STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS IN NUMBERS 13 & 14: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR TWO-WAY FAITH INTEGRATION?

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ABSTRACT: The paper evaluates a narrative from the Bible that illustrates the possibility that the faith integration process is a two-way, reciprocal process rather than a one-way process. The paper provides a summary of the literature on the use of the 2x2 matrix in strategic management especially environmental scanning, explores the historical context of Numbers 13 and 14 and examines two of the 2x2 matrices that can be constructed from Deuteronomy 1 along with the strategic implications of each. Finally, observations from this passage from both theological and strategic management points of view are explored.

Key words: 2x2 matrix, environmental analysis, strategic analysis, strategy formulation,

INTRODUCTION

The use of Scripture when seeking guidance for business practice is fundamental to the faith integration process. Paul the Apostle thought about this issue on at least one occasion (2 Timothy 3:16), and it continues to be a matter of concern to scholars inside and beyond the readers of this journal (Higginson, 1993, pp. 26-35; Preston, 1993, pp. 95-109; Maier, 1994; Dockery, 1995; Lynn & Wallace, 2001; Boersema, 2002; Fields & Bekker, 2010; Cafferky, 2012). It is not likely that this concern will go away until a carefully crafted description of the faith integration process or theory has been developed, which includes a definitive statement regarding the use of Scripture.

Interpreting the Bible to draw conclusions regarding any aspect of life requires the reader to carefully weigh the entire biblical record, taking into consideration the original historical context. What happens when we bring contemporary understanding of business with us when we read a story in the Bible? Is it possible that in practice the faith integration process is at times a two-way, reciprocal process? Is it ever possible to completely lay aside what we have learned outside of Scripture when we read the Bible?
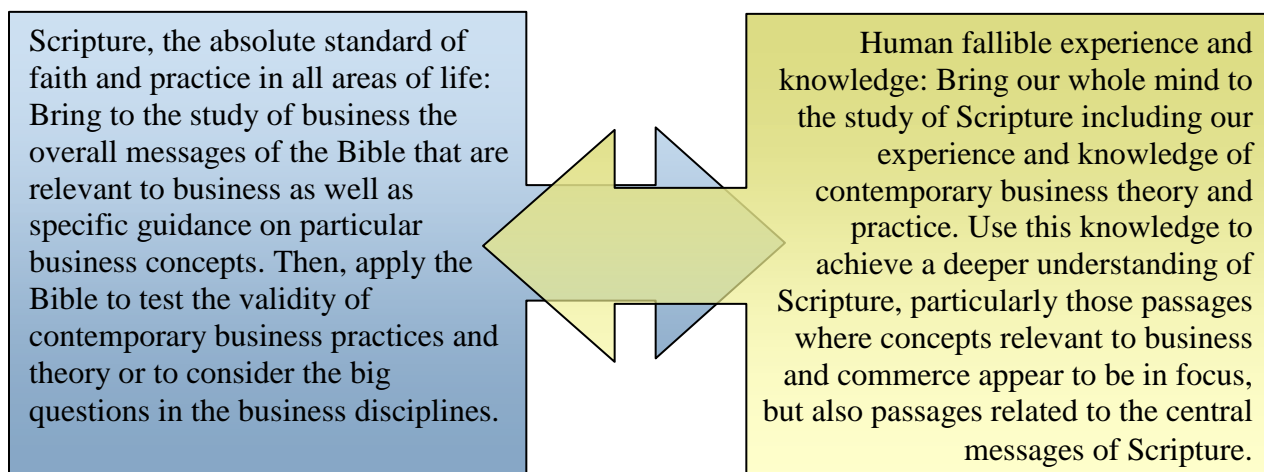
One way to look at the faith integration process is to consider Scripture as the starting point. It is the absolute standard of faith and practice in all of life, including business. As Scripture is understood, we can apply it to contemporary life and deepen our understanding of God's will in business.

