

STORY | THEOLOGY | VOICE

# FULLER

ISSUE #10 | WORK



“The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor. That sums up the progress of an artful leader.”

MAX DE PREE, PAST HERMAN MILLER CEO AND LONGTIME FULLER BOARD CHAIR





# WORK

## *Introduction*

Mark D. Roberts

*p. 2*

## *Faith-Work Integration: Trendy or Essential?*

Mark D. Roberts

*p. 4*

## *Becoming Entrepreneurial: Embracing Failure and Empathy in a Changing World of Work*

Michaela O'Donnell Long

*p. 11*

## *A People Entrusted to Your Care*

Scott Cormode

*p. 18*

## *Moms, Marchers, and Managers: Priests All Three*

Matthew Kaemingk

*p. 26*

## *Relational Stress in the Workplace*

Migum Gweon

*p. 36*

## *Walking the Line*

Vincent Bacote

*p. 41*

## WORK

by Mark D. Roberts  
Guest Theology Editor

I recently met a young entrepreneur for coffee in a gentrified neighborhood of San Francisco. As we talked about the mission of Fuller's Max De Pree Center for Leadership, he quickly cut to the chase. "I'm interested in this faith/work thing you're talking about. I want to know how to do Jesus at work."

"Doing Jesus at work" wasn't always on the radar screens of Christians. Work was part of the "secular" world that had little to do with the "sacred" world of Jesus. Increasingly, though, followers of Jesus are rightly sensing that God's world shouldn't be divided up that way, and that work has everything to do with faith and faith with work.

In his book *God at Work*, David Miller locates us in "The Faith at Work Era." His historical research examines the burgeoning

## TRABAJO

Por Mark D. Roberts

Recientemente conocí a un joven empresario de café en un acomodado barrio de San Francisco. Mientras hablábamos sobre la misión del Centro Max de Pree para el Liderazgo de Fuller, él rápidamente llegó al punto importante. "Estoy interesado en esta cosa de fe / trabajo de la que estás hablando. Quiero saber cómo hacer para involucrar Jesús en el trabajo".

"Involucrar a Jesús en el trabajo" no está siempre en las pantallas de radar de los cristianos y cristianas. El trabajo fue parte del mundo "secular" que tenía poco que ver con el "sagrado" mundo de Jesús. Sin embargo, cada vez más, los seguidores y seguidoras de Jesús están sintiendo, con toda razón, que el mundo de Dios no debe ser dividido de esa manera, y que el trabajo tiene todo que ver con la fe y la fe con el trabajo.

En su libro *Dios en el Trabajo (God at Work)*, David Miller nos ubica en "La Era de la Fe en el Trabajo". Su investigación histórica examina la

## 일

저자: 마크 로버츠

저는 최근에 샌프란시스코의 어느 중상류화된 지역에서 젊은 사업가를 만나서 커피를 마셨습니다. 풀러 (Fuller)의 맥스 드 프리 (Max De Pree) 리더십 센터의 사명에 대해 이야기를 시작하자, 그는 재빨리 본론에 들어갔습니다.

"나는 당신이 말하고 있는 이 신앙 / 일에 관한 것에 관심이 있습니다. 직장에서, 예수님을 따르는 신앙의 삶을 어떻게 살 수 있는지 알고 싶습니다."

"직장에서 예수님을 따르는 삶을 어떻게 살 수 있는지는" 항상 그리스도인들의 레이더 망에 있었던 것은 아니었습니다.

직장은 예수님의 "거룩한" 세계와는 거의 관계가 없는 "세속적인" 세상의 일부로 여겨졌습니다. 그러나 점차적으로 예수의 추종자들은, 하나님의 세계가 그렇게 이분화되어서는 안되며, 직장이라는 것은 신앙과, 또 신앙은 직장과, 전적으로 관계가 있다는 것을 당연히 감지하고 있습니다.

데이비드 밀러 (David Miller)는 직장에서의 하나님이라는 저서를 통해서, 우리가 "직장에서의

conversation over the last 30 years about the integration of faith and work. This conversation began primarily among business practitioners, not scholars or pastors—and flourished mainly among upper-middle-class and upper-class white males. As you would expect, it reflected the longings and losses of this particular constituency. Personal fulfillment, ethical leadership, work-life balance, and workplace evangelism were common themes.

Increasingly, however, the conversation about faith, work, and economics is emerging among more diverse participants in more diverse communities. For example, the fact that Fuller Seminary is devoting a full theology section of *FULLER* magazine to work illustrates that “faith at work” is gaining interest among academics, several of whom have contributed articles to this issue.

florecente conversación en los últimos 30 años sobre la integración de la fe y el trabajo. Esta conversación comenzó principalmente entre los y las profesionales de los negocios, no eruditos o pastores, y floreció principalmente entre los varones blancos de clase media alta y de clase alta. Como lo puede imaginar, reflejaba los anhelos y las pérdidas de este grupo en particular. La realización personal, el liderazgo ético, el equilibrio entre la vida laboral y el evangelismo en el lugar de trabajo eran temas comunes.

Sin embargo, cada vez más, la conversación sobre la fe, el trabajo y la economía está surgiendo entre los y las participantes más diversos y en las comunidades más diversas.

Por ejemplo, el hecho de que el Seminario Fuller esté dedicando una sección completa de teología de la revista *FULLER* al trabajo, ilustra que “la fe en el trabajo” está ganando interés entre los académicos,

Fuller’s De Pree Center seeks to include a broad range of partners in our conversations about faith, work, and economics. Not only does this diversity enrich our understanding and program, but it also encourages others to reach beyond their familiar constituencies. The articles in this edition of *FULLER* magazine reflect the breadth of topics and perspectives that come from a breadth of authors. In the typical discussions of the past faith at work era, you might not have heard about such things as justice, beauty, eschatology, breastfeeding, empathy, economics, and female entrepreneurship. But you will read about them here. And, as you do, you’ll be invited to think afresh about how your faith shapes your work and vice versa, and how, through your daily work, you are contributing to God’s work in the world.

varios de los cuales han contribuido artículos a este tema.

El centro De Pree de Fuller busca incluir una amplia gama de colaboradores y colaboradoras en nuestras conversaciones sobre la fe, el trabajo y la economía. Esta diversidad no sólo enriquece nuestro entendimiento y programa, sino que también alienta a otros y otras a llegar más allá de sus entornos familiares. Los artículos de esta edición de la revista *FULLER* reflejan la amplitud de temas y perspectivas que provienen de una amplitud de autores. En las discusiones típicas de la pasada era de la fe y el trabajo, usted pudo no haber escuchado hablar de cosas como la justicia, la belleza, la escatología, la lactancia materna, la empatía, la economía, y el emprendimiento femenino. Pero leerá sobre esos temas aquí. Y, como podrá ver, será invitado e invitada a pensar de nuevo acerca de cómo su fe moldea su trabajo y viceversa, y cómo, a través de su trabajo diario, usted está contribuyendo a la obra de Dios en el mundo.

신앙의 시대 (Faith at Work Era)”에 살고 있다고 말합니다.

그의 역사적인 연구는 지난 30 년 동안 급발전해온, 믿음과 일의 통합에 대한 대화를 조사합니다. 이 대화는 주로 학자나 목회자가 아닌 비즈니스 실무자들 사이에서 시작되어, 주로 중상류층과 상류층 백인 남성들 사이에서 활발해졌습니다.

예상할 수 있는 것처럼, 그것은 특정 부류 사람들의 갈망과 상실을 반영했습니다.

개인적 성취, 윤리적 리더십, 일과 삶의 균형, 일터 복음 전도가 공통된 주제였습니다.

그러나 점점 더 다양한 지역사회의 더욱 다양한 참여자들 사이에서 신앙, 직장 및 경제에 관한 대화가 점차로 부각되고 있습니다.

예를 들어, 풀러 신학교가 *FULLER* 잡지의 전체 신학 섹션을 직장에 초점을 맞추도록 했다는 사실은, “직장에서의 신앙”이 학계에서 관심을 얻고 있음을 보여주는 것입니다. 그 학자들 중 몇몇 사람들은 이 이슈에 대한 기사를 기고했습니다.

풀러 (Fuller)의 드 프리 센터 (De Pree Center)에서는 신앙, 직장 그리고 경제에 관한 대화에 폭넓은 동역자들을 포함하고자 합니다.

이러한 다양성은 우리의 이해와 프로그램을 풍성하게 할 뿐만 아니라, 다른 사람들이 그들과 친숙한 부류의 사람들을 초월해서 뻗어 나가도록 또한 격려해 주는 것입니다.

*FULLER* 잡지의 이번 판에 실린 기사들은 폭넓은 저자들의 폭넓은 주제와 관점들을 반영합니다. 과거의 ‘직장에서의 신앙 시대’에 대한 전형적인 토론에서는, 여러분은 아마도 정의, 미(美), 중말론, 모유 수유, 공감, 경제, 여성 기업가 정신에 관한 내용은 들어본 적이 없을 수도 있습니다. 그러나 여기에서는 들어볼 수 있습니다.

그리고 들어보시면서, 어떻게 여러분의 신앙이 여러분의 직장을 형성하는지, 또 반대로 여러분의 직장이 어떻게 여러분의 신앙을 형성하는지, 그리고 이 세상에서 여러분이 매일 직장의 일을 통해서 어떻게 하나님의 역사에 공헌하고 있는지에 대해 새롭게 생각해 보도록 초대받게 될 것입니다.





## FAITH-WORK INTEGRATION: TRENDY OR ESSENTIAL?

Mark D. Roberts

Mark D. Roberts is executive director for the Max De Pree Center for Leadership at Fuller Seminary, responsible for the mission, strategic direction, and operations of the center and also serving as principal writer of its *Life for Leaders* daily devotional. With years of experience as a pastor, non-profit leader, and mentor, he is committed to serving leaders in the marketplace, education, government, nonprofits, arts, family, and the church. He has written eight books and dozens of articles for journals and magazines, and regularly speaks on leadership, vocation, faith and work, digital media, church life, and biblical theology.

In my first months as executive director of Fuller's Max De Pree Center for Leadership, I conferred with over 50 marketplace leaders, asking each of them, "How can we serve you?" The response I heard was almost always something like, "You can help me integrate my faith and my work."

This was consistent with what I had experienced for years as a pastor and leader in the so-called faith at work movement. I had known hundreds of people who longed to find spiritual meaning in their daily work. I listened to baby boomers who were tired of dividing their lives between secular work and sacred faith, and millennials who intended never to make such a division. "If my faith really matters," one young entrepreneur said, "then it's got to matter for my work."

The proliferation of materials and organizations devoted to the integration of faith and work bears witness to its growing importance. Among dozens of faith-work books published in the last decade, *Work Matters*, by Tom Nelson,<sup>1</sup> and *Every Good Endeavor*, by Timothy Keller and Katherine Leary Alsdorf,<sup>2</sup> have had broad influence. Through the Theology of Work Project, a team of theologians, biblical scholars, pastors, and business leaders collaborated to produce a commentary on the whole Bible, examining more than 850 passages that deal with work.<sup>3</sup> Recent academic studies of faith and work include *Work in the Spirit*, by Miroslav Volf,<sup>4</sup> *A Theology of Work: Work and the New Creation*, by Darrell Cosden,<sup>5</sup> and *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement*, by David Miller.<sup>6</sup> In 2017, the Lilly Endowment awarded a grant of \$1.5 million for the most extensive and in-depth study of how Christians actually integrate their faith and work (see sidebar on page 38 for more details).

Hundreds of churches and parachurch organizations focus on the integration of faith and work—or FWE, as it is often called today. (FWE, which sounds like "free," stands for "faith, work, and economics." This abbreviation highlights the broader systemic and social dimensions of faith-work integration.) A recent survey found that 86 percent of pastors preached a sermon in the last year on work.<sup>7</sup> Since its beginning two years ago, Made to Flourish, a network of pastors committed to connecting Sunday faith to Monday work, has grown to over 1,900 members.<sup>8</sup> Twenty seminaries, including Fuller, have joined the Oikonomia Network, which helps "pastors equip people for whole-life discipleship, fruitful work, and economic wisdom."<sup>9</sup>

Since our mission at the De Pree Center is to "serve marketplace leaders so they might live intentionally and wisely as disciples of Jesus in every part of life, including their daily work," I rejoice that work is getting more attention these days. Yet, every now and then, I wonder if this is just a fad. I have watched the church blown here and there by the latest rage, convinced that we have finally found the key to robust Christianity. Inevitably, we realize that what we once considered so vital turns out to be less so. Is the integration of faith and work merely trendy? Or is it actually essential to the Christian life and God's global purposes?

It's common for FWE advocates to argue for the importance of work on the basis of how many hours human beings spend working. When we take into account both paid and unpaid work (like raising children or mowing the lawn), then most of us spend well over half of our waking hours working. Surely, it is claimed, Christian faith must be relevant to what we're doing with most of our time. This

+ Continued on p. 7







# A GROUNDBREAKING STUDY OF FAITH AND WORK IN THE UNITED STATES

Elaine Howard Ecklund and Denise Daniels

*Last year the authors received a \$1.5 million grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc., to examine the relationship between faith and work: how people from diverse workplaces and socioeconomic backgrounds integrate religious views and their work. As a member of their advisory board, I asked Elaine and Denise to introduce their research here so readers might be informed and ready to learn from their study.*  
—Mark Roberts

We came to this project because of our own personal and professional interests in the intersection of faith and work. For the past 15 years, Denise has been working with others to expand a Christian theological understanding of work and apply it to business and leadership, while Elaine has written extensively on the intersection between science and faith—primarily focusing on how scientists and those in medicine understand their own faith commitments and experiences in the context of their work. When we met, we realized that while there has been a large and growing amount written on faith and work, most of this writing is normative. That is, it is focused on how people should understand and engage in their work in light of Christian theology, and assumes they have certain questions: How can I find meaning and purpose in a job that is

toilsome? How can I more fully experience God's presence in the workplace? How can my faith help me become a better manager? How can I communicate God's presence to those with whom I work?

