

# The Theology Diamond: A Strategic Framework for Christian Business Faculty

NATHAN KIRKPATRICK  
Samford University

DARIN WHITE  
Samford University

**ABSTRACT:** Based on the “Strategy Diamond” by Hambrick and Fredrickson (2001), the Theology Diamond is a strategic framework for Christian business faculty. This strategy helps Christian business faculty live intentionally for the glory of God and allows Christian institutions to compete by having business faculty that live out Gospel-centered values. Five elements of the Theology Diamond are presented (arenas, vehicles, differentiators, sequencing, and economic logic), and a strategic framework of Gospel living and working is presented.

## INTRODUCTION

“Always plan ahead. It wasn’t raining when Noah built the ark.” —Richard Cushing

Many Christians today are convinced that planning is unnecessary. They argue that Christians should “live by the spirit” and quote verses like Zechariah 4:6 in support of their position. “This is the Word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.” John Bloom (2015) argues for an unplanned, spontaneous ministry approach and says, “[T]he picture we get of Jesus’s earthly ministry strategy is not a highly structured three-year plan with a detailed, efficiently executed travel schedule and preaching itinerary.”

John Stott (1986), world-renowned author of the *Cross of Christ* and pastor of All Souls Church in London, England, for almost three decades, disagrees with Bloom’s theory and eloquently demonstrates the intentionality of Jesus in His dogged pursuit of the cross as recorded in the Gospels. Stott writes, “From Jesus’ youth, indeed even from his birth, the cross cast its shadow ahead of him. His death was central to his mission. Moreover, the church has always recognized this” (p. 23). Indeed, a close reading of the Gospels demonstrates that everything Jesus did, from the words He spoke to the places He visited to the timing of

His actions, were meticulously planned to be in “accordance with the Scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:3).

The authors agree with Stott and advocate for the benefits of a well-thought-out strategic approach for effective Christian living. Specific to the context of Christian business educators, they seek to develop a framework to help Christian faculty strategically ground their daily lives in the Gospel of Jesus Christ to accomplish their God-ordained roles.

## FROM BUSINESS STRATEGY TO PERSONAL MINISTRY STRATEGY

According to Hambrick and Fredrickson (2001), a strategy is “an integrated, overarching concept of how the business will achieve its objectives” and should be “externally oriented” (p. 48). Furthermore, a strategy must be preceded by the development of the company’s mission and objectives. Thus, strategic planning involves the development of a mission statement, then objectives, and finally the overarching strategy. Hambrick and Fredrickson (2001) further argue for the importance of cohesion in the strategic development process and highlight the five key elements of a strategy: arenas (where will we be active?), vehicles (how will we get there?), differentiators (how will we win in the marketplace?), stages (what will be our speed and sequence

of moves?), and economic logic (how will we obtain our returns?). These “domains of choice” are output-focused and provide a useful framework to assure the strategy is unified in its various elements once formed.

As demonstrated in the opening paragraphs of this manuscript, Christian individuals should also have a single, unified strategy if they hope to accomplish their God-given mission. The authors of this manuscript develop a new, individual-based strategic planning process for Christian business faculty grounded in Hambrick and Fredrickson’s (2001) organizational strategy approach. They entitle this new framework the “Theology Diamond.” The remainder of the article will outline this approach which is illustrated in Figure 1.

### MISSION, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGY

The first step in the Theology Diamond process for Christian business faculty is the development of a mission statement. A mission statement defines the individual’s function in the world and answers the question of why he/she exists. It should be clear, concise, meaningful, inspirational, and long-term (Kerin & Hartley, 2020). When properly constructed, it should give the Christian business faculty member a sense of how his/her efforts, both on the job and in their personal lives, will impact the world.

The first statement of the Westminster Shorter Catechism eloquently describes the mission statement of

followers of Christ. It starts with a question, “What is the chief end of man?” and then provides the answer, “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever” (Conway, 2016). To recognize that our primary reason for existing is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever is “to appreciate the whole thrust of Scripture, to see into God’s heart, and to discover our own purpose” (Conway, 2016). Understanding this truth enables us to see that “knowing Jesus is eternal life, and that losing our lives for him means finding true life” (Conway, 2016). With this in mind, the authors put forward the following mission statement for Christian business faculty:

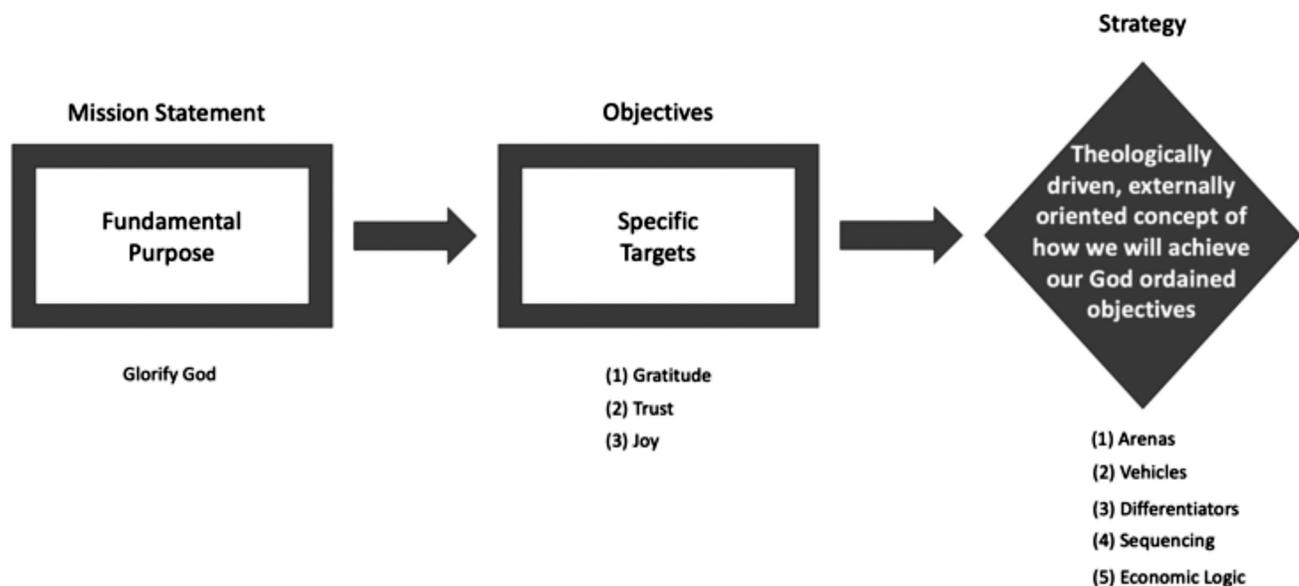
The mission statement of Christian business faculty is to glorify God in every aspect of his/her career and personal life while reveling in the finished work of Christ, that God’s purposes on earth be fulfilled and that God’s name be honored and praised.

The second step in the process is the development of objectives in light of the mission statement. Practically speaking, how does one “glorify God” and “revel in the finished work of Christ”? According to the Theology Diamond framework, we must convert the mission statement into “specific targets.”

A close reading of the Scriptures highlights two key targets for the followers of Christ who are seeking to glorify God (gratitude and trust) and one target for reveling in the finished work of Christ (manifest joy).

We find the first God-glorifying target in Psalm 50:23 which reads, “The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacri-

Figure 1: The Theology Diamond: Christian Business Faculty Strategic Planning Process



fice glorifies me.” According to John Piper (1986), this verse demonstrates that to acknowledge His glory is “to value it above all things and to make it known (and) implies heart-felt gratitude” (p. 56).

The second God-glorifying target relates to our complete trust in Him. The apostle James tells us that Abraham grew in his faith and trust of God and in so doing “glorified Him” (James 2:23). Conversely, the original sin committed by Adam and Eve was due to a lack of trust. God’s desire was for Adam and Eve to co-rule the world with Him while trusting completely in the wisdom of God. However, they rejected His wisdom (represented by eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) and redefined good and evil based on their own selfishly motivated wisdom (Genesis 2:15-17). This same issue has doomed the human race and is at the core of the biblical authors’ explanation for why our world is broken. God’s solution is the same as it was for Adam and Eve. He calls for us to have complete trust and faith in His wisdom and in so doing glorify Him.

The third and final objective from the above mission statement concerns reveling in the finished work of Christ. Jesus said, “I am come that you might have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). When we behold the greatest blessing of all, the finished work of Christ, it should fill us with great joy that in turn propels us to honor and praise God’s name on the earth. The free life of the Christian (in Christ) supernaturally produces joy when one gives their life away for another, when one serves and gives instead of takes and consumes, and when one shares and serves out of a heart of love and gratitude for all that God has done for him/her in Jesus Christ (Galatians 5:13-14). According to Hollinger (2003), “The enjoyment of God and the glory of God can never be pulled apart. They walk hand in hand” (p. 2). All of this taken together would yield the following three objectives (specific targets):

Christian business faculty members should seek to tangibly demonstrate: (1) gratitude towards God and exhibit a deep (2) trust in the sovereign will of God for his/her life and in the revealed Word of God. He/she should also overflow with (3) joy which is grounded in the finished work of Christ and an irrepressible hope for the future resurrection from the dead and new heaven and new earth.

Now that we have a specific mission and objectives, we can move forward with utilizing the Theology Diamond.

### THE THEOLOGY DIAMOND BACKGROUND

As Christian business faculty grow in their understanding and intention (by God’s Grace) of their mission to glo-

rify God in every aspect of their personal and professional lives, including their specific vocational work as business faculty, then these faculty (especially at Christian colleges and universities) can take great confidence that their efforts are strategically leading to living out of a Gospel framework. This missional living to glorify God and enjoy Him forever informs the objectives of a Christian business faculty member to live with gratitude for all that God has done for mankind in the person and work of Jesus Christ; to trust that God is sovereignly working in all things for His people’s good and His glory (Romans 8:28); to live freely through loving, serving, and laying down one’s life for another (Galatians 5:13); and to live a life of surrender knowing that God’s larger story is at work and being weaved through every good endeavor that a child of God undertakes (Berg & Carson, 2020; Keller, 2012; Keller, 2013).

Keller (2012) illustrated this concept well when he articulated how the Gospel of Jesus Christ gives meaning to all of our work, and Christians can take great comfort that their work is being used by God as He builds His kingdom and unfolds His larger story for mankind. Thus, when Christian business faculty live missionally for God’s glory, and by grace live out this mission through objectives rooted in gratitude, trust, free loving and serving, and surrender, the Gospel of Jesus Christ shines in the darkness and the Kingdom of God advances. In addition, it allows Christian business faculty to have a well-informed strategy (using the Theology Diamond as one helpful guide) to ground their business teaching, content, and research in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which in turn helps Christian colleges and universities compete in the marketplace of Christian higher education since their business faculty are engaging their students in every angle through the Gospel and for the glory of God (reaffirming and giving credence to what the institutions stand for as Christian institutions). This intentional missional living with objectives that inform a strategy of specific theological living, working, teaching, and communicating connects to what the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 10:14-15:

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

Hambrick and Fredrickson (2001) created the Strategy Diamond for business workers, business students and faculty members, and any worker associated with business to be able to understand a helpful framework for strategy design.

