

ABSTRACT

The Relationship Between Corporate America and the Church

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As a nation, we are finding ourselves in the middle of a cultural shift. While our world becomes more and more expectant to receive products that are custom tailored to fit every need and desire, a consumeristic mindset has permeated itself into most aspects of, not only the business culture, but church culture as well. Consumers no longer shop at the mall only but now shop for local churches. In recent years, churches have begun employing staff that have earned an MBA, establishing marketing teams, and even building coffee shops within the church buildings. There are both benefits and dangers to the market-driven church and the "Christian business." When used with good intentions, both the market-driven church and the "Christian business" can thrive by learning from each other's ethics and strategies. Similarly, when these strategies are used in the wrong context or outside of ethical means, both types of organization can find themselves in negative or undesirable situations. As the corporate world and the church continue to grow and evolve over time, ethics are going to play an even more important role in keeping people safe from harm that can come from unethical behavior. It will be up to the future church and corporate leaders to deem it important enough to place emphasis on the topic of ethics and to place the large amount of emphasis that the topic deserves.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CORPORATE AMERICA AND THE CHURCH

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DEDICATION

First, I would like to dedicate this work to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Without Jesus, I never would have been able to complete this project. Second, I dedicate this work to my family. I am continually encouraged, challenged, and uplifted by each of you. You make me better. I am thankful to call each of you “mine.”

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

What does it mean to be a consumer? Defined simply by Merriam-Webster, the consumer is “a person who buys goods and services” or “one that consumes.”¹ Humankind has been created to consume. As Christians, the belief is that God created the human race to consume or worship Him and, because of sin in the world, man and woman now live with desires to consume the objects of this world, rather than the Creator.

The idea of consumerism or “the belief that it is good for people to spend a lot of money on goods and services”² began its most rapid stage of growth in the United States after World War II. This trend was due in large part to the fact that:

Wartime production had helped pull America’s economy out of depression, and from the late 1940s on, young adults saw a remarkable rise in their spending power. Jobs were plentiful, wages were higher, and because of the lack of consumer goods during the war, Americans were eager to spend.³

Since the post-war consumer-driven market began, it has not ended. Anywhere a person turns, he or she has grown accustomed to expecting a form of marketing whether in the form of a large, towering billboard on the highway, watching TV, or

¹ Merriam-Webster. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consumer> (accessed November 12, 2014).

² Merriam-Webster. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consumerism> (accessed November 12, 2014).

³ Public Broadcasting Service. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/tupperware-consumer/> (accessed November 12, 2014).

waiting in line for a cup of coffee in the morning at Starbucks. There is rarely ever a moment when the average person is not surrounded by some form of marketing that encourages more consumption.

This consumeristic world is a great environment for businesses. In a world that encourages spending more, doing more, or gaining more, corporate America has grown tremendously because, in order to create a profit, businesses encourage the consumerism mentality of “more.”

The various consumer-driven organizations and markets constantly fighting and competing for a person’s attention explain why the local church has joined the fight. At a risk of losing a culture that has become focused on consumption, the church has turned to business-like tactics to bring people through church doors throughout the week. To say that a church should deny all forms of marketing and disregard any potentially useful business strategies in order to stay free from falling into consumerism would be wrong. There are many useful lessons and tactics the church can learn from businesses especially when it comes to attracting non-believers into the church; however, there is a line where the market-driven church goes too far.

Similarly, there has been a shift in corporate America toward ethical business practices. According to *Good Corporation*, this shift has to do with “the two Rs: Reputation and Regulation.”⁴ Regarding reputation, “even if it’s only brief, no business likes a high profile demonstration against its activities, with all the

⁴ *Good Corporation*. <http://www.goodcorporation.com/uncategorized/the-rise-of-business-ethics/> (accessed November 12, 2014).

resulting media coverage that this usually brings”⁵ so businesses have adopted much more ethical behaviors regarding their business practices even if it doesn’t ultimately produce profit changes for the organization. The same is true regarding regulation. Businesses have become more ethical because they “survive by staying ahead of the game. Many understand that today’s campaign is tomorrow’s regulation. No business wants to be caught on the back foot if regulators decide to dictate the way they should behave”⁶ so businesses have become more aware of the ethics in the practices they choose to adopt.

There are also ulterior motives for some businesses to choose ethical best practices when committing to a standard for the organization. “Christian businesses” like the craft store, Hobby Lobby, or popular fast-food chain, Chick-fil-A, are secular businesses that are owned and operated by devoted Christians. These businesses may view their ethical responsibility as a calling from God similarly to that of the church.

This paper will examine the shift toward a market-driven church in Christianity and the higher emphasis put on ethics in corporate America. The following chapters will, define the purpose of a business and the purpose of the local church in society. Then, using those definitions, this thesis will draw conclusions about the ethical lines between a market-driven church and the “Christian business.”

⁵ *Good Corporation.*

⁶ *Good Corporation.*

CHAPTER TWO

The Purpose of a Business

Business Defined

There are many different ways a business manifests itself. A business can take the form of a *FORTUNE* 500 corporation, a sole proprietorship, or a partnership to name a few. A *FORTUNE* 500 corporation is defined as a corporation that earns a spot on “an annual list of the 500 largest companies in the United States as compiled by *FORTUNE* magazine.”¹ These *FORTUNE* 500 companies are some of the biggest in the world in scale and scope. A sole proprietorship, on the other hand, is defined as “the simplest business form under which one can operate a business... It simply refers to a person who owns the business and is personally responsible for its debts.”² A sole proprietorship is typically very small, especially when compared to the sheer size of a *FORTUNE* 500 corporation.

These different types of businesses can look extremely different in many areas such as the customer type, bottom line, and employee numbers. For instance, a *FORTUNE* 500 corporation might have millions of customers, billions of dollars in revenue, and thousands of employees. Comparatively, a sole proprietorship may serve less than one hundred customers, earn a few thousand dollars in revenue, and be owned and operated by one person. The comparison of the largest examples in

¹ *Investopedia*. <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/fortune500.asp> (accessed October 10, 2014).

² *Entrepreneur*. <http://www.entrepreneur.com/encyclopedia/sole-proprietorship> (accessed October 10, 2014).

business to the smallest examples demonstrates the term “business” is a broad term and can mean many different things. The purpose of this chapter is to determine not only the type of business definition used throughout the upcoming chapters but also to define the purpose of that form of business in the marketplace and in society.

Despite of all the differences, there is a similarity that remains in every form of business regardless of the definition used, the size of the customer base, or the amount of dollars earned in revenue. Every type of business from the largest *FORTUNE* 500 corporation to the smallest sole proprietorship has a service or good they are looking to sell and a customer to whom they desire to sell that good or service.

Merriam-Webster defines a business as “the activity of making, buying, or selling goods or services in exchange for money.”³ The use of an extremely simplified definition is purposeful because, at its very core, a business is a very simple entity. As previously explained, businesses primarily seek to sell a good or a service to a customer. This is not to disregard the fact that some businesses may have other positive or even negative motives in business, but rather to acknowledge, at its core, a function and goal of a business is to sell a good or service to a customer.

There is a trend in the business world of socially responsible business in which businesses act as individual persons and form opinions on various social topics and use their power, whether in market share, marketing, or through financial donations, to make statements about those formed opinions. This is not,

³ Merriam-Webster. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/business> (accessed October 9, 2014).

however, the core responsibility of a business according to Milton Friedman who, in 1970, famously concluded:

There is one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud.⁴

Friedman’s argument is that the primary function or the role of a business is to use its resources to actively increase its profits and allow its social responsibility to be that of helping the economy rather than making statements on the hot social issues of the day or using profit to support various social organizations. He would argue that, in using its ability to help benefit the economy, businesses would be indirectly supporting the people and the economy whether through creating new jobs, assisting in making the economy more stable, or helping to make products more price competitive.

This idea is similar to the aphorism, “a rising tide lifts all boats.” This means that a rising tide, or in this example the healthy economy, helps tremendously in creating a higher quality of life for all those affected by the economy. From the largest yachts to the smallest canoes, when the tide rises, all boats rise and are placed in better conditions than previously. In the same sense, a booming economy helps every citizen from the poorest of the poor to the richest of the rich. When a company uses its resources to be successful financially, that success creates more jobs, more cash flow in the economy, and ultimately a more robust economy that

⁴ Milton Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits.” *The New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1970, <http://www.colorado.edu/studentgroups/libertarians/issues/friedman-soc-resp-business.html> (accessed September 8, 2014).

helps to create a higher standard of living for citizens across the board. Friedman's argument would agree that a thriving and prosperous economy helps produce thriving and prosperous citizens and therefore, becomes a rising tide that lifts all ships.

Friedman's argument is not met without objections. In 1979, Kenneth Mason who was the president of Quaker Oats, wrote regarding Friedman's philosophies:

A dreary and demeaning view of the role of business and business leaders in our society... Making profit is no more the purpose of a corporation than getting enough to eat is the purpose of life. Getting enough to eat is a requirement of life; life's purpose, one would hope is somewhat broader and more challenging. Likewise with business and profit.⁵

In response to Mason, as previously mentioned, there are many organizations with other motives, both positive and negative, in doing business. It could even be said that an organization should have other motives in creating their goods or services that identify with their organization such as an insurance company supporting Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). The argument of this chapter, however, is that any motive other than creating a profit is a secondary objective for a business. The primary goal, responsibility, and purpose of a business should be to use its resources to create a profit through providing valued goods and services to its consumer.

