

VOCATIONAL STEWARDSHIP
FOR THE COMMON GOOD

K I N G D O M
C A L L I N G

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Foreword by Reggie McNeal

Afterword by Steven Garber

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On the whole, though, our cursory examination of Christian professional societies did not indicate that discussions of reforming their discipline were a common, central, animating feature of these associations.

CONCLUSION

The average Christian professional sitting in the pew hears little from the pulpit or in Sunday school about how her life with God relates to her life at work. She may receive general guidance about being salt and light in all the spheres of her life, including her workplace. Overall, though, her church offers little specific guidance about why her work matters, how God can and does use it, or how her vocational power can be stewarded to advance his kingdom.

Lacking this guidance, some Christians simply "turn off" their faith at work; they function as "practical atheists" on the job.²⁷ They have no vision for what it means to partner with God at work, to bring meaning to their work or to accomplish kingdom purposes in and through their work. Others look outside their local congregation for guidance, joining a marketplace ministry or a Christian professional society. These individuals receive some good counsel and personal support, and, depending on which fellowship they belong to, may also hear a fairly robust vision of vocational stewardship.

More often, though, they are simply instructed to be people of strong integrity and to seek to win coworkers for Christ. These emphases on ethics and evangelism are needed and valuable, but they are insufficient for equipping Christians to steward their vocational power to advance foretastes of the kingdom. We need to get beyond the status quo.



Inspiration

Vocation is integral, not incidental, to the mission of God in the world.

STEVE GARBER

Doug Spada, the leader of WorkLife, Inc., offers pastors a vivid metaphor about a church's proper identity:

From this day forward, I would like you to think of your local church as an aircraft carrier. Unless our churches assume the rightful and biblical positions in the battles we face in the workplace, we cannot fully advance. It's only as the carrier arms, equips, briefs on the battle plan, fuels the jet and then launches the pilots out on their mission that they assume their maximum dominion. . . . Unfortunately, many of our churches operate like a cruise ship. Think about it, what do you do on a cruise ship? You go to be entertained, you eat a lot, there's very little accountability. And think about a cruise ship: it goes out, hits a couple points and comes back to the very same place—rarely advancing forward into new territory. If the enemy of our souls can disarm the carrier, confuse the pilots, break the catapult system, then we essentially continue to function as a cruise ship. . . . God may very well be asking you to be a catalyst for work life reformation in your church. The church is not a cruise ship but an aircraft carrier.¹

Churches whose self-identity is as aircraft carriers place a high value on affirming and equipping laypeople for their ministries out in the workaday world. They teach people just how much their daily work matters. Like Pastor Tom Nelson of Christ Community Church in Leawood, Kansas, they inspire their members by reminding them that their work is "central

to [God's] redemptive story and his redemptive aim in the world—not only now but also in the new heavens and new earth.”²

Missional church leaders know that the church is formed of both the “gathered” and the “scattered.” They affirm that ministry is not solely about what happens inside the four walls of the church; in fact, it’s usually much more about what happens outside them. They don’t make the mistake of defining ministry as “church work.” Therefore, they affirm laypeople in the ministries that they have in and through their “secular” jobs.

It is from this high view of members’ daily work that pastors are positioned to offer inspiration to their flock. Carrying out this task of inspiration involves teaching a biblical theology of work and providing practical advice to members regarding the “vocational sweet spot.”

THE BASICS OF A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF WORK

To inspire their flock about their daily work, congregational leaders need to start with the vital truth that work preceded the Fall. This truth is foundational for faithful vocational stewardship. Work is not a result of humankind’s fall into sin. Work is central in Genesis 1 and 2. There it is—right in the midst of paradise, right in the picture of God’s intentions for how things ought to be. Work is a gift from God. *Work is something we were built for, something our loving Creator intends for our good.* Work is not evil, nor is it a side effect of sin. This truth can be hard for congregants to trust when they are frustrated in their jobs or unfulfilled in their careers. It’s certainly true that the curse of Genesis 3 brought toil and futility into work. Ever since, our experience of work involves pain as well as pleasure. But work itself is good. It has intrinsic value.

Labor’s intrinsic value: How we participate in God’s own work. Human beings are made in the image of God, and God is a worker. Human labor has intrinsic value because in it we “image,” or reflect, our Creator. In *Faith Goes to Work*, author Robert Banks discusses God as our “vocational model,” describing the various sorts of work he does and how myriad human vocations give expression to these aspects of God’s work.³ Banks’s model is very helpful for teaching congregants the intrinsic value of work. Pastors can explain the various ways in which God is a worker, and then encourage their congregants to identify where their own labors fit. God’s labors include the following:

