Would Jesus Build a Pyramid?

Servant-Leadership and Corporate Social Responsibility
—Jiyeng Song

“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”
—John 10:10b

The purpose of this article is to examine corporate social responsibility (CSR) from a Christian perspective and to study Jesus’ leadership and speculate whether Jesus would have built a CSR pyramid. CSR has no single definition due to its complexity and evolvement in the business field, but its focus has shifted from the role of business leaders to the behavior of companies, to the environment, and the corporate citizenship (Blowfield & Murray, 2008). CSR is “the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society and outlines what an enterprise should do to meet that responsibility” (The European Commission, 2011, para. 3). A widely used model was first developed by Carroll in 1979 and later shaped into the form of a CSR pyramid in 1991 (Carroll, 1979, 1991). In 2016, Carroll admitted some issues concerning the applicability of his CSR pyramid in different global, situational, and organizational contexts. Carroll (2016) argued that his CSR pyramid was supposed to be an integrated whole rather than building blocks in a sequential fashion, starting with being profitable, then obeying the law, then being ethical, and then being a good corporate citizen. However,
Carroll received criticism regarding his CSR pyramid due to its alignment with Levitt’s (1958) profit maximization (Song, 2022) and its representation of a masculinist perspective (Spence, 2016). As a Christian educator, I raise the questions: What would Jesus do? Would Jesus build such a pyramid? I am going to wrestle with these questions from a Christian perspective in this article. First, literature is reviewed in the areas of servant-leadership, how Jesus leads, and corporate social responsibility. Following is a discussion of faith integration perspectives and models, biblical and theological approaches, and whether Jesus would build a pyramid. This article ends with a conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Servant-Leadership

Unsurprisingly, servant-leadership is not a new concept even though 2020 is the 50th anniversary of Robert K. Greenleaf (2003) coining the term servant-leader. In ancient China, the best leader was regarded as one who served and nurtured others without contending with them and helped people accomplish things without taking credit: “The highest form of goodness is like water. Water knows how to benefit all things without striving with them” (Lao Tzu, 2005, p. 17).

Greenleaf was a Quaker thinker and servant-leader. Retired from his career as Director of Management Research at AT&T, he founded the Center for Applied Ethics in 1964 and devoted his life to leadership studies. In 1970, he published “The Servant as Leader,” a landmark essay that used the phrase “servant-leader” (for original 1970 edition, see Greenleaf, 2003). Drawing from his experiential leadership practice and deep Quaker spirituality, he coined and defined the term servant-leadership: “The servant-leader is servant first. . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from
one who is leader first” (Greenleaf, 1977/2002, p. 27, emphasis in original). Greenleaf explained how we can identify servant-leaders:

Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived? (p. 27, emphasis in original)

In Greenleaf’s writings, Spears (2002) has identified 10 characteristics of a servant-leader: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

Based on Spears’s (2002) 10 characteristics of a servant-leader and my research study, I constructed a servant-leadership model (Figure 1). Empathy, listening, awareness, and forgiveness contribute to healing; healing, listening, and reflexivity (with conceptualization) lead to the growth of entheos; and the growth of entheos results in better awareness (Song, 2020). Entheos comes from the Greek word ἐνθέος, which literally means “in God.” By entheos, Greenleaf (2003) meant “the power actuating one who is inspired” (p. 118). These characteristics of servant-leadership interweave with one another to bring out better awareness in servant-leaders, so they tackle whatever issues are in front of them. Inward awareness (i.e., self-awareness) can help leaders understand their own strengths, weaknesses, emotions, and concerns, as well as the impacts of their actions. Upward awareness (i.e., spirit-awareness) can shape a leader’s entheos and nurture his or her oneness and wholeness. Outward awareness (i.e., other-awareness, relation-awareness, and situation-awareness) can move a leader toward stewardship, including persuading people through word and deed, committing to the growth of people, and building community. A person with relation-awareness and situation-awareness is able to identify
situational, historical, religious, cultural, and social elements in a complex situation. All these forms of awareness take place with onward awareness (i.e., time-awareness); and the awareness of the future leads to foresight (Song, 2020).

