

Salt Network News: Living like Salt

Summer Issue



As the Salt Network we work together to be like Salt and light throughout our work, business and areas of influence.

The Salt Network: Living like Salt

READ: Matthew 5:13 - 16

There are many good explanations of how the people of God are to be like salt and light in the world, but the thread that seems to run through many of them is the concept of influence.

Throughout the history of God's people we have been set apart as a light to the nations. Through our acts, character and faith we are lights that illuminate the love, grace and renewing power of Christ. As a disciple of Jesus you become a light emitting, flavor giving, co-creating image of Christ.

We are called to be people of influence not hidden away, snuffed out or flavourless but rather shining bright and releasing the creative flavour of God's kingdom into the world.

Many Christian business leaders say that they feel called to their

workplace and position of leadership but their minister or church do not really understand or value that call

Does this feel familiar? For too long business has been seen as synonymous with wealth, greed and the love of money. You and I know that that is not true but what could be done to show that to others?

How can you be a positive influence and ambassador of business for good?

We see though the life and workplace leadership of Joseph whilst running the estate of Potiphar that his faith, leadership and success was inextricably connected to the faithfulness of God towards him. Joseph's commitment to his work was as a service to God and as such resulted in fruitful relationships, influence and success.

Upcoming and find out more

The Salt Conference: Renegotiating the Social Contract

Following on from last year's successful conference, The Christian Aid Salt Network will be teaming up again with the Church of England's Faith at Work team to host our annual event.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions we are still fixing the details however now is the time to hold the date for the beginning of November.

We are working to host both physical and virtual access to a set of speakers from business, charities and politics as we explore what the future of the social contract is and what we must do as leaders to influence a better, fairer and more prosperous future.

More details available soon.

SALT LAUNCHES: PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT FUND

We are delighted to have launched the Philanthropic Capital Investment Fund. This new fund is working to strengthen market-based solutions to poverty by supporting farmers to scale and improve their market share. See more on page 2.

GET INVOLVED

We have a new website with fresh content, articles, videos, pledges for action and more. Find out more about the network and read the latest news at:

www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/salt-business-network

The Salt Network: Philanthropic Capital Investment Fund

The Philanthropic Capital Investment Fund exists to strategically position your giving to maximise social return through investing in market-based solutions to poverty.

Christian Aid has been a leading international development agency for 75 years working to eradicate poverty through developing strong partnerships and establishing innovative programmes that deliver sustainable opportunities for communities to overcome the scandal of poverty.

Corporate and philanthropic capital has a vital part to play in addressing injustice and establishing sustainable solutions to some of the worlds most pressing issues.

Whilst emergency aid remains essential in some circumstances, as we continue to strive for sustained social and economic development it is important to move beyond aid. Christian Aid has experience in over 40 countries establishing long term solutions through creating jobs, growing the economies, strengthening political stability, and equipping and empowering communities to build the futures they want. Market-based solutions use the assets of a particular community or industry to establish employment opportunities and economic stimulus to overcome the need to for aid.

The Philanthropic Capital Investment Fund strategically directs your giving so that it has impact for generations to come.

As we launch The Philanthropic Capital Investment Fund we are excited to open Malonda: Wealth Creation for Smallholder Farmers to further investment. We launched the Malonda programme in Malawi in 2019 with over £400,000 of committed corporate investment. Since then we have seen further funding and significant social return in growing market access, launching seed funding and scaling pigeon pea farmer operations; delivering life changing results to over 2000 farming households.

We are now looking to further boost this programme and with your investment we can secure transformative social return.

“A few years ago, I was selling my pigeon peas to middle men who were buying at a low price. We didn't have enough money to improve our home”.

Pigeon pea production in Malawi is dominated by smallholder farmers. They typically have limited access to market information and lack of access to improved varieties. The local pigeon pea market is highly fragmented and disorganised. Despite the availability of ready markets in India, the export market opportunity is being jeopardised by high freight costs, unscrupulous middlemen and low pigeon pea grain quality as compared to countries like Tanzania and Kenya.

The domestic market is underdeveloped, with poor knowledge of the versatility of the pigeon pea as a nutritious food source for humans and livestock creates a significant opportunity to open up to new domestic markets and develop existing ones. This would address the significant challenges with food insecurity and poor economic growth.