- *Redemptive work* (God’s saving and reconciling actions). Humans participate in this kind of work, for example, as evangelists, pastors, counselors and peacemakers. So do writers, artists, producers, songwriters, poets and actors who incorporate redemptive elements in their stories, novels, songs, films, performances and other works.
- *Creative work* (God’s fashioning of the physical and human world). God gives humans creativity. People in the arts (sculptors, actors, painters, musicians, poets and so on) display this, as do a wide range of craftspeople such as potters, weavers and seamstresses, as well as interior designers, metalworkers, carpenters, builders, fashion designers, architects, novelists and urban planners (and more).
- *Providential work* (God’s provision for and sustaining of humans and the creation). “The work of divine providence includes all that God does to maintain the universe and human life in an orderly and beneficial fashion,” Banks writes. “This includes conserving, sustaining, and replenishing, in addition to creating and redeeming the world.”⁴ Thus, innumerable individuals—bureaucrats, public utility workers, public policymakers, shopkeepers, career counselors, shipbuilders, farmers, firemen, repairmen, printers, transport workers, IT specialists, entrepreneurs, bankers and brokers, meteorologists, research technicians, civil servants, business school professors, mechanics, engineers, building inspectors, machinists, statisticians, plumbers, welders, janitors—and all who help keep the economic and political order working smoothly—reflect this aspect of God’s labor.
- *Justice work* (God’s maintenance of justice). Judges, lawyers, paralegals, government regulators, legal secretaries, city managers, prison wardens and guards, policy researchers and advocates, law professors, diplomats, supervisors, administrators and law enforcement personnel participate in God’s work of maintaining justice.
- *Compassionate work* (God’s involvement in comforting, healing, guiding and shepherding). Doctors, nurses, paramedics, psychologists, therapists, social workers, pharmacists, community workers, nonprofit directors, emergency medical technicians, counselors and welfare agents all reflect this aspect of God’s labor.
- *Revelatory work* (God’s work to enlighten with truth). Preachers, scien-

tists, educators, journalists, scholars and writers are all involved in this sort of work.

In all these various ways, God the Father continues his creative, sustaining and redeeming work through our human labor. This gives our work great dignity and purpose. Vocational stewardship starts with *celebrating* the work itself and recognizing that God cares about it and is accomplishing his purposes through it.

It is worth lingering on this point because much teaching on the integration of faith and work neglects the inherent value of work. Church leaders should indeed teach and preach on becoming certain types of workers—honest workers, ethical workers, caring workers, faithful workers and salt-and-light workers. But such teaching is insufficiently biblical if there's never any mention of the inherent value of the work itself. As my brilliant friend Ken Myers likes to say, we should seek to be more than "adverbial Christians."

Our work lasts. We saw earlier that a further reason why our work truly matters is because it *lasts*. Work—pleasurable, fruitful, meaningful work—will be an eternal reality. Preview passages about life in the consummated kingdom, such as Isaiah 60, depict humans bringing all manner of culture-making, craftsmanship and economic production into the new age. Revelation 21:24 describes how "the kings of the earth will bring their splendor" into the New Jerusalem. It is good for pastors to remind their congregants of this grand truth, because believers sometimes get discouraged by the seeming futility of their labors. Consider Lesslie Newbigin's profound insight:

Every faithful act of service, every honest labor to make the world a better place, which seemed to have been forever lost and forgotten in the rubble of history, will be seen on that day [at the final resurrection] to have contributed to the perfect fellowship of God's kingdom. . . . All who committed their work in faithfulness to God will be by Him raised up to share in the new age, and will find that their labor was not lost, but that it has found its place in the completed kingdom.⁵

COUNTERING FALSE IDEAS ABOUT WORK

Pastors need also to be aware that sin and our fallen culture have twisted many Christians' views on work. As church leaders teach the goodness of

work, they also need to unmask and reject our secular culture's false understandings of work.

Because we are fallen, we sometimes act as though success at work equates to a successful life. It doesn't. Sometimes we make an idol of our careers. We need to repent. Sometimes we make decisions about jobs as though the ultimate purpose of work were self-fulfillment. It's not. Sometimes we judge people's worth based on their career position or status. We should seek God's forgiveness. Sometimes we allow work—which is just one dimension of our lives—to crowd out family or worship or relationships or play or Sabbath. We must resist.

False ideas about work emerge not just from the secular culture but also from poor theology. Therefore, church leaders must guard zealously against sacred/secular dualism that can produce an exaltation of the soul over the body (and thus of the so-called spiritual over the material) and/or a hierarchy favoring the work of clergy over that of the laity. Pastor Tom Nelson from Christ Community Church—who has been teaching his members about the redemptive value of work for ten years—takes this very seriously. "We're language police around here," he says. "We try very hard as a team to help each other avoid that dichotomist thinking and language."

