Toward a Practical Theology of Marketing:
A Five Ps Approach to the Business of Persuasion

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INTRODUCTION

Nicholas Wolterstorff (2004) tells the story of being invited by Max De Pree to consult at an executive leadership retreat of the Herman Miller Corporation. He was surprised by the invitation because he was a philosopher, not a business consultant. However, he was challenged by the three questions De Pree posed for the group to discuss: "What is the purpose of business?"; "Is there a moral imperative to good design?"; and "Is growth compatible with intimacy?" (pp. 264-266). With the tagline "Design and Build a Better World," De Pree's furniture company, now over one hundred years old, was grappling with the fundamental questions asked by many Christian business people.

For those in marketing, our questions become even more distinct. Is God at work in the somewhat contentious world of marketing, influence, and persuasion? What is the purpose of marketing? As we review the process of marketing, the traditional "Four Ps," we ask if there is a moral imperative to develop "good" products, price them "fairly," promote them "wholesomely," and place or distribute them in "Godly" ways. How do we even define those functions in view of our relationship with Christ? How can we do meaningful research into the field? Perhaps more fundamentally, can Christians be called to work in an industry that creates products people may not need and persuades consumers to buy them? If so, can we positively shape the industry? How then, as educators, can we prepare Christians to influence the development of normative marketing practices?

This paper will propose a framework through which current marketing practice can be researched and understood, and it will suggest ways in which educators in Christian universities can prepare students to help shape the industry with normative practices. It outlines the purpose and processes of marketing, articulates problems facing Christian marketers and marketing educators, outlines a framework for researching the discipline from a biblical perspective, describes a practical theology of reconciliative marketing in order to initiate normative practices, and suggests ways in which Christian educators can help to prepare students who sense God's call to work in the industry.

A PRACTICAL AND BIBLICAL APPROACH TO MARKETING

The Purpose of Marketing

De Pree's first question ("What is the purpose of business?") is a foundational question for those in business. Rae (2008) is adamant that business has two primary purposes: 1) to serve the common good of the community with goods and services that contribute to human flourishing and 2) to provide meaningful work that develops its employees. Van Duzer (2010) agrees, indicating that businesses are to glorify God in two ways: 1) through an external focus, businesses should "seek to provide the goods and services that a community needs to flourish," and 2) through an internal lens, they should "provide opportunities for individuals to express aspects of their God-given identities through meaningful and creative work" (p. 152).

With these purposes in mind, we ask the foundational question for marketers: What is the purpose of marketing? Is it to serve the common good, to help communities flourish and reflect God's creativity? Is it merely to advertise a product or service, or does it begin with the development of products and services? Do marketers "sell" customers on products already developed (a "push" approach), or do they develop products that are needed and wanted by consumers (a "pull" approach)? Is marketing meant to provide meaningful work that develops the creative abilities of employees?

Marketing has been defined in a variety of ways through the decades, moving from a description of the

traditional four Ps (product, price, promotion, and placement) through to a relational, exchange-influenced activity. The American Marketing Association defines marketing as "… the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (AMA, 2013).

Rae and Wong (2012) outline the central role that marketing plays as a critical component of a market-based economy. While they state that marketing works to "create wealth by stimulating overall economic growth and development," they defend marketing "as more of a benign reflection, rather than a shaper, of cultural values," clarifying that advertising is information packaged to enable consumers to make decisions about purchases (p. 388). While advertising is only one component of marketing, their statements raise questions. Does marketing create questionable social values, or does it reinforce already existing values? How can Christians "do marketing in ways that serve the common good of our communities, with goods and services that contribute to society in positive and affirming ways?"

De Pree's second question is also a most appropriate one for marketers to ask, challenging us to think carefully about the design of products. Are we called to provide an acceptable product at a basic standard of quality and operation for the price point, or are we required to go beyond basics and develop something that delights customers in both aesthetics and purpose? Is our calling narrowed only to products and services that enable consumers to flourish?

Push and pull strategies have been traditionally assigned to the "placement" phase of marketing. However, with the broadened definition of marketing adopted by the AMA, the concepts can be applied to the other three Ps. In a "dance" somewhat similar to the economic theory of supply and demand, marketers are becoming more sensitive to consumers' desires and more aware of the true exchange relationships created. Therefore, perhaps in a nod to the moral imperative for good design, marketers are heeding market calls for new products and services, and are more actively shaping products with features consumers request (a "pull" approach), such as smart phones with built-in multi-featured, high-definition cameras. New products are also "pushed" with features perhaps as yet unidentified by consumers. For example, Apple's new iPhone 7.0 has eliminated the jack for wired headphones, instead forcing consumers to purchase wireless earbuds along with the new phone.