Figure 1. Servant-Leadership Model (source: Song, 2020)

In the 1970s, Greenleaf (1977/2002) observed that “the sense of business responsibility is inadequate for the influence that business wields” (p. 66). This statement is even more true today. For years Greenleaf made the strongest pleas he could for major institutions to “become affirmative (as opposed to passive or reactive) servants of society” (p. 170). In 1974, the first unequivocal response came to him from a large multinational business (Greenleaf, 1977/2002).
proposal to the directors of this company, Greenleaf said, “If directors want a more socially responsible company . . . they should start the process by becoming more responsible directors” (p. 175). Grameen Danone Food Ltd, as a socially responsible company founded in 2006, is the result of the efforts of two responsible leaders—Franck Riboud and Muhammad Yunus (Danone, 2020).

Greenleaf (1977/2002) recognized that the core reason so few businesses serve well is “not in business institutions; rather, it is in the attitudes, concepts, and expectations regarding business held by the rest of society” (p. 149). People inside and outside business do not love business institutions (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). Greenleaf claimed, “Businesses, despite their crassness, occasional corruption, and unloveliness, must be loved if they are to serve us better” (p. 149, emphasis in original). How can you love an institution? You cannot. You love the people and the people are the institution (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). A centerpiece of Greenleaf’s work and writing is the principle of love (Tilghman-Havens, 2018). Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) argued that compassionate love is an antecedent to servant-leadership and the cornerstone of the servant-leader and follower relationship. If a mechanistic cog-and-wheel perspective of institution is replaced by an organic servant-led perspective, then traditional, hierarchy-driven, and command-and-control leadership models will yield to participative, value-driven, and people-oriented models. When you are asked, “What are you in business for?,” you can use Greenleaf’s (1977/2002) words to answer: “I am in the business of growing people” (p. 159).

Jesus’ Leadership

Jesus was not only in the business of redemption and salvation, but also growing people. Blanchard et al. (2016) claimed that Jesus is the greatest leadership role model of all time. To start with, Jesus has a compelling vision: “For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the
lost” (Luke 19:10). Blanchard et al. (2016) built a model of spheres of influence (see Figure 2 below) to show how Jesus leads. At the center is Self. Being a leader, one has to know how to lead oneself first. Confucius (2014) once said to a king, “If you weren’t so full of desire yourself, you couldn’t pay people to steal from you” (p. 96). In Figure 2, Blanchard et al. (2016) put Matthew 4:19-20 at the center with Self as an explanation, “And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him.” I consider this scripture more as an example of leading another, which is the second ring from the center of the spheres of influence. After having a solid center, the spheres of influence go through leading another, leading others, and leading an organization:

1. Leading another: “And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him.” (Matt 4:19-20) and “But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, ‘You of little faith, why did you doubt?’” (Matt 14:30-31)

2. Leading others: “You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:13-14)

3. Leading an organization: “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” (Matt 28:18-20)
This model is built upon the center: Self. Jesus is fully human and fully divine. The theological debate over Jesus’ being is beyond the scope of this article. I will focus on how Jesus leads for now. As Greenleaf (1977/2002) claimed, “any problem in the world as in here, inside oneself, not out there” (p. 44). Jesus leads from within. Later in the book Lead Like Jesus Revisited, Blanchard et al. (2016) elaborated on five Being Habits that countered the negative forces in Jesus’ life: accepting and abiding in God’s love, experiencing solitude, practicing prayer, knowing and applying Scripture, and maintaining supportive relationships. These Being Habits actually set great examples for how Jesus leads from within:

1. Accepting and abiding in God’s love: “So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.” (1 John 4:16)
2. Experiencing solitude: “In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.” (Mark 1:35)