Church leaders also need to address the fuzzy thinking some of their parishioners may have regarding work satisfaction. We've seen that for Christ-followers, the primary motivation for work is *not* self-fulfillment, self-enrichment or self-promotion. That cuts directly across our secular culture's claims. Christianity insists that our lives—including our work—are all about God and his work, his mission. This should be inspirational, because it provides profound meaning to our labor.

Pastors who begin teaching more on work may find that their congregants have some misplaced fears: Does the fact that their work is not "all about them" mean that God intends for labor to be only drudgery? Is he indifferent to our joy? Does he call us to work that we loathe? Are we only in the center of his vocational call if our work is miserable, painful and unfulfilling? No, no, no and no again!

Church leaders must help their people recognize that Satan delights in distorting our understanding of the Father and his loving purposes. Even believers who have walked for years with God can get tangled up by the

enemy of our souls, feeling guilty when they engage in work they love—as though that is a sign that the work must be selfish. It's not.

Dying to self in the context of our work does not mean that we must search for and take on the job we think we'd most dislike. God creates us each with passions and talents. He then endows his followers with spiritual gifts. He sovereignly arranges our circumstances and experiences. He forms us with unique personalities and designs. He puts in us the capacity to find deep joy and purpose by serving him through work that draws on our unique, God-given combination of natural and spiritual gifts. We serve him as we serve others through our work, because he has called us to be his hands and feet in the midst of our beautiful but broken planet. That work is often difficult and may be draining, but it also can bring rich satisfaction and reward. As author Frederick Buechner says in his pithy definition of vocation, "the place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."⁶

ENCOURAGING MOVEMENT TOWARD THE VOCATIONAL SWEET SPOT

Buechner's definition provides some helpful guidance that is needed when the shackles of a dualistic view of work are discarded. Pastors should celebrate when their members break free of the muddled idea that some jobs are sacred while others are secular. But to say that there's no sacred/secular divide is not the same thing as saying that all secular pursuits are equally worthy.

Some jobs, we know, are morally out-of-bounds. No preacher worth his salt is going to encourage his congregants to start a brothel, take a job at an "adult" bookstore or enroll as a mercenary soldier. Hopefully, few Christians need specific instructions to avoid such career paths, but some may need to be challenged about degrees of good—to be encouraged to ask whether the way they are investing their work time (typically forty hours or more a week) reflects what really *matters* in light of God's priorities and the world's needs.⁷

Church leaders should inspire their congregants to choose jobs that, to the greatest extent possible, offer them the best opportunities for directing their creative talents toward the end of advancing shalom for the common good. Some secular organizations and companies are engaged in putting

creativity to work in directions that are substantive for human flourishing; for example, in innovations that advance health or environmental stewardship. However, other secular companies invest their creative energies in ways that simply produce more needless things and new consumer waste. Again, in some companies, creative talent is directed toward the end of finding answers to critical problems in our broken world. In others, creative talent is directed toward providing answers to "problems" that are not really problems (consider the efforts that go into cosmetic changes in packaging or to the creation of new colors of lipstick).

Working for a company that directs the bulk of its creative energy in those kinds of directions isn't morally wrong. But pastors should ask their parishioners, "Why, as a follower of Christ, would you choose to give your creative talents to these sorts of exercises, when you could employ them instead in businesses or organizations that are meeting genuine needs?" In a world as broken and needy as ours—and with all the talent, privileges and opportunities that God has granted us in middle- and upper-class America—church leaders should question the validity of believers giving fifty years of their working life toward creating new flavors of dog food or 1,500-dollar sterling silver canisters for tennis balls or gold-plated staples. It's time to admit that some things are just trivial, and if we can avoid them, we should.

Unlike the bottom billion of the world's poor, who do the jobs their ancestors before them did in order simply to survive, many believers in middle- and upper-class America have been given the precious gift of vocational choices. They need to be encouraged to choose wisely when they have more than one option. Some believers in today's downturned economy may not have as many occupational choices as they might have in more prosperous times. Other believers continue to be privileged with multiple job options. The latter do well to remember that "to whom much has been given, of him much will be required" (Lk 14:28 esv).

The diagram below paints a picture of what I call "the vocational sweet spot." The sweet spot is that place where our gifts and passions intersect with God's priorities and the world's needs. To the greatest extent possible, Christians should seek to work there.

FINDING THE SWEET SPOT

Church leaders need to communicate that finding the sweet spot is usually

a journey. It takes time, and the process looks different for different people. Consider the journeys taken by Jill and Cynthia.

For twenty-nine-year-old Jill Sorenson, the process began with a deep inner desire to be an architect:

I still remember the moment when I was twelve that I decided to become an architect. My dad [a contractor] had taken me to his office. I sat in the lounge and looked at magazines. One was a self-plan book with many designs for different house plans. I remember asking if I could take it home. That night I pulled out my mom's gridded cross-stitching paper, took one of the [house] designs and totally redid it. I changed walls around, and decided this was going to be my dream home someday. And if I wanted to build it, I knew I needed to be an architect.⁸

Unlike most college students, Jill never changed her major. "The more I got into the profession, the more I fell in love with the merging of an analytical side of me—the thinking side of me—and [the] creative, artistic side," she says. "I feel like architecture is at its best when you find where those two things collide."

