

How Christian Entrepreneurs Are Going to Change the World

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The idea of a strict separation between sacred and secular is not a biblical one. Neither is the separation between “clergy” and “laity.” When you follow Jesus, you’re part of his kingdom in every realm of your life, so living out a Christian ethic and pursuing excellence and success in the marketplace by serving the needs of others and becoming generous is one way of positively impacting the world and drawing others to an understanding of God’s love for them. So, let’s get past the stigma, break through our fears, and do this well!

In Christian church history, there have been periods of time when the church has really created a strict dividing line between clergy and laity; that is, between professional priests, pastors, and ministers versus all of the “ordinary” members who are not called to a particular church office. I hope that we lose that because every Christian is a servant, a minister.

Some people are called to lead the church in a vocational capacity, but all of us are called to expand God’s kingdom together and all of us are ministers in the workplace. We serve other people *wherever we go*, not just at church on Sunday.

We also shouldn’t compartmentalize our faith. Most of us believe that we go to school for our education, to work for our money, and to church for our religion. But faith doesn’t work that way. It affects everything. When I submit my life to Jesus as King, he takes over as King of everything. So, you need to live an integrated, whole life.

This issue matters deeply to me, and it’s highly relevant, because God has put people in all kinds of positions of influence within society. In fact, he positions each and every one of us where we are to impact other people. He didn’t ask any of us to be an island unto ourselves, or to not have influence, or to not affect the world or the culture around us. I don’t believe he called us to isolate and withdraw and live life behind a wall and barricade ourselves off from the non-Christian world around us.

Personally, I feel strongly led to support and serve people in two positions of influence: **pastors and entrepreneurs**.

More pastors need to think in entrepreneurial ways. I highly respect those who subscribe to the school of thought that there should be nothing professional about Christian ministry. I understand where you’re coming from. I’ve read John Piper’s book, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals*. It’s a great book. It reminds us that we’re not just here to analyze markets and produce numbers. I completely agree. I also believe, however, that entrepreneurship is essentially a matter of being creative, and we can reflect the glory of God when we get creative.

Pastors need to ask themselves entrepreneurial questions, like:

- Am I thinking outside of my comfort zone and what’s familiar?
- Am I willing to venture into new territory, take risks, try new things, get creative?

- Am I willing to adapt my communication styles to the culture around me?

I also believe that Christian entrepreneurs who are not working in the “church” space should think more ministerially. If you’re successful in business, if you lead people, if you start things, if you earn money, if you influence your community or your culture in the business world, then you ought to be seeking ways to *serve other people* and to *share your faith* with people in loving ways.

In the New Testament, we see Paul talking about being a tentmaker – being bivocational. We think of bivocationalism today as a necessary evil – something some pastors have to do because their churches are too small to pay them a full-time salary. Certainly, there are those cases, and thank God for the men and women willing to serve in that role!

But I think we should begin to make room for a kind of bivocation where we encourage pastors and church leaders to be entrepreneurial and to filter into the marketplace alongside everyone else in creative ways, while still faithfully remaining committed to church leadership as a primary calling.

This matters because, society’s foundations tend to rest on seven major pillars, and the church is only one of them. Like dominos, if you can move these seven pillars of society, then you can move society in a new direction.

The seven pillars of society are:

1. Government and politics.
2. Media – the internet, news, television, etc.
3. Arts and entertainment.
4. Business and marketplace
5. Education, both primary and secondary.
6. Religion – the church and other houses of worship.
7. Family.

The idea is that if we can influence several of those pillars – government, media, arts, business, education, religion, and family – then we can tip all of society in a certain direction.

We think about ministry as taking place within the church, but that’s just one pillar, and it leaves the other six out. We need to be thinking about ministry as being spread across all areas of life.

God’s Kingdom is very subversive. Ed Stetzer wrote a book some years back called *Subversive Kingdom*. I would pair it right with Scot McKnight’s book, *The King Jesus Gospel*. Those two books really frame well my own viewpoints of what the Kingdom is.