But can the process of integration also work the other way? At times, if we come to Scripture, not with a blank mind but with our current, admittedly fallible, knowledge of contemporary business concepts and use this understanding, might we actually enrich or deepen our understanding of Scripture, particularly those passages related to business and also those passages of Scripture that carry the central messages of the Bible? This should not be construed by the reader to mean that we should "read into" Scripture (eisegesis). Rather, our understanding of business-related concepts may prove to be a useful tool for enlightening our understanding of the Bible as we do exegesis - much like ancient history, archeology and biblical languages are useful for Bible interpretation. Indeed the central message of Scripture of God's gracious redemption is sometimes conveyed to us by the use of economic-related concepts of buying, price and redeeming. At times Jesus likens the kingdom of God to common economic situations of his day.

A possible two-way reciprocal process is illustrated in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: The Integration Process: A Two-Way Process?

Scripture, the absolute standard of faith and practice in all areas of life: Bring to the study of business the overall messages of the Bible that are relevant to business as well as specific guidance on particular business concepts. Then, apply the Bible to test the validity of contemporary business practices and theory or to consider the big questions in the business disciplines.	Human fallible experience and knowledge: Bring our whole mind to the study of Scripture including our experience and knowledge of contemporary business theory and practice. Use this knowledge to achieve a deeper understanding of Scripture, particularly those passages where concepts relevant to business and commerce appear to be in focus, but also passages related to the central messages of Scripture.

The point here is that integrating faith and business may not be exclusively a one-way relationship, where the starting point is only Scripture. In theory, once we understand Scripture, we can then apply Scripture's teaching to contemporary life. In practice, however, this may be difficult to accomplish. And in practice the difficulty may render the faith integration process incomplete.

This raises the question of whether it is ever possible, or even desirable, to come to Scripture by putting aside all contemporary awareness and knowledge. This paper suggests one case from the Bible where an understanding of business might be useful for gaining a deeper understanding of Scripture and at the same time deepens our understanding of the central message of the Bible.

Accordingly, **the purpose of this paper** is to present the potential of Numbers 13, 14, and the related passage from Deuteronomy 1, as a case of strategic environmental scanning in the Bible narrative. The paper offers for consideration the **thesis** that understanding the contemporary strategic analysis process can help to deepen our understanding of the central messages of Scripture.

To accomplish this, the paper begins by providing a summary of the literature on the use of the 2x2 matrix in strategic environmental scanning. It explores the historical context of Numbers 13, 14 and Deuteronomy 1. The paper then examines selected matrices that can be constructed from the Bible narrative under consideration, along with the possible strategic implications these present.

Finally, the paper briefly explores some of the potential of this Bible narrative from theological and strategic management points of view.

CURRENT AWARENESS: THE 2x2 STRATEGY MATRIX TOOL

It is in the context of the task environment where strategy formulation takes place (Downey and Slocum, 1975). Thus, we expect that it is the task environment to which executives pay close attention when formulating strategy. Elements of the task environment need to be compared and contrasted for their potential for helping (opportunities) or hurting (threats) the organization's ability to pursue its mission.

Environmental analysis, in the context of organization theory or business strategy courses, has been standard practice in schools of business for many years. An early example of this is the textbook by Andrews (1971) followed decades later by many other texts. These books usually encourage analysis of both the general environment and the task environment. SWOT analysis, the weighted industry matrix and other devices are also employed as tools of analysis and most of these embrace the use of matrices.

Strategic choices involve tradeoffs. The 2x2 matrix is an excellent tool to depict the tensions and trade-offs between strategies. Illustrative of this are Ansoff's (1957) Product Market Matrix and the SWOT analysis. Lowy and Hood (2004) also present several 2x2 matrices related to strategy.

The work of competitors also can be studied with the 2x2 matrix by creating a positioning map for market segment analysis (Hamilton *et al.*, 1998). Mapping strategic groups is based on a similar idea, which helps the strategic decision makers simplify and organize their understanding and assumptions about the market (Barney & Hoskisson, 1990; Reger and Huff, 1993; Boardman & Vining, 1996; Dranove, Peteraf & Shanely, 1998). Take any two dimensions of strategic positioning (e.g., price, distribution channel selection, product quality, product line depth, technological leadership, cost structure, degree of vertical integration, and other dimensions which may be strategically important) and a map-like comparison can be drawn as a matrix showing relevant competitors' competitive positions relative to each other. The conversation about differences in competitive position can then lead to an estimate of the profit potential for each strategic group or of the current gaps in the available strategic positions.

