

The Entrepreneur and the Church

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1

The Entrepreneur Imperative

There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527)

The church, whether as a body of believers or as an organization, is in transition—some would say crisis. This is not because it wants to be but because of what is happening all around it. There is ‘a new order of things’ whether in business, in the economy or in society in general. Change is everywhere and we have the same misgivings about the situation as Machiavelli.

Taking a lead in such a situation is even more daunting. It is a precarious experience—at least it is for most of us. But there is one group that sees it all quite differently. These are the entrepreneurs. They thrive on uncertainty and chaos and are at home in today’s changing and effervescent world. It is their natural habitat.

Entrepreneurs thrive on uncertainty and chaos and are at home in today’s changing and effervescent world

Entrepreneurs are to be found throughout society and in a wide range of professions. Some entrepreneurs have become celebrities and been publicly honoured. Sir Richard Branson is well known through his Virgin brand and his ballooning exploits. Sir Alan Sugar now has a TV show ‘The Apprentice.’

These are the entrepreneurs who have obviously made it but there are many at the other end of the spectrum—the would-be entrepreneurs who have lost home and family and even self-respect. I met with one when I was helping with a night-shelter project for the homeless. Through the stress of it all he had taken to the bottle and then it had taken him. He was an alcoholic. He saw no way out.

I give this example because I do not support the ‘gung-ho’ approach to entrepreneurship that assumes we can all be entrepreneurs if we try hard enough. Most Government programmes for people who want to start their own business make this assumption, as do many of the business school courses in entrepreneurship. But it is just not true. I have seen too many casualties to believe otherwise.

Between the two extremes of those who are clearly very successful entrepreneurs and those who have tried and failed and not bounced back there are those with real entrepreneurial potential. Studies have shown that this is 10 to 15 per cent of us in the UK.¹ In the USA the figure is higher, as one might expect, at more than 40 per cent.

Our education systems, including theological colleges, are learning regimes rather than talent spotters and developers

This 10 to 15 per cent of the population should be the leaven that affects the whole. Sadly that is not the case, either in society or the church. The leaven is not able to do its job because our institutions and bureaucratic systems prevent it. They have declared the entrepreneur redundant.

This problem lies deep. Our education systems, including theological colleges, are all too often learning regimes rather than talent spotters and developers. Our institutions, especially in the financial and public sectors, and the church too, stifle entrepreneurial initiative. The financial sector does it by preferring to say 'no' rather than 'yes,' the public sector by not having true 'bottom line' accountability. The church has both of these problems.

So what is to be done? There are organizational answers to this question but the real answer is about people not systems or procedures. It is about entrepreneurs. They need to be liberated and allowed to get on with the job.

Releasing the entrepreneurial talent among God's people
is the greatest task facing the church today.
It is the Entrepreneur Imperative.

The aim of this booklet is to help you understand this imperative and then to do something about it!

Our Entrepreneurial Heritage

See, I have set before you an open door that no-one can shut.

Revelation 3.8

The church in Philadelphia served a God of the open door as do we. It should not therefore surprise us to find a strong entrepreneurial theme running through the Bible. Entrepreneurship is nothing new to the church; we have a substantial heritage.

The Old Testament Entrepreneurs

Many of the characters in the Old Testament were entrepreneurs, though some showed the darker side.

Noah took instructions from his entrepreneurial God and built an innovative ark that saved a generation (Genesis 6–9). No doubt his neighbours thought him mad.

Abram left the security of Haran 'even though he didn't know where he was going' (Hebrews 11.8). He was a risk taker. Finding himself in Egypt he used a difficult situation to his advantage with the result that he became 'very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold' (Genesis 13.2).

Abram left the security of Haran 'even though he didn't know where he was going'

Jacob fits the entrepreneur stereotype. He told his uncle Laban 'my honesty will testify for me in the future' (Genesis 30.33), the equivalent of 'just trust me.' He then cheated him so that 'the weak animals went to Laban and the strong ones to Jacob. In this way the man [Jacob, of course!] grew exceedingly prosperous' (Genesis 30.42, 43).

When twelve leaders from each tribe went to spy out the land of Canaan only two gave a positive report. They were the entrepreneurs in the group, Joshua and Caleb. 'We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it' (Numbers 13.30). No one agreed. They were even threatened with stoning. But entrepreneurs persevere and a generation later Joshua and Caleb finally got there. Then came a series of entrepreneurs described in the book of Judges. They certainly challenged the *status quo*. They made a difference.

David was perhaps the most complete entrepreneur. He built a nation. His entrepreneurial talent was evident from an early age when he took on Goliath. David saw no risk, was courageous and even asked what was in it for him (1 Samuel 17.26). Using a highly innovative approach to the problem, he achieved a great victory.

Jesus and the Early Church

Jesus, too, challenged the *status quo*, took risks, thought differently from the traditional religious leaders and gathered a team around him. He was an entrepreneur.

Most importantly Jesus created the church to which his relationship is so intimate that it is described as his body and he as its head. The creation of the church was probably the greatest of God's entrepreneurial initiatives and certainly cost him the most.

The growth of the church from those early days, following the death and resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is a remarkable entrepreneurial story. Lives were being transformed and a new spiritual entity, the church, was taking shape. The book of Acts is a description of entrepreneurs in action.

*Paul took risks,
faced challenges
head on and built an
extensive network of
Christian groups*

Paul was the church's first real entrepreneur. He took risks, faced challenges head on and built an extensive network of Christian groups. But alongside Paul was the entrepreneurial endeavour of ordinary Christians that spread the church and its message across the Roman Empire and finally challenged it.

So, Where Did We Lose It?

