

A Treatise on Leadership, Social Institutions & Community Engagements

OVERTURE

A conductor opens the score and lifts his baton. There is a silent moment of anticipation before the downbeat begins, but unlike many modern compositions, the first thing heard is a deep, rich cantus firmus coming from the double basses. After a while a melody from the violins commences, complementing their lower counterparts. Later joining in are the violas and cellos, filling in the harmony. Soon enough the audience can recognize meaning throughout the notes and rhythms. In other words, there is a glorious collaboration of counterpoint lines bringing beauty and transformation through motifs and symbols - ultimately giving glory to the Maker of all music.

Rendering Christian social innovation is analogous to producing a well-written composition: there first needs to be a cognizance of and a dependence on God (the Bass Line); required next is a strategic plan of beauty and innovation from an entrepreneur (the melody) which works in accordance with God; lastly - and what follows naturally from establishing the previous two parts - is a collection of holistic relationships in a community (harmony). If one would like to think in terms of orchestral strings, first is needed the double bass cantus firmus bass line, complemented by a species counterpoint provided by the violins, and lastly violas and cellos with their harmonic lines.

PART ONE: THE BASS LINE

Numerous social innovative ventures in the twenty-first century have been successful without a reliance on the Bass Line. “In recent years, much of the most innovative and entrepreneurial work in the social sector has been done apart from faith communities, whether

through secular nongovernmental organizations (e.g., Teach for America, KIPP) or for-profit businesses (e.g., hospitals and hospices)” (Jones 7). Furthermore, many question if using faith communities is relevant to social innovation at all. What is more disheartening is that the general public sees churches impeding the growth of entrepreneurship. Jones concurs, “Indeed, it is now often assumed that faith communities are irrelevant to social innovation and entrepreneurship or are a significant obstacle to it” (Jones 7). Why has this century’s sound palette been dismissive of the low, rich overtones of the Bass Line? The disturbing answer is because the Church has not done a good job in supplying them. Simply put, Christianity at this current point of time has lost its identity. Disciples of Jesus have forgotten who they are and whose they are, resulting in a lack of vision (for the ultimate future, for social innovation, for other things).

Indeed, throughout *Christian Social Innovation*, Jones remarks that most churches nowadays are preoccupied with self-preservation or trying change for change’s own sake. Knowing the End, however, keeps one “on track” with God’s mission. What is the End? It is the reign of God, specifically the full manifestation of it here on Earth as described in the last two chapters of Revelation. Instilling that landscape into one’s heart, mind, and spirit will produce purpose and the “why” behind socially innovative motives. Unfortunately, the Church has “become preoccupied with the “what” and the “how” and [has] lost the power of “why”: we have lost sight of the End” (Jones 24).

In other words, it seems the Bass Line has become somewhat lonely with its ostinato. The melodies of most twenty-first century churches have become distracted and fragmented, not producing consonance with God and his ultimate plan. To begin ameliorating the current condition, the church will need to retrieve its true identity and multifaceted vision once again. Jones offers many ideas about how the *ekklesia* can realign itself with God’s End, and one of

those is attaining practical wisdom (which will be elucidated upon shortly in the modulation section). Case in point, the melodies need to sync up with rhythm and arch of the Bass Line, but most importantly have the same double bar line (the end of a piece) in mind.

Knowing all this, though, why does the world still need *Christian* social innovation? Jones argues, “Christian social innovation offers a distinctive vision of social innovation because, at our best, Christians have a very clear sense of purpose: to bear witness to the reign of God that was announced and embodied in Jesus Christ and is present now through the work of the Holy Spirit who is making all things new” (Jones 20). People indeed need the presence of the Trinity in their lives to be transformed, and Christians have the peculiar opportunity to facilitate access to the Godhead for other people. This is imperative for Christians to understand: it’s not the socially innovative project that will change people, it is the Trinity itself. In other words, the Bass Line is the bottom line for true transformation.

MODULATION

Having now identified Christian social innovation, it is time to modulate toward the next section by asking some questions how faith and vision can be nourished and developed within innovators who will strategically plan their ventures. Although Jones provides various ideas toward this end in his opus, there are four which will be briefly expounded upon here. They all cultivate practical wisdom in some way. What is the first suggestion he offers? Listening to other people and the Holy Spirit. Carving out time into one’s schedule on a regular basis to hear how God’s Spirit is working in their friends’ lives is critical for acquiring a Christian vision and faith. This is because listening “is a key practice that continually focuses our attention beyond ourselves” (Jones 105).