Milton Friedman is also not the only person to ever try to define the purpose of business. In fact, Friedman's argument has been met with similar amounts of

⁵ Joel Makower, "Milton Friedman and the Social Responsibility of Business," review of *The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits*, by Milton Friedman, *GreenBiz*, November 24, 2006, <http://www.greenbiz.com/news/2006/11/24/milton-friedman-and-social-responsibility-business> (accessed September 11, 2014).

opposition and praise. In light of this, another popular view on the purpose of a business comes from Peter Drucker. In his book *Management*, he claimed:

There is only one valid definition of business purpose: to create a customer... It is the customer who determines what a business is. It is the customer alone whose willingness to pay for a good or for a service converts economic resources into wealth, things into goods... The customer is the foundation of a business and keeps it in existence.⁶

Drucker's argument is that a customer ultimately, whether directly or indirectly, controls all aspects of a business. Because of the effect the customer has on a business, Drucker's argues that a business must create a customer or create a demand for a product rather than creating a profit.

Drucker's idea that, if a customer didn't exist for a product, a business would cease to exist is true. His argument and ideas about business, though valid, are not entirely correct. Rather, it should be said that the goal or strategy of a business is to create a customer while the core purpose of a business remains to make a profit. Ultimately, the main purpose of a business is to maximize profits; however, the way that the organization can achieve, maintain, and further this purpose is through the strategy of satisfying the consumer's needs and wants.

The Consumeristic Strategy of a Business

Every business has one thing in common: a good or a service they intend to sell to a customer in exchange for money or another valuable asset. This means

⁶ Steve Denning, "The Origin Of 'The World's Dumbest Idea': Milton Friedman.," review of *The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits*, by Milton Friedman, *Forbes Magazine*, June 26, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2013/06/26/the-origin-of-the-worlds-dumbest-idea-milton-friedman/> (accessed September 11, 2014).

that, as Peter Drucker's argument would maintain, a business does not and cannot exist without a customer. Therefore, the goal or strategy of a business must be geared towards its consumers whether that is manifested in serving customers, creating products or services for the customer, gaining knowledge and information on trends shown by consumers in the marketplace, or analyzing some other form of behavior to better distinguish the company from their competitors. In other words, a businesses strategy must be designed to serve a customer or to tailor itself to be appealing to a group of people.

The majority of decisions a business makes are with the customer in mind. A business works to provide the best choice of product or services to its customers, giving the customer what is called "buyer power." Due to this buyer power, the customer can typically expect to have choices when it comes to shopping for any form of good or service. What results from the consumers' expectation of choices is the consumers' mentality that the process of shopping revolves around them. This is true of the business world where the business must shape itself to fit the consumers' ever-evolving set of needs and wants.

This consumer-centered mindset is logical when considering the purpose of a business. If the core purpose of a business truly is to increase profits, then a business has to be customer-minded. In order to maintain relevancy toward its customers, a business must know its customers' needs and desires while being capable of fulfilling one or more of these perceived needs and desires. If a business is not consumer-focused, it will not create the profits it needs in order to be successful and therefore, would not be fulfilling its core purpose as defined.

The Unethical Side of Profit-Making

Although Friedman does state, “There is one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources... to increase profits,”⁷ it is easy to focus on that one statement and forget the statement made right after. Friedman’s famous claim is qualified and supported by emphasizing the idea that the social responsibility of a business also includes “[engaging] in open and free competition without deception or fraud.”⁸

Just because the ultimate purpose of a business is to be mindful of the wants and desires of its customer in order to create a profit, does not mean that a business does not have to abide by ethical standards as well or have a responsibility to conduct business without “deception or fraud.” Businesses are held to an ethical standard as is everyone and everything. The question to answer is: What is that ethical standard? Is it the same as the church, which is considered to be held to a very high ethical and moral standard, or is the business world held to a less demanding ethical standard by its nature as a secular organization?

Businesses must be held to some form of ethical standard. This claim is supported by the fact that lists of the “most ethical” and “least ethical” businesses in the United States are released yearly. For example, Philip Morris International Inc. was ranked the fifth least ethical company in the world in a survey done by

⁷ Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits.”

⁸ Friedman, “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits.”

Covalence in 2010.⁹ In 1999, Philip Morris acknowledged “that scientific evidence shows that smoking causes lung cancer and other deadly diseases, after decades of disputing the findings of the United States Surgeon General and other medical authorities.”¹⁰ This demonstrates that, while Philip Morris’ business practices were technically legal, they were not considered ethical. The company has received a lot of criticism because of their lack of ethical business standards as shown by the fact that they were ranked highly on a list of least ethical businesses in the world. As a result, Philip Morris has been forced to pay billions of dollars in damages for the company’s unethical conduct. In a specific example, the organization paid “\$56 million in punitive damages and interest to the state of Oregon, finally ending the 14-year battle over damages in the death of a Portland smoker.”¹¹ This is one of many examples where Philip Morris has been charged with false advertising and fraud based on incorrectly warning consumers about the dangers of smoking the company’s cigarettes.

Although businesses must abide by a code of ethics, that ethical standard is less than that of a church. The ethical standards used by businesses “are often

⁹ Grace Kiser, “The 12 Least Ethical Companies In the World: Covalence’s Ranking,” *The Huffington Post*, January 28, 2010, final edition, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/01/28/the-least-ethical-compani_n_440073.html (accessed September 10, 2014).

¹⁰ Barry Meier, “Philip Morris Admits Evidence Shows Smoking Causes Cancer,” *The New York Times*, October 12, 1999, final edition, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/10/13/us/philip-morris-admits-evidence-shows-smoking-causes-cancer.html> (accessed October 11, 2014).

¹¹ Almee Green, “Philip Morris Agrees to Pay Oregon \$56 Million in Punitive Damages in Jesse Williams’ Death,” *Oregon Live*, January 17, 2012, final edition, http://www.oregonlive.com/pacific-northwest-news/index.ssf/2012/01/philip_morris_agrees_to_pay_or.html (accessed November 10, 2014).

guided by law”¹² and laws are largely enacted to protect those governed by them from any type of harm. Therefore, the corporate ethical standard is largely about knowingly committing harm whether that harm is to a customer, employee, or the environment.

Generally the corporate world is known to be held to a lower expectation of ethical conduct than the Christian community or the church. This is not to say the code of ethics to which businesses are held is bad or wrong; rather, the expectation of ethical behavior is different in a for-profit organization since these organizations are not held to living above reproach as the Church is.

For example, the financial ethics of running a business are different than the financial ethics seen in a church setting. Whereas the local church is and should continue to be placed under strict financial scrutiny, the finances and specifically the profits of a business are not held to the same standard. Creating a profit or having any form of profit margin should not be a focus at all for the church. This is directly opposed to the core responsibility of creating a profit in the business world. A church should be financially responsible, maintaining financial stability while using funds to give and serve in ministry rather than being concerned with creating any amount of profit or financial gain. Since creating a profit is how a business ultimately stays in business and is the core responsibility of a business, it would be knowingly harmful to the consumer and especially the employees if the organization did not create a profit. This explains why it is ethical for a business to seek to create large profits.

¹² *Investopedia*. <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/business-ethics.asp> (accessed November 10, 2014).

In the corporate world, businesses are expected to pay employees competitively for their work. These corporate salaries are typically higher than salaries paid to church leaders because church leaders bear the weight of financial humility that is not on corporate leadership. While pastors and CEOs alike have been criticized for earning salaries that are disproportionate to the other wages of the church staff and employees company respectively, the “numbers [of highly paid pastors] don’t compare to the incredibly high pay of corporate CEOs in the [United States].”¹³ To put this in perspective, not including televangelists like Joel Osteen, “Mega church pastors typically bring in pay in the low six-figures,”¹⁴ yet “the typical CEO took home \$9.6 million, according to an analysis by The Associated Press.”¹⁵ While the realities of CEO salaries can be considered excessive, they are not necessarily considered unethical in the corporate world when compared with definition given of ethical business. Though excessive, paying a CEO a large sum of money to do his or her job does not knowingly cause harm or threaten harm to the consumer, employee, or the environment and can, therefore, be explained as ethical.

There are industries of businesses, such as Philip Morris mentioned previously, that engage in the selling or manufacturing of products that could be seen as harmful in the long run to employees, consumers, or the environment.

¹³ Jaweed Kaleem, “Religious Nonprofit Salaries: How Much Do Leaders of Some of the Top NGOs Get Paid?” *The Huffington Post*, October 21, 2013, final edition, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/21/best-paid-religious-nonprofits_n_4124718.html (accessed November 10, 2014).

¹⁴ Jaweed Kaleem, “Religious Nonprofit Salaries: How Much Do Leaders of Some of the Top NGOs Get Paid?”

¹⁵ Seth Borenstein, “CEO Pay: Highest Salaries Equal 3,489 Years for Typical Worker,” *The Huffington Post*, May 24, 2012, final edition, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/25/ceo-pay-highest-salaries-typical-workers_n_1545189.html (accessed November 12, 2014).

