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# THE MISSION OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES

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## **PART ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

On behalf of ACDE, an organization primarily devoted to helping business executives to fulfill the mission given to them by Divine Providence (except in the sphere of trade union representation which is clearly left in the hands of organizations established for such purpose), I would like to thank the *Asociación de Profesionales de la Acción Católica Argentina* for giving me the honor of participating in this Workshop.

Before going directly to the subject of my speech, I would rather make a couple of comments. First, I am not even remotely pretending to cover all the aspects of this subject, not even the intellectual aspects of it. Those who may be interested in doing so, please resort to published literature, particularly to five publications which are easily found and available in Spanish. I strongly recommend all of them but ,specially, the first two:

- 1) "*El Dirigente de Empresa*" Author: Clement. Publisher: "Del Atlántico".
- 2) "*Pastoral Colectiva sobre Promoción y Responsabilidad de los Trabajadores*", dated April 28th, 1956, includes remarkable rules scattered here and there on the mission of business executives.
- 3) "*La Gerencia de Empresas*" Author: Peter Drucker. Publisher: "Sudamericana".
- 4) "*El Espíritu del Trabajo*" Author: Cardinal Wyszynski. Publisher: "Patmos".
- 5) "*Cristo en la Fábrica*". Author: Archbishop Morcillo. Publisher: "Euramérica".

Second, I would not like to be considered a "specialist", by no means. I am not. On the contrary, when I read the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (7:19): "For the good which I will, I do not; but the evil which I will not, that I do" I cannot help thinking how accurate this text is in my case.

However, I do believe in what Francis Thompson, the poet, calls "the hound of Heaven": the grace of God is always within reach for those who, knowing that they need it, keep on looking; therefore, yet while own faults are significant, a lot of good can be obtained.

Furthermore, I believe that civilization will be Christian if Christians want it to be Christian today and use the instruments that God has given us to fulfill the mission.

## **PART TWO**

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES**

The speakers who have been on this stand before me have clearly described the human, economic and social significance of business. At this point, it is evident that those who take the heavy responsibilities of management have a key role because if unsuccessful, business organizations cannot meet their true goals.

We should stop and analyze the economic role of business executives in detail. When a person decides to start a business, either on his own or with the help of others, he takes up full or partial risk and management and becomes a business executive, in terms of the economy.

It is a complex role. He must be reliable in the eyes of those who give him money. He must choose the members of the staff, set a goal, pick the instruments to achieve such goal. He must safeguard union, timely decision-making, and robust execution. He must deserve the credit and authority needed to be successful.

It is a hard role. He must choose and lead people. He must be familiar with his profession and with the market. He must be reliable... Experience teaches us everyday that a "change of owner" sharply changes any business, either for the better or the worse.

Business executives invest not only their money but also their time, skills and honor in their venture. They are top proactive production agents, the first between workers, because their mission is to achieve corporate goals.

We can conclude from this quick overview that, from the economic point of view, in order to prosper a country should first set free the initiative and actions of brave people ready to face major personal *responsibilities*, and count on capable, proactive and honest businesspersons.

On this subject, His Holiness Pius XII (1) says:

"Eminent representatives of your activity have strongly stressed the genuine meaning of the mission of the employer, his constructive and defining action in economic development. Subordinate agents simply execute prescribed jobs but bosses above them are those men with determination who leave their own individual mark on events, discover new ways, communicate a decisive impulse, change methods and remarkably increase the performance of men and machinery. And thinking that such activity always coincides with their interests and ultimately responds to selfish ends would be a mistake. It should rather be compared with scientific invention, artistic work arising from altruistic inspiration collectively oriented to the human community as a whole which prospers with new knowledge and new and stronger means of action."

Is it surprising, then, that The Lord in the Holy Scriptures has showed himself as the owner of a vineyard, a business executive?

However, it may be argued that, although still significant, the importance of business executives has declined. It is not true. On the contrary, in several speeches, after acknowledging the hard mission of business executives, Pius XII insists on the fact that business executives are one of the pillars of the reform and development of business organizations, and, by no means the least important one. Additionally, they provide a new significance and hierarchy to the role and they are one of the pillars of a new order more coincidental with Divine Will.

## **PART THREE**

### **THE MISSION OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES**

#### **A. Three duties**

Depending on perspective, the mission of Business Executives may be subdivided or classified differently. For the purpose of this Workshop I would rather highlight three remarkable duties of Business Executives: service, development and human ascent.

Let's address the essentials of these three duties now. Based on the words of Jesus Himself (Luke 22-27) the duty of *Service* makes the activities performed by any person, even if directed by human nature to his own selfish interests, into a service to the others, either directly or through the community. But, above all, service is the expression of a *spirit*.

*Development*, as a duty, is inspired in the biblical mandate "Subdue the earth" and in the parable of the talents. These teachings guide us to lead technological innovation to liberate mankind, increase its capacity to be creative and prevent material waste. Using mankind potential and the potential of the world is materially and spiritually beneficial.

*Human ascent*, as a duty, is the logical consequence of the basic Christian teachings about the eminent dignity of man. In fact, St. Thomas said that we should "do whatever it takes to make our personality flourish."

#### **B. At two levels**

These duties should be performed at the two levels where Business Executives gravitate -knowingly or not-: company wide and in society. As this is a very vast subject, I will only refer to some outstanding aspects.