With this remarkable entrepreneurial beginning how is it that we now find it necessary to promote the relevance of the entrepreneur to the church in a Grove booklet? Where did it all go wrong?

The answer no doubt is a complex one and buried in the depths of history. Yet surely, with such a starting point, we should find entrepreneurship deep within the church's DNA. The answer is that we do, but it is seriously hidden.

It would be easy to come up with a spiritual explanation. The church's entrepreneurs have not always 'walked humbly with their God.' They have often led it down false paths as the entrepreneurial temptations of power and wealth have taken hold. Others who were true disciples trying new ways were rejected by the Establishment. Bunyan's years in jail and Wesley's struggle with the Church of England are but two examples.

But there is another side to the church's loss of its entrepreneurial spirit—one in which it is not alone. All large corporations and institutions have the same problem. Once they were small, uncertain fledglings with a vibrancy and excitement that carried them forward and made them into large and great enterprises.

Inevitably over time this original entrepreneur dynamic is gradually lost and in its place come bureaucracy and so-called professionalism. There is a kind of gravity in operation that pulls an organization away from its entrepreneurial roots to the predictable and formal.

In regular times this is a good thing. Stable organizations provide long-term employment and give a sense of security and order. But in uncertain times they need urgently to rediscover the original entrepreneur dynamic that made them great. If not, their future is bleak indeed.

*In uncertain times
they need urgently to
rediscover the original
entrepreneur dynamic
that made them great*

The End of the Certain World²

3

I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up!

Revelation 3.1

What was a spiritual evaluation of the church at Sardis is often true of the inner life of today's corporations and institutions. They have a valued reputation with excellent people but they are dead or almost so. They have failed to recognize that the world is a different place. It has moved on but they have not.

Gone are the certainties of the church, of family life and of job security. In the three areas that we consider in chapter 6, economic, social and spiritual, the old certainties are no longer there. Whilst this brings many challenges, some

very difficult, I believe they are for the better. They open up a society that was locked in on itself. They break down institutions and corporations that stopped people thinking and the production lines that made them into robots. More importantly, from a Christian perspective, they give us a new opportunity. Sir Herbert Butterfield, with the foresight of a historian, wrote in 1956:

The saddest feature that I have seen of the present day has been the discouragement of some Christian workers who carry the real burden of transition and are not always in a position to see its better side...I wish I could convince them that this is the greatest moment in a thousand years for the preaching of Christianity.³

Changing Times

There have certainly been many cultural changes over recent years and they are not all good. The *Mission-Shaped Church* report's summary of social trends in the last 30 years and their comments on consumerism paint a sad picture but they are the consequence of something deeper.⁴ We behave differently because we now think differently. It is this change in thinking that we need to understand if we are to seize the gospel opportunity identified by Butterfield and really to grasp how important the entrepreneur is to our future.

The new thinking started in the scientific community in the 1920s. People like Albert Einstein and Max Born, whose biography is the title of this chapter, were key players.

The 'Certain World' that this new thinking replaced had been around for 300 years or so and was well established. It was introduced by Sir Isaac Newton and others and took the place of the mystery and superstition of the Middle Ages. Rational explanation and a mechanistic outlook were the basis of their certainty and confidence. Although not intended, this understanding of the natural world sent God into retirement. He was no longer needed in the explanation of things.

In the early part of the 20th century a new way of understanding the world began to emerge and again it came from physics. The old predictability was replaced by ideas of relativity and uncertainty. Truths once at odds with each other were seen as complementary.⁵

The turbulence of the 1960s moved the mind set of quantum physics into the public arena in a big way

This quantum world of the atom proved to be a very strange place but not so strange that many of its characteristics could not be carried over into our world. The turbulence of the 1960s moved

the mindset of quantum physics into the public arena in a big way and the implications are still being worked out. As Marilyn Ferguson put it in her book *The Aquarian Conspiracy* reprinted many times in the 1980s:

The great shuddering, irrevocable shift overtaking us is...a new mind—the ascendance of a startling world view that gathers into its framework breakthrough science and insights from the earliest recorded thought.⁶

All this has serious consequences for the institutions and organizations upon which we have relied for so long. They are threatened because they are too large and fixed in their thinking to respond adequately to this new environment.

But elephants can only dance if entrepreneurs are the ringmasters

IBM, the world's largest computer company and an international icon of success, almost closed its doors in the early 1990s. The press described it as a 'dinosaur' and predicted its 'extinction.' A new and entrepreneurial chief executive was appointed and an amazing turnaround was achieved. The book appropriately entitled *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?*⁷ tells the story. But elephants can only dance if entrepreneurs are the ringmasters.

The Entrepreneur's Natural Habitat

This new world of uncertainty and change is one in which entrepreneurs delight—for them it is a world full of opportunity. Lists of the world's richest are now dominated by those who have made their wealth in their own lifetime rather than inherited it. Bill Gates is not only the world's richest self-made man—he is said to have created more millionaires than anyone in history.

The wealth statistics might be staggering but there are other features. The people are young. In 1999 the average age of 18 top entrepreneurs each worth from \$278 million to \$21 billion was just 34 years.⁸ Not only are they young, they want to make a difference. When Steve Jobs of Apple Computers was persuading John Sculley to leave his safe job as Vice-President of Pepsi-Cola and join him at Apple he challenged him with the question 'Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want a chance to change the world?'⁹

Although Sculley proved not to be an entrepreneur, his experience at Apple provided him with an insight into the differences between a highly structured company like Pepsi-Cola, and an entrepreneurial one like Apple. This table is an adaptation of the one given in his book *Odysey: Pepsi to Apple*.¹⁰

	Pepsi-Cola	Apple Computers
Mind set	Mechanistic	Open
Focus	The organization	The person
Structure	Tight	Loose
Operation	Hierarchy	Network
Ability	To manage	To embrace change
Output	Market share	Market creation
Product	An artefact	A dream
Motivation	To make money	To make history

The characteristics listed under Apple are the approach and values of the entrepreneur. The Pepsi-Cola list describes the traditional company and also the church. But it was not always so. The early church was an entrepreneurial church.

