

Notes on Business through the Eyes of Faith

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PART ONE: THE BIG PICTURE

All Five Chapters in Part One are about Improving our VISION:

What are the EYES OF FAITH and what does it mean to view Business through them?

Reading Part One thus is like getting fitted for a

NEW PAIR OF GLASSES!

The "Eyes of Faith" will help us to overcome

the World's "HIGH MYOPIA" about what is really going on in Business and Who is in charge,

and what we should be doing about it.

Here is the Eye Doctor's Prescription:

1: Business: Is There a Christian Perspective?

2: Personal Goals and Business

3: What does the Lord require of You?

4: Real People: A Biblical View of Human Nature

5. Human Identity: In the World or in Christ?

I HOPE YOU LIKE YOUR NEW GLASSES!

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part I: The Big Picture

1: Business: Is There a Christian Perspective?

AGENDA: Learning to Read the System of Signs and the Signs of the System

KEYWORD: SYSTEM

BASIC THEME: Business is part of God's work in the world.

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

Salt and Light (Matthew 5:12-16)

Stewardship (Genesis 1)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

(Biblical Criteria for Judging the System) (9-10)

- Produce goods and services that enhance quality of life
- Provide for the basic needs of the poor
- Allow for individual differences; fairness and equity in resolving conflicts among individuals
- Reward and encourage initiative and hard work

- Provide opportunities for meaningful work for all; work is meaningful when it contributes to the welfare of society
- Use resources efficiently and carefully
- Respect other nations and future generations
- Share or distribute power equitably among groups
- Distribute fairly both costs and benefits of the system
- Protect human rights
- Value persons for their own sake, by providing opportunities for personal growth and development

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: Are these Biblical criteria? How so? If Biblical, how well are we measuring up in Hong Kong? Elsewhere?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part I: The Big Picture

2: Personal Goals and Business

AGENDA: Discerning the Christian meaning(s) of Success

KEYWORD: SERVICE

BASIC THEME: Success, in a sense, is a take-home exam from God. (15)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

Seek first His Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. (Matthew 6:33)

For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil...

(1 Timothy 6:7-11)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Implicit: The Reward System in Business

Implicit: The Financial Theory of Business Enterprise

- What motivates us to optimal business performance?
- Money or Meaning? Or some optimal balance of both?

- What is the role of Profit in business?

Peter Drucker has said that The purpose of a business is to create a customer. Making a profit, by implication, is not the purpose (or cause) of business, but is the expected effect of fulfilling the purpose of a business.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: Given a Christian understanding of Success, consider these: What is a business? What is a customer? What is an entrepreneur? What is an employer? What is an employee? What is a manager?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part I: The Big Picture

3: What does the Lord require of You?

AGENDA: Exploring the meaning(s) of Christian Ethics for Business Management

KEYWORD: BIBLICAL JUSTICE

BASIC THEME: God issues a clear call to his followers to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with Him. (26)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

He has told you, O man, what is good... (Micah 6:8)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Implicit: Priorities in Human Resource Management

- Biblical Justice in the Workplace (27-30)
 - Compensation Policy
 - Profit Allocation
 - Honest relationship between Quality and Price
 - Working Conditions (Hostile Environment Problem)
 - Equal Access to Opportunity
- Loving Kindness in Business (32-34)
 - Effective Management (Being Good vs Being Nice)

- Walking Humbly in Business (34-36)
 - Servant Leadership

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: How does the approach in this chapter reinforce or contradict other approaches to business that you have heard? (36)

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part I: The Big Picture

4: Real People: A Biblical View of Human Nature

AGENDA: Acknowledging through Faith our Capacities for both Good and Evil, in public as well as private life

KEYWORD: IMAGE OF GOD

BASIC THEME: "What should we as Christians believe about the nature of people at work? What concepts will guide our management style?" (40)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

"Image of God" as Made by God (Genesis 1:26)

"Image of God" as Shattered by us (Genesis 3)

