

**Agenda**

0930 **Welcome**

**Revd Andii Bowsher and Prof Ron Beadle (both Northumbria University)**

1000 **Oceanic Circles: lessons of business and society from ancient Indian scripture**

**Dr Sanjay Bhowmick (Northumbria University)**

The cul-de-sacs of the present approaches to happiness for most people within a new economic religious order of the world forms the background of this paper. It identifies deep changes that might be necessary in enterprise and the law and deeper still in governance and education for collective happiness to emerge for homo economicus today. For this, it explores some concepts of ancient Indian scriptures that have been acknowledged by thinkers around the world as the reservoir of great wisdom that show the path to sat chit anand (pure existence, consciousness and bliss). The paper focuses on the concept of 'oceanic circles' as a polycentric governance approach that existed in India until recent times. It explains some conceptual constructs from the scriptures, of individual conception of life and community, that dovetail with this approach and reach beyond in harmonising life with nature and existence itself where the individual acts to attain bliss having contributed to a life of worldly communal harmony. It reiterates that Indian scriptures could offer a goal to harmonise societal and individual arrangements of life and the deep transformations needed for it.

1040 **Unlearning and relearning: translating Quaker discernment for new contexts**

**Dr Nic Burton (Northumbria University)**

Failures to unlearn entrenched knowledge and discard old routines often results in a rigidity of thinking and competency traps. Yet, the processes of unlearning and relearning in organizations remains a 'black box'. This presentation draws upon the process and practice of discernment, the defining feature of the Quaker tradition, to explore the behavioural norms and normative commitments that might frame an unlearning and relearning process. The presentation draws upon action research conducted in the management consulting sector to consider how discernment can be translated by non-religious organizations to enhance their collective learning processes

Break 1120

1140 **Presbyterian virtues in old Scottish banking**

**Dr Angus Robson (Northumbria University)**

In the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2007/8, long-serving leaders in Scottish banking asked themselves what went wrong. They answered often in moral terms. The roots of good banking lay in solid social values and the community structures of kirk and town, but the banking revolution had transformed that pattern. The 'new bank' had swept away the 'old bank', and many things were lost in the process: status, respect, professional stability. The view given by these bankers is generally nostalgic. Underneath the sense of grief for a lost tradition lies the presbyterian virtue of thrift, abandoned by late capitalism. Thrift was to a large degree the point and purpose of Scottish banking, and it brought with it other virtues of self-reliance, prudence, truthfulness, patience and stewardship.

## 1220 **Sikhism and Sustainable Development**

**Dr Nadia Singh (Northumbria University)**

This paper explores how community based organisations in the Indian province of Punjab are using the basic tenets of the Sikh faith in order to create new models of people centric environmental initiatives. In consonance with other major religions of the world, Sikhism is increasing taking a green turn. Environmental advocates are reinterpreting scriptural sources and drawing on elements of Sikh history to promote Sikhism as an inherently "eco-sophical" tradition. Many Sikh temples have launched a grass root level "Green Gurdwara" movement to reduce their ecological footprint through preparation of organic food in the community kitchen, planting trees, recycling waste and participating in renewable energy projects.

This field-based research documents the role of community organisations in promoting ecological consciousness in Punjabi society and creating a new model to promote environmental protection. These organisations are promoting green initiatives by utilising the Sikh tradition of seva or voluntary service. The findings from the research reveal that these initiatives are fulfilling the aspirations of the community for sustainable living through innovative approaches based on community ownership and use of local resources and technologies as well as egalitarian community practices.

Break 1300

## 1400 **Islamic Fintech**

**Prof Hussein Abdou (University of Central Lancashire)**

This session will cover Islamic FinTech landscape; Islamic ethics; and provide answers to main questions around Islamic FinTech: What are the potential opportunities? What are the trends? and how they affect the market? What should be the key priorities?

Content:

What is FinTech?

Islamic FinTech Facts & Growth

Islamic Finance and FinTech

Islamic Ethics and FinTech

COVID19: Opportunities vs Challenges

Islamic FinTech Landscape

Potential opportunities

FinTech Trends

Islamic Fintech: Risks vs Mitigations

The future of Fintech: Key priorities

1440 **Christian Verses Secular Conceptions of Calling in the Meaningful Work Discourse**

**Sally Wightman (Northumbria University) and Dr Garrett Potts (University of South Florida)**

Research concerning the experience of ‘calling’ in the workplace has multiplied in recent years, yet there is still confusion over what we mean by work as a calling. The notion has been understood as work that provides self-fulfilment, work that contributes to the well-being of others, and work to which one is called by a divine caller. The notion of a divine calling, or transcendent summons as it is more regularly referred to, is under-researched and often misconstrued in secular academic literature. Over time, the concept has become less about a calling from God and more about an internal sense of ‘destiny,’ ‘serendipity,’ or ‘fate’ in an attempt to fuse religious and secular conceptions. We argue these attempts are self-defeating. Through conducting key informant interviews with volunteers at a Christian debt-counselling charity, we provide a case whereby the workers attest that their relationship with Jesus Christ, the divine caller, is central to their decision to conduct this work. In undertaking such challenging work for no financial reward and with little progression opportunity, a sense of calling is evident. But whilst the volunteers do find personal fulfilment and help others in their work, it is their relationship with Christ that drives them to persist through the challenges their role brings – other motivations are insufficient.

1520 **Buddhist-enacted practices in business management**

**Dr Mai Chi Vu (Northumbria University)**

Buddhist practices when transferred into organizational contexts tend to bear little resemblance to their original forms of practice, leading to misinterpretations of their characteristics of ‘universal’ adaptability. For example, the popular ‘mindfulness revolution’ in the business world has been criticized for reducing mindfulness practices to psychological traits and non-judgmental awareness. Such secular approaches do not represent the Buddhist ethics-based notion of ‘right mindfulness’, which originates from the Noble Eightfold Path. This presentation aims at unpacking the reasons behind why Buddhist-enacted practices (e.g. non-self, right mindfulness, skilful means) need to be interpreted and managed more context-sensitively in organizational contexts.

Break 1600

1630 **Keynote Lecture: Good Business and God's Good Economy: Some Pointers for Applying Biblical Economic Justice in Today's World**

**Rev. Dr Andy Hartropp**

In this lecture I aim to do three things. First, I will show what is distinctive about a biblical understanding of economic justice: including how it is rooted in the character of God, and how it combines both justice in trading and exchange with justice in distribution. Secondly, I will look at how it is possible to move from ancient Scriptures (dating from up to several centuries ago) to their application in today's world: this will include some pointers for how to identify key principles for what 'good business' is about. Thirdly, I will focus on contemporary business life, and give some more specific examples of what 'doing economic justice', in a biblical framework, might look like in the 21st century.

**About Rev Dr Andy Hartropp**

Andy Hartropp is an economist, theologian and Anglican church minister. He has PhDs in Economics (University of Southampton) and in Christian Ethics (Kings College London). He is the author of *God's Good Economy: Doing Economic Justice in Today's World* (IVP, 2019), is Associate Fellow of the Centre for Enterprise, Markets and Ethics, and since March 2020 has been Rector of two village churches in Leicestershire.

1730 **Closing Remarks**

Revd Andii Bowsher (Northumbria University) and Prof Ron Beadle (Northumbria University)