The Kingdom of God is not of this world. It’s not one of the seven pillars. Religion is humanly established. It’s organized. It’s regulated. There are rituals or things that we manage from a human perspective, but God’s Kingdom, the Bible says, is *within you*. It’s invisible. It’s basically the rule and reign of Jesus. Wo everybody that says, “I follow Jesus” is part of the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God operates on different principles than the kingdoms of the world around us. The Kingdom of God operates in the principle of purposeful, willing servitude toward other people. The

subversive Kingdom is the idea that God's Kingdom does not come in and dominate people, or culture, or any of those seven pillars of society. Rather, the Kingdom of God subversively springs up here and there within those different realms.

God has called us to move as agents of his Kingdom and serve and influence the marketplace.

The Church tends to lag behind. Whatever the world around us creates, we recreate fifteen years later and 85% as well. You see this in Christian film. You see it in Christian entertainment. We often give a free pass to very poor quality because we figure, "Well, this is the Christian version. It's not supposed to be as good." We just lag behind, and we wait for the marketplace to tell us what to do.

We need Christians to step into a leadership role – not a domineering leadership role, but instead as servants who contribute to the flourishing of humanity.

Four ways we need Christian entrepreneurs to show up and be present...

1. We need people who will live out a Christlike ethic in the marketplace.

In other words, we need people who will live and serve and do business the way Jesus might do business. I'm not suggesting that Jesus would *do* business. I'm just saying that Jesus came up with ideas like *going the second mile* for people, *taking the high road*, being brutally committed to *honesty* and *authenticity* and *charity*.

All of that originated in the mind of God and in the mind of Jesus, and so businesses that are committed to solid ethics, to honesty, to truth, to generosity, to charity stand out in an age of corporate corruption and greed.

2. We need people who will serve others in Jesus' name in the marketplace.

Zig Ziglar was very successful and became very wealthy by the end of his life and yet still managed to be, even though he was a motivational speaker and a great salesman, very humble and very Christlike in his life. Zig used to say, "***You'll have everything you want in life if you help enough other people get what they want.***" So, we need servant-hearted, generous leaders who will elevate others.

3. We need people who will create wealth from the marketplace to support missions.

When I hear about Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, or so many others who have made millions or billions of dollars and then have established foundations and trusts in their name whereby they can continue to distribute money through charitable causes throughout the years to come, I think that's awesome! I think we ought to celebrate that, and I think we ought to duplicate that, that Christians.

If we really have a desire to eradicate AIDS and other diseases, to improve education, to tackle issues like poverty and healthcare around the world, and if we really want to plant churches, raise up leaders, and share the Gospel everywhere that we possibly can, then we need to be creating wealth from the marketplace that can be given to missions.

4. We need people to be creative thought leaders in the marketplace.

This goes back to the idea that we shouldn't just sit around and wait for the world to invent everything. Christians should feel the freedom to be innovative.

Innovators change the direction of society. When you think about the most influential people in history, so many of them were innovators. We know who Gutenberg was because he invented the printing press, and out of the printing press came all the books and libraries and the bookstores that we know today.

Christians ought to be right in the middle of shaping the culture around us. We shouldn't be afraid of science, psychology, and other various disciplines but instead, fully engaging and being creative thought leaders in our marketplaces. This kind of engagement will make for better communities.

Four next steps for you to take, in light of this challenge...

1. We need to get over our limiting beliefs.

I talked about our limiting beliefs in the last episode. Our limiting beliefs hold us back.

- *I just could never do anything great.*
- *I'm not supposed to be earning money.*
- *I shouldn't be thinking about my potential.*
- *My platform doesn't/shouldn't matter.*

2. We need to cut through the stigma surrounding success and wealth.

We need to move beyond the stigma surrounding entrepreneurship. This is not about getting rich quickly or having tons of money so we can go on a permanent vacation and never work again. Where's the influence in that? But entrepreneurial acumen, when cultivated properly, contributes something very valuable to the culture.

3. We must overcome our fear.

We're not risk takers by nature. I don't believe in taking dumb risks, but we do have to get over our fear of taking any risk at all. We must be willing sometimes to step outside of our comfort zone and try new things and venture in a new territory. We must get over our fear.

4. We must think about the potential.

We need to think about what society could look like if Christians felt empowered to apply their faith in every facet of life. What would it look like for Christianity to influence the world around us?

Christian entrepreneurs, let's go change the world together, okay?