



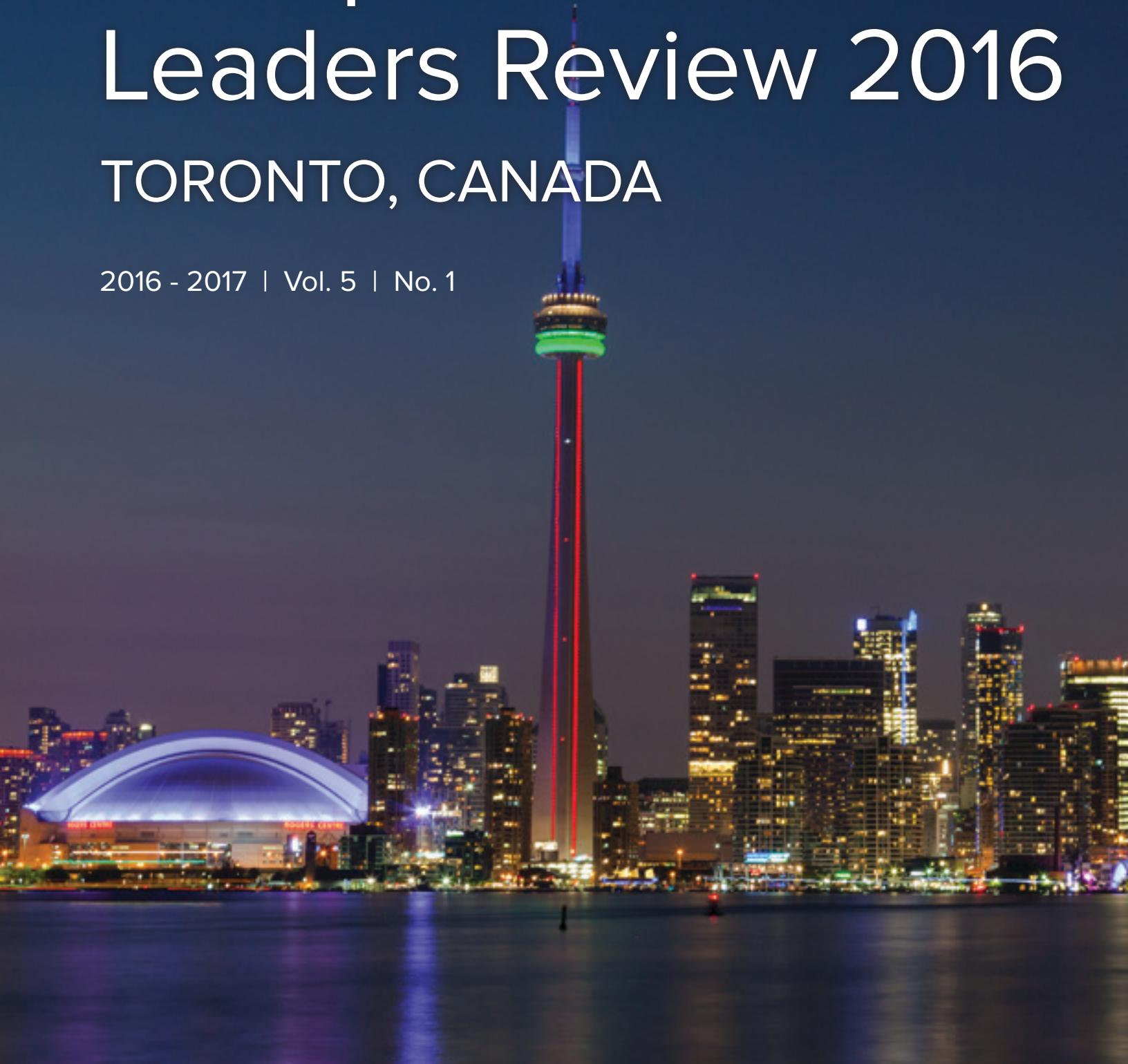
Entrepreneurial Leaders
ORGANIZATION

*To Connect, Equip &
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Marketplace &
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Entrepreneurial Leaders Review 2016

TORONTO, CANADA

2016 - 2017 | Vol. 5 | No. 1



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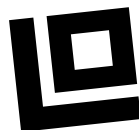
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For further information: www.EntrepreneurialLeaders.com.

Contact: Dr. Richard (Rick) J. Goossen, Chairman, Advisory Board, E: rick@EntrepreneurialLeaders.com

On The Web:

Our ELO website (www.entrepreneurialleaders.com) gets over 600,000 Total Hits Per Year!

We have a wide range of resources for Christian marketplace and entrepreneurial leaders:

12	10in2 Entrepreneurial Leader Video Profiles
19	Conference Videos
20	Podcasts
80	Entrepreneurial Leaders Interviews
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278	pages

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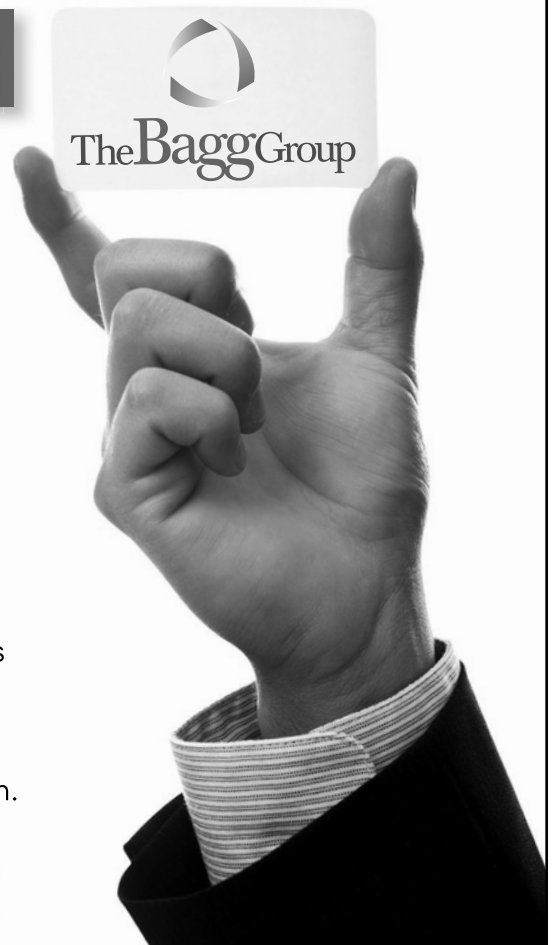