Getting it Right

So far this discussion has been largely in secular terms and this is because it is an area of the problem that we rarely discuss. We tend to go for spiritual explanations. These can be important but here we are dealing with a shift in mind set and we need to start thinking differently if we are to get things right.

But rather than re-think, Tom Peters tells us to ‘re-imagine.’¹¹

It is the foremost task and responsibility of our generation to re-imagine our enterprise and institutions, public and private.

Many landmarks that have served us well are going to disappear and these changes will be difficult and painful but they threaten us only if we let them. For me this is a call to re-imagine the church in today’s world. To think in new and different ways about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and a member of his body the church.

It is a call to release the entrepreneurs in our midst and for all of us to think in more entrepreneurial terms. In this process we will become more in tune with today’s culture and be able to make a far more relevant contribution to it than we do at present. If under God we could get it right we would have a revival on our hands of huge proportions. Mission would not be talked about; it would just happen.

Read *Re-imagine* by Tom Peters after you have read the *Mission-Shaped Church* report as I did and you will see what I mean.

Understanding the Entrepreneur

4

There are varieties of gifts...There are varieties of service...There are many forms of work, but all...are the work of the same God. (NEB)

1 Corinthians 12.4–6

Entrepreneurs are just one of many that serve society and the church. Yet they have a key role to play at 'such a time as this' when many feel threatened and cannot see a way ahead. The first step in releasing their potential is to understand them better.

Redeeming the Entrepreneur

'Does God love accountants?' This was the title for a talk at a Cambridge University Mission. No doubt the subject was Zacchaeus. We can ask a similar question about entrepreneurs. They have a tarnished image as somewhat unscrupulous individuals. But the time has come to redeem that understanding.

Since the 1980s, politicians of all colours have sought to reinstate them. The crucial role that entrepreneurs play in achieving a successful economy has finally been recognized. Studies of employment growth in Silicon Valley, California have shown that each entrepreneur creates either directly or indirectly 500 to 1000 jobs. Although it has a special entrepreneurial technology culture, the figure is still impressive.

Despite some degree of rehabilitation the entrepreneur still has a 'get rich quick' image. The facts tell us otherwise. Survey after survey has shown that the creation of personal wealth is the key motivation for only 10 to 15 per cent of entrepreneurs. The majority simply want to be their own boss.

Entrepreneurs are also often seen as being linked with the darker side of business. It is true that some are, but no more than in other groups where power and wealth are involved. Such temptations are nothing new.

Using the Word 'Entrepreneur'

Most people these days associate the entrepreneur with small businesses. This is mainly because the Government and the banks have been pushing the idea of self-employment for a number of years. This, however, is a distorted

picture. The very reason these businesses are small is that they are not run by entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs grow businesses, usually big ones. They are not satisfied with anything less.

In the church context entrepreneurs have been around right from the start but they have not been identified by that name. One reason is that the name is quite new. As far as records show the word 'entrepreneur' was first used in 1725 by the French economist Richard Cantillon to describe people who took the risk between two trading groups.

Another reason may be that the word has too much baggage and so we search for less loaded terms. Perhaps the most popular word at the moment is 'pioneer.' Other words like 'catalyst,' 'planter,' 'grower,' 'pathfinder,' 'builder' have all been used in a church context.¹²

Pioneers may break new ground and start things moving but they do not carry on the good work

None of these capture completely what an entrepreneur really is and does. Pioneers in particular cover only part of what entrepreneurs contribute. They may break new ground and start things moving but they do not carry on the good work and bring it to fruition. But if they do then we should call them entrepreneurs.

Trevor Beeson, in his book *The Bishops*, provides pen portraits of 48 bishops since 1832 and none is described as an 'entrepreneur.'¹³ The nearest would probably be the reformers, the missionaries and the evangelists, or even the odd-men out! After telling us that 'virtually all of today's bishops fall into the single category of pastoral-manager, with the strongest emphasis on manager,' Beeson comments that 'the original pioneering role of the bishop will need to be recovered quickly, while there is still time.' Why not simply say we need more entrepreneur bishops?

Defining the Entrepreneur

Most of the definitions currently available emphasize one aspect of what entrepreneurs do. They take risks, they challenge the *status quo*, they do things differently, they persevere, they work hard...the list is endless. This makes capturing it all in a single definition very difficult.

Here I offer a definition that Professor John Thompson and I have devised.

An entrepreneur is a person who habitually creates and innovates to build something of recognized value around perceived opportunities.

Entrepreneurs are People

This might seem rather obvious but much of the material about entrepreneurs deals with the idea of entrepreneurship as if it is just a matter of learning a few techniques. It is not. People are the key.

There is also such a thing as a ‘team entrepreneur’ where a group of people together possess the necessary attributes required of the entrepreneur. Then there is the case of the ‘collective entrepreneur’ when a whole community develops an entrepreneur culture that is its own. The early church behaved in this way.

They are Habitual

Entrepreneurs just cannot stop being entrepreneurial. John, an entrepreneur and personal friend, was in a hospice dying of cancer—yet he spent his last days working on a business plan for the hospice.

They Create and Innovate

Creativity is about having ideas; innovation is about turning those ideas into a reality. Entrepreneurs do both.

