

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY 17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018

Good Morning.

This week the Archbishop of Canterbury will hold a meeting to see if the Church of England can pull together a consortium to buy Wonga and rescue its debtors from loan sharks.

Last week the Archbishop came in for criticism for lambasting Amazon when the Church was found to be one of its shareholders. If Amazon 'leeches off the taxpayer', to quote the Archbishop, then so do all its investors including the church. The Commissioners, who manage the money, insisted on keeping the investments so as 'to stay in the room' but the charge of hypocrisy followed. This came on top of the Archbishop calling for higher taxes the previous week.

Nobody denies that the church should care for the poor. It was Keir Hardie who said that 'the Labour movement had come to resuscitate the Christianity of Christ'. Even religion's fiercest critics value the work done by the church through food banks and credit unions. The world would be a poorer place without them.

The church is very vocal at talking about how we must share our riches, but its voice is not as loud when it comes to creating the wealth.

In thousands of churches there are men and women in business who seldom hear their leaders affirm their calling to be wealth creators.

She continues to be controversial but Margaret Thatcher made a fair point about the Good Samaritan when she said, 'No-one would remember (him) if he'd only had good intentions, he had money as well'.

I once heard that when she was considering some other words of Jesus, “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God .... and all these things shall be added unto you.”, she added drily, “It seems to me that people want all those things added unto them without first seeking the Kingdom!”

In these coming weeks at the party conferences many promises will be made that will have to be paid for either by borrowing or by taxes. From pensions to prisons, from transport to health everybody wants more money. The only alternative to carving up the cake differently is to make a bigger cake. They all depend on wealth creation. How you make it as well as what you do with it are the crucial moral questions.

For people of faith creating wealth out of God’s material world is so that we can bring about – to quote St Paul – “A fair balance between (our) abundance and the needs of others”.

A principle which, no doubt, will be at the forefront of the Archbishop’s thinking when he convenes his meeting about Wonga.

The Right Reverend James Jones KBE

