Work

Christian Reflection

A SERIES IN FAITH AND ETHICS

BAYLOR
UNIVERSITY

GENERAL EDITOR Robert B. Kruschwitz
ART EDITOR Heidi J. Hornik
REVIEW EDITOR Norman Wirzba
PROCLAMATION EDITOR William D. Shiell

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT Elizabeth Sands Wise
DESIGNER Eric Yarbrough

PUBLISHER The Institute for Faith and Learning
Baylor University
One Bear Place #97270
Waco, TX 76798-7270

PHONE (254) 710-4805
WEB SITE www.ChristianEthics.ws
E-MAIL Christian_Reflection@baylor.edu

ISSN 1535-8585

Christian Reflection is the ideal resource for discipleship training in the church. Multiple copies are obtainable for group study at $3.00 per copy. Worship aids and lesson materials that enrich personal or group study are available free on the Web site.

Christian Reflection is published quarterly by The Institute for Faith and Learning at Baylor University. Contributors express their considered opinions in a responsible manner. The views expressed are not official views of The Institute for Faith and Learning or of Baylor University.

The Institute expresses its thanks to individuals, churches, and organizations, including the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, who provided financial support for this publication.

Contents

Introduction 8
Robert B. Kruschwitz

Consumer Culture and the Deformation of Work 11
Darby Kathleen Ray

Working for Dignity 19
Joel Schwartz

On the Value of Caring Work 26
Christine M. Fletcher

Of Magic and Machines: When Saving Labor Isn't Worth It 33
Jonathan Sands Wise

Working in Fields of Sunshine 42
Heidi J. Hornik
Vincent van Gogh, *The Red Vineyard*

Dismissed 44
Heidi J. Hornik
Philip Evergood, *The Pink Dismissal Slip*

Labor's Reward 46
Heidi J. Hornik
Jacopo Bassano, *The Parable of the Sower*
Domenico Fetti, *The Parable of the Vineyard*

I Offer All I Am to You 50
Jeanie Miley

Worship Service 51
Jeanie Miley

When Work Disappoints 60
Matthew S. Beal

Integrating Faith and Work 67
Mitchell J. Neubert and Kevin D. Dougherty

continued

The Theology of Work in the New Economy 75
Robert Dickie

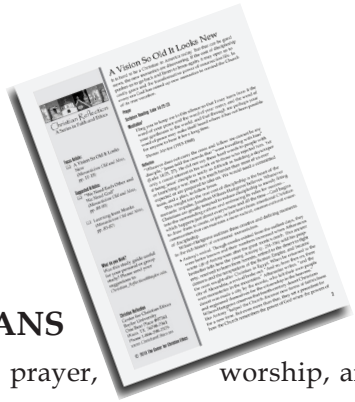
On Not "Dying on Third" 80
Robert M. Newell

To Labor Not in Vain 84
Gregory A. Clark

Work, Wealth, and Business 89
as the Ground of Christian Discipline
Roger Ward

Editors 94

Contributors 96



www.ChristianEthics.ws

Study Guides & Lesson Plans

These six study guides integrate Bible study, prayer, worship, and reflection on themes in the *Work* issue.

Consumer Culture and the Deformation of Work

Work can be a powerful source of livelihood, purpose, individual agency, social place, and connection to the divine, among other things. Yet work's ability to confer these positive meanings is threatened by the dynamics of today's consumer culture.

Working for Dignity

A job's goodness is not measured by salary, benefits, and 'intellectual' rather than manual labor, but by how well it preserves the dignity of workers and contributes to their fulfillment. This standard lends value to some jobs, particularly involving manual labor, that many people in our culture disdain.

When Work Disappoints

When work is linked to personal identity, this heightens the spiritual toll of underemployment and unemployment. No balm is to be found in modern motivational mantras, but in practicing the presence of God in our work.

The Value of Caring Work

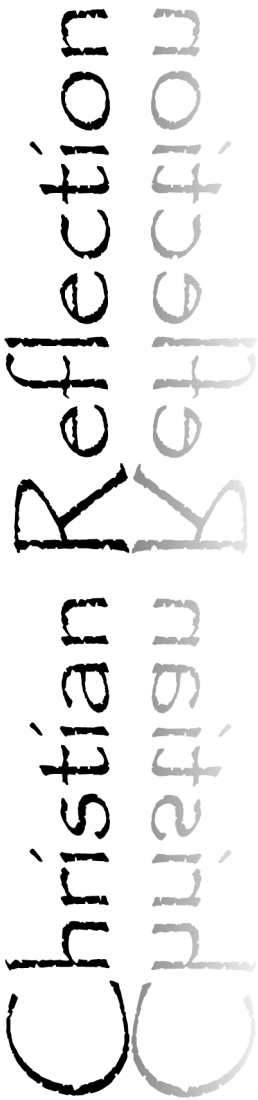
We undervalue work that cares for the weak, young, and old. And when we do value it, we prize it in the wrong way—as a display of our strength and virtues in caregiving. This reflects the individualism and consumerism of our culture, not the Christian Trinitarian perspective.

Of Magic and Machines: When Saving Labor Isn't Worth It

At the heart of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is the conflict between two visions of the true purpose and methods of work: one worships efficiency and dominates the world, while the other patiently draws out the inherent goodness within creation.

Integrating Faith And Work

Christians sometimes separate work and faith into secular and spiritual spheres. But recent studies show that if faith-work integration is emphasized in congregations, members experience work more positively and contribute positively to their workplace.



Reliable guidance
in engaging the ethical dimensions
of today's world

Past Issues:

Prophetic Ethics
Aging • Consumerism• Mysticism
Parables • Suffering • Marriage
Children • Apocalyptic Vision
Sports • The Pornographic Culture
Peace and War • Easter
Christianity and Islam • Cloning
Forgiveness • Women and the Church
Sermon on the Mount •Prayer
Immigration • Where Wisdom Is Found
Moral Landscape of Creation
Peace and War • Friendship • Acedia
Inklings of Glory • Health • Vocation
Global Wealth • Sabbath • Freedom
Food and Hunger • Membership
Catechism • Racism • Hospitality
Singing Our Lives • Cities and Towns
Advent Ethics • Heaven and Hell
Schools in a Pluralist Culture • Anger
Monasticism Old & New • Prison
Virtual Lives • The Gambling Culture
Christmas and Epiphany • Scripture
The Letter of James • Disability
Caring for Creation • Lent • Death
Women in the Bible • Work

Forthcoming Issues:

Generosity
Attentive Patience
Patterns of Violence
Traveling Well

HOW DO YOU REQUEST A FREE SUBSCRIPTION?

Christian Reflection is an ideal resource for discipleship training in the Church. To request a free subscription to this printed version, please contact us through our Web site or by phone. Your free subscription will begin with the forthcoming issue.

www.ChristianEthics.ws
phone (toll-free): 1-866-298-2325

ARE BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE?

Download and print free PDFs of *Christian Reflection* past issues, study guides, and lesson plans from our Web site. Multiple print copies of the current issue and many back issues can be purchased at $3.00 per copy. Please check our Web site or phone us for availability.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT CHRISTIAN REFLECTION?

Please continue to pray for this publication series. Share past copies of *Christian Reflection* with your friends, direct them to the Web site for free PDF versions of past issue contents, and encourage them to request their free subscription to the print edition.

If possible, make a financial gift. Simply go to the Web site, click on "Donate," and press the button to enter a secure online form. Because your gift to the Institute for Faith & Learning Excellence Fund is a tax-deductible charitable donation to Baylor University, you will receive a grateful acknowledgement from the University.

Introduction

BY ROBERT B. KRUSCHWITZ

Our labor should mirror God's creation and care for the world, but too often it reduces to mere drudgery because we idolize work or distort its meaning. Our contributors explore work's goodness in the Christian moral life and diagnose its contemporary diseases.

As Brian Brock has observed, "good work, because it is founded on God's love for humanity and creation, is attentive to the richness of that creation and to the speaking God who draws us into his reconciling service to humanity." Yet too often our labor misses this wonderful mark by a mile. It becomes mere drudgery because we idolize work or distort its meaning. In this issue our contributors explore work's goodness in the Christian moral life and diagnose some of its contemporary diseases.

"Work can be a powerful source of livelihood, purpose, individual agency, social place, and connection to the divine, among other things," Darby Ray notes in *Consumer Culture and the Deformation of Work* (p. 11), but she goes on to explain how "work's ability to confer these positive meanings is threatened by the dynamics of today's consumer culture." In *Working for Dignity* (p. 19), Joel Schwartz focuses on the threat to work's meaning when we measure a job's goodness "by salary, benefits, and 'intellectual' rather than manual labor" instead of "how well it preserves the dignity of workers and contributes to their fulfillment." He advises us to "remember that work is for the worker, not the worker for work," and then treat ourselves, colleagues, and employees by this standard.

Another deformation of work's meaning involves how we undervalue the work of attending to the weak, young, and old. Since the industrial revolution, this has been seen as "love's labor" for women, Christine Fletcher writes in *On the Value of Caring Work* (p. 26). Even when we do value such work, "we prize it in the wrong way—as a display of our strength and virtues in care-

giving," she observes. "This reflects the individualism and consumerism of our culture, not the Christian Trinitarian perspective."

On the other hand, we tend to overvalue efficiency at the cost of other values in our work. Jonathan Sands Wise explores this theme, which runs through J. R. R. Tolkien's beloved fantasy novels, in *Of Magic and Machines: When Saving Labor Isn't Worth It* (p. 33). Sands Wise detects "a direct line between our over-reliance on technology of all sorts, from smart phones to cars, and our inability to see or care about the sorts of human and environmental destruction that we sponsor by purchasing these commodities."

As work in the modern era becomes more entwined with one's sense of vocational fulfillment and personal identity, the spiritual toll of underemployment and unemployment is increased. Matt Beal's *When Work Disappoints* (p. 60) canvases some popular motivational mantras—such as "just dream bigger" and "find your purpose at the intersection of passion, mission, vocation, and profession"—that are supposed to give us hope and direction in this hard economy. He shows how these are misguided and points instead to Brother Lawrence's advice for "practicing the presence of God in our work." In a similar vein, Robert Dickie in *The Theology of Work in the New Economy* (p. 75) suggests that the "poverty gospel" and the "prosperity gospel" are misleading many today in the new economy of part-time work. He warns, "These two false gospels have the same flaw: they focus on what we earn and what we own rather than for whom we work and why we work."

The prosperity gospel receives more criticism for its practical failures in Mitch Neubert and Kevin Dougherty's *Integrating Faith and Work* (p. 67). Their studies show that "if faith-work integration is emphasized in congregations, members experience work more positively and contribute positively to their workplace." However, it makes a huge difference what "faith" is applied: "Beliefs about honoring God in work seem to contribute to creative and collaborative behavior at work, while prosperity gospel beliefs have no relationship with creative behavior and seem to discourage collaborative behavior." In *On Not "Dying on Third"* (p. 80), Bob Newell tells how he and his wife, Janice, decided to honor God by entering a second career of ministry rather than settling into an empty retirement. Newell concludes, "Aging well and continuing to serve Jesus requires a deliberate counter-cultural response to much that is taken for granted about retirement from work."

As several contributors note, Jesus probably worked at carpentry and he often featured manual laborers in his parables. In *Labor's Reward* (p. 47), Heidi Hornik shows how Jesus' lessons of work are transposed to the artists' own day in Jacopo Bassano's *The Parable of the Sower* and Domenico Fetti's *The Parable of the Vineyard*. In *Working in Fields of Sunshine* (p. 43), she examines Vincent van Gogh's appreciation for peasant workers in *The Red Vineyard* (cover). And in *Dismissed* (p. 45), Hornik explores how Philip Evergood's *The Pink Dismissal Slip* depicts the disappointment and rage at being unfairly laid off from work. The artist, she explains, "through both his expressionistic

art and his personal actions fought against the exploitation of the poor" during the Great Depression in the United States.

In a liturgy (p. 51) that commemorates the place of work in daily life, Jeanie Miley invites us to praise God who fashioned us as workers in the divine image. She provides words and rituals of thanksgiving that help us embrace God's call to stewardship, whereby "our work becomes a gift to God, a blessing to others, and a labor of love for ourselves." The worship service includes Miley's hymn, "I Offer All I Am to You" (p. 50), which concludes with the prayer: "Make holy by your presence here / the labor and the fruit; / inspire, create, fulfill your plan, / make blessing of my work."

The gatherer of Israel's wisdom famously warned that human work was toilsome and empty, or vain. "If, however, as the Apostle Paul writes, 'in the Lord your labor is not in vain,' then we need a way to understand our labor 'in the Lord,'" Greg Clark observes in *To Labor Not in Vain* (p. 84). Clark commends four resources—Timothy Keller and Katherine Leary Alsdorf's *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work*, David H. Jensen's *Responsive Labor: A Theology of Work*, Esther D. Reed's *Good Work: Christian Ethics in the Workplace*, and Ben Witherington III's *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor*—to help us think about work biblically and theologically. The authors respectively employ the categories of "Christian worldview," "the Triune God," "the resurrection," and "new creation" in order to "tell the story of God's work,…articulate the goodness along with the toil and vanity of human work, and…spur us to imagine heaven on earth." Clark concludes, "With each of them we can affirm that nothing good is lost."

In *Work, Wealth, and Business as the Ground of Christian Discipline* (p. 89), Roger Ward reviews four recent books that take up what he calls "the peculiar American struggle…[to] affirm Christians in business while offering theological critiques of capitalism or its effects." He notes that the books—R. Paul Stevens's *Doing God's Business: Meaning and Motivation for the Marketplace*, Amy L. Sherman's *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good*, John C. Knapp's *How the Church Fails Businesspeople (And What Can Be Done About It)*, and Jeff Van Duzer's *Why Business Matters to God (And What Still Needs to Be Fixed)*—"stand in a long line reaching back to colonial voices like the anti-slavery merchant and Quaker John Woolman and the theologian and pastor Jonathan Edwards who warned his wealthy congregants that God had made them 'for the good of your fellow creatures, and not only for yourself.'" Together these authors demonstrate how "balancing the spiritual dimensions of work with, and sometimes against, the norms of free market capitalism is an enlivening challenge."

Consumer Culture and the Deformation of Work

BY DARBY KATHLEEN RAY

Work can be a powerful source of livelihood, purpose, individual agency, social place, and connection to the divine, among other things. Yet work's ability to confer these positive meanings is threatened by the dynamics of today's consumer culture.

One of my favorite ways to begin a class, workshop, or discussion about work is to ask this question: Would you work if you didn't have to? That is, if you had enough money, good healthcare and retirement options, and adequate opportunities to be with other people, would you still want to work? Despite posing this question in a wide range of settings and to diverse audiences, I almost always get the same response: a resounding "Yes." Those who are dissatisfied with their current work situation sometimes take a moment or two to reflect, but before long they tend to make their way to a clear affirmative answer.

What is it about work, or about this particular moment in the history of work, that makes it an apparently indispensable dimension of what it means to be human? In other words, what work is work doing for us these days? In this essay I begin by considering the meaning-making functions of work in our day. I suggest that work is a powerful source of livelihood, purpose, individual agency, social place, and connection to the divine, among other things. Then I sound a warning, arguing that work's ability to confer these positive meanings is threatened by the dynamics of today's consumer culture.[1]

To begin, let us establish a theological foundation for our discussion. In biblical tradition, God is first and foremost a worker. God shapes the world with intelligence and care, patiently attending to both high-level concept and nitty-gritty detail, and taking great satisfaction in both the process and

the outcome of the work. In the book of Genesis, God's primordial labors bring order out of chaos, breathe life into the heretofore lifeless, and connect diverse life forms to each other in a complex, interdependent whole. At the climax of this world-making drama, God singles out one life form, humanity, and declares it has been created in God's own image. This is a stunning move with profound implications not only for humanity but for all creation. Among other things, the story tells us that humanity's work is intended to mirror God's work, which is to say it is intended to be fundamentally life-giving: a means of establishing our place in a complex and chaotic world; an opportunity to act on the world—shaping, building, growing, and delighting in it; and an avenue for connecting generously and responsibly to the diverse others with whom we share the world. The picture of work set forth in Genesis – work intended as a life-giving pursuit—is underscored in numerous other biblical texts and forms a backdrop against which we can consider our own culture's attitudes toward and practices of work.

The creation story tells us that our work is intended to mirror God's work. It is to be fundamentally life-giving: an opportunity to shape, build, grow, and delight in the world, and to connect generously and responsibly to other creatures.

What is it that work accomplishes for us today, and how does that square with the biblical notion of work as God-given and life-giving? For most of us, work is necessary for existence itself, for the provision of food, shelter, clothing, and other essentials of everyday life. Beyond survival, work gives our daily lives structure and purpose. Whether paid or unpaid, work serves as a kind of mandate for waking up and applying ourselves, a routine that helps demarcate and order time, a discrete space we occupy in the world. Through work we provide for ourselves and, ideally, for those who depend on us. In a sense, then, work shapes and organizes our world, providing existential coherence where otherwise chaos and fragmentation might reign. Those without work in today's world tend to lack not only the foundation for survival but also the routine and purpose necessary for coherent existence. As sociologist William Julius Wilson notes, "In the absence of regular employment, a person lacks not only a place in which to work and the receipt of regular income but also a coherent organization of the present—that is, a system of concrete expectations and goals."[2] Without the purposive effects of work, the world can be a strange and hostile place.

In addition to its survival and world-structuring functions, work in today's world is part of the bedrock of individual and social identity. The

first question we often hear when we meet someone is, "What do you do?" The assumption is that work is self-defining: if I know what you do for work, I will have a window onto your very being—not just how you spend your time, but who you really are. Those without work, whether unemployed or retired, can find themselves struggling for self-respect: who am I if I don't have work? In today's world, work is an important means of self-definition and self-respect. It also confers social place, positioning us in relation to others in the world. Our work connects us to others—coworkers, for example, but also to the larger socioeconomic and civic whole of which our work is a part. Through work, we put ourselves on the map, take our place in society. We also, importantly, contribute to the world around us.

Work not only positions us within society but is a primary means for shaping the world in which we live. Through our work, we leave our mark, have an impact, make a difference. We are actors in and on the world, and this is true not only for those with relatively high-status work where individual autonomy and creativity can be plentiful, but also for those whose work is lower on the socioeconomic pecking order. Witness, for example, the sense of individual agency and social impact articulated by a low-paid seamstress in Boston's Chinatown garment district: "There are three things that each person needs—food, house, clothing—and we take care of one of these. The clothes we do are everywhere, keeping the children, the grown men and women, warm and well."[3] For this worker as for many others, work is a means of self-efficacy, a way to act on and shape one's world.

For some people, work provides opportunities not only for self-assertion but also for self-actualization. In this scenario, it is through work that we reach our full potential and maximize our gifts. Work becomes a vehicle of self-expression, self-fulfillment, and personal growth. We don't simply tolerate work or periodically enjoy it, we love our work! It is our passion, our calling. While this almost magical symbiosis between self and work was once the exception to the rule, in recent years it has become a cultural ideal, the standard to which we aspire and against which all work is measured. When our work is a calling, we identify with it and give ourselves to it fully. For many, this means working an overabundance of hours and never really getting away from work. Studies show that especially for white-collar workers, work is increasingly "greedy"—outcompeting other institutions, including family, for workers' time.[4] Increasingly, we stay at least virtually connected to work around the clock, no matter what the cost to individual health, family and friend relationships, or civic involvement.

The irony is plain to see. The more we find fulfillment in our work, the more power work has over us. The modern work ideal is self-actualization, but in reality we seem to be losing ourselves. How did we arrive at this point? If we pan out from this picture of twenty-first century work, we can see that work's horizon is not what we might expect. It is not a vision of prosperity for all, nor even a laissez-faire individualism; it is certainly not

the kingdom or reign of God—life abundant for all creation. Rather, it is consumer culture that is the driving force behind work in our day. Put simply, we work so that we can buy. To be fair, humans have always worked in order to get what we need to live. In modern times we have worked for money and then spent that money on the things we need. The difference is that today we spend our money at unprecedented rates and on things we often do not need. Work is still a significant activity in today's society, but buying is even more significant. It is how we integrate into society, how we participate in today's world. Work remains important, but primarily because it is the precondition of consumption.

Under the impress of contemporary consumer culture, the life-giving potential of work—its potential to provide life's necessities and to be an avenue toward existential coherence, self-respect, social integration, individual agency, and civic contribution—is deformed and diminished. As work's primary purpose becomes the fueling of consumerism, its multiple intentions and life-affirming functions are undermined in worrisome ways. Take survival, for example. In a culture in which having the latest consumer goods is a prerequisite to social acceptance, the real necessities of life are often sacrificed for the sake of "keeping up." We might assume this is especially true for low-wage workers whose paychecks are barely enough to cover the basics of life, but the more affluent among us are no less likely to spend disproportionately on vanity items, putting other priorities at risk. "It is not simply a matter of keeping up with the Joneses or mimicking refined tastes," writes William Greider. "The consumption is required to keep up with American life itself." Thus, even those in poverty "are trying—struggling heroically, one might say—to remain good consumers and thus avoid public shame."[5] What was historically work's first priority, the provision of life's necessities, now too often takes a back seat to consumerism's superficial desires. We should also consider the role consumer culture plays in the widening gap between rich and poor, the increasing difference between minimum wage and a living wage, and other contemporary threats to work as a means of survival in today's world.

