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The JBIB serves as a refereed forum for discussing faith-learning-life links in business. It is committed to the proposition that “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (II Timothy 3:16-17). Faculty and business practitioners are encouraged to share their perspectives on how to best equip college students to live out their Christian faith in the workplace.

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EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE

What's Wrong with the Christian Business Faculty Association?

Richard J. Martinez, Editor — Cedarville University

As I take the reins from my friend Sharon Johnson at JBIB, I know these are big shoes to fill. Dr. Johnson grew the journal from birth to its current state in a little more than ten years. While Sharon certainly had extraordinary help from reviewers, writers, the CBFA Board, and Cedarville University, he has been faithful in doing the Lord's work. As I have worked with reviewers and writers to put this 2006 issue together, it has been no small comfort that Sharon's office is less than twenty feet from my own. I know you will join me in saluting Sharon for his time as Founding Editor of the Journal of Biblical Integration in Business.

In a recent issue of *The Chronicle Review* ("What's Wrong with the Society of Biblical Literature?"), Jacques Berlinerblau (2006) made some interesting claims about the Society of Biblical Literature, our cousins in the theological realm. Berlinerblau suggests about the SBL that, "as far as academic societies go, the SBL is about as unthreatening and placid as they come." He, of course, meant that in the most pejorative sense possible, noting that, "edgy,' 'controversial,' or even 'relevant' are not terms that spring to mind when trying to describe [SBL's] activities." Now, I am not

necessarily suggesting that we in the CBFA (or through *JBIB*) ought to strive to be edgy, controversial, or threatening.

Or am I? If we are to be relevant, our activities and ideas must be edgy and controversial, and even threatening, at least as far as a post-modern, secular world is concerned. As Berlinerblau notes, we live in a time when the Bible is enjoying much readership and interest. There are great evangelical opportunities afoot. We must reflect in the CBFA whether we are up to the task of moving beyond the comfort of our course schedules and classrooms in order to use

the gifts we have been given to engage a curious culture. Are we ready to join the fray where Christ meets business in the post-modern world?

In calling out the SBL, Berlinerblau opined four “points of malaise” intended to be a wake-up call. While the CBFA is not completely analogous to the Society of Biblical Literature, we are indeed the most significant representation of evangelical Christian thought on business matters. It is perhaps useful that we consider Berlinerblau’s four points in the context of our own state of affairs. Below I list Berlinerblau’s “points of malaise” regarding the Society of Biblical Literature and consider their application to the context of CBFA.

1. *“Consider that the most popular and widely discussed books about the Bible are almost never written by Biblicists.”* Likewise, most of the well-known publications on business from a Christian perspective are not written by members of the CBFA. Rather, we see books from practitioners and other non-academics (non-business academics) carrying the torch for

faith-business integration. It is true that we welcome the good work of our brothers and sisters who step out of their valuable experience to chronicle their journeys and to share their insights. Kudos to the likes of Bill Pollard and John Beckett. Well done to Ken Blanchard, John Maxwell, and Dennis Bakke. (Indeed, in this issue we include a re-print of Mr. Bakke’s fabulously-written “Postscript: Enter Into the Master’s Joy” from *Joy at Work*.) And we note that there are interesting offerings from some among our CBFA flock, especially those of the Economist persuasion. But where are the Dick Chewnings and the Alex Hills of the next generation?

The fact is the typical members of the CBFA have much to offer to the understanding of business from our unique perspective. We consider questions and possibilities and connections and ideas that are not likely to come from other sources. As an academically-oriented organization, we will always struggle with questions of “relevance,” and we must always heed the pressure to work with, through, and for the believing practitioners whose

labors we hope to enrich and enlighten. At the same time, however, great applications arise from great ideas, and great ideas must be fostered in the realm of possibility and insight. This is what we have to offer. And it is important.

2. “*Consider that ‘biblical studies’ as a college major is not exactly a booming industry.*” Our related reality is the fact that most business students and practitioners — Christians and non-believers alike — are not introduced to business and economic thinking that incorporates Christian thought. Within the CBFA and CCCU institutions, it is easy to remain focused on an integrated view of business and economics. Outside of our “bubble,” however, faith-guided business is a tough sell to a skeptical world. We continue to have much work to do to present ideas that are not only useful to our brothers and sisters in the marketplace but also are interesting to all business thinkers. Some of those ideas are best developed and discussed in explicitly Christian outlets such as *JBIB*, while others may find an interested audience at the table

of mainstream academic publications. The important point is that we in the CBFA have an obligation to present well-thought-out, interesting, and relevant ideas about business issues to an unbelieving world. Faith integration in business is not a booming industry, but we can represent Christ well as we analyze and explain the business disciplines in light of the truths of general and special revelation.

3. “*Consider that many secular universities don’t even have a full-time position in biblical studies.*” Two related challenges emerge for the CBFA. First, it would be an understatement to note that few (if any) secular universities hold a spot open for business thinkers representing an explicitly Christian perspective. Second, even within the “safe” haven of Christian academic institutions, business faculty are likely to be appreciated more for their contributions to maintaining the cash cow than they are for any academic or theological thinking they may contribute. These factors make it difficult to generate a critical mass of Christian thinking in the business arena. However, we certainly

do not want to suggest that believing scholars at secular institutions cannot contribute to the body of knowledge that CBFA seeks to develop. In this issue, we find a very interesting reading of the Parable of the Shrewd Manager from Bruno Dyck, Fred Starke, and Calvin Dueck, all of the University of Manitoba. Outside of such exceptions, however, most of the contributions to faith-business integration are going to come from faith-oriented institutions. CBFA members face the added challenge of convincing their institutions to provide the support and resources necessary to do the good work to which we are being called.

4. *“Consider that in nearly half a century... not a single biblical scholar has emerged as a public intellectual either nationally or internationally.”* I believe it is safe to say that we in the CBFA have not generated nationally- or internationally-renown scholars either, at least not in terms of renown for biblically-based scholarship. It is not entirely clear that we labor for the sake of such renown. Nonetheless, it is likely our ability to have an

impact on business practice at the national level will evolve from our ability to impact business thinking at the highest levels. To this end, the Editor and Review Board of *JBIB* have dedicated ourselves to encouraging, soliciting, supporting, developing, and producing the type of scholarship that will continually illuminate business practice. If we are allowed a larger stage or forum than CBFA and *JBIB*, then to God be the glory.

What next?

Be all of that as it may, what are the types of issues we ought to be considering? Among the many things that may come to minds other than my own, I offer up a few areas of consideration that ought to raise the contributions of CBFA and *JBIB* to the next level as we move forward.

Business implications of genetic and molecular discoveries — Sharon Johnson and I presented at the 2006 CBFA meeting in Dayton a discussion of the trends toward the molecular economy stemming from scientific and technological discoveries. Among other conclusions, we stated that

we believe that this is a fertile and fruitful area for exploration among Christian scholars. The developing cultural implications of this new economy will result in a clash of worldviews from which Christians cannot shrink. The molecular economy and the genetic industries it creates will form around a Darwinian logic and ethic that must be challenged where appropriate according to the light of biblical truth. I hope to see in *JBIB* many discussions of the nature and implications of the coming molecular economy. There is much to celebrate in discovery and innovation. There is much to anticipate in science and technological advancement. And there is too much at stake to allow the business environment and its impact on culture to evolve without insight, critique, and commentary from those in the Christian camp who speak to business issues. We are that camp.

Intelligent Design —

Related to the genetic and molecular developments in our modern economy is the cultural and scientific battle over Darwinism and Intelligent Design. As George Marsden noted in

his classic, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*, a distinguishing tenet of practically all Christians is the truth of the creation. If we believe that Intelligent Design is a viable scientific representation of creationist theology, then the implications of such a truth ought to be explored in all realms of culture, including business and economics. Already most business processes are understood solely in Darwinian terms. We speak of organizational ecology to model firm birth, growth, and demise. We employ evolutionary psychology to explain motivation, teamwork, and other organizational behavior phenomena. Evolutionary economics is a fundamental model of innovation. I believe that it is imperative that we seek to better understand the logic underlying Intelligent Design (ID) theory and work to build scripturally-sound ID models of business. Such an agenda will allow us to know better where Darwinian models are weak, and how creation-friendly models might better explain business phenomena. Well-crafted thinking and scholarship places our ideas in

the best possible light in the public arena.

Applied scholarship — *JBIB* continues to be one of the few publication outlets for business-oriented applied scholarship from a Christian perspective. As Stacy Jackson and his colleagues at Calvin College remind us in their article, “Engaging Ideas: Can Christian Business Scholarship Inform Business Practice?” our scholarship ultimately must be of value to the Christian practicing business in the secular marketplace. Not only must we provide answers to their questions, we must provide encouragement, truth, feedback, and ideas. We must be engaged with practitioners in order to understand their challenges. While we are not the same as practitioners (despite the fact that many of us in CBFA came from “industry”), we are their partners in ministry. As we continually seek relevance, our practicing brothers and sisters are a key constituency in our work.

Business as missions/tent-making — In laboring to understand the faith-business intersection, it seems as though the whole “business-as-mission”

movement snuck up on us. While there are now arising books and articles on the subject, the idea has not yet “been explored in much depth, especially in regards to how this movement affects Christian business education and scholarship. A notable exception is Steve Rundle and Tom Steffen’s (2003) book, *Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Missions*, and Rundle’s earlier piece in *JBIB*, “The Christian Business Scholar and the Great Commission” (2000). Most of us in CBFA know someone who is engaged in the trenches establishing missions opportunities through business engagements. This is difficult work, and we owe it to these brave missionaries to develop a better understanding of how to make such ventures more effective. *JBIB* is not, in reality, a “practitioner” journal. Nor is it a “missiology” journal. Nonetheless, as CBFA and the Christian academy have no other outlets for scholarly examination of applied scholarship or missions-related scholarship in business, *JBIB* must continue to serve this function until other

publication outlets are developed — from CBFA or elsewhere.

Demographic and socio-culture trends impacting business — It is impossible for us to anticipate all of the demographic and cultural trends that will affect businesses and businesspeople. And yet each one of us sees a piece of the puzzle, a part of the elephant, so to speak. It is critical — if CBFA and its members are to be a relevant source of ideas in our cultural domain — that we engage the trends we see around us. Our analysis should begin with early pieces of commentary on trends we encounter, move eventually through carefully crafted theoretical development, and ultimately produce practical applications of eternal biblical truths to temporal cultural contexts. Several examples can be easily considered. The rapid acceptance and integration of homosexual life into Western culture has many implications for business. Naturally, Christians have staked positions all over the social spectrum on this subject, but little has been said about the Christian *business* perspective on gay rights. It is likely that CBFA

members would mostly adhere to a relatively conservative position on this issue, but what does this mean for business? I won't presume to answer this question here, but I pose the challenge.

Another trend is the “Hispanicization” (to coin a phrase — or mangle the Spanglish language) of America. Our readers and contributors in other nations will recognize this in terms of their own immigration challenges. In the U.S., Hispanics represent the fastest growing demographic segment of society, a result of both legal and illegal immigration. While Americans grapple with the problems inherent in illegal immigration, Christians need to weigh in on the consideration of business implications of this trend and on the implications of reversing the trend. Many sectors of society rely heavily on Hispanics as a source of cheap labor. What do we think about this? Illegal Hispanic immigrants exact a heavy toll on U.S. public resources. Is there a social justice angle that makes sense to us?

A third trend that warrants a Christian business academy (CBFA) response is the aging of

the American population. This is closely related to advances in the molecular and genetic sciences, as discussed earlier. What areas of business are most affected by this trend? What ethical concerns does it raise? As our friends in the marketplace encounter issues related to the aging population, how should they respond? Again, I don't have these answers (yet). However, if we in the CBFA are to rise to the challenge of becoming relevant, we must develop intelligent and interesting responses to the forces in our society.

Conclusion

Whether or not Jacques Berlinerblau was right to call out the SBL is for its members to decide. Nonetheless, we in the CBFA face a unique historical opportunity. Christianity, religion, and spirituality are all topics on the post-modern table of discussion. They are vastly popular subjects, and the unique insights of CBFA members in matters of business will receive no greater appreciation than is now the case. Can we answer the call? Can we say (in the words of the great theologian,

John Fogarty), "Put me in, Coach; I'm ready to play today"? I look forward to working with abandon and fury with my friends and colleagues in the CBFA and elsewhere to bring good, God-glorifying ideas to the table, and to the pages of *JBIB*. Thanks for letting me be a part of this. Now go write something.

Dr. Richard J. Martinez

Associate Professor of Management
Department of Business Administration
Cedarville University
251 N. Main St.
Cedarville, OH 45314
937-766-4993
rmartinez@cedarville.edu

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ARTICLE

Joy at Work Postscript: “Enter Into the Master’s Joy”

Dennis W. Bakke

The following article is a chapter (actually, the “Postscript”) from Dennis W. Bakke’s seminal book, Joy at Work (paperback 2006; Pearson Venture Group). The chapter provides the underlying rationale explaining Mr. Bakke’s remarkable journey as the co-founder and CEO of Applied Energy Services (AES). The rest of the book — all of it preceding this chapter — is equally enlightening and useful for students, professors, and business practitioners who are inclined to challenge the established paradigm of compartmentalizing the faith and business/work aspects of our lives. We at JBIB thank Mr. Bakke and his publishers for allowing us to re-print this chapter, which is used by permission.

—Rick Martinez, Editor

“Where do these ideas come from?” was a frequently asked question following my lectures at business schools and other forums on the subjects covered in this book. “Enter Into the Master’s Joy” is my response. It is an attempt to describe the integration of my faith and the secular work to which I have been called. For clergy, this chapter is one person’s view from the pew.

—D. W. B.

Miss McInnes, a petite woman in her early 50s, was my math teacher from 8th to 11th grade. Polio had left her with a withered arm, but her brilliance and dedication were her most important features. During my senior year, I decided to stay at school before home football games, which were played on

Friday nights, instead of spending an hour and a half riding the bus home and then turning right around to get back in time for the game. Miss McInnes invited me to have supper with her before those games, at the local cafe about a quarter of a mile from school. One evening she asked the question put to every

high school senior. “What are you going to do with your life?” I gave her my usual answer: “I don’t really have any idea, although I am hoping to go to college.” I thought the college answer would bear out the faith she had shown in me. Fewer than 40 percent of my classmates planned to attend college. “I have some advice for you,” she responded without hesitation. “Raymond and Lowell [my older and younger brothers, respectively, both of whom had scrupulously avoided taking math from her] have already committed to be pastors. Someone needs to support them.”

To my knowledge, Miss McInnes was not a churchgoer or an amateur theologian. But her advice to me captured what I had been taught about the purpose of work and God’s attitude toward it. The best occupation for a devout Christian, according to the teachings of my church, was to be a missionary, preferably in rural Africa. My cousin Gordon Bakke filled that role for over 20 years. Second best was to be a pastor or priest. My brothers were called to this kind of work. Third in the hierarchy was the

“helping” professions: teachers, social workers, nurses, and others who served in similar ways, especially those who were not paid high salaries. People seemed to get more credit if they performed these kinds of jobs within a Christian-based organization, rather than working for the government, a public school, or a profit-making organization. Next in line was government work. Homemaking was a respected occupation as well. At the bottom were commercial and business jobs such as secretaries, technicians, factory workers, and executives. The primary path to redemption for these unfortunate souls was to make enough money to support those working in “full-time Christian ministry.” They could also atone by volunteering their time to do something significant for the local church or another Christian activity when not at their jobs. Miss McInnes had advised me to use my talents to play the role dictated by my religious beliefs, at least to the extent that I understood them at the time.

When I left Harvard six years later, my ideas about work had not changed significantly. I

accepted a position with the federal government in Washington partly because I had not served in the military. I felt a tug to do something useful for society. Somehow, spending time in government service seemed more consistent with my faith than jumping directly into business. After six more years working in the secretary's office at the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and in the Executive Office of the President, my understanding of the interplay between my faith and my work remained the same.

A shift began several years after AES opened its doors for business. A small group of people from Washington Community Fellowship, the church that Eileen and I had helped start, began meeting to pray, study the Bible, and share our lives...My understanding of the relationship between work and faith was reshaped by our Bible studies, conversations, and prayers. Every week I met with another group of friends, including Bill Brooks, Dan Van Horn, and Bob Muir, for breakfast in the cafeteria at the Supreme Court on Capitol Hill. Our discussions focused

primarily on business and the role faith played in it. We called our group "The Business Square Table." In these conversations I tested some of the business ideas that came out of my understanding of Scripture. Soon I was putting them to use at AES, which was still struggling to get established.

One of my core beliefs, then and now, is that every entity incorporated by the state should serve the needs of society in an ethical and economically healthy manner. The same goal is appropriate for both profit-making and not-for-profit business organizations. My views on this point are based on biblical principles, starting with the Creation story in the Bible.

The Creation story begins with God working. He is creating the universe. He then creates mankind in His own image. He assigned humans to manage the Earth and all the animals, plants, and other resources it contained. God gave us the capability and authority to work. Through the act of Creation, He showed us how to undertake this responsibility. Genesis 2:5 says, "... and there was not a man to till the

ground.” This implies that one of the reasons mankind exists is to work.

Work itself was not the goal of life. We were not placed in the Garden purely to work. The Bible says that we were created to have a relationship with God and to honor Him. Work is one of the ways we honor or “glorify” God. Humankind’s first important job description was to manage the Earth and all that comes from God’s creation. I believe this includes the ideas, services, and products that come from the imaginations of people. We honor God by furthering His creation. Work should be an act of worship to God. God is pleased when people steward their talents and energy to achieve these ends.

The Bible does not appear to give priorities to the various kinds of stewardship or work. All kinds of production and management activities honor God. If the work is seen by the worker as something accomplished for God and meeting a need in society, it is pleasing to God. Some roles that modern society tends to see as less valuable and mundane — animal

husbandry and tilling the soil, for instance — are specifically mentioned as worthy endeavors in the Garden. Isn’t it logical that all work that results in food, clothing, shelter, rest or recreation, beauty, and a host of other worthy ends can be acts of worship to God and seen as valuable contributions to society? Are these not activities that can be as sacred as rearing children, teaching school, or even carrying out priestly duties?

When I was a teenager, a camp counselor introduced me to a Bible verse in Paul’s letter to the church at Corinth. “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). This verse suggested that all my work and play was to be done for God. I tested the concept at home with what seemed to be the least creative and inspiring job I was assigned: washing dishes. I vowed to approach the twice-daily task as work done directly for God. Over time I realized that meant doing the work with a willing spirit, enthusiasm, and pride in the results. I continually worked on my dishwashing skills with a goal of being the best home

dishwasher God ever employed. Forty years later, Eileen and my children will attest to my seriousness and special joy that is part of almost every dishwashing experience.

Though I often fail to live up to God's highest standards, I realize that my approach to the job is consistent with the expectation God places on all my daily work. God does not differentiate among types of work. Halfhearted efforts and sloppy work do not honor God. He expects me to use my best efforts, talents, and skills in every task I undertake, whatever its importance.

A survey of other biblical stories finds no evidence that God favors church or other religiously related work over other callings and vocations. The grocery store magnate Howard Butt points out that Bezaleel was the first person mentioned in the Bible who was "filled with the Spirit of God." Neither Moses or Joshua received that distinction. Was Bezaleel a priest? Was he God's chosen leader of the Israelites? No. Bezaleel was an artist, a designer, a master craftsman, and later a

contracting executive. He was given the task of helping to design and build Israel's tabernacle in the wilderness.

Most of the heroes of the Bible are people called to secular vocations. Abraham developed real estate. Jacob was a rancher. Joseph was a high government official (in charge of agriculture, welfare, and interior lands and probably the equivalent of a modern-day prime minister) in a nation led by a Pharaoh who did not acknowledge the sovereignty of the Hebrew God. Esther won a beauty contest. Lydia manufactured cloth. Many heroes were military men. My favorite example is Daniel. He was an exiled refugee, an immigrant, who entered the King's University (Babylon's Harvard). Babylon was led by people who did not believe in the God whom Daniel served. There were no Jewish priests or synagogues in Babylon. Worship and prayer were conducted by lay people. In this setting, Daniel rose to the rank of prime minister and may have served as interim king when Nebuchadnezzar had to step down because of insanity. These biblical characters were

not clerics or in the helping professions. Indeed, they served as leaders in organizations that stood in opposition to everything they believed about God and His role in the world. They worked for secular organizations.

There are some who argue that the New Testament paints a different picture in this regard. I do not read it that way. I have already mentioned Lydia, and I could list others with similar callings. Again I quote Howard Butt:

The idea that daily secular work is spiritually inferior comes to its ultimate destruction in the person of Jesus of Nazareth — the Carpenter. The word translated “carpenter” is also the word for “builder,” someone in the construction trades (since there was little wood in the area, construction trades probably meant stone or masonry work). The Greek word is “tekton,” from which we get our word “technology.”

Traditionally we have thought of Nazareth as a rural village and the carpenter’s shop as a

quiet, rustic place with a small number of employees. That may not be the real picture. In 1931, the University of Michigan began archaeological digs at the ancient city of Sepphoris, just 4 miles northwest of Nazareth. From that research we know today that Sepphoris was a burgeoning, upscale Greco-Roman metropolis of 30,000 or more people located on the powerful East-West trade routes. Sepphoris was a moneyed city full of Jews, but also Greeks, Arabs, and Romans. Following an uprising around the time of Jesus’s birth, the Romans destroyed the city. Sepphoris was being rebuilt during Jesus’s lifetime — during his building-business lifetime. Herod Antipas made Sepphoris his capital for ruling Galilee. During Jesus’s later public ministry He avoided Sepphoris, probably because of its Herodian politics and the fact that Herod had Jesus’s friend and forerunner, John the Baptist, beheaded. During his years in the building business, I find it hard to

believe that Jesus and his team didn't work in Sepphoris. In construction, it was the biggest thing going in his area and not far from home.

This is all speculation, of course, but it is likely that Jesus spent 75 to 85 percent of his working life in the building profession making money or its equivalent in order to support himself and his family. It is also likely that he sold his products and services to people who did not recognize or acknowledge His deity. Many of them may not even have been Jews. He did what most people in the Christian church today would call secular work.

Jesus ordains another type of work different from the stewardship approach described in this book. Introduced in Matthew's Gospel, this other type of work is commonly known as the Great Commission. "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on Earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and

of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Thus, Christians have two callings, or job descriptions. First, they should use their talents and energy to steward the Earth's resources to meet their physical needs and those of others. Second, they should present the good news about Christ's redemption and all of its implications to people around the world. The Bible indicates that Christians are called to both these jobs, although our time commitment and effort toward each may not be equal. Family life is a good example where both job descriptions apply. Both of these assignments from God are part of our requirement to seek His holiness. Seeking holiness requires us to pray, study, reflect, and ask forgiveness for our transgressions. Our daily work is also an important element of the holy existence to which we are called. Our work and our faith come into alignment if we keep in mind these four lessons:

1. As part of seeking holiness and honoring God, we are called both to steward resources to serve people's physical needs and also to spread the story of redemption and the other teachings of Jesus. While the evangelical wing of the modern Christian church often puts the emphasis on work related to the Great Commission, there is little evidence that God considers this a higher calling than the work of managing His creation.

2. I realize that there is nothing more important than a person's coming into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Clergy and others who are set apart to lead us spiritually are obviously important in God's design for the world. However, their calling does not automatically rank higher than the work of farmers, executives, homemakers, administrative assistants, politicians, artists, teachers, factory workers, or investment bankers.

3. Being called to work in a "secular" organization is no better or worse than being called to work in a church, a para-church organization (such as Habitat for Humanity and World Vision), or an institution run by Christians. God may call us to work for Him in any of these settings, regardless of our occupation and particular talents. Moreover, if I am called primarily to evangelism, working in a secular company or other institution might be a better fit than working in the friendly confines of a Christian setting.

4. If I see my work as a mission for God, my attitude and behavior at work are likely to change in a markedly positive way.

The assistant pastor of a church I once attended counseled young people who were having trouble in a secular workplace to quit their jobs and seek positions in church work or employment in some other Christian organization. While there may be individual cases

where this kind of advice is appropriate, I don't think it is a practical approach in a world where devout Christians are a minority. In the United States and Europe, there is a trend to make religion primarily a private matter. In other words, whatever a person does at home and church regarding God is acceptable, but don't bring faith into the public square. The movement to keep God out of the schools, government, and companies is contrary to the biblical mandate to steward all parts of the Creation, including the public institutions we call secular.

Some churches and other Christian organizations have abetted this separation of "sacred" from "secular" by operating their own nurseries, schools, social services, and charities. By doing so, they are inadvertently aiding those who would keep the church out of the public square. We should encourage the gifted people in church-related enterprises to at least consider switching to secular schools and companies where their faith may have a bigger impact. We need more Daniels to speak with words and deeds

in all the important institutions of modern societies.

Members of my church developed an effective after-school learning center for children in the neighborhood. The program was expensive. It required over \$100,000 of the church's \$150,000 mission budget to provide part-time services for 30 to 40 children. A discussion among church members ensued regarding what changes should be made. I suggested shutting down the program (even though my wife had helped to start it 10 years earlier). In its place, I advocated a new approach. Why not provide \$10,000-a-year supplements to entice up to 10 young Christian teachers to work in the public schools of the inner city around the church? The new teachers would be marked by the church as God's ambassadors to the children in the neighborhood schools. I suggested that this strategy might have a greater impact on neighborhood children than our little center at the church. Like a lot of my schemes, the idea did not fly with others in the congregation. It was, however, the kind of thinking

that logically comes from understanding the concepts of work, callings, and mission as presented in the Bible.

I asked one of the volunteers at our church learning center where he was employed. “I am working part time serving tables at the local restaurant so I can have as much time as possible to work at the learning center,” he said. Most church members saw his decision as laudable and consistent with his faith and with God’s priorities. He believed the job at the learning center was much more significant in God’s view than the role at the restaurant. I have already suggested that this isn’t necessarily true, at least if I interpret Scripture correctly. With his attitude and philosophy about work, was he really doing justice to his job at the restaurant? Was he treating the role of waiter as one ordained by God? Was he performing his job as God’s steward serving the dozens of people who sat in his area of the restaurant each night? Was he cutting corners? Did he have a godly attitude? If he didn’t see his work as a sacred responsibility, would he do his best? Would his light shine

brightly for God, or would he go through the motions to earn money and save his best efforts for the learning center? It is all too common for Christians to put their voluntary efforts in community service or at their church ahead of the work that pays their salary and occupies most of their time. Similarly, people often give a lower priority to their work at the factory or office than they do to their responsibilities at home. This is not biblical. I also am not convinced that the common admonition from pastors to put family life ahead of work outside the home is consistent with Scripture. Jesus, for example, appeared to put His work ahead of family. On the other hand, idolizing work, or always putting work ahead of family responsibilities, is not biblical, either.

A gracious, godly woman met me at the airport to take me to the Christian conference where I was to speak. On the drive to the hotel, she asked me what I was going to say during my workshop session the next day. I gave her a five-minute synopsis of what I believed to be the principal purpose of organizations and my

passion to create joyful workplaces. “Are you part of the ‘success to significance’ movement?” she asked, indicating her approval if I was. “No,” I said. “I think that idea is very dangerous and is based on an incorrect reading of Scripture.” She almost drove off the road but recovered quickly enough to probe my thinking further.

The “success to significance” idea was popularized mostly among wealthy evangelical Christians through the inspirational book, *Half Time*, written by my friend Bob Buford. Bob tells the story of owning and operating a very successful communications company. At the “halftime” of his life he decided that he had made enough money and that it was time to do something more significant. He chose to move into the nonprofit sector. Unfortunately, many people have taken Bob’s personal story and made it a road map for their own lives. I see no evidence from the Bible or my Christian experience that working in a business is any more or less significant to God than becoming involved in the voluntary, church-related, or

not-for-profit activities that many Christians now think are more worthy of their talents and time. My reading of Scripture indicates that nearly every kind of work is significant, if it is consistent with the person’s calling and the person is working to glorify and worship God.

“Give something back” is another phrase thrown around by business leaders. It is a concept as flawed as “success to significance.” Giving something back assumes that I took something I shouldn’t have while working. Certainly this would not be the case if I saw my business as God intended it, a stewardship ministry to serve the needs of others and, in the process, my needs as well. Stewarding resources to meet the needs of others is a legitimate “giving” activity. Few activities are more socially responsible or Christian than using one’s talents to work at or manage a business. “Giving back” is relevant only if I have misappropriated and mismanaged the resources I have been given to steward.

John Pearson, the extraordinary CEO of the Christian Management Association, invited

me to speak at his group's annual conference. Before the gathering, we discussed the disturbing implications of the "success to significance" philosophy. "You see those individuals standing over by the window?" he asked, pointing to three men who appeared to be in their 30s. "Each of them was very successful in a high-tech industry in Southern California. Each one made a large amount of money. All quit their jobs and began searching for something more significant to do. They have all become disillusioned. They have not found a more significant way to use their talents than the jobs they quit. Now, they play a lot of golf."

Christian Wright, a 22-year-old graduate student, was working for a Christian development organization trying to help poor people in rural Uganda who had no running water or electricity. He became aware of AES's efforts to build a power plant on the Nile River that would supply electricity to both Uganda and Kenya. He was later hired by AES leaders in London to assist the development team for the project in Kampala. For more than four years he applied integ-

riety, creativity, enthusiasm, and business savvy to overcome economic, political, and environmental problems. He was able to bring the project near to the point where it could be funded and built. Chris is a devout follower of Jesus Christ. Like many others of faith at AES, Chris came to understand his role in the company as his calling from God, and his ministry, and his way of serving others. Few clergymen, missionaries, or social workers draw as heavily on their faith as Chris did while helping plan this project. If the Uganda power plant is eventually built, this profit-making venture will very likely do more good for the people of Uganda, especially the poor, than all the aid the government has received over the past 25 years from foreign nations, foundations, and church organizations. The projected price of the power from the plant is less than half that of the current fossil-fuel alternatives (and not nearly as damaging to the environment). It would triple the number of people who have access to electricity in that small country. Chris Wright and his colleagues at AES and in the

Ugandan government were doing God's work.

I met Steve Hase at church on Capitol Hill in Washington several years after AES had opened its doors for business. He was a recent graduate of Duke, where he had played junior varsity basketball. I enticed him to join our young company as a bookkeeper and financial assistant in our central financial services office, which employed only three other people at the time. His 6-foot, 7-inch frame and basketball skills were prized when the AES Arlington office competed against the hotshots from the new power plants becoming part of the company. Within a few years Steve was recruited to help in the company's business-development efforts. His colleagues soon recognized his extraordinary skills as an ambassador, a bridge builder, negotiator, and problem solver when AES faced controversial issues that involved public citizens, government officials, and other interests.

After six years with the company, Steve volunteered to move with his wife and young children to Cumberland, Mary-

land, a small and economically struggling town in the mountains of western Maryland. AES had identified Cumberland as a possible site for a new coal-fired power plant. Steve was asked to lead the local development of the plant.

I recently spoke at a civic function in Cumberland. It had been over six years since Steve had left the city for another AES assignment. Even now, he is remembered for his gracious manner, integrity, and courage, his love of the people of the community, and his creativity and tenacity in solving problems. He left Cumberland to live in Manchester, New Hampshire. Again, he was able to solve problems and win the hearts of an entire community, allowing AES to build a power plant in a city where few thought it possible. He may be the best example of how a Christian should and can approach business. He lived his faith openly. It affected everything related to his work. He saw his work as a calling from God as well as a duty to AES. He used his talents to solve problems and serve the needs of the community. In all

his work, he attempted to operate with the kind of humility, love, honesty, and persistence that Christ modeled for us. He did God's work as it is supposed to be done.

People of faith carry out their callings in a variety of settings and organizations. My sister, Marilyn Bakke Pearson, for example, has been a devoted mother, wife, and homemaker for most of her adult life. For many years she taught Bible each week to upwards of 500 women in Wilmette, Illinois, and in Devon, Pennsylvania. She also has a passion for making living spaces beautiful as well as functional. She manages to achieve that goal whether the budget is big or small. In her decorating business, she ministers to people by listening to the specifics of their lives and brings joy to others. Her decorating business honors God every bit as much as her roles teaching Bible or being a homemaker.

Genesis tells us that God paused at each step of the Creation process to pronounce His work "good." The joy He found in both the process and the extraordinary results

is obvious. God enjoyed working. Jesus reminds us of God's enjoyment of work in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30:

For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of these servants came and settled accounts with them.

So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, "Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides

them.” His lord said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the master’s joy.” He also who had received two talents came and said, “Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.” His lord said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the master’s joy.”

Then he who had received the one talent came and said, “Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.”

But his lord answered and said to him, “You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought

to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has 10 talents.

“For to everyone who had, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Most teachings on this passage focus on using our talents in a manner that will result in some useful product or service for the world. The parable also reinforces my interpretation of the purpose of work. It helps support my conclusion that the purpose of business and of other man-made institutions is to steward resources with a goal of creating products and services beneficial to people. It reminds me that stewardship is more about the eight to 10 hours a day I work at the office than it

is about the two hours a week I volunteer at the church or at another not-for-profit organization. The parable also supports my emphasis on accountability in the workplace.

My primary reason for focusing on this passage, however, is the phrase “enter into the master’s joy.” I have never heard a sermon, read a book, or seen a study that concentrated on the meaning and importance of these words. Notice that each time the lord or master reviews the work of the servants who took risks in managing the resources entrusted to them, the master congratulates the servant for a job well done and then adds the words — “enter into the master’s joy.” I conclude from this parable that God enjoys our stewardship work just as He enjoys His own work. By implication, we ought to enjoy our work. Note also the absence of decision making by the Master. God is not a typical boss. All the stewardship decisions were delegated to the servants. The linkage between joy and decision making is very much evident in this passage of Scripture. Joy at work is possible if we invest our talents as God

intended. In that way we honor God and can experience His joy. The Olympic runner Eric Liddell expressed it well in the movie *Chariots of Fire* when he said, “When I run, I feel His pleasure.”

Until Adam and Eve sinned and were driven from the Garden, the working environment there was described as a paradise. Work was a central element of this paradise. Not only was work an act of worship, but it also was fulfilling and rewarding. Of course, after Adam and Eve broke their relationship with God, all of life, including work, became more difficult and troublesome. For some, that is where the story ends. Mundane daily work is seen as an obligation, a burden, or even pure drudgery, rather than the joyous experience it was meant to be.

Fortunately, that is not the end of the story. For Christians there is more. There is redemption. Christ came so we could re-establish our relationship with God. That fact has many implications, but for the purpose of this book it means that our work can be redeemed as well. While we cannot re-create the perfect work environment of the

Garden, we can do everything possible to make our work environments as close to the Garden's standards as possible. We can approach our work as God designed from the beginning by helping create the workplaces that God intended. Despite sin, joy at work is still possible. We get more clues in Genesis and the rest of the Bible as to how to make work joyful. Above all, we must be humble. We are not God. We were created as limited, fallible human beings. Those characteristics apply to all people, including those of us who are leaders. Recognition of this truth, especially by leaders, is the first step to creating a workplace filled with joy.

Joy will be difficult to experience. It requires that we understand that the major purpose of work is to use the resources of the created world to serve our needs and the needs of others. Work is likely to be experienced as a difficult and meaningless endeavor if we stray from God's original purpose.

We may also find work less enjoyable if bosses make most of the important decisions. The Creation story does not

assign people, even leaders, the responsibility of "managing" other people. The Bible says that people are to have dominion over the animals and plants. It encourages humans to act as stewards for the world we live in. It does not, however, encourage us to dominate other people. It never classifies people as "resources." The Bible does endorse leadership. What is the difference? Biblical leadership requires those in authority to serve the people they lead. Leaders do whatever it takes to allow followers to use their talents effectively. Thus, good leaders delegate decisions and create an environment in which others can manage God's world. Notice that God delegated the decision of naming the animals to Adam. Even more important in the Creation story is that God allowed humankind to make the ultimate decision of life. He gave us the choice to acknowledge and follow God or to reject Him. We were created in God's likeness as moral beings with the ability to reason, make decisions, and be held responsible for the consequences. Living in relationship to God in a manner that is consistent with God's plan

for His creation is the best recipe for a joyous and productive life.

The question of leadership authority and its effect on organizational decisions remains difficult to understand. In my chapter on leadership, I discussed the dilemma of a leader who, on one hand, is given authority over the entire organization and, on the other, is supposed to refrain from making decisions that others in the organization can make. My research and experience suggest that leaders do have the authority to make all decisions and direct all actions. Leaders are responsible for all that goes on within the organization. There is, however, no requirement that leaders make all or even most of the decisions for which they have authority. God certainly had the authority to name the animals, but he did not use that authority. In the Parable of the Talents, the master gave his resources to his servants and entrusted them with decisions about their use. God could certainly control His creation through micromanagement, but He chose to delegate most decisions to us. Where God tends to take action is on matters of

morality and questions of right and wrong. Shouldn't we follow His lead when we decide which decisions to make and which to delegate? God created humans in His image. We are to be creators like Him. We should follow His path. As the Parable of the Talents shows, I do not believe He meant that most important decisions should be left to Himself or to human leaders acting on His behalf. God wants us to enjoy our work just as He did.

Bear with me while I retell the story of Joseph's life in Egypt with a contemporary slant in order to make a contemporary point. When Joseph, son of Jacob, went to Canaan Temple of Yahweh on the Nile, he joined a small and struggling group of believers. There were servants and slaves who, like Joseph, had been sold into bondage and taken by force to Cairo. Other members were young people who had fled their homes in Canaan to seek their fortune in the exciting urban life of Egypt. Still others were merchants and travelers who had come to the great city to ply their trade.

Early on, Joseph distinguished himself as one of God's

special people. He had moved rapidly from household slave to head steward at the home of a high government official. After being framed by the official's wife and sent to jail, Joseph received advice from the elders and priests of the temple to leave domestic management and join the temple staff. His ability to interpret dreams and understand prophecy would be especially useful at the temple.