Just as important is the need to “cross borders” by studying, learning, and reading widely. In fact, investing time in one’s relationship with the Bass Line while studying the Bible is a great starting point. “Studying scripture in a way that forms a scriptural imagination shapes our lives as disciples of Christ and connects us to those who have walked in the way of the Light before us” (Jones 106). The next step would be reading across disciplines, because that opens oneself to different ways of thinking and creates bridges across sectors. Most importantly, however, reading widely can reveal how God is present in other people’s contexts and situations.

“Praying, worshipping, and practicing silence are communal and solitary practices that focus us in responsive attentiveness to God and God’s reign” (Jones 106). This set is perhaps particularly oriented towards nurturing faith, though vision will certainly attend. And though it is important to stress the *solitary* quality of these practices, it is just as pertinent to articulate there needs to be a balance of *communal* engagement as well. Jones adds, “Often some of our best story-editing insights are discovered through these forms of relationship with God” (Jones 106).

Do the sacraments offer a nourishment of faith and vision for the social innovator? The Eucharist comes first to mind, because it inherently directs people to a future reality. On the night of Jesus’ last Passover, the Messiah even said he would no longer “drink the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes” (Luke 22:18) and that they should gather together, take the cup, and “this do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me” (1 Cor. 11:25). On top of this, it is indeed well-documented that the early Christian “love feasts” were highly anticipatory of Jesus’ second coming. Reminding one’s self of Jesus’ future reign and Revelation chapters 21 and 22 is critical for a Christian social entrepreneur’s dreaming.

PART TWO: THE MELODY

Having emphasized how a cognizance and dependence upon God is critical for Christian social innovation, now there needs to be a shift of focus toward the innovators themselves. For although the Bass Line will always be present, there needs to be strategic planning on behalf of the entrepreneur's part in order to bring out lasting social change. The planning should, of course, work in accordance with the Bass Line and not contradict its time signature or tonal center.

But how does an innovator prepare himself for such a venture? This is where *The Social Entrepreneur's Playbook* is brought into consideration. MacMillan and Thompson provide an excellent framework to test, plan, launch, and scale an enterprise. The scope of the whole book is too large for this paper, so only a segment will be addressed, namely the concept statement. Starting any type of business venture is difficult since so many factors and risks are uncertain. A concept statement is a short document of the research undertaken to study a venture's market, competition, business proposition, and socio-political landscape; creating one assuredly helps a social entrepreneur think through most of the possible risks involved. Although MacMillan and Thompson provide a concept statement example using Zambia Feeds, a different scenario will be elucidated - that of Naomi Sengbwila's Embracing Heart Homes.

The first step a social entrepreneur needs to address is articulating a specific problem and solution. Naomi Sengbwila interestingly received a vision from God about her life's mission: taking care of orphans. Naomi has always had a passion for raising children, but now her heart is specifically breaking for the numerous homeless orphans (due to the HIV Aids epidemic) in Lusaka, Zambia. That is the problem - the myriad orphans, particularly those under the great bridge in Kamwala. What is her proposed solution? It is building a set of orphan homes in the nearby Shibombo District, which is a somewhat rural area 50 miles outside of Lusaka. She plans

to name her place “Embracing Heart Homes” (EHH) and provide care which is personalized, all the while emphasizing sustainability and community.

The next step is considering what required behavioral changes would need to take place inside the beneficiaries in order for a venture to succeed. Concerning Embracing Heart Homes, the orphans would need to adapt to a structured living environment since they are accustomed to free-range living. This would entail an ethical change as well, since it is common for orphans to steal and be dishonest toward authorities. Naomi would need to cultivate an environment of honesty and loving discipline in her orphan homes, hopefully softening the children’s hearts. Note that Naomi is a follower of Jesus Christ and intends to incorporate her faith with the raising of the orphans. This is important to share since her melody will indeed be interacting with the Bass Line. In other words, she has the End in mind from the beginning.

The following section of the concept statement is specifying performance criteria, which includes a unit of social impact and a unit of revenue. A unit of social impact will measure the benefits delivered by one’s program. “Specifying the unit of social impact forces you to think about how you are going to rate your performance and measure it, and thereby, how you are going to communicate to the world and stakeholders (people who have a vested interest in your outcome) what social impact your project is delivering” (MacMillan and Thompson 15). A unit of revenue is an element that will generate revenue for a project’s operation. It could either be directed towards beneficiaries or a third party (governmental or nongovernmental organization), so the term ‘payer’ is preferred when discussing a unit of revenue. Naomi has family members experienced in animal husbandry, and one chicken house is already built and functioning. She understandably intends to use ‘the number of chickens sold’ as her unit of revenue and ‘the number of children housed’ as her unit of social impact.