Another of work's traditionally life-giving functions is its conferral of structure and purpose on human existence. Just as the creator God fashions order out of chaos, so can human work bring routine, discipline, reliability, and integrity to life. However, consumerism's exaltation of instant gratification and short-term gain can easily destroy work's world-structuring impact. The lifeblood of consumer culture is incessant desire—desire for things we don't yet have, desire for a newer or different version of something we already have, desire for more of what we already have. The "health" of our economy depends upon our perennial dissatisfaction with what we already have and our constant, often frantic search for the next best thing. This craving for novelty changes our relationship to time and undermines our horizon of meaning.[6] Under the influence of consumerism, we are

always on the move, in a certain sense, always on the lookout for new and better products and opportunities. Instead of being framed by a long-term horizon, our days and desires focus on the short-term, on what is just around the next bend or in the next advertisement.[7] Loyalty to the "old," whether a car, a job, a marriage, a community, or the religion of our upbringing, is seen as a liability. Long-term commitment will simply slow us down. We are more mobile than ever, and although we have hundreds, sometimes thousands, of "connections" and "friends," there are precious few who know us deeply.

Work was once a site of long-term investment and return, a place where loyalty, craft, and quality were valued and rewarded. By contrast, today's workers can expect to change not only jobs but careers multiple times, reinventing themselves again and again and developing loyalty not to the company or team but to their own self-advancement. To keep up with consumer demand, work must be flexible, mobile, off-shore, and just-in-time—a far cry from the world-structuring promise work once held.

Not only does consumer culture diminish work's ability to provide stability and existential coherence to twenty-first century life, but it also undermines work's function as a font of individual identity and self-respect. The flip-side of widespread and incessant consumer craving for new products is an economy focused on the promotion of cheap goods—goods that are inexpensive enough that all citizens can aspire to be consumers of them, and goods that are designed to last or satisfy for only a short time so that they must be replaced by a newer model or item. Where workers could once take pride in the quality of products or service their labor helped create, more and more jobs today focus on the production or sale of cheap goods or spurious services no one really needs. Workmanship and craft are pointless in such an economy. Even in "knowledge industries" like medicine and education, intense market pressures are squeezing out meaning and quality. For example, patient quotas mean doctors must hurry through examinations, while the linking of teacher pay to students' standardized test performance encourages "teaching to the test." In industry after industry, work that serves the ends of contemporary consumer culture is diminished in its ability to cultivate meaning and self-respect.

Work was once a place where loyalty, craft, and quality were valued and rewarded. But today's workers change jobs multiple times, reinventing themselves often and developing loyalty not to the company or team but to their self-advancement.

Increasingly, the value of work is reduced to a paycheck or, more accurately, to the buying power that the paycheck represents. Thus, it is less and less our work that puts us on the social map or gives us a place in the larger whole and more our ability to participate in consumer culture, to acquire the goods and services that one simply "must have" to avoid social shame. Even social responsibility is being redefined, as when today's leaders suggest that the best way to respond to national catastrophe or crisis is to go shopping. Apparently civic duty and social impact are as easy as the swipe of a credit card. Meaningful opportunities to shape the world through one's work are similarly delimited by consumerism, which reduces "the world" to Walmart and Wall Street and invites us to leave our mark not through creative effort or hard work but by investing our money, time, and energy in the consumer market. Work is still important, but its main value is its bankrolling of that investment.

To contest work's deformation and reclaim its life-giving potential, we can nurture nonconsumerist ways of seeing and being. That requires persistence and a community of support, for the market's version of reality is deeply ingrained.

Where does this sad story of work's deformation leave us? Quite a distance from the notion of work as a God-given, life-affirming pursuit! As we have seen, work can be a person-forming, meaning-making, world-sustaining activity, but under the impress of consumerist values it can also be powerfully destructive to human personhood and community. What can people of faith do to contest work's deformation and reclaim its life-giving potential? For one, we can stop acting like economic versions of meaning and value are the only ones that exist or matter. We can contest the assumption—almost universally held in our day—that the economic sphere is where meaning and selfhood reside, and we can give witness to other spheres of meaning.[8] In truth, however, our witness will be hypocrisy unless we ourselves nurture nonconsumerist ways of seeing and being. Doing that will require hard work, stubborn persistence, and a community of support, for the market's version of reality and value is pervasive and deeply ingrained.

As we set our sights on the recalibration of priorities and the refocusing of desire, we can look to religious tradition for wisdom and inspiration. One such source is the life and thought of Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430). According to Augustine, the key to understanding both the pathologies and the promise of human existence is desire.[9] We are fundamentally creatures of desire, and the challenge of faithful living is the proper ordering of our

multiple and complex desires. In his own life, Augustine struggled mightily to come to this insight and to enact it in his daily life. He craved worldly recognition and sexual pleasure, and he pursued these cravings at the expense of other, more life-giving desires such as personal integrity and love of God. Even though he knew in his heart that he was wasting his life chasing after what he called "lesser goods," Augustine was loathe to change his ways because of the pleasure those lesser goods brought him. What he finally learned, however, was that such pleasure is fleeting and unreliable; human desire cannot be sated by finite goods or temporal values—only the infinite love of God can satisfy our deepest yearnings. The key to human fulfillment, then, is not to deny the competing desires with which we are confronted but to learn how to prioritize them so that lesser goods are subordinated to higher goods. And what are those higher goods? According to Augustine, they are the values, actions, and things characterized by and aiming toward God's eternal love.

Augustine could not have conceived of the complexities and challenges posed by today's consumer culture. Yet his conviction that we are creatures of desire for whom authentic living requires the prioritizing of higher goods over lesser goods could not be more relevant. If we want to have lives and work that are not enslaved to consumerism, then we will have to become nonconformists. This means training our hearts and focusing our desires on the most worthwhile things—the love that endures, the work that gives life—and allowing those things to take priority over everything else. The reformation of work in our day will require that we open our eyes to and speak out against wages that are too low to support life's necessities, corporations that focus on short-term gains at the expense of long-term well-being, work that trades human dignity for higher profits, and other work practices that fly in the face of God's intentions for creation. Contesting work's deformation means raising our children and committing ourselves to say "Enough" when we have enough, rather than continually grasping for the next new thing. It means learning a craft, taking the time to develop skill and even mastery, and having the patience and foresight to teach the next generation. Finally, work's reformation will require that we work not primarily for the buying power our work produces but for the "higher" goods work can confer on human life—things like livelihood, purpose and structure, self-definition, social connection, and civic responsibility. May it be so.

NOTES

1 For a more thorough consideration of the arguments and ideas in this essay, see Darby Kathleen Ray, *Working*, Compass Series: Christian Explorations of Daily Living (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011).

2 William Julius Wilson, "Jobless Poverty: A New Form of Social Dislocation in the Inner-City Ghetto," in Amy S. Wharton, ed., *Working in America: Continuity, Conflict, and Change*, third edition (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 2006), 178.

3 Cited by Paula M. Rayman, *Beyond the Bottom Line: The Search for Dignity at Work* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 94.

4 See, for example, Juliet B. Schor, *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

5 William Greider, *The Soul of Capitalism: Opening Paths to a Moral Economy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 17.

6 For a discussion of the impact of consumer culture on the experience of time, see Darby Kathleen Ray, "It's About Time: Reflections on a Theology of Rest," in Darby Kathleen Ray, ed., *Theology That Matters: Ecology, Economy, and God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 154-171.

7 For an insightful study of the impacts of short-term thinking in contemporary culture, see sociologist Richard Sennett's *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998).

8 See especially Kathryn Tanner, *Economy of Grace* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005).

9 Augustine's autobiography, *Confessions*, offers a compelling articulation of his position.

DARBY KATHLEEN RAY
is Donald W. and Ann M. Harward Professor of Civic Engagement at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine.

Working for Dignity

BY JOEL SCHWARTZ

A job's goodness is not measured by salary, benefits, and 'intellectual' rather than manual labor, but by how well it preserves the dignity of workers and contributes to their fulfillment. This standard lends value to some jobs, particularly involving manual labor, that many disdain.

When my students discuss the goals of their college education, they often say they are preparing for a "good job," and for many of them, the goodness of the job depends almost entirely on a high salary, generous benefits, and how much of it involves "intellectual" rather than manual labor. But do such things as compensation and type of work really make a job "good," or is there more to consider?

Another way of evaluating the goodness of work is to ask how well it preserves the dignity of the worker. This shifts the focus to the person doing the job and to how performing the work fulfills the worker as a person. It is the approach adopted by Pope John Paul II in the encyclical *Laborem Exercens / On Human Work* (1981).[1] I will follow his lead in this essay and explore what is involved in respecting human fulfillment through work. The answer, as we shall see, can lend value to some jobs that many people today (like my students) do not consider to be good and dignifying of the worker, particularly some jobs involving manual labor.

Laborem Exercens begins with some clarifying definitions. Given that "the primary basis of the value of work is man himself," discussions about whether a certain sort of work is dignifying must focus on the human person and how that work contributes to dignifying the person. A person is defined as "a subjective being capable of acting in a planned and rational way, capable of deciding about himself, and with a tendency to self-realization" (§ 6). Of course, not all work is dignifying; it is sometimes toilsome, injurious, and in some circumstances, even unjust (§ 1). It is tempting to identify bad

work simply with the kind that produces significant toil and suffering, but John Paul II redirects our attention to the potential of work to diminish the human person. In other words, the negative effects of work are not only physical, but may be spiritual in their harm.

While it is not always appropriate to read content from pre-papal writings onto papal encyclicals, it is worth noting that Karol Wojtyla, before he became Pope John Paul II in 1978, often wrote about the dignity of the human person. He believed that human dignity is not simply a static reality (a property or status that the person possesses), but also a teleological calling on the individual (a goal for the person to understand, embrace, and grow toward).[2] This has an important implication for how we treat ourselves and others: to respect persons' dignity does not mean that we permit them to act as they desire because they possess a special property of dignity; rather, treating them with dignity includes encouraging and assisting them to develop into the fullness of their humanity, which they may or may not fully grasp for themselves. On this view it makes sense for an activity to "dignify" persons by enabling them to become more fully human. We should see this distinctive understanding of human dignity, which is explicit in the Pope's pre-papal writings, as undergirding the arguments and claims of *Laborem Exercens.*

Jobs that diminish rather than dignify workers, then, are not limited to those that treat people in (what is typically agreed to be) sub-human ways, but include those that prevent, distract, or disorient people from pursuing the *telos* of becoming fully human.[3] (For simplicity, I shall refer to work as "undignifying" if it either treats persons in sub-human ways, or simply prevents, distracts, or disorients them from recognizing, embracing, and pursuing their *telos*.) Of course, a complete discussion of undignifying work must identify and condemn sub-human treatment that occurs in the workplace. Such conversations are of first importance, because arguably we must acknowledge and, if possible, resolve those circumstances that ignore human dignity before we can really consider the many other situations that inhibit the fulfillment of people's humanity. However, if we do not continue on to such teleological conversations, we will miss a significant factor in explaining why people are dissatisfied with their work and why they discredit jobs as "beneath them."

HOW WORK CAN FAIL TO DIGNIFY A WORKER

Where do things go wrong with regard to work, whether it involve largely intellectual or manual labor?[4] The first way is in the objectification of the worker, which occurs when the worker is seen as valuable primarily as an object of use as opposed to a person. The worker can be seen as a cog in the machine, replaceable with another cog, not offering anything significant, and not requiring any special consideration apart from the fact that the worker's role must be filled for the machine to work. One might think that manual labor is especially exploitable in this way, as typically little to no

specialized education is necessary to hold those jobs; white-collar jobs, on the other hand, often require some kind of education that may make it more difficult to replace the worker. However, this does not prevent these white-collar jobs from being equally exploitive of the dignity of workers.[5] Indeed, some white-collar workers exploit themselves, offering themselves as a commodity for sale, willing to do whatever the job requires for the right price. Regardless of whether the job requires intellectual or manual labor, it can treat the person as a means of production rather than the subject of work (*Laborem Exercens*, § 7).

A second way in which work can diminish workers involves their perception of their labor. Dignifying (or undignifying) work cannot be reduced to the quantity of *external* goods like pay, working conditions, and benefits the worker receives from the employer. Certainly, such factors play a significant role, for without external goods, work cannot dignify workers. However, there are also *internal* goods of realizing and appreciating that one's work is dignifying. To lack this experience of joy in their work may be just as detrimental to the dignity of workers.

We enjoy the internal goods of working when we are being dignified by our work and we appreciate this. The lack of these goods can take two important forms: first, we may mistakenly think that we are being dignified in our work, but the actual goods are contrary to this experience; or second, we may think that we are not being dignified in our work, even though we have all the goods necessary in order to be dignified in work. In the first situation, there is a dual failure: the work is actually contrary to the fulfillment of our humanity, and furthermore we fail to recognize it as such. In the second situation, there is a single failure in our perception to understand what we require for fulfilment. In both situations the problem lies ultimately in our distorted perceptions, but our culture (or even our employer) often plays a significant role in shaping those misperceptions.

Jobs that diminish workers are not limited to those that treat people in sub-human ways, but include those that prevent, distract, or disorient people from pursuing the *telos* of becoming fully human.

While workers in many jobs lack the internal goods of working in one or both ways, I want to look at how manual laborers might fail to enjoy their work. This will help us understand how manual labor can be dignifying and what must be done to ensure that it is dignifying for workers.

Though it is not the norm, some workers may be subject to undignifying work, but due to personal lassitude or the extreme limitations of their circum-

stances (for example, they desperately need the money or benefits, there are limited or forced options about where to work, and so on), they do not make a change in their work; rather they attempt to make the most of it, to see the good in it, and to enjoy the work they do. These workers may even convince themselves that the work is not contrary to their dignity, despite being undercompensated, involving avoidable risk to their bodies, being treated in a demeaning way, and so on. They may even think they have a wonderful job, find meaning in it, and take pleasure in the work they do.[6] What started as a conscious strategy to cope with their bad job may evolve into a genuine but mistaken belief that their job is dignifying.

As an aside, it is worth noting an important distinction between a job being dignifying and a job having true meaning or purpose in one's life. Workers sometimes can find meaning or purpose in undignifying work. It may be like other forms of suffering that have meaning in one's life while being an undignifying experience. Indeed, being able to draw purpose from suffering that one cannot avoid, or that is a necessary means to achieving an important good, is a noble endeavor. In finding true purpose in undignifying work, workers are fighting against the undignifying nature of their work while still recognizing that the work is contrary to their fulfillment as human beings. While some may argue that workers should always leave undignifying jobs, the reality of their situations may not permit them to leave a job because they need the income for a good reason, or cannot find or do another job. This does not mean they should resign themselves to being undignified in their job, but that they should look for ways to help the work be more dignifying for themselves and their coworkers with whatever influence they have, even if the work remains ultimately undignifying.

In the first situation described above, when workers delude themselves about being dignified in their work, they are at fault for believing the job to be dignifying when it is not. Their employers, however, are more at fault for creating or allowing a work environment that is contrary to the dignity of the workers. In permitting such an environment to exist, one could argue the employers are doing their own work in an undignifying way, acting contrary to the fulfillment of their own humanity. Theirs is likely to be an even greater failure of moral vision than in the workers, because they are either failing to perceive the dignity of their workers as human persons or failing to recognize why the environment in which they toil is undignifying. Given the role that recognizing and promoting the common good plays in fulfilling one's own humanity, employers who act contrary to the good of their workers are also working against their own good, whether they realize it or not.

In the second situation mentioned above, the workers have all the goods necessary for their own fulfillment, yet they do not enjoy that experience because they fail to understand what they require for fulfilment. For example, while working at a job that requires hard physical work, they might mistak-

enly think this is undignified. Even though they are fairly compensated for both the work and the toll it takes on their bodies, they may be dissatisfied with their manual labor and convinced they should be doing a white-collar job instead. They perceive their job as "beneath them," perhaps because they have internalized society's general disdain for manual labor or their employers' low opinion of the particular job, even though the employers provide the support necessary for it to be fulfilling. Because they perceive the value of their work to be minimal, they long for something more than what they have, believing that a different job, greater compensation, improved benefits, and so on, will provide the dignity they lack. Yet, this might not provide the joy they seek, and may only feed their misperceptions of their work. They do not appreciate how their work contributes to their own well-being as persons and to their society's survival and flourishing.

In *Laborem Exercens*, John Paul II provides a concrete illustration of this second sort of situation with regard to the treatment and respect of those who work in agriculture for a living (§ 21).[7] Farming is not easy; it is physically demanding and, in certain seasons, requires constant effort and attention. Of course, the importance of agriculture for the survival and flourishing of society cannot be overstated, as through it the world's people are fed. Yet society tends to look down on those who do agricultural work, inadvertently encouraging those in the profession to look for ways to escape it and find work that is more respected. When farmers leave their land, there is often set in motion a dehumanizing process: the absentee landowners who gain control of the agriculture tend to be more disconnected from the farm laborers and thus less concerned with properly dignifying the laborers' work. The landowners are more likely to believe farm laborers are replaceable units with minimal impact in productivity, and there is little profit to be made by giving them opportunities for development in their jobs and as human beings. "In many situations," John Paul II concludes, "radical and urgent changes are…needed in order to restore to agriculture—and to rural people—their just value *as the basis for a healthy economy*, within the social community's development as a whole" (§ 21).

We can generalize from John Paul II's discussion of the problematic results of society misperceiving the value of agricultural labor. First, whenever society fails to recognize the value of a profession, the treatment of workers in that field can become dehumanizing. Furthermore, this can inadvertently encourage workers to leave the profession, undermine the work done within the profession, and thereby hurt not just those workers but all the people who depend on the work they do. Mike Rowe sheds light on these phenomena in his television shows *Dirty Jobs* and *Somebody's Gotta Do It*.[8] As he explores (and participates in) the jobs society disdains but desperately requires, he reveals why those jobs must be done and the hard work that goes into them. Hopefully, this instills in his audience both a greater understanding of these jobs and gratitude toward the workers who do them.

Rowe has taken the next step by creating a foundation that encourages people to go into skilled manual labor fields that lack the workers necessary to keep up with demand.[9]

Just as society's undervaluing of a profession can have these deleterious effects, in a similar fashion so can workers' personal, unjustified disdain for their work. The undervaluing of one's own job can lead to severe dissatisfaction that spills over into other parts of one's life, hurting not just oneself but one's coworkers, family members, and friends. Often the misperception may be traced to a lack of tangible evidence of constructive accomplishments from one's labor, which can lead to self-doubt. Of course, this lack of tangible, valuable results afflicts all sorts of work, and may even be most prominent in white-collar jobs within impersonal organizations. No one is immune from the dangers of undervaluing their work.

Employers should remember that work is for the worker, not the worker for work, and then treat themselves (for they are workers, too) and their employees by this standard.

HOW WE CAN MAKE WORK MORE DIGNIFYING

The "radical and urgent changes" required to make jobs more dignifying for workers must occur at the three levels of society, employers, and employees. There is interaction among these levels, but for clarity I will treat them separately.

First, society should properly value the goods that various forms of work bring about for the society and for the workers. While certain jobs, such as road maintenance and trash collection among others, may not require as much skill or encourage as much personal growth in workers as other jobs, they produce significant goods for society, and for this reason they command appropriate appreciation for those who do them. This appreciation may take many forms, such as an attitude of respect, better working conditions, and greater compensation for those workers.

Employers should remember that work is for the worker, not the worker for work, and then treat themselves (for they are workers, too) and their employees by this standard. Employers should recognize the value of their employees, and show their appreciation by providing fitting benefits and working environment. They should encourage workers to develop knowledge, work skills, and leadership that make them more valuable and less replaceable in the workplace. Their actions should be guided by the fact that the worker is a subject and work is also for the well-being of the worker.

Workers can help themselves by fully appreciating the goods for society, their employers, and themselves that they are accomplishing through work.

Most importantly, they can attend to how their work is helping to bring about the fulfillment of their humanity. Even when their employers and society present the opposite view, workers need to recognize the good that their work brings about and value their role in producing it. If workers fail to do this, they will not be dignified in their work, regardless of what others do on their behalf.

NOTES

1 Pope John Paul II, *On Human Work: Laborem Exercens* (Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 1981). This encyclical is available online in English translation at *w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html* (accessed June 1, 2015). Further references to sections of this encyclical will be in the text.

2 Karol Wojtyla, "The Dignity of the Human Person," in *Person and Community: Selected Essays* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1993), 179.

3 The *telos*, or proper end, of a human being can be understood rather broadly here; it need not be a specific, pre-determined set of behaviors. Wojtyla argues for self-determination as an important part of one's *telos*. By this he means not merely the modern (and largely negative) conception of autonomy (as having free choices), but the intentional direction of oneself toward one's *telos*. This self-direction requires one to recognize one's *telos*, which may be instantiated in multiple ways, depending on the situations and opportunities in one's life. One's teleology is about one becoming a kind of person rather than doing specific actions.

4 John Paul II often refers to work generally, noting that the following discussions apply to both intellectual and manual labor. See *Laborem Exercens*, §§ 1, 14, 17, 24, and 27. I shall follow his lead and use "work" to refer to both dimensions of labor.

5 The movie *Office Space* offers a humorous, too-true-to-life take on the dehumanizing life of a cubicle worker. Mike Judge, director, *Office Space* (Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 1999).

6 Examples of this situation range all the way from the "happy" slave to those abused office workers, demeaned sex workers, and endangered laborers who have convinced themselves they are happy.

7 The rest of the paragraph draws from this section of the encyclical.

8 *Dirty Jobs* aired on Discovery Channel from 2003 to 2012. *Somebody's Gotta Do It* began on CNN in 2014.

9 For more information about mikeroweWORKS Foundation and its scholarship program "for qualified individuals who are interested in learning a skill and mastering a trade," see *www.profoundlydisconnected.com* (accessed June 1, 2015).