While there is nothing wrong with these questions or the books and articles written along these lines, we discerned that no large-scale research projects have addressed the question of how Christians actually do integrate their faith and work, as well as how Christians compare to other faith groups. Does such integration depend on the type of job one has? The role they play at work? How old they are? What their income level is? Their faith tradition? We became very interested in the question of how Christians from a variety of denominational backgrounds, employment experiences, generations, racial groups, and geographical regions within the United States think about and experience their faith at work.

For many, faith and one's faith community are the most meaningful commitments in life. Also for many, paid employment is their single largest time commitment in life. Our research aims to understand how people integrate these two. The study will provide the first broad baseline about the ways individuals understand how faith informs

their work and about what congregations and their leaders may do to support the appropriation of faith to daily work.

Our three-phase research plan will begin with focus groups in a number of cities in the United States: some with pastors from a variety of Christian faith traditions, and others with professional and working-class Christians who are members of these congregations. We want to find out what faith-at-work issues are most important to their daily lives, and in what areas they feel they need the most support and guidance. These conversations will inform our second phase of research: a large-scale survey.

Our national, random-sample survey will target approximately 12,000 people from multiple religious traditions and from no religious tradition. We want to understand how people appropriate their faith at work as well as the benefits and challenges they experience from doing so. Do some people choose particular careers or jobs due to their faith commitments? To what extent do people experience positive outcomes at work as a result of their faith? How likely is it for Christians to experience disadvantages or discrimination based on their faith? Are there any systematic patterns?

In our final phase, we will

conduct about 200 in-depth, follow-up interviews with participants who took part in the survey. In this one-on-one format, we hope to get a more fleshed-out picture of how people think, feel, and behave at work as a result of their faith commitments. We also want to learn what people most want from their faith communities to support them in their work. How can faith leaders best encourage their constituents in their work? What do most Christians want from their faith communities that will enable them to accomplish God's calling in their work lives?

The findings of this study, we believe, will be useful to the broader faith-at-work community, including faith leaders, and also to the academic community. We hope to identify the unique challenges Christians face in their careers, how one's faith does or does not address such challenges, and how clergy may attend to these challenges. We would also like to identify the ways in which one's faith may be of benefit in the workplace. How can Christians express their faith so that their and others' experience at work is enriched? Our goal is to put easy-to-understand data into the hands of as many as possible, and to create networks of pastors and others who are trained to meet the spiritual needs of working men and

women across the spectrum: from different demographic groups, across multiple occupational domains, and at various income levels.



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argument is a good start, but still I wonder: Does the Bible place as much importance on work as claimed by FWE enthusiasts? Or are we projecting our enthusiasm into Scripture?

The existence of the 1,128-page *Theology of Work Bible Commentary* suggests that work is a major theme in the Bible. But an argument based on volume doesn't fully satisfy. Does work figure prominently in the main storyline of Scripture, in the core theology of the Bible? This question takes us back to the biblical text—including passages on the Creation and the Incarnation.

### CREATION

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1). Then God created everything else, including humankind (Gen 1:27). Though the verb “to create” is used uniquely in Scripture for God's own actions,<sup>10</sup> God is also said to “make” things (Gen 1:25, using the common Hebrew verb *‘asah*). The end of the first creation story observes that “on the seventh day God finished the *work* that he had done” (Gen 2:2, emphasis added). The Hebrew word translated here as “work” can mean “occupation, work, business.”<sup>11</sup> It's an ordinary noun used to depict human as well as divine activity.

Genesis thus reveals God as a worker. Yes, God's way of working is distinctive. Nevertheless, God works. And, as we see repeatedly in the text, God appreciates the good work God does (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).

As part of this good work, God creates human beings as workers. This is revealed, first of all, in the fact that humankind is made in God's “image” and “likeness” (Gen 1:26). Theologians debate the precise meanings of these fertile terms. But, in the narrative of Genesis, God's image and likeness are closely connected to God's working. This is confirmed by the first commandment given to God's image bearers: “Be fruitful and multiply,

and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion . . .” (Gen 1:28). Notice God's first instruction to human beings was not “Build an altar,” “Think rationally,” or even “Love the Lord.” Rather, God told the beings created in God's own image to get to work.

The opening narrative of Scripture points to the centrality of work, both divine and human. Work is not something we do on the side to support what really matters in life. Work is essential to our created identity and purpose: that's the way God made us. And the world God created will only reach its full potential through the work of human beings: that's the way God made it.

### INCARNATION

Moving from the beginning of the biblical narrative to its theological center, we come upon the Incarnation. John 1 makes this journey in a mere 14 verses, part of what professor Marianne Meye Thompson in her commentary on John identifies as “one of the most theologically influential passages of Scripture.”<sup>12</sup> The opening words of John echo the “In the beginning” of Genesis (Gen 1:1; John 1:1). Though the work of creation is mentioned in John (1:3–4, 10), the focus of the prologue is on the divine Word (*logos* in Greek). All things came into being through the Word (John 1:3), who was essential to God's creative work.

In the prologue to John, the divine Word, says Thompson, “enters this sphere of mortality and frailty and makes it possible for those born of the flesh to become those born of God.”<sup>13</sup> The Incarnation has a primary revelatory and salvific purpose. But the Word made flesh also underscores the value of the material world, even though it is tainted by sin. What God once created as good, God chose to redeem by becoming part of its materiality. This suggests that what human beings do in the material world, including work, might really matter.



This claim is strengthened when we reflect on what the incarnate Word spent most of his time on earth actually doing. A precise chronology of Jesus' life is elusive, but most scholars agree that Jesus lived into his 30s, devoting the last three years or so of his life to his public ministry.<sup>14</sup> This means that he spent around 18 years doing what we might call ordinary work. Traditionally, this work is thought to be carpentry. But the Greek word used to describe Jesus in Mark 6:3, *tekton*, could refer to one who worked with stone or metal in addition to wood. Jesus worked as a “builder”<sup>15</sup> and, I might add, the owner-manager of a small business.<sup>16</sup>

The idea of Jesus as a carpenter or builder is not unusual. It is unusual, however, to reflect on the deeper significance of Jesus' first career. God became human in Jesus, devoting three years to public ministry. Before that, God incarnate spent about six times as long doing ordinary work. In the inscrutable wisdom of God, the incarnate Word invested the majority of his adult life building useful products. Apparently, God did not consider this to be a colossal waste of divine time, but just the right way for God-in-human-flesh to spend his time on earth. Do we need more than this to convince us that work truly matters to God and that therefore our faith should matter to our work and vice versa?

## CONCLUSION

In Colossians 3, which summarizes how we're to live as “God's chosen ones, holy and beloved” (3:12), verse 17 states, “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” It's not just trendy to seek to do everything in the Lord's name, including those things that fill most of our waking hours. Doing our ordinary work

in the Lord's name is an essential, though often overlooked, element of our calling. So, whatever you do—whether managing staff, selling products, leading organizations, changing diapers, teaching children, building start-ups, preaching sermons, making films, writing books, molding clay, or cleaning houses—do everything, yes, everything, in the name of the Lord Jesus.



## ENDNOTES

1. Tom Nelson, *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011).
2. Timothy Keller and Katherine Leary Alsdorf, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* (New York: Dutton, 2012).
3. Theology of Work Project, *Theology of Work Bible Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2016). The entire commentary can be accessed online at [www.theologyofwork.org](http://www.theologyofwork.org).
4. Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
5. Darrell Cosden, *A Theology of Work: Work and the New Creation* (Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 2004).
6. David Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
7. The survey was conducted by the Barna Group in partnership with Le Tourneau University. See [www.centerforfaithandwork.com/node/804](http://www.centerforfaithandwork.com/node/804).
8. See [www.madetoflourish.org](http://www.madetoflourish.org).
9. See [www.oikonomianetwork.org](http://www.oikonomianetwork.org).
10. See *bara'* in F. Brown, S. R. Driver, C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).
11. See *mela'khah* in Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Lexicon*.
12. Marianne Meye Thompson, *John: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015), Kindle loc. 1422–23.
13. Thompson, *John*, Kindle loc. 1579–80.
14. See, for example, “Chronology,” by H. W. Hoehner, in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992).
15. Ken M. Campbell, “What Was Jesus' Occupation?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48, no. 3 (September 2005), 501–19.
16. This assumes that Jesus' human father, Joseph, died, passing his business on to his oldest son, which was common in that culture.









# DISAPPOINTING PEOPLE: ESSENTIAL FOR LEADERSHIP

Tim Yee

After seven years as pastor of Union Church, I have found that leadership means constantly disappointing people. One of the most irritating but accurate truths about leadership comes from Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky's *Leadership on the Line*: "Leadership is disappointing your own people at a rate they can absorb"—trying to find the right amount of stress that will push the community forward but not so far as to tear it apart.

Leading any congregation, let alone a diverse one, is challenging. At Union Church, we have Japanese-speaking Japanese Americans (Nichigo), English-speaking Japanese Americans (Nisei), and a new multiethnic ministry—the Bridge—that reaches out to a wide range of people in the surrounding Little Tokyo district in downtown Los Angeles.

We traditionally think of diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, or gender, but *within* the Japanese community there is vast internal diversity. In the Nichigo congregation are Japanese nationals whose primary identity is based in Japanese language and culture. We even have two living members who survived the atomic bombs dropped by the United States! In the English congregation are the Nisei—Japanese Americans, some of whom were personally impacted by the internment camps. Yet others served in the US Army's 442nd Battalion battling Nazis and in the military intelligence service working against the empire of

Japan. So, just between the English and Nichigo congregations, we have vastly different cultural histories and national identities, and inevitably, we also have challenges communicating and agreeing about church ministry. The diversity of the Bridge congregation adds to the complexity. The opportunities to disappoint are plentiful!

Then, of course, there's the fact that I am Chinese, not Japanese. When my wife and I were first approached about the idea of leading Union Church, we actually said, "No." We did not think that a Chinese American pastor would be acceptable to the Japanese congregation, nor did we have experience leading small or urban churches. Would they accept my mixed family—a Chinese American father with a white spouse and two mixed-race children? How would they feel about me not speaking Japanese?

Yet my family and I came to believe we were uniquely fit to lead the congregation: an Asian American pastor who could have some connection to the Japanese congregants without being a complete outsider, bringing experience cultivating ministries to younger generations while serving aging members in an urban context. I felt both accepted and burdened by the enormity of the challenge.

Indeed, the challenge of pastoring Union Church has been formidable. For example, we have significant communica-

tion challenges that can lead to misunderstandings about every aspect of church ministry. The Nichigo value group agreement and a unified front when considering anything for the church. The English congregants are hesitant to speak their minds and usually want to be asked to share their opinions. The Bridge folks openly share their opinions but can be shy to speak strongly out of consideration for the older, more longstanding members of the two Japanese congregations. This often results in meetings where we think all three groups have agreed on something, but in actuality, there wasn't a full sharing of everyone's thoughts, opinions, and commitments. We are slowly acknowledging common bottom-line guidelines, including reminders that votes matter and are not simply opinions that you can backtrack on.

I am still learning how to challenge our community in its mission and to accept the fact that disappointing people is a required part of pastoring. I find this to be a difficult path, in particular because I'm an Asian American pastor who doesn't want to confront others or disrespect longtime church leaders. I'm a people pleaser—I don't like disappointing anyone, let alone my congregation.

As I learn to be a pastoral leader, and therefore at times a pastoral disappointment, I'm inspired by the Great Disappointer. Is it sacrilegious to refer to Jesus in this way? The Gospels show that Jesus often disappointed

people. He did this, for example, on a small scale when he went to other towns rather than remaining where people wanted him to stay. Of course there was the biggest disappointment of all: Jesus' choosing a path of messiahship that was centered in suffering and led to death on a Roman cross rather than military victory over Rome.

As a pastor seeking to do my work with faithfulness and effectiveness, Jesus models for me the truth that leading people necessarily involves disappointing people. In fact, as our ultimate leader, Jesus shows us that disappointing people is necessary for God's kingdom to be fully realized. Yet beyond the disappointment of the cross lies the astounding surprise of the resurrection. Even when we disappoint those whom we lead, God is at work on something far better than any of us have begun to imagine.



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# BECOMING ENTREPRENEURIAL: EMBRACING FAILURE AND EMPATHY IN A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

Michaela O'Donnell Long

**S**arah sat hidden under her office desk. This was the third night in a month she'd had to sleep at work to meet a project deadline. Her job as an architect was not unfolding as she had imagined. Fresh out of school, she wanted to design spaces and make cities beautiful. Instead, she found herself working insane hours on projects that did little to satisfy her. As she sat curled up that night, she realized she was suffocating and wanted out—so she crawled out from under her desk and ran into her boss's office. Speaking through tears, Sarah sensed that she was leaving not only her job at that firm but her career as an architect. Yet she had been so sure that God had called her to this vocation. When Sarah left that job, she realized that if she wanted reasonable hours and satisfying projects, she would have to chart her own way forward.

## WORK IS CHANGING

Christians have callings. For many of us, our callings include working. However, it is no secret that the world—including the workplace—is changing at a rapid and disruptive pace. As Thomas Freidman puts it, “the three largest forces on the planet—technology, globalization, and climate change—are all accelerating at once. As a result, so many aspects of our societies, workplaces, and geopolitics are being reshaped and need to be reimagined.”<sup>1</sup> This reality has enormous implications on our systems of work and thus how we understand vocation.

