



One would think that a “Kingdom Business” would want to choose what to do not merely based on financial return but on the strategic value to the Kingdom of the service to be offered.

Ralph D. Winter



Dear Reader,

The missionary nurse fairly exploded in my face: “You can’t mix business and mission.”

She was referring to a worker she had trained who was now going out on his own across the mountains and giving people shots and other medicines as he used to do in her clinic. What was he doing wrong? He was self-supporting!

She said, “He not only charges for the injections he gives but for his burro and his trip across the mountain.”

I got into this tense conversation by suggesting that if her clinic could only become self-supporting it could be replicated. I figured the clinic was meeting only one percent of the need of a vast mountainous area where we both worked. If she could develop a self-supporting design it could be expanded to reach 100% of the need.

But, you say, poor mountain people can’t afford doctors! Not so! My thought was that her trained nationals could carry two-way radios. Most illnesses were simple enough to treat and did not need a doctor, but whenever something unrecognizable came up these agents of mercy could report key symptoms by radio to a doctor down in the city. People can’t pay a doctor for every problem, or even for a half hour consultation. They need to know when it is essential to make the arduous trip to the city. In most cases they can pay for two minutes of a doctor’s time—to find out if that trip is necessary. Okay, this is just an example of a work of mercy that could have been more effective if the service it rendered could have

been brought within the financial reach of the patient.

It is “a business” when the people being served can pay its costs. It is also “mission” if it is a God-glorifying blessing as well.

In my situation the medical committee of the mission would not hear of it.

Nevertheless, thousands of mission projects are ingeniously designed in such a way as to be self-supporting—ranging from small clinics and agricultural projects to major universities. Combinations of business and mission have been around a very long time.

But there is something new in the air.

Note these phrases: “kingdom business,” “kingdom professionals,” “Great Commission Companies,” “marketplace ministries,” “business is a calling.”

Really big and sudden changes in the world of missions don’t come often. But now one is upon us.

It’s the major optimism and thrill of business people who are devout believers starting or extending “Kingdom Businesses” around the world.

What is Kingdom Business?

This is a complex phenomenon, as our articles this time will clearly show. There is not, in fact, any single universally accepted definition of “Kingdom Business.”

However, we can say that “ordinary business” is not expected to be operated with the primary purpose of benefiting society, the customers, or the employees, though ordinary businesses almost always do benefit all three. If they didn’t they would not survive very long. But benefiting someone else is not the primary motivation of their owners.

Business people “know how to make money,” but their primary concern may not be to benefit society.

For example, Wal-Mart and other major US companies scour the earth to discover low-cost labor markets which will enable

them to produce things at lower cost and keep ahead of the competition. Their reason for probing the far corners of the earth is not primarily to aid pockets of poverty around the world, but to fill the pockets of investors although they may effectively do both.

In any case, today it is as if suddenly thousands of Christian businessmen have discovered the kind of faith that encourages them to regard major goals beyond profit—and still make money.

This is not new in principle, but its awareness is newly and amazingly widespread. The always tough challenge of enabling a business to pay its bills, its employees, its owners, and at the same time sustain a reliable and lasting service to humanity and glorify God is no small achievement of faith, creativity, hard work, patience, risk, intelligence and resourcefulness. Such a challenge is, however, so arduous that thoughts about “benefiting” customers and employees beyond what is necessary can easily get lost in the shuffle.

In its simplest form a business is whenever someone “provides a service and recovers all costs.”

Notice, however, that it is equally possible to choose a product or service which will allow you not only to offer a product or service and recover your costs but get back a maximum of additional income.

Good to Great

If it is money you want—and usually “business success” means making money—a current management proposal apparently designed to maximize income is called the Hedgehog Principle: choose to do what you can do better than anyone else and concentrate on that. It comes from a book titled *Good to Great*, which suggests that truly great firms got to be great by doing what they could do better than anyone else, be it coffee, rooftop solar power, mousetrap or whatever.

If maximizing income is the primary consideration then Hedgehog Principle may indeed be wise counsel. One wonders, however, why it does not seem to make much difference exactly what one does, as long as it is something one can do better than anyone else and can thus be more profitable.

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Ralph D. Winter is editor of Mission Frontiers and the General Director of the Frontier Mission Fellowship.

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Kingdom of the service or product to be offered.

One business might seek a financially safe activity that would be most likely to succeed and still be a wholesome and helpful activity. Another business might seek to identify the most urgent and strategic need and then try to figure out how a business operation could be designed to meet the need and still come out in the black.

It is safe to say that in general the business world is mainly seeking to gain not to give. Business schools and management books rarely come at things the other way around, asking what can be done that will be the most crucial of all contributions and still be sustainable.

Basically (and unfortunately), commercial dynamics are impersonal and tend to be blind to the relative urgency of a need—especially those that by their nature cannot provide a substantial remunerative function.

For example, no wonder so little goes into stamping out diseases while so

much goes into caring for the sick. Helping heart attack victims brings in \$1 billion a day in this country. Less than 1% goes to research the primary causes.

Fortunately, “learning how to make money” inevitably leads to learning how to benefit someone willing to pay for that benefit. But “what people will pay for” is not the most stringent test of what is most strategic to the Kingdom.

Earning a Living is not Enough

Some tasks are worth more to the Kingdom than others.

Would it not be better in terms of Kingdom priorities to figure out whether it is possible to fight malaria even if costs are only barely covered than to figure out how to make a “killing” by creating a new version of Barbie dolls, Beanie Babies, or iPods?

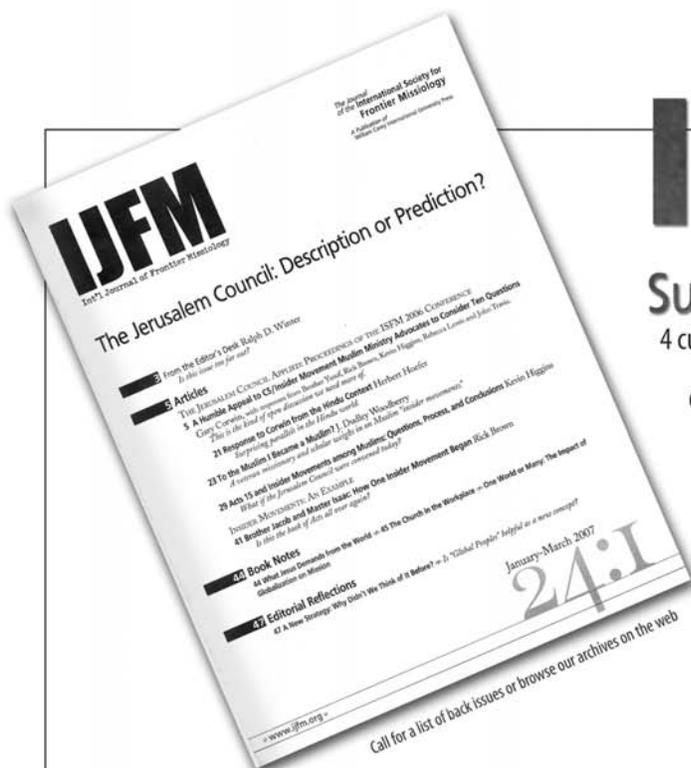
Usually business people pay little attention to the strategic value of the service to be rendered. Viability, sustainability, and profits are more of a concern.

Nevertheless, the truly “new” (old) thing is that any good work can be holy in the

Kingdom even if it is not usually considered holy in church. 🌐

Here is a quick run down on a handful of truly outstanding books related to “Business as Mission.”

- *Business as Mission: From Impoverished to Empowered*, Steffen and Barnett, 2006
- *Loving Monday: Succeeding in Business without Selling Your Soul*, Beckett, 2006
- *Where There Are No Jobs: Enterprise Solutions for Employment and Public Goods for the Poor*, Befus, 2005
- *God Is At Work: Transforming People and Nations through Business*, Eldred, 2005
- *Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Mission*, Steffen and Rundle, 2003
- *Business for the Glory of God: The Bible’s Teaching on the Moral Goodness of Business*, Grudem, 2003
- *Joy at Work*, Dennis W. Bakke, 2005 and *Joy at Work: Bible Study Companion*, Raymond Bakke, Hendricks, and Smith, 2005



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When Business Can be Mission:

Where Both Business and Mission Fall Short

by Ralph D. Winter

Some people think that missionaries only do “church work.” Missionaries do believe that their central strategy must be to bring people under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and into accountable fellowships within the family and small groups. But missionaries also set up schools, clinics, agricultural ventures and businesses. They are the only workers for whom no human problem is outside their mandate. And one main reason they can pursue any problem is precisely because they do not have to restrict themselves to things that will pay them back for their effort. They don’t have to support themselves. They can do many things by that method that businesses cannot do. This is not to say that good businesses are not an essential backbone in every society.