JOEL SCHWARTZ
is Visiting Professor of Philosophy at Bethel College in Mishawaka, Indiana.

On the Value of Caring Work

BY CHRISTINE M. FLETCHER

We undervalue work that cares for the weak, young, and old. And when we do value it, we prize it in the wrong way—as a display of our strength and virtues in care-giving. This reflects the individualism and consumerism of our culture, not the Christian Trinitarian perspective.

Last December, I was flat on my back after a cardiac ablation, forbidden to move until the bleeding from the incision stopped. After six hours, I had seen every nurse on the cardiac floor and most from the cardiac ICU. None of them could stop the bleeding. They substituted a ten-pound sandbag for a nurse's hands applying pressure and left me to sleep as I could. Instead of being in charge of my life and able to move at will, I was helpless and dependent.

I found myself in the hidden world of dependency, a place I didn't want to be. I am one of the active ones, I am in control of my life, or so I think. Suddenly I was part of the world of those who are not capable of being active and self-sufficient. I needed the care of others for my basic needs. We all have been dependent as an infant, and will be dependent again as we are struck by illness or weakened by aging. Our society, however, now segregates the dependent and devalues their lives and the work of those who care for them. How did we get to this situation?

In the pre-industrial economy, the work for the means of survival and the work of care for dependents were intertwined within the extended family. Women and men worked side by side, working for their sustenance, training up their children, and caring for their sick and their elders. For instance, when we read the Bible we enter a world where a person's identity was determined by membership in a family and clan which determined the role he or she played throughout life in an integrated economy.

With the industrial revolution, work for sustenance moved out of the home and became labor for wages. Men lived in the public sphere of the economy and politics. Women stayed in the home where they provided "love's labor"—care for dependents. Men worked in order to provide the monetary support for the dependents at home. As money became the defining standard of worth, women's unpaid labor of caregiving was not treated as "real" work, but defined as women's special vocation.

In the 1960s, with the rise of second-wave feminism, women sought equality, understood as an equal chance to participate in the economy and politics. However, the circumstances of work—the long hours and the separation of work from private life—were not questioned. Many women left the home and unpaid caregiving for paid work. As more women followed this trajectory, caregiving was outsourced. Arlie Hochschild describes the result:

> Care work is a hot potato job. Many husbands turn over care of the young and old to their wives. Wives, if they can afford to, often turn it over to childcare and eldercare workers. In turn, many immigrant nannies hire nannies back home to help care for the children that they have left behind, forming a care chain.
>
> Underlying this gender/class/national transfer is the devaluation of care. This is based on the idea that care work is "easy," "natural," and—like parenting—not quite real work. Part of what makes care work invisible is that the people the worker cares for—children, the elderly, the disabled—are themselves somewhat invisible. Strangers entering a room may tend to ignore or "talk over" the very young and old.[1]

This globalized outsourcing of caregiving is happening in a culture that has had a limited moral language for reflecting on caregiving. Modern morality was conceptualized as a common life in the public square between equals, who are autonomous and seek exchanges that are mutually beneficial. Alasdair MacIntyre illustrates the weakness of this morality with an image: a man walks into his local butcher shop and sees the butcher suffering a heart attack. He says, "Ah, not in a position to sell me my meat today, I see."[2] We instinctively realize how wrong this response is. A fully human shopper responds to the butcher's need, setting aside his or her own needs. The contrast between the two is the contrast between the ethics of modern capitalism and the ethics of care.

The ethics of modern capitalism presupposes two equal, autonomous individuals who create moral obligation by free choice. It is only because the individuals choose to promise, for example, that they are now bound to act in a certain way. Freedom from restraint is the highest value. Relationships are created and ended by free choice. The individual is autonomous and increasingly isolated in a world of social media and various loose commitments to family, friendships, and communities.

The ethics of care, in contrast, sees that persons are often neither equal nor autonomous. Moral obligation arises from human need as well as human choices: the need of one party calls forth a moral obligation on the part of the other.[3] Freedom is not freedom from restraint but a freedom for the excellence of human flourishing. Some relationships are given, especially the primary identity we possess as a member of a family, and impose obligations upon us. Persons are understood as inherently relational and bound by the tie of common humanity to every other person.

Secular ethicists have begun to fill the gap in ethics that leaves the work of care invisible and unvalued. Eva Feder Kittay, a philosopher who is also the mother of a severely disabled child, grounds her ethic of care in the fact that we are all—equally—some mother's child.[4] This claim to equality is an alternative to the conceptions of equality that dominate our political life and widens the scope of ethical reflection to include all persons, no matter how dependent.

We can find common ground with those, such as Kittay, who recognize the need for an ethics of care. We agree that each of us is some mother's child. As Christians, however, we start our ethical reasoning from a conception of the person as the image of God, a brother or sister to all other persons who are also children of our loving heavenly Father. Our actions are guided by the actions and teachings of Jesus who made our duty to care explicit at the Last Supper:

> After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.
>
> *John 13:12-16*

Jesus does not cease being Lord, though he undertakes lowly service; and he commands us to do the same.

We are called to use our gifts and talents, whatever they may be, to serve those around us. This means of course, that some specific kinds of caregiving, such as nursing a baby, are inherently gendered. But it would be a mistake to draw from that example the conclusion that men are not responsible for hands-on care of the young, the sick, or the elderly. All of us are called to be caregivers, men and women alike.

The Trinity, the central doctrine of our faith, tells us not only that we are made for relationship, but also that difference, such as gender, does not mean inequality. When we say God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are

not listing beings in order of importance. That urge to decide who is at the top of the pecking order is a manifestation of the pride and disorder of original sin. Instead of this ranking, in the Trinity we see equality in difference, and difference within equality. Applying that to our lives, we no longer see Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, but equal children of God (Galatians 3:28). From our Trinitarian understanding of equality in difference, we can see men and women as equals in the work of God's kingdom, and equally called to care for others. We also see equality between the caregiver and the care recipient as human beings in relationship with each other.

MacIntyre, longing to reestablish some patterns of community life that could foster an ethic of the virtues, famously wrote, "We are waiting not for Godot, but for another—doubtless very different—St. Benedict."[5] We do not have to wait for a new St. Benedict; the original can show us how the virtues of care—giving and receiving— are not gendered but human. Benedict of Nursia, a sixth-century Roman nobleman, left secular life to seek God. In his Rule for community life, he conceived of his monastic community as a family. The Rule, written originally for men in the patriarchal Roman society, asks them to give up their privileged position and voluntarily cultivate the virtues of the oppressed.[6] These virtues—humility, patience, and love—are cultivated in the work of care within the monastic community.

The Rule specifies the duties of the common table, of care for the young and for the sick, as constitutive of the community. Benedict makes the most common work of care, feeding each other, of equal importance as the primary vocation of the monk, the praise of God. In the Rule, being late for meals is as serious an offense as being late for prayers. These serious faults are punished by exclusion from the common table and the common prayer in the oratory.[7]

From the Trinitarian understanding of equality in difference, men and women are equals in the work of God's kingdom, and equally called to care for others. There is also equality between caregiver and care recipient.

Mealtime is a daily necessity that requires work by someone. In the Rule it is the duty of each monk in the community in turn. The chapter on kitchen service begins, "The brothers should serve one another…for such service increases reward and fosters love."[8] The chapter goes on to require that the weekly service end with the server cleaning the equipment and providing an inventory for the incoming week's server. Together they wash the feet of the community, a direct and constant reminder of the Lord's example at the Last Supper. Love, accountability, and service in the daily task of providing food

are the glue that turns the monastery (or any family) into a community rather than a collection of strangers.

This communal love is expressed in the care of the sick, too:

> Care of the sick must rank above and before all else, so that they may truly be served as Christ, for he said: *I was sick and you visited me* (Matthew 25:36), and *What you did for one of these least brothers you did for me* (Matthew 25:40). Let the sick on their part bear in mind that they are served out of honor for God, and let them not by their excessive demands distress their brothers who serve them.[9]

Benedict reminds the caregiver and the care recipient of the mutual love, based in Christ, which should animate them both.

Benedict was also concerned with the young and the elderly. Children were often sent to the monastery for schooling or to be raised within the monastery. Older monks were bound by a vow of stability to the abbey. Benedict cared for both, providing in the Rule special care and exemptions from the strictness of the discipline, thus bringing both the young and the aged into the community while making special provision for their particular needs.

The Rule of St. Benedict and the lived practice of Benedictine monasticism give us a vivid example of all Christians' call to a vocation of radical love and service. Benedict's reversal of his society's gender norms stands as a way to expand our notions of care. Our tradition is not wrong in stating that women are called to the vocation of virginity or motherhood; but it is incomplete without reminding us that equally all men are called to the vocation of virginity or fatherhood. Motherhood and fatherhood can be lived both physically and spiritually.

Caregiving for children requires parents who are responsive, who offer love and attention. They must have an unconditional commitment to the child, and be non-retaliating. This is an unconditional commitment to this child even if it is ugly, sick, or disabled; it is a decision to make the child's needs and not one's own needs paramount.[10] As we trust in God's unshakeable love for us, we must model the same love for our family. As parents we have a dual obligation: to care for our children and to teach them to care for others. The chores that were a necessity in the days of the family farm served as character training for the young, as well as strengthening the ties between family members. Today, many parents do not see the importance of having the children contribute to the labor of the household, perhaps because that labor has been outsourced to a cleaner or a lawn-service company, or perhaps because it is much quicker to prepare the meal and clean it up without trying to get reluctant children to help. Without everyone's participation, though, family life and the children's sense of belonging both suffer.

Caregiving has its own spiritual dangers. We can become blind to how giving care to someone and being needed by that person feeds our own ego.

C. S. Lewis wrote about this in *The Four Loves* when he described Mrs. Fidget, who lived for others, and you could tell the others by their hunted expression. Her service to others was not true love; it did not consider their best interest. Instead it was an all-consuming need to be needed. Lewis notes that the service we offer in caregiving is a Gift-love, "one that needs to be needed. But the proper aim of giving is to put the recipient in a state where he no longer needs our gift."[11] There will be times when loving parents do not intervene to protect their children from the consequences of their choices, but allow them to learn life's lessons—the only way anyone actually learns grit and resilience.

For caregivers dealing with the severely handicapped or the elderly, the dependent will always need care, and may need increasing amounts of care. This presents a different challenge. The knowledge that things are going to stay the same or get worse is one of the hardest aspects of caring for an aging or a severely disabled person. The failing elderly and the parents of disabled children often report that the physicians they see are brusque and seemingly dismissive. The healers cannot heal, and so they protect themselves from the pain and suffering of disability and aging by getting the patients out of their offices as quickly as possible.

This is pride and not the love we are meant to have toward one another; the only way to purify our love is to be humble. We must put aside our own wants and needs and seek the good of the person we love. MacIntyre identifies what he calls "the virtues of acknowledged dependence." These require us in our giving to be just, generous, beneficent, and not only sensitive to others' suffering but taking action to relieve it. And they require us in our receiving to exhibit gratitude without it becoming a burden, extend courtesy towards the graceless giver and forbearance towards the inadequate giver, and make a truthful acknowledgment of dependence, giving up our illusions of self-sufficiency.[12] His account of these virtues, based on a fuller description of human moral agents than the autonomous adult individuals of much Enlightenment moral philosophy, gives us a description of the work of care which is free from gender stereotyping.

Our society claims that those who are dependent lead lives that are of less worth, and so we have legalized abortion and face increasing pressure to legalize assisted suicide. Our faith overturns the values of the world. The king of the universe appears as a small baby, and puts himself in human hands to be put to death. The powerful people who have all the goods of this world lose the one thing necessary; but the weak, the poor, and the humble inherit the kingdom of God. Our lives and our values are transformed by the coming of Christ and his kingdom, and so we need to transform our thinking about care and dependency.

The gospel commands us to become like children (Matthew 18:3). We are to recognize our dependence on God for everything, our essential neediness. If we are in a period of our life when we have bodily strength and mental

acuity, we can forget this. A sudden accident can render us helpless and remind us of the true state of affairs: every breath we breathe is the breath of God.

All of us are aging, advancing toward a time when we will need the care of others. We do not want to admit this. Our fear of dependency prevents us from accepting ourselves and from caring for others with true compassion. When we recognize our own dependence and fragility, we can care for others, not as an act of condescension, but as equally vulnerable human beings. We will know the truth and the truth will make us free (John 8:32).

NOTES

1 Arlie Russell Hochschild, *So How's the Family? and Other Essays* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013), 30.

2 Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Peru, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1999), 117.

3 Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 55.

4 Ibid., 25.

5 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 263.

6 Shawn Carruth, O.S.B., "The Monastic Virtues of Obedience, Silence and Humility: A Feminist Perspective," *American Benedictine Review*, 51:2 (June 2000), 128.

7 Benedict, *The Rule*, chapter 25.

8 Ibid., chapter 35.1-2. The translation is from *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in English*, edited by Timothy Fry, O.S.B. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1981), 57.

9 Ibid., chapter 36.1-4, in *RB 1820: The Rule of St. Benedict in English*, 59.

10 MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 91.

11 C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, The C. S. Lewis Signature Classics Edition (London: HarperCollins, 2002 [1960]), 60–62.

12 MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 126–127.

CHRISTINE M. FLETCHER
is Associate Professor of Theology at Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois.

Of Magic and Machines: When Saving Labor Isn't Worth It

BY JONATHAN SANDS WISE

At the heart of J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is a conflict between two visions of good work: one worships efficiency and dominates the world; the other patiently draws out the inherent goodness within creation.

Though it is easy to miss, one of the central conflicts at the heart of J. R. R. Tolkien's epic fantasy *The Lord of the Rings* is between two visions of how and why we work. On the one hand, the evil and powerful villains Sauron and Saruman seek to dominate the world and more efficiently recreate it in their own image; opposing them stands the humble wizard Gandalf, who uses persuasion and encouragement to bring out the potential inherent in the world and in others, and so makes them what they ought to be.

In his own work as an author, Tolkien appears to be dedicated to this latter view of work as an art of gentle persuasion: after all, he chooses to write fantasy literature where God only shines through the occasional crack in the narrative rather than craft allegories that bluntly express his Christian faith. Yet there is no doubt that his writing is thoroughly Christian in its motivation, its understanding of reality as God's creation, and most to the point here, its perspective on the proper end and methods of work.

To the extent that there is an "argument" running through all of J. R. R. Tolkien's creative writings, we might reasonably say it is this: the vision of work exemplified by Gandalf, the good elves and dwarves, and most especially the hobbits is the correct view, and we must avoid the worship of efficiency and technology, of magic and machines, which dominates in Sauron and Saruman.

THE FALL, MORTALITY, AND THE MACHINE

Knowing as we do today the immense popularity and commercial success of *The Lord of the Rings* and its spinoffs, it is hard for us to imagine the great difficulty Tolkien faced in getting his masterpiece published. Even though his children's story *The Hobbit* (1936) had been surprisingly popular, prompting the firm of George Allen & Unwin to press him to write a sequel for adults, the publisher balked at the length of *The Lord of the Rings* and Tolkien's desire to publish it together with *The Silmarillion*. In an important letter written to encourage an editor at the rival firm William Collins, Sons, to publish the manuscripts together, Tolkien explains how all of his work ("all this stuff," he actually writes) is ultimately concerned with "Fall, Mortality, and the Machine." Mortality causes us to fear that our work will remain incomplete, while the Fall causes us to cling to our work as if it is our own and solely under our control. After the Fall and due to our attendant mortality comes the deceptive lure of magic and machines:

> [T]he sub-creator wishes to be the Lord and God of his private creation.… Both [the Fall and Mortality] (alone or together) will lead to the desire for Power, for making the will more quickly effective,—and so to the Machine (or Magic). By the last I intend all use of external plans or devices (apparatus) instead of developments of the inherent powers or talents—or even the use of these talents with the corrupted motive of dominating: bulldozing the real world, or coercing other wills. The Machine is our more obvious modern form though more closely related to Magic than is usually recognized.

Tolkien is not exaggerating: these are the central themes in all of his works. "The Enemy in successive forms," he says later, referring primarily to the Satan-like characters of Morgoth and Sauron, but also to all of Satan's other manifestations, including in the actual world, "is always 'naturally' concerned with sheer Domination, and so the Lord of magic and machines."[1]

Since Tolkien's fictional works are far too expansive and complex to trace this theme through each part of them, I will point to only a few salient occurrences. As you become familiar with his narratives, you can identify many more episodes that explore his fundamental insight.

Let's begin with *The Silmarillion*, his backstory to the mythology of Middle Earth, in which the Valar (higher angel-like creatures) join in the song of God in a grand symphony. Unbeknownst to them, in this music they are by God's grace bringing the world into being: the world is the concrete manifestation of the music they have sung. This includes the dissonant chords sung by the Satanic figure of Morgoth, who tries to control and subvert the music by his will, dragging many of the other singers with him. This discordant singing is the original source of evil in the world, just as all later attempts by creatures to create in their own image, rather than sub-create in the image of God, are the root of subsequent evils. Tolkien beautifully notes

that God's music always reincorporates Morgoth's attempts at rebellion, and is made more beautiful (if sadder) by it.[2]

Tolkien develops this distinction between the activities of creating and sub-creating in "On Fairy Stories," an essay in which he defends writing fantasy. Fantasy, he says, is a particular form of Art, which he defines as "the operative link between Imagination and the final result, Sub-creation."[3] Art, in other words, is the activity that turns what we see in our minds into what we can see and hold in the world, and fantasy is that form of art that results in fantastical sub-creations. These are not creations proper, but sub-creations: only God can create, making what is genuinely new out of nothing, but we in proper imitation can bring into being sub-creations out of the primary world that exists around us, because we are created in the image of God.[4]

Evil arises when we try to create (to make things on our own) or to control the things we have sub-created. Fantasy, in making a complete secondary world with its own internal logic, is the embodiment of our universal "desire for a living, realized sub-creative art, which (however much it may outwardly resemble it) is inwardly wholly different from the greed for self-centred power which is the mark of the mere Magician," for it seeks "shared enrichment, partners in making and delight, not slaves."[5] To use more traditional theological language, the central source of evil in all creatures is disordered pride, or a desire to be like God, which led to the fall of Adam and Eve.

This same distorted pride appears in *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings*, which revolve around created objects whose creators try to control and possess what they have created, refusing to share their goodness to the benefit of others or even of themselves. For instance, while Fëanor's creation of the beautiful jewels called the Silmarils is good, his refusal to sacrifice the light of the jewels to give light for all the world (after Morgoth has destroyed the trees of light) leads to the downfall of much of the Elven race.[6] Likewise, the Arkenstone in *The Hobbit* and the rings of power in *The Lord of the Rings* are good (with the possible exception of the one ring, which exists solely to dominate), but too often their possessors try to dominate others rather than seeking the "shared enrichment, partners in making and delight, not slaves," as sub-creation should do.

Mortality causes us to fear that our work will remain incomplete, and the Fall causes us to cling to our work as if it is our own and solely under our control. After the Fall and due to our attendant mortality comes the lure to magic and machines.

The prime example of pride-distorted work comes in Saruman, the evil wizard of *The Lord of the Rings*. His chief ability as a wizard is to convince others with his voice, even against what they previously believed to be the case. With such power of persuasion, Saruman takes virtual control of Rohan's king and raises an army to dominate all around him in order to gain the Ring of Power for himself. In a central scene, Saruman tries to convince Gandalf to join with him by appealing to the good that they might accomplish if they rule the world together. "But we must have power," Saruman continues, "power to order all things as we will, for that good which only the Wise can see." Saruman suggests that whether they work with Sauron or grab the Ring of Power for themselves, he and Gandalf will then be able to achieve "Knowledge, Rule, Order; all the things we have so far striven in vain to accomplish, hindered rather than helped by our weak or idle friends. There need not be, there would not be, any real change in our designs, only in our means." Gandalf replies by demonstrating the emptiness of his claims: his offer that they will work together for this good is empty, because the kind of power that Saruman seeks, dominating power, can only be held by one person. To work with Saruman would really just mean to submit to either Sauron or Saruman. There is a further problem, too: Gandalf sees that to achieve the good in this way is impossible. You cannot achieve true knowledge, rule, or order by dominating others, but only by winning over and working with those to be ruled.[7]

There is a direct line between our over-reliance on technology of all sorts, from smart phones to cars, and our inability to see or care about the sorts of human and environmental destruction that we sponsor by purchasing these commodities.

Once great and wise, Saruman has become petty and power mad, more a tycoon of industry than a wicked wizard. As Treebeard, the wise Ent (a race of beings who most resemble trees), says of Saruman, "He has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment." Saruman has dammed the stream, burned the forests, and even engaged in bioengineering by somehow combining Orcs and evil men to make the Uruk-hai, a race of Orc-like creatures that are larger and stronger and can move about by day.[8]

After the Ents, with an assist from the good wizard Gandalf, defeat Saruman completely, he makes his way to the Shire, the home of the hobbits, and becomes Sharkey. Once again, Saruman is bent on destroying the native goodness of the Shire, if only out of spite, and here his methods more

obviously parallel the world of technology that Tolkien felt encroaching on the English countryside. Old houses, well-suited to hobbits, are left empty, and old fields and gardens turn to waste and weeds, while trees are torn down to make way for roads, factories, and new, ugly houses that all look alike, or sometimes for no apparent reason at all.[9] At first these changes seem to be due to possessiveness and a desire to do things more efficiently or faster, but in the end they appear to be waste and pollution for no purpose at all.[10] The wizard who began by trying to help people using magic and machines ends by destroying everything of value for no apparent purpose at all.

