

Business as Ministry Impacts Poverty

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Abstract

Businesses that are operated by Christian workers can make a difference in ministering to poverty-stricken communities around the world. Poverty is a major social problem that has existed for all of history and will continue to affect the lives of millions in the future. A number of business initiatives such as social business, macro-government initiatives, and transformational development have experienced success in helping reduce the problem. It is imperative to approach the issue of poverty recognizing the spiritual component along with the physical. The ministry of Jesus Christ serves as an example for meeting the needs of the impoverished, and going into the work with a heart like His will demonstrate a love that is able to give life to the broken. The Christian non-profit operates with a purposeful ministry with several areas of impact, and examining one particular company called IBEC Ventures in detail will reveal a practical way the work is being done.

Business as Ministry Impacts Poverty

Poverty is a global issue that has received much attention and philanthropy flowing from wealthier countries like the United States and Europe to countries that are less economically developed. The Millennium Development Goals initially created in 2000 have brought attention to key areas of concern that non-profits along with government programs have tackled. Non-profits organized around meeting needs of people physically and spiritually will have the most success in handling poverty, as they will have an avenue to use business as a ministry to change lives. Their work becomes life-changing because it is reflective of the ministry of Jesus Christ. The purpose of Jesus coming was to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10). Every person is “lost” apart from Christ, facing destruction at the end of their lives unless an act of salvation takes place. All life belongs to the Lord, and once people acknowledge Him and allow Him to be their God, He can transform those who were spiritually dead into a new creation.

The Global Issue of Poverty

The Problem

No matter where one travels in the world, one can encounter areas of substandard living conditions of the impoverished. Poverty can be defined as either *biological* (lacking in food, clothing, or shelter), *relative* (people comparing their living standards to others), or *official poverty* (income level below a cut-off line that makes them eligible for welfare benefits) (Henslin, 2014). While industrialized, wealthier nations have some areas of poor populations known as residual poverty, the less-developed nations (sometimes referred to as Third World countries) experience mass poverty where disease, malnutrition, and low life expectancies are common (Henslin).

While there is no single cause that is the root of the issue, many reasons have some validity, some of them originating from the affected people themselves, and some from outside them. One cause is *economic colonialism*, which refers to less developed countries (LDCs) selling food and natural resources to Most Industrialized Nations at cheap prices that do not allow the nation to have a large enough income to support their population and keep up with debt, let alone have enough for investment and development (Henslin, 2014). A problem also exists when power elites squander nation's resources for their personal gain, using money from the government or even outside aid to lead wealthy lifestyles and secure their position of power (Henslin). Even if the government isn't corrupt, resources can still be poorly allocated into expensive but useless projects, or be directed towards other purposes, effectively minimizing the availability of funds for public assistance programs like welfare, job training, health care, etc. that are beneficial to people in need.

One cause originating from the affected person is the psychological concept known as the culture of poverty, where people have a mindset of resignation, hopeless of changing their living circumstances (Henslin, 2014). Children are affected by the economic status and wealth of their parents and they are at a disadvantage in society when raised in a poor environment (Cohen et. al, 2007). For working adults, wages are barely enough to get by and most of the agricultural work (typical livelihood of the poor) is performed with outdated methods (due to either limited access to improved technology or lack of education to change work patterns) (Henslin, 2014). When entire populations carry this burden of living with such minimal economic prospects, combined with a weak

position in the global marketplace, it is difficult to find a way to climb out of the hole of poverty.

The Solution

With all of the many factors that contribute to a life of poverty, there is not a neat and easy solution. Many attempts to alleviate poverty do not reach the level of success which was intended, mostly due to using strategies that are only short-term fixes or the fact that they fail to help the people develop ways to sustain themselves into the future (Stapleford, 2009). For example, when the government introduced integrated rural development programs in the 1970s to provide aid packages to ease financial burdens in areas such as health, agriculture, education, and government in rural parts of the world, the programs proved to be unsustainable politically, financially, and managerially (Stapleford). In recent times, “many countries in Africa... have relied primarily on multilateral assistance from organizations like the World Bank while avoiding fundamental macroeconomic reforms, with deplorable but predictable results” (Carpenter and Dunung, 2012, p. 334). Discovering effective solutions takes time to learn through uncovering what works and what does not; moreover, there are many strategies that have been found to reduce poverty, many of which involve nations managing wealth effectively and citizens contributing to economic growth. A few to examine include social business, macro-government initiatives, and transformational development.