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You Are ELO

By Richard (Rick) J. Goossen

ELO is a volunteer-driven, grassroots organization fuelled by collaboration.

I work full-time at Covenant Family Wealth Advisors as Strategic Counsel and Relationship Manager. I do ELO “on the side” since I think its vision and mission are very important to the Christian business community. I am grateful for all the volunteer support that ELO receives from myriad corners. I am tempted to provide names and examples, but there are far too many to mention—this short article would consume the entire magazine! So, let me thank in broad strokes the various people who are part of “the ELO Team.”

Advisors – ELO has distinguished Advisory Boards in Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg. In total we have about 50 Christian marketplace and entrepreneurial leaders who contribute their time, energy and great ideas to the cause. All of these people have too much to do and too little time—yet they get on board with ELO. We typically meet 2 or 3 times a year—the times of the day and the format vary per location.

Speakers – I am very grateful for our speakers. Every year, in each location, we are able to attract the world’s leading speakers to our events. We attract speakers who want to be part of our event; we are not interested in a “hired hand” who treats the ELO events as one more pit stop on the way to somewhere else. The vast majority of our speakers are active business leaders—there is nothing in it for them to prioritize our events—yet they do.

Conference Volunteers – Every year in each location we get dedicated, professional and courteous volunteers to help on the day of the conference. In Vancouver, Coastal Church has provided interns for a number of years—they have done a great job. In Winnipeg, we have had volunteers from Canadian Mennonite University and Providence University College. In Toronto, we have had volunteers from Tyndale University College and Redeemer University College. In addition, various family and friends have willingly pitched in.

Service Providers – Many companies have graciously provided services to ELO on a highly-discounted basis or they have engaged in some form of swap of their services for a presence at our ELO conferences. This has helped us tremendously with our website, logo and marketing materials, legal services, audio visual, accounting services and advertising.

Table Hosts – The conferences could not succeed without the steadfast support of table hosts. One of the dynamics of our conferences is that the bulk of people come because they are invited to be part of a table group. In other words, one person takes the lead to arrange or buy a table, then gets the word out to their associates to fill the table. The Table Hosts are, in effect, ambassadors for the event.

Sponsors – Sponsors are critical to cover the costs of an event. Each sponsor is critical



You are ELO (continued)

to the viability of the event because no non-Christian organization will sponsor a “religious” event. While we attract an amazing group of business leaders, no mainstream groups (i.e. law, bank, HR firm, etc. – the “usual suspects” that get behind every other major event) will touch this event. So, because of the very limited pool of potential sponsors, we are grateful for each one. Most sponsors get on board because of a Christian founder or owner.

Exhibitors – Exhibitors are an important part of each event. Exhibitors pay to have a presence at the ELO events. They are supportive of the ELO vision and mission, want to identify with it, and introduce themselves to and connect with like-

minded people. Our events are not the place for “hard core” selling or closing a deal—we all know that. At the same time, the exhibitor area provides an opportunity for organizations to “fly the flag”, have a presence and introduce their services.

Supporting Organizations – Supporting Organizations are non-profit organizations who get on board with the event and get the word out through their networks. They range from associations (i.e. Canadian Christian Business Federation), churches (Coastal Church in Vancouver, Global Kingdom Ministries in Toronto, Southland Church in Steinbach) or service groups (Canadian Christian Business Directory).

Attendees – Without attendees, there would be no purpose for the events—and that, quite frankly, would be the end of ELO. ELO sustains itself year by year—there is no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow that will artificially sustain something that no one is willing to support. If not enough people attend, then there is no basis to do another event the following year. Our events are targeted towards leaders who want a professional and excellent event, with the world’s top speakers live and in person, with like-minded influencers, and delivered by an organization that is widely recognized as the leading one in its field.

So, who is ELO? If you fit one of the above categories, then you are!



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ELO is Canada's Network for Christian Marketplace & Entrepreneurial Leaders: Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg & Toronto

Over the past 12 months, ELO has held successful events in Vancouver, Toronto, Winnipeg and Edmonton. There is no other organization that brings together Christian marketplace and entrepreneurial leaders across the country—and soon, around the world.

ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERS FORUM, EDMONTON, SEPT 26TH, 2016

The inaugural “Entrepreneurial Leaders Forum” in Edmonton on

September 26, 2016 got off to a great start, attracting business, NPO and academics from Edmonton, Calgary, Grande Prairie, Vancouver and beyond. The feedback from attendees was very positive. Mike O’Leary, President, Young Life of Canada, Vancouver, noted that, “These panelists give the rest of us the courage and inspiration to change and grow, perhaps, with one small step, to honour the Lord in our ‘business walk.’” Steve Rowe, Ministry Ambassador, Gideons said: “Great panelists. Great personal stories. Christ centered. I took away a

number of nuggets.” John Veldkamp, CEO, Christian Credit Union, said “Great learning on how to be a Christian leader in the business world!”

