

## **Redeeming Business Culture**

by Robert Wu

In the summer of 2006 after I graduated, I moved to Washington D.C. to start a career in business consulting. As a business professional, I copied the culture of my coworkers and was no different as a Christian business professional; I aimed for the same promotions, same goals, and same entitlements. Two years later, all of my expectations have been frustrated, all my plans have been thwarted, and all my desires have been withered into nothingness. Yet in this powerlessness and poverty, God has cultivated and created a new culture for my career through volunteering with Synergy Ministries. In my short time with Synergy, I've experienced how the organization is a contributor to human flourishing.

Synergy forms Christian teams of business professionals and university students for business consulting projects at Christian ministries. The philosophy behind Synergy is "oiling the tractors for the harvest"; we redeem our education and gifts for the purpose of serving Christian ministries and their constituents. The organization is led by a small group of passionate business professionals, with outside fulltime jobs, who give up their leisure time and part of their careers for Synergy's mission.

In the summer of 2007, I signed up to be a Team Lead for Synergy's South Africa Project, and the project was a tangible experience into human flourishing for my team. In addition to "traditional" mission activities such as biblical studies and ministry, our team set out to improve the operations of a Christian microfinance ministry. From applying project plans to developing pivot tables, all of our work related skills were leveraged to improve our client. The continuous cycle of cultivation at work and creation of solutions to improve Christian ministries bridged the gap between career practice, learning, and faith.

Since then, I've been on leadership with Synergy and focused on new project development, internal development, and strategic planning. My vision is not to grow the Synergy organization, but rather to grow the service and impact that Synergy has on its participants, clients, and communities. Together, we can contribute to human flourishing by developing these opportunities to change business culture. We need to advocate to churches about faith-career integrated projects for their congregation. We need to build the field by nurturing a network of like-minded organizations and communities. We need to partner with businesses and corporations to leverage applicable best practices and solutions for Christian ministries. Lastly, we need to implement a volunteer model so that any Christian business student or professional can serve Christian ministries with their education and gifts anytime and anywhere.

I dream of a new business culture where there is purpose, joy, and generosity. I dream of a culture where our education and gifts are closer to the areas of where God intended it to be. I'm not sure where these dreams will lead, but what I do know is that I'm a step closer in aligning my career practice, learning, and faith. Synergy has allowed me, in whatever small way, to redeem a culture that has been underutilized by Christians, and to contribute to human flourishing.

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