

Marketing in Heaven
Todd Steen, Hope College
Steve VanderVeen, Calvin College

ABSTRACT

The Bible tells us that we are to anticipate a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness (2 Peter 3:13 NIV). In this new heaven and new earth we read that we will plant vineyards and eat their fruit, build houses and dwell in them, and that we will long enjoy the works of our hands (Isaiah 65:22-23). Before we call to God, he will answer us, and while we are still speaking he will hear us (Isaiah 65:24). Our eternal home will not need a temple, “because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. This city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it” (Revelation 21:22-24).

As we work and live and worship in the very presence of God, as we build houses and plant vineyards and live in the New Jerusalem, will there be a need for marketing? Will marketing be part of the glory and honor of the nations that will be brought into the city (Revelation 21:26), or will it be one of the items described in Isaiah 65:17: “The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind?” If marketing is to be part of the New Jerusalem, what does this mean for the present?

This paper will examine the Biblical message and propose that indeed there will be a role for marketing in the new heavens and the new earth. We believe that a study of this topic can provide us with an ideal for what we might do now, a source of encouragement, and a realistic idea of the costs of discipleship.

Marketing in Heaven

**Todd Steen, Hope College
Steve VanderVeen, Calvin College**

Last revision: SEPTEMBER 7, 2002

Introduction

The Bible tells us that we are to anticipate a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness (2 Peter 3:13 NIV). In this new heaven and new earth we read that we will plant vineyards and eat their fruit, build houses and dwell in them, and that we will long enjoy the works of our hands (Isaiah 65:22-23). Before we call to God, he will answer us, and while we are still speaking he will hear us (Isaiah 65:24). Revelation 21:3 states "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." Our eternal home does not need a temple, "because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. This city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it" (Revelation 21:22-24).

As we work and live and worship in the very presence of God, as we build houses and plant vineyards and live in the New Jerusalem, will there be a need for marketing and those in the marketing profession? Will marketing be part of the glory and honor of the nations that will be brought into the city (Revelation 21:26), or will it be one of the items described in Isaiah 65:17: "The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind?" If marketing is to be part of the New Jerusalem, what does this mean for the present?

This paper will examine the Biblical message and propose that indeed there will be a role for marketing in the new heavens and the new earth. We believe that a study of this topic can provide us with an ideal for what we might do now, a source of encouragement, and a realistic idea of the costs of discipleship.

This work, as is any work of scholarship, is influenced by a particular tradition arising out of a particular worldview. The particular tradition we are part of is the Reformed-Calvinist tradition of the larger Protestant Reformation. We adhere to a particular philosophy that unifies our theology as well as our study of marketing into a systematic whole. This Christian philosophy leans heavily on “the basic motifs of creation-fall-redemption-consummation that are unfolded historically within the drama of biblical revelation” (Spykman, 1992, p. 10)¹. These motifs assume that

in creation God covenanted his kingdom into existence. After the fall, God renewed the covenant with a view toward the coming of his kingdom. The ultimate goal is the restoration of all creation in the renewed earth. Thus, the original covenant stands forever as the abiding foundation and norm for life in God’s world. Similarly, in the beginning God created his kingdom – “the heavens and the earth,” the realm over which he rules. Mankind, then, as servants of the King, rebelled; but God came back, renewing his kingdom in a proleptic way through Israel, and then reestablished it decisively with the coming of King Jesus. The kingdom, therefore, now stands as a settled reality securely anchored in God’s past acts of salvation as an abiding, present, coming reality, and as an assured hope based on the promise of a future fully restored reality (Spykman, 1992, p. 11).

Such a tradition, as any tradition, deals in a certain way with prolegomenal issues, or “things to be said in advance.” It is on these things that we will focus in the next section of our paper.

Things To Be Said In Advance

“The best prolegomena to the study of Christian theology ...is Christian philosophy” (Spykman, 1992, p. 13); likewise, the best prolegomena for the study of marketing is a Christian philosophy. In other words, it is not true that theology deals with matters of faith and philosophy with matters of reason, or that philosophy operates on “the plane” of general revelation and theology on “the plane” of special revelation, for this is “dualist” thinking, a false division of the “total reality” into a sacred or a profane sphere. At issue is whether the philosophy of science in marketing and Scripture have anything to do with each other. Can there be such a thing as biblical integration in marketing?

Furthermore, if there is such a thing as biblical integration in marketing, is the norm for marketing located in God or in humanity? If the norm for marketing is located in God, then the only text necessary is the Bible and our students would be better served at a Bible college. If the norm for marketing is located in humanity, then the Bible has no place in a marketing class and our students would be better served at a “secular” university, for even the term “secular” connotes duality. Clearly, we would not agree with this; but where, then, is the norm for marketing located? According to Spykman (1992, p. 62), the norm for marketing is located “in the mediating Word of God given with creation . . . , reaffirmed in the redeeming work of Christ, and illumined by the witness of Scriptures.” This three-factor worldview consists of God, his mediating Word, and the world (Spykman, 1992, p. 75).

¹As non-theologians, we rely heavily on the excellent work of Gordon Spykman in his *Reformational Theology: A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992.

If the source of this three-factor view of marketing is the Word of God, where do we turn for instruction? The first place to look is Scripture, but, according to Spykman, *sola Scriptura* does not mean that Scripture is God's only revelation.

In adopting *sola Scriptura* as our epistemological vantage point, it is important to be clear on what we are saying. The affirmation of *sola Scriptura* does not mean that Scripture is God's only revelation. This was not the original meaning of this byword as coined by the sixteenth century Reformers. For clearly Calvin, Luther, and others held that God reveals himself in creation and in Christ as well as in Scripture. Moreover, their appeal to *sola Scriptura* was not meant to deny the importance of church traditions, theology, philosophy, the church fathers, or the sciences and arts. All these have their rightful place in the life of the Christian community. The question, however, is this: By what unimpeachable standard is Christian faith to be evaluated? What is our central criterion of judgment? The answer is *sola Scriptura*, which, in the ablative case, means "by Scripture alone" (Spykman, 1992, p. 77).

