



**Long Distance**  
Christian

# The Resilient Business

Embedding Christian values  
in your company's DNA

**Peter Webster with Shirley Jenner**



# The Resilient Business

Embedding Christian values  
in your company's DNA

**Peter Webster with Shirley Jenner**



# Contents

Preface.....	4
Introduction.....	7
Research questions and method.....	7
Observations on the method.....	9
Analytical framework.....	9
Beginnings.....	12
Relationship 1: ownership, profit and leadership.....	13
Liability and risk.....	15
Leadership.....	16
Articulating the values.....	18
Explicit and implicit Christianity.....	19
Relationship 2: staff.....	20
Communicating the values to staff.....	24
Relationship 3: customers and clients.....	28
Relationship 4: suppliers.....	30
Relationship 5: neighbours .....	32
Relationship 6: the environment.....	34
Epilogue.....	35
Summary conclusions and recommendations.....	36
Future research.....	38
Select bibliography.....	39
Appendix 1.....	42
Appendix 2.....	44
Appendix 3.....	51

# Preface

How do we move from individually living out Christian values at work to embedding a Christian ethos right at the heart of our organisations? And how do we make sure that ethos really sticks, especially in times of change and challenge, to create resilient companies?

One of our supporters asked the Jubilee Centre if we would be interested in conducting a research project around these questions. He was looking for some principles that were both biblically rooted and practically relevant in today's world, to guide and inspire entrepreneurs and company directors.

The Jubilee Centre has researched extensively around promoting good and right relationships at personal, organisational and public policy levels, as a practical expression of the biblical vision of society. We saw in this project the opportunity to find out whether Christian entrepreneurs, in seeking to express their faith in the business they were building, likewise considered relationships to be their primary focus, and what effect that had on the company.

So we set out to explore the factors which contribute to creating and keeping a distinct Christian ethos and practice in a company over the long term, through the lens of relationships. We realised this was a good opportunity to draw in a broader base of expertise, so we invited Rev Dr Richard Higginson of Faith in Business at Ridley Hall, and Dr Shirley Jenner, a Workplace Associate with LICC and lecturer at the University of Manchester, to help develop the concept and oversee the project.

This led to appointing Dr Peter Webster of Webster Research and Consulting Ltd as the lead researcher and writer, assisted by Shirley Jenner, who conducted two of the interviews and contributed to the analysis and writing of the report.

Apart from the interviewees, who are named in the report, the following people also provided advice and support in different ways: John Ashcroft, Sally Bertlin, Guy Brandon, Richard Gedge, Charles Hipsley, Jonathan Pearson, Jonathan Rushworth, Michael Schluter and Tim Young.

This report is written to encourage, inspire and challenge Christian directors and managers. We hope to convince you that the quality of relationships among the diverse stakeholders of a business is crucial to its economic success as well as to achieving its wider purpose or mission. We also offer a range of practical ideas and worked examples of how to invest in those strategic relationships over the long term, and strengthen the Christian DNA in your organisation.

We hope all this will cast fresh light on applying Jesus' teaching in the Great Commandment, to love our neighbour as ourselves, in the tough environment of the business world.

At the end of the report are more details of the organisations behind this project, and some of the resources which they offer to Christians in business. May they help you become more faithful and fruitful in the service of our God and his kingdom.

**Jonathan Tame**

Executive Director, Jubilee Centre



# Introduction

Many Christian entrepreneurs start companies with a clear Christian purpose and mission. For most, their dream is that the business will flourish, grow and be profitable whilst staying true to the core mission, even after it has been handed on to others. We might call these ‘resilient businesses.’

The primary objective of this project has been to study the experience of such resilient Christian businesses, and to explore the factors which contribute to the creation and maintenance of a distinct Christian ethos and practice in a company over the long term, and from these to recommend how such businesses might be built from the outset. Put simply, how do we build resilient Christian businesses? Apart from this specific question of values resilience, a secondary objective has been simply to observe and report on the way in which those values have been embedded across a diverse group of companies, and to look for common patterns.

Put simply, how do we build resilient Christian businesses?

## Research questions and method

There is already a significant literature on the Christian theology of work as understood from the perspective of individual workers. The motivation of individual Christian entrepreneurs is rather less well studied, though a current project at Faith in Business at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, promises to shed important new light on the subject. There is significant writing of a prescriptive character, that begins with Scriptural and theological principles and then applies them to produce guidelines for Christians starting and running businesses. However, there has so far been little that has started by observing the experience of Christian businesses as they have developed over time, and from that empirical basis then attempted to generalise.

The primary method of investigation was by one-to-one interviews (which in three cases were in fact with two interviewees at once). These were supplemented by an examination of relevant documents (as supplied by the interviewees) and of other published materials where such were available. The interviews were semi-structured, and took place between October 2015 and January 2016, eight in all. The interview questions are listed in Appendix Three.



The interviewees were selected according to two key criteria. The companies had *both* to:

- (a) have been founded with, or to have subsequently adopted an intentional Christian ethos, and;
- (b) be led now by someone other than the original founder(s), or, to have grown to a size such that direct personal control cannot be exercised by the founder(s) if they are still actively involved.

The following table summarises the eight companies and the footnotes introduce the interviewees from each one.

	Region	Sector	Staff Headcount	Date of Foundation
David Ball Group <sup>1</sup>	East	Manufacturing	50-100	1970
Anthony Collins Solicitors <sup>2</sup>	West Midlands	Legal services	250-500	1973
Cygnat Group <sup>3</sup>	North-west	Engineering	100-250	1974
C. Hoare & Co. <sup>4</sup>	London & South-east	Financial services	250-500	1672
Lawsons <sup>5</sup>	London & South-east	Retail	250-500	1921
Paint Pots Nurseries <sup>6</sup>	South	Education	100-250	1993
Schluter <sup>7</sup>	North-west	Trading	>50	1858
Traidcraft <sup>8</sup>	North-east	Retail	100-250	1979

- 1 Since 1970 David Ball Group Ltd has specialised in researching, developing, manufacturing, and distributing specialist cementitious and sand products to provide bespoke solutions for industry. David Ball is the founder of the business, and is now chairman.
- 2 Anthony Collins Solicitors is a legal practice with a national market in areas including community regeneration, housing, charities and procurement. The business is based in Birmingham with a strong local presence, working alongside individuals, businesses and third sector organisations across the West Midlands. Anthony Collins is founder of the firm, now retired, and Peter Hubbard is senior partner.
- 3 Cygnat Group is a group of specialist engineering businesses delivering engineering solutions in two strategic areas; production and processes of technical fibres and oil and gas technology. Matthew Kimpton-Smith is group managing director.
- 4 C. Hoare and Co. is the UK's oldest family-owned private bank, founded in 1672. Formerly chief executive, Alexander Hoare is partner and director.

- 5 Lawsons is the largest independent timber, building materials and fencing merchant in London and the South East. John Lawson is son and grandson of the founders, and his son Simon Lawson is now chairman.
- 6 Paint Pots Nurseries provides nursery and pre-school education in nine settings across the Southampton area. It is owned and managed by David and Anna Wright, its founders.
- 7 Schluter SA is an international green coffee trading company, managed from Liverpool by managing director Phil Schluter.
- 8 Traidcraft is one of the leading dedicated fair trade companies in the UK and globally. It sources the UK's widest range of fair trade foods, beverages, household cleaning, charcoal and rubber products, as well as fair trade crafts and clothing, from fair trade suppliers in more than 30 developing countries. Ram Gidoomal is non-executive chairman of both the trading company and the charity.

## Observations on the method

It is important to note that the sample of companies described is a small one. As such, this report and its conclusions *must* be read as indicative and suggestive, rather than exhaustive. Fully to establish these conclusions in fact would require a study many degrees larger in scope, with a greatly increased sample size.

Since the scope of the project was limited to interviews and publicly available documentation, it has necessarily tended to privilege the voices of owners and of senior management. Without wishing to cast any doubt on the reliability of that testimony, it is still the case that the fullest picture of the workings of a Christian company could only possibly be gained by considering the perception of all the stakeholders of the business.

A final observation, on gender. In total, eleven people were interviewed, representing eight companies. Of these eleven, ten were male. This imbalance is in part a function of the supply available, since on the long list only two of the sixteen companies were either founded or are currently led by women. Quite how this imbalance may have affected the data being gathered is hard to determine, but the reader should bear in mind that the vast majority of voices being heard are male.

## Analytical framework

The report takes relationships as its organising principle: that is to say, the relationships between all the various stakeholders, internal and external – its owners, its staff, its customers, its suppliers, the local communities in which it is embedded, and finally the environment. First expressed at length in *The R*

*Factor* (by Michael Schluter and David Lee, 1993) this relational approach has been applied to many different kinds of organisation. This study is indebted to the work of the Relationships Foundation and Relational Research, and in particular the recent report on *Transforming Capitalism from Within*, by Jonathan Rushworth and Michael Schluter.

‘Relational Thinking’ is based on the conviction that good and right relationships in personal, family and public life are the key to improving wellbeing, family stability, organisational effectiveness, public service delivery and policy outcomes. Consequently the nature and quality of relationships should be an issue of primary concern to the leader of any organisation.

This will come as no surprise to Christians, for among all the world religions, Christianity is unquestionably the most relational one in its theology. The understanding of God as Trinity means that relationships and love preceded creation. Humans made in God’s image are relational beings – made by and for relationship. Both old and new covenants in the Bible govern the relationship between God and his people. The incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ enable all people and all things to be reconciled with God. Sin and redemption are defined in terms of relationships; the church is a community modelling restored relationships with God and between people; and the life in heaven is one of perfect relationships in a new community.

Jesus Christ summarised the Law as loving God and loving our neighbour – and love is a quality of relationship.

Consequently, a biblical approach to the Christian’s role in society should focus on creating, restoring and maintaining right relationships. Moreover, although the concept and language of relationships is deeply biblical, it can nonetheless be understood by, and resonates with, people of all faiths and none.

Relational Thinking maintains not only that relationships are important, but that *every area of human thought and activity* is relational – influenced by and in turn influencing relationships, whether between individuals, groups, organisations or nations. This applies to economics, finance, politics, law, medicine, education, technology and of course business.