But as a growing Christian, Jill wrestled with the validity of her profession. The Baptist Student Union she belonged to didn't seem to have a category for thinking of architecture as ministry. "I was really struggling

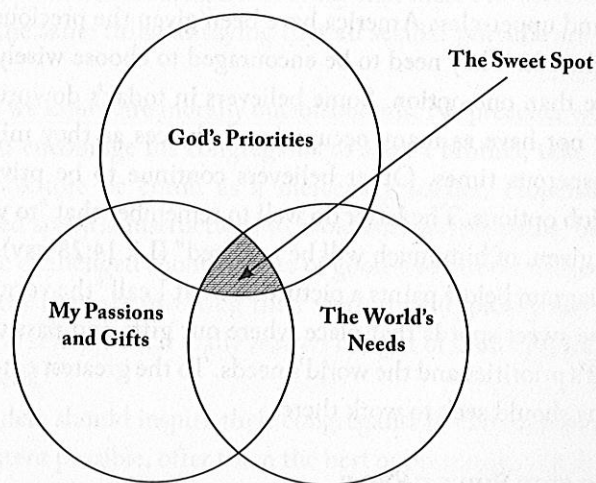


Figure 6.1. The vocational sweet spot

with how my faith and design passion merged," she recalls. "I knew [architecture] was something God was calling me to, and I knew that it couldn't be at odds with my faith. I knew there had to be an answer, there had to be some way for these things to fit together."

She ended up talking with her dad about how his faith shaped his work as a contractor. "He told me, 'You know, I thought about going into the ministry, but I knew that I could reach and affect more people through my work on the job site than from behind the pulpit.'" The affirmation rang true to Jill. "I just really appreciated his missional mindset. There wasn't a separation for him of the 'sacred' and the 'secular.'"

After a special summer ministering at a camp where the staff sought to love youth from many different faith backgrounds in ways that met spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional needs, Jill returned to college with fresh enthusiasm for reaching out to her fellow students in the architecture school at Kansas State. She felt that developing solid relationships with nonbelievers in her field was an expression of faith/work integration.

In her final years at university, her understanding of how faith affects work deepened further. "I was starting to want to narrow in on what I was going to focus on as an architect," she says.

I decided I wanted to use my profession in a way that helped people or was [environmentally] responsible. I was looking at either healthcare or sustainability, because I had worked on too many high-end condo projects that I didn't feel had any impact on the way people lived or added value to their life, at least value in the way I measured it. . . . I wanted to design buildings to create healing spaces. Or I could promote sustainability. I just wanted to be a better steward of buildings' purposes, resources and materials.

To prepare herself further, Jill became the first architecture student at Kansas State to achieve the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

Today Jill runs a small consulting business in the Bay Area, offering help to clients desiring to build more sustainably. She has also volunteered her architecture skills in economic development projects abroad with Engineering Ministries International and is the president of the board for Rebuild Sudan, which designs and builds "green" schools in Sudan.

For Jill, despite her love for her field, figuring out what her vocational sweet spot looked like was an unfolding process. For interior designer

Cynthia Leibrock, sixty-one, the journey to the vocational sweet spot began with dissatisfaction.

Leibrock went into design because she wanted to make things beautiful. She gained success, but it felt hollow. "I'd achieve my goal. I would . . . finish a project and have it completed, and I wouldn't feel satisfied with it. I'd look at it and I'd say, 'Well, what's the point?' I mean, it all seemed so empty to me."⁹

Then Cynthia got a design job for a doctor's office. It went "exceptionally well" and led to the client asking her to consider a part-time position overseeing a project to build a home for the developmentally disabled. She says,

I didn't really have any experience working with disabled people, and I didn't know anything about developing housing . . . for disabled people. But they offered me this job. . . . I wasn't that satisfied in interior design, as I mentioned before, and suddenly here was this new avenue that I could pursue. I prayed about it and I really felt that the Lord wanted me to be in this. And so I accepted it [and] worked for two years to develop a 15-bed home for developmentally disabled people.

The project marked a major turning point for her career as she realized that design could contribute to independence. As she told a *New York Times* reporter in 2009, "I want people to know [that] no matter whether they have mental or physical disabilities . . . they are only disabled if they can't do what they want to do. Architecture can eliminate disability by design. . . . If you are in a house where you can do what you want to do, you're not disabled anymore."¹⁰

Cynthia has earned national recognition in the field of universal design, has been invited to teach courses at Harvard and is a champion of the "aging in place" movement. She is contributing to the transformation of the design industry.

