Spiritual Sowing in the Secular Marketplace

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ABSTRACT: In the modern marketplace, driven by the financial bottom-line, it becomes tempting to view labor as a mere expense to be minimized or automated. What if we dared to reject such a narrow vision of employment and consider how God has placed individuals (including ourselves) within the marketplace, within our companies to grow in spiritual maturity? This article develops a spiritual sowing model that conceptualizes employee spiritual formation as a process involving the co-laboring with the Holy Spirit in strengthening the triadic relationship existing between God, self, and others based on the practices of service, observation, and witnessing. Implications for employee discipleship are discussed and potential areas for related research are explored.

KEYWORDS: spiritual formation, employee discipleship, service, Sabbath, witnessing

INTRODUCTION

Following Christ in the secular marketplace and demonstrating devotion by keeping oneself uncontaminated by the world (James 1:27) are no easy feats. In their book, *Business for the Common Good*, Kenman Wong and Scott Rae (2011) keenly observe, "[T]he predominant understanding of how faith and business relate has been as a one-way relationship, that is, we bring our faith and values to shape our workplace. Far less obvious and less frequently explored, however, are the ways…business can also ensnare us in a variety of vices (e.g., greed and idolatry) and deform our character" (pp. 95-96). Awareness of this deformation may only occur following a significant moral crisis. Even here, we may be tempted to view the self as being autonomous and capable of overcoming moral imperfections while ignoring how our relationships to people, objects, and ideas have impacted our beliefs and behavior. The modern competitive business environment influences employees' tendency to morally disengage—to believe that ethical standards do not apply to the self in particular situations (Bandura, 1986; Khan et al., 2021). It is estimated that up to 75% of employees have engaged in counterproductive workplace behaviors, such as sabotage, theft, and absenteeism (Harper, 1990; Jones, 2009) and nearly half of American employees have been subjected to bullying behavior (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007). Unfortunately, research suggests religion is no panacea for unethical workplace behavior (Wong, 2008). Considerable research has been published concerning the

Sunday-Monday gap, denoting the general disconnect between Christians' faith and their daily behaviors (see Diehl, 1991; Nash & McLennan, 2001). Tucker (2010) discusses how this gap occurs as individuals neglect their relationship with God and consider faith-based ethical demands as irrelevant to their jobs and the marketplace.

The Epistle of James is particularly insightful when considering how immersion in the secular marketplace can corrupt religious individuals and their sacred relationships. This letter was written to a Jewish Christian audience, including those that "carry on business and make money" (James 4:13). At some point in their faith journey, these individuals became complacent with living a "divided life" that excluded the consideration of faith in business affairs (Garrett, 2016). James is relentless in his rebuke of their worldly behaviors, including their quarrels (James 4:1), coveting (James 4:2), slander (James 4:11), boasting (James 4:16), hoarding of wealth (James 5:3), theft (James 5:4), and lifestyles of luxury and self-indulgence (James 5:5). Toledano and Karanda (2017) conclude, "James' approach leads one to place the problem in the context of human relationships and human-God relationships…. The whole suggestion in James' passage is that when entrepreneurs are unanchored from their relationships with God, they are not content with doing good business. Rather, they are led to a passion and insatiability for 'more money' that risks their moral character" (p. 72). Garrett (2016) notes contemporary Christian businesspeople may face similar challenges in the modern, secular marketplace driven by the financial

bottom line. Like the merchants featured in James' letter, modern Christian businesspeople are called to live in the world but not of it (John 17:14-15). This requires a continuous renewal of the mind (Romans 12:2) and ongoing employee discipleship that entails exchanging "the ways and values of the world for conduct inspired by faith" (Garrett, 2016, p. 310).

