

**Institution for Christian Teaching  
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**THE TRANSMISSION OF CHRISTIAN VALUES  
IN BUSINESS COURSES**

**By**

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## INTRODUCTION

Most businessmen with a non-Christian educational background will have profit maximization as their objective. Bhushan points out that "businessmen themselves maintain that the main objective of business is to earn profits."<sup>1</sup> Gupta and Khanka agree on this point and say that the basic motive of any business is to earn profit.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it can be inferred that the main objective of most business concerns is merely profit since all efforts are directed towards profit maximization. This is the "usual way"<sup>3</sup> of managing business organizations.

If a business organization has to survive, profits are essential. But how much profit? The ideal level of profits for any business organization could be profits enough to: (a) cover the cost of production, (b) pay the salaries of all the employees, (c) expand/update the business, and (d) obtain "adequate returns"<sup>4</sup> for the entrepreneur.

This being the scenario of the present business world, the transmission of Christian values such as, responsibility, accountability, unselfishness, etc., in business courses is vital today. The question that then arises is: How does a lecturer transmit these Christian values to the students in business courses? Christian teachers must shoulder the responsibility of inculcating Christian values in students. Otherwise, we are no different from secular teachers.

This essay, firstly, looks at the secular way of running a business. It then enumerates Christian values that can enable and prepare students, who will become businessmen tomorrow, to be able to "stand up for Jesus . . . in their business relations

<sup>1</sup>Y. K. Bhushan, Fundamentals of Business Organization and Management (New Delhi: Sultan Chand & Sons, 1994), BS-17.

<sup>2</sup>C. B. Gupta and S. S. Khanka, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management (New Delhi: Sultan Chand & Sons, 1999), 1.43.

<sup>3</sup>The "usual way" denotes the secular way of running a business. Here, profit maximization is considered to be the most important standard in assessing the worth or success of a business concern.

<sup>4</sup>"Adequate returns" from the money invested by entrepreneurs should not be less than the interest given by the banks but, at the same time, it should not be at a level that it will result in exploitation.

and in their associations with the world anywhere."<sup>5</sup> Finally, this essay focuses on how teachers can lead students to developing these Christian values.

The hope is that students will be able to develop and practice Christian value-enriched techniques of running and building a business organization.

### **BUSINESS: The "Usual Way"**

During the 1950s the technique called "Management by Objective," (MBO) was propagated by Peter F. Drucker.<sup>6</sup>

MBO is goal-oriented and all resources are directed to the attainment of the preset goals and objectives. This technique is very popular in the business community and is used extensively.

Rachman and Mescon say that "The element of profit is the foundation of our economic system."<sup>7</sup> Thus, as mentioned earlier, the "usual way" denotes the secular or prevailing business practices where profit maximization is the main objective. Therefore, if profit is the objective, all other objectives in business are secondary.

In order to attain this objective, all business concerns need an environment where they can survive and expand. Cherunilam categorizes environment into three.

(a) Internal environment: This consists of people working in organizations (employers and employees).

(b) Micro environment: This consists of people outside the organization but who have direct effect on it. For example, suppliers, competitors, wholesalers, consumers, etc.

(c) Macro environment: This consists of factors that affect the elements in the micro environment. For example, government factors, economic factors, socio-cultural factors, etc.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 341.

<sup>6</sup>David J. Rachman and Michael H. Mescon, Business Today (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1976), 127.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>8</sup>Francis Cherunilam, Business Environment (Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House, 1989), 2-6.

Since all business endeavors are dependent on the environment, they have certain responsibilities towards it. According to Carroll, these responsibilities are as follows:

### **Economic Responsibility**

The first and foremost priority of a business is to be an economic institution. That is, a business should be one whose aim is to produce goods and services that society wants and to sell these at a competitive and attractive price. This price is what society feels is fair, which represents the value of goods and services delivered, and which provides the business with adequate profit for its survival, growth, and reward to its investors.

However, it is common to find that individuals dealing with finances and holding responsible positions resort to illegal methods of amassing wealth. One such example is of Diana Dwyer Brooks, the former CEO of Sotheby's International. She was considered to be "the most powerful woman in the art auction world."<sup>9</sup> But she got herself into fixing commissions. As a result, Sotheby's became the target of a civil class-action suit which resulted in a fine of \$45 million.<sup>10</sup>

### **Legal Responsibility**

Secondly, it is the responsibility of business concerns to comply with the laws prevailing in the society. But how many business organizations adhere to the laws?

