

**Sermon Summary**  
**17<sup>th</sup> after Pentecost**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> September 2012**

- Mark 9:30-37 talks of Jesus blessing of the little children.
- Children here is of course a cipher for those who are weak or marginalised by society.
- The disciples have been side-tracked by a typically human question about institutions: pecking order and hierarchy.
- I was reminded of how easily our church concerns may turn inward towards such issues by a recent inter-deanery meeting. Business focussed on money, buildings and human resources.
- We need to pay attention sometimes to the tools we import into our church life. Is there any guarantee that feasibility studies and management speak formulated for the modern business world are the right “fit” for church work?
- Moreover, do they start from unexamined presuppositions (market forces etc) which we really do not share?
- Do they have goals which are different from ours....?
- I could not but help feeling that we are as side-tracked as the disciples...
- Jesus does not convene a seminar on different management strategies to help the disciples along.
- His response directs attention away from management, hierarchy and structure to a small child- the ones who are meant to be helped by the church....
- The core business of the church is not a focus on structures, but on how it may most efficiently provide a welcome to those who are outside of it.
- What might it mean for our church planning if we did not start with an internal audit, but by looking out to the communities and world in which we live, move and have our being- and predicate our business on care for people outside than management of the things inside

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