When we begin to believe that good work is always efficient, our work changes us in vicious ways. We embrace magic and machines in an effort to have everything we want quickly and with less effort, we believe the world is ours to shape to our will, and perhaps most dangerous of all, we begin to *enjoy* shaping the world simply for the expression of our own power. In the draft of a letter to his friend and fellow novelist Naomi Mitchison, Tolkien explains:

> The Enemy, or those who have become like him, go in for 'machinery'—with destructive and evil effects—because 'magicians,' who have become chiefly concerned to use *magia* for their own power would do so (do do so). The basic motive for *magia*…is immediacy: speed, reduction of labour, and reduction also to a minimum (or vanishing point) of the gap between the idea or desire and the result or effect…. Of course another factor then comes in, a moral or pathological one: the tyrants lose sight of objects, become cruel, and like smashing, hurting, and defiling as such.[11]

It is not always good for us, weak and embodied creatures that we are, to achieve our ends without hard work.

It is not difficult to see why Tolkien, living as he did through the first great, mechanized wars in history, would be worried about what machines might do to us as they take over all of our work, from fighting to communicating to making art.[12] This pattern continues today. There is a direct line between our over-reliance on technology of all sorts, from smart phones to cars, and our inability to see or care about the sorts of human and environmental destruction that we sponsor by purchasing these commodities. When we can get anything we want at the press of a button, how can we have the time or care required to try to change an entire system of exploitation?

Even when we do try to work for others, we want our work to be efficient and machine-driven. We want to give our charitable dollars using a credit card and a website, we demand good business assurances that our donation will then be used efficiently to do the most good, and we want to ship tons of foods and supplies to meet a need. We fly in our well-digging machines to fix water problems and fly in our troops or drop bombs to fix security

problems. All of this looks sensible if we worship efficiency, but the sense is merely an illusion. As Gandalf pointed out to Saruman, when we try to do the good using power and efficiency, we often fail to achieve it at all. Flown in security too often leaves chaos; flown in supplies too often destroy local food systems, leaving them completely dependent on foreign aid; and the demand for efficiency in charity too often means that we purchase sweatshop supplies for people forced to work in sweatshops because their products are cheapest.

Here we see two visions of good work directly in contrast: good work as that which achieves the chosen end in the most efficient way possible, or good work as that which works with the nature of the material at hand to achieve an end that is good in itself. Magic and machines both depend on efficiency, on finding the shortest and most powerful path between will and accomplishment, but this is not the way of good work. Good work must be humble, driven by a truthful vision and love for the soil or wood, student or neighborhood, upon which it works; and the good worker does not work to serve herself, but instead serves the good of her work. In short, good work makes something good *for us*, and also makes someone good *of us*.

GOOD WORK

When we think of hobbits, most people think immediately of their diminutive size, but this is not what Tolkien emphasized about them. In fact, in his description of hobbits in the introduction to *The Lord of the Rings*, their size does not come up until the second paragraph. Far more important is their approach to life:

> [Hobbits] love peace and quiet and good tilled earth: a well-ordered and well-farmed countryside was their favourite haunt. They do not and did not understand or like machines more complicated than a forge-bellows, a water-mill, or a hand-loom, though they were skillful with tools.[13]

The most important thing to know about Hobbits, it would appear, is their agrarian love for good work and good earth, and their equal disinclination toward machines and magic.

The natural vices of hobbits are as small and parochial as their lives, largely taking the form of over-eating and of pettiness about difference or change. While there are clear exceptions, hobbits do not have a tendency toward pride, greed, or vainglory, which is key to why they can play the heroic roles they take on in both *The Hobbit*, where Bilbo is worried more about a good meal than about the Arkenstone, and in *The Lord of the Rings*, where Frodo resists the power of the Ring long beyond what anyone could have expected. It is because of their humility and earthiness that Gandalf loves the hobbits, while Sauron and Saruman are completely unaware of them at first, but disdainful of them later. This humility is key to their good

work as well: they know what they can do and they do not tend to aim too high, and so they do their work excellently and with great care.[14]

Gandalf shows the same humility. Each species in Middle Earth has its own particular temptation connected to Tolkien's primary themes of Mortality, Fall, and the Machine: Elves are tempted to resist all change, Dwarves are tempted to control and possess their own beautiful creations, and human beings are tempted to gain power over death. Wizards are tempted toward impatience, as Tolkien explains in a letter to an American reviewer, "leading to the desire to force others to their own good ends, and so inevitably at last to mere desire to make their own wills effective by any means. To this evil Saruman succumbed. Gandalf did not."[15] By staying true to the hard, slow labor of persuasion rather than the efficiency of power through magic, Gandalf becomes a better person and achieves a great good. If, as we saw above, bad work makes us bad people and creates a bad product, so good work makes a good thing *for* us and makes good people *of* us.

Good work is done with humility, and so it is also done with a truthful vision. What separates Gandalf from Saruman is not simply his humility, but his love and appreciation for the people with whom he works. Saruman dismisses Aragorn and the elves as ancient relics and ignores the silly hobbits and slow Ents as having no power (for, after all, they have no magic or machines), but this is because he fails to see who and what they truly are. Good work must love the good of the work for its own sake, and so humbly serve it with patience and care. The true artist must be able to look at her work as a sub-creation, subordinate to God's work but still good in itself because we are created in God's image. Just as the effect of magic and machines is to teach us to dominate thoughtlessly, so the effect of good work done in service is to see and love the world around us better and so to love the creator more. We cannot make this world better on our own, but in service we can work with God to bring out its latent goodness, and only in this way can it truly be made better.

GRACE AND LOVING LEAVES

In his atypically allegorical "Leaf by Niggle," Tolkien adds one more point about the effect of good work: it can become part of God's work.[16] Niggle is an artist in his own small way, though not a particularly good one, but he loves trees and spends his entire life trying to paint them. Unfortunately, he often gets so focused on his painting that he does not truly see his neighbors around him or their needs, though he sees those needs well enough that they prevent him from fully giving his time to his work either. In fact, he is constantly torn, working neither particularly well nor particularly to the benefit of his neighbors; he is, in British terminology, a niggler, one who wastes time on too many little projects.

One day, Niggle is sent off on a sudden journey with no warning (i.e., he dies) to a workhouse (i.e., purgatory) where he is slowly taught to simply

do the work at hand, whatever it may be, and to love that work for itself. After working himself sick, he is confined to bed and overhears a conversation among three voices (i.e., the Trinity), the second of which gives his life an incredibly gracious interpretation. Much emphasis is put by this second voice on the way that Niggle could love and paint a single leaf as it truly is. After this conversation, Niggle is allowed to go on toward the mountains, where he discovers the reality of the world that he was always trying to paint. Here is his tree, here his forest, and in the distance are his mountains, all as he imagined them and tried to capture them, and some that he never quite got around to imagining. Working with a former neighbor, Niggle finally finishes his work, making this land exactly what it should be in itself, as opposed to what he wants it to be, and then goes on into the mountains.

The delightful message of this parable is that whatever good work we do, however small and humble (in fact, being small and humble might be best), whatever work we do that sees and loves reality as it is and tries to bring it to completion through our hard labor and work, will be taken up in God's grace and made perfect. That work that we allow to flourish apart from our desire to dominate and control will indeed fully flourish, and that good that we have only imagined in our minds will at last become fully free and real in ways we cannot imagine and beyond what we can even desire. Work done with magic and machines, work that seeks to dominate and control, will die with us. But work done as humble and loving sub-creation, in patient labor, will be taken up by the true Creator and made part of eternity.

NOTES

1 J. R. R. Tolkien, Letter 131 (to Milton Waldman), in *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, edited by Humphrey Carpenter (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2000), 145-146. William Collins, Sons, released *The Lord of the Rings* in three volumes in 1954-1955, but did not publish *The Silmarillion*. The latter was published posthumously by Tolkien's estate.

2 This story is recounted in "Of the Beginning of Days" in the Quenta Silmarillion in J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, edited by Christopher Tolkien (New York: Ballantine Books, 1981).

3 J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy Stories," in *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), 68.

4 Ibid. See especially the excerpt from his poem that Tolkien quotes on 74. The poem concludes with the claim that whatever fantastical inventions we might fill the world with, "—'twas our right / (used or misused). That right has not decayed: / we make still by the law in which we're made."

5 Ibid., 73-74.

6 This story is recounted over much of the Quenta Silmarillion, but primarily in "Of the Silmarils and the Unrest of the Noldor" and "Of the Flight of the Noldor," in *The Silmarillion*, 72-79, 86-102.

7 J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991), 252-253.

8 Ibid., 462. Treebeard, the Ent, surmises that this is the origin of the Uruk-hai, though they might be ruined men instead. *The Lord of the Rings* film series directed by Peter

Jackson seems to have taken a hint from Treebeard.

9 Ibid., 981, 989.

10 Ibid., 990.

11 Tolkien, Letter 155 (to Naomi Mitchison [draft]), *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, 200.

12 Tolkien, Letter 90 (to Christopher Tolkien), *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, 111. In this letter to his son at the conclusion of World War II, Tolkien writes, "Well the first War of the Machines seems to be drawing to its final inconclusive chapter—leaving, alas, everyone the poorer, many bereaved or maimed and millions dead, and only one thing triumphant: the Machines."

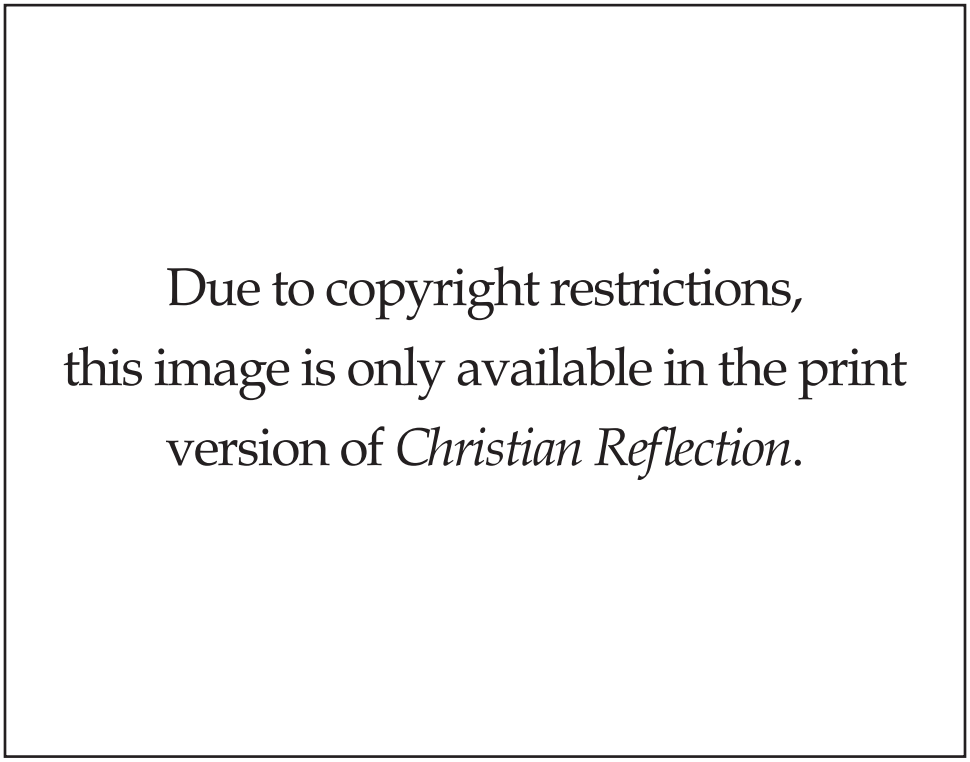
13 Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, 1.

14 Such provincial vices as the hobbits have may not tend to world domination, but Tolkien is well aware of their dangers nonetheless. Such vices as gluttony, gossip, and pettiness make us easy collaborators for those who would dominate the world, as we see in the Shire once Sharkey comes and finds help from some hobbits. Lotho and the other hobbits who cooperate with Sharkey are not themselves evil, but they are fools, and it is clear that Sharkey never could have taken over the Shire without their petty greed and the silly indecision of many other hobbits.

15 Tolkien, Letter 181 (to Michael Straight [drafts]), *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, 237.

16 J. R. R. Tolkien, "Leaf by Niggle," in *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), 100-120.

JONATHAN SANDS WISE
is Associate Dean of Academic Success and Associate Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown College in Georgetown, Kentucky.



Van Gogh celebrates the peasant workers who toil in this vineyard in southern France. They enjoy the open air and sunshine the artist loved.

Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), *The Red Vineyard* (1888). *Oil on canvas. 29.5″ x 36.3″. Puskin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Russia. Photo: Scala / Art Resource. Used by permission.*

Working in Fields of Sunshine

BY HEIDI J. HORNIK

The workers depicted here by Vincent van Gogh are the subject of the only painting by the artist known to have been purchased during his lifetime. It is believed that he painted the vineyard from memory.

Van Gogh had worked and studied in London, Antwerp, and The Hague. But it is not until seeing the paintings of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists in Paris that he changed his palette dramatically in 1887 to use brighter, less opaque colors. Like the Impressionists, he painted from life, preferred the use of natural light, and employed the synthetic evocation of color through Divisionism (the juxtaposition of small touches of pure, unmixed pigment directly on the canvas). This last characteristic became the expressive trademark of his later works.[1]

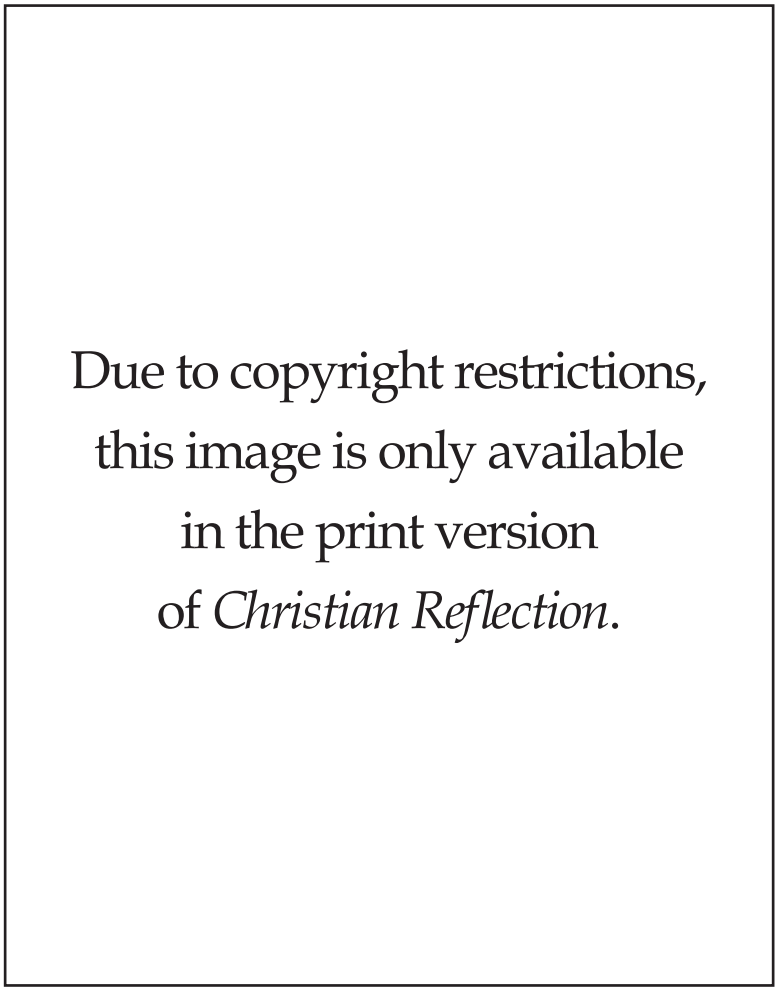
In February 1888, Van Gogh left the bustle of Paris to live in Arles, a small town in southern France. He was inspired by Jean-Francois Millet's paintings that focused on the work of the common peasant. Van Gogh enjoyed studying the workers as he viewed the golden wheat fields, the blossoming orchards, and sunflowers that appear in his later and most famous paintings.

The Red Vineyard was first viewed in Brussels in the invitation-only exhibition of *Les XX* in 1890. *Les XX* was a group of twenty avant-garde Belgian painters, designers, and sculptors formed in 1883 to exhibit their art annually. They also invited twenty international artists each year, and Vincent van Gogh was among them in 1890 and 1891. Van Gogh exhibited six paintings, including *The Red Vineyard* and the two (now) famous *Sunflowers* (today in the National Gallery, London, and Neue Pinakothek, Munich). Van Gogh's paintings were attacked and criticized by member Henry de Groux two days before the exhibit opened, but his friends Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Paul Signac came to his defense. *The Red Vineyard* was purchased by Anna Boch, painter and founding member of *Les XX*, and its provenance can be traced to its current location in the Puskin Museum.[2]

NOTES

1 "Gogh, Vincent Willem van," *Benezit Dictionary of Artists*, *Oxford Art Online* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), *www.oxfordartonline.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/subscriber/article/benezit/B00076203* (accessed June 12, 2015).

2 For more on Anna Boch, see *annaboch.com/theredvineyard/* (accessed June 9, 2015).



Philip Evergood's *The Pink Dismissal Slip* expresses his concern for the exploitation of poor workers during the Great Depression.

Philip Evergood (1901-1973). *The Pink Dismissal Slip* (1937). *Oil on hardboard. 28" x 22 ½". Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Gift of Harry N. Abrams. Photograph courtesy of the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University. Used by permission.*

Dismissed

BY HEIDI J. HORNIK

A leader in the American Social Realist movement in the 1930s, Philip Evergood was born in New York and educated in London and Paris. He also studied in Spain before returning to the United States in 1931 during the Great Depression. Through both his expressionistic art and his personal actions, Evergood fought against the exploitation of the poor.[1]

Evergood painted for and managed the easel painting section in the Federal Arts Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). As a member of the American Artists' Congress and the American Society of Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers, as well as president of the Artists' Union, he was well acquainted with the plight of the American artist as the worldwide depression wore on.[2] He was frequently jailed for protesting and striking. He was beaten severely in 1936 after a protest against cuts to the WPA that dismissed 1,923 artists and writers. *The Pink Dismissal Slip* shows an artist receiving notification of his dismissal from the Arts Project. The figure holds an envelope addressed to "John Doe" symbolizing all the artists involved. An exposed light bulb emphasizes that he lives in a low-income apartment complex. The painting is dominated by a vibrant, almost violent, red color.

Although Evergood painted biblical subjects for a period, he was more often inspired to depict the dramatic events of his day. His style, much influenced by the German expressionist Max Beckmann,[4] features unrealistic perspective and almost comical, larger-than-life figures with exaggerated gestures, disproportionate bodies, and expressive faces. The artist hoped his work would be a voice for the poor and glorify working families.[5]

NOTES

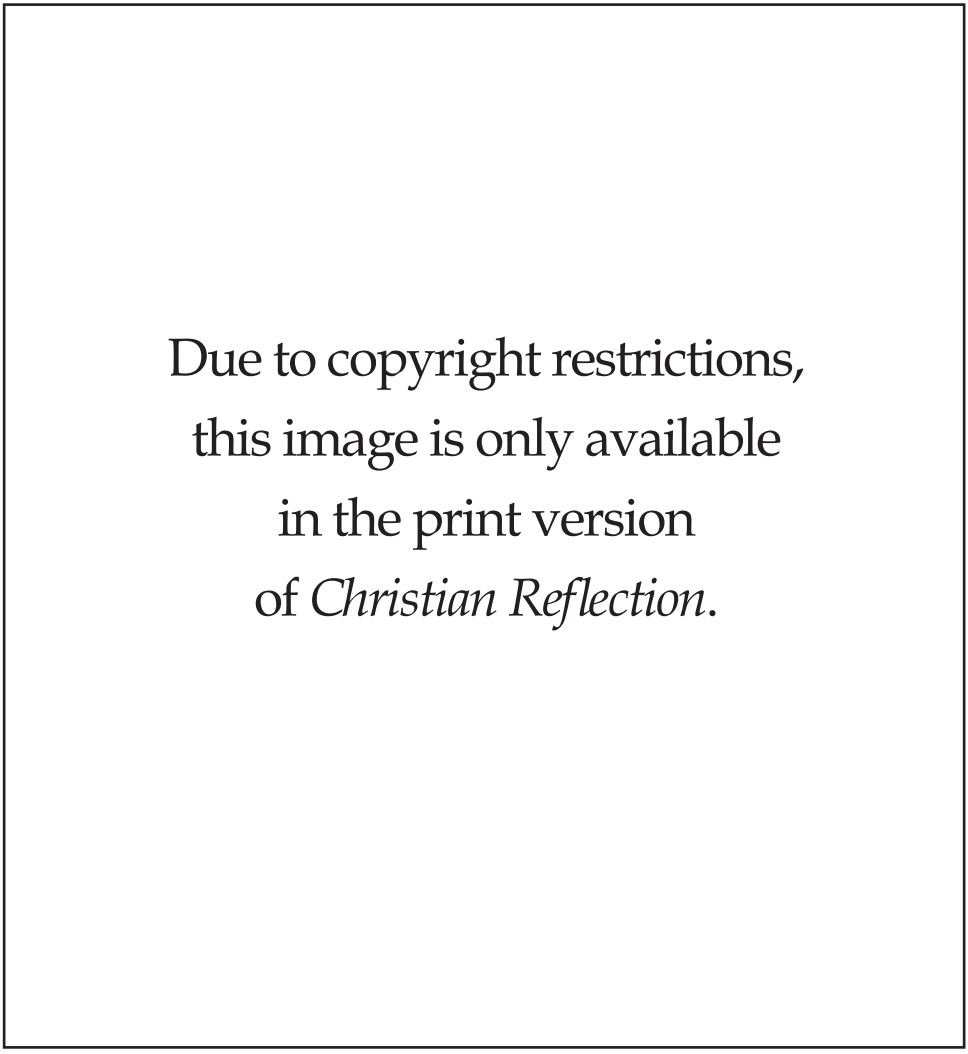
1 John I. H. Baur, "Evergood, Philip," *Grove Art Online*, *Oxford Art Online* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), *www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T027097* (accessed June 12, 2015).

