

Ministerial Entrepreneurship: Re-envisioning Entrepreneurship
and Revitalizing the Church

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Introduction

Articulating a relationship between faith and work remains a primary challenge for both the church and the marketplace. Any attempt to articulate a goal that satisfies both communities, in light of the Kingdom of God, proves elusive when considering the many issues facing both communities. Re-envisioning entrepreneurship and revitalizing the church may prove crucial for the sake of both endeavors. This writing provides a new initiative that may engage both church and marketplace through the vision of innovation and entrepreneurship, offering insights that reflect a new synthesis that overcomes some of the previous preoccupation with the accumulation of profits as the primary metric for new ventures.

Through the lens of ministerial entrepreneurship, ministers and laity alike find an innovative framework for vocation (calling) and sustainability (stewardship) that spans church and marketplace interests. The paper will first delineate the current state of business and profits from a Christian perspective, highlighting market concerns while suggesting an alternative understanding that might drive entrepreneurship. The paper offers concrete examples of current efforts to re-narrate a Kingdom centered approach to entrepreneurship before introducing the generative project that serves as the backdrop for this paper, ministerial entrepreneurship. The paper then attempts to differentiate this entrepreneurial venture in light of contemporary notions of entrepreneurship and in dialog with two traditional approaches to the market place, bivocational ministry and business as mission. Finally, the paper closes with suggestions how ministerial entrepreneurship situates a different way of engaging business and the marketplace with a Christian vision.

*The Marketplace from a Christian Perspective: The Issue of Profit.*¹

While the marketplace primarily relies on a profit (or return on investment) to function well, the ability to make money no longer appears to drive people entering the business world. Eighty percent of people aged thirteen to twenty-five want to work for a company that is concerned about how its actions impact and contribute to society; with half of those respondents saying they would refuse to work for an irresponsible organization (Meister, 2012). Barely half of millennials believe business is behaving ethically or even committed to helping to improve society (Deloitte, 2018). Even more troubling, only twenty percent of employees see the link between their work and their organization's goals (Van Duzer, 2015). Clearly, there is a

¹ Portions of the next three sections of this paper were previously published in an article titled "Business as Mission: A Christian Response to Why Business Matters," written by Rob Gailey and Susan Brownlee for the online *Viewpoint* magazine (July 24, 2018) published by Point Loma Nazarene University at <https://viewpoint.pointloma.edu/business-as-mission-a-christian-response-to-why-business-matters/>

noticeable gap between what people believe a responsible business should be doing and what businesses accomplish in day to day life.

Provost and former Dean of the Business School at Seattle Pacific University (SPU), Jeff Van Duzer (2010) observes that profits are a means to an end, but not the end, “a tool but not the destination” (p. 173). Van Duzer’s observation begs the question, what then should the “destination” for business be if it is not profit? And, just as importantly, what should the purpose/aim/end be for Christ-followers who seek to glorify God while engaging in the complex field of the business marketplace? In a dynamic, growing, and globalized world, often dominated by the business sector, these questions deserve intense consideration, and especially for those entering entrepreneurial ventures with ministry in mind. Scripture, particularly the New Testament, provides a gateway by which to understand how God’s people should be at work in the world, including marketplace ventures.

A New Testament Example

There is an important but often overlooked passage regarding the early Church and its influence on business in the 16th chapter of the book of Acts. Paul sees a vision from God to visit and proclaim the Good News in Macedonia with Silas and Timothy. Upon arrival in Philippi, the economic hub of Macedonia, Scripture narrates two concurrent stories of the apostles sharing God’s love with two women involved in very different businesses.