Social business. These types of businesses are managed or operated by the poor, allowing populations experiencing poverty to play an active role in stimulating the economy (Worth, 2014). Businesses can either create benefit to society by the goods they produce or be profit-maximizing in their operations (benefitting owners). One example of

a social business is a family raising livestock and gaining income from selling the products of animals (eggs, milk, cheese, etc.). Another avenue for business is a woman learning and specializing in an artisan trade product like jewelry or clothing and making a living from selling it. Social businesses are ultimately more effective than government spending in infrastructure or non-profits relying on donation funds to channel economic activity into LDCs (which is a form of trickle-down economics) since they directly impact the local market and increase the wealth of the people conducting business (Worth, 2014).

One tool to help social businesses financially is the use of microcredit. Worth (2014) defines microcredit as “small loans to entrepreneurs in developing countries who could otherwise not qualify for credit, helping them to start and sustain businesses” (p. 385). Since the money is directed towards productive activity, the system of loans is successful in helping people escape poverty. As a whole, social business can improve the well-being of individuals and their communities.

Macro government initiatives. Decisions made in a nation’s government can have far-reaching implications on the standard of living experienced by its citizens. Research shows “income redistribution through social spending directed towards education, improved healthcare, greater credit availability and land ownership all unambiguously increase a nation’s rate of economic growth” (Stapleford, 2009, p. 214). Individual governments as well as governments partnering with major world organizations can change the financial state of nations as a whole, which in turn affects citizens in their daily lives. For example, some nations have partnered with The World Bank and IMF in debt relief initiatives like the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Country

Initiative), which help pull LDCs out of a severe debt situation. In order to receive this assistance, “Poverty Reduction Strategies” that looked to achieve long-term, concrete results needed to be implemented in the countries (Stapleford, 2009). It is important for countries to do their part in improving societal conditions rather than merely relying on the government for aid.

Transformational development. Transformational development (TD) helps to meet the needs of the poor similarly to foreign aid programs with an added focus on the sinful human nature and spiritual poverty. This approach examined by Stapleford (2009) has a micro-development focus where organizations “direct human and financial resources toward the individual (particularly women and children), family, and community” (p. 255). The aspect of faith is integral to development as decision making regarding economic circumstances and involvement in the community stems from a mindset about the world (or worldview). Beliefs regarding the intrinsic value of human beings, the dignity of work, the call to stewardship and the freedom available through Christ can transform how one sees their worth and place in their community. Once people incorporate faith into their lives, churches can develop that build networks and encourage people to help one another out in the community. A system of support is put in place that creates structure along with “more opportunities for wealth-enhancing relationships” (p. 258). TD programs involve a holistic approach, including elements of lifestyle, education, technology, and governance (Stapleford).

A key element of TD is the importance of providing assistance through personal relationships with the poor. It is more than simply “helping the poor”—it is “walking with the poor” (p. 260) as Stapleford (2009) emphasizes. Rather than only operating in a

government office, workers meet the poor where they are by traveling to villages and mud huts and interacting one-on-one with the people. They listen to the people and teach them how to use the resources they have to improve their economic situation. The relationship with the community can be maintained over several years, working to help them become self-sustaining with their cooperation. Everyone involved in the TD programs (both community and workers) are accountable to one another through development and implementation processes (Stapleford, 2009). Results can be achieved only when “the rural poor take ownership of their own economic development” (p. 262).

The Importance of Justice

Maintaining justice in global business ensures all people have a fair opportunity to prosper through trade and globalization. One group should not have success at the expense of another: “If globalization is to be just, it is not enough that the poor be heard; the poor must be empowered” (Griffiths, 2007, p. 193). Although people in wealthier nations clearly have an advantage in production and available technology, this does not mean they are worth more in God’s eyes. The amount of suffering faced by people in less developed countries deserves not only attention but assistance as well.

The Bible includes the concept of distributive justice, discussing how need and merit are conditions for people to receive some of society’s resources (Rae and Wong, 2012). Initiative and hard work allow people to earn their share (a factor of merit), while people who cannot provide for themselves are supposed to receive a share of the society’s goods (a factor of need) (Rae and Wong, 2012). Some verses to support a personal responsibility to work include Proverbs 10:4: “Diligent hands bring wealth,” along with Paul’s instructions to “work with your hands” so one is “not dependent on anyone” (1

Thess. 4:10-12) and his statement, “if anyone isn’t willing to work, he should not eat” (2 Thess. 3:10). A few verses discussing people in need include the command to the Israelites to leave some of their harvest for the poor and foreigners (Lev. 23:22) and Deuteronomy 15:7-11 regarding opening one’s hand and lending to a poor brother to meet his need. The Bible is clear that people who are poor will always live on this earth (see Deut. 15:11, Matt. 26:11, and Mark 14:7). People have a responsibility to care for them since all people are made in God’s image and are valued and loved by Him. Proverbs 14:31 says, “Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.” Meeting the physical needs of people is equivalent to serving God Himself inasmuch as Jesus tells his disciples in Matthew 25 that whenever they provided food, water, clothing, or shelter to the least of these, they did it for the Lord.

