



St. Mary's London for Building a Better Future: Re-imagining the Social Contract. (Amanda Mukwashi, Nick Shepherd, Ivan Chakraborty, Gemma McGough)

## Salt Network Conference 2021

Thank you to everyone who attended, whether in-person or online, you all contributed to making this year's conference a huge success. After a delay, it was great to finally be able to come together in person to encourage, network, and learn.

Understandably, there was still some hesitancy for some of you about meeting together and we hope that by next year you will be ready to join us live as well. However, for those who did make it, it was great to see you and there was a real buzz of excitement and anticipation in the room.

### A Range of High Quality Speakers

Outgoing Christian Aid CEO, Amanda Mukwashi, started the day with a challenging reflection on Capitalism, it's origins, and the difficulties of using the system we have to rescue us from the plight we're in. She ended with a message of hope, but

admitted that it won't be easy.

Martin Rich (Future-fit Business), Matt Bird (@NAYBA), Rupert Vernalls (The MBA Academy), Ivan Chakraborty (Nuach Coffee), Gemma McGough (Partners in Progress aka Patriotic Millionaires), and Nick Shepherd (Church of England Faith at Work Campaign) provided the keynote talks on the day.

They covered a range of topics from how to prepare your business to thrive now, and in the future, to how the local church can make a difference in its community through promoting entrepreneurialism, and so much more.

### Online Availability

Many have asked if the talks are available online. We expect them to be by the time you read this newsletter. Watch @NetworkSalt on Twitter, Salt Network on Linked in and Facebook, to know as soon as they drop!

## Getting involved in the Salt Network

As the Salt Network, we stand together, united by our shared values, to transform businesses locally and globally to be a force for good.

We inspire businesses to champion our values of love, dignity, equality and justice.

With our collective power and energy, we aim to give people of all faiths and none a way out of poverty, by championing good business practices.

You can read more about the network, and how to join, here: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/salt-business-network/join>

As a network, we support each other through Regional Hubs, there are currently 5 across the country, but we are always looking for new areas to bring businesses and their leaders together as a force for good.

We also have WhatsApp Groups for those hubs to help you stay up to date with all of the latest events and ideas from us and from other Salt Members.

We have just had our annual conference and we will be releasing the audio and video content from the conference soon. We also hope to announce the date for our 2022 conference early in the New Year, so stay tuned to our social media channels to hear the latest news!

Twitter: @NetworkSalt

Facebook:

@TheSaltBusinessNetwork

LinkedIn: @SaltNetwork

## Delegate Reflection on Salt Conference

My notes from this year's conference were full of inspiring quotes (e.g. "We live on a finite rock. The only thing that gets replenished is sunlight and God's grace" – Martin Rich) and high-quality teaching on topics I didn't know anything about. Do you know what 'obliquity' is or understand a sigmoid curve? Thanks to Rupert Vernalls talk I do now!

Amanda Mukwashi (CEO of Christian Aid) set the inspirational tone, speaking about the current situation in the world and opening the Bible to find the answers. We have a broken and outdated economic system and an environmental crisis; things need to be done differently. We need to redefine growth, as economic growth for the sake of growth doesn't work. But we are simply called to be like Jesus in these situations, loving the person in front of us and changing the world one small act at a time.

With COP26 finishing on the same day, on everyone's mind was that the world continuing the way it's heading is simply not an option and we will all suffer as a result. But the poorest will be hit hardest as the rich continue to benefit and the poor reap the negative impact (created by the rich).

### I was encouraged that change really does begin with me!

Throughout the day it was apparent that the system is broken, but it takes individuals and groups (made up of individuals) to be able to shape the values of companies and economies, and thereby to change the political and economic systems.

I left inspired that rather than looking elsewhere, or at other people, I could look at myself and the businesses I am responsible for. Rather than thinking about: what could the government do if it really tried? Or how can we keep 0.1 degrees off the temperature rise of the ocean? I was encouraged that change really does begin with me! If you happen to be in a position of influence in a business, then change starts with you, your business, and your value system. Are you driven purely by profit? Are you driven purely by the environment? Can you find a way to look after them both?

## Living out my Faith in business is my constant motivation.

For me personally, and professionally, this was a really inspiring and helpful time of learning. The reason that I run Grace Enterprises, the reason we run Radiant Cleaners as a social enterprise, employing people who have been described as 'unemployable', and the reason why we then pay them the real Living Wage is because of a value system that is not held by the world. This is not a 'How little can we pay them and how much can we charge?' situation.