The Hebrew priests became more aggressive in recruiting him for temple work after his prediction that a seven-year famine would hit the entire Middle East. Certainly those in the temple who were of Canaanitic descent understood the dire consequences that a famine would have on family and friends back home. They strongly encouraged Joseph to lead a new Center for Canaan Refugee Relief (CCRR), operated out of the temple. The CCRR would begin immediately to store food and other necessities for members of the temple and relatives in Canaan and elsewhere. The center would collect money and food from congregation members and other supporters. They would send

requests to family and friends for similar support. With the money collected they would pay Joseph's salary in his important role as director of the center. They might also buy a little food with the extra money they received. Temple members would be encouraged to donate whatever food they could for the cause. Volunteers would be asked to drop by the Center after they finished their 16 hours toiling as domestic workers in Egyptian homes. They could help package and store the food.

Enter Pharaoh. He offered Joseph the job of chief operating officer of the country. The priests and elders of the temple tried to dissuade Joseph from accepting the job. "It is a godless government. It discriminates against our people," they argued. Joseph would be selling out to the worst kind of secular organization possible. One frustrated temple leader predicted the job would cause him to lose his faith in Yahweh or at least dilute righteousness. His once bright future in the ministry would be lost. He would be trading a chance of doing something significant for

God for worldly wealth, fame, and power.

Joseph took the job with Pharaoh, of course, and served his God and society from the new position. He still worshiped weekly at Canaan Temple. His friends and temple leaders were friendly, but they made little connection between his new role in the government and the programs and ministries of the temple. The temple leaders scrambled to find a new leader for CCRR in order to continue their program to prepare for the upcoming famine.

This apocryphal story of Joseph is presented to show how many modern Christian churches, especially those with a bent toward social service, might react to people like Joseph in their congregations. Joseph is an Old Testament portrait of Christ. He is betrayed and falsely accused of wrongdoing. He is restored to a lofty position so he can help save the world. He forgives his brothers for betraying him. All too frequently, leaders in Christian churches do not understand the implications of the Joseph story for members of their congregation and the

church's theology of work and mission.

One of the primary purposes of the local church is to encourage, prepare, and hold people responsible for their life missions, ministries, and callings. I suspect that the percentage of churches that do a good job of fulfilling this purpose is quite low. Few churches put the same emphasis on both the Great Commission in Matthew and the stewardship mission of Genesis. While churches generally do a good job helping people with religious matters, they often overlook the secular roles we fulfill at God's behest. Some jobs are wrongly considered more pleasing to God than others. The result is an institutional church that misses the opportunity to adequately prepare the majority of its members for the important roles they should play in the world.

The work set forth in the Great Commission of Matthew is almost always called "evangelism." But the church has had a hard time agreeing on a name for the responsibility God gave us to manage creation. Would our understanding and zeal increase if the Christian

church could agree on a common way to identify this important work?

Presbyterians and a few others call it the “cultural mandate.” Because of John Calvin’s theological insights in the 16th century, Presbyterian doctrine concerning the redeeming qualities of working in secular organizations is quite similar to my own. While the theology of the “cultural mandate” might be alive in the Presbyterian church, it is my impression that the average layman neither understands the term “cultural mandate” nor uses it to describe his daily work for the Lord. “Cultural” has taken on different meanings in modern society and may no longer be an effective way to communicate the essence of this type of work.

My brother Ray identifies this kind of work as our public ministry. Unfortunately, “public” is today usually associated with secular or government institutions. Christians probably would not identify their work in business or other private institutions as public ministry.

Tent-making ministry, so named because the Apostle Paul

made tents to fund his missionary work, is sometimes suggested as an alternative. However, this name suffers from the connotation that work is valuable only because it enables people to evangelize. The stewardship work I am referring to is not just an activity that supports evangelism. It is important and necessary work in and of itself — for the products and services it provides to society, as an act of worship to the Lord of Creation, and because it places Christians in positions of helping restore the world as God intended it to be. This kind of work puts more emphasis on the quality and quantity of tents than on the money it generates for evangelism.

The term “marketplace ministry” has become popular among para-church organizations and some churches as well. I like the word “marketplace,” but it is not being used in a way consistent with my view on work. The marketplace movement appears to encourage people to use their workplaces to evangelize either by word or deed. This marketplace mission is certainly consistent with the

Great Commission, but it does not sufficiently serve the important goal of stewarding God's resources to meet societal needs.

The phrase "lifestyle evangelism" also falls short. It is primarily a method of letting our behavior at home and at work reflect the character of Christ so that others might know the truth about who He is. This is certainly the way Christians should live and work, but it fails to recognize the importance of our creative efforts and the need to reform our workplaces.

Stewardship ministry reflects the essence of the role that God gave Adam and Eve in the Garden. They were managing resources to meet physical needs. Unfortunately, "stewardship" is a word that the church usually associates with charitable giving and tithing. It has come to refer to the small amount of money people give away, rather than the money they make and the talents they use to celebrate God in their daily lives.

Opus Dei (God's Work) is an increasingly important Catholic movement that advocates holiness in all that we do. It elevates the sacredness of our

daily work. Even so, I don't believe it celebrates, to the extent God intended, the work we accomplish and the places where we work.

Someone suggested that I name the kind of work I am discussing "The Net Minders' Ministry." Jesus called his disciples away from the fishing nets so they could spend most of their time in evangelism. Today, many of us are called to tend the nets so that others can eat and meet other material needs. We could also name this kind of mission effort after Daniel, Joseph, Esther, or any of the hundreds of biblical characters who made this kind of ministry famous. Their example is a powerful reminder that God intends our daily work to be a substantial part of our service to Him.

The way Christians identify the type of work they do often reveals their attitudes toward work. When devout Christians say someone is working "in full-time Christian service" or "in ministry," it usually means that the person works for a church or a para-church organization. It does not cover Christians employed by governments,

businesses, or public schools. Does this imply that people are not doing God's work "full time" if they work in secular organizations, especially profit-making enterprises? There appears to be a misguided notion in many Christian circles that someone working for The Washington Post, General Motors, Harvard University, the Department of Energy, Walt Disney, Goldman Sachs, or the local barbershop is doing something less significant for God than people who work at the First Baptist Church, Young Life, or the Presbyterian Mission Hospital in Pakistan.

If Joseph had been a member of a modern Christian church, he might have quit his job in the Egyptian government and headed back to his family in Israel. By today's logic, it would have been time for him to give up his power and wealth so he could give something back to his people at home. This idea that "Christian work" is somehow superior to the practical work of commerce most likely came from the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. They influenced early Christian theologians such as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Plato's

dualism divided the world into a higher level of great ideas and rational thought and a lower level of less worthy activity, such as work. In *Your Work Matters to God*, Doug Sherman and William Hendricks argue that this dualistic thinking led Christians to believe that their daily work has no intrinsic value. Christian churches and theologians have perpetuated these ideas by elevating the clergy and spirituality above the laity and the practical work that most people undertake. This is not at all consistent with Judeo-Christian Scriptures.

In addition, the powerful 20th-century movement to make faith private by pushing religious thought and opinion from the public square has contributed to the idea that religious beliefs should not be part of our public life, which for many of us is our work. This approach encourages people to freely exercise their faith at home and at church, but not at their workplace. Some churches have unwittingly abetted the movement to remove God from our schools, businesses, and governments by isolating themselves from the secular

world. Churches have created their own schools, social services, and enterprises in an effort to help disadvantaged people. This separation of the “spiritual” from the “worldly” has contributed to the confusion among people of faith regarding the sacred nature of their daily work.

In *Joy at Work*, I suggest how faith fits into businesses and other secular organizations. What about the local church? If church leaders believe what I have written, what changes should they consider in prayer, missions, sermons, pastoral visits, church programs, and the empowerment of church members?

I have put significant emphasis on accountability to God and to our business supervisors for the work we undertake. As discussed earlier, accountability is a necessary ingredient of the enjoyment of the work we do. The local church ought to be a primary vehicle for holding Christian people responsible for their vocational work.

Most Christian churches require people classified as “missionaries” to report periodically to the congregation on their work. Pastors and staff members

also report on their efforts to serve, as do volunteers and participants in church-sponsored programs. People who work outside the realm of the institutional church are rarely asked by the church to account for their work. There are no reports from homemakers. Government employees don’t talk about their work. Lawyers, accountants, nurses, and teachers are not required to tell their fellow congregants about their efforts to serve God through their work. People in business are not asked to provide a record of their stewardship.

Years ago, I asked the elders of my church if I could submit AES’s annual report as part of my accountability to the church and its members. I received no response. For the next few years, I placed a few dozen of the company reports in a conspicuous location within the church as both a partial report on my “ministry” and as a way of saying that the church should hold me accountable for all of my work, not just the 5 percent of my time I spent in worship and other church-sponsored activities. In addition, I added the annual

report of the Mustard Seed Foundation, our family foundation, so that church members could better hold Eileen and me responsible for our work in that part of our lives. Few other individuals or families followed my lead. Leaders of the church seldom discussed the need for accountability for the way we served God through our secular work.

I noticed that most people who were paid a stipend or salary by the local church were expected to report on a regular basis on their activities. Missionaries and pastors who were financially supported by the church were held accountable for their work. I asked to be part of the church budget. "Put me in for \$1," I suggested. No leaders took seriously my request to be part of the church budget so that I would be held accountable for my daily vocation. Why should someone with an income in excess of \$1 million a year be included in the church budget? Why should a business person report on his activities to other church members?

Each of us is accountable to God and our fellow man for the

stewardship of our talents and skills, no matter what financial remuneration we receive for our work. Every organization should hold its members and employees responsible for their work. The local church should develop methods to do this for all its members. The Catholic tradition of regular confession is one way to get at this, although confession focuses mainly on one's failures. It misses the opportunity for fellow congregants to celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of another member's work. There is little doubt that the relevance and vibrancy of the local church would increase if it were more engaged with its members. Similarly, asking members to report regularly to the church community on their jobs, social and recreational activities, and home life would encourage and expand their faith and their appreciation of God's work in the world.

Most churches hold important ceremonies to commission people for jobs or tasks they are planning to undertake. The ceremony celebrates the commitment the person has made to the job, asks the Lord's blessing on

the work, and “marks” or sets the person apart for the special role he or she will undertake. Commissioning is both a solemn and an affirming act.

Unfortunately, commissioning is almost always limited to pastors, missionaries, church staff, and volunteers. We are missing the opportunity to honor people who are called to other work, including parents and homemakers, through the uplifting process of commissioning. I have several times requested from my church leaders that I receive such a commission, but it has never been given. Some suggested mass commissionings — all the lawyers in one group, all the homemakers in another, and all the business people in another. I do not favor a group approach. I believe commissioning should be administered in a manner similar to baptism. Commissioning should be reserved for those who are mature in their faith and are fully committed to carry out their calling in a manner that is consistent with God’s word. Refusing to commission people for secular contributions runs contrary to God’s view of work.

Several years ago, my brother Lowell invited Eileen and me to speak on the fourth and final weekend of a missions conference at his church. It was the first missions conference I had ever attended that included business and other daily work by its members as missions of the church. As a prelude to the conference, a person from the church had taken dozens of pictures of individual church members doing their daily work: a man pumping gas, my mother pushing a grocery cart at Safeway, a young mother caring for her children. The sign above the pictures read “Our Missionaries.” During the conference, over 50 church members who were teachers in the local public schools were honored. What a powerful and beautiful way to help people understand their mission role.

Mission conferences, especially in the evangelical wing of the church, tend to concentrate on the important mission of the Great Commission. Some mission conferences also include the work of Christian-run organizations. Mainline denomination churches often emphasize

their social outreach programs, such as tutoring, drug counseling, and operating senior centers. However, few incorporate the work of those called to use their talents to provide products or services to society. These missionaries deserve a place in the missions conference. God is holding them accountable for their ministry. Shouldn't His church do likewise? These ministers are painters, government bureaucrats, football players, students, homemakers, waiters, taxicab drivers, bankers, and car salesmen. In most congregations, 80 to 90 percent of the members fit this missionary category. These people need encouragement in their mission. Mission conferences would be structured in a very different way if church leaders understood and supported the stewardship roles that these people play in God's kingdom...

...I recall only two or three visits to my place of work by one of my pastors in the past 30 years. I doubt that I am an exception. If our daily work is a sacred calling from God, pastors and priests should come to the workplace often. For people like me, a pastoral visit

affirms the importance to God of my daily tasks and reinforces the idea that my work has been ordained by God. It inspires me to do my best. I am reminded that I am God's representative at my place of work and that I am accountable to Him for my behavior and actions on the job and especially for the service or product I help provide to society.

For pastors, these visits help celebrate the variety and importance of each calling and vocation that God ordains. They lead to a fuller understanding of the challenges and temptations church members face. Sermons and teachings can be better targeted to the needs of the congregation. As the Catholic scholar Michael Novak notes, "Few preachers seem to take pains to understand, reinforce, and encourage business as a Christian calling. Preachers seem more comfortable in the pre-modern economy with pre-modern images and therefore give very little guidance regarding the unique opportunities, restraints, and temptations of a business person's realm. A preacher who is able to use business metaphors would touch

a lot of hearts.” In *Your Work Matters to God*, Sherman and Hendricks estimate that more than 90 percent of Christians have never heard a sermon that drew a connection between their religious beliefs and their work life.

In visiting workplaces, pastors are going where their congregation ministers. My brother Ray was visiting one of his parishioners at her factory job. “This is my minister,” she shouted to her colleagues over the workplace noise. “No, she is your minister. I am her pastor,” he corrected. The local church ministers to the community primarily in the places where church members work. There is no better place for pastors to connect with church members and the larger community than in the workplace.

The local church is mainly concerned with drawing people into worship, helping them establish a relationship with Christ, and nurturing and preparing them for service to others. Within the Christian church worldwide there is considerable disagreement about the definition and priority of

each of these goals. My own bias is that the church should concentrate its pastoral and administrative resources on evangelism, worship, and nurturing and equipping members for service. I suggest that churches operate service programs (schools, companies, feeding programs, social service organizations, housing complexes, and other businesses) only in the rarest instances.

The church should encourage governments, private social service agencies, and companies to perform these services rather than diverting scarce economic and leadership resources away from its primary mission. There are exceptions, of course. The church may participate in one of these undertakings because it offers an opportunity to evangelize. Or it may operate one of these services because no other organization is willing or capable of doing so. Even in these cases, I think it would be better if churches enlisted their members to own and operate programs rather than relying on church staff. This is the Joseph model that I have long advocated...

...One of the reasons that churches hesitate to pull out of social programs is their desire for public credit and acclaim. I have been involved in several late-night meetings with church leaders to discuss who should operate a proposed new program. Inevitably, someone will say, "The church won't get credit if we don't run the program." This is true. A church that initiates and manages a service program is often honored for being progressive and responding to the needs of the community. However, most churches are not good administrators or owners of organizations that make products or deliver services. Typically, neither the church's primary mission nor its governance structure fits the management needs of this type of organization.

I believe the pressure to run such organizations would decline greatly if churches used different criteria to judge their effectiveness. I think local churches should show their love for the community and evaluate the effectiveness of their service in a very different way. A church's service to the community should be measured by the sum of the

work carried out by its members. This would include both voluntary and paid work at home, in businesses, at church, and in other not-for-profit organizations. Thus, the services of the church might include the efforts of 15 public-school teachers and two principals, the owner of a local florist shop, three police officers, the county councilwoman, a metal lathe worker at a local factory, a CFO of a large international oil company, the headmaster of a Christian school, a retail clerk at the local hardware store, an instructor at Gold's Gym, a local leader of Young Life, 42 mothers with small children at home, six members of the military, and a volunteer youth football coach. As members of the church, all these people would bring credit to the local church and, more importantly, to God. This approach is far more consistent with the idea that all work should be equally useful to the Kingdom of God. The combined efforts of individual church members would probably exceed the impact of even the largest and most sophisticated local church operation.

One of the most important roles of the local church is helping people discover the work that God has planned for them and then empowering them to perform that work. As parents, we are urged to raise our children in a way that's consistent with their natural gifts so that they can use their talents in the way God intended. The church is expected to help parents in this task. Many churches do an excellent job of encouraging and empowering children for vocations that are considered Christian in nature. Church leaders write recommendations for young people to Christian colleges. Sometimes churches even provide scholarships for those headed to Bible schools or seminaries. But most churches are less helpful and encouraging when it comes to areas of service in secular organizations. This is another hangover caused by the dualism in the church. It is better to be a pastor than an actor and better to teach homiletics at a seminary than mathematics at MIT.

At the Mustard Seed Foundation (MSF), we are trying to counter this bias with a radical scholarship plan. Our Harvey

Fellows program provides funds to graduate students who are headed for careers where Christians are underrepresented in such fields as the arts, media, finance, academia, and technology. For example, the MSF might award a stipend to a devout Christian who wants to study journalism, as long as that person plans to attend one of the nation's top five graduate programs in journalism. This program is the foundation's way of empowering and marking those Christians who will be the "missionaries" in these fields later in life. It is an example of a strategy the church could use to increase its involvement in all of society.

Recently, I joined my brothers Ray and Lowell and my sister, Marilyn Bakke Pearson, to develop a university that will give doctorate ministry degrees and a master's in business administration. The school, not so modestly named Bakke Graduate University, will seek to celebrate the study and practice of both the stewardship command of Genesis and the Great Commission of Matthew's Gospel.

In the Parable of the Talents, Jesus referred to the full range of gifts that people have been given to carry out their life's work. The Master did not consider one type of work more worthy than another. His only injunction was that people should be willing to risk failure by using their gifts so that the results for the Master might multiply.

Business and other secular work is both a mission (to help people in practical ways) and a mission field. The good news of the Bible is that God plans to redeem us and that we were made in His image so that we could continue His work of creation. We glorify God through our enthusiastic and creative stewardship of the resources he has given us to serve others and provide for ourselves.

When I was a child, we sang a song in Sunday school called "Dare to Be a Daniel." Back then, interpretation of the song focused on Daniel's courage when he faced the lions, standing firm against his enemies and refusing to recant his faith in God. Today, the song takes on additional meaning. I am called to be like Daniel and

serve God by working effectively in a world that is hostile, or at least indifferent, to His existence and to His message. Like Daniel, I am called to steward the resources entrusted to me, both to meet my own needs and the needs of the world around me. In all of this work, I am charged with using my talents and skills to glorify God. Dare to be a Daniel and enter into the Master's joy!

Watch a video interview at www.DennisBakke.com.

Dennis We. Babkke was raised in Saxon, Washington, and graduated from the University of Puget Sound, Harvard Business School, and the National War College. He co-founded The AES Corporation in 1981 and served as its president and CEO from 1994 to 2002. Bakke is the author of the New York Times and Wall Street Journal bestseller, "Joy at Work: A Revolutionary Approach to Fun on the Job" (PVG, 2005). He is now president and CEO of Imagine Schools, a company that operates elementary and secondary (K-12) charter schools in 10 states. He and his wife, Eileen, live in Arlington, Virginia.

ARTICLE

The Faithful Business as a Publicly Traded Corporation: Testing the Outer Limits of Corporate Law

Stephen N. Bretsen — Wheaton College

Abstract

A faithful business operates its business as a mission by holistically integrating Christian theological and social principles. A business strategy leading to profitable growth can allow a faithful business to raise capital from the public markets. The question becomes whether corporate law permits a publicly traded corporation to primarily glorify God and advance God's Kingdom rather than to primarily maximize shareholder wealth. In affirming that a faithful business can function within the mandates of corporate law as a publicly traded corporation, this article reveals the expanding outer limits of corporate law.

Introduction

One of the most vexing problems in corporate law is determining the ultimate beneficiaries of the fiduciary duties of due care and loyalty owed by the managers of a corporation. Corporate law mandates that

these duties are owed to the corporation. The problem arises in defining the nature of the corporation and what is in the best interests of the corporation.

The corporation itself has a legal existence separate from its shareholders, directors, officers, employees, creditors, suppliers, customers, and the communities within which it operates. Each of these players within the corporation has varying and sometimes opposing interests. For example, in the zero sum game of measuring the profits of a corporation by revenue less costs, the shareholders' interest in increasing their return by increasing profits can conflict with the interests of employees in boosting wages, salaries, and benefits and thus increasing costs. Given these varying interests, how do corporate managers determine whether a decision or a proposed course of action is in the best interest of the corporation? Unfortunately,

legal scholarship has provided corporate managers with at least two different and opposing ways of understanding their responsibility to act in the best interests of the corporation.

In the shareholder primacy model, corporate managers discharge their responsibilities by maximizing profits for the benefit of shareholders. Although the focus is on profit maximization, the corporation's ability to do so is not unbounded since the corporation must obey secular laws and is subject to certain basic ethical obligations, such as honesty (Friedman, 1970, p. 2). In this model, the pursuit by corporate managers of any other social responsibilities represents an unfair tax on the shareholders and converts a capitalistic organization that is designed to serve the greater good by using market mechanisms to allocate scarce resources into a political organization serving the policy wishes of its managers (Friedman, 1970, p. 3).

In the stakeholder primacy model, corporate managers undertake additional responsibilities beyond compliance with law to balance the interests of the

corporation's multiple stakeholders. The list of stakeholders not only includes shareholders, employees, creditors, suppliers, customers, and local communities, but society at large. These additional social responsibilities are often associated with enhanced human resource policies and benefits, environmentalism, the promotion of human rights, and community development.

The idea of a faithful business conducting its operations as a Christian mission challenges both of these models.¹ Although such a business needs to be profitable to continue to fund its present and future operations, a faithful business is not in the business of profit maximization. The social justice demands of the Bible require the Christian managers of a faithful business to consider the needs of stakeholders other than shareholders (Proverbs 31:8-9; Isaiah 1:17; James 2:14-19). However, the Christian managers of a faithful business will not be balancing the interests of stakeholders as an end in itself or for larger social considerations. The mission of a faithful business is far more radical since the commandment

to “love your neighbor as yourself” is second to the greatest commandment to “[l]ove the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:34-40). Thus, for a faithful business, the profits that are made and the stakeholders that are served are all for the glory of God (Colossians 3:17).

Within the Christian business as mission movement is a desire to shift from programs that emphasize micro-finance and micro-enterprise development to larger scale businesses. According to Mats Tunehag, the convener of the Business as Mission Issue Group No. 30 at the Lausanne Forum 2004 and a consultant and leader in the broader business as mission movement, “If [Christians] are to tackle the enormity of the challenge before us, we need to think and act bigger, beyond micro to small, medium and large sized businesses” (Tunehag, McGee & Plummer, 2005, p. 7). In the United States, a business that is growing, whether through increased sales in its original product line or by expanding its geographic scope or through

horizontal diversification, often seeks equity capital in the public markets. The question for a faithful business following this route is whether it can operate its business as a mission by holistically integrating Christian theological and social principles as a publicly traded corporation. Does the current state of corporate law on fiduciary duties allow the corporate managers of a faithful business to place their obligations to God before their obligations to shareholders and other stakeholders in the event of a conflict? This article answers that question affirmatively after exploring the following areas: (i) the debate between the shareholder primacy and stakeholder models over the ends and means of the corporation and the nature of the fiduciary duties; (ii) the concept of a faithful business and how it radicalizes this debate; and (iii) the application of corporate law to operational and change of control decisions made by the corporate managers of a faithful business. The conclusion that a faithful business operating as a publicly traded corporation can function within the mandates of corporate law reveals the expand-

ing outer limits of corporate law and corporate governance.

The Means and Ends of the Corporation

The long running debate over the corporation's social responsibilities is an attempt "to answer two basic sets of questions: (1) as to the means of corporate governance, who holds ultimate decision-making power? and (2) as to the ends of corporate governance, whose interests should prevail?" (Bainbridge, 2003, p. 549).

The Means — Who Decides?

Lord Chancellor and First Baron Edward Thurlow (1731-1806) observed over two hundred years ago that "[c]orporations have neither bodies to be punished, nor souls to be condemned, they therefore do as they like" (cited in Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003, p. 33). In Christian thinking, the corporation is not soulless since the soul of the corporation is found in the people who comprise it (Pollard, 1996, p. 23). The moral obligations of the corporation become "the moral obligations and legal duties of

the actors who make corporate decisions" (Bainbridge, 1992, p. 971). The "who decides" question, therefore, becomes an important one with three possible answers: the shareholders, the board of directors, and the officers.

Although the shareholders are typically characterized as the owners of the corporation,² their ability to make corporate decisions is constrained. Legally, the decisions that shareholders are empowered to make are essentially limited to the election of directors and the approval of charter or by-law amendments, mergers, sales of substantially all of the corporation's assets, and voluntary dissolution (Bainbridge, 2003, p. 569; see also, Del. Code Ann. tit. 8, §§ 109, 242, 251, 271, and 275 (2006)). While these decisions are important ones for the corporation, they do not give the shareholder a voice in the many smaller operational and financial decisions that ultimately define the social responsibilities a corporation undertakes. A further legal limitation placed on the shareholders' ability to make decisions is the manner in which

decisions can be made. The ability of shareholders to make decisions or to question decisions made by others can only occur proactively at a shareholders' meeting or via a written agreement of a majority of shareholders, or reactively through a shareholder's derivative lawsuit (Del. Code Ann. tit. 8, §§ 211, 228, 327 (2006)). Since the shareholders in a publicly traded corporation are numerous and widely dispersed, they tend to be disorganized due to various collective action problems ranging from the difficulties and costs of being able to identify and communicate with other shareholders to the incentive of each shareholder to "free ride" on the activist efforts of other shareholders and undermine any collective shareholder effort (Branson, 2001, pp. 606-607).

Except for the few matters reserved for shareholders, corporate law clearly designates the board of directors as the ultimate decision making authority.³ Thus, the answer to the question of who decides is the board of directors, whether the board of directors is viewed as the agent or steward of the shareholders in the

traditional view of the corporation, or as a "Platonic guardian serving as the nexus for the various contracts comprising the corporation" in a law and economics contractarian view of the corporation (Bainbridge, 2003, p. 552), or as a "mediating hierarch" balancing the interests of the various groups needed to produce the corporation's goods or services in a stakeholder-based team production model of the corporation (Blair & Stout, 1999, p. 284). However, the board of directors often becomes subordinated to the officers it is supposed to select and monitor. Since the board of directors can only act as a board and usually only meets as a board several times a year, the directors cannot be involved in the day-to-day affairs of the corporation and delegate much of their power to the corporation's officers. In addition, the officers of the corporation control the flow of information to the directors and often set the agenda for the meetings of the board of directors. In an information age, information is power, and the power to set an agenda and provide information is the power

to decide what is and is not reviewed by the board of directors and at what depth. Until reforms, such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, result in truly independent boards of directors, the directors and officers are appropriately lumped together as managers of the corporation, and these managers are the de jure and de facto decision makers of the corporation.⁴ So, the focus of the social responsibilities of the corporation should be on the decisions of the managers of the corporation.

The Ends — Whose Interests Prevail?

The shareholders own the stock of the corporation but make few decisions for the corporation while managers own a small percentage of the stock of the corporation but make the primary decisions for the corporation. In a closely held corporation, where the shareholders are the managers or where the shareholders are venture capitalists who can leverage the corporation's present and future need for money into preferred shares and investor-favorable shareholder agreements,

there is either no split between ownership and control or the preferred shareholders are satisfied with their level of control. However, in a publicly traded corporation this split between ownership and control creates an agency problem in which shareholders are interested in profits and a return on their investment while managers' interests can reduce corporate profits via rent seeking and shirking. The agency problem has been noted and analyzed by scholars of corporations from Adam Smith to Berle and Means to Jensen and Meckling (Fama & Jensen, 1983, p. 301).

Imposing fiduciary duties on directors is corporate law's attempt to address the potential agency issues arising from the separation of ownership and control in a corporation. Directors owe a duty of due care in managing and overseeing the affairs of the corporation and a duty of loyalty to the corporation. The duty of care requires a director to act in good faith and in a manner that the director reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the corporation (Revised Model Business Corpo-

ration Act § 8.30(a)).⁵ The duty of loyalty requires a director to subordinate his or her own interests to the interests of the corporation and avoid or disclose conflicts of interest, such as those arising from transactions between the director and the corporation or from a director taking advantage of a business opportunity that is also available to the corporation (Revised Model Business Corporation Act §§ 8.31(a)(2)(iii), 8.60, 8.62). While a director's fiduciary duties do not legally create a fiduciary relationship between a director and the corporation, the fiduciary duties parallel the Christian virtue of stewardship (Luke 12:42-46).

Although corporate law generally requires managers to act in "the best interests of the corporation" to alleviate the agency problem, that phrase raises the issue over whose interests prevail within a corporation and the nature of a corporation's social responsibility. The modern legal debate about corporate social responsibility has focused on two candidates: the shareholders alone or a broader group of stakeholders, such as

shareholders, employees, customers, creditors, suppliers, local communities, and society at large.⁶

The case for shareholder primacy is best summarized in Milton Friedman's famous observation that in a free society "there is one and only one social responsibility of business — to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition, without deception or fraud" (1970, p. 8). Thus, what is in "the best interests of the corporation" is measured by what maximizes profits or shareholder returns. Among scholars, the shareholder primacy norm applies whether the corporation is viewed traditionally as owned by the shareholders (Friedman, 1970, p. 2) or whether the corporation is viewed as a nexus of explicit and implicit contracts between shareholders, creditors, employees, suppliers, and customers under a contractarian model (Easterbrook & Fischel, 1991, p. 12).

The shareholder primacy norm is also based on certain

other assumptions about the corporation. The first assumption is that pursuing social goals other than profit maximization for the benefit of shareholders aggravates the already dangerous agency problem. Replacing a single group of shareholders with multiple stakeholders and replacing a clear metric of profit maximization with multiple, competing goals decreases the accountability of corporate managers by increasing their discretion. Anything other than a shareholder wealth maximization norm “could leave managers with so much discretion that managers could easily pursue their own agenda, one that might maximize neither shareholder, employee, consumer, nor national wealth, but only their own” (Stout, 2002, p. 1200). Thus, Jesus’ proverb that a man cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13) becomes the legal warning that a fiduciary cannot serve two conflicting beneficiaries and the practical warning that a manager responsible to everyone is responsible to no one (Green, 1993, p. 1417). A second assumption is that the corporation is an economic institution. “Allowing

corporate managers to deviate from profit maximization would distort market mechanisms for distributing goods and services, and might, if pursued with enough force, produce long-run market failure” (Wells, 2002, p. 109). Pursuing social goals other than shareholder wealth maximization risks converting an economic institution into a political institution and subjecting the corporation to greater public control because it does not have the checks and balances present in a republican form of government (Friedman, 1970, p. 4).

The stakeholder primacy norm asserts that corporations should be operated for the benefit of all stakeholders, not just shareholders, since shareholders are just one of several stakeholders. Other stakeholders include “employees, financiers, customers, and communities” (Evans & Freeman, 1993, p. 82). Thus, what is in “the best interests of the corporation” involves balancing the long term interests of each group. Under more traditional stakeholder thinking often adopted by corporate executives, doing so ensures

profitability in the long term (A. Murray, 2006),⁷ while under more radical stakeholder thinking espoused by legal scholars, doing so allows corporate decision-making to more closely approximate the moral choices of individuals (Nesteruk, 1989, pp. 452-453; Elhauge, 2005, p. 844).

The stakeholder primacy norm is also based on certain assumptions about the corporation. First, the shareholders are not the owners of the corporation, since legal title to the assets of the corporation are held by the corporation as a separate legal entity. Instead, the shareholders, by virtue of owning the corporation's stock, hold an equitable interest in the corporation and are granted certain rights, primarily through the corporation's articles of incorporation and by-laws, but also by statute and common law. In addition to voting rights, these rights include the right to participate in a proportionate share of the profits of the company if and when the board of directors determines that dividends will be paid as set forth in the by-laws, and the right to receive a proportionate share of the corporation's residual

assets after all other creditors have been paid upon dissolution or liquidation of the corporation. Under the stakeholder primacy norm, this limited legal relationship is reinforced by the reality of public markets in which shareholders no longer view themselves as owners, but as investors or as beneficiaries of investment decisions made by financial managers (Nesteruk, 1989, p. 452). Shareholders ultimately exercise control not as owners through the legal mechanisms provided by corporate law, but as investors through the investment choices and automated transactions provided by the financial services industry (Wilcke, 2004, p. 200). Second, the stakeholder primacy norm assumes that all the stakeholders are required for the corporation to survive and thrive. For example, in a team production theory of the corporation, the ability of the corporation to produce its goods or services requires the coordinated efforts of several groups. Each group of stakeholders makes specific investments in the corporation in the form of time, money, or expertise in the hope of realizing a return on that

investment if the corporation succeeds and grows. To give the shareholders primacy is to ignore the explicit and implicit contracts between the corporation and its other stakeholders and allow the shareholders to capture a disproportionate share of the benefits of team production (Stout, 2002, pp. 1195-1198; Blair & Stout, 1999). Third, the stakeholder primacy norm assumes that the corporation is not just a voluntary economic association, but an entity with public responsibilities. The source for these public responsibilities is the privilege granted by the state of forming a corporation as an artificial, separate legal entity that provides its shareholders with limited liability.

The Faithful Business

The shareholder primacy model would view a corporation as a vehicle for maximizing profits and shareholder returns, and the stakeholder primacy model would view a corporation as a vehicle for balancing the interests of shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, and local communities. However, the concept of a faithful business

using the corporate form to practice its business as a mission moves beyond both of these norms to a more radical view of the corporation as a vehicle for doing Kingdom work. For a faithful business, making a profit and satisfying stakeholders are not ends in themselves or even a means to broader goals such as maximizing societal wealth through efficiency gains or greater corporate social responsibility, but instead are a means to glorify God. Anything less would be idolatrous (Exodus 20:3).

Historically, the business as mission movement is an outgrowth of The Lausanne Committee on World Evangelism and its motto of “The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World” (<http://www.lausanne.org/Brix?pageID=12722>). The First International Congress on World Evangelism was called by evangelist Billy Graham and held in Lausanne, Switzerland in July 1974 (Tunehag et al., 2005, p. ii). The Forum for World Evangelism held in Pattaya, Thailand in September and October 2004 included a Business as Mission Issue Group as

one of thirty-one issue groups, and this group of over seventy participants from all continents issued *The Business as Mission Manifesto* and *Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 59 on Business as Mission* (Tunehag, et al., 2005, pp. 2, 55). However, the business as mission movement has even more ancient roots.

The Theological Roots of the Faithful Business

The Christian business as mission movement and the idea of a faithful business are rooted in the Creation (Genesis 1:1). “At the beginning of man’s work is the mystery of creation” (John Paul II, 1981, § 54). The Creation sanctifies work in two different ways. First, as creatures created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), men and women ought to emulate God. Since God worked to create the heavens and the earth and all that is within them (Genesis 2:2) and pronounced the work of His creative activity good (Genesis 1:31), men and women are called to exhibit God’s likeness through work that is pleasing to God. Second, God gives humankind dominion over the earth and a

stewardship mandate to care for the earth (Genesis 1:28-30; Genesis 2:15; Psalm 8:5-8). Thus, through work, men and women share in the creative activity of God and the unfolding work of God’s creation (John Paul II, 1981, §§ 113-115; Volf, 1991). Although the Fall corrupts work by making work toilsome and burdensome (Genesis 3:17-19), “God’s fundamental and original intention with regard to man, whom he created in his own image and after his own likeness was not withdrawn or canceled out even when man, having broken the original covenant with God, heard the words: ‘In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread’” (John Paul II, 1981, § 39). Work itself continues to be good because “through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed in a sense becomes ‘more a human being’” by both reflecting the image of God and by fulfilling the ongoing creation mandate (John Paul II, 1981, § 40).

Business is the child of work and is thus both an extension of

the creation mandate and a victim of the Fall (Colossians 1:16; Romans 8:20-21). The model of work given by God is not one of solitary labor but of work in the context of relationships. Through the mystery of the Trinity, God is not just one, but three in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God's creative activity in the beginning unfolded through this Trinitarian relationship (Genesis 1:1-2 and 26; John 1:1-4). Business allows work to be performed both on a larger scale and within a community. "That the role of trade and commerce — business — is to enable humankind to glorify God and participate in God's creative and redemptive activity can be deduced in that we were designed to be in relationship with one another, that we were designed to be interdependent and that we have differing gifts and abilities" (Daniels, Dearborn, Franz, Karns, Van Duzer & Wong, 2003, p. 3).

The business as mission movement and the idea of a faithful business are testimonies to the belief that Christ can reform and transform the corporation. The Christian

managers of a faithful business seek to ultimately glorify God through business and to use business as a vehicle for fulfilling the creation mandate and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Tunehag et al., 2005, p. 2). While "the business of business is business," the business of a faithful business "is business with a kingdom of God purpose and perspective" (Tunehag et al., 2005, p. 7). Although a faithful business will exhibit its faith through its works, such as creating jobs that provide dignity and self-reliance to the poor, "[t]he goal is not simply about making people materially better off. Business as mission is actively praying and incarnating the [Lord's Prayer]: 'Your kingdom come, your will be done' even in the marketplace" (Matthew 6:10; Tunehag et al., 2005, p. 7). A faithful business brings salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16) while avoiding business practices that might cause it to lose its saltiness so that "it is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out" (Luke 14:34-35). Thus, the ultimate bottom line for a faithful business is *ad maiorem*

Dei gloriam, for the greater glory of God (Tunehag et al., 2005, p. 7). This bottom line must be the starting point to avoid the trap of thinking that the value of Christianity lays chiefly in how it can support and reform business to promote a just society. C. S. Lewis warns against believing in Christianity, "...not because it is true, but for some other reason" (2001, p. 127). As Screwtape, a senior tempter in the bureaucracy of Hell, diabolically advises Wormwood, a junior tempter on his first field assignment, "On the other hand we do want, and want very much, to make men treat Christianity as a means to their own advancement, but, failing that, as a means to anything — even social justice" (Lewis, 2001, p. 126). So, a faithful business must first and foremost be about glorifying God to avoid adding "Christianity and Business" to C. S. Lewis' deadly list of "Christianity And."