De Pree's third question leads us to ask: Can we move our business to significant growth while cultivating mutually satisfying customer relationships that enable us to intuitively design products and services that meet their needs? Can we "combine detailed customer knowledge with operational flexibility" so successfully that we are able to respond quickly, or perhaps even anticipate, a customer's needs, whether it be the customization of a product or a special request? (Treacy & Wiersema, 1993). Perhaps Apple has anticipated consumers' desires to be truly unplugged, demonstrating a level of creativity and innovation born of meaningful work provided to employees in Apple's design and product development departments.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN MARKETERS

The Process of Marketing

As we review the marketing process we are challenged to ask: Is there a moral imperative to develop "good" products, price them "fairly," promote them "wholesomely," and distribute or place them in "Godly" ways? Does our relationship with Christ constrain or liberate us as we define those parameters?

Marketing should be a process of building effective relationships, which satisfy individual, organizational, and societal objectives and lead to the exchange of one thing of value for another. Customers exchange money for a product or service; producers' goals of increased profitability are offered in exchange for meeting consumers' needs. Implicit to this exchange process is the concept that there are at least two parties, each having something of value to the other. Each is capable of communication and delivery, each is free to accept or reject the exchange offer, and each believes it is appropriate and desirable to deal with the other. The exchange process is assumed to be adversarial in nature yet balanced by the self-interest of each party.

Stackhouse (1995) gathers four strong views of the traditional four Ps, presenting a series of essays arguing that the exchange process is inherently flawed because of a lack of moral criteria surrounding the product itself (Camenisch), because the promotion process takes advantage of consumers (Kavanaugh), because foundational distinctions within cultures leave a process that is not always fair and just (Gunnemann), and because the consumer is not always considered an equal partner in the process (Kehoe). Reflecting the worst of our fallen human nature, these essays are consistent with negative perceptions of

marketing as a whole, a view shared by some Christians and consumers alike.

Some see marketers as being immoral liars who take advantage of naïve consumers through an unfair process because they have knowledge and information consumers do not have. These negative perceptions stereotype the practice as a whole, contributing to a breach in relationships between consumers and marketers in general.

Yet perceptions can be changed. Hagenbuch (2008) takes a different perspective from those presented by Stackhouse, arguing that God established exchange within the natural created order: Adam and Eve exchanged their work in the garden for food, Solomon and Hiram exchanged resources to build the Temple in Jerusalem, and the body of Christ, made up of differing yet complementary gifts, should be an outstanding example of the exchange model (p. 89). He evaluates the concept of exchange, stressing that a normative practice of marketing should facilitate valuable exchanges.

A Reconciliative Approach to Marketing

If the marketing process, the fundamental exchange process, is deemed to be adversarial and bounded by self-interest, are there ways in which we can shape marketing in a more normative manner? Reconciliative marketing should enable an experience of business that reflects God's reconciliation of the world to himself; he exchanged something undesirable (the penalty of our sin and an eternity of separation from him) for something of great value (the righteousness of Christ and an eternal relationship with him). Christian marketers struggle to align damaging and destructive marketing practices with the fundamental beneficial and valuable exchange process, bringing them into alignment with biblical principles. In doing so, we transparently identify the "value" of the exchange and take an initial step toward reshaping the practice of marketing. We should strive to fairly determine and articulate the value of items being exchanged beyond just the price affixed to a product.

A biblical, normative practice of marketing should restore a business process which no longer reflects God's original design of transparent and fair exchange. Karns (2008) suggests there are "opportunities to serve both individuals and the common good" by calling Christians to evaluate such things as their value proposition and brand promises and by taking a long-term view of customer relationships. He indicates that a reconciliative approach makes compatible such things as value-for-offering with product development by not pandering to consumerism or promoting idolatry of either self or of brands (p. 108). Karns also states that "in spite of some basic alignment, the purpose of exchange and marketing is relatively upside-down compared to a Christian worldview" (p. 105).

