

DOING  
BUSINESS  
GOD'S  
WAY

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DOING  
BUSINESS  
GOD'S  
WAY

Dennis Peacocke

# Doing Business God's Way

DENNIS PEACOCKE

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To my father,  
Fred Peacocke,  
whose love of history  
and profound interest  
in man's running  
of the world  
helped make of him  
an ethical businessman  
and a lover of God's Earth

Many people have helped me  
with the writing of this book.  
The First Edition,  
some eight years and countless  
teaching sessions back,  
was only possible because of numerous  
people's generous assistance.  
With this third major printing,  
it is also true that nothing of significance  
is done alone or without many helping hands.  
Thank you, my friends;  
it appears that our common labor  
is making some measure of difference.

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# Preface

This book was the result of years of study, conversations, and seminars which I taught on the general content in the 1980s. What has always seemed clear to me is that “spiritual truth” that does not result in measurable change in the here-and-now is either not yet clearly understood or irrelevant. For sure, economics and business are about here-and-now reality, and the issue therefore is to connect these endeavors and ground them to their spiritual foundations in the God who created them.

The purpose of this book is threefold. Firstly, it is to acknowledge God as the author and upholder of all concepts and practices related to stewardship, creation of resources, social justice, and successful organization-building. Secondly, it is to help reposition the way many Christians think about God’s purposes for humanity and the manner in which God’s own revealed actions model for us where He wants to take us. Thirdly, it is to help undergird and facilitate the rapidly emerging interest in marketplace ministry, and its validity to God, for countless millions of believers.

Over time, I have also observed that numbers of business people have struggled deeply with the role of the local church in their lives and marketplace ministries. While many pastors have become preoccupied with their own ecclesiastic roles and vision, tending to ignore other valid ministries not directly related to running a church, growing numbers of church leaders have given very specific value and recognition to marketplace ministries and other essential outward Kingdom ministry into the community. The New Testament is clear by emphasis that the local church is non-negotiably important to the grounding and development of believers. I am very grateful for the pastors and business ministries that believe this and are partnering to make a difference, both within the church and as it reaches out into the world around it to bring transformation.

Today we face many crises. None of them is more basic than the answer to this question: How should mankind justly care for the Earth’s

resources and distribute its wealth? If Christianity really is God's message to the world, and the Bible is His "manufacturer's handbook," then scripture must address this most fundamental question of human concern. Has our Maker established laws governing our labor, our currencies, our productive justice, and other general laws related to what we commonly call "economics"? If so, how do they work? Does the Bible address those laws? What are the penalties for individuals, businesses, and nations breaking those laws? This became the basis of my original search and my subsequent teaching. The answers to these questions are in this book.

As might be expected, Jesus said it most clearly: "...for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."<sup>1</sup> If you find my treasure, you find my heart. This is the most basic of all truths and the foundation of all studies of human nature. The study of hearts and treasures is all about economics and all about business. Christianity is, indeed, about the study of man at his most basic level and the God who made him so.

Whoever produces both capital and human justice will lead the 21st century. This book establishes a biblical foundation which I believe can both help in that cause and undergird a compassionate, free-enterprise system that is truly based upon Christ's Kingdom. The whole of mankind desperately needs you and me to give ourselves to this cause. The church stands at the threshold of an enormous possibility for both relevance and global leadership. May we respond to that challenge as men and women who are living lives that are centered beyond our own self-serving interests.

Finally, upon reflection, this book is designed to be "evangelistic." By that I mean it introduces an eminently practical and empowering Being to those who may have been looking for Him in the clouds instead of having feet squarely planted in the practices of men's lives. Welcome to the "franchise of all time" and those who serve its genius Inventor!

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 6:21

# Introduction

## Economic Evangelism: Catching the Fish with Their Own Food

*“And He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’”*

Matt. 4:19

**T**his book is built upon twelve foundational concepts of economic, social, and organizational laws. I have been teaching these twelve concepts and refining them for over twenty years. They address core issues within God’s heart and the human heart as well. They are systematically presented for the sake of a progressive and logical presentation, but not necessarily in order of importance. What I will say about them is this: These concepts are grounded in scriptural truth and, therefore, correctly applied, they work. Indeed, truth never fails.

God’s plan to change the world is Himself. He has created the world, and He will change it primarily through His people, who are commonly called “the Church.” The word *Church* comes from the Greek word “ekklesia,” which literally means those elected and called out to rule. Those of you familiar with Greek history know about the role of ekklesia in ancient Greek politics within the city-states. They were the rulers and the business managers of their culture. The Church is supposed to be an army of rulers, hence the Holy Spirit chose the word “ekklesia” to describe her. This is no small truth.

