

Investing in the Future ours!

Are you investing in the future and specifically in your own future?

This is not an idle question given the on-going concern about pension funding and how the young people of today will cope in their old age. So I make the assumption that you are investing in your pension either through tax, N.I. or savings. You will have realised that you need to invest for your old age.

How else are you investing in the future?

Are you investing in you children and grandchildren's education - buying books and other items for school to help them? Do you have an internet connection to help them with their homework? All of these will involve time and money and probably patience but you probably consider them worth the effort.

Would you like to see a better local environment in which to live, a better country in which your family and friends can feel more secure and a better world where there is peace and justice for all? If you are like me then your answer to this will be a loud but uncertain "yes". The reason for the uncertainty is, "how can we achieve this since we fear that things are getting worse rather than better

I am constantly amazed by what people will invest time and money in. In November 2004, the USA flew an 'aeroplane' with a scram jet engine at 10 times the speed of sound. This aeroplane was twelve feet by five feet and fell to the ocean floor. What is this massive investment of money and time for - a faster and more destructive missile? Surely we should invest in environmentally efficient transport not speed?

It really is mind blowing what people will invest in. They believe that it is worth the risk, the money and the time. So what should Christians invest in? Well Jesus said, **"Store up treasure for yourself in heaven."** (Matt6:19-21) Now I have wondered on more than a few occasions what is this treasure and how do I get to store it?

To be honest I am not really sure about the 'what' as eternal life is a free gift given without condition to those who give their lives to Christ, but I do have a few ideas about the how.

God is a God of love, justice and righteousness and God calls His people to be the means whereby His love, justice and righteousness are practised and expounded to others. If we want a better world for our family and friends we should have recognised by now that this cannot be in isolation to the rest of the world. Whether we are Christians or not, we know that without justice there can be no peace - even on our doorsteps. What happens elsewhere in the world affects us as well as our neighbours in far off lands? If we wish to work for peace and follow Jesus we must invest in Christian work around the world. If we want a better world we need significant Christian investment. We pray for God's kingdom to come on earth, (Matt 6:10) and God in His wisdom has decided that to achieve this He will ask you and me to invest in the process of bringing in His kingdom. The return on our investment is a better world and this strange incorruptible treasure in heaven.

So have I whetted your appetite for this investment? Read again Matt 25:31:46 and consider the following:

- We need to invest in our local church so that those living in our neighbourhood have the opportunity to become Christians and everyone has a better place to live in.
- We need to invest in justice and peace to relieve poverty at home and abroad. The *Jubilee Debt Campaign* has achieved significant results but only a small fraction of the debt has been written off. *Tear Fund*, *Christian Aid* and many other mission agencies need investment to relieve poverty and show Christian love and concern

All of this investment must come from Christians. Others may join in, but we must be at the centre of this giving. We need to be generous with the abundant generosity of God. It means that you and I have to get our hands in our pockets, our wallets, our chequebook and our plastic cards and invest in God's world because He first invested in us and now He calls us to invest in His world.

You are not so sure that God has invested in us. Just think about the investment God laid down millions of years ago in coal, oil, natural gas, metal ores, seeds, and the whole of creation - including you and me!

God calls you to consider your investment in His world - its voluntary - his investment in us is unconditional love!

So are you investing in the future?