##### **1 –At company level**

In business organizations all social classes meet in their common role of workers. Each person performs a useful role and the concept of social class vanishes in front of the social role. **(2)**

The spirit of service and commitment with growth may take countless shapes. When a person serves himself from things correctly, he elevates them by putting them to the service of the goal for which they were created: the service of mankind. For example, when a person uses fuel rationally to manufacture useful products or deliver useful services, he is "elevating" fuel by allowing it to meet the goal for which God created it.

Seen in this light, business helps nature to fully develop all faculties unto the glory of God, if this is possible, and it does so by turning into something more noble

after undergoing transformations to be more useful to mankind. The mission of man, as the utmost expression of creation, is to fulfill this duty towards its sublime end.

If not at the expense of the dignity of workers, scientific, technological and organizational development is also a duty and our bishops exhort us in this line:

*"You should consider yourselves managers of your possessions for the common good; therefore, it is a duty to duly manage your possessions."*

*"An attentive mind towards technological and economic development; initiative, optimism, and strength to establish new formulas and methods of action; intelligence to anticipate the reaction of consumers and other stakeholders; sustained determination to achieve economic development in spite of obstacles; psychological skill to wake up every dormant power and provide new stimulus to inventive minds, these are some of the qualities that you must put to the service of the national community and you will conquer the esteem and consideration of all." (3)*

Business organizations should continuously improve performance and help all factors to make their best following the evangelic parable of the talents, too.

And who doubts that man is the most valuable talent in any business organization? Is it not clear that man is the most fruitful talent? Isn't man the most productive talent, from the economic point of view, thanks to his spiritual seed with almost endless possibilities? (4)

We must strive for taking mankind to a higher level. *We are responsible for the personal fulfillment of our employees* but we should not interfere with their legitimate initiative and necessary responsibility.

Business executives should consider each employee an *"opportunity"*, someone who deserves to be helped to achieve fulfillment, to search and find the best in him.

The "atmosphere" at workplaces should contribute to personal fulfillment. *Jobs and workplaces* should provide the best chance for personal development. Business Executives should give enough freedom to staff members to be the masters of their own actions and *unveil their personality*.

The torment and joy of freedom should not be the privilege of a few but the right and duty of all.

Every person should be able to honor the divine mandate: "Be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect". (5) And all forms of authority should facilitate doing as commanded. All workers have the right to a workplace that is the instrument of their dignification, just the opposite to the situation that gave rise to the bitter complaint of Pius XI in *"Quadragesimo Anno"*: "for dead matter comes forth from the factory ennobled, while men there are corrupted and degraded."

We should not repeat the words of Taylor, the "founder" of productivity, who said "the stupider the worker, the better." Is it surprising, then, that the word "productivity" still rings an unpleasant bell in some sectors?



We all want to be valued, we all need comfort. Compared to the activities performed by managers, those of subordinate agents, for example in business organizations, can be compared, to some extent, to the second causes of the creative and provident act of God. Although they follow orders, subordinate workers maintain their condition of intelligent production agents and are not fully deprived of initiative.

Alos, the activities of subordinate workers are a valuable contribution to the sovereign acts of God and the sublime solidarity with the human community.

### **(1) 1st digression: Christian meaning of productivity**

To confirm the above mentioned I would like to tell you now some ideas of Antoine Bekaert, the president of the Catholic Business Executives Federation of Belgium, to whom I owe many other ideas on the subject.

"Lately, the idea of productivity has showed up with an arsenal of key ideas, those instruments of thought that people regularly grasp to face life struggles."

"Although there are many definitions of this new conception of collective work, men of science and industrial leaders are still far from coming to a common definition of increased productivity."

"Some of them believe that increasing productivity is simply a technical issue. In their opinion, productivity is a question of improving performance by implementing more powerful and diverse machinery and innovative and more rational production methods."

"Others believe that the goal of increased productivity is to improve corporate human relations by creating a new corporate spirit built on common interests and goals between employers and employees."

"Finally, the third category comprises the defenders of productivity who believe that productivity is a tool to improve standards of living. In their opinion when costs decline and distribution methods are enhanced, productivity not only caters for basic needs but provides common good to everyone."

"But the idea of productivity is far from being innovative. The best definition ever is part of a widely known two-thousand year-old book: the Gospel according to St. Matthew. The true meaning of productivity is admirably described in one of the most beautiful parables that Christ has handed down to us as a legacy: The Parable of the Talents. Everyone receives talents, gifts and skills. Some are abundantly gifted, others should be contented with very little. We all have the duty to make the best of our talents."

"Personal skills stand out as a result of suffering and hardships. When I reflect upon this matter I frequently remember the words of Mr. Santley Teele, the Dean at Harvard Business School: *"The key reason for so many unproductive people lies in the brutal fact that they hate their jobs."*

"Work, particularly industrial work, is usually hard, repetitive and has a point and meaning which are difficult to understand."

"The Christian meaning of productivity must be the result of respectful consideration of personal work. If we implement more effective technical tools, improved production methods, more rational and scientific organization schemes to provide a richer meaning to the efforts made by workers; if we make the jobs of fellow men easier and help them to be more fruitful and productive; and, after the Gospel, we help them to increase their talents, we are contributing to God's order for the world."