Rulership has always been connected with managerial responsibilities. How can a man rule in the ekklesia (church) of God if he isn’t a good ruler in his own home over his family?<sup>1</sup> Before you establish the rules and a plan for how things are designed to operate most effectively and efficiently, you need rulership. Is God a ruler? Obviously! Does He have a plan by which mankind and nations operate most effectively and efficiently? Yes, yes, and yes!

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. 3:4; Gen. 18:18

He has a plan called His “gospel”; a detailed blueprint of it called the “Bible”; a work force designed to implement His plan called His “Church”; and a C.E.O. called the Holy Spirit who is everywhere at once. What a potential operation! The major problem is the work force—the believers. They don’t understand the work project because they have focused on their retirement benefits in the future and in Heaven. Clearly they should focus on the work project God has given them to do on Earth.

Alas, God’s employees have been told by many of their leaders that what really counts is the retirement village in Heaven and not the passion and challenge of contributing to His enterprise here on Earth. Let me ask those of you who manage or hire people what you would think about the character and motivation of a prospective employee whose primary focus was on the benefits and retirement plans of your organization. Would you really want to hire such a self-oriented person? Can you now see why so much of Christendom is in such an apathetic mess? We’ve focused on the retirement plan and therefore have attracted self-interested people. The go-getters in the world look down their noses at us. The corporations snatch up the very kind of people Christ says belong to His Kingdom enterprise, namely, the “violent men” who “take it (the Kingdom) by force.”<sup>2</sup>

God not only has a business plan, but He has extended it out into the ages to come and preplanned each step before He created His worlds.<sup>3</sup> His children shall be working with Him forever. He is not in a hurry because His primary product is the quality of life and maturity that His employees and co-workers are experiencing with Him as He is extending the influence of His business (Kingdom). This is a major principle and one that you and I, as apprentices, are expected to understand, practice, and master. God’s business plan is designed to produce proprietorship and maturity in His business partners. Any family, business, church, or nation that builds on this principle will be blessed by God and prosper since He is into blessing people who run their businesses the way He runs His. But we are getting ahead

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<sup>2</sup> Matt. 11:12b

<sup>3</sup> Rev. 13:8

of ourselves, and right now we need to refocus on God's overall business plan.

Jesus was amazed that His earthly family guardians, Mary and Joseph, were full of anxiety concerning His whereabouts. Parenthetically, how would you like to have been responsible for losing God? Talk about poor stewardship! His response to them when they found Him in the temple conversing with the leaders, was a classic: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"<sup>4</sup> Frankly, Jesus, no! We didn't know your Father had a business or that you could possibly frame your work in such a down-to-earth and possibly even carnal way so as to talk about God as a business person.

Now, while you may be thinking that it is a "stretch" to apply Christ's quote about Father's "business" here to real-life business, please remember this: Business is about an exchange of values between two or more parties. In this sense, the gospel is "business." Is this "business orientation" talk of Jesus inconsistent with the rest of His message? Hardly. Consider this, please: There are more parables concerning the stewardship of material goods and personal talents in the New Testament than concern Heaven or any other single topic. God is not only materially oriented; He invented all matter and owns it all to boot. He has an earthly business franchise. He intends to return someday in person and then extend His employee/joint owners' influence into the rulership and management of all that He has created.<sup>5</sup> He has an evil unrelenting competitor named Satan whose rival operation has seized much of the Earth. Satan has been largely unchallenged by most believers because they thought the retirement plan was the issue, not the earthly franchise. And to make it all the more practical, both Satan and God are competing for the market share of the people who make up Earth's population. The undecided and the ignorant are evangelism's goal. God created them and, as a loving Steward, wants them functioning as He intended.

So how should we go about "fishing" for them on God's behalf? After all, Jesus said that He would make us "fishers of men."<sup>6</sup> What are

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<sup>4</sup> Luke 2:49 (KJV)

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 8:17; Eph. 1

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 4:19

the fish feeding on? They aren't biting much on retirement plans, I'll tell you that for sure. No, they're feeding on the practical issues of life such as these:

- How can I best provide for myself and my family?
- How can I live in safety and protect myself, my family, and my property from violence, theft, confiscation, and social collapse?
- How can I make and maintain real, meaningful relationships?
- How can the system I live in provide security, justice and economic opportunity?

