

Finding

ACRES OF DI MONDS

in Marketplace Ministry

by Craig King

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is an underused evangelism strategy
that is not event driven, but ongoing,
and results in natural and effective discipleship.”*



Russell Conwell

Russell Conwell was a Baptist minister who lived in Philadelphia in the early 1900s. He was also an orator, teacher, philanthropist, and lawyer. He is best remembered as the founder of Temple University, and for his inspirational lecture, “Acres of Diamonds” which he gave over 6,000 times.

What most people don't know is that he earned close to \$8,000,000 as a result of giving that speech and that he gave nearly all of it away during his lifetime. Just for the record, that would be over \$170,000,000 in today's dollars. He remembered what it was like as a poor, but highly motivated college student, so he gave the money to thousands of students who would not be able to attend college without his help.

Mr. Conwell's speech revolved around a story of an African farmer named Ali Hafed. Ali was fairly well off, but became dissatisfied with his life when he heard about others in Africa who became wealthy by discovering diamonds. Ali immediately sold his farm, packed a few things and left his family in search of these elusive stones. He spent years wandering across the African continent until finally, broke and despondent, he threw himself into a raging river and drowned.

Some years later, the man who bought his farm was working the soil and found a strange-looking stone in a small creek that ran across the property. The farmer brought it into his farmhouse and placed it on the fireplace mantle as a curio. One day, a visitor who knew diamonds came to the farmer's home and noticed the unusual stone. He quickly picked it up and excitedly shouted, “Do you know what this is? This is one of the largest diamonds I have ever seen!”

Further investigation revealed that the entire farm was covered with the valuable stones. In fact, this particular piece of land turned out to be one of the richest and most productive diamond mines in the world, and the new owner became one of the wealthiest men in Africa.

There are many who say the story Russell Conwell told was true and the farm turned out to be the Kimberley Diamond Mine ... the richest the world has ever known. I cannot vouch for the truth of the story, but I can share several undeniable truths as they relate to Marketplace Ministry.



The main point of Russell Conwell's speech is that many times we are surrounded by great opportunities and resources, yet we don't recognize them for what they are. In the story, neither farmer recognized that all the while they were toiling in the hot sun to make a modest living, they were actually surrounded by incredible wealth.

In the context of Marketplace Ministry, business owners, independent contractors, and professionals make up approximately ten percent of your church membership. They are scattered throughout your congregation, just like stones in a farmer's field. But these are no ordinary stones. Your business leaders, just like raw diamonds, are valuable to your ministry in several unique ways.

They hold the key to building community *within* your church and building bridges to the community *around* your church. Marketplace Leaders are almost always the largest givers to your

ministry and have the most potential to increase their giving. And equipping your business leaders for ministry is virtually an untapped evangelism strategy that is not event-driven, but ongoing and results in natural, effective discipleship – the most valuable gem of all.

Diamond #1 – *Building Community*

Let me elaborate on these three truths, starting with how valuable business leaders are when it comes to building community. Are you aware that in the Jewish community a dollar changes hands seven times before it leaves the community? A major part of the Jewish, the Amish, and even the Mormon community is that they do business with each other whenever possible. So why is that important?

“Connections that happen outside the church turn into relationships inside the church.”

According to Barna Research, the average Christian only attends church one to two times per month. How can a church expect to build community based on connections made one to two times per month? But we all do business every day. We need our hair cut, our cars fixed, and our lawns mowed. Connections that happen outside the church turn into relationships inside the church. That creates community, making your church “sticky,” which helps to close the back door.

Diamond #2 – *Funding the Gospel*

Another way your business leaders are valuable is in their ability to help fund the gospel. Having researched and explored this truth over the past 32 years, I can say with complete confidence that

not only are the business leaders in your church the largest givers, but they have the most potential to increase their giving. Here are three actual examples and then my explanation for why I believe this is true.