Today's Protestant theology of vocation is rooted in the work of the Reformers. Generally speaking, we understand calling to consist of both central calls and particular calls.<sup>2</sup> First, our central call—and our shared vocation—is Jesus' invitation to “follow me” into the kingdom of God.<sup>3</sup>

Second, Christians have particular calls: specific places to participate in the kingdom through our work. In Scripture, we see examples of God's particular calls. God calls Moses and Aaron to work that helps usher in liberation for God's people (Exod 3:4, 28:1). God calls the prophets Samuel (1 Sam 3:10), Jeremiah (Jer 1:4-5), and Amos (Amos 7:15). In Matthew 4, Jesus calls his disciples with the invitation, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” In this, “Follow me” is Jesus' central call, while “I will make you fish for people” is the particular call or invitation.

Work is shifting in such a way that our theology of particular call may no longer be dynamic enough to include all the ways people work.<sup>4</sup> When the Reformers wrote on vocation, people's work looked very different than it does today. In fact, people's work looks very different today than it has at any other time in history. In the United States, one such change is the shift toward independent workers, including independent contractors, freelancers, side-hustlers, temporary workers, and self-employed entrepreneurs. Studies estimate that in 2005 10.3 million people, or 7.4 percent of the workforce, were independent.<sup>5</sup> That number has increased dramatically over the past decade. In 2016, between 40 and 54 million people were reported as active in the independent economy.<sup>6</sup> This figure reflects 25 to 35 percent of the workforce. Experts suggest that these numbers could rise as high as 50 percent in the coming years. The church's mental model of a singular, stable vocation is simply not calibrated for a system that includes so many people who work independently.

The shift in momentum toward independent work carries with it major adaptive



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challenges. Adaptive challenges are those problems that have unclear solutions—challenges that require people to wrestle with deeply held assumptions and experiment with new ways of being.<sup>7</sup> The two most pressing adaptive challenges facing people who work as independents are that (1) the burden of risk transfers from the corporation to the individual and (2) independents need skills not emphasized in education or by the church.

First, as the economy shifts to include more independent workers, the burden of accountability for realities such as health care, insurance, privacy, finances, and even a steady acquisition of work shift to the individual. While third-party platforms intended to support these needs are becoming more available, gaps in the systems and pressure on individuals remain. Is the church prepared to care for and meaningfully support people who are saddled with burdens that on the one hand threaten to overwhelm and on the other promise to accelerate?

Second, people charting their own course need skills not emphasized in education or by the church. Skills for success as an independent include things like collaboration, creative problem solving, self-awareness, ongoing learning, tolerance for ambiguity, and resilience.<sup>8</sup> In other words, people need skills that help them work with others and thrive in the

midst of failure and change. Is the church prepared to recalibrate its mental model of vocation in a way that prepares people to live out their callings while dealing with the realities of independent work?

In the midst of these adaptive challenges, we long for stabilizing voices and places. Shouldering more burdens and acquiring new skills will be painful for individuals. In this, our longing for Christ's tethering presence will increase, not diminish. Because the narrative of Christ is both stabilizing and also completely disruptive, it can help prepare us for the changes that lie ahead.

#### **BECOMING ENTREPRENEURIAL**

The church must reshape its understanding of vocation and thus how it forms individuals for God's call in a changing world of work. There must be an emphasis on people—who, whether by force or by choice, will have to chart their own course in work. We must embrace the practices and postures that help people thrive in a changing world. For these reasons, I investigated the practices of faithful entrepreneurs for my dissertation. Through a nominating process, 49 exemplar entrepreneurs were selected and surveyed, with 11 of those interviewed in depth. The practices of these individuals offer guidance for a church seeking to recalibrate in light of the adaptive challenges discussed above. I was encouraged by how simple and embodied my

findings were. It seems that in the wake of massive change, we need not reinvent the wheel of how to behave. Instead, to become entrepreneurial, we need to lean deeply into qualities already present in our faith. Here, I want to highlight two: *embracing failure* and *practicing empathy*.

*Embracing failure:* In each interview, I asked how the interviewee had learned to define success and failure. The entrepreneurs I interviewed are objectively successful—founders of international NGOs, venture capital-backed start-ups, and stable small businesses. Yet, when talking about success, nearly all were noticeably uncomfortable. Some even had a hard time articulating their thoughts. Most were unsure if they had even achieved success.

But when I asked them to talk about failure, every single interviewee loosened up. They talked openly and freely, easily recounting examples of how they had hurt people, lost money, or took a risk on an idea that completely backfired. Simply put, they embraced failure. Many felt that their experience of failure led to new life. In time, they had learned to have hope in the midst of loss.

As Christians, we are called to hope in the midst of loss. This is a central part of embracing the narrative of our faith, particularly the death and resurrection of Jesus. The story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus shows us how easy it is to get lost in loss. In the wake of Jesus' death, the disciples grieved deeply. They had not imagined a dying Messiah. They did not expect this loss as part of Jesus' promise of new life. In Luke 24:14, the disciples are so preoccupied by their loss of Jesus that they miss noticing when Jesus joins them

on their journey. Jesus walked with them to Emmaus, yet because they had not expected his death, they were unable to experience the new life in their midst. It is not until the breaking of bread in verse 30 that the disciples were finally able to see that Jesus had been with them all along.

We will experience breaking-bread moments in our vocations—times when God's presence pierces our reality and helps call us toward particular tasks. But for many of us, breaking-bread moments do not come that often. We thus must widen the ways we come to recognize how Jesus has been with us all along. Part of this is the need to expect and embrace loss in our work so that we might also experience the new life it can bring. As more and more people are charged with charting their own course, it is those who embrace failure—knowing that it holds layers of loss, hope, and eventually new life—who set themselves up for success and also for recognizing God amidst a changing world.

*Practicing empathy:* Becoming entrepreneurial involves practicing empathy. This was a common theme in both the survey and interview rounds of my research. Empathy requires us to bracket our own biases and emotions so that we might enter the world of another. Entrepreneurs know—and innovation literature validates—that empathy is the starting point for designing valuable products and processes. But for the faithful entrepreneur, empathy is also at the heart of what it means to be a good neighbor in this world. God calls us to love God with everything we have and to love our neighbor as ourselves. The parable of the Good Samaritan demonstrates both who our neighbor might be and what good neighbors do. In the story, we learn that the

man on the road was attacked and abandoned. He was clearly suffering. Suffering is perhaps the most common experience among humankind. The fact that we all suffer helps us understand that anyone can be our neighbor.

If anyone can be our neighbor, then being a good neighbor means crossing the road, and this requires empathy. Jesus' parable suggests that empathy, and thus neighborliness, are embodied in real moments with real people. We have to be on the road and readied in order to recognize our neighbors in our midst. The entrepreneurs I interviewed talked about empathically recognizing colleagues, family members, customers, and vendors. Their empathy was embodied in their listening ear, choices on behalf of another, advocating for others, and saying no. Although stories differed, each one involved the entrepreneur crossing the road for their neighbor.

As work shifts to include more independent workers, it would be tempting to become an even more individualistic society—to hunker down and drown in our own isolation. But if we follow the lead of faithful entrepreneurs, empathy can serve as a thread that weaves our stories with those of neighbors within our work.

## THE WAY FORWARD

When Sarah's job as an architect flopped, she experimented by sending out a graphic design portfolio she had built in college. One gig turned into many and today, she owns a thriving graphic design business. Whether by force or by choice, many of us will chart our own way forward in a changing world of work. There will be no shortage of technical obstacles and failures as we do. But there is also great hope

# GETTING PAID

Deidra Riggs

for those among us who are willing to become entrepreneurial. The stories of the walk to Emmaus and the Good Samaritan help us recognize that our faith prepares us to be on the journey. A church committed to its own recalibration for a changing world of work can start helping people become entrepreneurial by forming them to embrace failure and practice empathy.



## ENDNOTES

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Many creative people I know—especially those who are also people of faith—have a hard time asking for payment for their work. Even when offered compensation, we're often likely to settle for less than what we feel the work is worth. I want to tell writers—and speakers, preachers, musicians, artists, entrepreneurs and other fabulous creative people—to stop giving your work away for free.

Don't get me wrong. Everyone works for free now and then. But work for free when you *want* to. You may want to offer your work to support an organization that is close to your heart, or to gift your work to a friend or family member for a special occasion. Whatever the reason, the decision should be one you make for yourself.

If, conversely, you're always giving your work away or settling for less than what you think you're worth, you'll constantly fight feelings of frustration and resentment. Those feelings zap us of the desire to practice our craft and suck the joy out of our souls. They make us feel worthless. It's a

vicious cycle: When we feel worthless, we value our work less, and we're willing to settle for less than what we deserve.

Of course, it's not all about the money. As followers of Christ, we are his ambassadors in every facet of our lives. Doing top-notch work, meeting your deadlines, and establishing yourself as someone who's amazing to work with is primary. But, in a world that functions on currency, it's hard to focus on the customer while simultaneously kicking yourself for settling for less money than you know will help you meet your obligations.

We don't, however, want to be like the rich guy in the Bible who built bigger barns to hold all his stuff. If we're not careful, that's how it can play out. We get comfortable charging more and more money and buying more and more things. That's why I believe it is critical, in determining your rates, to set a cap for yourself. Even more important than knowing the value of your work is knowing the maximum amount of money you'll ever accept for it. If anyone pays you

more than the cap you set, be prepared to give away the excess. After all, God gives us the ability to work so that we can serve others. Sometimes we do this through financial giving out of our own abundance.

There is no shame in being paid what you're worth. In fact, setting a rate that reflects the value of your work frees you to do your best work—as it also sets the stage for free, joyful, and worshipful giving.

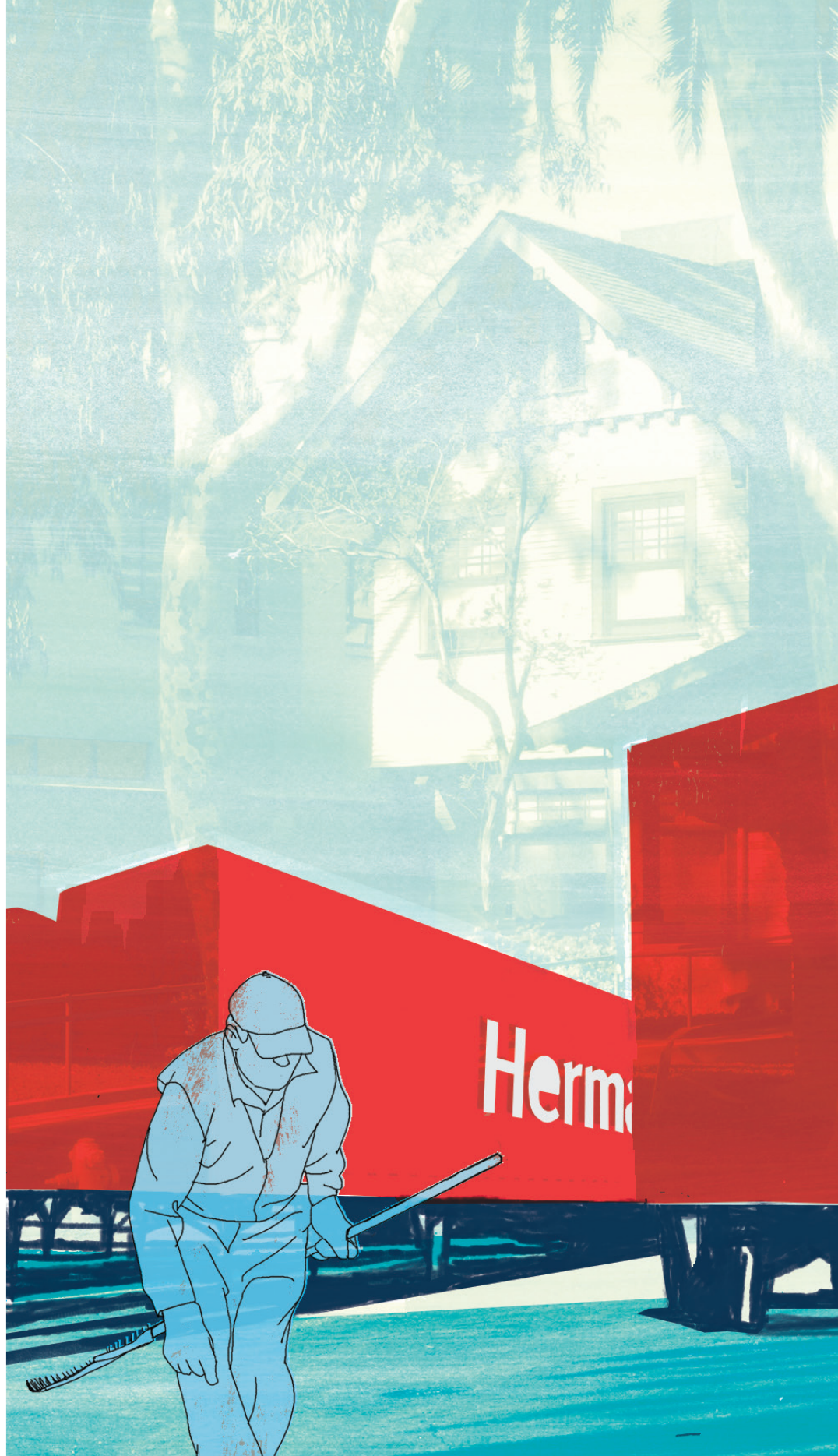


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*“The first responsibility  
of a leader is to  
define reality. The last  
is to say thank you.  
In between the two, the  
leader must become  
a servant and a debtor.  
That sums up the progress  
of an artful leader.”*

—Max De Pree  
Past Herman Miller CEO  
and longtime Fuller trustee











## A PEOPLE ENTRUSTED TO YOUR CARE

Scott Cormode

Scott Cormode is Hugh De Pree Professor of Leadership Development at Fuller, and previously also served as academic dean and as director of innovation. He founded the Academy of Religious Leadership, an organization for professors who teach leadership in seminaries, and its *Journal of Religious Leadership*. Author of the book *Making Spiritual Sense: Theological Interpretation as Christian Leadership*, Cormode has also published numerous articles on leadership, organization, and technology. He maintains case studies and other resources on leadership.fuller.edu, a website for developing Christian leaders.