"In this spirit, the meaning of productivity for Christians goes beyond technological development, social peace or social welfare. Productivity is *a stage of personal perfection*. Work is not an end. Neither is production, nor welfare. Human beings were created to fulfill their destiny and workers could be satisfied if they knew that work is their instrument to fulfill their task and mission in the world. Productivity is nothing but an open door for workers to develop their personality and fulfill the mission in life for which they were created."

"Productivity is an instrument to make better human beings worthy of their supernatural destiny."

## **(2) 2nd digression: "Paternalism"**

Please, let me dwell now on paternalism.

I have been trying to explain that rather than giving out from their own possessions Business Executives should help employees to discover the good in them. There is no room for "paternalism" in our country today. Mons. Richaud, Archbishop of Bordeaux and President of the Social Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops of France, says: "Our survey indicates that considerable amounts of money were invested by several companies to support moral and educational initiatives favoring social and cultural services. However, I have already said that workers do not want to feel a bond with their employers beyond their workplaces. They prefer to get the extra services they need by themselves and through their own organizations. They are against "paternalism", as they call it."

"Please note that, in many cases, paternalism has not only been indispensable in the past but it still is in certain communities of under developed employees. Paternalism is a stage that should not be crossed too fast."

"Please note that, in a broad sense, -particularly between Christians-workplaces should maintain a family spirit, a spirit of personal solidarity because companies are not just buildings, machinery and capital. The Sovereign Pontiff in a speech delivered on January 31st, 1952 to the *Union Chrétienne des Chefs d'Entreprise* beautifully compared this humane and family feeling to the drop of oil that penetrates the gearing of every corporate member and organ."

"Probably "paternalism" is not the name you would choose. Nothing compares to the honorable father. However, taking the meaning given to this word today, please consider how you react when you feel you are deprived of your freedom to manage your own business, when you reject any situation of submission to a foreign market or dependence from any economic or administrative power. Obviously, employees have the right to look at their own lives just the way you look at your own business, even out of the professional scope."

"Christian Business Executives, in their unique sensitive and brotherly spirit, should make workers understand that their real emancipation is the consequence of a sharper knowledge of their respective personalities" **(6)** and our Bishops do not condemn it but they do not promote it either, not even in vast country estates." **(7)**

### **(3) Practical conclusion: community in life**

We can conclude that, apart from being economic units, workplaces should also be communities in life.

And Business Executives have a clear mission in this field.

"The mission of Business Executives is to analyze companies in detail and organize them so that they provide more suitable working conditions, satisfactory leader performance, salary schemes, and corporate spirit to continuously help workers to put into practice their initiative, their surprisingly rich creative fantasy and their moral standards. Each employee from his own workplace, function and skill must feel part of a living entity with a beating heart and feel motivated to work enthusiastically, with a fair desire to meet performance standards or surpass them, knowing that his salary is fair in relation to his efforts, that he is safe and hoping to improve, eventually." **(8)**

However, this is insufficient. Whether they know it or not, workplaces are the cast of the people who work in them, for better or worse.

Oh, what a cast! -exclaims Pius XII, full of meaning. He is convinced that work should not corrupt or deform but shape.

For this reason I would like to wrap up this part saying that everything should be the instrument of grace, including workplaces. As a human environment, in favorable or unfavorable conditions, they should let Christ grow in human soul.

## **2 -At society level**

### **(a) Individual and collective actions**

First, I would like to say that the "external" actions of Business Executives can be classified into individual and collective.

Individual actions face many obstacles (this does not mean that it is impossible to carry them out or that they are unproductive; on the contrary, experience shows that individual actions always have an effect and, in fact, they are usually more effective than expected); however, collective and institutional actions are much more effective.

Furthermore, Business Executives should create specific institutions to solve the large number of obstacles they face instead of trying to solve them individually.

### **(b) Business Executives and *their clients***

Business Executives should deliver *legitimate* services that meet *real* needs. Pius XII is very clear in this matter: "Does business and the opinion of the general public about conducting business depend on "the fact that... business delivers a legitimate service to a real client?"

...In other words, clients with real purchase powers participate in transactions to meet real needs.

Professional moral principles are lured today by fake purchase power, artificially promoted needs, disproportionate markets, monetary base instability, dislocated relations with the State, politics and economics attract injurious speculation that threatens the robust fundamentals of trade."

### **(c) ... and *peers***

The actions of Business Executives in this field are extremely complicated. Business Executives should be held in respect and be reliable, otherwise, trade chambers and employers associations will not play their respective roles which include not only representing and defending the professional interests of their members but also organizing production forces into independent professional bodies to contribute to the common good. **(9)**

If Business Executives want to safeguard their freedom, they should voluntarily show their solidarity to others.

### **(d) ... and *unions***

Trade unions should not cause irritation but sympathy. If economic freedom is a goal -and so it should-, the conditions to achieve such goal should be part of the deal... The problems at work should be solved by the parties involved: employers and unions; otherwise, the State will solve them and the big issue today -looking at it from a certain distance- is to be careful with the role of the State, not of trade unions.

Trade unions in our country are going through adolescence and anyone having a 13/16 year-old child understands what I mean. They are arrogant, self-confident and with inferiority complexes to spare. They are sincerely inspired in high ideals but they are also capable of being grossly materialistic.