I personally feel called to be a Godly employer and therefore how we employ and how we employ them is more important to me than what business I'm running and how much money I'm making. But without a profitable and sustainable business I won't be paying anybody anything and won't actually be helping.

## Continuing the way the world has gone for the last 100 years is not an option.

We have to choose to actively engage while knowing that we are citizens of heaven. We are living here on Earth and it's the only planet we've got. As a Christian business leader, living out my faith in businesses, and allowing people who interact to notice the difference of us being salt and light in the world, is my constant motivation.

The quality teaching, conversations and relationships built at this conference encourage me and help me on my mission. I am called to make a difference and to be Jesus to the one in front of me - and to care about those people on another continent who are never going to be in front of me. These are people who I can impact by running a sustainable and profitable business while having a value system that is upside down compared to the capitalist economy. It can be done. We follow a God who is all powerful and owns all the money in the world. He is a God who speaks – the question is are we listening? And if we hear, and what we hear is uncomfortable, then will we act? He is faithful and He provides.

-- Matt Parfitt - CEO Grace Enterprises and Radiant Cleaners



### Salt Conference Workshop Hosts and Topics

Nick Shepherd, from Setting God's People Free and the Church of England's Faith at Work Campaign, led a workshop on how to live out your Faith at work. If you would like to know more please email Nick on [nick.shepherd@churchofengland.org](mailto:nick.shepherd@churchofengland.org).

Michael Gough, from Sparks Studio, ran a workshop on Building a Brand with Purpose. If you would like more information on building your brand please have a look at their website at [www.sparks-studio.com](http://www.sparks-studio.com)

David Atter and Ellie Harris, from The GOODWORK.COMPANY, host a workshop asking poignant, Questions for a Better Future. Here are the main questions you might like to think about for yourself or your business:

>> Is it easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism?

>> If charity is easy, why is it so hard for rich people to think about equality?

>> If fossil-fuelled neoliberal capitalism is drawing to a close, what's next?

>> How do we best market sustainability?

>> How can we make business leaders see that green business can cost less money?

You can find David and Ellie at <https://goodwork.company>

## Better Business, Fairer World: Corporate Philanthropy

The past 15 years has seen significant shifts in businesses taking their position within a globalised economy as more important than a mere tick box exercise and begun integrating 'whole system' corporate responsibility thinking into core operating strategies.

Initiatives such as B-Corp, Future Fit Benchmarks, the Sustainable Development Goals and Christian Aid's Salt Business Network, have enabled businesses to look beyond charitable giving to Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) as their only means of 'doing good'. Rather, many businesses have, and will continue, to imbed 'impact'[1] into their core activities. This shift in corporate thinking, which may feel well established to some, is actually a reasonably recent and important shift away from the narrow corporate capitalism of Friedman's shareholder primacy that dominated the 80's and 90's.

## Does a Reduction in Corporate Giving = Reduction in Impact?

The Charities Aid Foundation identified, in their 2018 Corporate Giving by FTSE 100 report, that collectively, corporate donations in £'s had reduced to £1.9 Billion over the period of the study, whilst the % of Pre-Tax Profits assigned to impact within individual organisations was reported to be up by an average of 2.4%. One explanation of this could be that FTSE 100 companies have become less profitable during the period of the study. However, we know this not to be the case with FTSE 100 company valuations increasing by over 25% during the period. Therefore, a more likely explanation is that charitable activities by FTSE 100 companies during the period was increasingly taken 'in-house' and is thus represented by the increased percentage of pre-tax spending towards impact activities. Whilst cash donations to 3rd party charitable intermediaries such as INGO's, decreased. In other words, corporates have taken charitable

decision making 'in house' rather than out-sourcing it to CSO's, which may previously have been the norm. Whilst Corporates continue to look for partnerships to direct their funding, they increasingly look for greater operational and brand synergies and multi-channel impact of their funding – that is to say, corporate funding is often intelligent, impact focused, beneficial for business and thus integrated into brand identity.