Each of the four Ps of marketing could be analyzed to further evaluate reconciliation. Hagenbuch (2008) applies this approach to several marketing theories (pp. 90-94). He stresses that a normative practice of marketing should facilitate valuable exchanges that, in themselves, may lead to a form of reconciliation (i.e., having lower-level needs met may allow people to fulfill higher-level needs and perhaps may lead to other forms of reconciliation). He accentuates the fact that deceptive advertising and persuasive tactics are likely to cause resentment among buyers, who will realize that the exchange to which they have been a party was unfairly biased from the start, and therefore the buyer-seller relationship will not continue. He argues that in marketing, the number of prospective buyers should always be secondary to the qualities of buyers, suggesting that marketers actively segment and target buyers whose needs the marketer is best suited to meet. This further enhances the concept of reconciliation: buyers' needs are satisfied more precisely and effectively, and organizations are able to make wise and efficient use of their resources, thereby enhancing their profitability. Hagenbuch's prescriptive approach, therefore, stands opposed to the judgmental proscriptive positions presented by Stackhouse. Instead of focusing on sinful motives, the spotlight shines on how the practice of marketing can be restored. The practice of marketing is redeemed from the broken tactics perceived as representative of the practice.

Consideration of exchange to the marketing process is critical because this is an *a priori* reflection of today's society, and, sadly, it encompasses current marketing practices. Karns (2008) builds on Hagenbuch's model, aligning the concepts of exchange and reconciliation with themes of justice, shalom, and freedom, among others (pp. 112-114). He suggests that exchange becomes misaligned because of our fallen humanity, leading to one-sided gains, exploitative and unjust relationships, and ultimately idolatry. In a careful analysis of the purpose, worldview, and effects of exchange and marketing, he evaluates a variety of Christian worldview themes, identifying areas of alignment and misalignment, using the quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as filters. He concludes that further research into a Christian model of marketing is "warranted, given that exchange and marketing do not seem to be wholly outside

such a worldview" (p. 111). As examples, he concludes that a misalignment of shalom is seen in that our culture today finds "joy" in consumption for consumption's sake, self-interest perpetuates the societal status quo of those who have wealth, and the exchange process is marked by hostile commercialization (p. 114).

Marketers constantly make decisions about the four Ps. It is in these functions that the need for reconciliation is key so as to bring shalom to marketing practice. A reconciliative approach would lead marketers to consider the best outcomes for both the seller and the buyer; the mutually-beneficial exchange process would be optimized for both parties, thus helping to establish normative marketing processes. Van Duzer (2010) indicates that consumers are entitled to know what they are purchasing, to purchase products that meet their expectations for usefulness and safety, and to be charged fair prices (p. 159). This would apply to consumer goods products, which are typically mass marketed products with minor differentiations. A marketing campaign that provides truthful information and maintains the dignity of employees and consumers in promotional materials can be reconciliatory.

While St. Jerome may have said, "A merchant can seldom if ever please God," and St. Augustine may have written, "Business is in itself evil," business is a part of God's work in the world (Chewning, et al., 1990, pp. 4-5). While Scripture does not contain hard and fast rules for practicing marketing, or more generally for doing business, numerous principles and recurring scriptural themes provide sound guidance for Christians who are called to make difficult decisions while facing real business challenges (for example, in Leviticus 19 there are strong words describing business conduct; see verses 13 and 35). Chewning, et al. state that all business decisions are ultimately made according to our faith, and as Christians we should place "special value on the love and nurture of the family, the love of service, the health and well-being of the socially and economically disadvantaged, and the need to be kind and considerate of human differences" (p. 7). They ask us to consider our personal goals and how those goals can be accomplished through business and in light of God's requirements of us as outlined in Micah 6:8 (NRSV): "He has showed you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." They discuss a biblical understanding of our sinful human nature, and how that can drive business decisions; they challenge us to discern our identity in Christ, rather than in the world. In the section on leadership, they discuss motivational tools that can also apply to the ways marketers can motivate consumers to make purchases. We should appeal to good motives, we should be open and honest about the motivational techniques we are using, and we should encourage active choices on the part of consumers (pp. 174-176). These principles influence the way marketing campaigns are structured, as they draw on edifying motives through techniques that are reconciliative and that strengthen godly values. They affirm the purposes for business and for marketing outlined by Van Duzer and Rae and Wong.

Not all companies practice marketing with such motives and values. The controversy about marketing and body image was stoked in 2014 when The Gap, a clothing retailer marketing to millennials, tweeted a photograph of an extremely thin model wearing a plaid shirtdress. However, their website contained a picture of a different model, one who was not "ultra skinny." The public backlash resulted in a vague public relations statement that the company was celebrating diversity by using different body types in their marketing campaigns (Serico, 2014). Yet in 2016, they encountered the same type of social media backlash, this time for a racially insensitive photograph of four young girls: a tall Caucasian girl is resting her elbow on the head of a small African-American girl. The company released a similar, vague statement, indicating that the campaign was intended to celebrate inclusivity and diversity. It would appear that the company has done little to improve its marketing campaigns; management indicate they are "sorry" for offending anyone, yet they continue to use offensive and damaging images in their campaigns (Allen, 2016). They have not truly listened to their customers, and their approach to marketing is not reconciliative in nature. Interestingly, neither of these press releases is posted on the corporate website.

