

Special Section

Looking Back and Looking Ahead: A Review of the Most Frequently Cited Biblical Texts in the First Decade of *The JBIB*

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This study identifies the five most frequently cited biblical passages in the first ten years of The JBIB and analyzes how these passages have been used. Our review gives rise to an overarching framework that serves as a foundation for future research. Four themes are highlighted: 1) the contrast between the ways of God vs. the ways of the world; 2) the renewing of our minds in order to transform the ways of the world; 3) the call for practical acts of servant leadership to manifest the ways of God; and 4) the importance of humility and nonjudgmental discernment. Implications for future research are discussed.

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Anniversaries help us to remember important events of the past, to reflect on their meaning, to take stock for the present, and to provide a foundation and set an agenda for the future. Biblical examples include the Sabbath, the Passover, and Holy Communion. These are times to remember how God has been active in our lives as a people, to give thanks, and provide guideposts for our future actions. In this 10th anniversary year of *The Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*, it is useful

to look at where we have been and where we might be going in our quest to help students, practitioners, and each other to integrate faith and work.

The premise of this article is both simple and profound. It is *simple* because it is based on a counting exercise of all the biblical texts that authors cited in their articles during the first 10 years of *The JBIB*. We identified the most-cited biblical passages and performed a content analysis to see how these passages were used by the various authors who cited them. We looked for common

themes among the authors' interpretations and for common themes across texts. This allowed us to develop a relatively simple framework describing the main themes that have been evident in *The JBIB* during its first 10 years. It is also *profound* because, as we shall see, the framework provides a foundation for, and points to, important issues for future research. It is that ongoing research agenda that may have important implications for the development of management theory and practice in the future.

This paper is organized as follows. We first briefly present our methodology for determining the most frequently cited passages of Scripture. We then summarize what authors said about the most frequently cited passages and note both common themes and areas of contention. Finally, we discuss the implications of our analysis for future research.

Methodology

During the first 10 years of its existence, 45 articles and 10 dialogues were published in *The JBIB*. We examined all 10 issues of *The JBIB* page by page and recorded all Scripture passages (either single verses or series of verses) that appeared. We also noted the issue in which each

passage appeared. The outcome of this lengthy coding process was a matrix with more than 1,500 rows (with each row containing a passage of Scripture) and 10 columns (one column for each year of publication of *The JBIB*). A simple frequency count then revealed which passages were most frequently cited by authors.

We calculated both the total number of *mentions* and the total number of *articles* in which a given passage of Scripture was cited. In calculating the total number of mentions, if an author cited the same verse more than once on a page of an article, we counted that as only one mention, but if an author cited the same verse on several different pages of the same article, we counted that as multiple mentions. We used this approach since multiple mentions of the same passage on the same page of an article usually meant that the author was developing and elaborating one basic idea, while multiple citations of the same passage appearing on *different* pages of an article often meant that the author was developing several different basic ideas.

Using this approach, the five most frequently cited passages were Genesis 1:27-28 (17 total mentions in 11 different articles); Matthew 5:13-16 (13 mentions

in 11 articles); Romans 12:1-2 (10 mentions in six articles); I Corinthians 13:12-13 (10 mentions in nine articles); and John 13:12-17 (nine mentions in seven articles). Other passages of Scripture which received more than five total mentions are listed in Table 1. (See Table 1 below.)

It is interesting to note that the vast majority of passages (85%) were mentioned only once over the 10-year period. Passages from the New Testament received somewhat more mentions (56%) than passages from the

Old Testament (44%). The four Gospels accounted for almost one quarter (23%) of the most frequently cited passages, with Matthew (9%) and John (7%) being the most-cited books overall. The book of Romans (5%) was the most frequently cited Pauline epistle. In the Old Testament, the Pentateuch (20%) accounted for almost as many citations as the Gospels, with Genesis (7%) leading the way. The two other most frequently cited Old Testament books were Proverbs (6%) and Psalms (6%).