This framework has five elements or components (arenas, vehicles, differentiators, sequencing, and economic logic) and truly represents an integrated set of choices that informs a strategy and answers the question, “How do we compete?” (Hambrick & Fredrickson, 2001; Porter, 2008).

In this paper, the authors seek to use the “Strategy Diamond” concept to develop a biblically saturated, theologically rich framework termed the “Theology Diamond,” which can help Christian business faculty members (specifically at Christian colleges and universities) strategically ground their teaching, content, and research in the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:16-17). Thus, starting with the first component of the Theology Diamond—arenas (informed directly by Hambrick and Fredrickson’s Strategy Diamond)—this paper unpacks an intentional sequence of steps and choices (that strategically fit together) that allows Christian business faculty to live boldly for Jesus Christ in their vocation and also helps their Christian higher education institutions compete in the marketplace by having more faculty on their campuses that affirm and support what these institutions purport to stand for (Gospel-centered education) (EPM, 2017).

### **Arenas**

The first step and intentional choice in the strategic framework of the Theology Diamond is arenas, or as Hambrick and Fredrickson (2001) wrote, the areas that one is active in. This first part of the Theology Diamond is the most fundamental of choices in that it conveys from the start where Christian business faculty members are going to intentionally, lovingly, and boldly live out their mission and objectives for God’s glory and the Gospel’s proclamation (Hambrick & Fredrickson, 2001). In addition, the arenas side of the Theology Diamond also conveys a seriousness in emphasis in that the arenas of a strategic framework must be clear in direction but also in how much energy, time, and attention will be devoted to these areas. Thus, for Christian business faculty members specifically in their vocation, the arenas where intentional living for the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be carried out (for God’s glory) is largely in the classrooms and offices, on campuses, in committee meetings, on research calls and collaborations, through guest speaking opportunities, and even in conference and research presentations.

These arenas where Christian business faculty members can be active for God’s glory and the Gospel’s proclamation (through a life of gratitude, trust, freedom, and surrender) are not an exhaustive or perfect list of where one can be strategically active for the Gospel, but these arenas do cover a larger portion of the typical environments where Christian

business faculty members are active and work out their vocation and training. This variety of arenas where Christian business faculty can be strategically, intentionally active for the Gospel of Jesus Christ aligns with what Porter (1996) wrote about how effective strategy involves different sets of activities and is largely about fit. The Theology Diamond strategic framework starts with the aforementioned arenas because all of these areas of activity and scholarly production fit with a typical faculty member’s roles, duties, and responsibilities, and most likely connects with a Christian business faculty member’s passions, interests, and abilities since these arenas are part of the daily life of a faculty member in general (Porter, 1996).

The arenas of classrooms and offices, campuses, committee meetings, research calls and collaborations, guest speaking opportunities, and conference and research presentations all serve as areas of activity where a Christian business faculty member can bring the Gospel into their workplace but also live out a humility and selflessness in and through these areas of activity by pointing others away from themselves and to Jesus Christ and His Truth (Keller, 2010; Sauls, 2015). As Brown (2015) articulated, the implications of living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ for Christian business faculty members is enormous and requires an intentional, heartfelt, everyday engagement in the arenas in which faculty find themselves in the context of being college educators. The Theology Diamond framework reminds Christian business faculty members that their missional living for God’s glory through a heart and life of gratitude, trust, freedom, and surrender starts with the areas of everyday activity where they find themselves (their arenas).

This actually should be good news for Christian business faculty members because they do not have to “add on” anything to their everyday work lives, rather (by God’s Grace), they simply need to ask God for a changed, intentional heart every day to be purposeful in their existing academic and scholarly arenas for Jesus and His glory. This heartfelt, intentional living for Jesus and His Gospel is backed up by the Apostle Paul in Colossians 3:23-24 when he wrote, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” Christian business faculty members are missionaries in their academic and scholarly arenas (whether realized or not), and the call for these men and women (as children of God) is to surrender their lives to the Lord every day and ask for a devotion to express their Christian faith in thought, word, deed, action, and example in the arenas of activity that God has called them to on college and university campuses (White & Kirkpatrick, 2020).

Arenas are the crucial first step in the Theology Diamond strategic framework for Gospel living because one must know where they are *already* active to then leverage those existing arenas for God's glory and Jesus' name. Christian business faculty members know their typical academic and scholarly arenas, and they know that these arenas will always be part of their work, time, attention, energy, communication, and career goals. Thus, the first part of a new strategy (as God works and changes hearts) for missional Kingdom living is to see these arenas as mission fields where surrendered hearts to God and His glory can be used intentionally for competing for Jesus and His name, fame, and Kingdom renewal (Smith, 2001).