These industries can range from the tobacco industry to the snack food industry. Both of these industries have received criticism for the unethical way these companies market their products. The reason for this is the knowledge of the potential for harm caused by these products and the lack of warning about this harm. Due to this ethical dilemma, specifically tobacco companies are required to put extensive amounts of warning signs or labels on their products so consumers know the harm they could inflict on themselves by using the company's products. Again, the ethical standard is set higher for the church. The standard is set so that a church leader should not do anything to jeopardize the congregation. One of the "products" of a church could be seen as the sermons given on Sunday mornings. Part of a pastor's duty in being a church leader is to be extremely careful that he or she is preaching Truth and not preaching anything that could ultimately harm the congregation. Similarly, a business must provide warning labels for any products that could even potentially cause harm; however, the business does not have the same high ethical standard as the church to not do anything to harm, rather just to warn of potential threats for harm.

Conclusion

A business is not an unethical machine that should create a profit no matter the cost. It must abide by the ethical code set by the law in seeking ways to maximize profits. The ethical standards for a business will look differently than those of a church because the church is called to exist at a higher standard due to its calling from God, but the corporate world must maintain an ethical code that is set

mainly by the law of the government. This law gives rules and regulations as to what a business cannot do as well as a few rules a business must follow.

These laws include employee protection, environmental protection, and consumer protection. If a company creates a product that could place the consumer in immediate harm or a product that could not work correctly causes the potential for harm, the business will either recall that product or risk a costly lawsuit. Similarly, businesses are required by law to make sure they provide safe working environments for their employees as well as compensate them for working excessive amounts of time. The laws of government are the primary way to see the ethical standards to which a business is held.

The overarching theme when discussing the purpose of a business comes down to one word: profit. The business world gets a lot of negative reactions when a company's main purpose is to create a profit; however, when one can see past the money-hungry executives and see the greater economic purpose and potential when a company seeks profits first, it can be understood as to why Milton Friedman so famously made his claims on the social responsibility of a business.

CHAPTER THREE

The Purpose of the Church

Introduction

After defining the role of the business in society, it is necessary to decide how this argument will define the church and its purpose in the world. The first resource to use when discussing matters of the church is the Bible. In Ephesians 4:11-13,

Paul writes:

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.¹

This passage in Ephesians highlights four areas that are considered key roles of a churches purpose widely amongst the local church. Paul mentions equipping, service, knowledge of the Son of God, which leads to worship, and unity in the faith, which is considered to be the ultimate goal of Christian community. Through this passage Paul outlines four areas that give purpose to the church.

These four areas of equipping, mission or service, community, and worship are the way this chapter will define the four key roles of the local church in its ultimate purpose of loving God and loving others as an outpouring of love for God. Equipping is the teaching of the church. It is how the church itself spreads the Gospel and also how the church prepares its members to share the Gospel with the

¹ Eph. 4:11-13 (NIV)

unbelieving world. This equipping can take place in the form of services on Sunday, bible studies, or classes for the congregation to take that prepare them to spread the Gospel. Service means living on mission and giving of one's time, energy, resources, and knowledge in order to help anyone in need. Service can look many different ways. It is typically coupled with evangelism and can be through international or local missions, volunteering, or even helping within the church itself. Community helps to gather current believers together to support one another and pray for one another. The idea of community is often seen in small groups that meet weekly to encourage one another. Humankind was not meant to walk through life alone and, with the added benefit of community in the local church, having community aids the believers in their journey of faith. Finally, worship connects believers to God through the knowledge of his presence. This can be in many different ways from fasting, to music, to prayer and the local church is to provide avenues for the believer to worship God.

As an example, Harris Creek Baptist Church located in Waco, Texas uses the model of a tree (see figure 1) to describe this discipleship philosophy and purpose as the local church.

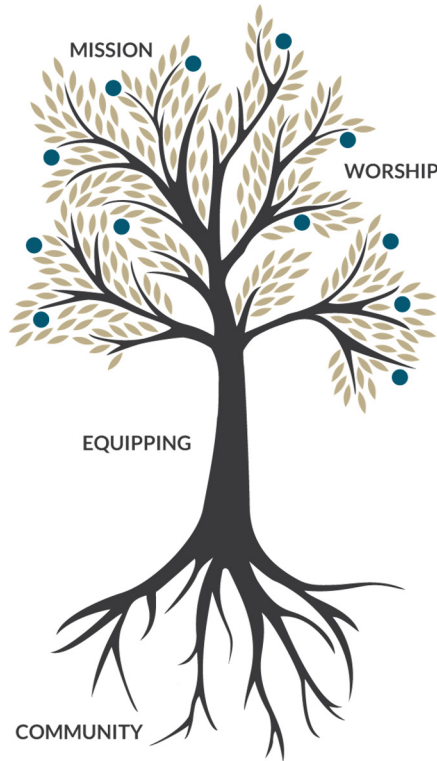


Figure 1. Discipleship – Harris Creek Baptist Church

The idea behind the tree model for the purpose of Harris Creek Baptist Church church is to explain the different aspects of what makes a church’s purpose and how those aspects relate to each other and to the individual Christian life. Community makes up the roots because the “church cannot function properly and be alive without the deep relationship of community (the roots).”² In the same way, the trunk represents “the solid teaching of equipping,” and the branches are metaphorically “outstretched arms of worship.”³ Lastly, “the church exists to join God in the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:18 says, ‘All of this is a gift

² Harris Creek Baptist Church. <http://www.harriscreek.org/discipleship> (accessed July 20, 2014).

³ Harris Creek Baptist Church. <http://www.harriscreek.org/discipleship> (accessed July 20, 2014).

from our Creator God, who has pursued us and brought us into a restored and healthy relationship with Him through the Anointed. And He has given us the same mission, the ministry of reconciliation, to bring others back to Him.”⁴ Through serving others and evangelizing through that service, the church can live out the key aspect of mission, which is the fruit in the discipleship philosophy.

This is not an exhaustive list of all the reasons a church exists; however, it is the general guideline that encompasses the four key roles of the local church as a part of the churches greater purpose in loving God and loving others.

This guideline is similar countless other churches looking to set a foundation for its goals as a church. In his book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren gives five values that help the church achieve its purpose. These are: fellowship, discipleship, worship, ministry, and evangelism.⁵ This lines up with the four values listed previously because fellowship falls under community, discipleship and ministry fall under equipping, worship is the same term as used previously, and evangelism falls under the umbrella of missions and service. Soul City Church in Chicago has 11 values the church believe explains its church vision as well. These values are:

1. Transformation
2. 7>1
3. Moments that Lead to Movement
4. Acceptance & Expectance
5. Equality
6. Excellence
7. Good Stewardship
8. Creativity and Innovation

⁴ Harris Creek Baptist Church. <http://www.harris creek.org/discipleship/mission> (accessed July 20, 2014).

⁵ Rick Warren. *The Purpose Driven Church*, 49.

9. Community
10. Leadership Development
11. Do/Justice/Love/Mercy⁶

Even with 11 core values, each one can be grouped into the four key aspects or roles in a church previously discussed.

Soul City Church uses the word “transformation” as a part of its core values to describe the way God is continually transforming the believer by the power of his Gospel to then go out and help transform other people’s lives. This idea of transformation would fall under the key role of equipping previously mentioned. The idea of “7>1” or “Seven is Greater than One” explains Soul City Church’s commitment to being active in the lives of the congregation and the city throughout the week rather than simply on Sundays. This promise that “Seven is Greater than One” falls under the key role of providing a community of believers. Another core value of Soul City is the idea that “Moments that Lead to Movement” meaning the church aims to provide a service that will allow for moments for the congregation to connect with God that ultimately lead them to movement and growth in their faith and the way they evangelize to non-believers. This act of encouraging those intimate moments can be categorized in the key role of worship. The values of “Acceptance & Expectance” as well as “Equality” come from the idea of a strong community that loves and cares for everyone equally yet expects and challenges those people to grow in their faith. Soul City puts value in “Excellence” as well as “Good Stewardship.” The church wants to make much of the gifts they have been given by the Lord as well as its congregation by providing the best it can to the

⁶ *Soul City Church*. <http://www.soulcitychurch.com/about/vision/> (accessed July 21, 2014).

people and the city where it has been rooted. This idea of a church setting the example through generosity, good stewardship and striving for excellence in all areas lines up with the key aspect of community. The church has put emphasis on giving much and being the best for the congregation in order that the congregation's community might thrive. Soul City Church uses its "Creativity/Innovation" as a way of worship and ascribing the ultimate glory to the ultimate Creator. The church also specifically outlines "Community" as a core value. To equip its members, Soul City Church uses the idea of "Leadership Development" and finally, "Do/Justice/Love/Mercy" is used as a core value to inspire the congregation to live missionally and serve the community where it has been placed.

These values are what Soul City Church uses to explain the vision of the church. This vision of the church is what the church desires to achieve in and through the congregation or its purpose as a church. These values support the four key roles of the church as defined by Harris Creek Baptist Church through casting a vision for what the goals of the church look like when made into a reality.

It is clear that the original list of four key responsibilities of the church shown by Harris Creek Baptist Church can be supported by the values of other churches (as seen by Soul City Church) and even farther. However, the purpose remains the same despite the amount of characters or words used to describe it. A church must be a community for its members to feel fully known yet fully loved. It must provide teaching and equipping that leads to service and evangelism of non-believers as well as a place to connect intimately with the Lord through different avenues of worship.