Additionally, free trade may only flourish safely in democracy and democracy goes hand in hand with trade unions. The absence of trade unions gives such room to State participation that economic freedom is annihilated and political freedom disappears with it." **(10)**

### **(e) ... and *the State***

Business Executives should be true to the State, contributing directly with state actions and preventing the excessive participation of the State by not asking for privileges for companies or sectors. Unfortunately, many good "customs unions" projects that bring peoples together have been delayed by those who look for benefits for their own "selfish interests."

### **(f) ... and *common good***

The key duty of Business Executives is to be real "businesspersons", to be "involved in business", to be entrepreneurs. Our duty is to create jobs.

I am not going to talk now about the need and advantages of work for personal perfection and joy, too. However, the Holy Scriptures (11) tells us that in the divine plan we are a family of God and if we work more efficiently, there will be more resources for Providence to distribute among the poor and in need. "Created things are the smile of God" says St. Ireneaus.

Business Executives distribute the smile of God. May God help us not to corner the smile of God because the world would be deprived of joy...

We should work to achieve a vital but orderly economic environment that will be one of the pillars of social peace.

## **C. Summary**

I believe that these principles should be most urgently applied these days in:

(1) Company-wide voluntary reforms to communicate with workers and facilitate their involvement in company life building relations that encompass true human dignity and creating a community in workplaces.

(2) Professional organization to favor the demmocratization of the economic environment where freedom is safeguarded by an organic group of independent institutions.

(3) Orderly and vital economic environment that provides the material basis for common welfare and social peace based on moral principles.

## **D. Appendix: Christian Business Executives**

You may think at this point: "You have talked about Business Executives in general, but what else has a Christian businessperson got to do?" My answer is: There is nothing else that Christian Business Executives should do. They simply have to do things differently.

As Christian Business Executives we are invited to do the eternal and the temporal, to serve God by rendering service to mankind in the economic field, to be sanctified as part of our jobs and to sanctify our jobs. The function of Christian employers, defined by the union with Christ and lived by them, has a different meaning to the function of a non Christian employer, even when correctly executed.

This spiritual sphere gives a special meaning to the role of Christian Business Executives in all the sectors that I have mentioned. For example, with our peers, we should not forget the call of Pius XI: ... "That these whole classes of men may be brought back to Christ Whom they have denied, we must recruit and train among them ... (who) ... know them well and their minds and wishes, and can reach their hearts with a tender brotherly love. The first and immediate apostles to the workers ought to be workers; the apostles to those who follow industry and trade ought to be from among them themselves." **(12)** We should demonstrate, particularly to them, that there is a *Christian* concept of economic life which observes laws and the imperatives of economy but subordinates them to obtaining true *goals*.

For example, as Cardinal Leger, Archbishop of Montreal, has recently pointed out, hydraulics also have its laws but that does not prevent man from striving to avoid floods. Furthermore, man uses water in irrigation and to produce electricity and improves the life standards of the population.

And who else but a Christian Business Executive can moderate and even change the sense of cruel laws that contribute to a "harder" economic environment? Who but Christian Business Executives will learn from the evangelic teachings of Father Moledo, the spiritual counselor of ACDE?

"Today the lack of advocates of paternalism, a caricature of fatherhood, should not prevent us from looking at businesspersons from the Christian perspective and clearly identify the presence of a soul called to spiritual fatherhood."

"On the other hand, the Gospel hands down to us an unequalled icon of spiritual fatherhood in the figure of the Father of the prodigal son."

"His son does not understand him. He does not trust him. He does not obey. He leaves... The father enlightens him, warns him, explains things to him but does not subdue him... He does not deprive him of his right... He is not authoritative, violent or retaliated. He gives in to the sublime exercise of material and true authority. And he uses three instruments for this purpose."

"First, he keeps quiet. He tames his ill-tempered passion. He does not blurt out insults or blames and he does not discredit his son."

"Is this a sacrifice? Sure. His silence is a sign of superiority, of Christian love. But it is also a sign of wisdom. He does not utter a word that may hinder the return of the prodigal son."

"Silence is not his only instrument."

"He suffers precisely because he loves. However, it is not selfish suffering out of hurt self-esteem or pride because he is not loved. He suffers because he sees the danger. His love is free from personal attachment. Being crystal clear, his suffering is offered to The Lord for the sake of everything that is good and fair. His suffering gives birth to understanding and immolation."

"But he has another instrument. He has the instrument to victory: prayer. Because praying brings to life his other two instruments mentioned before."

"A prayer, a huge, charitable feeling grows in his powerful, strong heart and this is a conquering feeling."

"This is the answer to the question, the sublime Christian answer to the struggle of classes. It is not a question of responding to hate with hate, to despise with despise, to blame with revenge, to lack of sympathy with lack of sympathy."

"The answer to the absence of love is the cross because the cross gives us a glimpse to the promise of resurrection."

"Because the Christian resurrection of mankind and economics is at stake today and this largely depends on the answer of Business Executives to the call of Christ."