3. Practicing prayer: “He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’” (Luke 11:1)

4. Knowing and applying Scripture: “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim 3:16-17)

5. Maintaining supportive relationships: “And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.” (Ecc 4:12)

According to Montañez (2021), the leadership of Jesus—the Deliverer—is in contrast with the leadership of a Pharaoh: “A Pharaoh, … is one who takes captives and holds them by force, demanding to be served first…. take(s) people captive to build everything in their image” while “A Deliverer, … brings a message of freedom and growth… with a strategy of serving others first…. Deliverers are not threatened by diversity or individuality and are more about others than about themselves” (p. 178). This Deliverer is also a servant, who emptied himself, took the form of a slave, and humbled himself to the point of death on a cross (Philippians 2:7-8). Jesus said to his disciples,

Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. (Matt 20:26-28; Mark 10:43-45)

This Servant-Leader came to us and claimed, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b). Jesus, as our Deliverer,
is the ultimate model of a servant-leader.

**Corporate Social Responsibility**

Long before the term Corporate Social Responsibility was coined, leaders and businesses had been searching for ways to make positive contributions to society (Blowfield & Murray, 2008). With the rising of the concept of CSR, some people argued that profit maximization should remain the dominant purpose of business (Levitt, 1958) and that social issues are not the concerns of businesspeople (Friedman, 1962). In 1991, Freeman and Liedtka called to abandon the concept of CSR because it had become “a barrier to meaningful conversations about corporations and the good life” (p. 92). Despite these oppositional voices, CSR still prevails. The focus of CSR has shifted from the role of business leaders to the behavior of companies, to environmental concerns, and to corporate citizenship (Blowfield & Murray, 2008).

Elkington (2018) coined the term **triple bottom line** of people, planet, and profit (3Ps) in 1994. It is “a sustainability framework that examines a company’s social, environment, and economic impact” (para. 4). However, Elkington recalled this term in 2018 and claimed that it needed some fine tuning. He believed that the triple bottom line had been wrongly used because many corporations had been measuring its sustainability goals only in terms of profit. In order to keep the well-known 3Ps and its true meaning of sustainability, Kraaijenbrink (2019) suggested using “prosperity” to replace “profit.” Kraaijenbrink hoped to broaden the scope of economic impacts within the 3Ps while drawing attention away from profit as the only legitimate goal. Prosperity, according to Kraaijenbrink (2019), is realized through economic impacts such as employment, innovation, and taxes. Caring for people, not only physically and emotionally but also financially, contributes to these people’s prosperity. Prosperity is more than just economic value; it is people and community being prosperous with the support from one
another. It is the “flourishing of all” (Tilghman-Havens, 2018, p. 120). It is bell hooks’ (1984) vision of “reorganizing society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires” (p. 26). It is Tutu’s (1998) ubuntu, “a person is a person through other persons” (p. 19).

A four-part definition of CSR was developed by Carroll in 1979 and widely used since then. Carroll (1991) suggests that four kinds of social responsibilities constitute total CSR: economic (be profitable), legal (obey the law), ethical (be ethical), and philanthropic (be a good corporate citizen). In 1991, Carroll shaped the four-part definition into the form of a CSR pyramid. He described it as follows:

It portrays the four components of CSR, beginning with the basic building block notion that economic performance undergirds all else. At the same time, business is expected to obey the law because the law is society’s codification of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Next is business’s responsibility to be ethical. At its most fundamental level, this is the obligation to do what is right, just, and fair, and to avoid or minimize harm to stakeholders (employees, consumers, the environment, and others). Finally, business is expected to be a good corporate citizen. This is captured in the philanthropic responsibility, wherein business is expected to contribute financial and human resources to the community and to improve the quality of life. (para. 19)

