Introducing

Jubilee Manifesto

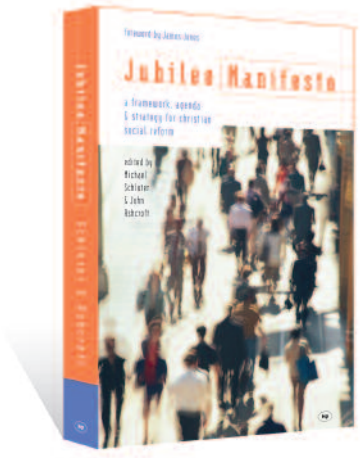
a framework, agenda & strategy for christian social reform

foreword by James Jones edited by Michael Schluter & John Ashcroft

IN ORDER TO CELEBRATE THE RELEASE OF *JUBILEE MANIFESTO* WITH IVP WE HAVE SUSPENDED THE NORMAL PUBLICATION OF *ENGAGE* THIS QUARTER. ALTHOUGH IT IS, IN A SENSE, ONLY THE END OF THE BEGINNING, AS MICHAEL NOTES BELOW IT IS ALSO THE REALISATION OF A 30-YEAR-OLD DREAM BORN IN EAST AFRICA.

The contention of *Jubilee Manifesto* is that there is a distinctively Christian vision for society that challenges Capitalism, Socialism and other ideologies. *Jubilee Manifesto* identifies relationships – at every level of society – as the central concern of biblical social teaching and explores how that concern should find expression in the life of communities and nations. Drawing on practical examples from the Jubilee Centre and its sister organisations, it concludes by outlining a strategy for social reform.

This special publication introduces you to *Jubilee Manifesto*. For any who want to bring about change in society, it is a crucial handbook of both theory and practice. We hope you will order your copy today at our special website price.



WHERE IT ALL BEGAN BY MICHAEL SCHLUTER

PEOPLE OFTEN ASK ME, 'WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THESE IDEAS? HOW DID IT ALL BEGIN?' I WAS IN EAST AFRICA IN THE MID 70S WORKING FIRST FOR THE FAMILY BUSINESS IN RURAL KENYA AND LATER AS A CONSULTANT FOR THE WORLD BANK AND THE INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE.

In church in Nairobi Sunday by Sunday I was listening to a preacher who applied the Bible not just to the church but to political and economic issues as well. So I began to ask what the Bible had to say about Capitalism, Marxism and Socialism, the ideologies dominant in Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania respectively at that time. Was it enough for Christians simply to critique these ideologies? What constructive alternative could we offer?

When I went on holiday to Mombassa in 1975, I was determined to resolve this question. I read and reread Deuteronomy, and realised the laws were not an arbitrary collection of miscellaneous ideas, but provided a coherent vision of how society should be organised. As I walked among the palm trees by the Indian Ocean, I remember dreaming of a day when this biblical understanding would become a major influence in world affairs. So, for me, the publication of *Jubilee Manifesto* marks a significant point in the fulfilment of that dream.

That was 30 years ago. Much has happened since. The Jubilee Centre was established in 1983 after my wife and I returned to the UK. John Ashcroft, my co-editor of *Jubilee Manifesto*, joined us in 1987 after being expelled from Kenya (that's another story!). The *Cambridge Papers* writers, some of whom have contributed chapters, first came together in 1988. And we have learned much through various practical reform initiatives such as the Keep Sunday Special Campaign and other projects which have grown into independent charities: Credit Action (1994), the Relationships Foundation (1993), Citylife (1999) and Concordis International (2004).

But much remains to be done. If the *Jubilee Manifesto* agenda truly reflects God's will for society, the task for us as Christians – who pray so often, 'Your will be done on earth' (literally 'in the land') – is to see it applied and our communities and nations transformed. The task ahead is enormous, but the God we serve loves to use the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. So, 'Who despises the day of small things?' (Zechariah 4: 10).