### Vehicles

The second part or side of the Theology Diamond (rooted in Hambrick and Fredrickson's work) is "vehicles," or the intentional answer to the question of "How will we get there?" (Hambrick & Fredrickson, 2001). When creating and honing a strategic framework for competition and action, arenas (where will we be active) must be initially identified, but then there must be a concrete understanding of how one will move through these arenas and leverage these arenas for strategic growth, competition, and collective success (God's Kingdom advancement) (Hambrick & Fredrickson, 2001). As Planellas and Muni (2020) pointed out, businesses, organizations, and any movement are built on the important day-to-day decisions that individuals make and the long-term strategic decisions that inform and guide. The vehicles side of the Theology Diamond is meant to help answer both parts of this strategic framework in that it informs Christian business faculty members' day-to-day work as well as their long-term path forward in their careers (as God guides them) by showing them the means (everyday and long-term) for *how* they live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the different academic and scholarly arenas they touch. Thus, the Theology Diamond puts forward (as one helpful example) vehicles that help Christian business faculty members know how to step into their various academic and scholarly arenas with a confidence and assurance rooted in God's love for them in Christ, God's Truth empowering them, God's spirit leading them, and God's sovereign goodness protecting and comforting them (Psalm 145:18; Romans 8:39; Galatians 5:16; 1 Timothy 6:15).

The first vehicle which helps Christian business faculty members answer the questions related to how they engage their arenas missionally for God's glory and Jesus' name starts with intentionally grounding one's teaching, content, delivery, and classroom practices in the very Word of God, the Bible (Matthew 4:4). The Theology Diamond asserts

that the most important vehicle for helping Christian business faculty members (at Christian colleges and universities in particular where the freedom to share the Gospel is encouraged) engage their academic and scholarly arenas for God's glory, Jesus' proclamation, and their own personal true fulfillment is by grounding all that one does (personally and professionally) in God's Word. All the academic and scholarly arenas that a faculty member touches and connects with as part of vocational ministry in Christian higher education needs to be brought under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and informed by God's holy, inspired, infallible, inherent, and authoritative Word (2 Timothy 3:16) in order for all constituents (students, faculty and staff, respective campus communities, the scholarly community, etc.) to see that one's arenas are engaged for Christ because it is lovingly commanded to do so (Matthew 28:19).

Correia et al. (2020) picked up on this theme when they wrote about faith and Gospel integration as an important part of Christian business education, and life and calling in general for the Christian business educator should be central to what they do. Babyak (2017) also articulated that witnessing for Jesus Christ and His Kingdom stems from a specific understanding of one's Christian mission and purpose. As mentioned previously, if the Theology Diamond is undergirded by a mission to glorify God and enjoy Him forever through specific Gospel-centered objectives of gratitude, trust, freedom, and surrender, then the vehicles by which we carry out this mission and these objectives allows for specific engagement in the arenas God calls Christian business faculty members into. Consequently, when a Christian business faculty member grounds their teaching, content, delivery methods, discussions, and examples in the classroom in the Word of God, the arenas of the classroom, office, and even student discussion moments are infused by Kingdom Truth, wisdom from the Holy Spirit, and God's inspired words that penetrate hearts and minds (Hebrews 4:12).

One may ask, how does a Christian business faculty member (specifically at a Christian college or university) ground their teaching, content delivery methods, instructional designs, classroom discussions, student conversations, etc. in God's Word as the primary vehicle for engaging these arenas for Christ? There is not one primary or "right" method for this vehicle of movement and purpose, rather it simply takes a heart and life that desires to live intentionally and desires for the academic and scholarly arenas related to their teaching and content to be grounded in God's Word and supported by God's Truth (Dulaney et al., 2015). This can take on many forms, but it could be starting one's class with a Scripture of the day connected to content being taught and discussed, or it could be praying through a

Scripture verse in class while praying with and for students. It could be talking about a specific business issue, ethical dilemma, financial practice, leadership scenario, or strategic method with a verse, biblical context, biblical story, or biblical example as the backdrop. It could be discussing the ever-changing domestic and world economies and business realities through the lens of the sovereignty, providence, and perfect rule of God the Father and Lord Jesus Christ (and undergird these theological principles with Scripture such as Ephesians 1).

These examples that comprise the primary vehicle for bringing out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the arenas that comprise and relate to teaching, classroom education, and discussion are many and have great flexibility, but they all connect through intention. An intentional heart that desires to surrender to Jesus every day (albeit as a fellow sinner and struggler) will want to use the vehicle of biblically infused teaching and communication to engage the arenas of the classroom, student discussions, office, and educationally related student events (clubs, groups, small group studies, home meals, etc.). As Babyak (2018) pointed out, Christians (and Christian business faculty members) can place their hope and trust in God and His Word, and by His grace, step out on faith using the vehicles (such as teaching, mentoring, and classroom management infused by the Gospel of Jesus Christ) to engage the arenas where God has called them to be active and missional for His glory and their good.

A second important vehicle that moves Christian business faculty members (at a Christian college or university) towards engaging their academic arenas for God's glory and Jesus' proclamation is to engage the arena of research and scholarship from a distinctively biblical perspective. The blessing of having scholarly business journals that encourage thoughtful, biblically based research and scholarship is that Christian business faculty members can engage the arenas of the academy through a variety of publishing means and avenues, and they can use their faculty-driven research and scholarship interests to address business topics and business education through the lens of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Again, Christian educators can glorify God through great work, scholarship, teaching, and research, regardless of where they work, but Christian business faculty members at Christian colleges and universities have the added benefit of being able (and hopefully encouraged) to bring their Gospel-centered research and publications into the direct channels of campus communication and education (classrooms, offices, meetings, presentations, committees, student groups, etc.).