These are the kinds of questions people all over the Earth are asking and precisely the kinds of questions we Christians are not answering. We are refusing to look away from the future retirement plan of our gospel to be able to deal with these here-and-now questions. They seem too carnal and earthly. However, if we truly care for people (the fish), why do we insist that they eat what *we* want to feed them, instead of giving them the things for which they hunger? Christians are the only fishermen I know who demand that the fish change their feeding habits, come to the sporting goods store (our church), and voluntarily put the hooks in their own mouths! Here is my point: The nations are looking for people with a plan for how to live successfully here on this Earth. The issue is not on what *should* the unsaved be feeding, but rather, on what *are* they feeding.

The three most important issues in U.S. Presidential elections are consistently these: economics, economics, and economics. Where people's treasure is, there will their hearts be also. This preoccupation with the practical is not all bad since God and His gospel are immensely practical. What's truly unfortunate are Christians who live in the real world, but refuse to deal with the real issues in it. This is tragic because it misrepresents God and because it allows the evil world system to exploit people and take away their ability to fully experience freedom, growth, and productivity from God's point of view. And it is likewise unacceptable because it shrouds the retirement plan in future promises, rather than in God's demonstrated effectiveness in the

here-and-now business of this life. If God's gospel doesn't work now, here on Earth, why should we expect unbelievers to trust in it for a future richness of life in Heaven?

But, God's business plan will unfold as His people begin to see how serious He really is. He's in the business of overcoming the competition, closing the deal on the uncommitted fish, and demonstrating the obvious superiority of His principles of life in the one realm which preoccupies the whole world: the just provision for our lives (economics).

I believe economic evangelism is the next major wave of the future for a number of reasons:

- 1) Economic issues are a universal bait of all people.
- 2) The gospel clearly explains how to follow the manufacturer's (God's) purposes for people and His uses for the created order.
- 3) God's laws of personal and corporate freedom, dignity, growth, and justice operate perfectly in a self-rewarding and competitive environment.
- 4) Business and financial success are both easily measured. Hence, unlike politics, social justice, etc., business people can apply God's Word and then personally see that it works without undue complicating factors.
- 5) Christians have access to God's wisdom to deal with all of the above, and we are operating in a *massive seller's market of desperate human need*.

What a dynamite situation! All we have to do now is better understand Father's business plan and put it into operation in our own lives and places of responsibility.

*Doing Business God's Way* is an introductory study to the master principles of management, growth, and productivity that God has revealed in His Word. May we see and practice these principles. The nations are waiting for us as they flounder in the grip of tyranny, confusion, and systems of economic mismanagement that can only fail and oppress them.

## Our Journey Together—We Must Change as Individuals before We Change the Culture

This book is divided into two sections. *Section One* deals with the theological issues affecting the individual believer and his or her role in the marketplace, and *Section Two* takes those same issues and principles and shows how they, of necessity, must affect the political world in which we live. We move from the private to the public.

If truth doesn't work at home it isn't truth. If truth doesn't work in the marketplace, it won't work in Congress or the courts either because something is fundamentally wrong with it. Stated positively, if principles work at home and in the marketplace, they will work equally well in governing a nation with order, justice and productivity.

*Section One* attempts to explain how a clear understanding of God's vision for His children and their work radically changes our personal lives and releases us into a whole new world of creativity and freedom.

*Section Two* assumes two things: (1) we're losing our current freedom because we're rejecting even the historic truths we did have, and (2) you and I want to reverse this slide into chaos and economic bondage by practicing God's truths in the marketplace and electing leaders who will do so in our public institutions. Both issues lie squarely at the feet of Christians. Indeed, believers are to be Almighty's mouth, hands, and feet on this Earth, for they are stationed here to operate His earthly franchise, and to empower people and deliver them from ignorance and bondage.





SECTION  
ONE

**God's Essential  
Principles  
for Building  
Government and  
Free Enterprise**



# CHAPTER ONE

## God Is Building a Family Business

*“...wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?”*

Luke 2:49 (KJV)

MASTER PRINCIPLE #1

**God is the Creator  
of private property.**

**W**hat is God doing on the Earth today? What has He been doing from the beginning? What can we expect from Him tomorrow and for the many years that will come and go before He brings history to its end? All

too often the answer is that He's frantically working to save a bunch of people before the end, or before they die, so that He can populate Heaven. But if that were so, God could have dispensed with the majority of scripture, which addresses our responsibilities here on Earth, and cut straight to the retirement plan waiting for us in the future.