These four key roles of the local church are helpful ways to simplify larger biblical concepts. They provide a good framework and guideline for areas where a church should seek to be active and growing. Is there a way to simplify these roles in the church even further? What is the ultimate purpose of the local church? At the core of each of the four aspects previously described and mentioned is the command of Jesus Christ:

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”⁷

The four roles of the local church come from these two commandments. It is the pastor’s role to teach and equip his or her church not only out of love for the congregation, but first and foremost, out of a love for God and for the congregation to fully know God. Similarly, the members of the congregation are called to serve out of a love for God that becomes a love for other people. Through serving others, believers are choosing to love their neighbor as themselves. Community is another way believers come together to love one another. Through encouraging, challenging, and lifting one another up in prayer through biblical community, believers choose to love their fellow believers as Christ loved us. Lastly, when one ascribes worship to God, it is out of an act of love for God. Rick Warren claims that, “what is needed today are churches that are driven by purpose instead of by other forces.”⁸ Through applying the four key roles of the local church to Jesus’ commandment in Matthew, it is clear that the local church’s first commandment and

⁷ Matt. 22:37-40 (NIV)

⁸ Warren. *The Purpose Driven Church*, 80.

therefore the primary purpose, is to love God and love others and everything else it does, including the four key roles previously identified, stems from that commandment.

The Church and the Higher Standard

Is the church, both local and the collaborative body of Christ, called to a higher standard of ethics than a secular business, nonprofit, or even school? The simple answer is “yes.” Why is this true? With so many churches adapting business-like practices, where does the church have to draw the line? Paul outlines the idea of being “above reproach” in his letter to Timothy:

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.⁹

As Paul begins to describe what characteristics a leader in church should have and therefore, the characteristics the church as a whole should have, he uses the words “above reproach.” Merriam-Webster defines the word reproach as “an expression of rebuke or disapproval.”¹⁰ When Paul says the church should be above reproach, he means the leaders of the church or the overseers should be so focused on the Gospel and doing works for the name of Jesus that their eyes do not look to the right or to the left and fall into sin. The church should be careful about the way it is carrying

⁹ 1 Tim. 2:1-3 (NIV)

¹⁰ Merriam-Webster. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reproach> (accessed July 21, 2014).

out the four roles of a church because there is a recognize the weight that has been put on them as leaders to shepherd the community that has been given to them.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul explains a few of the ways a church leader and the church need to remain above reproach or rebuke. These characteristics, when in the context of biblical community and worship, make sense; however, when comparing them to the ethics of a business, these characteristics outlined for leaders may seem excessive. For example, a few ways Paul describes living above reproach as temperate, not given in to drunkenness, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. When looking at the antonym for these four characteristics: hateful, drunken, argumentative, and greedy, it is clear that these actions would, not only be inappropriate, but would be unethical in a church setting. However, these are characteristics that are stereotypical of the business world. These are stereotypes and by no means indicate that every business is run by leaders who act in this way, but it is stereotypical because the precedent has been set previously in the secular world to behave in this way. These characteristics are also not considered unethical in the workplace. In fact, some of these characteristics are seen daily in the corporate world. These characteristics have become stereotypes of top executives and management in the secular business workplace: hatefulness toward other businesses, drinking excessively after work whether at home or in a bar among coworkers or friends, being argumentative in negotiations, and loving money to the point of greed. Again, none of these characteristics are necessarily unethical in the secular world; however, when applied to a church or ministry setting, would be deemed as unacceptable.

In being above reproach, the local church is called to model the Gospel for believers and non-believers alike. Mark Driscoll recently came under fire when he was found to have been in the middle of a controversy over book sales discussed in a later chapter. He had been scheduled to speak at Gateway Conference and, considering the recent events including his resignation from his church, Mars Hill, instead went to the conference as an attendee. In a moment where the church could have alienated Driscoll and made him fend for himself, instead, the pastor of Gateway Church took a different approach:

Morris admonished the church for being ‘the only army that shoots at its wounded.’ He said the church has two options in the matter: ‘One is we can crucify him, but since someone’s already been crucified for him, the other choice is we can restore him with a spirit of gentleness considering ourselves less we are also tempted.’¹¹

This is another way the local church should be living out its purpose of loving God and loving others – by showing the world how the church can extend grace as we have been taught by Jesus rather than condemning sinners without regard for the fact that the church is full of sinners, too.

Through this comparison, we can see that the church is called to a higher standard than the world. Romans 12:2 tells the believer to “not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”¹² meaning that the believer is called to be a part of the world and help seek salvation for all people, but the believer is called to act differently than the rest of the world because

¹¹ Stephanie Samuel, “Former Mars Hill Pastor Mark Driscoll Reports Death Threats, Attacks at His Home,” *The Christian Post*, October 23, 2013, final edition, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/former-mars-hill-pastor-mark-driscoll-reports-death-threats-attacks-at-his-home-128559/> (accessed on October 30, 2014).

¹² Rom. 12:2 (NIV)

of the calling by Jesus that has been given to his or her life. The same goes for the church, both local and the corporate body of believers. The church should act differently than a secularly owned and operated business because of the calling that has been given to it according the Gospel of Jesus Christ to fulfill its purpose of loving God and loving others.

The Church and the Prosperity Gospel

Christianity Today defines the “prosperity gospel” as “an aberrant theology that teaches God rewards faith – and hefty tithing – with financial blessings.”¹³ This prosperity gospel is becoming a large issue for the Christian church because it is a false gospel that “promises its followers health, wealth and happiness” all while feeding a fear that if the believer do not possess those three things then he or she does not have favor with God.¹⁴ This false gospel directly contradicts what Jesus preaches in Matthew 6:19-21, 23:

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also... No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.¹⁵

Once the Gospels have been read, it is clear to see that Jesus often preaches against excessive wealth and never promises constant happiness or health to his followers.

¹³ *Christianity Today*. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/topics/prosperity-gospel/> (accessed September 15, 2014).

¹⁴ *About Religion*. <http://christianity.about.com/od/Word-Of-Faith/a/Prosperity-Gospel.htm> (accessed September 15, 2014).

¹⁵ Matt. 6:19-21, 23 (NIV)

In fact, after Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, the reader can see that the idea of suffering for the Gospel of Christ is a theme in the New Testament.

The reason it is important to mention the prosperity gospel is to draw the similarities of this false gospel to what is often seen in the business world. When looking at the prosperity gospel, it is important to ask the question of "is [the prosperity gospel's] emphasis on Jesus Christ or on self?"¹⁶ It is easy to quickly recognize the answer to this question is: self. The prosperity gospel serves consumer-minded and self-centered "customers" whose hopes are built on getting their needs and wants met through church. They seek a product to buy for salvation rather than a Savior to cling to for salvation.

Victoria Osteen is a well-known and highly controversial pastor at Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas where she co-pastors with her equally controversial husband, Joel Osteen. During a church service in late August 2014, while trying to move the congregation to worship and exclaimed "we're [worshipping God] for yourself, because God takes pleasure when we're happy. That's the thing that gives Him the greatest joy this morning ... just do good for your own self. Do good because God wants you to be happy."¹⁷

¹⁶ *About Religion*. <http://christianity.about.com/od/Word-Of-Faith/a/Prosperity-Gospel.htm> (accessed September 15, 2014).

¹⁷ Billy Hallowell, "Pastor Joel Osteen's Wife Hits Back at 'Critics and Cynics' and Addresses Furor Over Her Viral Sermon About Worshipping God," *The Blaze*, September 5, 2014, <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/09/05/exclusive-victoria-osteen-responds-to-evangelical-furor-over-viral-youre-not-doing-it-for-god-clip/> (accessed September 15, 2014).

The Osteens are both known to be prosperity gospel preachers who teach that, “God exists to make us happy rather than holy”¹⁸ and are, therefore, teaching a false prosperity gospel. This is exactly what a church is not meant to be. In this specific example, the Osteens are failing to equip their congregation with true biblical teaching. They are instead creating an unrealistic, self-serving, and flawed environment where people go to feel good about themselves rather than to be convicted and equipped to teach the true Gospel as they walk out of the church doors on Sunday.

As the Bible shows in the Book of Job, the life of the believer may or may not always look “happy,” but regardless of circumstances, God is worthy of glory, praise, and honor. This stands in direct opposition to the Osteen’s idea of God giving blessings as a reward to those who serve Him and giving those blessings in the form of money, health, and materialistic items.

The examples of what a church is not can range from extreme cases of using God as a genie to grant the wishes of the believer to seemingly harmless and mild cases of selfishness. It appears extreme to say that God is not ultimately interested in the believers worldly happiness but, then again, the cross Jesus bore for the sins of humanity seemed radical as well.

The church has grown to have the mindset of a consumer. It is about what is perfect for the believer, where he or she feels most “fed,” and where conditions fit the church-goer’s ever-growing list of criteria. What the believer doesn’t realize is, while the church should adopt a servant-hearted mindset toward the congregation,

¹⁸ Billy Hallowell, “Pastor Joel Osteen’s Wife Hits Back at ‘Critics and Cynics’ and Addresses Furor Over Her Viral Sermon About Worshipping God.”

the believer must mutually adopt that mindset toward the church. As the body of Christ, the believer is called to give of themselves for the church, rather than being selfishly consumer-minded. The local church must be a place where the believer can serve rather than simply be served by a bible study or a service.

