

Who are entrepreneurial leaders?

Entrepreneurial leaders see opportunity in the face of uncertainty and motivate people to help enact a vision. Their genius lies in bringing together human and financial resources in a combination no one has seen before. The entrepreneurial leaders profiled in this book, Vol. 3 of our series (the previous two volumes were under the title *The Christian Entrepreneur*), are rooted in the Christian faith. The series provides entrepreneurial leaders' wholistic reflections on their faith as they live it out in their various workplaces.

"A lot of people said, 'McDonald's is a crummy little hamburger stand; how are you going to make any money out of it?' But that didn't stop my wife and I. I still remember that Thursday morning (1967) when we opened the doors to McDonald's in Canada for the first time. Shortly before opening, as I contemplated the fact that I had my entire net worth on the line through my personal guarantee, I thought, 'What if no one comes?'"

— **George Tidball**, founder of *The Keg Steakhouse & McDonald's Canada*

"I started by purchasing a little magazine called TV Week. It was doing about \$100,000 a year. I had a borrowed desk in the back of a printer's office, with a borrowed phone. ...Today the company produces more than 30 titles, with annual revenues in excess of \$25 million."

— **Peter Legge**, founder and CEO of *Canada Wide Media Ltd.*



Richard J. Goossen, PhD

CEO, M & A Capital Corp; Adjunct Professor of Entrepreneurship, Trinity Western University

"I commend Richard Goossen's work because of what he represents as both a practising businessperson and academic professor. He is himself an entrepreneur; he knows what he is talking about from experience. Yet he is also a careful student, well-read in a variety of areas including marketplace theology. ...We need individuals who can straddle the two worlds, who can speak the language both of the boardroom and the classroom. Such people are rare, but Richard Goossen is one of them. He understands what is necessary to run a successful business, and at the same time is mindful of the disciplines of serious academic research."

— **Dr. R. Higginson**, Ridley Hall Foundation, Cambridge, UK



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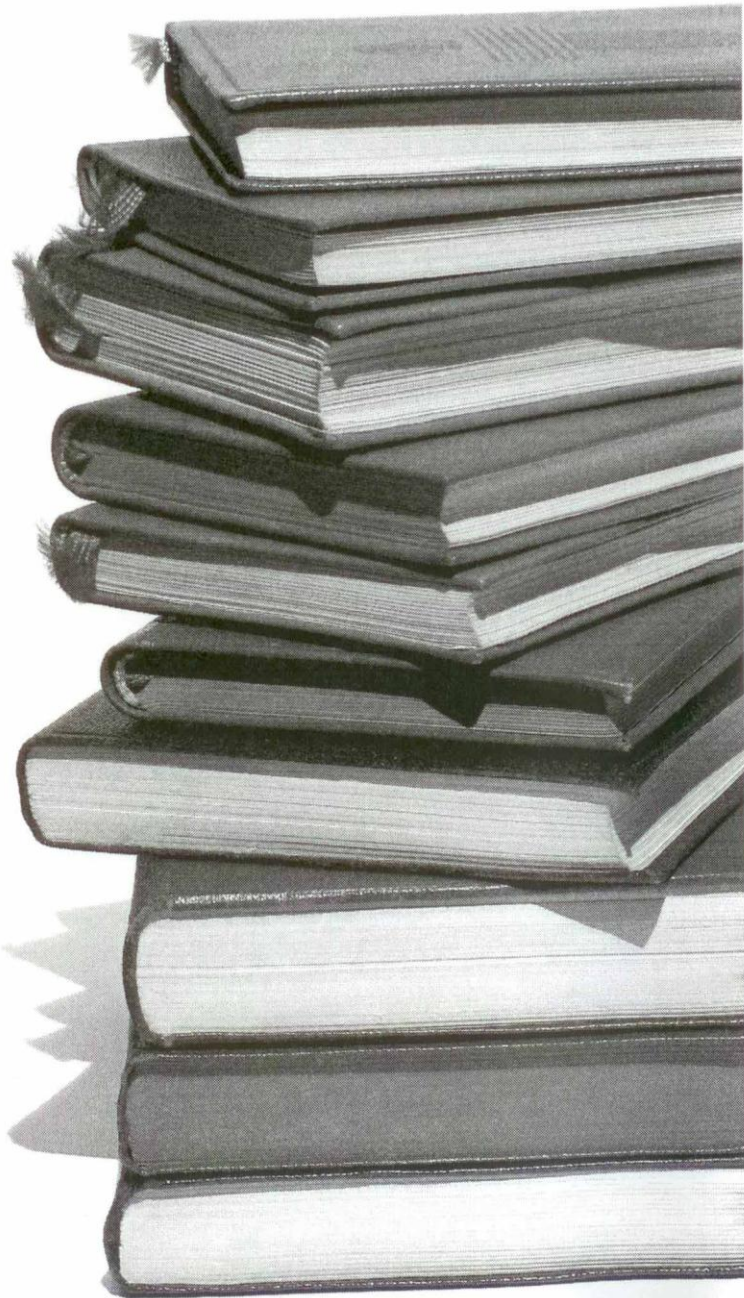
Volume 3