The event was a collaboration between Entrepreneurial Leaders Organization (“ELO”) and the Leder School of Business. Dean Elden Wiebe hosted the event and Dr. Rick Goossen, Chairman, ELO, provided opening remarks and MC’d the panel discussion. Leder students provided great volunteer support and contributed to the success of the Forum.



Panelists Gordon Wiebe, John Leder and Dennis Landis with MC Rick Goossen at the Entrepreneurial Leaders Forum, Edmonton

ELO is Canada's Network (continued)

The distinguished panel included three seasoned Christian business leaders. One panelist was John Leder, President, Supreme Steel, after whom the School of Business is named. His company is Canada's largest private steel construction and fabrication firm, with over 1,000 employees at plants across Western Canada and the US Pacific Northwest.

The second panelist was Dennis Landis, CEO, Prairie Coast Equipment, a large John Deere dealer headquartered in Grande Prairie. The company has 11 stores spread throughout Northern Alberta and BC. The third panelist was Gordon Wiebe, All Weather Windows, Edmonton, one of Canada's leading window manufacturers with 1,000 employees. Gord has been with the company since its inception in 1978, beginning as Sales Manager and eventually becoming both CEO and Principal Partner.

The inaugural Entrepreneurial Leaders Forum achieved its purpose of bringing together marketplace and entrepreneurial leaders from throughout the city of Edmonton, the province of Alberta, and even beyond, in order to focus on greater Christ-centered, difference-making in the marketplace. The authentic and transparent remarks of the panelists reflected God at work in the marketplace.

ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERS FORUM, WINNIPEG, MAY 18TH, 2016

The Entrepreneurial Leaders Forum in Winnipeg on May 18th was a resounding success, with the largest first-time attendance of any city in which ELO has held an event. Almost 250 attendees packed the Grand Ballroom, The Fort Garry Hotel for the "Entrepreneurial Leaders Forum." As one attendee remarked, "Manitoba

needs an event like this, which brings together Christian business leaders." ELO is well-known in cities in which it has events as a unifying force, built and sustained on collaboration, that brings together people from throughout the Christian spectrum.

Attendees were drawn from large and small businesses, the professions, NPOs, churches and educational institutions. Supporters included many well-known Manitoba businesses and business leaders: Golden West Media; Buller Foundation; Bison Transport; Friezens Printers; Charles Loewen of Loewen Windows; Triple E Trailers, Jade Transport, Schroeder Freight. Leading local NPOs, educational institutions and churches supported the event.

Rick Goossen, Chairman, ELO, MC'd the proceedings and led a panel discussion on "the power to overcome." The panelists included



The Grand Ballroom, The Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg

local entrepreneurial leaders: Herb Buller, Herb & Erna Buller Foundation & formerly of Kitchen Craft and Norcraft companies; Don Streuber, Executive Chairman, Bison Transport; Heidi Reimer-Epp, Co-founder and President, Botanical Paperworks; and Charles Loewen, Chairman, Loewen Windows. The evening keynote was delivered by Peter Legge, President, Canada Wide Media, Vancouver. Peter is a highly-experienced and masterful presenter—and he delivered on the topic “The Power of a Dream”.

The feedback from attendees was very positive. The overwhelming consensus was that the entire evening was very good and that Peter was an excellent keynote speaker. People mentioned that the event was “inspirational”, “encouraging” and “excellent—wished it was longer.” On Peter, one person

said he was “the best keynote speaker I have had the privilege to hear in person.” One of the event sponsors received these comments from a couple they invited: “Thank you both so much for a lovely and inspiring evening. We enjoyed ourselves very much. I am sure that the next ELO event in Winnipeg will set yet another record for attendance based on all of the positive feedback that I have heard.”

ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERS CONFERENCE, VANCOUVER, NOVEMBER 4TH, 2015

The ELO World Conference in Vancouver on November 4th provided an outstanding opportunity to connect, equip, inspire and celebrate Christian marketplace and entrepreneurial leaders. The all-star roster of speakers provided an inter-

national and varied perspectives on entrepreneurial leadership. The feedback was uniformly outstanding. Robert Mulligan, Director, Platinum Holdings, Vanuatu said: “Well worthwhile traveling from New Zealand (and Vanuatu), inspirational, encouraging, enlightening, and fellowship with like-minded Christians.” Robert Dickie, President, Crown Financial Ministries, Knoxville, TN “Absolutely fabulous conference! Can’t believe you were able to pack all that great content in one day. I loved every session!”

The afternoon session featured a variety of perspectives and topics. Timo Plutschinski, Director, Business Coalition, World Evangelical Alliance, Hamburg, Germany provided an excellent analysis regarding Christianity in a post-Christian Europe—and its implications for believers in other

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ELO is Canada's Network (continued)

countries. Margo Engberg, Founder, Pinkabella Cupcakes, Seattle, WA, shared candidly about growing her business in the midst of a very busy family life with 7 adopted children. Peter G. Hall, Chief Economist, Export Development Corp., Ottawa, gave an insightful perspective on the big picture of the economy and how he, as a Christian, navigates the challenges of predicting the future. Charles Loewen, Chairman, Loewen Windows, Steinbach, shared the highs and lows of leading a family business with a 100-year tradition, selling it and then buying it back. Steve Miller, Canton, OH, runs a large pallet manufacturing company with 1,600 employees—he spoke about the centrality of calling.

The evening session began with the opening prayer by Pastor Dave Koop, Coastal Church, in Vancouver. There was an interview with Kevin Strike and Clarence Martens, two of the founders of Ballistiq, a Kingdom-focused web technology firm in Montreal. One of their projects is a web site garnering over 1 million unique visitors per month. The evening session was highlighted by the presentation of the ELO Entrepreneurial Leaders Award to Lord Robert Edmiston, Chairman, I.M. Group, London, UK. Lord Edmiston then gave a keynote address on the faith and entrepreneurial journey. The venue was the spectacular Pan Pacific Hotel, one of the Vancouver skyline's most iconic buildings. Guests came from throughout Canada (AB, MB, ON QC), the US (WA, OR, CA, TX, TN) and overseas, from as far away as Vanuatu/New Zealand.

ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERS CONFERENCE, TORONTO, NOVEMBER 18TH, 2016

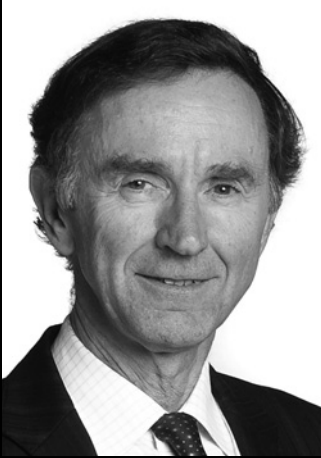
The ELO World Conference in Toronto on November 18th provided an outstanding opportunity to connect, equip, inspire and celebrate Christian marketplace and entrepreneurial leaders. The all-star roster of speakers provided an international and varied perspectives on entrepreneurial leadership. Here's some feedback. Gary Lindblad, Dean, Crowell School of Business, Biola University, La Miranda, CA said: "This conference is so unique and so needed. I highly recommend it as an excellent investment. It will pay for itself in your business, your spiritual life and your fellowship with other entrepreneurs." James M. Stieva, Dir. – Marketing + Communications, Super Sucker Hydro Vac Service Inc., Ancaster, ON: "On behalf of the team at Super Sucker Hydro Vac Service, thank you for a fantastic event yesterday. I found the conference to be inspiring and affirming; it was great to be a part of entrepreneurial leaders in a 'cloud of witnesses.'" - Rob Wildeboer, Chairman, Martinrea, Vaughan, ON added: "Great event and I would recommend it. Great way to see how many Christians work in so many ways and how God works through them." –

The Toronto conference featured a wide range of speakers in the afternoon session. Datuk Edward Ong of Singapore was the first speaker. He shared the highs and lows of his entrepreneurial and faith journey. Datuk Edward has undertaken massive resort development proj-

ects such as Sutera Harbour Resort in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. Next Paul Stevens, Professor Emeritus of Marketplace Theology, Regent College, talked about the theological foundation of entrepreneurial creativity. Rick Goossen then interviewed Clive Lim on "The Family Business: East Meets West." This was a fascinating discussion of understanding Confucian and other influences behind Chinese thinking, including concepts of face, guan-xi and familial piety. Ted Malloch, of Said Business School, Oxford University, addressed the notion of spiritual enterprise and the importance of a virtue-based approach to ethics. The final speaker was Cheryl Bachelder, CEO, Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, with 2,500 outlets worldwide, who spoke on "Dare to Serve." Lorna Dueck, Host, Context With Lorna Dueck, interviewed a number of the speakers after their presentations.

The Entrepreneurial Leaders Award was presented to Bobby Grue-newald, Pastor of Innovation, Life Church, Oklahoma City, OK. Bobby was the featured keynote speaker. His presentation was in the form of an interview style with Dr. Richard J. Goossen, Chairman, ELO. The event was held at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, a central location for guests coming from throughout the GTA. A number of guests came from throughout Canada, the US and beyond.

Stephen K. Green, Afternoon Keynote Speaker



Topic: “My Faith & Work Journey”

Stephen Green was born on 7 November 1948. He was educated at Lancing College, Sussex, and at Oxford University where he graduated in 1969 with a BA (First Class Honours) in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. He also obtained a Masters Degree in Political Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1975. He was created a Life Peer in 2010 and was appointed Minister of State for Trade and Investment on 11 January 2011. He retired from this position on 9 December 2013. Lord Green began his career in 1970 with the British Government’s Ministry of Overseas Development. In 1977, he joined McKinsey & Co Inc, management consultants, with whom he undertook assignments in Europe, North America and the Middle East. He joined The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) in 1982. In 1998, he was appointed to the Board of HSBC Holdings plc as Executive Director, Investment Banking and Markets. He became Group Chief Executive in 2003 and Group Chairman 2006. He retired from HSBC in December 2010. HSBC is one of the world’s largest banks, with 250,000 employees and generating \$80 billion in revenue. Stephen Green has written four books -- *Serving God? Serving Mammon?* [1996], *Good Value, Choosing a Better Life in Business* [2009], *Reluctant Meister - How Germany’s Past is Shaping its European Future* [2014] and *The European Identity - Historical and Cultural Realities We Cannot Deny* [2015]. Stephen Green is married with two daughters.

**Extracts from Dr. Richard (Rick) J. Goossen
interview with Lord Green on February 8th, 2016:**

R – For many years you were an executive leader in a very large financial institution, an ordained priest and an author--how did you balance those activities?

S – I have never been a full time priest. I have never run a parish and never taken a full time job in the church. It was never part of my perception of what I was called to do. The executive leader - that was a journey that I found myself taking more out of serendipity—at least at the time it seemed that way—than out of conscious planning. I began my career in the British civil service, and left after a few years for management consultancy. Why did I leave the civil service? Because I found myself bored and unstretched. I wrote out of the blue to McKinsey & Company saying, here am I and these are the things that I have done - which included a spell at MIT in Boston on a fellowship, which broadened my horizons hugely. McKinsey invited me for an interview - and I ended up working for them. That was an important turning point

Stephen K. Green (continued)

in my life because I guess I could have easily stayed in the British civil service for the rest of my career.