Good and right relationships in personal, family and public life are the key to improving wellbeing, family stability, organisational effectiveness, public service delivery and policy outcomes.

A company does not really exist apart from its relationships with its stakeholders. It may own some assets and its shares may be owned by others, but its ultimate nature is relational. For this reason, the present research project has been structured around different stakeholder relationships.

One significant difficulty which arises is that it is difficult to measure the quality of a relationship. This absence of measurability has hindered some managers from engaging more fully in relational issues; if you can't measure it, you can't manage it, and neither can you justify investing in fixing it. Significant also is the fact that the very language of individual and personal relationships is inadequate for describing relationships in an organisation. The Jubilee Centre's thinking around relationships led to the development of more nuanced language to describe and analyse relationships, and to launching the Relationships Foundation. The Relational Proximity Framework<sup>®9</sup> was originally developed through reflecting on how the jubilee provisions in Leviticus 25 would have impacted relationships over the long term, and it identifies five preconditions for healthy relationships to grow:

A company does not really exist apart from its relationships with its stakeholders.

- **directness** of encounter, which reflects the degree of presence in a relationship, and how that is mediated by technology, time and other people;
- **continuity**, which looks at a relationship's storyline, as well as how much time is invested in it over time;
- **multiplexity**, which reveals the extent of mutual knowledge in a relationship, especially about the other person outside their working role;
- **parity**, which deals with power or influence in a relationship, and the extent to which the parties participate in decisions and believe that risk and reward are distributed fairly between them;
- **commonality**, which considers whether the goals and values of both parties are aligned, or if any hidden agendas undermine cooperation.

When these positive 'drivers' of relationship are at their optimum level – where there is true encounter, a shared storyline, mutual knowledge, a perception of fairness and alignment of purpose – relationships will work well. Evidence for the operation of these five drivers of healthy relationships will be drawn out

in the case studies throughout this report. In addition, Appendix One contains a reflection on the relational aspects of the study as a whole.

## Beginnings

As was noted above, the motivation of individual entrepreneurs is not the main concern of this report. However, some short observations may be made on the experience of those of our interviewees who were themselves founders of their businesses.

When viewed in relation to the rest of the group, the experience of Traidcraft seems unusual in the following respect. The founder Richard Adams started the business without any specific professional background in international development and trade, save for some revelatory weeks spent in India. What Adams did have was an extremely sharp sense of the potential of trade to better the lot of the poorest of the poor, out of which came a specific business idea. This lent Traidcraft (when the company with that name was later formed) an unusually sharply defined mission from the outset. By contrast, David Ball was catapulted into entrepreneurship almost overnight when his position at an established firm came to an abrupt end, and so had little time to reflect on the values of the business in between making product samples at the kitchen sink. Anthony Collins was similarly preoccupied simply with survival in the very early years, as Anthony Collins Solicitors made a loss in its first year of trading, like many new companies. Unlike Traidcraft, the experience of most seems to have been of a gradual evolution of mission and values over time, from being implicit (and communicated in person) to being explicit, codified and written down. In other cases, notably that of Schluter, a firm established without any particular Christian influence was much later to adopt an explicit Christian approach under the influence of a newly converted owner. The explicitly Christian influence in Cygnet Group dates from the time during which Matthew Kimpton-Smith joined the family firm as a partner, having been converted to Christianity through the Alpha course.

By what were our entrepreneurs resourced? Few of them reported having benefitted from other Christian business people at the outset. Indeed, part of Simon Lawson's motivation to participate in this study was to allow others to benefit from his experience, since he did not have such an opportunity when younger. The bulk of the writing on the Christian theology of business dates from the last 25 years, and so those of our entrepreneurs who started out before

that date reported little in the way of written help. When dealing with the key text of all – the Bible – there were few specific passages that had proved decisive in our interviewees' thinking. Some talked in terms of 'do as you would be done to', the shortened form of Christ's words in Matthew 7, often known as the 'Golden Rule'.<sup>10</sup> More often our interviewees spoke in terms of more general ethical principles, such as honesty, integrity and service to others – all of them deeply biblical in origin – but not accompanied with specific proof-texts.

One particular recurrent note amongst those interviewees who were also owners of the business was an unusual understanding of what that ownership meant. Even if in law the business was indeed theirs, at a higher level the real ownership was in the hands of God, with its leaders acting much more as stewards, in a manner that calls to mind the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servant (Luke 12, Matthew 24). This seems to be connected to an approach to long-term business planning that was prudent and rational but that allowed for the operation of providence in taking the business in unexpected directions.

## Relationship 1: ownership, profit and leadership

Two crucial pressure points in the sustaining of a Christian ethos within a business have historically been in the nature of the relationship between the business and its owners, and the attitude of those owners to profitability. To what degree are owners of a business prepared to accept that doing business in line with a particular set of values might, at least in the short term, result in lower profitability and slower growth? The recent loss of Christian distinctiveness in several of the iconic businesses of the nineteenth century may well be related to the dispersal of ownership inevitable in listed companies.<sup>11</sup>

Doing business in line with a particular set of values might, at least in the short term, result in lower profitability and slower growth.

The majority of the businesses interviewed were still owned wholly or mostly by the founding family, or by small numbers of others who were known to share the values of the company. Although the risk of takeover was not explicitly identified as the main reason for this, such a pattern of ownership has perforce had the effect of preventing such a takeover. In two cases, more specific action has been needed to ensure continuity of values.

For the first three decades of its existence, the relatively small partner group of Anthony Collins Solicitors was composed entirely of Christians. As the firm grew, there was concern that simply professing to be a Christian was not sufficient clearly to demonstrate a common purpose, and also that the restriction might be preventing the firm from attracting the very best candidates for partnership. Part of the solution was a process by which the values of the firm were more explicitly articulated, leading to the adoption of a 'Principles' document in 2005. Those principles, whilst very clearly derived from Christian thinking, proved to be readily acceptable to new partners who themselves did not profess a faith. The principles were expressed in terms of the difference that the firm made in society and local communities, in the achievement of social justice, and as a resource to the Christian churches. Crucially, they stated that 'the maximisation of profit for distribution [...] is not an objective of the business.' The existence of these principles in codified form, which were in effect binding on the partners as owners, protected the values of the business from short-term pressure for increased profitability.<sup>12</sup> The principles were superseded in 2016 by a new articulation of purpose and values, in which there is a similar stress on profit as 'a means to an end'; Anthony Collins Solicitors is 'purpose-driven not profit-driven', aiming to 'improve lives, communities and society'.

Traidcraft has been able to ensure that conflict between company values and the interests of shareholders does not result in their dilution.

Only one of the businesses interviewed is a public limited company, with freely tradeable shares.<sup>13</sup> Traidcraft became a PLC in 1984, five years after its foundation. That said, the company has an unusual structure of share ownership, in that one class of shares, known as the 'guardian share' or 'golden share', has certain rights that effectively guard against any dilution of the values. There is a single such share, in fact, held by the independent Traidcraft Foundation, that gives a veto on appointments to the board, and the right to approve any changes to the firm's articles of association. The profile of the holders of the ordinary shares is also highly unusual. Unlike the majority of firms, which have a small number of shareholders each with a sizeable holding, Traidcraft has more than 6,000 individual shareholders, none of which has a holding large enough to give any significant direct influence. This was due to the nature of the rights issue in 1984, which was a direct public appeal to Christian supporters to participate in the work of the firm in low income countries; it was 'not an investment for personal gain or profit.'<sup>14</sup> There is also continuity in the relationship with shareholders, who remain relatively

tolerant of a lower return than might be made elsewhere. Turnover of shares is very slow, even in the last few years when no dividend has been paid since 2011, and engagement with the annual general meeting is relatively high. By a different means, then, Traidcraft has been able to ensure that conflict between company values and the interests of shareholders does not result in a dilution of those values.

## Liability and risk

Christian thinkers on business have questioned the effects of the limitation of liability of shareholders, on which modern corporate structures are founded. Put simply, the critique is that shareholders are more likely to sanction excessive risk-taking when they stand only to lose their initial equity stake if those risks result in the collapse of the firm.<sup>15</sup> Interviewees were asked whether, as far as they could say given the speculative nature of the question, having limited liability had an effect on the business's attitude to risk.

In one case, the answer was very clear. Throughout the firm's long history, the partners of C. Hoare & Co. have had joint and several unlimited liability. Alexander Hoare was very clear that this makes the partners uniquely keen to know the business, the clients and the kind of risks that staff are taking, and to invest resources in stable long-term relationships with staff, customers, suppliers and the wider community. This attitude to risk is distinctly conservative when set against the rest of the industry, and stood the firm in good stead during the crisis of 2008-9.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast, other interviewees were not clear that the limited liability they enjoyed had any particular effect on company behaviour. Several interviewees noted that at least some protection against disaster was necessary for owners of a business, particularly if taking on very long-term and inflexible commitments such as a decades-long lease on a new building. More than one also noted that the banks (as lenders) were at least as much of an influence on risk-taking (negatively) as was limited liability in the opposite sense.

In the case of Lawsons, the question was put very clearly in 1993, when the company went bankrupt, despite still trading profitably: the effect of an investment in commercial property that failed due to the sudden rapid rise in UK interest rates. John Lawson describes himself as 'conscience-stricken' by the effect of the collapse on his creditors. When a new company was set up from the ashes of the old, he invited all those creditors to invoice the new company for the outstanding debt, to be honoured as soon as the company



could afford it. This example suggests that limited liability need not always distort behaviours, if the culture of the firm and its leaders works towards positive action.

## Leadership

The firms under examination here are all of a size such that they cannot be directly managed by a single individual. It is clear, however, that a great deal still depends on the person of the chief executive and the senior leadership team, that goes beyond the influence exerted through a line management structure.

Part of the importance of the person of the leader is in visibility and approachability. Both Anthony Collins Solicitors and C. Hoare & Co. have intentionally resisted expansion into many disparate locations, due to the negative effect that geographic dispersal would have on the culture of the company. Much of this damage would be in the reduced visibility of senior staff, or – to speak in relational terms – reduced directness in the relationship between leadership and staff. In the case of

A great deal still depends on the person of the chief executive and the senior leadership team.