New Frontier: “Business as Mission”

My purpose here is to turn specifically to what could be considered a frontier: “Business as Mission.” Although the basic idea is not altogether new, the mounting and widening discussion of the idea is new—witness the new swirl of related books and conferences. No doubt “Business as Mission” can legitimately be called a “new” frontier in mission awareness and thinking.

This sphere interests me greatly, in part because some of my own experiences involve business activities of one sort or another.

During grade school I delivered papers early in the morning. I got paid by the people I served for what I was doing—for what they were willing to pay. While in high school, I worked one summer in a heating company spray painting furnaces on the night shift.

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My pay came from the people I served since I was doing what they were willing to pay for. Another summer I worked for the Square-D Electric Company, first as a mechanical draftsman, then later in its quality-control department. Again the customers being served paid for that service. After the war I was hired to do a topographical survey of the Westmont College campus. I was paid for what they wanted me to do. While in seminary I worked as a civil engineer for an engineering company. Those who paid for this activity were being directly served.

By contrast, in missions, I have for over 50 years never been paid by the people whom I directly served—a distinctly different dynamic.

Nevertheless, as a missionary in Guatemala I initiated 17 small business endeavors that others ran. I enabled seminary students to earn their way while in school. More importantly, that experience then gave them a portable trade after graduation, allowing them to serve beyond the confines of their own acreage. Most earlier pastors were tied down to the soil, so these 17 “businesses” were all portable (as with the Apostle Paul). These businesses were also the first ever in which mountain Indians became the registered owners.

Two other missionaries (from other missions) and I started the Inter-American School, which is thriving to this day and is self-sustaining. I helped very slightly in the founding of an Evangelical university, which today has 37,000 students and has provided almost all the judges in Guatemala.

At Fuller Seminary, while on the faculty, I was urged to set up a publishing activity, which is called the William Carey Library. It has been self-sustaining since 1969, sells \$1 million worth of books a year, and is now wholly owned by the U. S. Center for World Mission. I also helped set up the self-sustaining American Society of Missiology, not to mention

the U. S. Center for World Mission and the William Carey International University. Both of the latter involve many essentially business functions.

The history of missions is full of other examples. The Moravians went out to establish new villages with all of the trade skills necessary to a small town. In Surinam, South America, they planted what is today the largest retail company (a kind of Sears Roebuck). William Danker's book *Profit for the Lord*, which may well be the classic text on business-as-mission, tells how Swiss missionaries planted a chain of hardware stores in Nigeria. Those stores not only fulfilled a much-needed function but also displayed an attitude toward customers that was a marvelous Christian testimony.

Of course, every church or school that is planted on the mission field, and is self-supporting, is like a business in the sense that it renders a service and is provided for by those whom it serves. If you add up all such "small businesses" on the mission field (churches and schools), it would run into millions of businesses. The Christian movement itself is "Big Business" no matter how you look at it. In fact, I read recently that there are "over 500,000 pastors" in Nigeria alone, who are essentially—even if only part time—in that kind of "business."

However, let's look more closely at a general question.

What is Business?

Business is basically the *activity of providing goods and services to others on the condition of repayment to cover the cost of those goods and services*. This is not to say that businesses never do anything that does not at least indirectly assist their efforts in image building, public relations or something of that kind. However, businesses that use profits in ways that add nothing to the business itself would seem to be very rare. Businesses, in fact, that try to put any considerable profit somewhere else would, it seems, inevitably run into conflict with their customers' interests, employees' interests, or stockholders' interests. Why? They are jealous if any substantial proportion of the gross income is diverted by the owners to private interests of no concern to customers, employees or stockholders.

Note that business typically involves a concrete understanding between two parties (the customer and the company) and comprises what is essentially a two-way street: the company gives the customer something and the customer gives back something previously agreed-upon.

Missionaries, by contrast, serve people from whom they do not necessarily expect to receive anything previously agreed-upon.

However, mission work is, in one sense, actually a business. Donors and supporters of missionaries are, in a sense, the customers paying for a service they wish to see rendered to a third group. The missionaries are providing the services for which the donors are "hiring" them. Note that the ultimate beneficiaries of the missionaries' labors, and of the donors' payments, are needy people in foreign lands who receive aid of some sort without paying for it. Incidentally, when those final recipients get something for nothing it is hard for them to believe what is happening and they often impute lesser motives to the missionaries.

However, missions are not like businesses in one unfortunate way.

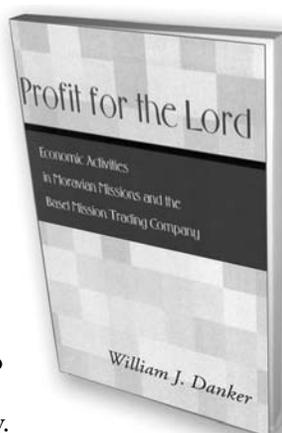
I refer to the simple fact that most missionaries are not adequately managed and face temptations to overdo or get distracted into little tangents. Most humans cannot survive under those circumstances. Missionaries are for the most part highly dedicated people. That does not mean they will inevitably be good managers of themselves.

However, sooner or later it may dawn on the ultimate recipients of altruistic mission work that someone wants to help them without asking payment, as in Jesus' case. Is there any better way to communicate God's love?

Of course, it is equally true that a goodhearted and hard-working businessman may also be providing a very beneficial service out of genuine love, not just as a means to earn a living. Even so, as with missions, to the customer, that motivation may not be equally obvious—altruism is so often missing from the marketplace that suspicions will rule.

What Types of Businesses?

You can well imagine that some "business-as-missionaries" will go overseas and start a business that will be owned and operated by citizens of that country. Others will plant a business or a branch of an international business, owned by the business/missionary, which is an activity that truly serves the people, and is itself therefore a type of



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ministry. Others will not only plant a business but will expect to support other work from the profits.

Still others may not have the capital necessary or the required expertise to set up a business but can only take a job in the foreign land. Not everyone can buy

It is also true that no matter how altruistic an owner is, what pulls down many a business or ministry is the very different attitudes of the employees.

20 tons of castor oil at a time, as does one business as missions described in an excellent book I will mention below. The biggest problem I see with Christian college courses on business-as-mission is very simply that the average student taking that course may be enamored of this new approach but not be

wealthy enough to swing it, even in his own country, let alone accomplish that amidst all the increased hazards and bureaucracy of foreign lands.

However, just getting a job in a foreign land is what is more often thought of when the phrase *tentmaker* is used.

Ironically, Paul the Apostle was not that kind of tentmaker. He essentially owned his own business. He evidently, on occasion, supported both himself and others with him, although they, too, may have helped him in his leatherworking tasks. He also accepted gifts from churches so as to cut down on his need to do leatherworking—that is, he apparently valued his other ministries more highly than his leatherworking though that was a genuine ministry to his customers. Thus, he fits all of these patterns except the one we often associate with tentmaking, namely, becoming an employee in a foreign country.

How is the Business Viewed by the Customer?

I have no doubt that there is ample room for businesses owned by believers who work with Christian principles. Those principles, however, may not always be clear to everyone. I mentioned earlier a hardware chain founded by Swiss missionaries. It astonished people by the fact that if a customer bought something that had the wrong specifications or that did not work he could exchange it or get his money back—something unheard of in many countries. Thus, for a business to be effective mission, it needs to be perceived by onlookers as a service, not just a way for businesses to make money for the owners, although, frankly, most onlookers may still suspect the latter.

Here in America, of course, all businesses loudly proclaim their desire to serve the customer. We get used to that. We don't really believe it. Businesses in many overseas situations don't even claim to be working for the customer. Neither the customer nor the business owner views the money received as simply a means of continuing the service rendered, but as a contest to see who gets the best end of the deal.

It is also true that no matter how altruistic an owner is, what pulls down many a business or ministry is the very different attitudes of the employees. The owner may have high purposes. The employees may not.

Furthermore, once a business starts overly siphoning off "profits" (whether to increase the owner's wealth or to help fund some Christian work), the business may be unable to withstand competitors who plow almost all profits back into what they do, either to refine it or to lower their prices below what the Christian-owned business—with its extra drain on profits—can afford to offer.

One of our board members, Ted Yamamori, has edited an excellent book entitled *On Kingdom Business, Transforming Missions through Entrepreneurial Strategies*. In several chapters, the various authors

wisely question businesses run by missionaries as a "front" or a disguise for mission work. And they should. To "see through" such disguises is not at all difficult for governments or private citizens. It is questionable whenever "business-as-mission" is simply a clever disguise.

We also read that "micro-enterprises" have their problems. If one woman in a village gets a micro-loan enabling her to utilize a sewing machine, she may produce more for less and be better off. At the same time she may simply put a number of other women out of work in that same village, which is not the most desirable witness.



Special Circumstances with Unreached Peoples

Most of the chapters in Yamamori's book do not distinguish between the attitudes people have where mission work has been long established, and where it is just beginning.

