

Have you ever experienced being a part of an enterprise's "great pivot?" Well, the truth is, it's likely that, you indeed *have* experienced the fruits of *several* great pivots! But wait, you say, what does this notion of a *great pivot* actually mean? Well, a great pivot is when an enterprise, perhaps a business or a nonprofit or even a country radically changes the way it does something that's very foundational—ultimately to great benefit of a lot of folks! And sometimes that benefit becomes so embedded in people's lives that they rather unthinkingly take the fruits for granted. So...let's take a look at some really impressive pivots!

For starters, how about the decade of the 1910s, when Henry Ford pivoted to his dual masterstroke of significantly lowering the price of automobiles for mass affordability even while simultaneously radically multiplying the wages of Ford's employees? Oh, you thought Ford was simply all about moving away from producing a small number of hand-crafted cars by creating an assembly line for manufacturing lots of cars? Well, yeah, but that pivot led to unparalleled new mobility for great masses of people in many countries around the world! *And* that fresh new affordable mobility led to extensive highway systems. ...*And* affordable suburbs at the edge of expensive cities. ...*And* sophisticated logistics not restricted to fixed train routes, all of which helped work to lead to routine but extensive options for consumer goods and tremendously improved standards of living. Indeed, your life and mine have been dramatically improved by Henry Ford pivoting his company to assembly lines...and then others following his lead!

So, then, how about Bill Gates and his embracing the Internet in the 1990s? That's when Microsoft pivoted *from* consumers routinely loading software onto PCs and laptops from discs *to* Windows 95 and the web browser Internet Explorer (which later became Microsoft Edge). With all that and beyond, Gates hugely pivoted one of the leading technology companies in history. Lest we fall into the trap of thinking that what Gates did was obvious and easy, we do well to remember how very few successful companies in history pivot to completely transform the offering and delivery of their products or services. For Microsoft, the rest is history. But many companies stay consistently *behind* the curve. Do you recall...

...The story of Netflix? Remember that Netflix reportedly offered to sell itself to Blockbuster for \$50 million in the early 2000s? Blockbuster declined because it dominated the delivery of movies through bricks-and-mortar stores. 'Course, Blockbuster ultimately closed 9,000 stores and is now down to one nostalgia location in Oregon. *No pivot there!* And Netflix is now *Netflix*, one of the top companies purveying movies!

But that's not the point here in this episode: the real reason you know all about Netflix is that the company pivoted *from* sending DVDs via snail-mail *to* streaming to every tech appliance imaginable. That made all the difference in inking subscribers to Netflix...a company worth over \$150 billion in 2023. What a pivot!

Let's stick with tech for a minute more. How about Android, which started as a cloud-based platform to store photos? Google acquired Android and pivoted Android into the mobile phone market. And, in early 2023, Android was tallied by some as having over 70% of the mobile operating systems market worldwide!

How about some other amazing pivots...including a taste of some "lower-tech" examples?

- Pivoting *from* mining in the U.S. *to* adhesives worldwide—you know, like Scotch tape and Post-it Notes. Yes, that's pivoting from Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing to today's 3M!
- Pivoting *from* looms for textiles in Japan *to* the prominent car brand in the world...that's Toyota!
- Pivoting *from* one simple grocery store selling dried fish and noodles in Korea *to* countless consumer electronics found in over 100 countries around the world...that's Samsung!
- Pivoting *from* selling espresso makers and coffee beans *to* over 35,000 drink-purveying destinations worldwide...block after city block after suburban block...that's Starbucks!

So, just what precipitates this kind of morphing of these enterprises into major, stratospheric success? Well, the answers range from key, foundational facilitation by free markets...to astounding inventions and new innovations...to changing consumer tastes...to streamlined digital and logistics improvements worldwide...to aggressive competitors. Most often, it's really a potent combination of several of these

factors. But, most of all, these great pivots share one key ingredient—such amazing pivots require leaders who are astute, curious, courageous, and persevering—and all of *that* in the face of many naysayers!

Next, how about this twist...moving on to a couple very low-tech events that challenged the ruling status quo of the time...and then worked to change the lives of billions over the centuries? In 1215, King John of England was abusing his power as king—as human kings all tend to do—and several barons maneuvered to get him to sign the Magna Carta, the “Great Charter of Freedom.” With that event, real political freedom first saw the light of day. And that pioneering document’s rocky journey ultimately afforded freedom and rights to ordinary English citizens. Wow, just a parchment with some writing on it—low-tech!