Lawsons which by the nature of its business operates on many sites, both John and Simon have made a specific point of visiting branches on a regular and frequent basis. David Wright and Anna Wright, with nine geographically separate locations in the business, regularly spend time in each of those different settings, in order to be visible to both staff and to the parents of the children.

The economist Danny Dorling is one of several commentators to have pointed out the corrosive effects on society of extreme inequality in both income and wealth. One of the casualties of that inequality is sympathy, and a perception of common interests and life experience between those at the top of the income scale and those at the bottom.<sup>17</sup> At its inception, Traidcraft paid the most senior staff no more than twice the salary of the lowest-paid.<sup>18</sup> Over time, however, the firm came to realise that the policy made it difficult to attract the necessary skills in certain roles, but after a progressive widening of the differential over forty years it still remains at the relatively low level of 1 to 6. Other firms interviewed had differentials slightly lower than this in absolute terms, some rather higher. Common to all were differentials which were narrower than the industry as a whole. This policy was consciously adopted in the case of several of those interviewed, and articulated in clearly moral terms as a matter of justice. However, it may also be that a restraint on differentials also reduces

the sense of distance – in life experience and aspiration – between leaders and their staff that Danny Dorling describes. If it is seen as maintaining a fair distribution of risk and reward within a business, such restraint may help preserve relational parity.

Our interviews were marked by a humility and generosity of spirit which is not always found amongst senior executives. Simon Lawson expressed his own role in terms of ‘servant leadership’, the paradigm of leadership most associated with the American author Robert M. Greenleaf, but which is visible in the earthly ministry of Christ himself, particularly in the washing of the disciples’ feet.<sup>19</sup> This is most clearly shown in the ‘values lunches’ that Simon gives to staff. These are not given on company premises, but at home; the catering is not outsourced, but Simon himself cooks the food. Both aspects speak very eloquently of the role of the chief executive as servant, quite apart from the communication function the lunches also fulfil (of which, more will be said below). In the case of Paint Pots Nurseries, both founders are also qualified as practitioners, and routinely spend time working directly with children, under the direction of the managers they have appointed.

Part of the humility of the servant leader is the willingness both to seek, and then to take, advice.

Part of the humility of the servant leader is the willingness both to seek, and then to take, advice from others, even when that advice might be challenging. In a number of cases, our interviewees had mechanisms in place by which the senior leadership could be advised by impartial outsiders, not so much on operational issues and business strategy (as might be the case with a non-executive director on a board), but on the wider purposes of the business. Part of Simon Lawson’s advice to new entrepreneurs was to set aside regular time to reflect on the direction of the business, and to gather wise people around you, to advise and to challenge. This advice matches that of Matthew Kimpton-Smith, who has informal relationships with a number of Christian business people for both mutual support and challenge. Phil Schluter has a formally constituted Advisory Board, composed of experienced people from within and outside the particular industry. For Traidcraft the board of directors of the PLC is made up of the same people as form the board of Traidcraft Exchange, a registered charity which carries out related charitable and campaigning work. The elements of advice and challenge to both boards come from the Traidcraft Foundation, which holds the guardian share of the the company. The trustees of the Foundation are independent, and drawn from the worlds of politics, academia and the wider development world.

## Articulating the values

We noted above the process by which Anthony Collins Solicitors came to articulate a set of principles by which the firm would operate. Almost all the firms under examination here make some similar kind of public statement, several of which are gathered in Appendix Two. While such statements of values are hardly uncommon in the business world, the presentation of these on our interviewees' websites seem to be more prominent than on the average company's website. By articulating values in this way, the commonality in the relationships between stakeholders is made explicit.

Firstly, however, these values should be clearly distinguished from statements of *mission*. Partly dependent on the nature of the business and the industry in which each works, these mission statements were focussed in different ways.

By articulating values in this way, the commonality in the relationships between stakeholders is made explicit.

In the cases of Anthony Collins Solicitors, Traidcraft and Schluter, the overall purpose of the company is articulated in terms of the difference made to society. In the case of Anthony Collins Solicitors, the purpose of the firm is 'to improve lives, communities and society'. Where Anthony Collins Solicitors is focussed on the impact on clients and their

communities, Schluter and Traidcraft both exist to effect change amongst their suppliers. Traidcraft exists 'to fight poverty through trade', and Schluter's vision is 'to transform lives in Africa through commerce in a mutually profitable way'.

Not all companies are in industries in which there is such obvious scope for social impact. For these others, the articulation of company vision tended to concentrate on the achievement of excellence in the product or service. While a focus on 'excellence' is of course commonplace in the business world, amongst our interviewees excellence is best understood in terms of its relationship with an ethic of service to the customer, and an ethic of work. The mission statement for the Cygnet Group is 'empowering our people to deliver engineering excellence'. The David Ball Group is similarly committed 'to our company ethos of always providing excellent customer services and the best construction products available'. This is only possible when the company will 'encourage and empower our people to be the best that they can be.' Although the firm in fact very much focusses on customer services in branches, the mission statement for Lawsons makes the centrality of the interests of staff to the business even clearer: 'Lawsons' vision (and without a vision business will perish) is to make work as interesting and satisfying as possible.' While the

doing of good work (the achieving of excellence) can be an act of worship in itself, these businesses also exist to a degree for the intrinsic flourishing of their staff as human beings.

## Explicit and implicit Christianity

Christian entrepreneurs vary in their willingness to proclaim their faith and the source of their values. This is a fact which has emerged clearly from the research into fifty Christian entrepreneurs currently being undertaken by Ridley Hall. Some have no inhibitions about taking a bold stand, being 'up front' about their faith and witnessing openly to those with whom they do business. For them inviting clients to an annual company carol service, for instance, would be an entirely natural thing to do. Others are much more guarded about the way they express their faith. They do not wish to impose their faith on others, they fear the danger of misusing their power and they are wary of alienating customers or potential customers by expressing their views too strongly. A third group occupy a midway position, articulating their faith more gently and perhaps along the lines of 1 Peter 3:15-16: 'Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the faith that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.' The position that individuals take is often a reflection of their personality - the degree for instance that they are extrovert or introvert; but it may also be a response to the particular business sector in which they work and its perceived sympathy, indifference or hostility to Christian values.

While all our firms were to a greater or lesser extent explicit about values, there was some divergence as to how explicitly Christian these were to be.

This spectrum of responses was mirrored in this research. While all our firms were to a greater or lesser extent explicit about values, there was some divergence as to how explicitly Christian these were to be. The values statement from Schluter states that 'all business must be done in a way that reflects the character of God'; Traidcraft's website states that the firm was 'founded on Christian principles. We seek to live out that Christian faith through our mission to fight poverty through trade.' Cygnet Group has 'a strong Christian ethos at its heart.' The advice of Ram Gidoomal to new entrepreneurs was to know what values the company stood for, and to articulate them as robustly as possible to avoid them being watered down over time in the face of challenges.

This explicitly Christian identity was not however universal amongst our interviewee companies. In some cases it was felt that such explicitness would

risk damaging a business and thus lessen the good it might be able to do. David Ball had very intentionally avoided the making of explicit Christian statements, believing that if the business was run in a way that embodied Christian principles, such explicitness is both unnecessary and potentially a source of alienation. (Indeed, on several occasions other Christians he has encountered in the workplace have correctly guessed his faith without his ever needing to state it.) This indirect – but no less powerful – way of witnessing through corporate actions can be seen as an outworking of Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:16: ‘In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.’ Whether explicit or implicit, the leaders of these companies were united in seeing their companies as an important outworking of their faith. To run a company with a strong, distinct and resilient Christian ethos is not only to make a crucial contribution to society, but also it is to play a significant part in building the kingdom of God.

## Relationship 2: staff

In their different ways, the settlements of Saltaire in Yorkshire, Bournville in Birmingham and Port Sunlight on the Wirral all speak of a particular Christian response to the condition of the industrial working class in Victorian England, and to the relationship of employer and employee. Although the employee is now protected by law to a far greater extent, the last few years have nonetheless seen an upswing in concern about the conditions under which many in Britain must work. Such concerns are not confined to the lowest-paid: in the USA,

A common thread amongst our interviewees was an uncommonly good offering to staff.

2015 saw a spate of interest about the culture for staff among firms on Wall Street, after the suicide of a young Goldman Sachs analyst.<sup>20</sup>

A common thread amongst our interviewees was an uncommonly good offering to staff, when the package of benefits (financial and otherwise) and working conditions are viewed as a whole. The specific question of pay differentials was addressed above in the section on leadership. The issue of absolute pay levels is harder to generalise from our sample, since the conditions in each individual labour segment varied greatly between firms, and between types of role within firms. Some of the firms had adopted the minimum wage level promoted by the Living Wage Foundation. Others reported paying staff at around or slightly above the market level, in part to be sure of securing good people. In contrast,

for senior management positions, and for other roles where professional salaries have traditionally been high in relation to the national average, such as in banking and the law, the total financial compensation (including bonuses, stock options and the like) has tended to be lower than could be obtained elsewhere. In these cases, the recruitment offer has been centred very much on the intrinsic value gained from working for a values-based company, and/or from elements of non-financial compensation, to which we will shortly turn. (The experience of two of these businesses suggests that an offer to staff based on the appeal of the mission of the firm is partially successful, but in some cases staff have nonetheless left for higher salaries elsewhere.) From this sample, however, it is not possible to generalise as to whether a Christian business is likely to pay well or poorly.

There was a direct personal demonstration of concern for the welfare of staff.

A clearer picture emerges when looking at benefits other than salaries. Perhaps the most generous offering amongst our group is that from Lawsons. This includes: an income protection scheme for five years in the case of illness; a death in service benefit; financial, legal or relationship counselling and support; child care vouchers; a scheme to enable the purchase of a bike to travel to work; and store vouchers as gifts on significant life occasions such as a wedding or the birth of a child. This, when added to a contributory pension scheme and a profit share scheme, appears to be exceptionally generous; but most of our interviewee companies have also been self-consciously generous in relation to staff benefits. More than one firm maintains a staff canteen. One of these is subsidised as routine, and in the second case the firm buys lunch for the whole staff once a month. Another firm also subsidises a staff sports and social club. These, along with the maintenance of a pension scheme, are for Alexander Hoare a 'conscious paternalistic choice'.