The church is not a building meant to be used on Sundays only to ask God to give the believer more. The purpose of the church is to love God and love others while fulfilling its role to equip its congregation to go out and serve through missions, provide a place for people to worship, and plant the seeds for community. This ends up looking exactly opposite of the well-known and controversial prosperity gospel. It models a congregation of people laying their lives down and taking up their cross to follow Jesus (paraphrased from Matt. 16:24 [New International Version])¹⁹. It turns the church from being self-serving and consumeristic to being servant-hearted with a desire glorify God, not themselves.

¹⁹ Matt. 16:24 (NIV)

CHAPTER FOUR

The Market-Driven Church

Introduction

As society has grown, evolved, and changed, so have the various manifestations of churches. What was once a small community of local Christians has exploded into the podcasted, marketed, and very public church we know today. This trend surfaces regardless of the size of the congregation. Whether the congregation is a local, small-town chapel or a mega-church, the role of churches in society has become more public than ever before due, in part, to technology and a culture that demands constant updates and connectivity.

With publicity and the potential for even international exposure added by technology, churches have taken a natural step towards a business-like strategy to continue the search for relevancy and growth. Looking specifically at mega-churches, there has been a trend toward adding marketing teams, social media consultants, management branches, and CEOs.¹ Churches, such as Willow Creek in Chicago, have become places that employ “two MBA – one from Harvard and one from Stanford – and boast a consulting arm.”² Does this mean that these places are no longer concerned solely with the advancement of the Gospel to those who do not know God? The two are not mutually exclusive. If a church takes on certain

¹ “Jesus, CEO,” *The Economist*, December 24, 2005, final edition, <http://www.economist.com/node/5323597> (accessed March 21, 2014).

² “Jesus, CEO.”

business practices as it grows, it does not automatically mean the church is unconcerned with the message of the Gospel reaching God's people. There does, however, come a point where using business methodologies and ideals become unethical. Churches with too heavy of a business mindset put emphasis on "how many are reached by various outreach efforts" rather than "what actually happens to those reached."³ This means that, as a church that unethically overuses business principles or practices, the focus has shifted from shepherding a flock to herding a flock once then letting the sheep roam free. When the focus of a church is on numbers and statistics, "they lose their true purpose and joy and become mere status symbols – just as church membership statistics become hollow symbols when used to advertise pastors, churches, and methodologies rather than representing real people with their flesh and blood realities."⁴ As a church takes on a mindset of reaching more and more people as opposed to simultaneously investing in those they have already reached, the mindset of a church becomes more corporate, desiring growth, monetary success, and publicity above the spiritual growth and salvation of its members.

There is a different side to this phenomenon. Churches who refuse to adjust to the ever-changing culture introduced by technology and connectivity are falling behind and losing membership. With the millennial generation, a generation accustomed to being catered to and having convenience at its fingertips, reaching maturity and adulthood, churches must adapt useful technologies and methods of

³ T. David Gordon, "Your Pastor: Shepherd or CEO?" Web log post, May 2002, http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/NH02/05d.html (accessed March 21, 2014).

⁴ Os Guinness. *Dining with the Devil*, 50.

reaching a generation that is used to a lot of noise in their lives and having their attention being fought for by many different messages and marketing campaigns. This is where the traits of a business can play out positively for a church. In using business practices in a God-glorifying way to reach out while simultaneously using similar practices to grow and shepherd the flock the church already has, the local church can use typical business strategies for good.

The idea of “quantity over quality” has become a mindset of the mega-church, which seeks to bring as many people as possible into their services.⁵ The problem with this is whether or not the church has the ability to properly care for the congregation’s needs that comes from masses of people attending one church. It is easy, a big church, to lose the personal touch and relationships that are characteristic of a body of believers and the aspect of community, which is one of the key roles of the church. Along with the mega-church come the management teams and other business practices that must be adapted in order to lead such large numbers of people. In light of the “responsibility of church officers...to ‘watch out for your souls, as those who must give account’ (Hebrews 13:17), there comes a point when the sheer size of a church makes such care difficult,” which puts into perspective the church’s need for a form of management.⁶ Looking at the efficiency of the corporate world, it is understandable as to why a relationship and values-based system would wish to imitate some management practices of the professional world in order to help with efficiency.

⁵ T. David Gordon, “Your Pastor: Shepherd or CEO?”

⁶ T. David Gordon, “Your Pastor: Shepherd or CEO?”

The Village Church, primarily located in Flower Mound, Texas, provides a good example of how a mega church can effectively incorporate business strategies and leverage growth without losing the core purpose of loving God and loving others in the local church setting. The Village Church, rather than having one massive location where tens of thousands of members gather to hear Pastor Matt Chandler preach, it employs the idea of satellite campuses. These satellite campuses all listen to the same sermon, which is typically, but not always, preached by Chandler; however, they have their own campus pastors, worship teams, and small groups. This is an example of a church leveraging technology and practices commonly found in the business world to aid in the growth of the church, not only in size and numbers, but more importantly, spiritually as believers.

Implementing new ideas and new directions that have previously been used in businesses into the local church is not in itself a problem or unethical. Os Guinness speaks to this idea when he claimed, “the issue is not God or modernity, as if God’s sovereignty and modernity, or Christian orthodoxy and contemporary relevance, were mutually exclusive. The issue, instead, is which one is the decisive authority in practice.”⁷ He goes on to explain,

The superspiritual error is simply the opposite extreme. Just as Christians are flesh and blood as well as spirit, so the church of Christ is in the business of pews, parking lots, and planning committees as well as prayer and preaching... But this is a far cry from the dictum of the church-growth gurus that, ‘The No. 1 rule of church growth is that a church will never get bigger than its parking lot.’ It’s parking lot? A dead giveaway for the suburbanness of church growth. And No. 1? Above growth in faith? Before growth in the Word and Spirit?⁸

⁷ Guinness. *Dining with the Devil*, 36.

⁸ Guinness. *Dining with the Devil*, 38.

Where churches get into trouble is when they begin to get consumed by the growth and popularity they receive as they begin to put more emphasis on the congregation as “customers,” rather than God and the core purpose of loving God and loving others. In fact, running programs and services more efficiently is an opportunity to put time into what matters in the church: mission, community, equipping, and worship. The question that remains, though, is this: When do the church’s adaptive business practices go too far?

Market-Driven Church Taken Too Far: An Example

Mark Driscoll is the well-known head pastor at Mars Hill Church in Seattle, Washington. Driscoll is also a bestselling author and prominent speaker. On March 5, 2014, *WORLD Magazine* acquired a copy of an agreement between ResultSource, Inc. and Mars Hill Church “to conduct a bestseller campaign for [Driscoll’s] book, *Real Marriage* on the week of January 2, 2012. The bestseller campaign [was] intended to place *Real Marriage* on *The New York Times* bestseller list for the Advice How-To List.”⁹ According to *WORLD Magazine*, Mars Hill Church, paid a marketing company called ResultSource to ensure Driscoll’s new book which he co-authored with his wife, *Real Marriage*, would make its debut on *The New York Times* bestseller list among other bestseller lists upon its release.

⁹ Warren Cole Smith, “Unreal Sales for Driscoll’s *Real Marriage*,” *WORLD Magazine*, March 5, 2014, http://www.worldmag.com/2014/03/unreal_sales_for_driscoll_s_real_marriage (accessed March 21, 2014).

In an article in *The Wall Street Journal* about ResultSource's legal, but questionably ethical, methods for ensuring bestseller status to its clients, it explained that ResultSource "purchased books ahead of publication date, creating a spike in sales" that caused the books to appear more successful.¹⁰ This means that the company would help the author get to milestone achievements such as bestseller lists or a certain number of copies sold by purchasing the authors books in bulk while making them appear to have been purchased individually. Specifically in Mark Driscoll and Mars Hill Church's case, they bought "6,000 individual orders and [supplied] RSI with addresses to deliver the books through a third party. In addition, Mars Hill purchased 5,000 bulk copies and provided 90 different addresses for the shipment of the bulk copies" in order to boost the book to bestseller status.¹¹

The argument could be made that, no matter the purchaser, the books were nonetheless purchased and, were therefore, valid book sales for any bestseller list. The problem with this argument is that Nielson BookScan, the company that tracks book purchases and creates many of the bestseller lists that go out to the public, has strict regulations that "confirmed bulk sales are always flagged and pulled from BookScan's bestseller chart-making process."¹² Nielson BookScan also goes on to say that a definition of bulk sales includes:

¹⁰ Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg, "The Mystery of the Book Sales Spike," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 22, 2013, final edition, <http://online.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323864304578316143623600544> (accessed March 21, 2014).

¹¹ Kate Tracy, "Mars Hill Defends How Mark Driscoll's 'Real Marriage' Became a Bestseller," *Christianity Today*, March 7, 2014, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2014/march/did-mark-driscoll-real-marriage-earn-nyt-bestseller-status-.html?paging=off> (accessed March 21, 2014).

¹² Jeffery A. Trachtenberg, "The Mystery of the Book Sales Spike."

