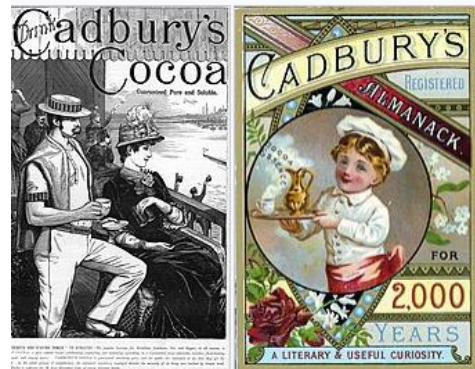


Establishing Jesus' Neighborhood

The life of factory workers in Victorian England was bleak. During the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) England transformed from a rural, agricultural economy to an industrial nation. Factories in England were dangerous places to work, and employees often lived in poverty. Richard and George Cadbury moved their family-owned business to the countryside in 1878, an unprecedented move during the industrial revolution. The Cadbury brothers sought for a way to improve people's lives. George Cadbury asked, "How can the working man cultivate ideals?" Cadbury built a new kind of factory and ensured that his workers benefited from the thriving business. The company bought up land around the factory to create a model community for their workers. Each home was comfortable and contained land for residents to grow their own vegetables. They introduced the 5 ½ day work-week and closed the factory on bank holidays. They established work councils with an equal number of factory workers and management. Workers were paid good wages and were offered medical care, educational opportunities, and pension plans, all because of Cadbury's faith in Jesus Christ.



The result was that the community, Bournville, thrived with sports fields, playgrounds, schools, churches, and a community hospital. Imagine what a community would be like if Jesus Christ was in charge of our neighborhoods and workplaces. When communities reflect Jesus' values, people flourish.

Jesus tells us to pray that God's *will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven* (Matthew 6:10). We can be part of that, too. We can follow Jesus' lead in our communities and workplaces and improve the world around us.

Sweet. When that happens, we will improve the lives of others in our "neighborhood." George Cadbury based his goals on his faith as a Quaker. What the Cadbury's did wasn't just a kind, goodwill gesture. It was a commitment to changing the culture of their community! Cadbury's chocolate business is an example of employers reflecting how Jesus would like us to treat others, and seeking a better quality of life that extends far beyond the workplace. They created a thriving community.

The Bible Says: *your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10).*

Questions: What would your neighborhood look like if Jesus was in charge? How can you lead like Jesus?

This devotion is based on a reading in Our Daily Bread, September 13, 2024 story which prompted online research about the Cadbury company. One document was entitled "Cadbury Chocolate and Christianity."