The first business mentioned is led by Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, the clothes used by royalty. Lydia, already a devout follower of God, responds positively to the message of salvation, gets baptized, and offers up her home for use by the church leaders. The second business is not as well regarded, involving the horrific practice of human bondage. Enslaved by businessmen, a girl uses her gift of divination to bring in a “great deal of money.” After several days of this girl proclaiming that Paul and his group were sharing the message of salvation, Paul casts out the spirit residing in the girl. The business owners quickly realize that the enslaved girl is no longer a cash generator and they blame Paul for their loss of income. These angry businessmen drag Paul and his friends into the marketplace and accuse them of disrupting their cultural practices. Paul and companions are put in jail, where they sing and praise God, and eventually convert and baptize the jailer and his family.

One might note that these two stories of the early Church and businesses occur in the middle of Acts, a book describing how the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit might respond and function in various cultures throughout the known world where churches had been planted. Clearly, business can be used to glorify God, or be so far from God’s desire for humanity that Christians must challenge its destructive influence on society.

Dr. Jeff Van Duzer, now Provost at SPU, in his book, (2010) *Why Business Matters to God (And What Still Needs to Be Fixed)* and presentation (2015), provides a framework for Christians to consider the fundamental purpose of business and how business can serve the common good. Van Duzer spent several years leading discussions between the business faculty and the theology faculty at SPU to get at a Biblical/theological understanding of business. Their work builds on the Biblical account of Creation (where work is encouraged and honored even in the garden), the

Fall (when work becomes drudgery), Redemption (Christ renews), and Reconciliation (all things are made new). At its core, a theology of business has at its foundation God's desire to redeem God's creation and restore God's relationship with all people. This goal not only extends God's call (vocation) into the workplace, it also serves to revitalize the church as members of the body of Christ exercise stewardship in everyday life.

Van Duzer (2010) further argues that the Garden, as originally designed, was not God's intended endpoint but rather a starting point for God and humanity to partner together to steward God's creation. In Revelation it is revealed that in the end times we will not be called back into the Garden, but rather, into the New Jerusalem – into the diversity, complexity, and messiness of a city, a place of business. It will be through human beings pooling their resources (or capital) to design, build, and market products and services that people and societies will flourish. However, both in Scripture and in our own society today, we recognize that the city is often a place where people assert their independence from God. As Christians we know that ultimately it is God's desire to redeem for good those things that have often been used for evil. It is all part of God's redeeming love story for humanity.

With that scriptural context as background, Van Duzer (2010) advances that the two primary God-ordained purposes for business are 1) to provide the community with goods and services that enable the community to flourish and 2) to offer opportunities for meaningful work that allow employees to express their God-given creativity. In sum, Van Duzer states, "the Christian in business is in the business of rendering service that will enable humanity to flourish" (p. 48). The function of profit, which is an important and critical piece for making a business sustainable, is how this community service can be fulfilled. Van Duzer (2015) likens profit to blood pumping through one's body - no one gets up any morning with the intent or joy of just pumping blood through one's veins, and yet each one would be dead without this vital function taking place in our bodies. For entrepreneurs, profit ultimately becomes less a destination as much as a means to an end. This vision seems consistent with an understanding of entrepreneurship that may serve capitalistic needs but remains somewhat independent in the "drive" for profit (Mondal and Jimenez, 2015).

Contemporary Examples

The scriptural/theological foundation for doing business may prove important, and appear nice for academic discourse, but what about the real-world? Can these principles and ideas be lived out in the workplace? Fortunately, there are several examples of people and organizations trying to engage these principles that serve as examples for ministerial entrepreneurs. In the investment realm, two organizations are worth highlighting. Sovereign's Capital (<https://sovereignscapital.com/>) focuses on investments within the USA and the South Asia regions into companies that are led by excellent, values-driven management teams motivated by visions that go beyond outsized financial returns. Eventide (<https://www.eventidefunds.com/>) invests in companies whose products and practices help make the world better. These investment firms were founded by Christian believers who want their resources and investments to serve the common good. One of the founders of Sovereign's Capital, Henry Kaestner, recently launched a beta website to encourage faith-driven entrepreneurs (<https://www.faithdrivenentrepreneur.org/>).