"Image of God" as Restored through Christ

(Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:20-24)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Organizational Behavior: Managing within the Triadic Structure of Moral Responsibility in Business

- Love or commitment to internal moral standards (43)
 - Both personal and corporate...
- Positive rewards for good behavior (44)
 - Good "face" as well as good bonuses
- Negative consequences for inappropriate behavior (45)
 - Demonstrate genuine concern for improvement
 - Communicate expectations clearly
 - Provide adequate "feedback"
 - Administer correction promptly

- Demonstrate fairness and consistency

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: Consider "Cookies and People": How similar to Hong Kong business?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part I: The Big Picture

5. Human Identity: In the World or in Christ?

AGENDA: Recognizing the Source of our Personal and Professional identities in light of Christian commitment

KEYWORD: SOURCE

BASIC THEME: "We undergo an identity transplant as the source of our identity is transferred from the world to Christ."

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

The New Creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)

God's Love and our Life (1 John 4:13-21)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

- Organizational Behavior: Abraham Maslow's Psychology of Higher Order Needs (51-56):
 - Realize Unconditional Acceptance (51-52)
 - Demonstrate Competence (53-54)
 - Experience a Sense of Belonging (54-56)
- How and Why do Businesses seek to fulfill these Needs?
- Given the purpose of a Business, is it reasonable to expect Businesses to be the primary place in which these Needs are fulfilled?

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING:

- To what extent do those seeking to realize a Christ-centered Identity still have the same Needs as everyone else?
- How do I seek to fulfill these Needs? If I doubt they can be fulfilled in Business, where else do I seek their fulfillment?
- If I have discovered the true Source for fulfilling these needs, am I more or less likely to be an effective manager?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

PART TWO: WORK:

GOD'S INTENTION AND OUR RESPONSE

Now that you have adjusted to your

NEW GLASSES, you may begin to see that OTHER THINGS ALSO NEED FIXING.

If the "EYES OF FAITH" give us THE BIG PICTURE on what Business is and ought to be,

how can we begin to change our ACTIONS, POLICIES and BUSINESS FIRMS to better reflect our Christian VISION of Business?

PART TWO provides an INVENTORY of RESOURCES that are meant to help us maximize God's own JUSTICE in Business:

6. Doing Justice in the Workplace

7. Justice and the Opportunity to Work

8. Human Development in the Workplace

9: The Jungle of Obligations and Rights

10: Planning and Organizing:

Means of Doing Justice

IS THERE ANYTHING HERE YOU CAN USE?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part II: Work: God's Intention and our Response

6. Doing Justice in the Workplace

AGENDA: Formulating priorities for an action plan for doing justice in the workplace

KEYWORD: JUSTICE AS GOOD STEWARDSHIP

BASIC THEME: "Christians need to be sensitive to equity issues and try to develop systems that foster equity." (71)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

Prophetic utterances about God's stake in how well we treat our employees (Malachi 3:5)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

- Strategic planning for justice within the business firm: ESOPs and employee-ownership: Herman Miller, Inc., as an innovative and morally exemplary business enterprise
- Holistic approach to work environment:
 - Removing obstacles to employee creativity
 - Human dignity and participative management (65)
 - Elements of a Quality Work Environment
 - Just Compensation (67-71): Beyond market wages
 - Criteria for a decent minimum wage
 - Executive compensation packages as a model for compensating all the firm's employees
 - If execs get bonuses, all should get bonuses
 - If execs get stock options, all should....

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: Can the policies advocated in this chapter be justified on financial grounds? Do they tend to make the firm more productive?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part II: Work: God's Intention and our Response

7. Justice and the Opportunity to Work

AGENDA: Formulating an employment strategy that reflects Christian concern to overcome various forms of discrimination

KEYWORD: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

BASIC THEME: "Work is a healing process," in the sense that business has the responsibility of participating in the society's efforts to overcome the consequences of past injustices.

