

**Christians in Business Collaboration event  
12 October 2010, Liverpool Cathedral**

**Philip Green, Chief Executive, United Utilities plc  
“Responsible Leadership - Business and Personal”**

**Leadership** is the most important factor in determining the success of any organisation (church, country, company...). A definition of leadership from General Tim Cross “Leadership is winning the hearts and minds of people to achieve a common objective.”

Important elements of leadership:

- Vision
- Emotional intelligence (EQ – ref. Daniel Goleman’s book):
  - the ability to communicate,
  - self-awareness,
  - authenticity,
  - empathy...
- Values and using them to set priorities. Philip talked about trying to blend or create overlap in his 5 F’s:
  - Faith
  - Family
  - Fitness/Health
  - Fun
  - Firm/Career



However leadership on its own is not enough it needs to be **responsible** at a corporate, an individual (business) as well as at a personal level.

**Corporate responsibility** is important because:

- of our moral responsibility to be stewards of the planet
- it results in good business
- it helps with recruitment and retention of staff

Embedding responsibility and responsible behaviours into individual staff is a key element of leadership and Philip talked about some of examples where United Utilities had received recognition in this area (e.g. floods in Cumbria...)

On a **personal** level Philip talked about his heart for Africa and the projects he is involved in, including a kindergarten and a community sports centre which will teach life skills, as well as Alpha programmes in Southern African prisons. Other opportunities he has taken included raising money and providing practical help together with his staff from UU.

Some challenges he faces:

1. It is depressingly difficult to talk about your faith inside and outside work. It is important to be a witness but it is hard to get it right: how, where, when. We all need to keep trying.
2. It is hard to fund raise publicly for explicitly Christian charities and usually compromises have to be made (still supporting good causes).
3. A non-challenge so far, regarding the co-existence of, or conflict between, business and faith. There are examples of Christians at the very top of our biggest banks (Stephen Green and John Varley). Business and faith are not inherently inconsistent. There are challenges but the bible makes clear reference to trade...



The **Questions & Answers** session covered a broad range of topics and a selection of issues raised are covered below:

- *Excessive compensation of business leaders*  
This is wider even than a societal issue as the biggest issues are with football players and bankers who are part of global not local/national markets.
- *Partnership model of business e.g. JLP*  
It is a great model. Where a business is already established with large numbers of shareholders it is not easy to move from one model to another.
- *Giving locally vs giving overseas*  
Giving is the important thing. People are passionate about different causes. Businesses need to find a way to share the money they give between local and overseas needs.
- *Accountability for business decisions as a Christian*  
Follow Christian values – compassion, integrity, and truthfulness... Pray about decisions. Talk to mentors including wife but ultimately need to believe the decision I am making is the right one.
- *What would Jesus say to Christians in business if he came back today?*  
Find someone to provide leadership (like a Wilberforce). Need more Christian witness in business and across society. We need stronger leadership to provide a voice in current climate with the new austerity measures and what the church's response should be.
- *How do you keep your faith alive?*  
Work at it, pray several times a day, bible reading...
- *Not taken your "own people" with you when moved from one company to the next*  
Moved across sectors so they might not have had right specialist skills. It sends the wrong message to the new company about what you think about their people.
- *Advice for struggling businesses*  
Tough environment to work through. Minimise costs and be cautious.

You can listen to the whole talk and the Q&A session online:

[www.cabe-online.org/podcasts.php](http://www.cabe-online.org/podcasts.php) or via the other collaboration team websites.

Chris Gibaud concluded the evening by presenting **four questions** for the audience to reflect on as Christians in business...

1. Do we accept that the Biblical model for organising a nation, as expressed in the Mosaic teaching of the first five books of the Old Testament, is still relevant in principle in our modern world, accepting that application needs to be understood in a contemporary context?



2. Why do so many of us still compartmentalise our faith, often leaving it at the office door, along with the Biblical values of behaviour we agree with on Sunday yet somehow forget during the working week?



3. Why do we accept that God can transform our personal lives with supernatural intervention but struggle with accepting the possibility of similar transformation in our businesses and the way that we conduct business?



4. How far am I prepared to go to open my life up to God's scrutiny, perhaps revealing brokenness and vulnerability behind my business image, and allow myself to be accountable to those whom God chooses to place around me?



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