Opportunities to help people in need exist everywhere, sometimes becoming life-or-death emergencies, and they won’t be resolved when people ignore them (Bryan, 2014). In fact, a person who withholds from being generous towards others can come to poverty themselves (Prov. 11:24). Luke 16 gives a vivid portrayal of the consequences faced by a rich man who went through life withholding food from the beggar (named Lazarus) at his gate. He paid the price after death, facing torment for never extending his hand to Lazarus. This story shows the reality of how people do not have equal lots in life, yet what one does with the resources he has can make all the difference. Ultimately, one’s financial position on earth cannot buy any advantages on the Day of Judgment. Proverbs 11:4 says, “Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.”

Spiritual Poverty

While millions of people are starving physically every day, the spiritual hunger people experience living apart from God affects people on a much greater scale. Earley (2010) makes the statement, “Spiritually, we are all beggars in need of living bread” (pp. 55-56). Chapter 6 of John explains that Jesus is the living bread. Whoever eats of it will not die but will live forever (vv. 50-51). “For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:33). Jesus clarified this to a crowd of people who searched for him and longed to know the truth of how they could be satisfied. He told them, “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you” (v. 27). When they asked what this work entailed, Jesus said it was simply “to believe in the one he has sent” (vv. 28-29). People who believe and eat the living bread remains in Christ and Christ is in them, resulting in life because of him (vv.56-57).

Once people are saved, this does not necessarily mean they will be lifted out of their life circumstances. Following Christ does not promise an easy, problem-free life, and a life that has been lived for years in an environment of poverty with limited resources at one’s disposal will not be changed instantaneously the moment one comes to faith in Christ. However, God watches over His children and will help meet their needs when they turn to Him. Also, Christians have the power of the Holy Spirit living within them, as 2 Corinthians 4:7 states, “We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” Psalm 73:26 is encouraging to Christians with the words, “God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” Christians are a new creation and can live with a joy that persists through all of life’s

circumstances. It is important to remember that this earthly dwelling is only temporary, and people can look with hope towards “the city that is to come” (Heb. 13:14). God’s promise comes through in the words: “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves” (Colossians 1:13).

The Structure of Non-Profits

The Nature of the Non-Profit

A non-profit is a type of organization with a social agenda. More specifically, they are tax-exempt organizations, self-governed by their members who “work to serve public purposes or the common goals of their members” (GAO, 2007, para. 8). To retain the tax-exempt status, non-profits must meet the non-distribution test, making sure assets aren’t benefitting owners. The most well-known and largest component of the non-profit sector is the 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit, as classified by the IRS (Worth, 2014). Charitable non-profits are organized to “benefit the broad public interest” (GAO, 2007, para. 9). The human services sector of charitable nonprofits is the area involved with poverty reduction, providing things like job training, housing, food distribution, disaster relief, and more (Worth, 2014).

All non-profits must be organized with a clear mission, vision, values, goals, strategies and objectives just like any for-profit business. Several areas in business like management of finances, operations, human resources, project-planning and more are vital to executing the functions of the non-profit. Knowledge of public policy is also necessary, especially when operating at a global level. Outside of the US, non-profits are generally known by the name *non-governmental organization* (NGO) (Worth, 2014).

Going Global

A great need for business as ministry exists beyond the familiar borders of the United States. According to Worth (2014), changing technology and the increased rate of globalization have “[raised] the awareness of people in developed nations about the needs of others on the planet, stimulating unprecedented global response to humanitarian needs” (p. 382). Organizations that have operations outside of a single country are called *international nongovernmental organizations* (INGOs). INGOs could be based in the US or other countries around the world. They can function as either an advocacy organization (which promote a cause or issue) or operational organization (working towards economic development or providing short-term relief from human suffering). Non-profit work outside of the US can become complex in dealing with factors such as varied legal systems, different cultural norms, foreign languages, and geographic distance. (Worth, 2014)

When non-profits include personal service to people groups in other countries (involving social welfare, medical care, etc.), it is imperative for workers to understand the family and social dynamics of the culture to better relate to clients and secure the best treatment for them (Cohen, Tran, and Rhee, 2007). A range of services requiring specialized care to handle problems that arise in individual families may be needed as part of the non-profit operations. Non-profits will work with diverse families living with different economic or institutional backgrounds, and becoming familiar with each way of life will help services be most effective (Cohen et. al, 2007).

The Face of the Organization

While the particular methods of carrying out non-profit work will change over time, the need for leaders and workers with a strong commitment and heart for the people being served is what will continue to drive the mission of the organization (Worth, 2014). Hard-working, creative individuals who show compassion toward people are the ones who have the ability to change lives wherever their work takes them. They see their work as more than just a job but rather as an opportunity to make a difference.