She and her husband—aided by numerous corporate contributions—built their Colorado home, Green Mountain Ranch, as a "showcase, laboratory and training center for those interested in universal design." The home includes numerous aging-in-place design elements, like a hidden bathtub lift and kitchen cabinets with a ten-inch drawer in the kick space that can be removed to lower the counters to wheelchair levels if needed.¹¹

In recent years, Cynthia launched Rehabitat, an initiative to help congregations come alongside disabled or elderly parishioners looking for ways to remain in their homes for as long as possible. Often minor adjustments—such as the installation of grab bars, ramps or handrails—can permit a person to stay in his or her home. Rehabitat gathers volunteers from churches that can donate labor to remodel homes. Its mission is "to show God's love in action as we help families to provide modifications that enhance independence and prevent disabling accidents."¹²

Jill and Cynthia each found their vocational sweet spot, and they are integrating their faith and work in deeply thoughtful ways.¹³ Along the way, their sense of the meaning of their work deepened, their understanding of vocational stewardship matured and their joy increased. As Jill writes in her blog, "I see the world through the eyes of a designer, as one responsible for the built environment and the effect space has on life. I'll never be the same; I'll never shake this passion." She continues:

With each step I take, it becomes more clear to me that these two paths, as an architect and as a disciple, are not meant to be walked separately and independently of the other. The longer they overlap and intersect, the further they intertwine and correspond, the more alive I become and the greater glory He is given.¹⁴

UNDERSTAND THE SEASONS

I'm encouraging church leaders to invite people to find and live in their vocational sweet spot because of the joy it brings to the worker, the hope it brings to those served and the glory it brings to God. Simultaneously, in their encouragement, leaders should employ "caveat" language—suggesting that people *to the greatest extent possible* seek that sweet spot. Such language is imperative because not every congregant can in fact work in their vocational sweet spot, and some who are able to do so may be able only for limited seasons of life.

Right now, for example, it's not hard to imagine that some Christian dad is working in the dog food industry because the salary and benefits are excellent. He needs that job to care well for his family, since it includes a severely disabled daughter. The dog food company is in the same town as his in-laws, who provide his wife with much-needed respite care. The family relies on his salary alone because Mom has her hands full car-

ing for their daughter—as well as their three healthy boys. This couple has no idea what they would have done without the dog food company's good health insurance policy, which has paid the bulk of expenses for their daughter's thirteen surgeries. Dad may wish he could find work in his vocational sweet spot, but that's just not realistic now, given his other commitments.

Or consider Sally, another fictional character. She has her eyes resolutely set on her vocational sweet spot: being a family court judge. It's a terrific career goal from a kingdom perspective. Such judges have enormous opportunity to do good. They have significant influence on the lives of abused children, kids in foster care and the like. Sally's aspirations are laudable—but she will not spend her entire career as a family court judge. It's going to take some time to get there. She'll likely spend a season as a law student, then as a law clerk and then perhaps as an attorney in a practice related to family law. She might not reach her vocational sweet spot until she's forty-five or fifty years old, if then.

It's important to remember that we live our lives in seasons, and that our lives are about more than just work. Right now, some people in your congregation may not be working in jobs or careers that, in an ideal world, make the *best* use of their God-given talents. Perhaps, for example, the job works for the individual in terms of balancing family and career. Or perhaps the job is located where the individual needs to be so he can take care of his elderly parents. Perhaps the individual's physical or emotional health has been compromised for a season, and this job is a good fit. Or perhaps he just can't find the job he really wants in today's downturned economy.

In situations like these—and others we could imagine—working within the vocational sweet spot is not a given. So pastors must be careful not to make parishioners feel guilty when, for any number of legitimate reasons, they are not able to be in that sweet spot.

BE READY TO EXHORT

Some congregants, though, may need to hear a word of challenge to get them questioning whether they really are in the best place they could be for stewarding well the vocational gifts God has given them. It's just a fact that we sometimes drift in this life, rather than living *intentionally*. Drift-

ing in terms of our jobs may happen even more often than other kinds of drifting, because of how little explicit teaching about work Christians hear from the pulpit.

So, to inspire people with a robust understanding of work, church leaders may need to exhort congregants to examine whether they're in the right place vocationally. Some believers may need to reassess *why* they are in their jobs. What are the reasons—and are they good reasons, kingdom reasons, God-honoring reasons? How much of a role do comfort, convenience, pride, fear or materialism play in explaining why we're staying in our current jobs? Is the congregant staying in the job out of wrong motivations like “a slavish need to please one's parents,” “lust for prestige and status” or a “desire to justify oneself by achieving significance in the larger scheme of things?”¹⁵ Admittedly, these are uncomfortable issues to raise. But to help congregants follow Jesus faithfully, pastors must be willing to ask these kinds of penetrating questions.