Praxis Labs (<http://www.praxislabs.org/>) provides a mentoring and networking organization that targets the advancement of redemptive entrepreneurship in both the for-profit and nonprofit arenas. Praxis Labs also serves college-age students who are exploring starting their own venture or have a creative idea to address a social problem through their annual Praxis Academy events (<http://www.praxislabs.org/academy>). One example that demonstrates the Praxis community's embrace of Van Duzer's notion of God's purpose for business is found in Josh Kwan's (2017) online journal article, "Roles of the Redemptive Entrepreneur: Anthropologist, Custodian, Prophet." In this article, Kwan outlines the intent of Praxis to help Christians find the intersection between culture, theology, and entrepreneurship.

Christian universities and seminaries are also finding ways to highlight the practical application of Van Duzer's (2010) principles. Seattle Pacific University has created a 13-video series (and on-line class) called Faith & Co. (<https://faithandco.spu.edu/>) that features businesses across the country and around the world that are seeking to enable their communities to flourish and provide meaningful and dignified work for their employees.

In San Diego, several churches have joined forces to create Flourish San Diego and a co-working space called The Greenhouse. These churches are changing the narrative in churches about vocation and the sacredness of all God-honoring work. In San Francisco, Nazarene pastor Jeffrey Purganan leads the Possibility Project, where one of their members founded and runs Sacred Space, a co-working space for entrepreneurs that seeks to integrate meaningful space, intentional community and positive impact.

Ministerial Entrepreneurship: An Alternative Approach

The backdrop for this paper rests with a relatively new initiative at Nazarene Theological Seminary (NTS), titled Ministerial Entrepreneurship. Beginning in 2013, NTS developed a partnership with the Kauffman Foundation, a national leader in entrepreneurship education, and their FastTrac Entrepreneurship program. NTS faculty participated in the program and incorporated entrepreneurship curricular content and learning opportunities into the seminary. At that time the Kauffman approach mandated a classroom context (10 weeks), following fixed curriculum, costing \$300-500 a person. These cost constraints prohibited curriculum expansion to a broader audience, both within the seminary curriculum and for alumni/pastors in-service.

However, recent research from the Kauffman Foundation (2017) highlighted a decline in entrepreneurship endeavors across the United States. Kauffman's 2017 Annual report notes, with concern, that entrepreneurship rates in the country declined by 50% from the previous generation. In response, the Foundation created a national "Zero Barriers" strategy (Hwang 2017) to assure aspiring entrepreneurs an opportunity to create new firms. The Kaufman Foundation recognized their approach to distributing their course materials through a limited and sometimes costly approach, proved antithetical to their Zero Barriers initiative. In response, Kauffman announced a curricular change with their FastTrac curriculum. Kaufmann opted to digitize course materials, revise some electronic resources, and establish a modular, low-cost, flexible, program deliverable through an asynchronous, online, self-paced, format for approved programs.

Nazarene Theological Seminary, as an affiliate of FastTrac, began to adapt FastTrac's high quality, accredited, entrepreneurship training for a pastoral context, and extending the curriculum to further pastoral in-service training for alumni and the broader denomination. The effort was made possible through a grant by the Association of Theological Schools. The development of this curriculum created fresh opportunities to partner with leaders and established business schools actively engaged in entrepreneurship. One such partnership includes the Fermanian School of Business at Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) in San Diego and its Center of International Development (CID). The CID brings broad experience in global entrepreneurship efforts. The Fermanian School of Business includes a number of MBA students and alumni who consistently seek to understand how their faith can inform how they serve in the workplace, and as some are launching their own entrepreneurial ventures. Collectively, the curriculum provided a means of serving both NTS and PLNU, as well as other scholars and mentors, by creating a climate of mutual conversation around faith and work.