Consider this example. When I first went to Guatemala, as I neared the Mexico-Guatemala border it occurred to me that the border officials of a predominantly Catholic country might not welcome a Protestant missionary. It also occurred to me that, since my most advanced education was in the field of anthropology (not theology), I might get through the border with less hassle if I presented myself as an anthropologist.

I had to give up that idea the moment we got out our passports at the border and I noticed that mine (back in those days) plainly labeled me a “missionary.” As it turned out, when we got out of the car at the border station, our two little daughters (ages two and three at that time) worked their magic, wandering around among the desks of the customs officials and charming everyone with their blond hair. We had no difficulty getting into Guatemala.

Two years later I experienced an “aha” moment when I found myself down at the capital renewing my passport at the U.S. Embassy. For a brief moment in that process the thought again flew through my mind: “Now I can change my designation from missionary to anthropologist.” But instantly, I recoiled at the thought.

After two years in Guatemala I had already learned that, in even the tiny mountain villages, people knew the difference between a missionary and an anthropologist. Anthropologists are often possessed of the idea that culture is completely relative, so it does not matter how you act. Mountain villages had seen anthropologists whisk in for a few weeks and go out again, leaving behind a reputation of totally immoral behavior. Missionaries, by contrast, came and stayed—for years on end—and were accorded the very highest respect. If I were in a mountain town and needed some cash, as a missionary I could write a simple IOU on a scrap of paper and borrow five dollars from anyone, believer or not. Moreover, the rural towns of Guatemala, even if solidly Catholic, almost always chose a Protestant believer to be the town treasurer.

Thus, in much of the world, even governments with formal restrictions on mission work know the difference between missionary personnel and others. Even where formal government barriers exist, if there has been any long-standing missionary work, there will likely be an ocean of good will among the people toward missionaries.

However, forget all that if you seek to work among a truly Unreached People. In such cases you may wonder how you can ever gain the trust of the people. Whatever you do, business or missionary, will be subject to suspicion. Any good deed, no matter how generous, will be interpreted as somehow to your benefit. The constant question in the people’s minds for perhaps years will be “What’s he up to now?” Even in Guatemala, where I had instant respect due to the missionaries who came before me, the people were still surprised when we returned for our second five-year term. Knowing a bit about the affluence of the society from which we came, they were more likely to wonder why we would want to come back than to discern good will when they saw it.

No Matter What

In any case, “no matter what,” every society needs many basic functions and services. Whether as formal businesses or as an aspect of standard mission work, all societies need certain things. They need a banking system. They need fully reliable channels of raw materials and finished products. Curiously, they need guidance in the production of many things they have never seen and for which they can see no use. Think of all the novelties coming out of South China these days! And now many rural people in the remotest spots around the world can use cell phones to find out what the prices are in a distant market.

Yet in all of this there is absolutely no substitute for honesty and reliability. Honesty is so rare that the absence of integrity alone is the chief drag in many societies. Corruption or inefficiency in local government can make or break almost any business or mission. Thus, there will always be room for people of integrity and good will, for the those who keep their word.

In the growth of our young republic, when westward expansion was rapid, connections between suppliers and buyers East and West were tenuous. Two Evangelical businessmen in New York, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, founded a company to compile a list of businessmen west of the Appalachians, mainly those encompassed by revival—people whom they could trust. Today that company is called Dunn and Bradstreet.

J. C. Penney, in the early days, attempted quite successfully to found a business-as-mission. A devout Christian, Penney sought to deliver at the lowest price what people truly needed. A mother in Nebraska could send her two children down to the J. C. Penney store with a note for the storeowner to outfit them for the fall school term. She did not have to worry that they would come home with things they did not need.

In the early days of IBM, any salesman would be fired who ever oversold IBM machinery or services to any company beyond their real needs. As a result, companies no longer put out competitive bids because they could trust the advice and wisdom of the IBM salespeople. Indeed, at IBM even the highest executives had to get out and do sales work once a month in order to stay close to the customer. IBM became strong because it truly served.

Thus, there will always be a tension, real or suspected, between business services and business profit. In one

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sense, when a customer pays for goods or services, he turns those funds over to a business owner who might do well to consider those funds as held in trust. That money is needed to buy more goods of the kind just sold, to pay wages to the employees serving the customer, and to keep the owner in food and lodging. Those funds may also be needed to pay the equivalent of interest on any business loans that are making the enterprise possible. Certainly, customers' payments ought to be spent on improving the service rendered. The funds the customer gives ultimately and most legitimately should be used to benefit the customer, to maximize the service rendered. It ought not to be a question merely of how much a business can "get" for something it is selling.

Now what if the product the customer is paying for is scarce or unique and a high price can readily be charged? The income beyond cost can effectively be spent in improving the product or streamlining the service. Can it legitimately be diverted to a Christian ministry unrelated to the customer's interests?

Polarization

Here at our Center in Pasadena we also have a university, the William Carey International University. The latter is committed to what we term "International Development." This phrase refers to any and all types of contributions in a society—religious or secular—that contribute to the building up and healthy development of that society. This is what beneficial businesses are doing. This is also what missions are

doing. The latter more often renew hope and vision, while the former deal with more concrete things, the essential stuff of daily life. At times, the missions are more heavenly minded than they are of earthly good. Businesses are sometimes the opposite, of genuine earthly good but with no thought whatsoever for eternal

values. This is an unfortunate polarization.

In our own midst, we sense this same polarization. We have three staff families in India. One has started a business that is owned and operated by Indians. In the second, the husband has held an academic position in a university there and still is able to witness among a wide range of intellectuals that church people in India could hardly touch. The third is working with church leaders on a curriculum with mission vision, even though the husband has an advanced degree in science.

All this can be confusing. Right on our campus we have a university devoted to development, mainly run by missionaries without business experience. Some people may find it hard to understand why it exists because they don't understand the full spectrum of missionary concern as exemplified by the broad perspective of William Carey after whom the university is named. Even in this book to which I have referred I sense this same polarization.

When I was in Guatemala I lay awake many nights pondering the problem of a vast mountain Indian population that had cut down all the trees for fuel and heat, eaten every animal form of life for food, and tilled every square inch of flat (and even very steep) land. Among these dear people were thousands of faithful believing (and slowly starving) Christians.

For my own thinking process I wrote a paper entitled "The Future of the Rural Man." I showed it to a State Department official who happened to be visiting a missionary friend out in our area of the mountains. He showed it to the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala City and suddenly I got invited down to the capital to talk it over with about twenty of the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) workers assigned to Guatemala.

When I was done with my presentation, one man asked me what I would do if they allocated \$10,000 to my work. I told them that what my people needed were raw materials light enough to be imported economically, the capital to buy those materials in advance and to pay for essential equipment, the know-how for which their patience and hand skills were appropriate, and reliable connections to outside markets. I realized that they could never get out of poverty selling to each other (why do the microenterprise people not see this?). Thus, I said, if given \$10,000 I would use it to place ads in the Wall Street Journal seeking multinational businesses to discover the potential labor market these Indians constituted. I never saw any of their money.

I perceived at that time a subconscious polarization between five different spheres:

1. *USAID type (money-giving) agencies.* They have often worked as if they can solve any problem by throwing money at it.
2. *The commercial world.* Whatever people say, this is a substantial backbone to any country, but which is an activity not expected to be altruistic.
3. *Political people at the State Department level.* For these people governmental reform is the most vital matter.
4. *Peace Corps people.* They were assigned a variety of good things to do, such as starting chicken farms. (In Guatemala they were instructed to have nothing to do with missionaries.)

I said, if given \$10,000 I would use it to place ads in the Wall Street Journal seeking multinational businesses to discover the potential labor market these Indians constituted. I never saw any of their money.

5. *Finally, religious agencies.* These entities, like my own Presbyterian mission, were involved in building schools and conference centers, doing Bible translation, church planting and literacy work, founding hospitals and medical clinics, and even fielding full-time agricultural specialists, etc.

An Example

The Peace Corps man, who lived in a village near where I worked, always avoided me. But once I found myself going up a steep narrow street and saw him coming down. I instantly knew that we would at least have to exchange a greeting. I had heard that his two-year term was soon to end and wondered what he had understood of what I was doing. When he approached I stuttered out a hello and asked him how the chicken farm was going. “Lousy,” he complained. “I don’t think it will continue when I leave.” I knew he had put his heart into it, so I asked him what was the problem. He snarled, “You can’t trust these Guatemalans. When I leave each month to go to the capital for our Peace Corps briefing, the egg production drops on exactly those two days. No, you can’t trust these Guatemalans.”

By this time I had been in Guatemala for almost ten years, so I took some offense. I found myself replying, “Look, you want to find an honest Guatemalan? That’s the business I’m in. I can find you an honest man in any village of Guatemala.” By then every village in Guatemala had at least one Evangelical congregation of humble people whose lives had been renewed because of a heavenly hope and a new earthly Master for whom deceit and dishonesty were detestable.