In this context, a faithful business strives to eliminate the individualism and dualism that can compartmentalize Christianity and business. "A specific danger is that the BAM [business as mission] movement

ends up preaching an individualistic gospel, that Christians do business and live out their morality as a matter of simply between an individual and God alone" (Ewert, 2006, p. 75). Thus, a faithful business moves beyond traditional Christian business models of promoting the Kingdom through spiritualizing (praying and exhibiting personal virtues, such as honesty and generosity, in the workplace), workplace evangelism (witnessing to co-workers, suppliers, and customers), tentmaking (working in a business to financially support a ministry outside that business), and "business for missions" (donating profits from a business to support a ministry) (Alford & Naughton, 2001, pp. 14-15; Tunehag et al., 2005, p. 6). In an attempt to end the division between the sacred and the secular that arose out of human sin and the Fall, a faithful business strives to allow Christian business people to live out their calling, both their general calling to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and their specific calling to a vocation, through business itself.

The Faithful Business and the Multiple Bottom Line

A faithful business holistically integrates a real business with Christian theological and social principles and meets the challenge of balancing these multiple demands through a multiple bottom line (Tunchag et al., 2005, p. 19). As a real business, a faithful business must meet customers' needs and earn a profit to sustain its operations. Thus, a faithful business must have a financial bottom line. However, a faithful business does not fit the shareholder primacy model since, like the stakeholder primacy model, it has a multiple bottom line. As a business that holistically integrates Kingdom values, such as "holiness, justice, and love" (Hill, 1997, p. 19) or stewardship, justice, shalom, dignity, and community (Ewert, 2006, p. 66), a faithful business also has spiritual and social bottom lines. The social bottom line intersects with the stakeholder primacy model, but the spiritual bottom line reveals the enormous gap between the faithful business and the stakeholder primacy model and its concern for corporate social

responsibility. As a faithful business, it is not primarily serving shareholders or stakeholders and temporal goods, whether financial or social, but instead it is serving God and supernatural goods.

However, operating a business for the glory of God has a financial cost. In the same way that corporate social responsibility policies and practices add costs that can reduce the profitability of a firm, a faithful business' commitment to a multiple bottom line means that the financial bottom line may not be as attractive as the financial bottom line in an equivalent secular firm. This apparent financial disadvantage does not mean that a faithful business cannot effectively compete with an equivalent secular firm and ultimately attract sufficient equity capital and become a publicly traded corporation.

One of the core concepts in the academic discipline of strategic management is that of competitive advantage. A competitive advantage allows a firm to distinguish itself from its competitors and to create greater value than its competitors.

A competitive strategy implements the firm's competitive advantage to capture as much of the value created as possible given the constraints of the firm's overall industry structure. Value is created by "offering lower prices than competitors for equivalent benefits or providing unique benefits that more than offset a higher price" (Porter, 1985, p. 3). The former is often associated with having a cost advantage and pursuing a cost leadership strategy. The latter is often associated with differentiation and attributes such as a brand name, quality, features, or customer service, although for a faithful business, its existence as a faithful business may be a source of differentiation.

A firm without a competitive advantage risks getting "stuck in the middle" (Porter, 1985, p. 16). The firm is unable to compete on costs, and the firm does not have the unique product, service, or transactional innovation that would allow it to compete via differentiation. Due to the extra costs associated with a multiple bottom line, a faithful business risks getting "stuck in the middle" if it pursues a cost leadership

strategy since there can only be one cost leader (Porter, 1985, p.13).⁸ However, a differentiation strategy does not pose the same problems. "In contrast to cost leadership...there can be more than one successful differentiation strategy in an industry if there are a number of different attributes that are widely valued by buyers" (Porter, 1985, p.14). By successfully pursuing a differentiation strategy, as the Starbucks Corporation has done in the specialty coffee market, a faithful business can increase its customers' willingness to pay to both cover the costs of the multiple bottom lines and grow. This growth coupled with profits anchored in a defensible competitive advantage based on differentiation would allow a faithful business to first attract private equity investments and ultimately public equity capital through an initial public offering. In moving from a small, closely held corporation in which there is either no separation of ownership and control or in which a limited number of investors understand and support the corporation's radical goals to a larger, publicly traded corpora-

tion in which ownership and control are divorced, the question becomes whether corporate law will support the faithful business in pursuit of its Christian mission.⁹

Using Corporate Law as a Faithful Business

The need to give managers discretion even under the shareholder primacy norm combined with incremental changes in corporate law to accommodate the stakeholder primacy norm provides the faithful business with the corporate law tools it needs to operate and defend its business. The business judgment rule, corporate constituency statutes, and key court decisions all become vehicles that allow the faithful business to use corporate law to glorify God in a way that transcends the secular debate between the shareholder primacy norm and the stakeholder primacy norm. By using these legal tools, the managers of a faithful business are being “as shrewd as snakes” in their Christian witness (Matthew 10:16).

Operational Decisions

Operational decisions represent the variety of decisions,

both large and small, that must be made by managers to keep a corporation running. These decisions range from high level strategy decisions about whether to develop a new product or enter an overseas market through important decisions about capital expenditures for new plants or equipment to more mundane decisions about accepting individual offers from customers and suppliers based on their price, quantity, and delivery terms. For the Christian managers of a faithful business, these decisions might also include whether to pay a higher living wage rather than the legally mandated minimum wage (Deuteronomy 24:14-15), whether to refuse to do business with a customer because of the nature of that customer’s business, or whether to create an in-house chaplaincy position. Both the common law business judgment rule and state corporate constituency statutes provide broad legal protections to the discretion exercised by Christian managers in making these types of operational decisions.

Traditionally, at common law, a lawsuit by a shareholder

disputing a decision by the board of directors of a corporation was evaluated by a court under the business judgment rule. The business judgment rule is a standard of judicial review used to determine if the board of directors had violated the primary fiduciary duties of due care, loyalty, and good faith (Branson, 2002, p. 631). As defined under Delaware law, the key state for corporation law due to the number of companies incorporated in Delaware, the business judgment rule creates a “presumption that in making a business decision the directors of a corporation acted on an informed basis, in good faith and in the honest belief that the action taken was in the best interests of the company” (*Aronson v. Lewis*, 473 A.2d 805, 812 (Del. 1984), overruled on other grounds by *Brehm v. Eisner*, 746 A.2d 244 (Del. 2000)).

To rebut the presumptive applicability of the business judgment rule, a shareholder plaintiff has the burden of proving that the board of directors, in reaching its challenged decision, violated

any one of the triad of fiduciary duties. If the shareholder plaintiff is not successful, then the business judgment rule operates to provide substantive protection for directors and their decisions. If the business judgment rule is successfully rebutted, then the burden shifts to the directors to prove to the trier of fact that the challenged transaction was entirely fair. (*Emerald Partners v. Berlin*, 787 A.2d 85, 91 (Del. 2001))

Thus, the business judgment rule prevents courts from second guessing corporate managers¹⁰ as long as they do not violate the duty of loyalty through self dealing or some other conflict of interest, show due care by making the decision in a deliberative fashion after reviewing the material facts that are reasonably available, and, in Delaware though not in other states, pass the “smell test” implied by the phrase “good faith” (Branson, 2002, pp. 641-644). The rationale underlying the business judgment rule is that judges are not able to evaluate and assess the business decisions of corporate

managers. However, due to this judicial deference, the application of the business judgment rule in individual cases produces inconsistent results that provide both the proponents of the shareholder primacy norm and the proponents of the stakeholder primacy norm with supporting precedents.

The case typically cited to demonstrate that corporate managers have a fiduciary duty to shareholders to maximize profits even under the business judgment rule's deferential standard of review is *Dodge v. Ford Motor Co.*, a 1919 decision of the Michigan Supreme Court. The Dodge brothers, ten percent minority shareholders in the Ford Motor Company, filed a lawsuit after Henry Ford, the president of the company and a member of its board of directors, announced that the company would no longer pay special dividends and would implement a business plan that involved lowering the prices of automobiles and expanding the company's production facilities. At the time, the company had approximately \$112,000,000 in surplus above capital and over \$52,000,000 in

cash and was highly profitable. Henry Ford indicated that the rationale for the decision was his concern for stakeholders other than the shareholders. "My ambition," said Mr. Ford, "is to employ still more men, to spread the benefits of this industrial system to the greatest possible number, to help them build up their lives and their homes" (*Dodge v. Ford Motor Co.*, 170 N.W. 668, 683 (Mich. 1919)). The court ordered the payment of a dividend under a rationale that endorsed the shareholder primacy norm:

There should be no confusion (of which there is evidence) of the duties which Mr. Ford conceives that he and the stockholders owe to the general public and the duties which in law he and his codirectors owe to protesting, minority stockholders. A business corporation is organized and carried on primarily for the profit of the stockholders. The powers of the directors are to be employed for that end. The discretion of directors is to be exercised in the choice

of means to attain that end and does not extend to a change in the end itself, to the reduction of profits or to the nondistribution of profits among stockholders in order to devote them to other purposes. (*Dodge*, 170 N.W. at 684)

However, the court refused to enjoin the business plan even though it recognized that the plan reduced profits under a rationale that reflects the more typical deferential level of review under the business judgment rule:

The judges are not business experts. It is recognized that plans must often be made for a long future, for expected competition, for continuing as well as an immediately profitable venture. The experience of the Ford Motor Company is evidence of capable management of its affairs. (*Dodge*, 170 N.W. at 684)

Thus, although the court indicated that managers of the corporation have discretion in making decisions under

the business judgment rule, that discretion must advance the primary purpose of the corporation, which is to maximize profits for the shareholders.

However, *Shlensky v. Wrigley*, a 1968 decision of the Illinois Court of Appeals, affirms the business judgment rule's deferential standard of review in the context of a decision to forgo profits for shareholders for the benefit of other stakeholders. Shlensky, a minority shareholder in the corporation that owned the Chicago Cubs, sued over the board of directors' refusal to install lights at Wrigley Field and play night baseball games. The complaint alleged that these decisions reduced the corporation's profits and provided uncontested evidence that the decisions were based on the personal opinion of Philip Wrigley, the president, director, and majority shareholder of the corporation, "that baseball is a 'daytime sport' and that the installation of lights and night baseball games will have a deteriorating effect upon the surrounding neighborhood" (*Shlensky v. Wrigley*, 237 N.E.2d

776, 777-778 (Ill. App. Ct. 1968)) Despite the fact that Shlensky cited *Dodge v. Ford Motor Co.*, the court affirmed the trial court's dismissal of the complaint under the business judgment rule. The court stated that "the authority of the directors in the conduct of the business of the corporation must be regarded as absolute when they act within the law, and the court is without authority to substitute its judgment for that of the directors" (Shlensky, 237 N.E.2d at 779, quoting *Helpman v. American Light & Traction Co.*, 187 A. 540, 550 (N.J. 1923)). Although the court noted that the reasons for the decision could be in the best interests of the corporation because neighborhood decay might reduce attendance and affect the ballpark's property value, the allegations that the decision was motivated by concerns other than profit maximization were ultimately moot because "the decision was one properly before directors and the motives alleged in the amended complaint showed no fraud, illegality or conflict of interest in the making of that

decision" (*Shlensky*, 237 N.E.2d at 780). Given Philip Wrigley's obviously poor business decision (as alleged in the complaint and supported by the Chicago Cubs' subsequent night baseball games), the stakeholder nature of the beneficiaries of the decision, and the court's efforts to stretch its rationale to find that the business decision was not contrary to the best interests of the corporation, the opinion not only demonstrates how the business judgment rule protects corporate managers, but the opinion can be seen as a more fundamental attack on the shareholder primacy norm to maximize profits (Greenfield & Nilsson, 1997, p. 830).

Since the business judgment rule can be used to support either the shareholder primacy norm or the stakeholder primacy norm, it ultimately reflects the tensions created by the separation of ownership and control and the agency problem. Implied in the managers' control of the corporation is both the discretion necessary to exercise that control and accountability for how that control is exercised. However,

[w]hile both accountability and discretion are important goals, they are also ultimately irreconcilable. One inevitably reaches a point at which additional accountability can be held only by limiting management discretion. The business judgment rule thus reflects a policy decision to accept the risks encompassed by the two masters and managerial sin problems in order to capture the benefits flowing from broad managerial discretion. Management's freedom to consider nonshareholder interests is merely an incidental by-product of that determination. (Bainbridge, 1993, pp. 1439-1440)

While it appears that the Christian managers of a faithful business can take advantage of the judicial deference provided by the business judgment rule to incorporate profit-sacrificing Kingdom values into operational decisions, using the business judgment rule as a shield is not risk free. Although the business judgment rule may relax the shareholder primacy norm's mandate to maximize

profits, it does not eliminate it, as demonstrated in *Dodge v. Ford Motor Co.* (Greenfield & Nilsson, 1997, pp. 817-818). Further, while as a practical matter corporate managers will be able to successfully defend lawsuits using the business judgment rule by creating some rationale as a pretext to tie the decision to the best interest of the corporation and its shareholders, this option is not available to the Christian managers of a faithful business for several reasons. First, a pretext is essentially a lie, since a pretext is defined as "a false reason or motive put forth to hide the real one" (*Webster's New World College Dictionary*), and Christian morality has clear prohibitions against lying (Leviticus 19:11; Proverbs 12:17). Second, by giving pretexts and secular rationalizations for a decision rather than the reasons that reflect the business as mission, the Christian manager is sacrificing his or her witness by lighting a lamp and then placing it under a bowl (Matthew 5:14-16). For a Christian manager to provide a pretext under these circumstances is to allow the ends of winning a lawsuit filed by a disgruntled

shareholder to justify the means of lying. Like Henry Ford and Philip Wrigley on behalf of their respective stakeholders, the Christian manager will ideally want to clearly assert, or at least not deny, that operational decisions are made primarily to glorify God by advancing His Kingdom and not primarily for the benefit of shareholders in order to be a valuable witness. The risk of doing so is that the court will determine that the Christian manager has exceeded the discretion provided by the business judgment rule to change the ends of the corporation. Fortunately, the risk is a small one since the business judgment rule appears to “stand for the proposition that courts will abstain from reviewing the exercise of directorial discretion even when the complainant alleges that directors, in making their decision, took nonshareholder interests into account” (Bainbridge, 2003, pp. 601-602; Elhauge, 2005, p. 770).

The Christian manager of the faithful business can supplement the protections provided by the business judgment rule by incorporating in a state with a

corporate constituency statute. Initially enacted by states in the 1980s to discourage hostile takeovers and the accompanying loss of jobs (Orts, 1992, p. 24), over thirty states¹¹ have constituency statutes, although Delaware, a key state in the area of corporation law, does not. Generally, constituency statutes explicitly allow corporate managers to consider the interests of stakeholders independently of shareholders when making decisions. The Ohio statute is typical, although the list of stakeholders and the nature of the interests that can be considered varies from state to state. Per the Ohio statute:

For purposes of this section [generally describing the director’s authority and standard of care], a director, in determining what the director reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the corporation, shall consider the interests of the corporation’s shareholders and, in the director’s discretion, may consider any of the following: (1) The interests of the corporation’s employees, suppliers,

creditors, and customers; (2) The economy of the state and nation; (3) Community and societal considerations; (4) The long-term as well as short-term interests of the corporation and its shareholders, including the possibility that these interests may be best served by the continued independence of the corporation. (Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 1701.59(E) (Page 2006))

While all constituency statutes allow corporate managers to consider the interests of various stakeholders, the Ohio statute also highlights several variations in constituency statutes from state to state. First, most statutes, like the Ohio statute, only extend to decisions by the board of directors. However, some statutes, like the Illinois statute, extend coverage to officers of the corporation (805 Ill. Comp. Stat. 5/8.85 (Lexis 2005)). Second, while most state statutes cover all corporate decisions, others, such as the Missouri statute, only apply when the corporation is the target of a takeover and the decision before the board of

directors is whether to accept or reject the takeover proposal (Mo. Ann. Stat. § 351.347.1 (2006)). Third, some statutes, like the Ohio statute, *require* the board of directors to consider the interests of shareholders and *allow* the board of directors to consider the interests of other stakeholders. However, most statutes are permissive, such as the Minnesota statute, allowing the board of directors to consider a variety of stakeholder interests without elevating the interests of shareholders (Minn. Stat. Ann. § 302A.251(5) (Lexis 2005)).

The typical constituency statute — one that allows the board of directors to consider the interests of all stakeholders equally in all decisions — supports a stakeholder primacy model of the corporation. All the statutory interpretation rules, such as interpreting statutes according to their “plain meaning” and consistently with legislative purpose and legislative history, indicate that the typical constituency statute changes the common law fiduciary duty of care (Orts, 1992, pp. 75-76 and 86). What is in “the best interests of the corporation” now includes

stakeholders as well as shareholders, so the constituency statutes “release management from the legal duty to maximize profits” (Greenfield, 2002, p. 607) and allow corporate managers to mediate among the interests of the various stakeholders. However, with this result, the typical constituency statute exacerbates the agency problem by replacing a single beneficiary of the fiduciary duty of care, the shareholders, with multiple beneficiaries in the form of stakeholders, and replacing a single standard of measurement, maximizing profits, with no fixed benchmark given the disparate nature of the various stakeholders’ interests. The typical constituency statute thus increases the discretion of corporate managers especially since none of the statutes give stakeholders standing to sue to enforce the expanded definition of what is in “the best interests of the corporation” (Orts, 1992, p. 83). The extent of this discretion is unknown because of the dearth of cases interpreting constituency statutes, especially in the area of operational decisions.

Whatever the merits of constituency statutes, in conjunction with the business judgment rule, they provide Christian managers of a faithful business with the legal room to maneuver in making operational decisions. To obtain the protection of the business judgment rule, a Christian manager is potentially placed in the position of providing a pretext tying an unprofitable operational decision made primarily to advance the Kingdom to long-term profits if the corporation is sued by a disgruntled shareholder. However, with a typical constituency statute, the Christian manager should be able to legitimately tie an operational decision that reflects the principles of stewardship, justice, shalom, dignity, and community to a stakeholder, especially when a definition of a stakeholder includes not just employees, suppliers, creditors, and customers, but also local community and general societal considerations or “any other factors the director considers pertinent” (Ind. Code Ann. 23-1-35-1(d) (Burns 2006)). The statutory definition of interests that can be considered by

corporate managers in a typical constituency statute is broad enough to encompass Jesus' answer to the question, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10: 25-37). Thus, all the criticisms of the constituency statutes inure to the benefit of the faithful business, even if the statutes themselves have not yet led to the revolution in corporate law hoped for by proponents of the stakeholder primacy norm or feared by the proponents of the shareholder primacy norm (Springer, 1999, pp. 120-123).

Change of Control

A faithful business that is a publicly traded corporation will not just have to make the large and small operating decisions necessary to run a business, but will also likely face issues related to takeover proposals and changes in control. In fact, a faithful business that is successful enough to attract capital in the public markets may be particularly vulnerable to takeover threats that would undermine its business as mission. However, the business judgment rule as modified by Delaware law protects the faithful business

from takeovers to a certain extent while several constituency statutes, most notably in Indiana and Pennsylvania, provide higher levels of protection.

A publicly traded corporation is subject to the federal securities laws, such as the Securities Act of 1933, the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, and their accompanying regulations. The goal of the federal securities laws is to create financial transparency in the public capital markets through the mandatory disclosure of information to investors, primarily financial information about operating results. The faithful business as a publicly traded corporation would want to disclose how it is glorifying God and how its activities reflect Kingdom values for several reasons. First, the faithful business would want to let its light shine before others, so that they can see its good deeds and also glorify God (Matthew 5:14-16). Second, the faithful business would want to disclose the nature of its business as mission to avoid misleading or deceiving shareholders about its true nature, primarily to avoid the spiritually devastating conse-

quences of deception (Acts 5:1-11), but also for the practical reason of avoiding class action lawsuits by disgruntled shareholders for misrepresentation. Finally, the faithful business would want to comply with the federal securities laws as an act of submission to earthly authority (Romans 13:1-5).

However, disclosure will likely reveal that the faithful business has a higher cost structure than its competitors due to the extra costs associated with a multiple bottom line.¹² The increased operating costs associated with a faithful business will also likely increase the costs of raising capital. Although the faithful business has a real financial bottom line, the cost burdens of the other bottom lines will reduce the returns produced by the financial bottom line relative to secular competitors. Thus, fewer investors will be attracted to a faithful business since an investor who insists on profit maximization will invest elsewhere.

Given these hurdles, the faithful business that becomes a publicly traded corporation must have a compelling business

strategy. However, the source of the faithful business' financial success will also be its Achilles heel. A successful business strategy combined with higher costs unrelated to the implementation of that strategy will make the faithful business a potential target for a hostile takeover attempt, such as a tender offer by a secular competitor or a leveraged buyout by a private equity firm. The potential acquirer will see in the faithful business an opportunity to realize higher financial returns on the business strategy after eliminating the costs related to the business as mission. In this scenario, the salt of the faithful business will have lost its saltiness (Matthew 5:13). Although the faithful business can rely on the loyalty of its shareholders who support the business as mission, both the business judgment rule and constituency statutes offer additional protections in the takeover context.

Under Delaware law, decisions by corporate managers to defend against a takeover are subject to a less deferential version of the business judgment rule. When the board of directors

of a corporation are taking actions to thwart a hostile takeover attempt, the burden of proof is on the board of directors to show: (i) they had reasonable grounds to believe that the takeover posed a danger to corporate policy and effectiveness; and (ii) the defensive measure adopted was reasonable in relation to the threat of the hostile takeover (the “Unocal standard”) (*Unocal Corp. v. Mesa Petroleum Co.*, 493 A.2d 946, 955-956 (Del. 1985)). This higher burden of proof in the takeover context reflects a heightened concern for the agency problem due to the potential conflict between shareholders, who want to maximize the stock price, and corporate managers who want to preserve their jobs and generally maintain the status quo. The board of directors’ burden of proof for the first prong is met by showing that the board acted in good faith and conducted a reasonable investigation (*Unocal Corporation*, 493 A.2d at 955). More importantly for the Christian manager of a faithful business, the burden of proof for the second prong is met if the board of directors

undertakes an analysis of “the nature of the takeover bid and its effect on the corporate enterprise,” including “the impact on ‘constituencies’ other than shareholders (i.e., creditors, customers, employees, and perhaps even the community generally)” (*Unocal Corporation*, 493 A.2d at 955). While the board of directors “may reasonably consider the basic stockholder interests at stake,” such interests are “not a controlling factor” (*Unocal Corporation*, 493 A.2d at 955-956). However, once the decision is made to sell the company, then the board of directors’ duty changes “from the preservation of [the company] as a corporate entity to the maximization of the company’s value at a sale for the stockholders’ benefit” (the “Revlon standard”) (*Revlon, Inc. v. MacAndrews & Forbes Holdings, Inc.*, 506 A.2d 173, 182 (Del. 1986)). With a decision to sell, the directors are no longer the protectors of “corporate policy and effectiveness,” but “auctioneers charged with getting the best price for the stockholders at a sale of the company” (*Revlon, Inc.*, 506 A.2d at 182). In announcing the

Revlon standard, the Delaware Supreme Court clarified the Unocal standard's broad language concerning stakeholders by noting that "a board may have regard for various constituencies in discharging its responsibilities, provided there are rationally related benefits accruing to the stockholders" (*Revlon, Inc.*, 506 A.2d at 182). Thus, the business judgment rule in the takeover context only provides partial protection to the Christian manager of a faithful business in defending against a hostile takeover since the standard, deferential business judgment rule does not apply and the enhanced business judgment rule under the Revlon standard "expressly forbids management from protecting stakeholder interests at the expense of shareholders interests" (Bainbridge, 1992, p. 982). As with the use of the business judgment rule for operational decisions, the Christian manager is placed in the position of creating a pretext for why a takeover defense is in the long term best interest of shareholders. Not only is the pretext morally indefensible, but the pretext is even more obvious

because a takeover bid monetizes all the corporation's prior profit sacrificing decisions (Elhaug, 2005, p. 819).¹³

Constituency statutes provide a safety net for Christian managers in the takeover context as they do for operational decisions. State constituency statutes were a political solution to the problem of factory closures and job losses resulting from hostile takeovers, and several state constituency statutes apply specifically to takeovers. The constituency statutes of two states in particular, Indiana and Pennsylvania, aggressively recast the business judgment rule as developed by the Delaware courts in the takeover context to provide greater protections for corporate managers. In typical fashion, both the Indiana and Pennsylvania statutes allow a director, in considering the best interests of the corporation, to consider the effects of any action on a list of stakeholders that includes shareholders, employees, suppliers, customers, local communities, and all other factors the director considers pertinent, including the long-term interests of the corporation, and, in Pennsylvania, the

“benefits that may accrue to the corporation from its long-term plans and the possibility that these interests may be best served by the continued independence of the corporation” (Ind. Code Ann. § 23-1-35-1(d), (g) (Burns 2006); 15 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 1715(a) (Lexis 2006)). However, both constituency statutes then proceed to repudiate the Delaware common law. The Indiana statute states (as does the Pennsylvania statute in almost identical language) that in making a determination that an action is not in the best interests of the corporation, “directors are not required to consider the effects of a proposed corporate action on any particular corporate constituent group or interest as a dominant or controlling factor” (Ind. Code Ann. § 23-1-35-1(f) (Burns 2006); 15 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 1715(b) (Lexis 2006)). Even more explicitly, the Indiana statute states that

[c]ertain judicial decisions in Delaware and other jurisdictions, which might otherwise be looked to for guidance in interpreting Indiana corporate law, including decisions

relating to potential change of control transactions that impose a different or higher degree of scrutiny on actions taken by directors in response to a proposed acquisition of control of the corporation, are inconsistent with the proper application of the business judgment rule under this article. (Ind. Code Ann. § 23-1-35-1(f) (Burns 2006))

To underscore this point, the official commentary on the statute by the Indiana General Assembly states “in deciding what is in ‘the best interests of the corporation’...a director is not required to view presently quantifiable profit maximization as the sole or necessarily controlling determinant of the corporation’s ‘best interests’” (Official Comment to Ind. Code Ann. § 23-1-35-1(d) (Burns 2006)). The decisions of the board of directors in both states are presumed to be in the best interests of the corporation unless, in Indiana, “it can be demonstrated that the determination was not made in good faith after reasonable investigation” (Ind. Code Ann. § 23-1-35-1(g) (Burns 2006)),

or, in Pennsylvania, if there is a “breach of fiduciary duty, lack of good faith, or self-dealing” (15 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 1715(d) (Lexis 2006)). In Indiana, in reaction to a Delaware Supreme Court decision which found the directors of a corporation liable for gross negligence in approving a merger in the absence of any allegations of fraud, bad-faith, or self-dealing, the constituency statute was amended to exclude liability for “any action taken as a director, or any failure to take action, unless: (1) [t]he director has breached or failed to perform the duties of the director’s office in compliance with this section; and (2) [t]he breach or failure to perform constitutes willful misconduct or recklessness” (*Smith v. Van Gorkom*, 488 A.2d 858 (Del. 1985); Ind. Code Ann. § 23-1-35-1(e) (Burns 2006)). The official commentary notes that the change represented a conscious effort to narrow the basis for imposing personal liability on directors in response to the increasing amount of litigation against directors and the increasing expense of defending such claims, which made it difficult for corporations to

persuade qualified individuals to serve on boards of directors (Official Comment to Ind. Code Ann. § 23-1-35-1(e) (Burns 2006)). Taken together, these statutes explicitly reject the duties encompassed by the Revlon standard and other Delaware cases to auction a company or to give primacy to shareholder interests. Instead, they “permit directors to select a plan that is second-best from the shareholders’ perspective, but which alleviates the decision’s impact on the firm’s nonshareholder constituencies” since the right to consider stakeholder interests equally presumes the right to protect those interests (Bainbridge, 1992, pp. 994-995). In the faithful business, what may be second-best from a financial perspective is defending against a takeover to preserve the spiritual and social bottom lines so that the Christian manager can continue to seek first the Kingdom of God through the continued operation of the business as mission (Matthew 6:33).

Case law interpreting the constituency statutes in both Pennsylvania and Indiana confirm the protection given the

faithful business facing takeover. An early case arose from an attempt to acquire control of Strawbridge & Clothier, a publicly traded Pennsylvania corporation in which the descendants of the two founders were both officers and directors and owned forty percent of its stock (*Baron v. Strawbridge & Clothier*, 646 F. Supp. 690 (E.D. Pa. 1986)). Not surprisingly, Strawbridge & Clothier's management and board viewed the independence of the company as a predominant factor in its success and defended against a tender offer with a stock reclassification plan. The directors were accused of attempting to perpetuate the Strawbridge & Clothier families' control over the company in violation of their duties of loyalty and of care to the company's shareholders (*Baron*, 646 F. Supp. at p. 692). In a ruling that favored the company, the court reviewed Pennsylvania's first-generation constituency statute and stated, "Under the law of Pennsylvania, as in other jurisdictions, *Enterra Corp. v. SGS Associates*, 600 F. Supp. 678, 686 (E.D. Pa. 1985), the fiduciary duty of corporate directors

"to act in the best interests of the corporation's shareholders . . . requires the directors to attempt to block takeovers that would [in their judgment] be harmful to the target company," and "directors are obliged to oppose tender offers deemed to be 'detrimental to the well-being of the corporation even if that [opposition] is at the expense of the short-term interests of the individual shareholders'" (*Baron*, 646 F. Supp. at p. 697). Subsequently, in 1990, the Pennsylvania legislature amended the constituency statute and added the additional considerations previously cited to strengthen the protections given to directors (R. Murray, 2000, p. 629). In another federal district court case arising from Conrail Inc.'s attempt to merge with the CSX Corporation and disregard the Norfolk Southern Corporation's tender offer, "the court upheld Pennsylvania's constituency statute and supported the notion that a board of directors has 'wide discretion in how to react to so-called takeover bids' even when such discretion fails to maximize shareholder wealth" (Transcript, *Norfolk Southern Corp. v. Conrail, Inc.*, Nos.

96-7167, 96-7350, November 19, 1996, cited in R. Murray, 2000, pp. 647-648). In several cases filed by shareholders alleging a breach by directors of their fiduciary duties, the Indiana state courts have broadly construed the Indiana constituency statute by noting that “Indiana has statutorily implemented a strongly pro-management version of the business judgment rule” and that “Section 23-1-35-1 grants incumbent directors broad authority in running the affairs of a corporation, including decisions related to hostile takeovers, and permits them to consider many factors in doing so with lessened fear of being held liable to shareholders for breaching their duties as a director” (*G&N Aircraft, Inc. v. Boehm*, 743 N.E. 2d 227, 238 (Ind. 2001); *Murray v. Conseco, Inc.*, 766 N.E. 2d 38, 44-45 (Ind. Ct. App. 2002)). In a case involving the merger of a publicly traded Indiana corporation, a federal district court stated that the Indiana constituency statute “recognizes that corporate directors may consider many interests beyond those of shareholders (Ind. Code § 23-1-35-1(d)).

The business judgment rule was written to make clear, for example, that even in the sale of the business, the directors do not have an unqualified duty to maximize shareholder value at the expense of all other considerations and constituencies” (*American Union Insurance Company v. Meridan Insurance Group Inc.*, 137 F. Supp. 2d. 1096, 1113 (S.D. Ind. 2001)).

The level of protection offered by the constituency statutes in both of these states is so high that a faithful business should consider incorporating in one of them, especially since a corporation’s state of incorporation does not have to coincide with its business operations or principal place of business. In addition to the benefits of the constituency statutes, the faithful business will have the benefits of anti-takeover statutes that provide additional protections beyond the Revised Model Business Act or the General Corporation Law of Delaware. Indiana law gives broad authority to boards of directors by allowing them to adopt special change-of-control procedures (Ind. Code Ann. § 23-1-22-4 (Burns 2006)).

The combination of Pennsylvania's constituency and anti-takeover statutes creates one of the most comprehensive, strictest, pro-management anti-takeover regimes in the nation (15 Pa. Cons. Stat. §§ 2501-2588 (Lexis 2006); R. Murray, 2000, p. 630; MacKerron, 1994, p. 502). The faithful business can take advantage of the Indiana and Pennsylvania constituency and anti-takeover statutes without surrendering the general benefits of the Revised Model Business Corporation Act or the General Corporation Law of Delaware since all "the corporate law statutes are more alike than they are different" outside of several key areas, such as the business judgment rule and change of control (MacKerron, 1994, p. 517).

Conclusion

The discretion given to corporate managers under the business judgment rule despite the underlying assumption of profit maximization combined with changes in corporate law to accommodate a broader stakeholder view of the corporation have stretched corporate

law. The faithful business' ability to operate and defend itself as a publicly traded corporation despite its focus on glorifying God rather than maximizing shareholder wealth or balancing stakeholder interests reveals just how far the outer limits of corporate law have been stretched. While a faithful business still needs to count the cost of the limitations placed on its operations by Christian theological and social principles, those costs do not include foreclosure from the public markets as a publicly traded corporation or liability from disgruntled shareholders for actions that sacrifice profits to advance the Kingdom of God.

Stephen N. Bretsen

Associate Professor
William Volkman Chair of
Business and Law
Wheaton College
501 College Avenue
Wheaton, IL 60187-5593
630-752-5899
stephen.n.bretsen@wheaton.edu

Endnotes

¹A faithful business is another way of describing what others call a business as mission (Tunehag et.al., 2005) or a Great Commission company (Rundle & Steffen, 2003). In this sense, “faithful” means more than a business that is operated by Christians or that applies Christian principles to some aspects of its business, but instead a business that holistically integrates Christian theological and social principles with its business operations for the glory of God. The term “faithful business” is not meant to imply that the former is unfaithful, but only that it does not go far enough in implementing the countercultural demands of the Good News. By conventional business standards, the former would probably be considered a more prudent firm. In a similar manner, Rundle & Steffen (2003) specifically distinguish a Great Commission company from a Christian company (pp. 39-41).

²“The acquisition of a share of stock makes a person an owner and shareholder in a corporation. Shareholders thus own the corporation” (Miller, Jentz, & Cross, 2003, p. 715).

³All corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the authority of, and the business and affairs of the corporation managed by or under the direction of, its board of directors, subject to any limitation set forth in its articles of incorporation or in [a shareholder agreement] (Revised Model Business Corporation Act, § 8.01(b); see also Del. Code Ann. tit. 8, §141(a) (2006)).

⁴Bainbridge (2003, p. 561) notes that the twentieth century legal scholars Adolf Berle and E. Merrick Dodd erred by failing to distinguish between directors and officers. While in theory boards of directors do have significant attributes that deserve special attention, in practice, the failure to distinguish between the two is not necessarily an error. See also Endnote 9.

⁵See also Revised Model Business Corporation Act § 8.42 for similar duties imposed on officers.

⁶For an historic overview of the corporate social responsibility debate, see Wells (2002) and Branson (2001). For an overview of the antinomy between the corporate goals of profitability and social responsibility and the points of tension between shareholder primacy models and stakeholder primacy models, see Margolis & Walsh (2003).

⁷Article on A.G. Lafley, Chief Executive Officer of Proctor & Gamble Co. The Business Roundtable, an association of the chief executive officers of leading

corporations, has stated that it is in the long-term interests of shareholders for the corporation to treat other stakeholders well (Business Roundtable, 1997, p.3).

⁸A faithful business can be the cost leader if it achieves productivity gains that are sustainable because they cannot be imitated and because they offset the costs associated with the spiritual and social bottom lines.

⁹The idea that a faithful business is better positioned to pursue a differentiation strategy is explored in greater detail in a separate paper (Bretsen, 2007).

¹⁰Although often expressed as a rule relating the liability of directors, the business judgment rule applies to both directors and officers. In describing the rule, one court noted “[t]he sound business judgment rule...expresses the unanimous decision of American courts to eschew intervention in corporate decision-making if the judgment of directors and officers i[s] uninfluenced by personal considerations and is exercised in good faith...” (*Miller v. American Telephone & Telegraph Co.*, 507 F.2d 759, 762 (3rd Cir. 1974), cited in Gevurtz, 2000, p. 279). Including officers within the protection of the business judgment rule makes sense since all authority to manage the business and affairs of the corporation rests with the board of directors, and the board of directors delegates much of this authority by appointing officers (Revised Model Business Corporation Act §§ 8.01(b) and 8.40(a)). Further, the business judgment rule is a rule related to the duty of care and the duty of care of directors and officers is nearly identical (Revised Model Business Corporation Act §§ 8.30 and 8.42). However, there is no authority for extending the business judgment rule to employees below top management (Gevurtz, 2000, p. 298).

¹¹See, e.g., Ariz. Rev. Stat § 10-2702 (Lexis 2006); Fla. Stat. Ann. § 607.0830(3) (Lexis 2005); Ga. Code Ann. §§ 14-2-202(b)(5), 14-2-830 (2005); Haw. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 414-221(b) (Lexis 2005); Idaho Code § 30-1602 (Lexis 2005); 805 Ill. Comp. Stat. 5/8.85 (Lexis 2005); Ind. Code Ann. § 23-1-35-1(d)-(g) (Burns 2006); Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 271B.12-21(4) (Lexis 2005); La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 12:92(G) (Lexis 2005); Me. Rev. Stat. Ann. tit. 13-C § 831.6 (Lexis 2005); Md. Code Ann. § 2-104(b)(9) (Lexis 2005); Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. ch. 156B, § 65 (Lexis 2005); Minn. Stat. Ann. § 302A.251(5) (Lexis 2005); Miss. Code Ann. 79-4-8.30 (Lexis 2005); Mo. Ann. Stat. § 351.347.1 (2006); Neb. Rev. Stat. § 21-2432(2) (2005); Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 78.134(4) (Lexis 2005); N.J. Stat. Ann. § 14A:6-1 (Lexis 2005); N.M. Stat. Ann. § 53-11-35(D) (Lexis 2005); N.Y. Bus. Corp. Law § 717(b) (Lexis 2006); N.D. Cent. Code § 10-19.1-50(6) (Lexis 2005); Ohio Rev. Code Ann. §§ 1701.13(F)(7), 1701.59(A)(E) (Page 2006); Or. Rev. Stat. § 60.357(5) (2003); 15 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. §§ 515, 516, 1715, 1716

(Lexis 2006); R.I. Gen. Laws § 7-5.2-8 (2006); S.D. Codified Laws § 47-33-4 (2006); Tenn. Code Ann. § 48-103-204 (2005); Tex. Bus. Org. Code § 21.401 (2005); Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 11A § 8.30 (2005); Va. Code Ann. § 13.1-727.1 (Lexis 2005); Wis. Stat. Ann. § 180.0827 (Lexis 2005); Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 17-16-830 (Lexis 2005).