We could say that God is building His Kingdom. That would be true. But that answer would also be likely to fall on deaf ears, because too many Christians have heard about “the Kingdom of God” for so long that they no longer pay attention to it. The phrase has lost much of its substance from overuse, misuse, and abuse.

Instead, I like to say that God is a businessman, and He's building a business. Novel as this language may seem, it is biblical. Grasping it can revolutionize how we understand our role in history, as we saw in the introduction.

The prevailing lifestyle in much of the evangelical world reveals an attitude of, “We've got our salvation, and since God controls history, let's just take care of our own personal affairs, avoid major sin, witness when possible, build ‘successful churches,’ and then get out of here.”

That isn't what God wants. In Genesis 1:26-28, God states that we are created in His image and likeness to have dominion over the

Earth and everything in it. That means we are created to have the same intrinsic goals, desires, and ambitions as God, and that they are to be realized first of all on Earth before we graduate into the future. God intends to bring life on Earth under His order, and He intends to use believers to do it. This is why we are to “seek first the Kingdom”<sup>1</sup> and to pray, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven.”<sup>2</sup> Heaven has no problems; the work is here on Earth.

### **God Wants to Extend “Almighty & Sons” to the Earth through Us**

Let’s say it simply: God the Father is building a family business. I call it ALMIGHTY & SONS. He wants each of His children to have a franchise in that business. He wants the business to grow through each of us. God wants to bring His own brand of *McDonald’s* down to Earth and give every believer a piece of the action. Through each local franchise, He wants His children to reap its blessings, and He wants the needy, hurting people of the world to benefit from the services His business offers. A franchise does that. It supplies the expertise and power, and you supply the local outlet.

When you were born again, you were born into the family. You became a joint heir with Christ in the enterprise.<sup>3</sup> From that moment, Father began grooming you to take your place in the family business alongside all the other family members. Why do we refer to God’s work in the world as the family business? Because that is how Christ speaks in the Parable of the Minas.<sup>4</sup> A nobleman, who represents Christ Himself, distributes to each of his servants one mina (about three months’ salary) before leaving on a long trip and says to them, “Do business (literally: trade) until I come” (verse 13). When he returns, he calls each of them to him “that he might know how much every man had gained by trading,” (literally: by conducting business)(verse 15). Having accounted for their gains, he gives them

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 6:33

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 6:10

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 8:17

<sup>4</sup> Luke 19:11-27 (KJV)

new responsibilities proportionate to their proven business acumen. The parable of the minas depicts how Christ rules over His Kingdom and apportions work, the sort of work associated with running a business, to His servant children.

If you are in Christ, you are called to extend His Kingdom franchise on Earth as a junior partner.<sup>5</sup> You are called to discover His management principles of life, relationships, and stewardship in the scriptures; practice them personally and with others; and let the Holy Spirit train you as to their proper use and appropriate applications. You are to become a “company man” or a “company woman.” Like Jesus, you are to seek every possible opportunity to extend Father’s life and blessings to all men and all situations. You are also called to apply godly stewardship and care over the resources entrusted to you and to root out the enemy/competitor (Satan) from your own life and your family. You’re to look for opportunities to attack Hell’s gates<sup>6</sup> and liberate those whose minds, morals, and lifestyles have been imprisoned by Satan’s world system. You didn’t just get saved, you got drafted! You’re in His family business to extend it both within you and externally to the uttermost parts of the Earth. It runs on laws which you are expected to learn and apply in an ever-increasing masterly fashion. You, friend, are in God’s M.B.A. program, and the only issue is what kind of student/employee you are. Are you looking out for yourself and your retirement program in the sky, or are you looking out for the extension of Father’s business affairs here on Earth like Jesus did?

This book is set up around Twelve Master Principles of biblical economics and management. Each of the Twelve Master Principles have direct corollaries, or spin-off truths, that touch major areas of management and also national and international economic issues as well. The master principle which we will discuss here in chapter one deals with God’s creation of private property. It is “square one” in terms of the whole study, and forms what I believe is the introduction to any biblical study on economics.