I knew Michael when his work had meaning. He was the 30-something-year-old manager of a chain drugstore that happened to be next to a large retirement community. When asked about his work, he did not talk about selling things; he talked about people. He described the 19-year-olds who came to work for him, swelling with healthy pride as he talked about teaching them to show up on time, work hard, and care for customers. He talked about the elderly folks whose trip to the store was the high point of their day. Michael cared about his people.

There was a time when Michael could say he was doing what God had called him to do; that his work was more than a job, that it was a vocation. Then things started to change. The big chain that owned the store was taking steps that did not treat his people well—cutting hours, cutting benefits, cutting promised positions. Michael wanted to maintain the integrity of his faith in his work, so he asked for his pastor’s advice. His pastor’s only answer, however, was for Michael to quit his job to do ministry.

The pastor’s answer leads to our questions. Was quitting Michael’s only option? How do we understand vocation, especially vocation in the marketplace, when we recognize that companies that are designed to make money—whether run by Christians or not—will not always make Christ-honoring decisions? What does it mean to be called by God in the workplace?

The Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthians that our work begins with God’s work in the world.<sup>1</sup> God was in the world reconciling the world to himself in Christ Jesus and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. Then Paul says, “We<sup>2</sup> are therefore Christ’s

ambassadors.” An ambassador<sup>3</sup> is a citizen of one country who goes to live in another country with the expressed purpose of building relations between the two<sup>4</sup>—in this case, between what Martin Luther called “the kingdom of heaven” and the “kingdom of this earth.” Luther tied together the idea of living in two kingdoms with the idea of vocation. “Vocations are located within the kingdom of earth. More precisely, a vocation is the specific call to love one’s neighbor which comes to us through the duties which attach to our social place or ‘station’<sup>5</sup> within the earthly kingdom.”<sup>6</sup> For Luther, one’s “station” was attached to one’s workplace. Like an ambassador stationed<sup>7</sup> in a particular land, we Christians are appointed to duty in a particular workplace.

Inspired by Luther, I propose recalibrating the Christian idea of vocation by focusing it on the people entrusted to our care. This is a way of rooting it in the biblical call to love God and to love neighbor.<sup>8</sup> In recent times, some Christians have deformed the doctrine of vocation to be about my gifts, my work, and my place in the world.<sup>9</sup> But we do not exist for ourselves and neither can we work for ourselves. Instead, every Christian’s calling begins with listening to the longings and losses of the people entrusted to our care.

God calls us neither to a task nor to a job, and not even to exercise a gift. God calls us to a people. The entire point of doing the task or exercising the gift is to benefit others. For example, we create because God creates. Artists and entrepreneurs alike celebrate this point. But why did God create? God creates for the sake of his people.<sup>10</sup> Artists who create just for the sake of creating miss the point. Art should be shared. Likewise, entrepreneurs who build for the sake of

building (or for the sake of selling) miss the point. Every Christian who is a boss, or who serves customers, or who labors alongside coworkers, has people entrusted to her care.

The idolatrous danger for Christians is to see people as tools, as nothing more than a means to accomplish selfish ends. Business leaders have a responsibility to do more than extract value from their people. I recognize that the nature of the workplace is an exchange. Clients or customers pay for what businesses provide, and employees earn a salary for doing their work. Each party attempts to extract maximum return from minimal cost. This is not wrong; it is just not enough.

It is better, instead, to think of what Max De Pree calls a “covenantal relationship” in the workplace. For example, the company where Max was president promised that factory workers would have a say in the hiring and firing of their supervisors. It was a way for authority to travel up as well as down. When a shift worker named Valerie came to the president’s office one day with a petition because a new vice president had fired a supervisor without consulting the line workers, most managers would think it was important to back the authority of the fledgling vice president. Max said it was more important for the company to keep its promises about the rights and dignity of the workers, so he restored the supervisor. Max believed that God had entrusted his workers to his care. Therefore, he made public promises about how they would be treated and enabled his people to hold the company to those promises.<sup>11</sup> We Christians are stewards of our clients, our customers, our employees, and, indeed, even our bosses.

her station, has people entrusted to her care. Wherever God plants you—in whatever position and with whatever authority—the question that should orient you is this: Who are the people God has entrusted to my care?

Last December I presented a preliminary version of this essay to a group of business leaders in Silicon Valley. As we talked about the people entrusted to our care, a young lawyer at a tech firm blurted out, “You mean you expect me to care about my employees’ personal lives?” I responded, “Yes, I do.” Then we had a fruitful discussion about whether or not Christians bear such a responsibility. In the end, he was not convinced.

A few months later, a book came out that included a much better answer than I gave to the young lawyer’s question, though it is a secular book written for a secular audience. The author, Kim Scott, created management training courses at Google and then at Apple, and now she mentors the CEOs of companies like Twitter and Dropbox. The central idea of the book is that a boss has two responsibilities: to care personally and to challenge directly. The young lawyer would have accepted the second duty but not the first.

Kim Scott tells a story to show what it means to care personally for the people entrusted to her care. She describes a particularly busy day when she was the CEO of a tech startup. Late one night, she discovered a pricing problem that was so pressing she cancelled all her morning meetings so that she could focus on her spreadsheets. But as she walked into the office that morning, a colleague ran up to her needing to talk. He was distraught because he had just discov-

I believe that every Christian, no matter + *Continued on p. 21*



# THE VERMEER EXTRA MILE

Scott Cormode

You are the parent of an 11-year-old daughter who is feeling anxious and depressed. She tells you she has thought about suicide. You don't know what to do. Where do you reach out for help? If you are a factory worker at the Vermeer Corporation in Iowa, you call the company chaplain.

The Vermeer Corporation is a family business. Mary Vermeer Andringa, a trustee of Fuller Seminary, is the former CEO and current chair of the board. Her father, Gary, founded the company. Her brother Bob preceded her as CEO, and her son Jason succeeded her. They make farm and mining equipment, things like hay-balers, wood-chippers, and massive diggers. The 3,000-person factory covers 1.5 million square feet in Pella, Iowa, along what they call the Vermeer Mile. The chaplaincy program is part of what they call the Vermeer Extra Mile.

Shawna Beeman is one of three Vermeer chaplains. She has a jovial nature—a ready laugh and a singer's melodic voice. Last year, a factory worker contacted her about his depressed daughter. Shawna drove out to his house, “way out in the farmlands” as she tells it. She sat in the living room with the anxious preteen and simply asked, “What's going on?” That gave the girl her opening, and

they talked for some time. Shawna made many more drives to sit in that simple living room, and worked together with the parents to get the girl they loved counseling and medication. Now, a year later, the young lady is doing well. Her parents did not have a church to draw on. They did not have community resources or family connections that could help. But there was the chaplain at the factory.

These parents called Shawna because the Vermeer chaplains have established trust over time. That trust starts with the steel-toed boots every chaplain wears. Kevin Glesener has been a chaplain from the beginning of the program. He needs the boots because he spends his days—and swing-shift evenings—walking the factory floor amidst the bright arcs from the welders, the constant banging of sheet metal, and the hiss of hydraulics. He stops at stations long enough to say, “Hello, how's it going?” He has quiet conversations with shop supervisors to see if anyone is down or struggling. He makes himself available. The chaplains, he reports, have become the first responders for people in pain. He has observed that many people in rural Iowa no longer have a church. They don't have nearby family and don't really know their neighbors. In short, they lack community. So, says

Kevin, “they come to us first” when they have a need.

Drug and alcohol abuse, for example, is a problem in rural America, made even more dangerous for people operating heavy machinery. The Vermeer Corporation has a policy of paying for rehab for anyone

the chaplain to accompany them on the painful trip to Human Resources, where they have to say out loud that they want to go to rehab. The days of walking the floor just to be available, the stories that circulate about how the chaplain helped the guy next to me in the line, and the many hours of

*“Our chaplaincy program exists to come alongside folks. People deal with real-life issues every day at work and outside of work, and if we can provide this service—sometimes it's just a listening ear, or maybe suggesting a possible avenue to pursue—it really helps us further our people-centered focus.”*

Mary Andringa  
Chair of the Board and Former CEO  
Vermeer Corporation

who voluntarily asks for it. It is not uncommon, Kevin says, for workers to talk first to a chaplain. They want someone to tell them that rehab is the right thing to do—to take the stigma and sting out of asking for help. Then they often ask

casual conversations, doled out two minutes at a time, together build the trust that enables the Vermeer chaplains to provide community for the workers entrusted to their care.

The chaplaincy program began

because the Vermeer family decided that they bore a larger responsibility to their employees and settled on what they called a “4P Philosophy”: a commitment to people, product, profit, and principles. “The people,” Bob Vermeer has said, “are our most valuable asset”—and the chaplaincy program started out of an impulse to serve those people. It began as a simple brown bag lunch program where the company invited speakers to talk about things like marriage, blended families, and household finances. When three or four hundred employees showed up for the lunches, the company decided to try hiring a chaplain. They contracted with a third party—a psychologist named Pat Ashby—to run the program, employ the chaplains, and provide the supervision. They wanted to create a firewall of confidentiality so that, as Mary Vermeer Andringa has said, there “was never a feeling that management knows what’s happening with everyone.” Seeing that confidentiality practiced over time has given the chaplains their credibility.

When the chaplaincy program was first proposed, there were many, especially managers, who were quite skeptical. Those managers are now among the biggest proponents of the program. “We want to come alongside our team members in their whole life,” Mary Andringa explains. The program recognizes, she continues, that although “they spend a lot of time every day here

at work, they also have another life—a life with a family.”

Everyone in the program is clear that “the chaplaincy program is not here to convert people.” Pat Ashby says that initially, the chaplains had to decide whether to be “faith-based or faith-friendly.” They decided that “to be honoring to the diversity of people here, we needed to be faith-friendly, which means to us any faith, any nationality, wherever they are coming from, we minister to that person where they need it—whether it is someone to listen, someone to care, someone to bring food. We don’t proselytize or evangelize. We just have a ministry of love and care.”

It was that continual love and care—offered each day in steel-toed boots—that allowed a frightened parent to ask for help. It was that ministry of presence that enabled an alcoholic to ask the chaplain to help him get to rehab. And it was that longing to “come alongside” that prompted the Vermeer Corporation to go the extra mile.

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ered that he might need a kidney transplant. She sat with him for an hour, calming him over tea. As she walked out his door, she saw an engineer whose son was in ICU. She took the time to convince him that he belonged at the hospital and not at the office. More tea, more tears. Finally, she saw a man who wanted to tell her some good news: his daughter had just achieved the highest score on a statewide math test. She found time to celebrate with him. The longings and losses of Kim’s people had eaten into the time she wanted to spend on the pricing problem.

She later discussed the morning with her mentor, complaining that “emotional babysitting” was getting in the way of “real work.” “This is not babysitting,” her mentor replied. “It’s called management, and it is your job!” Kim Scott then draws the point of the story. “We undervalue the ‘emotional labor’ of being a boss,” she writes, but “this emotional labor is not just part of the job; it’s the key to being a good boss.”<sup>12</sup> The people are just as much a part of your job as the spreadsheets. Indeed, Kim spends the rest of the book explaining that a manager can only challenge directly if she is willing to care personally. “Do you mean you expect me to care about my employees’ private lives?” Yes, because they are not just employees. They are the people entrusted to your care.

That brings us back to Michael, the store manager. How could Michael represent, as an ambassador, the God of integrity and compassion while at the same time representing, as a manager, a company that stands for neither? He could do it by continuing to do what he had already done. Michael helps the elderly folk from the retirement community next door. He teaches teens how to be responsible workers and to care for customers. He manages people with in-



tegrity and compassion. But what about the new and unfair policies? They become an opportunity for him to model for his employees the appropriate way to live in the world. In this way, he is like the Apostle Paul, who ministered to churches that were persecuted, abused, and defiled. Michael keeps his integrity by staying with the people entrusted to his care and ministering to them in the midst of their longings and their losses.

Michael's situation happened years ago, but I went back to see him recently. We met at a Starbucks. Before we could order our coffee, a woman came bounding from behind the register to hug Michael. She was the manager of the store, had not seen Michael in years, and wanted to thank him because she owed her career to him. She had been one of those 19-year-olds who learned from him. She gushed about how he taught her the best way to treat people, both customers and employees. She said she learned from him values that saw her through dark times. Michael never preached to her. But he gave her a different vocabulary and a new way to see the world. That's what most sermons strive to do. In sermons, beliefs lead to actions. At work, actions embody beliefs. Michael had such an impact on his former employee because he listened to the longings and losses of the people entrusted to his care.



#### ENDNOTES

1. Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 66.
2. The church has taken on this apostolic role as ambassador, and thus Paul's assertion about himself and his team ("We are ambassadors") can also be said of present-day Christians who are sent out into the world to engage in God's reconciling work.
3. The Greek word Paul uses for an "ambassador" refers to an envoy who is sent to speak on behalf of a sovereign.

Paul uses this term to emphasize his own authority as the mouthpiece of the God who sent him, but softens that claim by emphasizing reconciliation. He is thus the envoy of reconciliation who stands between God and the Corinthians, imploring them to accept God's kind offer of reconciling grace. Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 307–9.