¹²Although a faithful business will likely have higher costs than a firm following the shareholder primacy model, the cost differential with a firm following the stakeholder primacy model may not be as great. However, since a faithful business' multiple bottom lines include a spiritual bottom line that would not usually be present in a socially responsible firm, there will likely be a difference in cost structure between the two types of firms.

¹³In a later case involving a corporate reorganization, *Paramount Communications, Inc. v. Time, Inc.*, 571 A.2d 1140 (Del. 1989), the Delaware Supreme Court appeared to limit the Revlon standard to situations where the break up of the corporate entity is inevitable and stated that a board of directors "is not under any per se duty to maximize shareholder value in the short term, even in the context of a takeover" 571 A.2d at 1150. Based on the treatment of the Unocal and Revlon standards in that case and a later case involving a change of control, *Paramount Communications, Inc. v. QVC Network, Inc.*, 637 A.2d 34 (Del. 1993), some legal scholars have argued that the Revlon standard is limited to change of control transactions that transform a public held corporation into a privately held corporation (Stout, 2002, pp. 1203-1204; Fairfax, 2002, p. 409).

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ARTICLE

Leader-Member Exchange in Scripture: Insights from Jesus, Noah, and Abraham¹

Dr. Jennifer J. Dose — Messiah College

Abstract

Although much has been written about leadership from a Christian perspective, Christian principles have greater potential to be integrated into the academic research literature than has yet been realized. Leadership theory and practice is one area in which Scripture can contribute significantly, leader-member exchange theory (LMX) being one example. LMX states that leaders have limited personal, social, and organizational resources (e.g., time, energy, personal power); thus, rather than interacting similarly with each follower, leaders have different relationships with different followers. Some followers receive a higher degree of social exchange including increased levels of information sharing, interaction time, mutual support, and informal influence. In contrast, other followers receive a lower level of social exchange and are treated in a more formal, “by-the-book” manner. This paper applies biblical

principles to LMX with the goal of making recommendations regarding the desirability and possible limitations of building differential relationships with followers as a leadership practice. Jesus’ relationship to the twelve disciples in comparison to other followers, as well as God’s relationship to Noah and Abraham, are used to derive principles for effective LMX practices. Distinctive qualities of these high LMX relationships are shown through the instruction, unique experiences, empowerment, and higher expectations that these followers received. Unique relationships between a leader and followers are appropriate, but must be established based on appropriate criteria, e.g., values rather than demographic variables. Additionally, followers can, in turn, develop LMX relationships with others, thus allowing the leader to influence a greater number of individuals, though indirectly, and to support organizational goal accomplishment.

Finally, a leader has a minimum responsibility and expectation for all followers, not just those with high LMX. These principles have implications for activities such as increasing workforce diversity, span of control, succession planning, and strategic leadership.

Leader-Member Exchange in Scripture: Insights from Jesus, Noah, and Abraham

Both secular and Christian academic circles have viewed leadership as an important topic; however, there has been little integration of scriptural teachings and research findings. Since all truth is God's truth, a complete examination of the topic using scriptural examples to illuminate organizational models would be informative and beneficial. God's choice to fulfill His will using organizations, and the people and processes underlying them, means that our understanding and application of scriptural principles to organizational issues is crucial. This paper examines one particular theory of leadership, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, through the lens of Christian faith.

Leadership theory and research can be divided into three streams (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000). The first, strategic leadership theory, involves how organizational leaders develop ideas, make decisions, and implement these strategies to facilitate organizational success. The second stream focuses on charismatic, transformational, and visionary theories of leadership. The final stream is labeled the emergent theories of leadership and includes theories that involve social exchange, behavioral and cognitive complexity, and social intelligence. Writing in the area of Christian leadership, both popular press and scholarly literature has focused almost exclusively on the second stream, offering Jesus as the model of a transformational and servant leader (e.g., *Developing the Leader Within You*, Maxwell, 1993; *Lead Like Jesus*, Blanchard & Hodges, 2005; "Stewardship-Leadership: A Biblical Refinement of Servant Leadership," Beadles, 2000; *Transformational Leadership*, Ford, 1991).

The third stream, the emergent theories of leadership, merits

greater focus by Christians. The relational nature of leadership as depicted by the emergent theories captures an important aspect of leadership, as well as being consistent with the relational emphasis in Christian life on fellowship and discipleship. In particular, LMX theory is appropriate in light of its emphasis on the interpersonal relationship between a leader and individual followers. This is not to detract from discussions of visionary or strategic leadership; it is simply recognition that a Christian worldview and a theory of leadership focusing on relationships can do much to inform each other. This article applies biblical principles to LMX theory. Following a review of the present state of knowledge with regard to LMX theory and research, the paper describes examples of LMX from Scripture, specifically regarding Jesus' relationship with His disciples and God's relationship with Abraham and the nation of Israel. From these examples, principles are derived that can be used to make recommendations regarding the practice of LMX as an approach to leadership.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Most theories of leadership assume that leaders display an "average leadership style" in which they interact with all of their followers in basically the same manner. In contrast, LMX theory describes leaders as having limited personal, social, and organizational resources (e.g., time, energy, personal power), a situation that discourages them from having the same type of interaction with each follower (e.g., Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Mueller & Lee, 2002). Instead, each leader-follower relationship is unique, falling on a continuum such that some followers receive a relatively lower and some a relatively higher degree of social exchange. Followers receiving a lower level of social exchange are treated in a fair, but more formal and contractual, "by-the-book" manner. In contrast, a higher level of social exchange may include increased levels of information exchange, mutual support, informal influence, trust, and greater input in decisions (Mueller & Lee, 2002). Although high LMX followers

receive more resources, leaders also expect more from them in terms of effort and going beyond the established job description. For both the leader and the follower, the extra effort is directed toward the goals of the organization. Consequences of receiving high LMX may include higher performance (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982), job satisfaction (Graen et al., 1982), organizational commitment (Nystrom, 1990), organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Hui, 1993), increased delegation (Schriesheim, Neider, & Scandura, 1998), empowerment (Gomez & Rosen, 2001), and lower turnover (Graen, Liden, & Hoel, 1982).

Antecedents

The variables that predict differential relationships between leaders and subordinates have been of particular interest to researchers. Models of the leader-member exchange development process depict two alternate paths that can determine the quality of LMX (Bauer & Green, 1996; Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Graen and Scandura (1987) have

depicted one path as a process of role development occurring as leaders and followers begin to interact. Initial interaction leads to delegation of a trial assignment: the role-taking phase. The leader then assesses the follower's performance, makes causal attributions, and decides on future action. In the role-making phase, the relationship between the leader and member develops through working together on tasks. Role-making, if successful, generates a high LMX relationship (Uhl-Bien, Graen, & Scandura, 2000). As the relationship stabilizes, roles become routinized. This is the more desirable path because the LMX relationship is predicated on organizationally relevant, relatively objective criteria such as the follower's actual performance (e.g., Kim & Organ, 1982) or the leader's perception of the subordinate's competence (Dansereau et al., 1975). Research investigating these variables has achieved mixed results (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997), however.

Instead of relying on performance evidence, leaders often take a second, less deliberate

path. Similarity between the leader and follower, particularly when salient (Dienesch & Liden, 1986) or during initial interactions (Bauer & Green, 1996) can directly predict LMX, without using performance as a basis. Research findings have shown strong support for this path. Liden, Wayne, and Stillwell (1993) found that overall similarity based on an index of demographic variables (gender, race, education, and age) was not related to LMX; however, research addressing specific attributes has shown that similarity in sex typically has demonstrated a positive relationship to LMX (Duchon, Green, & Taber, 1986; Green, Anderson, & Shivers, 1996; Larwood & Blackmore, 1978; Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989). Similarity in education (Basu & Green, 1995; Green, Anderson, & Shivers, 1996) has received mixed results. In addition to demographic variables, attitude (Phillips & Bedeian, 1994) and values similarity (Ashkanasy & O'Connor, 1997; Dose, 1999; Steiner, 1988) also predicted LMX. Perceived similarity is a more powerful predictor of LMX

than is actual similarity (Liden et al., 1993; Phillips, 1992). Other perceptions such as liking (Engle & Lord, 1997) and trust (Gomez & Rosen, 2001) also show a positive relationship with LMX.

A Prescriptive Direction and Unanswered Questions

The LMX research literature primarily has been descriptive. Only recently have scholars begun to deal with the issue of the extent to which the LMX leadership style is recommended (Yrle, Hartman, & Galle, 2003), and questions yet remain. Is it "fair" for a leader to treat certain followers differently, or is it favoritism? Yes, followers with a high degree of exchange with their leader may have higher performance, lower turnover, higher job satisfaction, etc., but what about the rest of the followers or the organization as a whole? Do leaders conscientiously select high performers for high LMX?

In attempting to resolve the justice issue and enhance organizational performance, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) have suggested that leaders begin with a contractual relationship with all follow-

ers, but at some point offer high-quality LMX to each subordinate rather than differentiate between them. The relationship will advance more strongly in some cases than in others. Hiller and Day (2003) echoed this recommendation, particularly for diverse groups. Mueller and Lee (2002) have sought to provide further direction by suggesting that followers can take a proactive role in determining the quality of the exchange relationship by demonstrating high performance in task assignments, engaging in effective communication behaviors, and utilizing impression management strategies. Scandura and Graen (1984) have offered evidence that leaders can be trained to offer high LMX, improving both satisfaction and overall performance of the subordinate; however, it is unclear whether this practice can be maintained over time.

Although the prescriptive view of LMX that recommends against differentiation does attempt to provide leaders some guidance in building relationships with multiple subordinates, this logic contains some flaws.

One difficulty is that it discounts the issue of the leader's resource constraints and the reality that high LMX relationships require substantial investments of a leader's time. Furthermore, it contradicts scholarship that emphasizes the importance of differentiating among followers (e.g., Krackhardt & Brass, 1994; Liden et al., 1997) and conserving time for strategically valuable relationships (Brass, 1995), thus suggesting instead that leaders should give priority to intentionally developing followers who have the greatest potential. Although to some extent the non-differentiation view provides a means for limiting the number of subordinates to which the leader has a high exchange relationship by leaving it in the hands of the followers (e.g., Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), this approach does not guarantee that the most deserving followers will accept the "offer" rather than those with the greatest motivation for impression management. Neither does it allow leaders to discern the followers with the greatest performance potential in the first place and to invest the

greatest level of time and resources with them.

One way to evaluate the prescriptive view advocated by these researchers is to examine the practices of a highly regarded leader in the context of LMX. With that goal in mind, the following section describes the practices of Jesus, widely acknowledged to be an effective leader by both Christians and others. Scripture demonstrates that Jesus did form differential relationships with followers, He did so in an effective manner, and doing so was instrumental in accomplishing His purpose of spreading the Gospel to the whole world.

LMS Theory in Practice: Jesus and His Disciples

Jesus as an Example

Scripture describes that although Jesus had many followers, He selected twelve with whom He spent significantly more time and to whom He devoted more teaching. Even among these twelve, He had a more focused relationship with Peter, James, and John. Importantly, Jesus used this strategy

with a purpose. Thornton has written, “On the whole it is evident that His aim is not present success or number of adherents, but the preparation of a solid nucleus . . . absolutely committed to the service of the kingdom. This withdrawal onto the few . . . is but the forging of an instrument to save the whole” (1956, pp. 37-38). Differential relationships were part of how God’s ultimate plan (in which He offers salvation to all who believe in Him) was put into effect.

One might ask whether Jesus truly had limited resources as is the case for human managers and other leaders. He was fully human as well as fully divine. On the one hand, He had self-imposed limited resources; for example, the time constraints of His three-year ministry; on the other hand, surely He had greater personal resources than the typical leader. Thus, it is significant that He chose not to foster the same level of exchange relationship with each of His followers. Leadership theorists have noted that the study of leadership has not adequately considered the situational context (House & Aditya, 1997). It may

be that Jesus chose twelve disciples because that was an appropriate group size; if larger, they could not effectively gather, each ask questions, travel together, etc.

Antecedents. It is difficult to answer entirely the question of “Why these particular individuals?” The situation was not a contractual employment setting (as is most LMX research), nor are we privy to God’s ultimate plan; however, some things are apparent. The reasons for the selection of these individuals were not the same as those valued by society. Matthew, one of the twelve disciples, was a tax collector (Mt. 9:9), and several were uneducated fishermen (Lk. 5:9-10). Jesus was scolded by the Pharisees for associating with tax collectors and sinners (Lk. 5:30). Nor do these relationships necessarily demonstrate the characteristics found in LMX research: Jesus, the twelve disciples, and His other followers were mostly working-class Galileans; therefore, Jesus did not share greater demographic similarity with His disciples than with other followers. Neither had the disciples previously demonstrated superior performance

in ministry. On the other hand, Jesus did appear to have a purpose for choosing these individuals, and they did go on to play an important role in the development of the early church. He perceived that the disciples were teachable and had potential to grow in the characteristics and values such as those He described in the Beatitudes (Mt. 5).

Distinctives of Jesus’ Relationship with his Disciples

Scripture depicts many examples of Jesus’ relationship with His disciples, beginning with calling brothers Peter and Andrew, James and John as the first disciples (Mt. 4:18, Mk. 1:16, Lk. 5:8-11). He appointed twelve from among all His followers and designated them as apostles (Mk. 3:13-14, Lk. 6:12). His purpose was for them “to be with Him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons”² (Mk. 3:14-15). Significantly, at the point at which many of His disciples “turned back and no longer went about with him” (Jn. 6:66), none of the core disciples left. Consistent with LMX theory, Jesus’ interac-

tion with the twelve disciples, and in some cases Peter, James and John, was different from that with His other followers in several ways, including the amount of teaching they received, specific experiences, expectations, and empowerment.

Teaching. Scripture gives several examples of instances where Jesus gave further instruction to the disciples, either to the twelve versus the other followers (e.g., Mt. 11:1) or to His disciples versus the crowd: “He did not speak to them [the crowd] except in parables, but He explained everything in private to His disciples” (Mk. 4:34). At one point, He told the disciples, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given” (Mt. 13:11). Jesus gave further commentary on events, such as the rich man’s questions and how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God (Mk. 10:23). At times, He instructed them not to share all they had seen (Mt. 16:20, Mk. 8:30, Lk. 9:21), at least not at that time. He gave the disciples greater explanation of His purpose and what would

happen in the future, even though they did not understand. The primary example of this was that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer, die, and be raised (Mt. 16:21, Mk. 8:31). Manson (cited in Thornton, 1956) has calculated that seventy percent of the Lord’s teaching was given privately to the Twelve.

Conversation was not only in one direction. As part of this instruction, the disciples also felt free to question Jesus, such as by asking for further explanation of the meaning of a parable (Mt. 13:36, Mk. 4:10, Lk. 8:9), a reaction of the Pharisees (Mt. 15:12), or what will happen at the end of the age when He returns (Mt. 24:3). The disciples also asked Jesus to teach them to pray (Lk. 11:1). Peter, James, John and Andrew asked Jesus questions privately as well (Mk. 13:3). Once a leader has this high-quality exchange relationship with a subset of followers, there is a great deal of potential to influence them and to model appropriate behavior (Dansereau et al., 1975; Maurer, Pierce, & Shore, 2002). Jesus’ relationship with the disciples allowed them to get to know Him quite well,

to witness His values and how His behavior was consistent with them. This was particularly important in that His Kingdom was different from their previous understanding of a Messiah coming to bring political victory to the Jews.

Experiences. The miracles and other events that the disciples alone experienced also exemplify the high LMX relationship that Jesus had with certain of His followers. Leaders often provide professional development experiences for high LMX followers (Graen, 2003). At times, Jesus simply withdrew with His disciples away from the crowd (Mk. 3:7). Often these experiences were related to things Jesus wanted them to learn. The disciples witnessed Jesus calm the storm (Mk. 4:37-39, Lk. 8:22-25) which strengthened their faith. Jesus' relationships with Peter, James, and John qualify strongly as high LMX. Only Peter, James and John accompanied Jesus into the house of Jairus (Luke 8:51). Peter was able to walk on water (Mt. 14:28-29). Peter, James, and John witnessed the transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-2, Mk. 9:2-3,

Lk. 9:28-29) and accompanied Jesus to Gethsemane to keep watch with Him (Mt. 26:37, Mk. 14:32-34).

One type of experience for the disciples, also related to teaching, was to see Jesus modeling appropriate relationships with non-Jews. In addition to the benefit for the individual with whom He was interacting, the purpose of this role modeling was to equip the disciples for further ministry by demonstrating how to share the message of the Gospel and to fulfill the work for which He commissioned them in Matthew 28. One example is Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn. 4). Jews did not associate with Samaritans, yet He conversed with her and explained that He was the Messiah, and that ". . . salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship Him" (Jn. 4:22-23). A further example is Jesus' exchange with the Canaanite woman who sought healing for her daughter (Mt. 15:24-28). In these instanc-

es, the disciples initially were astonished (Jn. 4:27) at the interaction or criticized His actions saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." (Mt. 15:23). Jesus, however, was able to demonstrate that one does not have to be a Jew in order to have strong faith.

Expectations. As LMX theory predicts (e.g., Schriesheim et al., 1998), greater time and resources given to followers is matched by greater expectations of them. Coleman (1963) also notes the importance of expectations. In Luke 12:48, Jesus stated, "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded." (See also Mt. 13:12). The parable of the talents (Mt. 25:14ff) also expresses this theme: Although the master entrusted a different number of talents to each servant, he expected all of them to use the talents wisely in accordance with what they had been given. It also should be noted that the talents were given according to ability (Mt. 25:15), and that those who were found to be able and

trustworthy were then given more over which to be responsible (Mt. 25:21). Ability is the recommended criteria for LMX. When Peter declared Jesus to be "the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:16), Jesus affirmed that Peter would be the rock upon which Jesus would build the church (Mt. 16:18), not an easy task. He also referred to Peter as "Satan" when Peter failed to understand (Mt. 16:23). Jesus had high expectations and a close enough relationship that He could be harsh if warranted. While on the cross, Jesus gave the care of Mary, His mother, to John (John 19:27). Peter and John were chosen to select and prepare the Passover lamb (Luke 22:7-8). Later, Peter and John's letters refer repeatedly to Christ as the Lamb, demonstrating their understanding of the concept of the Paschal Lamb like no other New Testament writer (Moore, 2003, p. 53). Peter, James, and John were referred to as pillars by Paul (Galatians 2:9). When Jesus was no longer physically present, the disciples would need to function with greater autonomy; high LMX, as illustrated by the preceding examples, leads to the

development of this characteristic (House & Aditya, 1997).

Empowerment. Consistent with LMX research (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989), Jesus exhibited differential relationships with His followers by giving high LMX followers empowering experiences. Many of the disciples' experiences served to prepare and empower them for ministry in which Jesus was their role model. Jesus involved the disciples and encouraged them to learn by doing or apply what they had learned, such as when He asked them to give the five thousand something to eat (Mk. 6:37). A culminating experience was when Jesus sent the twelve (Mt. 10:1, Mk. 6:7, Lk. 9:1) and also the seventy-two (Lk. 10:1) off two by two to preach and heal, applying what they had learned from Jesus. At the end of His earthly ministry He prepared them for their future work saying, "For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (Jn. 13:15). At the Last Supper He commands, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk. 22:19). Finally, He commis-

sioned them, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt. 28:18-20). Jesus transferred some of His authority to the apostles. He repeated a theme they did not yet quite understand about going to all nations. Finally, He assured them that His relationship with them would continue.

Equal Treatment

It is also important to note when Jesus does not treat followers differentially.³ This distinction helps indicate under what circumstances LMX is appropriate and when it is not. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5) explicitly includes individuals (e.g., meek, poor in spirit) who could otherwise be perceived as having less value (Willard, 1998). Jesus had compassion on the crowd as a whole because they were

like sheep without a shepherd (Mt. 9:36). I Cor. 12 likens workers in the Church to a body with many parts each necessary to the whole. The parable of the workers in the vineyard (Mt. 20) depicts workers receiving the same pay no matter when they started working: Believers are received into the Kingdom of God no matter how early or late they come to Christ. Jesus offers the opportunity to be a follower to everyone: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Mt. 11:28). He also stated, “For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Mt. 12:50), not just the disciples or His earthly mother and brothers. Acts 10:34 states that “God shows no partiality,” offering salvation to believers from every nation.

Although the twelve disciples were given higher expectations, all followers of Jesus must meet certain expectations. Several Scripture passages require any disciple to take up his or her cross and follow Him (Mt. 16:24, Mk. 8:34, Lk. 9:23, Lk. 14:27). Jesus illustrated the sacrifice

of following Him: “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Mt. 8:20). Thus, even in the context of LMX, there is a minimum acceptable level of relationship and mutual expectation between a leader and his or her followers. This is analogous to the work setting where all must meet the contractual expectations of their job.

The Result

Scripture shows that Jesus used LMX in an unbiased way, giving fair treatment to all, and requiring more from those in whom He invested more time and energy. Notably, although the disciples did grumble about other things, there is no place in Scripture depicting complaints about their status relative to one another (Coleman, 1963). Coleman viewed this as “proof that where preference is shown in the right spirit and for the right reason, offense need not arise” (p. 31), further stating that for this to be true, the ultimate goal must be clear and there must be no hint of selfish favoritism. The disciples learned from

the teaching and events they experienced and were able to use this experience to fulfill their commission, build the Church, and spread the Gospel to other nations.

God and the Nation of Israel

Although certainly the richest example, Jesus' appropriate use of differential relationships with the disciples was not an anomaly in Scripture. God had high LMX relationships with individuals such as Noah, Abraham, Jacob/Israel, Moses, and others that were distinct from His relationships with other Israelites, and through which He worked to build the Hebrew nation. As with Jesus, these relationships worked to further the purpose of advancing the kingdom of God. The following section describes God's relationships with Noah, Abraham, and the Nation of Israel as examples of effective LMX being used to further God's ultimate purpose.

Evidence for High LMX

The fact that God demonstrated high LMX relationships

supports the legitimacy of this leadership practice. God's special intimacy with those whom He had high LMX relationships, the fact that He gave them new names, and the covenant He established express the quality of these differential relationships.

Noah and Abraham's relationship with God is described in an **intimate** way, indicative of high LMX. "Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9). In Isaiah 41:8, God referred to Abraham as His friend. Abraham spoke with God and was able to ask Him direct questions (Gen. 15:8). God included Abraham in the decision-making process for Sodom and Gomorrah, saying, ". . . Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" (Gen. 18:17). Abraham spoke on behalf of what righteous people may yet have been in Sodom, "Far be it from you to do such a thing — to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare with the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" (Gen. 18:25). Eventually, as it became clear that Sodom and Gomorrah must be destroyed, "God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out

of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had settled” (Gen. 19:29). This is not the contractual exchange that a low LMX relationship would evidence.⁴

A significant aspect to many of God’s high LMX relationships was that He gave these individuals a **new name** indicative of His purpose for them. Abram became Abraham, “father of many,” a symbol of God’s promise to him and his role in God’s purpose. Jacob became Israel, the name of a new nation. (Later, Jesus renamed Levi as Matthew, “gift of the LORD,” and Simon became Peter, “the rock.”)

God’s **covenant** expresses the formalization of the high LMX relationship as a means to accomplish God’s purpose. The parties to the covenant have higher mutual expectations of each other. God established a covenant with Noah regarding the ark (Gen 6:18); Noah’s response prompted God’s pledge, “I will never again curse the ground because of humankind” (Gen. 8:21), and blessing (Gen. 9:1) to Noah and his descendants. This covenant is a precursor to the one made with Abraham, which looks

ahead to choosing and building a nation through this individual. Consistent with LMX theory, God makes a special request: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you” (Gen. 12:1). In exchange, God promised to make Abraham and his descendants into a great nation, blessed, and a blessing to all peoples on earth (Gen. 12:2-3). God reiterated this covenant many times (e.g., Gen.13:15; Gen.15:18; Gen. 17:2).

God’s relationship with specific individuals had all the earmarks of a high LMX relationship. In addition, God’s relationships with these individuals provide a good example for leaders on how to choose high LMX followers: based on character, values, and performance, not demographic similarity. One characteristic evidenced by Noah and Abraham was their **righteousness**. “The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. . . . But Noah found favor in the sight of the LORD” (Gen. 6:5,

8). Abraham “believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness” (Gen.15:6).

Choosing a Nation

An example of LMX on a larger scale is God’s relationship with the nation of Israel versus followers from other nations. In addition to leading certain individuals such as Noah and Abraham, God also specifically chose and led the Nation of Israel. After the Tower of Babel resulted in multiple nations, God decided to choose one nation through which to bring forth the Messiah (Icenogle, 1994; Moore, 1995). Election is “the act of choice whereby God picks an individual or group out of a larger company for a purpose or destiny of his own appointment” (Packer, 1982, p. 314). God illustrated this choice and destiny when He stated, “You shall be holy to me; for I the LORD am holy, and I have separated you from the other peoples to be mine” (Lev. 20:26).

God did not turn his face from other peoples, instead blessing them through Abraham

and his descendants (e.g., Gen. 12:1-2). Belief in God was not limited to the Jews; His ultimate plan was to work through the Jews to reach all peoples: “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you’” (Gal. 3:8).⁵

Just as the relationships described by LMX theory are not simply an ingroup and an outgroup, but rather a continuum, so the LORD’s choice of Israel does not mean Israel had carte blanche nor that other nations had no status. Consistent with LMX theory, those with high levels of exchange have greater responsibilities and expectations as well as rewards; they are held to a strict standard. Israel’s special relationship with God did not free the people from being subject to discipline for disobedience. Thus, in fact, Israel’s punishment for their sin was a *consequence* of their chosenness: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2). Also, consistent with LMX,

followers from other nations were to be treated fairly. For example, Israel was forbidden to abhor the Edomites (Dt. 23:7-8), descendants of Esau, and were commanded to treat kindly the Ammonites (Dt. 2:19), who were descendants of Lot (Gen. 19:38). Ruth, a Moabite woman, gained prominence as an ancestor of David (Ru. 4:17; Mt. 1:5-16).⁶

Summary

The preceding paragraphs have shown that God expressed a more personal, intimate relationship including higher mutual expectations with some followers than with others, although all were treated fairly. Abraham and Noah, especially, provide a good example of certain characteristics, e.g., righteousness, being appropriate antecedents for the high LMX relationship. It is also true that these differential relationships were conducted for a purpose: focusing on a few, to later spread the gospel to the whole world.

What We Can Learn: Principles and Applications

The preceding examples show how carefully-considered,

selective, high LMX relationships can be effective in bringing about fruit. Followers benefit from the relationship and can, in turn, develop relationships with followers of their own. In this fashion, leaders and members work together to fulfill the organizational goals. In the following section, principles are derived from the scriptural examples; in many cases these principles contradict prescriptive LMX theory as it is currently stated. Applications for LMX practice are also described. These applications address the problems that LMX research has been trying to solve, but do so through different mechanisms, ones which are consistent with Scripture but not necessarily with prescriptive LMX research in its current form, as described earlier.

Principle 1: Limiting High LMX Is Valid

The relationships between Jesus and His disciples and between God, Abraham, and others support the premise that it is appropriate for a leader to establish unique relationships with followers, some receiving a higher level of exchange than

others. As exemplified in Scripture, such relationships can be characterized by intimacy, involving teaching, shared information and experiences, greater influence and involvement, and higher mutual expectations. This model runs counter to the current thinking in LMX theory which advocates that leaders should foster high LMX relationships with all followers.

Succession planning can be positively impacted by the practice of choosing a limited number of followers with whom to foster high LMX. Succession planning focuses on high-potential employees, assessing them, giving them special assignments, and preparing them for future leadership positions. Today's fast-changing business environment means that succession planning is vital (Wells, 2003), yet about one-third of companies are concerned about being able to find suitable replacements (Bohlander & Snell, 2004). Often CEOs are so concerned about holding on to power that they fail to make a significant interpersonal investment in their subordinates (Sherman, 2004), thus highlighting the importance

of high LMX for human resource management.

Limiting span of control, the number of subordinates a manager has, may mitigate some of the concerns over the fairness of differential relationships. Research has found that the number of employees a manager supervises is negatively correlated with LMX (Schriesheim, Castro, & Yammarino, 2000). As work-unit size increases, relationships between supervisors and subordinates typically became less positive (Green et al., 1996). Recent trends in organizational design, including the virtual organization and reducing middle management have moved in the opposite direction, increasing span of control. Although self-managed teams and empowerment are positive ways to give employees more responsibility, the relationship between managers and employees remains an important consideration. This implies that organizational design should consider LMX issues in determining the optimal span of control, taking into consideration that a smaller span of control will allow the leader to have more time to

develop high exchange relationships with subordinates as well as to give subordinates an opportunity to develop their job-related skills.

Principle 2: Appropriate Basis for High LMX

It is important for LMX to be established based on appropriate criteria. The parable of the talents expresses the importance of managers giving responsibility based on ability and trustworthiness. Scripture shows that similarity in values and enacting those values is important both for initiation and continuation of a high LMX relationship, whereas simply demographic variables or similarity are not. Abraham and Noah were known for their righteousness. The disciples, particularly Peter, James, and John, were able to understand Jesus' ministry more fully than others. Peter, especially, showed that he was teachable with regard to interacting with Gentiles. Basing high LMX on similarity in values is consistent with prescriptive LMX research but not with typical practice, as described previously.

When left to their natural tendencies, research has shown that leaders are significantly influenced by perceived and demographic similarity (e.g., the similar-to-me bias; Rand & Wexley, 1975). Leaders need to be conscious of the basis upon which they choose followers for high LMX relationships. An affective rather than cognitive choice can limit the diversity of those who have access to a greater share of the leader's time and other resources and can be discouraging to minority employees (Douglas, Ferris, Buckley, & Gundlach, 2003). This is problematic in light of an organization's need for diverse members who can make a contribution to organizational goals. Fostering LMX relationships that cross gender and racial boundaries, in fact, may be the key component in a successful diversity initiative (Douglas et al., 2003). High LMX relationships should be based on ability or performance potential and congruence with the values of the organization. Using these criteria reduces the potential for favoritism (warned against in James 2:9) by the leader and

the danger of prejudice against low LMX individuals (e.g., Jews' attitude toward Samaritans).

Principle 3: Working Through High LMX Members to Lead Others

Having established high LMX relationships with the appropriate followers, one way to deal with the reality of limited resources is for leaders to work through their high LMX followers to develop others. This is exactly what Jesus did with His disciples. The things that the disciples learned and experienced with Jesus enabled them to continue the mission of spreading the gospel. Noah and Abraham had important roles in furthering God's plan for the Nation of Israel and ultimately reaching the whole world. The idea of a system of relationships is consistent with the biblical plan stretching over thousands of years and many sets of relationships. Aside from Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) preliminary ideas about LMX as a network of interdependent dyadic relationships, this principle has not been addressed by LMX theory.

The series or system of dyadic

relationships throughout the organizational hierarchy proposed here implies that it is also worthwhile to look at LMX at the macro or organizational level. Followers initially benefiting from high exchange relationships could be trained and motivated to develop high exchange relationships with their own followers, thus effectively connecting them to the organization as a whole. This would not necessarily be in the context of formal reporting relationships, but could be in the form of more experienced members of a team mentoring and developing newer members. The initial high LMX followers would be seen by others as being trustworthy and having legitimacy and credibility through their relationship with the leader (Liden et al., 1997). This allows the primary leader to influence a greater number of individuals (though indirectly), ultimately furthering the organizational purpose.

A benefit of using high LMX followers to develop other employees is that it is a way of providing more organizational members with the opportunity to develop a high-level exchange

relationship. It would also mitigate the potential negative effects on coworker relationships of some subordinates having high LMX with the supervisor and some not. Additionally, Maurer et al. (2002) have proposed that when LMX is high, employees will be motivated to engage in developmental activities (going beyond the usual job responsibilities) that benefit the organization as well as their own supervisor.

Although there has been little LMX research in non-business organizations, other types of organizations, such as churches, clearly are settings in which LMX will occur and can provide an illustration of this concept. Evangelism and church renewal experts have recognized the value of focusing on giving teaching or spiritual direction to a small set of committed church members. Although some, such as Robert Coleman in *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (1963) have recognized the value of these concentrated relationships for teaching still others to lead, evangelize, and create disciples, not all take the logical next step of proposing that this small

group of high LMX followers each develop similar relationships to other church members, in turn strengthening the commitment of these individuals. Thornton (1956) stops with the focus on committed members. Other recent church growth and renewal experts (e.g., Warren, 1995) recognize that different levels of relationship and commitment exist within the church body; however, they imply that the pastoral focus should be on individuals at the lowest level of commitment. The discipleship literature and LMX research clearly have significant relevance for each other and would be a fruitful subject of future research and integration.

Principle 4: High LMX Leads To Organizational Goal Accomplishment

High LMX relationships play a role in working toward the accomplishment of God's plan throughout Scripture. Jesus' relationships with His disciples played a role in fulfilling the Great Commission. God's relationship with Noah, Abraham, and the nation of Israel as a whole provided a foundation

for the ministry of Jesus on earth. Research shows that high LMX leads to higher performance on an individual level, but there has been little investigation of LMX and organizational performance.

In *Christian Reflections on the Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner (2004) emphasize that leaders are influencing their followers to accomplish some broader goal. The LMX relationships described in Scripture provide excellent examples of how effective use of LMX combined with working through high LMX followers to lead others can be instrumental in implementing strategy; however, LMX research has typically focused on supervisory leadership (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000). The processes by which strategic leaders affect the organization has received little research attention (House & Aditya, 1997), and investigating the efficacy of LMX in this regard would be beneficial.

LMX research has not extensively addressed the importance of a leader's vision. Although Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) do make a connection between high-quality exchange and transformational leadership (Bass,

1990; Burns, 1978), the LMX literature has not completely recognized the value of a social exchange relationship for transmitting the leader's vision to a relatively small group of followers who have the ability to carry on that vision. It has been recognized to a somewhat greater extent in the Christian leadership literature, however. Maxwell (1993) commented that leaders spend eighty percent of their time with twenty percent of their followers, enabling these followers to carry on the vision.

Principle 5: Equitable Treatment for All

Again, it is important to emphasize that having high LMX relationships with only some does not mean that other followers are discounted or treated unfairly. Equitable does not mean equal. The parable of the talents illustrates that to whom much is given much is also expected. God's choice of Israel did not show favoritism; Israel's disobedience merited judgment while other nations also experienced God's mercy. Jesus offered a relationship with Him to all who would accept it.

In an organizational context, there is a minimum appropriate level of relationship with followers; even though some have a higher level of exchange than others, the leader has a certain responsibility to and expectation for all followers. LMX theory has not addressed how other followers should be treated apart from the injunction to give high LMX to all followers.

Although giving certain followers high LMX is justifiable, leaders must be concerned about low LMX followers as well, particularly minority employees. Dee Hock, founder of Visa International, has noted, "Any leader worthy of the name makes sure that *all* people for whom they have responsibility have open and equitable opportunity to develop their abilities to the maximum" (Bennis, Murphy, Hock, & Muldrone, 2003, p. 64). This is indeed a challenge, yet an important one. Nystrom (1990) found that low LMX led to low organizational commitment which in turn led to turnover. Although minority employees sometimes may feel stigmatized, resulting in lower job satisfaction and organizational

commitment (Milliken & Martins, 1996), individuals with a strong organizational identity perceived that they were treated fairly, regardless of racial identity (Dovidio, Gaertner, Niemann, & Snider, 2001). This organizational identity may be strengthened by values congruence.

Furthermore, leaders should realize that LMX level is not set in stone. High LMX members who do not meet their (perceived) potential or subsequently reduce their output may receive lower LMX (Nystrom, 1990; Steiner, 1997) or be sanctioned (consistent with God's treatment of Israel, e.g., Amos 3:2) while retaining high LMX. Scarce resources should be used in the most effective way, while maintaining respect for individuals.

Conclusion and Limitations

Although there is merit in developing as many high LMX followers as possible, given the positive outcomes associated with these relationships, resource constraints limit the number of high exchange relationships leaders can realistically cultivate. As a result, leaders would do well

to conform to the principles modeled in Scripture. Five principles emerge from a scriptural examination of LMX. These principles are that limiting high LMX is valid, using an appropriate basis for LMX, working through high LMX members to lead others, high LMX leads to organizational goal accomplishment, and equitable treatment for all.

These five principles are somewhat at odds with current scholarship and practice. Current LMX theory advocates fostering high LMX relationships with all followers; however, highly effective leaders such as Jesus appropriately fostered differential relationships with followers. These relationships involved greater intimacy, teaching, shared information and experiences, influence, and expectations. High LMX relationships were based on characteristics of the followers such as righteousness and greater understanding, not just similarity of demographic characteristics. High LMX relationships became part of a larger organizational plan in which these followers, in turn, developed relationships with others to further the organizational goals; current scholarship

has not focused on this macro view. Finally, LMX theory has not focused on appropriate treatment for low LMX followers.

It is important to recognize that there are limitations in the extent to which we can apply these scriptural examples to organizational life in general. Human leaders are not omnipotent; they cannot entirely recognize their followers' potential and, therefore, cannot always select the most appropriate individuals for high LMX. Although working through high LMX followers to lead other subordinates is a viable option, human leaders do not have the luxury of working over thousands of years to bring a plan to fruition. Limited time may also interfere with working through high LMX followers to lead other subordinates to bring a plan to fruition. Additionally, some valid recommendations for applying LMX cannot be derived from scriptural examples (e.g., training leaders in order to increase LMX; Scandura & Graen, 1984). Nevertheless, application of scriptural principles can give leaders assurance that it is both reasonable and productive to have unique relationships with subor-

dinates, provided that this practice is implemented both fairly and with concern for effective human resource development and organizational performance.