In addition, NTS conducted and edited video interviews with fourteen younger entrepreneurs (often within newer ventures) to connect Kauffman's FastTrac educational program to specific issues relevant to the intersection of faith and ministry. The interviews revealed varying expressions of faith and specific articulations of how said faith influenced entrepreneurial decisions. Those interviewed suggested there may be particular elements of a person's faith that influence their willingness to become an entrepreneur, and that communities of faith can influence both the articulation and nurture of an "entrepreneurial" spirit. These interviews already suggest new research venues for exploring faith, and the communities and cultures that shape faith, which could be useful in informing future faith at work efforts and inspire local congregations toward a revitalized life through innovative practices.

Why Entrepreneurship?

One might wonder why a seminary would adopt the language of entrepreneurship. When one considers the popular imagery of success anchored in the public personages of Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Donald Trump, one might suspect that the term runs too close to the brokenness in creation as detailed by Van Duzer (2010, p. 66-72). However, theologian L. Gregory Jones (2016) argues that historically the church has demonstrated considerable innovation and creativity until more recent times. Jones asserts:

It is crucial for the Church's own internal integrity and witness that we rediscover a vision for social innovation and entrepreneurship. We need to recover this witness not so we might be relevant, but rather as an intrinsic part of our witness to the God who we believe is making all things new by the power of the Holy Spirit. Ironically, the best way we can become relevant is not by focusing on how to be relevant, but rather by rediscovering and renewing our own mission and purpose

In a similar vein, Anglican priest and scholar Michael Volland participated in the Church of England's Fresh Expressions movement and (2014) offers the following aesthetic rationale:

(W)hen the focus is moved away from wealth- creation and placed instead on a range of visionary and creative qualities that entrepreneurs exhibit and which, when exercised by

Anglican priests and lay people in a receptive context, they have the potential to produce outcomes that have recognised value for a wider group or groups.

Jones, and Volland, along with other theorists, establish both an ecclesial and aesthetic framework for entrepreneurship with ministry in mind (Baker 2015, pp. 85-87). The activity remains primarily entrepreneurial, yet seems to coincide with a vision of leadership advocated by Goossen and Stevens (2013) as one that “pursues opportunities in the face of opposition or limited resources and brings together the human and financial resources necessary to pursue an objective” (p. 37). Collectively, these Christian scholars point to a broader view of entrepreneurship than the popular images generated in our society.

The term, entrepreneur derives from the French words “entre” meaning ‘between’ and “prendre,” which is the verb ‘to take.’ The French verb “entreprendre” may then be understood as ‘to undertake’ or ‘to do something.’ During the Middle Ages, any person with this title might be understood as a person that “gets things done,” possibly a merchant go-between, but other professions as well (Volland, 2014).

The contemporary notion of economic entrepreneurship owes its primary allegiance to Joseph Schumpeter’s recovery of Richard Cantillon’s writing in the Merchantist age, and John Stuart Mill’s emphasis on “risk” as a hallmark of entrepreneurship (Mondal and Jimenez, pp. 189-191, Volland 2014, p. 15). Writing from the Catholic tradition, Anthony Percy (2010) summarizes contemporary research by characterizing entrepreneurs as those who are commercially focused, creative, yet also willing to take calculated risks, expending high energy levels, yet also creating and sustaining relationships to attain the goals (p.42). Of the five traits, only one takes seriously economic interests. Instead, Percy continues by arguing entrepreneurial work is distinguished by “...alertness to information and creative knowledge. It discovers new possibilities in the marketplace, engages factors of production, looks forward to profit (return) as a compensation for the risks undertaken in engaging the factors of production.” (pp 44-45). Clearly contemporary expressions of entrepreneurship draw definitions from within economic, or marketplace, efforts.

However, the more ancient concept of entrepreneur predates even Adam Smith’s articulation of modern capitalism. Some theorists argue that the close relationship between capitalism and entrepreneurship may prove limiting to understanding the range of entrepreneurial efforts that exist or are possible (Mondal and Jimenez 193-194). In a similar vein, Percy (2010) argues early church to medieval Catholic writings assert that, while entrepreneurs may be interested in money, the virtues of magnificence (the desire to accomplish something great) and fortitude (courage in the face of adversity) help temper or moderate the love of money. Percy continues: “It is this moderation that is the source, in the mind of St. Thomas, which leads (the entrepreneur) to undertake the risks so characteristic to the work of entrepreneurs” (p. 94). People who tend to undertake a major risk in order to accomplish something great certainly exist within economics, but this vision often describes other great efforts beyond the marketplace. While contemporary capitalism often relies on entrepreneurs to be change agents when systems stagnate, entrepreneurship can describe a range of innovative efforts beyond this one economic system.

