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The Business of Christianity: The Growing Market For Everything Christian

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In 2008, McFarland Publishers, Inc. of Jefferson, North Carolina is scheduled to publish my book: *The Business of Christianity: The Growing Market for Everything Christian*. The premise of this book is to elaborate in some detail how entrepreneurs are marketing products and services to the Christian consumer that have never been marketed before. Before going into what these products and services are, I should point out that these markets have always existed. The difference is, however, that with the attention given to, Evangelism, the religious right and the growth of mega-churches, those with memberships in excess of 2,000, businessmen and women have identified a new niche, Christian consumers looking for products and services with overtly Christian themes.

From purely a leadership perspective, this new consumer demand, has offered these entrepreneurs an unprecedented opportunity to turn their leadership skills towards creating business opportunities that once either lay “under the radar” or was considered too small a market to worry about penetrating. An example is the traditional Christian book store. Traditionally these stores were outlet for Christian products such as Bibles, Sunday school and communion supplies and Christian books and CD’s. As the market has grown so has the number and types of products these stores sell. To whatever degree, there is some amount of leadership on the part of these Christian bookstore owners to be aware of the markets “needs” for these products and to be able to deliver them to the consumer. This is in fact what has actually happened in part or in spite of Wall*Marts expansion into the market for Christian goods and services.

The introduction to my book is, *The Exploding Christian Marketplace*: If you can experience it and/or play with it the Christian marketplace will offer it. It addresses seven specific areas that have either been developed around a specific Christian theme or is in the process of being developed. This growth was possible because of effective leadership that enabled these entrepreneurs to identify an untapped market, have a vision to penetrate it and to deliver to the market products and services specifically tailored to this growing and influential niche.

Chapters discusses topics such as the use of Faith Nights by minor and major league baseball teams as a means of increasing attendance. Faith nights are targeted to Christian churches by offering a Christian themed concert. On some occasions promotional items have also been used as give-a-ways. These have included Bibles with camouflage covers and bobblehead dolls of Biblical characters including Moses. It discusses Christian gyms and diets, Christian action figures and Christian themed cruises and amusement parks. Chapter 2 deals with the vision of leaders in the film business who have come to identify the growing market for Christian themed movies and for the new ways in which these

movies are being marketed while Chapter 3 addresses the redefining and rebranding of the traditional Christian bookstore and its competition for not only secular book sellers such as Barnes & Noble and Borders but from the big box retailers such as Wall*Mart, Target, Sam's Club, and Costco. Chapter 4 discusses the influence baby boomers have had on the funeral business especially with regard to the growing business of personalized funerals and personalized gravestones. The growth of the video game market is the focus of Chapter 5 with Chapter 6 discussing the growth of Christian targeted television through the leadership and vision surrounding the growth of Sky Angel and its 24 hour Christian only television and radio broadcasts. The book concludes with some of the more non-traditional businesses that have grown up around the Christian consumer. These include, Christian themed water parks and most interesting of all, at least from my perspective, the growth of Christian, men's and women's, wrestling organizations.

This book can be looked at from both a leadership and a business perspective. What I hope it does is provide the reader with an overview of just how large the Christian consumer market has become and how none of this growth could have taken place without leaders ready to address this market and willing to incorporate change as a part of their business strategy

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