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Business Ecology: Team Leadership

Background article: *Where is the community?*, 23 June 1999; available in the Chronicle archives.

So just what is Business Human Enterprise Ecology anyway?

Simply put it is humanities oldest science. It is also the one science that transcends cultures and religions because it is simply the observational result of mankind dealing with the environment around him. For so called primitive people it became their holy record or revelation of origins and destiny, but for the most part nature as an end was not worshiped as deity, but created objects, seen and unseen which were respected and sometimes made gods. However, that deification was really the result of being forced to deal with both an awesome power common law and majesty common grace beyond the simple intellect of humanity.

Most of these people however, possess in their oral myths the concept of a Supreme Deity in some way responsible for the whole thing, and that Deity very commonly interacted within the human community as a real mythological person to provide guidance for the struggles of life on earth.

It is only enlightened western man that believes that he has evolved beyond that Business Ecology of nature, basically through industry and urbanization. However, as we are seeing all of our best efforts to subject nature to our desires, have in turn made our materialistic atheistic naturalism even more susceptible to increasing natural laws of storms, climate change, and other disasters. As the Bible says professing to become wise we have become fools.

Business Ecology is truly the only form of observational science known throughout the



world. We find it's first scientific reports written on the walls of caves and rock outcrops, still visible after thousands of years. Interesting however, only in the west do we find the rise of other sciences and pseudo sciences. Most of the enlightened would say that this was because we have evolved beyond this need for a crutch to determine our way in the world. They are at least partially correct, we no longer need nature to give us a revelation of God, for God has given western man a higher revelation of Himself in the Bible.

In that regard the whole fall of mankind through original sin and total depravity found in Genesis Chapter 3 and following, add a much deeper context to the natural law and common grace found in creation. Western man has made himself god, and has attempted to substitute himself as the zenith of deity, when in fact even with all our stuff, we are even more vulnerable to all the outside forces we so desire to overcome. So what that is really saying is that we are not as smart as we would like to believe. In fact, we are so much more akin to the entropy of the Second Law of Thermodynamics than we are willing to admit.

If God truly created Adam and Eve, they were much more intelligent than we are today. The truth that we have made the creation of stuff our highest goal, speaks not to our intellect, but the stupidity of our goals. Materialism does not in anyway answer the fundamental questions common to all man. Materialistic observational science or it's philosophy has no reasonable answers for origins why we are , meaning what to we do with who we are , morality how we are to interact with others , and destiny what will happen to us when we die . We now truly live in a culture summed up in a bumper sticker on our jacked up, hemi powered four wheel drive pickup: He who dies with the most toys wins.

The profundity of it all is that we can substitute another, less macho means to the most toys, but the truth still only remains in the sum of our toys. Toys that will soon run out of gas, or can be destroyed in seconds in an earthquake, tornado, or terrorist attack. We are unwilling or have degenerated to such an extent that we can

not see that toys and self indulgence is really a stupid reason for wasting your life.

Embedded within all successful organizations is the revelation of team leadership. It is a common grace gift that we accept or reject at our peril. If you have read some of these previous articles you will understand that instead of using the term disaster, catastrophe and others, I have substituted the term stupendous change. This is simply because the Bible says in Romans 8:28 that all things work for good in God's people. Therefore, disasters and the like are part of the set of "all things" so why put such a negative spin on the whatever happening.

Stupendous change comes in two flavors just like disease, acute short term and chronic long term and the soft serve swirl variety, a distinct mixing of the two. Acute stupendous change you can and must handle pretty much as an individual. That may be affected and effected by your preparation, but it is still something you must handle alone or with close family and friends.

Chronic and the swirl variety however, need a community in which you must interact. We look to our government to provide aid in such stupendous change times, such as the recent tornado in Greensburg, Kansas, but it is really just aid, like a Bandaid. If that community is going to be rebuilt, it is going to be done through the community efforts of the citizens of Greensburg, truly with little help from the outside world, other than slow and inadequate financial accessibility.

As a product of ROTC I was given the training needed to become a leader of men. The underlying principle behind that concept is that leaders are not born they are created and trained. From a personal point of view entirely, if for no other reason, leadership training, for citizen soldiers alone, should be the reason to abolish the all volunteer military. Contrary to public nonsense, leadership is not about giving orders and having them carried out. True leadership is really the skill and the art of working with people to accomplish goals that are impossible for the individual, or especially a group of people trying to figure out what to do next.

As alluded to last week, the other example of leadership we have in our society is organized team sports. Using baseball as an example, 9 guys playing with a stick and a ball on a grassy field, is known

as America's National Pastime. At the major league level hundreds of millions of people pay billions of dollars to watch such a simple game. The problem is that they are just spectators, not participants. While like with military leadership there is a certain requirement for ability, this time athletic ability, for the most part however, just as like in the military, players and leaders are created and trained, not made.

If you look at the number of position players in sports and their counterparts within the military unit you find pretty much the same break down. The connection that I never made however, those are the same numbers that make effective community organizations. That connection was made when I read a book by Niall O'Brien, a Roman Catholic priest working with indigent rural peasants in the Philippines. The name of that book is "Revolution from the Heart."

As time as progressed and I have studied indigenous people groups around the world, I have discovered that the organization of bands of small communities on the Native American plains is essentially the same as the military platoon, the baseball team, and those same oppressed people that Father O'Brien worked with in the Philippines.

Father O'Brien and his team of a total of 3 priests were able to organize the destitute peasants working on large sugar cane plantations into effective and powerful communities, much to the detriment of the sugar cane plantation owners and the then Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

These groups consisted of at least 25 adult members, because it took at least that many to have the diversity of skills required to make the group self sufficient. These groups however, work best with between 30 and 40 participants, but when the numbers went much above 50 the focus and the intent seemed to dissipate. As a consequence, through the Father's leadership, once the groups got to 50 they were broken into two groups of 25 and again allowed to grow. Looking more closely here we see the Biblical Exodus example of 10s, 50s, 100s, and 1000s, which we shall develop in greater detail later.