The matrix is not an automatic strategic decision-making recipe. Rather, like other strategy tools, it is useful in strategic discussions. As an analysis tool it is designed to facilitate the exploration of the assumptions strategic decision makers make but sometimes do not talk about.

Strategists must also be concerned about environmental uncertainty as portrayed by scholars such as Daft *et al.* (1988) and Downey and Slocum (1975). The dimensions of the task environment can be studied in terms of three dimensions (Aldrich, 1978; Dess & Beard, 1984): Munificence (capacity), dynamism (stability) and complexity (homogeneity, concentration). Here the work of Child (1972) and Emery and Trist's classic study (1965) have contributed to our understanding.

Environmental scanning behaviors, and the value of environmental scanning, may depend on one's view of the environment. Aguilar (1967) was the first to comprehensively address both the significance and the problems of environmental scanning during the strategy formulation process. Lenz and Engledow (1986) provide a helpful review of environmental analysis theory where they discuss environmental scanning in terms of each of the five environmental models most commonly used by scholars. Similar to this is the work of Aldrich and Pfeffer (1976) who consider various environmental models.

At another level the 2x2 matrix has been used in strategy research. Daft and Weick (1984) use the 2x2 matrix to illustrate how an organization's assumptions about its environment (to what degree the environment is believed to be analyzable or unanalyzable) and the organization's degree of intrusiveness into the environment (active or passive) influence the modes of environmental interpretation during strategy formulation.

As expressed in the popular SWOT analysis, internal analysis of core competencies can also be enhanced with the use of one or more matrices. For example, the work of Charles Perrow (1986) illustrates how a matrix aids in understanding the impact of various approaches to organizing workers.

The 2x2 matrix offers two characteristics that make it a powerful tool for problem solving: simplicity and limits (Lowy and Hood, 2004). With simplicity comes ease of communication and intuitive application. With limits come focus and dialectical tension from irresolvable contradictions. With these two characteristics the 2x2 matrix can be adapted to many decision-making situations, scalable for either the individual level or the macro-environmental level. The 2x2 matrix is merely a tool to bring to the surface core-conflicting issues that require attention when forming a cluster of strategic commitments and then when managing the implementation of these choices. With the benefit of simplicity also comes its draw backs. If the environment or the organization is complex, simplicity will lose some key dimensions important for strategy.

Lowy and Hood (2004) note that the ingredients of a 2x2 matrix must be knowledge-intensive and derive from experiences that guide us in making difficult choices. In this regard, one assumption the author draws about the Scripture passage considered here is that Moses, if not others among Israel's leaders, possessed such knowledge from his experience or from intelligence gathered through other means. The passage considered here illustrates, however, that intuitive thinking can be made clear by creating dichotomies that support analysis of the complexity of a situation rather than quickly embracing a single right or wrong answer. In this way the 2x2 matrix and the conversations that ensue around are an attempt to bring some order to the sometimes messy strategic thinking process.

Apparent from the Bible narrative explored below, even in ancient times, decision makers identified key variables that could impact their current situation. While we have no evidence that these persons actually used a matrix as part of their analysis, the fact that they identified important variables gives us some clue regarding the major issues in the strategic conversations. They needed information to guide their assumptions about what to expect when implementing strategic initiatives. For them as well as for us, environmental scanning appears to have been inseparable from the strategic management process. Environmental scanning still informs strategic decision makers. 2x2 matrices provide the manager with a tool for thinking through complex issues that require intuition and wisdom based on experience rather than simple rational decision making. The matrices from the Biblical passage considered next are presented and discussed to illustrate how managers can manage complexity as well as the dialectical tensions that go unresolved in a manager's experience. Accordingly, while the Bible record does not present the discussion graphically as a 2x2 matrix, it is easy to see how such a matrix could be constructed during strategic conversations.

BACKGROUND FOR THE EVENTS RECORDED IN NUMBERS 13-14

The English title of the book of Numbers in the Bible is derived from the Latin and Greek versions of the Hebrew text, which appears to come from the focus of the first few chapters, i.e., the census and organization of Israel. The Hebrew title ("in the wilderness") appears to be more consistent with the entire narrative message of the book, i.e., the wilderness and Israel's sojourn therein, which was in response to the events in this story. Most of the rest of the book is the story of the wanderings in the wilderness, the failed attempt at conquest and the testing of the people's faith. This famous story explains why a delay occurred between the time of the Exodus and the fulfillment of the promises (Levine, 1993, p. 349).