Chewning et al. are clear about the need to listen and to tell the truth, even though both can be costly commitments to make. One of the most striking examples of honesty in a marketing context occurred in 2008, when an outbreak of listeriosis began at a meat processing plant owned by Maple Leaf Foods. Twenty-two Canadians died. While lawyers and accountants advised CEO Michael McCain to deflect responsibility for fear of law suits and a drop in share price, McCain went against their advice. In a solemn and emotional one minute and six second television spot, McCain expressed a heartfelt apology and commitment to resolve the situation. He transparently described what went wrong, how it happened, and how Maple Leaf would work to prevent it

from happening again. While the stock price did drop drastically, four months after McCain's apology the shares were trading above the price at the time of the outbreak. Reconciliative marketing, honesty, and truthfulness were the foundation for a crisis management and marketing communications plan that was effective and ethical, and which resulted in trust being retained by the company.

Wrenn, Hoover and Warwick (2013) evaluate marketing in light of Psalm 15 (which they call "The Marketer's Psalm") and Phil. 4:8. The challenges they identify in these passages are to practice marketing with integrity, doing so in a righteous and truthful manner, speaking no slander or falsehood, keeping an oath, lending money to the poor without interest, and not accepting a bribe against the innocent. A reconciliative posture means that we should maintain a blameless walk, advertise with honesty, honor the warrantee or unconditional guarantee on the quality of our products, charge a fair price for our products, and not seek profit on the backs of those who cannot afford our products. Wrenn et al. suggest a model for marketing behavior based in Scripture; this is consistent with De Pree's call for moral imperatives.

The Problems Facing Christian Marketers

As in the days of St. Jerome and St. Augustine, there is still an underlying and subtly pervasive attitude amongst some Christians that business is evil and marketing is the root of that evil since it promotes a cycle of unhealthy and dangerous consumerism. The perceptions of marketing, enhanced by the unethical and self-interested actions of some companies, make it even more necessary that Christians work to establish practices that reconcile consumers to producers, wants to needs, and value for exchange. The need for a normative, reconciliative approach to marketing becomes even more apparent, for example, as products that exhibit defects are knowingly sent to market (this has been especially prominent in the automobile sector over the last decade with air bag, acceleration, and brake defects not being recalled in a timely manner). Trust between those party to the exchange is eroded, and ethical marketing practices are challenged. The reputation of marketing, and of marketers, is further tarnished.

As we develop products that meet appropriate needs, price them so the company earns a fair profit, communicate information about the products in wholesome and winsome ways, and distribute the products in a manner that is God-honoring, we are able to take opportunities at every step to develop a normative process of marketing.

Christian educators are therefore compelled to identify observed, current marketing practices that diverge from a biblical approach and to prepare students to enter the industry as faithful stewards of God's resources, embodying Christ in each area of a reconciliative practice.

In view of this, Christian educators should conduct research to identify current marketing theory and practice. Gaps between theory and practice that call for reconciliation will be articulated. The intersection point between theology and marketing would be helpful in posing and answering research questions.

Christians called to a career in marketing and in education, called to actively participate in that reconciliative process, should work to actively shape marketing practice. Uncovering current application of marketing theory and practice should lead to constructive and positive actions as we identify and apply models that will affirm the validity and reliability of our research.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS

Research into Marketing Practices

Austin and Smith (2005) indicate that prior to their scriptural analysis of a biblical market orientation, little had been published on market-related issues that interacted with scholarly marketing literature (pp. 36-37). They trace the historical progression of thought about the orientations of business, evaluate definitions of market orientation, and utilize the narrative in Acts 1-6 to describe how the early church successfully responded in a market-oriented fashion to changes within their congregations and resulting needs. Yet they conclude there is the need for further research from a Christian perspective in order "to build a framework for a 'biblical' market orientation" (p. 51). Austin and Smith's call for broad research has been answered somewhat through focused studies, such as whether strong brands can serve as a substitute for our relationships with God (Burns & Fawcett, 2012), and whether advertising should use shock tactics (Hagenbuch, 2015). Still, there is no overarching methodology or framework from which to research marketing theory and practice in order to answer the call for broad research.