The purpose of this paper is to explore how modern professional life shapes employees' personal and spiritual relationships, impacting employee discipleship, and what individuals can do to strengthen these relationships to facilitate spiritual growth in themselves and others. The manuscript builds from a growing body of research exploring relational aspects of spiritual development. McMahone (2019) explored how leader-subordinate relationships shape employee discipleship and suggested a number of practices that business leaders may consider in this process. These practices include the demonstration of service, authenticity, integrity, grace, and humility. McMahone (2019) notes these practices may move employees "several steps closer along the path of following that may someday lead to faith" (p. 28). McMahone's work is useful for understanding the important role that the horizontal dimension (i.e., interpersonal relationships) serves in the spiritual formation process. This paper extends the examination of marketplace discipleship to the vertical life (i.e., the relationship between God and man) for both the disciple-maker and disciple by examining the importance of workplace observation and witnessing activities. This provides for the development of a spiritual sowing model that conceptualizes the employee discipleship as a process involving co-laboring with the Holy Spirit in strengthening the triadic relationship existing between God, self, and others.

SPIRITUAL SOWING

The parable of the sower and the seed (Matthew 13:1-39, Mark 4:1-20) is useful when considering the spiritual formation process and the powerful role of the environment in nourishing or hindering the connections critical for spiritual growth. In this parable, Jesus communicates how a farmer sows the word of God but experiences setbacks as various forces prevent the seed of truth from germinating into faith and being fruitful. The seed on rocky ground fails to establish roots, thorny weeds inhibit the fruitfulness of nearby seedings, and Satan himself corrupts the seed while it remains on the surface of the worn path. It is only the seed that is sewn into the good soil that produces a fruitful harvest.

Choi (2001) suggests this parable can be understood by examining how connection with the soil facilitates life. He comments, "Neither the seeds that have been sown nor the soil that stretches beneath the road, the rocks, and the weeds is at fault. As long as the seed can overcome the obstacles and maintain its connection with the soil, it will bear fruit" (p. 61).

Analogous to the parable of the sower and the seed, the modern workplace is a mission field corrupted by the devil and in desperate need of caretaking. The lack of life-giving water (the Word of God) has depleted the topsoil in the marketplace, leaving considerable rocky, weed-infested ground for the disciple to till. Worldly vices (e.g., greed, pride) have undermined the connections between individuals and their creator. They have overtaken the arid field, germinating into invasive weeds that give the illusion of life while covertly disguising the shallowness of the nutrient-depleted soil. This neglected field remains ready for cultivation. The call persists to vigilantly sow the seed that God provides to scatter in the marketplace, remembering that a settling of accounts awaits each servant (e.g., Luke 19:11-27). One may reflectively ask what spirit-led sowing looks like for disciples in the marketplace. Conveniently, we may examine the word "sow" and consider it as an acronym, referring to "serving," "observing," and "witnessing."

Figure 1: Spiritual Sowing
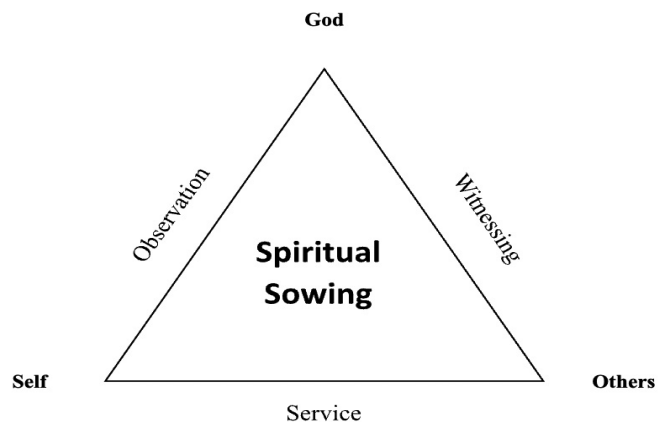
Serving

Compassionate caring is central to discipleship (Hudson, 2019). Work provides Christians a primary

opportunity to fulfill Jesus' command to love one another by serving our customers and coworkers. Yet the prioritization of this seems suspect in the modern marketplace. Trunfio (1995) identifies two primary threats to Christians' relationships in the workplace—power and profits. He reflects,