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<sup>5</sup> Rom. 8:17

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 16:18

## **If Owning Things Is a Sin, God Is the Chief of Sinners**

God is the author of the concept that is called “private property.” He created all things, both spiritual and material, and owns them all. If you have fallen for the anti-biblical, gnostic heresy that owning material things is unspiritual and carnal, then you must logically believe that God is the chief of sinners and the most carnal of us all. But I doubt if you really believe that. It is only what false teachers have tried to teach us. Hopefully, they didn’t understand the implications of their own false teaching. What is true is that private, material property, and all the biblical rights and responsibilities surrounding it, is *God’s idea*, not carnal exploitative man’s or Satan’s. God declares Himself the only true and rightful property owner of all material things: “The Earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.”<sup>7</sup>

Obviously this does not mean that material ownership should lead to crass indifference, ignoring the genuine material needs of others. Anyone who knows about the kinds of community service projects I encourage and facilitate knows better. But let’s set the record straight from God’s Word: All resources are owned by God and on loan to man to steward for Him. They are to be used to generally further God’s Kingdom franchise on Earth. Rousseau, Karl Marx, or any left-wing professor who attacks the concept of private property, and who knows anything about its origin, are simply anti-Christ in their false assertion that all private property is theft.

Without going into a philosophy lesson, this anti-property and anti-material garbage is actually a very old form of what is called “gnostic philosophy” and was resolutely fought against for hundreds of years by the early church fathers. It is called “dualism” and essentially says that spirit is “good” and matter is “evil”; and that to become truly spiritual one must reject all material things and live in “the spirit.” Of course, the Holy Spirit exhorts us to be fully blessed and prosper in every way,<sup>8</sup> that is, both in spiritual and in natural things.

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<sup>7</sup> Psa. 24:1

<sup>8</sup> 3 John verse 2

## **God Is after Incarnating Truth Rather Than Calling Us All to Poverty**

Christianity, and the whole world, have been catastrophically affected by two things: first, the belief that true spirituality can primarily only exist in poverty; and second, that true spirituality must reject the material world and the challenges in it. I would like to remind us all of the two major truths directly related to this attack against the material world, and owning or managing things, services, etc.

1. As Paul tells us in Philippians, chapter two, Jesus “emptied Himself” of all that He owned in order to please the Father and demonstrate humility. He gave up His heavenly power out of virtue, not because what He owned was inherently evil. If it was evil, why did He ask for all of it back in John 17:5? He triumphed over all things by emptying Himself of His inherent right to them as their Creator. This principle of “moving in the opposite spirit” is very deep and beyond our study here. The point is this: Jesus became poor for a season and for a reason. Upon completion of His first advent, He was once again clothed in all the majesty, power, and ownership He had ever possessed.<sup>9</sup>
2. Rather than rejecting the material world and the management of it, God ordains it. God incarnates His spiritual ideas *into* the material world. Jesus Christ is “Exhibit A”: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”<sup>10</sup> When God has an idea, He incarnates it into His Cosmos. He operates directly opposite to the false teachers who want to get everything *out of matter*, into the spirit. God is moving to get His Spirit controlling His believers so that they will bring His creation into His order.

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<sup>9</sup> John 17:5

<sup>10</sup> John 1:14

I clearly remember one day in 1987 when I was out jogging, and God's Spirit impressed me with the statement: "Dennis, you and I are going in opposite directions. I'm moving more and more to get *on* the Earth, and you're waiting to get off it." I began to weep, for I began to comprehend the problem. God's kids are trying to get off the planet and into the "spirit," while God is moving to get increasingly *on* the planet and *into* the material world through His children, to extend His franchise. All of a sudden Christ's prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10), took on a whole new level of understanding. The problems aren't in the spirit in Heaven, but rather in the material world here on Earth! This is where the action is, and the franchise is to be extended. No wonder Satan wants us to reject the material world and the stewardship and management of it. He wants it for himself and *his* franchise. It's a smart move, but not smart enough. God's kids are waking up, and those who are engifted with management skill and understanding are especially aroused. They know that their product is substantially superior to Satan's.

### **In God's Kingdom, There Are No Second-Class Citizens**

The false teaching against material stewardship has had especially devastating results against the average Christian, who, unlike the pastor, is called to earn his living dealing with the material world. It has promoted a kind of "second-class citizenship" in the Church. If you're spiritual, or "called to the ministry," you go full-time into God's work. If not, you work in the fallen world, contribute where you can, and sometimes wonder why God didn't love you enough to let you be "full-time" and out from under the burden of the material world. At best you may become a deacon or Sunday school teacher, but you feel tainted by material things. At worst you become a "cash cow" to the local church and are called upon to keep its projects running in the black.