2 "Evergood, Philip," *Benezit Dictionary of Artists*, *Oxford Art Online* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press) *www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/benezit/B00060452* (accessed June 12, 2015).

3 "The Pink Dismissal Slip," Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, *museum.cornell.edu/collections/view/pink-dismissal-slip.html* (accessed June 10, 2015).

4 "Evergood, Philip," *Benezit Dictionary of Artists.*

5 Baur, "Evergood, Philip."



Jacopo Bassano transposes the message of Jesus' parable of the sower into this image of a farming family's daily work and their harvest.

Jacopo Bassano (1515-1592), *The Parable of the Sower* (c. 1560). *Oil on canvas. 61" x 57". Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain. Photo: Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza / Scala / Art Resource, NY. Used by permission.*

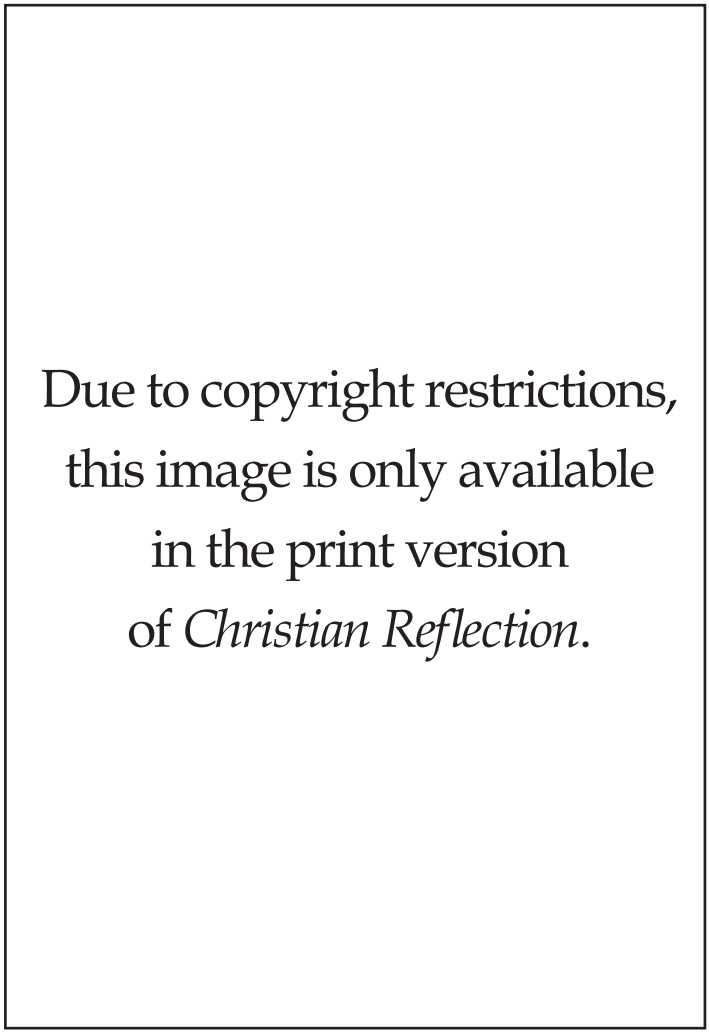
Labor's Reward

BY HEIDI J. HORNIK

In *The Parable of the Sower*, Jacopo Bassano features a scene of daily work by a country family in the foreground. The artist typically used genre scenes (everyday scenes) as the main portion of the composition and placed the biblical subject in a secondary area. While a young girl is feeding the sheep, and a young boy and his mother seem to be moving something towards the sleeping dog, an older woman is readying a blanket with bread for a meal. The gaze of the three women directs our attention to the bread. To the left a young man in a hat is attending to the oxen that draw the plough. In the right middle ground of the composition, a farmer is casting seed by hand. He is the figure who is most closely associated with the sower in Jesus' parable (Matthew 13:3-9; Mark 4:3-9; Luke 8:5-8). The sack of seeds visible under the tree completes the equipment required for his work. Paolo Berdini concludes, "Together [the figures of the two men] present the instrument and the labor necessary for sowing the soil."[1] Berdini suggests the actions of all the figures are unified by the bread in the foreground. As sowing leads to harvest and seed leads to bread as cause and effect, the figures' actions "present the requisite components of a statement about the essential dynamics of agrarian existential determinism: work and reward."[2]

Bassano's dramatic visualization of farming life is the sort of storytelling in pictures that Jesus would admire. After all, why did Jesus speak in parables? The most common definition of a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly message. As is the case with many good teachers, Jesus was a good storyteller who sincerely hoped listeners would follow and be entertained by his narrative, visualize its context, and discern its meaning. Jacopo Bassano depicts the context beautifully and memorably in this rural scene of the family activity of sowing seeds and working the land. Such biblical-pastoral scenes as this were a compositional innovation by Bassano in the 1560s and established a reputation for the artist in the area known as the Veneto in northeastern Italy.[3]

Another Baroque painter also working in the Veneto, Domenico Fetti, frequently depicted Jesus' parables. Of the thirty-three parables, Fetti painted twelve of the scenes. In addition to *The Parable of the Vineyard* (c. 1616) shown on the following page, there are nine other known versions, painted by either the artist or his assistants, of this parable found in Matthew 20:1-16.



Domenico Fetti (1588/89-1624), *The Parable of the Vineyard* (c. 1616). *Oil on wood. 29 7/8" x 17 ½". Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Florence, Italy. Photo: Scala / Art Resource, NY. Used by permission.*

Fetti was born in Rome, but his affinity for the parables as subject matter grew as he encountered them in the paintings of Northern artists such as Jacopo Bassano, Paolo Veronese, and Jacopo Tintoretto while he was working for the Duke of Mantua in Northern Italy. Parables were exceptionally popular during the Italian Catholic Reformation period of the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Fetti was a spiritual man and "the parables appealed to [his] imagination for their narrative gift of presenting didactic truths in the guise of mundane experience," according to art historian and Fetti scholar, Pamela Askew.[4]

Traditionally the parable of the vineyard has been interpreted allegorically as a warning to believers: "the reward for their labors is not to be measured in terms of gain or privilege."[5] Believers must be charitable to their fellow human beings and show humility before God. It is God's grace that will help them enter the kingdom of God rather than how hard or how long they have worked. In the foreground of the painting is a laborer who has returned from an entire day's work, which is longer than the others who have received the same wage. Tired, he leans on his shovel, and protesting with arms closed across his chest, listens as the landowner explains how he determined the wages. The artist suggests that the landowner expresses the will of God by representing him as seated, enthroned as it were before the symbolic wall of heaven.[6]

Fetti's composition is classically organized. The primary characters are staged in a balanced and symmetrical manner centered in the foreground. Emotion is conveyed through body position and hand gesture in a typically Baroque expressiveness that is characteristic of Fetti.

Like Jacopo Bassano in the previous generation, Domenico Fetti produces a dramatic visualization of Jesus' parable. Neither artist attempts a literal rendering, but each offers a transposition of the parable's message into an image of work in their own day.

NOTES

1 Paolo Berdini, "Jacopo Bassano: A Case for Painting as Visual Exegesis," in Heidi J. Hornik and Mikeal C. Parsons, eds., *Interpreting Christian Art: Reflections on Christian Art* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003), 169-186, here citing 175.

2 Ibid., 176.

3 "Jacopo Bassano, *The Parable of the Sower*, ca. 1560," Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain, *www.museothyssen.org/en/thyssen/ficha_obra/949* (accessed May 29, 2015).

4 Pamela Askew, "The Parable Paintings of Domenico Fetti," *Art Bulletin*, 43:1 (March 1961), 21-45, here citing 22.

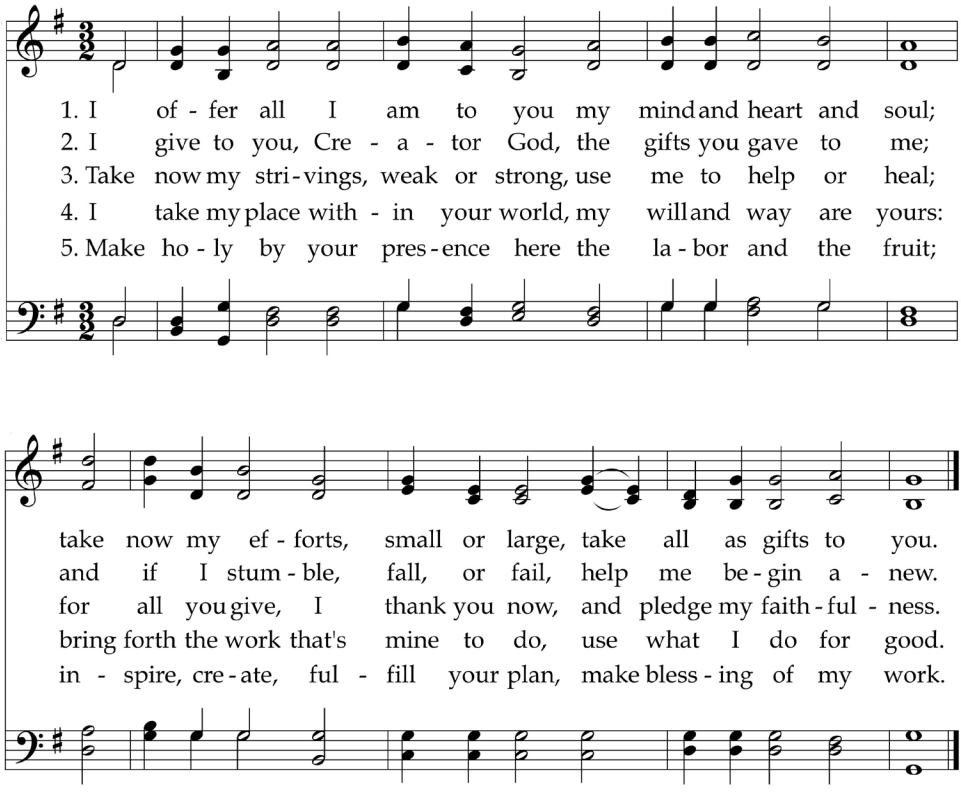
5 Ibid., 39.

HEIDI J. HORNIK
is Professor of Art History at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

I Offer All I Am to You

JEANIE MILEY

CARL G. GLÄSER (1784-1829)
ARR. LOWELL MASON (1792-1872)



Tune: AZMON
8.6.8.6.

Worship Service

BY JEANIE MILEY

A Service to Commemorate the Place of Work in Daily Life

The Chiming of the Hour

Silent Meditation

Work is love made visible.

Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931)[1]

Gathering Hymn

"Holy, Holy, Holy"

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see;
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Reginald Heber (1826), alt.
Tune: NICAEA

Invocation

Loving God, we gather in your name on this day.
You are Lord, and we acknowledge your holiness.

We come to you as your people, created by you.
We acknowledge that you have made us in your image.

May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts
be pleasing in your sight,
O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer.[2]

And may the imaginations of our minds and the works of our hands
be pleasing to you,
our Creator and Sustainer.

May we continually seek your guidance
in the work we do in partnership with you.

May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us;
establish the work of our hands for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands.[3]

Amen.

Old Testament Reading: Genesis 2:1-15

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground—then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is

gold; and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

A Reading

Somewhere along the line, Adam got a bad rap, or at least the God of Adam did. Someone somewhere misread the story of Creation and Fall, and came to the conclusion that work was the result of the Fall, not part of God's original design for human beings. On closer inspection, it is perfectly clear that God's good plan always included human beings working, or, more specifically, living in the constant cycle of work and rest.

Ben Witherington III[4]

Response of the People

Creator God, may the work that we do and the fruit of our labor contribute to the good of your creation and benefit your people.

New Testament Reading: Matthew 25:14-30

"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you

did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

Response of the People

Loving God, may we be responsible and faithful to do
what has been entrusted to us to do.
May we work with joy and with love.

The Written Word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God for the written word.
Thanks be to God for the Living Word.

Hymn

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before thee,
opening to the sun above.

Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
drive the dark of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day!

All thy works with joy surround thee,
earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.

Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
singing bird and flowing fountain
call us to rejoice in thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
well-spring of the joy of living,
ocean-depth of happy rest!

Thou our Father, Christ, our Brother—
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals, join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
love divine is reigning o'er us,
bringing all within its span.

Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward,
in the triumph song of life.

Henry Van Dyke (1907)
Tune: HYMN TO JOY

Two Readings

First Reader:
Our work, seen from the point of view of Scripture,
has deep significance for us.

Whether it is done as a volunteer or as a paid worker,
what we do matters.
It matters to those of us who do the actual labor,
and it matters to those who benefit from what we do.

Whether we work with our minds or our hands,
we participate with others and with God
in making life easier, better, or more beautiful for others.
Whether we work on an assembly line or in a research lab,
in a nursery school or a graduate school,
in a field or in an office
at home or out of the home,
and whether we are paid much or little,
work gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

Second Reader:
When we see work as tedium or unimportant,
we diminish ourselves or others.
Experienced as toil and burden,
our work steals our life from us.
Seen as a calling,
work is lifted to a higher plane.
Recognized as an essential part of being human,
work becomes infused with holiness.

We may work to put bread on the table and pay the bills;
we may work to express our unique gifts and calling.
We sometimes work to help other people,
to save their lives, or point them toward God.
Sometimes we work to make life sparkle,
to entertain others, touch their hearts, or make them want to dance.

When we take work seriously and as a partnership with the Creator,
we participate with God's work in the world.
When we work as stewards of God's creation, our work becomes
a gift to God, a blessing to others, and a labor of love for ourselves.

Silent Reflection

Always you have been told that work is a curse and labor a misfortune.
But I say to you that when you work
you fulfill a part of earth's furthest dream,
assigned to you when that dream was born,
and in keeping yourself with labor you are in truth loving life.
And to love life through labor is to be intimate with life's inmost secret.

Kahlil Gibran[5]

Prayer of Confession

God of creation, we confess that we sometimes complain too much about the burden of good work or the tedium of it. We complain about not being appreciated for what we do or paid what we feel we deserve.
Lord, have mercy.

We confess that at times we are blind to the importance of others' work and their investment in our comfort. We do not honor and respect those who labor for our benefit. We take them and the work they do for granted.
Lord, forgive our negligence.

We confess that we sometimes do our work half-heartedly. We fuss about whose task is more important, and we bring negative thoughts and resentful actions into our workplaces—in our home, our church, our school, the marketplace, and our volunteer assignments.
Lord, take away our sins.

We confess that sometimes we take our ability to work or the freedom to work as we choose for granted. We label our jobs as burdens and forget the privilege of having a job.
Lord, change our hearts and minds.

We confess that sometimes we use work as an idol or an escape. We give first priority to what is urgent and neglect what is important. We struggle with competing agendas.
Lord, help us put first things first.

God, hear our prayers.

Pastoral Prayer

Patient and compassionate Lord,
you understand our need for forgiveness seventy times seven.

You are the God of second chances, and more:
you have shown us your mercy more times than we can remember;
your work, Loving God, is the work of forgiveness and redemption.

Once again, forgive us for missing the mark.
Forgive our mistaken ideas, our half-hearted efforts, and our laziness.

Grant us the opportunity to begin again,
and to do our work better.
Give us the strength and the stamina to do what is hard.
Give us the patience and the endurance to do what is boring.
And in all that we do, give us glad hearts to do what is ours to do.
May we be lovers of life, like you, O God.
May we be joyful servants and stewards of your world.
Work in us a good work,
so that we might work for you. Amen.

Hymn

"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Thomas Ken (1674)
Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH

Sermon

Offering

Invite congregants to bring to the altar either symbols of their work or index cards with the name of their work written on the card. This offering action should to be announced prior to the service and cards provided for those who do not bring symbols.

Declaration

On this altar are symbols or written expressions of the varieties of work we do during the week in stores and warehouses and offices, in schools or our homes, out in the fields or at our desks.

We are a people blessed to contribute to others through our work, and in the economy of God, there are no small jobs. In God's eyes, there are no insignificant workers and no unimportant work.

We are blessed to have work to do, and we are blessed to share our work with each other. Let us offer ourselves and our work to God.

Hymn of Dedication

"I Offer All I Am to You"

I offer all I am to you,
my mind and heart and soul;
take now my efforts, small or large,
take all as gifts to you.

I give to you, Creator God,
the gifts you gave to me;
and if I stumble, fall, or fail,
help me begin anew.

Take now my strivings, weak or strong,
use me to help or heal;
for all you give, I thank you now,
and pledge my faithfulness.

I take my place within your world,
my will and way are yours:
bring forth the work that's mine to do,
use what I do for good.

Make holy by your presence here
the labor and the fruit;
inspire, create, fulfill your plan,
make blessing of my work.

Jeanie Miley (2015)
Tune: AZMON
(p. 50 of this volume)

Benediction

May the grace of God inspire you in your work and in your ways.
May the love of God fill you with love for life, for each other,
and for the work of your mind, your hands, and your feet.
May the joy of the abiding presence of the Living Christ
be near and constant in you.
And may the mercy of God keep you safe
and guard your mind and heart until we meet again.
Amen.

NOTES

1 Kahlil Gibran, "On Work," *The Prophet* (1923).

2 Based on Psalm 19:14 (NIV). Scripture passages marked "NIV" are from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® NIV®, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

3 Psalm 90:17 (NIV).

4 Ben Witherington III, *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2011), 2.

5 Gibran, "On Work," *The Prophet.*

JEANIE MILEY
is an author and retreat leader in Houston, Texas.

When Work Disappoints

BY MATTHEW S. BEAL

In a peculiarly modern twist, work is more closely linked to vocation and personal identity. This heightens the spiritual toll of underemployment and unemployment. However a balm is not to be found in modern motivational mantras, but in practicing the presence of God in our work.

So many things in our culture depend on successful employment. At the macro level, stock market analysts carefully examine the monthly employment numbers, because Wall Street rises and falls on those reports and politicians' aspirations may soar on their wings or lie crushed beneath their wheels. On a more personal level, individuals and families scrutinize their work hours and income to see if they can afford healthier meals, enjoy vacations, save for retirement, go to the movies, and give gifts to their friends. Some, in their want, must navigate mounting debt to meet basic needs or maintain a lifestyle for which their level of employment is unsuited. This latter scenario is increasingly common as underemployment in the United States is more widespread and on the rise.[1]

When adequate jobs are scarce, and excellent ones are even rarer, life becomes more difficult than anticipated. Dreams sometimes die, and the spiritual toll of underemployment becomes steep. Doug Maynard, who studies work psychology, summarizes the potential hindrances to human flourishing:

> Research shows that underemployment, whether it is involuntary part-time employment, underpayment, or intermittent employment, has negative psychological and behavioral effects, including low self-esteem, stress, substance abuse, health problems, and depression. In fact, being underemployed may be as traumatic and damaging as being out of work entirely.[2]

Engaging in satisfying work, on the other hand, correlates with financial flexibility, relational well-being, personal contentment, and community integrity. Work or its absence, then, holds great meaning in our lives and is an important aspect of our flourishing.

Work is also related to our sense of vocation. John G. Stackhouse outlines three ways of conceiving this relation: work *as* vocation, work *distinct from* vocation, and work *as part of* vocation.[3] I will be exploring the third sense, in which work is a vital aspect of vocation but is not equated with it. We often experience work as an integral aspect of our personal identity; it could be described as our identity in motion. Vocationally suitable work is both the accurate embodiment of our current identity and the realization of adequate progress toward our aspirations. In other words, our work takes on the *telos,* or goal, of our identity being developed. When considered from this perspective, major frustrations and disappointments in work can stab at the deepest regions of personal pain.

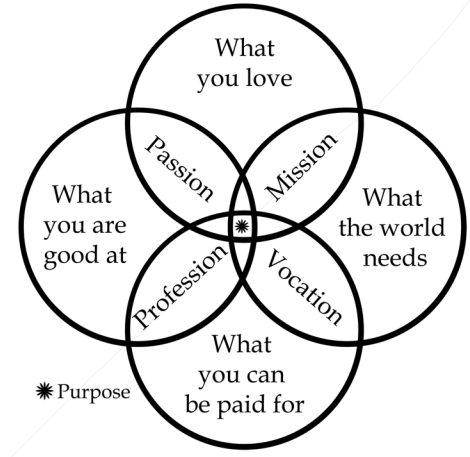
Admittedly, this is a peculiarly modern understanding of how work relates to vocation and development of personal identity. Through much of human history the idea of vocational disappointment, as characterized here, would have been meaningless. In pre-industrial cultures—whether they were nomadic, hunting, subsistence-farming, or trade-oriented—people were simply born into their vocations and any frustration with them would not be a matter of mere underemployment, but of radical upheaval in the community due to an invading army or natural disaster. The now popular stereotype of idealistic young people successfully rebelling against their domineering parents' superego-infused vocational intentions for them obviously could have no place in such cultures.