Table 1
Scripture Passages Mentioned More Than Five Times
in First 10 Years of *The JBIB*

<i>Scripture Passage</i>	<i>Brief Description</i>
Matthew 20:20-28 (8 mentions)	Request by mother of James and John
Genesis 2:15 (8)	Till and keep the Garden
Deuteronomy 15:1-11 (8)	Sabbath year laws
Matthew 22:35-40 (8)	Two greatest commandments
Matthew 25:14-30 (8)	Parable of the talents
Matthew 28:18-20 (8)	Commissioning of disciples
Luke 12:13-21 (8)	Parable of rich fool
II Corinthians 10:5 (7)	Obey Christ, destroy obstacles to knowledge of God
Galatians 5:22-24 (7)	Fruits of the Spirit
Ephesians 2:10 (7)	Made for good works
Colossians 3:23 (6)	Do tasks as if for the Lord
I Corinthians 4:5 (6)	Do not judge, Lord will bring light
John 14:13-17 (6)	Obey Jesus, Spirit will come

Analysis of the Top Five Passages

In the paragraphs that follow, we summarize the main themes that authors identified in the five most frequently mentioned passages of Scripture. We also note some of the practical applications that authors have suggested and identify different nuances among the authors.

We carried out a grounded content analysis of how the authors used these frequently cited passages and developed an overarching framework that highlights common

themes (explicit and implicit) that tie them together (See Table 2 below). This framework provides not only a helpful overview of the past 10 years but — as we will show in the Discussion section — also a basis for future research.

The Image of God (Genesis 1:27-28)

It comes as no surprise that the most oft-cited passage comes from the creation account, where humankind is given its mandate to manage the world that was created by the life-giving Creator.

Table 2

Overview of Key Themes

Genesis 1:27-28	<i>The JBIB</i> promotes image of God — care for creation	<i>The JBIB</i> rejects image of World — dominate creation
Romans 12:1-2	renew your minds/transform — focus on renewed minds	conform to patterns of this world — focus on external goods
I Cor. 13:12-13	difficult-to-do, is seen dimly — humility, open-mindedness	easy-to-do, all around us —pride, judgmental
John 13:12-17	serve one another — Christlike actions	be served by others —self-interested actions
Matthew 5:13-16	salt and light — opportunity (vs. task)	bland and dark —task (vs. opportunity)

So God created humankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:27-28, NRSV).

Two dominant subthemes are evident in authors' discussions of these verses: 1) we are created in God's image (Martinez, 2003, 95; Lemler, 2003, 109; Surdyk, 2002, 85; Huie, 1998, 26; VanderVeen, 1997, 9; Page, 1996, 62), and 2) we have been given dominion over the earth (Page, 1996, 62; Chewning, 1997, 32; Hoover, 1998, 50; Smith & Wheeler, 1999; Lemler, 2003, 106).

As shown in Table 2, the first subtheme — that we are created in the image of God and that we are called to reflect the image of God rather than the image of the world — runs through all of the most frequently cited passages. This theme of competing images is quite explicit in some passages — for example, "do not conform to patterns of this world, but be

transformed by the renewing of your minds" (Romans 12:2) — and more implicit in others — for example, we are to be light in a dark world (Matthew 5:14). Similar ideas are evident in many other biblical passages that were not cited as frequently by authors. Putting off our old selves and putting on a new self (Ephesians 4:22, 24), fruits of the spirit vs. works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-23), beatitudes vs. woes (Luke 6:20-26), and being loosed from oppressive structures and bound to life-giving structures (Matthew 16:19-20) are just a few examples. This duality also underpins the mandate of *The JBIB* to offer biblically inspired management theory and practice that contrasts with conventional management theory and practice.

God works, and as God's image bearers our approach to work is one of the ways we fulfill the mandate of Genesis 1:28. While work is viewed as central to human beings (Ward, 1996, 7; Surdyk, 2002, 76), there is some debate about exactly what constitutes work. For example, Huie (1998, 28) questions whether God was working during creation, and Lemler (2003) analyzes the issue of whether work means the same thing now that it meant in the pre-fall Garden of Eden. Smith and

Wheeler (1999) examine the nature and purpose of work in detail.

An interesting example of how we manifest the image of God is evident around the issues of entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation. A creative spirit may rightly be seen as a reflection of the creative nature of God's image (Martinez, 2003, 95; Lemler, 2003, 109). However, in our fallen state, there is great danger that these traits will be exhibited in flawed ways (e.g., financial excess and unethical managerial behavior). We are called "... to be good stewards of both the process and the outcomes of innovation and entrepreneurship" (Martinez, 2003, 95). It seems that for every good gift there is a counterfeit gift, and the church must learn to discern between the two.