Richard J. Goossen

Entrepreneurial Leaders

Reflections on Faith at Work **Vol. 3**

Richard J. Goossen, Editor



THE EMINATA GROUP
the eminata group

Dr. Peter Chung

"Doing good to others makes us happy, because that's how God created us to be.
The most important thing we can do is share God's love with other people."

Interview conducted on March 6, 2007

by Matt Heckel & Jun Xie

Founded by Dr. Peter Chung, The Eminata Group has a rich history in educational development. It delivers excellent diploma-based programs, university transferable credits, and career-training courses that meet or exceed current market demands. Eminata's diverse programs combine theoretical and practical education with career training solutions. At Eminata institutes across Western Canada and Washington, students enjoy multicultural learning environments while earning industry-recognized certifications and diplomas. The current annual enrolment of full-time students is over 2,500. (from www.eminata.com, modified)

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION
biographical information

Dr. Peter Chung

Position: CEO

Company: The Eminata Group

Website: www.eminata.com

Locations: headquarters in Vancouver, BC; institutes across Western Canada and Washington

Type of Business: Post-Secondary Education

Number of Employees: undisclosed

Status: Private

Years in Operation: 26 +

Approx. Annual Revenue: undisclosed

GENERAL QUESTIONS

general questions

1. When did you start your first entrepreneurial venture, and what was it?

I started my first venture when I was 17, teaching martial arts while I finished high school. I continued teaching after high school in order to put myself through university.

2. What motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

There were a couple of motivating factors. When I became a Christian as a freshman at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), I wanted to go into missions work. Instead, my father advised me to become a businessman, so I could help missionaries financially. I took his advice.

I didn't know which aspect of business to pursue, or if I should simply continue teaching martial arts. I was very focused on helping missionaries, though, and I knew I would probably make more money in the long run if I owned my own business, rather than working for someone else.

However, at that time I still lacked direction.

I ended up going to a few different universities. The only undergraduate program I finished was at UCLA, but I also went to Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA, and California Polytechnic in Pomona, CA.

After I finished my university studies, I worked for five different companies in five years. I felt restless, and I couldn't stay with the same job for very long. Because I had majored in mathematics and science at university, my first job was as a computer programmer. Then I got a job in engineering, and also started doing some work as an accountant. I quickly realized that I didn't fit into the norm—I wasn't satisfied being a 'nine to five' employee. Eventually I went to graduate school to do my MBA.

The other factor that motivated me to become an entrepreneur is the fact

that I'm an immigrant to North America. When I was a manager at a manufacturing company in Pasadena, CA, I had to deal with racism issues, and that motivated me to start my own company. Running my own business, I wouldn't have to worry about racism from a boss or co-worker.

3. Was anyone a model of inspiration for you, and if so, how?

I didn't have a person as my model of inspiration. I knew God would bless me, because my heart was to help missionaries. I also knew that my venture would be God's venture too, so that inspired me to pursue entrepreneurship.

4. Was your educational experience (to whatever extent) helpful?

My MBA program was helpful, because I was able to apply what I learned about business to my career. However, the specific information I learned during my undergraduate studies wasn't really helpful. My undergraduate education taught me basic work habits, but it was only a starting point for my continued education.