Entrepreneurs are Builders

In French an ‘entrepreneur’ is a contractor, usually a building contractor—someone you employ to get something done. Entrepreneurs are like that. They build things, though not always with bricks and mortar.

They Build Something of Recognized Value

Often the motivation is quite personal. They want to show the world that they are somebody. Sometimes it is to prove something to their parents, often the father. Others want to make a difference and leave their footprint on the world. But whatever their reason, what they build makes the rest of us wonder how they did it. Their achievements are impressive.

*Whatever their reason,
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They Build Around Perceived Opportunities

These are opportunities that entrepreneurs see that the rest of us miss. Sometimes we pass them by as unimportant or impractical. Other times we wonder why we did not think of them first. Some we miss completely. Whatever our excuse, the entrepreneur sees the opportunity and delivers.

Recognizing the Entrepreneur

Research tells us that entrepreneurs are typically characterised as follows:

- they are first-born males
- their fathers are self-employed or professionals
- they have served an informal apprenticeship of some kind
- a life event has triggered them into action
- education is not very important
- religion can be important, as with the Protestant work ethic
- most start young, in their 20s or before

This list might be interesting but it is of little help in recognizing entrepreneurs since they are individuals, not averages plotted on a distribution curve. It is also historical data and so out of date as soon as it is published.

For example, women are currently proving themselves to be better entrepreneurs than men. As they gain more freedom to do what they want to do, the statistics are changing. Today most of the millionaires between the ages of 18 and 44 are women and the most common reason for their wealth is that they started their own business.

It is not difficult to recognize entrepreneurs when they are successful. Their achievements are clear for all to see. However, there is value in reading stories about entrepreneurs so that we can get the feel of how they operate and what makes them tick. That way we will understand them better and learn to recognize them more easily.

5

Identifying the Entrepreneur

I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. (Rev 2.2)

Entrepreneurs are doers. They work hard and persevere. The church at Ephesus certainly had some characteristics of the entrepreneur.

Profiling the Entrepreneur

Personality profiling is now a well developed area and psychometric testing is often used as a part of the selection process for new appointments. Many use some form of the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator (MBTI) and Belbin's Team Roles. More recently the Gallup StrengthsFinder® has been introduced.¹⁴ These are all helpful in telling you something about yourself or a job applicant but they are seriously limited when trying to assess suitability for a role. The reason is that there is not a close fit between personality and role. In general we shape our roles around our personalities and not the other way round.

Thus it is possible for people with different personality profiles to do the same job well. Using the MBTI, for example, entrepreneurs can be ESTPs who are 'good innovators, negotiators and entrepreneurs.' They can also be ENTJs, Field Marshall types, 'perhaps an apt description for some entrepreneurs.' Studies of technology entrepreneurs in the USA found them to be ENTPs. Thus there is no single MBTI profile for the entrepreneur. Nor are those with these profiles always entrepreneurs.

The Gallup Organization has taken a different approach, one that links talent with role. Their first studies were with entrepreneurs but leaders/managers soon became their main area of interest.

The FACETS of the Entrepreneur

Starting from the original Gallup work on entrepreneurs, Professor Thompson and I took the research further and developed the FACETS approach to profiling the entrepreneur. We have identified six attributes for the entrepreneur. Some are talent based, others depend upon temperament. Some are essential for the entrepreneur, others not. The six attributes conveniently form the acronym FACETS. This conveys the idea that as with different types of crystal there is a unique facet structure for the entrepreneur. Other roles, such as leader and manager, have their own facet structure.

The entrepreneur FACETS are summarized below.

F	Focus delivers on the opportunity
A	Advantage selects the right opportunity
C	Creativity sees many opportunities
E	Ego brings motivation and courage
T	Team multiplies effectiveness
S	Social finds a cause

The FACE of the Entrepreneur

The first four FACETS form another convenient acronym FACE. The true entrepreneur will be strong in all four.

The first three—*focus*, *advantage* and *creativity*—are talents and are fairly self-explanatory. The fourth, *ego*, is about temperament. Here there can be some misunderstanding. *Ego* often has a negative connotation to do with being self-centred, as with the word egotistical. That is not the meaning within FACETS where *ego* refers to a person's psychological core. It is what makes us who and what we are and has two aspects. There is an *inner ego* that only the person knows and an *outer ego* which is the self that others see.

Two interplays between the FACE facets are important. One is within the talent set and the other is between the talent set and the temperament facet *ego*.

The first interplay tells us how the entrepreneur operates. *Creativity* is the starting point, though it is not the same as artistic creativity. The entrepreneur's creativity is about creating opportunity, about ideas that have a purpose and about problem solving. *Advantage* is the ability to know which of the many ideas or opportunities provided by *creativity* is the best one to go with. For entrepreneurs this is a matter of instinct rather than analysis. They just know. *Focus* then takes that best idea and makes it happen. Thus the talent chain links *creativity* to *advantage* to *focus*. Any weak link in that chain means that the person will be a less effective entrepreneur or indeed not one at all.

Of these three facets the least critical is *creativity*. This is because a strong *advantage* facet will pick up ideas from anywhere. There are plenty of ideas out there, so recognizing them is more important than coming up with them yourself. It is this *advantage* characteristic that makes entrepreneurs pick up ideas, some would say 'steal' them, from other people.

The interplay between the talent set and *ego*, the temperament facet, can make or break the entrepreneur. The combination works best when both are strong but it can also work well when there is a strong temperament and moderate talent. Disaster comes when there is a weak temperament and a strong talent as my earlier example of the homeless alcoholic shows.