Social entrepreneurs. According to Dees, Emerson, and Economy (2001, as cited in Worth, 2014), social entrepreneurs are workers that have “a mission to create and sustain social value” (p. 400). In the right social, economic, and political conditions, entrepreneurial action can take place. Social entrepreneurs are driven to find innovative solutions to social problems. Free markets and governments alone cannot solve the problem of poverty, but using business as a means to involve people in poorer communities can help provide a sustainable income.

The role of government. Christians tend to disagree on the extent government should be involved in distributive justice. Cowan and Spiegel (2009) explain the different views Christians hold. Some lean towards a libertarian view believing that “government should not be in the business of redistributing any wealth” (p. 408). Others have a more socialist mindset that involves “centralized state-sponsored wealth redistribution” (p. 408) where resource sharing by voluntary and private institutions is insufficient to meet every need. Welfare liberals have a middle ground position that allows for some government wealth redistribution to ensure basic needs are met in the lives of the citizens. The Bible does not offer a definitive mandate when it comes to this subject of

distributive justice. However, many New Testament situations involve church giving and individual believers giving to those in need, suggesting a tendency for financial distribution to be voluntary rather than state-sponsored (Cowan and Spiegel, 2009). Jesus and his apostles ministered to the poor (see Luke 4:18 and Gal 2:10) and the early church itself was “characterized by a remarkable redistribution of resources” (refer to Acts 2:44-45) (Cowan and Spiegel, 2009, p. 406). Boice (1986) points out how “social security, Medicare, unemployment and various other social programs pre-empt what many Christians did previously, doing it better in total resources but not necessarily better in compassion or personalized care” (p. 505). Regardless of how the government functions to meet the needs of its people, since ministering to the poor is such a prominent task for Christians in the Bible, Christians today should devote themselves to the same cause.

The Heart of a Servant

If business is viewed as a service to people, the motivations behind one’s actions become people-oriented rather than self-focused. Everything a person does through service can have a lasting impact when God’s love is shown in caring for others. Business becomes an opportunity to evangelize when the ingredients of “compassion, love, intentionality [and] obedience” are put into one’s work (Wheeler, 2010, pp. 328-329). The heart of a business man or woman will ultimately determine whether his or her work has meaning. Hoekema (1986) states, “Fallen man today cannot in his or her own strength either do what meets with God’s approval or change the basic direction of his or her life from sinful self-love to love for God” (p. 232). A person cannot sacrificially love the people being helped through the non-profit until he or she is set free from the bondage to sin (Hoekema, 1986). Second Corinthians 3:17 says, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is,

there is freedom.” This freedom allows Christians to live in God’s will through loving God and loving others. Within a business setting, “the more [one] exercises this freedom, the more [one’s] freedom will resemble that of God himself, who is love” (Hoekema, 1986, p. 243). Matthew 5:16 calls Christians to “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Christians dedicated to serving God and meeting the needs of others will discover what Earley (2010) calls “the real business of life,” something “far greater than [one’s] own personal fulfillment, peace of mind or even [one’s] happiness” (p. 13). Allowing oneself to be used by God “to transform unbelievers into people whose great delight in life is to know and trust Him”—this is what brings true fulfillment and provides purpose to work (p. 13). As the real business of life is lived out through a person’s career, God is glorified and the person is living in a way that satisfies their reason for existing on this earth. Isaiah 43:7 is clear that God created man for His glory. Christians are instructed how they should live in Colossians 2:6-7: “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness.” Any work that does not keep Christ at the center, even if it has good intentions (for example, non-profit organizations that help the poor but do not acknowledge God in their mission), will not create a lasting impact of eternal value. Individual workers focused on God in their business could see lives transformed for God’s glory. How much greater could the sphere of influence reach if the entire organization was whole-heartedly devoted to working in the real business of life, serving God in their everyday activities? Every population touched by the organization

could be viewed as a mission field, and God's name would be proclaimed around the world.

Non-profits with a Christian Mindset

The Church. The Church has the potential to make a great impact in the world. Most government programs that tackle poverty are constructed through "top-down" initiatives that do not always produce tangible results in the lives of the people they are meant to help (Griffiths, 2007). When considering Africa, an area of the world experiencing widespread poverty, the Christian church has grown to 350-400 million people (Griffiths, 2007). The Church is in a position where it can interact with the poor, compared with which all other institutions fall short. A stable infrastructure is formed and leaders have the potential to impact the community, creating visible change in the lives of Africans with their additions of schools, clinics, hospitals, and recently created "micro-finance initiatives" (Griffiths, 2007). Globally, churches with a missional mindset can reach populations left untouched by other organizations.

