

Jerome Fernando: Unfiltered, Unapologetic, and Unfazed

Posted on



Jerome Fernando.

Jerome Fernando is a disruptor in every sense of the word. Instead of simply provoking debate, he challenges a nation with his words and prophecies. Unfazed

by criticism, he focuses on a global mission: positioning the Glorious Church for international reach.

A year after speaking with Business Today, his voice remains steady and convinced. Admired or opposed, his forthrightness is unmistakable. In this wide-ranging conversation, he discussed national issues, personal character, and addressed criticism of his teachings on prosperity.

For Jerome, prosperity is inseparable from salvation and is essential to wholeness. He argues that the Church stays relevant by engaging with financial realities and believes Christianity is fundamentally about uplifting the poor and developing stewardship among the wealthy.

Words Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.

Photography Rohan Herath and Dinesh Fernando.

Given your large platform as a religious leader, how do you balance prophetic conviction with social responsibility—especially in a climate where words can influence public sentiment? Specifically, could you elaborate on the revelations you made regarding the cyclone that affected Sri Lanka in November?

Words are vital as one grows in wisdom. For someone in the office of a prophet, the primary responsibility is to uphold the integrity of God. God and His Word are one. When a prophet receives a Word, he must dispense it because if he's not faithful in communicating what he hears from God, the Lord will not speak to him. So at moments like that, more than social responsibility, the integrity of God is prioritized.

A prophet thinks differently from a pastor, a teacher, an evangelist, or an Apostle. He's not diplomatic. So, because he's not diplomatic, even though I'm a diplomat, the priority is what God is saying in the moment and to speak it in a way that serves the integrity of God. Because before I serve the people, I serve God. So, it's not an easy office to hold.

I had a vision, which I later revealed during the Billion Room program. I was asleep in that vision. I'm taken in a boat, and all I see is water everywhere. I'm moving on this boat, and I approach the airport where I see aircraft and people being de-

boarded. After contemplating it for several days, I realized that it was an event that was inevitable. Hence, I must reveal it to the country. But by the time Sunday came, I had forgotten about it. However, I remembered it during the Billion Room program and revealed my vision to the attendees. In fact, what you don't see in the video is that I'm telling them that I don't know the timeline. I was very honest when I told them that I didn't know the time. It could happen tomorrow or in a month. But it was definitely going to happen. So the prophecy was about the economic impact the natural disaster would have on the country and countries, and not about landslides. I don't have to prophesy about landslides. Sri Lanka has landslides every year.

Turning to national influence, do you believe religious voices should influence national policy in a country striving for economic recovery and international credibility?

If the religious leader is wise, then yes, a nation needs to hear what they have to say. But if there's no wisdom and it's only religion, then religion is a hindrance to economic development. Religion without wisdom is a hindrance to a nation's economic development.

What is the spiritual dimension of economic reform? Could a nation's mindset influence its economic outcomes?

Two billion percent yes. Life is spiritual – doctors get sick despite their education because life is a spiritual entity. The most spiritual component of a man's life is his mind. How the mind works is how life works. The recent floods in Sri Lanka are not normal – they are part of an economic curse the nation has suffered since 1948, when every government has faced catastrophes. This is an evil pattern that requires a spiritual dimension to break.

A nation's mindset has a significant influence on its economic outcomes. In Sri Lanka, for instance, grandmothers teach their grandchildren to pick lottery tickets, believing they can become rich through the lottery rather than through hard work. Working diligently and following the right principles will guarantee success.



What does righteous leadership mean to you?

Righteous leadership means doing what's not just right in the moment but considering the outcome. Outcome is more important than income. A righteous leader might make decisions that people aren't happy with now, but they'll be thankful in two years. Righteous leadership is outcome-focused, paying a price now to reap the benefits later.

Alongside that impact, how have you managed to attract visitors from many parts of the world, including those from different religions?

Since opening the Miracle Dome, we've welcomed 10,800 international visitors from

over 90 countries in three years, and that's quite a considerable number. The purpose of the Miracle Dome was, in fact, to attract international visitors to this small island. Sri Lanka is renowned for its tea, rubber, coconuts, and cricket. But I wanted to showcase a godly message, wisdom, healing, and the power of God. That was the purpose of the Dome.

Today, I am witnessing that purpose being fulfilled. I am passionately committed to the purpose for which God called me to do what I'm doing. That is why I see the results. As a young boy, I aspired to pursue a career in cricket, aiming to make a positive influence on the nation, which I achieved as a member of the under-19 national team. But my cricketing career came to a halt after that. That desire came to pass through a different avenue.