Regarding the second subtheme, there is agreement that in exercising dominion, we must act in God-honoring ways (Ward, 1998, 32; Hoover, 1998; Smith & Wheeler, 1999). Humankind is given responsibility to manage creation "in the image of God." This includes helping to sustain the created order, to bring order out of chaos, and to work towards life while eschewing what is anti-life. When the passage calls people to "rule over" or "have dominion," it is clear that it does not mean that

we are to dominate. The dominion we have "is not to be abused" (Hoover, 1998, 51) nor is it to "become a relationship of coercion and oppression" (Ward, 1998, 32). Rather, we are to rule over the earth in the image of God — "to care for" God's creation (Surdyk, 2002, 76) and "to be careful stewards" over creation (Hoover, 1998, 51) — by acting in "God-honoring ways" (Ward, 1998, 32) with the same love and respect for creation that God modeled during creation.

Renewing our Minds (Romans 12:1-2)

This passage echoes the competing dualities of being in but not of the world and also indicates how we are to discern which actions are consistent with the image of God.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present yourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is his good and acceptable and perfect will (Romans 12:1-2).

There are also two subthemes that emerge among authors who cite this passage: 1) we are to differentiate between the patterns of this world (to which we must not conform) and the

This collegial process of The JBIB follows a long-standing academic tradition ...

characteristics of a transformed world (which we are to pursue); and 2) as is entirely appropriate for business scholars and educators, the authors emphasize the importance of renewing our *minds*.

To not conform to the patterns of this world means that we are to cease “molding employees into an image that is desired by a secular organization” (Seibert, 2001, 95). Instead, we are to “sacrifice our personal interests in favor of God’s interests” (Seibert, 2001, 97). This means that we are not to conform to the pattern of the world when we deal with “evil” things like layoffs, wage inequities, labor exploitation, money, etc. (Porter, 1998). We are called to redeem the ways of the world.

As to how we might do this, authors place considerable emphasis on the renewing of people’s *minds*, and this is the second subtheme. “We who labor to encourage the development

of a biblical world/lifeview in the *minds* of our students should not rest until we ourselves have sufficiently gained the *mind* of Christ. We must continue to seek the *mentally transforming*

work of the Holy Spirit, who will form Christ in us” (Chewning, 1997, 22, emphasis added here; cf Chewning, 1998; Johnson, 1996, 2000; Seibert, 2001).

Educators who are trying to provide students with a biblical worldview must themselves strive to sufficiently gain the mind of Christ and to seek the transforming work of the Holy Spirit if they hope to be effective. Johnson (2000, 5) points to the importance of spending time in prayer so as to avoid being conformed to this world, but instead become transformed. Echoing Chewning’s exhortation to “be on our guard as we navigate the world” (Chewning, 1997, 40), Seibert (2001, 95, emphasis added here) points out the dangers of conformity and links his comments implicitly to the Genesis account: “The socialization that occurs in a secular business firm can be considered one specific form of conformity to the world since it involves molding employees into an image that is desired by a secular organization.”

The world works on people from the outside in, but Christians are to be transformed from the inside out. Seibert presents seven principles which show believers how they can simultaneously resist the world and submit to God. These include: 1) sacrificing personal interests in favor of God's interests; 2) disowning the world's standards; 3) continuously renewing one's internal control center; 4) feeding on God's Word; 5) praying for God's protection from Satan; 6) uniting with fellow believers; and 7) expecting that the world will not welcome us (Seibert, 2001, 96-98).

Although the last part of the passage — discerning God's will — was not explicitly well-developed in any article, it is noteworthy that this is implicit in the work of *The JBIB* since the journal provides a forum where, via a collegial process, scholars can serve one another and learn from one another as they work toward discerning life-giving approaches to management theory and practice. This collegial process of *The JBIB* follows a long-standing academic tradition and is in tune with events like the Councils at Nicea and Chalcedon, where the church-as-a-community discerns what it means to manage in the image of God.

Humility (I Corinthians 13:12-13)

While both the Genesis text and the Romans text help to set the overarching framework that *The JBIB* is to differentiate between the ways of the world and the ways of God, the text from I Corinthians addresses the challenging nature of discerning and renewing our minds to do business in the image of God.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love (I Corinthians 13:12-13).

