

of economics and labor at the level of the entrepreneur as man with a special vocation in the economy of creation, which, a structural analysis can show, is not at all divorced from the economy of grace.

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## Why Business Matters to God (And What Still Needs to Be Fixed)

**Jeff Van Duzer**

Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2010 (201 pages)

You might not expect a solid theological work from a business school dean who was formerly a lawyer, but that is precisely what Jeff Van Duzer gives the reader in *Why Business Matters to God*. The grasp of the Bible and theology displayed here would make his theological colleagues proud. Van Duzer moves effectively from theology to business throughout the book and leaves the reader with little doubt that he has made his theological case concerning the intrinsic value of business well. For the businessperson who is looking for more specifics about integrating his or her faith into the day-to-day issues in the workplace, that is not the goal of the book (to see more of those specifics addressed, see Kenman L. Wong and Scott B. Rae, *Business for the Common Good*, IVP Academic, 2011). It broadly affirms the value of business in God's economy and provides discussion of some of the issues that such an affirmation raises (such as the place of profit and the responsibilities of companies to shareholders) but says less about the specific challenges that confront businessmen and businesswomen as they work out their faith in the workplace. It is very strong on why business matters to God but a bit light on the subtitle—what still needs to be fixed.

Van Duzer approaches the biblical teaching on business from the broad theological framework of creation—fall—redemption—consummation. He correctly insists that business has intrinsic, not just instrumental value. From his reading of the creation accounts, he argues that business has two intrinsic purposes: first, to provide goods and services and enable communities to flourish; and second, to provide opportunities for meaningful work. Although work and relationships in the workplace are distorted as a result of the general entrance of sin (Van Duzer does a good job of giving examples of these distortions—from the way work is perceived culturally to the way a company treats its employees), the creation purposes still are in effect and are being completed in the realms of redemption and consummation. He rightly insists on the eternal value of work, suggesting that it is practically incomprehensible that God would give work such intrinsic value and not have it last for eternity. He further points out that the vision of the consummation of all things is not the garden or the wilderness but, rather, the city—a vision of development and commerce.

With the first excursus, Van Duzer summarizes and applies the Niebuhrian typology of Christ and culture to business. Although it might seem on the surface to be a different framework for understanding business, it is actually a more specific set of lenses through which to view the conflicts that the person of faith faces in the workplace. Again, this is a very general template for viewing these problematic areas in the workplace. Van Duzer concludes that there is merit in more than one of these typologies while rejecting some outright. It is not entirely clear that this is the way that Niebuhr intended these typologies to be used, though the application to business is certainly appropriate. A close reading of Niebuhr would suggest that one typology is the dominant one, whereas Van Duzer indicates that three of the five typologies have some elements of truth in them.

The second excursus on institutions is where Van Duzer's theological colleagues might quibble with him a bit more. His application of the biblical "powers and principalities" to institutions will probably strike the reader as somewhat novel because the Bible overwhelmingly refers to the powers and principalities negatively. The interpretive consensus for some time has been to see these powers as a component of the spiritual realities that underlie the physical world, not to see them as institutions that originated in the creation order as good things. This is not to say that such a view of institutions is necessarily incompatible with the Bible, but the theological argument in this excursus is more speculative and, in my view, involves a bit of a stretch to make its point. Appropriately, Van Duzer views his conclusions here a bit more tentatively than other places in the book.

The final chapter, "Making It Real," is the strongest part of the book. Here he addresses questions about profit and shareholders, which are at the core of some of the most common criticisms of business. He rightly puts profit in its proper perspective, showing that it is a tool for assessing a business, not a destination. He clearly does not apologize for teaching his business students how to make a profit well, though he insists that it is not the purpose of a business. The discussion of shareholders is related, and here he takes on the stakeholder-shareholder debate and provides the reader with a very well-nuanced discussion of the duties owed to shareholders *vis-à-vis* other stakeholders.

This book should be standard reading for business students of faith, giving them the theological undergirding of the vocation of business as a sacred calling from God. It affirms that it is possible to do business well and profitably by viewing it this way—as a service to the community and to employees.

—Scott B. Rae

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