Praise God, there is a spiritual revolution in the making, one like unto Martin Luther's "priesthood of all believers" revolution. Not only are all believers priests before the Lord,<sup>11</sup> as Luther maintained, but

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<sup>11</sup> 1 Peter 2:9



all Spirit-directed vocations are ordained by God and intrinsically of value. God's Kingdom franchise requires workers of all kinds: plumbers, C.P.A.'s, salesmen, housewives, and corporate executives. All of them are called to extend Father's will and the ways of His Kingdom into every sphere of life. You are no longer a second-class citizen, once you see God as the Property Owner and the spirit-made-flesh Material Manager. We should have had a clue to this liberating truth the first time we read Exodus 31:1-3, where the first "Spirit-filled" people in Moses' congregation were artisans and craftsmen.

As a pastor and businessman, I can honestly say that if many businesses were run like many churches are run, they would be broke in a year. That isn't a slam against pastors or churches as much as it is a statement of our universal stupidity in the Church. In trying so hard to be "spiritual" we have often rejected the obvious biblical skills associated with planning, strategic objectives, budget analysis, productivity, accountability, and many other "worldly" management skills—simply because we thought they only operated in the world of property, not the world of souls. Thankfully we see that kind of gnostic nonsense beginning to yield to God, the Property Owner, and God, the Strategic Thinker. The franchise is beginning to be seen, and it is mostly business professionals and everyday saints who are responding. Managing people and things isn't a sin; it's a franchise mandate.

### **Our Time on Earth Develops Our Spiritual Skills**

In Galatians 3:23 to 4:7, Paul magnificently points out that God's children are kept under tutors, trained and prepared by those tutors, until the Father calls them to Himself for more managerial responsibility. Under the disciplines of Earth life, God will someday call us fully to Himself, not as slaves, but as heirs.<sup>12</sup> Having been trained during our earthly visit to deal with life, reality, relational challenges, and material management problems, we will be ready for more training and responsibility. Fruitful saints will rule over cities, not harps, in the next age. Some will even rule over whole nations<sup>13</sup> rather than golden

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<sup>12</sup> Gal. 4:7

<sup>13</sup> Matt. 24:46-47; Luke 12:44; Rev. 2:26

slippers. For God is the Ultimate Manager of His Cosmos, and He is training up His kids to rule it all under Christ, using planet Earth as square one. Indeed, since power is guarded by problems, all the franchise trainees will get ample opportunity to learn how to apply God's Word toward solving problems here on Earth.

Earth is our workshop assigned by God, and we are not here simply to keep ourselves from sin. We are also here to drive sin away and nullify its effect in the created order.

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus says the gates of Hell will not prevail against His Church. Most Christians live as if our job were to keep the gates of Hell from swallowing us up until, at the last minute, Jesus rescues us. That is not Christ's point.

Jesus calls us the "ekklesia." The ekklesia was an institution familiar for centuries throughout the Hellenic world. It was the representative assembly that ruled over civic affairs. It was not a ragtag guerrilla army or a cowering, persecuted minority; it was the duly constituted authority. By calling His people the ekklesia (which we translate "church"), Christ implicitly gives us authority in world affairs. That is part of why the Roman Empire considered the Church such a challenge and was so threatened by it.

Christ's intent is not that we should bar the gates and somehow weather Hell's fury; it is that we, acting under His authority as His ekklesia, should storm the gates of Hell and crush them, radically reducing Hell's influence in the world and so expressing the truth that Christ is all in all.

### **Most of Our Trials Are Lessons to Be Learned**

Earth is our workshop, and it is filled with trials, challenges, and opposition, all of which are intended by God for our growth. We are to attack Hell's gates. We are on the offensive, and our weapons are not guns and bombs. They are obedience to God's Word, prayer, preaching, teaching, debate, and self-sacrificial service to those in need. With these we cast down false spiritual ideologies and practices that enslave people. In short, we discover and practice a biblical world-

view, a way of seeing and practicing God's reality and decrees for His Earth. When, by the Holy Spirit, we put God's Word into practice through this biblical worldview, revival will naturally follow.

In Father's workshop, we are being prepared for Heaven. But most believers don't want to deal with the problems God serves up in the workshop. They assume that all their troubles are Satan's attacks. Indeed, I am convinced that if Satan didn't exist, believers would invent him! Most of our challenges are exercises, lessons God has prepared for us in the workshop. If we would stop ascribing them to the devil and start receiving them as lessons from God to be solved with His Word, we would experience the power of God's Word in a whole new practical way. Then we would be like "those who by reason of use (that is, practice) have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."<sup>14</sup>

All of these truths relate back to God's creation of the material world, His command for man to steward it on His behalf, and to solve problems God's way. The reason we must spend so much time in this chapter on these theological foundations is that without this foundation you will constantly be in danger of falling off one side of the road or the other. On the one side, we fall into simple materialism, forgetting that the issue is stewarding God's resources with God's purposes and methods rather than "getting rich." On the other side is the ditch of false spirituality which rejects the management of property and resources in favor of "full time ministry" or "spiritual" things. Balanced ministry seeks neither goods nor ghosts, but rather God.

