Work Matters:
Toward a Model of Congregational
Public Theologizing about Faith and Work

by
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ABSTRACT

There are over 1,300 parachurch organizations in North America alone, dedicated to the interface between faith and workplace issues. This project examines the rationale, promise and hope for a congregational approach to the integration of faith and work. Action research was done with a study group of church participants over a one-year period to see what might work for this kind of public theologizing in a congregational setting. The research shows that a small group format that includes an introduction to theology, an introduction to a theology of economics, an introduction to cultural interpretation and leadership, together with an immediate application of these to workplace issues does enable participants to engage in public theologizing about workplace issues. The research also shows that an emphasis on personal development that includes Christian spiritual components is highly motivating to those who wish to engage in this area of public theology. A model for congregational ministries of work and workplace integration ministries is developed based on the research.
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Chapter 1
Rationale

I am the pastor of a Presbyterian church. Over a period of twenty-three years of ordained ministry and five years of non-ordained ministry before seminary, I have become passionate about helping churches integrate faith and workplace issues. According to many studies, I am one of very few pastors so interested.¹

Several sets of experiences led me to this passion. The first set of experiences that got me started in this direction was work itself. I worked in a number of private sector jobs before seminary. (I do not count the short-term and part-time work I did during high school and college.) For five years after college, I was involved in a volunteer ministry with military enlisted men and women. This commitment required up to thirty-five hours

¹ There are numerous studies that indicate the paucity of pastors’ understanding of, or ministry to, for, or about workplace issues: Stephen Hart and David A. Krueger, “Faith and Work: Challenges for Congregations,” Christian Century, July 15-22, 1992, pp. 683-686, as quoted by David W. Miller, “The Faith at Work Movement,” Theology Today, vol. 60, October 2003, p. 302; and as discussed at greater length in David W. Miller, God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). This topic is also discussed at length in Laura Nash and Scotty McLennan, Church on Sunday, Work on Monday: The Challenge of Fusing Christian Values with Business Life (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001). My own experience as a pastor affirms the research. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, I was one of only two PC(U.S.A.) associate pastors I could find with a job description dedicated to the area of faith and workplace integration. Both of those positions have been terminated and only one known PC(U.S.A.) congregation, Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park, CA, currently has a person on staff dedicated to this area.
per week; as a result, I earned my living through hourly wage jobs that did not exceed forty hours per week.

So, along with doing lay ministry full-time every week, over that five-year period I also worked as a mud carrier for a masonry contractor, a construction site punch list expeditor, and a warehouse delivery driver for a forklift company. That last position led to a position as a warehouse manager for a Caterpillar dealership—a job I held for four years. I was surprised at how much I liked that job. There I was, a college graduate with a degree in classical Greek, working side-by-side with mechanics and parts guys—many of whom were part of a motorcycle gang on the weekends. The vice president in charge of the forklift division at that particular dealership was one of the finest leaders I have ever seen.

My last job before heading off to seminary was as an outside salesperson for a materials handling equipment company. This could have been a good job for saving money for graduate school; it turned out to be a training ground for my character instead. It was 1982-83 and the worst recession since the Great Depression up to that point. No one I called on had any money to buy anything for their warehouses. They had definite needs, but no money in their purchasing budgets. It was tough work. I went out every day and made calls on clients who couldn’t buy a thing.

With little else to do, I set myself a goal of making thirty cold sales calls a day. A cold call is a call on a potential customer who has never done business with your company. That potential customer usually doesn’t know you exist, and thirty cold calls a

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2 There are motorcycle gangs that are mostly groups of friends, not engaged in crime. This was one of those—happily so, for those of us who worked with them.
day is considered a lot. Even so, I was determined to do that many, if only to practice the
discipline of meeting a personal goal.

For the most part I fulfilled that cold call goal. In the process, I uncovered more
leads than my company had ever had, but I closed almost no sales. It was hard,
discouraging work, in a small, dysfunctional company. I learned how important
organizational health and good leadership are in the workplace. I learned how important
sales work is to the economy. You can have the best product or service in the world, but
if you can’t get it into the hands of organizations that need it—and get them to pay for
it—the product or service is worthless. It is sales and marketing people who do this kind
of work. (When do we ever honor this particular work in a worship setting?)