"The Church is asking those members who have received more to love in proportion to their burden and bear it accordingly. The Church is asking them to contribute to the grace of The Lord in this somber world. The Church is asking from them to observe state duties and be charitable and closer than the rest while they witness the endless love of God for mankind." **(13)**

## **PART FOUR**

### **REQUIREMENTS TO FULFILL THE MISSION**

I have referred to the mission of Business Executives. I have mentioned what ought to be *done*. Now I am going to go through the requirements needed to fulfill this mission, to the virtues needed to fulfill the mission of Business Executives. Even if we knew by heart the best books on the subject, if we do not know which virtues are needed, we will not be able to make it. In other words, I am referring to the man it takes to fulfill the mission.

#### **A. PERSONAL FEATURES**

##### **1 –A person of character**

It is not a question of having the eccentric "personality" of an individual who lives in isolation but rather a personality capable of playing a role in society.

Taking note of the differences in analogies, I believe that we should look into certain aspects of the Trinitarian dogma -that could be called the "family life" of the Holy Trinity- to make the issue clearer and go for a more profound and realistic spirituality that is closer to the Lord who is The True.

As we all know, God is Love and The Father is rendered Love, in other words, endless Love, endlessly rendered love. Hence, Love is the gift of rendered Love.

The Holy Spirit is the Love rendered by The Father to The Son and vice versa, in other words, all Love rendered.

Therefore, in relation to this subject, if man, who is created in the image of God and after His likeness, wants to be what he *ought to be* and, hence, be realized, he should be open and receptive just like the Sacred Persons in God who are so completely open to one another **(14)** that their life is unique for each of them, who live purely in the other, and there is no pulsation in one that is not also a pulsation in the other, at the same time.

This is certainly not a question of imposing on yourself or on your fellow men a reunion of I and You resulting from merging two natures, or denying the personal I, but a mutual *availability* that shows respect for the dignity and autonomy of the rest.

And, therefore, the person who gives himself is the one who is more a human being and *achieves fulfillment* as a human being and the more the person gives himself, the more he is a human being and the more fulfillment he achieves as a human being.

##### **2 –A person deserving authority**



I am not going to analyze now whether the authority of Business Executives is legitimate or not but I would like to point out that authority comes with the role and should not be the result of fortune or birth. Whoever exercises authority should honor it. And, hence, the person should be:

**(a) A person of business**

In other words, this person should be an entrepreneur, an inspiring, diligent (Romans 12:8) cheerful person. Grumblers have never gone far.

Frequently people say "In my family, John Doe, was such a good man that he went bankrupt". It is not true. Sometimes our good God, for the sake of his soul or that of his heirs, may have allowed this to happen but, in most cases, a person loses his money for quite different reasons. For example, because of irresolution, weakness or absence of determination to put good intentions into practice. And this is quite different from being good.

Recent surveys on 13,000 companies in the US that closed during prosperous 1956, allegedly closed because of:

Mistakes: 91.3% of cases  
Neglect.: 4.3%  
Embezzlement: 2.1%  
Fire, etc.: 1.4%  
Unknown: 0.9%

Business Executives should be competent and have competent people working with them. If we think that we are forced sometimes to hire incompetent people, in the case of relatives, for example, and give them important positions, our duty is to make sure that those tasks are efficiently performed for the sake of the company.

Problems are so complex today that, in my opinion, Business Executives should meet with peers to analyze them in the light of a mutual spirit of solidarity and service (institutions like ACDE were created for such purpose).

**(b) ... self-controlled**

The most necessary virtue of rulers is certainly self-control.

Cato, the severe Roman consul, briefly said: "The worst ruler is the one that cannot master himself".

Charles Wilson, president of General Motors, has recently said almost the same about virtues in Business Executives.

St. Paul puts forward a wonderful principle to measure the capacity of a leader (1 Tim. 3:5): "But if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"

Cardinal Wyszynski says "Before ruling others, you must begin by being your own master, (...) ruling your own house". The person who learns to control himself is usually kind and wise with others.

The tendency to judge others lightly, be shocked by moral failings and be intolerant is typical of youth. Furthermore, this behavior is evidence that a delicate conscious has not been cultivated enough. People who have experienced internal struggles usually are wise and kind. They look upon the world as a father would because they are familiar with obstacles.

This is the only way to wise management. The people that The Lord chooses to educate to direct others, in general terms, have a difficult and arduous spiritual life. He forges us there and shapes us into sagacious instruments of His doings in the souls of our brothers". **(15)** In order to teach, *knowing* is enough but educating takes *being* somebody.

### **(c) ...wise**

There is always a technique to implement an action. When you do not want to analyze and implement this technique, you are tempting God.

The medical director of a hospital in the United States gave such instructions that when mothers were discharged after delivering their first baby, they should see the deputy director who would teach them the best feeding practices and give them a brochure on how to feed babies to prevent possible misunderstandings. Several months afterwards, a survey revealed that only 17% of the mothers followed these indications.

As a result of this survey, the method changed. Mothers were summoned in groups and, instead of receiving instructions, they were encouraged to discuss the matter (and the conversation was routed in the right direction). After the debate, they were given a piece of paper and pen to write down what they thought was the most important information. The next survey revealed that 82% of the mothers followed the procedures learnt.

If psychology is necessary to teach mothers how to feed their first newborn, which is a very natural and motivating task for them, it is clearly more necessary in any other activity, particularly in prejudiced environments with clashing interests.