Environmental Considerations and Impacts

We are advocating for:

- Organically grown pigeon peas which are both more environmentally friendly and fetch a higher price for farmers.
- Mixed cropping of pigeon peas and maize to lessen the use of fertiliser in maize.
- Conservation agricultural methods which includes sustainable production of manure and Integrated pest controls.
- Use of waste to make Livestock and Fish feed thus promoting a more circular economy.
- The use of groundwater and small solar pumps to supply water to small dams for fish farming. The dam conserves water and provides charging to the aquifers. This has no unsustainable impact on watercourses, water table or down river water flow.



Social Impact Targets

We are working towards some very ambitious targets. However from our work thus far we are confident we will meet and even exceed these impact objectives.

- Support 3361 pigeon peas farming households to boost productivity and increase global market share
- Establish sustainable markets by:
 - a) Export market identification and access.
 - b) Creating domestic markets by increasing local consumption through:
 - i) Developing pigeon peas nutrition recipes
 - ii) Production of Livestock feed
 - c) Working with Malawian Government to prioritise pigeon peas in Government institutions such as Prisons, Schools, and Hospitals
- Provide access to affordable finance by:
 - a) Establishing Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA).
 - b) Injecting seed and growth capital into small businesses.

Get involved:

To get involved or receive the Funder's Pack please contact Samuel Williams at:

SWilliams@christian-aid.org

Continuous economic growth

Capitalism works, It is also deeply flawed and high time for reform.

The concerns about capitalism that led to activists gluing themselves to the front doors of Barclays bank are not new.

Karl Marx famously believed that if capitalism was allowed to flourish it would inevitably lead to the increased exploitation of workers and land, as firms seek to remain competitive by lowering prices, thereby reducing profit and in turn reducing wages and costs.

He went further to suggest that this continual race to the bottom would lead to the unavoidable rebellion by workers, resulting in either a worker's revolution or greater violence and oppression.

The truth is that whilst wide of the mark, Marx and his modern-day disciples are not entirely wrong. Injustice, oppression, and greed run throughout the roots of capitalism.

We can't offshore our responsibilities

In 1819 the British government introduced the Cotton Factories Regulations Act, restricting children under nine years of age from working within the cotton mills which filled the landscape of the day. Sure enough, the action raised significant concern and outrage amongst factory owners who relied upon a 'free' unregulated employment market, to build their business upon what we would simply accept today as child exploitation.

However, in what is a damning display of corporate offshoring morality recorded in The New York Times, 1st June 1861, we read:

'[Britain] at large has been steadily increasing its pecuniary support of Slavery, by doubling its consumption of Southern cotton every ten years.'

40 years after market regulation outlawed the employment of children within UK cotton factories, those same factories working under those same legal and moral frameworks continued to import around 10 million Cwts of cotton per year from the well documented, family filled slave fields of the southern states of America.

I recognise the complexity of the issue; around a quarter of all British families relied directly upon the cotton trade. Other, albeit more costly but less exploitative cotton was available, but not purchased.

Corporate responsibility not to exploit children was taken offshore so as to maintain and maximise capital. Out of the sight and mind of regulators, executives and consumers, the cost of trade continued to be paid by those who had no voice to be heard.

In fact, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, with its legal and state sponsored commodification of human beings, is a prime example of capitalism run wild, fuelled by the maximisation of financial return at all and any cost.

Is it human nature or systematic failure?

In the third and fourth centuries there appeared a movement of religious hermits and devotees, who in the pursuit of holiness, took to living in the desert, most significantly in Wadi El Natrun, Egypt. The story goes that one day a devotee troubled by lust removed himself from all human companionship, yet the lust continued. After ever greater measures to eliminate his lust to no avail he decided to bury himself - with no connection to the outside world but a tube through which food would be deposited. After years in his subterranean chastity he emerged, grieved that even within the grave his lust found a way to reach him.

No matter the state regulation or economic system, and no matter the socio-economic, environmental or moral cost, some of us will always find a way get what we want.

The offshoring of moral and social responsibility during the Atlantic slave trade demonstrates that state involvement in setting out market regulation to limit poor practice only gets us so far.

Human nature has shown itself to be extraordinarily innovative and determined to achieve our goals no matter the barrier. While this resolve is an evolutionary asset, it's also a dark reality of our nature that we would sometimes rather ignore, blame upon influencing factors, or mitigate through restrictions.



