

**RELIGIOPRENEURSHIP AFRICAN SUMMIT 29<sup>TH</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> JULY 2022**

**KAMPALA UGANDA**

**THEME: “Entrepreneurial Transformation through Faith-based innovation, Trade and Technology”.**

**Topic: Entrepreneurial Transformation through Faith-based Innovation: role of Divinity, Wisdom and Management”.**

**Rev. Dr. Ammishaddai Owusu-Amoah**

**July 2022**

## 1. Introduction

I am delighted for the opportunity to be part of the panel of speakers for this conference. I find the theme for the conference very appropriate in these times and for the African continent. My heart bleeds anytime I hear people refer to us as very religious and prayerful and thus not hard working and always expecting everything to happen by prayer and faith. It is good to be religious and prayerful. It is very good to have faith and pray, but it must be combined with works since it is said faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26). Works in the context of our topic today is innovativeness and entrepreneurship. For most of the religions and for that matter the major religions in Africa we look for heaven and therefore we are expected to live lives that will ensure that we enjoy the [hereafter](#). But before the hereafter, there is here.

The God we serve is much interested in our lives here just as he is interested in our lives after earth. The prosperity on earth is important. Not solely for individual prosperity but that of all. It's therefore not surprising that each faith find time to devote resources to helping the needy and improving the lives of people here on earth. The lives of our people on the African continent, will improve as we combine our faith with innovativeness, creativity and hard

work backed by the divine nature of God, the wisdom that God gives us and the management principles enshrined in the word of God.

If many of the Small and Medium Enterprises will understand and imbibe these principles we will see the full positive impact of faith based innovation.

It is therefore not surprising that faith and entrepreneurship has been a major area of significant interest over decades (Brammer et al. 2007; Carswell and Rolland, 2007; Cavanagh, 1999; Davidsun and Wiklund, 1996;

## 1.2 Purpose and Approach

This paper seeks to look at the subject of Entrepreneurial Transformation through Faith-based Innovation and specifically focus on the roles that is played by Divinity, Wisdom and Management. The objective which is in line with the conference objectives includes the following:

- To show the essential nature and role of African religiosity in skills development.
- The extent to which religion can contribute to the growth or collapse of enterprises on the African continent.

- How Africans can allow its resources and actors to be mobilized through Religion to liberate African entrepreneurs and societies from poverty through entrepreneurship development and innovativeness?
- The place of the concept of wealth creation, technology, innovation in divinity wisdom and management and whether religion enhances the structural existence of poverty among the religious faithful in African societies.
- Explore new ways of leveraging religion as a force for positive social and economic transformation and development in African society

The approach adopted is to first look briefly at the concept of Entrepreneurial Transformation and its relation to faith based innovation. Not much attention will be devoted to this because being a speaker on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the conference, I know many of the earlier speakers, will have touched on the subject.

We will then proceed to look at the subject of Divinity, Wisdom and Management and then to demonstrate the inter relationship between these three and its potential to turn the very religious African into an extra ordinarily faith based transformative entrepreneur necessarily to enhance organizations performance and the transformation of our continent. For example Pearce, Firtz and Davis in their study using a sample of 250 religious congregations in five different locations concluded that entrepreneurial orientation is found to be positively associated with organizational performance. Pearce, Firtz and Davis (2010).

## 2. Entrepreneurial Transformation through Faith-based Innovation:

Religion is dependent on faith and there is no doubt about that. The Bible itself says without faith, it is impossible to please God. (But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that

diligently seek him.)Therefore it is crucial. But the faith must be combined with innovation to create transformative entrepreneurs.

So what we are seeking for from this topic is how we combine faith with innovation. There are several examples of faith combined with innovation and diligent work in the Bible that produced great results.

### In Ecclesiastics

In Ecclesiastes 11:4 we read: *“Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.”*

Farmers go out and work the fields. They plow, till, and sow seeds. Then they wait for God to do His part and bring the rain. If the rain doesn't come and the plants die, they have to begin the process all over again. They don't abandon hope, but plant and plant again until the crops grow plentifully.