## Integrated Corporate Responsibility

The trend towards integrated corporate responsibility is widely encouraged by the values-based business movement that seeks to blur the lines between good business and good citizenship.[2] However, this shift towards business for good does not come without significant challenges, especially when operating in emerging and vulnerable economies. ClearView Research and the Vodafone Foundation found that philanthropic giving and corporate responsibility investment, seeking to deliver positive impact throughout supply chains, tend to favour delivering transformation in partnership with western NGO's rather than delivering impact directly or in partnership with local actors. They go on to stress that this helicopter development which drops in aid does little sustainable good, and rather perpetuates a kind of 'neo colonialism'. Here, Christian Aid offers a great benefit by delivering almost 100% of development programmes with local partners. Over 75 years, Christian Aid has been working to establish its best in class approach to delivering sustainable development that is shaped and implemented by those most invested in its success – the communities themselves.

This approach has shown remarkable impact, not least demonstrated through the Philanthropic Capital Investment Fund. A donor fund committed to high social returns through resourcing local businesses and farmers to scale, grow and develop a stable and dignified market-based solution to poverty.



### Benson Alick: Cycling His Way to Success

Benson Alick is 32 and lives in Kalambo, 3 hours south of Lilongwe, Malawi's capital city, with his wife and child.

Before meeting Alliance Development Africa Foundation (ADAF), he worked as a security guard. However, after the business management and village savings training with ADAF he began exploring new business opportunities and settled on bicycle hire services.

He successfully secured a Christian Aid funded interest free loan of £52.63 and purchased a bike.

Benson also joined the VSL groups that were formed by ADAF and has started to grow his savings. Benson has now managed to buy three more bicycles and employed more people to expand his business.

Benson plans to expand his business by buying a motorbike allowing him to charge greater fees and secure greater profits.

You can find out more about the PCIF at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising/philanthropic-capital-investment-fund>

## It's Never Too Late or It's Never Too Soon?

We are all very familiar with the saying, "It's never too late." We hear it quite frequently. It is commonly used as a way of encouraging someone to try something new, or to take up a new habit or even career, and who doesn't love a bit of encouragement? But, is it true?

A quick Google search revealed that the origin of the phrase is probably unknown. Some have attributed it to George Eliot from his writings in approximately AD 1880, but some other clever people seem to think that is an incorrect attribution. Even though when and why it became a part of common vernacular would be an interesting investigation for some, it would still fail to answer the question of whether it is true or not.

### It's Never Too Late...

Again, I understand the desire to encourage someone to better themselves at any stage of life. We should all want to continue to learn and grow and to become the best version of ourselves or our business until we lose the ability to do so. However, is, "It's never too late" the best advice or source of motivation?

In a word, "No!" As a phrase it's not even true. Sometimes it is too late. Regularly we pass up on opportunities that may never present themselves again. Sometimes we do lose the ability to do certain things through age, injury, location or timing. So, while the phrase may be true in a small number of specific contexts, I would argue that it is largely unhelpful for the purpose for which it is meant - encouragement to help you accomplish your purpose, personal or in business.

### It's Never Too Soon...

In light of this, I offer this alternative: "It's never too soon." Like, "It's never too late," it won't be true in every context, but I believe for the purpose of self-improvement and the fulfilment of life purpose, it is hugely more helpful and challenging. I think maybe the fact that it's more

challenging is perhaps why we use it less. Many of us are not great at challenging ourselves or others. We prefer gentle encouragement and phrases that make us sound like we care, over the gentle challenge of phrases that show we care enough to make someone think.

We are all, by now, extremely aware that Christmas is on the way with New Year hot on its heels. Could this be the year that you make a New Year's Resolution that you can keep and that could help you not just lose a little weight but actually find your purpose?

### Try Something New!

"It's never too soon" allows you to step up to all sorts of challenges and encourages you to try something new, as we all know that doing the same thing but expecting different results defines a trait that none of wants to be identified by.

So, the next time you, one of your friends, or a business colleague says, "I'd really like to...(lose weight, do a qualification, climb a mountain, play an instrument, change the culture...)," try saying, "It's never too soon!" and see where the conversation goes. Maybe challenge yourself over the next week to replace, "It's never too late" with "It's never too soon" every time the opportunity arises and see if it becomes a habit. Remember, the sooner you start practicing your new habits, the sooner they become second nature.



### Giving to Salt

The Philanthropic Capital Investment Fund

Whilst emergency aid remains essential in some circumstances, we continue to strive for sustained social and economic development. 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. To find out more, please visit <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising/philanthropic-capital-investment-fund> or email [Bowen@christian-aid.org](mailto:Bowen@christian-aid.org) for a giving pack.



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