Several of our interviewees also strove to maintain a culture in which there was a more direct personal demonstration of concern for the welfare of staff in its widest sense. Several took an active interest in the lives of their staff outside the workplace, getting to know partners and families through events such as the staff family trips organised by Lawsons. Going beyond this more general sociability, Traidcraft have historically placed an emphasis on active help for staff experiencing difficulties, aiming to be 'an inclusive community of purpose and relationships, acknowledging the Christian precept of love by putting the interests of others before one's own.' This was demonstrated by the availability of staff to act as counsellors and advisers, so much so in fact that at one point,

early in the firm's history, the firm seemed to one manager to be 'turning into a social work department.' Recalling the observation, a later director of human resources acknowledged that to act in this way did incur an expenditure of time that was both significant and hard to schedule. However, it remained the policy as part of a 'Christian response to staff.'<sup>21</sup> For Simon Lawson, work can provide the kind of stability, security and belonging that he sees as lacking in society as a whole. This multiplexity of relationships with staff was a key theme.

A marker of love, then, is the willingness to listen to staff, and listening can happen collectively as well as with individuals. None of the firms interviewed operated in an industry with significant trade union influence, although

A marker of love, then, is the willingness to listen to staff.

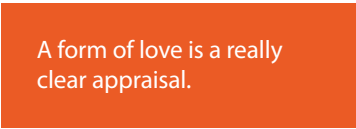
more than one would have welcomed the involvement of unions, and had indeed encouraged it. Some, such as C. Hoare & Co. had well-developed corporate grapevines – made possible by the physical co-location of staff – through which concerns could be passed upwards to senior management. At

Lawsons, the values lunches were not simply an opportunity for Simon Lawson to communicate to staff, but also a means by which staff could communicate, in a relaxed environment away from the usual place of work, with no senior management but Simon being present. (The staff who attend are elected by their colleagues, rather than being selected, and no-one may be vetoed.) Several companies had in place more formal forums in which staff could be represented. In the cases of both Traidcraft and David Ball Group staff are represented at management board level. All these various ways of listening to staff are indications of both directness and parity in the relationship between staff and employer.

The issue of 'work-life balance' is particularly acute in salaried roles without a culture of paid overtime. The problem of working too much is also not uncommon in 'vocational' roles, where staff tend to work *themselves* too hard (as opposed to being driven hard by an overbearing employer). As such, there is sometimes a need for businesses, including Christian businesses, to save their staff from themselves. Peter Hubbard recognises the tension between employing people with a highly developed sense of vocation to their work and maintaining this balance. The firm has sought to ameliorate this by having in place a partnership model explicitly stating that partners should aim to work no more than 45 hours per week, and offering three month sabbaticals after ten years as a partner. This is matched in Anthony Collins Solicitors as in other

cases by some flexibility about working hours, leave to attend family events and the like. David Ball is explicit about wanting to avoid a long-hours culture since it is both bad for the individual, and tends to lead to lower-quality work. Both he and Alexander Hoare have on occasion sent colleagues home at the end of a day: another example of the importance of leaders setting the tone.

The purpose of staff training is often articulated in terms of increased productivity and thus greater profitability, much as the reconditioning of a piece of machinery might also increase productivity. Our interviewees also spoke a good deal about training staff, but its purposes were articulated in more relational terms: about the development of individual potential. The recruitment offer for Cygnet Group is expressed in terms of ‘enabling each employee to achieve their full potential’:



A form of love is a really clear appraisal.

new recruits need to have a ‘real desire to constantly strive to improve both personal and corporate performance and would relish the investment in them that we offer.’ Similarly, in return for a commitment to making a difference in children’s lives, Paint Pots offers new recruits a ‘commitment to your personal development, fulfilment and career.’ Here we see an emphasis on continuity of the relationship between staff and employer from the outset. This extends to training staff at the very beginning of their careers, when they are least productive. Anthony Collins Solicitors has a regular intake of trainee solicitors, and Cygnet Group operates an Apprenticeship Academy. The David Ball Group has traditionally funded doctoral students at either Imperial College or the University of Cambridge, and (unusually) neither requires the candidate to work for the group subsequently nor makes any claim on the intellectual property in the completed thesis.

Several of the firms interviewed spoke of the company-staff relationship in terms of love. Indeed, outsiders have occasionally observed how fortunate their staff have seemed to be in relation to the industry; more than one has succeeded in attracting staff from competitors as a result. On occasions, however, there is a need for ‘tough love’ in relation to staff: a need for an element of challenge alongside the chocolate on the desk and the arm around the shoulder.<sup>22</sup> In the case of poor performance, it is often in the best interests both of the person concerned and their colleagues (who tend to be working harder to compensate) that action is taken. As Peter Hubbard put it, ‘a form of love is a really clear appraisal.’ This was found to be a particular challenge, since Christian organisations have tended to be characterised by a ‘nice but vague’ approach to performance management, fearful perhaps of treating staff



as commodities. Where it has been necessary to challenge misconduct or poor performance, our firms have tried to be robust in the challenge whilst understanding of circumstances, clear and transparent in proposed remedies and ready to offer a second chance. Where it has become apparent that a member of staff is no longer suited to a role, for whatever reason, Traidcraft has put time and resources in counselling and retraining that person to find alternative employment.

A sense of intrinsic worth in the work itself must be connected to a set of values that go beyond these.

Taking a lead from Frederick Herzberg's classic two-factor (or motivation-hygiene) theory of staff behaviour, many of the aspects of the relationship with staff examined thus far could be classified as 'hygiene factors': things the absence of which creates dissatisfaction, but the presence of which does not necessarily provide *motivation*. The motivating factors that Herzberg identified might well include the kind of consensual decision-making and recognition of effort that we have encountered, but it may be argued that a sense of intrinsic worth in the work itself must be connected to a set of values that go beyond these. At this point, we must turn to the degree to which a firm's values are adopted by its staff.

## Communicating the values to staff

We have noted that most of our businesses have over time come to a point where a set of core values, governing the way in which business is conducted, have been explicitly articulated. By and large, a means has also been found to bind the owners of the business to those values, such that conflict between the values and profit maximisation can be avoided. How, then, have those values been taken from written documents and instilled in the company as a whole? Since the culture of a company is little more than the sum of the collective memory and individual behaviours of its workforce, how do staff come to act in line with the values?

Organizational Culture models (current in the secular disciplines of management and human resource management) suggest that the typical routines, policies and practices of organisational life, and the types of relationship these engender can be viewed as outward expressions of deeper underlying values and beliefs.<sup>23</sup> Edgar Schein defined organizational culture as 'a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned...that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel'.<sup>24</sup>

The concept of organizational culture has persisted in business and management life because it offers a framework for setting a sense of direction and purpose, and influencing behaviour. Research has shown that senior business leaders and employees in the UK think it important that organisations have defined values which govern behaviour.<sup>25</sup> Not only that: senior management is seen as capable of intervening to create, modify and sustain a particular type of culture, rather than being obliged to accept the culture that already exists. The mechanisms for such intervention amongst staff are understood to include recruitment and selection, induction, training, performance management and employee engagement and involvement activities.

Culture, however, is not static, but can be affected by internal and external events, and values and purpose can become diluted over time. The triggers can be a series of small, almost imperceptible shifts, or larger and more obvious challenges, perhaps associated with rapid growth in size, or other organisational and operational change. As we shall see, the experience of our firms confirms the emphasis within this body of theory that constant reinvestment is needed to maintain the desired culture.

It has become something of a commonplace in the secular business world that firms should ‘hire for attitude, train for skill’; businesses that wish to work in a different way to their industry should pay particular attention to the degree to which candidates are in sympathy with the company values, and should worry less about specific competences, which can be acquired through training.<sup>26</sup> For a business which is already under pressure, however, the initial investment of time, energy and resources in training a new recruit may be too much to contemplate, leading them to prefer to recruit someone with the exact skills needed to start work immediately, even if the longer-term fit is less than ideal.

It's vitally important to place the company values in the forefront of the recruitment process.

By contrast, several of our interviewees stressed the vital importance of placing the company values in the forefront of the recruitment process: another means of stressing commonality in the employer-staff relationship. Simon Lawson made explicit mention of recruiting for attitude and not so much for skills. According to the website, all the staff at Paint Pots ‘have been carefully chosen for their ability, dedication and love of children, in addition to their qualifications.’ Anthony Collins Solicitors titled a recent recruitment brochure *Think law firms should not just be money-driven? Take a seat*. The brochure stresses the values of the firm from beginning to end, and is designed to attract prospective trainee

solicitors 'who are inspired by our values and who are motivated by our vision, working with our clients to positively influence the society and communities we are building together.' It is in return for commitment to the purpose and values of the company that new recruits can expect the kind of working life on offer.

Once a new recruit is in post, almost all firms use some form of induction training, and some of our interviewees have built training in the values into that process. In the case of Cygnet Group, all new recruits, whatever their seniority, spend an hour one-to-one with Matthew Kimpton-Smith, during which he lays out the values of the group, and his own Christian faith from which they are derived. It is particularly crucial that the values of the company

Values were learned 'on the job', through the example of colleagues and managers: 'caught rather than taught.'

are made clear at the very beginning, to avoid the importation of less helpful attitudes and learned behaviours from a new employee's previous experience. In order to explain this valuable lesson, learned during a period of rapid expansion, Matthew uses the analogy of a house with cream-coloured carpets. Unless every new arrival to a party understands that

they must take off their shoes at the door, the result is a house of dirty carpets, which are then particularly difficult to clean while the party continues.

After that, a challenge remains: to reinforce continually those values in staff, such that the values are not relegated to a set of presentation slides in a file. In more than one of our firms, values were learned 'on the job', through the example of colleagues and managers: 'caught rather than taught.' This kind of visible demonstration of values is perhaps a side-effect of the regular work that David Wright and Anna Wright both elect to do in their own settings alongside their staff, mentioned above. This is also supplemented with an intentional foregrounding of the values in regular communication from management to staff. The 'values lunches' at Simon Lawson's home are a means by which Simon can communicate something of the values, away from specific tasks and the work environment. Anthony Collins Solicitors build their annual review of business around how the work of the year has contributed towards the firm's vision and been consonant with the values, going beyond a bare presentation of financial results and the setting of new targets for the year following. The firm also has a blog written by the senior partner, in which content specifically concerned with the firm's purpose is published, alongside material more in the character of reportage. In each of these cases, there is required a continual reinvestment of resources in the perpetuation of the values, above and beyond recruitment and induction.