FROM THE FOREWORD BY JAMES JONES, BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL

THE AUTHORS OF THIS MANIFESTO FIND THE INSPIRATION AND THE AUTHORITY FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL IDEAS IN THE BIBLE. JUST WRITING THIS SENTENCE MAKES ME FEEL THE WEIGHT OF THEIR TASK!

We live in a culture whose literature, law, music and historic architecture are baptized in the biblical narrative but whose leaders, including its religious ones, make little appeal to the existence let alone the authority of the Bible. Referring to the Bible in public discourse is like pedalling away on an exercise bike and then pressing maximum load! Getting the Bible taken seriously in contemporary debate on social and political issues is an uphill struggle. Even amongst Christians the level of biblical literacy is low and this important document will be a challenge to many even sympathetic readers.

MANY YEARS AGO IN NAIROBI, I WAS PRIVILEGED TO WITNESS THE BEGINNINGS OF WHAT IS NOW JUBILEE MANIFESTO. *I COMMEND THIS BOOK AS A SERIOUS AND SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION BY FELLOW PILGRIMS.*

MUTAVA MUSYIMI, GENERAL SECRETARY, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF KENYA

The authors recognize the difficulty, but they appeal to the Bible for very good reasons. Anyone who is concerned with the cause of human flourishing could be expected to ask at least two questions: in the history of the human family, is there any example of a human being who has flourished as a true human being, and is there any society whose common life has been so shaped to ensure the flourishing of its members? It is the conviction of the authors that the Bible's relevance and authority reside in its testimony to these two realities: namely, that in the person of Jesus Christ we come face to face with a truly true human being and that in the community of Israel we are given a social paradigm from which we can elicit timeless principles on which to construct a community where human beings might experience their true potential.

THOUGHT-PROVOKING ATTEMPTS TO UNCOVER THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR SOCIAL ACTIVISM AND REFORM ARE ALL TOO RARE. I COMMEND THIS BOOK TO ALL WHO WANT TO DISCUSS AND WORK TO A PRAXIS THEOLOGY. IT TAKES THE TWIN COMMANDS OF LOVE FOR GOD AND NEIGHBOUR WAY BEYOND TRUISM.

ANN HOLT OBE, BIBLE SOCIETY

Throughout these pages you will see that the principal motif is that of relationship. It is the foundational issue because that is the nature of reality; we are persons in relationship – with each other, with our environment and with God.

This manifesto is the fruit of over twenty years' study and reflection on holding together the spiritual and the political. As one who has been in the front-line of urban regeneration and community renewal, I welcome this book enthusiastically both personally and on behalf of the church. I particularly welcome the courage of its authors to move from theory to proposing a manifesto with an agenda and a strategy for social reform based on Christian principles. You may not agree with every policy detail; the authors acknowledge the room for disagreement. But you will be challenged with the gauntlet of finding an alternative.

WHO SHOULD READ IT?

- Christians concerned for society's well-being
- Those in leadership positions within churches concerned to understand and teach what the Bible says about the social order
- Those with a professional interest in social, political or economic issues
- Students – particularly those studying the social sciences or theology/biblical studies

WHAT READING THE BOOK WILL GIVE YOU

- An understanding of the kind of society we should be working for as Christians
- Skills to help you make sense of biblical teaching concerning the social order
- Specific biblical teaching about nationhood, government, family, welfare, economy, finance, criminal justice, international relations and defence
- Insight into how we can influence society today

ORDERING DETAILS

Visit www.jubilee-centre.org
Ring 01223 566319 with credit/debit card details
Use your response form (if available)
£10.99 inc. UK p&p / £14.49 inc. international p&p (RRP £14.99)

SUMMARY OF JUBILEE MANIFESTO

A FRAMEWORK (PART 1)

Chapter 1 outlines a case for a social reform based on the 'big idea' of relationships, and their nurturing at every level of society because, as chapter 2 argues, the Christian faith is most fundamentally about relationships. Chapter 3 then examines some of what Christians have had to say about relationships and persons over the last two millennia. Chapter 4 examines the nature of the ethical authority of the Bible and the Old Testament in particular. Chapter 5 considers the multifaceted character of biblical ethical teaching and defends the use of early Israel as an ethical paradigm or model.