I could tell he didn’t believe me. Maybe I exaggerated a little. Nevertheless, mission work still has an inherent advantage. The diversity, mutual antagonism, and lack of coordination of the earnest efforts of the agencies I have listed above is a real burden and hindrance to development and hope. This burden and barrier is really only nearly erased when you get into the world of the religious agencies, particularly the standard missions. By “standard missions” I don’t mean the specialized religious relief and development agencies. They also cannot be effective in most cases unless the religious agencies get there first and generate honest people. All agencies need enough renewed people to create the minimal integrity required to manage the essential developing infrastructure of a country.

Not even in this country do we have enough renewed people of that kind. I am disappointed with the amazingly popular (and good) book—Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life*—which is entirely devoted to all the good things church members can do in helping their local churches in their after-hours time. I can’t find one word about the quality or focus of

the believer’s work during their forty-hour week. Not even in this country are there very many visible Christian businesses, for that matter.

But there is one more consideration.

The Cultural Mandate?

A number of people these days refer to the Genesis “Cultural Mandate” which was given to Adam, note, before the Fall. This way they feel they can rightly and reasonably justify earnest Christian efforts in just about any good business which is essential to the growth and welfare of society. These people also speak of what is called “The Evangelistic Mandate,” which arose of necessity after the Fall, and was intended to advance the Kingdom and thus redeem the fallen creation.

However, these are not complementary mandates. They are sequential. The Cultural Mandate came first, and assumed no emergency. The Cultural Mandate is like

All agencies need enough renewed people to create the minimal integrity required to manage the essential developing infrastructure of a country.

what happens in peacetime. But, when an emergency strikes (such as a tsunami or war), while cultural (read domestic) activities cannot totally cease, they will be radically modified. As I look back on my experience during the Second World War, I remember both civilians and servicemen being totally caught up in the war. I vividly recall that even domestic activity was extensively bent and refitted to support both the true essentials of society as well as the war effort.

The gasoline being burned up by war vehicles on land, armadas of ships and submarines at sea, and hundreds and even thousands of fuel-burning planes in the air, did not leave enough gasoline for anything but truly essential use at home. You could be fined \$50 (today that would be \$500) for going on a Sunday drive with the family if that trip did not include some war-related or crucial civilian-related purpose. Nylon stockings vanished in favor of parachute cords. Coffee totally disappeared as a non-essential.

What I am saying is that, while the vast array of activities that can be included in a business or Cultural Mandate are good and important—and while the Cultural Mandate has never been rescinded—after the Fall of Adam the Cultural Mandate is no longer enough. Nor can the Evangelistic Mandate be purely “heavenly-oriented.” After the Fall it is no longer merely a matter of getting people prepared for heaven, it is a case of preparing them both for heaven and for all-out, knock-down, drag-out war against the powers of darkness and evil. A wartime emergency, both

physical and spiritual, still exists and must be dealt with on a wartime basis or the glory of God will continue to suffer.

Two Mandates or One?

It is essential that both mandates should be merged into a single “Military Mandate,” which, in this life, in the story of a reconquering Kingdom of God, may well be the only mandate about which we should be concerned. A Military Mandate logically includes all the essential civilian functions. It must also include fighting evil and the works of the devil, which is essential to the “reglorification” of God. This is in addition to true reconciliation of humans and the new life of Christ within them and whatever is necessary to accomplish that redemptive and recruiting function.

The Second World War definitely unified these two mandates. When the Allied forces were poised to invade the continent on D-Day, they were, of course, seeking to liberate the French (Belgians, Dutch, etc.) from the oppression of Nazi occupation. But that could not be their only purpose. To do that they first had to track down and defeat Hitler and destroy his evil empire. In fact, defeating an evil empire was no doubt more prominent in their minds than liberating Paris.

Today in business or missions, then, we cannot simply go out to do good to people in need. People don't just happen to be poor. They are oppressed. Yes, by humans, but also by intelligent, evil powers behind both social and biological evils. Human societies are riddled with graft and corruption and greed and unscrupulous operators of all kinds, for whom human life is meaningless. Furthermore, all poor populations, more than anything else, are dragged down and decimated by intelligent evil attackers too small to see with the naked eye. I may have said this before but 45 million people are pulled out of the workforce in Africa by malaria every day of the year.

A Major Example

This latter dimension—disease—looms so large and is so unnoticed that it can be employed as a major example of the interplay of mission and business. I am familiar with this dimension because it forced its way into view for me since 1996 due to cancer taking my first wife and now plaguing my own existence.

Missions and businesses are both good at helping out when people get sick. In fact, money from sick people is very nearly the single resource of the largest industrial complex in this country next to education, namely the medical/pharmaceutical complex. But virtually nowhere is any substantial and serious thought being given to a crucial activity for which

sick people are not paying, that is, the eradication of the very pathogens that haunt most human societies on the face of the earth. Even in the U. S.A., these deadly but tiny terrorists kill millions per year, dragging down nine out of ten Americans to a premature death. Note that in this arena we can find no insights in Luther or Calvin's writings or theology because they did not know about germs.

But, in any case, where there is no income there is no business. The medical/pharmaceutical complex thus gravitates 1) to artificial substances that can be patented and sold at a very high price, and 2) to medicines for chronic diseases which ensure that customers will be long term. That's just “good business.” This means that market remuneration will not as effectively support an effort to seek outright cures or especially to seek to eradicate the causal pathogens.

Only a donor-supported “mission” can deal with those things. That sort of “mission” can be found in the Carter Center (which is attempting to eradicate five major diseases), and also in the nearly unique Howard Hughes Medical Institute. The latter, unlike most universities and even the National Institutes of Health, is not dependent on funding and bonuses from the pharmaceutical industry.

Lamentably, most of the research done by universities and our government is extensively subsidized (and in effect controlled) by outside commercial interests. Thus, the flow of funds to all the world's efforts focused on eradicating pathogens amounts to pennies when compared to the energies expended when humans notice and must pay for help with their illnesses. It simply is not “good business” to create medicines for poor people.

So, therefore . . .

If we wish truly to glorify God in all the earth, we need to realize that we cannot go on allowing people to believe that our God is not interested in defeating the Evil One. The Bible plainly states that “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the Devil” (1 Jn 3:8). Only that way can France and Belgium be truly liberated. Only that way can we do as Paul described in his mandate to Agrippa: “To open [peoples'] eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God” (Acts 26:18).

Unfortunately, I don't see either the mechanism of business or the current activities of missions being of any great help in this area. I see missions focusing on both earthly and heavenly blessings but I don't see any significant effort—mission or business—aimed specifically at the defeat of the works of Satan, beyond rescuing humans from their spiritual problems. Our Christian mission is certainly not significantly recruiting people for war and for the casualties war

expectably entails. By casualties I refer to everything from auto accidents, diseases, addictions, marital distress—you name it—things that we do not usually recognize as the weapons of an intelligent enemy. Yet they drastically curtail effective ministry whether business or mission.

We seem to assume that the world is simply the absence of good rather than the presence of both good and dynamic, intelligent evil. Is there even one substantial Christian mission (or either secular or Christian *business*) in the world focused specifically on the eradication of pathogens that tyrannize the entire world to this day? Both business and mission are failing. What is 50 billion in the hands of Bill and Melinda Gates? It is the five-year expense of soda pop for high schoolers. It is the amount a single “oriental gang” at work in this country extorts from our medical system each year.

Realistically, in a given country sluggish Gross Domestic Profit (GDP) is more likely the result of disease than any other single factor. We are almost blind to that fact, even when we ourselves get sick. During ten years in Vietnam we lost ten American soldiers per day. In Iraq we may be losing two a day. But in this country due to cancer and cardio-vascular disease alone we are losing 300 times that many per day. In other words, our losses due to heart disease day by day equal the death rate of 300 Vietnam or Iraq wars. Meanwhile, note that while we poured billions of dollars into Vietnam and are pouring multiple billions into Iraq, not one percent of the \$300 billion per year spent on patching up heart patients is focused on deciphering the strong evidence that infection is the initial and major factor in heart disease.

Yet, what is our “business” under God? Is it good enough for us to traverse the globe with good but relatively superficial remedies? Or, does our mandate derive from the larger, Biblical purpose of defeating the intelligently designed works of the Devil and in that way restoring glory to God (which, incidentally, benefits man)?

Is This War?

Is it good enough simply to make people feel secure in this life and hopeful about eventually getting out of this sin-filled world and safely through the pearly gates? Right now that is the main thing the church is doing. In stark contrast are those tasks like restoring creation, restoring God’s glory, rediscovering Satan’s works, and deliberately destroying his deeds and deadly delusions. Are we trying to win a war simply by caring for the wounded? The fruits of evil—sickness, poverty, illiteracy, and inhumanity—draw our attention away from the roots of evil.