Quantities bought by corporations or associations either for resale or free distribution and quantities purchased by their authors, regardless of whether the writers intend to resell the books, give them away, or use them to fulfill a direct-marketing promotion.¹³

This definition is a contrast with the defense given by Mars Hill Church of their actions. In *A Note From Our Board of Advisors and Accountability*, Mars Hill church stated, “to be clear, all of the books purchased through this campaign have been given away or sold through normal channels.”¹⁴ While this isn’t an illegal practice, comparing Nielson BookScan’s policy and definition of bulk sales with Mars Hill’s defense of Driscoll’s marketing campaign, one can see that the choices made to market the book were unethical because these bulk sales would typically have been pulled from BookScan’s chart-making process.

In a comment made to *WORLD Magazine* by church spokesman Justin Dean, he said:

Mars Hill has made marketing investments for book releases and sermon series, along with album releases, events, and church plants, much like many other churches, authors, and publishers who want to reach a large audience. We will explore any opportunity that helps us to get that message out, while striving to remain above reproach in the process. Whether we’re talking about technology, music, marketing, or whatever, we want to tell lots of people about Jesus by every means available.¹⁵

This means that the official opinion of Mars Hill was that the false and deceptive boost in sales of Driscoll’s *Real Marriage* was justified because the church was using it to further the Gospel of Jesus. The problem with this is that the ultimate conclusion, not only did not really seek to make Jesus more known, but ended up

¹³ Jeffery A. Trachtenberg, “The Mystery of the Book Sales Spike.”

¹⁴ *Mars Hill Church*. <https://marshill.com/2014/03/07/a-note-from-our-board-of-advisors-accountability> (accessed March 21, 2014).

¹⁵ Warren Cole Smith, “Unreal Sales for Driscoll’s Real Marriage.”

making Mars Hill and Mark Driscoll known for a national scandal. What is more is that Driscoll and his staff chose to sin when, through deception, they found a way to get fame for the book, no matter the cost rather than live above reproach and without deceit as is their calling as leaders in the church.

According to *The Wall Street Journal*, ResultSource's website even states that "publishing a book builds credibility, but having a Bestseller initiates incredible growth – exponentially increasing the demand for your thought leadership, skyrocketing your speaking itinerary and value."¹⁶ The reason for having a book on any bestseller list can be a selfish way of boosting one's own fame, and that is what it was perceived as Driscoll and Mars Hill regardless of the pastor and the churches original intentions as they made a deal with ResultSource to get an undeserved bestseller spot for *Real Marriage*.

This is an example of business in a church being taken too far. The church cannot be a place where its leadership is focused on promoting self by whatever means are necessary that it loses sight of the one person they have been called to promote: Jesus. Otherwise, any church leader can justify using ResultSource's type of marketing tactics to use his or her bestseller status as a way to further God's kingdom even if that is not the intent. This mentality makes witnessing about God dependent on bestseller status as well as rejects the scripturally-based calling of church leaders to live above reproach.

The thought and desire for published fame and success using tactics common in corporations became a focus for Driscoll and the Mars Hill staff to where they

¹⁶ Jeffery A. Trachtenberg, "The Mystery of the Book Sales Spike."

were too consumed to focus on the congregation and their call as leaders and elders to lead the church in a way that is glorifying to God. It is better for a pastor to have no fame and no accolades than to be swallowed up in them to the point where his local mission and calling as shepherd to a flock are lost. In order to remain firm in the foundation of the church, we must know what the church's role in this world is. While this is only one example, it was chosen because it illustrates well the type of ethical dilemma that can be faced by the church when it chooses to use certain corporate tactics for less than God-glorifying means.

The Faithful Market-Driven Church

In order to determine if operating a church like a business is ethical or not, we must know the role of the church and the standard to which these ethics are held. As discussed in the previous chapter, the local church has a very unique role in society: to love God and love others then use that as an outpouring for the key roles of service or mission, worship, equipping, and community. This unique role should not be overcome by the desire to be viewed as successful or wealthy by the world's standard, but should be held up to the standard set before it in the Bible. Once the church gives itself over to what the world says it should be, it is quick to turn over to a business mindset that does not glorify God with a core goal of growing and expanding its profits.

The difference between businesses and churches is that businesses are operated for people. Business are run so that their customers can get exactly what they demand exactly when they demand it and, therefore, satisfy the wants and

needs of the customer. That way, a business can earn a profit off their customers, while simultaneously increasing demand for a product. They are operated on a profit-based and scale. A corporation's number one purpose is to create a profit. That profit typically translates to growth and can be manifested in many different ways, whether it is growth in profits, margin share, or awareness. The primary purpose of the corporation is not necessarily about relationships as it is in the local church; rather it is about growing the customer's desires for more of the goods or services produced by the company.

That is not what the church has for the world. The church is operated for God. Adopting this mentality towards the church means that the church wasn't set into motion to satisfy people's wants, as a business is for a consumer, but it was set in motion to satisfy the deepest need and desire of the human heart: the desire for God. The point at which the Church begins to become consumed with numbers, popularity, status, or publicity is when it loses sight of its original calling and begins to chase after the idols of this world. The goal of the Church should be to provide community, intimate moments for worship, ways to serve, and equipping for the believer to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you," as Jesus said in Matthew 28:19-20¹⁷.

This is why the Church should not act as a business outside of adopting practical business practices and adapting them to be scripturally-based concepts such as financial responsibility, servant leadership, or efficient management skills.

¹⁷ Matt. 28:19-20 (NIV)

The churches purpose was never to have the fiscal growth that this world sees or to make a profit. A desire for growth in the church should stem out of the knowledge that “Jesus Christ is the head of the church and hence the source and goal of its entire life, true growth is only possible in obedience to him. Conversely, if the church becomes detached from Jesus Christ and his word, it cannot truly grow however active and successful it may seem to be.”¹⁸ Once the church begins to chase after anything other than Jesus, it will begin to fall. The church can and should adapt business concepts while maintaining a foundation in scripture; however, the focus has to be on making the name of Jesus known rather than making the name of the church or the pastor known.

Disregarding the churches practices and turning the body of believers into little less than a business is not ethical for the church because of the corporate worlds emphasis on growth cost and profit. However, the local church ethically can and should seek to find how it can learn about good and efficient practices from the corporate world. It is not the sharing of ideas that creates the trouble of a market-driven church, but the reality that when a church dives into the corporate world, it can quickly lose what makes it the church: Jesus. It becomes as Romans 12:2¹⁹ warns against, “conformed to the pattern of this world,” rather than loving God and loving others in a world that does not.

¹⁸ Guinness. *Dining with the Devil*, 39.

¹⁹ Rom. 12:2 (NIV)

CHAPTER FIVE

Church Principles in the Corporate World

Introduction

Throughout corporate culture there has been a rise in the amount of businesses that have a goal that is something other than simply creating a profit. As the culture in America shifts towards the desire to do good and give back, the corporate world has acknowledged this shift and has made adjustments to create business strategies that fit the “do good” mindset accordingly.

This mindset is seen throughout philanthropic businesses such as TOMS who has built its entire brand around the phrase “one for one.” This phrase means that for every pair of shoes or glasses purchases with TOMS, the company will donate a pair to a child in need. TOMS, while being a for-profit organization, likely wouldn’t say the company is in business solely to make money, but rather, to give help to those who are in need.

TOMS is an example of a business with a philanthropic business plan. This type of business plan could be said to have many similarities to the mission of a church. When comparing TOMS to the key roles of the local church as defined in previous chapters, TOMS has lined their missional organization up with one of the key roles of the local church: service. The difference is that, rather than performing acts of service out of a desire to serve God, TOMS has hopes of altruism that motivate the companys giving. With “56% of Americans [reporting] that religion is

very important in their lives”¹ and more businesses moving toward missions and visions that give back to their communities, this trend in the corporate world brings up a pressing question: What is the benefit, if any, of supplementing a business plan with traditionally Christian values?

Secondly, this chapter will continue the comparison of a business and the Christian faith from the previous chapter. There are many examples of self-named “Christian businesses.” Does a “Christian business” need to look differently ethically as opposed to the ethical standards of a non-Christian business?

The “Christian Business:” An Example

Don Flow is the Chairman and CEO of Flow Companies, Inc. This organization is an automobile dealership with locations in North Carolina and Virginia. Don Flow is well known as a Christian man. In studies, it has been found that “religious individuals tend to be more hopeful, agreeable, and conscientious, and to express the values of honesty and forgiveness.”² These findings show that the “character strengths [found in religious individuals] suggest that more religious works may view themselves as being and may actually be better, more virtuous organizational members, as well as better adjusted.”³ Upon further examination, one can see that Flow’s beliefs and values from his Christian faith have infused themselves into the way he runs his dealerships. Flow Companies has three

¹ Chan-Serafin, Suzanne, Brief, Arthur P., and George, Jennifer M. “PERSPECTIVE - How Does Religion Matter and Why? Religion and the Organizational Sciences”

² Chan-Serafin, Brief, and George. “PERSPECTIVE – How Does Religion Matter and Why? Religion and the Organizational Sciences”

³ Chan-Serafin, Brief, and George. “PERSPECTIVE – How Does Religion Matter and Why? Religion and the Organizational Sciences”

principles that guide all of its practices. These three principles outline that Flow Companies seeks to have:

1. A covenant with [the company's] customers to be a place that keeps its promises and is worthy of their trust.
2. A community of people who work together towards a common vision.
3. A commitment to work towards the common good of every city where [the company does] business.⁴

One of the remarkable concepts of Flow Companies is that the organization has taken an industry, namely car sales, that is often filled with unethical behavior and wrought with deception and created a company that fits within the industry yet doesn't fit within the typical description of the other businesses in the industry. Both new and used car dealerships tend to have a reputation of using manipulative selling tactics to induce customers into purchasing cars. In fact, "When it comes to qualities like honesty and integrity, survey after survey has the auto salesman's knuckles scraping the bottom of the barrel."⁵ Rather than accepting these opinions as the nature of the business, Flow saw the horrible reputation of the automobile sales industry as a chance to live his faith out in the secular world and "[build] an organization that would have a slightly different orientation than most people have toward the marketplace."⁶

⁴ *Flow Automotive Family*. <http://www.flowauto.com/History.aspx> (accessed November 2, 2014).