Esqueda (2014) illustrated this well when he wrote about how a biblical worldview in all learning, teaching,

scholarship, etc. is a unifying force that can help illuminate the Christian faith and theological truths in people's minds, especially on Christian college and university campuses (Psalm 18:28). Thus, Christian business faculty at Christian colleges and universities can also freely ground their research and scholarship in God's Word; the themes and theological truths of the Bible; and Jesus' overarching redemptive work to change hearts, minds, and all of creation and then directly infuse these scholarly activities into the very arenas on their campuses for further example of how to think, work, operate, and live out of a complete Christian mindset (Chewning, 2001; Liang, 2018).

A third vehicle that Christian business faculty members can intentionally take hold of in engaging their arenas on a Christian college or university campus is biblically saturated leadership and direction of people (Babyak, 2018). *Harvard Business Review* ("Coaching and Mentoring," 2004) wrote that effective mentoring, coaching, and specific leadership impacts take time and energy. This is no different for Christian business faculty members at Christian institutions in that as God provides the time, energy, and moments, Christian faculty members can use biblical, intentional leadership to step into the relationships on campus (and beyond) that God provides. This vehicle related to biblical leadership is essentially missional living and is grounded in the freedom found only in Jesus Christ that truly moves one to lead for Christ through love, service, and the laying down of one's life for another (Grimes & Bennett III, 2017). One sees this example in Scripture in Galatians 5:13-14 when the Apostle Paul writes, "For you were called to freedom brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

This biblical, intentional leadership for Christian business faculty members on their respective campuses is a powerful vehicle that can not only help the love of Jesus Christ shine forth but can also directly and indirectly influence others to also be inspired to lead intentionally for Jesus Christ in their own arenas (where they live, work, and play). As Windes et al. (2017) illustrated well, it is only through intentional love and service of God and the surrounding neighbor that true satisfaction, joy, freedom, and meaning, as well as purpose to the Christian life arises. Christian business faculty have the strategic influence to be able to use heart-driven, intentional leadership (through words, actions, conversations, presentations, etc.) that is saturated in the Gospel of Jesus Christ to engage the arenas that they are active in and to see that this engagement is not about self; rather, it is about God's Kingdom advancement and

others' hearts and souls (McMahon et al., 2015). This joyful and freeing reality of biblical leadership is a vehicle that moves men and women of God into action, into intention, and into biblical and God-honoring engagement in the arenas where God has called them to be active, including the campus communities of Christian colleges and universities.

### Differentiators

The third part or side of the Theology Diamond (rooted in Hambrick and Fredrickson's work) is "differentiators," or the intentional answer to the question of "How will we win in the marketplace?" (Hambrick & Fredrickson, 2001). When creating and honing a strategic framework for competition and action (living intentionally for God's Kingdom and glory), arenas (Where will we be active?) must be initially identified, vehicles (How will we get there?) must be clearly articulated, and then differentiators (How will we win the marketplace?) must be clarified. This third step of the Theology Diamond is grounded in a biblical view of winning that is different from the secular world's definition of winning and success. For the Christian looking to God's Word, one must first understand that because Jesus has won already for sinners, the final judgement day and final outcomes of redemption have already been achieved through Jesus' perfect life, death, and resurrection (Romans 1:4; Romans 6:5; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 20:6). Thus, the Christian in general, and the Christian business faculty member in particular, is free to understand they can differentiate themselves and their work for Jesus' name and fame because He has already won and secured everything for the Christian. As Jesus said Himself on the cross in John 19:30: "It is finished."

So, the first and most biblical way that a Christian business faculty member on a Christian college or university campus can differentiate themselves from the world is to remember and then remind others that Jesus is the one who has already won for sinners, and He is returning one day to make all things new and finish his ultimate victory of redemption and reconciliation (Revelation 21:15). Then, with this in mind, these same faculty members can ask God for the grace to differentiate themselves from the world and Satan's lies (which will in turn help their Christian institutions compete in the marketplace by showing commitment to the Gospel) by being faithful to the Scriptures; bringing the Gospel intentionally into their classrooms; and even creatively weaving God's Word into student assignments, student projects and presentations, and student research. One of the most effective ways for Christian business faculty members to strategically differentiate themselves from the rest of the academic world (not out of arrogance or

pride, rather out of humility and love for Christ) is to show students that God's Word informs every aspect of their lives, including the work they do (assignment, projects and presentations, etc.). As Sauerwin (2013) articulated well, Christian colleges and universities should be in the business of transforming hearts and minds for Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, and one effective and powerful way Christian faculty can do this is to be faithful to the Scriptures and have God's Word connect and inform the actual work being done in the classroom.

This differentiation by Christian business faculty members to strategically bring God's Word into the classrooms in the actual classwork, assignments, and graded student tasks is simply another way that these men and women can show students and the world that they believe in the totality of Scripture and the applicability of God's Word to every area of life (2 Timothy 3:16). Wrenn and Cafferky (2015) articulated this intentional differentiation well when they wrote about how Christian business faculty members are no different from any other Christian scholar or professor and how there is a direct need for more Christian business faculty members (specifically at Christian colleges and universities where the Gospel is embraced) to bring God's Word into the classroom, into assignments, and directly into their students' lives. This strategic differentiation approach by Christian business faculty members to bring God's Word into the actual work being done (by faculty and students) every day is moved along by the vehicles of intentional, biblical living for Christ, and leads to direct engagement into the arenas of the classroom, campus community, and students' hearts and lives.