Given such a diverse influx, how do you appeal to such a wide range of people?

Paul the apostle, who wrote most of the New Testament, said, "I became all things to all people." It's a function of wisdom. Jesus was comfortable with beggars, the poor, prostitutes, taxpayers, and politicians – only hypocrites felt uncomfortable with him. I came from a poor family and know what it is to be poor, to be in pain, to be without food, to be persecuted. My father was a gambler. There was a period when we didn't have electricity for two years. That's how we grew up. My mother had to do a great deal to keep the home fires burning. God brought me through that, and now I can understand all people.



Looking ahead, what can you tell us about the planned Miracle Dome City adjacent to the Miracle Dome?

I'm beginning to see the other side of the vision that I didn't see two years ago – we need more space. We've had 52,000 sick people attend the healing room in 2025, but I only have about four to five hours with them. I don't get to meet them again. Those who get healed testify immediately. In some instances, we never get to hear about people's healing. I need to provide accommodation for people coming from places like Anuradhapura or Jaffna, so they don't have to stand on the road or sleep on pavements. So, if they come on a Thursday night, they don't have to go back on the same day; they can stay until Friday if they want, and even Saturday, and return on Sunday after the service.

We're building a 1,500-bed accommodation facility with washroom facilities and a kitchen, all of which will be provided free of charge. We also plan to add an open crusade ground where at least 30,000 people can sit. For this Miracle Dome City, we will utilize the adjoining seven acres, which cost 1.3 billion rupees. We have already

paid 200 million and will pay an additional 350 million by April.

We hope to have at least a 500-bed facility out of the planned 1,500 by 2027 and expand from there, as the building is expected to be more expensive. You may want to know how I plan to do it. I invest a lot of time in helping businesspeople in the church increase their capacity and generate more revenue. They make more money, and when they make more money, they naturally return to the church and want to give a percentage of their new earnings. So, that's how the money comes.

In terms of execution, how do you envision bringing this massive project to life?

I hope to execute this massive project by faith. My confidence comes from knowing it's not my ambition, but a word from God. I tell people what needs to be done, and it happens. I must be patient, strategic, wise, and steward the funds carefully.

The project will happen in stages. Miracle Dome City will feature a printing press, a fuel station, agricultural activities, accommodation, a supermarket, and a crusade ground.

You spoke about mentoring. Your ministry is known for conducting a mentoring program for up-and-coming business professionals. Could you share more details about the program?

Correct. Because businesspeople and marketplace professionals are fundamental to what we do as a church, we've invested a lot of time in supporting them.

I have raised businessmen to take care of smaller businesspeople in small groups. They are small and medium-scale enterprises, including start-ups and small businesses, such as those with a tuck shop by the roadside. They have the Option of getting into some of these groups that are basically mentored by some of my mentees.

We have a three-year syllabus based on biblical financial principles. Every Tuesday, they get together in small groups. Anyone, whether part of the church or not, can join if they're humble enough.

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How do you communicate about this program to attract participants and

ensure its impact is understood?

Primarily through “business cells” – essentially word of mouth for now. We just completed the structure, so we haven’t gathered much momentum yet. Next year, there should be more momentum. It’s a non-threatening environment where any non-Christian can come, sit, and learn from the syllabus. In church, you often hear about the person of Jesus, but not much about the principles of Jesus that can lead to business success. So this is where a non-Christian who does not know the person of Jesus can still come and learn from the principles of Jesus for business success. There’s nothing that I do that you might find outside of scripture. I have a scripture for absolutely everything.

How do you navigate guiding people who may not know Jesus to benefit from biblical principles in business?

Even if you don’t know Jesus or His principles, you definitely understand money – it’s a universal language. I use money as a starting point to help people understand the basics. I tell them that money doesn’t respond to your tears, prayer, fasting, or religion.

Money is a spirit, it’s mammon, it operates by laws. According to Matthew 6:24, money is a god. God with a small g. It’s called mammon. When people don’t understand Jesus or His principles, I present the laws of money because everybody understands money. That’s the gate. People often find fault with me for discussing money, but they shouldn’t, because it’s a universal language.

What if traditional churches say that’s not what the Bible says?

The traditional church, unfortunately, is irrelevant. When a church loses its relevance, no one listens to it. Jesus said you can’t put new wine into old wineskins. A church that doesn’t talk about money is not relevant in today’s society. That’s reality. Interestingly, if I look at my sermons this year, I haven’t really spoken much about money.