SHOWCASE MODELS OF VOCATIONAL STEWARDSHIP

A final aspect of inspiring the congregation involves searching for people in the church who are modeling vocational stewardship and telling their stories. A pastor can preach all day about the call to integrate faith and work, and to see our work in a God-centered, service-centered way. But without living, breathing examples of this, church members may have difficulty putting that teaching into practice.

Part three of this book is peppered with stories of Christians living out vocational stewardship in a variety of ways. Many more real-life examples like them exist in every church. Staff need to find those individuals, learn their stories and invite them to testify about their journey of vocational stewardship. Their stories can help their peers in the congregation gain vision for what's possible and plausible. They may aid parishioners in envisioning new, creative ways they could deploy their own vocational gifts and assets for kingdom purposes.

CONCLUSION: A MODEL SERMON

A sermon given by Pastor Adam Hamilton from Church of the Resurrection (COR) in Leawood, Kansas, is an excellent model of inspirational leadership in vocation.¹⁶ Seated on the stage in the worship auditorium

behind a stereotypical office desk bedecked with a phone, stapler and coffee mug, Hamilton began by noting that committed believers from the ages of twenty-five to sixty-five who regularly attended Sunday services at COR would log about 2,266 hours in the pew. By contrast, he estimated that they would spend roughly 96,000 hours at work during those forty years. "The workplace," Hamilton concluded, "is the primary place where we live out our faith."

He went on to debunk the sacred-secular divide: "Your five-day-a-week job has sacredness; it has value to God," he stated. "It is innately good." Exegeting the morning's reading from the early chapters of Genesis, Hamilton underscored fundamental biblical principles: that God is a worker; that, made in his image, we are his coworkers; and that work is good. He offered practical advice on being the kind of worker who recognizes that God truly is the boss, whose character is impeccable and who serves humbly and loves coworkers well.

Hamilton then went beyond the familiar themes of "vertical" righteousness and "personal" righteousness to the topic of how congregants can advance justice through their work. Looking out at the thousands gathered, many of whom had significant influence in their workplaces, he challenged his hearers to ask themselves, "How can what we do as a company be done in such a way that it brings good to others?" He didn't proceed to bash the congregation's businesspeople. Instead, he held up real-life examples of vocational stewardship among members.

Hamilton told of executives from the Kansas City-based GEAR for Sports who have worked diligently to ensure fair and just working conditions in their textile factories in Latin America. As Sam Brown, executive director of the Fair Labor Association, said in a 2000 press conference, "GEAR for Sports has taken a leadership role in the issue of human rights for many years. GEAR is an important ally in our mission of improving workers' rights."¹⁷

Then Hamilton talked about a contractor from COR whose commitment to racial reconciliation motivated him to practice special procurement policies. This business owner guaranteed that "with every contract he led, he was going to hire proportionally the same number of ethnic minority subcontractors" as there were those ethnic groups in Kansas City's population, according to Hamilton. If the city's population was 18

percent African American, this contractor followed hiring policies that ensured that 18 percent of his subcontracts went to black-owned businesses.

Hamilton also told of a conversation he enjoyed with another church member, Irv Hockaday, the former CEO of Hallmark Cards. Irv, he explained, let his faith shape decisions about the product offerings at the company. He reported that Irv said,

We decided we would make greeting cards for people who had loved ones who were dying. These were for people who were in hospice. We realized there was no profit to be made on this. We couldn't sell enough of these cards to make a profit. But we felt like it was the right thing to do to help people be able to care for their loved ones during times like this.

Then Hamilton offered some practical examples for congregants in other vocations. He praised teachers from COR who had left comfortable jobs in the suburbs to teach in Kansas City's distressed public schools. He thanked a meteorologist from the congregation who had been public about his faith on television. He commended a boss who made it his habit to visit any employee who was in hospital.

Drawing to a close, Hamilton then challenged every listener at COR to grasp that they were "missionaries," regardless of what field or industry they worked. He concluded, "If 12,000 of us realize that we're missionaries first and we go out into our workaday world everyday on a mission to bless, to love, to heal, to bring justice, to serve God in the workplace—then when we finally begin to do that, I tell you, the world is going to be different."

Amen, pastor.

Bibliography: A Christian Guide to Books on Work, Business, and Vocation (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002). This extensive literature review includes several hundred books, but a significant number do not specifically address the question of integrating faith and work.

⁴Seminars in Christian Scholarship, "Business as Ministry: Exploring the Issues, Patterns, and Challenges," Calvin College, July 16-17, 2007 <www.calvin.edu/scs/2007/seminars/business>.

⁵The Fellowship of Christian Graduate Students lists thirty-eight such professional associations on its website. See <www.bgsu.edu/studentlife/organizations/fcgs/christprof.html>.

⁶David W. Miller, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 6.