AN AGENDA (PART 2)

Jubilee Manifesto argues that the people of God, called to be a priestly nation and a light to the Gentiles, can be seen as a paradigmatic model from which we can and should learn about the ordering of relationships in society. Chapter 6 considers core relational values which should set both our personal and societal goals. Chapter 7 considers what we should mean by 'nation', and the implications of this for our relationships. Chapter 8 considers what it might mean for a constitutional order to express love between citizens, and chapter 14 broadens the perspective to consider relationships between nations. Chapters 9 and 10 examine the role of the (extended) family and of welfare provision. Chapters 11 and 12 open up the radical scriptural teaching on economic life. The restoration and nurturing of broken relationships is shown in chapter 13 to be at the heart of the Bible's teaching on justice. All these relational themes are drawn together in chapter 15.

IT IS ONE OF THE TRULY SIGNIFICANT ADVANCES IN WESTERN CHRISTIANITY IN THE LAST GENERATION THAT WORK SUCH AS THIS CAN BE DONE AT SUCH A HIGH LEVEL, WHEN NOT VERY LONG AGO CHRISTIANS WOULD HAVE HAD HARDLY ANYTHING TO SAY ON SUCH ISSUES.

TOM WRIGHT, BISHOP OF DURHAM

A STRATEGY (PART 3)

Part 3 raises the urgent question of how this manifesto could work in practice. Chapter 16 considers a number of approaches to social reform. In addressing the need to engage with those who do not share our faith if we are to bring about reform, we consider the ways in which the language and agenda of relationships can articulate common ground which is true to our faith. In chapter 17 we present a series of case-studies from the work of the Jubilee Centre and its associated charities. To close, chapter 18 sets out challenges that arise from this agenda for Christian social reform. This book is rooted in the experience of seeking social reform - we hope that further engagement will be its fruit.

This table illustrates the coherence of Israel's social, political and economic institutions. Each square in the table illustrates how the goal represented by a particular row is furthered in the sector of activity represented by a particular column. For example, the goal of protecting and strengthening family relationships is furthered in the 'land and property' column through the jubilee legislation, discussed in chapter 9. (Figures in brackets indicate the chapter where the issue is discussed.)

SECTORS OF PUBLIC LIFE / GOALS: SUSTAINING KEY RELATIONSHIPS	RELIGIOUS LIFE	FAMILY POLICY	POLITICAL STRUCTURES	ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE	LAND AND PROPERTY	CAPITAL UTILISATION	WELFARE PROVISION	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & DEFENCE
SOCIETY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD	Levites' role to teach the law (7)	Role of family to teach the law and pass on tradition (9)	God's ultimate political authority recognised (8)	God regarded as the source of all justice (13)	God's ultimate ownership of the land acknowledged (9)	Accountability to God for use of wealth (11)	God loves the widow, the orphan and the immigrant (10)	God's law a universal basis for international relations (14)
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CITIZENS	Equality of all citizens before God (8)	Role of the family redeemer ('goel') (10)	Rights of all citizens to protection and participation (8)	Protection of dignity of offender (13)	Enforceable property rights (9)	Year of debt remission (10)	Laws protecting the dignity of the vulnerable individual (10)	Protection of prisoners of war and asylum seekers (14)
EXTENDED AND 3-GENERATIONAL FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS	The Sabbath and Passover (9)	Honouring of parents (9)	Constraints on king's power (8)	Relational concept of seriousness of crime (13)	Jubilee laws ensure family roots and colocation (9)	Ban on interest (12)	Family required to be primary welfare provider (10)	Exemption from conscription for newly-weds
LOCAL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS	Tithes collected locally and redistributed in the community (10)	Overlap of kinship and community networks (9)	Major role for community elders and constraints on king's power (8)	Major role for community courts (13)	Jubilee laws help preserve community relationships in the long term (9)	Ban on interest (12)	Local community 'duty of care' for the vulnerable (10)	Community-based army units and laws against king having chariots (14)
NATIONAL, INTER-REGIONAL AND INTER-GROUP RELATIONSHIPS	The sacrificial system and 3 annual festivals (7)	All families gather in Jerusalem for national festivals (7)	National law, national culture and role of the king (7)	Role of 'court of appeal' and the king in justice issues (13)	A national basis of equitable regional allocation (9)	National currency and free trade (11)	Welfare laws apply across Israel (10)	The king's role in foreign policy (7)