This does not mean our contemporary concern with issues of work, vocation, and identity is inappropriate or ethically immature. It just means this concern, from a broad historical perspective, seems peculiarly ours. What was inconceivable for centuries is now commonplace for many people: they confront a plethora of employment paths that promise identity development as it relates to work. So, it would be dysfunctional for us to avoid the matter.

Furthermore, the relationship between work, vocation, and identity I am considering is a product of widespread affluence and prospects of socioeconomic "upward mobility." Thus, when we struggle with vocational disappointment of this sort, we thereby locate ourselves within a framework of privilege. Globally, a multitude of hungry, displaced, suffering, unemployed women, men, and children still experience vocational disappointment not as a deficiency in personal identity in motion but as a desperate need to engage in anything resembling productive work. This does not mean we do not face a real problem; it just means our problems regarding work could be much worse.

To our problem, therefore, let us direct our attention. In the next section I will canvas a model for finding purpose in our work that has become a commonplace in our culture. But, I suggest, instead of providing helpful guidance, it leads to unwarranted disappointment. A more adequate perspective is needed, and in the final section I point to one found in the writings of the seventeenth century monastic, Brother Lawrence.

As a professional counselor, I serve clients whose disappointment with work (as it relates to their vocation and identity) integrally affects their mental health disorders and general sense of distress. As an ambitious Ph.D. student with close ties to others in the academy, I experience in my own life and notice in my friends' lives the stress, anxiety, and disappointment of work and vocation. Doctoral students in the humanities increasingly face the challenge of underemployment. After they have devoted years to making an original contribution to the expansion of human knowledge, to teach or research in an adjunct capacity can shake their confidence and add to mounting financial stresses. After they have developed the passion and skills for advanced scholarship, to teach junior high mathematics can be disappointing. What for many people would be a very rewarding career seems to them more like a vocational setback that impedes their development and threatens their identity with stagnation or disintegration. Of course, this sort of disappointment with work is not limited to ambitious young academics; it manifests in many fields, including the service sector, science and engineering, creative arts and crafts, the ministry, and so on.



In relatively affluent societies like ours, the prospect of "dreaming big" only heightens the tension. For instance, the "American dream" teaches people "if you can dream it, you can do it" because the economic environment allows single-minded, energetic persons to attain whatever financial goals and attendant lifestyle accoutrements they desire.[4] Unfortunately, this exhortation to "Dream big!" echoes not only through business motivational seminars but also among evangelical congregations.[5] Dreaming big has blossomed into an exquisite flower of modern capitalism. However, its pollen is an allergen hazardous to many.

In this dreaming-big project, we are supposed to discover our purpose—what I have described as the *telos* for developing one's identity—at the

intersection of passion, mission, vocation, and profession. Just search the Internet for images with those terms and you will be rewarded with dozens of variations on the diagram at left.

There are several serious problems with this common motivational model. First, it promotes an unrealistically high ideal. Most people will find it unobtainable. They must do work for which they are underqualified or overqualified, for which they are underpaid, or which they experience as mundane and unfulfilling. Offering them platitudes about holding out hope of a better future—to "dream bigger"—does not change their present situation, which falls short of their life's "purpose" on this model.

Second, the model points us in the wrong direction. Does the struggling single father who is bussing tables at a diner thereby miss his purpose? Does the independently wealthy volunteer miss her purpose by not being paid? Does the skilled, highly-paid pastor who feels inadequate to the work and struggles to love ministry miss her purpose? This seems unlikely to me. The model predicts that our purpose, identity, and well-being depend on the intersection of passion, mission, vocation, and profession. However, the reality is that many people find purpose and fulfillment in work that is lacking in one or more of these categories.

Another problem is that the model makes flourishing depend too much on external, transitory conditions such as a having a particular job, earning a high salary, enjoying a generous benefit package, living in a certain location, or working on a favored schedule. These are good things, but locating purpose at the conjunction of these aspects of work makes us unnecessarily vulnerable to despair.[6]

Finally, the model depends too much on subjective responses to those conditions. It is a better indicator of things that influence people's temporary feelings of satisfaction with their work than whether they are finding purpose in their work and being fulfilled by it.

If Christian communities imbibe the cultural assumptions of this model, they will fail to promote human flourishing in the face of vocational disappointments. They will add insult to injury when work disappoints, rather than point people toward abundant life. This will be a tragedy, because the Christian tradition contains resources to cope with discouragement in work and foster human flourishing despite vocational disappointments. To one of these resources, the insights of Brother Lawrence, we turn next.

To buck the culturally dominant model described above, we must shift the locus of "purpose." With a richly embodied perspective on work and vocation in *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence (1611-1691) affords precisely this opportunity. He transforms mundane work by recognizing within it the transcendent presence of God.

As a monk he became frustrated when his superiors assigned him a task for which he was acutely unfit. The charge "was a very unwelcome task to him, because he had no turn for business, and because he was lame." Note, however, his response:

> [Brother Lawrence] gave himself no uneasiness about it…. [Rather] he said to God, It was His business he was about…. So likewise in his business in the kitchen (to which he had naturally a great aversion), having accustomed himself to do everything there for the love of God, and with prayer, upon all occasions, for His grace to do his work well, he had found everything easy during the fifteen years that he had been employed there.[6]

Brother Lawrence advocated "doing our common business…(as far as we are capable) purely for the love of God."[7] Rather than depending upon a convergence of passion, mission, vocation, and profession for his sense of purpose, he rooted the motivation for his work in love, claiming that despite the apparent lack in one or more such categories "he was pleased, when he could take up a straw from the ground for the love of God."[8] His experience of pleasure confirms the Westminster Shorter Catechism's proclamation that humanity's ultimate purpose is to glorify and enjoy God forever.[9]

Brother Lawrence's account of simplicity of heart in work bears striking resemblance to modern conceptions of mindfulness:

> I do not say that for this cause we must place any violent constraint upon ourselves. No, we must serve God in a holy freedom, we must do our business faithfully, without trouble or disquiet; recalling our minds to God meekly, and with tranquility, as often as we find them wandering from Him.[9]

Brother Lawrence subverts our culture's tendency to base work's purpose in external circumstances. His advice echoes a more ancient source that instructs us to re-center our work priorities around the work of Christ: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord" (Colossians 3:23, NIV).[10] For Henri Nouwen (1932-1996), this means "our vocation [becomes] to convert the enemy into a guest and to create the free and fearless space where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and fully experienced."[11]

When we follow Brother Lawrence in being mindfully aware of God's presence in our daily work, we do not ignore the pain of disappointment, frustration, sadness, anger, and stress caused by underemployment and unemployment. Rather, we realign our purpose in a manner that allows us to cope with this pain productively, by placing our labor into the metanarrative of God's love and work of redemption.

This is a thoroughly Christian analogue of the counseling treatment called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which promotes "psychological flexibility and adaptability" in harmony with our values and arising out of our personal agency.[12] In other words, ACT advises that we can reorient our goals and achieve purpose in the context of disappointment. In more theological language, Brother Lawrence is showing us how to adapt to work disappointment as mature agents, as subjects in the *imago Dei*, tolerating our emotional distress while weaving it into a metanarrative that gives suffering meaning because it serves a greater purpose.

When career dreams are dashed by rejection letters, termination notices, or personal tragedy, or when underemployment proves the only option, we must not assume that we have personally failed God. A more resilient perspective allows for such suffering, disappointment, and barrenness without intrinsic threat to purpose, identity, or call.

Indeed, rather than finding underemployment a frustration of purpose, we might as readily find in it precisely the purposes of God: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, when you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance" and can lead to spiritual maturity (James 1:2-4, NIV).[13] Work can be frustrating, grating against the aspirations of our passion, mission, vocation, and profession. It can be disappointing, unfulfilling, discouraging, exhausting, and brutal. Indeed, often our daily bread comes "through painful toil" and "by the sweat of [our] brow" (Genesis 3:17, 19, NIV). Yet we continue to work in the hopeful conviction that Christ's resurrection accomplishes not only a spiritual deliverance from sin, but also redeems the entire created order.[14] Therefore it is in faith that our work, no matter how toilsome or disappointing, is imbued with life through God's presence.

Disappointment in work is nearly inevitable. A commitment to engaging all our acts of work as acts of love and worship while reorienting our purpose from the transient to the transcendent will help us accept the attendant hardships. This is a particular, modern case of finding the secret of contentment that the Apostle Paul knows and spiritual writers like Brother Lawrence embrace:

> I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.
>
> *Philippians 4:12-13* (NIV)

NOTES

1 See the Local Area Unemployment (LAU) data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor at *http://www.bls.gov/lau/stalt.htm* (accessed April 1, 2015).

2 Douglas C. Maynard, "Underemployment," in Vincent N. Parillo, ed., *Encyclopedia of Social Problems* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2008), 967-969, here citing 969. See also David Dooley, Joann Prause, and Kathleen A. Ham-Rowbottom, "Underemployment and Depression: Longitudinal Relationships," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 41:4 (December 2000), 421-436.

3 John G. Stackhouse, *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 221-222.

4 This quote is commonly attributed to Walt Disney (1901-1966), who developed an empire of media products that sold the dream to many.

5 "God never gives us small dreams. If your dream doesn't scare you a bit, it's not from God," write Bill Easum and Bil Cornelius in *Go Big: Lead Your Church to Explosive Growth* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 13.

6 Nicholas Herman of Lorraine (Brother Lawrence), *The Practice of the Presence of God* (London, UK: H. R. Allenson LTD, 1906), 13-14. Brother Lawrence was a retired soldier who became a monk, but was too uneducated to be ordained. Nevertheless, his practical wisdom came to the attention of Cardinal de Noailles, who requested more information about him. *The Practice of the Presence of God* is the notes of four conversations with Brother Lawrence conducted by Abbe de Beaufort, the Cardinal's envoy.

7 Ibid., 21.

8 Ibid., 12.

9 Ibid., 35.

10 Scripture passages marked "NIV" are from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® NIV®, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

11 Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1986 [1975]), 50.

12 For an introduction to ACT, see P. Nancey Hoare, Peter McIlveen, and Nadine Hamilton, "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) as a Career Counselling Strategy," *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 12:3 (October 2012), 171-187, here citing 173.

13 See M. Elizabeth Lewis Hall, Richard Langer, and Jason McMartin, "The Role of Suffering in Human Flourishing: Contributions from Positive Psychology, Theology, and Philosophy," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 38:2 (Summer 2010), 111-121.

18 Cf. Romans 8:21-22.

MATTHEW S. BEAL
is a Licensed Professional Counselor at Heart of Texas Counseling Center in Waco, Texas.

Integrating Faith and Work

BY MITCHELL J. NEUBERT

AND KEVIN D. DOUGHERTY

Christians sometimes separate work and faith into secular and spiritual spheres. But recent studies show that if faith-work integration is emphasized in congregations, members experience work more positively and contribute positively to their workplace.

In the beginning of time there was work: God worked and he determined that humankind would work as part of their fellowship with him. The Fall broke this perfect fellowship and corrupted work, but it did not fatally sever the relationship between worship and work. Despite work being part of what we are called to do in fellowship with God, over time Christians have sometimes integrated work and worship, while at other times they have separated the two into secular and spiritual spheres. Historian Alexis de Tocqueville and sociologist Max Weber are among those who have asserted faith influences work, with particular attention to how faith influences the motivation for and success of entrepreneurial endeavors. However, these assertions and other ideas related to how religious faith might inform our understanding of and practices of work and entrepreneurial behavior have been largely ignored or dismissed by business scholars.[1]

Together with colleague Jerry Park and graduate students from sociology, we set out to investigate the state of connections between work and faith among adult workers in the United States. Funded by a National Science Foundation grant, we engaged in a multi-phase research project to explore the relationship of religion and entrepreneurial behavior.[2] The initial phase of the project involved adding work-related items to the Baylor Religion Survey, a highly regarded national study of beliefs and values in the United States. From this survey, we discovered that less than half (47%) of employed

adults who attend religious services monthly or more indicated that they often or always see connections between faith and work. In the second phase of the project we investigated the relationships between a broader set of religious and work variables in our National Survey of Work, Entrepreneurship, and Religion, a nationally representative sample of full-time employed adults. In this sample of full-time workers, we found that 61% of those regularly attending a religious service agreed that their work honors God. These preliminary analyses point to some level of faith-work integration for many adult workers but also a disconnection for many others. The third phase of our research took us inside American churches. We visited ten congregations across the United States and conducted interviews with full-time workers and entrepreneurs in each congregation. Our interviews allowed us to dig deeper into the ways that church-going Americans integrate their faith and work.

ADULT WORKERS

One of our main interests was to understand how faith-work integration influences attitudes and behaviors in the workplace for a broad range of workers. Drawing on Baylor Religion Survey data, Katie Halbesleben and I (Neubert) crafted a paper, "Called to Commitment: An Examination of Relationships Between Spiritual Calling, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment,"[3] that explored how a subset of items from Lynn and colleagues' faith integration scale explained job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the workplace.[4] The subset of items we used related to spiritual calling in the workplace. We defined spiritual calling as a summons from God to approach work with a sense of purpose and a pursuit of excellence in work practices. Analyzing a national random sample of 771 adults yielded significant positive associations between spiritual calling and both job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment, even after accounting for a number of demographic, religious, and workplace control variables. Job satisfaction is the attitude an individual holds toward his or her particular job, whereas affective organizational commitment is the volitional attachment or bond an individual has with an organization. Both job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment are important because they contribute positively to job performance and decrease forms of job withdrawal such as absenteeism and turnover. In this study we also demonstrated that affective organizational commitment is at its strongest when both spiritual calling and job satisfaction are strong; yet a strong sense of spiritual calling contributes to affective organizational commitment even if an individual's job is not very satisfying.

In another study using Baylor Religion Survey data, "Religious Orthodoxy and Entrepreneurial Risk-Taking,"[5] graduate student Todd Ferguson led an investigation of the relationship of religious orthodoxy with the propensity to take risks at work. Religious orthodoxy was defined as a belief in

God as the ultimate external and eternal authority for what is right and wrong. Risk taking was assessed by questions related to an individual's propensity to risk loss to gain positive outcomes. Historically, there are divergent views and findings related to the role of religion in risk taking, particularly entrepreneurship. The results of this study indicate that a specific belief, religious orthodoxy, was negatively associated with risk-taking propensity at work. This result among workers in organizations may lend support for those who would argue that religion hinders entrepreneurial behavior, which is seemingly an undesirable conclusion for those promoting faith-work integration, or it might lend support for faith being a factor influencing prudence and wise stewardship of resources. Regardless of the interpretation, this finding affirms the importance of assessing specific beliefs in determining the relationship between faith and work outcomes.

Developing specific measures of religious beliefs pertaining to work was the purpose of another of our early studies. In "Beliefs About Faith and Work: Development and Validation of Honoring God and Prosperity Gospel Scales,"[6] we developed two short scales to assess theological beliefs related to whether an individual's work is honoring to God and whether God promises financial prosperity to faithful believers. In contrast to general measures of religious affiliation, these more specific measures are useful in identifying unique relationships with work variables. Our analyses indicated a positive relationship of workplace entrepreneurial behavior with beliefs about honoring God in work, but there was not a significant association with prosperity gospel beliefs. Honoring God in work beliefs were positively associated with helping behavior in the workplace, whereas prosperity gospel beliefs were negatively related to helping behavior. In other words, beliefs about honoring God in work seem to contribute to creative and collaborative behavior at work, while prosperity gospel beliefs have no relationship with creative behavior and seem to discourage collaborative behavior.

Beliefs about honoring God in work seem to contribute to creative and collaborative behavior at work, while prosperity gospel beliefs have no relationship with creative behavior and seem to discourage collaborative behavior.

In a working paper entitled "Beliefs about Work: Emperors With and Without Clothes,"[7] the relationships of honoring God in work and prosperity gospel beliefs with work behaviors and attitudes were explored in more detail. In our nationally representative sample of full-time working adults,

we found that after controlling for a range of demographic and personality variables, honoring God beliefs were positively associated with helping, entrepreneurial behavior, affective commitment to the organization, and the tendency to look for and recognize opportunities to innovate. Prosperity gospel beliefs had no association with entrepreneurial behavior and affective commitment, while they had a negative association with helping, the tendency to look for and recognize opportunities to innovate, and a measure of work performance. In short, prosperity beliefs do not seem to deliver on their promise in work, quite to the contrary of some proponents' promises.

Looking across these studies of the relationships between faith beliefs and work outcomes for working adults, it is clear that beliefs matter, but it is important to measure specific beliefs. Believing God will provide financial prosperity is either unrelated to work attitudes or contributes to passive or selfish behavior, whereas believing that one is called to work or that work honors God is positively related to important work attitudes and constructive work behaviors.

ENTREPRENEURS

Central to our research project was our interest in exploring relationships between faith and work for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs, as specific types of workers who start businesses, have a prominent role in the economy and in popular culture. Entrepreneurs have unique characteristics and motivations, and we expected that faith may play a role in why they start businesses and how they go about their work. In a study by our research team, "A Religious Profile of American Entrepreneurs,"[8] we analyzed data from the Baylor Religion Survey and discovered few differences in matters of faith between those who do not start businesses and those who are trying to start or have started businesses. The two groups of workers differ little on measures of religious affiliation, church attendance, or even in belief in God. However, entrepreneurs do tend to pray more frequently, are more likely to attend a place of worship that encourages business activity, and are more likely to see God as engaged and personal. The reasons for these differences are not apparent from our survey, but in comparison to non-entrepreneurs it seems reasonable to think that those who put their money, and possibly their livelihood, at risk to engage in the uncertain work of starting a new business would be more prone to seek guidance or ask for help from a God they believe is engaged in their lives.

Our research team extended the investigation of the role of faith among entrepreneurs through a series of interviews. In an exploratory study, researcher Jenna Griebel Rogers interviewed thirty Christian entrepreneurs in Colorado. The entrepreneurs were asked to reflect on how faith influenced their decision to start a business and how faith shaped their business practices. The co-authored article that resulted, "Faith and Work: An Exploratory Study of Religious Entrepreneurs,"[9] pointed to a common theme of entre-

preneurs starting businesses and running them in ways that express values central to their faith. Starting a business allowed more flexibility to accommodate work and family conflicts or it allowed entrepreneurs to create organizational cultures that treated others with respect or focused on helping others. In other words, entrepreneurship was a means to align faith and their work, reducing the tension between the two that existed in other work environments.

Jenna Griebel Rogers continued her work studying entrepreneurs in her dissertation, "Religion and Entrepreneurship: The Role of Religious Beliefs and Values on Female Entrepreneurship."[10] As a member of our team during our congregational-interviews phase of our research, she was able to interview a sample of thirty-seven employed women, sixteen of whom were entrepreneurs. Her dissertation offers a glimpse of the unique motives and challenges of female workers and entrepreneurs. Despite working full-time, many of the women indicated that their faith compelled them to prioritize family commitments, particularly raising children. They regularly experienced conflict between work and family demands. For some women, the desire to gain flexibility to meet their competing demands led to starting a business. For those who were employed by others, faith offered them the support and strength to juggle these demands.

The idea of men and women of faith starting businesses and their faith influencing how they operate their businesses raised another question for our research team: How might potential employees react to an entrepreneur explicitly stating that their motive for starting a business was to honor God or that they intended to honor God in all their business practices? A colleague, Matt Wood, and I (Neubert) explored this question. In a working paper, "Espoused Religious Values and Applicant Job Pursuit Intentions,"[11] we tested the notion from person-organization theory that applicants with high levels of faith-work integration would find a job at an integrated entrepreneur's company attractive, whereas those with low levels of faith-work integration would find the job unattractive. Our results confirmed this notion, suggesting that entrepreneurs who explicitly communicate their intentions to integrate faith and work should be aware that it is likely to reduce the pool of applicants interested in working for them. Alternatively, for those who believe that an entrepreneur's faith-work integration fits with their own values, research on fit suggests these employees will not only accept a job offer but also will be more likely to be fully engaged at work and stay with the organization longer.

MANIFESTATIONS OF FAITH-WORK INTEGRATION

In our survey research and in the initial explorations of the full set of congregational interviews we find narratives of faith-work integration that fit with the framework espoused by David Miller.[12] His framework, drawn from researching faith and work movements past and present, identifies *ethics*,

experience, *enrichment*, and *expression* as the most common manifestations of faith-work integration. Ethics refers to faith motivating ethical behavior and excellence within the workplace. Experience refers to faith offering meaning to work as a place to live out one's calling and a context for utilizing one's unique gifts and talents in serving others. Enrichment refers to faith assisting in work by providing strength, guidance, and the capability to cope with difficulties or suffering. Expression refers to faith being shared in word and deed as an example or witness to others. Our research affirms that these manifestations of faith are present among those we surveyed and interviewed.

These manifestations of integrating faith and work have precedent in Scripture. An example of each type of integration is evident in the First Epistle of Peter, which was written to believers scattered through many towns and workplaces of the day. Peter describes a process of enrichment in which faith helps us as we "suffer grief in all kinds of trials" and our suffering develops our faith (1 Peter 1:6-7, NIV). Peter provides an ethical mandate rooted in the character of God and our relationship to him as his children: "Be holy, because I am holy" (1:14-16, NIV). The encouragement to express faith in the context of work is evident in the charge: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (3:15, NIV). Finally, the experience of being called to serve out of the gifts we have been given is affirmed in the exhortation to "use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (4:10, NIV). It may be a fair critique to suggest these exhortations relate to behavior in the Church, but it also seems reasonable to suggest they relate to behavior outside of the Church, which would include workplaces of that day and of today. Moreover, the identity we have as followers of Christ as "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (2:9, NIV), reinforces the importance of manifesting faith in relationships outside the Church.