An overarching framework for research into current and normative marketing practices can be shaped by methodologies used in other disciplines. In an attempt to evaluate methods of research in the field of accounting, Chua (1986) describes three approaches (mainstream or scientific, interpretive, and critical), and discusses three

sets of assumptions or beliefs (about knowledge, about physical and social reality, and about the relationship between theory and practice) within each approach. Chua defines a mainstream approach as one that includes scientific gathering of data and formulating and testing a hypothesis. An interpretive approach evaluates case studies to find sense in human behavior. A critical approach looks for changes to the discipline over a period of time, taking the form of longitudinal studies.

Wilkinson (2005) proposes a fourth perspective, grounded within that of Chua, developing a Christian perspective. He suggests that the ultimate embodiment of truth rests in the persona of God and that truth must be determined from His Word, discerned through the Holy Spirit. He clearly paints a Christian's beliefs about physical and social reality: We are lost, God is sovereign and gracious, and we need a relationship with our Savior. He notes that these statements encompass elements of both the mainstream and the interpretive paradigms described by Chua: They exist, absolute and independent, of any person's individual experience. Still, non-believers are captive to evil and are being led away from the truth, dead through trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-2). When applied to research, Wilkinson argues that we must, therefore, expect certain types of behaviors to dominate because we are a fallen people. This objective reality, caused by the Fall, exists independently of research and is waiting to be "discovered" empirically. Therefore, we should not be surprised by the discovery of unethical behavior, of self-interested actions, of power struggles, or of unjust systems and structures. Nor should we be ignorant of a more subjective reality where our findings can be colored by the different gifts and abilities of our subjects or different interpretations of Scripture shaped by the lived experiences of individuals.

He makes a strong argument that the reality embodied in the Scriptures gives Christian researchers a basis for normative research and prescriptive statements, often avoided by secular researchers, because we can reflect upon what *should be* rather than what is. He also argues that we as Christian educators bear a significant responsibility to provide a biblical framework in which to ground our students before they graduate into a corrupt world.

Wilkinson blends the relationship between theory and practice into the interpretive and critical perspectives described by Chua. The interpretive perspective calls us to understand our behavior, but as Christians, that understanding is based on solid biblical principles instead of a reality that is constantly shifting. While the critical

perspective seeks to root out unjust systems, the entire process must be biblically grounded, not permitting truth and justice to be driven by a constantly changing context. For example, God's unchanging truth calls us to "look not only to your own interests, but to the interests of others" (Phil 2:4) and to live transparent lives as we let our "light shine, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:16). Jesus' statement suggests that even our marketing efforts should reflect a concern for others and should be transparent so that God will be honored. This foundation of truth gives Christian researchers an advantage over unbelievers because we do not struggle with relative concepts of truth. We have the Scriptures as our basis for truth as we investigate current marketing practices or as we propose practices that might reform the industry.

A Proposed Framework for Research into Marketing

The Chua-Wilkinson framework can be adopted as an overarching model for research into the discipline of marketing. The mainstream perspective would adopt a scientific approach to evaluating current marketing practices, using marketing research to gather data and formulate and test hypotheses related to the traditional four Ps. The interpretive perspective would study the psychology of marketing, the softer, persuasive side of the discipline, evaluating marketing communications campaigns and the effects on consumers. Case studies would analyze such things as marketing practices during times of political and social conflict, ethnographic and historical influences on marketing, and cultural and contextual emphases. The data from these studies form Chua's critical perspective and would provide demographic and psychographic insight into where marketing efforts are either effective or ineffective, prescriptive or proscriptive. With the addition of Wilkinson's biblical grounding and Karns' quadrilateral, such research would help evaluate practices in which marketers and their efforts bring honor and glory to God and illuminate marketing campaigns in which faith and practice are integrated (see Table 1). Such research could become a bridge between a God-honoring activity and an industry in need of reshaping. It would appear from this limited literature study that research undertaken with this framework and method would add much to the body of knowledge of Christian marketers and educators alike. Well-structured and applied research is a moral imperative as we seek to understand the field of marketing in order to develop normative marketing practices.

However, the framework could also be used to shape marketing pedagogy. The mainstream perspective would help students learn how to use marketing research to identify examples of flawed marketing initiatives and to articulate opportunities in which a normative, reconciliative approach could have been taken. Analysis would evaluate wholesome and harmful psychological approaches, highlighting persuasive tactics that are grounded in open and transparent exchange principles. Through the use of client projects and case studies, students would be actively involved in developing normative marketing campaigns. A pedagogy that is intentional about discerning prescriptive practices would prepare students to enter careers in marketing with an understanding of what needs to be done to shape the norms of the industry in positive ways rather than to mirror society's current, flawed practices.