⁷Ibid., p. 5. Douglas J. Schuurman's book *Vocation: Discerning Our Callings in Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) offers an accessible summary of the thought of Luther and Calvin.

⁸Ibid., p. 129.

⁹Ibid., p. 131, emphasis added.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 192, n. 18.

¹¹Ken Walker, "It's Time for Marketplace Ministry," *Charisma*, May 31, 2003 <www.charismamag.com/index.php/features2/234-unorganized/7624-its-time-for-marketplace-ministry>.

¹²Miller, *God at Work*, p. 135.

¹³Ibid., p. 139.

¹⁴The fifteen were Blackaby Ministries International—Marketplace Ministries, Fellowship of Companies for Christ International, Kingdom Companies, Breakthrough Fellowship, Businessmen's Fellowship USA, International Fellowship of Christian Businessmen, Christians in Commerce, His Church at Work, C12 Group, Christian Businessmen Connection, Kiros, Life Chasers, Marketplace Network/Made to Matter, International Christian Chamber of Commerce, and Needle's Eye Ministries.

¹⁵Fellowship of Companies for Christ International, "Vision and Mission" <www.fcci-online.org/about-us/vision-mission>.

¹⁶Ibid. Breakthrough Fellowship, the International Fellowship of Christian Businessmen and the Christian Businessmen Connection also state as their main objectives evangelism and personal discipleship. Businessmen's Fellowship USA encourages businessmen to share Christ in their workplace and offers a variety of events where Christians can tell their testimonies publicly. All these groups tend to limit their attention to ethical matters to those concerning individual behavior, as opposed to the mezzo- and macro-level ethical issues described by Miller.

¹⁷See Blackaby's Marketplace Ministries webpage for current Bible study dates <www.blackaby.org/resources/bible_study>.

¹⁸D. Michael Lindsay found that these business leaders were strongly committed to personal ethics and that many sponsored workplace Bible studies or hired corporate

chaplains. He also met business leaders who expressed concerns about guarding their firm's public self-presentation. Some corporate executives he interviewed noted that one way their faith shaped their work concerned their decisions about company spokespeople. They worked to ensure that such spokespeople, including celebrities, shared the faith values the evangelical executives held. Jockey CEO Debra Waller made a decision that in the underwear company's advertisements that showed both men and women, the actors would wear wedding bands. In this way Waller "publicly link[ed] evangelical faith with corporate decision-making." *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 179.

¹⁹The Business As Mission (BAM) movement offers hope for a more robust integration of faith and work that advances foretastes of the kingdom. Readers wanting to know more about this important and encouraging development can read an overview of BAM on <www.vocationalstewardship.org>.

²⁰The twenty-three were Christian Engineering Society, Christian Dance Fellowship, Christian Educators Association International, Christian Medical and Dental Associations, Affiliation of Christian Geologists, Artisan, Gegrapha, Christians in the Visual Arts, Christian Legal Society, Association of Christian Economists, Christians in Political Science, American Scientific Affiliation, Christian Pharmacists Fellowship International, Association of Christians in the Mathematical Sciences, Association of Christian Librarians, Christian Sociology Society, Christian Association for Psychological Studies, Christian Veterinary Mission, Christians in the Theater Arts, Affiliation of Christian Biologists, North American Association of Christians in Social Work, Christian Foresters Fellowship, and Nurses Christian Fellowship.

²¹"Purposes of the ACMS," ACMS Online <www.acmsonline.org/beliefs/index.html>.

²²Christian Neuroscience Society <<http://cneuroscience.org>>.

²³Timothy R. Tuinstra, "Applying the Reformational Doctrine of Christian Vocation to our Understanding of Engineering as a Sacred Calling," presented at the Christian Engineering Education Conference, June 22, 2006. See <http://people.cedarville.edu/employee/tuinstra/bio_.htm>.

²⁴CIVA has updated its mission statement since then, to be called to creative work, devoted to the church and present in culture. See "Mission," Christians in the Visual Arts <www.civa.org/about/mission>.

²⁵Christian Medical and Dental Associations, "About Our Organization" <www.cmda.org/WCM/CMDA/Navigation/About/About_CMDA.aspx>.

²⁶James Davidson Hunter, *To Change the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 235, emphasis in original.

²⁷Doug Spada, founder, WorkLife, Inc., telephone interview with the author, November 9, 2010.

Chapter 6: Inspiration

¹Doug Spada, "Founder's WorkLife Vision," YouTube <www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-tDaFcsVdo>.

²All quotes from Tom Nelson, senior pastor, Christ Community Church, Leawood, Kans., are from a telephone interview with the author, October 21, 2010.

³Robert J. Banks, ed., *Faith Goes to Work: Reflections from the Marketplace* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 1999), pp. 22-26.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵Lesslie Newbigin, *Signs Amid the Rubble: The Purposes of God in Human History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 47.

⁶Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC* (New York: HarperOne, 1993), p. 119.