> The misuse of power and the overemphasis on profits in organizational cultures has the potential to distract and discourage organizational members from exhibiting the virtue of agape love necessary for fulfilling the great commandment. Organizations in which power and profits are the ultimately prized values are often characterized as being impersonal and dehumanizing and thus destroy meaningful human relationships. (p. 18)

The proliferation of artificial intelligence in workplaces threatens to further diminish human relationships. Beavers et al. (2020) note how workers often develop an instrumental mentality in using this technology to do their bidding and the real possibility for such interactions to become habitual and overflow into workers' instrumental approach to human interactions. Material incentives in the workplace can erode the "spirit of camaraderie" (Wong et al., 2015, p. 20). Performance management systems, particularly those adhering to "rank and yank" or rigid distribution criteria, too often focus individuals' efforts on maximizing their own outcomes at the expense of teamwork (Field, 2006). There is a tendency to focus on self-advancement in the workplace at the expense of rendering self-sacrificial service. This is often reinforced by organizational artifacts that reward such behavior. Brown (1993) details how workers are provided with coveted perks as they ascend corporate ranks. In addition to the increase in compensation, these special perks include enhancements to the individual's work environment. Office spaces and travel become more luxurious, communicating the worker "has arrived" at the good life. All the while, the vulnerable disciple remains blissfully ignorant of the stumbling blocks before them and the spiritual deformation in his soul.

Consider the following reflection by Veith (2002):

> The Devil tempts the holder of a vocation to the way of glory. Insisting on being served rather than serving, the calling becomes an occasion to wallow in pride. The mentality this creates is one of self-sufficiency. The person in this vocation feels no need for dependence on God. There is certainly no need for the Gospel, since the person in this successful position is doing just fine by himself. The Devil

> has twisted the vocation so that it undermines both love for neighbor and love for God. (p. 148)

Self-sacrificial service is useful in resisting the ways of the devil. It requires individuals to purge the pride and sloth dwelling deep within them and to take on the role of a humble servant, often doing things they might otherwise consider menial and undignified for their previous prideful state. Stone (2001) suggests, "Today's temptation is not to assume like Moses and Jeremiah that we are unworthy of the great tasks, but to regard ourselves as too great for the 'small ones'" (p. 246). Viewers of *Undercover Boss* are acutely aware that "the boss" is often humbled through his or her experience of assuming the role of a front-line worker. Yet there is often much wisdom gained through the experience. It is by serving those around us that we come to know and be known. It is service rendered through our work that we become keenly aware of our own vulnerabilities and others' challenges. Service helps forge the bonds between persons as trust and goodwill are cemented between vulnerable parties. It is through repeated acts of service that charity becomes habitual and the stranger becomes an acquaintance and an acquaintance a beloved neighbor (Luke 10:29-37).

Serving others in the workplace is important when considering marketplace discipleship. Embracing service is critical in imitating Jesus (Matthew 20:27-28). McMahone (2019) discusses how managers' demonstration of self-sacrificial service can help others see the value of following Jesus' teachings and aid in workplace discipleship. He suggests, "[T]he demonstration of the pragmatic truth of the faith gives an opportunity to move someone closer to belief" (p. 25). As noted previously, the vulnerability and sacrifice involved with service promotes trust between individuals. Trust and admiration are important to discipleship effectiveness (McMahone, 2019; Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 14:22-32). Additionally, service is beneficial in promoting the humility and spiritual maturity of the one engaged in such behavior. McMahone notes the one demonstrating service is "taking an important step toward learning the kind of self-sacrifice to which Jesus calls his followers" (p. 26).