One can think of entrepreneurs as performing a mediatorial role, a form of innovative intervention within a number of social and/or economic systems that require both vision and risk. This interventionist view allows entrepreneurship to be seen both as an asset to economics in general without being limited to one particular view of economic theory such as capitalism. Allowing the concept of entrepreneurship to stand “outside” any particular economic construct places some critical distance between current theological critiques of both capitalism and socialism, while allowing a kind of practice that sees entrepreneurial efforts as an expression of God’s good gift to humanity for the sake of the good (Long, 2000). This view would allow for entrepreneurs within a capitalistic based economic system, but also afford a vision of entrepreneurship that is more missionary than mercenary, more strategic than opportunistic (Taylor 2016). Such a view also allows for a type of entrepreneurship “with ministry in mind.”

Ministerial entrepreneurship might be identified by key theological characteristics. Following the work of James Fowler (2000), one can see ministerial entrepreneurs discovering unique ways of marshalling resources to participate in God’s ongoing creative work in the world, as well as mirroring God’s governance or stewardship and ultimately participating in God’s liberating or redemptive work. Fowler asserts that all Christians partner or participate in God’s creative, governing and redemptive work (pp. 68-79). Ministerial entrepreneurs (following Perry’s definition above) merely seek to do great things for God by risking their vocational goals in the face of economic risk and adversity, all for the sake of human redemption and flourishing. To accomplish their goals they live out stewardship in a manner consistent with Douglas John Hall’s vision of *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age* (1990) in that, for these entrepreneurs, they seek to steward all of their current and prospective resources for the sake of ministry. To accomplish their goals, ministerial entrepreneurs evidence a form of “practical theology” in that often their ventures follow Richard Osmer’s (2008) four-fold emphasis of:

- Priestly Listening: Discerning their context in light of opportunities and obstacles entailed in positioning their venture.
- Sagely wisdom: Exercising grounded wisdom by carefully exploring the limits of their venture along with the organizational and leadership issues as the commit yet refine their approach.
- Prophetic Vision: Moving forward with a both a creative yet critical vision that now merges their personal vision of doing great things for God with real fortitude to pursue their venture.
- Servant Leadership: Exercising the day to day work with others in their venture, both co-workers and those who are recipients of their efforts.

Seeing ministerial entrepreneurship as an expression of practical theology reminds ministers and laity alike of the ongoing need for engaging faith and work at every point in the venture.

Bivocational Ministry and Ministerial Entrepreneurship

Bivocational ministry may come closest to expressing what ministerial entrepreneurs do. The history of bivocational ministry goes back to the Apostle Paul’s “tentmaking” ministry and often reflects earlier eras where economic employment and ministry were held more closely together. In our current setting, it also signals a rise of bivocational ministers in the United States (Brown, 2018).

The term bivocational suggests two different vocational routes with separate sources of income, yet may be titled in varying forms: shared time ministry, dual vocation, dual role or multirole ministry, tentmaker or tent-making ministry as mentioned previously (Jones 2017, p. 33-34). Overall the relationship between the workplace setting and church ministry may vary with economic support from the workplace offering everything from total support to a very modest supplement (LaRochelle 2010, pp. 22-32). While some bivocational writers (Bickers, 2004; Black 2014, p. 35) stress that the term reflects two jobs, one ministry (encapsulating Luther's notion of baptismal and ordained ministries) this view still sees two different vocational expressions, that of lay and clergy (Jones, p. 34). This approach still retains the challenges often associated with needs of clergy: time constraints, loss of self-esteem, lack of support, difficulties in smaller congregations, less flexibility in responding to congregant needs, less opportunity for study and connection with other ministers, less opportunity to deal with conflicts in the congregation (Bickers 2013, pp. 30-39; Jones 2017, p.38).