Taking Scripture seriously as the Word of God, then, means that the Word of God is more than Scripture alone. For example, Psalm 33:6 says "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made," Psalm 119:89 says "Forever, O Lord, thy Word Is firmly fixed in the heavens," and Psalm 147:15 says "He sends forth his command to the earth, His Word runs swiftly;" in other words, "all created reality reveals the holding power of God's Word" (Spykman, 1992, p. 80). Thus, we gain knowledge of God "as Creator by studying how his various creatures respond to the holding power of his Word" (Spykman, 1992, p. 81). Put another way, we gain knowledge of God the Creator by studying how marketers and consumers respond to the Word of God in creation.

John 1 says "In the beginning was the Word" and "all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Thus, everything belongs to Christ. In addition, John says "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." This means that God is interested in the whole person (body and soul) as well as the whole of creation, for

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth He is before all things, and in him all things hold together For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross (Colossians 1:15-20).

This means that

The creational Word remains God's first Word for the world. It is also his lasting Word. . . . The Paradise created, and lost, will be regained and fulfilled. The plan of redemption is not a different plan, replacing the original plan of creation. The original blueprint still holds. Redemption is, as it were, a "mid-course correction" (Spykman, 1992, p. 87).

Therefore,

Christian scholarship . . . is therefore called to discern the norms of God's creational Word for our life in his world, illumined and directed by his Word in Scripture, under the regal authority of his Word incarnate, so that thus we may learn to "lead every thought captive in obedience to Christ" (Spykman, 1992, p. 84).

So can there be biblical integration in marketing? Absolutely. Developing a Christian perspective on marketing requires faithful attention to God's Word in Scripture and to his revelation in creation. They are both revelations of the Word of God; furthermore, they are both affirmed by the redeeming work of Christ. Christ connects everything together, and together everything connects us to Christ.

Biblical Perspectives

This study on marketing in heaven rests on an understanding of the Biblical message. And what is the basic drama of that single story? Creation, fall, redemption, consummation. It is to this drama that we now turn.

Creation

God's work in creation sets the context for all that we experience and all the tasks that we undertake. "Our point of departure is accordingly the biblical teaching on creation, viewed not only as a series of divine acts in the beginning, but also as the ongoing, ever present creational reality which lends life its continuing meaning" (Spykman, 1992, p. 143); for instance,

God brought forth a "cosmos," a normatively structured, orderly world, not a "chaos." In the beginning, therefore, the structures *of* creation answered fully to the divinely ordained structures *for* creation. But this was not the end of the story. The well-structured creation was also given a history, which involved active functioning, a dynamic opening up of the well-ordered potentials built into the creation (Spykman, 1992, p. 157).

But that is not all: "The God-given orders and structures of creation precede and define their respective functions;" and, if "a culturally formed institution no longer functions well, . . . then it is time for reformation" (Spykman, 1992, p. 158). Therefore, it is Scriptural to say that marketing is a particular structure within the structure of business. Marketing and business have particular tasks given by God; and, if they no longer perform these tasks, if they are misdirected and not contributing positively to the unfolding history of redemption, then business and marketing need to be redirected. If business and marketing perform as God created them in his ongoing creation to perform, there would be shalom and self-actualization. For:

Willing obedience to this life-enveloping, love-impelling, shalom-embracing framework of law and order brings with it freedom, righteousness, and joy. It enables us to become all we are meant to be. This good order for creation holds for all our life relationships. It defines our manifold callings. . . . This cultural mandate [Genesis 1:26-31] lays its claim on us both as a benediction and a command. . . . It delineates in a typically biblical way the potentials for every human enterprise as well as the limitations on it. Therein lies the firm and abiding foundation for a myriad of practical vocations. Viewed in this light, every calling is a religious calling. . . . Our calling is to bring the order *of* our life in God's world, whether in the pulpit or in politics, in our halls of learning or in our

marketplaces, into conformity with God's good order *for* our life in this world (Spykman, 1992, p. 179, 180).

Thus, all of our callings, including our calling to do marketing, are sacred in the sense that they are all done before and for the Lord in His creation in the present age. Already there are biblical pointers in the Genesis account of creation: among other things, we are given the familial task of "fostering the growth of children," the tasks of daily labor; the "governing task" perhaps to keep out the evil intruder, and a learning task (Spykman, 1992, p. 181). Marketing, in other words, could be the creation of God's ongoing creative activity to help with these tasks. In fact, marketing, as we shall see, has an important teaching function that frequently is misdirected.

In addition to creating the world with particular structures and functions, God also created us in his image. Because the Word of God is revealed in creation, in Scripture, and in the redeeming work of Christ, and because Christ is the All in All,

We learn what imaging God means best by looking to the Word incarnate in Jesus Christ, who became like us in all things, who came to do the will of the Father, and who through his Spirit lends an eschatological perspective to all who seek to be faithful imagers of God. . . . We must therefore learn very concretely "to see eating and drinking as a way of expressing our love for God. . . . by the act of eating and drinking itself. . . . Imaging means that we "represent God, like an ambassador from a foreign country. . . . [representing] the authority of God, . . . [seeking to] advance God's program for the world" (Spykman, 1992, p. 226, 227).

In other words, imitating Christ can help us do marketing in the right direction.

Sin and Evil

We confess that God created that which had no preexistence. We confess it because the Bible tells us so. We also confess that the *origin* of sin remains a mystery, though its "*beginning* is a matter of biblical record" (Spykman, 1992, p. 312). Our Christian philosophy holds the following.

Structurally, as an aspect of man's constitution given with creation, the will is free to function as our Maker intended. We have the right and freedom, even the obligation, to make all kinds of choices. We can decide what to eat, when to sleep, what kind of work to do. Despite the effects of the fall, God by his preserving grace maintains this structural feature of the human makeup and its ability to function freely. . . .What then about the impact of sin on our will? It, too, became totally depraved, that is, radically misdirected and disoriented. Structurally and functionally we are what we always were; but directionally nothing is the same. Our wills, too, are now "so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good." . . . We are burdened with an "enslaved freedom" – unless liberated and redirected by the life-renewing grace of God (Spykman, 1992, p. 333).