Observing

It is often stated in business that "time is money." With the 24/7/365 operating schedule of business activity, there is intense pressure placed on companies today to continuously expand the hours in which work gets conducted. Refraining from commerce-related activity during the evenings and weekends presents real oppor-

tunity costs associated with lost revenue. This concern is amplified when a company's direct competitors engage in such action. To get ahead in professional life, workers often feel compelled to devote themselves to work even on the day(s) they are not obligated to do so. Such behavior may also reflect individuals' coping strategies in response to vexing work demands and job insecurity. Lengthy weekly work hours are common in the American workforce. Blagoev and Schreyögg (2019) note many employees work for organizations requiring extreme work hours, defined as 60-120 hours per week. Relative to many other industrialized nations in Europe, Americans tend to work longer and more irregular hours, including evenings and weekends (Hamermesh & Stancanelli, 2015). Modern technology has given rise to many types of work being able to be performed at all hours of the day, and during every day of the week (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006). Sunday (or Saturday) being a day of rest is now an antiquated notion for many (Morrow et al., 2015).

Overwork does real damage to one's physical and spiritual wellbeing as employee stress and burnout have become regular topics of discussion among employers and human resource managers (see Wilkie, 2019). Work burnout is associated with a plethora of unwelcome outcomes, including emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (e.g., Jackson et al., 1987). Cooper and Caballero (2015) suggest such overwork and burnout poses a direct threat to growth in the believer's spiritual life. When overwork becomes habitual, the relationships between self, others, and God can become severely distorted. Working on Sunday morning (or late the night prior) may keep a parishioner from attending church service with his or her family or keep the professional from devoting time for spiritual practices (e.g., prayer, Scripture reading, etc.) with a spouse or close friend.

Unfortunately, even some of the most devoted Christians can become infected by the insidious vices celebrated in corporate work life, the chief of these being pride and greed. The worldly success achieved in professional life may convince individuals that there is no longer a need to prioritize and glorify God at work. The spiritual relationship, once neglected, is in peril of becoming severed as the professional looks inward at his own self-sufficiency and engages in self-idolatry. The corrosion occurring in the spiritual relationship between God and the wayward threatens to spill over in the interpersonal realm and undermine the relationships between individuals. Co-workers, once appreciated for their intrinsic worth

being made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), are in danger of being objectified and manipulated to fulfill the self-serving desires of others. We often fail to seriously consider how our own shortcomings (e.g., double standards, demeaning attitudes) contribute over time to relationship distance. Leaders' word-deed alignment influences followers' interpersonal trust (Simons et al., 2015). Greenbaum et al. (2015) note individuals may distance themselves from individuals that demonstrate hypocritical behavior.

Sabbath observation serves a vital role in cultivating the relationship between God and humankind (Cooper & Caballero, 2015). Regular Sabbath observation renews our energy and is positively correlated with work-faith integration (Lynn et al., 2010). The Sabbath gives us space to recognize others' God-given dignity and to reflect on the hypocritical behaviors that undermine our relationships with others and the effectiveness of our discipleship in the workplace. This period of reflection provides us with an opportunity to repent of our faults and avoid the self-condemnation that accompanies the judging of others (Matthew 7:1-5). Without the obligation that comes from remembering that God showed his love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8), it is all too easy to form attitudes of resentment and hostility towards others that fall short of our expectations, which in turn can drive wedges in the relationships between ourselves and the "undeserving" at work. In *Life Together* (1954, 2015), Diedrich Bonhoeffer eloquently brings to remembrance that the spiritual love that shapes relationships originates in Christ and the Word. He reflects:

> God Himself has undertaken to teach brotherly love, all that men can add to it is to remember this divine instruction and the admonition to excel in it more and more. When God was merciful, when He revealed Jesus Christ to us as our Brother, when He won our hearts by His love, this was the beginning of our instruction in divine love. When God was merciful to us, we learned to be merciful with our brethren. When we received forgiveness instead of judgment, we, too, were made ready to forgive our brethren. What God did to us, we then owed to others. The more we received, the more we were able to give…. Thus God Himself taught us to meet one another as God has met us in Christ. (pp. 24-25)

The ongoing manifestation of this type of spiritual love requires the continuous renewal of the mind (Romans 12:2) for employees immersed in a fallen world.