Building on the assumption that faith is intended to be made manifest in workplaces, another question arises: To what extent are congregations emphasizing these forms of integration? In a subsample from our survey of full-time workers consisting of working adults who attended church regularly, 63% agreed or strongly agreed that their congregation promoted the ethical manifestation of "considering what is morally right when facing a tough decision at work." Following next in frequency was a question associated with enrichment, with 57% who agreed or strongly agreed that their congregation promoted "drawing on my faith to help me deal with difficult work relationships." Expression, as measured by a question about their congregation promoting "letting my coworkers know I am a person of faith," yielded 42% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed. Finally, 38%

agreed or strongly agreed that their congregation promoted "viewing my work as a partnership with God," which represents the experience of a fully integrated calling at work.

Although there is room for improvement in congregations promoting faith-work integration, when it does occur there are notable implications for workers in doing their work. In a study led by Jerry Park, "Workplace-Bridging Religious Capital: Connecting Congregations to Work Outcomes,"[14] we found in our National Survey of Work, Entrepreneurship, and Religion that the promotion of faith-work integration in congregations is associated with greater job satisfaction, entrepreneurial behavior within the organization, and commitment to the organization. Furthermore, these associations were strongest for more frequent attenders. Our chapter in the *Handbook of Faith and Spirituality in the Workplace* extends these findings.[15] We analyzed the same survey data and found that faith-work integration in congregations is positively related to an entrepreneurial mindset that seeks out opportunities for innovation and to Protestant work ethic beliefs regarding ethical behavior, asceticism, and the value of hard work over leisure.

This brings us full circle. Faith-work integration that is emphasized and promoted in congregations appears to influence, in part, the faith-work integration beliefs of those in attendance, who in turn experience work more positively and contribute positively to their workplace. In sum, the integration of faith and work exists and, where it exists, it matters for individuals and the organizations in which they work.

NOTES

1 Paul Tracey, "Religion and Organization: A Critical Review of Current Trends and Future Directions," *The Academy of Management Annals*, 6:1 (June 2012), 87-134.

2 This article is based on research supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant #0925907. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

3 Mitchell J. Neubert and Katie Halbesleben, "Called to Commitment: An Examination of Relationships Between Spiritual Calling, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment," *Journal of Business Ethics* (September 2014), 1-14.

4 Monty L. Lynn, Michael J. Naughton, and Steve VanderVeen, "Faith at Work Scale (FWS): Justification, Development, and Validation of a Measure of Judeo-Christian Religion in the Workplace," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 85:2 (March 2009), 227-243.

5 Todd W. Ferguson, Kevin D. Dougherty, and Mitchell J. Neubert, "Religious Orthodoxy and Entrepreneurial Risk-Taking," *Sociological Focus*, 47:1 (January 2014), 32-44.

6 Mitchell J. Neubert, Kevin D. Dougherty, Jerry Z. Park, and Jenna Griebel, "Beliefs About Faith and Work: Development and Validation of Honoring God and Prosperity Gospel Scales," *Review of Religious Research*, 56:1 (March 2014), 129-146.

7 Mitchell J. Neubert and Kevin D. Dougherty, "Beliefs about Work: Emperors With and Without Clothes," Working Paper, Baylor University.

8 Kevin D. Dougherty, Mitchell J. Neubert, Jenna Griebel, and Jerry Z. Park, "A Religious Profile of American Entrepreneurs," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 52:2 (June 2013), 401-409.

9 Jenna M. Griebel, Jerry Z. Park, and Mitchell J. Neubert, "Faith and Work: An Exploratory Study of Religious Entrepreneurs," *Religions*, 5:3 (2014), 780-800.

10 Jenna Griebel Rogers, "Religion and Entrepreneurship: The Role of Religious Beliefs and Values on Female Entrepreneurship," (PhD dissertation, Baylor University, 2014).

11 Mitchell J. Neubert and Matt Wood, "Espoused Religious Values and Applicant Job Pursuit Intentions," Working Paper, Baylor University.

12 David W. Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

13 Scripture passages marked "NIV" are from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® NIV®, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

14 Jerry Z. Park, Jenna Griebel Rogers, Mitchell J. Neubert, and Kevin D. Dougherty, "Workplace-Bridging Religious Capital: Connecting Congregations to Work Outcomes," *Sociology of Religion*, 75:2 (Summer 2014), 309-331.

15 Mitchell J. Neubert and Kevin D. Dougherty, "Christian Perspectives on Faith at Work: An Empirical Exploration of Faith and Work Associations across Religious Traditions," in Judi Neal, ed., *Handbook of Faith and Spirituality in the Workplace: Emerging Research and Practice* (New York: Springer, 2013), 47-67.

MITCHELL J. NEUBERT
holds the Chavanne Chair of Christian Ethics in Business at Baylor University.

KEVIN D. DOUGHERTY
is Associate Professor of Sociology at Baylor University.

The Theology of Work in the New Economy

BY ROBERT DICKIE

Two distorted views of work—the "poverty gospel" and the "prosperity gospel"—sidetrack many Christians in the new economy of part-time work. These two false gospels have the same flaw: they focus on what we earn and what we own rather than for whom we work and why we work.

Work is such a central theme in the Christian life that we meet it at nearly every turn. The faith-versus-works tension is familiar to us: we are taught that God loves us unconditionally and that we owe God a life of excellent service. Indeed, we were made to be co-laborers with God in tending the creation, and understanding how God views our work and the stewardship of resources entrusted to us is a daily concern. Most of us who care about living life as God intended have spent time praying about what specific work God wants us to do and how he wants us to do it.

Unfortunately, the theology of work is often misunderstood and taught incorrectly. For instance, I remember a grade-school teacher instructing me that to spell "business" correctly one just needed to remember that "s-i-n" was in the middle of it. My Christian journey began with this and many similarly distorted views about work from well-intentioned educators putting their spin on Scripture.

It seems to me that two very misleading views of work are sidetracking many Christians today: I call them the "poverty gospel" and the "prosperity gospel." As the following chart shows, these false gospels are opposin distortions of a proper biblical theology of work as stewardship.[1] This explains why to avoid one of these mistaken views, many believers are tempted to jump to the other one!

	Poverty Gospel	*Stewardship*	*Prosperity Gospel*
Possessions are	evil	a responsibility	a right
I work to	meet only basic needs	serve Christ	become rich
Godly people are	poor	faithful	wealthy
Ungodly people are	wealthy	unfaithful	poor
I give	because I must	because I love God	to get
My spending is	without gratitude	prayerful and responsible	carefree and consumptive

Even though these two false gospels are on opposite ends of the spectrum, they share the same fundamental flaw: they make what we own the most important variable rather than for whom we work and why we work. By focusing on how much or how little we own, each of these distorted views puts the focus on us, not God. In a proper theology of work as stewardship, the focus is on God: our work is unto the Lord and the results are up to him.

Understanding how God sees work in relation to Christian vocation and ministry is especially important today because young people who want meaningful work are facing a very rough road in a new economy. Due to a diminished pool of jobs, they are finding it harder to craft a career that encompasses a lifetime. The global economy came off the rails in 2008 and ushered in the Great Recession from which we are just now starting to recover.[2] However, things are not going back to "normal." Rather the entire global workforce is dealing with a restructured economy that impacts our work, careers, and the way we live life.

This new economy increasingly offers young people only part-time work. In 2013, 75% of the jobs created in the United States were part-time.[3] In 2014, only 52% of college graduates were able to find full-time work.[4] Many experts believe that the contingent workforce (or, those who work on a non-permanent basis) in the United States, which is currently about 18.6%, will grow to become more like Europe's at 30-40% in the next ten to fifteen years.[5] This tectonic shift will impact all sectors of the economy.[6]

To deal with the questions of meaning and purpose that are posed by these new economic realities, the world is searching for answers that can be found in the Bible. The sociologist Peter Berger reports that multiple studies show that countries that were founded on Judeo-Christian values and follow the Protestant work ethic prosper economically, while other countries with

different value systems lag far behind.[7] This is no accident because God's principles change everything!

Here, then, is a brief outline of what I called the "Stewardship" model above. It is the biblical view of work and the role it should play in our lives.

First, we must understand that God was the first worker. The Bible begins, "In the beginning *God created* the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1, NIV),[8] and it goes on to say "By the seventh day God had finished *the work* he had been doing; so on the seventh day *he rested for all his work*. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the *work of creating* He had done" (Genesis 2:2-3, NIV).

Furthermore, God was the first employer: "God said, 'Let us make man in our own image, in our likeness, and *let them rule* over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the creatures that move along the ground'" (Genesis 1:26, NIV).

In the biblical model, human beings report to God as stewards**:** "God blessed them and said to them, '*Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over* the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Genesis 1:28, NIV). Later it is explained, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden *to work it and take care of it*" (Genesis 2:15, NIV).

From the very start, our relationship with God was defined by the work God gave us. We are stewards or caretakers by birth to care for the things God has entrusted to us. We are to use our life, gifts, and talents to serve God and build his kingdom. There is no hierarchy of work. We are all called to be faithful in the execution of the duties we have been given whether great or small.

In the Parable of the Talents, Christ reminds us that our stewardship will be evaluated by God. The master in the story clearly distinguishes between the faithful and unfaithful servants:

> "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share in your master's happiness!'
>
> …'And throw that worthless servant outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"
>
> *Matthew 25:23, 30* (NIV)

As Christians, then, our work becomes worship as we glorify and honor God when we do our best. We should use the talents God has given us to expand God's kingdom by following his principles to help others and serve the poor. The Apostle Paul teaches, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:21, NIV).

Whether we labor in traditional church work or the marketplace, every bit of work we do is to be ministry that reflects our service to God. Unlike the teacher of my youth who demonized business as sinful to extol the virtues of "full-time ministry," I am convinced that we need committed Christian leaders in every honorable walk of life.

We should be encouraging, teaching, and empowering the next generation on their journey as stewards whose work can shine as a light in a dark world. In truth, most people will not come into contact with Christ in a church, because they do not attend. As "missionaries" in the business world, we can take the gospel to people where they live and spend their time.

Think of the impact of the faithful business leader Dan Cathy, founder of Chick-Fil-A, whose testimony has touched millions as he showed how to run a business based on biblical principles. The film *God's Not Dead*, directed by Harold Cronk and with music by the Newsboys, reached millions for Christ. Even in the realm of sports, athletes like Tim Tebow, the famed Heisman-winning quarterback from the University of Florida, was given a national platform to be a witness to millions of people who might never enter a church.

Those who are blessed with the resources to employ others should be esteemed and taught to handle that mantle of responsibility with much reverence. The marketplace has great significance in the Bible; I believe it is no accident that thirty-four of Christ's fifty parables are set in the marketplace. In the book of Acts alone, thirty-seven of forty miracles are performed in the marketplace. It continues to be the place where business leaders can bear witness to many people who are not in the pews on Sunday morning.[9]

A recent survey of global Christian business leaders showed that 59.8% said their greatest need was "Biblical mentorship and practical examples on how to lead their businesses by the Book." Seeking biblical guidance on how God views work and our responsibilities to him should be of extreme importance to every disciple.

As in the Parable of the Talents, the stewardship of our work will ultimately be inspected by our true employer, God himself. All Christians aspire to hear the words, "Well done thou good and faithful servant. I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share in your master's happiness." The way we perceive our work and how we conduct ourselves in those pursuits will have great bearing on the words we hear one day from our Master.

NOTES

1 This chart is adapted from the Crown Financial Ministries seminar "The Bible on Money."

2 Matt Egan, "2008: Worse than the Great Depression?" *CNN Money* (August 27, 2014), *money.cnn.com/2014/08/27/news/economy/ben-bernanke-great-depression/* (accessed May 25, 2015).

3 Lucia Mutikani, "75 Percent of Jobs Created This Year Were Part-Time Due to Weak Economy, Obamacare Concerns," *Reuters* (August 21, 2013), *www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/21/part-time-job-creation_n_3788365.html* (accessed May 25, 2015).

4 Melissa Korn, "Job Market Perks Up for Recent College Graduates," *The Wall Street Journal* (February 27, 2015), *www.wsj.com/articles/job-market-perks-up-for-recent-college-graduates-1425013918?mod=WSJ_hps_sections_careerjournal* (accessed May 25, 2015).

5 For a snapshot of the current American workforce, see Doug Short, "Ratio of Part-Time Employed Still Higher Than the Pre-Recession Level," *Advisor Perspectives* (May 11, 2015), *www.advisorperspectives.com/dshort/commentaries/Full-Time-vs-Part-Time-Employment.php* (accessed May 25, 2015), and for the comparison with the European workforce, see "Charting International Labor Comparisons (Washington, DC: U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2012), *www.bls.gov/fls/chartbook/2012/section2.pdf* (accessed May 25, 2015).

6 I wrote *The Leap: Launching Your Full-Time Career in Our Part-Time Economy* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2015) to address these issues and instruct on how to navigate this new reality.

7 Jerry Bowyer summarizes his interview with Peter Berger in "Is Religion an Essential Driver of Economic Growth?" *Forbes* (May 29, 2013), *www.forbes.com/sites/jerrybowyer/2013/05/29/is-religion-an-essential-driver-of-economic-growth/* (accessed May 25, 2015).

8 Scripture passages marked "NIV" are from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® NIV®, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

9 Larry Burkett, founder of Crown Financial Ministries, wrote *Business by the Book: The Complete Guide of Biblical Principles for the Workplace* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998) to help marketplace leaders. Burkett provides insight on how to start and operate a business based on biblical principles.

ROBERT DICKIE
is President of Crown Financial Ministries in Knoxville, Tennessee.

On Not "Dying on Third"

BY ROBERT M. NEWELL

Aging well and continuing to serve Jesus requires a deliberate counter-cultural response to much that is taken for granted about retirement from work. God wants us to remain active and alert in meaningful ways, always "in the game" before we reach "home."

Mr. Spock, the science officer and first officer of the starship Enterprise, is remembered for his Vulcan salute and the blessing, "Live long and prosper." Leonard Nimoy, the actor who created the Spock character in the original *Star Trek* television series and movies, admits his idea for the gesture (a raised hand with palm forward, fingers parted between the middle and the ring finger, and thumb extended) and blessing came from his Jewish heritage. Nimoy recalls his Orthodox priest raising both hands in a similar manner to bless the congregants during the High Holiday services. The gesture probably represents the Hebrew letter Shin as shorthand for *Shaddai*, the Almighty, which is the name of God known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 6:3).[1]

I never doubted that God wanted a long, fruitful, and meaningful life for me. I agree with the Apostle Paul that "we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10, NIV).[2] I always wanted my work to be worship and am deeply honored to be a part of God's work on earth. This attitude comes from my father, a small businessman who confirmed the compelling side of the Protestant work ethic. Through his business integrity he exhibited his love for God and our family, and he demonstrated God's love for the world.

As a boy of fourteen, I began to sense God's call to ministry, in both the universal and professional senses of that word. As I matured into the wider implications of that marvelous impression, I realized that clergy, like other professionals, often "grow weary in well-doing" (Galatians 6:9, KJV), espe-

cially in the later years of their service. I prayed for good life-planning and the Holy Spirit's dynamic leadership to keep God's call alive and growing.

As a professor and administrative dean at Houston Baptist University, I also served twenty-one times as interim pastor. In those experiences I observed some pastors who had not planned well and who felt trapped during their later years. With a constricted focus and inadequate preparation, they found little flexibility and few options in their service to God. When I became a permanent pastor, I discovered many committed followers of Jesus whose work cessation brought on a kind of spiritual malaise. They had narrowly framed their contribution to God's kingdom around their occupation, which left them feeling little spiritual value when their work ended.

When my wife, Janice, and I began to experience our own aging and the approach of retirement, in what some may have taken to be (in Dylan Thomas's words) our "rage against the dying of the light," we chose not to bow predictably before the golden calf of retirement. Since idolatry in any form, including the idolatry of retirement, always disappoints, we asked God for a new challenge. Our gracious God provided what some have called an "encore career." It was an eleven-year, thrilling, new expression of our callings, far removed from the wealthy, upper-income congregation where I was then pastoring. We were guided by our grasp of God's ongoing and developing will and by the skills and varied experience God had given us. The vision of innovative ministry among the "least reached" through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and our God-engendered love for Albanian people aided our stubborn insistence that we would not retire until later. These factors and our willingness to uproot and reinvent ourselves and acquire two additional languages combined to carry us from our lovely home on the lake in suburban Houston, Texas, to an expression of our callings among the working class and outcast Albanian immigrants in the ancient city of Athens, Greece.

The evangelist Billy Graham, as he nears one hundred years of age, acknowledges the contemporary church's ineffectiveness in helping a follower of Jesus to live appropriately in the years immediately preceding death. "All my life I was taught how to die as a Christian, but no one ever taught me how I ought to live in the years before I die," he writes in *Nearing Home: Life, Faith, and Finishing Well*. "I wish they had because I am an old man now, and believe me, it's not easy."[3]

While many find genuine help in living the Christian life by asking "What would Jesus do?" for this circumstance Jesus left no specific model to emulate. Because he was crucified in his thirties, he did not grow old as many do today. If we assume that in his earthly work Jesus followed the trade of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, then Jesus was in that sense self-employed. So, even if he had lived to old age, he would not have experienced the termination many modern workers go through when they receive a "pink slip" or "gold

watch" or "golden parachute" at the end of their working lives.

Retirement is not a biblical concept. On only one occasion in the Bible is there anything close to the idea. When Moses is dedicating the tribe of Levi as the Hebrews' ceremonial priests, God tells him they should cease their priestly duties at the age of fifty. At that point "they must retire from their regular service and work no longer. They may assist their brothers in performing their duties at the Tent of Meeting, but they themselves must not do the work" (Numbers 8:25b-26a, NIV). Retirement is a comparatively recent phenomenon, a modern contrivance. Mary-Lou Weisman humorously notes:

> In the beginning, there was no retirement. There were no old people. In the Stone Age, everyone was fully employed until age 20, by which time nearly everyone was dead, usually of unnatural causes. Any early man who lived long enough to develop crow's-feet was either worshiped or eaten as a sign of respect. Even in Biblical times, when a fair number of people made it into old age, retirement still had not been invented and respect for old people remained high. In those days, it was customary to carry on until you dropped, regardless of your age group—no shuffleboard, no Airstream trailer. When a patriarch could no longer farm, herd cattle or pitch a tent, he opted for more specialized, less labor-intensive work, like prophesying and handing down commandments. Or he moved in with his kids.[4]

Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck of Germany is credited as the inventor of the modern concept of retirement. Leading his country to offset the rising threat of Marxism, he announced in 1883 that he would pay a pension to any German man over the age of 65 who was not working. Since in those pre-modern-medicine days few people lived to reach 65, the immediate payout of Bismarck's proposal was small. But the discovery of penicillin and other medical advances in the twentieth century soon changed the picture dramatically.[5]

If my story and that of others can be instructive in any way, it is that aging well and continuing to serve Jesus requires a deliberate countercultural offensive in the face of much that is taken for granted. Growing up in Mississippi, I was taught not to "get too set in my ways," and I have found that advice to be helpful in my later years. Of course, one cannot discount the modern obsession with youth and the marked diminishing of energy or other realities of aging. The growing complexity of our work world and the cultural fixation on the "good life" of retirement also complicate matters. But, I have found fulfillment in remaining active and working longer. Indeed, in the recent economic crises, and given better medicines and other considerations, many people are revisiting the cultural norm and choosing not to retire.[6]

The title of Graham's book, *Nearing Home*, borrows an image from the world of baseball by referring to aging and death as "nearing home base." To expand on that metaphor, let's remember that each one of us, in our youth, trains and prepares. When our time "at bat" comes, we enter the world of work. Seeking guidance "signs" from the "Coach," most of us get "on base" with our first job. Unless health issues or severe economic conditions "throw us out," we remain in the "game" of life. We advance around the "bases" of our life's work, often aided or impeded by the "hits," "force-outs," and "sacrifices" of others, but also by our own ability to "play the game" and "run the bases." Some have even been known to "steal a base" or two. Finally we reach "third base," the summit of our careers. That significant time period, whether long or short in duration, between the conclusion of our working and the end of our lives is represented by the distance between "third base" and "home." No player wants to "die on third." For the sake of our "team," we want to make a contribution, even late in the game. I am convinced that the Coach also wants us to remain active and alert in meaningful ways, always in the game before we reach home.

Once, when Saint Francis of Assisi (c. 1181-1228) was working in his garden, someone asked him what he would do if he suddenly learned he would die before sunset on that very day. Francis replied, "I would finish hoeing my garden."[7]

Amen and Amen!

NOTES

1 Leonard Nimoy, *I Am Not Spock* (Cutchogue, NY: Buccaneer Books, 1997 [1975]), 104-105.

2 Scripture passages marked "NIV" are from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® NIV®, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

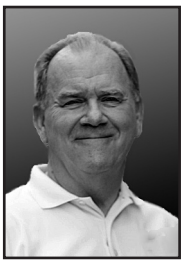
3 Billy Graham, *Nearing Home: Life, Faith, and Finishing Well* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011), vii.

4 Mary-Lou Weisman, "The History of Retirement, From Early Man to A.A.R.P.," *The New York Times* (March 21, 1999), *www.nytimes.com/1999/03/21/jobs/the-history-of-retirement-from-early-man-to-aarp.html* (accessed June 10, 2015).

5 Ibid.

6 Chris Farrell, *Unretirement: How Baby Boomers Are Changing the Way We Think About Work, Community, and the Good Life* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014).

7 The quote is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi on *blog.gaiam.com/quotes/authors/saint-francis-assisi* (accessed June 10, 2015).