More often bivocational ministers may feel the pressure of doing one "job" in order to engage in another "ministry." Even if both perspectives are held with equal value, there seems to be different role definitions associated with each position, even if they interact through relational qualities (Jones 2017). The view of two roles, or two positions, often troubles both churches (LaRochelle, p. 4) and some bivocational ministers themselves (Jones 2017, pp. 37-38). In short, bivocational ministry may be more draining due to a lack of boundaries within clearly defined specific positions (Merritt 2013, para. 18). What might be of most interest is the fact that workplace "vocation" can often mirror the service orientation of ministry. While a number of professions are considered from trades to business to service, bivocational ministry handbooks suggest the predominant roles for bivocational pastors (and particularly for women in bivocational ministry) may revolve around service-oriented professions (Brenneman 2007). With the advent of the "gig economy" and its plethora of smaller, part-time jobs, the range of recommended roles still highlight the balance between trade and service-oriented work (Hall 2014), or encourage a second job that serves to support an active minister (Connelly 2013).

Based on curricular interviews for the Ministerial Entrepreneurship class, it seems that many entrepreneurial ministers approach vocational goals differently as entrepreneurs. Ministerial entrepreneurs rarely see their pastoral roles as "bivocational" (separate spheres of engagement), but, rather, as a seamless "expression" of vocational calling. In similar fashion, the faith held by committed laypersons appears to help nuance their entrepreneurial goals and undergirds their motivation to bring their venture to fruition. While traditional bivocational pastors may share a similar view, the reality of a dual income vocation still presses bivocational pastors to see their work in separate domains. Ministerial entrepreneurs prefer seeing their ministry "through" their venture.

Business as Mission and Ministerial Entrepreneurship

In the past twenty-five years, a number of Christian organizations and thought leaders have nurtured a movement come to be known as Business as Mission (BAM). BAM has several operational definitions and organizational structures, including its first iterations as "Tent-making ministries" or "marketplace ministries" or "enterprise development" (Johnson and Rundle 2006). The concept really grew in prominence, however, following the publication of a

White Paper (2004) on Business as Mission after a 2004 Lausanne Forum in Pattaya, Thailand. The paper helped raise the notion and nomenclature of BAM among Christian agencies, and launched a research and praxis network that has become firmly embedded in the Christian missions industry. A central storyline featured in the publications of the BAM movement is the work of the apostle Paul and other disciples who used their vocational skills in order to support their cross-cultural ministries and evangelical travels (Acts 18:3, Romans 16:3, 2 Timothy 4:19).

It is worth noting that most BAM initiatives focus on Christian business practitioners coming from richer countries who engage in ministry/business operations in poorer countries. Less attention has been paid to creative/innovative business/ministry leaders from within the global South launching and operating their own ventures. BAM conversations sometimes fail to include voices from the global South and, therefore, can miss or distort cultural perspectives not grounded in western, democratic, capitalistic-focused societies. The BAM summary that follows primarily reflects an approach to cross-cultural missions work done by western-sending agencies to the global South whereby business is the primary vehicle of engagement.

Business as Mission scholars recognize BAM entities as difficult-to-define hybrids, Steven Rundle notes (2012) “neither motivated by money, nor embarrassed about making it.” These missionaries and organizations fall along two spectrums of categories worth considering. The first continuum spans from one end of mostly donor-dependent business/nonprofits used as support vehicles for evangelism/church-planting efforts, especially in countries resistant to traditional preaching/teaching missionaries. The other end of the spectrum contains fully-fledged for-profit entities that are owned/run/managed by Christians who believe their work/vocation is a calling from God to serve the common good.