### **Ruling over Real Things in the Real World Is the Real Issue**

As we have already noted, the reason satanic strategy attacks the stewardship of property and material things is so that Satan can rule over the resources of this Earth, and so that the captive nations will be unchallenged by Christianity. Satan believes in his total monopoly. If the kingdoms of both Satan and God require material human bodies

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<sup>14</sup> Heb. 5:14 (KJV)

and material resources to extend their power (and they both do), then blinding God's people with false and misleading "spiritual" assumptions is essential. Add to this fact the undisputed reality that the vast majority of human beings are preoccupied with how to live successfully in *this* material world, rather than in a future "spiritual" one, and you can quickly see the massive problem we face in light of this truth. Many believers think the gospel of Christ applies primarily to the *future*; hence the gospel becomes less relevant to here-and-now unbelievers. Believers and non-believers aren't even communicating. This message, Christ's Kingdom message, bridges the gap. It clearly shows how today and eternity are linked by the principles of apprenticeship in the here-and-now. Ruling well over what you have now, becomes the stepping stone into your future and the levels of responsibility you will carry.

### **Let's Apply What We Learn**

The heart of my message is not "save the United States" or any other nation. We're not here to "save" the nations, as much as we may love them, but rather to present ourselves to Father for training in obedience while in His earthly workshop. As we become effective in our obedience, the discipling of the nations will naturally flow from this. We want to become effective tools Father can use to fulfill Christ's destiny, that He should be all in all. We are calling the Church back to the workshop and saying, "Father is building ALMIGHTY & SONS, and in building ALMIGHTY & SONS, He requires us to apply the Book to the whole of human living."

God has given us a tremendous opportunity. Satan's world-system franchise is steering the ship onto the rocks. When the ship hits, it will begin to break up and sink. We can show the world how to get the ship off the rocks and repair it. But to do that, we must stand fast on the truths of scripture and destroy the falsehoods that dominate the world's thinking and have led the world to its present debacle.

Many of us were unaware until the last decade that Jesus meant it when He said, "Occupy (literally: conduct business) until I come" (Luke 19:13 KJV). We thought the name of the game was "get saved, stay

holy, stay in your comfortable fellowship, let the world go to Hell,” and “Praise God, Jesus is coming to rescue us from this mess that Father can’t straighten out.” I call that “faith” simple unbelief!

This defeatist message is not the historic gospel. It grew out of eighteenth and nineteenth century secularist “enlightenment” philosophy, and it is the root of the idolatrous notion that Christianity has no solutions to man’s temporal problems and is not responsible to lead or care for the Earth and its people. It leads many contemporary evangelicals to think the Bible is fine for telling you how to get to Heaven but says little about how to manage your household, less about how to run a business, and nothing at all about how to govern a city or a nation.

Often this deceit comes clothed in innocent sounding language: “The Bible isn’t a textbook on economics” (or science, or law, or government, or anything else but salvation). True enough. It isn’t a textbook on any one of these things. It’s a textbook *on all of them* and everything else in life, and it doesn’t read like a textbook, systematically treating each subject in isolation, because it was inspired by a God who made all of life interwoven so that everything affects everything else.

### **A Quick Look at Father’s Franchise Building Rules**

We won’t change the world in the world’s way. We won’t copy the strategy of the Marxist revolutionaries, or the lords of capitalism, or any other secular movement. Instead, we will build on four biblical principles:

1. Change must work from the inside out, both personally and institutionally.
2. Change must progress from local, to national, to international (i.e., from the bottom up).
3. Change must be comprehensive, affecting every aspect of life, looking from today on into eternity.
4. Change must be affected by the godly stewardship of servant-leaders, not by tyrannical takeovers.

We must build according to God's pattern. God changes the world from the inside out, starts small and grows big, transforms every aspect of life, and uses people with servants' hearts. You do not change a nation for the good by naked legislation. You change it by regeneration and sanctification that bear fruit in changed legislation.