The Sabbath provides an opportunity to introspect and to seek treatment for our spiritual ailments. It is a time reserved to grow in our interior life and relationship with Him. Reading Scripture convicts us of our shared burden of falling short of the glory of God (e.g., Romans 3:23). Time devoted to prayer helps us overcome our tendency for self-preoccupation and apathy towards others. A healthy interior life produces humility and charity toward God, expressed in work that serves the legitimate needs of our neighbors (Wyszynski, 1995). As Locke (2015) notes, regular Sabbath observation can help promote our relationships with God and with those around us. It is through our regular observance of the Sabbath that our focus is restored, our hearts are softened, and our souls are nourished through the Lord's life-giving Word. It brings to remembrance that work should neither define man nor set him free from his dependence on God. Sustainable management practices in the marketplace require the self to remain spiritually connected to God (Stuebs & Kraten, 2021). Humans are merely branches unable to bear sustaining fruit apart from the life originating in the vine (John 15). The Sabbath provides an opportunity for the disciple to receive living water that is gained only through immersion in the Word and an ongoing intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit (John 15:5). This spiritual renewal brings to remembrance the need for disciples to first remove the sin operating in their own lives, so they can effectively minister to others (Matthew 7:5).

Witnessing

There is a particular apprehension today with discussing religion at work for a variety of reasons, including the fear of litigation and congeniality concerns (Grossman, 2008). Yet, the secularization of modern society and the decline in Christianity have been well-documented, and so, too, have the alarming trends in anxiety, loneliness, and apathy. Miller (2007) bemoans, "[M]any business-people and others in the marketplace, like the rest of the lay population, are not biblically literate and, on the whole, have become increasingly unfamiliar with the basic content of the Bible, its truth claims, classic narratives, moral lessons, ethical teachings, and spiritual insights" (p. 94). Bretsen (2008) asserts the sharing of the good news about the kingdom of God is at the center of the faithful corporation. Indeed, Jesus indicates his followers will be "fishers of men" (Mark 1:17) and should feed his sheep (e.g., John 21:17). God has placed us in our positions of influence in the workplace to provide spiritual care for others that are in desperate need of hope and eternal salvation that can only be achieved through exposure to the Gospel. Presuming this will adequately occur within the walls of a church building on Sundays is becoming increasingly unrealistic as contemporary society continues its drift away from organized religion.

There is a renewed interest in workplace evangelism as the secularization of modern society accelerates. McMahone (2019) emphasizes the need for Christian managers (and others) to engage in employee discipleship, which he conceptualizes as a process involving "seed planting" and tending to the conditions that may impede the effectiveness of Christian witnessing. Effective workplace witnessing requires the messenger first to strengthen his relationships with God (through regular Sabbath observance) and others (through regular acts of service). As Bonhoeffer (1954, 2015) writes, "[W]here the ministry of listening, active helpfulness, and bearing with others is faithfully performed, the ultimate and highest service can be rendered, namely, the ministry of the Word of God" (p. 80). Such endeavor faithfully honors the Great Commandment and Great Commission while promoting the triangular relationship between self, others, and God.

Exposure to the Gospel has the ability to transform individuals and their relationships. Hudson (2019) observes, "As we open ourselves to the astounding good news that God offers us of another kind of life, our motivation undergoes a radical shift. We find ourselves wanting to change, to become different and to relate in a more compassionate way" (p. 117). We come to understand all mankind has sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23) and that "God's promise is to heal, forgive, cleanse, and redeem" (Havens, 2015, p. 69) through Christ's atonement on the cross. Repentance is important in this process. Caldwell et al. (2011) view repentance as "an integrated change in one's actions or way of life that seeks to improve relationships with others, either individually or as members of a group" (p. 474) and to fulfill the duties owed to the self and to others. These duties include

- honoring commitments (e.g., Deuteronomy 23:21-23),
- ethical conduct (e.g., James 1:21),
- regular Sabbath observation (e.g., Exodus 20:8),
- loving and serving others regardless of merit (e.g., Luke 10: 30-37),
- forgiving others (e.g., Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13), and
- becoming fishers of men (Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17),

all of which continue the tradition of sharing the Good News to a wayward society in desperate need of discipleship.