A Practical Theology of Marketing

As we begin to evaluate the prospects for developing a practical, biblical theology of marketing, research done according to the proposed model will better differentiate ways in which a biblical practice differs from a non-biblical practice. Pattison and Woodward (2000) cite numerous definitions of practical theology that range from the concise and succinct (Whyte's simple statement that practical theology is the theology of practice) to a more applied definition (Forrester's indication that it is "primarily concerned with the interaction of belief and behavior") (p. 5). According to Campbell (2000), the linkage between faith and practice means "the nature of practical theology is intimately related to one's understanding of the relationship between the life of the church and the life of the world 'outside the church'" (p. 83). Marketers live (and help to shape) the world outside the church.

Campbell's description of practical theology would suggest that such an approach to business and marketing could lead to concrete proposals for the restructuring of the lifestyles of Christians within secular society and to the renewal and reshaping of marketing itself. He cautions, "Practical theology's concern for operations and its relatedness to specific situations needs to be grounded in some systematic conceptualization of the church-world relationship." He takes his argument one step further by asking "…why the things that are done by Christians are done, and what their relationship is to the things done by non-Christians." His answer is that the actions of Christians are to celebrate and attest to God's reconciliation of the world to Himself, which begins and ends in Christ. The key difference between the actions of Christians and of non-Christians is that "those who profess belief and adhere to the membership of the church have been called to make explicit the celebration of God's work" (p. 83).

Campbell's work echoes Wolters' (1985) description of the biblical narrative as being composed of three movements: creation, fall, and redemption. Wolters discusses the goodness of God's creation, identifies ways in which the fall of man has damaged the perfection of creation, and encourages Christians to work toward redeeming individual areas of that creation as we move ever closer to the eternal consummation that will reach the eschatological fulfillment of redemption by Jesus Christ. He argues that as Christians, we are called into the act of reconciliation as we work toward bringing God's shalom to earth. To borrow Wolters' argument, Christians in marketing are called to develop such redemptive marketing practices as transparent pricing mechanisms or easily understandable and honored warranty conditions to help bring shalom to society.

Cornelius Plantinga (2002) applies Wolters' three movements to the concept of Christian education, stating that learning built on faith in Jesus Christ explores the "height and depth, the length and breadth of what it means to build on this faith" for a lifetime of learning to be applied to work in God's kingdom (p. 24). The foundation of faith, which Wolterstorff (2004) describes as being the fundamental orientation and energizer of our lives (p. 283), is rooted in the knowledge of who created the world and why. Consequently, as we teach students marketing theory, the theology in which we root the theory will give them a foundation on which to build a normative marketing practice.

Boersema (1999) has developed a Christian perspective on economic activity, identifying several foundational biblical principles on which business in general should be built. Filtering economics and capitalism through each of the Ten Commandments, he states that "…the development of principles is not enough, not an end in itself (except perhaps for philosophers and theologians); economists and politicians must apply themselves in resolving practical issues" (pp. 44-45). He describes biblical principles including understanding how sin has marred all we do and causes us to struggle to find balance as we seek solutions for a sinful world; loving neighbor love as we strive to meet the needs not just the wants of our neighbor; practicing justice and the need to do business with fairness, righteousness, equity, and care for the weak, rightly bearing burdens and benefits; counting the cost as we allo-

cate scarce resources to decisions; and exercising personal responsibility as we steward the resources with which God has entrusted us. His work builds on and expands that of Chewning, Eby, and Roels (1990) and can as easily be applied to marketing as to economics, enveloping each component of the practice in sound theology.

Such an influence on marketing could have profound ripple effects on our lives, culture, and society. For example, consider the potential results from more honest and wholesome marketing campaigns alone. An industry seen by some to be destructive with outcomes such as consumerism and idolatry (Kilborne, 2006) could be shaped by more reconciliative campaigns. A practical theology of marketing would suggest that a normative approach to marketing can identify practices that provide an open and transparent exchange of value between customers and businesses that enhance customer relationships so as to maximize opportunities for shalom; that provide work that is creative, innovative, and meaningful for employees; and that align with biblical principles.

The Preparation of Marketers

Three fundamental questions remain. Can Christians be called to work in the industry of persuasion? If so, can we do so in ways that positively shape it? How then, as educators, can we prepare Christians to enter such a world?

Much has been written recently about business practices that allow us to flourish. Indeed, Rae (2008) includes human flourishing as one of the primary purposes of business. Dalla Costa (2005) has taken a broad approach to shalom or human flourishing within the context of our work in business, defining it as "magnificence, or excellence on moral steroids," which achieves great things that are also good things (p. 14). He calls Christians to a "double and" or "multiple and" set of factors. Using this approach, marketers would be able to implement and execute great strategy and greatness of purpose *and* make great products that create dignity for consumers and workers *and* do it with craft and quality, being transformed by the effort, artistry and beauty of the resultant process and output (p. 60).

