

Ethics, Current Events and Good News

“Ethics” examines a central principle in life: “to whom are we responsible, and for what?” What values do we (i) choose (ii) to live by, and (iii) to whom are we responsible as our values affect other people? Christian Ethics asserts: “we are responsible to God for everything.” God is our center, and God invites us to be stewards of Creation, which God shares with us. Applying these points to CEOs, the difference between RUN and RUIN an organization is the insertion of “I”. What “I” stands for is counter to God and God’s values.

Current automobile factory closures are disturbing. Managers defend their decisions on economic grounds; but, through all their rhetoric, a central point remains: people are suffering because of the ethics of “I.” ‘ROI’ from factory closings matters more than people.

Jesus invites us to remember how his ethics apply in his world: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the *least of these* brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" [Matthew 25: 40]. Yes, managers must serve their stock holders; but, according to what values? What is the ethical center of those values: “I” or God? This is God’s world, and we are responsible to God for all things.

History reminds us that where God is chosen as the center of people’s ethics, people prosper. Where “I” is the chosen center, people and organizations fail. This point applies to nations, public institutions, and private organizations. This is God’s world and God’s values prevail!

So, what about current business news? Thousands of people are devastated by the abruptly announced decision to close automobile factories. The ethics of this decision, its announcement, and the damage to people’s lives, need to be called out by stock holders. Is ROI all that matters to them and their employee-managers? Will stock holders allow their employee-managers to RUN or RUIN their company? To whom and for what, collectively and individually, are those in authority held responsible?

For people who are suffering from these factory closures, it helps to remember an ironic truth about God’s presence: light shines most brightly in life’s darkest moments. Darkness comes from human decisions and actions. Light is evidence of God’s presence, to bless us with healing and new opportunities. God’s commitment always is (i) to be with us, (ii) love us more deeply than we can imagine, and (iii) give us life as it can be with God, not according to the ethics of corporate “I.”

Prayer helps. In prayer, God invites us to be with and experience God’s presence. Let us remember what Jesus taught us: “May your kingdom come; may your will be done on earth as in heaven.” Worldly organizations can hurt us greatly, but God’s sovereignty and power will help us through our suffering and difficulties, and lead us to new opportunities. After all, this is God’s world, and God’s values prevail.

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