If a farmer goes out at the start of the planting season and says, “I don't feel any wind or see any clouds; it probably won't rain, so why bother planting?” then he surely won't reap any harvest. If he waits

for the perfect conditions to arrive, it might be too late, and the farmer will have missed his chance altogether. But in addition the Farmer must become like the Ant in Proverbs 6:6 and say I will plant but just in case the rains doest not come I need to prepare myself so that I would not be in want when the rail fails. That brings in irrigation, bore holes, etc. Creativity, faith and innovativeness and mobilization of resources to achieve prosperity.

God places an idea on our heart or we feel called to do something, we can't put things off until the conditions are just right. Sometimes we say, "I'll do it when I have more time." Or, "I'll do it when I have more money." Or . . . fill in any of the many other excuses that hold us back in life. Instead, Solomon teaches us in the book of Ecclesiastes to have faith and take the first step, even when we can't see how everything will work out in the end and he teaches us in the book of Proverbs how we can plan for the lean season. Go to the ant.

### 3. Role of Divinity, Wisdom and Management.

The quality of being divine or having the God factor in you, the application of wisdom which also originates from God and the application of various management principles which are also consistently enshrined in our holy book for that matter the Bible if I am talking about Christianity is very important to ensure the achievement of Entrepreneurial transformation. This is what the African faith based innovation should look towards.

To throw more light on this we will use a very popular parable that the Lord Jesus shared in the Bible in Mathew 25:14-30

<sup>14</sup>“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants<sup>[a]</sup> and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents,<sup>[b]</sup> to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. <sup>17</sup>So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. <sup>18</sup>But he who had received the one talent went and dug in



the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup> Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, and 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' <sup>21</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.<sup>[c]</sup> you have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>22</sup> And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' <sup>23</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>24</sup> He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' <sup>26</sup> But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no

seed? <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

In this story there are 4 things I will talk about

- Call to fruitfulness and Multiplication
- Application of faith, hard work, diligence;
- Application of Wisdom and innovation
- Application of Management Skills

### 3.1 Call to fruitfulness and Multiplication

In this parable it is clear that each one of us have been given some capabilities, some abilities, and some talents. Whether in Africa, in Ghana or any corner where we find ourselves there is a talent given to us and we are called to be fruitful. In genesis when God created man the charge was be fruitful and multiply. This is the charge. Fruitfulness and multiplication is our charge. We must teach in the church. Fruitfulness and multiplication for this earth and for the next one yet to come. When God called and charged Joshua he charged him take all the territories' he had positioned him to capture all the territories. Even when he thought he had finished he drew his attention that there are more territories to be captured (Joshua 1:1, Joshua 13:1). There are territories for us to take. There are business territories to take. They are enterprise that you have started has more territories' to take. Your talent may be one or may be 2 but it is for fruitfulness and multiplication.

### 3.2 Application of faith, hard work, diligence;

This requires faith, it requires hard work, and it requires diligence. Listen to the story of the talent again. All of them went to work. Let's start with the one talent. He behaves like some of the African religious people. Not passionate about multiplication. Not passionate about hard work. For him it is just prayer. He went, dug the ground put the talent there. That was work. He had to be careful that he is not spotted. I am sure he did not have peace. For all you can imagine he was going for all night Saturday Sundays, Tuesday 11 am to 2 pm that the talent may be preserved in the ground. Sleepless nights. He was afraid of his master He saw prophets. Travelled to Nigeria, may be Ghana to listen to some prophecy. Thus saith the Lord. You have some hidden talent. Some thieves are planning to take it. Bring Oil. Take this water. Sprinkle it on the talent. Your coworker is the one that is making 10 out of 2. If you don't go and pray you will lose the one. When your master come you will not have a good story to tell. We are going to pray that you will find favor with your master. Fast for favor. Devine favor is very

important. I believe it. Joseph had favor. But he still had to work hard. He learnt from the ant in Proverbs 6:6. He knew how to manage a buffer stock. Meanwhile the one who was being fruitful and multiplying his talents is already receiving favor.