The importance of sales and the ability to close a sale were affirmed for me while
I was in seminary. For two years I owned and ran my own small business as a way to pay
for school. It was a painting company. For $1,500 I became the proud owner of a van,
two ladders, and the good will of the previous seminarian owners, who were graduating
that spring. Oh, and I was given one day of training by one of them.

I quickly went from the life of a graduate student into one of the best training
programs of my life. I was the marketer, salesperson, estimator, HR department, foreman,
purchaser, bookkeeper, motivator, bill-payer, and painter. I also almost lost my proverbial
shirt. By the end of the first month, I was down to my last few hundred dollars—with
nothing to show for my risk but $1,500 of debt. My dream of paying for school was
quickly turning into a nightmare.

I had to perform a turn-around, and I had to do it in a matter of weeks. I suddenly
became a very accomplished closer of sales. My workers (one of whom was my brother-
in-law) stepped up the quality of their work and their output, but only after a difficult conversation about the possibility of having to let them go.

By the end of the summer I was well in the black, and I had two crews with a total of nine students working full-time. I was able to pay for most of my tuition that year, as well as purchase my first computer. (The computer was a shining silver beauty: a Sanyo with 256K of memory and two floppy disk drives. Neighbors in the married student housing flocked to our apartment to marvel at it.) I kept the business going the rest of that year and into the following summer. When I graduated, I sold it to another group of students.

Owning that business was a powerfully instructive experience. I saw firsthand what it was like to provide a good service for a fair price. I enjoyed meeting the needs of my customers. I worked harder than I ever had before and felt good about being able to provide for my family. I saw what it was like to be a small business owner who put other people to work and provided them with good pay for that work. I learned what it felt like to take a risk, and how risk taking was beneficial to the community in which I lived. I experienced the fear of business risk, too. I knew what it was like to lose sleep over whether or not I could make payroll.

After five years of working before graduate school, then three years of different types of work during seminary, in 1986 I entered full-time work as a pastor. There I quickly experienced a completely different realm of work. It was as though I had entered another world. I had entered a workplace domain with a very different worldview from that of a for-profit business. At the time I wasn’t able to name the worldview differences. All I knew was that it was almost completely different.
I went from working with fellow employees who tended to be motivated and professional, to working with volunteers who often seemed to treat their church commitments as after-thoughts—often failing to follow through with a cavalier attitude that astonished me. I went from working for business leaders who worked well with fellow staff and workers, to working with the head-of-staff of a large church who seemed to have little or no concept of what it meant to lead a team.

I went from producing a product and providing services that could be clearly valued monetarily, to the very challenging and important work of helping a church with adult spiritual formation. But I constantly sensed that those who were paying for the pastoral work saw pastors as people who “couldn’t hack it in the real world.” For the first time in my life I experienced disdain from others for my work. (I also experienced profound gratitude and respect from many in that church, so there was a mixture of viewpoints.) I also found it was difficult to valuate my work monetarily. I felt the need to justify my hard work—something I never felt when I was running a warehouse or painting a room. I had never worked harder in my life, yet I felt as though my efforts were not valued—not only in terms of pay, but also (and especially) in terms of respect.

But the main differences did not have to do with the challenges of a volunteer culture or the lack of respect for the pastoral role. They were also the differences in group process and motivation—the way decisions took much longer and called for a type of leadership that focused on process, not output, and on the way outcomes were measured. Church was a different culture, but I had difficulty naming the differences at the time and operating comfortably within that different domain.
I also learned that most pastors have almost no understanding of, or interest in, the domain of work that their parishioners experience day-in and day-out. Whether that work is for-profit, or in education, the military, or government service—it seemed to me that my colleagues saw working people as volunteers to be used to fill slots in church work, or as numbers to be counted for attendance records at budget time (primarily as a source of cash). At the time, I knew of few pastoral colleagues who genuinely regarded what these people did at work as a fulfillment of their discipleship or a call from God. Perhaps there were others who saw their parishioners’ work in this way, but I did not hear others teaching or preaching along these lines. Because I had experienced work as a venue for my discipleship, and as a fruitful place of service to God and neighbor, and had seen the benefits that most people derive from their work, I was dismayed by this. I was also dismayed by the lack of sensitivity I encountered in many of my pastoral colleagues to the realities of work in our parishioners’ lives: time pressures, critical job-related issues, and the overall importance of work in their lives.