⁵ Tom Van Riper, "Car Dealers' Biggest Lies," *Forbes*, January 25, 2007, http://www.forbes.com/2007/01/24/car-dealers-lies-biz-cx_tvr_0125lies.html (accessed November 7, 2014).

⁶ *Faith & Leadership*. <http://www.faithandleadership.com/qa/don-flow-how-do-you-live-faithfully> (accessed November 7, 2014).

Flow Companies are not a church or any form of ministry. It is a fully secular company that is run by a devoted Christian who chooses to allow his beliefs to dictate how he runs his organization. Through Flow Companies, “Flow intentionally embodies belief in practice, hoping to transform the business environment in a way that embodies Christian principles.”⁷

In an interview with *Faith & Leadership*, Flow explained what he called his “United Nations approach” to living out his calling as a Christian in a secular business without also turning into a ministry:

Finding common language is an extraordinarily important witness for Christians – respect, truth, responsibility – defining common language that creates culture and community is a life-giving work. It takes a lot of time. It takes building relationships.⁸

Flow Companies’ ethical standards look differently than what is expected of the average car dealership or even the average business. This is shown by the fact that Flow Companies can boast being a BBB Accredited Business. The standards of BBB accreditation as outlined by the organization’s website are:

1. Building trust through establishing and maintaining a positive track record in the marketplace
2. Advertising honestly by adhering to established standards of advertising and selling
3. Telling the truth and honestly representing products and services, including clear and adequate disclosures of all material terms.
4. Maintaining transparency by openly identifying the nature, location, and ownership of the business, and clearly disclosing all policies, guarantees and procedures that bear on a customer’s decision to buy

⁷ *Faith & Leadership*. <http://www.faithandleadership.com/qa/don-flow-how-do-you-live-faithfully> (accessed November 7, 2014).

⁸ *Faith & Leadership*. <http://www.faithandleadership.com/qa/don-flow-how-do-you-live-faithfully> (accessed November 7, 2014).

5. Honoring promises and abiding by all written agreements and verbal representations
6. Being responsive in addressing marketplace disputes quickly, professionally, and in good faith
7. Safeguarding privacy through protecting data while also respecting the preferences of customers regarding the use of their information
8. Embodying integrity through approaching all business dealings, marketplace transactions and commitments with integrity.⁹

The BBB accreditation of the company shows that, through making an active and conscious effort to “institutionalize Christian beliefs in a pluralistic marketplace,” Flow Companies has set the bar higher ethically than the majority of their secular competitors.¹⁰ As a Christian business owner, Flow’s business strategies reflect that of his beliefs. Because of these beliefs, there should be a higher expectation of serving both customers and employees as well as a sense of purpose through even secular jobs.

Flow Companies currently represents 20 different car manufacturers ranging from Honda to Porsche and has 36 different dealerships throughout the North Carolina and Virginia area. On the company’s website, it explains that the “growth [of Flow Automotive Companies] has been driven by a strategy to attract and develop high achieving people of outstanding character who are committed to operational excellence and to providing extraordinary personal service.”¹¹ As mentioned earlier, Flow views this as a way he can bring his Christian faith into the

⁹ *BBB of Northwest North Carolina*. <http://www.bbb.org/northwestern-north-carolina/Business-Reviews/auto-dealers-new-cars/flow-automotive-companies-in-winston-salem-nc-7001221/bbb-accreditation> (accessed November 7, 2014).

¹⁰ *Faith & Leadership*. <http://www.faithandleadership.com/qa/don-flow-how-do-you-live-faithfully> (accessed November 7, 2014).

¹¹ *Flow Automotive Family*. <http://www.flowauto.com/History.aspx> (accessed November 2, 2014).

business world. He believes that by providing excellent service, hiring and supporting employees with incredible character, and establishing an environment of mutual respect, his organization can be a beacon of Christian ideals in an industry that is usually very dark.

Through the example set by Don Flow and Flow Companies, it is seen that the “Christian business” run by a believer when operated differently than a strictly secular business reaps great benefits. This difference in operation is out of the Christians calling to have his or her faith be a part of every aspect of his or her life and not simply because it is good for the organization. However, this does become a benefit, as it can be seen through Flow’s example, that when an organization implements highly Christian ideals into its business practices, the organization is likely to thrive regardless of whether or not the customer knows the organization is run by a Christian.

The “Christian Business” and Controversial Topics

In the Bible, Jesus tells his disciples,

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. This is why the world hates you.¹²

This passage from John explains to the Christian that there will be controversy with Christians and non-Christians, who are referred to as “the world.” This controversy comes from the friction created from the opposing forces of God’s perfect goodness and the sin in this world. As Christians trying to go through the process of becoming

¹² John 15:18-25 (NIV)

more like God, this passage reminds the believer that there will be a noticeable difference between the way the believer is called to live and the way the rest of the world or the non-believers choose to live. In fact, “religious values and religious living cannot be applied at certain times and places, only to be ignored for others... A set of principles which are marked ‘For Sunday Only’ is no religion at all”¹³ and therefore, to a certain extent, a Christian business owner’s values must infuse into the way he or she does business.

In light of a business owned by Christians, this means that often the way a “Christian business” operates will be different than a fully secular business. These differences can range from small differences that cause non-believers to be confused to major differences that cause outrage from non-believers.

Truett Cathy’s popular restaurant chain, Chick-fil-A is well known as being run off of Christian values and owned by a deeply rooted Christian family. In fact, on its website, Chick-fil-A states that the corporate purpose of the organization is “To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to [the organization]. To have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick-fil-A.”¹⁴

Since its original opening, Chick-fil-A has instituted a policy requiring every restaurant location to close its doors on Sunday. This causes “many to question the chain’s policy and how Chick-fil-A could forgo sales on one of the busiest days for

¹³ Nabil A. Ibrahim and John P. Angelidis. “The Long-Term Performance of Small Businesses: Are There Differences between “Christian-Based” Companies and Their Secular Counterparts?”

¹⁴ Chick-Fil-A. <http://www.chick-fil-a.com/FAQ#?category=2> (accessed October 11, 2014).

food service.”¹⁵ Amidst the questioning, Cathy has stood firm in his decision to keep his restaurants closed on Sunday often calling this decision “one of the best business decisions he has ever made.”¹⁶ Chick-fil-A’s “Closed-On-Sunday policy” has been a staple of the restaurant since its first opening. When questioned about his reasoning for closing the restaurant on Sundays, Cathy explained that the restaurants policy “says two important things to people: One, that there must be something special about the way Chick-fil-A people view their spiritual life and, two, that there must be something special about how Chick-fil-A feels about its people.”¹⁷

Many scratch their heads at why Chick-fil-A would implement this policy and go without the sales that could be produced on a busy day for all restaurants. Chick-fil-A, while using the Closed-On-Sunday policy as a chance for worship and family, isn’t hurting by closing its doors on Sunday. In fact, “Chick-fil-A restaurants often generate more business per square foot in six days than many other quick-service restaurants produce in seven.”¹⁸ There are many factors that could and do contribute to this incredible amount of business, including great customer service, trustworthy food, and clean restaurants, but the point is that Chick-fil-A is a business known as a “Christian business” that has implemented its Christian values into every aspect of its work in order to “glorify God by being a faithful steward of

¹⁵ *Truett Cathy*. <http://truettcathy.com/pdfs/ClosedonSunday.pdf> (accessed November 2, 2014).

¹⁶ *Truett Cathy*. <http://truettcathy.com/pdfs/ClosedonSunday.pdf> (accessed November 2, 2014).

¹⁷ *Truett Cathy*. <http://truettcathy.com/pdfs/ClosedonSunday.pdf> (accessed November 2, 2014).

¹⁸ *Truett Cathy*. <http://truettcathy.com/pdfs/ClosedonSunday.pdf> (accessed November 2, 2014).

all that is entrusted to [them].”¹⁹ Even in doing what seems counter-intuitive to a non-believer, Chick-fil-A has seen tremendous success and growth in the organization that cannot be said for many of the company’s purely secular competitors such as McDonalds. In fact, a recent study showed that, “with respect to their firm’s overall performance (relative to their industry) over the past 5 years, the mean for “Christian-based” companies was 3.20 while their secular counterparts had a mean score of 3.12. In terms of the annual growth rate in sales, the “Christian-based” firms averaged 7.28%, while others averaged 6.46%.”²⁰ This shows that, while these statistics do not boast huge variances, there is often difference in the success of organizations that are Christian-based as opposed to the secular competitors.