An example can be given of the Central Directorate of Health Services in Siliguri (one of the towns in India) which had issued an alert against "toxic tea" sold in the market. Manufacturers used a chemical substance to adulterate tea which was being distributed in many parts of the country. This toxic chemical (called bandoline powder) which was used to adulterate tea, is known to cause severe damage to the nervous system, liver, and kidney after prolonged consumption.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Cathleen McGuigan and Peter Plagens, "Going. . . Going. . . Gone," *Newsweek*, October 16, 2000, 71.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>The Times of India (Bombay), January 25, 2001, 1.

This example shows how business organizations are not concerned about environmental and consumer laws and are involved in corrupt practices.

### **Ethical Responsibility**

This area involves behaviors and activities that are not embodied in the law, but are expected of the business by society. In other words, ethical responsibilities are those areas in which society expects certain performance but which have not yet been articulated in the form of law.

However, not many business concerns avoid questionable practices. They often operate below minimum requirement of the law. There are many such small cases which go unnoticed. But one to have a global significance was the antitrust case filed by the government against Microsoft, stating its engagement in "exclusionary, anticompetitive and predatory acts to maintain its monopoly power".<sup>12</sup>

### **Voluntary or Discretionary Responsibility**

These voluntary, discretionary, or philanthropic responsibilities of business are guided only by the business's desire to engage in social activities that are not required by law and are generally not expected of business. But it is desired of business by society. If one looks around, not many business organizations contribute towards community/education, community involvement/improvement, and volunteerism. Even if they do, there is vested interest in it, such as tax evasion.

### **The Four-part Social Responsibility**

The social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations placed on business organizations by society.<sup>13</sup> The social responsibility of business is nothing but the relationship that is required or expected of business by society. The initiation lies in the hands of business organizations.

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<sup>12</sup>Steven Levy, "Microsoft's Crapshoot," *Newsweek*, April 17, 2000, 24.

<sup>13</sup>Archie B. Carroll, *Business and Society* (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Co., 1989), 30.

However, business organizations themselves put all these responsibilities second to profit maximization. This leads to an environment in which we have broken relationships and exploitation on economic, political, and social front.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 1 tries to illustrate how profit maximization leads from one thing to another ultimately ending in exploiting people on economic, political, and social front.