5. How many different business ventures have you started in the course of your entrepreneurial career?

I have started about 20 different ventures, including partnerships and group ventures. I used to be a partner in a bank. I was also in auto safety engineering and the import/export business, along with real estate development, homebuilding, and real estate investment.

6. How many of these business ventures were financially successful?

All of them have been successful to a certain extent, although not all 20 are in existence today. I've had my ups and downs.

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

questions about your business

7. How did you identify the opportunity that preceded setting up your business?

The Eminata Group started in Abbotsford, BC (a city about 70 kilometers east of Vancouver, considered part of the Greater Vancouver area). I had a business reversal in 1992, wherein I lost about 95% of my business assets and faced many lawsuits. After that I took a break from business for about 3 years.

Then one day I went to Vancouver and happened to pick up a copy of *The Vancouver Sun*. The headline that day highlighted a 12 or 13% unemployment rate. So, I thought maybe I could do something about that by purchasing a school and offering career training.

8. What were the critical elements you assessed before you decided to pursue the opportunity?

For me, the critical element was noticing the high unemployment rate. I knew I had to do something to attract unemployed people. It was very simple; I didn't have to do much research.

9. How much time elapsed between the day you saw the opportunity and your first day of business?

Three months. It would have been sooner, but the deal I worked on to acquire my first school did not work out. I ended up purchasing a different school in Abbotsford.

10. Did you have business partners? If so, who were they, and how did you find them?

I did not have partners. As an entrepreneur, I do not do well with partners.

11. Did you have a written business plan of any kind?

I didn't really have a business plan. I saw the opportunity, and I wanted to acquire a business that was already in existence. Because I had recently immigrated to Canada, I still had to learn Canadian culture. Moreover, because of licensing requirements for my type of business, I needed to understand how the Canadian government worked. If I had wanted to start a business from scratch, those obstacles would have been much more daunting. Instead, I decided to buy the school in Abbotsford.

12. What type of financing did you have?

I gave "key money" (a significant deposit) to the owner of the school. In retrospect, I probably didn't need to do that; however, at the time I didn't understand Canadian business very well. I paid a 40% down-payment on the business and got the remaining 60% of financing from the owner.

I asked the owner to work for me until I learned the business and felt financially stable. She was happy with that arrangement, because she enjoyed the work but didn't want to deal with the pressure of owning the business. This way of financing motivated her and helped me run the business well.

13. How much capital did your business require?

It took \$150,000.

14. How long did it take for your business to reach a positive cash-flow position?

We reached a positive cash-flow position right away! We turned it around very quickly. We were able to increase our revenue by doing some joint ventures with the University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV).

15. If you did not have enough money at the start, or at low points in the business cycle, what did you do to stretch your capital?

I didn't have any problems from the get-go. I had previous business experience, and even though that experience was in a different culture and a different

country, it was very helpful.

16. What were the strengths of your venture?

The business I purchased had a contract with the government to provide education to qualifying individuals, so I knew there would be at least some amount of steady income until that contract expired. I was confident that by the time our government contract ended, we would have built up our revenue by attracting additional students. I perceived the foundation of government contracts as a strength right away.

17. What were the weaknesses of your venture?

In this service industry, we don't really have 'assets.' If enrolment is down, we have no inventory to liquidate. Our professors and students are our assets, so our business depends heavily on reputation. Sales and marketing are also very important.

18. What was your most triumphant moment?

There have been many moments. When I started The Eminata Group's second location, our business rose to the next level. That felt good. Now The Eminata Group owns one of the top three largest career colleges in Western Canada. We have ambitions to grow further in the future.

19. What was your worst moment?

The worst moments have been when our cash flow has dropped.

20. What were the most difficult gaps to fill (or problems to solve) as you began to grow your company?

As an entrepreneur, I am more of a visionary. I don't consider myself very good at developing systems or setting up consistent operating procedures. But, The Eminata Group is at the point where these processes are necessary, and implementing them is part of a five-year plan we are implementing.