The authors who cite this passage caution us about being too judgmental, too closed-minded, or too overconfident that we have the corner on truth. The popularity of the passage may be a reaction to the stereotype that evangelical Christians in general — and within Christian liberal arts colleges, business professors in particular — are not deferential enough in expressing their views. In contrast to this stereotype, *The JBIB* editor Sharon Johnson (1998, 4) writes: “There is truth,

but my perspective about what this truth means and how this truth applies to business and economic issues at any given time in my faith journey may differ from my friends on their journeys.” Others concur: “Because we see through a glass darkly, and because the Bible is often an enigma, we must tread softly, acknowledging that differing interpretations of God’s Word are possible and equally plausible, even when utilizing the whole counsel of God” (Porter, 2000, 71; Lynn & Wallace, 2001, 28). Porter (2004, 143) further observes that “Because we see through a glass darkly, we must approach theological applications with humility.”

In discussing these verses, authors often differentiate between the ways of God and the ways of the world. They suggest that one reason we see things dimly is because (unfortunately) our everyday practices do not yet clearly show the image of God. For example, in showing the relevance of the Romans 12:1-2 passage to this passage from I Corinthians, Smith and Steen (1996, 34) suggest that “Christians have not been effective in transforming the world because they have not themselves been transformed.” Porter (1998, 107) adds that there is a lack of

consistently putting into practice principles associated with managing according to central Christian tenets. The argument suggests that if managers practiced according to the image of God, then we would be able to see it more clearly and less dimly. Of course, practitioners might reply that they are waiting for guidance from like-minded scholars, who have a responsibility to spell out what such management might look like.

Most authors who cite this passage argue that because we have only limited knowledge, we must be careful when we interpret and apply Scripture. There is a consensus on this general principle, but a debate has developed (especially between Richard Chewning and Brian Porter) about how our human limitations and limited knowledge affect our ability and confidence in applying Scripture. Chewning (1998) argues that Scripture is generally clear and adequate for knowing the mind of Christ. Porter questions this position and states that “... even with the whole counsel of God, the Bible remains a mystery on many issues.” Porter also notes that even if it were clear, how are we to discern which individuals actually have the mind of Christ? To support his position,

Porter gives several examples of Scriptural ambiguity, including the issue of how much of their wealth Christians are to give for charitable purposes.

Several interesting questions involving change are discussed by authors who cite this passage. Does God learn over time? Does God forget things? Can prayer change God's mind? There is some agreement on the first two questions. Since God knows everything, God cannot learn anything. God does not have to obtain knowledge because God is knowledge. Chewing (2000) argues that God does not forget anything, either, and he explains how this position is not incompatible with God forgetting our sins. The issue of whether prayer changes God's mind is more complex. Black and Smith (2003) observe that since humans cannot understand the entirety of God's system, we will have difficulty determining answers to such questions.

Service (John 13:12-17)

In contrast to the previous passages, which focus more on *theoretical* ideas like knowing the mind of Christ or describing what it means to be created in the image of God, this passage has a *practical* focus on action.

After He washed their feet, put on His robe, and had returned to the table, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done for you? You call Me Teacher and Lord — and you are right for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (John 13:12-17).

There is widespread agreement that this passage points to a servant leadership model that contrasts with the ways of the world (Page, 1996; White, 1999; Tucker, Stone, Russell, & Franz, 2000; Klay, Lunn, & TenHaken, 2004). Jesus initiated the idea of servant leadership and modeled for the disciples what it looked like (Tucker, et al., 2000). Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet is the classic model for servant leadership (Page, 1996).

A variety of reasons are given for the rationale of serving

others. For some it is simply to follow the example of Jesus, who manifested the image of God on earth (Tucker, et al., 2000, 14). Others add that service will lead to genuine greatness: "If you want to be served, you must learn to serve. If you want to be a leader, you must learn to serve sacrificially those whom you lead" (Page, 1996, 68-69). Porter (2000, 41) points out that service to others is "also service to God. The very essence of serving God is serving others." In addition to being an act of love to God, it is also an expression of obedience to God's will (Chewning, 2000).