We are, as Spykman says, like hardened drug addicts, free but enslaved in a misdirected way.

Thus, as marketers doing marketing, we can be sure that our calling remains structurally sound and able to perform; however, our Christian philosophy also holds that because of sin our efforts are misdirected except by the renewing grace of God; only through God can we come clean.

Redemption

Through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, God reconciles his children and his creation to Himself.

The plan of salvation represents God's way of restoring the fallen creation to all it was meant to be. To that end God in Christ intervened redemptively in the affairs of our alienated world to win it back. That mighty act of reconciliation is still going on. The decisive battle has indeed been fought and won at the cross and the resurrection. In principle the war is over. The outcome is settled. But very intense rear-guard skirmishes continue (Spykman, 1992, p. 351).

For our present purposes it is important to note that before Christ ascended into heaven he gave his disciples what is known as the "Great Commission," which in effect is a renewal of the cultural mandate.

In the beginning already our Creator conferred on us a “mission unlimited.” Traditional theology has a name for it: the “cultural mandate.” It involves a cluster of God-given tasks, including marriage, family nurture, daily labor, governance, learning, and worship. By our willful disobedience we reneged on this original “great commission.” . . . In [his] parting message Christ takes the “great commission,” enunciated by his Father at the dawn of creation, and restates it in the language of redemption of the New Testament era (Spykman, 1992, p. 472, 473).

We should be encouraged by the fact that the war has been decided and the most decisive battle already won. However, the renewal of marketing remains as one of the rear guard skirmishes that Spykman notes above.

The Consummation

As noted earlier, we look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness (2 Peter 3:13) that will be ushered in when the Lord returns. But the history of God’s people in his creation continues to unfold; the Word of God given to us in creation and in Scripture is affirmed by one more great work of Christ *that is already being enacted!* This “‘end time’ history carries the biblical story line of creation, fall, and redemption forward, drawing all its diverse elements together into a breathtaking array of culminating acts” (Spykman, 1992, p. 515).

With Christ’s exaltation the teleological movements which shape kingdom history now move onward with quickened pace. The three earth-shaking days from Good Friday to Easter Sunday set the stage for the Messianic expectations of the prophets to reach their crowded climax of that provisional “end.” From the moment of Christ’s resurrection (the “already”) and his return (the “not yet”) stand out with finality as the two overpowering events which together define the opening and closing acts in the ongoing eschatological drama. Whereas the prophets envisioned fulfillment and consummation as a single highly compressed event, the apostles clarify these pro-visional anticipations by recognizing that they happen in sequence, thus creating space for present history, bounded by the first and last comings of the Lord. These two crucial events serve as a set of “bookends” holding together the gospel message (Spykman, 1992, p. 524).

Furthermore,

The parousia, therefore, does not introduce a radical break with the past. . . . The familiar contours of the created order, with its divinely given structures and functions, give shape and form to the life of the resurrected humanity in God's renewed world where everything will be thoroughly redeemed, completely redirected to its appointed end. Isaiah's prophecy (chapters 60 and 65) of a time of "beating swords into plowshares" will come to final fulfillment in the new earth (Spykman, 1992, p. 559).

As noted above, our examination of the Biblical description of the new heaven and new earth leads us to believe that marketing will have a role there in the lives of God's people. Thinking about how marketing will ultimately be completely redeemed and reordered can aid in our redemptive task today.

With this introduction, we now take a brief detour to discuss briefly the concept of the millennium and the major schools of thought on this subject. We do this in order to show how Christian philosophy can influence not only our interpretation but also our response to God's revelation in Scripture. This is important, particularly when we are speaking of passages such as Revelation 20:1-6, for one's eschatological outlook influences one's estimate of one's own times (Spykman, 1992, p. 532).

Christian Views of the Millennium

There are basically three basic schools of interpretation surrounding Christ's "thousand year reign:" postmillennialism, premillennialism, and amillennialism. According to Spykman, there is the modern liberalist form and the historic, orthodox form of postmillennialism. The modern liberalist postmillennialism holds evolution will gradually bring about the millennium apart from a divine cataclysmic event in a Darwinian fashion. The historic, orthodox postmillennialism holds that a "golden age"

will usher in the return of Christ operating not by evolution per se, but by the operation of the Gospel: the golden age will gradually merge with the millennial age as more and more people are converted to Christianity.

Premillennialism, on the other hand, holds that Christ will return prior to the millennium. This view, again in contrast with the postmillennial view, expects Christ to interrupt a demonic evolution. However, before Christ interrupts with his thousand year reign and his final judgment, several events must occur depending upon one's interpretation. Postmillennialist and premillennialist views are generally opposed to one another, although they do share a common concern with chronology and a specific, definable thousand-year time span. In contrast, the amillennialists view the thousand years" as "a visionary commentary on the present age, from Christ's first coming (Revelation 12) to his return (Revelation 22:16-20). . . . Such a reading of Revelation lends it a very practical, down-to-earth relevance for our life in God's world today (Spykman, 1992, p. 540).²

Interlude: Isaiah 60

So far we have been speaking in general, "big picture," philosophical terms; we will now get specific: first, we will comment on a specific biblical passage that prophesies, we believe, about the future of marketing, relying heavily on Richard

²In terms of genre, amillennialists consider Revelation to be highly symbolic, since John wrote to the church during its second great persecution under the emperor Domitian (A.D. 95) and used codes that would "baffle" outsiders, giving the passage a heightened sense of urgency (Spykman, 1992, p. 539). Amillennialists also interpret I Thessalonians 4:17, particularly the word "meet," as Christians meeting Christ in the air and escorting him to earth as would a delegation escorting an important dignitary. Finally, amillennialists interpret the Greek word for "new" in II Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1 as "new in nature or in quality," not as "new in time or origin" (Hoeksema, 1979, p. 280).

