

Book Review

by Sharon G. Johnson

*Just Business: Christian Ethics
for the Marketplace,*

Alexander Hill

InterVarsity Press,

Downers Grove, Illinois, 1997

This is an excellent book for use in classes on Christian business ethics. The author establishes a model for ethical analysis based on the attributes of holiness, justice, and love. Those who have followed some of Dr. Richard Chewning's work in developing ethical frameworks based on the attributes of God will recognize his influence in Dr. Hill's work.

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 develops the basic concepts underlying the holiness-justice-love model. Part 2 reflects on what are called "False Exits." The three chapters in this part deal with philosophical and practical objections to the model developed in Part 1. Part 3 focuses attention on a variety of specific topic areas in business, seeking to understand and respond to the issues in light of the model developed in Part 1. Among the topics discussed in Part 3 are "Honesty and Deception," "Employer-Employee Relations," "Discrimination and Affirmative Action," and "The Environment."

Each chapter is filled with specific and timely marketplace applications of the topic at hand, and each chapter ends with three very special "discussion support" materials:

- A short case with questions
- Questions directed at those involved in the workplace (for example, “Have you ever worked with someone who treats business like a poker game? Do you envy or pity this person?”).
- Concepts to understand. Each key idea treated in the chapter is accompanied by a set of Scripture passages and questions directed at exploring those ideas.

The following sample is taken from Chapter 5, “Dual Morality.”

Poker Game Ethic

Genesis 27:1-46

How did Rebekah and her son Jacob “play poker” in this situation? What was the outcome of their disregard for “normal ethics”?

Genesis 29:15-27; 30:35

How do Laban and Jacob treat each other? What is the end result for both?

1 Samuel 16:1-3

Is Samuel being dishonest with King Saul? Is this an acceptable example of poker playing?

along with the substantive discussion, helps makes Dr. Hill’s book an excellent classroom choice, either as a stand-alone text or as a supplement to a “standard” ethics or business and society textbook. The book is very readable and would also be appropriate for a small-group discussion at church or home Bible studies, and even as an evangelistic outreach to non-Christians in the workplace.

The determinedly Bible-centered approach of the book,