These perspectives help us to realize that a move toward shalom or magnificence presents particular opportunities to Christians who are called to serve as marketers: We have an unique understanding of the meaning of exchange and of reconciliation, yet we are working within a practice that has become tainted by greed and excess, with unnecessary and frivolous products being developed, at prices beyond what many consumers can afford,

advertised in unethical ways, driving a cycle that is forever unfulfilled and unfulfilling. Dalla Costa's call to magnificence supports Hagenbuch's assertion that marketing can be a Christian vocation because all work is an act of reconciliation. As educators, we bear the responsibility of engaging our students in reconciliative opportunities in the world of marketing.

Marketing educators can begin to integrate the use of biblical principles into discussions about marketing practices. As stewards of God's resources, we should engage in sustainable practices of development and conservation (Ps 24:1–2; Lev 25:23). This has implications for product design and development, especially as a cradle-to-cradle rather than cradle-to-grave approach is considered. This also suggests that marketers should both care for the environment and not waste resources as we balance efficiency with other goals, which will affect pricing and distribution. The concept of *imago Dei* calls us to care for those who work in marketing as they seek to create products that enhance not only economic activities, but their lives and the lives of their consumers. As educators, we are called to love not only our students but to challenge them to love God and their neighbors as they strive to meet the needs, not unlimited wants, of consumers now and in future generations. It is by our love for one another that we are known as his disciples (John 13:35). Justice should be modelled for students as they assess and strive to meet the needs not only of those who can afford to buy our products but of those cannot. Practitioners should structure their marketing activities intentionally so as not to create "built-in disadvantages to any individual or group of people" (Chewning et al., 1990, p. 27).

Passages in the Pentateuch, the wisdom literature, and in the prophetic books warn against pursuing dishonest gain and using dishonest scales and weights (Lev 19:35-36; Deut 25:13, 15; Prov 11:1, 16:11, 20:23; Amos 8:4-6, Mic 6:10-11, and Hos 12:7). Waltke (2007) affirms that not only are God's people to use honest weights and measures but that those very scales belong to God (p. 207). We are called to ensure that commercial transactions (which includes all marketing functions) are completed with honesty (Prov 11:1, 16:11; Lev 25: 13–17; Ex 20:15–16). Marketers who tell honest stories about products, without distortion, could help to right an industry that has been tilted by our natural bent to sin and to exalt our own self-interest. The responsible use the wealth created through the marketing of products and services should cause us to seek the common good in our business activities and respond to inequities in our com-

munities. Making choices about allocating scarce resources in marketing campaigns requires that we weigh the costs and benefits of actions, economic and otherwise, as we plan all components of marketing. Finally, educators should help students assess situations and make responsible judgments, considering the moral choices (and moral repercussions) for which we will be held accountable.

Hunt has done significant work to study marketing theory, including evaluating observed behaviors and normative practices (2002), identifying the benefits brought to society by marketing practices (2007), and developing an approach to educating future marketers using experiential learning practices (2004). Hunt and those with whom he has worked conclude that any marketing program that seeks to prepare students to adopt normative marketing practices must include marketing ethics as part of the curriculum. However, experiential learning includes far more than courses on ethics.

As more research is done into the practice of marketing and the integration of biblical principles, case studies of actual situations can be developed to prompt discussion. Cases, stories around which students can wrap theory, help to concretize concepts and apply them to known and memorable situations. They also provide a framework for students to make decisions in new scenarios. Case discussions provide opportunity for educators to talk about their own experiences in the industry, again helping students to develop a faith-based approach to marketing, a biblical approach to business, and a biblically oriented ethical compass. Cases can be used to prompt students to consider such difficult topics as whether the marketing of high-end, niche products to a select group of consumers can follow a biblical approach or whether Christians can take on the marketing of questionable products such as lotteries and gaming. Van Duzer (2010) suggests that a purpose for business should be that it do no harm (p. 158). Perhaps a discussion about marketing a product such as FIJI Water would challenge students to consider the moral imperatives of marketing or ways in which Christian marketers could influence the development and promotion of products which might cause unintended harm. These discussions are difficult and important to the development of a normative approach to marketing and to developing godly attitudes among marketing students.

CONCLUSION

The concept of exchange existed long before marketing became a formalized set of business disciplines. The process of exchanging one thing of value for another can be traced throughout Scripture. Today, it plays a critical role in market-based economies, and it is central to the practice of marketing. Yet the practice has become tainted by self-interest and exchange mechanisms that reflect the worst of man's fallen nature.