So you think churches are talking too much about suffering?

I think churches are talking too much about human experience rather than divine possibilities. There’s a reason it’s called a pulpit – you’re supposed to pull people out of pits, not keep them in it.

The gospel has to be preached to the poor, and what is good news to the poor? Good news can't be "God wants you to be poor." Luke 4:18 states that the gospel must be preached to the poor, and in Greek, "poor" refers to those who are financially impoverished. So, good news to a poor person must include deliverance from poverty. Good news is the opposite of being poor.

The pulpit is not talking enough about money. Most of Jesus' teachings focused on money more than faith, hell, and heaven combined. Jesus speaks about money in Matthew 6:24 - you can't serve both God and money. In Luke 16, he discusses how to use money to win people. In Matthew 25 and Luke 19, Jesus teaches the parable of the talents, and the word "talent" means money.

It is often overlooked that key moments in the Gospel involved people of means. Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy man, making the Resurrection possible. He was born into the lineage of King David—royalty, not poverty—and is called the Son of David for that reason. When the wise men came, their first gift was gold. Yet sermons often focus only on frankincense and myrrh—symbols of suffering—while ignoring gold, which represents kingship and provision. This selective emphasis shapes an incomplete narrative.

My role is not to claim ownership over people, but to point them to God. The power does not belong to me—I am simply a vessel. When that connection is made, people will find their way to faith in their own time.



Do you speak more about gold than about frankincense and myrrh?

I speak on all three. Sometimes you can't get to the gold without the myrrh. Look at my life – I came through a lot of suffering. You go through different stages to become someone great, but when you become great, suffering doesn't end because they persecute you for the gold. It's a never-ending process.

You spoke about the Good News, which is always associated with salvation. But what you're trying to say is that salvation also entails people elevating themselves from their current status into something better.

Correct. Salvation includes eternal life, healing, deliverance, wholeness, and prosperity. The Greek word is "sozo". Let's look at eternal life. Many people believe that internal life is related to the afterlife. No, eternal life is a higher life. Jesus Himself said, 'I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly.' He's referring to humans who already had human life. So the life that he's offering is

surely not human life. Jesus is offering a different kind of life, which comes through salvation. But part of salvation, which is wholeness, is getting to a place where others say, “You were doing badly before, now you’re doing better.” We must start preaching Jesus beyond the tomb, the man who rose again from the dead, and the man who told the disciples where to find the fish. Prosperity is not a separate gospel; it is one dimension within the Gospel, just as healing is. Many preachers do not teach the Gospel in its fullness, often due to a lack of wisdom, and that is where misunderstandings arise. Most criticism comes from a distance rather than through direct engagement. To date, none of my detractors has approached me personally to have that conversation.

Do you insist that people who are healed must become followers of your church?

Not at all. That would be a narrow and unhealthy approach, and I do not encourage it. When people receive healing, we offer them guidance on how to sustain it, but the choice to follow those principles—or to join any church—is entirely theirs. We simply encourage them to stay connected to the source that helped them, whether through our broadcasts or by finding a local church in their own community. I once encountered a family in Nuwara Eliya at a restaurant who recognized me. The husband told me that three years earlier, his wife had come to our church as a last hope while battling cancer. After prayer, she was healed. They never returned, and I do not know where they worship today. But in that moment, they recognized that God had used me as a conduit in their healing.

That is what matters. My role is not to claim ownership over people, but to point them to God. The power does not belong to me—I am simply a vessel. When that connection is made, people will find their way to faith in their own time.

What strategic principles have enabled your growth beyond Sri Lanka?

It’s twofold. One strategy is raising leaders through mentorship. To plant churches globally (the vision is a church in every nation, currently about 29-30), I must raise leaders, which can only be done by a secure leader. You can’t be insecure like King Saul and have global influence. The second strategy is improving my own influence. Influence is money, and money is influence. Without influence – the ability to persuade, impact, and inspire – there can be no global scale. I write books, give solutions, solve problems, and have a message the world needs. I’m featured on major Christian television networks where only a few Asians appear. I am the first

preacher to be featured on Zee Tamil. Every day, thousands of people somewhere get to hear me for the first time through television stations. Finally, controversy is another strategy – saying thought-provoking things that get people’s attention.

