



BIRMINGHAM FAITH & MONEY GROUP IMMERSION EVENT

Under the outstanding leadership of ICE Board members, Maria Campbell and Warren Nash, the Birmingham Faith and Money (F&\$) peer group spent a week in New York hosted by Trinity Episcopal Church. The group explored how money works in the world and in the church by visiting three centers of power — NY Stock Exchange, NY Federal Reserve Bank, and Ground Zero. They experienced:

- how money operates in the free enterprise system,
- how the government deals with money,
- the tragic conflict of faith and money represented at Ground Zero.

The group met with leading economists and financial experts such as Dr. Douglas M. Johnston, President, International Center for Religion and Diplomacy; Alan Blanchard, President Emeritus of the Episcopal Church Pension Group (CPG); Dr. Gary Shilling, Economist and Investment Banker; and authors Freda and Chester Johnson. As a result of the powerful impact of this week in the financial district, The Birmingham F&\$ Group is now planning a three-year travel/study program designed to dissect the mystery between Faith and Money. The group processed their experience:

“I learned that money is inherently neutral and that the New York Stock Exchange is a very addictive game.”

“<there is a> correlation between (1) the ways in which we clergy deal with our own personal financial planning and (2) our overall sense of vocational fulfillment. For some time now I’ve felt the need to better understand and manage our own family’s financial situation, and this experience has encouraged me to move that up on my list of priorities. I look forward to this being an early component of our learning together.”

“ ... people who deal in big numbers day-in and day-out would not necessarily be shocked or put-off by a big number request for the capital campaign or some new, cutting-edge ministry. They would just need to see the number justified and have the question answered “Why me?” Answer: “Because God may well have put you in position to do so.”

“This question of faith and money we are exploring is an important one. I was struck by how difficult it was for the people with whom we met to articulate the connection between faith and money in their own lives and in their work. Upon further reflection, I believe it is also difficult for us and for many of the members of our respective churches to formulate answers to the very same questions we were asking. For me this confirms the importance of the work of our group over the next three years.”

Look for future reports on the Birmingham Faith and Money groups studies and findings on this web site and in the ICE newsletters.