

UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF CATHOLIC BUSINESS EDUCATION

**A Response by Osvaldo M. Ferreiro
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This session had many very thoughtful papers; moreover, they are profound and fascinating ones.

In father Francis Hilton and Peter Lorenzi's paper it is very interesting the presentation of the first two stages in the faith-reason partnership (stage one made faith formation a senior partner; stage two made it a junior partner).

I fear that the sentence by Boston College Business Dean "Religion plays no role in the curriculum at the graduate level at Boston College", may be true in many of the MBA programs and in many Catholic Business Schools in General.

I agree that not only in the Jesuit schools, but everywhere "Business Programs are fundamentally at a stage two development" (even hopefully). In relation to future progress, at stage three, a good question is: How do we really enter "faith" at stage three, in a world in which everyone seems to have his/her particular faith?

Thomas Bausch paper is a very profound one; it challenges us to think about the true ends of our business schools. Very impressive, in that sense, it results the sentence on page 2: "To call persons, specially the talents of human persons, is the special work of our Business Schools."

However, I think that most business faculty would not understand and would not agree with the sentences: "the purpose of a Business School on a Catholic campus is evangelization"; "All aspects of our work must be considered as evangelization activity ...". Are the current catholic business schools like that? Many would not recognize themselves.

I completely agree with the author in the sense that "Catholic Business Education is incomplete and does not consider the entire mission of the modern business school". Thus, I wonder, How much are Catholic Business Schools doing in the direction of evangelization of the culture?

The six ways of evangelization that the author presents are an important contribution and represent a big challenge to each one of us as faculty of a Catholic Business School. Finally, it sounds very strongly the question: Are we truly looking to the ends? (telling the good news?).

The paper by Brother Victor Forlani and Joseph Castellano tells a great experience (acceptable, unconventional) which it is very much related to the previous two papers. It is very important the challenge about how business schools can use Catholic Social Thought and incorporate issues related to it in their core business courses.

As the authors state, in many professions (as in the “helping professions”) is easier to see their careers as a vocation or calling, than for business students. Thus, the School of Business must respond to the challenge of helping students recognize the importance of their profession for the society and help their students to see their professions as a spiritual calling. I fear that we are not doing well right now on these respects.

The course that the authors present has some remarkable characteristics: the value of “witnesses”; an assignment (in lieu of a final exam) required each student to develop a credo and personal vision statement; the question, “if business is a calling, what are we being called as business professionals?” It is certainly a very challenging and moving paper.

From the three papers of the session we perceive a clear challenge for the Catholic Business Schools: Be excellent and keep your soul alive. Are we truly looking at the ends or ... really confusing the ends? We need to be very creative to become acceptable unconventional.