Having identified the problem, proposed solution, and performance criteria, the concept statement then investigates the market and competition of a proposed venture. In doing so, there are three specific questions to ask. The first, what is the identified market segment? MacMillan and Thompson articulate why this is an important question: “Your beneficiary population is unlikely to be completely homogeneous, and targeted segmentation of the population is critical for increasing the chance of early traction” (MacMillan and Thompson 21). Pertaining to Embracing Heart Homes, Naomi has chosen the specific orphans living under the bridge at Kamwala. Since there are hundreds of orphans there, she intends to identify families of siblings together (assisted by her daughter, who spends time feeding the orphans a few times per week). The targeted number is 24 since that will be the capacity of her first orphan home.

The next question to ask is, what is the most competitive alternative? The answer may be elusive since it might be a government, NGO program, or simply the mindset of ‘keeping things as they are.’ “In fact, in some cases, beneficiaries’ fatalistically *doing nothing at all* itself constitutes an entrenched competitive alternative that you may have to overcome” (MacMillan and Thompson 36). For Naomi and Embracing Heart Homes, the most competitive alternative would be the existing orphanages around Lusaka. How is Naomi’s venture better, though? All the Lusaka orphanages are full to capacity and are institutional, impersonal dormitories, while EHH is a community of homes where care is personalized. For example, Naomi’s kids can have more privacy since 3 or 4 children will share one bathroom.

The final part of the concept statement displays information about the sociopolitical landscape. There are bureaucratic hurdles in each region of the world, but “the minimally resourced social enterprise is more vulnerable to such obstacles, particularly if the start-up disrupts the status quo, and must then defend itself against resistance by entrenched interests”

(MacMillan and Thompson 59). The first item to consider in a sociopolitical strategy is the people who would benefit from a proposed business. In EHH's case, that would naturally entail the children and widowed mothers who would be "house moms" in exchange for room and board. There are more, however - the Shibombo District as a whole and even the future of Zambia are not out of the question. Perhaps this is dreaming unrealistically, but Naomy's Embracing Heart Homes could set an example of how orphan care should be undertaken and may influence many people to build homes for orphans as well.

Who would be hurt by EHH? There is a very slight chance the surrounding chicken farmers would feel the increased competition. The poultry market is enormous in Zambia (the demand being so great and the supply left wanting) that Naomy's venture will probably have little impact on other chicken breeders. Another answer to the question posed is exploiters of the children. Granted, this is nefarious ideation, but there may be some truth in this imagining unfortunately. Some people may not want a sizable amount of orphans leaving the great bridge at Kamwala for reasons most people cannot understand.

Who would be the key stakeholders with EHH? Of course, Naomy, her husband, and their children come first to mind. Specifically thinking geographically, the Shibombo District Council (which regards the development of the area) would definitely play an important role. Lastly, current and future donors understandably have to be included in this set.

That leaves a duet for the end of this section: allies and opponents. The allies of Embracing Heart Homes would be the local markets purchasing chickens, eggs, and other products which support the homes. Closely alongside those are the feed suppliers. Since the Zambian government has declared a war on HIV Aids, Naomy is certain she will have the government on her side. That rapport will bode well for Naomy's educational and medical

endeavors with EHH. Who would be the opponents? Besides the possible surrounding chicken farmers and nefarious exploiters, Naomi and her colleagues cannot think of any possible opponents.

Having covered a concept statement, a few more words need to be shared about planning a venture. Although words can describe a lot about a business, numbers are just as critical and need to be placed in a proposed budget. Financial goals have to be articulated, and estimating required revenues, maximum allowable costs, and maximum allowable assets is necessary. The scope of these objectives is too large for this paper, but pg. 83-140 in *The Social Entrepreneur's Playbook* will provide a good framework for the required budgeting.

MODULATION

Before entering the harmonic part of this specific orchestration, a transition needs to happen between the entrepreneur and 'everyone else.' For once the Bass Line and the melody (who has prepared itself the best it can) are in sync, then there is room for the harmony to fall into place. The melody and harmony have an interesting interaction, however. The former is usually comprised of one instrument (or person), sometimes two. The latter will undoubtedly be comprised of multiple instruments and can sometimes influence the "leading notes up top." For example, specific passing tones may influence the melody to change direction. Case in point: a top-down approach may be seen a few times, but more often a bottom-up approach happens.

In *Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know*, David Bernstein and Susan Davis indeed suggest the latter is a more successful endeavor. In fact, they partly define the term 'social entrepreneurship' by that aspect: "Social entrepreneurship describes a *process*, a way to organize problem-solving efforts. The entrepreneurial authors get the ball rolling, but the process has its own characteristics. Unlike governmental efforts, it flows from the bottom-up. Typically it grows

out of one person's direct interaction with a problem" (Bornstein and Davis 34). What naturally follows is an accumulation of attraction towards the entrepreneur's idea, but the main point being addressed here is social entrepreneurs generally do *not* lead from the top-down. In a sense, they are 'grassroots' kinds of people.