It was as though we said to our parishioners, “Church is the center of life, so come to worship and Sunday school every week. In addition, give us 10% of what you make every month or year. Don’t ask any questions about that either. Oh, and serve on two or three committees while you’re teaching in Sunday school or volunteering for youth leadership. In addition, make sure you join a small group and ferry your children to and from the church three times a week or more.”

However, when did we ever say to all these fine (and very tired) people: “By the way, how can we help you with what God has called you to do with up to two-thirds of your waking hours?” Instead, it seemed to me that churches in general, and pastors in
particular, managed to convey that parishioners’ work was unimportant except insofar as it enabled them to support the church financially. In fact, making a profit in any kind of professional venue was somehow, well, wrong. (Though we were certainly happy about their profits when it came time to raise funds for a building project.)

During my first few years of pastoral work, all these thoughts floated around in my mind and heart. Several experiences sent me in the direction of learning how I might help churches do a better job of encouraging their members to integrate their faith and work. The first of these was a conversation with my father-in-law as I headed off to seminary. He had spent his career with one of the largest corporations in the world during the years he worked there—U.S. Steel. He had wound up in the board room as one of two assistant treasurers for the company. Obviously my father-in-law knew a lot about finance and the world of work. He had also served on many elder boards in the churches he and my mother-in-law had faithfully attended.

When I asked him how, as an aspiring pastor, I might better serve my future congregants in matters of faith, he challenged me to learn what business people felt and thought. “It’s amazing how little pastors understand about what business is all about,” he said. “Try to learn what your people think about, feel and experience at work.” In order to help me do that, he gave me a subscription to the Wall Street Journal every year for almost fifteen years. “Just read it,” he encouraged me. “You’ll learn a lot over time.”

What surprised me was how right he was. Though I’d worked for years before that, I found a wealth of simple, direct information in the Wall Street Journal about business and work. From articles about management and human resources to reviews of business books—from exposés of business scandals to the clear and simple reporting of
business news—I found myself entering into the thoughts and pressures of the working world in a new way. This experience sent me to other sources to learn more: the *New York Times, Fortune, Forbes, Harvard Business Review*, and various business books. All these provided a surprising amount of helpful information for my practice of ministry, becoming for me an ongoing source of understanding for what working people face in life.

The second experience occurred during my second year of ministry. I was invited to The Leadership Forum, a national event sponsored by The Leadership Network for those engaged in men’s ministries. Men’s ministries was one of my areas of responsibility in the church I was serving at the time. I still have no idea how I was invited to that forum. I think it was a mistake, because I was about the only pastor there. The other attendees were involved in independent, mostly small and mostly local, parachurch organizations. I enjoyed the forum a great deal. I witnessed inspiring examples of people who viewed both business people and the domain of work as worthy of attention. I was exposed to people who regarded the workplace itself in a positive, rather than a negative, light.

Bob Buford, the founder of The Leadership Network, was in attendance. He did not say much in front of the group, but was part of many side conversations. Here was a businessman who had done very well in the cable television business, sold his company, and was using the money to fund The Leadership Network. The Leadership Network was quite new at the time and was having a good impact on various ministries.

Late one night, as people were just sitting around chatting, Bob mentioned something that really got my attention. The group was talking about money and about
fundraising for independent ministries like the ones they were serving. Bob said, “Well, whatever you do, make sure you understand money and what it means for business people, especially business owners. Don’t be like my pastor. Let me tell you, he just doesn’t get it—he doesn’t understand money at all.”

I never got to ask Bob exactly what he meant. But what I took away from his comment was a desire not to be like his pastor, and I started paying more attention to the way money matters to people: What did they think and feel about money? How did they handle it? Manage it? How could the church help with these matters? What I discovered, of course, was that many people—both pastoral colleagues and parishioners—held the following assumption: there are very few reasons for talking about money in church—among them, raising more of it for a building project or funding the annual budget during stewardship season. Simply talking about money, or teaching about money as a larger topic, were quite foreign to most of my colleagues and parishioners.

