



LANCASTER DIOCESAN

FAITH & JUSTICE CONFERENCE 17 October 2009

WORKSHOP: Labourers and Investors in a Global Vineyard

Is the current economic situation an opportunity to think differently about investment, and about mutual approaches to tackling global poverty?

Lila Watson, an Australian Aboriginal leader said: *“If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”* What might such mutual liberation look like in the context of the current financial situation?

The goal of the workshop is to use our reactions to the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (*Matthew 20: 1-16*) to reflect on the global economy, and consider what is revealed about faith and justice. Some people may appear to have arrived a little later into the global economy. What does the parable teach us about our response to this situation?

The current recession started when lack of access to credit began to impact on enterprise. So the value of credit, particularly business finance has been made more obvious to us all. But access to credit has been a long standing problem for disadvantaged people in the Global South. At the same time, we are inspired to think more closely about what banks do with our investments and savings. There is also a renewed interest in financial concerns such as: usury, lack of transparency, governance and regulation. Can there ever be liberation from such perennial concerns?

There is an opportunity for economic life to be put at the service of people again and be based more on the social teachings of solidarity. Such change will require the development of mutual ways of working together: mutual benefits, mutual costs and mutual understanding of needs. As faith based investors, how can we stand in solidarity with people working their way out of poverty?

The workshop will include a short film from Oikocredit giving examples of microfinance in Nicaragua, Bolivia and Peru. We will explore the mutual links between the labourers and the investors in the global vineyard, and how faith is linked to our investment decisions.

Time: 55 minutes

Maximum number of people: 16

The workshop will be led by Patrick Hynes, UK representative for Oikocredit. Oikocredit is a global financial cooperative that offers loans or investment capital for: microfinance, co-operatives and small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries. Individuals, churches and project members invest in Oikocredit. Patrick has worked in education and social care, with most of his work experience in banking and finance. Patrick is interested in the links between economics and theology.

www.oikocredit.org