

A THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF CHURCH'S INVOLVEMENT IN BUSINESS INVESTMENTS

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Conclusion

This work has provided the opportunity to look critically at the question of whether it is right or wrong theologically for churches to go into business ventures or go into investments of funds for return. If it is right how can they do it without losing focus? What are today's churches doing with regards to business investments?

John D. Beckett asks the question "how realistic is it to expect to apply the concept of biblically based service in today's often harsh, always demanding business environment?"¹ He is also of the view that always "there are conflicts between the walk of faith and the practical world of business."²

The sum total of this is that churches, if they must be involved in business, really have an uphill task to perform in today's world. This work has been able to conclude on what the church was basically set up to do, this is to carry out the Great commission. In doing this Rick Warren came up with five purposes for the church.

- 1) Love the Lord with all your heart (through worship)
- 2) Love your neighbor as yourself (ministering to other by meeting their needs and healing their hurts.)
- 3) Go and make disciples. (Evangelism)
- 4) Baptize them,
- 5) Teaching them to obey (discipleship)³

The church was set up by our Lord and Saviour to edify, encourage, exalt, equip and evangelize. While each church will differ in how these tasks

¹ John D. Beckett, Loving Monday, (USA: Intervarsity Press 1997). p. 117

² Ibid p. 23

³ Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven church, (Grand Rapids: Purpose Driven Publishing 1995) p. 97

are accomplished there must be no disagreement about what the church is called to do. In achieving the purposes, the church of today needs a lot of money which the normal tithes and offering cannot be adequate to take care of. The church therefore needs to put in additional efforts in order for it to meet the challenges it faces. The leaders of the church need to be more innovative and aggressive in generating additional funds for the church to carry out its programmes and purposes. Bursk is of the opinion that "candidates for the ministry should receive better education in business"⁴

This work has been able to prove that a lot of churches are already involved in businesses. As against the age old belief, Churches have found out that involvement in businesses is not against the biblical teachings rather it enhances the ability of the church in carrying out its mandate from the lord of the church. Today's church is set to prosper and not live in poverty and expect the Great Commission to be carried out to the letter. The blessing of God is both to the individual worshippers as well as the church as a body. The church must not loose the blessing of God by creating unnecessary bottlenecks for itself. Paul Yonghi Cho puts It that "we have to believe that the blessing of God is part of His redemptive provision"⁵ The Church can no longer live in the era of believing that poverty is synonymous with piety. The church needs to be more aggressive and dynamic if she must cope with the ever changing world in which she is operating.

⁴Edward C Bursk, Business and Religion, (New York: Happer and Brothers Publishers 1959) P.4

⁵Paul Youghi Cho cited in " The creative ability of your words" in The Church Divided, Robert wise et al p. 119

The worshippers must be in good financial health which also leads the church to be in good financial health. The church can no longer sit on the fence in matters of making money and allowing unbelievers to control the wealth of the world; In fact Bursk is of the opinion that the Great Commission and wealth of the worshippers and the church herself are related to each other closely. He says "it is significant that those churches which have carried out faithfully and to the best of their ability the spirit of the "Great Commission" have themselves prospered".⁶

Money making can no longer be looked upon by the church as evil. Money is the wheel on which evangelism and mission can move. Without money evangelism cannot be done. It is how the money is made and how it is used or managed that can be evil. Bursk also says that "Money or the lack of it is not a problem in itself. The problem to be faced is one of management, for good management attracts capital as well to the church as to channels of business"⁷

The time has come for the church to be seen as the holders of the wealth of the world. The church, in readiness for the shaking that will take place in the market place when the resources of the world will be returned to the hands of the children of God, must be ready in terms of management capabilities. The church must sharpen her management intellects in a wholistic manner, ranging from managing spiritual matters to the management of material things especially financial matters. Church managers

⁶Edward C Bursk, Business and Religion. (New York: Harper and Brothers Published 1959)p. 57

⁷Ibid

and leaders need to be highly informed, competent and innovative in this challenging environment.

Talking about management generally in the church amongst which is financial management Roebert says:

*So often the church has presented a poor image. Mediocrity has dogged its footsteps. Many local churches are totally disorganized. This image has not been a credit to the Lord. The time has come for people of God not only to be a people of prayer, holiness, integrity but also a people of discipline and example especially in terms of excellence.*⁸

The church can no longer afford to be myopic in her view of things of the world or even in the way the church herself sees herself and the purpose for which God created her. The way the church is seen by the outside world, cannot continue to be the same age old spiritual-and-nothing-else syndrome.

The church should and must be seen essentially as the embodiment of God's purpose for mankind, an idea which must of necessity combine the principle of leadership and the principle of sharing, the idea of a divine authority and the idea of freedom for the individual to do the will of God in the service of all mankind. One can confidently say that,

*The conviction is growing that the need of Christian people is a fresh vision of the church of Christ as God meant it to be, His own creation, the instrument of His age-long purpose, the reconciling body in which all mankind might meet in a worship and service which would extend to the farthest boundaries of human life.*⁹

The church can no longer see herself as a collection of poverty stricken individuals that must not touch or be involved with anything that does not

⁸ ED. Roebert, *Maturing Management in the church*, Kent England: Sovereign World 1996) p.14

⁹ Newton R. Flew, *Jesus and His Church*, (Cumbria UK: Paternoster Publishing 1998) p. xiii