Thus, these three initial parts or sides of the Theology Diamond (arenas, vehicles, and differentiators) are intentional, missional, biblical ways of living that trust and believe in two key theological truths: 1. God is absolutely sovereign over all and in control of all. 2. God has a perfect plan for this world and His people, and men and women are human agents who are responsible for their choices and actions as they live with the time that God gives them (1 Samuel 2:3; Daniel 11:32; Luke 23:51; Acts 4:24; Romans 7:15; 2 Corinthians 9:6; 1 Timothy 6:15; 1 Peter 1:13; Revelation 6:10). Christian business faculty members can intentionally use the vehicles and ways that God has provided to engage their arenas for Jesus Christ and His glory, and use specific, biblical ways of integrating the Gospel into their work and their students' work in order to differentiate from any other business class at a secular institution (which still has great value and is being informed by the common grace of God) so that a Gospel-centered strategy of biblical integration into business teaching takes place on a consistent

and God-honoring basis. These intentional, strategic steps of competing for God's glory, Jesus' name, and for the good of Christian college and university campuses (helping them differentiate in the marketplace as institutions that want to stand for the Gospel) requires a heart that is gripped by the love of God in Jesus Christ and helps inform the last two sides of the Theology Diamond: Sequencing and Economic Logic (McMahon, 2014).

### Sequencing

The fourth part or side of the Theology Diamond (rooted in Hambrick and Fredrickson's work) is "sequencing" or the specific answer to the question of "What will be our sequence and speed of moves? (Hambrick & Fredrickson, 2001). After one has clearly defined one's arenas (Where will we be active?), one's vehicles (How will we get there?), and one's differentiators (How will we win in the marketplace?), the fourth side of this strategy diamond deals with intentional pacing. To answer the question of sequencing from a biblical worldview and Gospel-centered framework, one must first acknowledge again the sovereignty of God in all things (Acts 4:24) and the fact that nothing happens in this world and in one's life apart from God's perfect will and direction (Psalm 37:23; Proverbs 16:9; Proverbs 20:24). This biblical reality is not just head knowledge or information for discussion; rather, it is much deeper and serves as a great comfort to the Christian (and the Christian business faculty member) in that no movement, action, or result will happen that is outside of God's control or apart from God's providential care for His children (Psalm 89:26; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:3; Ephesians 4:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6).

Thus, Christian business faculty members can strategically ground all their teaching, research, work, engagements, conversations, and campus involvements in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, knowing the speed with which these actions are done is under the watch, care, and control of a loving heavenly Father (1 Corinthians 15:58; Philippians 2:16). So, how do Christian business faculty members at Christian colleges and universities in particular answer the strategic question of sequencing? The answer is found in the intentional, everyday proclamation and living out of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a speed and sequencing that is not based on velocity. Rather, it is based on consistency and a standing firm in the faith (by God's grace) that is evident to the world and honoring to the Lord (Ephesians 6:13; Philippians 1:27; Philippians 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 1 Peter 5:12). The answer to the strategic question of sequencing is that every day, every week, Christian business faculty members (and

all Christians around the globe) can be intentional with the time that God has given them, and they can see that their platform for Kingdom influence is a gift from God that is meant to be lived out to the fullest (1 Corinthians 9:24; Hebrews 12:1). As Pope (2017) articulated well, at the end of the day, it is not about activity or all that we have done as it relates to earthly duties (although God uses the ordinary for His Kingdom and glory); it is about a more intentional living and devotion to and for Jesus Christ.

The second piece to answering the strategic question of sequencing is that as Christian business faculty members live intentionally every day, every week for Jesus Christ and His glory, these same men and women also are called to live with a God-honoring sense of urgency in that one's time on this side of heaven is short, and God has numbered the days of each person on this side of heaven (Lamentations 4:18; Job 23:14; Job 30:23; Psalm 119:91; Acts 22:10; 1 Corinthians 7:29; Hebrews 9:27). James, the half-brother of Jesus, illustrated this reality of the urgency with which Christians should live on this side of heaven when he wrote in Chapter 4:14, "Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes."

This humbling reality for all Christians in general, and Christian business faculty in particular (as it relates to the context of this paper), reminds one that one should live with urgency for the Gospel of Jesus Christ *today* because God does not promise tomorrow, and what one has today is simply a gift, blessing, and mercy of God (Proverbs 27:1; Matthew 6:34). Consequently, Christian business faculty can strategically live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their classrooms, offices, meetings, on their campuses, and within their academic communities with a great sense of loving urgency because they know they have the gift of salvation and Truth in Jesus Christ, and they have the only true source of joy and hope that the world and others eternally need (Pope, 2017).

Giglio (2017) highlighted this intentional sense of urgency in the Christian life when he wrote about how the greatest regret any Christian could have is the regret that they were not bold and intentional in living lovingly and specifically for Jesus Christ with the time that God gave them. Strategically, the Christian business faculty member competes for the Kingdom of God and for the glory of Jesus through an intentional sequencing that is every day, steady, and forward-marching as a soldier of Jesus Christ and for His Kingdom advancement in the world (and in students', faculty, staff, and others' lives) (Ephesians 6:10-20; Philippians 2:25; 2 Timothy 2:3; Philemon 2). It is important to note that no one and no Christian can do any of these things

apart from the grace of God not only saving their hearts and lives through Jesus but also changing their hearts, minds, lives, and desires through the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:21). This is good news that Jesus Christ came to save, redeem, and transform sinners so that they could live with a sense of loving urgency for His Kingdom and glory with the time that He has appointed for them (Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15). This is urgent living out of a heart that has been transformed by the grace and power of God through Jesus Christ and this Gospel-centered sequencing is the speed and pace with which all Christians, and Christian business faculty members, should move and work at as God gives the grace to carry on (Ephesians 6:18, James 1:25).