We need only look carefully at organizational practices in the marketplace to realize exposure to the Gospel can come in a variety of forms, from In-N-Out Burger's inclusion of Bible verses on its cups and food wrappers to Dayspring's (division of Hallmark Cards) worship services for its employees. It can be the one-off conversation with a colleague about the cross necklace we wear or about the church we attend. How faith-based messaging influences marketplace discipleship is not well informed by empirical research. In their empirical study of nearly 300 Christian youth, Francis et al. (2021) found group activities (e.g., participating in a group Bible study, prayer group, or Christian retreat) and individual experiences (e.g., studying the Bible, reading faith-based books and blogs, and spending time with mentors) strengthened the depth of discipleship. This research suggests continual immersion in the Word, through a combination of group and individual activities, is critical to disciples' growth. To the extent these research findings generalize to the workplace, it may be useful for companies to consider voluntary interpersonal faith activities (e.g, group Bible studies and prayer offerings) to facilitate employee discipleship. Companies including Interstate Batteries, R.G. LeTourneau, and Polydeck Screen Corporation provide some insights into how such group activities can be effectively integrated into companies' culture to encourage voluntary employee participation and enhance employees' discipleship (see Zigarelli, 2019). Executives may also consider making resources available (e.g., voluntary faith readings, corporate chaplains) for employees to engage in individual experiences similar to those found by Francis et al. (2021) to enhance individuals' discipleship.

While the form may vary, the mission involving the sharing of the Gospel is the same—to help others in their personal relationships with the Lamb of God and to bring about the formation that only the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can provide. Diedrich Bonhoeffer (1959, 1976) reminds us "the Holy Trinity himself has made his dwelling in the Christian heart, filling his whole being, and transforming him into the divine image" (p. 343). We must remember that lasting transformation in love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23) comes from the inner working of the Holy Spirit in the believer. It is not the outcome of any training program, value system, inspirational speaker, or employee assistance program (although these all have their legitimate uses in organizations). As Hudson (2019) indicates, "Real change is always an inside work of the Spirit, a transforming gift of grace

to those who live with open hands before God—never a human achievement that we bring about on our own" (p. 67). The story of Jesus changing water into wine (John 2:1-12) is useful when illustrating important truths concerning discipleship and the spiritual formation process (Hudson, 2019). Hudson (2019) notes the miracle required the disciples' obedience. After being informed that the wedding had run out of wine (John 2:1), Jesus instructs the disciples to fill the nearby water jars with water and subsequently transforms it into wine (John 2:7-9). Water is often used in Scripture to symbolize the word of God (e.g., Ephesians 5:26) and human communication (e.g., James 3:10-11), whereas humans are often compared with clay jars (e.g., Isaiah 45:9; Jeremiah 18:6). Considering this symbolization in the context of Jesus' first miracle, one could conclude the story emphasizes the partnership of the disciples and the Holy Spirit. The discipleship process involves both the disciples' sharing of the pragmatic truth found in Scripture and the subsequent indwelling of the Holy Spirit to bring about human transformation.

To summarize, spiritual sowing is about co-laboring with the Holy Spirit to bring about transformation through the strengthening of the triadic relationship existing between God, self, and others. This sacred responsibility compels us to continuously strengthen (1) our relationships with others through mutual self-sacrificial service, (2) our personal relationship with God through regular Sabbath observation, and (3) others' relationships with Christ through exposure to the Gospel. Zigarelli (2019) features fifty Christian-owned enterprises that engage in behaviors consistent with some—or all—of these practices. One of these companies is Interstate Batteries. On the "About Us" section of the company's website, Norm Miller (the company' s former CEO and current Chairman of the Board) shares his personal testimony by detailing how, after 20 years of ongoing alcohol abuse, he cried out to God for help and was transformed by the Word. From this experience, Norm became a "believer in God's power to change lives" (Interstate Batteries, n.d., "Leadership"). He sought out discipleship opportunities and ways to incorporate faith in the business (Klett, n.d.). New employees at Interstate Batteries are given a copy of the Bible (Klett, n.d.). The company has a Chaplain's Department to minister to the company's various stakeholder groups. Employees are invited to participate in the department's mission "to impact others with the love of Christ '' by volunteering their time in service to the local community or participating in one the many other optional faith-based events (Interstate