Over time, though, I think I began to understand what Bob Buford might have been referring to that night. Money, according to Jesus, is a tool to be used for the good of God’s kingdom.³ To my surprise, when I encountered successful business people, I saw little greed about money. Instead, I encountered a desire in most business people to put money to work in good ways—for the sake of their companies and fellow workers, as well as for the larger world. Furthermore, even when business owners had a lot of money, much of it was committed to their business. I discovered that many pastors (myself

³ Luke 16 is one of the places, though not the only one, where Jesus teaches about what money is and what money is for. There is a large, ongoing, and perhaps never-ending debate about the biblical teachings on money, and a growing body of literature and journals exploring this topic. See, for example: Craig M. Gay, Cash Values: Money and the Erosion of Meaning in Today’s Society (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003); The Journal of Morality and Markets, published by the Acton Institute; Victor V. Claar and Robin J. Klay, Economics in Christian Perspective: Theory, Policy and Life Choice (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007); Ronald J. Sider, Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1978).
included) acted as though people with money had an abundance of it just sitting around in cash. Their job, as far as we were concerned, was to hand large portions of it over for building campaigns and church operations. In fact, here’s what one head-of-staff said to me when he found out I was in a small group with a particular entrepreneur: “That guy hasn’t given enough for the building campaign. Why don’t you ask him for a couple hundred thousand dollars?” There was just one problem. This entrepreneur had committed all his capital, including mortgaging his home, in order to start a business that I happened to know was not going well at all. To the outside world, he looked great—after all, he had a big house and a busy office with over twenty employees. But I knew he was actually experiencing negative cash flow and was struggling to stay out of bankruptcy. The assumption made by the head-of-staff—that this entrepreneur had lots of spare cash lying around—was, perhaps, what Bob Buford was referring to that night. Pastors can be tone-deaf on money matters.

I also began learning about finance and companies in general, both public and private. What are earnings? How are they achieved? What is a quarterly report all about? How does a pastor read one? What’s a P/E ratio? ROE? P/S? EBITDA? What do these tell you about a company? How do you discern good management from these measurements? Can you? What’s a legitimate profit in different industries? How can you discern a company’s values? Vision? Ethics? Apart from any conclusions I might have been able to draw, I found this was a fascinating study in and of itself. I learned that money is a measure of more than profits or revenues. I discovered that pastors can and should know more about finance than we usually do.
A third experience was office visits. I stumbled into office visits almost completely by accident. Pastors are well-trained to make home or hospital visits. But office visits? I never heard anything like this talked about in seminary. In fact, I discovered them unintentionally in the course of picking up several parishioners for lunch meetings.

The first office visit that registered for me was this one: I had a church-related meeting with a parishioner and was picking him up at his office. He was an entrepreneur and CPA, and when I arrived he offered to show me around. I was immediately struck by how proud he was of his office, his work, and his colleagues. He introduced me to everybody, happily telling them I was his pastor. He showed me everything—every office, the conference room, every other room, every computer. Then he talked excitedly about what they were working on. He wasn’t just obviously proud of his work. He was also pleased to show off his workplace to me. This reminded me very much of making home visits to church kids. Parents treat pastors as people they have to clean up the house for, but kids just want to show you all their stuff—their room, their pets, their schoolwork. This office visit was just like that, except that it was with an adult instead of a student. I was fascinated by this man’s response to my presence in the place where he spent so much of his professional life. He was pleased as punch that I cared about what he actually did with his time during the working day.

At lunch that day, I asked him more about his work and how it was going. It occurred to me that maybe he had never had a pastor ask the simple question, “How’s work?” Maybe that’s because a lot of us don’t think the work of our parishioners matters all that much.
Then, during the same lunch, this capable, energetic business person told me how discouraged he was at church. “Why?” I asked, a bit surprised. “Because they put me on the finance committee. I hate working on the finance committee.”