Again echoing earlier passages, authors who use this passage contrast the way of service with the way of the world. When leaders operate with humility, rather than acting as if they are know-it-all experts, teamwork is facilitated, with leaders and followers working together and sharing a vision and a sense of responsibility (Klay, Lunn, & TenHaken, 2004, 131). This call to service facilitates mutual trust and represents a "radically different kind of leadership" than Jesus' listeners are accustomed to (Page, 1996, 69).

White (1999) applies the concept to the accounting profession by exhorting a more

service-oriented approach rather than a power-acquisition approach. White (1999, 7-8; emphasis added) anticipates subsequent accounting scandals when he suggests that the accounting profession should focus their attention on "service to society as opposed to increasing its own *authority* in society."

Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16)

The final "top five" passage shares with the previous passages an emphasis on differentiating Christian managers from their worldly counterparts.

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but to be thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:13-16).

The focus here is on our being salt and light so that God

may be glorified (Page, 1996, 71; Seibert, 2001, 95; Cafferky, 2001, 181). The ongoing theme of not conforming to the world but renewing our minds to reflect the image of God is also evident in authors' interpretations of this passage. For example: "Salt and light need to maintain their basic character and purpose in order to be useful. The Bible teaches that believers are to simultaneously *resist the world and submit to God*" (Seibert, 2001, 105; emphasis added here). Highlighting the same duality, Chewning (1997, 22) challenges readers to adopt the mind of Christ and thereby become salt and light; he also asks whether we have been seduced by the world and whether we are guilty of emulating the world's thinking. Elaborating on this theme, Fields (2001) addresses the issue of how Christians can succeed at the difficult task of balancing their allegiance to a university or company *and* to God.

Diverse examples of what it means to be salt and light include: 1) making choices "based on things other than utilitarian criteria" (Chewning, 2003, 45); 2) completing our work "with a good attitude, graciously and energetically" (Smith & Wheeler, 1999, 131); 3) "speaking about Christ" (Clark, 2003, 115);

and 4) applying the gift of "cherry-picking" Scripture that associates specific Bible verses with specific occurrences in the world (Chewning, 2001, 143).

There is also some discussion that being salt and light should be seen as an opportunity rather than as a chore. For example, Page (1996, 71) notes that students may choose to "see their tasks as coming from God and respond with a joyful rendering of service" or to see them as "chores to be endured or feats to be accomplished ...". Seeing tasks and responsibilities as feats to be accomplished may produce public applause and short-term personal gratification, but it is

The focus here is on our being salt and light so that God may be glorified.

hollow if it does not bring glory to God. Rather than seeing work as a chore, we should recognize that "Work can serve as ministry. Our work can open an avenue to share and live out the gospel before a needy and hurting world. ... The process of how we perform our work may be a lost and dying world's only exposure to the gospel. We must allow the light of God's grace to shine through our lives so our colleagues 'may

see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven’” (Smith & Wheeler, 1999, 131). We are to be salt and light regardless of our occupation (Cafferky, 2001).

As a more nuanced point, it may make a difference whether Matthew 5:16 is translated as saying that God is glorified via good *deeds* versus good *works*. If it is deeds, then there is a greater emphasis on the *process* of how work is performed (Smith & Wheeler, 1999). If it is works, then there is greater emphasis on *outcomes* that faithful believers “produce” which bring glory to God (Chewning, 2001, 143). This will surely have an effect on the emphasis we place on management theory and practice.

Discussion

Our review of the most frequently cited biblical texts in the first 10 years of *The JBIB* gave rise to at least four ongoing themes: 1) the contrast between the ways of God and the ways of the world; 2) the renewing of our minds in order to transform the ways of the world; 3) the call for practical actions of servant leadership to manifest the ways of God; and 4) the importance of humility and nonjudgmental discernment.

The Contrast Between the Ways of God and the Ways of the World (Overarching Theme)

There is a growing frustration with conventional business practices, and this frustration goes far beyond the pages of *The JBIB*. Concerns date back at least as far as Max Weber (1958, orig. 1904), who lamented the emphasis on materialism and individualism that has imprisoned much of society in an iron cage. A growing amount of research indicates that the conventional obsession with materialism — that is, maximizing productivity and profitability — results in significant social costs such as decreased overall well-being and happiness (for an excellent summary, see Kasser, 2003). The hollowness of materialism seems to be generally well-recognized. For example, a recent survey (New American Dream, 2004) found that 93% of Americans believe that there is too much emphasis on working and making money and not enough emphasis on family and community. More than half of those responding have voluntarily opted not to maximize their material wealth in order to facilitate other forms of well-being (e.g., social, physical, ecological, aesthetic, spiritual, or intellectual well-being).

