



Minding God's Business

by Ray S. Anderson



What in the World is God doing?

- The gospel is that God has entered into history in order to accomplish the restoration and reconciliation of his created world, including human society, to the end that God is glorified and lost humanity become a “people of God.”
- This gospel, which has been completed in the person and work of Jesus Christ, is taken up by those commissioned to be his apostles by the resurrected Christ, as the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16).
- Through the ministry of these apostles, in the power of the Holy Spirit received at Pentecost, the church is born as the agent of the gospel and as a sign of the kingdom of God in the world.



- God's kingdom is his sovereign rule over and within the world, which was manifest in Israel and present in the fullness of power in Jesus Christ (Matt. 12:28).
- Jesus proclaimed the “gospel of the kingdom” through his own ministry of teaching and healing (Matt 4:23).
- Christian organizations exist to carry out the continuing apostolic task of the “gospel of the kingdom” as part of the church of Jesus Christ.



What is my Purpose?

GOSPEL → CHURCH → MISSION

- This “gospel” is the substance of the work of God in Christ by which he died for sinners and was raised up by the power of God for our salvation (1 Cor. 15:3).
- The church is an agent of the work of the gospel, not the final form of the gospel itself as an organization or an institution. Nor is mission capable of sustaining itself as an activity or organization except as it is grounded in the life of the church through the power and authority of the gospel.
- The church, then, comes into being as the power of the gospel is born as the mission of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost). The apostolic character of the church is its role in the process of gospel taking formation through mission.



What is My Source?

GOSPEL ← CHURCH ← MISSION

- “Theological reflection” is the task of the church as it carries out the mission of Christ in the world; that is, the church is to ground that mission in the authority of the gospel.



- The mission of God in the world, broadly defined, is his finished work of redemption through Jesus Christ, which is proclaimed as the gospel.



- Through Christ's gift of his Spirit, this work, which has been completed, continues to accomplish its purpose through the transformation of sinful persons into a new community of social and spiritual health: the church, the body of Christ.



- The work of mission cannot make an “end run,” as it were, and bypass the church as the body of Christ. Nor should one suppose that the apostolic mandate itself could take the form of a mission without being accountable to the body of Christ in the process of the formation of the gospel.



- A Christian organization in this sense can be said to be a gathering of Christian persons in common cause, who have a distinctively Christian identity and mission.



- The function of directing such an organization is what we mean by “management.” What makes Christian organizations distinctive is the content of the common cause. We designated this as the unique nature of a Christian organization as being mission-specific.



- Development of Christian organizations, therefore, is essentially the development of a community of Christian people whose organizational goal is mission-intensive. Organization in the Christian organization is the servant of the mission, which is the creative power behind the organization.



- What happens when the leadership function of management comes under the mandate of the mission of God as set forth in the world through incarnation?



- Management now becomes the servant of God's purpose and plan, and no longer is in the relentless grip of the utilitarian and self-preservationist drive of organizations under the determinism of the Fall. Under the Lordship of Christ, a new form of leadership emerges called servant leadership.



- Its goal is not serving the organization's own ethics and purposes, but leading the organization to fulfill God's purpose as a servant of God.



Management, Megatrends, and Methods



- Methods do not have the power in and of themselves to fulfill the kingdom of God or to move from an immediate objective to an ultimate objective.
- Methods are neutral, not inherently good or evil.
- Certain management principles or methods are inherently Christian would be a dubious approach.



Role of the Holy Spirit in Managing Christian Organizations



1. Understand the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, directing, empowering, and equipping Christians to accomplish his will.
2. The Holy Spirit is not a substitute for planning, nor is he the “missing piece” in a puzzle by which God’s secret plan is made known.
3. Plans are the human means for achieving goals, that embody the promise of God and complete the will of God.



4. The spiritual aspect of managing Christian organizations is not itself the use of a spiritual method or means as against any other method. Rather, the spiritual dimension of managing is represented by bringing all of the methods and means used into the service of the spiritual goal—that of achieving the will of the Lord and glorifying him in the process.



5. One important role of the Holy Spirit in the managing of Christian organizations, then, is to invest the reality and freedom of Christ as a living presence and power in the dynamic process of leading an organization to set goals, establish priorities, create action plans, and work with all contingencies that occur.



6. The Holy Spirit gives to an organization a creative response to contingencies, so that the “unforeseen” can be enfolded into the planning process without undercutting the validity of the plan.