After a few years I went from consulting (I don't think I ever saw myself as making an entire career in consulting) to the Bank [HSBC] in Hong Kong. I signed a contract for two years. I thought that I would be doing it for at least four - on the basis that you don't do anything that's worth doing just for two years. It ended up being 28 years. The connecting thread in all this was that I had always been interested in developing countries - emerging markets, as they later came to be called. In McKinsey I did a lot of work in developing country environments and then of course the Bank is quintessentially an emerging market bank. I and my family lived in Hong Kong for 12 years. So there is a connecting thread, but I can't claim that it was a carefully planned career strategy.

R – I don't imagine that there has been another Chairman and CEO of HSBC who has been an ordained priest. How did people react?

S – In the Church of England the notion of a non-stipendary minister is quite well established. There are a small number of people in reasonably senior executive positions in that situation. In banks I can't think of any other, but it is not completely strange. How did it happen? I found my encouragement to explore this route coming from within, but also from some friends and mentors.

For a while I was quite active in the church [Church of England] when I first came back from Hong Kong. We settled in London and in the local parish church I was taking services every couple of weeks. Now I do it less often (partly because I am away more). So it became a part of life. I was ordained in Hong Kong in 1988: it is not a step I ever regretted. In part because of this role, I found myself wanting to write. The first book I wrote was in 1996 called, "Serving God? Serving Mammon?" This book was an attempt to explore what it meant to be a Christian and working in the financial services. Whilst you don't have to be an ordained priest to write that kind of a book, I think the training you get to become an ordained priest is relevant and to some extent being a priest gave me the challenge to write it.

R – What is your calling?

S - I would have probably answered that differently at different stages of my life. As a student, I wondered whether I was called to full time clerical ministry: but I ended up spending 28 years as a banker and then three years as trade minister in the British government. I believe that that was a calling. I think Christians should always expect to have a specific calling, meaning that they perceive they are doing what they are called by God to do using the gifts that they have been given. That doesn't mean being in full time church ministry.

I think there are two important manifestations of calling. Firstly, you have to be able to tell yourself that what you are doing is going to be making some form of a contribution to the common good, to social well-being. That goes for whatever you are doing, whether you are a clergy person, doctor, teacher or banker. For me, it was important that I be able to say to myself whilst in the financial services sector that I am doing what I am called to do, that I can see why I am being called to do that and that I can see how it is making a difference.

Secondly, I think that there are obvious challenges for how you comport yourself in terms of ethical codes. How do you handle issues, all the way from the obvious to the subtle but profoundly important? How do you manage expenses? How do you deal with other people? Do you lie to other people? Are you being honest with people for whom you are responsible about how they are doing at work? Are you being honest with clients? Are you, in general, being challenged in the spirit by such questions each day? That is part of what it means to say that you have a calling. That should be true for bankers as much as it is true for people who are in what are sometimes called "the caring professions" (which is a phrase that I rather object to because it implies that other kinds of professions are typically uncaring. I don't accept that.)

John C. Maxwell, Entrepreneurial Leaders Award Recipient & Evening Keynote Speaker



Topic: “Intentional Living: Choosing A Life That Matters”

John C. Maxwell is a #1 New York Times bestselling author, coach, and speaker who has sold more than 26 million books in fifty languages. In 2014 he was identified as the #1 leader in business by the American Management Association® and the most influential leadership expert in the world by Business Insider and Inc. magazine. As the founder of The John Maxwell Company, The John Maxwell Team, EQUIP, and the John Maxwell Leadership Foundation, he has trained more than 6 million leaders. In 2015, he reached the milestone of having trained leaders from every country of the world. The recipient of the Mother Teresa Prize for Global Peace and Leadership from the Luminary Leadership Network, Dr. Maxwell speaks each year to Fortune 500 companies, presidents of nations, and many of the world’s top business leaders.

Where did it all start? On July 4, 1976 while he was leading a service celebrating US bicentennial he says, “I got a sense that God was calling me to help other Christian leaders to grow and reach their potential for the cause of Christ.” This started his 30+ year career helping others learn about leadership, in the Christian community and beyond.

The Importance of Christian Leadership - Maxwell believes in the importance of leadership, especially for Christians: “Make your aim to practice transformational leadership, where people’s lives are changed from the inside out. That kind of leadership is based on character, conviction, and Christlikeness. In other words, transformational leadership follows the patterns laid down in Scriptures.”

Foundation of Christian Leadership - John Maxwell always emphasizes that leadership needs to be lived first—then taught. How does he do it? In *Intentional Living* he explains that “God helps to make my best, as flawed as it is, even better. I have always believed that God will be there for me and help me. In fact, my belief in myself grows out of my faith. I totally embrace the words in Jeremiah 29:11 – “For I know the plans I have for you” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Think Big - In *Intentional Living* he also notes that, “There is only one thing in my life that I value more than intentional living in order to achieve significances, and that is God. He can do more than I can imagine, guess, or dream about.” (p. 71.) John Maxwell has had a great influence in both the Christian community and the mainstream leadership world—from the unlikely beginnings in a small church in rural Indiana.

ELO is honoured to have John Maxwell not only join us on November 16th in Toronto to deliver the keynote address but also to receive the “Entrepreneurial Leaders Award” in recognition of his Christ-inspired global contribution over decades of dedicated effort.

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Russ Crosson On Helping the Family Business Succeed

Family and business. A match made in heaven or a train wreck waiting to happen? That depends. It could be either. On the one hand, a unified family with strong values, clear communication with a spirit of innovation can not only run a great business, but can even have advantages over non-family businesses. On the other hand, a family business with poor communication, unclear job descriptions, underperforming family members on the payroll, a sense of entitlement and lack of entrepreneurial spirit will have a short lifespan.