Carroll’s (1991) hierarchical design of CSR set economic responsibilities or being profitable as the foundation of CSR, supporting the idea of Levitt (1958): profit maximization should be the dominant purpose of business. In 2016, Carroll took another look at the four-part definitional framework upon which the pyramid was created. He admitted that some issues had been raised about the applicability of his CSR pyramid in different global, situational, and organizational contexts
(Carroll, 2016). Carroll’s (2016) CSR pyramid suggests that business should fulfill its social responsibilities in a sequential fashion, starting with being profitable, then obeying the law, then being ethical, and then being a good corporate citizen (even though he emphasized that the pyramid was supposed to be seen as an integrated, unified whole rather than different parts). This sequential fashion could be misleading or used as excuses in terms of meeting a corporate’s social responsibilities. Where is the end of being profitable and the beginning of social responsibility? This question does not mean that a socially responsible business cannot or should not make profits. A social business model is to benefit economically disadvantaged or marginalized people/communities while being financially sustainable, not through donations or charity, but through its own economical sustainability (Osberg & Martin, 2015; Thompson & Doherty, 2006; Yunus et al., 2010). Yunus et al. (2010) placed a profit-maximizing business and a social business at two ends of the spectrum of profit maximization and social impact.

I conducted a hermeneutic phenomenological study in 2020 to explore the essence of CSR and crisis leadership through the lens of servant-leadership (Song, 2022). In this research, I used the metaphor of the layers of the earth (inner core, outer core, mantle, and crust) to propose a 3Ps and CSR as the Core of Business model (Song, 2022; See Figure 3). I reshaped Carroll’s (1991, 2016) CSR pyramid into a ball consisting of four parts. I then combined the 3Ps with this newly designed CSR and proposed a new model mirroring the layers of the earth (Figure 3). This model made people, planet, and prosperity (3Ps of local communities) the inner core of a business and CSR (economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities) the outer core upon which a business should build.
The purpose of this article is to examine CSR from a Christian perspective and to study Jesus’ leadership and speculate whether Jesus would have built a CSR pyramid. After reviewing the concept of servant-leadership, Jesus’ leadership in particular, and the concept of CSR, I am going to set up a Christian framework through some perspectives, models, and biblical and theological approaches to faith integration. Then I will discuss whether Jesus would have built a CSR pyramid.

DISCUSSION

*Perspectives and Models on Faith Integration*

The historical perspective of Christian colleges sheds light on my understanding of the situation of Christian higher education today. The purpose of educating white, evangelical, male, middle-class Protestants for their social, political, and religious positions does not prevail anymore, but watered-down moralism and training soul-winning specialists still impact higher education nowadays. This historical
perspective provides us a trajectory of where we come from and
hopefully by going back it helps us find where we are going. How do we
as Christian educators think clearly, intentionally, and rigorously about
our academic disciplines and our mission? Bach once said, “The aim and
final end of all music... should be none other than the glory of God and
the refreshment of the soul” (as cited in Brooks, 2019). Just like Bach’s
passion for music, the mission for Christian higher education should be
the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul as well. It is the
education of a whole person—body, soul, and spirit—here now and there
then. It is the efforts of “[weaving] together the curriculum and co-
curriculum to transform students intellectually, emotionally, and
spiritually” (Ostrander, 2008, p. 49).

Graduating from a Chinese secular university in the mid-90s, higher
education was all about curriculum and learning to me. After I became a
professor in American Christian higher education, it was a learning curve
to realize that students come here not only for knowledge, but also for
fun, for community, and for a safe place to find out who they are and
what is God’s calling for them. In order to meet their needs, we have to
provide the integration of faith and learning, and build our college into a
place of discovery, a place of ethical transformation, a place where
matter matters, and a place of welcome (Tippens, 2008). However,
meeting students’ needs should not be our only purpose. Customer-
orientated and competency-focused universities may abandon or obscure
their Christian identity. Consumerization of Christian higher education
has the assumption that consumers/students know best. If so, higher
education should be the follower of society development instead of the
leader. A place of discovery would be a place of application. A place of
ethical transformation would become a place of ethical compromise. To
be a leader means to listen and to create dangerously. We need to know
our students, know their needs, know this generation, and know the
generations to come to serve accordingly. Meanwhile, we need to keep the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul in sight as our purpose so that we can lead courageously. Christian higher educators, as servant-leaders, live at two levels of reality: earth-orientated, incarnational, building a place of discovery and welcome; and kingdom-orientated, transcendental, leading through clear vision for the future and toward transformation.