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

The Jubilee Principle (Leviticus 25:15-41)

Biblical Mandate for Restitution (Exodus 22:1-15)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Business and the Social Environment: Overcoming Employment Discrimination based on Race, Sex, Disability, and Age, becoming "Equal Opportunity Society"

- Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Affirmed as a Business Asset rather than an Obstacle to Productivity
- Managerial Strategies for Managing a Multicultural Workforce
- Managerial Strategies for Empowering Women and Minorities in Management
- Senior or Long-term Employees: Assets or Liabilities?
- Planning for Affirmative Action (81)

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: Does this chapter have any relevance to Hong Kong business or is it simply a Christian response to "the American Dilemma"? What are the unwritten rules for hiring and promotion in your business?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part II: Work: God's Intention and our Response

8. Human Development in the Workplace

AGENDA: Developing a management style in business that embodies Christian love of neighbor

KEYWORD: SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BASIC THEME: "There is no 'Christian' theory of management. But there are principles, which when integrated with other theories, do suggest how Christians should carry out their management responsibilities." (90)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

The Son of Man as servant (Matthew 20:25-28)

Christians as the Master's servants (Ephesians 6:9)

Serpents and doves (Matthew 10:16)

Wisdom as prudence (Proverbs 15:2)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Ouchi's Management theories X (Legalism?), Y (Mohism?) and Z (neoConfucianism?) (88-90)

- The Case for "Theory A" (Christian Agapism) which maximizes the strengths and minimizes the weaknesses of Theories X, Y, and Z:
- Management as Servant Leadership: Love beyond Power Dominance (X)
- Management as Empowerment: Love beyond Wishful Thinking (Y)
- Management as Reconciliation: Tough Love beyond Superficial Harmonies (Z)
- Theory A, along with X, Y and Z, respects east Asian wisdom about Social Relationships: Effective Business Management is the Management of Social Relationships

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part II: Work: God's Intention and our Response

9: The Jungle of Obligations and Rights

AGENDA: To assess from a Christian perspective the rights-based approach that is dominant in secular business ethics, and often institutionalized in the policies of US business corporations

KEYWORD: RIGHTS

BASIC THEME: "Christians start with a unique understanding of the source of obligations and rights," which may result in distinctively Christian priorities for respecting rights in business.

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

Jesus did not defend his own right to life (Luke 9:23-25)
yet Paul exercised his own right as a Roman citizen to
avoid the penalty of flogging (Acts 22:22-29)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Is the theory of rights the most appropriate way to identify and improve the moral obligations that constitute business ethics?

Christian priorities for implementing rights:

- Family rights in the workplace
- Employee assistance programs as a right
- Medical insurance as an employee right
- Employee right to privacy

- Herman Miller's policy on workers' rights (117)

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: What are the strengths and weaknesses, both theoretical and practical, of a rights-based approach to business ethics?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part II: Work: God's Intention and our Response

10: Planning and Organizing:

Means of Doing Justice

AGENDA: To clarify the nature of the strategic planning process that may be required to implement Christian priorities in a firm.

KEYWORD: STRATEGIC PLANNING

BASIC THEME: "In a very real sense God is the sovereign planner, and we are subplanners.... So why should we plan in business at all? Because good stewardship and our concerns for justice demand it." (122)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

God's sovereignty over our plans (James 4:13-16)

Biblical wisdom and prudent planning (Proverbs 12:15; 13:10, etc.)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Strategic management: guidelines for designing organizational structures that serve justice (124-126):

- Maximize employee freedom and responsibility
- Create an environment that rewards creativity
- Design work routines that encourage cooperation
- Clearly identify accountability structures
- Facilitate group interaction and lateral communication
- Eliminate as much managerial hierarchy as possible

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: It's hard for an American not to think like an American. Does this chapter confuse the Christian Gospel with the gospel of participatory democracy? Is all this too alien to the way we do business here?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

PART THREE: LEADERSHIP:

TO RULE OR TO SERVE?