A practical theology of marketing would suggest that we can understand how marketing practice done according to biblical principles can, as Campbell (2000) argues, "celebrate and attest to God's reconciliation of the world to Himself" (p. 83). The prospects for shaping marketing into a truly reconciliative practice are encouraging, yet as Austin and Smith challenge, there is more work to be done.

How, then, would the purpose of marketing and the processes which marketers use be changed? Can we be marketers in today's culture, in ways that lead to a reasonable profit? Can we provide well-designed products and services that meet the needs of our neighbors and lead to the growth of our businesses while at the same time know our customers with an intimacy that is born of neighbor love and that brings honor and glory to God? As we recognize God's calling on the vocation of marketing and as we more intentionally research marketing through a biblical lens and an established framework, we will be able to better articulate a normative approach to the process of marketing, thus equipping our students to influence the industry of product and persuasion. By probing approaches to research and by identifying worldviews embedded in those approaches, theological perspectives are clarified, helping to shape the very questions that should be asked. Christian educators can prepare our students to winsomely challenge current practice by evaluating the moral imperatives of marketing through the direct application of biblical principles, thereby shaping our culture rather than benignly responding to it. These are challenging opportunities, yet ones which will have a profound impact on the next generation of consumers and marketers.

Table 1: A Framework for Research into Reconciliative Marketing Practices

	Source of Study	Biblical Analysis	Worldview Comparison	Impact on Society
Mainstream Scientific	Marketing research to gather data, formulate and test hypotheses related to the Four Ps.	Evaluate current prescriptive or proscriptive marketing practices that adhere to or diverge from biblical, reonciliative marketing.	Alignment of product, pricing strategy, and promotion strategy with a Christian or secular worldview.	Reflection of shalom to consumer, community, and society as a result of reconciliative marketing practices.
Interpretive	Case studies and marketing research stemming from psychology studies, to evaluate the use of persuasion in marketing communication campaigns.	Differentiate communications and persuasion tactics against scriptural principles of persuasion and communications.	Deconstruct worldviews reflected in marketing communications campaigns and assess them against a biblical worldview for communications.	Effects of marketing communications campaigns on consumers and broader society.
Critical	Case studies to analyze marketing practices during periods of conflict, identify ethnographic and historical influences, and provide demographic and psychographic insight.	Analyze marketing approaches identified in cases against biblical principles.	Evaluate worldview implicit in cases against a biblical worldview.	Impact on current marketing practice resulting from these periods, influences, and insight.

Table 2: Application of the Framework

	Source of Study	Biblical Analysis	Worldview Comparison	Impact on Society
Mainstream Scientific: Mise-o-jeu campaign, Loto-Quebec, 2013[1]	Campaign to increase purchases of sports lottery products. Marketing research very specifically segmented the target audience and an integrated campaign was launched over a two-year period.	Passages that discuss love of money, greed, gains in wealth and foolish decisions can be used to evaluate gambling from a biblical perspective.	Alignment of product of gambling in the public sector of a secular society can be compared with the biblical worldview that calls us to build our communities on faithful practices.	Use of humor, which is often specific to the culture being targeted, can be evaluated in light of the significant costs of gambling addictions.
Interpretive: Schwartzkopf Nectra Colour "Marry Me" campaign, 2014[2]	Chaiken[3] (1979) study regarding how physical attractiveness is persuasive in selling. This campaign features two physically attractive people in what seems to be a loving, marital relationship.	Difference between socially acceptable relationships and biblical perspectives on marriage can be discussed.	Postmodern worldview that recognizes such social paradigms as individual values, tolerance for all lifestyle choices, and personal happiness.	A love story that suggests deep romantic and lasting relationships, with beauty that is enhanced by changing hair colors, is acceptable outside marriage.
Critical: FIJI Water	Case study that evaluates the highly differentiated, high-priced, bottled water, which is mass-marketed around the world.	Mass marketing of a highly priced commodity by appealing to social status and envy can be examined.	Conflicting views of ownership of resources and stewardship of God's earth.	Greenwashing and marketing practices come under scrutiny.

[1] *Loto-Quebec and Sain Jacques Vallee Y&R, http://cassies.ca/entry/viewcasepast/24856. Accessed 12/05/16.*
[2] *NHB Studios Berlin. http://www.nhb.de/en/news/details/schwarzkopf-nectra-color-marry-me.html. Accessed 12/05/16.*
[3] *Chaiken, S.E. (1979). Communicator physical attractiveness and persuasion.* Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 1387-1397.*

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