Cosgrove outlined four approaches to faith and learning integration: Scripture as the sole authority, faith and learning as parallels without overlap, equal authorities tilting toward secular research, and the worldview model (as cited in Beers, 2008). According to Beers (2008), faith and learning integration is neither merely about personal relationships between educators and students, nor praying before class, nor a set of additional courses, nor cherry-picking of biblical precepts. Beers (2008) considered Christian worldview as the picture on the top of a puzzle box that “provides a framework for constructing the puzzle” (p. 52). The central theme of faith and learning integration is “evaluating and shaping a discipline’s body of knowledge from a Christian worldview” (p. 55). It’s the examination of epistemology of Christian educators and researchers.

It is necessary to recognize the different visibility of integration in various disciplines. Meanwhile, it makes sense to apply diverse integrative strategies based on the visibility of integration. Built upon Beers’ (2008) figure of The Visibility Continuum of Integration (p. 60), I drew the interactions between integrative strategies and visibility continuum in Figure 4.
In a Christian higher education institution, pursuing faith and learning integration wholeheartedly, different approaches must be allowed based on the visibility of integration (i.e., the natural of the discipline). No matter what approach we use, the three-level hierarchy of reflective actions (Figure 5) could provide guiding questions: “What?,” “So what?,” and “Now what?” It works through the stages of investigation, interpretation, and application (Beers, 2008). This simplified framework can inspire various integrative questions from different disciplines.
**Biblical and Theological Approaches**

Mead’s (2007) vertical and horizontal dimensions connect God with human beings, heaven with earth, and Old Testament with New Testament. This simply-built relationship (as shown in Figure 6), expressed in three strokes, forms a Chinese character “工,” which means “work.” This is the work of salvation and redemption. This is the work of God. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16, NRSV). As a Christian, knowing and worshiping God and living in relationship with God and others shall be my life-long work. This integrated framework admits the transcendence as well as immanence of God. If God were only transcendent, the top and the bottom strokes would be in parallel without the vertical connection. Jesus is ο λόγος (Word, masculine), η ζωή (Life, feminine), as well as το φως (Light, neuter). “In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all” (Col. 3:11, NRSV). Our salvation is made possible only through Christ. Without Jesus Christ, the vertical connection would be impossible. By the Holy Spirit and through Christ, we can live into God’s kingdom, which is here and yet to come. This three-stroke framework of God’s redemptive work shall guide our work as individuals as well as Christian educators.
No matter what professions or disciplines you are in, worldview is always the lens you use to examine knowledge. As a Christian, the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of humanity shape my understanding of my research, learning, and teaching. Husserl (1952) proposed the method of bracketing, “put[ting] out of action the general thesis which belongs to the essence of the natural standpoint” and placing it in brackets (p. 110). He used the Greek word εποχή (epoché), which means “a certain refraining from judgment” (p. 109). In this sense, inquirers can step out of their own presuppositions and prejudices and see things as they really are (Husserl, 1952). Heidegger (1962) claimed that “understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein’s Being” (p. 32), and the phenomenological interpretation is “a determination of the structure of the Being which entities possess” (p. 96). Thus understanding and interpretation are ontologically connected with Being-in-the-world and we cannot step outside of it. Our understanding always involves an interpretation influenced by our historicality, which cannot be eliminated (Laverty, 2003). Gadamer
(1975/2004) also viewed bracketing as impossible because the “prejudices and fore-meanings that occupy the interpreter’s consciousness are not at his [or her] free disposal” (p. 295). Our task is to “clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place” (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 295); and “to examine our historically inherited and unreflectively held prejudices, and alter those that disable our efforts to understand others, and ourselves” (Garrison, 1996, p. 434). If we admit that we cannot step out of our historicality and Being-in-the-world, then how can we avoid integrating faith into our learning and teaching? I think the whole question is not about whether we should integrate faith and learning, but how to do it effectively with long-lasting positive impact. Furthermore, how to clarify the conditions of our understanding, recognize our preestablished assumptions and prejudices, and how to integrate faith and learning meanwhile respecting others since they are created in the image of God as well?