Once we have formulated a STRATEGIC PLAN for renovating the Business Firm, we must consider HOW the plan can be implemented.

The challenge of LEADERSHIP in Business is to insure that both the WHAT and the HOW of Organizational Development are consistent with the VISION that animated them in the first place.

The following chapters invite us to consider distinctively Christian contributions to the cultivation of LEADERSHIP in Business:

11: A Christian Concept of Leadership

12. The Christian's Use of Power

13. Accountability: Stimulus for Self-Control

14. Motivation: Calling or Manipulation?

15: Communication: Listening and Truth-Telling

HYPOTHESIS: If the ideas presented here are true, implementing them ought to make our businesses more productive. If they help make us more productive, we can make money off of them. OK?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part III: Leadership: To Rule or to Serve?

11: A Christian Concept of Leadership

AGENDA: To invite Christians to exercise leadership in business by showing how Biblical values define a distinctive and attractive style of leadership

KEYWORD: BALANCE

BASIC THEME: "Good business leadership is an art. It provides direction and purpose for an organization. It elicits trust and helps employees focus on the big purposes of an organization. Leadership must be earned." (133)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

The Beatitudes as a checklist of character traits for Christian leaders (Matthew 5:3-9)

The "Fruits of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-24) signify the sources of inner strength for Christian leadership.

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Leadership Studies and the "Trait" theory of leadership: What does the Bible know about leadership that often escapes these theorists?

- Leadership Responsibilities (a synthesis of the two):
 - Model moral behaviour
 - Articulate and carry the corporate vision
 - Maintain open communication
 - Foster team building
 - Create environments that facilitate creativity
 - Manage the organization effectively
- The Principle of Balance in Business Ethics (141):
 - Leadership embodies the Balance

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part III: Leadership: To Rule or to Serve?

12. The Christian's Use of Power

AGENDA: To clarify the way in which Christians should use power, consistent with a Christian view of business leadership

KEYWORD: SELF-CONTROL

BASIC THEME: "The purpose of power is not control but rather setting God's creation and people free for constructively using resources." (153)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

The Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22-24)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Organizational behaviour: types of power in business:

positional power, charismatic power, power of information and expertise, power of access to personal connections, coercive power (149)

Guidelines for the use of power:

- Accept accountability to others (relativity of power)
- Exercise responsibility (no false humility)
- Be candid about power exercised
- Empower others; provide the marginalized with access
- Build organizations characterized by trust and openness
- Encourage full and broad participation in corporate decision-making
- Regard power as a tool, not as a perk or token of status

- Above all, NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF SELF-CONTROL, and its spiritual source

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part III: Leadership: To Rule or to Serve?

13. Accountability: Stimulus for Self-Control

AGENDA: To deepen our understanding of accountability and its constructive role in the exercise of Christian leadership

KEYWORD: ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURE

BASIC THEME: "God intends accountability to be a freeing process because it gives direction, security, and encouragement."

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

A model of Christian accountability (Ephesians 5:21)

A case for Christian discipline (Hebrews 12:5-13)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Organizational behaviour in a culture that overvalues "Autonomy" and "Individualism"

The process of accountability (158-159)

- Fair standards of evaluation
- Clear communication of expectations
- Effective and timely evaluations

The reality of failure and appropriate strategies for overcoming failure (162-164): To what extent does my management style actually contribute to the failures of my subordinates? Have I done all that I can to remove whatever obstacles there are to their success?

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: If accountability is meant to enhance our capacity for service, may I ask myself how I am accountable to those whom I supervise?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part III: Leadership: To Rule or to Serve?