I also feel the company is reaching my limit as an entrepreneur, so I am

emphasizing a united company culture and strong employee training. Setting up that framework is the next step toward continued growth.

21. What were the key attributes you looked for in people (partners, advisors, managers) as you grew the company?

I look for people with good character who are loyal, honest, and hard-working, and who live with integrity. I also look for people who are able to fit into our company culture.

I believe a company cannot grow without good employees. They are the people who make things happen.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

reflective questions

22. What have you found most personally rewarding and satisfying as an entrepreneur?

During the late 1990's, the unemployment rate was quite high. We attracted a lot of unemployed people as students.

I watched them go through the job-searching process, and many of them ended up with jobs. Seeing their success was satisfying. Knowing that my business helped them become productive citizens of the world was also rewarding.

During good times, like now, a lot of students return to our institutes for retraining. With the current low unemployment rate, our business model has changed. Now we train people for jobs that are more challenging than what people are used to. This way, they'll find jobs they can improve themselves in. It makes me happy to see people go through training and find a good job.

23. With respect to starting and running a business, what are the three most important lessons you've learned and hope to 'pass on'?

First, you have to have goals and objectives. You have to figure out why you want to be an entrepreneur. Second, you need to be very honest with yourself and say, "Do I really have the guts and skill sets to do this?"

For example, we once hired an Executive Vice President of a very large government hydro company. He failed miserably. He thought he could do the job because he had been an Executive Vice President at a large corporation, but he didn't understand his limited skill sets. You have to seriously search yourself to see if you truly are an entrepreneur.

Third, in order to continually grow, you have to understand the bottom line. You must make sure that what comes in is bigger than what goes out, or else you won't be around for long.

FAITH IN THE MARKETPLACE QUESTIONS
faith in the marketplace questions

24. What does the word "calling" mean to you?

As a Christian, having a "calling" means knowing that I have to answer to the Lord at the end of the day. He is going to say, "What have you done with the talents I have given you?" and I have to be able to answer, "This is what I've done." I want to be the servant who has gained five or two talents, not the servant who only has one.

God has given me an ability to make money, and I want to use it wisely for His Kingdom. Through His gifts to me, I would like to see a lot of people come to know the Lord.

25. Do you feel "called" to entrepreneurship? If so, what does that mean to you?

I didn't hear an audible voice telling me to become an entrepreneur, but I notice opportunities, I am able to get creative, and I have vision to see beyond what's in front of me. So I would say that because I know God has given me these personal gifts and personality traits, I do feel called to entrepreneurship.

26. Who, if anyone, affirmed that calling?

My father did. He was a pastor in Los Angeles when I became a Christian, and as I mentioned earlier, he encouraged me to become a businessman who contributes financially to missions work.

27. What do you believe your gifts are as an entrepreneur?

I look for solutions. I am very creative. I see situations in a positive light.

Also, I always try to figure out how to make things work. When people say, "We have a lot of problems here," my response is, "Well, what's a solution? Let's not talk about problems—just solutions." Also, I see many opportunities because of the way I think: I am a dreamer.

28. How do you integrate your business expertise with your Christian faith, and how are they complementary?

I sit on a number of Christian boards. Because of my business sense, I come up with ideas that help non-profit organizations. I also try to spend 10 percent of my time as a tithe. I spend 10 percent of every year in board meetings, going on missions trips, and being part of Canadian delegations to other countries.

On a recent trip to Paraguay, I had dinner with the President of Paraguay, who is a Christian. I have also traveled to El Salvador, Ecuador, and Cambodia. My business leads me into places that the average missionary may not be able to go. Through this type of ministry, I can influence leaders to use their power to spread the gospel.

I'm also involved in a group that meets with the 100 most influential people in cities with populations of over a million people. We primarily do this in the US,

but we have also done it in Mexico City as well. The team includes the Miami Dolphins' owner and the owners of Cinemax, LensCrafters, Interstate Battery, and Tyson Foods. All of these CEOs are Christian men.

