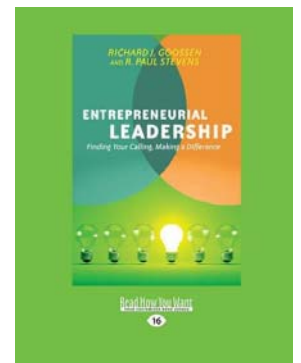


Entrepreneurial Leadership: finding your calling, making a difference

IVP 2013, paperback, 181 pp, £19.99
ISBN: 978-0-8308-3773-1

by Richard J. Goossen & R. Paul Stevens

■ reviewed by Kina Robertshaw



Is entrepreneurship a calling that can make a difference? Paul Stevens and Richard Goossen believe so. Drawing upon their many years of practice, reflection and research they present a thoughtful and empowering book for Christian entrepreneurs and those interested in issues of integrating faith and business. In preparation for a dissertation on Christian Entrepreneurship, I had the privilege of reading the draft manuscript for *Entrepreneurial Leadership* and to hear both authors discuss their research. While Goossen draws from behavioural science and management and entrepreneurial leadership theory, Stevens argues from a theological perspective.

Stevens is Professor Emeritus of Marketplace Theology and Leadership at Regent College, Vancouver, BC. He has been a pastor for 20 years. Goossen is Strategic Advisor & Relationship Manager at Covenant Family Wealth Advisors in Canada. He is also Chairman of the Entrepreneurial Leaders Organization and Director of Entrepreneurial Leadership for Transforming Business in Cambridge. While the authors have drawn from Peter Drucker, John Maxwell, Scripture and interviews of entrepreneurs, both authors have written many books, have extensive experience doing business and are theologically rooted.

The book is structured in ten parts. It starts by looking at the traits of entrepreneurship: innovation, seizing opportunities, and gaining personal satisfaction through innovation and analysing risk. It subsequently explores the essence of biblical leadership. In chapter three Goossen and Stevens contrast a humanist model of entrepreneurship without God, with the Christian model with God. In chapters 4-7 Stevens and Goossen describe

their particular understanding of the Christian entrepreneur. Chapter four considers the nature of soul and spirituality. Our composition of soul, spirit and the physical form implies that spiritual life cannot be compartmentalised from our work life. They present 'the marketplace as a location for spiritual formation' and make clear why 'marketplace spirituality' is not an oxymoron.

In chapter five, building on the contrasts between Christian and Humanist approaches to entrepreneurship, Goossen and Stevens outline the differing meaning of the work ethic applied in both models. Christians 'find meaning in God through, and in the context of the work' where the Humanist 'individual looks for meaning in the work itself' (p. 77). Here, the authors expound on a pattern where good theology births morally good entrepreneurship founded on a Christian work ethic.

Before exploring the nature of an entrepreneurial calling in chapter seven, chapter six explicates the Christian approach to risk and reward. The final three chapters deal with how Christian entrepreneurial leadership is lived out. Goossen and Stevens explore principles and practices that will nourish and sustain entrepreneurs' ministries, and ways that can help to bridge the gap between the church and entrepreneurs. The book is not a quick read; rather it is thoughtful and thought-provoking. At the end of each chapter they include questions for reflection and discussion, making it a good resource for group study.

Through an extensive and polemical argument Goossen and Stevens make a significant contribution to the contemporary debate about the relationship between the church and Christians in business. According



►► to Bridget Adams in the preface to her thesis, *Christ in the Marketplace*¹, ‘Over the years, the Church in England seems to have distanced itself from the world of work, leaving what could be called the Sunday-Monday gap’. Pulpit messages often through silence risk signalling that the world of work, unlike the world of church, does not matter - further echoed by Laura Nash and Scotty McLennan in *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday*.² This growing body of literature, to which Goossen and Stevens make a valuable addition, reveals the ‘lack of connection between entrepreneurial leaders and their churches’ (p. 164).

Goossen and Stevens root their argument in the grand narrative of the Father reconciling the world unto Himself through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Taking a balanced view, the book is not about apportioning blame, but righting a wrong. The book addresses an internecine state within the Body of Christ, an entrepreneur-church dichotomy, by considering entrepreneurs’ struggles in their relationship with the church and why the church struggles with entrepreneurs. The authors then discuss how church leaders and entrepreneurs can work together in partnership to bridge the gap.

The authors have claimed that according to the Entrepreneurial Leader Research Program (ELRP) analysis most entrepreneurial leaders indicated that the church did not play a significant part in affirming their calling to business. ‘Part of the problem is that church leaders often do not think that what entrepreneurs are doing in the world is important, is part of kingdom ministry or is doing God’s work’ (p. 166). Goossen gives an example that when speaking at a conference on ‘Business As Mission’, it turned out that only two from a group of 40 were pastors and church workers - a situation I can confirm from my experience of attending faith and business conferences. Goossen rightly concludes ‘the clear message: business people thought this topic was important; church leadership did not’ (p. 166). From the entrepreneurs’ side the authors conclude that a significant proportion

of the entrepreneurial gift of people within the church is ‘withering on the vine’ (p. 167).

Goossen and Stevens admit that ‘entrepreneurs are not always the easiest people to deal with. In fact entrepreneurs may be among the most challenging for any organisation. They can be impatient, action-oriented and non-bureaucratic’ (p.167). However the authors add: ‘the challenge for the church is to harness, rather than squelch, the energies and passions of entrepreneurs in their midst’ (p.167).

A yawning gap between entrepreneurs and the church is a real concern with serious implications for the body of Christ. With regard to bridging the gap between the church and entrepreneurs, the authors claim from the ELRP that entrepreneurs indicated: a longing of their calling to be validated; they valued ‘prayer and encouragement from the church leaders’; they desired church leadership ‘to understand and respect them’ and they expressed a need for ‘solid biblical teaching’ – entrepreneurs feel un nourished (p.168).

The authors demonstrate ways in which both entrepreneurs and church leaders can engage and work together to subdue and rule the earth for the glory of God. Entrepreneurial leadership concludes with a challenge for entrepreneurs to make a difference right through to the end, suggesting that most tend not to finish well. The temptation to build empires tends to be strong and seductive, even when for a good cause. A biblical example of not finishing well is found in King Solomon, ‘a compromised old man with a dirty mind’ as revealed in the Songs of Songs’ (p.174). (They explain why they interpret the book this way.) The authors point out the allure of money, sex or power as reasons for leaders not finishing well, but also offer strategies for completing well.

Goossen and Steven write compellingly on matters that both the church and Christian entrepreneurs need to gets to grips with; for this reason I recommend this book as a must-read for church leaders and entrepreneurs. ■

Before coming to study theology at Ridley Hall Cambridge in 2010, Kina Robertshaw owned My Choice, a department store in Lusaka and was involved in a number of additional business ventures including a music production company and an events agency. She was successful not only in Zambia but competed effectively in the fashion industry in Johannesburg, South Africa as well.



1 This can be found online at kingdombusinessstv.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Christ_in_the_Marketplaceformat.pdf.3).
 2 Published by Jossey-Bass in 2001.