



ENTREPRENEURS
TRANSFORMING
NATIONS

by John E. Mulford and Ken Eldred

Kingdom entrepreneurs represent an engine that can transform a nation from one of self-centered individuals to one of other-centered people who love God and each other. A transformed society is characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22); whereas an untransformed society is subject to sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like (Gal 5:19-21).

Someone might say, “I thought the church was the engine that transforms society.” But who is the church? It is the body of believers, many of whom spend most of their time in the marketplace, where they are to be salt and light. So when the church is operating as it should, much of the transformation it brings will happen through business.

We don’t mean to shortchange other influential sectors of society—education, arts and entertainment, media, and government, to name a few. Believers are called to be salt and light there as well. However business has a unique, catalytic role to play in societal transformation. Not only does it generate the wealth that enables society to support arts, entertainment, and a full range of social activities that enrich life, but it also provides an ideal platform for modeling and conveying the whole gospel.

God made man steward of the whole earth and commanded him to rule over it (Genesis 1). God also created man in His image, so man has amazing creativity. Man can apply that creativity in developing the earth to support the billions of people that resulted from God’s mandate to be fruitful and multiply. Much of the development needed to support the earth’s population comes through business.

Business is first and foremost about people—personal development and interpersonal interactions and relationships. Man was created to work and feels most fulfilled when he has done a good job. In today’s economy, few people work alone. Business thrusts people together—employees working

together and with suppliers to create products and services, and interacting with customers from product concept to delivery. Deadlines, budget crunches, and technical problems create pressures that test character and relationships. The kingdom business person has ample opportunity to “live the gospel” in these situations.

So where are the kingdom businesses? Why don’t we see more transformation? In short, we do not see more because, even when a large fraction of a nation believes in God, that does not mean everyone “knows” God. And even those who know God may not be willing to obey and follow Him.

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Some of the gap between belief and obedience is due to lack of knowledge. Some is a lack of understanding about how to apply that knowledge. The rest is rebellion—not doing what we know we should. We will start with knowledge, because people can’t obey what they do not understand.

Many Christians think that “acceptable” Christianity in business consists of telling the truth and keeping promises. While these are necessary, they certainly are not sufficient to bring the whole gospel to the workplace. But activists who want to confine the gospel to church buildings have intimidated Christians at work. By keeping the focus on surface symbols—displaying Bibles and holding prayer meetings—and arguing against those symbols, they divert attention from the real mechanism of gospel transmission—godly people caring for others through their daily attitudes, words, and behavior. A kingdom business will have a vision, mission and strategy evidenced by its policies, procedures and culture that encourages these godly values. The sum total of all of these elements constitutes

the worldview of the business—not just of the leaders, but of all the employees of the business.

Let’s look at how the worldview that infuses a company’s culture affects attitudes, behaviors and results in that company. And then we will examine the implications for society if that worldview dominates business in a nation.

Man-Made View of Business

Three worldviews of business exist—Man-made, Principled, and Kingdom. A man-made worldview is one devised by people without consulting God either through prayer or through study of His principles. Man-made views may reflect location and time in history, because, even though people think they are devising everything themselves, they are influenced by the received wisdom of past generations. However, a man-made worldview will eventually degrade to the lowest level of human sinfulness. Here, we assume that the man-made worldview has reached its lowest form.

Principled Worldview of Business

The Principled worldview refers to making judgments and decisions according to a set of principles. Religious people follow the principles of their religious books. Most religious writings share a common set of valid principles; however, trying to follow the letter of the law without a heart attuned to its purpose leads to failure in two ways. First, people lack the ability to obey the written rule. And second, people distort the meaning of the rule and then follow the distortion. Jesus criticized the Pharisees for the latter. Although the principled worldview could refer to any set of principles, for this article, we assume that the principles come from, or are at least consistent with, Judeo-Christian principles from the Bible.

A Kingdom worldview is based on a vibrant personal relationship with God, because it is His Kingdom that followers are sincerely trying to understand. Followers do this by asking God to illuminate His principles in their hearts. Just as Jesus restated many principles from the Old Testament and then held them to a much stricter standard of heart attitude in addition to outward obedience, a kingdom worldview

requires one to go beyond the letter to the spirit of the law. Societal condition represents the bottom line result of these worldviews. A fully degraded man-made worldview produces misery and despair because people are so focused on their short-term self-interest that they reject all the other-oriented behaviors that produce an orderly, healthy society. A society in which most decisions are based on Judeo-Christian principles will be more orderly and productive. However the pressures of an economic or social crisis may cause people to slip into sinful behavior associated with the man-made worldview. Even when times are good, the principled society may wonder, “Is this all there is?” Only those operating according to a kingdom worldview will experience the peace and joy of knowing that they fulfilling their creator’s plan for their lives.

Although any manager can begin to implement a kingdom worldview in his sphere of authority, it is only a kingdom owner who can fully implement a kingdom worldview throughout the organization. For this reason, we focus on kingdom entrepreneurs, who have both the authority and the responsibility to operate their businesses according to a kingdom perspective (column three in the Table).