The Other FACETS

The remaining two facets are optional and each gives the entrepreneur a different slant.

Team

Most entrepreneurs are not team players. They may have a group of followers who help and support them but the followers rarely act on their own initiative. The followers often make up for this by being very good at tidying up the mess the entrepreneur has left behind. *Team entrepreneurs* use their teams quite differently. They build participating teams that multiply their talents and increase their effectiveness.

Entrepreneurs who are strong on *team* are good networkers but they do it for a purpose and not just for the pleasure of socializing. This means that entrepreneurs will often drop people when they find they cannot be of any help. Though easily misunderstood by others it is a particular example of the *advantage* and *team* facets working together. There is no malice in their action.

Social

This facet starts with belief and values and then moves on to espousing a cause and serving it. Entrepreneurs who get as far as values are those who will run their enterprises in an ethical way. Philanthropic entrepreneurs will have also got to this point.

True *social entrepreneurs* move on to espousing a cause and doing something about it. Their cause is often a very specific one. Wanting to serve the disadvantaged in society is not precise enough. It has to be more targeted. People usually find their cause by a personal experience of some kind and they often see God's hand in such direction.

J Arthur Rank had failed in earlier attempts to emulate his successful entrepreneur father Joseph Rank. At around the age of 40 he was involved in Sunday School work at a National level and discovered the religious film. This fired his imagination and gave him his calling. As one biographer put it, 'He strongly believed God had given him the job of making good-quality religious films.'¹⁵ Having found his cause his entrepreneurial instincts took over. Within ten years he was carrying the whole of the British film industry on his shoulders. He also had a business worth £50 million.

The Entrepreneur Enabler

Some people may not be entrepreneurs themselves but seem to be very good at recognizing those who are and helping them to get started. These entrepreneur enablers are often found in institutions like universities, banks or the public sector. I once found one in the planning department of a local council!

Entrepreneur enablers are entrepreneurs at heart but are weak in one or more of the entrepreneur facets. Their entrepreneurial *inner ego* may be weak so that they are not comfortable with taking risks. They prefer the security of the institution but do enjoy encouraging others along the way. Another weakness may be in *advantage* so that the person never knows which opportunity to go for. When entrepreneurs come along who are quite sure then they are keen to help them.

In the Grove booklet *Models of Ministry*, Ian Bunting quotes a 1973 survey of Anglican ordinands in which they ranked various clergy roles.¹² 51 per cent opted for the ‘enabler’ role. Here ‘enabler’ involved getting alongside people at their points of need rather than of opportunity but nonetheless it is an interesting finding. Maybe there are more entrepreneur enablers in the church than we think.

The Entrepreneur Indicator

Using the FACETS model Professor Thompson and I have put together an Entrepreneur Indicator questionnaire that measures a person’s strength in each of the facets. It was originally devised to identify those within a cohort of students who might benefit from a post-graduate entrepreneur programme. Since then it has developed a life of its own and proved to be an effective evaluation tool.

This questionnaire is a first indicator. The next step is for the person being evaluated to understand the FACETS in greater detail so that they can come up with their own scores. A third step is for evaluation to take place over time when the person is in an entrepreneurial role to see if any of the talents develop and become stronger.

My jointly-authored book *The Entrepreneur in Focus—Achieve Your Potential* provides a step by step guide to making your own assessment of your FACETS strengths (see *Notes* section, p 28).

Over the past two years I have used the questionnaire to evaluate more than 100 people mostly with some church affiliation. Part of that number included a Christian mission agency team and a group of leading clergy—‘leading’ in the sense of taking new initiatives rather than their position in the church hierarchy. There was also a group of advisers from the business world who may or may not have had a church affiliation.

The results showed the leading clergy group to be the most entrepreneurial, with the mission agency team a little behind. The business advisers were the least entrepreneurial!

6

Spiritual Capital

To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: 'I know your affliction and poverty—yet you are rich.'

Revelation 2.9

We are wealthy when we have much of something. Most obviously this is money, economic capital, but we can also have a relationship with another person or group that has value. That is social capital. In Christ we experience the blessings of the Father's love. That is spiritual capital. The church at Smyrna was low on economic capital but high on spiritual capital.

Three Forms of Capital

Economic capital is well understood and so needs no explanation. Social capital is a more recent term. Coined by sociologists it describes the relationship of co-operation based on trust that can exist between people. The best definition I have found is by Francis Fukuyama.¹⁶

Social Capital can be defined as a set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permits co-operation among them.

Fukuyama's 'norms' include virtues 'like truth telling, the meeting of obligations and reciprocity.' These are, of course, Christian virtues. James 2.8 calls 'reciprocity' the 'royal law.' He tells us that 'If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing right.'

Spiritual capital as an idea is still being developed but it can be found throughout the New Testament. Jesus often spoke of storing up treasure in heaven. He told the parable of the successful entrepreneur to teach us to be 'rich towards God' (Luke 12.13–21). For the early church spiritual riches were theirs in Christ and they were 'glorious' (Eph 1.18), 'incomparable' (Eph 2.7) and 'unsearchable' (Eph 3.8).

Entrepreneurs are involved in these three forms of capital. The same talents that create economic capital can be used to create social and spiritual capital. But capital is not what entrepreneurs focus on. Their target is to build something of recognized value. In the process they both use capital and create it but essentially it is a by-product of their building enterprise.

Henry Venn, an influential figure in the early days of the Church Missionary Society, said that indigenous churches should be 'self-governing,' 'self-supporting' and 'self-propagating.'¹⁷ He correctly identified the three areas in which capital had to be built and understood that it had to be done locally. He was really saying that indigenous churches need to be fully entrepreneurial. Significantly, the *Mission-Shaped Church* report suggests that these three principles should be noted by 'church plants, fresh expressions of church and dioceses.'