4. On "reconciliation" as Paul's missional goal, see Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 445–46.

5. Miroslav Volf argues that Luther inappropriately intertwines a calling with a job, creating what Jürgen Moltmann calls "the consecration of the vocational-occupational structure." Volf, *Work in the Spirit* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1991), 107–8, quoting Moltmann, *On Human Dignity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 47.

6. The quotation is from Lee Hardy's summary of Luther in *The Fabric of this World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 46.

7. William Placher points out that Luther's notion of station is rooted in a static view of society that relegated women and peasants to marginal status and baptized a wealthy man's standing. We will reference his work but shift the usage of the word "station" so that it takes on a more contemporary meaning that allows for social mobility. Thus, we draw inspiration from Luther without adopting all of his assumptions. William Placher, *Callings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 206.

8. Hardy, *The Fabric of this World*, 47.

9. The most famous of these self-referential notions of vocation is Frederick Buechner's line that "the place God calls you is to the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1993). In recent years, authors like Tim Keller have attacked that idea. Keller says, "A job is a vocation only if someone else calls you to do it and you do it for them rather than for yourself. And so our work can be a calling only if it is reimagined as a mission of service to something beyond merely our own interests. [For] thinking of work mainly as a means of self-fulfillment and self-realization slowly crushes a person." *Every Good Endeavor* (New York: Dutton-Penguin Books, 2012), 19.

10. Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

11. What keeps this from being some paternalistic sense of authority over others is De Pree's notion of "roving leadership." He believes that the authority in the moment does not depend necessarily on roles. So, for example, he did not just allow but he enabled Valerie to exercise authority over him by publicly promising to keep his commitments. Max De Pree, *Leadership Jazz* (New York: Dell, 1992), 16–32.

12. Kim Scott, *Radical Candor* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2017), 3–5.









# BEAUTY AND A CHRISTIAN VISION OF BUSINESS

Uli Chi

One morning a few years ago, I sat in a weeklong meeting with Christian business leaders and academics at Seattle Pacific University. The topic for our conversation was the criteria by which Christians ought to assess their work in business. Does a Christian vision of business suggest meaningful ways of evaluating business, ways that transcend the typical measures of profitability and growth?

That morning I had been reflecting on the following text: “Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food” (Gen 2:9). I had never before noticed the order of the description of the trees of the garden—first “pleasant to the sight” and then “good for food.”

In my world, my business and I are traditionally evaluated around the “good for food” dimension. What do I contribute to the work of the business? How productive am I in my work? What does my business produce? How useful are its products and services? All are questions of individual

and corporate “fruitfulness,” it seems to me.

The question I raised for our conversation that morning was this: “What would it mean to take beauty seriously as a category for evaluating business?”

It is hard to think in these terms. We live in a business environment that focuses almost exclusively on utility. We ask: How useful is this? What function does it serve? Beauty, if it is considered at all, is assessed exclusively in terms of its utility to market and sell a product or service. Certainly, aesthetics are not considered on par with utility, much less given priority.

Yet stunning examples exist where a focus on beauty creates remarkable businesses. We are all aware of Steve Jobs’s commitment to aesthetics as well as function in the design of Apple’s category-changing technologies such as the iPhone. Long before Jobs made his mark, my friends at Herman Miller created beautifully designed, functionally useful, and economically endur-



ing furniture, such as the Eames lounge chair.

In my experience, entrepreneurial work is especially fertile ground for appreciating and creating beauty. Most entrepreneurs, including me, are driven

by a compelling idea. In my case, it was a particular vision of how to reimagine the complex interaction between computing technology and its human owners. In the early days of our business, I remember sketching an idea of what I had in mind to one of my

programming staff. A few days later, as he showed me the visual embodiment of our conversation, I remember feeling the hairs on the back of my head stand up. It was an extraordinary moment of recognition: seeing the beauty of the idea, even in its most embryonic form.

That recognition drove and sustained my entrepreneurial work for decades to come, even in the face of business setbacks and financial challenges. Early on, I remember finishing a presentation to a key investor and business sponsor for our work. He declined to continue his support, and I felt deeply discouraged. It was a classic, entrepreneurial, gut-check moment. Were we willing to bet our futures by going it alone? In the end, our decision hinged on our commitment to the idea, and our commitment to the idea hinged on being captivated by its beauty.

So how might we practically give attention to the priority of beauty in business? For me, it begins by asking questions. How might we rightly embody beauty in the

way we do business, including in the products and services we provide? How do we make beauty an integral value and virtue of doing business? These are not simple questions. As someone at our meeting asked, what would that look like for a business like Costco, with its focus on a low-cost value proposition? More generally, how can beauty as a business category be reconciled with a hard-nosed, cost-efficient orientation that marks all successful businesses in highly competitive markets? How do we keep the focus on beauty from becoming a distraction and a waste of resources?

This is where a Christian vision of business rooted in the creation text can both be countercultural and provide energy for personal and organizational transformation. No doubt it is more complicated to consider beauty at all, much less as a business priority. But as this creation text hints, beauty is God the Creator's priority in creation. If we are to be God's faithful image bearers, then we need to take it seriously in our work, even if that makes

our lives and businesses more complicated. In my business experience, utility is much easier to focus on and measure. But, invariably, excluding beauty as a serious business consideration, despite its complexity and subtlety, turns out to be a mistake. Nevertheless, it's an easy one to make. Perhaps that's another reason why beauty is given priority in the biblical narrative.

One final note. Even though the ordering of beauty before fruitfulness is an important insight, the biblical text implies that beauty and fruitfulness are not meant to be separate and competing concerns, but mutually reinforcing. After all, this is not about just looking at aesthetically pleasing trees! Their fruits are meant to be eaten. Just so, businesses need to produce useful and profitable products and services.

Still, this text reminds us that we have a creation mandate to make businesses that embody beauty, not only in the products we make, but also in our practices and relationships. How we

do that, given the particularities of our individual businesses, is God's challenge to our creative imaginations as God's image bearers. All of our work should in some way demonstrate the striking beauty that characterizes the work of the Creator.



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## MOMS, MARCHERS, AND MANAGERS: PRIESTS ALL THREE

Matthew Kaemingk

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*A cobbler, a smith, a peasant—each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops.*

—Martin Luther

*You will be for me a kingdom of priests . . .*

—Exodus 19:6

**D**oes this little job matter?

There is a moment—and it comes for all of us—when, at the end of a long week, we begin to ask existential questions about our work: Does this job mean anything? Does it matter? Does it have value? Does anyone notice?

The angst of a weary Friday is often compounded when we consider the finite nature of our jobs in relation to the seemingly infinite nature of global challenges, forces, and institutions. The office wall posters, clichés, and platitudes ring hollow, and we are left paralyzed by the (in)finite nature of the work we have been assigned.

### THOSE WHO MARCHED AND THOSE WHO COULDN'T

*It is a quotidian mystery that dailiness can lead to such despair and yet also be at the core of our salvation. . . . We want life to have meaning, we want fulfillment, healing and even ecstasy, but the human paradox is that we find these things by starting where we are. . . . We must look for blessings to come from unlikely, everyday places.<sup>1</sup>*

—Kathleen Norris

Social media loves a protest. The photos are vivid; the videos are enthralling; the frenetic energy of a passionate and pulsating crowd is palpable. The Women's March certainly qualified as "trendworthy"—it was the largest physical protest in American history.

On January 21, 2017, my social media feed was filled with panoramic vistas of endless crowds, impassioned speeches, funny signs, and convicting demands for the dignity, rights, and honor of women. As far as I could tell, none of the protestors suffered from any existential angst about the meaning or importance of their actions that day. There was no doubt that they were participating in history, part of something infinitely larger than their finite selves.

That said, soon enough, a different sort of social media post began to appear in my feed that morning: from women who could not march. A number had to work that day—manage employees, wait tables, design marketing campaigns, and prepare lectures. Still others were stay-at-home mothers looking at a long day of errands, lunches, and laundry. The absent women posted reflections of disappointment and frustration. The marchers were doing something—the moms and managers weren't. Put another way, the marchers felt like they were bending history; the managers and moms felt like history was bending them. My social media feed became a fascinating mixture of thoughtful women all reflecting on callings that were finite and global challenges that were anything but.

This article is not about women's rights, important as that topic is. It is a theological reflection on the rampant—and ruinous—assumption that on January 21, 2017, the marchers were a part of something important, something infinite, while the moms and managers were not.

My friend Jennifer Stewart Fueston is a poet and a mother. With regret, she and her infant son missed the march. They live in Denver, and it was, after all, January. And

# SEEKING JUSTICE AT WORK

Meggie Anderson-Sandoval

so mother and son followed their callings that morning—he nursed and she wrote a poem. Entitled “To the Women Marching, from a Mother at Home,” the poem reads in part as follows:

*It is cold, and my son is small  
I rock him in the fragile boat of my body  
between this night’s dark and brighter  
shore . . .*

*In the quiet, we hear your chanting.*

*Remember us with you, we are the rear  
guard.  
I am carrying him like a banner, feel him  
cutting his teeth on my curdled milk.*

*I am sharpening him like an arrow.<sup>2</sup>*

## THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

*The ordinary man who honorably  
fulfills his daily calling before God  
hardly seems to count anymore; he  
does nothing, or so it is thought, for  
the kingdom of God. . . . In the view  
of many today, to be a real Christian  
requires something extra, something  
out of the ordinary, some supernatural  
deed. . . . And so it is that the power  
and the worth of Christian faith is not  
appraised according to what a man  
does in his common calling but in what  
he accomplishes above and beyond it.<sup>3</sup>*

—Herman Bavinck

*Everyone wants a revolution. No one  
wants to do the dishes.*

—Kitchen sign

American Christianity has, by and large, bought into the world’s un-

If we spend the majority of our time in our workplace, then seeking God’s justice at work is not only relevant, but crucial. Yet seeking justice in a for-profit workplace is complex. Often-competing commitments to power and to people create challenges for embodying the kingdom of God. Social and cultural differences and layers of power create advantages for some and disadvantages for others. But within these challenges reside great opportunities for workplace advocates to embody the kingdom values of justice, wholeness, and flourishing among our communities at work.

We see an example of what it looks like to advocate for wholeness through one’s work in Acts 11:1–18, the story of Peter and Cornelius. The early church was constantly navigating the power differential between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. In this encounter, God first called into question Peter’s assumptions about Jewish laws of cleanliness and cultural practices that excluded Gentile Christians. These practices created an inherent “in-group” advantage and “out-group” disadvantage. Peter was afforded the advantage of belonging to the “in-

group” of Jewish Christians. But after his Spirit-led encounter with Cornelius, a Gentile, Peter used his power and cultural capital to advocate for Cornelius’s inclusion in the body of Christ. Peter used his influence to be a bridge builder across the cultural divides in his work. He challenged the mental models of the Jewish Christians and created space for Gentile Christians to belong within the beloved community.

Similarly today, we must expand our mental models. “Too male and too pale”<sup>1</sup> is David Gill’s apt diagnosis of the existing faith/work conversation. At the De Pree Center we have been asking ourselves: What advantage is afforded to some and not others in the ways we talk about faith and work? How can we include others in the conversation, even as we seek to serve a broad spectrum of God’s people through our work? We must “fill the gap” in the conversation with voices that have been unheard in the past—including the distinct experiences of women, people of color, and those who do not hold high positions of power in their workplaces. This brings us one step closer to seeing the wholeness of God’s kingdom

embodied in our work—not just “my work,” but “our work” as the people of God.

Advocates transform exclusion into belonging. Each of us has the potential to be a workplace advocate. We are called, like Peter, to recognize the “out group” in our midst and to embody a new vision of kingdom belonging. In this way, we bring about justice, wholeness, and flourishing in our communities at work.

1. David Gill, “Deeper, Broader, Stronger: Moving from Faith@Work 101 to 201,” presentation at Faith@Work Summit, Dallas, TX, October 27–29, 2016.



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derstanding of what it means to live a life that matters. Scale and excitement are key. Vocations that truly matter in American Christianity, ones that receive recognition, need to be exciting, exotic, and immense. Because of our obsession with heroic Christian vocations, callings that are by design small, ordinary, repetitive, and mundane are on the outside looking in. In our worldview, finite callings have limited access to infinite meaning.

For all their rancorous debate, progressive and conservative Christians have largely agreed to accept the world's extremely narrow understanding of what it means to live a life that matters. On both the right and left, the list of jobs that truly matter to God is distressingly short. Progressive Christians lionize careers in social justice, activism, and race relations. Conservative Christians lionize careers in missions, evangelism, and church leadership. Where does this leave the 99 percent of Christians who are not professional evangelists or activists? How can they participate in the mission of God?

Progressives and conservatives commonly provide answers that are both theologically simple and discouraging: If you are not in these fields, your ultimate purpose will be found in paying for those who are. While rarely communicated with such stark clarity, this message of "vocational hierarchy" is communicated all the same. We see it propagated constantly in Christian conferences, magazines, books, and media. Ponder for a moment how many times you have seen Christian leaders praised for serving the poor in Africa, planting a church in New York, or fighting for justice in Washington, DC. Now ponder how many times you have seen Christians praised for









designing a safer freeway, raising a student's reading level, or engineering a more fuel-efficient car.

To make matters worse, this latent vocational hierarchy is liturgically reinforced Sunday after Sunday as mission teams, charity workers, and church staffs are brought forward and commissioned for "God's work" while the other 99 percent are reduced to passive audience members. Those seated in the pews—who develop software, manage households, conduct surgeries, design sewage systems—are on the outside looking in. The message is that their daily work can only participate in the *missio Dei* if it is twisted into some sort of platform for either justice or evangelism. The work of designing, cooking, caring, negotiating, and selling has no place or purchase in the kingdom.