Numbers is more than just a collection of stories about wandering in the wilderness. It is a theological statement about covenant relationships. Loyalty to the principles of the covenant would have led the Israelites to a flourishing life of shalom in Canaan (Deuteronomy 28:1-6; Psalm 119:165). Instead, unfaithfulness and disloyalty resulted in forty years of misery in a barren wasteland and, for the people who were unfaithful, their death followed. Kuntz's (1974) comments on this calamity are especially cogent:

> The book reveals that Israel's sojourn in the wilderness constituted a period of supreme trial. Yahweh, Moses, and the people themselves were all put to the test. The people's faith was frequently challenged, but so was Yahweh's patience. The people might trust in Yahweh's ability to provide for them, or they might fret over the lively possibilities of imminent annihilation. They might endure the adversities of desert existence and thereby acquire new strength, or they might fall into despondency. Numbers is less a record of sequential wilderness history than it is a work that advances significant theological questions. In particular, it attests to the extraordinary vitality of that ongoing relation between God and people. (p. 128)

The events recorded in Numbers 13-14 represent the fourth of seven tests of loyalty given to Israel (Stubbs, 2009, pp. 112-174). This test and its disastrous results became strategic in nature. It had the longest impact on the people of any trial they had faced thus far. The trial was also the most serious and became the "crux" of Israel's rebellions (Stubbs, 2009, p. 126).

Even so, this and all the trials that would follow during the forty years of wandering, also gave Israel an opportunity to come to know God's faithfulness (Hill & Walton, 2009, p. 148). Through this wilderness experience God would give the unfaithful parents a chance to procreate and teach offspring who would inherit the land of promise. The forty years would be a continuing test of loyalty (love), a time to learn the importance of having their hearts renewed and their characters transformed (Hill & Walton, 2009, p. 154-155).

The Crisis of Faithfulness

It had been about two years since the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt (Numbers 1:1). They had spent some time under the shadow of Mt. Horeb (Mt. Sinai) learning a new culture and new expectations. It is an eleven day journey from Mt. Horeb to Kadesh Barnea

(Deuteronomy 1:2; maps of ancient Palestine are available on the World Wide Web at: http://www.bible-history.com/maps/).

The nation was organized by tribes. We see in Numbers 1 that a census was taken to determine the readiness of the people to go to war. In chapter 2 we can see that they were organized for war. Israel had arrived at a war "staging area" (Olson, 1996, p. 77).

The mobile tabernacle had been constructed and was being managed and protected by the tribe of Levi. At this time, there were over 22,000 first-born males, ages one month and older. We might conclude from this that there were over 40,000 families in the camp. There were 22,000 adult male Levites in the congregation (Numbers 3:39). In addition to the tribe of Levi (Numbers 2:47), there were 603,550 adult males age twenty and above. While we do not know the birth rates for Israel, we can estimate that the sojourning nation numbered to be over one million people. Add to this the "mixed multitude" of Egyptians who had escaped Egypt with Israel. With an army of over 600,000 this would have been considered a formidable foe in any battle.

On their way from Mt. Horeb, Israelites traveled through a "great and terrible wilderness" (Deuteronomy 1:19) as they went north. This journey must have been very difficult in terms of procuring food and water for such a large group of people, for in Chapter 11 of Numbers we encounter the story of the complaints about manna, the giving of the meat in response to the complaining and the resulting plague of illness. Not only is God's power questioned, but God's appointed agent, Moses, becomes the target of dissent. Even fellow leaders Miriam and Aaron (Numbers 12) criticize Moses' choice of a Cushite wife, a bit late in the process one could argue. Because of Miriam's sin of insubordination, she was cast out of the camp for seven days. Following her reinstatement, the people moved from Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran (Numbers 12:15-16) at Kadesh Barnea (Deuteronomy1:19; Kuntz, 1974).