Mouw's *When the Kings Come Marching In*; then we will develop propositions regarding marketing in heaven, carefully considering marketing's God-ordained structure and function and intended direction; finally, we will discuss implications of our propositions for the present.

Richard Mouw admits that those in the "transformationalist" camp, or those in the Reformed-Calvinist tradition, have too often stated their case in "too facile" a fashion, choosing to debate issues almost exclusively on philosophical and systematic-theological grounds. To remedy this situation, he chose to investigate some of the "Christ and culture" that occurs in Scripture, focusing on Isaiah 60 and comparing it to other passages such as Isaiah 2 and Revelation 21 and 22 (Mouw, 1983, p. x, xi).

In Isaiah 60 is recorded a vision of a magnificent, transformed city: "many of the people and objects from Isaiah's own day appear within its walls, but they have assumed different roles, they perform different functions" (Mouw, 1983, p. xii).³ Isaiah 2, in contrast, speaks of the same objects and people, but in negative terms. In addition to describing the city of God, Mouw also offers a plausible explanation for the apparent contradiction in Isaiah, one which offers new fuel for the millennium debate over whether the world is getting better as more Christians are converted, worse so that Christians should focus more of their efforts on winning souls, or roughly the same so that Christians should focus on shalom and self-actualization.

Isaiah pictures the Holy City "as a center of commerce, a place which receives the vessels, goods, and currency of commercial activity;" for instance, "camels come from

³ Mouw uses the words "roles" and "functions" meaning, in Spykman's language, "direction" as opposed to "structure/function." We argue that although Mouw says the roles or functions of the people and objects in the transformed city have changed, what has changed is actually their direction, for they are now worshipping God alone.

Midian, Ephah, and Sheba, carrying gold and frankincense (v. 6),” ships arrive from Tarshish, “bearing silver and gold” (v. 9), and expensive lumber comes from Lebanon (v. 13) (Mouw, 1983, p. 7). Mouw notes that the animals “are primarily important as commercial goods and vehicles” and that, along with sailing ships and lumber, they are no longer “signs of *pagan* cultural strength or displays of alien power;” rather, they now “proclaim the name of the Lord:” these things “are gathered into the Holy City to be put to good use there” (Mouw, 1983, p. 8, 9).

On the other hand, this description seems inconsistent with other passages of Scripture, such as Isaiah 2, which condemn the wicked and their works. Isaiah “seems to picture God as destroying the same kinds of things which are then brought into the Holy City” (Mouw, 1983, p. 10), to be judged by the Lord because “people trust in these things” (Mouw, 1983, p. 11). Mouw answers this dilemma by stating the following:

My own impression is that the judgment that will visit the ships of Tarshish is of a purifying sort. We might think here of the “breaking” of the ships of Tarshish as more like the breaking of a horse rather than the breaking of a vase. The judgment is meant to *tame*, not destroy. The ships of Tarshish will be harnessed for service in the Holy City – a process that will require a “breaking” of sorts (Mouw, 1983, p. 13).

For, in Spykman’s words, it is not the ships nor their structure/function that will be destroyed, but their direction: they will still carry things, but they will carry things in complete praise to the Lord, for this is what they were created to do. No longer will they symbolize “haughtiness and rebellion” (Mouw, 1983, p. 13). Isaiah was optimistic about the future of many elements of pagan culture, “but he did not mean to encourage people to embrace that culture in its present forms” (Mouw, 1983, p. 14).

God’s people are not to covet the possessions of pagan neighbors. They must not envy the material wealth, the precious metals, the horses and chariots, the vessels of trade and war, the military fortifications that their neighbors boast about. To

covet such items would be to show an insensitivity to the idolatrous functions of those instruments in their pagan cultural contexts (Mouw, 1983, p. 14).

Mouw concludes by saying that “as we think about what will be gathered into the Holy City, we must look for present-day analogues to the ships of Tarshish and the cedars of Lebanon” (Mouw, 1983, p. 18), remembering that some things “will be changed almost beyond recognition. Swords will become plowshares” (Mouw, 1983, p. 19).

We think marketing offers a present-day analogue, for even though its structure/function is good, it can be used for or against God’s service. What is marketing’s God-ordained function? What would it look like in the Holy City? These questions we turn to next.

What is Marketing?

Marketing is defined by Kotler as a “social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products of value with others” (Kotler, 1994, p. 6). The characteristics of marketing are as follows:

(1) there must be at least two parties, (2) each party must have something that might be of value to the other party, (3) each party is capable of communication and delivery, (4) each party is free to accept or reject the offer, and (5) each party believes it is appropriate or desirable to deal with the other party (Kotler, 1994, p. 9).

Reconsider these definitions in the light of the words of Jesus when he was asked about what was the greatest commandment:

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:36-39).

We believe that marketing was created by God to meet needs and to create need-satisfying products, teach people how meet those needs, and deliver those products. To meet the needs of God's creatures, exchanges occur, as both buyers and sellers, created with unique gifts and interests, seek to pursue their callings and become what they were meant to be. Marketing is a set of tools as well as a process for loving God and neighbor. Its primary function is to meet needs and wants "through creating, offering, and exchanging products" and this is done through a structure that permits exchange. But what are needs and what needs do people have?

Briefly, God created people with basic needs, or states of "felt deprivation of some basic satisfaction" (Kotler, 1994, p. 7). One arrangement of basic satisfactions is the five level classification scheme of Maslow's Hierarchy. These needs can be thought of as physiological (for example, food, clothing, etc.), safety needs (for example, order, stability, routine, control, health, etc.), social (for example, love, affection, belonging, etc.), esteem needs (for example, self-acceptance, success, independence, etc.), and needs for self-actualization, or reaching one's full potential. Ultimately, people have a need to be in-relation, with each other and with God. For this reason, we believe, in addition to what Maslow says, people need to worship something, and if they worship God properly, they will not only experience self-actualization but they will also be able to bring about shalom.