In this season, the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, it is ironic to witness Protestants erecting for themselves a whole new priesthood—a select group who alone perform holy work on behalf of the rest of us. The heirs of Martin Luther have misplaced a chief tenet of the protesting movement: the priesthood of all believers. Our myopic theological visions would do well to recover Luther's much richer theological imagination, which enabled him to actually compose the following prayer for men who change diapers:

*O God . . . I confess to thee that I am not worthy to rock the little babe or wash its diapers or to be entrusted with the care of the child and its mother. How is it that I, without any merit, have come to this distinction of being certain that I am serving thy creature and thy most precious will?*

Luther goes on to reflect cantankerously on his "diaper prayer" by saying, "Now you tell me, when a father goes ahead and washes diapers . . . God, with all his angels and creatures, is smiling. Those who sneer at him . . . are ridiculing God."<sup>4</sup>

#### COMMANDED TO "GO AND MAKE"

*The number of pages theologians have devoted to the question of transubstantiation—which does or does not take place on Sunday—for instance, would, I suspect, far exceed the number of pages devoted to work that fills our lives Monday through Saturday.*<sup>5</sup>

—Miroslav Volf

Theologians love words, and I'm no exception. The word "make" has always loomed large in my own theological imagination. Without fail, my courses on work, calling, and vocation often begin with the point that God is a *maker*. Indeed, this is the first thing we learn about the nature of God in Scripture—not that God loves, but that God *makes*. More than that, the God of Genesis delights in both the process and the product of that making.

God's effervescent delight in making is so intense that the making must cease from time to time; the maker-God chooses to stop, sit, and enjoy that which has been made. The creational craftsmanship, the stuff itself—its beauty, complexity, and value—cause the maker-God to cease activity and gaze upon its wonder. Like the smell of sawdust on the carpenter's floor, God breathes in creation's aroma.

More than a simple focus on the product, God's process of making is joyous. It is joyous in its repetition and diversity, its

care and color, its infinite scale and finite detail. Moreover, the maker-God delights so much in this (micro)cosmic process of making that God does not want the making to end, and fashioned the creation itself to continue the generative process. The whole creation is therefore invited—no, *commanded*—to continue the process of cultivation and craftsmanship.

*Fish, go and make.*

*Sparrows, go and make.*

*Adam and Eve, go and make.*

Like the budding flower of a tulip, the creation itself was uniquely fashioned to continue unfolding and revealing its complex beauty as petal after intricate petal opens up and displays its color. Every time the daughters of Eve and sons of Adam investigate a molecule, design a violin, build a home, or wash a dish, they are plunging their hands into the fertile soil of God's garden. The computer scientist, the carpenter, the neurologist, and house cleaner are all a part of that garden. None of them "create meaning" in God's garden; the meaning, value, and purpose are already there. Divine glory is already present in the justice they seek, the products they design, and the children they raise. It is the maker who infuses meaning and value into the earth they cultivate.

*Well, come now my daughters, don't be sad when obedience draws you to involvement in exterior matters. Know that if it is in the kitchen, the Lord walks among the pots and pans helping you both interiorly and exteriorly.*<sup>6</sup>

—Teresa of Avila

*The homeliest service, that we do in an honest calling, though it be but to plough or dig, if done in obedience . . . is crowned with*

*an ample reward. . . . God loveth adverbs;  
and cares not how good but how well.*<sup>7</sup>

—Joseph Hall

A child *carefully* draws a picture for a sick friend, a software engineer *creatively* develops a new application enabling businesses to coordinate, an orderly in a retirement home *joyfully* plays cards with lonely residents, a biologist *painstakingly* investigates a new algae, a poet *patiently* wrestles a stubborn couplet to the ground, a manager *skillfully* cultivates a working group marked by trust and collaboration. God loveth adverbs.

If Christians cannot recognize and honor these adverbs in their (in)finite nature, we have a serious problem. The narrow vocational visions of both progressives and conservatives betray a troubling lack of theological imagination. Reducing the vast complexity of the *missio Dei* to mere “evangelism” or “social justice” misses what it means to be called by God to serve in a multifaceted creation and its kaleidoscopic restoration.

My point is not that evangelism and justice do not matter. We urgently need more marchers and more missionaries, not fewer. My point is that our theological understanding of what counts as a holy calling matters. The church must theologially grapple with the complex and diverse ways in which the people of God are called to participate in God’s economy. Once we do, we will quickly realize that we need to commission more than one percent of our population for service in the kingdom.

The manager, the mom, and the marcher are priests all three. Each has a place in God’s garden. Each has a sacred calling to participate in its restoration. When my

friend Jennifer could not participate in the Women’s March, she nursed her son and she wrote a poem. While her calling was finite, she saw her place in the infinite. Rocking back and forth in that small and quiet nursery, Jennifer could say to no one but her maker: “I am sharpening him like an arrow.”



#### ENDNOTES

1. Kathleen Norris, *The Quotidian Mysteries: Laundry, Liturgy, and “Women’s Work”* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998), 11.
2. Excerpted from Jennifer Stewart Fueston, “To the Women Marching, from a Mother at Home,” in *Poems of Resistance and Resilience*, ed. Murray Silverstein (San Francisco: Sixteen Rivers Press, forthcoming September 2018).
3. Herman Bavinck, “Common Grace,” trans. Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, *Calvin Theological Journal* 24, no. 1 (1989), 62.
4. Martin Luther, “On the Estate of Marriage, 1522,” in *The Annotated Luther, vol. 5: Christian Life in the World*, ed. Hans Hillerbrand (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 67–69.
5. Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: A Theology of Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 69.
6. Teresa of Avila, *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, vol. 3 (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1985), 5.
7. Joseph Hall, *The Works of the Right Reverend Joseph Hall*, ed. Philip Wynter, vol. 7 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1863), 526.



# MADE TO FLOURISH: FAITH, WORK, AND ECONOMICS FROM A LATINO PERSPECTIVE

Peter Rios

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Hispanics are projected to comprise nearly one-fifth of the labor force by 2024. The church has both the opportunity and responsibility to address the large group of Latino Christians who feel their calling in the marketplace has not been recognized or celebrated. This will make a difference in and beyond the Latino community.

I recently spoke with Dr. Jesse Miranda and his son, Rev. Jack Miranda, about faith and work from a Latino perspective. Dr. Miranda, who founded and leads the Jesse Miranda Center for Hispanic Leadership in Southern California, has for decades been developing and mentoring Latino leaders for the church, community, and academy.

Hispanic Christians can make a unique contribution to the conversation about faith, work, and economics, Dr. Miranda believes. “We bring our whole selves to work,” he explains. Philippians 2:5 reads in English, “Let this *mind* be in you . . .” The classic Spanish translation,

however, states, “Haya, pues, en vosotros este *sentir* . . .” Whereas the English translation speaks of the *mind*, the Spanish translation speaks of *feeling*. Hispanics, according to Dr. Miranda, can help everyone bring their whole selves to work, their feelings as well as their minds and bodies. This can transform our experience of work.

The Mirandas believe deeply that our work matters to God, particularly given how much of our time we spend working. According to Amy Sherman, author of *Kingdom Calling*, people in the United States spend an average of 45 hours a week—more than 180 hours a month—at work. Human flourishing will happen when all Christians realize they are ministers of Jesus Christ in their work, the Mirandas emphasize. “I’m on a mission to eliminate the phrase ‘full-time minister’ when it’s used only for pastors and missionaries,” says Rev. Miranda. “Do you have faith in Jesus Christ? Guess what. You’re a full-time minister!” Dr. Miranda has a burning passion to equip Latino believers for the work of ministry in whatever

space they find themselves. His center has teamed up with Made to Flourish, a network of pastors who seek to “connect Sunday faith to Monday work,” to develop *Hechos Para Florecer*—Made to Flourish—for the Latino community.

Yet, like the general population, the Latino community faces challenges when it comes to work. One of the most difficult, Dr. Miranda claims, is supporting women in leadership. “The branding, especially of the Hispanic church, is probably more masculine than anything. The image we get, especially in my generation, is of a woman working only at home. Rather, I need to see that my daughter could be going for her master’s or doctoral degree, or to the pulpit to preach! These are things we’re challenged with, but I think we have a greater awareness now.” Churches, as well as other organizations, need to address the glass ceiling that historically has hindered women in general, and particularly Latinas, from growing to their full potential in their work in the marketplace and the church.

The Mirandas yearn to see Hispanic men *and* women—and, indeed, all of God’s people—exercise all their gifts in service to God and others through their work.



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# HECHOS PARA FLORECER: FE, TRABAJO Y ECONOMÍA DESDE UNA PERSPECTIVA LATINA

Peter Ríos

Según el Buró de Estadísticas Laborales, se proyecta que los Hispanos formarán casi la quinta parte de la fuerza laboral para el 2024. La iglesia tiene tanto la oportunidad como la responsabilidad de dirigirse hacia el gran grupo de Latinos Cristianos quienes sienten que su llamado en el mercado económico no se ha reconocido ni celebrado. Esto marcará una diferencia dentro de y más allá de la comunidad Latina.

Recientemente hablé con el Dr. Jesse Miranda y su hijo, el Rev. Jack Miranda, acerca de la fe y el trabajo desde una perspectiva Latina. El Dr. Miranda, quien fundó y dirige el Centro para Liderazgo Hispano Jesse Miranda en el Sur de California, ha estado desarrollando y mentoreando a líderes Latinxs en la iglesia, comunidad y academia, por varias décadas.

Los Cristianos Hispanos pueden rendir una contribución única a la conversación sobre fe, trabajo y economía, cree el Dr. Miranda. “Nosotros traemos todo nuestro ser al trabajo,” explica él. Filipenses 2:5 dice en inglés, “Tengan esta *mente* en ustedes . . .” La

traducción clásica en español, sin embargo, declara, “Haya, pues, en vosotros este sentir . . .” Cuando bien la traducción en inglés habla de la *mente*, la traducción en español habla de *sentimiento*. Los Hispanos, según el Dr. Miranda, pueden ayudar a los demás a traer todo su ser al trabajo, su sentimientos como también sus mentes y cuerpos. Esto puede transformar nuestra experiencia laboral.

Los Miranda creen profundamente que a Dios le importa nuestro trabajo, en particular cuánto tiempo pasamos trabajando. Según Amy Sherman, autora de *Kingdom Calling*, las personas en Estados Unidos dedican un promedio de 45 horas a la semana—más de 180 horas al mes—en el trabajo. El florecimiento humano se realizará cuando todos los Cristianos se den cuenta que son ministros de Jesucristo en su trabajo, enfatizan los Miranda. “Estoy en una misión de eliminar la frase ‘ministro a tiempo completo’ cuando sólo se utiliza para pastores y misioneros,” dice el Rev. Miranda. “¿Tienes fe en Jesucristo? Pues adivina qué. ¡Eres ministro/a a tiempo completo!” El Dr. Miranda

tiene una fuerte pasión para equipar a creyentes Latinos para la obra del ministerio en cualquier espacio en donde se encuentren. Su centro se ha asociado con “Made to Flourish” (Hechos Para Florecer), una red de pastores quienes buscan “conectar la fe del domingo con el trabajo del lunes”, para desarrollar *Hechos Para Florecer*—“Made to Flourish”—para la comunidad Latina.

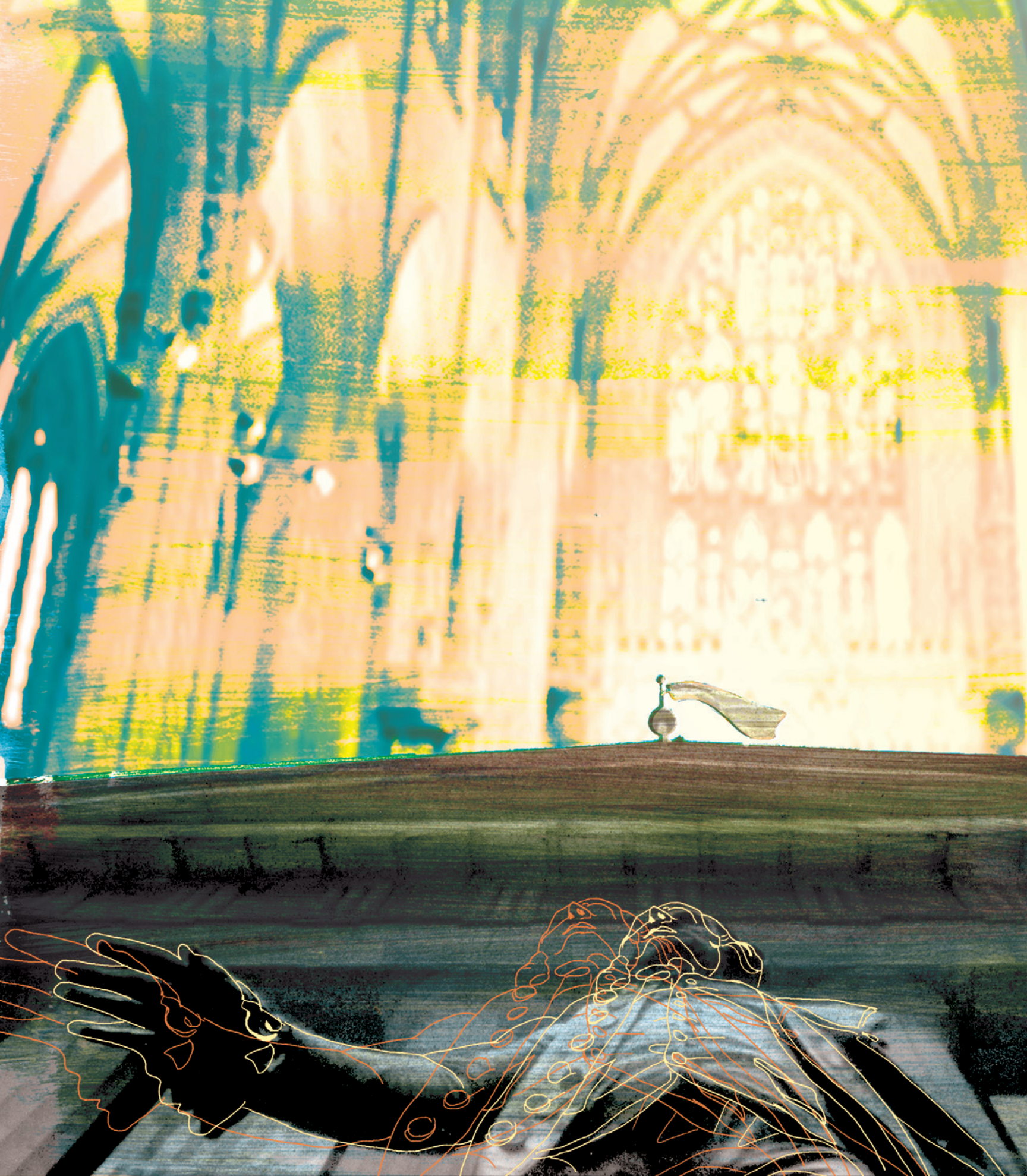
Sin embargo, al igual que la población general, la comunidad Latina se enfrenta con retos relacionados con el trabajo. Uno de éstos más difíciles, declara el Dr. Miranda, es apoyar a las mujeres en el liderazgo. “La marca, especialmente en la iglesia Hispana, es probablemente más masculina que cualquier otra cosa. La imagen que recibimos, especialmente en mi generación, es la de una mujer trabajando sólo en el hogar. Más bien, ¡yo necesito ver que mi hija puede ir buscando su maestría o doctorado, o el púlpito para predicar! Estas son las cosas que nos retan, pero pienso que estamos más conscientes ahora.” Las iglesias, como también otras organizaciones,