Dr. Jennifer J. Dose

Associate Professor of Human
Resource Management
Messiah College
Department of Management and Business
Box 3042
Grantham, PA 17027
717-766-2511 x2320
jdose@messiah.edu

Endnotes

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²All Scripture references taken from: *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (1989). New York: American Bible Society.

³At the same time, Jesus makes a clear distinction between His followers and those who are not. One example of this is the passage about separating the sheep (followers) from the goats (Mt. 25:31ff). Jesus states that only the ones who do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of Heaven (Mt. 7:21); to the rest, He will declare “I never knew you” (Mt. 7:23). The statement, “Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters” (Mt. 12:30), also expresses the clear distinction of who are and are not Jesus’ followers.

⁴Additionally, Abraham’s reasoning parallels the passages in Matthew discussed earlier in which Jesus made a clear distinction between those who are His followers (the righteous) and those who are not. God did not relinquish His standards of justice as a favor to Abraham; Abraham knew those standards and spoke within those parameters.

⁵Jesus, the Messiah, was a descendant of Abraham. Jews of Jesus’ day knew that Israel had a destiny meant to affect other people (Kean, 1956), but they did not understand just what that destiny was. At the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus charged the disciples to “make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:19). As Paul said of Abraham, “For he is the father of all of us” (Rom. 4:16).

⁶Moabites were also descendants of the children of Lot (Gen. 19:36-37). Additionally, Moses married a woman from Midian, and his father-in-law Jethro gave Moses important advice about delegating responsibility for the governance of Israel (Exodus 18). The episode of Jonah the prophet journeying to the foreign city of Ninevah is another example of God’s mercy and compassion on people other than Israel (Jon. 4:10-11). Ninevites were descended from Ham, the youngest son of Noah (Gen. 10:6-12).

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ARTICLE

Just What was Jesus Saying? Two Interpretations of the Parable of the Shrewd Manager*

Bruno Dyck, Frederick A. Starke, and Calvin Dueck — University of Manitoba

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Abstract

Many Bible passages have been applied to the practice of management. One particular passage — the parable of the shrewd manager (Luke 16: 1-15) — is conspicuous by its absence. Why is this parable, where the central character is a manager, rarely referred to? In this paper, we interpret the parable of the shrewd manager from both a conventional materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view, and from its Radical counterpoint-of-view. Readers are challenged to consider the implications of the different interpretations of the parable and to think clearly about their own moral-point-of-view of management.

Christian scholars have drawn from a wide variety of biblical passages as they think about and develop management theory and practice. For example, more than 1500 biblical passages were cited in

the first decade of the *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business (JBIB)*. Of these, the five most frequently cited passages (Genesis 1: 27-28; Matthew 5: 13-16; Romans 12: 1-2; I. Corinthians 13: 12-13; and John 13: 12-17) emphasize four common themes: 1) the differences between God's way of managing versus the way of the world; 2) a call for new ways of thinking in order to transform the ways of the world; 3) the identification of servant leadership as a way for managers to manifest the ways of God; and 4) an emphasis on the importance of humility and nonjudgmental discernment (Dyck & Starke, 2005).

While it is helpful to examine common themes among frequently cited passages, it is also instructive to examine passages that are conspicuous by their absence. Accordingly, in this paper we focus our attention on one particular

passage — the parable of the shrewd manager (Luke 16: 1-15) — that is rarely mentioned in the literature that attempts to link biblical teachings with management theory and practice. Despite *JBIB*'s explicit focus on the integration of biblical teachings with management theory and practice, none of the articles published in the first decade of *JBIB* cite this particular parable.¹

This paper is organized as follows: First, we review some of the literature that informs our analysis of the parable of the shrewd manager. Second, we analyze the parable from two perspectives: first from a Conventional materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view, and then from a Radical counterpoint-of-view where materialism and individualism do not trump other forms of well-being. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our analysis for management theory and practice.

Materialism, Individualism, Moral-Points-of-View and Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

Dyck and Schroeder (2005) note that in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max

Weber (1958, original 1904) identified two hallmarks of modern management theory and practice: individualism and materialism. *Individualism* can be traced back to the idea of calling introduced during the Reformation. Rather than having salvation determined by the church (e.g., via confession to a priest, or taking the holy sacraments), the preachers of the Reformation argued that it depended on how *individuals* lived out the calling, or vocation, that God had given to them. In particular, there was emphasis on disciplined work habits in their jobs. Weber also linked *materialism* to this emphasis on calling, suggesting that preachers of the day argued that religion leads to hard-working and frugal individuals, which in turn cannot help but result in material riches. Solomon and Hanson (1983) suggest that this link between material wealth and salvation provided unprecedented legitimacy to the pursuit of profit.

These two dimensions — individualism and materialism — give rise to four “ideal-types” of management, where the Conventional ideal-type is characterized by high individualism and high materialism, and its Radical

counterpart is characterized by low individualism and low materialism. It is clear that Weber does not consider the Conventional type to be “ideal” in any normative sense. Rather, he uses the term “ideal-type” to denote a proto-typical managerial style or organizational form. In contrast to Conventional management, Radical management does not place primary emphasis on materialism, individualism, efficiency, productivity, or competitiveness, nor does the goal of profit trump other legitimate goals. Instead, alongside financial well-being, Radical managers promote spiritual, physical, social, aesthetic, and intellectual well-being (Burch, 2000). Dyck and Schroeder (2005) note that the Radical perspective is not inconsistent with Mennonite/Anabaptist theology. Dyck and Weber (2005) examine a data set of Christian managers and find that, as hypothesized: a) materialism and individualism are indeed independent constructs and can be used to form a 2 x 2 matrix; and b) managers who are more materialist-individualist tend to place greater emphasis on conventional management virtues (specialization, centralization, formalization and standardization) and less

emphasis on radical management virtues (sensitization, dignification, participation and experimentation) than their less materialist-individualist counterparts.

Weber’s own dislike for the emphasis on materialism that characterizes the secularized Protestant Ethic moral-point-of-view is captured in his well-known metaphor of the “iron cage:”

The care for external goods [italics added] should only lie on the shoulders of the “saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment.” But fate has decreed that the cloak should become an *iron cage*. [italics added] ... material goods have gained an increasing and finally inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history. (1958, p. 181)

Weber argues that, just as the prophets of the religious Reformation helped to usher in the materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view that underpins Conventional management theory and practice, so also we now need new prophets to help us escape the iron cage that the materialist-individualist

paradigm has given rise to. Charles Perrow (1985), a leading critical management theorist, challenges readers to describe what organization and management theory might look like if it were based on a radical interpretation of the teachings of Jesus — the same Jesus, ironically, whose teachings were originally invoked (Weber, 1958) as a basis for the Conventional materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view.

In challenging readers to reconsider the biblical teachings of Jesus, Perrow implies that if we read the biblical record from a Conventional moral-point-of-view, and if we expect to see Jesus' teachings as supportive of this point of view, then our interpretations of Jesus' teachings will be consistent with our expectations. However, if we view Jesus' teachings from a Radical moral-point-of-view, we may be surprised to find that our interpretations are qualitatively different.² While many *JBIB* readers may lean toward a radical view — one that suggests that Jesus' teachings point to a way of managing our lives that permits escape from the “iron cage” associated with the status quo — interpretations of Jesus' parables are often

implicitly premised on the former materialist-individualist view.

Expectations generated by a given moral-point-of-view can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy, that is, one which creates the very behavior it is predicting. The notion that our moral-points-of-view act as a self-fulfilling prophecy that influence how we interpret a text like the Bible is also evident in the larger management literature, where leading scholars are pointing out that “bad” management theory and practice have resulted from two underlying, self-fulfilling assumptions: (1) people inherently behave in ways that are consistent with the maximizing assumptions of classical economic theory (i.e., materialism), and (2) people are self-interested and primarily motivated to compete and get ahead (i.e., individualism). Many writers note that the dominant management paradigm, with its unquestioned acceptance of maximizing shareholder value, is built on a foundation of individualism and materialism that has led to some very unfortunate self-fulfilling prophecies in terms of the way that people treat one another (Ferraro, Pfeffer, & Sutton, 2005; Ghoshal, 2005; Giacalone, 2004; Margolis & Walsh, 2003). For

example, Ferraro et al. (2005, p. 11, 13) note that economic theory — the “reigning queen of the social sciences” — is characterized by an emphasis on self-interest and extrinsic rewards. They identify several mechanisms by which social science theories become self-fulfilling, thereby creating the very behavior they predict. A similar line of thinking is pursued by Ghoshal (2005), who observes that an “ideology-based gloomy vision” (i.e., the pessimistic view of human nature), when combined with the notion of self-fulfilling prophecies, has contributed to problematic management behaviors that we have witnessed during recent years.

In sum, Weber argues that current management theory and practice was originally grounded on a particular (Protestant Ethic) interpretation of biblical teachings, characterized by its emphasis on materialism and individualism. This materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view has become secularized and serves as a self-fulfilling prophecy that, among other things, leaves us captured in an iron cage. Although himself an agnostic, Weber recognizes the importance of developing a religious basis to develop radical management theory and practice

that permits escape from the iron cage (see also MacIntyre, 1981). Perrow (1985, p. 22) even notes that it is possible to ground this liberating non-conventional approach to management theory and practice explicitly on the teachings of “the Man from Galilee and his radical social doctrine.” This challenge is consistent with the common themes of current scholarly work that integrate biblical teachings and management theory and practice, which were noted at the beginning of this paper (Dyck & Starke, 2005).

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager: Two Interpretations

Jesus’ parables have proven particularly useful for applying biblical teachings to the practice of management because they were designed to teach certain values as they applied to everyday life and work (Tucker, 1987, p. 44; see also Moxnes, 1988, p. 56, 62; Oakman, 1986). Parables help to put flesh-and-bones to what the Kingdom of God³ is like, and how it differs from the ways of this world. In this way, parables help to “ground ideas of local resistance [to the status quo] in specific empirical contexts” (Alvesson & Deetz, 1999, p. 206).

Moreover, if we think of parables as metaphors of what Godly living is like on-the-ground, then a parable can “become the vehicle through which paradigms become actualized in the mind of the theorist” (Burrell, 1999, p. 397; see also Morgan, 1988).

As noted earlier, many writers who apply biblical principles to the practice of management have often ignored the parable of the shrewd manager. Why might this be so? Perhaps because it is one of the “most difficult” (Capon, 2002, p. 302), “puzzling” (Herzog, 1994, p. 233) and “notoriously difficult” (Liefeld, 1984, p. 986) of Jesus’ parables to comprehend. This difficulty in interpretation is evident in the variety of headings that are used in different Bible translations for this text. There is wide agreement that the central character in the parable is a “manager” (NRSV, NIV, Good News), sometimes called a “steward” (NASB, New Jerusalem Bible). However, there is considerable disagreement as to the adjective used to describe this manager. In many translations he is clearly a shady figure, called “dishonest” (NRSV, KJV) and “unrighteous” (NASB). In other translations the emphasis is on the manager’s

cleverness, and he is called “shrewd” (NIV, Good News) or “crafty” (NJB). For the remainder of this paper, we will call him a shrewd manager because as we shall see, that label seems appropriate when analyzing both the Conventional, or mainstream, and the Radical interpretations of this passage.

To better analyze the meaning of the parable and to grasp what Jesus was saying, it is helpful to first understand the role of a manager in Jesus’ time. The word used in this passage is *oikonomos* and describes someone who managed the farm estate for an absentee owner. According to Aubert (1994) managing an estate was considered beneath the dignity of the landowner. Consequently, the job of managing a farm was given over to a trusted slave, or perhaps on rare occasions, to a freeman. It should also be noted that a farm was considered to be a safe investment; a place for steady but not spectacular returns on investment. Since the owner did not get involved in the day-to-day affairs of managing the farm, there was considerable latitude for dishonest managers with ambition to amass their own wealth, as long as the owner received some steady

income. This situation was so pervasive that the Latin equivalent term for manager (*institores*) had “acquired a derogatory meaning and has a flavor of greed, luxury and debauchery” (Aubert, 1994, p. 17). So, although social norms required nobility to entrust their farms to managers, it is interesting to note that:

The typical *institor* was viewed by the nobility as a necessary disease to be contained within strict limits. This was mainly achieved by social segregation, the upper classes pretending to abstain from potentially very profitable activities which became the preserve of lower classes. (Aubert, 1994, p. 24)

This attitude towards managers must surely have been shared by the lowest classes who were exploited by unjust managers. The manager thus found himself caught in the middle, being despised by both the rich and the poor. By using a manager, the rich person could claim full obedience to the law while implicitly requiring behavior from the managers that they could claim not to condone. The poor, on the other hand, suffered under those managers who

lived up to their reputation as agents of injustice and greed.

These background facts should be kept in mind as we present two alternative interpretations of the parable, first from the Conventional management perspective, and then from a Radical management perspective. Table 1 presents the biblical text and a brief overview of our two interpretations. We encourage readers to think critically about these two interpretations and to come to their own conclusions about which moral-point-of-view is most helpful in applying Christian principles to the practice of management. Readers should keep in mind that we offer these two as ideal-types or “extremes” — we are not arguing that the two moral-points-of-view are the only ones for readers to choose among, nor are we arguing that these are necessarily the best ones with which to interpret the parable of the shrewd manager. We do, however, think that juxtaposing these two points of view gives us new insights into what the parable might be saying.

TABLE 1: Parable of the Shrewd Manager, with Conventional and Radical Interpretations

I. Body of parable (Luke 16: 1-8)	Conventional interpretation	Radical interpretation
<p>a) Manager is accused: ¹“Jesus told his disciples: ‘There was a rich man whose manager was accused [<i>diaballo</i>] of wasting [<i>diaskorpizon</i>] his possessions.’</p>	<p>A manager fails to safeguard a rich man’s financial self-interests.</p>	<p>A manager purposefully disperses a rich man’s resources.</p>
<p>b) Rich man’s first response: ²So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’</p>	<p>The outraged rich man fires the manager.</p>	<p>The rich man strips title from manager and asks for an accounting.</p>
<p>c) Manager’s response: ³The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg — ⁴I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’ ⁵So he called in each of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶“Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied. The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.’ ⁷Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’ ‘A thousand bushels of wheat,’ he replied. He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’</p>	<p>The manager does an instrumental cost-benefit analysis of his options, and decides that it is in his own financial self-interest to unilaterally reduce the amounts that debtors owe to the rich man (thereby the manager ingratiates himself to the debtors).</p>	<p>The manager does some soul-searching, notes his personal financial poverty, and purposefully continues to scatter the rich man’s resources (thereby cementing his radical reputation and bringing honor to the rich man).</p>
<p>d) Rich man’s second response: ⁸The master commended the dishonest manager [<i>oikonomon tes adikos</i>] because he acted shrewdly.</p>	<p>The rich man admires the manager for out-witting him.</p>	<p>The rich man admires the manager for acting righteously and bringing honor to him.</p>

II. Meaning of parable (Luke 16: 9-15)	Conventional interpretation	Radical interpretation
<p>a) Jesus' lesson: <i>For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are people of the light. ⁹I tell you, use worldly wealth [mamona tes adikos] to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. ¹⁰Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest [adikos] with very little will also be dishonest [adikos] with much. ¹¹So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth (adikos mamona), who will trust you with true riches? ¹²And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? ¹³No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."</i></p>	<p>Christians should be just as shrewd in managing God's true riches as the manager was in maximizing his own financial self-interests. In part, this means being trustworthy (by conventional standards) in managing someone else's property, and thereby showing that they serve God rather than money.</p>	<p>If you cannot be trusted to purposefully manage to "scatter" (mere) worldly wealth to those who need it (even in the role of an employee of the very rich), how can you be expected to be a good manager of God's true riches? In their "scattering," managers reveal who their true master is.</p>
<p>b) Listeners' response: ¹⁴<i>The Pharisees, who loved money heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.</i></p>	<p>Lovers of money equate money with <i>true</i> riches.</p>	<p>Lovers of money feel threatened by Jesus' teaching.</p>
<p>c) Jesus' response: ¹⁵<i>He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.</i></p>	<p>Don't love money more than God (but, <i>of course</i>, don't "waste" money either — duty to "conventional" justice).</p>	<p>Woe to teachers whose love for money trumps the obvious value of its purposeful scattering.</p>

Interpretation of the Parable From a Conventional Moral-Point-of-View

A Conventional interpretation of this parable starts from the assumption that the rich man wanted the manager to maximize the rich man's financial wealth. Any actions by the manager that failed to safeguard the rich man's possessions would be deemed to be wasteful, dishonest, and unrighteous. From this materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view, the rich man is outraged to hear that the manager has squandered his resources; he therefore fires the manager.

From a Conventional moral-point-of-view, the manager's subsequent behavior is not surprising, given that he is about to lose his job and that his future job prospects look dim (bad reputation as a manager, unable to do physical work, unwilling to beg). The manager acts in his own financial self-interest, and "buys" himself some friends by unilaterally lowering the amounts of money owed by others to the rich man.⁴ Although this seems to cement his reputation as a dishonest manager, he is hoping that he will later be able

to sponge off the debtors whom he has helped.

Then comes the first surprise in the parable. When the rich man finds out about the deals that the manager has struck, he commends the manager for acting shrewdly. This unexpected response from the rich man may have occurred because he was impressed by the resourcefulness of his former manager. Put another way, the rich man grudgingly admires someone who can beat him at his own game and is impressed at how shrewd the manager was in dealing with people like him.

The second surprise comes when Jesus does not condemn either the manager (for his behavior) or the rich man (for praising the manager's unjust [*adikos*] actions). Instead, Jesus praises the manager, and encourages listeners to do likewise: "Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings" (v. 9). From a Conventional perspective, it seems inconceivable that Jesus actually meant that we should manage other people's possessions in a way that harms (i.e., does

not maximize) their financial self-interest.

In trying to deal with this apparent contradiction, commentators who interpret this parable often argue that Jesus was not commending the managerial *practice* of wasting an employer's wealth; rather, they argue that Jesus was emphasizing the *idea* of managers being shrewd for God (Lockyer, 1963). Thus, in terms of the Conventional moral-point-of-view, the parable is interpreted to suggest that, just as worldly managers shrewdly use material wealth to protect their own financial self-interest, so also should God-fearing managers creatively use material wealth to achieve God's goals. Chewning et al. (1990, p. 97) illustrate this approach when they say that "Jesus used this story to suggest that Christians should be just as creative and clever in working in the world for kingdom values as this manager was in taking care of his own needs."

Another problem that this parable poses for Conventional interpreters is evident in the very strong "either-or" statements that Jesus makes about money versus God ("either you will love the

one and hate the other," and "you cannot serve both God and money"). Taken at face value, these harsh statements seem to contradict the Conventional view, which holds that managers should work to maximize owners' financial self-interests (e.g., many managers who hold to Weber's version of the Protestant Ethic assume that there is no conflict between loving God versus managing to maximize riches). To address this concern, the Conventional interpretation suggests that Jesus is condemning a narrow segment of people like the sneering Pharisees, who love money *more* than they love God. In this view, Jesus uses the strong "either-or" language merely as a way of emphasizing the importance of loving God more than loving money. As a result, managers still can serve owners' financial self-interests, so long as they do it out of a love for God (e.g., evident in the idea of "calling" associated with the Protestant Ethic) rather than out of love for money.

A contemporary Conventional example. What might a modern Conventional manager look like? Consider Jack Welch,

the former CEO of General Electric, who is the most often-cited manager in leading management textbooks (Dyck & Starke, 2005). He has been called a visionary “prophet” (Litz, 2003, p. 671) and a “modern saint” whose “miracles” have inspired a host of “apostles” (Hegele & Kieser, 2001, p. 298). Under Welch’s leadership, GE experienced over two decades of consecutive annual dividend increases, a near-perfect record of ever-higher profits, and a greater than one thousand percent increase in the value of its shares (O’Boyle, 1998). He was voted the Most Respected CEO four times by *Industry Week*, named the “manager of the century” as well as “America’s toughest boss” by *Fortune* (O’Boyle, 1998, p. 83), and called the “gold standard against which other CEOs are measured” by *Business Week* (Hegele & Kieser, 2001). Like the shrewd manager in the parable, Welch comes highly commended!

Consider the following specific example where Welch’s actions are somewhat akin to those of the shrewd manager in the parable, who was accused of

wasting his master’s possessions. One of GE’s main “masters” is the U.S. government, GE’s largest customer accounting for nearly 20% of its revenues. Unfortunately, GE earned “the dubious distinction of leading corporate criminal among the Pentagon’s one hundred largest defense contractors” (O’Boyle, 1998, p. 266). Welch’s GE was both accused and found guilty of “wasting” the resources of the government (GE’s “master”). In 1985 GE was indicted on a Minuteman missile contract and then suspended from doing business with the U.S. government. However, in this case Welch fared better than the manager in the parable; he met with the Defense Secretary and got the suspension lifted within two days. Like the shrewd manager in the parable, Welch was good at “buying” friends, for example, by “exhorting GE executives to give more money to the corporate political action committee so that GE could engender more goodwill with friends in Congress” (O’Boyle, 1998, p. 270). Welch enjoyed formidable connections inside the Beltway.

By placing managers like Welch front-and-center in our textbooks and classrooms, we are essentially approving of his Conventionally-defined shrewd actions and telling student to “go and do likewise.”

Interpretation of the Parable From a Radical Moral-Point-of-View

A Radical interpretation of this parable is based on two assumptions: (1) that there is nothing inherently righteous or commendable about managers who maximize the wealth of people who are already rich, and (2) that the manager is commended by Jesus because he is actually modeling truly righteous behavior (even though that behavior is clearly “dishonest” from a Conventional moral-point-of-view). Most readers will not find the first assumption problematic, but some may at first have trouble accepting the second assumption.

A key issue is how the words *diaballo* and *diaskorpizon* are translated (see Luke 16: 1). The term *diaballo* is often translated as slander or false accusation. In the context of this parable the

word could serve as a hint that the charges against the manager are false. However, the word that is more important to the meaning of the passage is *diaskorpizon*. Most Bibles translate the word as “wasting” or as “squandering.”⁵ The image is that of a meaningless waste of resources. However, it is striking that in other Bible passages *diaskorpizon* is usually translated as “scattering,” and is never translated in the same pejorative manner that translators have given to it in this passage.⁶ For example, in the parable of the talents, the master gathers where he did not “scatter” (Matt. 25:24; see also Deut. 9:4; Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27; Luke 1:51; John 11:52; Acts 5:37).

The meaning of this parable changes considerably when the accusation against the manager is translated as “scattering” instead of as “wasting.” The manager’s behavior then becomes more purposeful since the word *diaskorpizon* carries with it the connotation of deliberate action, as opposed to scattering due to carelessness. Thus, we could say that the manager was accused of deliberately dispersing the owner’s money in a way that

some others found objectionable, hence their complaint to the owner. Whereas “wasting” implies that the rich man’s resources are being used in a way that benefits no one, “scattering” or dispersing the resources implies that others may be benefiting from the redistribution. And, as we learn in the parable, this dispersing of resources does not maximize the rich man’s financial self-interest (or the manager’s, for that matter) but may enhance other forms of well-being and, more importantly, fulfills the righteous requirements of the Law.

If the rich man believed that the manager was “wasting” his resources, as per a Conventional interpretation, then why does the rich man not *immediately* fire the manager? Rather, the manager is given some additional time to further “scatter” the rich man’s resources. What the rich man does not realize at first, and which we as listeners are cued into by the manager’s speech — in which he indicates extreme poverty if he loses his job — is that the manager has not been using his master’s wealth for his own personal gain. If the man-

ager had followed conventional wisdom and unlawfully taken money out of the estate for himself, then he would not be facing such dire financial straits.

Furthermore, the rich man commends the manager for being *oikonomos tes adikos* (literally, a manager of unrighteousness or dishonesty). This unusual manner of speaking begs the question: What exactly is being called unrighteous or dishonest? Is it the manager (a conventional interpretation), or is it the larger socio-economic system that he is part of (evident, for example, in the unrighteousness of those who would call him to account for his scattering). If it was the manager who was dishonest, then why not use a more common expression such as *adikos oikonomos* (literally, an unjust manager). Clarification comes by way of another unusual expression. In explaining the meaning of the story, Jesus urges his listeners to use *mamona tes adikos* (literally, money of unrighteousness) to gain friends.

Taken together, these phraseologies (awkward from a Conventional view) raise an important question: What is the unrighteousness that both the

manager and the money are a part of? From a Radical perspective, it is the unrighteousness of a socio-economic system which rejects the scattering of resources for friendship and the common good, and denigrates managers who challenge such a system. Such an “unrighteous” economic system demands that goods and services be paid for and properly accounted for, regardless of who needs them. Such a system creates an “iron cage” that both secular and biblically-grounded scholars long to escape.⁷ By reducing the debt of oil and wheat (which were necessities of life), the manager was, even if unintentionally, circumventing the economic system and the systemic prejudicial views of himself in the role of manager, in favor of true justice and mercy. This radical manager is commended for modeling the character of a righteous man in his seemingly audacious transactions.

Moreover, by scattering resources the manager also brought honor to the rich man who would be seen as someone who is concerned about righteousness. Landry and May (2000, p. 201) point out

that “the manager’s actions make his master appear to be generous, charitable, and law-abiding.” This would have been an important consideration for the owner, because, as scholars point out: “In both Jewish and Greco-Roman societies of New Testament times, honor was just as important as wealth — if not more so — to a man’s social status” (Landry & May, 2000, p. 208). So, maximizing the financial return on his possessions was likely not the only priority for the rich man. Indeed, it seems that honor comes when actions subvert the Conventional financial self-interest view:

While some modern [Conventional?] people see it as unbelievable that a rich man would praise an employee for giving away his money, almost every scholar who employs the honor-shame paradigm would dispute this. Many sociologically-oriented critics have pointed to the frequency with which the rich engaged in benefactions and the spectacular amounts often involved as proof of their claim that honor is more

important than money.
(Landry & May, 2000,
p. 304)

Thus, from a Radical interpretation it makes sense for Jesus to echo the rich man's praise of the manager. Jesus is saying that we *should* be like the manager, who acted in ways that were "dishonest" from a Conventional socio-economic systems perspective.⁸ Jesus asks, if we can't be trusted to share *worldly* wealth (*adikos mamona*) — that is, if we constantly seek to maximize our own financial self-interest — then how can we be trusted to manage *true* riches? A Radical interpretation suggests that Jesus was actually encouraging his listeners to literally follow the example of the manager and to redistribute worldly wealth in a non-wealth-maximizing way, that is, in a way that seems "unjust" (*adikos*) from a Conventional point of view.⁹ Such distributions would benefit others (particularly debtors and the poor), would win friends, and would nurture community. All of these outcomes *are* consistent with Jesus' teachings. So, although the manager's scattering is viewed

as "wasteful" and "unjust" from the Conventional perspective, it is commendable when viewed from a Radical perspective.

You cannot serve God if you are fixated on trying to *maximize* profits. Whoever can be trusted to use mere worldly wealth in a Radical way can also be trusted with true wealth, but whoever blindly follows the Conventional mantra of self-interested wealth-maximization cannot be trusted to nurture interpersonal relationships, build community, and gain true riches. A society has true riches (e.g., friendship, consideration, trust, and community) if it manages to disperse wealth to those who need it, even if such scattering may be deemed "wasteful" and "unjust" from a Conventional perspective.

Finally, the sneering response that Jesus receives from the Pharisees — who were key teachers of the day — is entirely consistent with a Radical interpretation.¹⁰ Woe to today's management teachers and practitioners who justify their theories and actions by trusting in a materialist-individualist view — what is highly-valued among people is detested by God. Woe

to lovers of money who sneer at Radical views—God sees the underpinning moral-point-of-view that we use to justify our wealth management. God wants us to manage our lives by deliberately and purposefully scattering resources, even though this goes against conventional wisdom. From a Radical perspective, the parable points to an understanding of management theory and practice that differs substantially from what is found in standard textbooks.¹¹

A contemporary Radical example. Aaron Feuerstein, CEO of Malden Mills Industries in Lawrence, Massachusetts, illustrates certain aspects of the Radical shrewd manager (Dyck & Starke, 2005). When most of the Malden Mills factory burnt to the ground in 1995, the then seventy-year-old Feuerstein could easily have taken the \$300 million insurance money and enjoyed retirement. Or, he could have taken the advice of (Conventional) advisors who counseled him to follow the trend of moving his operations south, where labor costs were lower. Instead, Feuerstein, who found guidance in the Torah,

decided to deliberately “scatter”¹² his resources in his community by rebuilding the factory on the same site, even though the insurance covered only three quarters of the reconstruction costs. He also voluntarily kept all three thousand employees on the payroll during reconstruction: “I simply felt an obligation to the entire community that relies on our presence here in Lawrence; it would have been unconscionable to put three thousand people out on the streets” (Batstone, 2003, p. 133). His willingness to “scatter” resources to nurture community attracted a lot of media attention: “I got a lot of publicity. And I don’t think it speaks well for our times. . . . At the time in America of our greatest prosperity, the god of money has taken over to an extreme” (The Mensch of Malden Mills, 2003).

The contrast between Conventional and Radical shrewdness was evident in 2003, after Malden Mills had been forced into bankruptcy (due to successive warm winters and cheaper overseas goods)¹³ and was now owned by a group of creditors led (ironically) by GE,

who was looking to sell it. Again flying in the face of conventional wisdom, radically-shrewd Feuerstein tried to buy back the company and keep jobs in Lawrence, one of the poorest cities in America, in a deal where his partner Winn Cos would develop 600 units of housing on land owned by Malden Mills next to its new state-of-the-art factory. However, the Feuerstein-Winn offer was deemed “far too low to be acceptable” according to a spokesperson for the conventionally-shrewd GE: despite the socio-economic merits of the offer, the deal would compromise GE’s ability to maximize profits because it meant that GE would get \$2.7 million less than the asking price (Bailey, 2003).

Discussion

In this paper, we observed that: (1) management scholars generally accept Weber’s argument that Conventional management theory was initially underpinned by a specific (Protestant Ethic) interpretation of the biblical text; (2) the materialist-individualist management theory and practice that characterizes modern management is being

increasingly linked to problematic societal outcomes (e.g., the iron cage); and (3) scholars are beginning to look to the biblical narrative to underpin a Radical counterpoint-of-view which will serve as an alternative to the Conventional status quo (e.g., Dyck & Starke, 2005; Perrow, 1985; Weber, 1958).

In developing these themes, our paper provided two interpretations of the parable of the shrewd manager, one from a materialist-individualist perspective and the other from its Radical counterpoint. Because a Conventional interpretation starts with the assumption that any use of resources that fails to maximize the financial self-interests of the rich man is deemed to be wasteful, and because Jesus seems to commend precisely such behavior, the parable has been difficult to reconcile with a materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view. Conventional interpreters are to be commended for their clever interpretation that the parable is saying that, just as the manager was clever in managing the rich man’s resources to meet the manager’s own financial self-

interests, Christians should be as clever in managing God's true riches for the glory of God. Unfortunately, because such a Conventional interpretation suggests that readers should (obviously) not follow the example of the shrewd manager, readers are left with little practical guidance about how to go about managing God's resources for God's glory. Presumably Conventional managers believe that they are glorifying God by honestly managing to maximize the financial interests of shareholders. However, because such a view is not inconsistent with secular Conventional management theory, there is little left to differentiate the ways of the Kingdom with Conventional management theory.

In one sense, the "punch line" of both the Conventional and Radical interpretations is similar—don't love money more than you love God—but because the Radical interpretation sees the shrewd manager's actual behavior as exemplary, it provides much more direction as to how to manage to put this sentiment into practice. From a Radical perspective, Jesus is interpreted as

saying that managing according to the Kingdom is characterized by a purposeful redistribution of resources. Such a radical teaching has all sorts of implications for developing an approach to management that differs substantially from conventional wisdom and challenges today's dominant socio-economic systems. Listeners are driven to think about what kind of redistribution is God-pleasing. For example, for whom should debt be reduced? By how much? When? The parable seems to suggest that it is acceptable for wealth to be distributed unequally throughout society (e.g., the rich man is still rich at the end), but when are the rich too rich, and the poor too poor? How can wealthy people promote wealth-creation among poor people? And so on.

In sum, a Radical interpretation points to a way of managing that is qualitatively different from conventional wisdom. In stark contrast to a Conventional interpretation, a Radical interpretation challenges status quo socio-economic systems, and calls for much work in rethinking management theory and practice. Moreover, it shows what

Kingdom management looks like in a specific empirical context.

Societal Implications

Because it flies in the face of conventional wisdom, some readers may find the Radical interpretation controversial. They may also be reluctant to act on it. Others may agree with it in principle, but be inclined to dismiss the Radical approach as too idealistic to be of practical value in the rough-and-tumble real world of everyday management. However, the Radical approach may have more to commend it as practical than we might first think. For example, a growing body of scholarly research shows that a materialist-individualist approach to life contributes to significant negative outcomes. These include a lower satisfaction with life (Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002; Kasser, 2003; Kasser & Ryan, 2001), poorer interpersonal relationships (Richins & Dawson, 1992), an increase in mental disorders (Cohen & Cohen, 1995), environmental degradation (Brown, 1998; Thurow, 1996; McCarty & Shrum, 2001), social injustice (Rees, 2002), interpersonal

manipulation, and less connectedness with others, less generosity, less empathy for others and greater conflict (for an excellent review, see Kasser, 2003).

Moreover, society seems to be ready for a more Radical approach to managing our everyday lives. In a recent survey, 93% of respondents thought that “there is too much emphasis on working and making money, and not enough emphasis on family and community” (New American Dream, 2004). More than half of those responding have opted not to maximize their material wealth in order to facilitate other forms of well-being (e.g., social, physical, ecological, aesthetic, spiritual or intellectual). Idealistic perhaps, but Jesus did teach his listeners to pray and work to manage relationships here on earth “as it is in Heaven.”

Implications for Business Schools

We have already seen how a growing number of management scholars are lamenting the materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view that underpins Conventional management theory and practice. Pattison (1997)

argues that management has become a *religion* which preaches that managers should put their faith in maximizing efficiency, competitiveness, profitability, and productivity. The leading “priests” and “prophets” of this Conventional faith are management professors and practitioners, and business schools serve as the “churches” where adherents learn about the basics of the faith. A study by the Aspen Institute (2002) found that “the assumption that the primary, if not the sole, purpose of the firm is to maximize wealth for shareholders has come to dominate the curricula of business schools and the thinking of future managers” (Margolis & Walsh, 2003, p. 271). This dominance of Conventional management may be changing, given the growing interest in corporate social responsibility and business ethics. Also, it is unclear whether these Conventional views are as prevalent in smaller religious liberal arts colleges, where instructors may be more likely to reflect the views such as those described in Alford and Naughton (2001), who recognize that financial criteria

are not the only ones that are important. In any case, the most widely-used management textbooks in all schools continue to emphasize the maximization of shareholder value.

The Conventional management assumptions contained in widely-used textbooks have had a definite impact on the students who attend business schools. Even though surveys among management students in our university indicate that a majority aspire to be Radical managers, their preferences are at odds with standard business education. A longitudinal study of how the values of MBA students change between the time they enter the program and the time they graduate found that they became more *materialistic* as they proceeded through their program. Graduates placed more emphasis on enjoying a comfortable life, pleasure, and being capable, and less emphasis on non-materialistic pursuits like wisdom, inner harmony, or a world of beauty. These students also became more *individualistic*, placing less emphasis on developing true friendships, world peace, family and national security, being

helpful, loving, and polite, and instead placing more emphasis on being independent and enjoying social recognition (Krishnan, 2003).

Perhaps the time has come to re-think the business school curriculum.

Implications for Readers

As noted earlier, we are not arguing that the two moral-points-of-view that we have described here are the only ones or the best ones for readers to choose among. The important message of our paper is not in its details, and we do not want readers to lose sight of the forest because of the trees. Our larger message has three interrelated parts. First, everyone has a moral-point-of-view. There is no such thing as value-neutral management theory or practice. All theory and practice are implicitly based upon certain assumptions. Conventional management theory is based on a materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view that values things like maximizing efficiency, productivity, competitiveness, and profitability. These are value-laden assumptions that

beg scrutiny. Why should competitiveness be valued over cooperativeness? Why should efficiency be valued over relationships? Why should shareholder self-interest be valued over society's interests?

Second, our moral-points-of-view tend to become self-fulfilling prophecies. In this paper we have demonstrated that a person's moral-point-of-view influences his or her interpretation of the Bible and of management behavior. For example, from a materialist-individualist perspective, managers like Jack Welch may be seen as heroes, while managers like Aaron Feuerstein may be seen as fools. But from a Radical perspective, the social and environmental costs created by Welch's profit-maximizing strategic actions are bad, while the community-building facilitated by Feuerstein is good. Our moral point of view affects what we see.

This argument is not new, but it is often forgotten. As a result we are often seduced into non-critically adopting the dominant socio-economic systems as our own. This is particularly problematic for

management scholars because the materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view is so well entrenched. So strong is the Conventional hold on our thinking that, for example, even enlightened scholars in the corporate social responsibility movement feel compelled to defend it on the grounds that corporate social responsibility is good for the bottom-line (Margolis & Walsh, 2003).

Third, to be a moral person one must be aware of one's own moral-point-of-view and then act upon it. In this paper, we have offered two moral-points-of-view. Since there may be as many specific moral-points-of-view as there are readers, we are not suggesting that readers must choose between one of these two. However, we *are* exhorting readers to carefully consider what their moral-point-of-view is. Failure to do so prevents us from being fully moral persons, and leaves us vulnerable to the dominant (and often unstated) moral-point-of-view that underpins the status quo. Sire (1997) makes a similar point when he notes that we need to live an examined life and be aware of

how our worldview influences our perceptions and interpretations of the world.

Conclusion

As management scholars, we have a responsibility to help our students become increasingly moral persons. This means (1) allowing them to see how different moral-points-of-view influence how they perceive their world, (2) helping them to understand the implications of the various moral-points-of-view for management theory and practice, and (3) giving them the necessary tools to discern where they stand. This is a dynamic and on-going process, and our views will change and grow as we discern in community what is good and bad. May we scatter these resources widely.