EXAMPLE #1

Wayne has been a member of his church for several years and has a great relationship with his pastor. One morning his pastor stopped into his business just to see how things were going. As they were having a casual conversation, an idea emerged that had the potential as an offshoot of his original business. They worked together to sketch out a business plan and his pastor prayed for God to bless this new business. Wayne made a commitment right there to tithe off the gross sales of the new business. Within three years Wayne's giving increased from \$15,000 per year to over \$15,000 per month.

EXAMPLE #2

Brad is part of a Christian CEO roundtable group. One core element of his group is to actively seek out strategies to advance the Kingdom through his business. On the 25-year anniversary of his business, he decided to give \$2,500, over and above his tithe for each contract signed. Based on last year's production, this should amount to around \$250,000 for the year.

EXAMPLE #3

There is a large well-known church in Texas that started a ministry to business leaders approximately four years ago. When they started the ministry they discovered that 68% of their top 300 giving families were business owners, independent contractors, and professionals. In the past four years, giving from the top 300 has gone from \$19 million to over \$30 million annually, an increase of more than fifty percent.

Let me explain why I believe Christian Business Leaders are exceptionally generous and have the ability to increase their giving in higher percentages than most people. Having received a 1099 for over 40 years and not knowing exactly how much I will make from one year to the next makes me want to live conservatively. I try not to commit to monthly bills and pay for most things with cash. When the Lord blesses me financially, I feel exceptionally grateful, and since I don't feel the pressure of monthly bills, I am free to give generously.

While most employees who receive a W2 can expect to receive a modest 3-4% cost of living salary increase each year, I have known many business owners that have doubled their income and their tithe, in a single year. Most business leaders are risk takers and optimistic knowing that if God

“This could mean a ten times increase in giving from just one family.”

did it one time, they can give it away and He will do it again. There is even a trend with some sole proprietors to set up their companies to tithe off total company sales rather than just the profit. This could mean a ten times increase in giving from just one family.

Diamond #3 – Evangelism and Discipleship

The next diamond I would like to discuss is the effect Marketplace Ministry can have on evangelism and discipleship. Since the turn of the century, hundreds of parachurch ministries have been formed with the goal to support workplace ministry. One such organization is C-12. Their niche is to help Christian CEOs run “Great Companies” for a “Greater Purpose.” As a C-12 member, I experience on a monthly basis the passion my peer members have for running their businesses with excellence and for actively exploring ways to allow God to use their companies for maximum Kingdom impact.

During one full day each month these business leaders dive deep into what the Word says about how they should run their business. There is also a Core Business Presentation each month where one business owner shares actual data concerning company growth, employee initiatives, and how many salvations occurred as the result of being intentional with the Gospel. Across the nation, in hundreds of groups and thousands of companies, the average is four salvations per company each year.

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Can you imagine the potential positive impact if churches used the same approach to train their business leaders to be intentional with the Gospel while at work?

Now let’s talk about discipleship, and I really want you to think about this. Let’s just say that next Easter you have two hundred visitors to your church. God gives you an incredibly inspired Word and twenty people

walk forward to give their hearts to the Lord. Now comes the really tough part! Can your volunteers get their contact information and follow up in a way that will help them stay committed? Your church may have an incredibly effective way to disciple new converts, but sadly most churches do not. The fact is that most new believers never get discipled and many never return to church, until maybe next Easter.

But what if their conversion happened at work? What if one of the business leaders in your church was intentionally using his business as a tool to spread the Gospel? Conversions that happen at work put the new Christian in daily contact with the disciple maker. Once a relationship is established, it becomes much easier to invite

the new believer to church with them and there is a much greater likelihood that they will stay involved.

I'm hoping by now you might be asking yourself if there could be some value in Marketplace Ministry and who your diamonds might be. If that's so, we're glad you asked! We would like to offer you our free Marketplace Ministry Manual. This is a "how to" manual based on over 32 years of empirical experience from hundreds of churches and more than 50,000 Christian business owners.

The diagram on the following page is a blueprint of steps we feel necessary to build a successful ministry to business leaders. All of these steps are important and will be described in detail in the MM Manual - along with a variety of resources that are available to help you along the way.

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Let me share a few thoughts as you consider how you might start this journey.