Though the wild success of Chick-fil-A shows how a business can still be highly successful while taking a stand for Christian values, there are other examples of businesses owned by Christians that, while they have remained financially successful, have experienced what Jesus means when he says the world will hate the believer.²¹

Hobby Lobby recently came under fire in the news for fighting a mandate by Obamacare requiring the organization to provide 20 different types of birth control to their employees through its health care coverage plan. While many people mistakenly thought this meant Hobby Lobby was trying to prevent any birth control

¹⁹ *Chick-Fil-A*. <http://www.chick-fil-a.com/FAQ#?category=2> (accessed October 11, 2014).

²⁰ Ibrahim and Angelidis. “The Long-Term Performance of Small Businesses: Are There Differences between “Christian-Based” Companies and Their Secular Counterparts?”

²¹ John 15:18-25 (NIV)

use for its employees, the Green family who owns the craft store chain, was only opposing “Plan B, which is also known as the ‘morning after pill,’ Ella, another emergency contraceptive, Copper Intrauterine Device and IUD with progestin – forms of birth control that some believe can cause or are akin to abortion.”²² The Green family made it clear that they “have no objection to the other 16 FDA-approved contraceptives required by the law that do not interfere with the implantation of the fertilized egg” and that “the four objectionable drugs and devices are widely available and affordable, and the employees are free to obtain them.”²³

Since “providing these objectionable drugs and devices violates the deeply held religious convictions of the Greens... That life begins at conception,”²⁴ the family took a stand on Christian values though the organization is not a church or ministry. Taking this stand, though it ended in the legal result the store desired, ultimately led to a lot of unwanted criticism and publicity for Hobby Lobby.

Through the minor example in Chick-fil-A and the rather major example with Hobby Lobby, it is clear that carrying the label of a “Christian business” in a secular marketplace can cause the organization to pay a price. This often results from the “Christian business” being called to a higher ethical and moral standard than other businesses because its owners are called to a higher ethical and moral standard.

²² Billy Hallowell, “Pastor Joel Osteen’s Wife Hits Back at ‘Critics and Cynics’ and Addresses Furor Over Her Viral Sermon About Worshipping God,” *The Blaze*, September 5, 2014, <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/09/05/exclusive-victoria-osteen-responds-to-evangelical-furor-over-viral-youre-not-doing-it-for-god-clip/> (accessed September 15, 2014).

²³ Billy Hallowell, “Pastor Joel Osteen’s Wife Hits Back at ‘Critics and Cynics’ and Addresses Furor Over Her Viral Sermon About Worshipping God.”

²⁴ Billy Hallowell, “Pastor Joel Osteen’s Wife Hits Back at ‘Critics and Cynics’ and Addresses Furor Over Her Viral Sermon About Worshipping God.”

This higher calling does not always cause negative implications for the organization, as it did for Hobby Lobby, but can also provide earthly benefits to the Christian business as seen with Chick-fil-A and Flow Companies.

Conclusion

Chick-fil-A, Hobby Lobby, and Flow Companies are just a few among many businesses that have Christian owners who choose to infuse their Christian ethics, values, and morals into their businesses. These companies show that, “the rise of openly faith-based organizations and discourse surrounding the role and importance of spirituality are just a couple of the indicators that religion, in its various guises, is playing a role in organizational life.”²⁵ There is a difference between businesses, such as Flow Companies, that simply choose to introduce its Christian ethics into the business and Hobby Lobby that chooses to also bring the values that come with Christianity into the business world.

Typically, a business owner can expect positive results from implementing Christian ethics such as respect, honesty, loyalty, and service into their business practices. This is true for organizations like Flow Companies and Chick-fil-A and is very beneficial for both of the companies and the way they are viewed in the public. The warning Jesus gives Christians in John 15²⁶ comes to reality when an organization begins to implement its Christian values into its business. As a result, the Christian-led business will likely face controversies due to the difference in the

²⁵ Chan-Serafin, Brief, and George. “PERSPECTIVE – How Does Religion Matter and Why? Religion and the Organizational Sciences”

²⁶ John 15 (NIV)

way a Christian is called to live and the way a non-Christian would choose to live. Though it is not wrong for a private business owned by Christians to infuse Christian values into the way the organization is run, it often leads to what can be seen as negative outcomes through the eyes of a non-believer but are fleeting earthly consequences in the eyes of a Christian

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

The core purpose of a business is to create a profit. This is not to say that there are not other motives in doing business; however, at its core, a business's purpose is to create a profit. Every business has either a good or a service it intends to sell to a customer. This need to sell a good or a service in order to fulfill its core purpose of creating a profit means that there is a natural shift towards a consumer-driven strategy that focuses sales, advertising, research, and product development on the consumer. A business cannot survive without a customer. If there is not a customer, a business will fail to make a profit and, therefore, fail in its core purpose.

With this definition and purpose of a business in mind, corporate America must determine at what cost the business is willing to make a profit. The ethical boundaries for a business have been drawn through regulations made by the law of the government. These regulations or laws state the potential causes for harm or threats of harm to an employee, customer, or environment. It is considered unethical for a business to perform any activity that knowingly places an employee, customer, or the environment in any kind of harm.

These regulations and laws that guide business ethics, by nature, create lower ethical standards than those standards that the Christian has been given as ordinances by God. This means that the "Christian business," or a secular business run by a Christian, must maintain a higher ethical calling than a business run by a

non-believer. Running a business with Christian ethics has proven to be very beneficial when looking at examples such as Flow Companies or Chick-fil-A.

Flow Companies, an automotive sales organization, has implemented Christian ethics through creating a business environment that values honesty and integrity when the typical business in the industry has a reputation of dishonesty. Flow Companies does this through creating an atmosphere of trust for employees, hiring employees of good character, and modeling Christian ethics in leadership as well.

Chick-fil-A has implemented Christian values and ethics in its business practices. It has implemented Christian values by closing its fast food restaurants on Sundays so its employees can worship, spend time with family, and rest. Though this policy has caused the secular world to shake its head, Chick-fil-A has not received public criticism for choosing to close its doors on Sundays. Similarly to Flow Companies, Chick-fil-A makes a point to invest in its employees, hire people of high moral standing, and show Christian leadership starting at the head of the organization.

However, running a business where the company takes a stand on Christian values has been proven to be costly for organizations such as Hobby Lobby. This does not mean that it was not necessarily right for the owners to stand for what they believe in; rather it gave the organization a lot of unwanted national attention.

In contrast to the calling of a secular business and even the “Christian business,” the ultimate purpose of the local church is to actively seek four key roles

in the community where it has been placed: missions or service, community, equipping believers, and worship as a part of the churches greater calling to love God and love others.

The church is called to a higher standard than a business. There are many things that are considered unethical in a church setting that are not considered unethical or even “bad” in a secular setting. As an example, if a pastor were to go to a bar with friends and drink excessively after church on Sunday, that would be considered unethical; however, if the CEO of a corporation were to do the same after work, his or her actions might not be looked upon fondly, but they wouldn’t be considered unethical.

The church must also model the Gospel to non-believers in actions and through words, which is why the “prosperity gospel” presents a large problem for the local church. With a false gospel such as the “prosperity gospel” modeling a consumeristic mindset for believers, it is evident that a believer maintaining a consumeristic mindset toward the church is wrong.

Using the definition of the purpose of a church as loving God and allowing that love to be an outpouring to love others, the church ethically can and should make use of the resources it has to reach non-believers with the Gospel. This is why the market-driven church alone is not an inherently bad or unethical concept. A church can and should employ some useful business strategies to aid in efficiently managing or marketing the church. The Village Church in Dallas, Texas does this well by using a multiple-campus approach. Each campus listens to the same

sermon, typically preached by Pastor Matt Chandler, but each campus has its own community pastors, small groups, and worship bands. This allows for incredible growth in the church without the church losing its ability to play the four key roles of mission, community, worship, and equipping in the lives of the congregation in the church.

The church does not need business strategies to remain relevant. Relevance “masks both its built-in transience and its catch-22 demand. Dean Inge captured the transience in his celebrated line ‘He who marries the spirit of the age soon becomes a widower.’” But it was Simone Weil who highlighted the catch-22: “To be always relevant, you have to say things which are eternal.”¹ The gospel will always be relevant to men and women because it is the eternal story of salvation; however, this does not mean that a church cannot use business strategies for efficiency as seen with The Village Church.

There does come a point when the mentality of reaching people no matter the cost proves itself to be unethical in the church. This line is seen in the example provided by former pastor at Mars Hill Church, Mark Driscoll, in his unethical use of an organization to deceptively boost his book, *Real Marriage*, to *The New York Times* bestseller list when the book had not actually been purchased enough to receive a spot on the bestseller list.

There are both benefits and dangers to the market-driven church and the “Christian business.” When used with good intentions, both the market-driven

¹ Guinness. *Dining with the Devil*, 63.

church and the “Christian business” can thrive by learning from each other’s ethics and strategies. Similarly, when these strategies are used in the wrong context or outside of ethical means, both types of organization can find themselves in negative or undesirable situations.

As the corporate world and the church continue to grow and evolve over time, ethics are going to play an even more important role in keeping people safe from the harm that can come from unethical behavior. It will be up to the future church and corporate leaders to deem it important enough to place emphasis on the topic of ethics and to place the large amount of emphasis that the topic deserves.

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