AN AMBITIOUS VISION BY JOHN ASHCROFT

I AM EXCITED ABOUT *JUBILEE MANIFESTO* AS A PLATFORM FOR CONTINUING RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CHRISTIANS IN MANY COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS WITH PEOPLE WHO DO NOT SHARE OUR FAITH BUT ARE ENGAGING WITH ISSUES WHICH HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE LIVES AND WELL-BEING OF SO MANY PEOPLE.

Jubilee Manifesto is unashamedly ambitious in its vision. The nature and scale of the task before us demands no less. The book, and indeed the wider body of work on which it draws, is not, however, comprehensive in terms of the issues addressed or the answers it seeks to provide. We hope *Jubilee Manifesto* will encourage much further biblical reflection. The Jubilee Centre can only reach small portions of the church directly – we hope *Jubilee Manifesto* will resource many others to encourage and equip Christians to engage in social reform. We pray that Christians in many countries and walks of life will be helped to become more effective parts of that movement for change which the body of Christ is called to be.

THE AUTHORS ARE PRACTITIONERS WITH A LONG HISTORY OF DELIVERING WORKABLE POLICY PROPOSALS. IN TERRAIN OFTEN DOMINATED BY HIGH LEVELS OF ABSTRACTION, THEIR WORK IS A RARITY AND WILL HELP CHRISTIANS AND OTHERS TO RETHINK THEIR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IDEAS.

ANDREW CAMERON, LECTURER IN ETHICS AND CHRISTIAN THOUGHT, MOORE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE, SYDNEY

Whether we are working with those who share our concerns but not our faith, or in debate with those who advocate a different set of values and vision for society, it is important that the reasons for the positions we advocate are clear and that we communicate both the love of God and a commitment to human flourishing. We believe that the language and agenda of relationships aids this task and will make our continuing engagement fruitful at many levels – including, most importantly, the relationship each of us has with God.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

THE JUBILEE CENTRE EXISTS TO CONDUCT PIONEERING RESEARCH INTO BIBLICAL SOCIAL TEACHING AND TO DISSEMINATE THE FRUITS OF THAT RESEARCH AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE.

Five initiatives which have grown out of the work of the Jubilee Centre are discussed in *Jubilee Manifesto*. Michael comments, 'From the beginning the Jubilee Centre was established not just to study the text but to apply it. There were failures as well as successes. Christians are called to do what they can; granting success is God's prerogative.' This 'family tree' illustrates the exciting work being undertaken by a range of organisations united by a shared history and commitment.

Jubilee Centre – seeking to understand and communicate the biblical vision for society. Distributes *Cambridge Papers*. *www.jubilee-centre.org*

Keep Sunday Special Campaign – exists to preserve Sunday as a day of rest, as a day for family activities and as a day of worship for Christians. *www.keepsundayspecial.net*

Credit Action – a national money education charity committed to helping people manage their money better. *www.creditaction.org.uk*

Relationships Foundation – launched the Rnetwork to inspire and resource a movement of people committed to building relationships across society. *www.relationshipsfoundation.org*

Concordis International – works with individuals and groups in conflict situations to build relationships across conflict boundaries. *www.concordis-international.org*

Citylife – encouraging local investment to transform communities, particularly those with high levels of unemployment. *www.citylifeltd.org*

Keep Time for Children (KTC) – exists to promote the importance of family time at weekends. *www.keeptimeforchildren.org.uk*

Equity for Africa – promoting social investment in small businesses in Africa to enable sustainable employment creation. *www.equityforafrica.org*

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JUBILEE CENTRE

A BIBLICAL VISION FOR SOCIETY

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