These men contact other high-influence businesspeople who are non-Christians, and invite them to the house of the owner of the Miami Dolphins. A lot of wealthy business owners come for this annual meeting in Miami and stay in first-class guest cottages. After a round of golf and dinner, a testimony is shared. This is an outreach to powerful leaders in the world. Our hope is that these leaders will come to know Christ, and will then positively influence many people.

We have also done an outreach meeting for inner-city children. The owner of a Cinemax movie theatre in Miami donated his theatre space to us for an evening, and we set it up for the event. Popcorn and drinks were free, and we invited all the children (both Christian and non-Christian) to be picked up in limousines. As these poor and needy children arrived, football players and celebrities gave them high-fives and red-carpet treatment. After the movie finished, LensCrafters gave eyeglasses to kids who needed them. Then a hearing aid group donated equipment to kids who were hard-of-hearing. The kids also received a couple bags of food. We then shared a testimony video clip.

In order to do missions work, you need money and you need people. Getting wealthy people to donate money for the Gospel's sake is powerful, and God has laid that goal on my heart.

I travel about a month and a half every year for mission purposes.

29. How have you been involved in your local church?

Because I travel so much, it's hard for me to get involved in my local church. It's more of a place of worship for me. A lot of times I miss church due to my travel schedule.

30. Have you been involved with your church denomination?

No.

31. Have you been involved in para-church organizations?

Yes. I sit on boards for Campus Crusade, Far East Broadcasting, Global Connections, Navigators, and Youth for Christ.

32. How have you integrated Biblical principles into your business practices, thus acting differently than a non-Christian would?

I believe giving is a Biblical principle, and that affects my business practices. I give incentives to my employees. I think people view me as a very generous man.

I consider generosity an important characteristic for Christians. One example of this is when my company owed an architecture company a sum of money. The architect did a great job for us, and I didn't forget that. Last Christmas, I sent him double what I owed. He wrote me a nice letter back saying that it was completely unexpected. But I think of it as a response to Jesus' teaching—if a man asks you to walk one mile with him, walk two. Do not be afraid to give generously. Because I am a Christian, I never want to shortchange anyone.

33. What lessons would you 'pass on' to Christians pursuing entrepreneurship?

You must regularly go back to the basics and ask yourself, "What am I going to do with the money I make?" We all need that perspective.

You only need three meals a day, you only wear one pair of pants at a time, and you only sleep in one bed at a time. Everything else is gravy. We must use it for the Lord's work.

34. How could your local church congregation support you as an entrepreneur?

I don't know. I just started attending a church that has a number of entrepreneurs in the congregation. I'm beginning to meet some people, but I haven't really become involved with that church yet.

35. What have been the biggest challenges for you as a Christian in business?

There are many temptations to cut corners when it comes to living out my Christian faith in business. This world judges people by wealth, so it's very important for us as Christians to be humble. Also, whenever money is involved, there can be an internal power struggle against greed and the idolization of wealth.

As my income increases, it's hard to consciously keep giving more and more. When I am in doubt about how much I am giving to the Lord, I add an extra zero on the end of the amount.

36. Who has been most helpful (and why or how) in addressing these challenges?

Board members from the organizations I'm affiliated with.

37. Have you hired people from your church? If so, has that been a positive or negative experience?

I haven't hired anyone from my local church. I did hire my son's pastor one time. It was a negative experience, because he didn't have the right gifts for the position we had hired him for. I had a difficult time knowing where to draw the line between the personal connection with this individual and the demands of the particular job.

38. Have you done business with other people in your church? Please explain.

No.

39. Have your relationships with those people been positively or negatively affected—from a business and spiritual standpoint—by doing business together? How?

N/A

40. Are any passages of scripture particularly meaningful or inspirational to you?

Ecclesiastes 3:12 says, "I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live." When I think about what makes people happy, it's not wealth or power—it's the Lord. Secondly, doing good to others makes us happy, because that's how God created us to be. The most important thing we can do is share God's love with other people.

I enjoy reading Ecclesiastes, which is all about the life experience of King Solomon. It presents very practical wisdom.

At the end of Ecclesiastes, the writer basically says, "Fear the Lord; that's what really matters." When I meditate on this verse (12:13), it's very meaningful, yet simple. There are many things in life that lead right back to it.