I'm sure you have heard the Chinese Proverb that "A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step." The first step in Marketplace Ministry is to identify the business leaders in your own church. That is why the "**Identify Leaders**" step is on the bottom; it is *foundational* to everything else. There are many examples throughout Scripture where God used what was readily available to do a miracle. He asked Moses what he had in his hand ... and then used his staff to do many miracles; He multiplied the oil for the widow; He turned water into wine, and He multiplied the loaves and fishes, twice!

What if you saw your current business leaders like diamond seeds? Well, that's exactly what they are! Like diamonds, once they are discovered and properly cut, they become exceptionally valuable to your church fellowship and the kingdom of God. And like seeds, they will multiply in kind. What I mean is that once your church starts a ministry to business leaders, you can expect other business leaders to be drawn to your ministry.



We discuss two methods for identifying your business leaders in our MM Manual. While both methods will achieve similar outcomes, we highly recommend the Business Directory approach over the survey approach. The reasons for your church to have a business directory are so compelling and the benefits so tangible, that there is virtually no reason not to strongly consider it.

Your business leaders benefit from increased business, your members benefit from better service and increased relationships, and your church benefits from increased giving and member loyalty. The “Elephant in the Room” objection that some churches used to bring up about protecting their church’s reputation has been virtually eliminated by our *“three-pronged protection promise”* for your church. All of this and more are detailed in our MM Manual.

It is important to understand that the business directory is a stand-alone product and has benefits to a church that are unique and separate from the business ministry. It could be as long as a year or more before you find the right person to run your ministry to business leaders, but the process of connecting your members through business can start right away. In fact, many times it is in the process of gathering information for the business directory that we find someone in your church who would be passionate about running the business ministry for you.

The third step in the diagram, “**Appoint or Hire a Business Pastor**”, requires a little advanced explanation. I think the first time I ever used the phrase “Business Pastor” was at a Wendy’s restaurant in Kokomo, Indiana in 1992. I remember telling another business leader that there would come a day when churches large enough to have a youth pastor and a music pastor, would start to hire business pastors. To me it just made sense. I knew by this time that the business leaders were the largest givers to a church, so the ministry position would fund itself. But business owners also make great leaders and they have great opportunities to use their businesses for God’s work. That was more than 25 years ago now and they may not all be called “Business Pastors,” but I have met more people filling that role in churches in the past two years than in the previous thirty years combined.

God's timing is always perfect and it seems that the emergence of the "Business Pastor" is no exception. An Executive Pastor recently shared with me that more and more baby boomer business owners and executives are approaching him looking for ways to use their talents to do something significant. Many of them have sold businesses or retired and are no longer motivated by how much money they can make but rather motivated by Kingdom significance.

The business pastor from Texas, in the example I gave earlier, had recently sold his business for several million dollars. Now he is using his business acumen to serve his church and the business leaders in it. I bet you could bring to mind two or three businessmen in your church who would be perfect in this position. You might even have some very talented retirees who would run this ministry with excellence, simply for the opportunity to use their business talents to serve God's kingdom.

So what does this position look like? The following is a sample job description for a Business Pastor. Please keep in mind that the job description you write will be as unique as your church and the business ministry you develop for it.

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE ROLE OF BUSINESS PASTOR/BUSINESS LIAISON

The primary role of the business pastor is to help individual business owners recognize God's purpose for placing them in positions of authority and influence, and to help them fulfill the great commission through their work. Next is to create connectivity and community among individual business owners, between church business owners and church members, and between church business owners and their surrounding communities.

SHORT TERM GOALS

- To provide encouragement and business training through a weekly email blog. Content for these blogs might come from established business sources or better yet, from successful business leaders in the church. Sharing personal stories, answers to prayer and business advice will help to create community and connectivity within the body.
- To spend time with each business owner one-on-one. Getting to know them along with their individual needs and challenges. This effort would include office visits (mostly by appointment), and lunches with individual business leaders on a daily basis.
- To learn as much as possible about the operation of each business in order to serve or counsel the business owner as needed.
- To pray with each business owner on every occasion.