Batteries, n.d., "Chaplain's Group"). The company has hosted Bible study groups, Christian luncheon speakers, and employee mission trips (Zigarelli, 2019). Its bi-annual distributor conferences (involving its network of 200,000+ distributors) end on Sundays to allow the ministry of the Word that has resulted in thousands of attendees committing their hearts to the Lord (Whitaker, 2013). Many of the company's distributors have followed the lead of the corporate headquarters and are closed on Sundays to provide time off for their workers to connect with God and their loved ones. Zigarelli (2019) observes, "Norm wanted others to enjoy the same transformation that he had—the inner peace, the joy, the freedom from the bondage of addiction, the assurance of eternal life" (p. 302). His unwavering commitment to discipleship practices centered on service, observation, and witnessing have aided in the fulfillment of this faith-inspired vision for the company and its stakeholders.

DISCUSSION

There are several areas for further exploration concerning spiritual sowing in the marketplace. First, the employee discipleship process needs empirical examination. While conceptual work has commenced, researchers need to confirm the relations between the ideas proposed in this emerging area of study. This research will help with identifying both the direct and interactive effects of discipleship practices and may uncover important mediating variables that facilitate or impede spiritual growth. Second, discipleship activity does not occur in isolation but is embedded within a larger environmental ecosystem. Future research might examine the role of organizational culture in promoting service, observation, and witnessing activities, in addition to other behaviors that influence spiritual formation. Employee desires are shaped through the various practices and artifacts of the company, including its ideologies, symbols, stories, and rituals (see Pettigrew, 1979; Ulrich, 1984). It remains unclear how these artifacts might be leveraged in the pursuit of enhancing the spiritual development of employees. The scope of this paper prevented examination of other organizational stakeholder groups, such as consumers. How are customers shaped by the products they purchase and by the interactions they have with the company? Significant research has examined the customer experience but often in direct connection with a company's primary value

proposition. Researchers might consider this topic from a spiritual formation perspective. Finally, companies that are serious about fostering company cultures that embrace employee discipleship may consider adopting performance metrics that assess progress in this area. Organizations that assess workplace discipleship practices and employees' spiritual growth need careful examination. Polydeck Screen Corporation is one such company, having developed a balanced scorecard measuring employees' community service (including mission trips), stewardship giving, prayer group meeting attendance, and personal salvations (Polydeck, n.d.). Future research might consider additional companies that track similar performance and explore best practices.

CONCLUSION

"Most companies use people to build a business…. We use a business to build our people" (as cited in Pontefract, 2016, p. 128). Those simple yet powerful powers are attributed to Ralph Stayer, the co-owner of Johnsonville Sausage. His company, like other faith-based enterprises, understands the critical role of developing employees both professionally and personally. In the modern marketplace, driven by the financial bottom-line, it becomes tempting to view labor as a mere expense to be minimized or automated. When employee development is considered, it is often from the limited perspective of job-specific skill sets. What if we dared to reject such a narrow vision of employment and consider how God has placed individuals within the marketplace, within our companies (including ourselves) to grow in spiritual maturity? The marketplace occupies a critical part of the field that will one day be harvested with the seed being sowed. As we sow in the marketplace, we would do well to reflect on St. Paul's admonishment:

> Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously…now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. (2 Corinthians 9: 6, 10)

Let us be deemed worthy of being called good and faithful stewards of the seed provided for us to sow with a gentle and grateful heart.

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