Perhaps the most fully developed example of intentional investment in regular reflection on values is currently being implemented at Cygnet Group. This is partly borne of a consciousness that, as the business grows, it becomes more and more necessary to have some means of measuring or auditing the performance of the firm in relation to its values. To this end, the directors meet in smaller groups on a regular basis to reflect personally on their own work and its alignment with the values, and a similar scheme is to be implemented throughout the firm. Anthony Collins Solicitors has also recently completed their own review of the 2005 Principles and adopted a new purpose, values and goal statement, a process which included a thorough assessment of the evolution of the work supporting the Principles across the organisation.

A continual reinvestment of resources in the perpetuation of the values is required.

Modern corporate culture is not distinguished by its reverence for history. Indeed, a focus on development and future profit growth combined with the natural turnover of staff often results in a kind of corporate amnesia, unless a continuous investment is made in sustaining the memory of the firm. The communication of the story of a firm and its values may be a powerful method of preserving and fostering those values, and was one of the recommendations of an unpublished 2001 study by Larry Reed for Opportunity International. Two of the firms studied here have published official histories. That for Anthony Collins Solicitors was made for the thirtieth anniversary of the firm in 2003, and runs to a few short pages. The history of C. Hoare & Co., covering as it does more than three centuries, is a rather more substantial volume. Both of these two histories give prominence to the values of the firm. For Alexander Hoare 'Henry the Good set the tone' and the name of this pivotal partner from the early eighteenth century still stands for something within the collective consciousness of the firm. The story of the business and the difficult personal circumstances in which Anna Wright and David Wright found their calling to the care of children is a key part of the induction for new staff at Paint Pots.<sup>27</sup> This matches very closely the stress placed by theories of organisational culture on the need for story-telling, and the intentional use of the narrative of the firm as a means of influencing culture.

Such an understanding may also be communicated, both to staff and clients, by the physical environment. History is very present for the first-time visitor to the offices of C. Hoare & Co. in Fleet Street, from the presence of a company museum within the building, to the corridor lined with historic ledger books. The sharing of physical space may also be used to communicate the current

understanding of values. Both David Ball Group and Paint Pots allow local community groups to use spaces in company buildings, an expression of the commonality of interests of the firm with its neighbours.

To what extent did these firms have a culture of corporate prayer? In this, the picture was mixed. One of the first actions of Matthew Kimpton-Smith was to introduce prayer at the beginning of board meetings, as a signal of the change of culture that he intended to introduce, and of the true ownership of the business. In its very early days Traidcraft had included both worship and prayer in its general staff meeting, but over time this element of compulsion was felt to be inappropriate for non-Christians. By 1986 there was both a weekly

The partners use the time to review how they are contributing to society.

worship meeting, which took place in work time, and a separate prayer group, at both of which attendance was optional for staff who do not profess a faith themselves.<sup>28</sup> A regular prayer meeting still takes place today. At Anthony Collins Solicitors prayer has been a

regular feature of meetings both of the partnership and for some staff from the outset, although the partners now use the time to review how they are contributing to society through stories as the faith profile of the partners has widened. The current weekly prayer meeting run by a small group of staff is in part guided by the results of a weekly email soliciting requests for prayer, which is symbolic of the values of the firm. In other cases, there has not been any tradition of corporate prayer, although our business leaders evidently pray assiduously in private. In one case, there was openness to a staff prayer group, but also a keenness that it be set up and led by the staff, rather than by the chief executive, in case staff were to attend for the wrong motives.

## Relationship 3: customers and clients

In relation to customers and clients, the distinctiveness of our Christian businesses from the commercial world in general becomes least marked. While many makers of goods and services concentrate on producing the cheapest possible product for price-sensitive consumers, at least as many compete not so much on price but on quality of both product and service, as do the majority of the firms interviewed. What differences there are tend to be in the manner in which the motivations are articulated.

Two aspects of this relationship often appear together, particularly so in service

businesses: quality (or excellence) in a product or service, and service (being the manner in which that product or service is delivered). In the case of David Ball Group, a business that manufactures specialist sands and cementitious products, the quality of the product is one of the three key values that the company espouses. This was in part due to the early history of the business, in which its first product was a specialist sand which acted as a reference material for the whole industry: the sand was of an exactly uniform quality, or it was nothing. In the case of Anthony Collins Solicitors the issue is the quality of the advice that the business gives; the firm focusses on providing informed, articulate and relevant advice that is in the best interest of the client even if that may not be to the advantage of the organisation. The reputation of the firm for doing this is fundamental, and the memory of even a mediocre job can persist amongst clients. There is an element in Christian theologies of work that highlights the making of an excellent thing as both an act of worship and as a reflection of the nature of God as creator, drawing on Biblical episodes such as the making of the tabernacle in the book of Exodus.<sup>29</sup> However, this particular understanding was rarely evident amongst our interviewees as part of their articulation of their work. To produce work of the highest quality seems simply to be self-evidently good business sense.

Personal contact with customers and clients represents a clear focus on relational directness.

Several of our interviewees reported a particular focus on personal contact with customers and clients: a clear focus on relational directness. In the case of Lawsons, the business is such that the firm is in competition with others to sell mostly identical products, and against larger players who are always able to offer a lower price. As such, Lawsons strives to make the quality of their service to the customer in the branch the key distinguishing feature. The firm publishes a Trading Charter, in the first point of which Lawsons undertakes to 'adopt a personal approach'. The charter sets out certain undertakings that are focussed on the product, but many are also orientated towards the customer themselves, such as promptness on the phone and courtesy at the sales counter. Much of the customer feedback on the site suggests that the strategy has worked.<sup>30</sup> In the case of C. Hoare & Co., the firm operates in a retail environment which Alexander Hoare sees as characterised by a lack of care and personal attention. However, there is nonetheless a segment of the market that values a 'relationship of care' and will pay a premium for such a relationship. For Matthew Kimpton-Smith this relationship is articulated in terms of the Golden Rule of doing as you would be done to; not walking away

from a relationship which is going wrong, and striving to put things right, is only the treatment that one would hope to receive.

In the section on staff, we saw our firms often taking a holistic view of the circumstances of a member of staff, at home and at work, as an expression of Christian love. In the case of Paint Pots, a similar focus can be seen in relation to the customer – in this case, the child and their family. Paint Pots staff are often involved in supporting families under pressure in many small ways that go beyond childcare: providing advice on care at home, on the complex official systems with which parents must interact, and on finding help in a crisis.

Our interviewees focus on the continuity of relationship with customers and clients.

The image used by Paint Pots is an extended family, of the love of Christ being expressed in practical ways, of bringing the Kingdom of God on earth. In relational terms, here are relationships of unusual multiplexity.

Our interviewees also tended to focus on the continuity of relationship with customers and clients. In some industries, such as that in which David Ball Group operates, this tends to be the norm in any case. It is relatively difficult to gain a new customer since the industry is conservative and tends to resist change. However, once a customer is won, the relationship tends to be a long one, and the firm as a consequence must work at looking after the customer. There are varying ways of fostering such a long-term relationship. At David Ball Group, this is done by regular survey work and interviews to gauge satisfaction and gather feedback. (That feedback has on occasion led to renewed innovation in the products themselves.) C. Hoare & Co. brings customers together with staff on occasions, perhaps around a fundraising event for a supported charity: an example of directness and multiplexity in relationships which also tends towards continuity. Sometimes the language used is important, and intentional; at Hoare's, the language is of a customer *joining* the bank.

## Relationship 4: suppliers

In the cases of both Traidcraft and Schluter, it may be said that the very purpose of the business was to change the nature of the supply chain in their industry for the better. Traidcraft was formed as a result of a realisation by the founder Richard Adams in the late 1960s that aid to developing countries was unlikely in its own right to be enough to alleviate the shocking levels of poverty in

those countries. Instead of extracting the maximum value from trade with the poorest and then handing back a portion as charity, the structure of trade itself needed to change. 'Our help must come not from what we have left over after we have provided for our needs and fancies but through the very process of providing for ourselves.'<sup>31</sup> Phil Schluter expressed the priorities of the firm in a similar way: to divide the significant profit margin between the commodity price of coffee in Africa and the selling price in the west to leave a greater share of the value in the hands of the producers: a voluntary relinquishing of market power. The vision of the firm is firstly 'to transform lives in Africa through mutually profitable commerce.'<sup>32</sup> If the majority of businesses have a vision focussed on their customers, and Lawsons on its staff, then Traidcraft and Schluter are oriented primarily towards the restoration of greater parity and commonality in the supply chain.

As well as the payment of a fair price for goods, both Traidcraft and Schluter also plough staff time and resources into other projects to help their suppliers and also the communities in which they work. In the case of Schluter, a proportion of profits are given to charitable projects located in the same areas as their suppliers, although they are careful to ensure that supplier and charity are not directly linked. This is in order that the aid cannot be construed simply as a means of 'greasing the supply-chain'. In the case of Traidcraft, the projects supported by the charitable arm of the organisation are more oriented to technical training for suppliers, developing local organisations and their access to markets, reducing the need for child labour, reducing environmental impact and improving the position of women. However, a similar visible separation is maintained by the fact that the PLC does not directly fund the charity, and also by ensuring that no supplier that has been thus helped is subsequently required to supply Traidcraft. Although this is sometimes difficult to understand for those in the industry but outside the firm, the work that Traidcraft's charity does is expressly not intended to create captive suppliers.

Not all the firms interviewed here had this kind of relationship with suppliers, but many were nonetheless very concerned to develop and maintain continuity in relationships. Several make a point of settling invoices on or ahead of time – indeed, in the case of Paint Pots, invoices are paid immediately. C. Hoare & Co. outsource some of their IT provision to an overseas firm, which sends staff to London to work on site for extended periods of time. These staff are treated so well that the supplier firm says that C. Hoare & Co. are their favourite client. A 2013 promotional video on YouTube shows the directness of the relationship between Lawsons and the firm which supplies and maintains their fleet of trucks. Characterised by continuity and closeness of communication, it was



a 'perfect partnership'.<sup>33</sup> Rather than giving hospitality to customers, as many firms do, Schluter & Co. hold an annual dinner for their suppliers.