The second spectrum worth considering relates to the type of person involved in these kinds of ministry. On one side of the spectrum is a theologically-trained missionary with limited business credentials who operates a “business” so as to remain operational (legal) in a country. On the other side of the spectrum is a business leader who has a craft/skill in business operations, but who may lack cross-cultural ministry skills, experiences, or knowledge. These spectra highlight a feature often touted by BAM advocates, that is, within the context of ministry, businesses have a utilitarian purpose for evangelizing the world. In other words, business is a means to an end. BAM practitioners may pay little heed, theologically, to the structure of their business or to its practices. Operationally, a BAM-run business may be indistinguishable from a typical for-profit business since the “real work” is done behind the scenes in evangelistic outreach efforts with employees (often covertly) or in their communities outside of the workplace.

In this context, there are two distinguishing features between BAM businesses and the ME efforts this paper describes.² First, the BAM businesses are often larger and more

² We want to be careful not to lump all businesses that claim BAM affiliation into these distinct categories as there are a number of different sizes and types of organizations utilizing the BAM nomenclature. Indeed, many of the businesses that are BAM-focused might also feel comfortable using the ME description provided in this paper. Furthermore, many BAM businesses are designed to operate in places where the gospel/Christianity have limited options, whereas ME businesses, as we describe here, are often operational in the U.S. within and among church

structured/established as they focus on employing many people and often run as a traditional company in the country of operation. Missional entrepreneurs, on the other hand, often start smaller businesses as self-employed firms trying to integrate their efforts to fit a specific need in their community. Second, the motivation and drive for work and ministry among BAM-focused businesses revolves around a distinct witness initiative, whether among employees or within a community (or sometimes both). ME efforts, conversely, seek to integrate and weave in ministry and community building into the business model. For many entrepreneurs with ministry in mind, one must not only proclaim the gospel, but also participate in gospel through helping the community to flourish. This vision allows Ministerial Entrepreneurship to translate more easily principles from marketplace to congregational practice.

Conclusion

Ministerial entrepreneurs, whether in social entrepreneurship roles or traditional for-profit ventures, see themselves serving the common goal of ministry, while highlighting innovation, imagination, and risk-taking as important aspects of faith at work. As congregations and entrepreneurs engage each other in healthy and constructive ways, an opportunity arises to challenge the negative, but popular, view of entrepreneurship (or business in general) within the church, while also paving the way to revitalize the church.

Ministerial entrepreneurship defines new, yet old, expressions of entrepreneurship with ministry in mind. More work is needed to understand the underlying context that gives shape and support to these expressions of ministry. The movement also must identify current congregational beliefs and practices that help shape the existing culture towards entrepreneurship and explore the sources that nurture new expressions of ministerial entrepreneurship. Identifying positive cultural practices that encourage people to engage in innovative efforts may help congregations and, by extension, their communities to foster a “faith at work” ethos commensurate with emerging entrepreneurship opportunities and challenges.

Christians have a strong theological and biblical case to challenge the dominant secular view that businesses only exist to maximize short-term profits and shareholder wealth. While profits are a critical component and are necessary to secure the capital needed to serve the community, profits are not the reward – they are the means. To that end, entrepreneurs “with ministry in mind” may prove to be innovative yet grounded, seeking to do great things in the face of adversity, yet holding business and its various stakeholders to a long-term, holistic, and servant-minded perspective. Too often churches diminish the role that people in business can have in furthering God’s Kingdom. Perhaps articulating, identifying, and lifting up ministerial entrepreneurship as a viable option for ministry will offer pastors and laity alike an opportunity to see their callings and the ministries they engage in as unified vocations with multiple expressions. Those of us seeking to emphasize faith and work may learn from these entrepreneurs as they serve as mediators of a redemptive and service-oriented view of business that seeks, ultimately, to provide goods and services that enable communities to flourish and give employees the opportunity to participate in purposeful and meaningful work.

planters. Thus, the geo-political circumstances may be as relevant to this discussion as operational differences are, since the context may drive the operational choices and options.

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