This is where the modulation occurs. Yes, the social innovator prepares an intricate plan to shape a part of society, but it actually came from knowledge of a real-life problem concerning real-life people. The harmony and melody influence one another. This paper could have perhaps placed the harmony section second and the melody section third if it weren't for one particular detail: the harmony has a more difficult time connecting to the Bass Line if there is no melody. The melody's primary job is to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and everything else (yes, even including the harmony) will be added.

PART THREE: THE HARMONY

Having covered both the Bass Line and the melody somewhat in depth, the last part of this opus concerns 'everyone else.' Specifically, this section will address how the harmony can impact the whole orchestration. The following questions come from "Part III: Envisioning an Innovating Society" from *Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know* - How could schools nurture social innovation? What can governments do to engage more successfully with social entrepreneurs? How can philanthropists help social entrepreneurs?

The first question (like the other two) is quite multifaceted, and perhaps the most effective starting point is suggesting that an entrepreneurship class curriculum needs to include case studies of teenage social innovators. This would hopefully inspire the students to become changemakers themselves. Bornstein and Davis agree: "The best ways for schools to produce social entrepreneurs tomorrow is for them to encourage students to practice changemaking

today... Young people should study how other young people are successfully (or unsuccessfully) attacking social problems” (Bornstein and Davis 85). There are plenty of case studies taken from Injaz, Do Something, Free the Children, among others, which could be integrated into class lectures.

Schools also need to redirect where they reward and encourage students. Straight A students and gifted athletes are usually celebrated, but there needs to be award programs and conferences for youth-initiated social problem solving. Rendering this would provide many future benefits to the community, because students will become attuned to finding solutions for the rest of their lives. Not only that, but they would become key allies with their teachers in reshaping their schools and communities.

Thirdly, there are four helpful principles which teachers would benefit from remembering. They come from Bornstein and Davis: “To encourage more people to be changemakers, schools should help students to believe (1) that their ideas are valuable; (2) that it is good to ask questions and take initiative; (3) that it is fun to collaborate with others; and (4) that it is far better to make mistakes than not to try at all” (Bornstein and Davis 84). Emphasizing these would actually be beneficial for all stages of learning and development.

Having covered schools, next on the plate are governments. What can governments do to engage more successfully with social entrepreneurs? First, they could strategically search the population for successful social entrepreneurs and then help frame/scope their ideas and organizations. For indeed, governments will need to transition from their current mode of controlling programs to investing in different means of support toward entrepreneurs. Governments also should make it easier for people to start social-purpose organizations. Part of this can be achieved by changing the tax treatment of L3C corporations.

Besides providing innovation funds inside all the government agencies, governments could also interact with impact investors and philanthropists to develop a social capital market. Furthermore, Bornstein and Davis provide an interesting thought: “Create cross-sector fellowships to bring social entrepreneurs into government and place policy staffers in social organization” (Bornstein and Davis 97). This should be effective since congressional staffers and political campaign directors comprehend politics better than specific details of solutions, while entrepreneurs are skilled in addressing problems but lack in political bargaining nuances.

What about philanthropists? They can assist social entrepreneurs in a few ways. First, they can help social innovators engage with governments and businesses more effectively. Combining the strengths of disciplines could render much improvement for public systems, and philanthropists are neutrally, uniquely positioned to catalyze such interchanges. Secondly, specific tuition support (like fellowship programs) in university settings could promote research in social entrepreneurship. This would assuredly attract more people into this growing field of study. Lastly, philanthropists could improve collaboration between social entrepreneurs themselves. Firms could be created and reduce the loneliness and risk of early-stage social innovators. Some initiatives are already in place as models - the MaRS Discovery District and the Centre for Social Innovation, both in Toronto, Canada.

Finally, what about the mass of people who are not school teachers, government leaders, and philanthropists? They certainly could have a negative or positive impact on social entrepreneurship. Bornstein and Davis encourage *everyone* to be changemakers and provide a helpful list of thoughts in the back of their book (p. 129-130). Following those ideas would result in a richer, fuller harmony in the orchestration of society. As a reminder, though, a dependence on the Bass Line needs to be included in that list somewhere as well.

It is time to close the score and lay down the baton. All three parts have been dissected and performed. If only one thing is remembered from this moment, it should be this: the well-prepared and innovative melody (social entrepreneur) needs to move in sync with the Bass Line (God) and consequently, the harmony (everyone else) will have a natural tendency to fall into place, rendering beautiful music and giving glory to the Composer of all meaningful, transformative music.

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