



CELEBRATING LIFE AND  
LEGACY OF JOHN STOTT  
A TRACI LECTURE

## CHRISTIANS IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

**Rev. Dr Christopher J.H Wright**  
Global Ambassador & Ministry Director  
Langham Partnership



# TRACI

Theological Research And  
Communication Institute

### Christians in the Marketplace: A Biblical Perspective on the World of Work

The 2022 Annual TRACI Lecture commemorated the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. John Stott for what would have been his centenary year (1921-2021). The lecture was delivered by Rev. Dr. Christopher J. H. Wright who is the Global Ambassador and Ministry Director for Langham Partnership. Dr. Wright spoke on 'Christians in the Public Square', discussing the Christian's engagement with the whole world of work, which is wherever human beings engage together in productive projects. It was an inspiring session that raised many questions and challenges for us to ponder over.

There is a common assumption that God is not interested in the marketplace. Dr. Wright contested this by pointing out that in both the Old and New Testaments, God is intentionally and intensely interested, involved, and in charge of the public square. Genesis 1-2 portrays God as the Worker. Our work matters because it is part of our createdness in His image. Dr. Wright asked whether we see our work as of intrinsic value to God, or only as a necessary evil, or a context for evangelism. He also underlined that God is an objective and independent auditor of everything that happens in the public sphere (Psalms 33:13-15, Amos 5:12-15). It is under the governance and sovereignty of God although humans are morally responsible. Knowing God is in charge frees us from fatalism or determinism. The prophets emphasized God's sovereignty in all arenas of life (Isaiah 19:1-15, Daniel 4). We should examine how accountability towards God and His governance is reflected in our everyday work. We must also remember that God redeems everything he has made because he 'loves all he has made' (Psalms 145). Everything we have made here will also be redeemed (Isaiah 65:17-25, Col. 1: 16-20) and all of creation waits in anticipation for that future (Romans 8: 19-21). The knowledge that our work will be redeemed should transform our daily labour.

Dr. Wright then discussed how these perspectives should inform our attitude and mission in the public sphere. Firstly, Christians are called to engagement through work in the public sphere. Joseph and Daniel are notable examples of believers who engaged in public arenas in the service of 'pagan' powers. Paul urged believers to do good work (1 Thess. 4:11-12). Christians should work for the greatest public good, thereby commending the gospel. Ministry includes serving the public in what is falsely considered 'secular' callings. Paul even calls governing authorities 'God's servants' (Romans 13), affirming political and judicial work as of service to God.

Secondly, Christians are called to distinctiveness as they engage with the world. Israel was to be distinctive, rooted in the holiness of God, in all contexts including social and judicial ones (Lev. 18, 19). We are called to live by a different standard, as people of moral distinctiveness. Daniel was a man of integrity and excellence in public and private spheres of life (Dan. 6:4). We should have no dichotomy between our public and private personas, between the sacred and secular, between our words and actions. Jesus's sayings about salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16) apply to practical living and not just religiosity.

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### FAREWELL MATHEW VARUGHESE

TRACI is deeply appreciative of the dedicated service of Mr. Mathew Varughese as Director of TRACI since 2016.



He steered TRACI through a difficult phase when its functioning had almost come to a standstill on various counts. Through his tireless efforts and perseverance he has been able to revive TRACI again and set it in the path towards fulfilling its purpose. Many of TRACI's flagship programmes have been initiated under his able leadership.

The TRACI Staff and Community are grateful to Mr. Mathew Varughese for his exemplary and dedicated leadership, his devotion and hard work of inspiring, mentoring and encouraging individuals to integrate their faith and engagement.

Through his theological reflections, discussions and teachings on contemporary and relevant issues

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It is our good deeds, not just our words or preaching, that are to shine. If a society is dark and corrupt, the question is where are the Christians who were to keep it from going rotten and dark? Christians are also called to have a distinctive worldview wherein we live for God and refuse to make work an idol (Duet. 8:17,18). We affirm the value of work but also the Sabbath by which all our work is intended to find rest and fulfilment in the enjoyment of God. What worldview are we living out every day in the workplace?