14. Motivation: Calling or Manipulation?

AGENDA: To establish a link between the Christian understanding of vocation and various motivational theories

KEYWORD: CALLING

BASIC THEME: "As Christians we should see our motivation for all that we do as a response to a calling from God." (170)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

We are called to be saints (1 Corinthians 1:2-9)

The attitude of responsiveness to God (Psalm 40:1-8)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Four types of motivational theory: Freudian, deterministic, cognitive, and inheritance theory

- Each of these must be evaluated critically in light of a Biblical understanding of human nature: what does each reveal and what does each obscure about human thinking and acting?
- Scientific research into motivation, nevertheless, is to be encouraged because its assured results can help us achieve the efficiency and productivity required by true stewardship. (173)
- Christians will apply motivational tools using 3 criteria:
 - Appeal to good motives: build up vs. tear down
 - Be transparent about motivational techniques
 - Encourage active choice and full participation

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: What is manipulation and why is it wrong? Is it possible to be an effective manager without manipulating our subordinates?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part III: Leadership: To Rule or to Serve?

15: Communication: Listening and Truth-Telling

AGENDA: To help us understand the Christian values at stake in cultivating the communication skills essential to business success.

KEYWORD: LISTENING

BASIC THEME: "Love is not well served by inaccurate, incomplete, masked, or misdirected communication. Neither are people at work well served when we tell the truth in a brutal, harsh, or condemning manner." (189)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

"He who has ears, let him hear...." (Matthew 11:15)

Consider the privileged role of hearing and speaking in the Bible's portrayal of our interactions with God: Revelation as a paradigm of effective communication.

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Effective listening and business leadership: Consider the difference between the "opinionated" and "open" listener.

How is it possible to structure an organization so that open listening is encouraged and misdirected communication minimized? What, for example, is an ombudsman?

Consider the problem of open communication relative to management challenges in marketing, public relations, human resources, and relations with the regulatory system.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: Does a Christian view of leadership help or hinder the cultivation of good communications within an organization? How so?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

PART FOUR: BUSINESS:

AN AGENT FOR SHALOM

Having explored the meaning of the Christian VISION for ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT and LEADERSHIP in Business, we now turn to Business' external relationships with the various constituencies.

STAKEHOLDER THEORY is used to structure a broad discussion of Business' SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES consistent with HOW Christians see the world

"through the EYES OF FAITH."

The book concludes with a general reflection on the processes by which Christian ethics seeks to translate PRINCIPLES into PRACTICE.

Here are the final Chapters:

16. The Social Contract of Business

17: Social Responsibility as Stewardship

18: Justice and the World's Wealth

19: Biblical Absolutes in a World of Change

GO IN PEACE!

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part IV: Business: An Agent of Shalom

16. The Social Contract of Business

AGENDA: To develop a Christian interpretation of the movement to expand the nature and kinds of social responsibility that society expects of the modern Business corporation

KEYWORD: SHALOM AS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

BASIC THEME: "Business, as an institution, provides the opportunity to participate with God in the creation and distribution of God's wealth in God's world." (195)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

God's stake in economic policy (Leviticus 25:8-34)

Stewardship (Genesis 1:1-31; 2:15)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

The Social Contract and its Uses in Political Theory and now in Debate over The Social Responsibility of Business:

- Minimalist and Maximalist Agendas
- Negative and Positive Social Responsibilities

Social Contract theory as a way of resolving the Debate

Stakeholder Theory (199) to structure the Social Contract

One more examination of the role of Profit in Business, and the optimal role of Government Regulation, in light of the Social Contract (199-204)

OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVE QUESTIONING: Does Hong Kong Business need a Social Contract, or are "Asian Family Values" a sufficient response to Social Responsibility claims?

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part IV: Business: An Agent of Shalom

17: Social Responsibility as Stewardship (1)

AGENDA: To develop further a Christian understanding of Business' social responsibility by considering Business' obligations to various external stakeholders.

