

Equipping Thoughts for Leaders



December 1, 2019

I once listened to a message on church leadership from a very good speaker who had some excellent points to make about leadership that was applicable to both the business as well as the church world. He referred to a few Bible verses but much of his instruction was from business principles.

Near the end of his talk he started using examples and quotes from people's lives that reinforced his topic. I began to feel a stirring from the Spirit that echoed in me, "Hold on...something isn't quite right here!"

Every example he gave was from famous people in the scientific and business arenas but none of them were historically known as Christians. He even gave examples from people who were atheists and deists like Charles Darwin, from other religions like Gandhi, as well as secular money makers whose life devotion was wealth and affluence.

I was reminded about places in the Bible in which spiritual heroes/leaders were highlighted. God seldom used people outside His Kingdom to give positive examples of how He wants His people to live. Can you imagine turning to Hebrews 11 and instead of finding people like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses you would find Steve Jobs, Henry Ford, Warren Buffett, Rupert Murdoch, and Gandhi? The heroes God highlighted in the

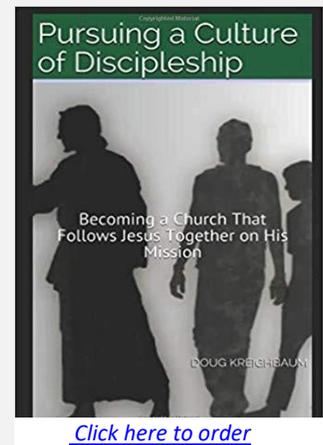
Bible were know for their faith, not their dynamic leadership ability. *Hebrews 11:2 It was their faith that made our ancestors pleasing to God.*

Church Growth and Business Models

The downside of business models for church leadership is that we begin to learn more from Peter Drucker than the Apostle Peter.

During the past 30-40 years most church leaders have been affected by what has come to be known as the "Church Growth Movement." It brought much-needed emphasis on things like being effective in reaching the unchurched and lost. Many good business principles were brought into churches to help them organize, develop leadership, and see progress. Things like vision statements, strategic planning, and leadership development were highlighted. These things were largely absent in church leadership environments up to that time.

We can learn good principles from business. Even Jesus used business parables to help explain the Kingdom. Remember that Jesus, Peter, James, and John ran small businesses and all 12 of the disciples came from the marketplace.



There has also been a downside to this philosophy. We began to hear more from Peter Drucker than the Apostle Peter. I know of some churches who hired management consultants to give advice to their leadership teams on advancement and how to navigate through problems they were facing. In one church the problem was eliminated but it led the church away from God's nature of a loving family and replaced it with an "old school" corporate climate. The staff subtly began to look out for their own interest in fear of losing their "positions" and the whole climate of the church shifted from a family paradigm to more of a corporate business model. Even the founder of the church could no longer stay in it.

We must remember that most of the qualifications for leaders in God's house are not business characteristics that generate success (Budgets, Buildings, and Behinds sitting in the meetings). God rarely chose leaders who looked like the best or brightest from the business world's point of view.

Consider this example I once read by Tim Hansel of how a Management Consultant firm would have advised Jesus on choosing His team.

*To: Jesus, Son of Joseph
Woodcrafter's Carpenter Shop
Nazareth 25922
From: Jordan Management Consultants
Dear Sir:*

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for managerial positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests; and we have not only run the results through our computer, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant.

The profiles of all tests are included, and you will want to study each of them carefully. As part of our service, we make some general comments for your guidance, much as an auditor will include some general statements. This is given as a result of staff consultation and comes without any additional fee.

It is the staff opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capability.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale.

We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew had been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind, and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious, and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man. All of the other profiles are self-explanatory.

We wish you every success in your new venture.

*Sincerely,
Jordan Management Consultants*

Two problems that can develop when we approach church leadership with corporate business models.

- **We can tend to value certain types of people/leaders more highly than others.** This goes directly against Paul's teaching on the Body of Christ in which every person is vital, even those who are not considered valuable by others (1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4:1-16, Romans 12:1-10 etc.). In business models, people who have great public giftings as well as abilities to move organizations forward subtly become more valuable than others.

I remember what a top businessman who spoke at the Global Leadership Summit said to the crowd that echoed this very sentiment. He said that he sorted his workers into "A" and "B" level players each year. He made sure the "B" levels were eventually removed or fired.

This is crazy!!! Remember God's church is a family. You may fire business partners, but you can't fire your family. In a loving family environment, you help out of place members adapt to household chores more suited for them, but you don't get rid of them.

- **The end (success) justifies the means.** In "Old School" business models the bottom line is the means of evaluation. In corporate church models, numbers and influence are the indicators of God's blessing, so we evaluate our operations by those benchmarks.

I remember one church that prepared a group of people to respond to "spontaneous baptisms" as if they were just now getting saved because it would help other timid people get baptized. When this was exposed, they justified it because it helped others to be motivated to get baptized and join the church. The obvious problem with this was it wasn't honest. The church is to be "the pillar and support of truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). It is hard to be that when you are dishonest in order to help the bottom line, more people, more baptisms.

One mega-church in the Church Growth Movement covered up the leader's sexual escapades because exposing it would have led to less people "finding God and becoming part of the church." These types of things go directly against the

nature of God and the character He wants among His people. Paul showed us that the motivations behind what we do are more important than what we do (1 Corinthians 13:1-3 “none of these things matter if we don’t do them with the motivation of love”).

Let’s learn every helpful thing we can from the business and corporate world but make sure that we apply them in the leadership nature of God which is family.

It is good for leaders to always remember that heaven’s government is, and always has been a family. The ultimate event we are all heading towards isn’t a board/business meeting but a wedding with the rest of God’s family (Revelation 19:7, 9). God’s plan is a family plan.

Doug Kreighbaum
dkreighbaum@gmail.com
www.c2cfamily.org