Spirituality

Today there is an increasing interest in spirituality, an outcome of the 'End of the Certain World' discussed earlier. With these old certainties gone, many in the younger generation are seeking spiritual reality but are finding this very difficult because their only legacies from earlier generations are materialistic.

Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall have written about the two ideas of spiritual intelligence and spiritual capital.¹⁸ They make it clear that their 'use of the word spiritual has no connection with religion or any other organized belief system.' Whilst they accept that organized religion has built 'some genuine spiritual capital,' they see it limited because it excludes those who hold other religious beliefs or none.

They define spiritual capital as 'our shared meaning, our shared purpose, our shared vision of what most deeply matters in life...It is capital that is increased by drawing on the resources of the human spirit.'

Many of the Self-help and Mind and Spirit books that are so popular in today's uncertain world take a similar line, but they do demonstrate that people are indeed seeking for meaning and purpose in their lives.

Spiritual Capital

We cannot come to an understanding of spiritual capital without bringing God into the equation. He is its source. It is found only in him and through him. Paul's letter to the Ephesians in particular has many references to the riches that the Father has for us. It is through the Holy Spirit that we have access to them.

The whole gospel message is about an incarnational God who not only brought forgiveness and redemption but gave us the Holy Spirit so that we could understand spiritual things. 'We speak in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words' said Paul. 'Things that come from the Spirit of God are spiritually discerned' (1 Cor 2.13, 14).

Again Paul puts it clearly. 'We have access to the Father by one Spirit' (Eph 2.18). 'We have the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us' (1 Cor 2.12) and that includes his riches.

On this basis I suggest the following definition.

Spiritual capital is 'All the Father's riches made available to the disciples of his Son, Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.'

The outworking of that definition can be seen at each stage in the Christian life. When we become Christians we have our first experience of spiritual capital. 'In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of his grace that he lavished on us' (Eph 1.7).

As we grow in our Christian discipleship we experience the blessings of the Father's spiritual capital. We do this when prayer and the Bible become alive to us, when we are blessed in worship and around his table or when burdens are lifted and needs met. Paul understood this when he prayed for the Ephesian church 'that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being' (Eph 3.16). Similarly he told the Philippian church that 'God (will) meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus' (Phil 4.19).

At our journey's end we can look forward to more of the Father's spiritual capital for we have an inheritance waiting for us. 'He has given us new birth into... an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you' (1 Peter 1.3, 4)—an inheritance too that is guaranteed with the Holy Spirit as the deposit (Ephesians 1.13, 14).

The Capital Cascade

The three forms of capital have a particular relationship to each other. Fukuyama has noted that social capital can enhance economic capital. He has also observed that spiritual capital promotes social capital. In his discussion of the Great Awakening in the 19th century he documents a direct correlation between the activities of those newly awakened to a Christian faith and the improvement of the social conditions. He comments that:

In the battles against alcoholism, gambling, slavery, delinquency and prostitution and in the building of a dense network of voluntary institutions, Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, and other ministers and lay believers were the foot soldiers.¹⁶

*We thus have a cascade
of capital from spiritual
to social to economic*

We thus have a cascade of capital from spiritual to social to economic. Interestingly this is a one way route. Economic capital cannot create social capital. In fact, it is very good at destroying it, as the worst forms of capitalism demonstrate.

Nor does social capital create spiritual capital though it is easy to think that it does. Some churches are excellent social clubs but there is little or no spiritual dimension. This social role is an important one and should not be neglected. But, if Christ is at the centre, the church will be a different place, just as when Christ enters the human heart. Churches that have placed Christ firmly at the centre of things have experienced amazing transformation that they would not have believed possible. Spiritual capital has cascaded down and produced a new level of social capital. Christian fellowship has become a deeper experience and a source of real blessing to all.

Some have seen a connection between this Cascade of Capital and the Prosperity Gospel. This is not the case. The Cascade model is the result of observation. Spiritual capital can enhance social capital which in turn can increase economic capital. There is a causal link but only in the one direction. There is no value judgment in such a statement. It is just the way it is.

What the model does not say is that social and economic capital must have a spiritual source. There is plenty of evidence to show that this is not so. Nor does it say that social and economic capital are a sign of God's blessing. They may be but they also may not.

Paul is quite clear about his approach to economic prosperity. Using financial language he wrote 'Whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared with the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord' (Phil 3.7, 8). That is where true prosperity lies.

The Kingdom Entrepreneur

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain.

Psalm 127.1

The Spiritual Entrepreneur?

The idea that we can use the term ‘spiritual entrepreneur’ to describe those entrepreneurs who build something of recognized spiritual value is an enticing one. But it does have problems.

The first is that it seems somewhat presumptuous. God is the source of spiritual riches, not us. As Paul put it ‘we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us’ (2 Cor 4.7). This problem can be resolved when we recognize that what spiritual entrepreneurs do is actually the work of the Holy Spirit through them. There is no room for boasting. As Paul commented we are all ‘only servants.’ ‘I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow’ (1 Cor 3.5, 6).

There is, however, a more serious objection. Describing entrepreneurs by their area of activity does not work for the spiritual entrepreneur. This is because the word ‘spiritual’ can describe both an area of activity and a personal characteristic. Thus economic entrepreneurs who are Christians can just as validly be called ‘spiritual’ as can be those entrepreneurs whose activities are in the spiritual area. If it were otherwise we would have a hierarchy of calling not found in the New Testament.