LONG TERM GOALS

- To create a network of seasoned business professionals within the church who are willing to use the leadership skills God has given them to help lead and build the business ministry.
- To connect seasoned business owners with newer business owners as mentors.
- To provide business training and guidance for young entrepreneurs or established businesses. This could mean recommending resources such as books, the SBA, a business coach, CEO roundtable groups or other available resources.
- To expand the business ministry through existing church business owners who are willing to introduce you to their network of associates and friends. (This is an evangelism opportunity)
- To teach the essence of Corporate Chaplaincy to those willing to learn. (This is a strong evangelism initiative)
- To coordinate events such as business lunches, workplace ministry seminars, job fairs and other venues that take the business ministry outside the walls of the church.

In 2002, the Rev. Billy Graham said, “I believe one of the next great moves of God is going to be through believers in the workplace.” Then shortly after that, George Barna said, “Workplace ministry



Rev. Billy Graham

will be one of the core future innovations in church ministry.” Since those statements were made nearly 20 years ago, hundreds of parachurch ministries have been formed trying to meet this expanding need. Many of these organizations do very good work, but isn’t it time for God’s church to get into the game?

At Christians In Business, our mission statement is, “*To help churches establish or enhance ministry to their business leaders.*” We can help you identify, connect, and equip your marketplace leaders for ministry. When you do that, the potential impact is INCALCULABLE. How do you measure the impact that a Chick-fil-A, Hobby Lobby, or Tyson Foods has had on their employees, their customers and even on American Culture? We believe that every business has the potential to be a little Chick-fil-A influencing everyone they touch.

If you have an interest in exploring this type of ministry for your church, we would love to come along side you to share our passion, resources, and experience. Getting started on this journey will not cost you a dime. In fact, many churches that use our services have received as much as \$20,000 from Christians In Business to help lay the foundation for this ministry. The benefits are high, the risk is low, and the effort is definitely worth it. We have been helping churches take the first step of identifying their business leaders for over 32 years. That part of our program is free and completely turn-key. We hope you will allow us to partner with you in this exciting endeavor.

PRECIOUS GEMS

One of my fondest memories growing up as a preacher's kid, was an old beat up book my father used for sermon illustrations. It was called "*Precious Gems*." My dad is now 84 years old and is still traveling and preaching on mission fields around the world and when prompted, will share these little illustrations. Recently, I asked him if he still had the book and he informed me that the book binding was gone and it is now just some loose sheets in a manila folder. I would like to share a couple of these gems with you. I hope you enjoy!

RATTLESNAKE GOSPEL SERMON

Author Unknown

Up in the hills of Ole' Kentuck,
The meanest place that e'er was struck,
There lived a man named Jacob Jobe,
The meanest man on this mundane globe.

He feared not God
Nor cared for man,
Except his wild
And wicked clan.

He had six boys, all big and bad,
Who followed right behind their dad.
They drank that Wildcat Whiskey down,
And painted red their country town.

He had six daughters, big husky gals,
Who danced and frolicked with their pals.
They danced and pranced upon the hills
And, sometimes, down among the stills.

One day an awful rattlesnake
Bit the oldest boy, Big Wicked Jake.
Through his veins the virus flew;
“He’s bound to die, what shall we do?”

They sent a runner into town,
To fetch in haste, ole Parson Brown
A Dutchman of John Wesley’s band,
As good as any in the land.

He prayed a wondrous, curious prayer,
In words of faith both rich and rare.
And if to heaven it reached or not,
On earth it surely hit the spot.

Oh God, we thank Thee for this snake.
That Thou has sent to bite ole’ Jake.
To fetch him down from his high hoss,
and lead him to the Savior’s cross.

And now O God the Great I AM.
Please send another to bite old Sam
And Jack and John, the worst of rakes,
Oh, God we need more rattlesnakes!

Send chicken snakes to bite the gals
And all their wicked dancing pals.
And mama Jobe she needs one too;
Perhaps a copperhead will do.

And now, Oh God before too late,
Please hurry up these Gospel snakes,
And save this ole’ Kentucky State,
I ask it all for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND

Myra Brooks Welch

'Twas battered and scarred and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But he held it up with a smile.