Non-profit companies. Businesses can serve the less fortunate through unique entrepreneurial avenues. Christians who have positions in business leadership can help influence the private sector in less-developed countries, maintaining honest standards in their work and using the business to benefit the community (Griffiths, 2007). Jobs, exports, training, and collaboration among the poor can help people establish themselves and contribute to economic development (Griffiths, 2007). Christians can use globalization as a means to reach the poor through giving them access to markets and supporting policies that encourage productivity (Wydick, 2007). Rundle (2004) states, "Because of globalization there are Christian-owned, world class companies springing up

almost everywhere...all sharing an interest in helping promote a stable and prosperous society and in supporting Christian ministry” (p. 208). Non-profits can be a mission field that shares the love of Christ through intentional service to the poor, which allows one’s “saltiness [to] be tasted” and “light [to be] seen” (Boice, 1986, p. 502).

The Person of Jesus Christ

To truly understand how a person can carry out a successful ministry in their business, it is best to go to the source of salvation who led a perfect example with his life—Jesus Christ. According to Erickson (2001), “His humanity... is the standard by which we are to be measured” (p. 231). Hebrews 12:2 states, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.” Examining Jesus’s actions and character can help show how people today can lead a fulfilling life.

The Mission of Ministry

Throughout his life, Jesus demonstrated fellowship, obedience, and love, which put him in the right relationship to God the Father and with other human beings (Erickson, 2001). Jesus had perfect fellowship with the Father, speaking with Him through prayer while on earth and giving thanks and glory to Him. His will was subordinate to God during his time of ministry. Paul states, “Though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). Jesus’ obedience was carried out to the point of death, relinquishing all power and divine authority to die a miserable, grueling death on the cross in order to save mankind. He also loved humans, especially showing compassion to the outcasts of society (the poor, lame, sick, demon-possessed, etc.) and going out of his way to save the lost, becoming a friend of sinners and offering forgiveness and salvation to many. A few examples of this could

include telling the Samaritan woman about living water, saving an adulterous woman from being stoned by a crowd, and reinstating a disciple after he denied Jesus and turned his back on their friendship multiple times. Jesus made it a point to always look beyond outward appearances and into the hearts of the people he met. Jesus's ministry was centered around service to others, and He desired for His followers' ministries to consist of a like-minded service (Saucy, 1972). The concern that business workers have for others is "...nourished by the discovery that in in his grace God cares for them [too]" (Boice, 1986, p. 487).

The work that Jesus did definitely had "overtones of a spiritual ministry" since "eyes were opened to truth and captives to sin were set free" (Boice, 1986, p. 502). However, Christ's miracles were not all explicitly done as a means of bringing people to salvation. The miracles were evidence that Christ was more than just a man—He had divine power that allowed him to perform life-changing acts never been done before in the lives of men. These acts were part of fulfillment of prophesy, showing Jesus to be the longed for Messiah. Having compassion on the needy was part of who He was, and He taught that good should be done even to the "culturally despised" (as was the case with the parable of the good Samaritan) and to one's enemies (as he showed in the healing of the ear of the servant who came to arrest him in the garden of Gethsemane) (Boice, 1986, p. 503). Jesus's ministry carried through his life, leading up to his death on the cross.

The Ultimate Sacrifice

The act of giving one's life is considered by many to be the ultimate sacrifice. Jesus gave his life as a ransom (see Matt. 20:28), which was "a means of liberating those people who were enslaved to sin" (Erickson, 2001, p. 260). Since he lived a life

unblemished by sin, he was capable of offering himself as a perfect sacrifice that brought eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12-14). This single sacrifice was the necessary atonement for the sins of all humankind. Jesus's death was unlike any other in that it wasn't only physical but also spiritual, enduring separation from God and bearing the wrath of God on the behalf of humanity when He took all the sin of mankind upon Himself (Boice, 1986). Christians are instructed to go the way Jesus did "bearing the disgrace he bore" (Heb. 13:13). The cross is "an affirmation that one must lose the life to gain it" (Morris, 1983, p. 205). Love can be costly to show as Jesus demonstrated, and if Christians intend to love as He did, it can cost time, money, or hardship. Boice concludes, "What is purchased by such love will be of great value. It will be proof of the presence of the life of God both to the individual Christian and to the watching world" (1986, p. 440).