An entrepreneur I once met told me that when he became a Christian he wanted to serve God’s highest call, so he sought ordination. When that did not work out he went for God’s second best. He applied to a missionary society. When that did not work either he became an entrepreneur!

To avoid this kind of misunderstanding I prefer not to use the word spiritual entrepreneur. Instead I suggest the term Kingdom Entrepreneur. This puts all entrepreneurs who are Christians on the same footing. Their aim is to build something that has kingdom worth whether that be economic, social or spiritual or some combination of all three.

Whose Building?

The talents of the entrepreneur can be used for ill as well as good. Al Capone, the famous American gangster, was an outstanding entrepreneur who built a criminal empire. Although most entrepreneurs are not like this, all do face the temptations that come with wealth and power. Being an entrepreneur and a disciple of Jesus Christ is not easy. We should not be surprised to find Paul cautioning the entrepreneurs in the early church. 'Each builder should be careful how to build' (1 Cor 3.10).

But there are also particular problems that come with the very attributes that make a person a successful entrepreneur. In terms of the Facets approach described in chapter 5 the two most troublesome are *advantage* and *ego* and they can easily take control.

We find their interplay in the case of Jacob. By taking *advantage* of situations he was able to steal his brother's birthright, take his father's blessing and become a successful businessman. In his experience with God at Bethel he turned God's unconditional blessing into a deal. 'If you God will be with me... then the Lord will be my God' (Genesis 28.20, 21).

Then he met God again at Peniel. This time there was no deal struck. Instead God brought Jacob's *ego* down to size and left him with a limp, no doubt to remind him not to do things in his own strength any more. Jacob, the supplanter, became Israel, the struggler with God (Genesis 32.24–32).

The *ego* is a controlling facet and influences all the others. For many Kingdom Entrepreneurs this can be a real challenge. One working with drug addicts commented 'We get involved in social action by responding to the call of God to bring a taste of heaven to hurting people. Selflessly we are motivated to serve God and people in need'—clear evidence of a strong *social* facet. He then goes on to say:

Yet self is not so easily defeated. Though we may feel we have turned our back on self once and for all and have unreservedly committed ourselves to serving God's kingdom, somewhere down the track all too often we start building our own empire.¹⁹

This is a real point of difficulty for entrepreneurs who instinctively want to build empires. Sometimes God has to let that empire collapse before a true understanding of what it means to be a Kingdom Entrepreneur can be reached. I know of several who have been down that particular road.

To be true Kingdom Entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs have to come to the point where they recognize that the enterprise they are building is not theirs but

the Lord's. It is not a matter of serving the Lord through what is being built but of realizing that it is his building. This might seem a little subtle for most of us but for the entrepreneurs involved it can be a life changing experience.

*It is not a matter
of serving the Lord
through what is being
built but of realizing
that it is his building*

Some Examples

The work of these Kingdom Entrepreneurs is seen in the great movements that have transformed the church over the centuries and given it new impetus. Many were able to engage in all three areas of capital at the same time.

The monastic movement of the Middle Ages was led by some outstanding Kingdom Entrepreneurs. Cluny Abbey was the largest structure in western Christendom and produced a series of visionary and reforming leaders. Spiritually led, they created social capital through their community living and were economically very successful.

Groups like the Mennonites and the Huguenots during the time of the Reformation also worked on all fronts. They had to—they were in turbulent times. When displaced from their homeland they built communities that were economically, socially and spiritually very strong. This tradition still survives in the work of MEDA, the Mennonite Economic Development Associates, a network of Kingdom Entrepreneurs.

The spiritual awakenings of the 18th and 19th centuries produced many Kingdom Entrepreneurs. Some like William Carey were involved in the mission movement that spread around the world. Others such as Elizabeth Fry and Dr Barnardo were responsible for major social reforms. William and Catherine Booth combined the gospel and social welfare in the work of the Salvation Army.

Kingdom Entrepreneurs are also in action today. Some are individuals like Rick Warren in the USA. His story of the start up and growth of the Saddleback Church in Southern California has entrepreneur written all over it.²⁰ Others less well known are found in new movements that bring together people with a similar calling. ISAAC, the International Substance Abuse and Addiction Coalition is an important network of Kingdom Entrepreneurs bringing God's love and compassion to a needy group of people. Fresh Expressions of Church and Community Transformation are similar entrepreneurially led movements.

There are plenty of Kingdom Entrepreneurs around. We just need to recognize and encourage them and, of course, look for more.

8

Making it Happen

Attempt great things for God. Expect great things from God.

William Carey 1792

It is not difficult to give recognition and support to the current movements discussed in the previous chapter because they are new and exciting. The real problem lies with those organizations that were once entrepreneurial movements but have now become institutions. The real question is whether they have run their course and done the job God gave them to do. If so, then organizations, like people, should be allowed to retire gracefully. This of course is not an easy judgment to make but the question has to be faced. If the organization is to remain then it will have to change within itself, because the external environment is constantly on the move. Major businesses are facing this problem all the time and we can learn from them—hence my recommendation of Tom Peter’s book *Re-imagine*. But the church and its associated organizations came into being through Kingdom Entrepreneurs led by the Holy Spirit. These are the people that we need to re-engage with if we are to meet the challenges of today’s world.

Letting the Kingdom Entrepreneurs loose would certainly make a difference but this has to be done within a framework. Albert Einstein never came to terms with the uncertain world of quantum physics that he had initiated. He famously said ‘God does not play dice’ and searched for structure in the chaos of the quantum world. The answer that Max Born came to was that there was an ordered framework within which the uncertain world operated. Using that model, Kingdom Entrepreneurs need a framework within which they can operate, one that does not restrict their creativity yet provides them with reference points. The following is an example of what such a framework statement might look like in a church setting.