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Covenant Family Wealth Advisors (www.covenant.ca) specializes in succession and transition planning for family businesses

across Canada. Covenant was inspired by and originally operated as Ronald Blue & Co. in Canada. Ronald Blue & Co. is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia and is one of the largest independent fee-only wealth management firms in the United States—with 13 locations and billions of dollars under management. The approach of Ronald Blue & Co. is to “look beyond the mere numbers to provide comprehensive financial strategies based on biblical wisdom designed to empower [their] clients to live enriched lives.” The relationship between these two companies has evolved over the years to one of collaboration, rather than corporate partnership, however the philosophy of the two companies remains the same.

The President and CEO of Ronald Blue & Co. is Russ Crosson. Russ is the author of four books: *Your Life... Well Spent*, *The Truth About Money Lies*, *8 Important Money Decisions for Every Couple* and *What Makes a Leader Great*. Russ will be speaking at the Entrepreneurial Leaders Conference in Toronto on November 16, 2016, on the topic: “The Family Enterprise: Six Key Decisions to Facilitate a Successful Transition.” He will address the following six questions:

1. How much to heirs? How much to charity?
2. Do I give equally to each heir?
3. When and how do I give?
4. What form of estate assets?
5. What techniques do I use?
6. Should we have a family conference?



Russ Crosson (continued)

The sixth question relates to the notion of a family conference, which can provide tremendous benefits and peace of mind to parents as they discuss will and estate intentions with their children. Several years ago, Russ was coordinating a meeting involving clients, their children and spouses and some of the clients' professional advisors: attorneys and investment managers. During that meeting, the benefits of a family conference became obvious to him. Russ discovered two general purposes for a family conference.

He writes:

"There are two general purposes for family conferences. First, and foremost, it's an opportunity for communication among family members about philosophy, beliefs and values regarding finances. As parents, we're responsible for training our children in all areas of life, including the financial area. Although parents have the right to do with their assets as they wish, the family conference permits frank dialogue concerning important issues while all parties are present, rather than after a death (which is usually when a "family conference" occurs). With such healthy communication, the family conference enhances family harmony. Communicating early avoids bitterness over money decisions.

"Second, the family conference is for child training. It's an opportunity for Mom and Dad to begin training their children about budgeting, investment, estate planning and other financial responsibilities. Children

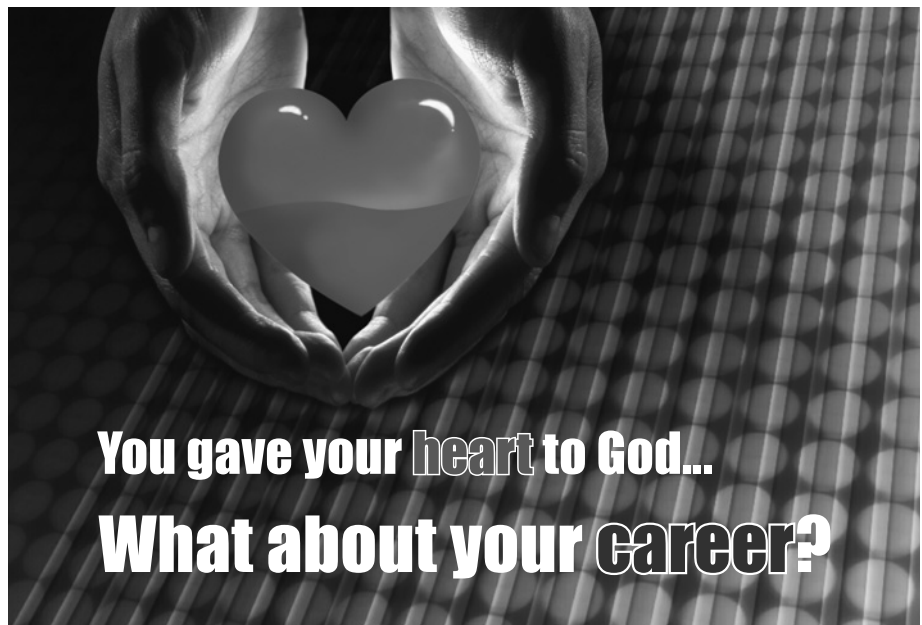
observe their parents modeling and implementing wise financial stewardship."

There is no arguing that family and non-family businesses have successfully transitioned through careful strategic planning, good decision-making and a lot of hard work. However, the experience of Covenant has shown that family businesses fail because of the non-technical issues such as: lack of communication, misguided notions of business and inter-family and long-term embedded challenges.

A family that utilizes family confer-

ences provides itself with a platform for expressing values, beliefs and convictions and gives one generation the opportunity to pass along its wisdom and experience to the next generation. The bottom line is that family conferences enhance communication within the family, which ensures a greater chance of successfully transitioning the family business.

The question was asked at the outset, "Can family and business exist together as a match made in heaven?" I believe so and a family conference is a meaningful place to start.



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James Epp of Fraserway RV - No Shortcuts To Success

By Richard (Rick) J. Goossen

[James Epp will be participating in a “Q & A / Interview” on the topic of “No Short Cuts To Success” with Rick Goossen at the Entrepreneurial Leaders Conference, Vancouver, November 30th, 2016. Here is an overview of James’ story.]



How to succeed as an entrepreneur? Easy. Spend almost 50 years perfecting and expanding in your niche. That’s the story of RV-loving entrepreneur, James Epp of Abbotsford, BC, who owns and operates Adventurer Group, the largest RV company in Canada.