The call for the development of alternative management theory and practice to contrast with the conventional paradigm is also becoming louder within mainstream scholarly management journals. For example, Giacalone (2004) points to students who hunger for an alternative to the utilitarian ways of thinking that characterize conventional management theory and practice. He calls for the development of theory and practice that recognizes noble goals and aspirations that transcend (and perhaps defy) the status quo. Along similar lines, Ferraro, Pfeffer, and Sutton (2005) observe how the assumptions of self-interest have become self-fulfilling. We have become a society where altruistic acts need to be justified in self-interested terms in order to be deemed morally legitimate. This suggests that we ask the following question: What would management theory and practice look like if it were based on a qualitatively different (self-fulfilling) prophecy? For readers of *The JBIB*, that alternative self-fulfilling prophecy will be biblically grounded.

Of course, even in mainstream journals some work is already being done in this area. Dyck and Schroeder (2005), for example, identify fundamental management

ideas and practices associated with the conventional materialist-individualist moral point of view and then systematically contrast them with parallel ideas from an explicitly Anabaptist-Mennonite moral point of view. Their approach of carefully articulating conventional theory in order to develop parallel non-conventional theory has several advantages: 1) it points out the relative strengths and weaknesses of each type of theory; 2) it ensures that non-conventional theory covers the same breadth of subject matter as conventional theory; and 3) it compels readers to determine what management would look like from their own personal moral point of view.

Renewing Our Minds (Management Theory)

Renewing our minds points to the rigorous development of conceptually sound non-conventional *theory* to complement conventional mainstream theory. This is demanding work, since it requires adopting a countercultural worldview and then spelling out its implications, all the while meeting the same high scholarly standards that characterize the best conventional research.

Readers of *The JBIB* will be especially interested in developing

biblically based management theory to contrast and compare against the status quo. We need to name and become bound to life-giving structures and systems and to become loosed from ways of the world that breed oppression and injustice. This will require scholars who have the training, motivation, and institutional resources (especially time) to do this demanding and rewarding work. Because of its relationship with the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, *The JBIB* is particularly interested in developing theory that business instructors can use in the classrooms of Christian institutions of higher education. There is

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much room for developing such materials, since many instructors still rely on mainstream textbooks in the classroom. Students in Christian schools deserve more, and the world also hungers for alternatives to the status quo. Will new resources be made available to facilitate the richer development of theories that will enable the renewing of minds? If *The JBIB*-affiliated institutions do not invest sufficient time and resources

to develop comprehensive and compelling ways of thinking that do not conform to the patterns of this world, then who will?

Practical Examples of Servant Leadership (Management Practice)

Who are the role models for management students? We examined six top-selling management textbooks and found that the most-cited management practitioner was Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric. His high profile should not come as a surprise, since his achievements are truly remarkable using conventional criteria of success. Under Welch's leadership,

GE experienced more than two decades of consecutive annual dividend increases, a near-perfect record of ever-higher profits, and a greater than 1,000% increase in the value of its shares (O'Boyle, 1998). But textbooks may not mention that Welch earned the nick-name Neutron Jack because he purged well over 100,000 employees from GE, often from businesses that were profitable but just not profitable *enough* to meet Welch's standards. Neither do students read about other costs associated with Welch's success. For example, GE has a less-than-

glowing record in terms of the environment (improperly disposed waste materials), workplace safety (excessive radiation in the workplace), and illegal behavior (fraud in military contract procurement) (O'Boyle, 1998). Is Welch a worthy role model for our students (Litz, 2003)? Would we be proud to train more students to become managers like him? Does he exemplify the image of this world or the image of God?

If managers like Jack Welch are the icons that are being held up for students to emulate, then we are likely to see continued emphasis on materialism and individualism in the future. If *The JBIB* readers fail to conduct research, write case studies, and draw from examples that provide alternative heroes to Jack Welch, then we are simply perpetuating the status quo. In our view, we need much more research that highlights and examines management practitioners who march to the beat of a different drummer.