### Economic Logic

The fifth and final part or side of the Theology Diamond (rooted in Hambrick and Fredrickson's work) is "economic logic" or the focused answer to the question of "How will we make our returns?" (Hambrick & Fredrickson, 2001). After one has clearly defined one's arenas (Where will we be active?), one's vehicles (How will we get there?), one's differentiators (How will we win in the marketplace?), and one's intentional and urgent sequencing for God's glory, one can then finally turn to answering the question centered on the return on investment. In the context of this paper, what is the strategic return for Christian business faculty members (specifically Christian colleges and universities) as they seek (by God's grace) to live out an intentional life of teaching, mentoring, advising, presenting, writing, and campus engaging that is grounded in biblical Truth and saturated in the good news of Jesus? How will Christian business faculty even make or see these returns as they seek by grace to live this kind of life personally and professionally? The answers to these questions that form the fifth side of the Theology Diamond (economic logic) are found in the context of trust and surrender to the Lord and in the words of the Apostle Paul in the letter of Romans, chapters 8 and 12.

First, by God's grace and through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians (and Christian business faculty members) are called to trust the Lord with their hearts, lives, careers, outcomes, and eternal standing. All throughout Scripture one sees the call of men and women who call on the name of the Lord to trust in God, His goodness, His love and provision, and His sovereign plan (Psalm 37:5; Psalm 52:8; Psalm 56:4; Psalm 56:11; Psalm 71:5; Proverbs 3:5; Proverbs 16:20; Jeremiah 17:7; Daniel 6:23; Matthew 27:43; Philippians 2:24; Hebrews 2:13). Christian business faculty members can trust and surrender the return on their investments (economic logic) to the Lord and simply step

in and engage their arenas strategically for the glory of God and Jesus' name knowing that God *is* at work in all things and in all work (Psalm 8:3; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Schaeffer (2001) articulated this concept well when he wrote about how Christians must be prepared to die daily to their flesh and their own desires and to surrender all for the sake of Jesus Christ. Keller (2015) commented that we can cast our burdens on the Lord and surrender our work and prayers to God and His perfect character, knowing that He has a plan of salvation for the world. Piper (2011) also added that it is for the glory of God that all Christians should be living, not for the glory of man. Christian business faculty can take great comfort in the fact that they can surrender their daily work and engagement for the sake of Jesus Christ to the Lord; they can not worry about what surface-level returns they notice or do not notice, and they can focus and trust (by grace) that God is using them in the here and now of everyday life to bring people to Christ, build His Kingdom, and plant seeds for redemption and renewal (2 Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 3:10). This Kingdom-focused heart and mindset comes when one is changed by God's grace and goodness in Jesus Christ to trust, surrender, and live for Him, not because of personal gain, professional favor, economic benefit, or human praise (although all those things are blessings by God when they come) rather out of a heart that is grateful and excited for all that God has done for sinners through Jesus Christ (Chapell, 2001).

Second, Christian business faculty members can not only trust and surrender the returns on their investments to the Lord and His sovereign goodness, they also can rest in these two sections of verses written by the Apostle Paul in the letter of Romans:

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39)

Paul then goes on to write in Romans 12:1-2:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Christian business faculty members can take great comfort in knowing as they strategically engage their arenas for the sake of the Gospel and as they seek by Grace to surrender their work, time, talents, and results to the Lord that nothing (including academic success or failure, people's approval, tenure, and promotion, etc.) can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus. In the same vein, because Christians can never be separated from the love of God, instead of focusing on the return on investments that the world focuses on, Christians (and Christian business faculty members) can instead seek to live not for this world but for God's Kingdom to come and for the King of Kings, Jesus, who currently sits on the throne and is making all things new (including using work in academia and all spheres of life to bring about this renewal) (1 Corinthians 15:24). Thus, once completed, the Theology Diamond (arenas, vehicles, differentiators, sequencing, and economic logic) truly can be used as one helpful strategic design tool to not only guide Christian business faculty members as they seek to intentionally live for Jesus Christ on their campuses (in direct and indirect ways), but it also can serve as a model for comfort and counsel in that it points one back to God's Word and His sovereign, loving, gracious, redeeming, perfect, renewing work found only in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Roman 10:9; Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10). This is the good news of the Gospel. This good news is the fortification of all five sides of the Theology Diamond and points us back over and over to the loving arms of God the Father and the salvation, forgiveness, freedom, and love of Jesus Christ, His Son (Brown, 2004).