necesitan confrontar el techo de cristal que históricamente ha impedido a las mujeres en general, y en particular a las Latinas, de lograr crecer a su máximo potencial en su trabajo dentro del mercado económico y la iglesia. Los Miranda ansían poder ver hombres Hispanos y mujeres Hispanas—y por supuesto, todo el pueblo de Dios—poder ejercer sus dones espirituales en servicio a Dios y a otros por medio de su trabajo.



*Peter Ríos es vice presidente asociado para innovación académica en Fresno Pacific University. En Fuller, él ha estado investigando asuntos Latinos y estudios interculturales, y con frecuencia colabora con el Centro De Pree, ofreciendo su experiencia en liderazgo y relaciones interculturales.*







# MARKETPLACE MINISTRY AND THE DANIEL INITIATIVE

Breon Wells, as told to Mark Roberts

When Jeanelle Austin of Fuller's Pannell Center for African American Church Studies connected me with Breon Wells, a young man deeply engaged in Washington, DC's political world, we met over lunch to talk about his work. Breon's enthusiasm was evident from the start: "I am a marketplace minister," he told me.

"You mean you're some kind of chaplain?" I asked.

"No. I'm a marketplace minister in my daily work, as I help people with strategic communication and work on the Hill to help shape US policy in key areas. I'm a marketplace minister in everything I do, just like all other followers of Jesus are called to be."

For Breon, the marketplace isn't just the business world. It's everything "outside the four walls of the church," including business, government, arts, and education. Marketplace ministers, he believes, don't simply add a few religious duties to their ordinary job descriptions. Rather, "they see everything they do as ministry. Everything in their work is for the Lord."

Therefore, we who follow Jesus as marketplace ministers should seek to do all of our work with excellence. "Our excellence honors God and is evidence that God reigns in us," Breon observes. His perspective is like that of the influential British author Dorothy

Sayers, who, in her classic essay "Why Work?" writes: "The Church's approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours, and to come to church on Sundays. What the Church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables."

Yet Breon was not inspired by Dorothy Sayers to become a marketplace minister; it began in a prayer meeting during his sophomore year at Messiah College. As he was praying Breon felt a strong "agitation," seeing Christians seeking excellence in "church stuff" but not in their day-to-day activities. He became convinced that God wanted him to excel in his work in the world and to encourage other believers to do the same.

Thus the seed of the Daniel Initiative was planted in Breon's heart—his platform for offering strategic communication, promoting social justice, and upholding the vision of marketplace ministry. As its name suggests, the initiative is inspired by the biblical figure of Daniel, the Jewish man who became an influential leader in Babylon during the time of Israel's exile. "The first chapters of Daniel bear witness to his excellence as a political leader," Breon states. (See, for example, Dan 1:15–17; 2:46–48.) This excellence is based on Daniel's

personal integrity, his faithfulness to God's revelation, and the fact that Daniel "learned the Babylonian system" (Dan 1:4). "We can't change the world if we don't know the systems of the world we're in," Breon insists.

Breon's world, like that of Daniel, has been mainly in the realm of politics. He learned the systems of Washington, DC, by serving for several years on Capitol Hill as a congressional staffer. That experience prepared him to launch the Daniel Initiative, which has opened doors for Breon to advise leading members of Congress, the Senate, and even the White House—including key leaders from both parties. He seeks, Breon says, to be a bridge-builder, though that work is not easy.

"While I live as bridge-builder both behind the scenes and in public, I am not exempt from feelings of frustration, hurt, and anger that arise when I see and experience injustice and racism," Breon says. "However, I think of God as my real client, and God cares about unity. God is bringing about justice and reconciliation through Christ. When Jesus comes back, he's coming for one church, not a black church or a white church, but one church. So, in anything I do, I try to serve the interests of my ultimate client. And for some reason, leaders from both parties keep asking for my help. They're even fine with my Christian beliefs. It's amazing."

Breon has been inspired by the example of Daniel. But the theological foundation for the Daniel Initiative and Breon's belief that God calls all of us to be marketplace ministers can be found in Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." "If the whole earth is the Lord's," Breon insists, "then he cares about everything. There is no sacred/secular division for God. Everything we do should be for God and God's purposes. I'm serving the Lord when I'm working on judicial policy, helping politicians shape their message, preaching in churches, or loving my family. And I want to help everyone live their lives this way."

+ Learn more at [thedanielinitiative.org](http://thedanielinitiative.org).



*Breon Wells is founder and CEO of the Daniel Initiative, supporting organizations in their messaging and political strategies and encouraging Christians in the workplace to live as marketplace ministers. Mark D. Roberts, who authored this article, is executive director of the De Pree Center.*





## RELATIONAL STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Migum Gweon

Migum Gweon, a licensed marriage and family therapist, is director of clinical training for the Department of Marriage and Family in Fuller's School of Psychology, coordinating all aspects of the student practicum experience as well as teaching courses. Her clinical training background includes serving at Department of Mental Health-contracted and community mental health agencies, in church and school-based settings, and in private practice. Before pursuing psychology, she trained in three diverse career areas: concert piano, investment banking, and high school and college ministry—all of which enrich and inform her current work.

It's 3 a.m. The deadline is fast approaching, and I am starting to panic. I can't seem to focus. My plate is overflowing with other tasks, and I feel like I'm perpetually running on empty. What I really want to do is to tell them I can't do this. I'm stressed!

Such was the turmoil I experienced a week before this article was due. Faced with limited resources and a hard deadline, feelings of inadequacy began to choke me, making me feel incapacitated. I wanted to renege on my commitment and escape, but I was worried about how others would then view me. These fears revealed my underlying negative self-statements: *I'm a disappointment; I'm not good enough; I'm a failure.* These were the roots of my relational stress.

While we may experience day-to-day stress that comes from a heavy workload, such stress is mostly due to the pressure of time. It is a stress that we can resolve with our own effort and skills, simply by completing the task. However, as I look back on my work experiences, the majority of my stress came from real or potential relational conflict. Even with the writing of this article, more of my stress came from my fears about what others would think of me. As Christian psychologist Archibald Hart notes, "I would guess that 95 percent of all stress originates with other people."<sup>1</sup> Whether it is self-imposed or other-imposed, relational stress feels pervasive, intimidating, and often debilitating.

We are especially vulnerable to relational conflict in the workplace because, for many of us, our identity is tied to our work. Even with a healthy understanding of vocational calling, there is an evaluative component to our work that is, for the most part, in-

escapable. Our accomplishments become a measure of our success and are often perceived as a direct reflection of who we are. Hence, we can become entangled in a vicious cycle of pursuing more accomplishments to build our sense of self and, in turn, protecting that reputation by seeking more accomplishments. Therefore, when our work is viewed negatively, we often perceive this as a direct *threat* to our identity.

### RESPONDING TO EMOTIONAL THREAT

I am part of a growing community of therapists who practice an integrative model called Restoration Therapy.<sup>2</sup> Using this model, I conceptualize stress within a framework of understanding emotional danger. Consider when we are faced with physical danger. Our brain's limbic system is activated, and we have an automatic fight, flight, or freeze response. Similarly, when we feel a threat to our identity or to our sense of safety and trust, our brain registers this as an emotional threat and responds automatically by blaming, shaming, controlling, or escaping. Such negative coping behaviors create friction in relationships. Thus, any ensuing relational conflict, as well as the inability to resolve it, gives us stress.

Consider a threat to our hard-earned reputation or accomplishments. Perhaps our accomplishments are not acknowledged, our efforts are not appreciated, or our ideas are dismissed. Alternatively, we may feel powerless regarding job-related decisions or an excessive workload. There may be times when coworkers cannot be trusted, such as when they take credit for our work or we are unfairly blamed for their mistakes. At other times, the system itself can feel unjust, such as when there is favoritism, salary discrepancies, unfairness over pro-

motions, or other types of discrimination.

*Blaming* is a fight response to an emotional threat. When we feel disrespected, unappreciated, unheard, or dismissed, blaming someone else shields us from having to take responsibility or having our reputation tarnished. When we feel like we don't measure up, we find fault with others in an effort to deflect scrutiny. Hence, anger is a common blame response. Likewise, defensiveness and passive-aggressive behaviors are variations of blaming.

In a *shame* response, the emotional threat can cause us to point the finger inward, and our insecurities rise to the surface. Feeling like we are not good enough may keep us from addressing the overload with our supervisors. Comparison envy can fuel our stress as we struggle with feeling incompetent, which can be expressed through internalizing, complaining, feeling sorry for ourselves, or playing the victim, any of which can gradually lead to depression. We might fear that someone will see past our façade, prodding us to overcompensate for our insecurities and work even harder to shore up our reputation. This can quickly lead to burnout.

When we turn to *controlling* behaviors, these are often in reaction to feeling vulnerable or powerless. We try to manipulate people or situations to gain our desired outcome. If the system or coworkers are not trustworthy, we feel we have no choice but to protect ourselves and get what we need. And when those relational dynamics are complicated by power dynamics, we often feel defensive and powerless. We can become fiercely protective of our own tasks because it feels like those are the only things over which we have control. When

we delegate, we may criticize others for their subpar performance. Unfortunately, our criticalness may lead to a belief that others cannot do the task as well, so we may cease to delegate altogether. Such perfectionism can increase our sense of hopelessness because no one can measure up to our standard of excellence, not even ourselves.

Alternatively, we may take flight and veer toward *escape*. We may withdraw from coworkers, the situation, or work in general, and start shutting down. If we cannot trust the system to take care of us, it feels futile to work hard. While the burden of unfinished tasks weighs on our shoulders, we find ourselves procrastinating through the myriad of distractions at our fingertips. Feeling hopeless, powerless, and unmotivated may decrease our ability to concentrate, so we may take longer to complete tasks or not do them altogether.

Whether we blame, shame, control, escape, or do a combination of these, all such coping behaviors will likely increase relational conflicts at work, which will only increase our stress.

#### **A WORD ABOUT BURNOUT**

In much of the psychological literature, job burnout is defined as “a gradual process of loss in which the mismatch between the needs of the person and the demands of the job grows ever greater.”<sup>3</sup> Initially, this mismatch can make us feel like the workload is *too much*, thereby causing stress. However, compounded stress can lead to a deeper state of feeling like we ourselves are *not enough*. This feeling of burnout is the depletion of energy, motivation, care, or hope to the point that we feel like there

+ Continued on p. 39



# JOINING GOD IN HIS WORK IN THE WORLD

Deborah Gill

All Christians are called to join God in his work in the world. The creation mandate in Genesis 1:26–28 calls us to stewardship—bringing creation and culture to their highest fruitfulness. God developed a garden and placed the first human couple there to “cultivate and keep it” (Gen 2:15). The redemption mandate in Matthew 28:18–20 calls us to discipleship—becoming, and helping others to become, formed in the likeness of Christ. God was at work in Christ and calls us to join him in the work of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:19).

In an era of increased specialization in every field, the church may be tempted to limit ministry to the educated and ordained. But it is better to engage marketplace Christians in the mission of God than to restrict ministry to the clergy—and Proverbs 31:10–31 (at right) illustrates this beautifully.

The virtuous woman of Proverbs is known by the nature of her work. In her businesses, the text describes her in the roles of buyer, purchasing agent, and production manager. She is a manufacturer, designer, supplier, and importer. She manages people, invests in real estate, trades, and develops agriculture. In a period of history much different from our own, this Bible woman is an entrepreneur. She

organizes and operates her own businesses and takes on greater than normal financial risk in order to do so.

This woman is a model to Christian business owners today in the manner of her work. Proverbs describes her stellar work ethic: she is industrious, responsible, reliable. As a producer she is top notch; as an investor she is perceptive and profitable—she has found her zone! Yet she also values her family and her community. She conducts her businesses with multiple bottom lines: her endeavors are financially profitable and socially responsible.