This is a “wartime” and Biblical perspective, yet that fact has apparently evaporated into the thin air of the current mood, which is defined by an artificial and inadequate (albeit pervasive) peacetime mandate. The Biblical mandate is “the Gospel of the Kingdom,”—meaning the extension of that “Rule” against opposition. It is not merely a “Gospel of salvation.” The Gospel of the Kingdom is the central matter of God’s “will being done on earth as it is in heaven.” It is a mandate that is distinctly larger than getting along in this life with the help of business, and getting to heaven with the help of missions. God’s glory is at stake, and His glory is our main business. 

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Making God

the Hero-King of the Great Commission Company

by Tom Steffen

A lady had begged for 25 years in a city in one of the biggest countries in the world. She was demon possessed, but eventually delivered from the spirit through the efforts of followers of Christ associated with a Great Commission company (GCC) in the area. As she slowly pulled her life back together the entrepreneurial lady was eventually able to begin her own business. In time, the former beggar made good money, making it possible to reunite her family. Eventually she built a house for her newly reunited family, dedicating to God the bottom floor used for business.

Her resourcefulness and questionable activities did not go unnoticed by the local police. One day they took her to the police station for interrogation. As she looked around the station she told them how glad she was to see all these rich people and things. When the police asked if she teaches about Jesus Christ in her business she presented the gospel to them before they could stop her. When the officer in charge threatened her she said, "Why should I fear you, I don't fear the demons." They let her go.

In *Great Commission Companies* (2003), Steve Rundle and I defined a Great Commission company as,

Dr. Tom Steffen served 20 years with New Tribes Mission, 15 of those in the Philippines. He is Professor of Intercultural Studies in the School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University in La Mirada, California where he directs the Doctor of Missiology program.

a socially responsible, income-producing business, managed by Kingdom Professionals, created for the specific purpose of glorifying God and promoting the growth and multiplication of local churches in the least developed and least-evangelized parts of the world (Rundle and Steffen, 2003:41).

We also called for these GCCs to develop not only a business plan, but also a ministry plan for the facilitation of a church planting movement. These plans that drive the company were not to stand separately, but to be tightly integrated.

Keeping this integrated plan, walking together in a culturally effective way that maintains high ethics, making a profit, serving the needy within and without the company, and expanding God's kingdom is no small challenge. Humanly, much depends on the CEO and those who surround him or her. How well do they understand starting, maintaining, and multiplying a business? Serving the poor? Starting a church planting movement? More importantly, how well do they understand these activities from a cross-cultural perspective? Most importantly, how well do they maintain their walk with God?

Guidelines for GCCs

Just as God is the Hero-King of the stories of Bible characters such as Adam, Noah, Rahab, Moses, David, Mary, and Paul, so GCCs that attempt to multiply wealth, create economic lift, promote hope, and challenge a culture of greed, will strive to make him the Hero-King of their companies. As co-laborers commissioned to reach all peoples, they have unparalleled opportunity to reveal the gospel through word and deed to co-workers, suppliers, government officials, credi-

tors, and customers. To accomplish this they will “constantly return to, and discover anew” (Polhill, 1992:122) the ideal of first-century Christianity: God’s righteous rule that produced responsible relationships with God, others, the material world, and provided refreshing rest for people and the environment. Tables 1 and 2 provide GCCs tools to evaluate God’s rule in relation to relationships and rest.

Righteous rule calls for GCCs to institute integrative organizational systems, symbols, stories, and rituals that promote relationships of integrity and rest even though this may be far from the norm of the host country (Prov 10:9). GCCs must constantly remind themselves, as Israel was commanded, to remember what it was like to be a “stranger” in a foreign country, and treat people how they would like to be treated.

When New Testament communities of faith provided for the needs of the poor and oppressed it did not go unnoticed by the larger community. The same will be true of GCCs who hire and care for the disabled and disfigured, especially in countries where such people are despised. When servanthood, stewardship, and justice dominate the way GCCs are run, e.g., challenging turf wars, layoffs, theft, terminations, ecological ineptitude, and so forth, God’s macro rule over the universe is modeled, providing a venue for proclamation, repentance, and new communities of faith living in a rejuvenated environment.

Responsible relationships call for GCCs to conduct business honestly in a cutthroat environment, allowing the Holy Spirit to control the competitive spirit so that human relationships

are not harmed nor natural resources abused. Employers will challenge personal and collective pride when the business becomes successful. Workers should receive just wages and conduct, and a health-friendly working environment. Sup-

pliers would receive payments in a timely manner. Customers would receive honest advertisement and quality products in a timely manner at fair prices. Competitors would receive just treatment. The poor that surround GCCs would receive

responsible social action; the rich would not be cheated. Boards, banks, and shareholders would receive accurate reports. When possible, each party would receive prayer, the good news of Jesus Christ, consistent follow-up, and financial resources so that new holistic communities of faith and businesses can multiply.

GCCs would refuse to rape the environment (which ultimately impacts everyone’s children and grandchildren) for short-term gain. When conflict

emerges within or without the company, GCC management would make a genuine effort to resolve it. Striving for responsible relationships on all levels will eventually

provide GCCs opportunities, secretly or openly, inside and/or outside the company, to convey the message that will restore broken relationships with the King. In relation to involvement in responsible relationships Matthew’s warning is apropos: “...be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves” (10:16, NIV).

Refreshing rest calls for GCCs to take seriously the number of hours they work and demand of their employees. No family should suffer because of perpetual stress, burn-out, or outright neglect.

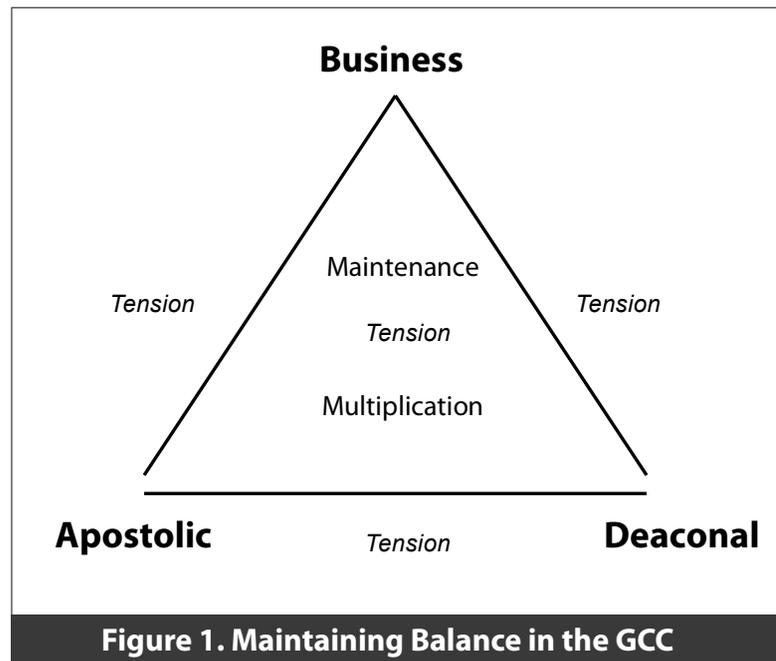
Table 1. Evaluating God’s Rule in Relationships

	Very Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Very Positive
Employers					
Employees					
Creditors					
Suppliers					
Customers					
Locals					

Table 2. Evaluating God’s Rule in Relation to Rest

	Not Appropriated	Seldom Appropriated	Consistently Appropriated
Employers			
Employees			
Environment			

Reasonable work hours with appropriate breaks, sabbaticals, vacations, and expectations reflect God's rest. The Psalmist warns: "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint" (Prov 23:4, NIV). Finding that oft elusive balance between profit and people will remain a constant challenge for GCCs.



to spiritual, human to human, human to material), God will use his co-laborers' imperfect attempts to exemplify biblical values and verbalize the story of redemption, just as he did for the lady beggar and the police. A comprehensive view of God's story of rule that restores broken relationships, and

Handling new wealth must also be addressed so that John Wesley's fear will not become a reality for the new followers of Christ.

I fear that wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore, I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must of necessity produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches (in Danker 1971:30).

When giving is taught immediately, and implemented, Wesley's concern is addressed. People who love to share what they have with others will find it much more difficult for riches to rule their lives. They will find one model in the CEOs.

GCCs attempt to keep three priorities balanced: (1) the business end (profit), (2) the apostolic activities (multiplying new communities of faith), and (3) deaconal services (social needs) (see Figure 1). They recognize that tensions always exist between the three with one that demands superiority. They also recognize that tension exists between maintaining the GCC and multiplying it so that others can experience opportunity for present and future hope. Such tensions drive managers of GCCs to rely constantly on the Holy Spirit in their day-to-day activities.