At Kadesh God sent an encouraging message: "You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is giving us. Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged"

(Deuteronomy 1:20, 21). It was at this point that the people requested that men be sent before the congregation to "search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come" (Deuteronomy 1:22).

We might conclude that although the promise of possession and encouragement to accomplish this were given, there were questions about which was the best route to take, what the cities were like that they would be inhabiting and other issues, some of them strategic. A question of the fertility of the land also arose. God had promised that the land they were to enter was abundantly fertile. Perhaps the people wanted tangible evidence that this was true.

A question relevant to the issues of environmental scanning is the question of whether this spy mission was military, peaceful or even commercial in nature. Traditionally many Bible commentators have considered this passage from a military perspective. However, as is seen in Table 1 below, some have argued that the agricultural/commercial interests were just as important.

Regardless of the view taken, it appears that the people were concerned about their safety as they continued north into the territory of the Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites and Canaanites. They were also concerned about their long-run livelihood.

STRATEGIC VARIABLES IN THE NARRATIVE

All of Numbers 13, 14 and Deuteronomy 1 are relevant to the larger story, the context and its potential value for teaching the 2x2 matrix. Nevertheless, selected passages are presented here for discussion:

Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying, [2]'Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, everyone a leader among them.' (Numbers 13:1-2; *New American Standard Bible*)

Comparing this verse with Deuteronomy 1 reveals that the idea of sending spies may have come from the people themselves, with God's permission. Consistent with the early chapters in

TABLE 1: The Two Perspectives on the Purpose of Spying Canaan

MILITARY CONQUEST PERSPECTIVE	PEACEFUL (AGRICULTURAL & COMMERCIAL) PERSPECTIVE
1:2-3 Take a census of all the congregation…from twenty years old and above – all who are able to go to war in Israel." "Moses then charged the spies to bring back detailed information that would be useful in military operations to conquer the land, and, beyond that, in settling in it. Whether the people were strong enough to defend their cities, whether the land would support the invading armies of Israel, whether the dwellings of the inhabitants of Canaan were in unfortified camps or in walled cities, all these facts would be important in drawing plans for the forthcoming conquest." (Ashley, 1993)	Keck (1998) points out that the primary meaning of the word translated to spy out is not necessarily military, but rather, it is used in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes to describe the process of seeking wisdom (Ecclesiastes 1:13; 2:3; 7:25) and giving wisdom (Proverbs 12:26). It is the people who engaged in trade under Solomon's reign that demonstrated in action this wisdom gathering and sharing (1 Kings 10:15; 2 Chronicles 9:14). The term is used only one time to refer explicitly to military intelligence gathering (Judges 1:23) the idea to send out scouts does not require a military context. Keck suggests that the idea that is closest to the intent in the Hebrew is simply to explore.
Nation organizes into tribes of armies (Numbers 1 and 2)	It was at Kadesh Barnea that the people requested that men be sent before the congregation to "search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come." (Deuteronomy 1:22) No explicitly military concerns are stated at this point.
Army commanders are appointed and instructions given for issuing signals for movement (Numbers 10). Tangible evidence brought back in response to specific request to bring back "fruit" of the land.	The only tangible evidence brought back from the land of Canaan is not military in nature but rather, commercial in nature. The intangible reports of the spies incited the people to think that the possession of the land could take place in no other way than by battle.
Following the rebellion, Israel attempts a military conquest (they failed). This signifies that war was what they had in mind. Later battles were fought in the process of possession of the land.	Nothing in the promise is predicted in terms of a battle victory. Instead, the promise is simply that the land would be given to them and they would simply have to take possession of it. Though there were battles (cf. Battle of Ai), God's plan was for a more peaceful possession of the land (cf. the taking of Jericho).
	Even though a census was taken to determine how well the nation could wage war, the story in Numbers 13-14 is the first time the idea of conquest is explicitly mentioned (Noth, 1968). Keil and Delitzch (1949) point out that the text itself explains the purpose of the visit, namely to find the best route to take, to determine the strength of the people, their defenses and the fertility of the land. In short, they were to look at the land (Keil and Delitzch, 1949; Olson, 1996, p. 78; Brueggemman, 2008, pp. 306-307) Emphasis on evaluating the defensive positions and the strength of the people is counterbalanced by instruction on evaluating the potential of the land itself.