Dr. Wright emphasized that the church and its pastors should support and “equip the saints for works of service” in the marketplace (Eph. 4:12). The church must stay updated with the realities of the world, and resist remaining in an isolated spiritual bubble. It should help ordinary workers better engage as Christians in their workplace, encouraging them through the struggles that they face. Dr. Wright concluded by reminding us that our work matters because it matters to God. It has intrinsic value as it serves the community, and thereby the Creator. If we do it conscientiously as disciples of Jesus, willing to witness and even suffer, He will enable our lives to bear fruit in multiplying the citizens of the new creation from among our friends and colleagues.

*Shobha Elizabeth John Ph.D Research Scholar, IISER Bhopal*

### CARRYING THE VISION FORWARD

TRACI as a Christian Research Community was born out of a deep desire to communicate the relevance of the scripture both to the church and the society. In the imagination of the founding members, they desired TRACI to be a facilitation centre for the study of and research into the belief and practices of the Christian Church and the community life of Indian Society. This was carried out with all eagerness and reverence. The initial writings and publications stand proof to their dedicated labour of love. There were evident signs of building up and accepting each other in love and humility.

Over the last five decades while the society has aspired to keep this vision abreast; there were times the movement had to also introspect and revive itself again. The last decade has seen efforts to renew TRACI keeping in mind the original vision that this community was called for. Some of us who have been part of this process will gladly affirm that the Lord has blessed the labour of our hands.

As I accept the leadership of TRACI, I do so realising it is God’s plan for us as a movement. The beauty of any leadership is one that is shared; and I am grateful to the team we are, both the staff team and the society members. We also look forward to those committed to research and engagement to join us. We promise you the strength of team work, envisioning together and at the same time providing the space to carry the passion laid in your heart.

A few things on my heart as I take over from Mathew Varughese, who has envisioned most of our recent initiatives, is to definitely respect the past and thank God for all that we have benefitted from those who have carried out the vision of TRACI faithfully thus far. Also, as a team, we will renew ourselves to be relevant to our times and it calls us to hear what is happening around us and keep our ears open to what God has to say through his Word. This necessitates us to meet with people and be in places and also listen one-another about issues that are relevant and contemporary and need to be addressed holistically. The key focus areas of integral mission, gender equality and society and polity, will time and again be discussed, researched and taught, integrating it with theological reflections. In doing so, we do not stand alone, rather we shall stand alongside the Church and all mission movements in partnership.

TRACI requires your support and prayers as we continue in our calling to bring significant impact both for the Church and the Society.

**Sathish Joseph Simon (Director, TRACI)**

### DO LOOK FORWARD TO THE UPCOMING PROGRAMMES

April 30<sup>th</sup> Saturday, 6.30-8.00 pm:

Global Politics at the Crossroads: Ethical And Moral Dimensions of the Recent Developments, Prof. Varaprasad S Dolla, Professor in Chinese Studies, JNU Delhi.

Mr. Mathew modeled the mission of TRACI as he encouraged us towards integrated response and transformative engagements. His critical thinking and grounding will always be deeply valued.

Thank you Mr. Mathew Varughese for who you are and the challenge of your lifestyle and ministry. The entire TRACI community wishes you a journey ahead that continues to be filled with contentment and purpose even as you labour for the cause of the Kingdom.

### WELCOME SATHISH SIMON

We welcome the new Director of TRACI, Mr. Sathish Joseph Simon who took over from Mr. Mathew Varughese from 1 April 2022. He has had a fairly long association with TRACI transitioning through different roles over the years and his last assignment being Director of Operations in TRACI.



Sathish is a graduate from Kerala University and also done his theological studies, completing BD and MTh in Counselling from UBS Pune. His vast experience in UESI, his passion for University Engagement, his commitment to the Lord and to the tasks entrusted with him and God given talent of leadership are the strengths that he brings with him as he leads TRACI. Sathish lives in Delhi with his wife Mini and daughters Stuthi and Diya. As a family they are deeply committed to serve the Lord and hence serving people.

Our best wishes and prayers for Mr. Sathish Joseph Simon that God would grant him wisdom and discernment to continue the work that God has entrusted him through TRACI.

#### INDIAN ACCOUNT

Account Name: TRACI  
A/c No. 072501000006876  
IFSC: IOBA0000725  
Indian Overseas Bank, GK-II  
New Delhi – 11004



#### FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION ACCOUNT

Account Name: “Theological Research And Communication Institute”  
Bank: State Bank of India,  
Branch: 00691  
A/c. No. : 40081602741 (FCRA Savings Account)  
IFSC Code : SBIN0000691  
SWIFT Code: SBININBB104