This kind of relational approach has on occasion extended to the ending of a relationship, such as in one case where the quality of goods supplied to one of our interviewees fell below the necessary level. Rather than immediately ending the relationship with a small supplier and pursuing the maximum level of compensation, Traidcraft instead took time to help the supplier to find an alternative market for its goods. Anthony Collins Solicitors now assesses labour relations amongst its suppliers as part of the procurement process, looking at factors such as the payment of the Living Wage and delivery of 'social value'.

## Relationship 5: neighbours

No business, even one that exists solely in an online environment, is without neighbours: others who share physical space with its operations, or who are otherwise affected by those operations whilst being neither customer nor supplier nor member of staff. By and large our interviewees were readily disposed to think of these relationships in terms of neighbourliness. Both of our interviewees based in city centre offices hold annual Christmas carol

No business, even one that exists solely in an online environment, is without neighbours.

services to which neighbouring organisations are invited. Others, with the kind of business that might prove more disturbing, have gone to great lengths to avoid any issues. In Lawsons' depots, there is frequent movement of vehicles lifting heavy goods on and off trucks, and they have taken measures such as adopting quieter electric forklifts, and acoustic

fences to avoid noise disturbance, and are also planning to attain the highest standard of safety certification for their fleet of delivery trucks. Paint Pots encourage both their staff and parents to cycle or walk to work, to lessen the traffic around their settings in the mornings and evenings.

To support neighbours slightly further away, some companies have made efforts to sponsor local charities, help publicise local good causes, and share facilities (as noted above). David Wright chairs a local multi-agency forum on childcare issues, and Paint Pots has regularly welcomed medical students, prospective foster parents and young people on work experience. Some of

the smaller firms interviewed did not have cultures of internships, due to their size, but some did: Simon Lawson sees internships as a way of 'giving kids a chance in a confusing world'. Some had offered matched-day schemes to encourage staff to do voluntary work, although the take-up had been low. We already noted the commitment of some of the firms to education and training, which can be understood both as part of the relationship with staff but also with the local communities from which they are drawn.

Sometimes that concern for the neighbour extends to national and indeed international issues. One of the partners of Anthony Collins Solicitors, Mark Cook, was joint author of a 2002 study from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on the best means of achieving public benefit for communities through procurement of contracts.<sup>34</sup> Another partner has led lobbying of government in relation to legal aid funding. The charitable arm of Traidcraft campaigns regularly in the area of trade and international development, and is periodically called upon to advise the government precisely because it is linked to a business and not simply another development NGO.

The final area of concern for neighbour is that of direct financial giving. This took several forms, but was a common feature of our businesses. Anthony Collins Solicitors set up and funded the Nehemiah Foundation, promoting understanding between different faiths in several communities across the country. The Golden Bottle Trust is the charitable arm of C. Hoare & Co., set up in 1985 to formalise the more *ad hoc* giving that had happened previously. It supports various charities and in addition holds some of its capital in the form of social investments. The Trust also matches giving from staff, a similar arrangement to that in place at Lawsons, where individual branches are given a charity budget to support local causes. In some cases the proportion of profits given away is around 10%, giving the appearance of corporate tithing (although it is not often described as such.) In at least one case, that of Schluter, the figure of 10% is disclosed publicly.

In each of these cases, it is very clearly the legal person of the firm that is the giver. This contrasts with the model associated with historic names such as Rockefeller and Mellon, and more recently with Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, or (in the UK) Brian Souter of Stagecoach, where very generous giving is on the part of the owner or owners of very successful businesses.<sup>35</sup> One interviewee, who took the latter approach, thought that the kind of direct corporate giving described above would have been difficult to achieve where the ownership (if not control) of the company was more dispersed.

## Relationship 6: the environment

Within a relational framework, the environment, although being without personality, may meaningfully be spoken of as a stakeholder for businesses, if only as a pooling of the individual interests of every living thing on the planet. The past decade has seen awareness of issues of environmental impact penetrate public consciousness very substantially, and that of the business world as well. This is so much the case, in fact, that conspicuous engagement with the issues has become a necessary part of a very great many brand images and, conversely, bad behaviour can have very serious negative effects.

In one particular case, that of David Bull Group, there has been a happy coincidence between environmental concern on ethical grounds and the brand of the business. The group is known as a champion of sustainable development, having recently developed a low-carbon alternative to traditional cement, one of the largest single sources of carbon dioxide emissions. However, all our interviewed businesses had engaged seriously and sacrificially with environmental issues. Lawsons, for instance, has gained

All our interviewed businesses engaged seriously and sacrificially with environmental issues.

sustainability accreditation for its timber supply and is looking into the use of hybrid lorries in its delivery fleet. Traidcraft, an international trading business that necessitates a good deal of travel, adopted an environmental policy in 2005, and more recently has begun to include environmental criteria in its annual social

accounts. C. Hoare & Co. set and hit a target of a 20% reduction in carbon emissions, and is investigating the adoption of the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment in relation to the use of its capital.

All this having been said, it was not clear from the interviews that these Christian companies had engaged with the environmental agenda very much sooner than many other companies, or to a greater extent. Although it is articulated in different terms – of stewardship of creation, as opposed to a more self-interested focus on human survival – it would be hard to argue that environmental awareness is a particularly distinctive feature of these firms.

# Epilogue

Towards the end of the interviews, a particular question was asked: in the history of the business, had there been particular points in time where difficult, costly decisions had had to be made to stay in line with the values? Somewhat to our surprise, the examples of these were very few. Some were stories of growth and profit voluntarily foregone. One firm had considered and eventually passed up an opportunity to acquire another business, thus growing the firm and its profits, because of the likely difficulties in integrating the new business and (crucially) in infusing the new business with the company culture.

More common were stories of choices made in times of difficulty. We have already noted the actions of Lawsons in voluntarily taking responsibility for the liabilities of the bankrupt firm in 1993. In the case of Traidcraft the last four years, in which the PLC has posted a loss each year, have inevitably placed some of the principles under pressure, since a short-term lift in profitability could be achieved by altering the balance of trade between the firm and its suppliers. At Paint Pots, where profit margins have recently been under pressure, an easy option that has not been taken would have been to close the loss-making setting in the most deprived area of the city, where much good is being done amongst families and the community. However, in these and in the other cases mentioned, interviewees have not hesitated to agree that the values of the business, and the associated practices, cultures and relationships with stakeholders that are based on those values, are too great an asset to jeopardise by short-term actions to boost profitability.

The unanimous sense was that 'doing the right thing' was positively good for business.

To put the point another way: even amongst those interviewees who could not point to similar moments of crisis, the unanimous sense was that 'doing the right thing', looking after customers, staff, suppliers and all the other stakeholders, was not simply a brake on the bottom line, but was positively good for business, making for stronger and more durable firms. In terms of the 'triple bottom lines' (profit, planet, people), there was no necessary conflict between showing a profit in social and environmental terms and performing well in financial terms.

## Summary conclusions and recommendations

The Christian businesses examined here tended to show at least some of the following features, which readers who are either founding or running businesses of their own may wish to consider emulating. Those features were:

(a) a clear conception, most likely in the form of written statements, of the purpose or vision of the business – what positive change it should effect amongst its range of stakeholders. This is unlikely to include (and may positively exclude) the maximisation of profit for distribution to the owners solely for the sake of their enrichment;

Both vision and values may well be articulated in explicitly Christian terms, but by no means necessarily so.

(b) an equally clear statement of the values of the organisation, that guide the way in which the firm does (and does not) do business. Both vision and values may well be articulated in explicitly Christian terms, but by no means necessarily so;

(c) to have achieved an arrangement by which the owners of the firm, be they partners or shareholders, have adopted the values as fundamental to the business and thus of such an authority that they override considerations of increasing profitability for its own sake;

(d) that the leadership of the firm assent to the vision and the values, and understand the importance their own modelling of those values has in shaping organisational culture;

(e) that recruiting staff on the basis of their likely fit with the values is of the first importance, overriding considerations of competence (if those competences are such that can be acquired through training);

(f) that, in order that the values are not eroded over time, they are regularly and explicitly communicated to staff, not only during their induction. Some element of regular audit or self-evaluation may be useful in some cases, to check on the degree to which the values are being successfully lived out;

(g) that interactions with staff are marked by openness in communication, a willingness to consult, a concern for the welfare of the whole person, and high expectations about performance. Staff turnover is often relatively low;

(h) that relationships with customers and clients are marked by a focus on quality of product and of service, a stress on the personal, and an aim of directness, continuity and multiplexity;

(i) that relationships with suppliers are marked again by continuity, a stress on directness and personal contact, and a scrupulous pursuit of fairness, most prominently in relation to a fair price and payment terms;

(j) that some form of charitable giving is practised, either from within the firm or on the part of the owners;

(k) that they act in a neighbourly way in their local communities, in relation to physical impacts such as noise and traffic, as well as taking a lead in promoting face-to-face contact in community events, and contribute by means of other non-financial assistance to local causes;

(l) that they tend to be well engaged with issues relating to stewardship of the environment, although this may not be described as a particular Christian distinctive;

(m) in terms of the 'triple bottom line', there is a readiness to take difficult decisions to keep in line with company values at a short-term financial cost, which in the longer term almost always proves profitable. Doing the right thing is good for business.

## Future research

In the earlier section on research method, we noted the relatively small size of the sample used in this study, and the provisional nature of our conclusions as a result. A useful additional research project might be to extend the same method of enquiry to a larger sample of companies.

That said, a particular lesson learned in the course of the project was the simple difficulty of identifying candidate businesses to interview. There are in fact many businesses that were established with a Christian ethos, but many fewer that passed the second test for inclusion: that is, to have reached a sufficient size and age that the issues of resilience of culture (with which

Research into Christian businesses that failed would provide an alternative angle from which to view resilience.

this study is most concerned) presented themselves. In addition, these firms do not often lead their communications with the fact of their Christian ethos. Some are explicit about the fact, others less so, although it may be inferred from the language in which company values are framed. As such, the 'long list' which the project team were able to

assemble from existing knowledge had on it only sixteen names. Any larger project would need to have a significant research component at the beginning, simply to identify the larger sample of companies that such a study would require.