The Nature of Christ

Jesus Christ is the same person who existed before the creation of the world, walked the earth 2,000 years ago, is presently at work in the world today, and will reign as King in the future. The virtues Jesus displayed in his life, His "kindness, truthfulness, faithfulness, and every other moral virtue...reflect the nature of the immutable God" (Cowan and Spiegel, 2009, pp. 364-365). In regards to people's moral standard in life, "God's nature is the foundation" (p. 365). The Biblical commands given to people by God help to "make this standard known to people and [confirm] one's duty to obey it" (p. 365). When people fail to live up to God's standard, this is where justification comes in, allowing people to be forgiven because of what Christ accomplished. Christ's death brought with it reconciliation, an "outworking of the love [of God]" (Morris, 1983, p. 149). The Gospel that people can cling to is "the simple grace of God that comes through

the work of Christ alone by faith alone all because of God's mercy" (Ferrell, 2015). Galatians 2:20 describes a life centered on the Gospel when Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ...The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." A pastor warns, "If the saving power of God is not at the center of a Christian's life and walk, one is miserable, wretched, and empty" (Ferrell, 2015). When the life of Jesus is at work in a person, communicating the Gospel will come naturally and the person will be renewed daily to take up the tasks God has for him or her (Palau, 2003).

A Business Ministry of Purpose

Areas of Influence

Once Christians go into the world working in a non-profit, there are specific needs that can be targeted that are vital to communities having the ability to sustain themselves. Socio-economic needs cannot be singled out in development efforts since they work together to address poverty (Stapleford, 2009). Stapleford (2009) describes how "a healthy lifestyle, fundamental education, effective governance, accessible markets, and appropriate technologies" are all contributing factors providing sustainability (p. 254). Two important needs within these factors are economic development and nutrition, as these areas influence every area of life on both a personal level and in a broader context.

Economic development. A characteristic of a prosperous society is one that exhibits a strong economy. A stable economic environment encourages people to "trade, invest, and engage in entrepreneurial activities" in a way that stimulates growth (Gwartney, Stroup, Sobel, and Macpherson, 2013, p. 323). Institutions and policies must be regulated to encourage productive activity. Legal systems should include secure

property rights, fair enforcements of contracts, and procedural justice to monitor business and political practices. Also, the monetary environment should be stable with free market policies allowing competition to take place and minimal regulation that restricts entry or prevents open trade (Gwartney et. al, 2013). Any indigenous economic activity, whether it be domestic or international in nature, will put “upward pressure on wages and working conditions” (Wydick, 2007, p. 203). When productive business occurs, output is increased as innovation and technology improve and investment in physical and human capital takes place (Gwartney et. al, 2013).

In order to measure economic progress for less-developed nations, indicators can be used such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Human Development Index (HDI), Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), and the Economic Freedom of the World (EFW) index. These can help determine trends within a country or allow for comparison with other countries. Sometimes, economic data is not as readily available in less-developed countries, so measurements may have to be approximated.

Nutrition. Having access to a stable food supply helps families stay healthy physically and have the energy to work and sustain themselves. Non-profits can help communities maintain “household food security” where every family has an adequate food supply (King and Burgess, 1993, p. 334). Food and nutrition surveillance can help monitor the food supply and nutrition of various groups, learning where problems exist and planning a response. Sometimes problems are outside of a family’s control such as weather interference or production structural adjustment on the government’s part (such as a reduced food supply or less subsidies) due to rising debt or economic problems.

Nonprofits may address such problems through participating in a group feeding program, which provides meals at a free or inexpensive cost (King and Burgess, 1993). The vulnerable people in a population including children and pregnant or new mothers require special attention as they are most at risk of experiencing undernutrition. Programs distribute a calculated amount of food to families for a set time to temporarily meet their needs in times of food shortages or financial hardship. Other types of feeding programs are carried out in institutions (like schools or orphanages) or during emergencies (such as in a time of disaster or war) (King and Burgess, 1993). It is important that the programs involve the communities and have elements of planning, supervision, and evaluation to make sure they are effectively maintained. Potential downsides to the feeding programs are the costliness of them, the risks of creating dependency, and the overall lack of effectiveness in correcting feeding problems in families or failing to meet the needs of those who need the help most (King and Burgess, 1993).

Non-Profit Employee Motivation Theories

Academic theories. One approach to understanding motivation consists of viewing it through an academic lens. The term *motivation* refers to “forces within a person that affect the direction, intensity, and persistence of voluntary behavior” (McShane and Von Glinow, 2015, p. 124). Motivation aligns with level of engagement, or the “emotional and cognitive motivation” that is directed towards achieving work-related goals (p. 124). Over the years, many studies have been done to determine the underlying causes of motivation within a person, but there is not a consensus as to what is the best theory. Maslow’s needs hierarchy is one of the most commonly cited theories, where five basic categories of needs represent the drives a person has and works to fulfill

from the lowest to the highest needs. One need that is separate from the pyramid but still relevant is the “need to know,” something that fits into other theories as well and can be a major factor for non-profit employees (McShane and Von Glinow, 2015, p. 127). People have a drive to satisfy curiosity and understand themselves better within the environment in which they are located (part of the drive to comprehend in the four-drive theory described by McShane and Von Glinow). Sometimes knowledge comes with encountering a different way of life, and becoming involved with different cultures around the world can help a person satisfy this desire of increasing one’s knowledge and self-comprehension. Also, in this globalized world where technology allows a rapid spread of knowledge, people can be aware of social problems that require attention (Worth, 2014).