Bruno Dyck, Frederick A. Starke, and Calvin Dueck

University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
CANADA R3T 5V4

Endnotes

¹Three authors *did* briefly mention Jesus' explanation of the parable's meaning as described in Luke 16: 9-15. For example, in discussing the relationship between Christian ethics and profit, Hoover (1998, p. 51, 71) notes that we are to place friends before wealth (verse 9), and reminds us of Scripture's warning against the love of money (verse 13). Smith (1999, p. 89) quotes verse 10 in the context of *trust*, and Chewning and Haak (2002, p. 66) also cite verse 10 under the heading of *integrity*.

²This idea that one's moral-point-of-view has an effect on how one interprets Jesus' teachings will not come as a surprise to biblical scholars or to readers who are familiar with social construction theory (e.g. Berger & Luckman, 1967). For example, much has been written about differences in the way that Jesus is interpreted among the four Gospel writers which, for example, leads to discussion comparing Luke's "Jesus" to Matthew's "Jesus." We build on these observations, and we note that Western biblical interpretations are often influenced by the dominant materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view, and that there is relatively little sustained rigorous scholarly interpretation of any of the Gospels from what we call a Radical moral-point-of-view [some exceptions include Hauerwas and Willimon (1989), Gay (2004), and Finn (2006)]. This emphasis on the materialist-individualist view is noteworthy in light of the fact that our contemporary notion of individualism was unfathomable in biblical times, and that in biblical times assumptions about economics and production (e.g., the economic pie as a fixed sum) would have resulted in a very different understanding of what it might mean to be materialistic.

³Jesus' teachings about the "Kingdom of God" should be of particular interest to management scholars because, as Dyck and Schroeder (2005) note, a contemporary translation of that phrase might be rendered as "the managerial character of God" (e.g., do Jesus' teachings promote a Conventional or a Radical managerial character?). They argue that, because God's "Kingdom" is not primarily territorial or national in nature, a more accurate translation might be the "kingly rule," "sovereignty," "reign," or the "managerial character" of God. However, because the contemporary notion of management would not have been fathomable in biblical times, we do not argue that these passages are limited only to applications in the workplace, or even that Jesus' teachings are *primarily* directed at managers.

⁴The first debtor owes 800 gallons of olive oil, which represents the yield of about 150 olive trees and a debt of about 1000 denarii (one denarii is the equivalent to about one day of wage labor). His debt is reduced by 50%. The second debtor owes about 1,000 bushels of wheat, the equivalent of about 100 acres of land,

worth about 2,500 denarii. His debt is reduced by 20% (taken from Herzog, 1994; Liefeld, 1984). Some scholars suggest that the differences in the loan reductions were related to the inherent “riskiness” of the commodity, and reflect the “interest” built into the debt. For example, because oil could easily be adulterated, it was discounted at a higher rate than wheat (Wright, 2000, p. 226; cf Herzog, 1994, p. 256-257). Others point out that in each case the reduction was the equivalent of about 500 denarii (Liefeld, 1984, p. 988).

⁵The Greek word *diaskorpizon* is translated as “wasting” in three translations of the Bible (King James Version, New International Version, Revised Standard Version), as “squandered” in two others (New American Standard and New Revised Standard Version), and as “cheating” in one other (New Century Version).

⁶The only two places in the New Testament where translators have given the word the pejorative twist of “wasting” is this parable and the parable of the prodigal son wasting or scattering his possessions (Landry & May, 2000, p. 306). Context is important in biblical exegesis, so we examined the parables that preceded and followed the parable of the shrewd manager (the parable of the prodigal son and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, respectively) as preparation for our analysis of the parable of the shrewd manager. Because of space limitations, we do not discuss how the parable of the prodigal son might be affected by translating the word as scattering, but in the parable of the shrewd manager the translation is of particular importance for interpreting the parable.

⁷Jesus and his listeners would have been familiar with the frequent passages in the Old Testament where readers are exhorted to give to those who need it without expecting a return. [E.g., “If your brother becomes poor, and cannot maintain himself...you shall maintain him.... You shall not lend him your money at interest, not give him your food for profit” (Leviticus 25: 35-37).] Indeed, at the start of his public ministry Jesus quotes from Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor ... to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4: 18-19). Recall that the Year of Jubilee required regularly redistributing financial resources so that everyone had enough.

⁸Note that the manager’s “dishonesty” vis a vis the Conventional materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view is very different from the dishonesty evident in modern-day events like Enron and so on. As Bonaventure (1221-74) noted long ago, but modern commentators seem to forget (Wright, 2000, p. 228), unlike the Enrons of our time, the manager in the parable did not line his own pockets by making deals with the debtors. Rather, the manager is trying to build friendships. It is unclear whether his actions make it less likely that he will find future employment

as a manager (because he cannot be trusted to profit-maximize) or more likely to get another job as manager (because his actions bring honor to his employer).

⁹Note that this dispersing is purposeful and planned — not haphazard squandering — and different from hand-outs that create a dependency that may lead to a lack of motivation for recipients.

¹⁰Another Radical way to understand the parable is to argue that it is the *wealth* of the owner that Jesus is calling unrighteous. If this is the case, then the manager becomes a manager of unrighteousness (*oikonomon tes adikos*) because he is managing dishonest wealth. It is only after it is revealed how much wealth the rich man had that the term *adikos* is used and it is used in a way that allows us to interpret it as someone who manages unjust riches. The rich man had far more than enough and yet had apparently lent, not given, the basic necessities of life (wheat and oil) to others expecting full repayment. In another place Jesus argues that we are to give to the one that asks of us expecting nothing in return. Jesus, here, likewise exhorts us to use money of unrighteousness (*mamona tes adikos*) — money that is more than we need for the basics of life — to make friends, not to reinvest for more monetary gains. It is in this sense that Jesus then lumps all wealth into unrighteousness (*adikos mamona*). If you are not trustworthy in handling unjust (or as many translations say, worldly money — *adikos mamona*, that is, more than you need to live on) who will trust you with true riches? This may more fully account for the sneers of those who love money.

¹¹Seeing the parable as a story of how a just, or faithful, person responds to unrighteous economic systems also helps to explain another puzzling aspect of Jesus' response to the Pharisee's sneers. In Luke 16: 16-18 Jesus indicates that, although the Kingdom of God is evident in the Law and the prophets, people need to "force" their way into it because of the dominance of un-Kingdom-like socio-economic systems. It requires considerable strength of character and will to challenge the rules and norms evident in "unrighteous" economic systems that favor the accumulation of wealth over that of justice and righteousness. The Law does not change (it is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of the pen to drop out of the Law), therefore, when our socio-economic systems are not oriented toward justice as a primary motive, those who wish to truly follow the Law must reorient even their economics toward the justice called for by the Law.

¹²Or to "waste" his resources, as his actions would be interpreted by Conventional observers.

¹³It is important not to confuse being Radical with being financially successful. Most people admire Feuerstein for doing the “right thing.” As Margolis and Walsh (2003) note, managers and scholars alike would be wise not to argue that doing the right thing will be rewarded with financial success; thankfully the world is much too complex for such simplistic arguments. Doing the right thing sometimes leads to results that, in the short term, can seem as negative as death on a cross.

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ARTICLE

Engaging Ideas: Can Christian Business Scholarship Inform Business Practice?

Stacy Jackson, Robert Eames, Leonard Van Druenen,
and Julie Voskuil — Calvin College

Abstract

This paper systematically reviews and critiques all the scholarship presented to date in the Journal of Biblical Integration in Business which is specifically focused on business practice. We employ a conceptual framework which parses the sources of normative advice and attempts to delineate the type of normative advice as being for our heads, hearts or hands. A particular focus is given to the “hands” portion of the framework when we look at the various normative perspectives regarding how business should be practiced by Christians. We also consider the sources for those perspectives (e.g., general versus specific revelation), the role of practitioners in their development, and the breadth of areas still in need of study. Finally, we suggest specific actions that consider the limited resources focused on explicit Christian scholarship, the particular (but not exclusive) Christian call to

scholarship that matters in practice, the variety of backgrounds and skills aspiring Christian scholars possess, and the unmet needs of practitioners that only Christian business scholars may uniquely meet. We challenge ourselves to be more engaged, more empirical, and more explicit in our Christian business scholarship.

“Maybe the reason business professionals don’t seek the advice of Christian business scholars is that we have nothing really to say...”

This comment (or some variation on it) is one we, as Christian business scholars, have repeatedly heard and may have even said among ourselves. We believe we do have something to say, but fear remains that the above statement is perhaps more true than false. One of the great benefits of the development of the *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business (JBIB)* is that there now exists a forum for exploring

a distinct view of Christian business built on a scriptural foundation. Thankfully, after ten years of publication, the question seems to have shifted from whether we have something to say to what has been said and how does it inform Christians engaged in business.

The objectives for our study are simply to seek to explore those questions: What has been said and how might it inform business practitioners? We assume (as Chewning did in 1997) that “God desires to: 1) bring His children to common points of reference, 2) radically alter Christians’ attitudes and motives, and 3) construct in His people a method, process or procedure of thinking” (Chewning, 1997, p. 30). We believe those changes will result in distinctive (but not necessarily unique) Christian business practices. More specifically, our objectives are to:

- Develop our understanding of *JBIB* authors’ normative advice in regard to business practice,
- Analyze that advice in regard to its portrayal of motives,

assumptions, principles, or business practices and in the varied approaches to integrating Scripture as a foundation for that advice, and

- Develop a potential scholarly agenda for faith integration in business practice.

To accomplish these objectives, we seek to be professionally critical but also humble (especially given that none of us have yet contributed to this forum). However, we are thankful for the opportunity to begin our contribution by understanding the work done to date and the work that still needs to be done. Our hope is that the *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business (JBIB)* continues to have something significant to say to the current and future business professionals we serve.

Why our focus on business practice? We define business practice as those specific individual or organizational activities (be they behaviors or processes) that result from convictions regarding one’s attitudes, motives, assumptions, or principles (i.e., heart and head). We use this term in reference to business similarly to

how Drucker (1954) and others have described *practice* in regard to management. Business scholarship must be readily practical in some regard. In addition, we agree with Hoksbergen (1994) that one of the distinct (but likely not unique) contributions of Christian scholarship is its normative perspective (particularly on the motives, assumptions, principles, and practices of behavior).¹ Our assumption is that as new creations (II Corinthians 5:17) there should be a specific change in our hearts as well as our deeds. Therefore, business scholarship should (in part) note distinctive Christian motives, assumptions, principles, and (at times) behaviors.

It also seems that the Christian Business Faculty Association and *JBIB* both emphasize and expect a focus on a change in motives, assumptions, and practice. Chewning (1997) suggests we should focus specifically on presuppositions that are “simply an understanding, assumption, belief, or point of view” Christians possess. Current *JBIB* calls for manuscripts also indicate the importance of our focus on informing practice:

“Faculty, scholars, and business practitioners are encouraged to share their perspectives on how Scripture illuminates the elements of our disciplines, and how believers may live out their Christian faith in the workplace” (Martinez, 2006). In sum, we believe a significant (but not exclusive) focus on practice is expected in Christian business scholarship. Therefore, our goals were to understand what authors since *JBIB*’s inception have said and concluded regarding distinctively Christian business practice.

The source of advice. Our study objectives also required an organizing framework for identifying the various ways authors supported their views on Christian business practice through the use of specific and general revelation sources. We desired to understand how authors distinguished between the world’s way of thinking and the Christian’s way of thinking (Chewning, 1997). There were two critical components of this part of the analysis. The first included a focus on the use of specific (scriptural) revelation. This aspect addressed questions such as: How is this advice

informed by Scripture? What hermeneutic does the author use? Is it based on a specific Scripture, a set of Scriptures, a broadly accepted creedal view on Scripture, a confessional view of Scripture, etc.? The second sought to capture the role of general revelation by understanding the use of logic and the incorporation of research by the broader academy (not to undermine scriptural support). Because Christian business scholarship is an emerging field, we were also curious to see how authors integrated work already done within the field either by less explicitly Christian authors or in the broader academy.

Figure 1 (adapted from Jackson, 2007) presents a

conceptual framework which summarizes the above two dimensions and can be used to understand the breadth of normative scholarship we see, both Christian and secular.

The figure shows that the source of scholarly advice can range from observing God’s creation and the scholarship of others which is not explicitly Christian (labeled “general revelation”) to an explicit scriptural support, which can include a variety of hermeneutics as discussed above. Figure 1 also shows that the type of advice can focus on changes in one’s heart, head, and hands. We are seeking to understand where *JBIB* scholarship fits within this framework.

Figure 1: Framework for Source and Type of Normative Advice

		Type of Normative Advice					
		Heart		Head		Hands	
Source of Advice		Attitudes	Motives	Assumptions	Principles	Words	Practice
	Biblical Sources						
	God’s Spirit						
	General Revelation						

Method

Research Approach

Articles from the *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business (JBIB)* from its inception through 2005 were included in this study. All *JBIB* articles were reviewed separately (including editorials and rejoinders as separate articles). We retained articles with specific normative advice. Articles with general commentary on economics, business as a calling, faith integration approaches, pedagogical advances, and case studies were not included unless they specifically advised business practice. In addition, a few articles were not included where normative advice was given but which did not naturally flow from the article's central thesis (e.g., an example of advice at the end of an article). An initial review (given those criteria) yielded 42 articles for further analysis (see Appendix B).

Article Analysis

Each article was categorized into a traditional research discipline within business including accounting, finance, management, and marketing. In addition, current research disciplines (e.g.,

operations, organization behavior, entrepreneurship, etc.) were also noted although they were often typically referred to as "management" within the journal.

Each article was evaluated by members of the research team according to a range of criteria including the following:

Type of normative advice. We used sub-categories as identified in figure one: a) heart: attitude, motives, values, or virtues; b) head: assumptions or principles; and c) hands: specific practice. In addition, the specific advice was summarized and integrated topically across the traditional disciplines of business (i.e., accounting, finance, management, marketing, etc.). Appendix A contains brief summaries of our understanding² of the normative advice from the articles. In addition, we specifically focused on normative advice that was distinct to business. For example, if an author suggested we should love others (which we'd all agree is appropriate Christian normative advice), we did not consider such advice distinctively about business. However, the same advice given within a more specific business context and

application would be included (e.g., demonstration of love for customers is reflected in the establishment of regular opportunities to interact with them, seek their feedback, and integrate it into product design). Such a distinction was somewhat subjective but the hope was to include only advice one might receive from an informed organizational scholar on business (versus from any Christian).

Type of scriptural support.

Categorized as being supported through: a) specific creedal, confessional, or doctrinal positions using Scripture; b) a variety of Scripture passages; and/or c) one specific Scripture as support.

Inclusion of broader academy's work. Categorized as: a) incorporating empirical support; b)

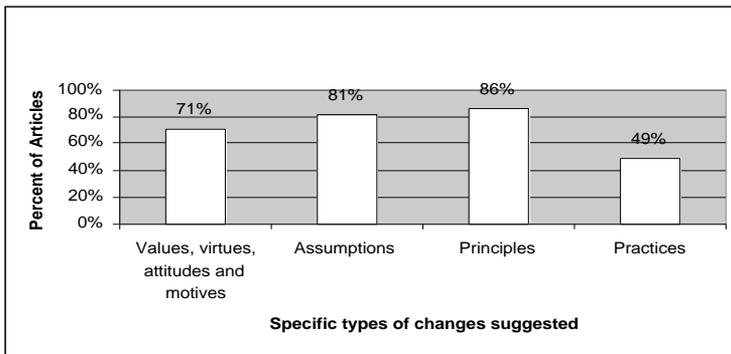
incorporating theoretical or empirical research from others; c) original theory development without outside support; and d) personal editorial.

Other observations. In addition, we recorded the degree to which practitioners were included in the research. We also noted authors' references to other Christian business scholarship, work in regard to Catholic social thought, or broader spirituality in business scholarship (not to assume their Biblical relevance).

Results

The normative advice. As illustrated in Figure 2, advice regarding specific Christian approaches to business included reference to specific changes in values, virtues, attitudes, and motives (71% of

Figure 2: Types of Normative Advice



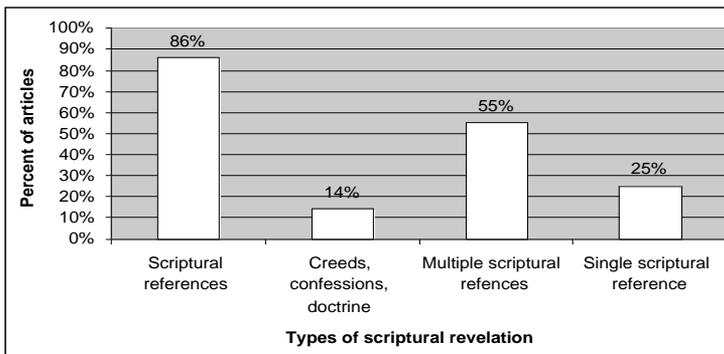
n=42 articles

the reviewed articles); assumptions (81%); principles (86%) and about half suggested specific changes in practice. Several examples follow: White (1999) suggests Christians in accounting should be *motivated* by a desire for fairness and service with particular focus on human resources and environmental concerns. In regard to *assumptions* about organizations, Beversluis (1998) states that Christians must assume that the absence of structures or transparently understood processes in organizations will make just decisions more difficult for those affected to accept. Carson (2000) portrays a specific *principle* in regard to contracts concluding God's standard of mercy overrides financial contracts. Finally,

specific practices included those that may seem less uniquely Christian such as paying bills on time (e.g., Brooks, 1996) and others that portrayed tentative (possibly hyperbolic) views such as Porter's (2000) challenge to consider reducing one's salary to an amount equal to, or below, the lowest paid employee.

Specific (scriptural) revelation supporting normative views. Figure 3 shows, as one would expect, that the majority of articles (i.e., 86%) referenced Scripture in a variety of ways. Those which did not were largely rejoinders, an empirical study, and a paper on pedagogical approaches. All creedal, confessional, or doctrinal references (14%) also explicitly noted reference to Scripture. There

Figure 3: Types of Scriptural Revelation Supporting Normative Views



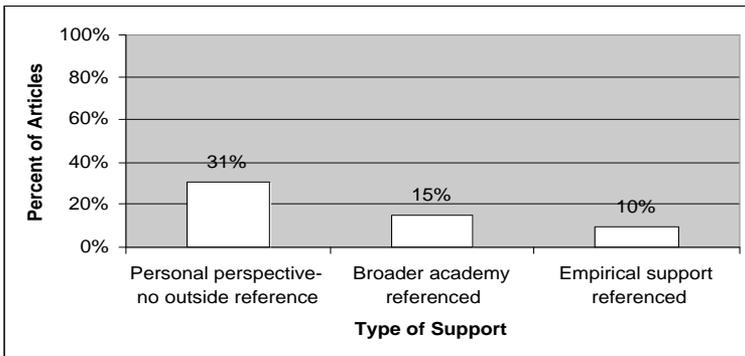
n=42 articles

was also some variety in how Scripture was integrated into (and supportive of) normative advice. Over half of the articles (55%) referenced a variety of Scriptures to support their views, where one fourth of the articles (25%) built their argument on a singular Scripture or passage. A very small number made general references to Scripture without clearly tying them to their normative advice. The majority of authors did not explicitly portray the hermeneutic or exegetical process used in developing their advice (e.g., Chewning, 1997).

General revelation supporting normative views. The most typical support provided outside of Scripture was the author’s development of argument (with

varied explicit logical support) or personal anecdote. As shown in Figure 4, almost one third of authors (31%) shared advice from a personal perspective without reference to others’ arguments, past research, or theory. A similar portion (38%) engaged in some level of general theory development about Christian business practice, but more than half of those (60%) made no reference to the broader academy’s theory development work in their area. However, many authors (38%) did reference the broader academy’s work regarding their topic in some manner (even if only anecdotally) with a few demonstrating a knowledge of the broader work within the academy. Only 10% of the

Figure 4: Types of General Revelation Supporting Normative Views



n=42 articles

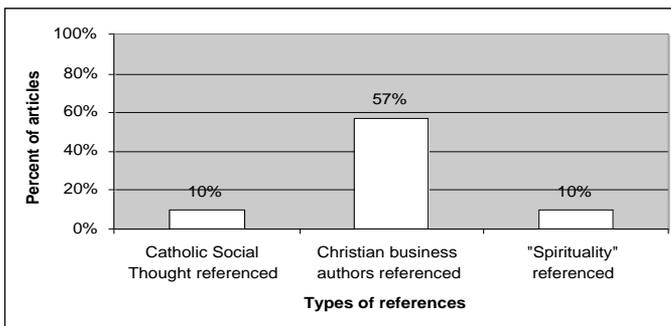
articles included reference to (or development of) empirical support for their conclusions. No articles developed theory on Christian practice by incorporating *both* work from the broader academy *and* applying empirical support (although a few did one or the other). These latter observations are surprising given their broad acceptance as the norm for theory development in almost all fields of study (either built on past research, empirical work or both). In general, it seemed advice was developed based on some scriptural reference but generally not developed further with regard for other supporting (scripturally consistent) sources.

Other observations. A portion of articles (20%) addressed current business practice issues in

an anecdotal manner (e.g., Hill, 2001 referenced five examples including HB Fuller Company). It was unclear as to whether such examples were the result of rigorous reviews of such companies or references intended to anecdotally enliven the author's points. No articles reported an active engagement of business practitioners in their assessment of the importance of their topic, although references to other works engaging practitioners were made on occasion.

In Figure 5 it is seen that a small number of articles (10%) referenced the broader field of "spirituality" in business as critique, contrast, or complimentary to their perspectives. Similarly, a small number of articles (i.e., 4) referenced work

Figure 5: Other Observations



n=42 articles

influenced by Catholic social thought, and over half (57%) of the authors cited other works by Christian business authors (sometimes scholars) on their topic. This last observation is biased in part because of citations inherent in rejoinders.

Topics covered. Articles addressed a variety of topics in regard to the traditional disciplines of business (e.g., finance). Appendix A summarizes normative advice given in each topical area. A variety of general advice that was helpful in business but not specific to business was included on occasion (e.g., communicate in a way that draws others in). A number of general business principles (e.g., treat co-workers with respect as part of a team regardless of seniority or position) were also included. There was normative advice in regard to management, marketing, and finance as well as accounting, human resources, leadership, and operations. Very little (if any) direct advice was offered regarding globalization, diversity, and technology. Also, little normative advice was presented in terms of specific trades or industries.

Although scriptural support existed for most advisory statements, very few were supported as distinctively Christian. That is, many people who are not Christians would likely support the same behavior. This is not surprising since we are all (Christian and non-Christian) looking at the results of a creative and sustaining God who laid the foundations for business. Motives and assumptions (as opposed to practice) were more likely to be defined as distinctly Christian (e.g., serve your employees as a leader), highlighting that a change in assumptions, heart, and motives are necessary to Christian practice.

Discussion

This review leads to a number of observations and possible conclusions for next steps. There have been a significant number of articles (almost one third) that advise practice. In this journal, Scripture thankfully remains the central foundation for such advice (although in qualitatively different approaches). Perspectives on the breadth of business disciplines exist in varying degrees of focus. In addition,

there seems to be a willingness to seek to understand how we might inform business practice in regard to the needed change in our motives as well as our behaviors.

There are several areas for improvement or possible concern as well that should help leverage the positive foundation established to date within *JBIB*.

The role of practitioners. A conclusion from our study is the need to consider how Christian practitioners can play a more active role in the research process or as participants in our research. We believe the conspicuous lack of practitioner involvement in research to date at least suggests we should explore how significant our topics are to the broader field we serve. Our service to future practitioners through our teaching should be more linked to our engagement of current practice lest we find ourselves exploring the irrelevant.

We suggest several methods for more closely linking our research to practice. First, we should discuss our ideas with business practitioners as we are developing and refining them. In addition to our own personal relationships, avenues to business

practitioners include alumni networks, guest speakers, firms we consult with as well as members of our churches. Second, we could prepare presentations for practitioners based on our research. These could be shorter and more applied versions (executive summaries) of our results. Of course, this would necessitate learning something about the businesses of the practitioners to whom we would present. Listening to the practitioners' responses to these presentations would be a key element of this process. Authors could consider including a section in each article that contains specific practitioner applications that resulted from the above interaction. Finally, authors should incorporate practitioner feedback in the form of adjustments in conclusions, specific examples, data analysis and, wherever appropriate, use actual company names and circumstances.

Being more explicit about normative advice. These might include a more intentional articulation of intended practical advice in articles. (In some cases, it was very difficult to understand if authors were making sugges-

tions, suggesting possibility, or demanding practice changes). We would encourage future authors (including ourselves) to be very explicit in their conclusions. What specific changes in motives, assumptions, principles, or practice are they recommending?

An example of the kind of specificity we would suggest is already present in several articles to date (but not consistently in the majority). An effective example includes White's (1999) challenge of "...foundational issues (in accounting), such as why certain activities are reflected in the financial statements while others are excluded..." (p. 9). She goes on to make specific recommendations: incorporating human resource valuations and environmental impact costs into financial reporting. Even more specific exploration of such topics will enable further dialogue and debate as well as equip practitioners to consider how their roles may change.

We would add that a significant number of *JBIB* articles each year should clearly seek to develop such advice (and may best be facilitated by special

issues of topical focus as well). For example, an immediate impact on understanding a Christian view of finance could be explored through a special issue that requires a focus on financial risk, both the observed preference for less risk and a normative Christian attitude toward risk. Such an issue would seek to understand whether God created us to be financially risk averse, or whether risk aversion is a result of the sin of broken community. The articles would seek to understand God's created design for human attitudes toward risk, based on the Bible, prior Christian scholarship on the topic, the rich broader academic theory, as well as existing empirical work and perhaps new empirical work. This topic could be informed by practice and empirical research and be useful to practitioners. Do I recommend a diversified portfolio to my investment client or a portfolio of a few local businesses which my client knows and which are serving God's kingdom? How much life insurance do I purchase? How much do I hedge interest rates and commodity prices? Do I

invest in stock, or only bonds? Do I risk my small company's future on a new product line and trust that God and His community will provide? How much do I need to keep for a rainy day? In these ways, Christian scholars can be more explicit when offering normative advice. Explicit advice will better serve Christian business practitioners who are engaged in serving God through their work.

Further developing scholarship expectations. The most common reaction of our team to the review of these articles was the broad range of quality. In general, articles lacked reference or incorporation of empirical work and often depended on anecdote for supporting positions. There was also a lack of consistent reference to other Christian scholars' work (outside of formal dialogues) which seems to have led to less-integrated development of independent efforts. We also noted that despite concerted efforts (within the journal itself) authors did not consistently articulate their varied approaches to faith integration (that is, how did they come to assume that a given Scripture or set of Scrip-

tures was appropriate to a given topic).³ Finally, authors typically do not demonstrate their understanding of the broader academy's work in their area (in contrast or comparison to the Christian view they present).

The emerging field of Christian business scholarship (and *JBIB* in particular) is likely at an appropriate stage of development where a more refined definition of Christian business scholarship is needed. Such a refinement in definition would include agreement regarding the appropriate use of anecdotal support, integration of other Christian scholars' work, ways in which scriptural support should be presented, and the need to be informed about advances in the broader academy.

Such a definition would require an understanding of what Christian scholarship does uniquely and in common with the broader academy. It would require us to answer questions such as whether the mainstream academy would view our work as credible (aside from the critically important theological aspects). This need not be a call to do only work that the broader

academy might accept as rigorous, but it would be a call to do appropriately rigorous and informed scholarship whatever our tools and educational research background may be. We should look at what our scholarship would add to our understanding of God's world and then go find tools (or analytical approaches) which God has allowed researchers to develop over the years.

This would also require us to engage in our current field. God's general revelation is an important part of Christian inquiry and we must stay informed and leverage all learning which God enables. For example, understanding how values influence managers (e.g., Egri & Herman, 2000) or strategic planning (e.g., Williams, 2002) does not change our scriptural foundations but should help us understand some of the specific difficulties inherent in managing values. Knowledge of the broader academy's work also demonstrates an understanding of competing frameworks by which practitioners may be influenced (e.g., socially constructed values in research such as Van Oosterhaut, Pursey, & Kaptein, 2006). Finally, it also provides us with excellent

tools, frameworks, and insights that (although not intentionally Christian) may provide a forum for discussion of distinctive views on current advances in our field. (E.g., How would Christian finance scholarship benefit from the work of the Aspen Institute as reflected in short publications such as Leimsider, 2006?)

A focused research agenda. Our final recommendation is in regard to the need for more focus especially given our limited scholarship resources. The development of Christian business scholarship would be well served by a research agenda in regard to our traditional disciplines. What are the most important topics for research within accounting, finance, management, and marketing during the next five years? Similarly, what specific current issues (e.g., globalization) are most important? Could *JBIB* help set that agenda by establishing a clear set of topical research expectations built on an interaction with Christian practitioners? In the broader academy, academic freedom can mean exploring whatever research topic one cares about most. It assumes that some level of integration and practical

relevance will surface in the larger research machine. Given the more limited resources of the Christian academy, we do not have the luxury of making such assumptions and thus our convictions about the relevance of our scholarship demands an agenda that is significantly informed by practice and useful to practice.

Summary. As a group of scholars new to the CBFA and *JBIB*, we approached this endeavor with a sense of humility and a high degree of respect for the work we reviewed and for the scholars that created it. We sincerely sought a better understanding of “what we have said” about business. We were rewarded with a richer understanding of a significant amount of important work that has been published in *JBIB* over the years, much of which contained normative advice and suggestions for practice. And yet, we believe that there are many opportunities to increase the relevance and the impact of Christian business scholarship, especially on practice. We want to say more. To do so we suggest that our scholarship should be more:

- **Engaged**, with the broader academy and with business

practitioners in order to increase the impact of our work on both,

- **Empirical**, incorporating work from the broader academy and using data to develop and advance theories of Christian business practice, and
- **Explicit**, especially in how we integrate our faith into our work and in our normative suggestions for business practice.

Finally, although we sought to be objective in our analysis and critique, we used multiple reviewers and interpreted the work of others in ways that are by nature subjective. We invite your dialog and humbly seek your mercy if we misinterpreted your work.

**Stacy Jackson, Robert Eames,
Leonard Van Drunen, and
Julie Voskuil**

Calvin College
Economics and Business
1740 Knollcrest Circle SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Endnotes

¹Other religiously convicted scholars and even those scholars who emphasize values and change in practice would also likely be normative in their perspectives (but with different assumptions and motives).

²We use the term “understanding” because we often had to interpret the authors’ advice because they were not explicit in a consistent manner regarding their advice.

³Only rarely did an author describe his or her hermeneutic and how it was based on a personal study that led to analysis of the positive and negative injunctions in Scripture regarding business practice. Such analysis may have occurred, but was typically not clearly described.

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Appendix A

Synopsis of our understanding of the normative advice in the reviewed articles

Accounting

- Accountants should not only seek to avoid litigation.
- Accounting should focus on service and fairness and should report on human resources and environmental impacts.

- Christians should work with the socio-economic accounting movement to redeem accounting.
- Integrate view of man as God's image-bearer in managerial accounting so students see the fullness of labor, not merely a cost to manage efficiently.
- Christians can make normative statements because they know the truth; in accounting, truth includes: accountability, stewardship, and representational faithfulness.
- Report to stockholders that income is a by-product, not the only concern of the organization.

Human Resources

- Allocation of return between workers and owners should be just.
- Give employees a coffee break, giving a seventh hour to them with breaks in morning, noon and afternoon.
- Egalitarianism is a correct Christian response to questions of fair pay.
- Train employees, don't disrupt employee family life.
- Justice (real or perceived) requires explicit written, formal procedures, rules and policies especially in decisions such as those involving salary, promotion and dismissal.
- Owners and managers have better information and should, therefore, set employee pay.

Finance

- The Bible does not discourage or prohibit financial risk taking.
- The Bible does not prohibit charging interest, except perhaps to the poor.
- Do not pair Christian (but unholy) stockbrokers with novices.
- Egoistic shareholder wealth maximization is not enough.
- It is acceptable to charge interest on commercial loans.
- Christians should figure out a way to make loans to poor persons without interest.
- We need Christian virtues in the marketplace for markets to be efficient and sustainable.
- Pay debts and bills on time.
- Diversify your portfolio into seven or eight asset classes.
- Teach honesty, integrity and justice, not just shareholder wealth maximization.
- Start your finance course with the biblical foundation of giving first fruits to God.
- The evils of profits are evident in bottom line thinking, oversimplification, quantification, and shortsightedness.

- It is un-Godly to take bankruptcy or seek legal loopholes in a debt contract since it is breaking our promise to pay. Pay your debts even if it is painful.
- It is not always a sin to declare bankruptcy.

Marketing

- Pay equal attention to God's Word and natural laws in understanding the marketplace.
- Christians need to abstain from some generally accepted practices in business (such as bluffing).
- Implement honest marketing campaigns that clearly state the negatives of the company's product or service.
- Market entry decisions should consider the values that the market encourages or discourages.
- Product differentiation and positioning must be undertaken carefully, honestly, and in a true spirit of service to the customer.
- In segmenting and targeting markets, Christians must consider caring for the poor using cross-subsidies to offer lower cost products to poor customers at low margin.
- Love the competition — its role is to serve as a benchmark while marketers serve customers.
- Serving the customer must take priority over industrial camaraderie.
- Special care should be taken when serving a target market that is poor.

Management

- Develop employee skills through training.
- Don't encourage employees to move to locations which would disrupt family life.
- The evils of power are evident in hoarding and hierarchy.
- Empower, coach, and mentor your employees by providing opportunities for them to do their best.
- Consider, enable, and promote the team before an individual.
- Create an atmosphere where others are encouraged, developed, and give input.
- Set goals and direction for employees.
- Value individual workers and offer praise.
- Reduce one's salary to an amount equal to, or below, the lowest paid employee.
- Cautiously engage in participative management by avoiding "counsel" with those who are uninformed and/or those who are not believers, avoiding compromise of values and an inappropriate desire for group acceptance.

- Emphasize stewardship of resources without an unwarranted focus on scarcity and ongoing acquisitions.
- Have a greater concern for employees' personal lives than their work performance.
- Strategic management needs to ask, "How can the company meet the spiritual necessities and physical necessities of people?"

Leadership

- Adjust your leadership style based upon the situation.
- First be a trusted servant and follower.
- Consciously invest in followers, preparing them for leadership.
- Servant-leaders should empathize and live among their followers, as Christ did, not separated by social-economic barriers.
- Be a servant first and leader (exercising authority) second.
- A strong culture capable of excellent performance and change is based on a clear leadership character code of ethics.
- Serve others as a leader, but do not assume servant leadership is somehow distinctively Christian merely because it involves service.
- Provide managers with, and make them accountable to, a trustworthy moral community that transcends the organization where they work.

Operations

- Capital equipment and machinery must obey the Sabbath.
- Do not stockpile to secure your future; you may lose sight of God's provision. In trusting in God this way we will not consider ourselves the center of all things.
- Rest so that your attempts to control nature and maximize production do not overwhelm you.
- Treat people equitably.
- The timeless truths in Old Testament land tenancy laws can be applied to business practice today in the areas of human capital, mobility, family life, income safety nets, life long training, and trust.
- Avoid timidity in decision-making and be willing to take risks and make mistakes because through Christ's atoning death on the cross Christians are assured of forgiveness and eternal reconciliation.
- Create processes focused on conservation, maintenance, and preservation.

General Business advice

- Christians should manage, not worship, the earth.
- If a company is in a less competitive industry, it should focus on meeting people's physical needs.

- If a company is in a competitive industry, it should focus on meeting people's spiritual needs.
- Communicate in a way that draws others in.
- Drive an inconspicuous automobile rather than a new luxury vehicle.
- Take care of the poor and do not exploit them.
- Live in a non-affluent area of town rather than a gated community or lakefront property
- Have concern for the disenfranchised.
- Utilize group accountability, using both individual and distributive means.
- Facilitate development of political and legal systems in other countries.
- Monitor your work-rest cycle and schedule meetings around it and others' cycles.
- Stewardship should cause Christians to critically examine and refrain from practicing cost externalization (pollution).
- Christians must practice restraint in increasing productivity and reducing costs at the expense of the workers.
- Honesty and a spirit of service are desirable policies.
- Voluntary trade group standards can be developed and used to support honesty in advertising and lending.
- Christians should practice integrity in regulated monopolies.
- Christians should be involved politically to shape the business environment to be more conducive to Christian values.

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ARTICLE

Lifelong Learning in Christian Vocation: Being Equipped for Every Good Work

Monty L. Lynn — Abilene Christian University

Note: Portions of this paper were presented at “Mind, Word, and World: Christian Scholarship, Scripture, and Political Realities,” Christian Scholars Conference, Rochester College, Rochester Hills, Michigan, June/July 2006. Appreciation is expressed to Mac Lynn and R. Vernon Boyd for inspiring the paper, and to JBIB reviewers for their insightful comments.

For this reason also, since the day we heard of [your faith in Christ Jesus], we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1:9-10

Lives of faith often are experienced as uneven journeys composed of wilderness wanderings, desert temptations, daily joys and sorrows, and occasional epiphanies (cf. Chryssavgis, 2000). Little scholarship, however, has been devoted to understanding how faith and work interact over the course of an individual’s career. Considering how strands of faith and work

are woven together over time can help business students anticipate possible challenges and life stages ahead, appreciate the disciplines that contribute to spiritual formation, and learn from others who have preceded them. Attention to the intertwining of faith and work beyond college is an expression of lifelong learning consistent with and unique to the mission of many Christian higher education institutions.

Our aim is to propose two models that describe the scope of Christian vocational formation and its influences. The models are prescriptive in that stages and catalysts for work and spiritual formation are described, but they are descriptive in that they avoid forcing individuals into a particular developmental pattern. We begin by defining terms and

assumptions and then propose a five-stage model of vocational formation. In the second half of the paper, we attempt to identify influences that leaven Christian workers toward ever-broadening lives of vocation. Further research directions also are suggested.