Christian Aid and Gaia Energy

Christian Aid and Gaia Energy have come together to develop the ARK Tariff (Additional Renewable Kilowatt tariff) helping the world's poorest communities to access clean, reliable energy.

Customers using this ethical energy tariff are helping to fund our award-winning Breaking the Barriers' Programme. It supports women to create and own Women's Led Sustainable Energy Enterprises in some of the poorest and most remote off-grid communities.

Groups receive training in sustainable energy products and technologies and business skills; they can also access finance through savings and loans groups. The project:

- > Increases rural women's jobs and income in the sustainable energy sector
- > Improves their working and living conditions promotes gender equality
- > Strengthens women's social status.

How does it work?

By choosing Gaia Energy's ARK Tariff, your church can support Christian Aid's renewable energy projects.

For an additional charge of £20 (including VAT) per year, per contract (either gas or electricity or both), you can help give the world's poorest communities access to reliable, clean energy.

Could you join Christian Aid by becoming a corporate partner? Get in touch to find out more.

Contrary to Marx's fear, long before the emergence of capitalism the willingness to oppress and exploit people and planet to maximise and privatised returns was widespread and industrialised.

Consider almost all empires from Mayans to Benin, Mongol, Roman and early British; all predated modern capitalism, yet were significantly motivated by the maximisation of wealth, resource and power.

Furthermore, consider this description found in Habakkuk 2:4-5: 'See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright - but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness - indeed, wine betrays him; he is arrogant and never at rest. Because he is as greedy as the grave, and like death is never satisfied, he gathers to himself all the nations and takes captive all the people.'

Timothy 6:10 explores the distinction between righteous and unrighteous in this regard when he writes:

'For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.'

Capital is not the issue. The unbridled love of capital is - the type of love for money and wealth that causes oppression, exploitation, and complete self-interest.

Capitalism is not the issue, greed is.

Is capitalism the root of evil?

Capitalism is non-moral. It is neither greedy nor generous. It is neither oppressive nor freeing. The blaming of capitalism as the root of evil is far more a convenient means of displacing personal and corporate responsibility, and an attempt at absolving one's moral discomfort with £3 t-shirts and million-pound bonuses, than it is a valid critique of the most successful economic system in human history.

And here is the key point: As much

as capitalism allows freedom for deviancy it similarly allows freedom for generosity, personal responsibility, and love for our neighbour.

Capitalism fundamentally trusts that people will do the right thing. It reflects the society in which it operates, and so reflects our own human nature.

Just as we can be prone to greed, so too we are capable of great generosity and selfless dedication to others. The very character and ministry of Jesus demonstrates such.

The question is: what will you do with your freedom?

The private sector must start to welcome the opportunity to meet the global challenges we face with positive solutions, not only to maximising financial value generation but collective social return too.

Take for instance the sustainability sector: the UN Sustainable Development Goals are estimated to generate \$12 trillion of market opportunity by 2030 in restorative and sustainable capital. This is both commercially viable and the right thing.

However, beyond public and private sector attitudes, the greatest power for shaping a generous capitalism sits with us and our organisational leaders taking the simple choice not only to no longer cut corners and perpetuate shareholder primacy, but to accept a higher level of responsibility for the whole system within which we operate.

Restorative or generous capitalism sits at the very cutting edge of economic sustainable growth thinking, which no longer sees a conflict between affordability and socio-environmental sustainability. This is neither degrowth nor anti-capital, but an inclusive capitalism that's able to extend its eyes beyond shareholder return alone, and embrace the opportunities of whole system return.

Salt!

ABOUT The Salt Network

The Christian Aid Salt Business Network

Our vision is to create a movement of business leaders working together as agents of change, leading best practice within their own businesses and in the wider, global community.

Founded on strong theological principles, the Salt Business Network aims to inspire businesses and business leaders to be the 'salt of the earth and the light of the world' (Matthew 5:13-16) in advancing God's work here on earth.

It is also a Network grounded in learning and action. Through our workshops, online community and at events, leaders have the opportunity to explore the impact businesses large and small have on our world and re-frame what it means to be in business.

To find out more about the network and how you can be involved contact: salt@christian-aid.org