The famous Hawthorne experiments and other similar tests on "fatigue" and "wish to help" ratify the importance of intelligence to study and identify the right psychological technique to meet any goal, even extremely sound ideals.

The actions to "Democratize the Economy" described by our Bishops **(16)** have their basis in moral teachings and psychology. As ACDE usually says "fair things are also the most suitable".

An English colleague **(17)** implements it in temporary corporate management in the following terms "For people to work in harmony, looking into the future, and helping each other with their common problems, you should give them a good leadership (and be aware of it), the opportunity to give the best of themselves, understand what is going on in their workplace and feel that they are understood:

"(I) Jobs should be interesting enough and demand responsibility so that everyone gives the best of themselves without feeling excessively tired, neither frustrated nor dejected."

"(II) Except in rare cases, people need to work in teams under an effective leadership supported by peers and subordinate workers and each team needs a defined scope of responsibility and enough liberty of action within such scope."

"(III) All interested parties should have easy and continuous access to news and opinions. Problems do not arise due to hard working conditions. Apart from being a way to earn a living, hard or dirty jobs may also be satisfactory . Problems crop up when conditions do not meet expectations due to ignorance or lack of understanding (of which they may not be responsible)."

But in addition to striving to know the attitude towards work, we should learn about relationships between fellow employees and towards "employers". Sometimes those who are not completely familiar with the environment, do not become fully aware of the importance of work as a "major experience of friendship and close solidarity of men as brothers". **(18)**.

Books such as "The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization" **(19)** may shed light and facilitate the exercise of authority.

#### **(d) ... *sympathetic***

But, identifying problems is not enough, we should also *understand* them.

"Sometimes people think that they know their employees but, since they do not really share their life standards, hopes and worries, they end up believing that a salary, a house and a job -which they would consider unacceptable for themselves or their children- are satisfactory and normal for workers." **(20)**

The Apocalypse shows that Christ, the Lamb, has the power to open the seal of the book of mystery. **(21)** He has this power because he has suffered intensely and deeply for the world and for the problems of the world although He was never subdued to it. **(22)**

Alas! Then, the key word is "sympathy". Our country would be far better off if we were sympathetic to each other! We do not need a law or decree to change; there is no need to wait and see the impact of any economic measure to change. If we, leaders, focus on understanding our subordinates in their objective and subjective

realities (prejudices, etc.) and they do the same about us to understand that we are not exclusively moved by mean and selfish interests!

The experiences described in "*Monte Ouvrier Méconnue*" **(23)** are extremely valuable in this and many ways.

But this is not enough. We should appreciate others or, at least, show them benevolence, good will. Do we ever think that may be our "fellow men" who are subordinates to us, in terms of functions, may be superior or deserve more than we do? The Sacred Scriptures say so explicitly. **(24)**

The Sacred Scriptures go even beyond that saying that we should all take care of the burden of our "fellow men" **(25)** because each person is a member of the other, his strength and help. **(26)**

### **(e)... with an understanding heart**

A lot has been written addressing business executives and people exercising any form of authority from a psychological approach (in the family, in the economy, in politics, etc.). Personally, nothing has had more impact on me than the teachings in the Sacred Scriptures (however, unfortunately, I cannot say that I observe them). **(27)**

Soon after inheriting the throne from his father David, young Solomon offered huge sacrifices to God. God appeared to him in a dream and told him: "Ask whatever you want that I will grant it to you". And Solomon replies "Lord, give me *an understanding heart* to rule Your people".

And God Himself expressed His approval in His reply giving special importance and sense to the request: "Because you have not requested riches and honor but only a wise and intelligent heart ..." In other words, wisdom and intelligence equal an understanding heart in the eyes of God and these are the characteristics of a leader.

"An understanding heart". For Hebrews the "heart" holds emotional, rational and intellectual forces and it is the seat of judgment, courage and gentleness. In other words, "an understanding heart" in human terms –because it is quite clear that "understanding" is primarily applicable to "listening", being gentle and obedient to God, above all- means paying attention, comprehending, focusing on understanding the neighbors that the Divine Providence has given us, principally if their functions are subordinate to ours.

We should listen with the purpose of understanding.

### **(f) Briefly,**

"The Law of Love given to us has two fundamental commandments: First, love others fairly and, second, set yourself free from the faults and vices that prevent you from be loved by others" **(28)**.

## **WE SHOULD BE AS THE OTHERS NEED US TO BE**

### **3 -A truly spiritual person**

Active life gives us a great opportunity for an insight to identify qualities and weaknesses, in case we are interested to do it. Knowing ourselves would be much more difficult without external work because there is a lot of concealment and pretension in us under our apparently calm surface.

The analysis of the way we carry out our jobs may be a wonderful examination of conscience. In this mirror we can see the true reflection of our ruling spirit. Analyzed in this light, active life reveals our virtues, whether superficial or profound, while our moral failings stand out. **(29)**.

When it comes to exercising authority, although very necessary, a fair moral conduct is not enough. What we need is a deep, humble and trustful obedience of intellect and will to the perfect Holy Will of God.

Having legitimate authority is the sign of a vocation to which a man is called upon, a true *mission of confidence from God*, above all.

Therefore, we should accept this mission with true and filial fear of God. We should accept it with *humility*.