Definitions

Dettoni (1994, p. 16) defines spiritual formation as “an internal, multifaceted process which promotes the transformation by which Christ is found in us so that we can become His continually maturing disciples.” Although such a definition is broad, it is uncommon for spiritual formation discussions to specifically address work. Thus, we have chosen to use the term “vocation” to refer to work-inclusive spiritual formation because it emphasizes a call to live in the gospel and it intimates that labor and work are a sub-set of that call. “Vocation” (from the Latin *vocare*, or “to call”) is often used to refer to an occupation, or more narrowly, as a call to a clerical or monastic role. But in a broader sense, vocation denotes a general calling to responsible co-creation and love

for neighbor expressed through productive work (cf. Gaiser, 2005; Grieb, 2005; O’Connell, 1993). Vocation incorporates being fully human, connecting with a primary community, and exercising gifts in service to others (Naughton, 2006). In contrast to the more limited concept of a “career” (Roels, 2003), a vocation is an expansive, all-encompassing call to be formed in the likeness of Jesus Christ, with work, family, the community of faith, care for the poor, and other aspects of Christian discipleship being expressions of that vocation.

Assumptions

Spiritual formation is often likened to a journey — such as is described in John Bunyan’s classic, *Pilgrim’s Progress* — or to a developmental process as in Fowler’s stages of faith (1991). Helpful as these metaphors may be, spiritual formation eschews rigid social science modeling, in part because God is involved (Dykstra, 2005). Biblical narratives demonstrate that mixtures of personality, environment, and divine intervention produce unique spiritual journeys. For

this reason, models of spiritual formation should allow for a variety of developmental paths and be humble in their formulation. Three assumptions set the stage for better understanding the nature of vocation and its development.

Assumption 1: Vocational Formation is from God, not us

Haughey (2004) suggests that growing in vocation requires constant conversion — conversion intellectually to live in reality as “attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible” beings (p. 3); conversion morally to the “ever-unfolding good, to the ways of being and doing that are seen as the right and valuable way of choosing to be” (p. 4); and conversion from a good life to a life that abides in love which “affects and heightens the energy that goes into all of one’s choices” (p. 6). Conversions like these do not result from attempts at personal reform. Desire and discipline may be necessary, but they are insufficient forces to bring about spiritual formation. Spiritual formation occurs through a surrender of one’s will to God, rather than an assertion

of it. de Waal (2001, p. 78) puts it this way:

...the journey is based on that Gospel paradox of losing life and finding it. An anxious preoccupation with my personal and spiritual growth is disastrous. The goal of my changing life is not self-fulfilment.... My goal is Christ.... Seeking God is not about acquiring something or excelling in something, but making progress towards God through our total dependence on his grace.

Vocational formation begins in receivers. Formation often occurs not in working on Scripture but in allowing Scripture to work on the individual; not by bringing Christ to the workplace but by finding Him already at work there in co-workers and creation. Oft-repeated, these sayings may be trite, but the perspective they convey is critical. Being receptive, humble, and quiet stands in sharp contrast to the take-charge, action-oriented climate that commonly is cultivated in business settings.

Assumption 2: Vocational Formation Transforms

Vocation creates change and permeates all of life, yet it does not require that all things be clear. Spiritual formation often produces wisdom but it does not culminate in the mind — the goal is not a clearer cognitive reconciliation of faith and business. Rather, the gospel ripples through life, changing perceptions, reordering priorities, and altering actions. Horrell (1997, p. 105) suggests that Christian vocation ends in “Christological praxis” not “theological principles,” and likely there are other elements involved as well (e.g., will, affections). Theological and spiritual formation may result in clearer vision and assurance but faithful discipleship can occur alongside intellectual and spiritual uncertainty as well. Perhaps *especially* in times of conceptual fog is faith demonstrated. As Vander Veen (1997, p. 11) has written alluding to Kierkegaard, “...it is in the acting where faith is integrated in a meaningful way, a faith continuously doubted by fear and trembling.” Finally, just as

spiritual formation is not relegated to cognition, neither is it in its mature expression, a separate, “religious” dimension of life. Mature faith radiates through life activities in transformative ways rather than merely punctuating daily life with spiritual moments. Instead of being demonstrated in an increase in the proportion of “sacred” thoughts or activities crowding out the “secular” ones, thought and life activities *become* vocation, expressions in love for God and others of one’s calling as a disciple of Christ. Formation permeates and encapsulates all of life, even when we see but a poor reflection (1 Cor. 13:12).

Assumption 3: Vocational Formation is Stretching and Paradoxical

Life experiences prompt new or renewed learning as do experiences with Scripture, spiritual disciplines, and life in the Christian community. As human beings, however, there is an opposing reality at work — a constant tendency toward spiritual and intellectual myopia. Biblical Scriptures are filled with counsel and examples about the tendency to forget covenants

(Deut. 8) or to become spiritually dull of hearing or myopic (Isa. 58; Matt. 13:13b-15; 2 Cor. 3:13-18). Thus, although learning may occur throughout life, so can stagnation; vocation requires a life receptive to stretching — both in terms of change and holding firm — as lead by the Spirit.

Regarding its paradoxical nature, vocational “obstacles” can have a variety of effects, including becoming doorways to spiritual formation. As Cummings (1986, p. 4) states so well about spiritual formation, “We are always beginners, beginning once again to seek and find, because there is always more of the living God to be experienced.” Spiritual insights fold back on themselves in a type of optical illusion so the more we are formed in Christ’s image, the more keenly we realize our distance from Him. Spiritual formation includes mountaintop experiences, plateaus, and valleys, and Scripture attests to the paradoxical observation that there is often more faith development in the valleys than on the mountaintops (Jas. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-9). As Dykstra (2005, p. 36)

states, the journey is “...ever endangered by powers and principalities and the threats of sin.” Failures at work can be the soil of growth or disillusionment; successes can be the same. More theological knowledge can result in diminished clarity or increased hubris, or it can bring new insights, reframing both person and work. Because of the paradoxical nature of spiritual formation, simple linear models do not capture the breakthroughs or the beginning-again nature of spiritual journeys.

Our three beginning assumptions of spiritual formation are summarized in the writings of St. Gregory, here conveyed by Leclercq (1982, p. 33):

The Christian life...is, one might say, a progress from one humility to another; from acquired humility to infused humility, humility nourished by the desire for God in a life of temptation and detachment, deepened and confirmed through loving knowledge in contemplation. ...these successive stages... are constantly renewed....

Vocational Scope

Several typologies have been constructed to describe the development of Christian faith generally (e.g., Fowler, 1991; Westerhoff, 2000), as well as the integration of business and faith (e.g., Nash & McLennan, 2001; Van Loon, 2000). General faith development models typically provide a comprehensive, prescriptive set of stages, emphasizing the increasing internalization of faith. General models often do not specifically address work life and sometimes are general enough to incorporate a variety of religious traditions. Business integration models, such as Nash and McLennan's, often depict various tones of harmony between faith and work, from the two being played on different

scales to their being dissonant and consonant. Integration models generally focus on the belief aspects of faith and work and views them as atemporal stages — development over time is seldom addressed. Falling somewhere between these models is what's often overlooked: A model which attends to the development of vocation.

Our model (here, it is similar to other business and faith integration models) suggests stages of Christian vocation (see Figure 1). The stages are represented as arcs rather than stairs or points along a line to soften the visual suggestion of a linear progression; the broader the arc, the more expansive and inclusive the vocational expression. Each arc adds a dimension

Figure 1: Vocational Scope



to the level immediately beneath it. Individuals may live under a particular arc for long or short periods of time and may move to broader and/or narrower arcs over time. Autobiographical and spiritual writing over many centuries — from Paul to St. John of the Cross to Thomas Merton — suggests that although spiritual formation stages may be systematized and linear in progression, the journeys of disciples often across them are not.

The two narrowest arcs — ignorance and irrelevance — depict low-levels of perceived relevance between faith and work. Although they may be arrived at honestly, these steps suggest a distorted vocational divide between faith and work. Individuals under the next broader arc — seeking — acknowledge that faith and work are linked although the ability to find direction may not be clear. The most inclusive arcs — application and incarnation — incorporate a growing transformation of heart, mind, and action. The inside two arcs are restrained in their degree of vocational development. The

outer two are less encumbered in their demonstration of faith. We'll pause to describe each.

Ignorance

Under the ignorance arc, faith and vocation reside as independent spheres of life. One lacks an awareness of faith having anything to say about work, or perhaps one has a disposition to isolate life activities (Le Cornu, 2005b). An individual may live under the ignorance arc if things of the Spirit are viewed as the stuff of theologians. Or, one may have stagnated vocationally, intentionally making faith impotent by isolating it as an activity or belief system devoid of any life-altering meaning. The ignorance stage suggests a lack of acquaintance with biblical or theological literature, a deficit of exposure to examples in the Christian community, and/or the presence of a personal obstacle to the Spirit's transforming work. Whatever the cause, when Christian faith is kept at bay from other aspects of life, it ceases to be Christian faith.

As a response, it is difficult to put a spade in the biblical text

without unearthing issues of work, poverty, material possessions, justice, labor, trade, slavery, and other business-related topics (cf. Sider, 1997). Further, clericalized theology is a concept foreign to the New Testament (Stevens, 1999). The term “laity” (*laikoi*) refers to the people of God (1 Pet. 2:9) and “clergy” (*klēros*) to those appointed or endowed by God with a Christian mission — or in other words, any follower with a vocation (Gal. 3:29; Eph. 1:11; Col. 1:12).

Irrelevance

The irrelevance arc suggests that faith may be the ideal but work constitutes reality. Individuals living under the irrelevance arc acknowledge that Scripture alludes to work-related topics but the content is too dated to be useful — there is simply too much dissimilarity between the ancient and modern worlds for anything beyond the most general ethical teachings to be useful. Society has changed, technology advanced, and the economy has become more sophisticated. Much of Christian ethics are viewed as largely

uninformed about the realities and challenges of modern business, germinating in an economy whose major issues include land tenure, usury, artisan and agricultural trade, and foreign occupation. In contrast, modern economies and society are characterized by constantly emergent structures and ethical issues that are simply beyond the reach of ancient documents.

Respecting societal, economic, and other differences between the ancient and modern worlds is a healthy exegetical practice, a prophylactic for doing injustice to the biblical text. But foundational ethical issues of covenant, the treatment of the disenfranchised, the meaning of work, and the use of material goods are arguably as relevant today as they were to audiences in the ancient world.

Seeking

The seeking vocationalist desires to live an integrated life, although some seekers struggle with hearing the direction of the call. Knapp (2005) had no difficulty accumulating dozens of ethical situations from interviews

with businesspersons who desired to identify a Christian response but couldn't always do so. A lack of vocational direction may result from confusion about the "what" of the biblical and theological message, or confusion about the "how" — the application or expression of faith.

Those aware of the ocean of literature on faith and work know that the spectra of views produced have been incredibly broad, with perspectives branching in disparate directions. One scholar compared the views of Christian economists regarding economic systems to that of a shotgun blast (Anderson & Langelett, 1996). The individual living under the seeking arc sees these examples of faith-integration and desires to integrate biblical and theological teachings in their work, but the myriad of perspectives and practices leave them confused about direction and often paralyzed. Apostolic letters were often written to clarify the Christian call amid the fog of ancient culture and practice. Scriptures offer insight into faith and work (1 Cor. 2:10-13; Heb. 4:12), but also witness to the

tendency of individuals to become confused in their search for faithfulness. In their comprehensive study of Christians in business, Nash and McClennan (2001, p. 5) concluded that "even deeply faithful Christians in business tend to feel a strong disconnect between their experience of the church or private faith, and the Spirit-challenging conditions of the workplace." This inability to find direction in Scripture may result from asking questions inappropriate of the text, confusion in discerning spiritual direction from the Christian community, or other sources.

Application

Application adds action to the previous stages. This is possible because a possibly imperceptible yet significant transformation begins to occur in the Christian worker. Up to this point, faith and work are isolated from each other and one or both may reside largely outside the individual. The application arc is possible because a greater internalization of both faith and work occur. The boundary separating faith and work is

permeable, lessening the knowing and doing gap. Garvey (2004, p. 39) helps describe this shift by contrasting career and vocation:

A career...identifies work that is instrumental. A vocation, by contrast, involves human effort that is integral to the person. Stated more concretely, a career is a way to make money or achieve status and power, while a vocation is a contribution of oneself to something of value to society.... The difference...reflects the attitude of the actor rather than the nature of the function. Accordingly, a career becomes a vocation when the actor approaches the position as a free, moral person wishing to contribute to the common good.

In accord with virtue ethics, the more one practices integrity in the details of life, the more one becomes a person of integrity; all of one's actions contribute to who one is (cf. Kotva, 1997). In this way, virtue ethics describes the propelling nature of feedback in the application stage of Christian vocation.

Incarnation

In incarnation, one's work and faith are not separate or external to the individual, but work exists as an expression of faith. Adapted from his description of the church, Martin (2001, 256-57) says it this way:

From an incarnational perspective Christ is not merely an exemplar or model of Christian praxis that we should imitate. More profoundly, Christ is the ground of our very being....in which we are invited to live.... Following Christ means living...such that the redemptive life of the Spirit manifests itself among and beyond the visible fellowship of *koinonia*.

With these stages briefly described, we move to our second model which proposes influencing factors in vocational formation.

Vocational Influences

Because life experiences and faith insights are not linear, vocation does not broaden at a constant rate; for many, faith spirals over time through

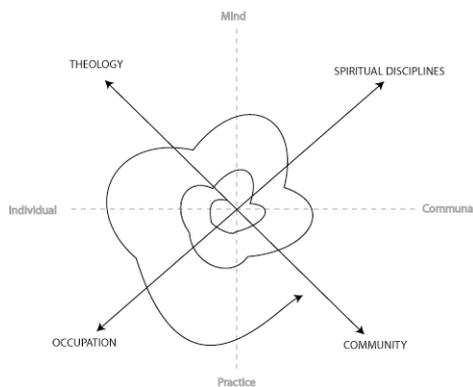
various stages of predictability, disillusionment, clarity, and hope (Rinehart, 1993). Likewise, individuals may move to broader or narrower arcs of faith-work integration as life events occur. Consistent exposure to certain influences tends to broaden vocation and counter spiritual ossification. Patterned after Hart's (1968) hermeneutical spiral, Figure 2 depicts the endless journey of formation. The spiral is uneven, however, suggestive of the varied experience of vocation by many individuals. The figure suggests that vocation widens under the leavening of four influences that are extracted from a wide swath of theological and biographical writing. The four influences are theology, spiritual disciplines,

community, and occupation. These influences occur alongside two continua which simply help in characterizing differences among the four influences: The continua are the individual-communal and mind-practice. These continua correspond with commonly-used spiritual dimensions of being, relating, doing, or mystical, intellectual, and institutional (Holt, 2005). Of the four influences, two are primarily mind-oriented and two are largely practice-oriented; two influences are explored more individually and two tend to be communal.

Reflection and Steadfastness

Adult learning, religious education, and career research indicate that reflection can aid in distilling learning from

Figure 2: Vocational Influences



experience (Jarvis, 2004; Le Cornu, 2005a; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999). Goal-setting, feedback, and self-regulation have long been shown by psychological research to enhance learning as well (Latham & Pinder, 2005). Thus, although the formative process is a divine act and not self-reform, feedback and reflection reminds one of the source and centrality of one's calling and provides an opportunity to reflect on life experience. A commitment to Christian vocation and reflection about that commitment are likely to enhance the degree to which each of the four influences in the model contribute to spiritual formation. This combination of contemplation and action has long been recognized by spiritual writers over the centuries (Servais, 2003), being reflected in the Ignatian counsel of "finding God in all things" (*in actione contemplativa*). Burns (2004, p. 40) summarizes the role of contemplation in vocation thusly:

Wisdom calls us to a thoughtful, contemplative attitude toward all aspects of living. Insight and understanding reside in the experiences of

our relationships. We contact this wisdom with a listening heart. The call of creation into human existence invites us into relationships in which we are fruitful and have dominion. Wisdom guides us in this call by summoning us to live attentively, with a listening heart.

So we begin with the assumption that the vocational laborer desires to live faithfully and reflects upon that desire in light of his or her surroundings.

Influence 1: Theology

We start with Scripture and theology because conceptions of faith and vocation are formed and corrected by them. The Holy Spirit works on us through Scripture to remake our mind, will, and affections — the biblical "heart" (Chewning, 2005). The study of Scripture and theology are not ends in the Christian life but watering holes which continue to call us to biblical understanding. Scripture may be read in many ways — as literature, through various critical lenses, with biblical imagination, as *lectio*

divina. The challenge is to respect the biblical text with its unique literary, theological, and historical nature, while avoiding limiting it to a human plain, or uncritically projecting contemporary culture, agendas, or personal views onto it.

Although the majority of marketplace Christians have rudimentary exegetical skill, there are some interpretative principles that can go a long way in equipping non-textual scholars in understanding Scripture (e.g., Cosgrove, 2002; Marshall, 2004; Packer, 1999; for a business application, see Lynn and Wallace, 2001). Individuals must constantly examine their approach to Scripture, however, not just their exegetical tools. Keck (1996, pp. 136-37) underscores the necessity of engaging Scripture humbly, recognizing that vocations are formed by God, not exegetical prowess:

When something is used, it becomes a tool by which to accomplish something, and its value depends on the degree of success the user has with it.... So too, when we use the Bible we are in charge.

It becomes a tool in our hands by which we accomplish our aims, whether to win an argument or to achieve a valid goal. Moreover, the skill of the user, the hermeneutical prowess, easily becomes the most important factor in its use. Then it is not long before we do the talking. When that occurs, it is difficult for the text to interrogate and interpret us.... The likelihood that we and our questions are confronted by the Bible is, on the other hand, precisely what is enhanced if we live with it as a companion partly because its diversity increases the chances that some voice within it will catch us unaware.

Theological sub-disciplines, other than exegetical studies, can contribute significantly to vocational understanding as well. For example: Christian ethics may be explored in practical theology, insights into biblical vocation across Christian traditions can be discovered in historical theology, and a theology of care for creation could be evaluated in systematic

theology. Archeology can provide insight into the life and teachings of Jesus on vocational ethics and issues, as well as on the ancient economic environment. From studies on Galilee, Reed (2000), for example, offers insights into urbanization, economics, politics, monetary exchange, taxation, and construction trades — all topics which illumine the message of biblical passages relevant to work and commerce.

The kaleidoscope of Christian tradition offers differing emphases and insights — such as reading John Wesley on poverty and justice along with Catholic Social Teaching and Mennonite authors. Diverse ideas can stretch and test entrenched and tacit beliefs and practices. In sum, there is a lifetime of learning in reflective exposure to the storehouses of Scripture and theology and nothing replaces the centering nature of Scripture for the Christian vocationalist.

Influence 2: Spiritual Disciplines

The modern Coptic ascetic, Matta El Meskeen (Matthew the Poor, 1984, pp. 20, 24, 26), differentiates between an

intellectual approach to biblical study and a practical, spiritual approach:

There is no intellectual means of entering into the Gospel, for the Gospel is spiritual. It must be obeyed and lived through the Spirit before it can be understood.... [P]ractical meditation builds an inner life with God that impregnates a person's words, thoughts, and teachings with divine power.... Reading remains useless, understanding powerless, and memorization a mere repetition of empty words, unless we obey the commandment...no matter what sacrifice, cost, hardship, or scorn we may bear.

Spiritual disciplines are often considered a primary vehicle for spiritual formation because they engage the person in heart and will. But spiritual disciplines require thinking and transform the mind as well as the heart (Willard, 2002); they address a broad, active, Christian vision of life, not just spiritual practices entered into in isolation.

Willard (1988) divides spiritual disciplines into two categories: Abstinance, which includes disciplines such as solitude, silence, fasting, and frugality; and, engagement, which includes disciplines such as celebration, service, prayer, and confession. (Willard includes study and worship as spiritual disciplines, but we have assigned these to other influences.) Spiritual disciplines may be argued to be practice-oriented rather than mind-oriented but they are included at the top of the diagram because they are often emptying engagements which require a simplicity and quieting of one's spirit distinctly different from the action-orientation of experiential engagements. The practice of spiritual disciplines readies the mind and spirit to receive and practice the word in community and provides space for growth that comes through new insights and recentered living. Thus, spiritual disciplines are communal as well — communal between God and individual for the purpose of living out one's vocation.

Influence 3: Community

Biblical teaching and tradition clearly support the idea that spiritual formation finds expression and enhancement in community with others. Formation is nurtured by modeling, enculturation, and witness by the alternative community of faith (Westerhoff, 1985), as well as in the practice of forgiveness, conflict resolution, acceptance, and mutual care. Formation occurs in worship, fellowship, and service to others in communities that are real and not always ideal. Matthaëi (2004, p. 57) states that “while the faith community's efforts do not cause...transformation, they provide the environment and opportunities for lives to be transformed by God through the process of faith formation.” Vocation is enhanced through the support, dialogue, and discernment of the Christian community. As Knapp argues (2005, p. 79):

If we conclude, then, that deliberate compartmentalization is neither a faithful nor satisfactory option, the alternative is for the church to

actually support the business person in strengthening the vital connection between Christian faith and that portion of life that accounts for most of his or her waking hours and productive years.

Vocation is shaped in community in several ways. For example, community tends to soften Western individualism, as Webb-Mitchell (2003, p. 80) suggests:

The real problem of radical individualism is selfishness and stridency, which are contrary to life in Christ's body. We are reminded that the reason we are not individuals is the catholicity of this body of Christ, in which the focus is on the many who make up the one body; an often overwhelming characteristic that keeps people forever changing is that they are becoming more like Christ and less like themselves.

Community also shapes vocation by teaching us about the nature of God. Zizoulas (1985, pp. 16-17) argues that patristic church leaders viewed the trinity as suggestive of God's communal nature, and that God can be

known only through "personal relationships and personal love best expressed as communion.... Without the concept of communion it would not be possible to speak of God." Persons come to be through relationship, not only sociologically but theologically because we are called to mutual compassion and service. Thus, for theological and sociological reasons, vocation is tested, modeled, and exercised in community.

Influence 4: Occupation

As the incarnation arc suggests, Christian faith is lived rather than simply codified in theological statements. Daily labor — paid and unpaid — contributes to vocation by providing opportunities for faithful co-creation and love of others (Gaiser, 2005; Sorg, 2003). The call of Christ in the workplace may be expressed in other ways including in the exercise of wisdom when dealing with ethical dilemmas, in the faithful execution of honorable work, and in the application of talents toward mutual care. Occupation also may provide stretching opportunities which

bring new challenges to Scripture, spiritual disciplines, and the community of faith.

Although directed toward managerial careers, Dotlich, Noel, and Walker (2004, p. 15) suggest that adversity — failure or difficulty at work — and diversity — interesting, stimulating projects, assignments, and roles — stretch workers. These punctuations to the routine require new skills or learning. They may include events such as joining a company, dealing with significant failure for which one is responsible, coping with a bad boss or competitive peers, losing a job or being passed over in a promotion, working for a firm that goes through an acquisition or merger, moving across functions, working internationally, or accepting responsibility for a business. The uneven journey in occupation provides opportunities to explore and test faith, to awaken to divine fingerprints in work and life, and to query and assist the Christian community.

Conclusion: Integration, Practice, and Future Research

Holistic Integration: A Multiplier Effect

As has been mentioned, vocational influences are most potent when they interact with and catalyze one another rather than are practiced in isolation. Fitch (2005) suggests, for example, that Christian social justice is defined by Scripture but understood in practice: “If we do not practice justice among ourselves as Christians under Christ’s lordship, we will not have the skills to discern it out in society either” (p. 154). Biblical understandings are not simply learned through private or even meditative study, but are illuminated through collective interpretation and practice within the Christian community:

With modernist confidence, scriptural exegesis is a matter of objective science for evangelicals. We believe there is no communal cultural hermeneutic needed to interpret Scripture.... We do not readily see how faith interpretation

of Scripture requires the culture of his body to test it and authenticate it under the auspices of the Holy Spirit. We do not understand that faithful interpretation requires discovering the justice of Christ one situation at a time in the body. (p. 159)

Thus, biblical and theological teaching informs spiritual disciplines which prepare us for life in the community of faith equipping us for co-creation and service. New insight and discipline from one influence enables development in another.

Practicing Vocational Development

Vocational development may be buttressed in a multitude of ways — informally through small groups of Christians who gather for prayer or accountability, through mentoring by other Christians (Emmerich, 2000), or by beginning anywhere in the cycle of influences, such as with theological reading or service to others. In many cities, small groups meet to explore vocation (InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, 2006; Kilgore,

2000; Woodstock Theological Center, 1999). Regardless of the approach, anecdotal evidence and focused research suggest that some mechanism for integration and practice is helpful for many individuals to connect one influence with another and continue growing in Christ.

Future Research

A lifelong approach to vocational formation opens a rich vein of possible research and raises numerous questions. How, for example, is vocational formation nurtured in students and in the workplace? Vander Veen and Smith (2005) have begun exploring curricular design that gives attention to lifelong learning and spiritual formation, and Emmerich (2000) has explored how mentoring for vocation occurs. Service learning (Schaffer, 2004) and internships might mirror future work settings and provide opportunities for students to reflect about their vocation. Archetypical patterns of vocational development might be explored empirically through psychometrically-tested instruments applied longitudinally or cross-sectionally across ages,

gender, and occupations. Scholarship on spirituality and aging studies could inform understandings of vocational formation as well (Kimble, McFadden, Ellor, & Seeber, 1995; Paloutzian & Park, 2005), as could career stage literature (Super, 1990). Plentiful biographical and monastic writings of Christians who labor are available to provide insights into vocational formation. In summary, lifelong vocational learning is ripe for further exploration.

Monty L. Lynn

W. W. Caruth Professor of Management
Department of Management Sciences
Abilene Christian University
ACU Box 29325
Abilene, TX 79699
325-674-2593
lynnm@acu.edu

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ARTICLE

Can A True Faith-Based Education Be Delivered Online?

Kaye Shelton — Dallas Baptist University; George Saltsman —
Abilene Christian University; Jekabs Bikis — Dallas Baptist University

Abstract

Can a faith-based education be as effective when delivered online as when it is delivered face-to-face? An in-depth look at the early adopters of the online technology reveals that it can be if the Christian university commits itself to developing an online learning community and to interweaving faith principles into crucial areas of its online program. The three key areas of faith integration upon which hinges the success of such programs are the integration of faith into course material, faith integration in the relationships among students, and faith integration in the faculty student relationships. Consistent attention to these three areas validates the online Christian education model, complements the missions of Christian institutions, supports the integration of faith and learning, and enables institutions to reach audiences that may not be currently accessible.

Since the introduction of delivering education via the Internet more than a decade ago, colleges and universities throughout the world have had to determine if online education was right for them. Some universities have embraced this new opportunity whole-heartedly while others have been reluctant to change their existing patterns of distributing education. This possible paradigm shift has been particularly important to distinctively Christian educational institutions, many of which have wondered whether online education fits within the context of the Christian university mission. The early success of faith-based, higher education institutions such as Regent University, Dallas Baptist University, and Letourneau University provide some indication that online education may be a feasible method for delivering faith-based education. However, other institutions are reluctant

to adopt this delivery method because of their long-standing commitment to delivering quality Christian education in a traditional setting.

Christianity and education have an interwoven history. From the very beginnings of Christianity some 2000 years ago, “education has been of overriding concern to the Christian community” (Vikner, 2003, p. 1). In fact, historical research demonstrates that in much of the last twenty centuries, Christianity was the major driver of education in the western world (Spickard, 2001). Furthermore, the very idea of a formal higher education has a distinctively Christian past, even though in most instances, this idea has been heavily secularized (Hull, 1992). Even so, the last several decades have witnessed a rebirth of interest in Christian higher education and many dedicated institutions have attempted to return to their Christian origins (Hamilton, 2005). In this return, the interweaving of faith with learning remains a core value. Because of the commitment to this core value, many Christian institutions in higher education

have struggled with the idea of educating students at a distance using Internet delivery or what many call *online education*.

Cagney (1997) recognized early on that “one of the major stumbling blocks to implementing distance education in Christian colleges is the belief that Christian community cannot be created as effectively in a distance-education course as on a college campus” (p. 68). Additionally, institutions may feel their core values are lessened, (Tonkin, 2004), and Christian community cannot occur virtually, because a physical campus is necessary (Kopf, 2003). Hueth (2004) found a tendency for “faculty and administrators (in journals, at conferences, and in casual academic and social meetings) toward making blanket judgments (either positive or negative) about e-learning and technology, without really identifying/knowing what technology(s) are included” (p. 527). It is argued that online education (a subset of distance education) may not fit within the context of a Christian university mission, especially if the use of technological means is put

ahead of educational ends (Roels, 2004).

Interestingly, though, distance education has had an unquestioned Christian application since the very beginnings of Christianity. The letters to the Church in the New Testament are good examples of distance education as some are specifically identified by theologians as “circular letters” intended for use and readership by many churches and believers separated by vast geographical distances (Harris, 1980). These letters are examples of writing and instruction of a teacher intended to encourage and educate many audiences. Throughout history, the need to educate and inform has exceeded man’s ability to deliver the message in person. Christian educators have struggled collectively with the logistics of how to reach a broader audience without compromising the academic and Christian ideals that are so strongly valued at their institutions. However, the necessity to increase that reach to a broader audience has grown with college degrees becoming more and more available online. According to Roels (2004),

“If the mission of Christian higher education is to disciple the Christian of this world and their cultures, then e-learning [online education] provides our best avenue to create global access to deeper Christian learning” (p. 461).

Within the last ten years, online education has become an accepted instructional method at many higher educational institutions. Recent research indicates that in the Fall of 2003, 1.9 million students in the U. S. studied online with a predicted increase to 2.6 million in the Fall of 2004 (Allen & Seaman, 2004). The researchers also show that “the nearly 20% growth rate expected in online enrollments far exceeds the overall rate of growth for the entire higher education student population” (p. 1). Such an increase in student demand for online education raises an important question for many faith-based institutions: Can a true faith-based education be delivered online?

Research and Online Education

The question of the validity of the faith-based online educa-

tion model has not yet been answered conclusively in the literature. While much has been written regarding general (secular) trends regarding overall online education, formal research regarding distinctively Christian practices in this field is sparse. The few studies that have been done such as Ma (2003), Weigel (2002), Grooms (2003), Browning (2004, Summer), Hueth (2004), Roels (2004), Rovai and Baker (2004), and Tonkin (2004), support the possibility of Christian online education; we have extended this research by interviewing faculty, administrators, and students of Christian institutions. Based upon this evidence, there is a strong indication that online education is an effective and feasible method for delivering a faith-based education to a wider and more diverse audience and complements institutional missions and supports the integration of faith and learning. However, without a conscious development of the learning community, attempting to integrate faith may be more difficult. We believe that with a focused development of an

online learning community, online education provides an effective method for integrating faith into course content, building Christian community among students, and offering exceptional opportunities for students to interact and bond with Christian faculty.

Integration of Faith and Learning in Online Learning Community

An effective Christian campus integrates faith at every opportunity and at every level. Many institutions have placed joint emphasis on the classroom experience and co-curricular activities (educational activities outside the classroom). This focus of resources toward faith integration is primarily designed to build upon and enhance a student's personal relationship with Jesus Christ and develop a strong Christian community within the campus.

In both the online and traditional campus environments, the integration of faith, through the curricula and co-curricula, can be categorized into three distinct elements: student interaction with course content,

interaction with other students, and interaction with faculty. An online learning community — a community that “consists of learners who support and assist each other, make decisions synergistically, and communicate with peers on a variety of topics beyond those assigned” (Boettcher & Conrad, 1999, p. 88) — stimulates interaction among these same three elements.

Gopez-Sindac (2004) shows that “online education makes possible the building of an effective, highly interactive learning community that offers exceptional value to students, teachers, and institutions” (p. 47). The development of the online learning community emphasizes student-to-faculty, as well as student-to-student interaction. This emphasis on those interactions within the practices of the online learning community is the institution’s greatest tool for providing a faith-based education online. Palloff and Pratt (1999) discovered that throughout the online learning community, it is “the relationships and interactions among people through which knowledge is primarily gener-

ated” (p. 15). Furthermore, Rovai and Baker’s (2004) research suggests that a clear sense of learning community is positively correlated to educational outcomes such as increased student retention. Furthermore, Palloff and Pratt (1999) find that a successful online learning community may also generate the following outcomes:

- Active interaction involving both course content and personal communication
- Collaborative learning evidenced by comments directed primarily student-to-student rather than student-to-instructor
- Socially constructed meaning evidenced by agreement or questioning, with the intent to achieve agreement on issues of meaning
- Sharing of resources among students
- Expressions of support and encouragement exchanged between students, as well as willingness to critically evaluate the work of others. (p. 32)

Thus, the conscious continuous development of the learning community is essential for integrating faith into online education. While at first online instruction may appear to be no more than a 1950s correspondence course reborn through email; in reality, it is far more than just the delivery of course content through a computer-mediated environment. The rich interaction of participants and discussion of the course material in the learning community gives it significance beyond the correspondence course model. However, instructors should remember that a successful online learning community, which allows students to feel comfortable enough to share and develop relationships, does not form on its own. It takes dedication, planning, and effort from both the course instructor and the institution. Instructors must plan for faith integration as well as look for spontaneous opportunities, just like they do in the traditional classroom. After this learning community is formed, instructors must also focus on the threefold faith integration into their online

courses: integration of faith into the course content, student-to-student community, and student-to-faculty relationships.

Integration of Faith into the Course Content

Christian institutions endeavor to provide a curriculum that is focused both upon engaging content within the discipline and upon integrating Christian faith and values into each discipline. Experts in their disciplines and mature in their faith, instructors incorporate the Christian worldview in their courses and impact students' lives. Faculty members, at Christian colleges and universities offering online classes, have shown that faith can be integrated into their online course content, just as in their traditional courses. This integration has been accomplished, at least in some part, by the creation of topical devotionals, reflective thinking exercises within the lesson, and the interweaving of Christian principles within the course lecture content.

The development of topical devotionals appropriate for the teaching objectives is a

practice already used by both traditional instructors and online instructors. For example, Indiana Wesleyan University's online courses offer devotionals correlated to the lecture topics (Gaide, 2004). This can be done by adding Bible verses, worshipful hymns, or reflective passages that suggest a direct correlation between a biblical concept and the course content, and providing reflective opportunities for the student during the comprehension of that lesson's content. This method is quite useful where the bulk of the course material may have been written from a secular worldview, such as is often the case of textbooks or commercially purchased content.

Additionally, instructors can develop personal devotionals that not only support the content being taught but also reveal their own thoughts on a topic, such as lessons learned from personal experiences. For example, Dallas Baptist University adjunct professor Dr. JoAnn Bowman shares the following:

As semesters advance, I see more and more that students

(and the professor) come to rely on each other in several ways. We give each other encouragement, support, and strength to carry on from day to day. One student emailed me that she often opens the sessions just to read and respond to the devotionals every day. Some students are hesitant in the beginning to join in, and we make that okay. As the semester continues, I see more and more that students feel safe to join in and respond. A perfect example is our online course for this spring semester in multi-cultural education. The course lends itself so well to sharing in our threaded discussions on the devotionals. In every session, I begin with a devotional. It always includes a song and most always a verse from the Bible or quotes. I also close each session with something else thought provoking. There is plenty of ideas for a response for every student no matter what their beliefs are. (Personal communication, April 25, 2005)

Furthermore, many instructors reference or link to devotional websites within an online course, such as Salt on the Net (<http://www.saltnet.org/snet-new/>) to reinforce Christian worldview concepts. Other good devotional sites used include C. H. Spurgeon's *Morning and Evening* devotions (<http://www.daily-devotional.com/>), Heartlight Daily Devotionals (<http://www.heartlight.org>), and Oswald Chambers' *My Utmost for His Highest* (<http://www.rbc.org/utmost/index.php>).

Reflective thinking exercises represent an integral part of student participation in the online learning community and further enhance student interaction with course content. Instructors create thought-provoking exercises that encourage students to make cognitive associations between course content and biblical principles. Observation suggests that the creation of these cognitive associations within the course may predispose the student to recreate those associations when dealing with that content later in real-life situations. In these exercises, students are free to respond from

their personal convictions and are encouraged not to parrot the instructor's thoughts. The online learning community is especially effective in this practice as students comfortably share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences that can contribute to the common purpose of the course. This learning approach is rich in examples and firsthand experiences that provide students with associative links to draw upon at a later date.

Many institutions create online course materials by either contracting with the instructor or a team of instructors. Since faculty have integrated faith in traditional classrooms for many years by working examples and illustrations into their courses, the construction of online course materials offers an excellent opportunity to intertwine the Christian worldview into the very core of each course. Dr. Ron Smiles, Professor of Economics at Dallas Baptist University, shares the following illustration for integrating faith into his online course material:

Textbooks, like the Bible, contain many value judg-

ments, and it is easy to compare and contrast those that are faith-based to those that are based on business theories or secular ethics. In this respect, the parables and letters of the New Testament are particularly useful in posing questions such as how Christian faith, as described in Hebrews, may conflict with behavior modification theories; how the Parable of the Vineyards may conflict with secular definitions of equity; or how Paul's letters may set parameters for appropriate business ethics. It is most important to illustrate to the students that Christ did not condemn free enterprise in order to express concern for the poor and oppressed although, on a number of occasions, he did warn ("woe unto") the most fortunate that good stewardship becomes more difficult for those people who are blessed with power, wealth, and popularity. We are also warned that under no circumstances can you take it with you and that there are more important things in life than the acquisition of wealth.

The Bible is replete with examples of faith-based business ethics and strategies that can be held up as the foundation for most worthwhile texts produced today. (Personal communication, August 19, 2003)

As this example demonstrates, faith can be successfully integrated into the development of online course materials. When combined with reflective thinking exercises and topical devotions, instructors have sufficient opportunity to place faith building elements for students to be exposed to the Christian worldview by the integration of real-life application within the academic discipline. As a result, students not only successfully interact with the course content, but they also participate in a distinctively Christian learning experience.

Creation of Christian Student Community

Building a campus community that produces, encourages, and enlightens Christian scholars is a goal that most Christian institutions strive to realize.