Numbers is the idea of going about the task in an organized manner by sending a representative of each tribe on the mission.

Budd (1984) suggests that the scope of the mission signifies the scope of God's purpose in bringing them to the land of promise: "Since the gift is the whole land it is artistically appropriate that the whole be surveyed and appreciated" (p. 146).

> [17] When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, "Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country. [18] "And see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong *or* weak, whether they are few or many. [19] "And how is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are *they* like *open* camps or with fortifications? [20] "And how is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes. (Numbers 13:17-20)

At the time of this story Israel had been traveling from Mt. Horeb at the southern end of the Sinai Peninsula. They were heading north approaching the southern end of the land of Canaan. For two years they had trod the desert path toward the land of promise and now at the doorstep their courage falters (Maclaren, 1952).

The southern border proved not to be the place where Israel ultimately entered. Years later after the long period of wandering, a punishment for their lack of faith demonstrated in this story, Israel entered Canaan from the east and captured the city of Jericho.

The passage in verses 17 - 20 is the heart of the material on which several 2x2 matrices (or one large matrix) can be built for analysis purposes. Moses identifies in Numbers 13:17 - 20 six critical success factors or strategic dimensions that could influence what and how Israel approached the problem of entry into Canaan:

- Strength of the Canaanite peoples (strong or weak)
- Number of people (many or few)
- Resources of the land (good or bad)
- Resources of the land (rich or poor)
- Resources of the land (wooded or not)

- Nature of Canaanite defenses (camps or strongholds)

From this data several 2x2 matrices can be developed related to formulating a strategy. The following are two examples (Table 2 and Table 3) of how the environmental factors might translate into strategy. The reader can make other possible matrices based on the text.

Knowing this information means a great difference in terms of the tactics that need to be employed to be successful in a military campaign as well as caring for families until the campaign is successful.

Awareness of the quality of the natural resources can also help determine the attractiveness of the territory as well as the availability of resources for building defensive positions. Knowing information about the resources, the inhabitants and the likely conditions the Israelites would face upon entering the land means a great difference in terms of the tactics that need to be employed to be successful in a military campaign as well as caring for their families until the campaign is successful. The quality of the natural resources can help them determine the attractiveness of inhabiting the territory. Knowing the quality of the land, the presence (or lack) of trees can help them determine the degree of motivation for military conquest as well as some of the strengths and limitations of actually living in that region after settlement.

There are other possibilities, too, which might be explored revealing possible strategies. In addition, these and other 2x2 matrices may reveal the key points of focus for managing the process of conquest.

Operational concerns and theological concerns existed in the sending of the spies. Political implications of environmental scanning reports are important. The selection of the spies is important for the purpose of this mission. The Israelite spies' report (self-contradictory and false), the resulting reception by the people (mutiny and arrogant revolt) and the consequences that followed (punishment of death and a forty-year delayed conquest) demonstrate the enormous impact that honest and dishonest strategic reports can have on organizations. Just as important as falsely reporting conditions in Canaan, the spies failed to report information that could be an encouragement to the people.

TABLE 2

		Strength of the People	
		Strong	Weak
Where they live	Camps	Prepare for possible vigorous battle and mobile pursuit if military operations are needed	Prepare for quick capture and immediate occupation
	Strongholds	Prepare for siege	The key: break through the strongholds if defended

TABLE 3

		Quality of the Land	
		Rich	Poor
Presence of Trees	Wooded	High motivation for conquest; plan for using all resources	Use the strength of the resources and minimize the weak
	Not Wooded	Use the strength of the resources and minimize the weak	Low motivation for conquest; plan for importing resources

The central theological issues of the passage are (1) faith in an Almighty God who would be their ultimate source of victory; (2) the scope of God's purpose for the nation in the plan for fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. But the theological significance should not diminish the practical value of gathering the information. Movements of God's people have always involved a blending of Divine power and human action. Executive leaders have a responsibility to understand their environment and plan accordingly:

> They proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. [27] Thus they told him, and said, 'We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.' [28] 'Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.' [29] 'Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.' [30] Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, 'We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it.' [31] But the men who had gone up with him said, 'We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us.' [32] So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, 'The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of *great* size.' [33] 'There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.' (Numbers 13:26-33)

