

1st Catholic Business Men's Forum (CBMF)

Theme: "Business: An Opportunity for Christian Mentorship"

By Br. Kyle Dardaine CTC

Cardinal Tulkson ends his recent document on "The Vocation of the Business Leader firstly by quoting the scriptures,

"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its saltiness, how can it regain its flavor? ... You are the light of the world... Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:13-16).

Consider what the Cardinal is suggesting to us as men involved in the business of Private and Public Corporate life. He is asking us to think of ourselves as small lights that have the power to draw attention to the Light of Christ in our businesses. Today, my brothers and sons in Christ, I want to suggest that each business leader has been given an opportunity in that very business to Christian mentorship. The opportunity is two-fold:

- 1. To seize the opportunity to mentor a co-worker, fellow business colleague or a member of your boss or director in Christian spirituality.***

In the first instance I think of a Catholic business man in Trinidad who spends one hour a week in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and experienced a powerful connection with the Holy Spirit at a Life in the Spirit seminar. This gentleman had the fortune of procuring a business contract with a reputable, highly publicized and extremely popular Entertainer in Trinidad. His relationship with the entertainer should have been strictly business. However one weekend before Pentecost Sunday, driven by His love for the Spirit, he invites our Community to lead an "Evening with the Holy Spirit" at his home poolside. To our surprise when we arrive to minister, the secular Entertainer was present with his family and several of his own business managers and partners. All those men left that session very touched and blessed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- 2. To seize the opportunity to mentor someone in your business in some aspect of personal development, to encourage their holistic growth and a healthy lifestyle.***

In the second instance I speak of a local businessman, honored at the National Awards for Outstanding Fatherhood who has consciously over the past few years purposely hired young African boys from a high risk community. As part of his business ethic he hires young men who do not possess the skills or qualifications necessary for his firm and puts his energy into training, mentoring and even sponsoring these youth to trade and study schools.

This excerpt is taken from “The Right to Lead,” by John C. Maxwell.

When U.S. Army General H. Norman Schwarzkopf was a colonel, he commanded the First Battalion of the Sixth Infantry, a unit previously known as the “worst of the sixth” but which he turned around with strong leadership.

After he improved the battalion, it was reassigned to a place Schwarzkopf described as “a horrible, malignant place.” It was an area that had been fought over for thirty years, was covered with mines and booby traps, and was the site of numerous weekly casualties from those devices.

Schwarzkopf made the best of a bad situation. He introduced procedures to greatly reduce casualties, and whenever a soldier was injured by a mine, he flew out to check on the man, evacuated him using his personal chopper, and talked to the other men to boost their morale.

On May 28, 1970, a man was injured by a mine, and Schwarzkopf flew to where he lay. While his helicopter was evacuating the soldier, another man stepped on a mine, severely injuring his leg. The man thrashed around on the ground, screaming and wailing. That’s when everyone realized the first mine hadn’t been a lone booby trap. They were in fact standing in the middle of a minefield.

Schwarzkopf believed the injured man could survive, and even keep his leg—but only if he stopped flailing around. There was only one thing Schwarzkopf could do. He had to go after the man and immobilize him. In his autobiography, *It Doesn’t Take a Hero*, Schwarzkopf wrote:

I started through the minefield, one slow step at a time, staring at the ground, looking for telltale bumps or little prongs sticking up from the dirt. My knees were shaking so hard that each time I took a step, I had to grab my leg and steady it with both hands before I could take another. . . . It seemed like a thousand years before I reached the kid.

The 240-pound Schwarzkopf, who had been a wrestler, then pinned the wounded man and calmed him down. It saved the man’s life. And eventually with the help of an engineer team, Schwarzkopf was able to get him and the others out of the minefield.

Later that night when Schwarzkopf was at the hospital, three black soldiers stopped him in a hallway and said, “Colonel, we saw what you did for the brother out there. We’ll never forget that, and we’ll make sure that all the other brothers in the battalion know what you did.” Until that moment, it hadn’t occurred to him that the soldier he had saved was black.

Key Learning: The army had given Schwarzkopf the power to lead. And his knowledge and skill had given him the ability to lead. But his demonstrated character and courage under the most difficult of circumstances had **earned him the right to lead.**

I close by exhorting you, to choose today to use business as an opportunity for Christian mentorship and in the words of prominent philosopher Aristotle, ***“Those who know do, those who understand teach”.***