Would Jesus Build a Pyramid?

Based on Figure 5, the model of reflective actions of faith and learning integration, I am going to walk through the steps of investigation, interpretation, and application for integration of faith and learning in terms of Jesus’ leadership, servant-leadership, and CSR. First, The What—understanding and investigating what is going on (Beers, 2008). Jesus’ ministry is built upon Self: who I am, whose I am, and what I am going to become. The discussion of Christology is beyond the scope of this article, but certain conclusions will be borrowed. Jesus is fully human and fully divine, which we can never be, but it does not mean that we cannot learn from the incarnated God. As finite creatures (Kapic, 2022), to answer the question who I am through self-identity, we have to examine our social identity—whose I am (Song, 2018). As Taylor (1989) puts it: “In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going” (p.
Our social identity enlightens how we have become, while our self-identity drives where we are going: “The self forms a trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future” (Giddens, 1991, p. 75). As Christians, our identity is in Christ: “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14), “dearly loved” (Colossians 3:12), forgiven (Romans 4:7), heirs with Jesus (Romans 8:17), Jesus’ friends (John 15:14), and many more. Bonhoeffer felt the weight of this question: “Who am I?” and concluded at the end: “Whoever I am, You know me. I am Yours, O God!” (as cited in Kapic, 2022, p. 89). When we define our identity through Christ, we are answering the questions “who I am” and “whose I am.” What I am going to become is driven by this exact identity.

In the discussion of servant-leadership, I introduced my newly developed servant-leadership model (Song, 2020; Figure 1). The center of this model is awareness with four dimensions. It is not appropriate to equal awareness with self, but awareness is a crucial part of self. Through inward awareness, we find who I am; along with upward and outward awareness, we define whose I am; and combining with onward awareness, we predict what I am going to become. Comparing this awareness model (as shown in Figure 1) with the Christian framework of work (工) (Figure 6), we learn that the vertical connection through inward and upward awareness constructs an individual’s relationship with a triune God through Christ; the horizontal extension through outward and onward awareness builds relationship with others. Without this Self, other servant-leadership characteristics (Song, 2020) will not be able to come into existence. Equipped with the deep understanding of my identity through Christ, I now examine my 3Ps and CSR as the Core of Business Model (Figure 3) through a transformationist perspective to require a connection in the field of social science (Figure 4). One thing is missing—the core: Self.
After above investigation, I move to the second step: So What—interpreting the facts through a Christian worldview (Beers, 2008). Through the process of interpreting, the social inquirer grasps the meanings that constitute an action in order to gain an understanding of that action (Schwandt, 2000). Understanding is not “an isolated activity of human beings but the basic structure of our experience of life” (Gadamer, 1988, p. 58). It requires the engagement of inquirer’s biases, rather than getting rid of one’s own standpoint and prejudices (Gadamer, 1975/2004). In addition, understanding is “a growth in inner awareness” and an adventure, rather than certainty obtained through scientific methods (Gadamer, 2001, p. 109). How do I develop a deeper understanding of why I missed Self from my CSR model (Figure 3)? First, I used to live a life of being a Christian and being a businesswoman in two realms. The separation of these two selves has taken deeper roots in me than I realized. Second, sometimes I still teach in two realms, self and leadership versus business management. The habit of separating the inner self from the business self was reflected through my different approaches to these topics in the classroom. Third, I do not have any scientific methods to obtain further understanding of the missing of Self, however, examining my own integration of faith and learning has contributed to my growth of inner awareness.