However, due to the influence of sin, marketing is not the way it is supposed to be; the description of needs is directed toward only towards one's self and away from God. Maslow, for instance, claimed that "Salvation is a by-product of self-actualizing work and self-actualizing duty" (Maslow, 1998, p. 9) and that salvation comes from

“hard work and total commitment to doing well the job that fate or personal duty calls you to do, or any important job that ‘calls for’ doing” (Maslow, 1998, p. 8).

In addition, we believe that needs are defined improperly. Consider the following definition of motivation:

Motivation refers to an activated state within a person that leads to goal-directed behavior. . . . Motivation begins with the presence of a stimulus that spurs the recognition of a need. . . . If the stimulus causes an actual state of being to diverge from a desired state of being, a need results (Mowen and Minor, 2001, p. 78).

According to the current direction of marketing, needs aren’t needs, but gaps between the real and ideal which get constantly manipulated. For instance, if we wanted to be considered the most successful people on our block, then we are going to perceive a need if our neighbor buys a more expensive car than what we have. When we need clothing, we may believe we need Armani suits; when we need shelter, we may think we need to have beachfront property; when we need to be loved and esteemed, we believe we can buy our friends. Without God, products are worshipped for it is believed that only they can deliver shalom and self-actualization.

The current direction of marketing has severe repercussions for the poor, both those in the United States and throughout the rest of the world. For marketers, a person is not part of a market unless they have money, for a market “consists of all the potential customers sharing a particular need or want who might be willing *and able* (emphasis ours) to satisfy a need or want” (Kotler, 1994, p. 11). Furthermore, “the only asset the firm really needs over the long run is *paying* customers (emphasis ours)” (Capon and Hulbert, 2001, p. 4). This leaves many on the outside, not being served by the firms but only being manipulated into greater and greater states of perceived deprivation.

This current state of affairs can't be what marketing and marketers will be like in heaven. So what would marketing look like in the new heaven and new earth? What would marketing look like if its direction were changed? In order to answer these questions, we need to delve more deeply into our assumptions about the character of life in the new heaven and new earth.

Assumptions Concerning the New Heavens and New Earth

There are a number of important issues about which we make assumptions in our treatment of marketing in heaven. These assumptions are key in our understanding of how marketing will exist in heaven, and the implication of this understanding for marketing activity today.

Scarcity

Will there be scarcity in heaven? A typical economics textbook defines scarcity as a situation in which there are not enough goods to meet the relatively unlimited wants of the individuals in an economy. There are a number of possibilities for our heavenly existence in light of this earthly definition of scarcity. First of all, it is possible to imagine heaven as a place of unlimited supplies of goods, given Biblical descriptions of the richness of the new Jerusalem. If the amount of goods surpasses the relatively unlimited wants of individuals, scarcity as we know it today may not exist. It is also possible that while there will be large quantities of goods available, our wants will be scaled back so that we start to appreciate the value of "enough." Again, in this case, scarcity as we know it in earthly terms will not exist. One yet to be mentioned (and less

likely) possibility is that the current type of scarcity we face will also be present in heaven. Given the Biblical message on the richness of the New Jerusalem and the vastness of God's created and redeemed heavens, we believe that there will be limitless amounts of goods available for human use. We also believe that our wants (which today are substantially based on greed and envy) will be scaled back so that we will have a true appreciation of what we have and of God's good provision.

Even if scarcity doesn't exist in heaven, there presumably will be choices to make about the temporal ordering of activities that we choose to engage in. Will we choose to read a novel or till a garden, sing songs of worship or hike a mountain, prepare a meal or build a treehouse? We may need goods (or products) in all of these cases to participate in these activities. Temporal issues may sound unusual in a place where there is no more night and the Lord will reign for eternity. However, if we exist in time as we experience it now, some things will have to come before others. Humankind's necessity to make decisions on the ordering of activities and the ideal combinations of time and goods will, we believe, result in the usefulness of marketing in the new heavens and the new earth.

Spiritual Gifts

The nature and distribution of spiritual gifts will also be important for the character of marketing in heaven. 1 Corinthians 12 gives a beautiful description of spiritual gifts and how all God's people have roles in the Body of Christ. We are told that some have the gift of teaching, others the gift of administration, and still others the gift of helping others, and that we should eagerly desire the greater gifts (vs. 28-31). We believe that on the new earth that although all of God's people will be in full communion

with the Holy Spirit, there will be still be a distribution of gifts among his people, and that we will still function as a body. All of us will be gifted in many ways and will exhibit the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), but there will still be those with greater gifts in one area than another of God's redeemed and transformed creation. In fact, all of the different gifts that God gives to his people will be spiritual gifts (see Exodus 31:1-11). The sharing of these gifts with each other will be the highest expression of the notion of the unity of God's people as the Body of Christ. We will have an eternity to develop our spiritual gifts and learn from the lives of other believers. It may seem unusual to think about a variety of spiritual gifts being present even when we live in the very presence of God. However, the alternative is that everyone has every possible gift and that there is no need for the gifts of others. Since creation, humankind has always needed and benefited from the gifts of others, and we believe that this will continue in the new heavens and the new earth. This leaves, we believe, the structure of exchange intact.

Amount of information

One of the functions of marketing is to provide necessary and useful information for people and institutions as they attempt to fulfill their callings. Currently in our daily lives we can suffer from both too little or too much information, both of which can negatively impact the decisions we make. What will be the nature, amount and availability of information in the new heaven and new earth?

Although the redeemed "will reign for ever and ever (Revelation 22:5)," there is no suggestion in the Bible that we will become like God and become omniscient. We will see His face and understand much that we did not before, but we believe that we will

still need to acquire and use information as we go about fulfilling our callings in heaven. Given the passing away of sin, we also assume that all information available in heaven will be completely true and useful to God's people. In addition, we will know things to a greater depth than ever before and appreciate God's goodness and sustaining love throughout all of his redeemed creation.

