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"What is precarious work, what is good work?"

What does precarious work mean?

There is a continuous reduction of the number of workers with traditional full time jobs. There are less and less permanent employment contracts, regulated working hours and reliable and adequate income. There is also growth of precarious and atypical working conditions, including part time employment contracts, temporary work contracts, subcontracted work and self employment.

The situation is getting worse because the economic crisis has accelerated the threats to good working conditions. Unemployment has been rising drastically and is attacking industrial and service jobs alike, affecting more and more people. The general atmosphere creates downward pressure on wages and conditions. People are afraid of losing their job, so they are ready to work more for less.

Just to remind: Precarious work could be a choice as well e.g. combining work and family life (part-time jobs) and not all subcontracting work is rotten - there are firms which are taking good care of their workers and respecting all working life conditions.

How a legislator can help to achieve good work:

- The rules and regulations of workers' health and safety should be of high standard, as well as systems to enforce these regulations by, for example, official inspections at the workplace.
- Creating safety networks in cases of crisis, unemployment, sickness etc.
- Creating good environment for learning and education.
- In Finland, we have our own systems that have been developed during decades. They cost money to build, but once they are smoothly running, they save money.

What are Christian work ethics?

A Christian work ethic is one in which work is viewed as a virtuous duty that has been mandated by God both before and after the fall of man. Idleness is viewed as a vice. Because we live in a fallen, sinful world, there will be times that work will involve a degree of strict self-denial. Workers should also receive satisfaction and maintain a spirit of joy. A Christian work ethic requires a commitment to excellence in the task and serving attitude towards neighbours.