St Arbuck’s Church,²¹ Anywhere God is in the world of the everyday

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| 1 | <i>Jesus at the centre</i> | his supremacy and lordship in all things |
| 2 | <i>A re-imagine mind set</i> | so that we think differently |
| 3 | <i>Mission not ministry</i> | saving sinners not entertaining saints |
| 4 | <i>Network not hierarchy</i> | all member ministry with social capital valued |
| 5 | <i>Vision driven</i> | but with different delivery mechanisms |
| 6 | <i>Enablers not managers</i> | releasing potential all the time |

An Action Plan

A booklet about entrepreneurs should lead to action. Accordingly I have set out below a series of actions that need to be implemented if we are serious about the entrepreneur imperative and really want to release the entrepreneurs in our midst. They are in two groups, one that might be discussed in a local church group and the other at chapter, deanery or diocesan level.

Local Church Group

- 1 Work out a Kingdom Entrepreneur framework for your church.
- 2 Run a 'Re-imagine' session and see what happens.
- 3 Become more familiar with entrepreneurs. Read some of their stories.
- 4 Reinstate the word 'entrepreneur.' Decide who the entrepreneurs and entrepreneur enablers are in your fellowship and neighbourhood. Talk to them.
- 5 Develop a series of studies of entrepreneurs in the Bible using the FACETS characteristics.
- 6 Read up about some Kingdom Entrepreneurs. Get any you know to come and talk to you.
- 7 Contact the mission agencies you support and ask them to tell you how they see their future.

The Church as an Organization

Any of the above especially the 'Re-imagine' exercise, plus

- 1 Make policy changes so that the answer is 'yes' more often than 'no.'
- 2 Create a framework that allows mistakes to be made and learnt from.
- 3 Know who and where the entrepreneurs are among those in ministry. Give them space and celebrate them.
- 4 Harness entrepreneurial talent across the church both lay and ordained and use them in all three areas—economic, social and spiritual.
- 5 Learn to recognize entrepreneur enablers, possibly forming an enablers group to encourage each other and compare experiences.
- 6 Only use words like pioneer, catalyst or pathfinder to describe these roles in particular. If anything use the word entrepreneur more generously so that it becomes 'ecclesiastically acceptable.'

And always remember:

Even if you are on the right track,
you'll get run over if you just sit there.

Will Rogers (1879-1935)

Notes

I have co-authored two books about entrepreneurs.

Bill Bolton and John Thompson, *Entrepreneurs: Talent, Temperament, Technique* (Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2nd ed 2004)

Bill Bolton and John Thompson, *The Entrepreneur in Focus—Achieve Your Potential* (Thomson, 2003)

In the following notes they are referenced as Bolton Thompson 1 and Bolton Thompson 2 respectively.

- 1 This is one of a number of references to studies of entrepreneurs made throughout this booklet. The original references can be found in Bolton Thompson 1.
- 2 Nancy Greenspan, *The End of the Certain World—The Life and Science of Max Born* (John Wiley, 2005).
- 3 C T McIntire, *Herbert Butterfield; Writings on Christianity and History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) p 259. The quotation is from a lecture series in 1956 at Bristol University entitled 'Christianity in the Twentieth Century.'
- 4 Several references are made to this report. To save space only this one is referenced, *Mission-Shaped Church* (Church House Publishing, 2004) pp 2–4.
- 5 The two main ideas here are Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle and Bohr's Principle of Complementarity. Both are discussed in Bolton Thompson 1, p 270.
- 6 Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy—Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* (Paladin Books, 1988) p 23.
- 7 Louis Gerstner, *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance?* (HarperCollins, 2003) p 12.
- 8 Stuart Crainer and Des Dearlove, *Generation Entrepreneur* (Pearson Education, 2000) p 5.
- 9 John Sculley, *Odyssey: Pepsi to Apple* (Collins, 1987) p 90.
- 10 *ibid*, p 95. For further discussion of the table see Bolton Thompson 1.
- 11 Tom Peters, *Re-imagine—Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age* (Dorling Kindersley, 2003).
- 12 Ian Bunting, *Models of Ministry—Managing the Church Today* (Grove Pastoral booklet, P 54) pp 9, 10, 13 and chapter 4.
- 13 Trevor Beeson, *The Bishops* (SCM Press, 2002) pp 1, 236.
- 14 Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton, *Now, Discover your Strengths* (Simon and Schuster, 2001).
- 15 M Wakelin, *J Arthur Rank* (Lion Publishing, 1997) p 46.
- 16 Francis Fukuyama, *The Great Disruption—Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order* (Profile Books, 1999) pp 16, 17 and p 278; *Trust—The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (Hamish Hamilton, 1995).
- 17 David Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Orbis Books, 1995) p 331.
- 18 Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall *SQ Spiritual Intelligence—The Ultimate Intelligence* (Bloomsbury, 2000) and *Spiritual Capital* (Bloomsbury, 2004). References made to p 3 and p 27.
- 19 *In the Field* (2001, Autumn), Editorial.
- 20 Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Zondervan, 1995) p 25 Chapter 1.
- 21 I hope you noticed that St Arbut's is derived from Starbuck's, the coffee chain. Their entrepreneurial story is told in Bolton Thompson 1, p 143.

All through Scripture we can see God using the talents of entrepreneurs, not least in the rapid spread of the early church. But the tendency of all organizations is to become fixed and settled and forget their entrepreneurial heritage, and the church is no exception.

In an age of change and uncertainty the church needs to rediscover its original dynamic by releasing the entrepreneurial talent in its midst. This is the greatest task facing the church today. And this booklet shows you why and how.

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