

A Mercy Surprise

Today was set aside for research. Yesterday I focused on beating back the invasive trivia so I could really get my head into details and the interpretation of details today.

Next weekend I will be speaking about Kingdom businesses in Canada, and I want to illustrate the seminar with stories of Canadian companies. I pulled a list from the web first thing this morning and then hunkered down for the process of grinding through an endless list of web pages, looking for the clues that would let me see behind the PR veneer.

Tim Hortons. Some surprises. I had wondered why there was some low grade dissonance in the expression of the company. Founder died early and his partner has heavily colored the original DNA with his own (dissimilar) style. Mystery solved.

Air Canada vs. WestJet. Slam dunk. WestJet works really hard to remind everyone of all the differences between the two. I get one bit of easy money each day.

Bombardier. Fun story. The sparkle is in the hand off from the founder to the second generation CEO. Great redemptive gifts synergy there which explains the dramatic redirection of the company.

Canadian National Railways. Hopeless. Government owned. Formed from an amalgamation of several other railroads. Leadership and policies shift with the political tides. This one would take a long time to sort out via the web. Wish I could ride it for a day. That would solve the mystery. Skip it. On to the next one.

Cirque du Soleil. Standard diagnostic question to self: *"What makes this different from other circuses?"*

Immediate answer: "Everything."

"Thanks a lot. That was no help. Would the smart aleck inside please take the rest of the day off?"

"OK. Specifics. P. T. Barnum vs. Cirque du Soleil. What is the core difference? Umm, dee dum. . ."

Ah, THERE it is. In a Barnum and Bailey circus, they provided a finished product for you to see. They worked hard to cause you to see what they wanted you to see, whether it was the barker trying to get you into an exhibit, or the clown on the ground in the ring. What they showed you was the final product. They offered a gratifying spectacle for your eyes.



"Cirque du Soleil, by contrast, tries to stir your imagination so that what they show you will serve as a jumping off point for you to think about things you have never thought about before. They don't want to be the ending point. What they show you is supposed to be the beginning point of a thought process that never reaches closure."

Wow! That was impressive. And a very new insight.

Clearly gift of Mercy.

That is Rob Bell, former pastor of Mars Hill. He drove the theologians batty with his propensity to challenge people to think through profoundly significant concepts in an open ended way, without his telling them what the right answer was supposed to be at the end of their cogitations. Quite heretical in the world of theological conclusions that are precise and emphatically delivered.

Ah yes. C. S. Lewis. Another one who had something to say that made a huge impact on people, but who also raised endless questions he did not bother to answer. He made people think about things they would not normally think about.

I decided to try it on Megan to see if she would sign off on it. I did. Her first (excited) response: "That is 'Beyond the Horizon.'" But of course. Intuitively she knew that when she named her company, it had to be a jumping off point, not a conclusion.

Then she went all glassy eyed on me as the concept made her brain feel like a pinball machine going for a new world record. Guess I am on the right track. (Sandy, when you proof the next set of CDs for us, be extra careful. Her audio editing the rest of today will be from her autopilot program, not from her core design. She is pretty much gone for a while.)

So, we have new language for the Mercy tribe and for those of us trying to successfully walk with them. That is why closure is so anathema to them. If you just think about it another day (or week . . . or month . . .) there might be even more possibilities to savor and imagine.

OK. Enough already with savoring and imagining. Some of us (Prophets) have research to do and a deadline to meet.

What is the social DNA of the Maple Leafs? Coming right up, Sir!

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From the Quarterdeck