Another theory worth noting is the expectancy theory, where employees are motivated by the outcome of their efforts and performance, along with the valences associated with the outcomes (McShane and Von Glinow, 2015). The desired outcomes of non-profit work can vary person-to-person and consist of anything from improving one’s self-worth by doing humanitarian work or seeing the life changes taking place in those being helped. A research study of motivating factors for expatriates doing non-profit work concludes that the top factors are altruism, international experience, and a desire to enhance family life/well-being (Oberholster, Clarke, Bendixon, and Dastoor, 2013). Worth (2014) states that having “a deep personal commitment and heart for the people being served is what will continue to drive the mission of the organization” (p. 413). Working in non-profits can be challenging, especially when the environments one enters are “governed by very different cultural norms and legal frameworks” (Bartlett and

Beamish, 2014, p. 655). Bartlett and Beamish mention how this type of transformational work “requires a long process of learning, adaptation, and above all, commitment to achieving results” (p. 655). Each of these academic theories proves to be applicable to non-profit workers.

Motivators for Christians. Another aspect to consider is the motivators that apply particularly to Christians, rather than all non-profit workers. According to Wheeler (2010), the call of Christians is “to invest [themselves] selflessly into the process of multiplying disciples,” thereby “making an eternal difference by simply modeling the life of Christ to others in their sphere of influence” (p. 328). This takes time and energy for people to accomplish, but Wheeler points out that “God’s work is always worth the investment” (p. 329). Having a willing heart allows God to work out a passion in one’s life in whatever capacity they are placed to serve (Wheeler, 2010). Business can be the avenue that is used to reach people for Christ. As long as the business man or woman shows Christ in their actions, evangelism can occur in any part of the world. The ingredients of evangelism are “compassion, love, intentionality, obedience, and the understanding that the call to evangelize is never limited by time or space” (Wheeler, 2010, pp. 328-329). Business leaders exhibiting these character traits in their companies can see excellent results in their work and make economic development become a reality through the creation of jobs, implementation of training, and use of community involvement (Griffiths, 2007). Helping find a solution to social problems such as poverty can be a great encouragement to workers knowing their efforts are helping to bring about change.

Example of a Non-Profit Using Business as Ministry

Examining the foundational structure and work being done by a non-profit with a missional focus can be informative for Christians looking to get involved in similar work. IBEC Ventures is a consulting firm that incorporates “Kingdom values” with building sustainable businesses, particularly in impoverished or spiritually unreached nations of the world (IBEC, 2015). The non-profit focusses on developing Small-Medium (SME) enterprises to help locals succeed in business and contribute to the economy in the process. Success is defined not solely in terms of financial return, but also on tangible life-change that comes as a result of the values-driven structure put into place in the businesses (IBEC, 2015). The values affect all of the stakeholders involved in the business, providing what IBEC calls a 360 degree impact. Specifically, the businesses operate with values of strategic excellence and delivering value, combined with principles of respect, integrity, collaborative relationships, and integration in each aspect of life. IBEC assists businesses in all stages of the process from identifying the opportunity to measuring ongoing progress by growth and development. While IBEC does not outright call itself a “Christian” organization, it is clear that it is a non-profit with a Godly, Kingdom perspective as it combines business with ministry to solve real problems in the name of Jesus. Ultimately, the goals of the business ventures are to help people create value in their communities while incorporating missions. In this process, which CEO Larry Sharp describes as exhibiting “the heart of Christ,” people being served can come to know Him and love Him and take a knowledge of Him to the world (IBEC, 2015).

Personal interview. Larry Sharp, the founder/CEO of IBEC serving as the Director of Strategic Training and Partnerships was interviewed concerning his company's view on business as missions (BAM) and the personal values held by workers in the company. Mr. Sharp has overseen this consulting company for nine years and has experience working abroad with mission's organizations. Dozens of BAM organizations have been influenced by IBEC and Mr. Sharp's vision and expertise (IBEC, 2015). The interview began with a description of how IBEC begins a business venture and how the initiatives are run. Mr. Sharp answered, "IBEC is about start-ups rather than multi-national corporations. We select areas that have business potential. It is helpful if a labor pool exists where training has been given in a particular industry" (personal communication, November 12, 2015). He then explained how the ventures are run primarily by sending teams to live overseas and engage in the culture. The teams go to areas where there is less resistance to foreign workers and outside ideas (a potential to spread the gospel through work). Prayer is also important in making decisions for where to go next (personal communication, November 12, 2015). The next question had to do with what most motivates the employees day-to-day. He responded:

The results of the businesses are most motivating for the workers. There must be success stories in order for the workers to want to keep doing what they do. Their passion and heart is for people who have never heard [of] Jesus. Seeing people come to a saving faith in Christ or watching social change take place are encouraging as a worker engages with people around the world. (personal communication, November 12, 2015)

He continued to say that from the perspective of the locals employed in the different businesses, they like that their consultants from IBEC “provide fair treatment, pay on time, and truly care for them” as the consultants put the Gospel on display in their actions (personal communication, November 12, 2015). Going off of his answer, the next question concerned the long-term effects of the work. Mr. Sharp said, “Work is being done for the purpose of advancing the Kingdom. Strong evidence of spiritual transformation takes at least a generation to occur in a culture that is lost” (personal communication, November 12, 2015). The final question dealt with how goals are set in IBEC and how progress is measured. He explained how there is a combination of profit making along with social enterprise taking place in the global ventures. Looking at the missions impact, there aren’t as many cases of masses of people turning to Christ at once, but rather individual people along the way. A central theme of Mr. Sharp’s answers is summed up in his statement, “You know business activity is a success when it can be used to transform lives for Christ” (personal communication, November 12, 2015).

IBEC’s work: A business venture in Africa.

The problem. Africa contains many countries experiencing a high level of poverty. Many countries do have a large number of practicing Christians and churches that allow their faith to be practiced (for example 60% of the population in Ethiopia are Christians), but the low standard of living along with the low rate of growth in the economy make life a challenge and hinder change in society (Joshua Project, 2015). Some doctrine in these countries can be skewed as well, as is the case in Ethiopia where people (including Christians) pray to spirits in the hope that they can “prevent misfortune” (Ofcansky and Berry, 1991). Also, some religious formalities are still upheld

in some instances and involve ritual observances, saint honoring, excessive fasting, and recognizing priests as having greater access to the God than the laypeople. There is a great need for the truth to be shared in the lives of people who believe petitioning spirits can help protect the community from disease, misfortune, and poverty (Ofcansky and Berry, 1991). It is these dark realities that present an opportunity for missional work to be done.

IBEC's response. IBEC saw a need in Ethiopia specifically in the field of eye care, and they took their business as missions into the country to make a tangible impact in the Ethiopian communities. Although Ethiopia is classified as a mostly unfree nation on the Index of Economic Freedom with a score of 51.5/100 and many sectors of the economy remain closed to global investment, having a business to serve the people through meeting a health need proved to be a desirable form of entry into the country (The Heritage Foundation, 2015). Ethiopia, as part of Sub-Sahara Africa, has an extremely high blindness per capita and a limited number of doctors to help the people (IBEC, 2015). IBEC assisted in the formation of a joint initiative between the US and Ethiopia that resulted in the building of the Discovery Eye Institute (DEI) to meet the need for eye care. The consultants helped provide holistic support to the team of ophthalmologists serving the Ethiopian people which aided in medical and spiritual deficiencies. The coordination of professionals allowed the DEIs to be managed by people with the necessary skills needed in international business, health care, organization design, and communications (IBEC, 2015). Business plans and funding strategies were also part of IBEC's work with the business and ministry partners in

Ethiopia, and their knowledge and expertise helped the eye care institutes become successful, as well as set up a model for use in other countries.

Conclusion

Many motivations exist for why a person, particularly a Christian, may want to become involved with non-profit work. It is a rewarding career where visible life change can happen among the people and communities in which workers invest themselves. Non-profit work certainly is not the easiest path to go down as far as having a comfortable business environment from which to work, as it can involve disheartening situations and harsh environments to which one must acclimate oneself to in order to accomplish the tasks before them. However, being in God's will, one can make it through anything, regardless of how difficult the temporary circumstances may seem. It is this knowledge that can drive one to want to serve the very least in society in a way that exhibits the person of Christ, leading to potential eternal transformations in the lives one encounters. Christians are tasked with continuing Christ's work of "proclaiming release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18). One day Jesus will establish his kingdom where there will be no end to his government and rule of peace. He will uphold it with justice and with righteousness forever (Is. 9:7). Where nations crumble, He will gather his people unto himself and no one will ever hunger or thirst again. Steven Curtis Chapman gives a great picture of what this time looks like and what Christians are to do until then in his song "A Little More Time to Love": "Deep in our soul we're all longing to be at The Feast, but until we sit down where there's more than enough, let us give as we've been given and love as we've been loved" (2013, track 8). This hope of what is to come should motivate

Christians to seek to use their businesses as a ministry that passes along the glorious hope of being forever satisfied in the loving presence of the Lord.

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