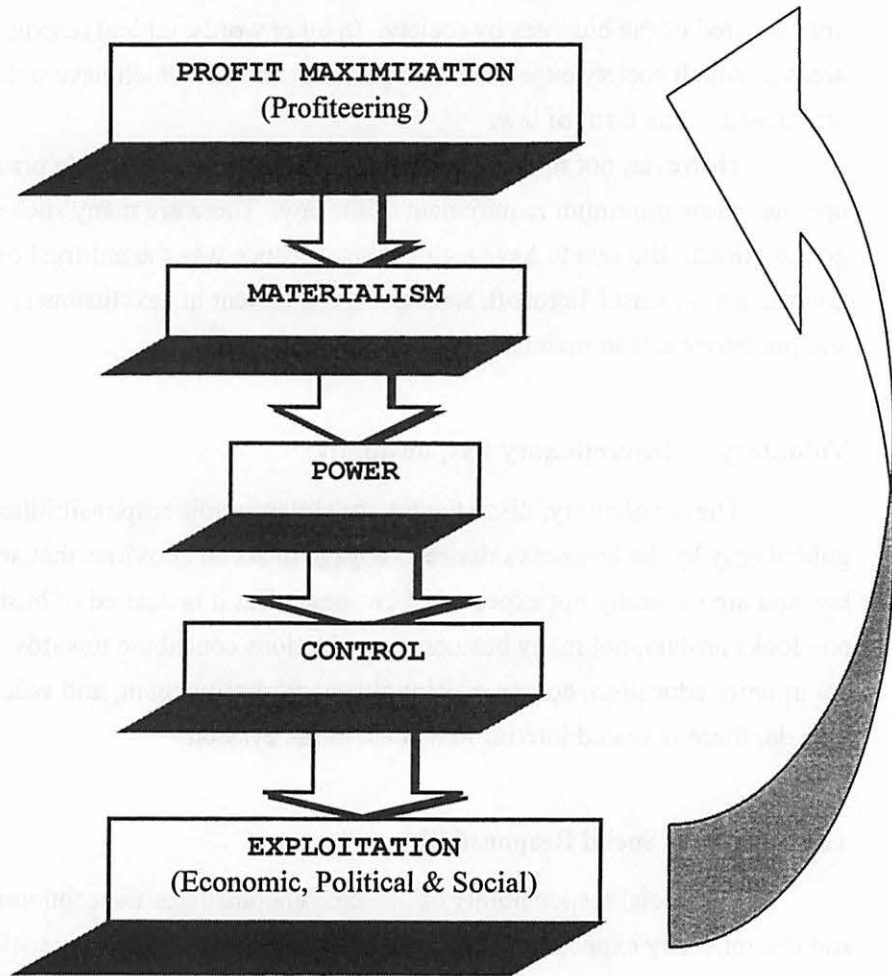


Fig. 1. The vicious circle of profit maximization

When profit maximization is the objective, there is a tendency to resort to profiteering. This leads to materialism which is the acquisition of wealth--wealth in terms of worldly possessions. Materialism brings power--power over people and property.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

This, consequently, becomes a motivator in exercising control. Thus, having the reigns and the objective (profit maximization), exploitation on economic, political, and social front is inevitable. Therefore, a vicious circle results increasing the gap between the "haves and the have-nots."<sup>15</sup>

The outcome of exploitation in business, may result in the following: (a) lower productivity of employees, (b) poor morale, (c) abnormally high turnover and absenteeism, (d) difficulty in getting workers, (e) failure to attract good dealers, (f) complaints from customers, (g) fast turnover of stockholders, (h) frequent stockholder complaints, and (i) resentment of the community toward the company and its operations.<sup>16</sup> The overall view is very disappointing.

### **BUSINESS: The "Unusual Way"**

The "unusual way" is the Biblical way of running a business. Integrating Christian values that foster good relationship while dealing with people in a secular business environment is considered to be the unusual way.

#### **Christian Values**

Values, as defined by Taylor, "are noble ends or ideals that we highly esteem,"<sup>17</sup> such as fairness, honesty, impartiality, justice, reliability, responsibility, self-control, trustworthiness, accountability, tolerance, unselfishness, etc. These values affect one's decisions, and consequently, behavior. In addition, Taylor points out that, "For a Christian, God is the source of Christian values."<sup>18</sup> Therefore, unlike business organizations run the usual way, the unusual way takes into account Christian values in addition to earning profits.

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<sup>15</sup>K. K. Dewett, Modern Economic Theory (New Delhi: Shyam Lal Charitable Trust, 1997), 590.

<sup>16</sup>Philip Lesly, ed., Public Relations Handbook (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978), 6.

<sup>17</sup>John W. Taylor, "Instructional Strategies for the Integration of Faith and Learning," A paper presented at the 27th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Mission College, Muak Lek, Thailand, December 3-15, 10.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

From the many values that are presented in the Bible and literature by Christian writers, I have selected only a few for this essay. These Christian values promote the building of good relationships with people in the business environment. They are as follows:

**Responsibility:** All business positions involve authority. Nevertheless, one must not forget that with authority comes responsibility. Responsibility, according to Carroll, is a "state or condition of having assumed an obligation."<sup>19</sup> In other words, it is "a moral compulsion felt by a subordinate to accomplish his assigned duties."<sup>20</sup> The Bible presents an example of Jesus demonstrating responsibility while on the cross. He made sure that His mother was taken care of. And thus, He handed His mother over to the care of the disciple He loved. And from then on, it was the responsibility of the disciple to care for Jesus' mother (John 19:26).

**Accountability:** In addition to being responsible, business students should be taught to provide satisfactory reasons for all their actions and decisions. This is what accountability is all about.

The Bible tells us that everybody will have to give an account "of himself to God" (Romans 14:12) and "for every careless word they have spoken" (Matthew 12:36).

**Fairness:** Fairness can be defined as the value in which people are treated equally and dealt with rightly or reasonably. As the Bible admonishes us to do "what is right and just and fair" (Prov 1:3), it is imperative that Christian businessmen exhibit fairness.

