

Stepping Out



Persons who start a new business demonstrate five qualities we can all aspire to.

by Kim Pettit

What motivates a Christian to knowingly take risks, to begin a new enterprise, a new company, a new work? When I think of entrepreneurs, or persons who start publishing businesses, or persons who start churches or other types of ministries, there are five qualities that come to mind.

Conviction

First, I recall the strength of their convictions. Such people are persons with a message. They have something to say, and they say it passionately. If you ask them about their mission and vision, their faces light up and they talk eloquently about what they want to do.

However, conviction of the truth of a message or a product, by itself, is not enough. A person who is thoroughly convinced of the truth of the Gospel does not always, automatically, become a publisher of the Good News. What else is needed?

Confidence

Along with conviction, persons who take risks demonstrate confidence in themselves and in their products. They believe in the efficacy of their message. If you ask them, new publishers will tell you how their books are different and better than those already on the market. They will tell you about the market research they conducted and what led them to decide on their chosen editorial line.

Concern

Conviction and confidence must be coupled with caring. Jesus told us the second greatest commandment is to "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:39).

Christian entrepreneurs recognize that they themselves have benefitted from the convictions they hold, and that other people can benefit as well. They are committed to spreading the Christian message *because* they believe in its power to change lives.

They want to promote a product because they think it will meet heartfelt needs. They are concerned for others. If you ask them, they will tell you whom they hope to reach, their target audience.

Commitment

Someone who chooses to begin an enterprise, to start a new work, is like a parachutist. "To start," according to John Ayto's *Dictionary of Word Origins* (Arcade), originally meant to jump or to leap. Once publishers sign the contract, pay the money, and order the print-run, they are committed. They are jumping off the plane and cannot easily jump back on. If you ask them, they will not limit themselves to discussing their market research, but will tell you what they will do about what they found out. They formulate plans, and they plan to carry them out.

Critical thinking

Every plan involves risks and pitfalls. Taking risks, on purpose, can seem unnecessary and foolish. Risks, however, are not the whole story. If you ask publishers about their decision to begin something new, you will find they take risks thinking not only of the costs, but of the potential rewards. Christian publishing brings eternal rewards; it can also be profitable. Critical thinkers will take time to carefully assess the advantages and disadvantages of starting a business. "It was a calculated risk," a publisher might say, "it was worthwhile."

If publishers and other risk-takers are simply persons who demonstrate conviction, confidence, concern, commitment, and critical thinking, then any Christian can follow in their footsteps. "Any Christian" includes you and me.

God might say we have a worthwhile contribution to make for His kingdom. Stepping out in obedience to God's call—taking risks—is the least we can do. ❖