While no GCC will reach total perfection in the demonstration of the King's rightful rule (human

provides comforting rest demands a comprehensive, responsible approach to business. This approach will include the Great Commission, the Great Commandment, and the interrelated creation mandate, all reflecting the holistic nature of the first-century Temple. Such a perspective will impact both the higher and lower creation. When this happens, God's story will intersect with the stories of all peoples of the world, producing shalom, just as it did for the beggar lady and her reunited family. 🌍

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Over-Steering a Cadillac

by Frank L. Roy

When I was 7 years old I was allowed to drive a go-cart on the street for the first time. Our family's 8mm movies capture me over-steering in one direction then quickly turning to compensate and steering too far in the other direction. Back and forth I went while my brother watched and my dad chased after me.

Fortunately it was just a go-cart and not my dad's massive Cadillac or my over-steering could have killed my observing brother.

This story shows the benefits of making quick course corrections when there is immediate feedback. It also illustrates the advantage of limiting the negative consequences by starting small. But what happens when the results of our actions take a long time to become visible or when the negative consequences are magnified by starting too big? This article is about two mindsets that will answer these questions and more.

Wealth Amplifies Consequences

Western non-profit organizations working to solve social problems are often not able to see the immediate consequences of what they are doing. And because they have so much wealth the negative consequences are amplified.

The book *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* by William Easterly is full of case studies illustrating the problems resulting from massive foreign development aid to Africa. Not only has tons of money been wasted but often the people end up worse off in the long run.

The Searcher Example

The book suggests some very insightful solutions. For example it tells the story of a man who started with little influence and money and through trial and error

discovers sustainable solutions. Without pouring in funds his programs grew and now benefit millions of people. Mohammad Yunas won the Nobel Peace Prize for encouraging business through micro lending and has enabled more than 5 million people to rise up out of poverty.

The man is an example of being faithful with little things, proving success on a small scale before growing. He is described in the book as a grass roots *searcher*. His searching and understanding of the on-the-ground realities led him to discover sustainable solutions that fit the needs of people in Bangladesh.

Work as a Solution

He discovered that enabling job opportunities and creating value is a solution to solving social problems. This did not come by applying Western plans and wealth but came as the result of starting small, working locally and letting success grow from the hard work, inspiration and entrepreneurship of the local people.

Thomas Friedman the author *The World is Flat* confirmed this model when he said:

Africa needs many things, but most of all it needs capitalists who can start and run legal companies... People grow out of poverty when they create small businesses that employ their neighbors. Nothing else lasts.

Western Agencies are Learning

These ideas are not new to missions. Instead of starting with big plans many mission organizations encourage starting small. They know it takes time to truly understand the context of another people and culture to effectively serve people over the long term. Today some mission organizations are discovering that sustainable success does not come from the power of donor money.

Frank Roy is a freelance writer and entrepreneur who has worked overseas.

A tiny seed in the garden, yeast in bread—Jesus’ own metaphors of the kingdom. The Kingdom of God works best as a minority movement in opposition to the kingdom of this world.—Phillip Yancey

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.
2 Corinthians 12:9

Separation mindset	Integration mindset
Work is not important	Work as worship
Words only	Example
Ministry professionals	Empowering lay people
Christian bubble setting	Mainstream work setting
Low risk accountability	Job provides accountability
Dependent	Sustainable
Dependent relationships	Responsible relationships
Limited roles	Everyone fits somewhere
Self accountability	Local accountability
Creating hope	Creating jobs
Teaching responsibility	Earning responsibility
Models independence	Models service to others
Predefined spiritual roles	Enables core competency
Models self reliance	Models service
Talks servant leadership	Models Servant leadership

Planner mindset	Searcher mindset
Power from strategy	Power in weakness
Planning	Trial and error
Apply global plans	Learn local conditions
We can do “this” for “them”	We are “them”
Solid assumptions	Always learning
Dependent	Sustainable
Dependent relationships	Responsible relationships
Accountability from afar	Local accountability
Accidental dependency	Enabling integrity
Inconsequential	Stabilize politically
Growth dependent	Organic growth
Serving constituents	Serving the oppressed

The two tables are an exaggeration of two views to make a point about the importance of being a searcher seeking sustainable models and the power of integrating work as a core belief that brings glory to God.

Accidental Consequences

Mohammad Yunus has helped raise millions out of poverty not by charity but by creating opportunities for people to work. The sink or swim aspect forces accountability and responsibility that are not inherent in non-profits. Work and business are important and can produce great benefits to the country and communities where we live. Through work, we serve people; learn to give to those in need, meet our own immediate family needs as well as the needs of our parents.

There are plenty of great missionary role models. However if this model subtly elevates this role as a “higher calling” it may give the impression that full time ministry is more important and reinforce a misconception that God’s work is better done by paid workers.

At the core of this misunderstanding is a mindset that separates activities. Consider the young man who thinks his work as a waiter at the local cafe is less important than his work as a youth leader at church. The negative consequences of separating activities can be huge.

It would be terrible if the waiter’s boss said “beware of Christians they make bad employees.” The waiter would not only be losing his best opportunity to be a role model but instead he has become a negative example. A positive view of work is required for any individual to have a rich and fruitful impact.

Thinking Long-Term

Missionary service has left behind a legacy of hard working responsible people. The society then can be a model of responsible behavior as a testimony to others. Pity the place and people who have been left with a belief that work doesn’t matter to God.

I hope the business as mission movement is not unknowingly minimizing the importance of work. If work is just a platform, a means to an end, it will have the same consequences as the waiter working in the café.

If a company is just a platform and it does not do its best to be successful and serve customers then it too may become a bad example. The people working in the company deserve more than just being a platform. They too need to be served to the utmost.

Integration of Life

Diligent, honest work is something that has value in itself and is not just a necessary evil. On the contrary it can be at the front lines of fighting evil. Anything that dilutes working in a way to bring the utmost for His highest will be wrought with inconsistencies. 🌐

Mission Agencies:

Infrastructure, Passion, Business as Mission?

by Justin Forman

Some experts estimate there to be anywhere from 40,000 to 60,000 people from North America living around the world that would identify themselves as being a full time missionary. At last count there were hundreds of mission sending organizations.

The business as mission (BAM) movement wouldn't hold as much potential as it does today had it not been for the missionaries and the hundreds of sending organizations that have laid the foundation over the past half century. Their sweat, blood and tears are a big part of the shoulders upon which we stand today.

Outreach and cross cultural evangelism has had many new faces that have adapted and changed over the years. The freedom of modern day transportation and globalization has made it possible for us to reach the far corners of the earth in hours, if not days. For better or for worse, this has led to the short term missions explosion. Today, the cry of impoverished countries for basic needs and economic development has led to an accelerated attention on the business as mission movement.

Business as mission has a unique ability to have an influence in areas where traditional methods cannot go. It has also attracted businessmen and women with unique skill sets that have not previously been interested in cross-cultural ministry.

For those reasons, along with many others mission agencies are investigating what their role should be and how they can use their infrastructure and resources to make a difference. I welcome those conversations and I'm greatly encouraged by their work. It has been refreshing to see traditional mission agencies like Pioneers, SIM, and United



Justin Forman is the founder of the Business as Mission Network. You can reach him at justin@businessasmissionnetwork.com.

World Mission evaluate what their role should be for people on their team who want to get involved. It is refreshing to see groups like YWAM embrace business as mission by creating resource centres and be a part of launching entrepreneurial efforts like Cards from Africa.

One recognized ministry leader in the United States recently said "Believe it or not, some of the best and most sustainable BAM is happening through traditional mission agencies. It's helping them to be financially sustainable and a more

compelling witness to the local people. At the same time, we need honest dialogue about what works and what doesn't and learn from both our successes and failures. We need to learn from each other between mission agencies and straight for-profit BAM businesses. Churches can help by supporting their business professionals to think missionally about their own workplace and to remind them of God's heart for the world. Missions is more complex than ever—we need to address the hunger and disease a person faces in addition to sharing with them the story of Jesus Christ."

Yes, we all can agree that the non-profit culture of a mission agency is vastly different than a for-profit business. The definitions and roles that both traditional agencies and for-profit businesses play in the movement will be different. Although different there is a dire need for both. It is disappointing to watch

It is refreshing to see groups like YWAM embrace business as mission by creating resource centres and be a part of launching entrepreneurial efforts like Cards from Africa.

some conversations between agencies and business become somewhat adversarial. There are far too few resources and people living it for us to be divided.

The infrastructure, people, and lessons that have been learned in the past 50 years by traditional mission groups can be an incredible catalyst to the business as mission movement if channeled correctly. This can only be done if we are patient and willing to work towards the common goal.