**Honesty:** One of the most essential values that is required of businessmen today is honesty. Teachers of business courses should guide their students to be free from deceit and untruthfulness and to display sincerity in order to possess honesty. Deuteronomy 25:15, 16 tell us that the Lord detests anyone who deals dishonestly.

**Justice:** In addition to being fair, justice eliminates suffering. In Deuteronomy 27:19, we are warned against withholding justice from the fatherless or the

<sup>19</sup>Carroll, 38.

<sup>20</sup>Bhushan, PM-72.



widows. The Bible provides many examples on justice. The best of all examples is that of God's ways which are just (Deut 32:4). Abraham, the man who walked with God, was also "right and just" (Gen 18:19).

**Unselfishness:** Ellen G. White has rightly written that "Unselfishness underlines all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty."<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Christian teachers should cultivate unselfishness in their feelings which the students can consequently acquire.<sup>22</sup>

Christian values help in decreasing the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Figure 2 summarizes this section by portraying the outcome of these Christian values.

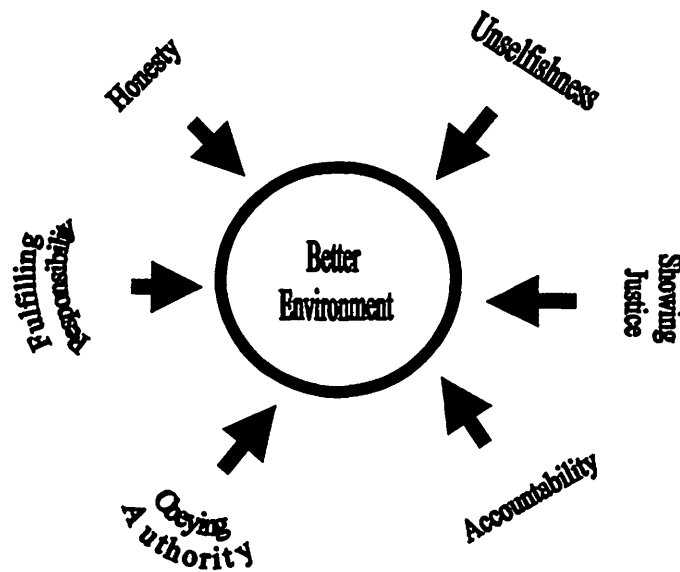


Fig. 2. Outcome of Christian values

<sup>21</sup>Ellen G. White, Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 32.

<sup>22</sup>Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 62.

### **INTEGRATION OF VALUES IN BUSINESS COURSES**

It is important to note that the unusual way of business is not isolated from the usual way. In fact, the unusual way is the combination of Christian values with the secular way of running a business. Some of the methods that can be used for the integration of Christian values while teaching business courses are as follows:

**Cooperative Learning Models:** These models involve interaction, positive interdependence, and individual accountability. Roy affirms that, in this method, the success of the group depends on the individual learning of each member. Even though students are required to give and receive from one another, it is equally vital that they be held individually accountable.<sup>23</sup> However, apart from being individually accountable, Carr points out that, "cooperative learning makes people accountable not only for individual results, but also to others."<sup>24</sup>

In cooperative learning, students work in small groups on a common topic or assignment. The teacher provides instruction and the group assumes the responsibility of ensuring that each member understands the topic. For example, a topic such as "Functions of Management" can be taught using this method.

Research shows that this method helps develop values such as accountability, responsibility, tolerance, open-mindedness, and mutual cooperation in students.<sup>25</sup>

**Bible Examples:** One of the best ways to transmit values like responsibility, accountability, honesty, justice, and unselfishness is by citing examples from the Bible.

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<sup>23</sup>Jim Roy, "Cooperative Education: Necessary Tool for Teaching and Learning," Journal of Adventist Education 57 (April/May 1995): 4.

<sup>24</sup>Kevin Carr, "Beyond Cooperative Learning," Journal of Adventist Education 57 (April/May 1995): 37.

<sup>25</sup>Shlomo Sharan, "Cooperative Learning in Small Groups: Recent Methods and Effects on Achievement, Attitudes, and Ethnic Relations," Review of Educational Research 50 (Summer 1980): 241-267.

Jesus, the Master Teacher, taught by using simple examples and familiar experiences.

For instance, while teaching taxation, one can illustrate what Jesus said, "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are His" (Matthew 22:21). Further, Romans 13:7 says, "Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." These examples can transmit the value of being a responsible citizen.