Why is following a kingdom worldview important? Won’t God honor His principles even when we don’t acknowledge God? Won’t God work in our lives and businesses whether we recognize Him or not? The answer to both questions is yes; however, when we do not acknowledge God as the source of all we have, we forfeit our personal relationship with Him. It is that personal relationship that enables us to have a kingdom worldview, which is really God’s view of the world. Let’s see what we miss when we don’t have that kingdom worldview:

We miss out on the wisdom to choose the right path. Our good strategy might miss God’s Kingdom direction. A kingdom entrepreneur wants to know where God is headed in his industry so that he can cooperate with God’s plan.

We miss out on God’s power that changes us. His power helps us resist temptation. It enables us to discern the

Worldview of Business			
ATTITUDES	MAN-MADE	PRINCIPLED	KINGDOM
Standard for Right and Wrong	Individual sets own standard	Live by set of principles	Internalize principles of the Bible
Strategy	Maximize self	Maximize profits	Maximize giving
Product	Cut corners to save costs	Excellence to meet customer demand	Create life-improving products & services
Marketing	Deceive others to sell more	Truth to those who read fine print	Truth for everyone; help those who lack knowledge
Customer	Do the least that will satisfy the customer	Do what you promised	Do the right thing for the customer regardless of cost
Employee	Drain him, then discard & replace him	Equip him to produce	Equip & care for whole person
Business Approach to Laws	Deceive & cheat but don’t get caught	Obey letter of law; look for loopholes	Obey spirit of law
Laws Approach to Business	Law extracts profits	Law protects private property & contracts	Law protects private property & contracts, but at lower cost due to obedience

needs of our employees and to love them with unconditional love.

We miss out on God’s power that can change the world around us. It can produce supernatural results beyond our intellect and ability. God can give us new inventions and innovations, confuse powerful enemies, repair damaged relationships, and turn the heart of the king in our favor.

When entrepreneurs exercise a kingdom worldview in their businesses we should see a successful company that meets the needs of its customers with excellence, but we should see much more. Let’s examine the beneficial results God produces through kingdom entrepreneurs:

- Blessing that flows from the business to all those it touches.
- Transformed lives—employees, customers, suppliers, and the general public.
- Everyone should recognize the hand of God on the business, even unbelievers.
- And, as a result, we should see revival.

Unfortunately, so few companies operate according to a Kingdom worldview that their impact is negligible. The Principled worldview tends to prevail in developed nations, whereas the Man-made view dominates in less-developed nations.

Contrary to the man-made worldview that man can improve the world through the power of his intellect and will, the world will spiral downward into depravity unless man operates according to a God-instilled kingdom worldview. We shouldn’t be too encouraged by the economic performance of nations where most companies operate according to principled worldviews, because that performance is not sustainable without an injection of the kingdom worldview. For the most part, these nations are living off spiritual capital accumulated over hundreds of years, deposited by people with a kingdom worldview.

People who follow Judeo-Christian principles because they received the habit from their parents’ generation can quickly slide into a degraded man-made worldview when the system is shocked economically, politically or technologically. Panicked crowds rarely remember the niceties of their principles. They tend to focus on their own survival.

Even mild pressures can tip principled business people into unprincipled decisions. Just look at Enron. In order to keep the numbers looking good, seemingly honest people first fudged and then fabricated the numbers. Who knows what people might do in a full-out financial panic.

Worldview of Business			
ATTITUDES	MAN-MADE	PRINCIPLED	KINGDOM
Philosophy	Fight to survive	Play to win	Excel to glorify God
Civil Society	Not my problem	Good citizen. Duty.	Care for needy
Power	Strong take from weak	Strong outperform weak	Strong help weak
Trust	Trust no one	Trust but verify; not everyone obeys laws	Trust but verify; not everyone sanctified
Investment	Little—investor can't capture benefit	Much—achievers keep benefits	Much—achievers fulfilled by sharing benefits
Income and Growth	Low—workers lack vision & incentives	High. Achievers motivated by money, prestige & power	High. Excellence & diligence to glorify God
Government Officials	Officials extort money	Officials enforce letter of law	Officials enforce spirit of law
Wealth Distribution	Highly skewed to powerful	Highly skewed to high achievers	Less skewed due to higher average achievement and voluntary giving by high achievers
Values Promoted by Products & Services	High percentage depraved	Mostly good; some depraved	All godly
Societal Condition	Misery and despair	Striving and questioning	Joy and peace

Kingdom entrepreneurs are the answer to both the current problem of nations hamstrung by a man-made worldview and to the future problem facing nations hanging on to principles without a foundation. The process may start slowly, but it should be viral and exponential. It starts slowly, because, before people can cooperate with God in His plans, they must first be prepared. They must be transformed into the image of Christ so that they will have His heart for the world, His perspective on the world, His wisdom and knowledge about business, and His attitudes and behavior that will transform the hearts of people.

A small group of vibrant kingdom entrepreneurs can spark change that envelops a whole nation in a generation or two. Take the case of South Korea. Although many factors have influenced its economic resurgence, one strong factor has been the role of kingdom entrepreneurs. Notice we say kingdom entrepreneurs, not just Christians who are in business. Other countries have seen similar increases in the number of Christians in their country, and even the number of Christians in business. But in

Korea, many Christian business people were taught to see their business as an extension of what God was doing in their lives and in their nation. That intentional kingdom worldview focused their efforts and gave them eyes to see where God was moving in their nation and the ability to be swept along in that stream of God's blessing.

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