We believe that we will have the ability and desire to study and examine all the things that God would have us know, and that as the Body of Christ we will help each other as we experience the New Jerusalem. We will also have the luxury of an eternity to live with God and learn more and more about His greatness. Still, given the finite capabilities of humankind, we will be able to process only limited amounts of information at one time, and will need to make decisions about which information is useful in completing a particular task at any one time. We may have an eternity to enjoy and worship God, but for us as humans, we presume that there will be some temporal order in which we live our lives. As a result, some information could be more useful than others at any one particular moment and marketers may have the salutatory task of bringing this information, information that would ultimately teach us about God.

Freedom of Choice

An important consideration in our discussion of the character of marketing in heaven is our assumptions concerning the amount of choice available to both individuals and communities in the new heavens and the new earth. As creatures created in the image of God, people have always had both the opportunity and responsibility to make choices. To be human is to make choices. In the garden, Adam and Eve (believing

Satan's great lie) chose to disobey God. As we live our lives today, God's redeemed humanity attempts to choose to follow Him more and more through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. In ways that we don't understand fully, our choices fit into God's providential plan for us (Romans 8:28).

We expect that the human ability to make choices will continue on into eternity with one fundamental difference. Once the Lord returns and evil is totally defeated, our choices will now be limited to choices for obedience. The shadowy, through a glass darkly, ability to choose that we know now will be transformed into a true freedom of choice where all our possible choices serve God and others fully and completely. Given God's grace and the riches of the New Jerusalem, we expect that the new earth and new heavens will provide many choices for the people of God; there will be opportunities that we cannot even imagine. But in all that we can choose to do, our only options will be obedient ones; the possibility for disobedience has been completely removed from the scene—no intruder can lead us astray.

Marketing in Heaven

The above assumptions frame what we believe will be the nature and character of marketing in heaven. First, we should probably say that we are not talking about marketing in heaven as opposed to marketing on earth; rather, our intent is to consider the structure/function and direction of marketing in the new creation, the Holy City, assuming that the structure/function of marketing is the same on this side of Consummation.

To summarize, we believe that on the new earth in many ways our lives will be similar to what we experience today. We expect a continuity that will involve sensing and feeling, everyday activities like eating and walking and breathing and smelling flowers and enjoying art and economic activity. What will be different is the lack of sin. Given the pervasive nature of sin in the world, we can only imagine how different and fulfilling our lives will be when Satan has been defeated once and for all, and when the curse that we have labored under will be removed.

Marketing, then, will be a tool for loving one's neighbor and a tool for loving God, since, as Martin Luther proposed, we show our love for God by loving our neighbor and we show love for our neighbor in our daily work. According to Ephesians 2:10, "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." We believe marketing will help people in heaven be what they were meant to be. People will still have choices to make, but as in the Garden of Eden, they will have many trees to choose from. Marketers will provide helpful information so God's people can make decisions on how to use goods to glorify God and to enjoy his new creation. Marketers will still design and build products and they will continue to innovate, not because they want to manipulate felt deprivations, but because they will discover new and better ways for humans to live out their callings. The wonders of God's creation will remain infinite and part of humanity's calling will be to learn more and more about God's creation in order to learn more and more about God.

Implications for the Present

What are the implications of marketing in heaven for our marketing activity here on earth? Does the nature of heavenly marketing have any implication at all in our situation where sin is so pervasive? The Lord's Prayer gives us a straightforward connection between our earthly activity and what we can expect to be doing when the Lord returns: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." We are to pray and to work to bring about the doing of God's will here on earth in a way similar to how it is done in heaven. We look forward with hope to the new heavens and the new earth where righteousness reigns, but we can also see them as a model (although unreachable until Christ's return) for our lives today.

Given this, we assert that marketing as we know it today needs to undergo fundamental changes in direction to bring it more in line with what we might expect when Christ returns. Marketing must be used in God's service as we walk in the "newness of life" in God's "already kingdom." Marketing's function then is to meet people's true needs by designing and making goods, services, experiences, ideas, etc. for specific people depending on their gifts, interests, and calling, making these products accessible both physically and financially, and communicating to these specific people that such products are available.

For instance, marketing could help with the familial task of "fostering the growth of children" (Spykman, 1992, p. 181). Helping children grow and mature, for instance, can fulfill physiological, safety, social, ego, and self-actualization needs as well as fulfilling, in a broader sense, the need to worship something. In other words, marketing can help humans feel good by helping them be good parents; and/or, marketing can help humans be obedient regardless of how it makes them feel.

The problem is not one of function, but one of direction. Ever since the Fall, humans have put themselves at the center of all things. God was only for those with a strong need to feel secure; religion was only part of culture, not the center of culture: culture was not seen as a response to God's revelation. Money and power became the chief means to self-actualization, and competition among individuals and groups of people became a means to not only meet social needs, but also esteem needs for at least the winners were better than someone. Even economic systems would be built around the notion that people would rather pursue their own self interest than the interest of others. Owning things, and owning more things than one's neighbor, became necessities.

Marketing, then, evolved as a tool not only to help individuals and groups feel good about themselves and secure by way of material goods and materialistic services and experiences, it also became a way for marketers and marketing corporations to feel good about themselves and secure. Those who did a better job of "meeting customer needs," or obtaining and retaining customers, would earn more profits than their competitors.

The science and practice of marketing needs to respond to its creational calling and the redeeming work on the cross of Jesus Christ. We suggest two approaches for renewing marketing at the present time and we believe that they should be viewed as two of a range of possibilities.

Filling in the Gaps: the Mustard Seed Model

Earlier in this paper we proposed that the function of marketing is ultimately

to meet needs and this is done through a structure that permits exchange. According to the Mustard Seed Model, the direction of McWorld is so misdirected that it does not permit exchange in some cases where the poor and marginalized are involved. Of course this would be resolved in the new heaven and new earth, but for the time being, Christians must show their love to God and neighbor by assuming the functions of marketing themselves.