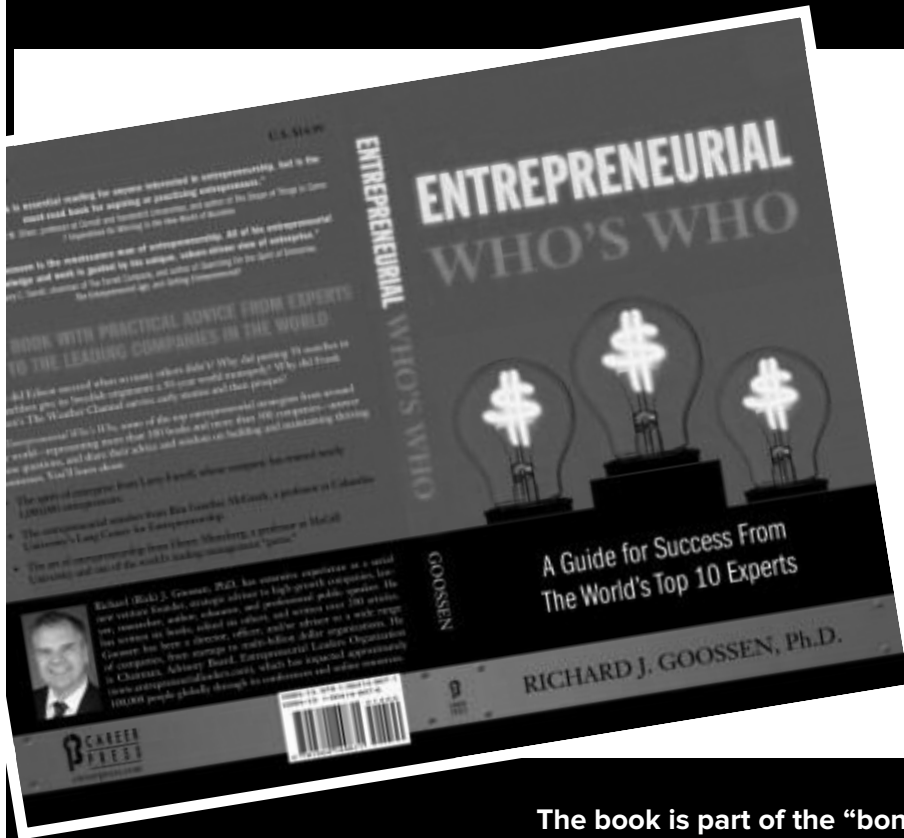
I have had the privilege of working with James as Strategic Counsel and Chairman, Advisory Board, through my position at Covenant Family Wealth Advisors (www.covenant.ca). Since 2004, the Covenant team has had the privilege of coming along side James on his journey providing the following services: buy sell agreements; corporate re-organization; career and personality profiling; emergency response plan; financial, estate & trust planning; insurance; legacy structure; philanthropic planning; and wealth management.

James’ story has one main lesson for other entrepreneurs—there are no shortcuts to success. While the media loves quick “overnight” success stories, a more common tale from the entrepreneurial front is that of founders who painstakingly build companies over decades. The process involves learning hard lessons in the marketplace, making careful strategic moves, constantly pursuing incremental and large scale innovation, and embedding themselves in the business ecosystem as delivering a valuable product that consumers will pay for—and surviving through the ebb and flow of the marketplace.

That’s precisely how James Epp has built Adventurer Group. Over almost 50 years, James and his entrepreneurial family grew this business to over 700 employees and 13 dealerships across Canada, plus an RV manufacturing company in Yakima, Washington. How did it all begin?

James first started in the RV business as a raw teenager when his father, Erdman, purchased a camper manufacturing business in 1969, which came with five employees. He started in the company during high





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James Epp (continued)

school by sweeping floors, taking out garbage and then working the assembly line. He worked full-time in the summer and 20-hour weeks during the school year, getting increasingly involved at different levels over the course of the company's growth. Instead of post-secondary education, James often jokes that he attended his father Erdman's "School of Business."

The company grew, not like a straight line on a graph, but through certain opportunistic moments. In 1980, after 10 years of ups and downs in the 70's, James and his father purchased an RV manufacturing company in Penticton, a town of 15,000 in the BC interior. This was the Company's first significant expansion. This also

opened the door for James' younger brother, Chris, who finished university and got involved two years later.

James gradually took over leadership of the company from his father. In 1983 – when he was 29 years old – James and his wife Vanessa purchased Fraserway Camper Manufacturer, the Abbotsford operation, from his parents. In 1987, James divided the manufacturing in order to focus on selling campers to dealers on a wholesale basis and the dealerships to focus on full retail sales and service. Each moved into separate and expanded facilities in Abbotsford.

Another opportunity for growth occurred in 1990 when an RV rental firm closed. James took a significant

risk and purchased 90 motorhomes from a receiver on short notice, with terms to pay over 90 days. He was able to lease over half the units during the 90 days. This strengthened Fraserway's reputation as a place not only for retail but for other dealers and manufacturers to sell surplus inventory.



In 1992, James made what would turn out to be a very astute move by opening a rental division in



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James Epp (continued)

Vancouver, serving European and local customers. Over the next 25 years, this division has dramatically expanded serving thousands of customers every summer. Typical clients are German or Dutch tourists who fly over for a 3 – 4 week RV adventure in Canada; they are picked up at the airport, brought to Fraserway, given an orientation to their home on wheels and they're off to the campgrounds and the mountains!



The rest of the company continued to grow, including his brother Chris' operations in the BC Interior. Unfortunately, Chris passed away in 2013. James was given the responsibility of being in charge of the Okanagan Group of RV dealerships and his brother's estate. This led to James purchasing Chris' four dealerships in 2014.

There was yet one more recent expansion. In 2015 James added one more location when he purchased an existing dealership in Prince George.

