

From Missions Course to Market Place

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For five years after completing the (UK) DCI World Missions course, I continued the part-time job that was a requirement for completing that course. I did this so that I had time to serve the Lord, mainly in the prayer ministry. Then for two years I went into full time employment. But I became increasingly unhappy. One day I realised it was the Lord who was allowing this to happen in order to 'thrust me out' into something new.

The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) was the word of faith that confirmed it was time to take my talent and begin a small business, doing design and print. I am not trained in either, or running a business. But the Holy Spirit helped me and my partners - one of whom is my wife and another my spiritual 'mother', both also 'graduates' of the DCI Missions School - providing us with wisdom and grace to meet each challenge, one by one, little by little, testing and refining us much in the process.

Four years later, as a team - and we could not have done it without working together as a team - we are now seeing much fruit from the business. At the same time, the Lord has told me, 'Now' is the time to turn to devote myself to the 'prophetic ministry' to which he has called me. All along ministry has worked hand in hand with business. We run our business as a work dedicated to serving God's purposes. Many times we have looked like failing completely but God brought us through. Now we are starting to thrive, but there is much challenge ahead.

It is true that when we prove faithful with a little responsibility God will give us more, but faith and patience are vital keys and we have learned to wait on the Lord. We have struggled much with finances (including facing huge debts and the threat of legal proceedings against us and our home) and as a result of our experience I humbly submit for your testing and consideration that finances are rarely if ever the real or whole root of the problems we face. God is ever able, but there is a process that we must personally go through before God reveals the particular key that he wants to use to financially release us individually.

It is now the case that I am able to dedicate myself to 'ministry' with a great deal more of my time, but I presently find myself wanting to maintain my involvement in 'business', for as long as the Lord helps us and allows me, because of the advantages I have discovered in serving God in this way.

Because of my experience, I now believe that running a businesses as a part of our service towards God will not hinder but will actually assist us to serve God in our various missionary ministries, for several reasons:

1. Firstly because Jesus said, whoever would be trusted with heavenly riches, ought first to be tested with natural riches and prove faithful.
2. Secondly, because it gets us out into the 'market place' and we learn a lot about life and the struggles of other people. There seem to be quite a few leaders who have little natural experience and consequently are of limited use in helping or understanding those around them.
3. Thirdly, because it keeps us dependent upon God. If we submit our business to God it may not prosper in the way or in the timescale we expect, but we can and ought to live by faith every bit as much when in 'business' as in 'ministry'. We do both unto God and need as much faith and patience for both.
4. Fourthly, running a business can very often give us much more flexibility to serve God compared to being in employment (including salaried 'ministries'!!)

Running a business is not for everyone, but for those called to 'missionary ministry' but frustrated by lack of finances, I would like to encourage you to seek God and discover whether running a small business might not be his provision (His PRO-vidence for the VISION?!).