Then I asked a question that changed my life more than it changed his. “What would you like to do?” I asked. He looked at me and said, “Nobody at church has ever asked me that before. They always assume that because I’m a CPA all I’m good for is to work on finances. What I’d really love to do is teach middle school Sunday school.”

Well, you could have knocked me over with a feather. At that particular time, in that particular church, we didn’t know anybody who wanted to teach middle school Sunday school. Here was a person who felt called to do it and was even excited about it. “I have two other couples who’d like to help my wife and me with this,” he continued. “Do you think you could arrange things so I could get off the finance committee and teach Sunday school?” Yes, I assured him; I could do it that very afternoon.

This person went on to become one of the finest middle school teachers I’ve ever seen. All because somebody asked him what he wanted to do. How many times do pastors assume things about our people that we shouldn’t? We assume that a CPA is only good for helping the church with finances. We assume that schoolteachers are just itching to help with Sunday school, when all we have to do is ask them what they want to do and help them do that—not only at church, but also at work.

Here’s what our culture seems to believe: pastors know about “spiritual things” and business people know about “business things,” and each should defer to the other on these respective matters. For the typical business person, anything spiritual is private, while work matters are public, and it’s better not to mix the two. Integration of faith and
work seldom happens because of this split and because of these assumptions. I could not name it at the time, but I date my dawning consciousness of this to that first office visit of mine, when I first really asked a parishioner what he wanted to do. Many pastors lack the confidence to converse with their parishioners about work matters. A funeral? Pastors know the ropes. A sermon? Pastors feel confident. But dealing with a management decision? What do pastors know about that, and why would a business person ever consult one?

My fourth experience was actually a series of experiences. Based on that lunchtime conversation, I began to spend more and more time with church members in their workplaces. I visited them there in order to learn everything I could about their dreams, desires, struggles, and challenges related to work. As I did this, I found I learned a great deal about how to lead the church better. I learned that most churchgoers are also Christian disciples, and most of these disciples sincerely and deeply desire the same thing regarding their work. They want to be able to integrate what they believe with what they do for a living. Most of them just do not know how to do that, and they get precious little help or encouragement for this integration from most pastors and churches.

My fifth experience came through serving as a workplace chaplain. For two years I worked for Marketplace Chaplains, an organization that provides a chaplain-based employee assistance programs (known as “EAPs”) across the United States. I served as the Oklahoma State Director. During this time I visited the offices, warehouses, manufacturing plants, processing plants, and cubicles of ten companies every week, offering chaplaincy services for well over one thousand employees and their families. Every week, along with two other chaplains, I visited those ten workplaces, meeting and
greeting every employee by name. Those two years reaffirmed for me how central work is to life. They also reaffirmed how important it is for churches to catch a vision for helping people integrate their discipleship with their call from God—*at work*.

In the important book, *The Homeless Mind*, Peter Berger addressed a new reality. According to Berger, Western societies have lost a sense of cohesion and belonging and are searching for how to re-create it. Whether we like it or not, whether we agree with it or not, many people today experience significant belonging, find meaning, and form close friendships at work. An example of this is the television show, *The Office*, which highlights the day-to-day relationships and stresses, silliness and seriousness, of a group of people who sell paper. It is clear that their workplace—their office—provides them an experience of cohesion and belonging.

What has been the cumulative effect of these five sets of experiences for me over the last thirty years? The effect has been a growing emphasis in my own ministry on helping Christian believers practice their faith in the public space of work—and a growing interest in helping churches discover how to do this as well. For the last twelve years in particular I have been working to discover how churches can better involve themselves in this largely ignored arena of ministry. This Doctor of Ministry research project has been designed to add to the growing area of faith and work ministry by researching what models of ministry that take place in a congregational setting might make the connections for disciples between faith and work.

Surprisingly little has been done at the congregational level on this subject. As David Miller notes, there are over one thousand organizations in North America

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dedicated to faith in the workplace, while only a few congregations focus on this area of ministry. Many, if not most, of these organizations focus on a pietistic approach to evangelism and discipleship. Few are truly integrative in their focus. Whatever the reasons for this—and they are many and complex—it is my conviction that this area must find its way into the life of congregations.