This growth environment is created both in and out of the classroom and is one of the greatest assets of a Christian institution. Friendships, ministry, and testimony among fellow students are important for the overall successful development of our students. The question that must be answered is whether this environment can be provided for online students who may complete a degree program without ever attending the institution's physical campus. By working together, online students, faculty, and institutions have been increasingly successful in their ability to create, or perhaps extend, the institution's Christian community far beyond the boundaries of the physical campus. This extension of community is accomplished by utilizing the relationship building nature of the online learning community and the intentional strategies of the institution's faculty and students to care for and nurture their fellow learners.

In order to achieve faith-integration in the online classroom, it is essential to create an environment where Christian ideas and practices can be safely

exchanged. One simple but highly effective way to foster such a community is to create a place where online students can post or email prayer requests. Another way is to provide spiritual resources in a web portal just as institutions do with academic resources. To further extend this community, institutions may appoint an individual to organize and encourage spiritual growth for online students.

The vast archives of the Internet provide endless opportunities for institutions to gather resources that they can use to evangelize, minister, and help grow online students in their spiritual walk. Institutions should seek innovative ways to use these resources to provide extracurricular opportunities for spiritual growth. For example, a student of the Dallas Baptist University online program experienced the tragic loss of his son, who had been deployed to Iraq to fight in the war. The DBU community, the majority of which had never met either the student or his son, rallied around the online student and offered prayer and support during this difficult time utilizing

a group email prayer list (K. Shelton, personal communication, September 12, 2004).

The effort an institution puts into the creation of an online learning community is reflected in increased opportunities for students to build meaningful relationships. The relationships that are built within an academic course by utilizing the learning community concept often carry on long after that course is over. Many students at Abilene Christian University reported in post-course evaluations of online classes that they felt they knew their fellow online students better than fellow students in a traditional course (G. Saltsman, personal communication, September 6, 2004). Many of these students continue to have relationships with each other outside the class in many ways, supporting, encouraging, and ministering to each other via electronic communication such as email, instant messenger, and cell phones. Friendships begun in an online class appear to have the same potential of developing into lifelong friendships as do the relationships from the traditional classroom.

The question regarding the *quality* of online classroom relationships is a valid one. To our knowledge, no significant research has been conducted on this matter so we are left with simple observation and instructor feedback. By creating an online discussion board-based community where all students participate in posting both academic discussions and personal beliefs, many instructors are surprisingly successful in creating an intimate and open environment where students share, sometimes anonymously, their greatest life struggles. Students begin to nurture and minister to each other — something that is almost non-existent in identical courses offered without the online learning community approach. For example, Dr. Dan Crawford teaches online at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and shares the following:

In an online course at SWBTS entitled “Discipleship for Ministry” with thirteen students enrolled, I developed a separate link entitled, “Prayer Room.” Both in the Syllabus and in each weekly

assignment, students were required to go to the “Prayer Room” and post either a prayer request or reply to the prayer request of another student. While this began rather slowly, as the semester went on, more personal needs were shared and more responses were posted. Often a student would post a request and six to eight students would reply to it. I personally posted occasional prayer requests and replied to most of the student requests. Toward the end of the semester, one student posted the following, “You guys are my best prayer partners. In fact, you are my only real prayer partners. I hate to see this semester end. Would anyone be interested in continuing to pray for each other beyond this class?” There followed twelve positive responses. To my knowledge, they are still e-mailing each other with prayer requests and replies. While this class was composed of all Christians, a non-Christian would not necessarily feel uncomfortable posting in the “Prayer Room”

since they too have needs. Their replies could simply be a thanks expressed to the student who shared a request and a promise to remember them. They might even develop a greater interest in and/or appreciation for Christianity through this exercise. (Email communication, September 29, 2005)

Examples such as this provide strong indications that the concept of online relationship building has merit in establishing relationships that are more than superficial.

Bonding Between Students and Faculty

Assembling a talented group of qualified persons from numerous disciplines who can serve as both Christian role models and scholarly experts is a remarkable accomplishment. The quality of education at any institution rests, in large part, on the quality of its faculty. Fisher (1989) recognized that “the determining factor in the nature and effectiveness of a Christian university is the faith and commitment of the teacher” (p. 119). Christian colleges and

universities strive to provide students with expert instructors who have the ability not only to deliver the course content but also to challenge students to consider that knowledge in the context of a Christian worldview. Fostering an environment where students can have faithful mentors is at the very heart of a faith-based education and directly supports the institutional mission. Integration of faith can be accomplished in the relationships that are built between students and faculty inside the course and outside the classroom.

Relationships within the online learning community are created among students and faculty just as they are between students themselves. Many Christian online instructors take the time to mentor their students. That mentoring relationship embodies the spirit of Socratic education and is one of the models upon which our institutions were founded. Joy Alvarez, a distance education student at Eastern University, recognized the importance of a Christian mentor in her education. In an interview in the

Chronicle of Higher Education, she remarked, “Eastern has committed Christian faculty who are able to model Christianity in their life. You can teach how to balance sheets, but you cannot teach honesty” (Carnevale, 2002, p. A51). The experiential nature of online education lends itself to disclosure where faculty have an excellent opportunity to use their life experiences as examples for students. Many online instructors at Dallas Baptist University place their personal testimony in the faculty information section of the online course. In fact, Stricklin (2005) observed that “by opening a window into our own lives, we invite people to know us — the good and the bad along with the happy and sad. Telling an honest story about ourselves makes us vulnerable” (p. 3). This disclosure creates a bonding and connection that is stronger than some faculty have ever had the opportunity to develop with traditional instructional practices. And according to Stricklin (2005), that “bond of mutual trust is an important step in sharing the Gospel effectively” (p. 3).

The informal nature of email has also increased faculty communication with students. Students often report that they think nothing of sending a quick email to their professor but would never consider stopping by the professor's office in person to ask such a "trivial question." Online courses rely heavily upon email as a primary communication method. Relying on a form of communication that is used frequently helps foster increased day-to-day contact between professor and student, again establishing a stronger bond between student and teacher. The depth of relationships that have developed between online faculty and online students can be great, yet the primary mode of contact, email, is rigid and lacking in context. Therein the paradox exists. How can a faculty member leverage the relationship developed in the online course to minister to a student in need? The answer may not be fully evident yet but it is possible. It may well be reliance upon the Holy Spirit to provide the connection between these individuals to provide the response to such dilemmas.

Conclusion

Can a true faith-based education be delivered online? Evidence indicates that online education can be used to deliver faith-based education when it is provided within a context that maintains an elevated level of interaction between participants and steadfastly adheres to the fundamentals of a Christian worldview in the online course. The development and use of the online learning community is an effective approach for integrating faith into course content, building Christian community among students, and providing opportunities for bonding with faculty and students. In fact, online education may be one of the most viable means to deliver faith-based instruction to broader and more diverse audiences due to its inherent capacity to reach beyond geographical confines and into the global classroom.

Faith-based institutions such as Dallas Baptist University, Liberty University, Indiana Wesleyan, Regent University and others have experienced tremendous growth and success with this new delivery method

in serving the needs of students since “access [to higher education] has increased the choices people can make about when, where, and how they will get some form of higher education” (Goral, 2005, p. 44). The body of Christian scholars must understand that a failure to meet the needs of the students will contribute to a decreasing relevance to our audience. Roels (2004, p. 460) poses an important question, “If the future is not one in which this model can provide effective access to Christian higher education for global populations what is the alternative?” The risk of complacency outweighs the risk of action. Christian institutions of higher education must let go of the complacent mindset of thinking there is only one way to deliver faith-based education. Dwayne Matlock (2003) observed that “institutions of Christian higher education face the same changing society that secular institutions confront, but with an added twist. In the secular setting where rampant change may be welcomed, the Christian community often holds to a

desire for the status quo” (p. 91). Christian higher education cannot afford to lose its relevance by holding onto the status quo within a world whose need for Christian education has never been greater.

Kaye Shelton

Dean, Online Education
Assistant Professor of Adult Education
Dallas Baptist University
3000 Mountain Creek Pkwy
Dallas, TX 75211
214-333-5337

George Saltsman

Director of Educational Technology
Adams Center for Teaching
and Learning
Abilene Christian University
ACU, Box 29201
Abilene, TX 79699-7892
325-674-2996
george.saltsman@jmc.acu.edu

Jekabs Bikis

Assistant Professor of Business
Dallas Baptist University
3000 Mountain Creek Pkwy
Dallas, TX 75211
214-333-5244

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BOOK REVIEW

It's Alive: The Coming Convergence of Information, Biology and Business

Christopher Meyer and Stan Davis

Crown Business Publishing, 2003, 275 pages

Reviewed by Dr. Sharon G. Johnson, Senior Editor for Publications, CBFA
Cedarville University

The Revolutionaries who are Our Neighbors

A colleague who teaches chemistry and physics and I were discussing his dissertation work. He told me he was creating a new compound that would bond with mercury. This compound could be used by water companies seeking to remove this dangerous heavy metal from water. He said that they did not know the specific mechanism by which this occurred because the material is opaque and thus cannot be examined through even a sophisticated electron microscope. What he did know is that he had created a brand new compound, and that the resultant compound, once bonded with mercury, was also brand new. In fact, both

compounds were in the process of being patented. His work was being done at the molecular level in order to create an economically valuable substance.

Recently, I was attending a high school graduation party of a friend's 18-year old and struck up a conversation with a farmer. This farmer works about 600 acres each of corn, soybeans, and wheat in the Midwest. He has been farming for over 40 years. I asked him to talk to me about what had changed over that time. Most of his discussion dealt with genetic engineering of seeds, GPS-guided spraying equipment linked to in-cab computers which kept track of which parts of the field he had sprayed and which had not, and the economics of

futures markets and hedging funds (which he monitored from his dish network and home computer).

My teaching colleague and my new farming friend are living out professionally the revolution described by Meyer and Davis in their 2003 book *It's Alive: The Coming Convergence of Information, Biology and Business* (Crown Business, New York).

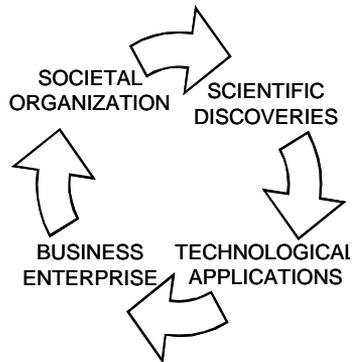
While the book is intriguing, we review it here in *JBIB* because of the profound implications its ideas have for the Christian men and women we are preparing to enter and/or succeed in the marketplace. Beyond its focus on technology and business arise issues related to the value-based issues that such enterprise developments may have.

Life Cycles and Economic Enterprise

Their approach to portraying the business environment of the future is to adopt an organic, life-cycle view of the development of business opportunities.

Meyer and Davis begin with the proposition that “the

economy of the future derives from the science of today” (p. 7). They propose a pattern of economic development driven by scientific discoveries that lead to technological applications in production that help create business enterprises that influence the very way a society organizes itself. This is easily seen in the development of the basic science of electricity being applied to the creation of electric motors then used in automobile generators and alternators that then created the way we as a society choose to live in neighborhoods outside of towns.



Meyer and Davis contend that there have been two major

science-technology-business-organization cycles (p. 21, figure 1-6):

- The Industrial Economy based on the **sciences** of electricity and chemistry, giving rise to **technological** application in electrical equipment and steel plants, which encouraged such **businesses** as the automobile industry and high-rise construction, which then created such societal **organizing** phenomenon as large plants, application of scientific management principles, and organization hierarchies.
- The Information Economy based on the **sciences** of solid state physics and information theory, giving rise to **technological** application in computing chips, software operating systems and internet protocols, which encouraged **businesses** ranging from Microsoft and Dell to cell phones to wireless applications, which then created such societal **organizing** phenomenon as on-line

communities (MySpace, blogs), identity theft concerns, and instant credit transactions through GPS-facilitated information systems.

Meyer and Davis argue that we are already now moving into a new revolution: the Molecular Economy. They cite the often exotic **sciences** related to biology, nanoscale exploration, and materials science (in which my friend and chemistry colleague is involved). They note the increased **technological** application of such sciences in arenas such as genomics and materials development that “have already changed how we reproduce, how we heal, how we develop our foods and medicines and fibers” (p. 23). They note that such applications have already greatly affected **businesses** in pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and materials. It is yet to be determined all the ways such businesses may shape the way we organize ourselves as a society, according to the authors.

The authors then voice the idea that we are between two

economic waves: the still developing information economy and the newly emerging molecular economy:

Anyone trying to run a business — or live a life, for that matter — over the next ten years will be dealing with two major forces: first, an environment in which change has doubled its pace and volatility has increased, creating the imperative to adapt. And second, the beginning of a new economic life cycle, in which the make-up of our GDP, which has in the past migrated from agriculture to manufactured goods, from goods to services, from goods and services to information, shifts again, this time to value created by molecular technologies. (p. 23)

The remainder of the book seeks to establish a framework for understanding, first, the economic enterprise as an evolutionary

phenomenon. The authors write, “We are finding that evolution is, in fact, a concept that describes many different kinds of systems and how they adapt to their environments” (p. 27). Second, the book establishes a framework for understanding the characteristics of adaptive businesses that will succeed in that evolutionary atmosphere. The authors share, “Looking at what these ‘early adopters’ have done to accelerate their own responses to change points us to measures that any company can take to make its processes, products, organization, and strategy more adaptive” (p. 95).

Learning from Evolution

Meyer and Davis identify a variety of concepts from the literature on evolution that can be instructive when applied to economic enterprise:¹

CONCEPT	DISTINCTIVES ²	IMPLICATIONS
ADAPTATION	Organisms change both their structure and behavior in response to environmental challenges.	Successful economic enterprise depends on the ability to both read and respond to the changes in the environment.
FITNESS	Successful organisms are those whose adaptations allow them competitive advantages in obtaining resources and propagating themselves.	Successful economic enterprise depends on the ability to detect and propagate the most promising adaptations that will grow the capacity of a business to attract capital, customers, and capable personnel, and allow the business to achieve productive fits in its market and industry.
AGENTS	Agents are the basic decision making units of an organism. These may occur at the cellular, organ, or body level.	Successful economic enterprise depends on the ability to identify and empower decision agents to observe, understand, decide, and act more accurately and quickly and with greater power.
SELF-ORGANIZATION	Successful organisms have the ability to change the pattern of the organization to create more complex systems.	Successful economic enterprise depends on the ability to adapt to complex market and industry developments by creating systems (e.g., marketing, transportation, and manufacturing) that allow more intelligent responses to these developments.
RECOMBINATION	Successful organisms, through cross-fertilization, gain greater environmental fitness by combining beneficial genetic changes into new life forms.	Successful economic enterprise recognizes the power of recombination as the most efficient engine of innovation (the Wright brothers combined the elements of an airfoil, a bicycle wheel, and an internal combustion engine to create a new form of transportation).
EMERGENCE	Successful organisms are the ultimate result of the failure of many adaptive efforts and the emergence, perhaps only temporary, of selectively successful organisms. And, success is only temporary, as organisms with greater fitness emerge, replacing older forms.	Successful economic enterprise is a process of trial and error and working through multiple versions of products, pricing strategies, promotion efforts, and placement activities. Therefore, success is incremental and emergent, encountering failures as a natural result of entrepreneurial effort.
CONNECTIONS	Successful organisms develop fitness not just through creation of individual components — just as important is the elaboration of connections within the organism through sensing, processing, and responding systems.	Successful economic enterprise is a process of connecting the various parts of a business to allow for greater and timelier information flows among decision agents. Successful businesses have always been active seekers of information capabilities.

The Adaptive Enterprise

Meyer and Davis state that “[their] purpose is to build a framework for management focused not on engineering and efficiency but on evolution and adaptability.” They go on to argue that “our current models of management treasure stability and control, not the kind of change, diverse thinking, and experimentation that we associate with adaptiveness” (p. 97).

They discuss six characteristics or mindsets of the adaptive organization:

- *Self-Organize*. Manage your organization from the bottom up. Influence the rules that affect individual choices rather than the overall behavior of the organization.
- *Recombine*. Proliferating connections make recombination — of software code, product attributes, people, and markets — easier. Turn your business into an open system to capture the value and innovation of diversity.
- *Sense and Respond*. Networks make real-time information cheap. Sensors help us filter and act on new information

and even abundant forecasting altogether. Equip your business to sense changes and to respond immediately, accurately, and appropriately.

- *Learn and Adapt*. After getting feedback on what happened when you “sensed and responded,” learn from the experience and incorporate the new information into your repertoire of responses.
- *Seed, Select and Amplify*. Test many diverse options, and reinforce the winners. Experiment, don’t plan.
- *Destabilize*. The rate of environmental change demands internal instability for survival. Disrupt the static elements in your organization.

It is with these ideas that I want to build a table that elaborates on the meaning of each and then suggest some “uneasy” implications from a Christian perspective:

CONCEPT	AMPLIFICATION ³	CHRISTIAN IMPLICATION
SELF-ORGANIZE	Allow maximum freedom for each individual to make decisions flexibly and adaptively, to be innovative, and to explore new ways of addressing issues.	To what degree do Christian higher education (CHE) institutions encourage independence rather than dependence? To what degree do Christian faculty model flexibility, innovation, and exploration before students in their professional and personal lives?
RECOMBINE	Seek to increase the diversity of thought within an organization by aggressively seeking the ideas of others and freely sharing information.	To what degree does CHE encourage diversity of any sort — given the rather homogenous nature of students, faculty, and staff at Christian colleges? What active steps are being taken to move all members of the community into new and uncomfortable environments?
SENSE AND RESPOND	Seeking more and freer feedback channels into and across the organization, taking advantage of information collection, processing, and response capabilities.	To what degree are CHE institutions run in collegiate versus command models that encourage maximum awareness and fast response to new environmental contingencies?
LEARN AND ADAPT	Creating opportunities for interaction among organizational personnel and outside through workshops, degree programs, and sabbaticals; encourage continuous improvement projects.	To what degree do CHE institutions encourage students to create learning communities where they can learn from each other? To what degree do such institutions create multiple, non-threatening forums for freely sharing ideas and concerns?
SEED, SELECT AND AMPLIFY	Encourage more tests, more early failures, and faster analysis of the basis for success and failure to encourage learning rather than blame placing.	To what degree do faculty at CHE institutions encourage students to experiment with new projects, self-directed teams? To what degree do faculty at CHE schools assess program and classroom level performance to help determine what really works educationally, and what does not?
DESTABILIZE	Create an environment where change is common, where the company can thrive in an atmosphere of constructive chaos, seeking to live close to the market “edge” of innovation and service.	To what degree do CHE institutions prepare students to thrive in a volatile and continually threatening economic environment? To what degree do CHE faculty and staff exhibit a readiness to embrace change, uncertainty, and risk in order to provide students the best education possible?

How Then Will We Respond?

This book is both exciting and worrisome. Meyer and Davis discuss these conflicting possibilities:

What might actually improve ... our sense of well-being is the availability of almost limitless computing power to make more of human learning available to more individuals. ... This utopian vision – in which the accelerating progress of molecular technologies and understanding of adaptive systems leads us to a world in which we find ourselves more healthy, wealthy, and wise – is, of course, appealing but not certain or even likely. The capabilities described above may be created, but progress always has its downside. The Industrial Revolution spawned the hellish factories of Charles Dickens' London. The Information Revolution seems to be creating a more polarized, politicized, unequal, and vulnerable world. The key social downside of the industrial economy continues to be the condition of the

environment, while that of the information era appears to be privacy. In the coming economy, the key issues will be ethical. These questions will range from the current debate on cloning to the rights we accord artificial entities once they appear to be conscious and feeling.

I am excited about the possibilities that Christians will have to be part of the conversation about these new ethical issues – and worried that we might be too woefully unaware of the issues, or too afraid of them, to be part of the conversation.

I recommend this book to everyone who is willing to expose themselves to uncomfortable and provocative ideas.

Endnotes

¹The author of this review is not an evolutionist. I am a committed creationist. This being said, I can recognize the power of evolutionary concepts as analogies that can provide enterprise-related insights.

²Many of the distinctives and implications in this table are NOT drawn directly from the Meyer book — they are my ideas, but do closely reflect the basic meaning of the text material as I understand it. Consider this a form of intellectual evolution and literary adaptation!

³As with the earlier table, the amplifications are not simply “lifted” from the text. The Christian implications are, of course, my own ideas.

BOOK REVIEW

Plowing the Sea: Nurturing the Hidden Sources of Growth in the Developing World

*Michael Fairbanks and Stace Lindsay
Harvard Business School Press, 1997, 289 pages*

Reviewed by Yvonne S. Smith, University of La Verne

One of the more difficult questions for a thinking Christian is the prevalence of poverty in the world. In many parts of the globe, people who are our brothers and sisters in Christ or fellow human beings face hunger, poor health, oppressive governments, and the inability to education their children. This sears the soul of a thinking Christian.

As business professors, we teach people how to create wealth. However, the complexities of world poverty are staggering, beginning with flawed social systems, corrupt governments, and lack of resources by the population. Can anything change that?

A few months ago, I ran across an enthusiastic review of the book *Plowing the Sea: Nurturing the Hidden Sources of Growth in the Developing*

World. I was rather cynical, but decided to read the book anyway. What I read made me enthused, too.

First of all, the authors do not speak from an ivory tower. They have worked in the developing world, both at a grass roots development level and as government and business consultants. South America is the focus of their expertise and provides most of the examples in the book. However, most, if not all, of the principles they discuss can be utilized in other parts of the globe.

The authors use Porter's "Diamond of Competitive Advantage" (1990) to frame the discussion. They begin with what they call Seven Deadly Patterns of non-competitive thinking which, they say, are inherent in many developing nations: Over reliance on basic factors of

production, poor understanding of sophisticated customers, defensiveness, paternalism, and so forth. In each case, they offer specifics and examples of how to change these patterns and replace them with relationships that will gain and sustain wealth.

But the authors go much deeper than a “how to” book for acquiring and maintaining national wealth. Possibly their most valuable contribution is a section on understanding the root causes of the deadly patterns they outline. The reader gains a realistic sense of the issues involved in world poverty and some of the solutions that have been and are being tried. Both perspective and practicality are conveyed.

This book has valuable content and the advantage of being highly readable. I recommend it, in full or in sections, as supplemental reading in an international, strategic, or economic class or any class in which world poverty is addressed. It will provide encouragement for the pessimist, a place to begin for the realist, and a reality check for the idealist.

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BOOK REVIEW

A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life

William Law (Edited and abridged by John Meister)

Westminster Press, 158 pages

Reviewed by Yvonne S. Smith, University of La Verne

For a long time I searched for a good Christian supplemental text for my Organizational Behavior course, a book to add the spiritual dimension to motivation, leadership, group dynamics, and firm change. I tried three or four books and found flaws in all of them.

Then one summer I started to read William Law's devotional classic, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. Written in 1728, this book had a major influence on such luminaries as John Wesley, William Wilberforce, George Whitefield, and Andrew Murray. Law's writing is very different from the sentimental "lite" style used by many contemporary spiritual writers. Law understood the human condition and presented God's claims in such a logical, readable, and seeringly honest way that,

reading him, I could only say, "Yes, he is right."

The version I happened to read was the Meister abridgement. In the early 1950's, a group of Indiana businessmen began to read *A Serious Call* for their weekly Bible study. They selected the book, Meister says in the forward, "for the not too admirable reason that none of us had previously read it" (p. 13). They soon found that 18th century Law spoke directly to their 20th century business situations. Eventually the group decided to abridge the book so that they could circulate it among their friends. They contemporized the language and took out many of the text redundancies. The result is a fresh, readable work of 150 pages, with short chapters and clear illustrations.

As I read the book, I realized that it might work in my Organizational Behavior class. It was an ideal size for a supplement — and the content fit. Law, the nonconformist, discussed the Christian business person's values and motivations. He discussed leadership, conflict, and change. The only OB topic he did not discuss in the book was group dynamics.

Take, for example, Goal Theory which is driven by intentionality. Law's comments on intention hit hard. "Why are the lives of even avowed Christians strangely contrary to the principles of Christianity?" he asks. It is because:

Men do not have the intention to please God in all their actions ... and if you will stop here and ask yourself why you are not so devoted as the primitive Christians, your own heart will tell you that it is neither through ignorance nor inability but purely because you never thoroughly intended it. (p. 23)

Law gives double value. After reading this chapter, students understand the practical applications of Goal Theory and

why intentionality is so important — and they consider their personal spiritual intentions as well.

Since I began using the book, I ask my OB students every semester if I should assign *A Serious Call* the next semester. Every semester the answer is an enthusiastic "yes!" Students feel that Law says things that resonate with them and they like his "interesting" approach.

There are, however, two types of students who do not like Law. One type dislikes Law because he is not contemporary and edgy. These students want a book written in the 21st century and feel Law is not "relevant." However, the more we incorporate Law into class discussion and papers, the smaller this group gets. Some of the people who dislike Law the most at the beginning of the semester are his most enthusiastic proponents at the end of the semester.

The other group dislikes Law because he is "too legalistic." Law's book is written for Christians who already understand the mercy of God and, therefore, desire to live a life of devotion to Him. Furthermore, Law is

systematic in his approach to holiness. He suggests that a person should set regular prayer times and subjects during the day. For example, at 9:00 a.m. thank God for His mercies, at 12:00 p.m. pray for the situations of the business, at 6:00 p.m. pray for unsaved loved ones and colleagues, and at 9:00 p.m. confess the sins of the day. This is standard learning theory but some students see this systematic approach as “too much law and not enough grace.” Not every student is at the same place in their spiritual walk, and some need to break away from legalism. To help these people, I discuss Law and grace early in the semester (pun intended), and also give students opportunity throughout the semester to point out where they think Law is wrong. Students have to read Law, but they don’t have to agree with everything he says. This has the double benefit of helping those particular students become comfortable with Law, even if they still dislike him, and of helping them gain a firmer understanding of the grace of God.

Law’s *A Serious Call* is a Christian classic and it deserves

to be. Like a box of Belgian chocolate, Law is filled with wonderful things with delicious centers. I heartily recommend this edition to you for personal devotional reading, for practical business application, or as a supplemental text in a business class.

BOOK REVIEW

Confession and Bookkeeping: The Religious, Moral, and Rhetorical Roots of Modern Accounting

James A. Aho

State University of New York Press, 2006, 131 pages

Reviewed by Charles Hartman, Cedarville University

James Aho's book, *Confession and Bookkeeping*, presents the idea that double-entry bookkeeping arose from the desire in Renaissance Italy for all actions to be brought into conformity with God's requirements, more specifically, with the dictates of the Roman Catholic Church. While the book does not address many modern accounting issues, it does present an interesting examination of the way in which social and cultural forces can shape business practice.

Dr. Aho, Professor of Sociology at Idaho State University, begins his book by stating the "problem" with Max Weber's argument that "has become virtually a dogmatic injunction in sociology, namely, that Catholicism has been (and remains) a poor host to the forces of economic change" (p. 1). In examining Weber's

argument, Aho begins by describing the origins of Roman Catholic penance. He then develops the concept of "scrupulosity," or compulsive concern over one's own possible wrongdoing, as it played out first in every day medieval life, then in business practices of the era.

Chapters 6 and 7 describe the development of double-entry bookkeeping itself as an outgrowth of the work of the notary bookkeeper, guardian of proper form in business transactions. Luca Pacioli's *Particularis de Computis et Scripturis*, sometimes considered to be the first bookkeeping text, is shown to be a logical outgrowth of medieval rhetorical technique, one well suited to recording all details of a business transaction to show that the merchant was above reproach in the conduct of his business.

The final chapter contends that double-entry bookkeeping “legitimized capitalist accumulation in [several] . . . ways,” by demonstrating that God and the Church could have an appropriate interest in business, if conducted justly and recorded in an honest manner (p. 86). The chapter also states that the “unintended consequence” of Calvinism is that “the pursuit of worldly things—honor, power, and money—was liberated from spiritual control” (p. 91). By contrast, medieval Catholic merchants are portrayed as “steward[s] of a benefice that is not finally their own, but is only temporarily given them to manage and answer for” (p. 94).

Aho does not write from any particular religious perspective. He generally adopts a detached tone in describing religious values and practices. The reader would benefit from a prior understanding of major differences between the Catholic and Protestant perspectives on salvation, although some information on this topic is provided in the book. Protestant readers may be particularly interested in the Appendix, which describes

Martin Luther’s rejection of the Catholic system of confession.

The book does an excellent job in immersing the reader into the mindset of the 15th century Italian merchant. We come to understand the tensions between running a successful business and satisfying the demands of conscience, church, and Creator. We also meet several interesting characters, including the remarkable Francesco di Marco Datini, whose desire for complete records caused him to preserve “150,000 pieces of correspondence, 500 account books (in double-entry), 300 deeds, and hundreds of other instruments” (p 38). Apparently Signor Datini would not have been a good client for Arthur Andersen’s Houston office.

It is clear the author has done extensive research. The references section is 14 pages long, with well over 150 sources noted. The reference list is eclectic, incorporating works from around the world in fields ranging from history, theology, and sociology to accounting, economics, and management.

Who would benefit from reading this book? Despite the subtitle, *The Religious, Moral, and*

Rhetorical Roots of Modern Accounting, it is not much concerned with contemporary accounting problems, instead focusing on the origins of double-entry bookkeeping. When I taught introductory accounting classes, I would occasionally compare the bookkeeping journal to the “Dear Diary” that might be maintained by a teenager, or to the captain’s log book employed on an ocean voyage. This book would help a reader understand the possible religious significance of fundamental accounting documents.

The book would probably be more interesting to economists than to accountants. I have a faculty colleague, an economist, who occasionally drops the name “Weber” into conversations without elaboration, the way a basketball fan might do with the name “Jordan.” This book could be helpful for professors like my colleague when they examine the assumptions alluded to in the book’s first chapter, that medieval Catholicism was not fertile ground for the development of modern commerce.

Readers, regardless of academic discipline or denomi-

national affiliation, will be struck by the piety displayed by these medieval merchants. Each page of Pacioli’s ledger was headed with the inscription translated “in the name of God” (p. 71). Although Pacioli was a monk, he was well acquainted with business practices; his notations reflected common Renaissance practice (p. 67). The modern reader would do well to apply the same level of devotion to his own business affairs as he seeks to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (II Cor. 10:5b NIV) and do all to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31).

Guidelines for Manuscripts

Purpose

The JBIB is devoted to providing a broad, blind peer-reviewed forum for sharing perspectives about biblical integration in the business disciplines. Articles are invited focusing on any matter ranging from research to teaching, from practical applications to philosophical models. Each issue of *The JBIB* reflects the character of the available manuscripts. The editor's aim, and the aim shared by the approximately 40-member board of review, is to support professional and scholarly growth among Christians. Rather than taking "pride" in how many manuscripts are rejected, *The JBIB* editorial team takes great joy in working with manuscripts in order to develop them into the highest quality publications possible. This almost always requires manuscripts to be significantly revised.

We see ourselves as in partnership with authors, not in competition. The process of writing and revising is part of the great enterprise of sharing ideas with peers, and is, we believe, an

essential expression of the need to not only transmit the knowledge of others, but to develop and test new ideas of our own creation. Our professional calling is enhanced to the degree that we are both effective carriers and inventive creators of ideas.

Manuscript Guidelines

Articles in *The JBIB* must focus on the integration of biblical perspectives and passages within the disciplines of business and economics. Thus, biblical citations and discussion must have a prominent part of each article. The editorial process includes a very close examination of biblical passages being used with proper regard for exegetical and hermeneutic principles.

Articles in *The JBIB* are expected to be grounded in some "stream" of existing literature. While we do encourage creative exploration and the development of innovative insights, the editorial team also wants the articles to reflect some awareness of the ideas of other writers, philosophers, etc. Thus, citations and a significant bibliography are

important. The board of review appraises both the adequacy of the review of literature and the appropriateness of the biblical integration.

Articles in *The JBIB* are written for a rather broad business audience. The primary target of the journal is professors teaching business at Christian and secular colleges and universities. Increasingly, however, *The JBIB* is being read by those outside the college arena. Therefore, the editor and reviewers seek to maintain a writing style that is accessible to a wide variety of teachers and practitioners. This would mean that technical terms should be explained (rather than assumed to be known) and that specific business-oriented examples are essential. Put another way, we wish to avoid jargon and academic-speak and thus focus on communicating clearly and concretely across the various boundaries of our business disciplines.

Articles in *The JBIB* should follow American Psychological Association (APA) style. Articles in *The JBIB* are published with textual citations rather than footnotes. Writers should refer to

the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* as they write their manuscripts.

Policy Regarding Previously Published Material (Including CBFA Meeting Presentations)

The JBIB does not normally publish manuscripts (or book reviews) that have been previously published in other journals, books, or magazines.

The JBIB will consider manuscripts of papers presented at regional or national meetings (including those presented at the CBFA national meeting). In this regard authors should note that *The JBIB* is a blind peer-reviewed academic journal. *The JBIB*'s standards for manuscript acceptance may be quite different from those of acceptance for meeting presentations. Frequently, regional and national meetings are forums for early versions of ideas, as well as for discussing issues related to a particular discipline's pedagogical, organizational, and political concerns. Therefore it is the position of *The JBIB* that papers presented at meetings should be substantively changed

for consideration as manuscripts for *The JBIB*. While it is not practical to quantify the required degree of change, it would be expected that the author(s), in a letter accompanying the manuscript, would be able to document the substantive changes made in development of the manuscript for review by *The JBIB*. *The JBIB* reserves the right to not publish material considered to be insufficiently developed as a journal manuscript.

Authors who do submit manuscripts developed from previous paper presentations should recognize that they may forfeit some of the “blindness” in the blind review process. While all identifying information will be deleted in manuscripts sent to board of review members, one or more members of the board may have knowledge of the paper as a presentation. Such papers are often published in meeting proceedings and these may well be known to reviewers (especially from the CBFA’s own national meeting).

Non-Manuscript Guidelines

In addition to articles, *The JBIB* also encourages submission

of cases and reviews of books, videos, computer programs, Internet sites, and other media that would be of interest to classroom teachers. Also, *The JBIB* encourages responses to articles published in the journal. Such responses may be in the form of extended letters, critiques, or even rejoinders to material presented in past issues of the journal.

Questions the Board of Review Asks About Each Manuscript

1. Would the topic of the manuscript be of interest to our CBFA readership (and those with whom they might share the material)? Is the topic too narrow and technical? Is it too broad and generic? Will the topic be helpful and stimulating to many of our members?

2. Is the manuscript readable or accessible? That is, could people in the CBFA membership readily understand the points being discussed? Would understanding the integration message of the manuscript be diminished by the approach or language of the manuscript?

3. Is there a strong integration dimension to the manuscript? Are biblical passages, precepts, and principles intimately woven into the flow and fabric of the manuscript?

4. Does the manuscript handle its biblical passages, precepts, and principles correctly? This does not refer to taking a particular theological stand but does mean that passages are used in context and precepts and principles are clearly and reasonably articulated.

5. Are there ways in which the manuscript could be strengthened by the addition of some material or by the deletion of some material? For example, does the manuscript need more elaboration in its introduction or greater clarification in its conclusion or sharper development of the in-between material?

Technical Specifications for Manuscript Submissions

1. Those considering submitting manuscripts to *The JBIB* should review past issues to determine content, length, and other “standards” implicit in the articles accepted for publication in the past. Electronic versions of

past articles can be accessed at www.cbfa.org (for those who are CBFA members).

2. All submissions of manuscripts must be accomplished electronically as an e-mail attachment (Microsoft Word format) sent to johns@cedarville.edu.

3. *The JBIB* uses textual citations rather than footnotes and adheres to APA standards for citations within the manuscript and for bibliographic information in the reference section.

4. While there is no “expected” article length, our experience has shown that substantive “feature” articles tend to be 20-30 pages double-spaced. Manuscripts of greater or lesser length will be accepted also.

Review Process

1. Manuscripts are reviewed by the editor to determine whether the material is appropriate for inclusion in *The JBIB* and whether the material is of sufficient written quality to forward to the board of review. The editor, at this point, may request a rewriting of the manuscript or may determine that the manuscript will not be considered further for review.

2. Manuscripts accepted through this initial “fit and readability” screen by the editor are submitted to members of the board of review in a blind review process: that is, the author(s) name(s) is(are) deleted before sending out the material. The memorandum accompanying the manuscript for review usually includes some initial comments on the manuscript by the editor.

3. After receiving reviews from individual board of review members (this may take 60-90 days, depending on the schedules of the board of review members), the editor determines areas of the board’s praise and concern. Based on the editor’s analysis, four decisions are possible:

- a decision to publish without revision (very rare)
- a decision to publish with some revisions (rare)
- a decision to withhold a publishing decision until significant rewrite and review by the board of review (usual)
- a decision to not accept the manuscript for publication (unusual).

Almost all manuscripts have to be rewritten to some extent. This is not an indication that manuscripts are weak. Rather, it is an indication of the intention of the editor and the board of review to make each issue of *The JBIB* carry the strongest possible message of the quality of applied scholarship. Rewriting strengthens good writing.

Revised manuscripts must be accompanied by a letter from the author(s) detailing the specific changes made to the particular concerns and suggestions expressed by the reviewers. The revised manuscript will be reviewed by the editor and sent to the original reviewers along with the author’s letter and a copy of the original manuscript. In some cases revised manuscripts may also be sent out to new reviewers.

4. A decision to publish (with or without minor revisions) will be acknowledged by the editor in a letter. At that time the author(s) will be asked to submit both a paper and an electronic (e-mail) copy of the final manuscript in Microsoft Word format.

5. Manuscripts accepted for publication will be sent out to

the entire board of review. Reviewers will be invited to submit rejoinders to be published along with the article. The rejoinders may challenge and/or extend the authors' paper. The rejoinders create a sense of dialogue that has been considered a valuable feature of *The JBIB*.

Communications

If you have any questions about *The JBIB*, please contact:

Department of
Business Administration
Cedarville University
251 N. Main St.
Cedarville, OH 45314
Phone: 937-766-7910
Fax: 937-766-4129

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Brad Lemler
Secretary/Treasurer
Kelly College of Business
Hardin-Simmons University
P.O. Box 16220
Abilene, TX 79698
blemler@hsutx.edu
325-670-1524