

Hey, today we're looking at building and sustaining real reliability in your enterprise's supply chain! This topic is so very relevant because every legitimate church, business, and nonprofit that purports to serve others has a supply chain...for better or for worse...whether they think of their enterprise that way or not!

But here's the thing. Often our Whitestone episodes start with business and nonprofit principles and a smattering of supporting stories and examples...and then end with an often-startling exclamation point that serves to point out the goodness of God and the story of His Kingdom. This time around we're going to cover those elements from His amazing Kingdom's perspective—that's because in God's Kingdom there are a number of key elements that foster and sustain real reliability in God's supply chain.

And, frankly, how God manifests a veritable kaleidoscope of extraordinary happenings in His Kingdom never ceases to amaze and instruct us. So, here we go—here are 12 key dimensions regarding the ways that God manifests His Kingdom's stunning supply chain!

God's flawless production of His Kingdom's service offering. Look, in the natural world of producing goods like cars, the goal is to maximize the value of the offering along with nearly zero production mistakes. That means a versatile car that never gets recalled for a production error. That approach is what the highly-valued Six Sigma certification in manufacturing is focused on—less than one flaw per one million units.

But...Jesus's atoning sacrifice for every person on the Cross was the *flawless* ultimate: Christ was the perfect, sinless substitute for every sinner! And the scope of the value of His blood offering is matchless: it covers every sin except unbelief...it's done that for 2,000 years and counting...and it carries many additional benefits, like eternal life and full reconciliation with our Father in heaven. *Flawless.*

Universal knowledge of the founder's brilliance. What would your enterprise give to have 100% awareness of the enterprise's founder and unparalleled handiwork? Well, in Romans 1:19-20 (ESV), that's exactly what God said happens with awareness of His creation: "For what can be known about God is plain to [every person], because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse." That's right, God has abundantly supplied obvious knowledge of Him Who is the source and the very center of the Kingdom's supply chain.

God's service offering and benefits clearly established and communicated in written form to the marketing team. Hey, can you get a more graphic service offering than a *completely* innocent man's dramatic torture and death on a cross? Then, God established and communicated the credentials and world-shattering impact of that offering by His Son in written form that's easily understood in the essentials...like this..."For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:16-17)

Then, Jesus made it clear at least twice to His disciples—yes, His marketing team—that they were empowered to be a vital link in the supply chain in every nation. Yeah, that's the Great Commission spoken just before the Cross *and also* Jesus's last words just before His Ascension (Acts 1:8). These two communications are among the clearest, most compelling instructions in the history of supply chains. Paradoxically, they've been *both joyously implemented and substantively ignored by Christians ever since.*

God's extraordinary instruction manual detailing crisp supply-chain roles and actions. Yes, God detailed definitive roles and definitive actions! ...The Father gave His Son to us...His Son provided atonement for all and intercedes for believers...the Holy Spirit empowers and teaches His people...believers proclaim the gospel...and believers make disciples. These are not theories—they are all real-world roles and actions!

God's clear emphasis on both capture and growth—the Kingdom mission is incomplete without both. God leads with an exemplary example again...He directs his partners in supply chain to gain fresh new believers in Christ and then disciple them. Likewise, every enterprise must gain, develop, and deploy those it serves!

God establishes clear delivery focus, logistics, and customer receiving procedures. Hey, what would happen if an Amazon delivery van driver kept delivering the wrong package to every address? The owners of Amazon certainly would not be happy! So God makes this clear: Moses delivered the Law, but Jesus delivers grace in the New Covenant. And believers' witness is as to Jesus's atoning sacrifice and the access of all to saving grace for every person worldwide. Ephesians 2:8 (ESV) says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." So, individuals receive God's grace as a gift...salvation is not by law or by works. *Only in this way* is the Kingdom supply chain completed!

God appoints the fullest number of supply-chain partners. God's plan is clear: *every born-again believer* is privileged to become a messenger of the gospel of Jesus's atoning sacrifice and His grace. No believer is barred from this privilege—*yes, every Kingdom citizen is intended to be active in God's gospel supply chain!*

But God still wisely has crucial supply-chain partner redundancy. Here's the point. One of the most important principles and actions for building and sustaining a reliable supply chain is *redundancy*, the ability to withstand any failure at any point by using backup resources. While Jesus is unwaveringly the only Way, not all Christians choose to lean into their role in the God's supply chain. Therefore, God has built perfect redundancy into the human delivery of His message of the Cross!

One of the most striking statements by Jesus in His earthly ministry is found in Matthew 9:35-38: "And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.'"

Sadly, many Christians are functioning like those sheep without a serious pastor-shepherd! So, while God fully commands every one of His disciples to "go forth and make disciples," God will indeed fulfill the gap with the few who heed His command! That's the ultimate in effective redundancy in a supply chain!

Great rewards for supply-chain partner participation. 1 Corinthians 3:9-16 indicates that Jesus will burn up Christians' works that did not build on the foundations He built...and, of course, conversely, He will specifically reward those who did build on His foundations! This is one of God's key facets of His redundancy structure: while all who join Jesus in heaven do so solely based upon a faith response to His grace, those who actually obey in building upon His foundation in the supply chain will get rewarded!

God's call center globally and on-site support locally. How about the ultimate call center for the Christian workforce—the Holy Spirit dwells within every believer, and we are to pray without ceasing! (1 Thessalonians 5:17) Also, the local church is our on-site support and collaboration across all roles in the supply chain of God's grace—just look at key roles in Ephesians 4:11...evangelists...pastors...teachers!

Hey, nowadays a cutting-edge enterprise simply *must* have extraordinary tech support. And we know that everything digital that's operating in much power is just a weak shadow of God's supernatural version! That's right, God invented "tech" support many centuries before the word *technology* was first uttered!

The Kingdom's continuous improvement of supply chain. The spread of the gospel by the early church relied on ships and the Roman road system. Likewise, can you imagine Kingdom processes without digital? Leveraging satellites and the internet and software, the Holy Spirit fosters continuous improvement in an unparalleled blend of the best of man's inventions and God's unlimited capacity and governance!

Indigenous-honoring, multi-generational focus. For two millennia, the truly enduring missionary facets of God's Kingdom have deployed indigenous-honoring, multi-generational, baton-passing strategies. Wow!

That does it! Hey, when it comes to building and sustaining reliability in supply chain, can you possibly imagine even one contender to God's Kingdom? *Once more, Kingdom approaches eclipse everything else!*

A&A: Application & Action

1. Every supply chain has vulnerabilities because fallible people and processes are involved. So, what is your workplace enterprise's most significant risk in its supply chain? And what is your enterprise doing to mitigate that risk? Be specific.
2. What is your local church's posture towards participating in God's amazing supply chain that's spelled out in the Great Commission? What actions (or inactions!) can you cite as evidence of that posture? Discuss.
3. What about *you* in this area of God's supply chain...as unto the Lord, are you one of the obedient laborers in the harvest...yes, going forth, joyously fulfilling your privilege? There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, of course (Romans 8:1)—but over a couple of millennia, many a Christian has declined the privileges of this command by Jesus to His disciples. Consider your path and its reward prayerfully, then respond.