I believe trust has been central to my growth and expansion. The Miracle Dome stands as a testament to that trust. From a widow’s mite to a wealthy man’s Lamborghini, every donor’s name is inscribed on the Wall of Honor in the lower hall of the Miracle Dome. It reflects a shared belief in the vision.

There is a certain conviction in my voice when I speak— people believe what I say. I have preserved that trust because they know I am transparent. If I had stolen, I would say so— but I have not. If I had made mistakes, I would acknowledge them—but I have not. Over the past two years, particularly during the period of investigation, people observed closely. They watched patiently. And after those two years, they came to know the man behind the voice.

Trust is what enables a project to begin, to be completed, and to achieve what others deem impossible. There is no such thing as “difficult” when an assignment is divinely given. The real challenge lies in leadership. The man or woman entrusted with the vision must be trustworthy, honest, transparent, and backed by a proven track record—able to say, I have done what I said, and I have said what I have done.

Equally important is a commitment to improving lives and delivering tangible results.

At its core, a person with resources can do more for the people, the church, and the country—but only if that person is trusted, accountable, and able to show clear proof, with everything properly documented. With the right team in place, it becomes possible to fulfil what God has called one to do.

Do you think one has to be wealthy to be influential and heard?

After you’ve come to Christ and understood the message and principles, being poor becomes a choice, not karma or misfortune. Mother Teresa chose to be poor, and it matched her calling. With my calling, I can’t choose to be poor because I couldn’t influence the people God has called me to influence. It depends on your audience.

Early in life, I realized my audience was the world, so I needed to show results. That’s why Sri Lanka’s response to me doesn’t disturb me – Sri Lanka is actually too

small for my global vision. I know it sounds arrogant. It's just that my vision is global. So when little Sri Lanka tries to say things about me, I'm not even hearing it.

Why is it important for you to reach the rich rather than being a missionary?

This is not a path I chose; it is a calling. At 29, I clearly heard God instructing me to leave business, with the assurance that He would do great things through my life.

My calling is to reach a specific audience—people of influence and wealth—who others may not naturally engage with.

To communicate effectively with them, I must speak their language and meet them at their level. If I am to share the gospel with leaders and the wealthy, I must first understand the universal language of influence and finance. That is why my ministry operates through platforms such as television and social media.

Different callings require different tools. What may be unnecessary for one person may be essential for another. I am simply responding to the mandate I have been given.

Do you see a need for a private jet in the near future?

I definitely see a need, not out of ambition but for what God has called me to do – mainly for convenience. I see a day when all of India, 1.2 billion people, will open up to me. If I'm called to Hyderabad or Chennai, I need to be able to go quickly. However, maintaining a jet is expensive, and I'd rather use that money to build accommodation facilities. Unless someone gifts me a jet and sponsors all expenses, it would be impractical. That context is often overlooked, leading to assumptions about excess.

In reality, I am very deliberate and disciplined with money. The church does not fund my personal expenses or vehicles; these are supported through my professional work, including teaching, mentoring, and advisory engagements, as well as my business interests. I have also established several businesses for my daughter, Heavenly, to take over when she turns 18.



You spoke about helping people improve their lives. But isn't it often the case that successful people are envied and outsiders fail to see how hard they have worked? Do you think it's a trait of the islanders?

Thank you for the question.

The prosperity of a nation is ultimately linked to the state of its collective mindset—how people think, make decisions, and channel their emotions. Those who are genuinely successful rarely undermine others. Criticism and attempts to pull people down usually stem from insecurity, not achievement. Individuals who are progressing tend to uplift others; those who are struggling often resort to negativity.

The challenge, therefore, lies in reshaping the national mindset. One contributing factor is the unregulated influence of social media, which increasingly drives shallow narratives and short-term gratification, eroding constructive thinking. Many

become absorbed in online discourse rather than productive pursuits.

Several countries have recognized this risk and taken steps to regulate certain platforms—not to suppress expression, but to protect societal well-being. The real solution lies in fostering a culture of purpose, productivity, and contribution. When people are engaged in meaningful work and value creation, they have little time for destructive distractions, and the nation's collective outlook naturally strengthens.

You often speak of calling and purpose. How might these concepts translate into corporate leadership philosophies?

Calling and purpose are deeply spiritual concepts. In the corporate world, what is often described as “calling” is more accurately passion—an inner drive or burden that fuels ambition, achievement, and personal success. True calling, from a biblical perspective, is different: it is a divinely ordained purpose, independent of personal gain, rooted in obedience rather than ambition.

