

Author's Preface

On May 25, 1961, the president of the United States, John F. Kennedy, challenged the country with landing a man on the moon and returning him safely by the end of the decade. At the time, the Soviet Union (USSR) was the leader in space exploration and the United States was a distant second. The cold war with Russia was intense in the late '50s and early '60s. President Kennedy sought an advantage over the USSR and viewed a space race with the USSR as beneficial to the USA.

After President Kennedy's challenge, funding for NASA, the new space agency, increased dramatically. And after his assassination in November 1963, funding increased even more.

After NASA was well-funded, it needed a plethora of scientists, mathematicians, and engineers. Accordingly, universities and colleges were conduits for grants, loans, and scholarships in fields of study relevant to the space race. This was the context in which I started my university work in physics in 1965. However, when NASA achieved President Kennedy's goal in July 1969, funding for NASA began to decline. When I graduated in August 1973, having earned three degrees in physics and eager to join the space program, there was an abundance of technically trained graduates with advanced degrees but few job opportunities. For a time, I was able to work as a research scientist but when the economy struggled under the Middle East concocted oil embargo, I was laid off, along with many other research scientists. Finding technical work was difficult and many of us, including me, had to change our careers.

For about ten years, I worked in the family construction business. I moved into management and, ultimately, decided to start my own consulting management practice. During this time, I studied

theology and was involved in my local church as a Bible teacher.

In 1990, I met a man who challenged me vocationally and biblically. He asked me about the principles I used in my consulting practice and whether I thought biblical principles were relevant to organizational behavior. I was stunned by the question because by this time I had received considerable theological training from capable seminary professors. Nevertheless, I struggled to answer his query about the relevance of biblical principles to organizational leadership and management. This stimulated a search.

I spent the 1990s searching the Scriptures, reading books, attending conferences, and talking with people about the connection between the Bible and organizational behavior. By the end of the decade, my vocabulary had changed and the principles I used to guide my clients changed. For example, I talked about congruence with a Christian worldview, equally yoked leadership teams, strategic planning as a process for discerning the will of God, and money as a tool used to obey God.

My clients were vexed. Their feedback helped me understand the transformation that God had worked in me. How was I to communicate this new biblical understanding of organizational behavior to them? This led me to write my first book, *Beyond Babel*, which presented a Christian model for organizational behavior.

In considering the building blocks of organizations, I realized that the key was the *right people* serving the *right people* doing the *right things* the *right way* at the *right time* in the *right place* for the *right reason*. This chain of divinely defined rightness begins with the right people.

Who are the right people for an organization to hire? And how does one find the right people whom the

organization is called to serve? These were perplexing questions that led me to a deeper study of Scripture.

As I searched, I found a clue in the account of the construction of the Tabernacle. The leaders of this project possessed specific traits. In time, I synthesized these traits into the C4 Principle.

I discovered the C4 Principle in other texts of Scripture and realized it was a general principle that could be used to guide individuals into finding their God-ordained races in life (Hebrews 12:1–2) and to help organizational leaders and managers identify the “right people.” In other words, this principle helped align people with God’s purpose. From a Christian worldview, this is the only correct way to live personally and to build organizationally.

In this book, I share my understanding of the C4 Principle, using numerous texts to help illuminate more fully what the Bible reveals. Plus, I endeavor to apply the principle to the various venues of life.

In the early part of the twenty-first century, I realized that educating my clients in a Christian worldview of personal destiny and organizational behavior required more than a book. Training venues were essential. I started with a seminar on building excellent organizations. Eventually it was divided into multiple seminars. The core teaching was presented in the Strategic Life Alignment (SLA) seminar, a two-day seminar on individual purpose and destiny based on the C4 Principle. I began teaching the Beyond Babel model through a series—now approximately twenty complementary one-day seminars.

This book is a stand-alone work, but it is intended to support the SLA and Beyond Babel training. This book coupled with the SLA training is a prequel to Beyond Babel training.

This book is overtly Christian and contains many Scripture references. When a text is quoted, my intent

is to use the text consistent with a sound understanding of the text. I carefully tried to avoid eisegesis. However, in whatever way I may have failed, please forgive me. My intent is to teach, train, and consult based on a sound, orthodox, grammatical, and historical understanding of Scripture as the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God.

With deepest appreciation, I wish to thank my wife, Carol, for her unwavering support. Also, my fathers (my biological father and four spiritual fathers) for their investment in me over the years. More than ever, I realize that their support was essential to guide and direct me in running my divinely assigned race. My wife and fathers helped me see reality correctly, understand reality more clearly, draw better conclusions, and make wiser choices. To whatever degree God has granted me success in life, it is because of my wife and fathers. So thank you to the Lord first and to them second for their faithful relationships.

My prayer is that you will be challenged and inspired as you read this book to discover and run your race looking unto Jesus. As you run your race, may you have more conviction about your life purpose and more clarity about the organizational contexts where you are called to serve. And may you serve well!

Gerald Chester
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