The outcomes of her work are exemplary. Her life is in balance—and because of her work, her household is happy and the community a better place. She is successful and secure, trusted and honored. This competent, compassionate businesswoman thus has a wonderful witness.

What principles can we derive from this biblical model? Engaging all the people of God in the work of God in every aspect of their lives puts every believer into ministry. It eliminates the “sacred/secular divide” and a “holy hierarchy.” It sanctifies the ordinary and integrates faith and work. It moves the congregation from passive to active,

the clergy from caregivers to equippers, and the church from maintenance to mission. This view results in maximum mobilization, unrestricted access, and incarnational authenticity.

There are multiple models engaging businesspeople for God’s purposes. Marketplace ministries focus on seeing one’s work as a platform for mission: compassion and justice, evangelism and discipleship. Tent-making uses one’s profession to serve as a Christ follower and shine his light in places restricted from overt gospel witness. Microenterprise development invests financially to raise the quality of life and standard of living of others. The Holy Spirit is unleashing God’s people through creative engagement with others through their work, not only in business for mission, but business in mission and business as mission.

One present-day example of this is Cascade Engineering, a business I have visited and researched in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Fred Keller, founder and chair, shares Cascade’s approach: “Everything we stand for culminates in our ‘triple bottom line’: people, planet, profit,” he says. A business should be about more than just financial results; it is uniquely poised to address social and environmental problems. Cascade,

for example, employs and retains folks who have formerly been on welfare, as well as those who have been in prison through their “returning citizens program.” This intentionality results in social capital—fewer individuals in poverty and a better workforce.

Cascade’s leadership team has sought to obey the creation mandate in stewarding people, the planet, and profit. They have also been able to wed their work with the redemption mandate. Cascade’s kind of business as mission has resulted in a quadruple bottom line: building financial, social, environmental, and spiritual capital. May we all similarly strive to join God in his work in the world.



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## PROVERBS 31:10–31

*A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.  
Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.  
She brings him good, not harm,  
all the days of her life.  
She selects wool and flax  
and works with eager hands.  
She is like the merchant ships,  
bringing her food from afar.  
She gets up while it is still night;  
she provides food for her family  
and portions for her female servants.  
She considers a field and buys it;  
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.  
She sets about her work vigorously;  
her arms are strong for her tasks.  
She sees that her trading is profitable,  
and her lamp does not go out at night.  
In her hand she holds the distaff  
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.  
She opens her arms to the poor  
and extends her hands to the needy.  
When it snows, she has no fear for her household;  
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.  
She makes coverings for her bed;  
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.  
Her husband is respected at the city gate,  
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.  
She makes linen garments and sells them,  
and supplies the merchants with sashes.  
She is clothed with strength and dignity;  
she can laugh at the days to come.  
She speaks with wisdom,  
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.  
She watches over the affairs of her household  
and does not eat the bread of idleness.  
Her children arise and call her blessed;  
her husband also, and he praises her:  
“Many women do noble things,  
but you surpass them all.”  
Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;  
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.  
Honor her for all that her hands have done,  
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.*

is nothing left to give. My colleagues Cameron Lee and Kurt Fredrickson have written, “Emotional exhaustion is common to people in the helping professions, who often give and give and give without caring adequately for their own personal needs,”<sup>4</sup> and this can include pastors, missionaries, and therapists.

Often, emotional depletion arises from the pain of relational stress. When we feel like we are not affirmed or appreciated, when it feels like no one has our back or no one is looking out for us, when we feel hopeless or powerless, when we feel like we are not enough—these are the painful feelings that can turn stress into burnout.

### OUR TRUE IDENTITY

If we want to learn to reduce workplace stress by improving relational conflict, we must begin by reclaiming our true identity. For many of us, significant relational wounds have given voice to negative self-statements that have damaged our identity. For example, when others have ignored what we say, we can feel unheard and dismissed, which can reinforce the notion that we are not worth listening to. Hence, we slowly begin to believe the lie that we are worthless. And with enough repetitive negative experiences, these lies can warp our identity.

We need to break the hold of such lies and restore our true identity. Henri Nouwen writes this:

*Your true identity is as a child of God.  
This is the identity you have to accept.*

*. . . It might take a great deal of time and discipline to fully reconnect your deep, hidden self and your public self, which is known, loved, and accepted but also criticized by the world. Gradually, though, you will begin feeling more connected and become more fully who you truly are—a child of God. There lies your real freedom.<sup>5</sup>*

As a Restoration Therapist, I believe in each individual’s capacity to reclaim his or her true identity by identifying truths and growing into those truths. Our truths generally come from three sources: God, trusted others, and the self. As an example of God as our source of truth, Ephesians 2:10 (NLT) says, “We are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” We are his precious daughters or sons whom he honors and loves (Isa 43:4). Another source of truth is trusted others who have shown us their love and their trustworthiness over time. Out of their love for us, they are able to speak truth into our hearts. However, of the three sources, the truths that the self speaks and believes appear to be the most transforming. Ultimately, we are the ones that have to choose to believe such truths and ascribe them to ourselves with the aim of restoring our identity and sense of safety.<sup>6</sup>

Reclaiming our true identity enables us to live as the new self. As stated in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” Our old patterns of believing



the lies and coping negatively are attached to our old self. Recognizing our true identity will empower us to put on our new selves, through which we can make better choices as an act of being made new in the attitude of our minds (Eph 4:22–24).

Our ability to see ourselves rightly is critical because it informs the way we interact with others. For example, we might have an internal message that our supervisor never listens to us. This may actually be true or it might be that the supervisor does not agree with us on a certain issue. Disagreement and not listening are two different experiences. When we lean into our truths and slow ourselves down enough, we might realize that our supervisor indeed listens to what we have to say. However, the pain of disagreement or feeling unheard can have us jump to the conclusion that we are never listened to at work, which will then prompt our negative coping behaviors.

Reclaiming our true identity allows us to ground ourselves in our truths. In this case, we can remind ourselves that we are valued, respected, and heard. We can approach our supervisor with a desire to engage respectfully, listen openly, and communicate calmly. Hence, even if our supervisor disagrees with our idea, we can remain strong in our true identity and choose not to react negatively.

#### STRESS AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

When we find work relationships to be challenging, this may be an indication that we need to make an overall assessment of our fit—the fit of our skills to the work, the fit of our personality with our coworkers or supervisor, or a reevaluation of our calling. More often, however, challenging relationships can provide us with the opportunity

to take a learning posture. Rather than succumbing to our negative coping behaviors, we can choose to take healthier and more nurturing actions.

*Seek collaboration.* If your tendency is to blame others, ask yourself how you can take responsibility for your own actions, which will help increase your sense of ownership. Taking ownership will help put you in a posture of collaborating and nurturing others.

*Seek assessment.* If you find yourself struggling with shame, work toward a more healthy self-appraisal. Remind yourself that this is not about how you perform; this is about who you are. Identify your gifts and strengths and build confidence around the person God has created you to be. Consider how your skills can be better used. Lean into your skills so that your work is a natural overflow of your identity.

*Seek mentorship.* Rather than taking control, aim to become more vulnerable. Seek mentorship from someone you respect. Give them permission to say the hard things. You will benefit from having someone speak into your life to rebuke, affirm, challenge, and encourage.<sup>7</sup>

*Seek connection.* If you find yourself having the tendency to withdraw, isolate, or escape, then seek connection. Find a trusted friend who can hold you accountable, particularly to the more harmful modes of escape. Make efforts to stay connected emotionally. Even when you feel overwhelmed with tasks, connecting with others will help to recharge your batteries.

The journey of writing this article was a reminder of the tension between my old

self and new self. My old self was weighed down by others' expectations and my own insecurities. My new self, however, sought to firmly grasp the truth of who I am: I am appreciated, I am good enough, and I am full of inherent worth. I leaned into my truths and chose to take nurturing actions. Rather than blaming others or internalizing shame, I took responsibility and owned my commitments. I made a healthy assessment of my time and skills and asked trusted mentors for their guidance.<sup>8</sup> And despite my full schedule, I carved out time to spend with my family and peers, whose words of encouragement and support recharged my spirit. All of these actions helped to relieve my stress and enabled me to focus on this task. We are called to live as the *new self* in Christ, and our restored identity can help us experience increased freedom from stress.



1. Archibald Hart, *Adrenaline and Stress* (Nashville: W Pub Group, 1991), 105.
2. Terry D. Hargrave and Franz Pfitzer, *Restoration Therapy: Understanding and Guiding Healing in Marriage and Family Therapy* (New York: Routledge, 2011).
3. Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter, *The Truth about Burnout* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 24.
4. Cameron Lee and Kurt Fredrickson, *That Their Work Will Be a Joy: Understanding and Coping with the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 40.
5. Henri Nouwen, *The Inner Voice of Love* (Doubleday, 1998), 70–71.
6. To read more about this, see Terry Hargrave and Sharon Hargrave, "Restoring Identity," *FULLER* magazine, issue 6, 40–43.
7. The training to be a therapist has an embedded system of live supervision, which invites regular monitoring of therapeutic skills as well as constructive feedback. I think other helping professions could benefit from such a system to normalize the experience of seeking and receiving feedback.
8. Much gratitude to Sharon Hargrave and Cameron Lee for their insightful feedback.

## WALKING THE LINE

Vincent Bacote

**F**amiliarity can sometimes lead to an illusory perspective. I have spent a long time thinking, reading, and writing about dimensions of public Christianity such as politics, culture, and work, and have been heartened by the increase in the numbers of books, articles, and blog posts on these topics. The illusion is that “increase” means that most evangelical Christians in the United States have developed an intimate familiarity with developments like the faith and work movement; the reality is that this increase is actually just the beginning. As investment strategist Bob Doll once told me, we are at the tip of the iceberg and not the entire iceberg itself.

While this recognition reveals the scale of the task of evangelizing the church about the impact of the good news beyond houses of worship, it also occurs to me that there is an opportunity to refine the message about the holistic discipleship central to faith and work. While many who write about faith and work could not be charged with swinging the pendulum to an opposite extreme in reaction to the absence of or resistance to holistic discipleship, it is important to reckon with the temptation to move from “heavenly minded-no earthly good” to “earthly minded-apathetic to heaven.” Put differently, the challenge is to land squarely in the midst of the “already-not yet” tension: what I think of as *walking the line* between detachment from our earthly lives and idolatrous (or nearly so) engagement with our lives.

It may seem strange to suggest that eschatology plays a vital role in a discussion of faith and work because of the heavily futurist orientation prominent in evangelical circles. Questions about Christ’s return—rapture, tribulation, millennium—have great importance but are not the only aspects of the

last things. When Jesus began his ministry after John’s baptism, he announced that the kingdom was at hand, the beginning of the end—or, really, the beginning of the new beginning. Christ’s life, death, and resurrection begin the arrival of God’s kingdom, and we stand between the first phase of the kingdom and its ultimate consummation that will occur when he returns to reign in fullness.

Our recognition of what has occurred gives us reason to conduct our lives now with the knowledge that God has not abandoned but has begun to reclaim his creation. This recognition of God’s commitment to his world ought to compel us to take our responsibility in this world with great seriousness; our work as one expression of the creation/cultural mandate remains.

It is also important to give attention to the future aspect of God’s kingdom. This forward gaze gives us sure hope in the face of the reverberations of the Fall that taint, impede, and sometimes thwart our aspirations for fruitful work. It also tells us that ahead lies life in the future kingdom that is greater than we can now imagine. Looking forward with great anticipation is a central and proper dimension of our faith.

What are some of the implications of this for our work life? First, an eschatological perspective can help us have a more expansive view of a word like *vocation*. Much of the faith and work conversation emphasizes vocation in relationship to career pursuits, which is indeed proper, but a fully Christian sense of vocation must include the call of God on our entire lives. Perhaps one way to think of this is to consider Augustine’s words: “our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” While Augustine may not



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have had dimensions of contemporary holistic discipleship in mind, the great truth that our lives operate best when we are reconciled to and resting in God applies to all of our endeavors. Vocation, the call of God, is God's beckoning us to a life reconciled to him and reoriented toward proper worship and work.

A further implication of this perspective is a familiar truth that is sometimes difficult to practice: Work is important, but there are important things in addition to work. To walk the line well requires an embrace of the goodness of work and the recognition that God is intensely interested in the 40-plus hours per week we spend on the job. The challenge is to resist turning God's affirmation of our work lives into permission to transform office spaces into altars or shrines. This is particularly difficult in the types of jobs that bring a high degree of satisfaction and reward. Proper attention to task management, leadership development, innovation, and other responsibilities in various fields can morph from holistic discipleship into idol worship. We desperately need Christians to work well and lead in their fields, but a distorted vision can quickly occur. This is where we need the reminder that even our best contributions are penultimate, that we await a future reality, and that our fidelity to God far exceeds other good though lesser commitments—like work and career. The resistance of workplace idolatry also helps us distribute our time to family life, service to the local church, and hobbies.

Some additional observations of walking the line include a recognition of the luxury of choice that comes to some of us. "Find your passion" is really just one dimension of discernment in our larger concept of vocation, and the conversation presumes a variety of options. The truth is that having an array of choices is a privilege easily taken for granted. These choices should certainly be considered with great seriousness, but tempered by walking the line between the now and the not yet. Even if we find ourselves in a vocational sweet spot where we live the dream of getting paid to inhabit our passion, no career amounts to a personal experience of realized eschatology. Our best accomplishments are penultimate.

Many open vistas remain for helping church leaders and parishioners discover the deep connections between life with Christ and life at work. As we do so it will be important to teach them to walk the line as part of faithful discipleship.