Bringing with them tangible evidence of God's promises of a flourishing land, ten of the spies choose to interpret the data in the most negative light. When Caleb quiets the people and urges

immediate conquest, ten spies exaggerate, contradict themselves and tell lies. Ironically, the spies could have mentioned the close proximity of Abraham's burial place which might have given the people hope. Where their forefathers lay in the graves, the nation could enter and live, and in so doing, realize the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! Instead, the unfaithful spies appeal to the sloth of the people inciting them all to lose their faithfulness. (Gaebelein & Polcyn, 1990; Wehnam, 2003; Olson, 1996)

The unfaithful spies' claims openly contradict the Abrahamic promise (Genesis 15:18-21; 17:9; 26:3-4; Deuteronomy 1:8, 21). The effect of this was to bring the crowd to a hysterical conclusion that they should return to Egypt, in other words that the redemption in the Exodus itself should be reversed. They wanted Moses to be removed from his position of leadership (Numbers 14:3-4). Had God not intervened, Caleb and Joshua would have been stoned. This would have been further indication of the peoples' disloyalty (Stubbs, 2009, p. 132). This action, which many considered open rebellion, was tantamount to a strategic undoing of God's gracious covenantal relationship. The people claim that God is the one who is being unfaithful by leading them into the jaws of destruction (Numbers 14:3; Deuteronomy 1:27).

This was the greatest crisis since the giving of the law and the making of the golden calf (Exodus 32). The Israelites' faithfulness is being tested on the doorstep of the fulfillment of God's promises. Their response to the test would be remembered generations later (Deuteronomy 1:19-45; 9:27-24; Psalm 95:10-11; 106:24-27), which as it turned out was fortunate. Forty years later when Moses inspires the next generation to remain faithful, he restates the blessings of faithfulness and the misery that would come from unfaithfulness (Deuteronomy 28-30). What the parents were unable to do (remain faithful), the children were able to do. God explains that He is willing to start over with His promises. He would make Moses the new leader, a replacement for Abraham if you will, and those who survive the ordeal in the wilderness would become a stronger nation as a result (Numbers 14:12; see also Exodus 32:9-10; Deuteronomy 9:14).

In response to their evil report and their strong-willed defiance of God's message through Moses, the people received a punishment which was to keep them in the desert for many years, one year for every day that the unfaithful spies were in the land. One lesson here is to be careful what you wish for; it might come true. The people did not want to go in and take possession of the land. And, in a poetic justice kind of way, their wish was granted (Olson, 1996, p. 85). Their desire to return to Egypt was not granted.

OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS FOR SCHOLAR AND PRACTITIONER

This passage offers several points that can be observed and lessons learned from this Bible narrative and from the 2x2 matrix used in environmental scanning. The reader will be able to draw other lessons from this narrative:

- Leadership during the strategic decision-making process is pivotal (Stubbs, 2009, p. 126). Leaders have the responsibility to identify the key variables that represent the strategic opportunities and threats an organization faces. At a deeper level, leadership is needed when interpreting the data from the environment. Some data can be seen from more than one point of view. While elements of the external environment are objective, it is perception of the environment that is the dominant influence in strategy formulation. Perspective matters. And the process of negotiating and debating the issues becomes a political process. A leader's job is to monitor the perspectives of those engaged in the debates over assumptions and the meaning of the strategic information. The leader must also monitor the political process to keep it from degenerating into a test of wills but rather focused on the issues and assumptions.

- Although this experience is often categorized as a rebellion, as Stubbs (2009, pp. 130-131) points out, the central issue in this story may have been the sloth and despair of the people. In every strategic process there is a time for thinking and a time for doing. At some point, the theory (assumptions) about "what might happen if" must give way to courageous action in faith. Leaders who are frozen in their fear will lead their organization into a wilderness.

- Strategic choices are sometimes difficult to reverse. This means that if a strategic mistake is made, there can be forgiveness; however, the consequences may last long after. In Numbers 14:20 we see that God forgives the people but He does not completely remove the unsavory consequences of the strategic choice of the people.

- Strategic choices come with consequences which either enhance or delay development of character. Strategy can never be separated from values, and our choices can either support or undermine key values.