Recently I witnessed a thread of emails develop on the topic of defining "real business as mission." I thought one individual who has experience as both a businessman and working for a traditional mission organization said it well:

In general, I fear much energy is being expended on the potentially divisive and distracting debate as to what is "Real Business as Mission." Globally, we operate in a diverse, complex and confusing world with a lot of "grey zone" reality (referring to economies and business). It seems to me that part of the essential spirit of business and the entrepreneur is that they will not and cannot be herded into one pen, and that they are essentially opportunistic and pragmatic. What dignifies and crystallises our practice of BAM, whatever the exact model may look like, is our pursuit of the calling of Christ and our practice of business with integrity, integration and intentionality. The business and charity playing fields are clearly two different things, and I think we would all affirm this. Somewhere in between is the complicated world of development which itself is in a process of change. Regardless, let's make sure that we do our part so that walls between the various communities stay down, and we remain in a learning and communicating posture, that bridges might allow for free passage in both directions.

Mission agencies will be a tremendous catalyst to watch in the business as mission movement in 2007. I look forward to the free exchange of ideas and hope that the conversation will help maximize all of our efforts for the years to come. 🌐



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Business as Mission

Kingdom-Focused Companies

by Justin Forman

Editor's note: Presented here are three companies that are a source of inspiration for all the entrepreneurs who are doing or wish to do Business as Mission.

Cards from Africa—Rwanda



Years after genocide ravaged its country, the nation of Rwanda is rising from its past to reclaim its future in Africa's growing landscape. That movement is being led by young entrepreneurs who see endless potential.

Cards from Africa is led by Chris Page. (See article on page 23). The 27-year-old British born missionary

teamed up with Rwandan artists several years ago to start Cards from Africa. Page's company has finished second in the World Challenge, a competition sponsored by *Newsweek*, BBC and Shell. They also won first place in the Open for Business competition at Urbana 06.

Here's a quote from their new website:

The cards, feature unique designs and are made of authentic recycled paper. They are made by the hands of an aspiring yet disadvantaged group of young men and women. Orphaned as a result of the genocide, AIDS or other sickness, our staff serve as the heads of their households. Our main goal is to consistently provide them with employment, inspire them with creativity, and teach them valuable skills to one day start their own business.

Meixia International

Bill Job, talented artist and entrepreneur from the mountains of Tennessee in the southeastern United States, came with his family to Xiamen, China in September 1987 and attended Xiamen University to study Mandarin Chinese.

Three months after arriving in China, the family focus shifted. Bill learned about a new policy allowing foreigners to set up wholly owned Foreign Investment Enterprises. In March of 1988 he brought together several American investors and obtained a license to produce handicrafts in the Special Economic Zone of Xiamen in Fujian Province. Meixia International was born. Over the years Bill has gathered together a management staff of key people from the US, Australia and the Philippines.

After 3 years of manufacturing high quality Tiffany lampshades, Bill developed a technology of building miniature houses out of stained glass and accessorizing them with pewter attachments, signage, trees and figurines. This new collectible line was called Forma Vitrum. The buildings included replica lighthouses, churches, businesses and Bed and Breakfast Inns. Among these collectible series were The Disney® Lighted Village and Coca Cola™ Through the Decades.



Taken from The 25 Most Admired Kingdom Companies by Justin Forman, founder of the Business as Mission Network (www.businessasmissionnetwork.com). Used with permission.

Recently, after years of research and development using varying stained glass techniques, Bill has created a superior quality laminated stained glass product. This 'inlaid stained glass' can be designed for any architectural or art glass application, and is subjected to rigorous ANSI safety glass standards.

Meixia International continues to produce Tiffany lampshades and other fine quality products for distribution in the United States and is currently expanding markets in both the United States and the Asia Pacific region.

Meixia also specializes in serving the needs of companies who design, manufacture and market their own product lines, but are finding their profits squeezed due to rising domestic production costs.



In over 50 years of serving both publishers and authors, they have produced over 100 million life-changing Christian paperbacks in partnership with the majority of Christian publishers and ministries in America.

way we do business every day, we have not arrived yet. We are committed, however, to measuring our progress and striving for continuous improvement.

Under John's leadership, the team has adopted a quadruple bottom line criteria for evaluating their success as a BAM practitioner: social, economic, spiritual, and environmental transformation.

Bethany Press—USA

Bethany Press (www.bethanypress.com) is a Christian owned and managed book manufacturer providing publishing solutions for manifesting, production, printing, binding, fulfillment, and warehousing of Christian literature.

In over 50 years of serving both publishers and authors, they have produced over 100 million life-changing Christian paperbacks in partnership with the majority of Christian publishers and ministries in America. They provide complete custom publishing services and project management for independent authors, ministries, and small publishers.

According to President and CEO John DePree,

Bethany Press began as a business for missions company, but is striving to become a Business as Mission company. We have only recently begun this transformation, and although it has been changing the

One distinguishing emphasis of Bethany is its commitment to be a catalyst of environmental transformation. Bethany Press has been an industry leader in environmental impact. They have signed the Green Press initiative (<http://greenpressinitiative.org/>), and are working towards improving their shop waste and office recycling programs.

Another important characteristic of Bethany's culture is the fact that they are a tax-paying, for-profit business that was founded by a non-profit world missions organization. As a result, Bethany Press provides financial contribution back to the parent non-profit (Bethany International) which funds world evangelism, missionary training, and church growth.

Bethany International (www.bethanyinternational.org) maintains over 125 missionaries in 30 countries and Bethany College of Missions trains more each year. In 2005, Bethany witnessed the graduation of over 500 nationally trained missionaries through 100 training schools located in Kenya, Indonesia, India, Brazil, and the Philippines....

This said, Bethany Press is overtly profit focused. They see a compelling need to steward and therefore multiply the resources that God has entrusted to their care so that God's Kingdom may be further advanced by the proper use of those resources.

According to John,

The team used to view Bethany Press as the business that made profit to fund missions (Business for Missions). Profit was the main motive, and the work itself, although producing life-changing Christian literature, was not viewed as ministry by the employees, leadership, or ownership. About two years ago, God began leading me on a journey that has brought me to understand work as a divine calling, Bethany Press' identity as a BAM company, and the sacred/secular divide that has caused so much damage to the body of Christ.

As I have been transformed by this journey, I have invited the leadership team and our ownership to journey with me, seeking to discover God's calling for Bethany Press and for each of us individually. This has led to many revelations about how our business had become misaligned with our vision, and ultimately God's desire for our company.

Our business is currently in an extremely exciting phase. We are in the beginning phases of developing BAM ventures around the world. These new ventures will give us a chance to found BAM companies and have their values, priorities and vision rooted in BAM principles from the beginning. It's a bit like building a ship in a dry dock versus trying to rebuild it while at sea. As I mentioned above, Bethany Press exists to help distribute the Christian message to a world in desperate need. The sky's the limit as we dream about the future.

I'm excited and hopeful as we have already seen great strides taken, and transformation occurring within the business as we seek to follow after God and align ourselves with the mission He has given us. 🌐

Business:

Poverty's Long-Term Solution

by Chris Page

What is poverty? Let's take a look at some statistics: About 50% of the world's population lives on less than the equivalent of \$2 a day. That represents a staggering number of over 2.8 billion people. Of these, about half live on less than \$1 a day. In addition to poverty, there are the devastating effects of disease that plague the poorest nations like Rwanda.

At the end of 2002, an estimated 42 million people around the world were living with HIV/AIDS, of which over 30 million of these people live in Sub Saharan Africa. Last year more than 3 million people died from malaria and tuberculosis combined. There is a tragic correlation between poverty, disease and unemployment. These statistics are made worse by the knowledge that the richest 20% of the world's population own approximately 80% of the world's wealth.

However, despite the one trillion US dollars given by rich countries in aid to poor countries since 1950, and debt relief on \$33 billion of loans, the share of world income of the poorest fifth of the planet's population has halved in the past 40 years. Or to put it another way, Africa is 25% poorer now than it was 20 years ago.

First of all what is poverty? A dictionary definition of poverty can be defined as having a great lack of money or resources. But what really is poverty?

Having lived in a developed nation, the UK, for 27 years, where the average wage is around \$3000 per month, and those who do not have jobs receive money from the government, it is safe to say that no-one is financially poor compared to the majority of people in Rwanda.

But in the UK a significantly higher number of people commit suicide, divorce their husbands/wives, rob each other, have children taking drugs, and are severely depressed, compared to Rwanda.

Churches up and down the UK are closing because no one goes to them anymore—in fact only about 3–4% of the whole population go to church every Sunday, and many of those do not have a personal walk with Jesus. So in many ways other than financial (e.g., morally, emotionally, socially and spiritually) the UK is much poorer than Rwanda.

So when talking about poverty, it is an enormous subject in which hundreds of books have been written. In this article, however, I'm focusing on financial poverty—why are so many people in the world poor and hungry, whilst those in rich countries throw away millions of tons of food because they've produced too much and can not sell it? And what does God think about all of this?

Darrow Miller, in his book *Discipling Nations* asks the same question. He says that except for catastrophic events such as war, drought, floods, earthquakes, etc.,

physical poverty doesn't "just happen." He says it's the logical result of the way people look at themselves and the world, the stories that they tell to make sense of their world.