Purpose in leadership, therefore, is about serving righteously in one's position. In business, long-term success is built on trust, which in turn rests on integrity. Integrity means being unwavering in one's word—letting yes mean yes, and no mean no. Every individual operates from a conscience shaped by upbringing, education, influences, and environment.

Corporate leaders must consciously shape that conscience, placing integrity at the center of decision-making. My message to business leaders is simple: work with a clear conscience, honor your word, and build institutions that endure across generations.

How do you manage credibility, brand reputation, and crisis communication—key concerns also shared by corporate leaders?

Today's leaders want to be incredible before becoming credible. Credibility is about trust – being someone whose words can be trusted, who has integrity and a godly conscience, who says what they do and does what they say. Products in the marketplace are no different – if you promise something, you must fulfill it. As for crisis communication, I'm told that in Japanese vocabulary, there's no word for crisis – the closest word is “opportunity,” which they have used incredibly to become what they are today from what they were after the Second World War. Credibility is not a 100-meter race but a never-ending marathon. People remember what you did

at the end, so credibility should be measured over time.

As someone who leads a large organization, what lessons from your own management or administration do you think could benefit Sri Lankan business leaders today?

What you don't manage, you damage. Sri Lanka has a relatively small economy, so business leaders must have an international impact by building their personal brand. No matter how big they get, they're still functioning in a very small economy.

There isn't much you can do unless you have an international impact. To have an international impact, you must build your personal brand. My advice to business leaders is that it's time for them to be mentored in a way that enables them to build their personal brand, so that people overseas are attracted to their personal brands before they come looking for businesses.



You spoke on the importance of personal branding for businesspeople to

grow beyond Sri Lanka. Is the Billion Room program part of that mission?

The Billion Room is one of many programs I have for different needs and people groups. The purpose isn't to make people billionaires but to increase their capacity. It's an overnight stay where I teach biblical things that would be too deep for a Sunday service. Recently, at Cinnamon Life, I taught a session on personal branding, the philosophy needed to make money, and the principles to follow. I invited two successful businessmen from the church to take sessions. It's a 14-hour program in total, during which I also pray for participants and prophesy over them. These are the people who come back next year and give 10 million rupees or more to the church – it's an investment with a return.

Doesn't social media come as an important tool in personal branding?

The entire world knows the name of Jesus, though social media did not exist in His time. John the Baptist wielded an extraordinary voice—so compelling that people left their homes and went into the desert to hear him speak. True personal branding lies in one's voice: the power, conviction, and authenticity of a person's communication.

While social media exists today, it's often drowned in noise and unnecessary narratives, limiting its ability to elevate meaningful voices. Personal branding is not merely about broadcasting a message; it is about how that message is embodied and communicated. Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Theresa, and Nelson Mandela had a message and none of them relied on social media to build their legacy.

Their lives illustrate a simple truth that social media may amplify a voice, but it's not essential to creating a personal brand. What endures is the strength of the voice itself and the authenticity of the message behind it.

What is your personal brand?

My personal brand is centered on influence, which I use as a tool to serve a specific purpose. What people often perceive as spectacle or entertainment is, in fact, functional—it is shaped by the assignment of the moment. My expression changes depending on whether I am ministering, teaching, or addressing a particular need. However, that public expression is not who I am in private. Away from the platform, I am a husband, a father, and an ordinary person—grounded, approachable, and deeply relational. At home, there is no performance: there is family, conversation,

laughter, and normal life. That balance is important. The anointing is for the assignment; the individual behind it remains human. I am intentional about keeping those boundaries clear, living simply, and maintaining integrity in our conduct. Ultimately, the brand is not about image—it is about influence directed toward a purpose.

But your personal brand is constantly under intense scrutiny. It's as if bad publicity follows you whenever you utter something.

Criticism, in many ways, gives visibility. When people consistently focus their attention on someone, they are giving what I call “mental real estate.” Well-established brands, such as Coca-Cola or HSBC, have endured negative publicity precisely because their credibility sustains them. The same principle applies here. Criticism does not weaken me; it often amplifies curiosity. Even negative attention prompts others to ask questions, seek context, and engage with the message. In that sense, what is intended as opposition can become an unexpected catalyst for growth.

A credible brand—especially one grounded in purpose— cannot easily be undermined. I believe that when God is with a person, sustained efforts to bring them down ultimately fail. Differences within the faith often arise from differing perspectives rather than malice, and I continue to advocate for understanding over persecution.