- In Moses' choice of strategic variables we might see some hints of the "classical" dimensions of environments: Munificence (capacity), dynamism (stability) and complexity (homogeneity, concentration).

- Using a passage such as this provides the scholar with a wonderful opportunity to focus on the theological intent of the passage. The central issue of the passage turns out to be faithfulness to an Almighty God who had promised to be their ultimate source of victory. Business concerns, whether strategic or tactical, long-run or short-run are concerns that need to be bathed in the awareness of the principles of a flourishing life. In the book of Numbers Moses portrays a theological world view (Kuntz, 1974). Ironically, as this story shows, even in an ancient society that values the presence of God active in all of life, the people still had difficulty integrating faith and life (as we might define it today).

- Symbols are important. The fruit which the spies brought back with them as evidence of God's promises to be fulfilled became an important image which later prophets used to remind the people of the importance of faithfulness (Psalm 80:8-19; Micah 7:1-2; Hosea 9:10; Isaiah 5:1-7). Jesus also used the imagery of fruit to teach about faithfulness to God (Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-24; Luke 13:6-9; John 15:1-11). The point here is that fruitfulness depends on faithfulness (Stubbs, 2009, p. 128). The symbols that a leader choses to

hold up before the organization can be pleasant reminders of the joy of being faithful.

- While six critical success factors are listed in the passage in Numbers, the passage does not say that Moses constructed a 2x2 matrix to use in decision making. This is, after all, an illustration of the kinds of strategic management issues that lend themselves to 2x2 matrix thinking. This passage illustrates the importance of focusing on strategically relevant features of the environment. The number and strength of rivals have long been considered an important industry feature that will affect what a company does in terms of strategic management.

- Knowledge of the critical success factors related to entering Canaan is built on other strategically relevant knowledge: "Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes." (Numbers 13:20) It is not just any two bits of strategically relevant information that can be meaningfully combined into a matrix that will automatically lead to a strategic decision. Rather, it is wisdom born of years of experience that informs the leader which issues are truly strategically relevant.

- Using a 2x2 matrix is not a mechanical method to get at the one right strategy. Rather it is a mental device to sort through strategically relevant issues that are either in direct, either-or opposition or are in complementary opposition where each element of the matrix is qualitatively different yet interdependent in a strategically relevant way (Lowy and Hood, 2004).

- The belief that God is the ultimate source of conquest victory should not diminish the value of gathering the environmental information. Movements of God's people have always involved a blending of Divine power and human action. Executive leaders have a responsibility to understand their environment and plan accordingly.

- Questions about who is the best person to lead the organization naturally arise during serious discussions of strategy. When the

people see Moses and the faithful spies prostrating themselves in anguish over the despair, they want a new leader. Miriam and Aaron's insubordination occurs in an event which preceded the one discussed here.

- Strategic choices have a visible dimension when implementation begins; however, an unseen dimension of our choices also may be operating at a much deeper level. In the case of this rebellion, the narrative tells of a conflict between God and evil during the preparation for the physical conquest which, as we learned in later books of the Bible, involved physical battles. At a deeper level another battle was raging. It was this deeper spiritual battle which was to replace the physical battles (Olson, 1996, p. 89; see Joshua 1:7-9; Isaiah 2:1-4).

CONCLUSION

Environmental scanning is integral to the study of business strategy and organizational theory. It is vital to the practice of business in for-profit and nonprofit organizations. The 2x2 matrix is a tool that can be used to help understand strategy and organizational-related concepts. Utilizing it in a passage such as Numbers 13, 14 and Deuteronomy 1 provides an interesting illustration of business knowledge illuminating the Scripture.

Numbers 13 and 14 is the first biblical example this author could find where clear elements of environmental analysis are laid out in a fashion conducive for using 2x2 matrix type thinking and problem solving. This is not to suggest that God's intent in this passage was to teach about environmental scanning as a business activity. Rather, it is illustrative of the fact that the intuitive wisdom of Moses included the same type of strategic thinking patterns that might be used today when considering a major marketplace action.

Beyond this, the case of Numbers 13-14 should stimulate discussion if not debate over the nature of the faith integration process, to what degree this process is a one-way or a two-way reciprocal process and what limitations must be kept in mind.

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