### 3.3 Application of Wisdom and innovation

How did the other servants multiply their talents? Definitely not just by praying. They may have prayed. I will pray But the Bible said he traded what sort of trading are you doing to multiply. You need wisdom and creativity. You need to apply wisdom. You pray to God and ask for wisdom to know how to multiply not preserving. In Proverbs 6:6 Bible says Go to the ant you sluggard learn of him and be wise

Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.

<sup>5</sup> Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

<sup>6</sup> Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

<sup>7</sup> Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

<sup>8</sup> Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

<sup>9</sup> How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

<sup>10</sup> Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

<sup>11</sup> So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man?

Deliver yourself

Go to the ant

Apply wisdom.

Know the right time to gather and the right time to store

If you don't have the wisdom, ask God (James 1:5)

You ask God for the wisdom

Illustrate with the Israelites and the manna.

They prayed. Then Manna came. Manna was sent from heaven.

But they had to pick the manna daily. That is evidence of daily work to complete the provisions of God

When they pick more than required in a day it went bad. However on Friday they picked for two days and it does not go bad.

Also know that on the day they entered into the Promised Land, the manna and the quails ceased. This is a clear message from God to say that this is the time to get to work. This is the time to show forth your innovative and entrepreneurial skills and create wealth.

(And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. And the manna ceased on the morrow after

they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna anymore; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.” Joshua 5:10-12

### 3.4 Application of Management Skills

It was time to apply various management skills to till the ground, work hard and create wealth because the opportunity is there. It is time to pray. It is also time for Strategic and managerial skills. They are very important. Jacob under Laban had to strategize constantly. People argue about what he did but for me I see business strategies in the mist of competition.

Put Jacob aside and take the man Jesus himself. He adopted all managerial styles such as identifying his leadership team, delegating, planning, discipline, association with his team, taking a break. He demonstrated planning and preparation, recruitment and hiring, communications, conflict resolution, public relations and



business ethics, employee satisfaction and family friendliness. All these, and more, are the principles of management practiced by the greatest manager the world has ever known.

Christians can and ought to be the movers and shakers of social change (Briner 2016)

#### 4. Conclusion

Sometimes the reason why some of the SMEs do not last and grow into the huge companies we are looking for is because we are not properly applying the principles of God. These principles apart from being enshrined in his word is also demonstrated to us in his u creation around us. Look at the development and metamorphosis of a tadpole into a frog. Your SME starts as a tadpole. When it starts it has no legs but fins and the kind of fish like bodies and a tail that allows them to swim in the small ponds. As they metamorphose into a frog, they need the legs that can make them stand on land and hop and compete on the land, so they do away with the fish

like bodies. The tails which were needed in the ponds will not survive outside the pond. Some of our SMEs are still trying to use the fishlike bodies they had to swim successfully in the small ponds to hop on land. And they pray and fast that they will be successful on land. It won't work. Pray, Change and Transform. Be innovative and creative adding your faith and the wisdom from above, hard work, effective management principles, several of which are in the Bible and you will be on course to build the next generation of enterprises that will transform the African continent

So the message to the African Religious person is that in religion is faith. In faith is the ability to transform and show forth strategy, apply innovation, wisdom and the managerial skill backed by prayer.

May be we can call this Religiopreneurship. With this we are set to transform the African SMEs and business. We are set to create the African Christian entrepreneurs that will take out poverty.

Briner, B. (1996). *The management methods of Jesus: Ancient wisdom for modern business*. Thomas Nelson Incorporated.

Briner, R. (2016). *Roaring lambs: A gentle plan to radically change your world*. Zondervan.

Pearce, J. A., Fritz, D. A., & Davis, P. S. (2010). Entrepreneurial orientation and the performance of religious congregations as predicted by rational choice theory. *Entrepreneurship Theory and practice*, 34(1), 219-248.