

Back in Business

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It has all the components of a business: cash flow (or a negative downside from lack thereof), a CEO, a board of directors, employees, customers, products and services, advertising, special offers, a physical plant, overhead expenses, recognition by government and other businesses, interaction with suppliers and regulatory agencies, etc. It also has access to the greatest manual on business ever written ... which manual, and dissemination of business success instruction therefrom, is one of its primary purposes for existence as a business. It is highly intriguing, therefore, that this business entity is so practically averse to disseminating that information regularly.

Jesus spoke more about money than about any other single topic. The first assignment given to mankind by the Creator was to be fruitful and take dominion over all the earth. Yet this business still tends to market the idea that poverty is preferable to profitability ... that those who finish last in the kingdom of earth will be first in the kingdom of heaven ... that meekness means weakness ... even that its role is not in the business world but in the spiritual so, therefore, it should defer to the world's "business mountain" in all matters concerning business. And they wonder why, in these days of decreasing relevance and attendance, they find themselves struggling to make budget and to keep the doors open. But imagine having a near corner on the market of whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous and praiseworthy!

Part of the problem has been that this business, perhaps feeling a bit guilty about actually making money and seeking somehow to prop up its legitimacy, has agreed unnecessarily (and contrary to the law) to take on a non-profit tax exempt status that has placed it under a regulatory thumb and given to foreign parties a mechanism of control that would never have been permitted by the Creator. And it wonders why it sees so little fruit!

Misunderstanding the Creator's commands that we not charge interest of our brothers, this business tries to stay as far away as possible from profitability, missing the rest of the story where He said it is OK to charge interest of foreigners (and missing the positives to be found in the example of those who have so taken those commands literally – in the name of the Creator while rejecting His Son the Messiah – as to make themselves the most wealthy and influential body of people on the earth).

This business has earned a place of respect in the community such that, if it can avoid hamstringing itself by needless acquiescence to regulations that would limit its activities and its profitability, it could do virtually any legal business with excellence and without interruption or interference, including using its platform to teach kingdom business principles to its current adherents and to others in the surrounding community. The very teaching of Biblical business principles alone could make this business so relevant and attractive as to make itself profitable.

And what a platform! Its physical plant typically sees full utilization for less than the equivalent of half one day each week. It utilizes a large auditorium with a speaker's podium, a sound system,

Back in Business

and a friendly client base that is accustomed to regular meetings there – meetings that they attend on a regular basis with no special extra advertising needed. It also typically has smaller classrooms where breakout sessions could be held. Restrooms are readily available as is, often, a kitchen and eating area where refreshments can be had. AV production capabilities are often present, as is a large database of regular members, attendees and interested locals.

And, too, this business is frequented by independent business leaders in the community, many of whom bring with them an expertise in business that makes them ready teachers who can help with the development of the business message and curriculum. Part of the business could actually be to serve as a sort of mall – a forum from which to showcase the business opportunities of its members – extra business opportunities at no additional overhead cost. And if the regulars there include local farmers and gardeners such that a farmers market concept could be developed, so much the better!

See, *the church* is missing not just a golden opportunity but, in the studied opinion of this writer, a royal responsibility to represent the King of kings as the Lord of business here in this temporary earthly kingdom.

Yes, the church is a business. Proof? “If it quacks like a duck ...” Seriously. Take away all of the things mentioned in the first paragraph above (just take away money *alone*) and see what is left. Church is a business. (That’s not *all* that it is, but it *is* a business.) So let’s optimize that business, recognizing the unrivaled opportunities afforded the church, knowing we can do so without jeopardizing a single one of the components that have been traditionally recognized as the bailiwick of the church – the “religion mountain.” Doing so, we not only advance the cause of Christ – the advancement of God’s kingdom – but we also reverse the church’s trending slide into irrelevancy.