Physical poverty is rooted in a mindset of poverty, a set of ideas held corporately that produce certain behaviors. These behaviors can be institutionalised into the laws and structures of society. The consequence of these behaviors and structures is poverty.

Rwanda's President Paul Kagame, has demonstrated the example of a hard-working man, standing against corruption, and planning ahead with a

Physical poverty doesn't "just happen." He says it's the logical result of the way people look at themselves and the world, the stories that they tell to make sense of their world.

Chris Page is the founder of Cards from Africa. Learn more at www.cardsfromafrica.com.

visionary attitude of what could be if we work at it with all our effort. These three behavioral qualities are new for Rwandan leaders—previous leaders of Rwanda either had the attitude regarding their country of “We are poor. We will always be poor, and there is nothing we can do about it” (which is fatalism). Or “We are poor because others made us poor. They are going to have to solve our problem. We cannot solve our problems.” The majority of Rwandans at the moment still have this attitude, especially about themselves. Some people in the west still have this attitude, but it’s the minority, not the majority.

Miller writes that these two types of thinking is rooted in man’s sin and rebellion against his Creator, who created a world of abundance and blessing. Man’s alienation from God and His principles

produces a mindset of poverty that further poisons the mind, spirit and heart. This poverty mentality enslaves people, leaving them unable to even imagine a way of escaping.

Therefore if we are ever going to see long-term solutions to world poverty, I believe it will come through starting and maintaining productive, profitable business.

Does God Want Us to Live in Poverty?

Poverty is both oppressing and enslaving. There is no doubt about that fact. Many of the people

I employ at Cards from Africa come from a rural community. All of them have neighbors or relatives who have died because of sickness—often a sickness that could have been prevented by the use of a mosquito net, or the low cost of some medicine, or a better diet, etc. Satan comes to lie, steal and destroy, but Jesus comes to bring life, and life in abundance. Being without the resources that we need to sustain life is not how God intended us to live. He created the earth with an abundance of resources for all people.

The Bible is very clear that being poor is not in itself a sin, that God has a special concern for the poor, and that being rich is not necessarily a sign of God’s spiritual favor (despite what many of the “prosperity preachers” say). Jesus warned repeatedly about the spiritual dangers of wealth. Yet God did not create poverty; man did. The problem is usually rooted in mindsets that stop and resist development. The two attitudes mentioned above come from Satan, the “father of all lies.”

Jesus quoted from Isaiah when he started his public ministry, by saying,

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

The good attitude and example of Rwanda’s President will help (and already is helping) to slowly change the nation of Rwanda. But is it just the job of politicians to do this? No! We as the church have the same responsibility. We’re called to be salt and light. Salt and light make a difference where they’re applied! Are Christians in the world making such a positive difference? Not much yet, but they can! We can help change this poverty mentality, starting with ourselves. But first we must be convinced that God is the creator of wealth, and acknowledge Him in all our efforts. As followers of Jesus, we must follow his example, and ‘preach good news to the poor, free those that are captive, heal those that are sick, and help release from oppression those that are oppressed.’

Helping to reduce poverty is a very practical demonstration of God’s love, and creating sustainable businesses, which include increased agricultural productivity, are the way forward for Rwanda to lose the shackles of poverty.

I believe one of the things God really wants is to see an emerging generation of Christians start and run businesses where they will serve God and their customer first, and will operate their businesses with attitudes of hard work (doing it unto the Lord), integrity and having faith for what could be.

As Wayne Grudem, in his book *Business for the Glory of God* says,

I believe the only long-term solution to world poverty is business. That is because businesses produce goods, and businesses produce jobs. And businesses continue producing goods year after year, and continue providing jobs and paying wages year after year. Therefore if we are ever going to see long-term solutions to world poverty, I believe it will come through starting and maintaining productive, profitable business.

I’m trusting God to raise up Christians across the world (although I’m biased towards Africa) who will run businesses that will honor Him because they are helping to release the crushing oppression of poverty.

Perhaps God has both given you gifts in the area of business, and is calling you to be a part of lifting people out of poverty by being a job-creator? Go on, be brave, ask Him if this is what He wants for you. He wants to use you to be a blessing to your country whatever you do. 🌐



Africa

Can a church planting effort start with an egg?

by Glenn Schwartz

I was privileged to participate in a seminar some time ago in Lomé, Togo. One of those in attendance from a neighboring country told the following story. He said that the church of which he is a part decided to launch a campaign to evangelize a number of villages in an area that they identified as needing a Gospel witness. They knew the cost would be high, so they drew up a budget. The amount they felt would be required in CFA francs was the equivalent of US\$100,000.

The one telling the story said he felt that was an unrealistic amount for a church of their size, so he told the other leaders that he did not believe such a goal could be reached. However, one of the other leaders suggested that they invite the members to give what they can. They said, "If someone can bring an egg, they should bring it. If they can bring a chicken, they should bring it. If they can bring a cow, they should bring it." After all, in 2 Corinthians 8:12 the Apostle Paul says the gift should be according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

The effort to raise funds was launched and to the surprise of many, the entire goal of US\$100,000 was reached with some to spare. In fact, they had enough over and above the goal to purchase a van for the project! The evangelistic outreach was

launched, and when it was completed, thirty-three new congregations were started!

Those who try to justify Western funding for cross-cultural church planting in places such as this most likely do not understand the power of local creativity and local resources. Westerners just don't think of beginning with an egg. How many times do we as outsiders rationalize that since we have the funds, we are obligated to give regardless of the impact on those we are trying to help. God blessed the efforts of those in this West African country, and they were rewarded with the blessing of a goal accomplished. Consider the harm that is done when local participation is overlooked or even spurned in favor of the outsiders need just to give. And that need to give—on the part of outsiders—is what results in donor-driven missiology, hardly the best kind. 🌐

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Glenn Schwartz is Executive Director of World Mission Associates, based in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The author welcomes interaction by e-mail at glennschwartz@msn.com.

*For further information about the issues of sustainability see the World Mission Associates website www.wmausa.org. Also Glenn's book, *When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement*, is available on that web site. Special bulk pricing is available.*



Disruptive Missiology, Part 3: In Communication, Context is Everything

Greg H. Parsons



When I was in grade school, one of my teachers asked me if I was a Christian. It was the end of the school year as I recall, and in my excited attempt to witness at this apparent “open door” I replied that I was a Baptist! I realized by her reply that I had answered her in a different category than she was asking. Nothing—even answers that make sense to us—is meaningful without a context.

I’ve got certain things that I believe about my faith in God, and the Scriptures. My experiences in my walk with the Lord have shaped my thinking. My study of the Word has been foundational in all this.

Of all those things we believe that could be said in discussions with non-believers we need to choose carefully. In the extreme, if we launch into modes of baptism or the timing of the return of Christ we might not get through.

When I started high school, our family began going to a new church, which consistently taught the Bible. I began to study the Bible inductively before I could drive! But then I realized that I could soak this “new affection” and deepening relationship with God and never do anything with it. I was saved and growing—but for what?

So, I got involved in ministry in various ways, which led to a heart for the world and what I’m involved in today. In the process, in church and later during seminary, I more fully understood and developed my theological framework. I hope I have continued to grow and learn. Now I’m in the process of working out how I interface my own framework with those in the body of Christ who disagree with me. I learned from a few mentors in my life that at times, it may be best to emphasize areas of agreement when sharing with those of different theological perspectives.

But recently I’ve been thinking much more about how this might apply as we share our faith with those who are not followers of Christ—especially if they are strong adherents from another major

religious group. How much of my theology should be a part of what I share? My sense right now is not much!

It is not that I think I am wrong (of course!) or that I shouldn’t be strong in what I believe. Nor is it that I should be quiet about it. It is however, because of a growing sense that I need to let my life speak and let those who hear develop their own perspective from the Scriptures itself. A missionary I know who has worked in the Middle East doesn’t answer any question a Muslim asks him. Even if he is clear on the answer, his response is always, “I don’t know, let’s see what the Bible says?” He then guides them to the passages that talk about the issue they raised, so in that sense, he is still teaching or guiding them. Actually, I’ve found that most people are looking for guidance and when they see someone who lives life in a God-honoring way, they anticipate learning something significant. It is amazing then to watch their reply when I say something in response to a question like, “Jesus said, ...”

We must let Christ and His Word speak first, rather than expressing the formulations of our thinking that we have had years to process. I’ve often noted that it took formalized Christianity hundreds of years to actually try and write down what they believed. While those early “councils” solidified certain core issues, there were on-going disagreements.

In reality, “on the street” it is the way we live out our faith that opens the door for the Scriptures to speak the loudest. Let’s be sure we point to Him and His Word with our lives and our words. 



Rev. Greg Parsons is General Director of the U.S. Center for World Mission. He and his wife have been on staff at the USCWM since 1982.