So, over an almost 50-year period, the Adventurer Group has grown from modest origins to encompass five different brands (Fraserway

RV, Country RV, Four Seasons RV Rentals, Roadmaster RV and Travelhome RV) which make up 13 dealerships across Canada. The Group also has a manufacturing plant which builds the Adventurer, Eagle Cap and Okanagan brands. There is a rentals division with 1,300 units on fleet. The Company also has a parts retail unit sales and wholesale distribution under the brand Specialty RV Products.

In addition to the operational divisions, James also established The Adventurer Foundation which supports extensive charitable activities. James' eyes light up at the prospect of being able to support a range of worthwhile causes. Employees are involved, too, such

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James Epp (continued)



James Epp on a missions trip to Africa.

as collectively sponsoring hundreds of children in Kenya since 2005.

So, what are the lessons for other entrepreneurs? First, James has built a devoted team, from management and staff. He cares about his extended team and treats them well—they clearly want to work for him. There are many long-term employees. He often walks the premises and chats with everyone, from sales people to those in the service department. Often when asked how he managed to build such a large and diverse company, James clearly states that God has blessed him over the years with many great managers and employees. James has successfully invested in the human infrastructure as a platform for growth.

Second, great mentors can be very helpful. The company started with James' father, Erdman, who mentored James for a long time before he took

over. James credits the role of father who laid the foundation for the values of the company to this day. His father wanted to build a business through strong ethics and customer satisfaction. He counts the success of the company to his father's mantra: "Never satisfied until good is better and better is best."

Third, have very clear company values and keep reinforcing them—and reflect them to all the staff. The company is rooted in core values regarding employees, customers, integrity, respect, workplace, teamwork, recreation, innovation, community, social action and biblical principles. These values are founded in James' faith. They are displayed in all the offices—and employees are expected to act accordingly.

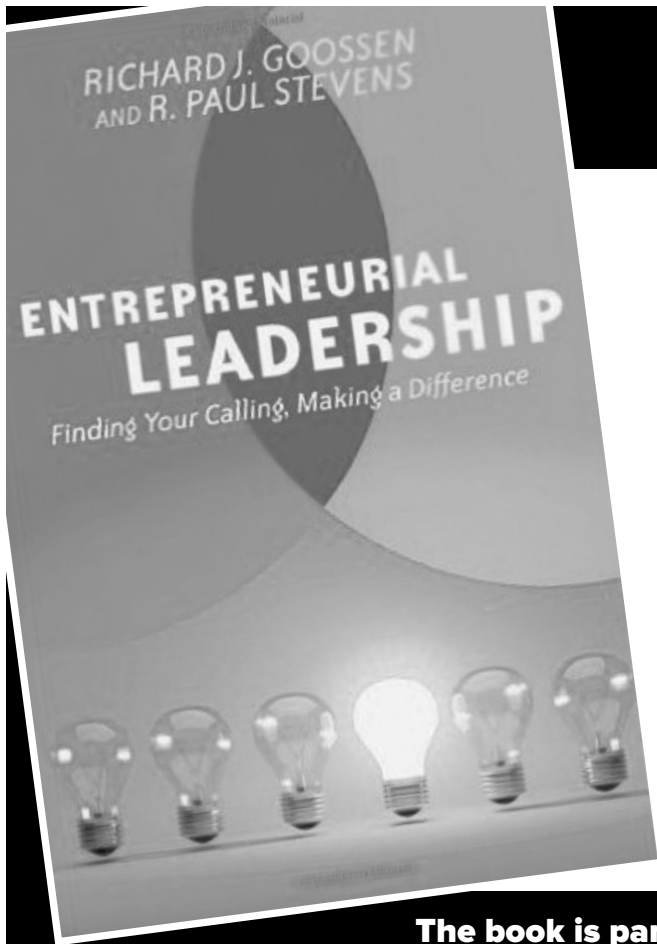
Fourth, think long-term. A successful and large organization is put together piece by piece over an extended

period of time. As his dad stressed, the key to handling success is investing back into the business and the community.

Fifth, know your customer very well. James is an RV'er himself, using his own product. Even through difficult economic times, James recognized that the company would only continue to grow by listening to customers and learning how to best serve their needs. Entrepreneurs, from Steve Jobs to Thomas Edison, only succeed with an almost obsessive desire to please their customer.

Sixth, never get complacent - keep innovating and improving instead. James has a frenetic energy that helps him stay on the cutting edge in terms of serving customers, doing well by them, and keep getting better. The market keeps changing and James knows that the company can't rest or it will be eclipsed by others.

In conclusion, the story of James Epp serves up an inspirational tale for aspiring entrepreneurs. Find what you love, especially something you know very well. Then dedicate yourself to serving customers, understanding them in detail, anticipating their needs and aspiring to deliver a superior service. Then, keep reinvesting in the company to keep expanding the expertise and services. Stay focused in a single direction for a long period of time. There's a good chance you'll succeed—over time, maybe decades later. The entrepreneurial experience of James Epp underscores the truism that there are no short cuts to success.



GOOSSEN & STEVENS, *ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP: FINDING YOUR CALLING, MAKING A DIFFERENCE* (IVP, 2013)

The book is part of the “bonus” book bundle for those who signed up for the entire conference or can be purchased separately for \$20.

“Evangelicals for much of the twentieth century ignored the political, economic and social marketplace, focusing instead on preparation for a more heavenly world. Goossen and Stevens break out of those fences, leading us to understand the Christ-given gift of the entrepreneur. This comprehensive treatment of Christ-centeredness in the marketplace provides a curriculum, offering wisdom, encouragement and counsel in this vital arena. It is not too much to say this book is an historic breakthrough on a subject too long ignored. I’ve begun my list of those to whom I will send a copy.”

– Brian C. Stiller, global ambassador, the World Evangelical Alliance, and president emeritus, Tyndale University College & Seminary

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