⁷Evangelical scholars John Bernbaum and Simon Steer assume a blunt position on this issue. They argue that "all jobs are not of equal worth in God's sight. A biblical perspective on work suggests that work is a God-ordained activity and that labor is of value as we serve as stewards and co-creators in God's world. But cultural worth is another criterion of Christian teaching about work. If we are called to be servants, the work that we do must bring benefit to others—benefit that has significance. We should avoid not only jobs that are harmful by definition (gambling and prostitution, for example), but also work that results in no useful service. Using our abilities to develop, make, or sell people luxury items or articles that can be harmful is not a biblically sound choice of a career. That is not God's desire for us." *Why Work* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), p. 87.

⁸Unless otherwise noted, all quotes from Jill Sorenson, sustainability advisor, Rebuild Consulting, are from a telephone interview with the author, July 29, 2010.

⁹Unless otherwise noted, all quotes from Cynthia Leibrock are from "The Secrets to Aging Beautifully" (audio file) <<http://agingbeautifully.org/tape1.mp3>>.

¹⁰Joyce Wadler, "A Colorado Home Is Ready for Its Owners' Old Age," *New York Times*, February 19, 2009.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²"Rehabitat Fund: The Carpenter's Helpers," Aging Beautifully <<http://agingbeautifully.org/volunteers.html>>.

¹³In part three, I outline four pathways of expressing vocational stewardship. Jill and Cynthia demonstrate how believers can live out more than one pathway at a time. Both are examples of pathway one (blooming where you're planted). Additionally, Jill's volunteer work abroad is an example of pathway two (donating skills). Cynthia's Rehabitat initiative is an example of pathway three (launch your own social enterprise).

¹⁴Jill Sorenson, "Beyond the Walls," *JILLM: Searching for Beauty in the Everyday* (February 19, 2007) <<http://jillm.com/2007/02/19/beyond-the-walls-2>>.

¹⁵Douglas J. Schuurman, *Vocation: Discerning Our Callings in Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 130-31.

¹⁶Unless otherwise noted, the following quotes are from Adam Hamilton, "@ Work," sermon delivered at Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, Kans., July 19, 2009.

¹⁷"GEAR for Sports® Joins Fair Labor Association," June 19, 2000, press release <www.gearnosweat.com>.

Chapter 7: Discovery

¹Pastor Armitage retired from his role as senior pastor at Pleasant Valley in late 2010.

²Church Community Builder (CCB) is a sophisticated program that enables congregations to build and manage profiles of members' involvement. CCB's "Positions" feature, for example, helps church leaders match service opportunities with individuals best suited to fill them based on their gifts, passions, skills and leadership style. The software also allows congregants to search online and apply for service opportunities that fit them well.

³All quotes from Charlene Armitage, director of equipping, Pleasant Valley Baptist Church, are from a telephone interview with the author, August 24, 2010. (She retired from this church position in late 2010.)

⁴Quotes from Sue Mallory, assistant stated clerk of the session, Brentwood Presbyterian Church, and author of *The Equipping Church*, are from a telephone interview with the author, August 11, 2010.

⁵All quotes from Don Simmons, president, Creative Potential Consulting and Training, are from a telephone interview with the author, August 5, 2010.

⁶On a more encouraging note, though, these few are among the most popular. According to Erik Rees at Central Saddleback Church, some fifty thousand congregations have used the SHAPE assessment. Originated by Saddleback Church in California, SHAPE helps people identify not only their spiritual gifts but also their heart passions and personality type, as well as experiences that have shaped them. Servants by Design, created by Fellowship Bible Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, is perhaps the best assessment tool in terms of its breadth of coverage. It combines a spiritual gifts questionnaire with a behavioral assessment and numerous questions about abilities and skills. Halftime, a Christian ministry helping successful marketplace leaders make the shift from "success to significance," recommends this tool. Servants by Design is also used in the curriculum for the Christian parachurch ministry Men's Fraternity, "for men to determine how they interact in vocation and serve outside of their job." According to Ann Blair from Fellowship Bible Church, more than fifteen thousand groups of men attend a weekly Men's Fraternity meeting globally.

⁷Don Simmons agrees. He says the publishers of the assessment tools hardly ever include suggestions for people to deploy their gifts outside the four walls of the church. This, he thinks, is because those publishers know that this internally focused approach sells better. Many church leaders, he laments, are far more interested in getting members to do church work than externally focused mission.

⁸From Dorothy Sayers's essay "Why Work?" *Creed or Chaos* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1947), as quoted in Douglas J. Schuurman, *Vocation: Discerning Our Callings in Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), p. 134.

⁹Tim Hammack, "Gourmet Giving," *Guideposts*, October 2010, p. 61.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹¹John Blackstone, "Former High End Chef Now Feeds the Homeless," *CBS Evening*