Now what? Here comes the third step: applying your learning to the redemptive process (Beers, 2008). Poe’s (2004) writing emphasizes the interrelationship of faith and learning. “As soon as the question of order arises, the conversation has entered the realm of faith. . . . Disciplines inevitably raise questions that cannot be answered without engaging in an interdisciplinary conversation” (p. 112). From Gospel to creeds, from creeds to doctrines, from doctrines to divisions, believers have been drawing perimeters to define what this is and what this is not and who is in and who is out. Whenever a question is raised, different answers rise
and head to various directions. “The truth of the doctrine has not changed, but the context in which it is explained has changed radically” (Poe, 2004, p. 111). In order to protect God, our belief, and ourselves, we choose sides and set up fences. A stroke here, a brush there, we feel the urge to make it clear in our doctrines. For example, at the fourth council, they defined the four fences of Chalcedon about Christ’s humanity and divinity: without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation (Olson, 1999). The purpose was to protect the mystery from the heresy of Eutychianism, Monophysitism, and Nestorianism (Olson, 1999). “All the definition really does is express and protect a mystery. It does not explain anything” (p. 234). The context changes, so do the questions. With the shifts of major concerns, different denominations come into place. In the hurry of building fences and walls, we deviate from the center of our belief: Christ. Does Jesus need our defense? Or would rather Jesus be the well for all? “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters” (Isaiah 55:1). Broadbent (2014)’s simple illustration of the contrast of fence model versus well model of the church (Figure 7) lends us a better understanding. John Ortberg explains it like this:

In Australia there are two main methods for keeping cattle on the ranch. One is to build a fence around the perimeter. The other is to dig a well in the center of the property. I think Jesus is more like a well than a fence. (as cited in Broadbent, 2014)

Which model are we going to bring into our discipline and classroom?
Christian educators need to not only understand the major themes of God’s redemptive work, but also be the witnesses to it. For example, how can we be grateful to the past, live the present with faith, and look forward to the future with hope? We have to deal with our own regrets, stress, and fear so that we can be witnesses gratitude, faith, and hope to our students. In the business field, how can we inspire students to be responsible for creation and responsive to God’s covenant? I propose the question of being God’s steward when we talk about planned obsolescence as a business strategy used by many companies. I was glad to see my students argued about it, wrestled with it, and reached the point of considering it unethical and irresponsible for God’s creation. Yes, we want business to grow, production to increase, employee income to rise, but we also need to be careful with the responsibility God has given us. Many students turned to innovation through extending a current business into related services, surrounding products, and unique accessories to grow their business and make it sustainable. The mindset of scarcity will lead us to competition, the survival of the fittest, and planned obsolescence. On the contrary, the mindset of abundance will lead to collaboration, the prosperity of all people, and sustainable innovation. May we be God’s responsible stewards and inspire our students to become one as well. To participate in God’s redemptive work and to be a witness to it, we have to bring Self back into business. Would Jesus build...
a pyramid of CSR? Absolutely not. Jesus is Deliverer, not Pharaoh. Jesus uses himself to hold everything together, “He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1: 17). Thus let the Self through Christ be the center of our business (see Figure 8).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Jesus would not build a pyramid of corporate social responsibility. Instead, He holds everything together with the very being of himself. The missing of Self from my previous CSR model pointed to my lived experience and biases. Examining servant-leadership and corporate social responsibility through faith integration models and biblical and theological approaches brought me a deeper understanding of myself and my discipline. Upon the corner stone of Christ, we build ourselves and our businesses to be witnesses to Christ.

Figure 8. Integrative Corporate Social Responsibility Model
References


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