“What am I bid, good folk?” he cried.
“Who'll start the bidding for me?
A dollar, a dollar ... now two ... only two ...
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?”

“Three dollars once, three dollars twice,
Going for three” ... but no!
From the room far back a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow.

Then wiping the dust from the old violin
And tightening up the strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet,
As sweet as an angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said, “What am I bid for the old violin?”
As he held it up with the bow.

“A thousand dollars ... and who'll make it two?
Two ... two thousand, and who'll make it three?
Three thousand once and three thousand twice ...
Three thousand and gone!” said he.

The people cheered, but some exclaimed
“We do not quite understand ...
What changed it’s worth?” and the answer came:
“ ‘Twas the touch of the master’s hand.”

And many a man with soul out of tune
And battered and scarred by sin
Is auctioned cheap by the thoughtless crowd
Just like the old violin.

But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul, and the change that is wrought
By the touch of the master’s hand.

O Master! I am the tuneless one
Lay, lay Thy hand on me,
Transform me now, put a song in my heart
Of melody, Lord, to Thee!

KNOW YOUR BIBLE / II TIMOTHY 2:15

Author Unknown

Study to show yourselves approved and do not misconnect the scriptures as one brother did when applying for his minister’s license. The following is a transcript of the interview ...

“Can you read?”

“No sir.”

“Can you write?”

“ No sir, but my wife, she can sir.”

“Well, do you know your Bible?”

“Oh, yes sir! I know that book from lid to lid!”

“Ok, what part of the Bible do you like the best?”

“I like the part of the parables.”

“I see. Which one of the parables do you like the best?”

“I like the parable of the Good Samaritan.”

“That’s fine. Can you tell us the story of the Good Samaritan?”

“Yes sir, I surely will!”

“Once upon a time a man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. And along the way, he fell among thieves, and the thorns grew up and they choked that man, but he got away. And he went on and on, and he didn’t have any money until then he met the Queen of Sheba, and she gave that man a thousand talents of gold, and a hundred changes of rament and he got into a chariot and he drove furiously, and as he was going along his hair got caught in a big oak tree and left him hanging there. That man, he hanged there for many days and many nights, and the ravens came and they fed that man food to eat and water to drink. And then one night as he was hanging there sound asleep, his wife Delilah came along and cut his hair, and he fell down on stony ground. And it began to rain, and it rained forty days and forty nights, and so he hid himself in a cave. And then he went on and on from there, and he met a man, and he said, ‘come and have supper with me’, but the man said, ‘I can’t have supper with you because I just married myself a wife and I can’t come.’ And he went on and on and he compelled everyone to come and have supper with him. And as he went on and on he came to Jerusalem, and when he got there, he saw Jezebel sitting high up in the window, and when she saw him, she laughed at him. And he said to the men, ‘throw her down from there’, and they threwed her down, and he said, ‘throw her down some more’, so they throwed her down seventy times seventy. And of the fragments, they picked up twelve basket fulls. And now then, whose wife do you think she will be in the day of judgement?”

Craig King, as the CEO and Founder of Christians In Business, has been helping churches establish ministry to their business leaders since 1987. In addition to owning and operating three successful companies, he is a consultant to many churches across the United States and at least a dozen businesses in the Atlanta area. He is an active member of C-12 and has facilitated Christian CEO roundtable groups across the country. Much of his experience and insight into Marketplace Ministry comes from meeting one-on-one with over 15,000 Christian business owners over the past 30+ years.



Thank you for taking time to consider the many benefits of ministry to your business leaders. Your next step is simply to let us know that you have an interest in exploring this type of ministry further. We will be happy to share our passion, resources, and experiences. Getting started on this journey will not cost you a dime. In fact, many churches that use our services have received as much as \$20,000 from Christians In Business to help lay the foundation for this ministry. The end result will be increased giving, a richer church community, and an ongoing evangelism initiative that is run by the most talented business leaders in your church.

God's Richest Blessing,

Craig King

Owner/Kingdom Press

CEO Founder/Christians In Business