The authority exercised by Business Executives should not be surrounded by the peace of Christ but it should show a humble heart in the eyes of God.

The only occasion when The Lord directly put himself as a perfect icon was when he said "Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart".

This does not mean that we should not be severe; however, we should not be *arrogant*.

Arrogant people always cause either open or concealed disruption. Without even knowing it, probably their own arrogance causes certain hostile attitudes from others. **(30)**

### **3rd digression: The spirit of poverty**

And since I am talking about humility, I would like to dwell shortly on another *detachment*: the spirit of poverty in the aspects connected to our subject today.

Although the first Beatitude of Christ's Sermon on the Mount that goes "Blessed be the poor..." is very popular, not all of us know that "blessed" means "happy" ... In other words, He, who knows us better than anybody else, is asserting in His authority that there is a very strong connection between detachment, happiness and perfection.

I believe that Business Executives should particularly put into practice this Gospel message at different levels:

(a) Detachment from the personal "ego". For example, Business Executives should not impose their ideas upon others just because they have authority to do it. (Additionally, these ideas may go against corporate performance).

(b) Detachment from the collective "ego". How many times does vanity instead of economic or social considerations rule decisions! There is *no other* explanation for unnecessary expenses "not to lose face". Even in state-owned companies there have been cases when manufacturing a specific product has become urgent and essential, even if unproductive, only because a neighboring country manufactured it.

(c) Detachment from an excessive sense of security. I have said before that Business Executives should be "persons of business" capable of overcoming their fear to lose possessions -which give them a sense of security- and prudently trust in *God*. And take certain risks, particularly to develop natural resources or create new and true sources of employment or perform activities such as journalism that, although risky or unproductive, may contribute to the common good.

(d) The Holy Trinity is an icon. As I have mentioned before, be aware that possessions were only given to us on behalf of our fellow men and for our fellow men. We should be detached and generous givers, or rather redistribute the material or spiritual talents that were given to us.

(e) Intellectual poverty, humility of the person who knows that he does not know everything and cannot do everything.

(f) Spirit of poverty in front of God because God will provide only if we feel poor, inept, empty, starving. (The brother of the prodigal son is a typical example of the opposite.)

(g) Poverty of temporal possessions. Most honest companies in Argentina are in poor financial condition and their technology is old compared to similar ventures abroad. Therefore, local business executives are primarily concerned about continuing operating and turn their attention away from social plans and their implementation in this unstable economic scenario. Implementing these plans is hard but not impossible. There is always a lot to be done even when money is scarce. We should strive to overcome this scenario and avoid feeling restless or paralyzed when things get dark.

(h) The ideal detachment that Christ proposes should make us understand our duty vis a vis the primary distinction between essential needs -which should be made available to all the community- and luxury possessions, the production of which is usually more profitable.

(i) And, finally, besides the spirit of poverty, some material renunciation either at individual (even innocent ostentation can be very offensive in times of great assymetry!) or corporate level is necessary.

## **B) Truly help anyone and anything that holds something good**

The influence that we should exert takes all available help from people who are ready to decidedly defend the principles of natural law, no matter their religious or political beliefs.

"Judge not, that you be not judged" says the Gospel.

Although those who do not share our convictions may sometimes have more complex goals and intentions, frequently they are genuinely generous, altruists and devoted to the perfection of social order. **(31)**

Naturally, although we are right in the middle of our fellow men and sincerely bonded to each other, we should not always do what others do. Christians should always avoid conformism.

## **C) Aspire with confidence to the success of the mission**

If Business Executives do not show the necessary self-command based on confidence, outcomes cannot meet expectations. The importance of the job, the problems and obstacles to be tackled may be discouraging; however, we should be optimistic.

In the paragraph above (3) our bishops call us to them. However, it is evident that, aware or not, our employees usually turn against us in times of trouble. If Business Executives are Christians in possession of the original plan of God for mankind, they are expected to be keen-sighted, understanding, determined and optimistic leaders.

In our doctrine there is sin; however, there is also redemption, excessive reparation. But, are we really persuaded that we are bonded to Redemption and we should prolong it? *Are we convinced that making a better world is our duty? Are we convinced that we can fulfill our duty?*

We should overcome our inferiority complexes, our paralyzing fatalism and be humble and detached, as I have said, to take hold of the braveness and optimism that is necessary to fulfill our mission.

"We should stubbornly believe that good is contagious and truth is powerful."  
**(32)**

But we should not feel discouraged in the absence of outcomes. Usually, the acts of God are slow. God will not do what we want Him to do. Instead of thinking "If You want me to do it, I certainly can", sometimes we think "I want to do it, and You should want it too".

Precisely one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit **(33)** is longanimity, a virtue seldom seen today that is particularly necessary in Argentina, a spirit of greatness and *Perseverance*. This virtue allows us to bear the fact that ends only be attained with great effort after a long time. **(34)**

ACDE is a living example of what is possible. It has changed the lives of many of us and has given us renewed hope. Future and history are no longer a succession of inevitable and fatal events. We have influence in the course of history and destiny. **(35)**

Precisely the feast that we celebrated yesterday, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, reminds us joyfully that we should not fall into despair for mankind, that Christ defeated Satan, and we should believe in the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the flesh.