A follow-on project could also usefully seek to take into account the views of all the stakeholders of a business, including staff, customers, suppliers and others, and not simply those of owners and senior management. Although not necessarily a comfortable experience, this kind of '360 degree appraisal' for firms might unlock significant new insights, both for the firms themselves and for a wider audience.

In the Epilogue above, we noted that our interviewees had had surprisingly few crises: points at which hard and indeed existential choices had to be made between holding to values and profitability. This may in part be due to the fact that, by its nature, our study has privileged the stories of those businesses that have survived to tell the tale. Were it possible to identify them, research into Christian businesses that failed would provide an alternative angle from which to view resilience.

## Select bibliography

- Adams, Richard: *Who Profits? A revealing case-study in successful trading with developing countries* (Oxford, Lion, 1989)
- Cadbury, Deborah: *Chocolate Wars. From Cadbury to Kraft: 200 years of sweet success and bitter rivalry* (London, HarperPress, 2010)
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development: *Keeping culture, purpose and values at the heart of your SME*. (London, CIPD, 2014)
- Schluter, Michael: 'Risk, reward and responsibility: limited liability and company reform', *Cambridge Papers* 9:2 (2000)
- Dorling, Danny: *Inequality and the 1%* (London, Verso, 2015)
- Higginson, Richard and David Clough: *The ethics of executive pay: a Christian viewpoint* (Cambridge, Grove Books, 2010)
- Hutchings, Victoria: *Messrs Hoare, Bankers. A history of the Hoare banking dynasty* (London, Constable, 1995)
- Johnson, Peter and Chris Sugden (eds): *Markets, Fair Trade and the Kingdom of God. Essays to celebrate Traidcraft's 21st birthday* (Oxford, Regnum, 2001)
- Rushworth, Jonathan and Michael Schluter: *Transforming Capitalism from within: a relational approach to the purpose, performance and assessment of companies* (Cambridge, Relational Research, 2013)
- Schein, E.H.: 'Coming to a new awareness of Organisational Culture', *Sloan Management Review*. 25:2 (1984)
- Schein, E.H.: *Organisational Culture and Leadership* (2nd edition, San Francisco, Jossey Bass, 1992)
- Schluter, Michael and David Lee: *The R Factor* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1993)



## Endnotes

- 9 For more information about this approach and methodology, see [www.jubilee-centre.org/introducing-the-relational-proximity-framework/](http://www.jubilee-centre.org/introducing-the-relational-proximity-framework/)
- 10 'In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets' (Matt 7:12, NIV). See also Luke 6:31.
- 11 See, for instance, Deborah Cadbury, *Chocolate Wars. From Cadbury to Kraft: 200 years of sweet success and bitter rivalry*, London: HarperPress, 2010, ch.19.
- 12 The Principles are given in full in Appendix 2.
- 13 One other had previously been publicly listed, but made the transition back to private limited status.
- 14 Richard Adams, *Who Profits? A revealing case study in successful trading with developing countries*, Oxford: Lion, 1989, p.119.
- 15 Michael Schluter, 'Risk, reward and responsibility: limited liability and company reform', *Cambridge Papers* 9:2 (2000)
- 16 See also the interview with Alexander Hoare in *Faith and Business Quarterly* 17:1, pp.22-3.
- 17 Danny Dorling, *Inequality and the 1%*, London: Verso, 2015, pp.11-13 and *passim*; see also Richard Higginson and David Clough, *The ethics of executive pay: a Christian viewpoint*, Cambridge: Grove Books, 2010, p.7.
- 18 Adams, *Who Profits?*, p.58.
- 19 See John 13: 1-20.
- 20 'Young banker struggled with quitting Goldman before death', *Bloomberg Business*, 2 June 2015, at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-06-02/young-banker-struggled-with-quitting-goldman-weeks-before-death>
- 21 Yvonne Dare, 'Traidcraft and its staff', in Peter Johnson and Chris Sugden (eds), *Markets, Fair Trade and the Kingdom of God*, Oxford: Regnum, 2001, pp.90-105, at p.95, 101.
- 22 A Scriptural point of contact is with Paul's injunction to the Ephesian church to 'speaking the truth in love'. (Ephesians 4:15, NIV)
- 23 E.H. Schein, 'Coming to a new awareness of Organisational Culture', *Sloan Management Review*. 25:2 (1984); Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, *Keeping culture, purpose and values at the heart of your SME*, London: CIPD, 2014.
- 24 E.H. Schein, *Organisational Culture and Leadership*, 2nd edition, San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1992, p.12.
- 25 CIPD, *Culture, Purpose and Values, passim*.
- 26 For example, see Bill Taylor, 'Hire for attitude, train for skill', *Harvard Business Review*, 1st Feb 2011, at <https://hbr.org/2011/02/hire-for-attitude-train-for-sk>
- 27 When considering the Church, a similar corporate reiteration of the 'story' is modelled by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. In a sense, the structure of the

liturgical year, with its annual retelling of the Christmas and Easter narratives, is a form of the same kind of communal and mutual recollection of the history of the corporate body, the Church.

- 28 Adams, *Who Profits?*, p.161.
- 29 See the skill of Bezalel and Oholiab, Exodus 35:30-36:1. A similar reading is possible of the motives of medieval craftsmen in making ornate carvings high among the vaults and high windows in cathedrals, even though they are rarely if ever seen by human eyes.
- 30 Customer Charter at <https://www.lawsons.co.uk/page/corporate/trading-charter.aspx> , customer feedback at <https://www.lawsons.co.uk/page/information/customer-feedback.aspx>, accessed 5 January 2016.
- 31 Adams, *Who Profits?*, p.29.
- 32 <http://www.schluter.ch/about/>, accessed 4 January 2016.
- 33 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQ81dqWdi2M> , accessed 4 January 2016.
- 34 Richard Macfarlane and Mark Cook, *Achieving community benefits through contracts*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2002.
- 35 Christian Wolmar, *Stagecoach. A classic rags-to-riches tale from the frontiers of capitalism*, London: Orion, 1998, pp.222.

# Appendix 1

## A reflection on the report from a relational standpoint

The following summary comments are made from the above analysis of the report using the Relational Proximity® Framework<sup>1</sup>.

### **Directness**

The eight companies understand the importance of clear and frequent communication in building strong relationships, particularly with staff, but also with clients. They each use carefully honed texts and frequent verbal communication to reinforce their core values. Also notable is the value placed on senior leaders undertaking this communication personally and being both visible and accessible. A number of the leaders cite examples of how they go out of their way to be face to face with key individuals and smaller groups so that communication is unhindered. These leaders also display a high degree of openness by placing themselves in peer review groups and/or by inviting representation of staff and independents on boards.

### **Continuity**

The vision for each business tends to be for the long term. Factors which influence this are: a sense of God's ownership; a strong sense of company history, often written down; links to a particular family (or group) that acts as a values holder; a sense of responsibility to the wider community and stakeholders. Long-term relationships with suppliers and staff also seem to be pro-actively sought. The long-term view is influential in defining the atmosphere and behaviours within these organisations.

### **Multiplexity**

The openness of leaders seems to be paralleled by the openness of the company to scrutiny. Making value statements public allows accountability and challenge. There seems to be general agreement that workplace relationships,

---

1 For more information about this approach and methodology, see page 9-12 and [www.jubilee-centre.org/introducing-the-relational-proximity-framework/](http://www.jubilee-centre.org/introducing-the-relational-proximity-framework/)

and therefore the business, benefit from understanding the bigger picture about staff, clients and other stakeholders. There are clearly limits on how much of the picture can be processed at a macro level, but at a team and individual level broader understanding and disclosure is encouraged.

### **Parity**

There is significant evidence of high Parity within these organisations. The invariably strong principled direction given by the individual or family leader might manifest itself in an unhealthy level of control. However it is noted that each organisation puts in place structural measures to ensure that 'paternalistic' may be used as a positive, rather than a negative descriptor. The leaders make themselves subject to the scrutiny of independent outsiders, peers and staff. Means of engagement with suppliers and clients are *designed* to enable greater parity. Staff training and development is given with a spirit of open-handedness.

### **Commonality**

The most active driver seems to be Commonality. The eight businesses understand the importance of aligning objectives and valuing the different contributions of each stakeholder. Leaders spend considerable time engaging with their staff, clients and suppliers to build a sense of shared purpose around the organisation. The definition of purpose as going beyond self-interest is common and its practical outworking is seen to go much further than the leader's rhetoric: narrow pay differentials, structures to avoid overworking, leaders making themselves available to a wide variety of stakeholders so that they can be influenced in the building of shared purpose.

## Appendix 2

# Statements of mission, values and principles

This appendix contains a selection of statements of mission, purpose, values or principles made by the businesses under examination. Unless otherwise stated, these were taken from company websites during February and March 2016.

### Anthony Collins Solicitors

Anthony Collins Solicitors adopted a set of statements of culture, values and principles in 2005, on which much of the analysis in the report was based. These were superseded in 2016 by a new statement of purpose and values. Both are included here.

#### **The ACS Vision: purpose and values (2016)<sup>2</sup>**

##### **Our Purpose**

The purpose of Anthony Collins Solicitors is to improve lives, communities and society.

##### **Our Values**

###### *Purpose Driven*

We share a passion and vocation to make a difference in the world. We are purpose driven not profit driven and work with clients who share our purpose.

Profit is a means not an end. We seek to make sufficient profit for us to invest in the growth of the business to further our purpose, and to ensure that partners and staff are rewarded appropriately and fairly.

---

2 At the time of writing, the new purpose and values were not yet published.

### *Show Respect*

Role and status are irrelevant to the way we engage with people. Each individual has potential and a unique contribution to make to the success of the firm.

Our success or failure is an inclusive endeavour in which everyone's contribution is valued; where we all have the humility to know that we cannot do things on our own.

### *Build Relationships*

We show care and concern for each other, this is a place where people are able to be themselves.

We encourage people to reach their full potential, in an environment of trust where people can give of their best.