ROBERT M. NEWELL
is a minister in Georgetown, Texas.

To Labor Not in Vain

BY GREGORY A. CLARK

If, as the Apostle Paul writes, "in the Lord your labor is not in vain," then we need a way to understand our labor "in the Lord." The books reviewed here make valuable contributions to thinking about work biblically and theologically. They help us to understand the conditions under which "all is vanity."

Work is not one thing. Each of the books reviewed here reflect on human work as employment, a source of identity and community, as onerous but necessary activity, as site of oppression or alienation, as vocation, and as worship.

But the value of work on each of these scales is either problematic or ambiguous. Perhaps most fundamentally, some eat, drink, and make merry; others toil under the sun. And then we die—all of us. All is vanity.

The topic of work calls for theological engagement. The Apostle Paul seems to lead the way claiming: "in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15: 58). His claim is provocative, but it has failed to spur theologians to the task. The four books included in this review aim to begin correcting this neglect.

Each book develops a normative account of work by reading human work as a response to God's good work in creation and in redemption. Their sources and their tools differ, and there are disagreements, but they also complement one another.

Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work (New York: Riverhead Books, 2014 [2012], 336 pp., $16.00) is authored by Timothy Keller, the founding pastor of a megachurch, Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York, and by Katherine Leary Alsdorf, a former CEO who now leads Redeemer's Center for Faith & Work. *Every Good Endeavor*

does the work of a teaching pastor by providing resources and models for thinking about one's work in light of Christian faith. The authors tell great stories that hold the reader's interest making the three-hundred page book accessible to most any audience.

At the center of the book's teaching is the claim, "Faithful work, then, is to operate out of a Christian 'worldview'" (p. 5) so that "we must think out the Christian worldview's implications in every field, and often those implications are subtle" (p. 169). This approach allows and requires the authors to teach not only on the nature of work but also on the Christian worldview. They fill in the framework and questions of a worldview with answers drawn from their exposition of Scripture.

Among the many strengths of *Every Good Endeavor* are these three: First, the authors acknowledge the limits of their approach. Because the language of worldviews harbors an intellectualist bias and because it emphasizes the differences from other worldviews, it can lead to elitism and sectarianism (p. 188), and this "can lead us to privilege white-collar work over blue-collar work" (p. 187). As a result, the authors distinguish the Christian worldview from "the Bible's view" (pp. 187-188). If we want to think about work as Christians, we would do well to learn from Keller and Alsdorf.

Second, Keller and Alsdorf illustrate their points with anecdotes and stories from a wide range of sources. These "illustrations" have a power to stand on their own and open up new avenues of thought. One of their explanations of how our labor is not in vain is to summarize J. R. R. Tolkien's short story, "Leaf by Niggle." Tolkien gets something profoundly right in this story, and the story brings it out better than any didactic account can.

Third, in their final chapter, they offer an account of the mission and programs of Redeemer's Center for Faith & Work. Here they lay out not just a set of ideas, but rather a description of people and programs that can serve as practice-altering exemplars for how the gospel is good news for our work worlds.

David H. Jensen's *Responsive Labor: A Theology of Work* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006, 121 pp., $22.00) is the work of an associate professor of constructive theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Jensen offers the most tightly argued and researched of the four books. He relies on the Cappadocian fathers, Reformed theology, and Catholic social teaching (especially Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*).

Because he sees God as appropriating *all* human labor, Jensen does not offer an exclusively Christian definition of work. He endorses the definition of human work as "any activity undertaken with a sense of obligation to oneself, others, one's community, and God" (p. 3).

The Christian will understand this work as the human response to the God who creates the world in love. Jensen sets out to relate work to

the doctrine of the Trinity, but that requires helping his readers understand the doctrine. Here Jensen shines. "The Trinity is a fundamentally practical doctrine," he says, with practical significance for our experience of work (p. xii). The self-revealing triune God points to "the intrinsic value of difference, abundance, interdependence, sharing, and play in work." By contrast, "our economy is often characterized by scarcity, a drive toward uniformity, hoarding, poverty, and overwork" (p. 51).

Jensen sees the liturgy generally and the Eucharist specifically as paradigmatic practices where human work displays the values of God's work. He concludes with a consideration of reforms in practice and policy that would bring our economic realities more in line with the values we find in the doctrine of the Trinity.

Esther D. Reed's *Good Work: Christian Ethics in the Workplace* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010, 132 pp., $24.95) was originally developed as the Sarum Lectures at Sarum College in Salisbury, England. The book retains the feel of a lecture series. The material is not always systematically developed, but her content is rich and evocative, incorporating pithy quotations from other authors.

Reed, an associate professor of theology at the University of Exeter, does not offer a comprehensive definition of work, opting instead to pursue the topic through the variety of aspects it presents in different contexts. Still, her central claims are that

> to understand the meaning of work, one must first understand the meaning of rest; the predominant framework for describing a Christian ethic of work…is the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead…; [and] reflection on the resurrection can orient (or reorient) the working lives of Christians in important ways." (p. 2)

These are substantive claims that may indeed help us understand what it means to say "in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Reed fills out her claims by "thinking with the resurrection." This means four things. First, it is a form of "Christian realism." Idealists (here she has in mind "Freegans" who are "dedicated to revealing human over-consumption and waste" by "dropping out of the paid employment economy") posit an alternative society, but they underestimate the complexity of social ills and the nature of sin (p. 23). Political realism, however, offers more cynicism than hope. By contrast, "Christian realists derive truth not only from the observation of things around us but from the event of the resurrection and the hope of God's kingdom to come" (p. 24).

Second, she finds that Catholic social teaching has already done good work in showing us how to think with the resurrection. Here she draws on Pope John Paul II's *Laborem Exercens* (1981) as a model for thinking with the

resurrection. Perhaps thinking of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* which tried to articulate a middle way between capitalism and communism, she insists that theological realism is not a middle way. It is rather "rooted in the Triune God…who transcends the realities of the created order and raised Christ Jesus from the dead" (p. 28).

Third, she offers readings of two icons, one depicting Christ and the harrowing of Hell (p. 27) and another of St. Nicholas (p. 98). Both readings offer unique insights in what it means to think with the resurrection.

Finally, Reed takes the reader through the liturgy to show how the liturgy trains its participants to see the world. To labor not in vain is to have one's work and oneself and ultimately one's people taken up and transfigured in Christ's resurrection.

Ben Witherington III, a prolific and highly respected New Testament scholar, has written *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2011, 192 pp., $18.00). His insights into the nature of work depend not primarily on research conducted for this book but from a life's work of reflecting on biblical texts for the Church. One of his central goals for the book is to teach the reader "what the Bible actually says about work" (p. vii).

This book packs many punches into its small size and casual tone. To illustrate, I will follow only its first line of thought.

Witherington constructs a definition of work in which eschatology has a central place. After sifting through definitions of work proposed by others, including Jensen, he then constructs his own. A good definition should provide a clear standard by which to determine what falls inside and outside of its domain. So, a Christian definition of work should enable us to determine what work Christians can, must, and must not do. A definition that includes everything does not make such distinctions and so is a failed definition.

Witherington defines work as: "*any necessary and meaningful task that God calls and gifts a person to do and which can be undertaken to the glory of God and for the edification and aid of human beings, being inspired by the Spirit and foreshadowing the realities of the new creation*" (p. xii).

We should note how Witherington's definition brings "new creation" or a "kingdom perspective" into the definition of work. "Our eschatology must shape our vision of our tasks" (p. xv). It is our eschatology that will determine what kinds of work are and are not in vain.

This pushes the question back to "What does the eschaton, heaven on earth, look like?" Witherington emphasizes two sources: Jesus' teachings about the kingdom, and Isaiah's declaration of the completion of all things:

> they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
> and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 2:4

Isaiah's view of the eschaton distinguishes swords and plowshares, war and work. It forces the question of whether it is possible to have Isaiah's view of the eschaton and consider war "good work." Is war possible work for a Christian who follows Jesus' teachings? Witherington responds with a clear "no." War contradicts the realities of the new creation.

Work, on the other hand, will continue in paradise which "involves a war stoppage, not a work stoppage, so that crops can be sown and their fruit enjoyed in peace. Work apparently *isn't* the human dilemma; war and other sorts of fallen human behavior are" (pp. xiv-xv). Witherington is quick to point out the implication here. Heaven on earth is not a retirement home. This means that our dream of working in order to achieve retirement is based in unbiblical myth.

This first line of thought that I have traced in *Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor* aptly demonstrates how little we have reflected on what the Bible says about work and how helpful Witherington is for that purpose.

Keller and Alsdorf, Jensen, Reed, and Witherington each make valuable contributions to thinking about work biblically and theologically. They help us understand the conditions under which "all is vanity." If we are to believe Paul when he writes, "in the Lord your labor is not in vain," then we need a way to understand our labor "in the Lord." The categories of "Christian worldview," "the Triune God," "the resurrection," and "new creation" are abstractly complimentary. They do not, however, amount to the same thing. They differ in their power to tell the story of God's work, to articulate the goodness along with the toil and vanity of human work, and to spur us to imagine heaven on earth. They differ in the clarity with which they can condemn actions that work against God and can praise actions which cooperate, even co-create, with God. With each of them we can affirm that nothing good is lost.

GREGORY A. CLARK
is Professor of Philosophy at North Park University in Chicago, Illinois.

Work, Wealth, and Business as the Ground of Christian Discipline

BY ROGER WARD

The peculiar American struggle with faith, wealth, and work is expressed in four recent books that affirm Christians in business while offering theological critiques of capitalism or its effects. Balancing the spiritual dimensions of work with the norms of free market capitalism is an enlivening challenge.

The peculiar American struggle with faith, wealth, and work is expressed in four recent books that affirm Christians in business while offering various theological critiques of capitalism or its effects. These authors stand in a long line reaching back to colonial voices like the anti-slavery merchant and Quaker John Woolman and the theologian and pastor Jonathan Edwards who warned his wealthy congregants that God had made them "for the good of your fellow creatures, and not only for yourself." Balancing the spiritual dimensions of work with, and sometimes against, the norms of free market capitalism is an enlivening challenge.

In *Doing God's Business: Meaning and Motivation for the Marketplace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2006, 259 pp., $18.00), R. Paul Stevens, who was professor of marketplace theology and leadership at Regent College, Vancouver, BC, presents a two-fold argument for Christian participation in business. First he establishes that "business exists, not mainly to make a profit but to meet needs and wants and to do so profitably" (p. 109). He makes a robust theological argument in support of wealth creation as an essentially good human activity that is, "part of the purpose of God on a

very large scale" (p. 111). In light of this he asks a telling question: "Is there an ethic strong enough to direct and discipline capitalism?"(p. 108) The second part of the argument examines motivation in business, and Stevens encourages entrepreneurship and habits conducive to capitalistic success. Profit is necessary for business to exist to produce goods and services that sustain and enhance human experience as the vehicle for God's work of "transforming creation, culture, community, and people" (p. 177). Rather than seeing faith as a way of resolving or bringing meaning to work, he says "we will find our satisfaction in God through our experience of work" (p. 198).

Stevens's engagement of business as a creation of God for the common good is attractive. Embracing our work as a fulfillment of God's purpose will clearly resonate with readers. What I find absent in Stevens's approach, however, is recognition of the spiritual effects on men and women who see the brutality of capitalism for people on the bottom as well as the top of the economic scale, but who feel powerless to do anything about it other than simply abandoning the field.

Amy L. Sherman's *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2011, 272 pp., $17.00) takes up the theme of Proverbs 11:10, "When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices" (p. 45). Sherman argues that the lives of the righteous ones, the *Tsaddiqim*, constitute a preview of God's kingdom in demonstrating the practices of shalom. This broad vision of the Christian gospel follows Ron Sider's critique of the reductionist gospel of personal salvation in which the Christian "can simply accept the gospel and go on living the same adulterous, materialistic, racist life" (p. 70). Sherman also evokes C. S. Lewis's understanding that "the universal longing for a better, more just, peaceful and healthy world suggests that either there was one or one day there will be one" (p. 80).

In the second part of the book, Sherman explores discipling for vocational stewardship and argues that it is missing from current church practice. She thinks what people need is a vision of institutional transformation or reform of practices based on the principles of justice and shalom (p. 99). Our work is central to God's redemptive story, she says, as "God continues his creative, sustaining and redeeming work through our human labor" (p. 104). She describes the "vocational sweet spot," where our skills and the world's needs intersect with God's priorities (p. 110). An example is the Mavuno Church in Kenya that combines social justice weekends with music and film industries. Sherman also strongly encourages participation in targeted church initiatives focusing on long-term community development. As one participant told his pastor after working in a challenging neighborhood, "This is where the kingdom of God needs to be" (p. 203). Sherman describes the transformational impact of the gospel on the lives and vocations of

believers who are able to re-create their workspace and career organically into shalom and justice. As Christians, she says, we cannot hold wealth without concern for the common good for those living next to us.

A significant virtue of Sherman's book is the affirmation of work combined with a substantial critique of congregations and the ends of business. I think this book would be particularly good for a church study group because of the examples and resources for discipling it contains.

John C. Knapp, in *How the Church Fails Businesspeople (And What Can Be Done About It*) (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2011, 192 pp., $15.00), begins with the observation that "as believers strive for coherence across all areas of their lives, much is at stake for the church" (p. xiii). He notes that clergy are often not interested in the working lives of their parishioners because they do not consider their jobs as callings (p. 28). Knapp thinks this is partially due to seminary training that lacks rigor in the area of addressing the "dehumanizing forces and temptations of the marketplace" (p. 39). He also thinks congregations have lapsed into a materialistic view, seeing people in terms of "what they are worth" despite a survey of Old Testament and New Testament scripture that shows "desire for wealth for oneself is never sanctioned" (p. 47).

Knapp traces the history of wealth in the Church, beginning with the common ownership of property in the New Testament church, to 950 when the Roman church owned a third of all the land in Europe. Reaction to the church's ownership of wealth and practices of usury shaped the Protestant Reformation, but even so "American believers are led to deem the pursuit of wealth more admirable than sinful" (p. 65).

Amy Sherman describes the impact of the gospel on believers who re-create their workspace and career organically into shalom and justice. As Christians, we cannot hold wealth without concern for the common good for those living next to us.

This is the condition from which Knapp suggests we should rethink Christian vocation and workplace theology. Such a change could sponsor a spiritual awakening of our understanding of wealth and work, and dramatically affect the potential of the Church to shape our lives. Knapp's theology of work as Christian wholeness is based on Micah 6:8. By living an ethic of love and responsibility, he argues, Christians in business can help the world become what it ought to be (p. 109). He commends

David Miller's *God at Work* and organizations like the Christian Business Roundtable for providing a multiplicity of resources for the growing faith-in-work movement (p. 129), and Knapp is encouraged by the potential for the Church in providing models of care.

The evidence is clear that many workers, and not all of them Christian believers, long for a sense of meaning in their work. I agree with Knapp that the contemporary church's failure to see this longing as an opening for gospel witness and care is puzzling. Perhaps we are collectively still entranced by the Niebuhrian bifurcation of "moral man, immoral society" and are not yet ready to face the challenge of articulating a Christianly-shaped economy or a business-oriented faith life.

Jeff Van Duzer, formerly dean of the Business School and now provost at Seattle Pacific University, writes in *Why Business Matters to God (And What Still Needs to Be Fixed)* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011, 206 pp., $20.00) that "if Christians can understand that the work they are doing is God's work, they can bring a sense of joy, meaning, purpose, pride and hope to their tasks that might otherwise elude them" (p. 19). Van Duzer draws business into the grand narrative of God's desire to restore a loving relationship with humanity. The original disobedience in Eden brings consequences that include broken human relations, business disparity, and depraved working conditions. Because the free market is "not inherent in God's design," it reflects "God's concession" to fallen humanity (p. 77). But by recognizing this limitation, Christians can still engage in business with a sense of hope and meaning, though resisting the status quo requires an alternative conception of business beyond profit maximization.

Van Duzer's vision for businesses is that they should serve others, be sustainable both fiscally and environmentally, and support institutions for the purpose of pleasing God. This includes straining to live within the limits of cost and profit (p. 161). All institutions, he says, are intended by God to work together to seek the common good, and Van Duzer's most direct challenge to a business status quo is to exchange profit maximization for the goal of "a reasonable risk-adjusted rate of return" necessary to raise capital (p. 171). Profit is not a reward, in his thinking, so much as a measure of business efficiency and alignment with market forces. In this way profit is a constraint and "a marvelous tool that brings forth the best from the company"; people who scorn profit seeking, he writes, "scorn an effective tool for providing for God's children" (p. 174). The edificatory tone of Van Duzer's book is most clear when he states "the call to business is a noble calling, a calling to participate at the very heart of God's work in the world" (p. 199).

Van Duzer exemplifies what I mentioned in the introduction of this review as the peculiar American interest in eliding business, work, and Christian faith. There are some inconsistencies on the need or necessity

of profit and whether the market or other business institutions are part of God's idea for human thriving. And yet the book works in providing a clear-eyed assessment of a reconception of business success that is self-consciously Christian and a part of God's grand narrative.

Considering all the books reviewed here, I am most struck by the relevance of a point Amy Sherman raises about the anemic Christian descriptions of work. She worries that congregations miss opportunities to see their members' work as occasions to express the Body of Christ in the world. The remedy would be a return to the thought of Walter Rauschenbush, and Dorothy Day in her own way, who elevate the worker as a Christian brother, a center of dignity and value around which the Church and our economic order ought to be organized.

The fear of socialism has affected our general conception of labor so deeply that the rightfulness of ownership and the absolute dominion of those controlling capital have become so engrained in our thinking that it raises few flags when "Christian" is combined without seam to "capitalism." The broad sense of the books reviewed here is that active participation in a market-based system is warranted *as synonymous* with the growth of God's kingdom. I do not want to argue here that this is wrong on its face, but I do think we are living in a culture of Christianity that uncritically accepts our economic system as normative for our future and for the global community. In the eschaton, and perhaps even before, we may have some explaining to do to our sisters and brothers in the global south and east who have borne the short end of the stick of the free market, and then perhaps also to the Master who told his disciples how difficult it is for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of heaven.

ROGER WARD
is Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown College in Georgetown, Kentucky.

Editors

ROBERT B. KRUSCHWITZ
General Editor

Bob Kruschwitz is Senior Scholar of the Institute for Faith and Learning and Professor of Philosophy at Baylor University. He convenes the editorial team to plan the themes for the issues of *Christian Reflection*, then he commissions the lead articles and supervises the formation of each issue. Bob holds the Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Texas at Austin and the B.A. from Georgetown College. You may contact him by phone at 254-710-4805 or e-mail at Robert_Kruschwitz@baylor.edu.

HEIDI J. HORNIK
Art Editor

Heidi Hornik is Professor of Art History at Baylor University. With the M.A. and Ph.D. in Art History from The Pennsylvania State University and the B.A. from Cornell University, her special interest is art of the Italian Renaissance. With Mikeal C. Parsons she coedited *Interpreting Christian Art* and coauthored the three volume *Illuminating Luke.* Her most recent book is *Michele Tosini and the Ghirlandaio Workshop in Cinquecento Florence*. You may contact her by phone at 254-710-4548 or e-mail at Heidi_Hornik@baylor.edu.

NORMAN WIRZBA
Review Editor

Norman Wirzba is Professor of Theology and Ecology at Duke Divinity School. Norman holds the M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy from Loyola University of Chicago, the M.A. in religion from Yale University, and the B.A. from the University of Lethbridge, Alberta. He is the author of *The Paradise of God, Living the Sabbath,* and *Food and Faith* and editor of *The Essential Agrarian Reader*. You may contact him by phone at 919-660-3400 or e-mail at nwirzba@div.duke.edu.

WILLIAM D. SHIELL
Proclamation Editor

William D. Shiell is Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Florida. He has pastored churches in Texas and Tennessee and served on leading committees of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. After receiving the B.A. in religion from Samford University, he earned the M.Div. in theology from George W. Truett Theological Seminary and Ph.D. in religion from Baylor University. He is the author of *Reading Acts: The Lector and the Early Christian Audience* and *Sessions with Matthew*. You may contact him by phone at 850-222-5470 or e-mail at pastor@fbctlh.org.

Contributors

MATTHEW S. BEAL
Licensed Professional Counselor, Heart of Texas Counseling Center, Waco, TX

GREGORY A. CLARK
Professor of Philosophy, North Park University, Chicago, IL

ROBERT DICKIE
President of Crown Financial Ministries, Knoxville, TN

KEVIN D. DOUGHERTY
Associate Professor of Sociology, Baylor University

CHRISTINE M. FLETCHER
Associate Professor of Theology, Benedictine University, Lisle, IL

HEIDI J. HORNIK
Professor of Art History, Baylor University

ROBERT B. KRUSCHWITZ
Senior Scholar of the Institute for Faith and Learning, and Professor of Philosophy, Baylor University

JEANIE MILEY
Author and retreat leader, Houston, TX

MITCHELL J. NEUBERT
Chavanne Chair of Christian Ethics, School of Business, Baylor University

ROBERT M. NEWELL
Minister, Georgetown, TX

DARBY KATHLEEN RAY
Donald W. and Ann M. Harward Professor of Civic Engagement, Bates College, Lewiston, ME

JONATHAN SANDS WISE
Associate Dean of Academic Success and Associate Professor of Philosophy, Georgetown College, Georgetown, KY

JOEL SCHWARTZ
Visiting Professor of Philosophy, Bethel College, Mishawaka, IN

ROGER WARD
Professor of Philosophy, Georgetown College, Georgetown, KY