The Mustard Seed Model is adapted from Sine's (1999) *Mustard Seed vs. McWorld*. In this book Sine argues that in the future "we will increasingly find ourselves contending not only with escalating global change but also with a system of values that is often fundamentally counter to the values of the gospel of Christ" (Sine, 1999, p. 19).

For,

The architects of McWorld are. . . working to redefine what is important and what is of value in people's lives all over the planet, to sell their wares (Sine, 1999, p. 21).

Furthermore, Sine holds that the Bible teaches that "the Creator God who passionately loves a people and a world and is working through the subversion of the mustard seed to make all things new" (Sine, 1999, p. 22):

God has chose to change the world through the lowly, the unassuming and the imperceptible. Jesus said "With whom can we compare the Kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which when sown upon the ground is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade" (Sine, 1999, p. 22).

In addition, Sine claims that the free market itself does not necessarily meet the needs of the poor because the rich often tend to spend their resources on maintaining and obtaining wealth (Sine 1999, p. 111). Therefore, Christians need to use marketing to fill in the gaps.

To fill in the gaps, Christians must create, offer, and exchange products of value with others (cf. Kotler, 1994, p. 6). For instance, Christians must teach the poor how to make better choices and where to go for assistance and they must teach the rich about “camels” and “needles” and the needs of their neighbors; in other words, Christians, at minimum, must create and be products of information and offer these products to the rich and poor and facilitate the exchange of information and resources.

In addition, Christians need to encourage their churches to become better at planning, asking such questions as “How will our communities be changing in the next 10 years?” and “What community needs will emerge?” and “Where will our source of funding come from so that we can continue to ‘bring that cold cup of water’ and ‘visit those in prison’ and minister to both the body and soul of the marginalized?” Business owners can ask similar questions, considering how much to set aside for need-based activities, or whom among the marginalized they could train and hire. Finally, Christians could even live among the poor and oppressed, making relationships the primary distribution system to exchange the information product. This would help Christians better understand and meet the felt needs of the disadvantaged because it would make the needs of the poor their needs (Perkins, 1993). In all these ways Christians can follow the model of the mustard seed.

Transforming the market: the Market-driving Model

Another method for renewing marketing is a model that attempts to use market power to teach people how to consume in a more stewardly fashion. This “market-driving” strategy is appropriate for larger organizations, those who “control” a large share

of the market and who are market leaders (cf. Carpenter, Glazer, and Nakamoto, 2001) as well as those who are “connectors” of people that facilitate “word-of-mouth” communication (cf. Gladwell, 2000). People learn how to consume and, in addition to families and schools and other social organizations, the marketplace teaches them. In all cases the marketplace is lead by a group of leaders. For example, who ever heard of a “coffee bar” ten years ago?

Coffee is one of the world’s oldest commodities. The rituals surrounding it are well established in many countries as are buyers’ preferences. For instance, more darkly roasted coffee beans are preferred in southern Europe while a somewhat lighter roast is preferred in the north. Americans have strong preferences for coffee, too; lighter roasts are preferred to darker roasts and drip brewing is common, yielding a weak brew by southern European standards. Despite these preferences, Starbucks is redefining coffee in North America, using that typically southern European brew – espresso. The technology to brew espresso is well established, but its appeal in North America has been limited. But through the concept of the coffee bar, Starbucks is reeducating North Americans about coffee and is creating a coffee culture (Carpenter, Glazer, and Nakamoto, 2001, p. 107, 108).

The argument is that market leaders have influence on both the *what* of marketing and the *how* of marketing. Market leaders, then, teach people about their needs in order to satisfy those needs and keep those paying customers. Market leaders are “cultural gatekeepers” who filter “the overflow of information and materials intended for consumers” (Solomon, 1999, p. 525).

As advertisers, Christian marketers would be involved in the “popular arts” and Christian cultural gatekeepers in the popular arts should “judge the quality of popular art not by its confessional appearance (which can often be very superficial) but by its artistic excellence and life perspective.” For instance, “popular artworks that affirm creational principles – love, justice, stewardship, truthfulness, courage, and responsibility to one’s

neighbor – attest to the existence of a world created by God” (Romanowski, 2001, pp. 93, 95).

In general, Christian marketers should emphasize “products that produce lasting benefit and that really enhance life rather than on those that simply respond to status wants and consumer orientation;” products “should do something positive, such as enhancing the physical and psychological well-being of those who buy it;” and, Christian marketers “must be concerned about products that use resources inefficiently or create problems because of difficulties in disposing of them” (Chewning, Eby and Roels, 1990, p. 209, 210).

In addition, Christian marketers should appeal to “good desires;” they should not “stimulate the egocentric, lustful, and perverted ones.” Advertisers should “appeal to positive consumer interests;” they should “give facts which help the buyer determine product features and quality” (Chewning, Eby and Roels, 1990, p. 211, 212). For instance, marketers know that it is easier to affirm consumer values than to change them; because marketers want to appeal to the largest market possible, they tend to seek the “lowest common denominator” (cf. Romanowski, 2001, p. 17).

From a decision-making perspective, we know that people have limited knowledge; therefore, frequently advertisers begin with what consumers know about a brand, even if that information is incorrect or irrelevant.

Current understanding of how people represent information in memory is a starting point for developing competition-based positioning strategy. . . . Consumers typically do not make decisions on the basis of attributes or image alone. Rather, they use attributes and image to infer some benefit. A benefit is an abstract concept such as convenience, pleasure, or fun. . . . In some instances, the benefit is supported by an irrelevant attribute as a means of persuasion. For example, Natural Silk Shampoo claims that it puts silk in every bottle. This attribute is irrelevant to the silkiness of hair. Similarly, claiming that coffee has

superior taste because it is mountain grown is irrelevant because most coffee is mountain grown (Tybout and Sternthal, 2001, p. 32, 33).