KEYWORD: STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITY

BASIC THEME: "Christians are called to exercise their stewardship responsibility to God by managing their businesses in ways that serve the needs of their communities. Previous chapters have considered responsibilities to shareholders and employees. Let's

now consider our stewardship responsibilities to customers, competitors, community, and the environment." (208)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

God ultimately owns everything (Leviticus 25:23)

Stewardship means caring for the environment (Genesis 2:15)

Biblical caution about consumer sovereignty (Proverbs 27:20)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Stakeholder theory, seen through the "Eyes of Faith," ignores the Ultimate Stakeholder, namely, God.

Stewardship theory is a way of reasserting God's claims as the Ultimate Stakeholder; just as Covenant theory is a way of reasserting God's claim as the senior partner in the Social Contract.

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part IV: Business: An Agent of Shalom

17: Social Responsibility as Stewardship (2)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Stakeholder Responsibilities and Marketing:

- Responsibility toward Customers: Beyond Consumer Sovereignty: Christians have a distinctive view of human nature that suggests that the customer is not always right. Therefore honoring Stewardship responsibilities in marketing decisions about what to produce and for whom will mean having more criteria in mind than mere legality and profitability. See the distinction between "wants" and "needs" (209-211) and comments on pricing policy (213)
- Responsibility toward Competitors: The principles of integrity and honesty should govern our competitive practices. (215) Implicit: competition should be understood more like the kind of athletic contest that St. Paul describes rather than guerilla warfare. Note comments on

stealing competitors' trade secrets and other questionable practices. (214, 215)

- Responsibility toward Community: Consider the question of being a "Good Neighbor," in light of the power and wealth commanded by mid to large size businesses. Does significant power carry with it heavier responsibilities?
- Responsibility toward the Environment: Shalom means living in appropriate harmony with all God's creatures. Implicit: Business needs to prioritize Negative and Positive Social Responsibilities.

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part IV: Business: An Agent of Shalom

18: Justice and the World's Wealth

AGENDA: To extend our conception of Stakeholder Responsibilities to include our Responsibilities to all God's children, past, present, and future.

KEYWORD: DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

BASIC THEME: "Out of gratitude for God's gifts, we should be stewards of wealth for the benefit of others." (224)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

Jesus' warning about Possessions (Luke 12:15)

St. Paul's advice about Wealth (1 Timothy 6:7-10)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Strategic Planning: The case for the democratization of corporate ownership: the advantages of ESOPs (227)

Public Relations: All businesses have a stake in maintaining the moral legitimacy of the capitalistic political economy. Legitimation, in the long run, depends on addressing questions regarding the distribution of wealth and poverty on a global scale. Business leaders who ignore the claims of

distributive justice or who refuse to fulfill voluntarily their social responsibilities make the best possible argument for State socialism.

For Christians, there is no reading of the Bible through "the Eyes of Faith" that can ignore God's special love for the poor and the oppressed. Understanding our role in sharing God's love does not necessarily commit Christians to one or another social policy or economic system.

Business through the Eyes of Faith

Part IV: Business: An Agent of Shalom

19: Biblical Absolutes in a World of Change

AGENDA: To help us become effective witnesses to Christian truth by showing what all is involved as we seek to discover appropriate policies and practices in Business that are faithful to Christian principles.

KEYWORD: ABSOLUTE TRUTH

BASIC THEME: "God's moral standards are not relative, even though the way we apply them does change to fit unique circumstances." (243)

BIBLICAL GUIDANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH:

Growing in Christ is not a "self-help project" (Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 John 3:2; James 4:8)

Becoming an effective witness (Matthew 10:16)

REFERENCE POINT FOR BUSINESS THEORY:

Implementing sound Business Ethics presupposes competence; so does implementing Christian principles in any area of life.

Seeing Business "through the Eyes of Faith" does not dispense us from realistically facing the "trade-offs" (241) that make for the complexity of moral decisions in business.

(Beware of the "Fallacies of Simplistic Thinking")

Recall the "Principle of Balance" (141): "Most decisions leaders make do not pit one alternative that is right against one that is wrong. All alternatives have both good and not-so-good points. The leader needs to weigh all the factors and choose the one that seems best for that situation."