**Modeling:** Through an exemplary lifestyle, the teacher can seek to portray what he wants his students to become. Taylor considers modeling as being "unquestionably the most powerful illustrative method."<sup>26</sup> Korniejczuk and Kijai confirm this by stating that "Without question, the most important manifestation of faith/learning integration is shown in the daily life of the Christian teacher."<sup>27</sup> Taylor further says that students should be able to perceive thirst for knowledge, trust in God, and Christian values in the Christian teacher.<sup>28</sup>

Values such as justice can be modeled by being "just and right" (Deut 32:4), in our dealings with students. Also, by indicating what the examination will cover, evaluating answer papers according to merit, and providing equal learning opportunities to all the students, the teacher can help inculcate the value of justice in students.

**Conversation:** Arlin points out that conversation is a technique which teachers can use to assess students thinking and adapt to their particular needs.<sup>29</sup> Rasi further says,

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<sup>26</sup>Taylor, 6.

<sup>27</sup>Raquel I. Korniejczuk and Jimmy Kijai, "Integrating Faith and Learning: Development of a Stage Model of Teacher Implementation," Journal of Research on Christian Education, Spring 1994, Vol. 3, No. 1, 80.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Patricia K. Arlin, "Teaching as Conversation," Educational Leadership 48 (October 1990): 82.

"Make yourself available to your students in order to continue the dialogue and the questioning after class, in your office or in another quiet setting. These private conversations lend themselves to deeper levels of reflection on life's meaning, choices, and destiny, strengthening personal faith and commitment".<sup>30</sup> Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians says: "Encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone" (1 Thess 5:13).

Through casual conversation the teacher can encourage values such as unselfishness, service, patience, and willingness in the student.

**Update:** Where would an institution be, if it taught how to build a bullock cart and efficiently drive it in the contemporary world? Will it have any customers? Will it survive? The obvious answer is no. In this "information age" where technologies become obsolete in a matter of days, educators need to keep abreast with the changes taking place around us in order to teach that which is currently applicable, relevant, and valuable.

However, while helping students keep abreast with current information and providing up-to-date information to students, the teacher should make certain that students perceive Christian values as constant. In their book, The New Tolerance, McDowell and Hostetler narrate how the value "tolerance" has changed its meaning and how the society is undergoing a cultural change. They say that the meaning of "tolerance" as defined by Webster's no longer holds true for the majority of the people, especially among students.<sup>31</sup> In this context, it is imperative for the teacher to develop Christian

<sup>30</sup>Humberto M. Rasi, "Basic Strategies for Integrating Faith and Learning in your Courses," A paper presented in the 27th International Faith and Learning Seminar, Mission College, Muak Lek, Thailand, December 12, 2000.

<sup>31</sup>Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler, The New Tolerance (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1998), 2, 9.

thinking in the minds of students. Robertson, cited by Manalo, says that the task of the Christian teacher "goes beyond mere providing of information. Christian teachers are to exert effort till their students become learners of Jesus Christ."<sup>32</sup>

**Case Studies:** This method of educating brings to the classroom real-life problems for students to solve. Students can be provided with situations they would face in the world outside. Integration of faith and learning can be accomplished by helping students apply Christian values such as, mercy, tolerance, justice, etc. in solving cases.

### CONCLUSION

In the contemporary world, we come across various aspects of business negotiations and dealings. It is vital that Adventist educators direct the students in the Christian way of business dealings. Rice points out that it is now time for teachers "to go beyond just reading a Bible text and saying a prayer." Instead, Christian teachers should lead students "to bring religion into every aspect of their lives,"<sup>33</sup> stand for the right, and uplift the society.

Therefore, it is vital that Adventist educators, who are involved in teaching business courses, be aware that when Christian values are practiced in a business environment, good relationships result. It is the task of Adventist teachers to equip students of our institutions with the vision to look beyond financial profits culminating from business relationships. This can be achieved by integrating Christian values in business course.

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<sup>32</sup>Eppie A. Manalo, "Teacher-Student Interaction: Development of Christian Values Via Critical Thinking Activities," Christ in the Classroom, Vol. 11, 3.

<sup>33</sup>Gail T. Rice, "Teaching God's Grace in Your Classroom," Journal of Adventist Education, 61 (December 1998-January 1999): 19.

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