One non-conventional manager who has attracted a lot of media attention is Aaron Feuerstein, the CEO of Malden Mills Industries in Lawrence, Massachusetts. When most of the Malden Mills factory burned to the ground in 1995, the then 70-year-old Feuerstein could

have easily taken the \$300 million insurance money and enjoyed retirement. Instead, he ignored conventional wisdom and applied principles from his Jewish faith to the workplace by investing his resources in the community and by rebuilding the factory on the same site. He also voluntarily kept all 3,000 employees on the payroll during reconstruction. Feuerstein said, "I simply felt an obligation to the entire community that relies on our presence here in Lawrence; it would have been unconscionable to put three thousand people out on the streets" (quoted in Batstone, 2003, 133). Feuerstein noted that the fact that his actions attracted so much media attention did not speak well of the business community: "At the time in America of our greatest prosperity, the god of money has taken over to an extreme" (quoted in *The Mensch of Malden Mills*, 2003).

Researching non-conventional managers who challenge the status quo is not only important for providing alternative role models for students to emulate, it is also important for developing theory. Theory is often developed by observing and learning from the managers who are best at exemplifying desired behaviors (e.g., Welch was a pioneer in downsizing that increases share

value, and others have learned from him and improved on his techniques). We must consider the question that Margolis and Walsh (2003) ask: Who is helping to develop theory that serves — and facilitates the “best practices” for — the host of managers who willingly forgo profit-maximization in order to make the world a better place? Why are we not investing more energy studying such managers, so that we can develop theory about how to “do good” well?

There is some cause for hope, as is evident in the growing interest in corporate social responsibility and stakeholder theory. Unfortunately, much of this research attempts to justify non-conventional management using conventional criteria (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). We seem obsessed with proving that profit is enhanced when we act in life-giving virtuous ways that treat stakeholders with dignity. (Recall the observation of Ferraro, et al., 2005, that non-self-interested behavior has become morally illegitimate). Why not simply argue that treating others with dignity makes the world a better place and that it manifests the image of God? As long as we try to justify management theory and practice solely by reference to criteria-like profits, we are stuck

in the conventional paradigm. By studying managers who embody service, salt, and light, we will be learning about those who make the world a better place, regardless of whether they *maximize* profit.

Discerning Boldly with Humility (Scholarly Modeling)

The JBIB has a unique opportunity as a forum for research on non-conventional management. People are growing weary of the materialist-individualist moral point of view that characterizes the conventional paradigm and are looking for a viable alternative. Because a majority of Americans consider themselves to be religious, they may therefore be open to new ways of thinking about and practicing management that are grounded in religious faith. *The JBIB* is one of the very few scholarly journals where the explicit integration of faith and work is not only welcome, but even required.

Building on the previous decade of *The JBIB*, we believe that the time is ripe for more research that provides a bold and plausible faith-based challenge to the status quo. The best research will be open-minded, drawn from a variety of sources (Luke 9:50), and be non-judgmental, aware

that proponents of a conventional materialist-individualist moral point of view may believe themselves to be just as firmly grounded in Scripture as those who subscribe to the non-conventional view. For example, the status quo has been historically rooted in the Protestant Ethic (Weber, 1958), and contemporary business heroes have no problem identifying with their Christian faith (e.g., Welch, 2001, 381). We all see through a mirror dimly. No one has a corner on the truth. Religiosity by itself may be a poor predictor of behavior in business — it depends on *what* you believe (Weaver & Agle, 2002).

We conclude with a very fundamental question: What do we believe business should be all about? Should business be primarily about maximizing profit, efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness, or should it be about community, social responsibility, human dignity, and concern for the environment? Failing to answer this question often means choosing the status quo by default.

An important theme in our review of *The JBIB*'s most frequently cited passages is the need for management scholars to develop management theory and practice that provides a plausible alternative to the status quo. As business scholars and educators,

we are called to think about the moral point(s) of view that we promote in our classroom and in our research. What does it mean for us to renew our minds rather than conform to the patterns of this world, to manifest the image of God, to follow the servant leader model of Christ, and to be salt and light in the world? We trust that our colleagues, students, and practitioners of management will continue to find answers to these important questions in future issues of *The JBIB*.

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