

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.

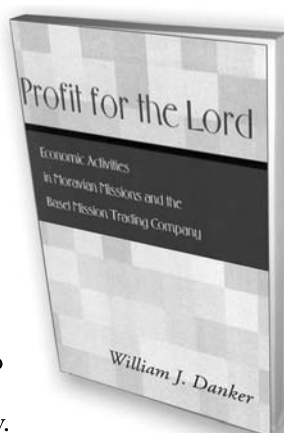
I refer to the simple fact that most missionaries are not adequately managed and face temptations to overdo or get distracted into little tangents. Most humans cannot survive under those circumstances. Missionaries are for the most part highly dedicated people. That does not mean they will inevitably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

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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.)

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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

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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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