

Legacy: Passing the Business Baton

The weekend spring conference which took place from April 13 –15 was the last that I will organise at Ridley Hall. This was reflected in the title: there was a sense in which I was passing the Faith in Business baton on to others, notably my friend and colleague Peter Heslam, who will organise next year’s conference. But it also provided an opportunity for our various speakers to reflect on the legacy that they are seeking to pass on through their companies and organisations. I shall give a summary of the talks given by each of our six main speakers, highlighting at the end a biblical verse that has proved inspirational for them. Unfortunately one of our scheduled speakers, Mark Spelman, had to withdraw at the last moment because of appendicitis, but we adjusted the programme to make extra space for other components.

Val King: Business as a Force for Good

Val King is Managing Director and Co-owner of Rooflight, a design and manufacturing company with 75 employees which makes windows for roofs and is based near Oxford. She believes passionately that business can be a force for good, and is committed to the corporate living out of four key values which have been agreed by her staff: integrity, care, empowered and unity. For Val care is the most important and one she equates very closely with love. Her vision – which she has seen put into practice – is one of a community choosing to live these values and consciously basing business decisions upon them. Obviously this is not always straightforward, especially when economic conditions are difficult, and one challenge she’s

had to face is what to do about staff who pay lip-service to or are not fully committed to the values. People who are cynical are asked or encouraged to leave. The values are positively reinforced through regular audits and the giving of trophies to staff who exemplify them in an outstanding way. Val quoted Charles Handy: ‘The companies that survive the longest are the ones that work out what they uniquely can give to the world – not just growth or money, but their excellence, their respect for others, their ability to make things happy. Some call those things a soul.’

The conference broke out into buzz groups, and Val asked people to identify 3–4 Christian-inspired values which they would like to see embedded in a new business. The values delegates came up with



**Conference Group
Photograph**