Obviously, Christian marketers shouldn't follow the path of least resistance. This is true for segmenting and targeting markets as well. This involves not only targeting non-paying customers, but also not targeting vulnerable customers, such as those who already eat and drink too much. Consider the following misdirected marketing practice:

Level of use is often the basis for refining a segmentation strategy. For many brands, it is appropriate to focus on heavy users, because heavy users of a brand often account for a disproportionate use of a brand's volume and thus are worthy of special focus. Major brands of beer typically find that 80 percent of their consumption is done by 20 percent of their users. . . . Thus, the first obligation is to sustain current users and especially heavy users of a brand (Sternthal and Tybout, 2001, p. 6).

Conclusion

Will there be marketing in heaven? We believe that the Biblical message suggests that marketing will exist in the new heavens and the new earth, albeit in a radically different form. Marketers will provide useful information to God's people, aiding them in making stewardly decisions concerning resource and time allocation, and by building up the Body of Christ through helping everyone utilize their spiritual gifts to both glorify God and to serve all of God's people. In other words, marketing will help individuals self-actualize and help bring shalom to the city in which marketing operates. For in heaven we will willingly obey God's shalom-embracing framework of law and order. There will be harmony between what we need and want, what marketing provides us, and what is good for the community and God's kingdom.

But even if there is marketing in heaven, why do we need to think about it now? First, we believe that thinking about marketing in heaven gives us encouragement, for we

know that our work is not done in vain, but that it has a connection to the eternity we will spend with our Creator. Second, we believe that thinking about marketing in heaven gives us an ideal, a set of norms that are based on God's Word as revealed in creation, in Scripture, and in the redeeming work of Christ.

First, then, thinking about marketing in heaven gives us encouragement. As we struggle to integrate the Christian faith with the both the study and practice of marketing, it is likely that we endure hardships and suffering. Philippians 1:29 speaks of this suffering: "For it has been given to you on Christ's behalf not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him..." If we truly live by love, believing that love means self-less behavior, then in the world's eyes, at the very least, we will suffer. We can turn to the book of Revelation for hope, for John wrote to the church during its second great persecution – under the Emperor Domitian around the year A.D. 95.

For the early Christian community, therefore, Revelation served as a book of comfort and security in the face of opposition and martyrdom. It reassured them that God has not abdicated the throne. The Lamb of God is now the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Spykman, 1992, p. 539).

For us, too, thinking about the time when the dwelling of God is with humankind, we can be encouraged, for we do not labor in vain.

Secondly, thinking about marketing in heaven gives us an ideal. The reformed tradition has always emphasized that every believer was a "priest" before God, and that God has given each person a vocation in order to participate in the transformation of culture. For the reformers, redemption meant not only personal redemption but also included the restoration of society until the day when the new heaven and new earth would appear. Because the new heaven and new earth are connected with the old, a

biblical vision of the renewed creation “gave them ideals for what might be done now and, at any rate, encouraged them to keep working optimistically, knowing that God guarantees that the end result will be good and not evil” (Boice, 1996, p. 151). For those involved with business, envisioning marketing in heaven may give us guidance in working out the vision of “thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” But these ideals related to marketing still have to be worked out, relying on the revelation of God’s Word.

References

- Boice, James Montgomery (1996), *Two Cities, Two Loves*, Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.
- Capon, Noel and James M. Hulbert (2001), *Marketing Management in the 21st Century*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Carpenter, Gregory S., Rashi Glazer, and Kent Nakamoto (2001), "Market-Driving Strategies: Toward a New Concept of Competitive Advantage," in Iacobucci's (ed.) *Kellogg on Marketing*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, pp. 103-129.
- Chewning, Richard C., John W. Eby, and Shirley J. Roels (1990), *Christians Through the Eyes of Faith*, San Francisco: Harper and Row.
- Gladwell, Malcolm (2000), *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Kotler, Philip (1994), *Marketing Management*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Maslow, Abraham (1998), *Maslow on Management*, New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Mouw, Richard J. (1983), *When the Kings Come Marching In*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Mowen, John C. and Michael S. Minor (2001), *Consumer Behavior: A Framework*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Perkins, John M. (1993), *Beyond Charity: The Call to Christian Community Development*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Romanowski, William D. (2001), *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Sine, Tom (1999), *Mustard Seek vs. McWorld*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Solomon, Michael R. (1999), *Consumer Behavior, 4th edition*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Spykman, Gordon J. (1992), *Reformation Theology: A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Sternthal, Brian and Alice M. Tybout (2001), "Segmenting and Targeting," in Iacobucci's (ed.) *Kellogg on Marketing*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, pp. 3-30.

Tybout, Alice M. and Brian Sternthal (2001), "Brand Positioning," in Iacobucci's (ed.) *Kellogg on Marketing*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, pp. 31-57.

Todd Steen Biography

Todd P. Steen

Professor of Economics, Hope College, 1988-present

B.S. (Geography), 1981, Penn State University

B.A. (Economics), 1984, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

M.A. (Economics), 1987, Harvard University

Ph.D. (Economics), 1992, Harvard University

Courses taught at Hope College: Labor Economics, Principles of Macroeconomics, Economic Themes and Topics Christianity and Economic Issues, Christianity and the Marketplace

Scholarship interests: Christian perspectives on economics and business, the relationship between religious background and economic outcomes, self-employment

Managing Editor of Christian Scholar's Review, 1994-present

Married, two children

Steve VanderVeen
Economics and Business Department
Calvin College

Biography

Professor of Business at Calvin, 1989 --.

Stockbroker, 1984-1989.

Courses taught at Calvin:

Perspectives in Management,
Small Business Management,
Introduction to Business,
Marketing, Marketing II (Marketing Research and Strategy),
Buyer Behavior

Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago (Marketing/Consumer Behavior), 1995; M.B.A. from Western Michigan University (Marketing), 1985; B.A. Calvin College (English), 1982.

Married, three children (one in college!).

Scholarship interests:

Hispanic small business; What's structurally good about business, wrongly misdirected, and "how shall we then live?"