What was really present and required work by the leadership, was to get the groups to understand that they had the power to make changes in their lives and the community as a whole. The Church and the Father's had given them the authority, and to the degree possible and with the meager resources available to make changes for the betterment of the community. Once that power and authority understanding began to work, the groups pretty much became self sustaining and reproducing, provided that the leadership did not try to dictate results to their prescribed understanding. Once the communities began to truly operate, the leadership quickly found out that the results so surpassed their vision that they became more like coaches than the traditional vision of priestly shepherding of dumb sheep. They became a diverse naturally functioning powerful human community.

One thing they found however, which was quite unproductive, especially in the context of a church operation was in prayer. What they found was that prayer as generally understood within the church, was the greatest hinderance to group effectiveness. Unproductive people used the excuse of formal prayer as a means of not getting involved with the community and its goals. Instead of formal prayer, the Priests found that informal prayer specific to present circumstances was not only more vibrant, but also much more effective.

Staying with the church concept for a moment, if you look at church movements that are changing culture today, and also in the past, it is through house churches. The church began and changed the known world in the first century after the resurrection of Christ through house churches. House churches in China and other repressive countries around the world today are really the only effective means of spreading the gospel and they work. The size of house churches is strictly limited by the total number of people you can crowd into a house, basically 25 50 people.

Furthermore, small groups or cells, so present in western evangelicalism don't work effectively because it takes at least 25 people to make a community self sustaining through work and responsibility. Similar to prayer they become an excuse for inaction rather than community action, because they focus inward instead of outward. Instead of a teaching ministry for historic doctrine,

apologetics, catechism, they serve as stages to promote moralism through Bible character studies. For the most part, participants only requirement is to be willing to show up when you have nothing better to do. For leaders they are not trained, but just volunteer to sort of guide the discussion, without making anyone feel uncomfortable for they may not return. As such they promote the role of the pastor not as a leader of people, but a shepherd of passive sheep. As well, cells stifle any congregational leadership role for men, thereby promoting feminization of the church.

To add some clarification from the military and sports. Military science has determined that one individual can effectively lead 3-7 people depending upon skills, experience, and organization, most people top out at about five. Therefore, to create your organization what is required is to develop teams and sub teams where no one is accountable to more than about 5 people. The younger leaders lead about three individuals, this is built up to the point where the master bottom up power leader leads about 5 other leaders of distinct sub groups. This gives you the platoon sergeant in the military, the quarterback on the football team, the catcher in baseball, the point guard in basketball, the goalie in hockey and soccer and so on.

In baseball, you have a total of 9 on the field, 3 outfielders with a special group of skills, 4 infielders again with similar skills, a pitcher and a catcher. In the major leagues you have an active roster of 25, and a 40 man total roster, just as with the Philippine peasants. Professional football has a quarterback, receivers, running backs, and line men, and a similar breakup on defense with a total active roster of a little over fifty. So this common grace numerology or Business Ecology of human community dynamics continues throughout the organization.

Sports, life, and war are dynamic changing realities, that is where coaching and authority in leadership come into the equation. Someone must be able to see and understand the bigger picture and make changes necessary to provide for a successful mission or simply to win the game.

In the military an Act of Congress defines you as an Officer and a Gentleman. It is really

just a definition, but incumbent with that act is theoretically the authority of the total United States of America, and that is backed by not only common law understanding, but also legal duties and obligations, both upward and downward. In the US Army this authority begins with the Butter Bar, Second Lieutenant, or LT for short. Really just some young kid, who knows little to nothing about anything, other than a head knowledge on the way to lead people to accomplish the military mission.

Sports teams hire a manager or a coach, but the same duties and obligations apply, if even on a much smaller scale. Your success is determined by your leadership ability to turn a bunch of self centered, pretty much arrogant individuals into a team that thinks of the team, more highly than themselves, and the high calling of the championship more important than personal rewards.

The crisis in America and around the world is not a crisis of stuff or even stupendous change happenings. The crisis is one of leadership. Leadership depends upon a consistent worldview authority. That is independent of whether that is, a military platoon in Iraq, peasants in Sudan, the Seattle Mariners, or Little League Baseball in Pocatello, Idaho. Without a consistent understanding of both the reality of unity and diversity in community as well as upwards power and downwards authority, success can not and will not happen either by evolution or wishful thinking. Success is built upon leadership and discipline to the mission. All three are requirements not options.

There is the old story about the ham and egg breakfast. The pig is committed, the chicken is involved, but today we must create another category for the spectators. Those who are not part of the breakfast, or the eating thereof. Spectators just seem to think a bran muffin and a skinny mocha grande is what life is all about, as we rush here and there, thinking that our life is real, when in reality it is not reality at all, just an unsustainable sham of a worldview that doesn't seek or care to meet life's true requirements or responsibilities. We really have no eternal clothes, just a house full of temporal stuff, that can disappear in an instant. We are told to enjoy or indulge ourself in the moment, because modern culture can not continue if it actually looks at the past or the future in any sense of reality.

Where is the church in all this? Idling in the Espresso drive through, struggling with which flavor syrup you shall add today, listening to some distant preacher on your ipod, plugged into your Bose Sound system, thinking that Jesus will rapture you from this at any second. That change may come, but it may not be to the heaven you expect to see, it maybe into the shocking reality you now try so hard to ignore.

Next week we shall attempt to put some details behind the leadership numbers.