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the authors argue for the benefits of a well-thought-out strategic approach for effective Christian living and working for Christian business faculty. We see evidence of this sort of approach in the way Paul undertook his missionary journeys outlined in Luke/Acts and in the thoughtful church growth strategies implemented by the Apostles. Jesus himself shows evidence of a strategic approach to his ministry actions in the way He constantly referred to his actions fulfilling what was predicted by the prophets. Indeed, biblical theology as a field of study is predicated on the fact that God announced His plan of redemption in Genesis with the Proto-Gospel (Genesis 3: 16-19) and again with the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12: 1-3), then executed His plan throughout the history of the nation of Israel, and ultimately concluded with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The authors argue that

Christian business educators (by God's grace and work in their hearts) should pursue a similar structured approach in their careers if they wish to accomplish their God-ordained roles (professionally as well as personally). To assist in this process, the authors developed a strategic planning framework for Christian business faculty, which they entitled the "Theology Diamond."

### REFERENCES

- Babiyak, A. (2017). Biblical leadership at work scale development. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 12(1), 9-31.
- Babiyak, A. (2018). Toward a theory of biblical leadership. *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*, 21(1), 55-66.
- Berg, T., & Carson, T. (2020). Resilience in the business curriculum: A biblical perspective and directions for future research. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 15(1), 89-98.
- Bloom, J. (2015). *You don't have to plan everything*. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/you-dont-have-to-plan-everything>
- Brown, K. (2015). Why biblical integration in business? *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*, 18(2), 87-88.
- Brown, S. (2004). *A scandalous freedom*. New York: Howard Books.
- Chapell, B. (2001). *Holiness by grace*. Crossway Books.
- Chewning, R. (2001). A dozen styles of biblical integration: Assimilating the mind of Christ. *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*, 7(1), 114-151.
- Coaching and mentoring. (2004). *Harvard Business Review*. Harvard Business Essentials.
- Conway, Andrew (2016). *5 reasons you need the Westminster Shorter Catechism*. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/five-reasons-you-need-the-westminster-shorter-catechism/>
- Correia, C., LaShaw, M., & Sloan, D. (2020). Intentional integration of faith in accounting matters. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 15(1), 77-88.
- Dulaney, E., Bates, M., Berg, P., Forbes, B., Gunn, R., Koontz, R., Mathern, A., Mullen, K., Strifler, J., & Thomas, B. (2015). Faith integration in the classroom: A plural view. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 10(1), 55-62.
- EPM. (October, 2017). *Strategy diamond*. Retrieved from <https://expertprogrammanagement.com/2017/10/strategy-diamond/>
- Esqueda, O. (2014). Biblical worldview: The Christian higher education foundation for learning. *Christian Higher Education*, 13(2), 91-100.

- Giglio, L. (2017). *Goliath must fall: Winning the battle against your giants*. Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group.
- Grimes, M., & Bennett III, R. (2017). Christ-centered leadership: God-honoring leadership for committed Christians. *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*, 20(1), 24-35.
- Hambrick, D., & Fredrickson, J. (2001). Are you sure you have a strategy? *Academy of Management Executive*, 15(4), 48-59.
- Herrity, A. (2015). A theory for preparing students to maintain integration of Christian faith and business while starting careers. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 10(1), 97-106.
- Hollinger, D. (2003). To glorify or enjoy forever. *Knowing and Doing*, downloaded on 12/12/20 from [https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/Knowing\\_and\\_Doing](https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/Knowing_and_Doing).
- Keller, T. (2010). *Gospel in life study guide: Grace changes everything*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan.
- Keller, T. (2012). *Every good endeavor: Connecting your work to God's work*. New York, New York: Penguin Books.
- Keller, T. (2013). *Galatians for you*. The Good Book Company.
- Keller, T. (2015). *The songs of Jesus*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House.
- Kerin, R., & Hartley, S. (2020). *Marketing*. New York, New York: McGraw Hill.
- Liang, E. (2018). Lifelong learning in Christian business education: A framework and case study. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 13(1), 41-48.
- McMahon, M. (2014). Missing elements: Improving our preparation of Christian students for the business world. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 9(1), 83-91.
- McMahon, M., Locke, L., & Roller, R. (2015). Whose faith? Faith integration for postmodern Christian business students. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 10(1), 107-117.
- Piper, J. (1986). *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian hedonist*. New York: Multnomah Books.
- Piper, J. (2011). *The dangerous duty of delight*. New York: Multnomah Books.
- Planellas, M., & Muni, A. (2020). *Strategic decisions: The 30 most useful models*. Cambridge University Press.
- Porter, M. (1996). What is strategy? *Harvard Business Review*, (November-December), 1-20.
- Porter, M. (2008). The five competitive forces that shape strategy. *Harvard Business Review*, 1-19.
- Pope, R. (2017). *The answer*. Johns Creek, GA: Life on Life Ministries.
- Sauerwein, J. (2013). The role of Christian faculty in restoring accounting professionalism. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 8(1), 73-80.
- Sauls, S. (2015). *Jesus outside the lines: A way forward for those who are tired of taking sides*. Tyndale.
- Schaeffer, F. (2001). *True spirituality*. Tyndale House Publishers.
- Smith, S. (2001). *Objects of his affection*. West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Company.
- Stott, J. (1986). *The cross of Christ*. Downers Grove, IL. InterVarsity Press.
- White, D., & Kirkpatrick, N. (2020). The role of biblical theology in teaching a Christian worldview on business. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 15(1), 66-76.
- Windes, D., White, L., Harkema, K., Hamilton, R., & Samudio, C. (2017). Preparing business students for participation in God's creative and redemptive purpose for the world. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 12(1), 149-12.
- Wrenn, B., & Cafferky, M. (2015). Biblical worldview and the business curriculum: The scriptural foundations for business series. *Christian Business Academy Review*, 10(1), 13-20.