In direct lineage to the Magna Carta were the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution in 18th century America. These documents literally embodied a pivoted governance *from* colonies by a human king and a remote Parliament *to* a path-breaking “we the people”...but *that* as rightly bound by a written Constitution! Since that time, many a country’s new constitution has tried to emulate the wisdom and savviness of that U.S. Constitution—but those mimickings’ results have been pretty mixed (mixed, at least, in the degree of enduring political freedom their citizens have enjoyed)! But take nothing away from the U.S. and its Constitution—that difficult birthing-effort blazed the way with a revolutionary pivot that impacted the lives of countless millions *worldwide* over the past several centuries.

‘Course, some nations have made *different* political pivots: governance by Communism and Socialism assert victory, but the facts are that citizens are largely devastated by their economic and political realities.

Let’s switch gears for a minute. How about the Reformation in Europe? Martin Luther laid a bold claim to the Biblical truth of justification by faith (Romans 1)...and the Christian world would never be the same—though the Reformation is not without its legitimate critics about its true Kingdom focus. Nevertheless, Luther’s challenge was foundationally needed to strip away many a religious pretension masquerading as God’s will...then *and* now! *This* was a pivot with major, reverberating impact—Luther wrote adroitly and leveraged the newfangled printing press to re-proclaim some simple but foundational Bible truth.

But what about that which is *undeniably the greatest pivot of all*...a pivot planned from before the foundation of the world? Yes, Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15) and He then was “like a lamb that is led to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7), culminating in His death on the Cross...His Resurrection...and His Ascension to sit at the right hand of His Father in heaven. Results? Billions of lives *have pivoted in response to this God-instituted pivot*...a uniquely unparalleled impact!

That God-instituted, capital-P pivot was effected when the Lord “established a new covenant” (Hebrews 8:8) that was better than the Mosaic covenant! That old covenant was based upon laws that no one can keep; God pivoted to a New Covenant founded and completed in Christ, one that simply requires a faith response by each lowly sinner! As Hebrews 8:13 says, “In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete!” Yes, God has pivoted from a focus on one people group, Israel, to a solution open to every person in the world. He has pivoted from a “lesser” covenant to a better covenant based on His sacrificial love! He has pivoted from an individual’s life of failure and ultimate defeat to a life of eternal victory in Christ! He has pivoted from a covenant where humans fail to a covenant where Christ finished all the work necessary—and yet still asks His followers to do meaningful work via His Great Commission! Hallelujah!

But this Great Pivot by God was *not* forced by a competitor, *or* by changing consumer tastes, *or* by human innovations. No, this pivot came from the heart of God Who proclaims in His Word, the Bible, that He Himself *is* love (1 John 4:8) and that “God our Savior desires all people to be saved” (1 Timothy 2).

Hey, this episode started with this question: “Have you ever experienced being a part of a great pivot by an enterprise?” Of course, you have—you’ve benefitted substantially from the Henry Fords and the Bill Gates of the world. But the stunning reality is, true believers have themselves pivoted to a glorious eternal destiny by choosing to join that Great Pivot effected by God through Christ! Whoa, *that’s ultimate pivoting!*

A&A: Application & Action

1. Is there strong evidence to others in your spheres and touchpoints in life—especially with unbelievers in your workplace or your neighborhood—that you have a “pivoted life in Christ”...not just evidence that you are trying to fulfill the Mosaic law like many earnest unbelievers. In other words, do you exhibit the “perfect law of liberty” and bless others with the clear love and grace of Christ? Be specific.

2. How well does your local church extend itself to participate in proclaiming the Great Pivot that was effected by Christ at the Cross...no, not your church merely stopping at the helpful giving of food or medical help...but working to ensure that unbelievers worldwide are afforded full hearing of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and the opportunity for themselves to pivot to the eternal life afforded by Christ and the Cross? Be specific.

3. Besides more overtly-clear Christian arenas, are you willingly (or unwillingly!) involved in a great pivot right now (for example, business, political, or social pivots)? Is yours a positive pivot or a negative pivot, i.e., do you expect that great pivot to yield awesome fruit or rotten fruit? Discuss.