Work for clients is always more than a transaction, we focus on the development of long term client relationships where we can be part of clients' success over time.

### *Demonstrate Integrity*

We do the right thing, even where this may not be to our advantage.

We always put clients first. When we commit to something we deliver. We act with consistency and fairness.

We are honest with ourselves and our clients and work hard to ensure that our treatment of staff and situations matches our values.

### *Deliver Excellence*

Excellence and innovation are important to us so that we can deliver the most relevant solution for our clients. Our insight into clients' reality and goals enables us to do a better job of meeting their needs.

We develop wisdom in our people so that we can challenge ourselves to provide new solutions to difficult problems.

## **Culture and values (2005)**

At Anthony Collins Solicitors, we aspire to:

- make a proactive difference in society and within local communities, seeking to significantly contribute to social justice;
- encourage our staff to flourish, building a culture of trust, honesty, and genuine equality of opportunity;

- reflect carefully on what we do and why we do it, seeking to operate a sustainable business, providing the services our clients need, rewarding all our people fairly, and establishing a sufficiently strong financial base to make all of this possible.

We recognise that many choose to work here not only to build a career but also to further and contribute to specific social and spiritual goals, both in what they do and the way they do it.

## **Principles (2005)**

The aim of the LLP shall be to serve the community, conduct the affairs of the business and to practise law in accordance with the following principles:

- that we will continue to act with diligence, integrity and concern towards each other, clients and members of staff and that a reasonable proportion of the work of the LLP shall be directed towards the promotion of justice and the granting of assistance to disadvantaged members of society;
- that we take time to examine and know what we do and why we do it;
- that we operate within a sustainable framework to ensure our clients receive the services they need, Members (the Partners) and staff are rewarded fairly for the contributions they make and our financial base is as strong as it needs to be to make this possible;
- that the maximisation of profit for distribution to the Members (the Partners) is not an objective of the Business and we seek to make only enough profit to ensure that Members (the Partners) and staff are each rewarded appropriately and fairly and that the Business is sustainable;
- that we recognise that many choose to work here not only to have a good job and build their career, but also to further and contribute to specific social and spiritual goals both in what they do and the way they do it;
- that we aim to make a proactive difference in society and within local communities;
- that we are a resource significantly contributing to the achievement of social justice;

- that we are a resource significantly contributing to the Christian church and Christian community;
- that we encourage people to flourish and follow their vocation;
- that we nurture a work-life blend which fits within the parameters of operating a sustainable business and ensuring our clients' needs are met;
- that we aim to operate in such a way that our treatment of staff and situations should evidence a concern for: loving others as ourselves - valuing and respecting others whilst acknowledging our own failings; encouraging and nurturing a culture of high trust; giving people the benefit of the doubt (where appropriate); providing opportunities, where viable, to put things right and for a fresh start;
- that we do not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of age, race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief or any other ground on which people may be treated less favourably than others.

## Cygnets Group

### Mission and values

With a strong Christian ethos at its heart, Cygnets Group aims to integrate itself as a key element in its employees' lives and aims each day to live by a clear set of values. While recognising that we often fall short, our aim is to constantly strive to be better at what we do and how we live, making Cygnets a more enjoyable place to work and a trustworthy and motivated group of people to do business with.

We strive to build long-term relationships with customers, suppliers and employees, and are committed to empowering our people and enabling them to reach their full potential.

Our mission is *"Empowering our people to deliver engineering excellence"* and the values we attempt to live by daily are:

- Treating others as we wish to be treated ourselves.
- Actively listening to each other.
- Working as a team where every success is a team success.



- Having the utmost respect for all the people we work with.
- Being honest and open in all our dealings.

[ <http://cygnet-group.org/about-us/> ]

## C. Hoare and Co.

### **Our philosophy**

*Treating others as we would wish to be treated*

Our culture is to operate ethically and with integrity in the marketplace. We are proud of our record in many areas, including employment policies, the community, philanthropy, the environment and business policies.

### **Our values**

*Empathy:* we build relationships based on trust and care for others.

*Socially Responsible:* we do our best to look after our community and the world around us.

*Honesty:* we tell the truth, communicate clearly and deliver on our promises.

*Excellence:* we seek quality in everything we do and accept accountability.

[ <http://www.hoaresbank.co.uk/our-philosophy> ]

## Lawsons

‘Our guiding principle is to have regard for people, whether that be staff, customers or suppliers, because they are the driving force of every business’

[ <https://www.lawsons.co.uk/page/information/about-us.aspx> ]

### **The Lawsons Family Mission<sup>3</sup>**

Lawsons’ vision (and without a vision business will perish) is to make work as interesting and satisfying as possible.

---

3 From an internal company document, dated 2011.

## The Lawson Family Values

- Job Security and honesty
- Empowerment and delegation
- Training
- ‘A sense of belonging’
- Good working conditions
- Fit for purpose equipment
- A fair package
- Job rotation and promotion prospects
- Sponsored events – family day, children’s Christmas party
- Improved communication – A new newsletter
- Give something back to the community

## Paint Pots Nurseries

Paint Pots has a loving and homely environment, which is safe, secure and stimulating. The emotional, social and physical development of all the children in our care is our primary concern. We ensure equality of opportunity for all children. We promote self-respect and a respectful, caring attitude towards our environment and others.

We treat each child as an individual in terms of his/her needs and learning journey. We have high expectations of each child and work to achieve the best possible outcomes in partnership with parents.

[...] All our staff have been carefully chosen for their ability, dedication and love of children, in addition to their qualifications.

[...] We understand how precious children are. We never take having them for granted and we recognise the enormous responsibility of caring for them as well as the tremendous privilege of being able to share our lives with them. We are grateful that families choose to put their trust in us to care for their children.

[...] As we have grown, we work continuously to ensure each one of our settings – nursery, preschool or after-school provision – retains the homely, caring atmosphere that we believe is the outworking of our motto Love, Laughter and Learning.

[...] Relationships underpin everything we do. The way we live, talk, have fun, respect, trust, value, celebrate, support and encourage each other, creates special relationships that are the life of Paint Pots.

[ <http://www.paintpotsnursery.co.uk/about/> ]

## Schluter

### **Vision**

To transform lives in Africa through commerce in a mutually profitable way. The coffee business will do this by being the most trustworthy buyer and seller of Quality African Coffee in the world market.

### **Core beliefs**

- We believe in the future of Africa
- We believe that African Coffee is the best in the world
- We believe that trust is earned
- We believe that all business must be done in a way that reflects the character of God
- We believe in the value of relationships
- We believe that all business must be done to the benefit of all parties involved

### **Philosophy**

- Schluter is a family business; we have been in Africa since the early days of commercial coffee production.
- We value the principles of tradition, experience, sustained relationship, and cooperation.
- We are enthusiastic about our product, and about the people and regions that produce it and consume it.
- We trade in a socially responsible & ethical manner, providing close links between our buyers & suppliers.

[ <http://www.schluter.ch/about/> ]



# Appendix 3

## Interview questions

1. How and when did the business come into being? What was its original purpose?
2. What were the founding Christian principles of the business, and where and whom did they come from?
3. In the development of these principles over time, have there been significant milestones or turning points?

Questions 4 to 10 focus on particular aspects of how those Christian principles were put into practice.

4. Firstly, did they impact on relationships with the *owners* of the business?
5. How has the business's relationships with *customers and clients* reflected these Christian principles?
6. How have those principles been reflected in the company's dealings with *staff*?
7. How have those principles been reflected in relationships with *suppliers*?
8. What about the *communities* in which the business operates?
9. What about the *environment*?
10. What about *government*? Have those Christian principles had an impact on the business's dealings with local authorities, HMRC, or industry regulators?
11. Looking back at all these different aspects (questions 4-10), have there been occasions where principles have come under pressure – where difficult decisions have had to be taken, or sacrifices made to hold to a principle?
12. Which distinctively Christian working practices and elements of company culture have been easiest to maintain, and which have been more difficult?

13. It is sometimes useful to think in terms of three 'bottom lines' for a company: financial; environmental; and social. How would you say that the choices we've talked about have had an impact on those three 'bottom lines'?
14. What have you learnt that might help other entrepreneurs wishing to create and sustain a distinctively Christian ethos and practice in a company over the long term? How can entrepreneurs and directors build such businesses from the outset?

# About *The Resilient Business*

How do we move from individually living out Christian values at work to embedding a Christian ethos at the heart of our organisations? And how do we make sure that ethos really sticks, especially in times of change and challenge, to create resilient companies?

This report is the fruit of a research project by the Jubilee Centre, together with Faith in Business and LICC (London Institute for Contemporary Christianity). Senior executives from eight companies were interviewed to explore how over time the Christian faith has influenced the companies' goals, values and working practices. The research looks particularly at the role and significance of relationships, in both theory and practice, to the development of resilient companies.

This booklet is written to encourage, inspire and challenge Christian managers and directors. The authors hope to convince readers that the quality of relationships among the diverse stakeholders of a business is crucial to its economic success as well as to achieving its wider purpose or mission.

The intention is that this will bring fresh perspectives on applying Jesus' teaching in the Great Commandment, to love our neighbour as ourselves, in the challenging environment of the competitive business world.

---

*"Businesses operate in a market system that needs to be regulated to provide it with moral direction and constraint. But the painful experience of the last decade underlines that regulation alone is not enough. Change is needed at the heart level that reintroduces a concern for others in the ways we trade, create and share wealth. This study, while clearly limited in scope, illustrates very well how those who carry a relational ethos at the heart of their business will in some measure contribute to the flourishing of all of their stakeholders. Its recommendations should be required reading for those already at the helm or thinking of a start-up."*

**James Featherby**  
**Chair, Church of England Ethical Investment Advisory Group**

**Dr Peter Webster** is founder and managing director of Webster Research and Consulting, which specialises in user research for digital services in the library and archives sector. He is also an historian of contemporary British Christianity; his study of Michael Ramsey, archbishop of Canterbury, was published in 2015.

**Dr Shirley Jenner** works at the University of Manchester's Global Development Institute, teaching and researching in the fields of leadership, human resource management and careers. Shirley is also a Workplace Associate with the LICC supporting churches, organisations and individuals to flourish as they integrate faith and work.