## PART FIVE

### CONCLUSION

Today, more than ever, and in spite of all difficulties, the duty of Business Executives, in their role as intellectual people and leaders, is to bring a message and shed the light of Faith for spiritual growth, to strive for solutions from Christian social principles to ever-changing realities.

Then, they should be the first to implement those solutions.

The economic and social crises resulting from recent events all over the world are opening the doors to social reforms that are going to change industrial relations completely.

If Business Executives do not participate in the preparation of these reforms, the role of employers will be in danger. The importance of this role, which is neither a privilege nor a divine right, lies in the fact that it is both, necessary and useful **(36)**.

Therefore I invoke St. Joseph, icon of Business Executives. He, who was in charge of the most important business of the world, acted like a true manager not an owner, like a person who knows that he is directing a superior being. St. Joseph is the patron saint of ACDE and it is under this patronage that the Episcopate has devoted the action for the promotion and assertion of the responsibility of workers. **(37)**

I invoke here the Blessed Virgin Mary and through her all of us and every Business Executive, whether a member of ACDE or not, shall receive

- *light* to be intelligent and lucid and live up to the circumstances;
- *an understanding heart*, sympathetic with the misery of others and with our own misery, in other words, the meaning of "merciful";
- her as an icon and after our own restoration we can give not only our money but ourselves to others.

And, finally, I would like to make a last digression.

As I prepared this speech I was surprised to find –and this is not a play upon words- how many words starting with the prefix "co" in Spanish, like in "community", can be used to give a brief description of this subject.

To create the **community** that we aspire, all we need is respect and understanding. These are only a step away from mutual **consideration** that facilitates **communication** which is the basis of the **combination** that takes to a **communion** with the others. And can we find the necessary strength to fulfill our duty but in **communion** with Christ, the Head of the Mystic Body?

Ladies and gentlemen,

It's time to talk now about the Eucharist.

It is not a coincidence that our bishops and also His Holiness Pius XII have called us to the Sacrament of Love to carry out this arduous social action.

Only the help of the Sacrament of Love can give us strength to leave our own selfish interests behind and have the power, talent and skill to "...make the dignity of workers, far from getting lost in the general organization of businesses, lead them to be more efficient not only in material terms but also, and above all, in terms of attaining true community values."**(38)**

And without the Eucharist we will never have, to put it in unionist words, neither the light nor the power to fully meet the MISSION OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- (1) SPEECH delivered at the 1st Congress of the International Association of Economists. L'Osservatore Romano 4-10-56.
- (2) Hernando Campos Menéndez. 1st ACDE Congress, Opening Speech.
- (3) Pastoral Conference, 1956, paragraph 106.
- (4) Hernando Campos Menéndez, *ibid.*
- (5) Hernando Campos Menéndez, *ibid.*
- (6) "*Criterio*", September 24th, 1953, page 724.
- (7) Pastoral Conference of Argentine Bishops, 1956, paragraph 95.
- (8) León Bekaert, UNIAPAC Congress, Rome
- (9) Pastoral Conference of Argentine Bishops, 1956, paragraph 77.
- (10) Cf. Mons. Pietro Paván in his speech delivered at ACDE, August 1956.
- (11) Psalm 10,14; Ephesians 4:28.
- (12) "Quadragesimo Anno".
- (13) Honorary Can. Manuel Moledo, ACDE counselor, 1st ACDE Congress. Buenos Aires, 1956.
- (14) Cf. Romano Guardini, "The Lord", volume 11, pages 228-232.
- (15) Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, "The Spirit of Work", page 157.
- (16) Pastoral Conference of Argentine Bishops, 1956, paragraph 65 to 76.
- (17) Michael Fogarty, "Programme for Social Action", page 80.
- (18) Pastoral Conference of Argentine Bishops, 1956, paragraph 47.
- (19) Elton Mayo, Harvard University.
- (20) Pastoral Directors in Social Affairs of the French Episcopate, paragraph 143.
- (21) Apocalypse 5:5.
- (22) Romano Guardini, *id.*, page 355.
- (23) Author: Michele Aumont, Editions Spes.
- (24) Philippians 2:3; Rom. 12:10.
- (25) Galatians 6:2.
- (26) Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Colossians 4:4; Ephesians 4:25.
- (27) 1 Kings, 3:9-12.
- (28) Alexis Cartel, fragments of the dairy "A Trip to Lourdes", April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1941.
- (29) Cardinal Wyszyński, *o. c.*, pages 152-153.
- (30) Cf. "*El Dirigente de Empresa*", pages 42-43.
- (31) Cf. Cardinal Leger, Archbishop of Montreal. Speech delivered at the opening session of the 14th World Conference of Employers.
- (32) Cardinal Leger, *id.*
- (33) Galatians 5:22-23.
- (34) Cf. Wyszyński, *o. c.*, pages 168-179.
- (35) Cf. Hernando Campos Menéndez, *o. c.*
- (36) R. P. Martín Brugarola, S.J., "*Problemas actuales de la Empresa*", 10th Spanish Social Week page 158.
- (37) Pastoral Conference of Argentine Bishops - 1956, paragraph 130.

**(38)** H. H. Pius XII to U.C.I.D., January 1952, quoted by P. Ventosa, a member of the *Instituto Católico de Estudios Sociales de Barcelona*, from "Social Magisterium of Pius XII", page 192.