The first two principles, which are closely related to each other, appear in Jesus' statements about the Kingdom: "The Kingdom of God," He said, "cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, 'Lo here!' or 'Lo there!' for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you."<sup>15</sup>

What is the Kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches...It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until it was all leavened.

*Luke 13:18-19, 21*

Not that we don't press for external change. We do. But our confidence is not in changing public policy, whether local or national. It is in the transforming power of God working first in individuals and families, then in wider circles. "Except a man be born again..."<sup>16</sup> This means that there has to be a fundamental regeneration of the human being.

The third principle is that we must build comprehensively. Paul told Timothy that God had put into scripture everything necessary to equip anyone fully "for every good work."<sup>17</sup> Too often we "New Testament Christians" read that in terms of the New Testament alone. But Paul was talking about the Old Testament, because there was no New Testament; it wasn't completed yet. Every admonition in the New Testament to study the scriptures applies directly to the Old Testament and only indirectly to the New. The challenge we face is to study the whole Book with such clarity, anointing, and intensity that we can address all of rebellious man's problems. We need the whole sword, not just the New Testament half!

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<sup>15</sup> Luke 17:20,21 (KJV)

<sup>16</sup> John 3:3 (KJV)

<sup>17</sup> 2 Tim. 3:16-17

The keys to rebuilding the family are in the Book. The keys to rebuilding the individual are in the Book. The solution to the drug problem is in the Book. The solution to educational failure is in the Book. Difficulties in taxation, agriculture, the environment—the whole onslaught of problems rebellious man has created are to be solved by studying and applying God's Word systematically and strategically. When we take God's Book seriously, God will demonstrate to principalities and powers and all the heavenly onlookers, that great cloud of witnesses, that HIS WORD TRULY IS ALIVE AND POWERFUL AND ABLE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT?

The saints are called to inherit the Earth.<sup>18</sup> We inherit responsibility; not harps, not golden slippers, and not a trip to the eternal retirement village in the great by-and-by. We are called to work because Christ works, and God is committed to work. Remember, work was commissioned before the Fall.<sup>19</sup> Christianity must revitalize the work ethic.

The fourth principle is that true leadership comes through servanthood. Christ said, "...whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve..."<sup>20</sup> God honors those who, imitating Jesus, humble themselves and take on the form of a bondservant.<sup>21</sup>

We intend to affect social and economic change one step at a time by applying these five corollary truths:

1. Freedom begins with self-government under God.
2. The family unit is the basic building block of a healthy community.
3. The local church is the primary equipping center for effective Christian service.

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<sup>18</sup> Matt. 5:5

<sup>19</sup> Gen. 1:26-28

<sup>20</sup> Matt. 20:27-28

<sup>21</sup> Phil. 2:5-11

4. Stewardship of private property is essential to personal and societal maturity.
5. Rebuilding a nation begins with rebuilding a local community.

We will explore these truths further in the rest of this book. For now, suffice it to say that Jesus Christ brings us to maturity by giving us relationships, talents, and things for which to care.

It is no accident that the socialist agenda, aimed at making people dependent on the idol of the state, has always been: (a) to commandeer public education and snatch the kids; (b) to essentially abolish private property, and to strip the general population of stewardship; and (c) to exterminate the Church or reduce it to a people only dealing with heavenly issues. Those are the three foundations of the new social order: kids, property, and Church. By the way, if you think that the collapse of communist governments means Marxist thinking is no longer a threat, you haven't observed the people and ideas controlling many American universities.

### **Economic Upheaval Is the Church's Wake-Up Call**

Why emphasize the *private sector*? Because God in His holiness is judging this nation as well as others. His judgment will bring major economic upheaval. God has always used economic judgment in history. Anyone who studies the demise of cultures can see that.

As He progressively de-funds this culture's civil institutions, the private sector will have to emerge to fill the void. The public sector increasingly lacks the revenue to meet people's needs and is going broke. City, state, and federal deficits are rising. The public sector will inevitably turn to the private sector for help. That will be the opportunity for God's people to reclaim a nation through servanthood and the biblical truths of management which we have learned to practice. It's an opportunity we dare not miss and will not miss, God helping us. The extension of Father's franchise is at stake!



When the wheels come off, we must be ready. Christian businesswoman and businessman: You are at the heart of God's answer to the need. But we can't help fix what we haven't learned how to make work in our own private worlds. This is the work to which we must give ourselves: learning to apply God's Word practically to our sphere of influence. Then the wake-up call will excite us rather than frighten us.