A number of convictions have guided my research. I enumerate these below, but will define my terms in the following chapter:

- Faith and workplace integration is an application of missional practice for missional-minded churches.
- Public theology is a major aspect of missional thinking and practice, and work matters are worthy of greater attention than they have received in public theology in the past.
- There are enough parachurch organizations operating in this area. It is time for churches to learn how to fill the gap that exists for people between faith and work.
- Models for congregational ministry in this area must be doable, rather than so theory-laden that they do not connect at a business operational level.
- The integrative work must be theological in nature, rather than limited to the two well-worn paths of evangelism and ethics alone.
- This model for ministry should be unashamedly Christian in content, taking up the call to proclaim the gospel in a pluralist society.

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5 David Miller, God at Work, p. 105ff.
• The model needs to be realistic in terms of fitting into the busy lives of most working people.

• There are four areas in which working people should become theologically competent in order to do the integrative work:
  
  o **A Theology of Work** – What is work? Why is it important? How does the Christian faith transform and guide disciples in the daily practice of a calling at work?

  o **A Theology of Economics** – What is money? How does the profit motive work or not work to fulfill the claims of the gospel of the reign of God?

  o **A Cultural Approach** – In the same way a missionary would enter a new culture by being intentional about understanding that culture deeply in order to proclaim the gospel effectively, Christian disciples should be skilled at learning how to analyze and name the larger business culture of North America, as well as the culture of their particular workplace.

  o **Leadership for Cultural Transformation** – My belief here is that Christians who have a vision for living their faith at work will find themselves in positions of leadership as time goes by. How do disciples lead so that a workplace culture is transformed in light of a vision for the workplace, shaped by the gospel of the reign of God?

In an effort to discover what will help move congregations in the direction of helping people integrate faith and work, I put together a study group in order to see how
disciples would respond to a series of learning modules based on the four areas listed above. I had developed these learning modules over the two years of course work in the Doctor of Ministry curriculum. As the group went through the modules, I conducted three rounds of interviews in order to gather data to analyze. The data analysis was designed to identify what connected for the participants and what did not. It was also designed to seek out a clearer future direction for congregational ministries of faith and work integration.

In Chapter Two I will set out the rationale for faith and work integration within the larger context of missional and public theology and give the framework for the research project itself. Chapter Three introduces the research study group, explains the research process and interprets the data received from the group study process. In Chapter Four I discuss conclusions based on the research and draw out a model for congregational public theologizing in the area of faith and work.

This project cannot be fully understood without the appendices. Appendix A, 1-5 contains the course content for the learning modules used with the research study group in the course of the project. Though I do not refer directly to the modules in the body of the project, the modules show the way the participants were led to engage the issues, and they form the background for the interviews. Appendix A is integral to everything that the interviews and the final model for ministry produced. Appendix B contains the two case studies the research study group used in the learning process. Appendix B also includes a blank copy of the WorkMatters Worksheet, which will be referred to later in this project. (The worksheet is on p. 203.) Appendix C is a calendar of the Research Study Group timeline. Appendix D is a collection of a few examples of what pastoral leaders could begin to do in order to honor the working lives of disciples in a
congregational setting. There are two sermons and one prayer service. The prayer service, which I wrote and conducted for a church member, was for the dedication of a new office space. These are designed to show that worship, both public and private, can connect the realms of faith and work.
Chapter 2
Missional & Public Theologizing

I began this research project with a thesis derived from my years of interest in faith and work integration. The thesis was brought into clearer focus as I designed and completed the four courses for my Doctor of Ministry studies. These four courses resulted in the first four learning modules that were utilized in the research study group, and these are contained in Appendix A, 1-4.

The thesis of the project is as follows: It is important that congregations with a missional outlook create and support ministries of public theologizing in the area of integrating faith and work; and local congregations can best create these ministries through sustained theologizing in long-term small groups. Each of the words of this thesis requires definition and explanation.

Theologizing

First, I have intentionally used the word ‘theologizing’. In using this term, I am borrowing and adopting it from George Hunsberger in a journal article on public theology. In this article, Hunsberger calls for renaming public theology in a more active way. He suggests that we should start calling public theology ‘public theologizing’. This change transforms public theology from mere statements of theological content into an action and a way of applying the gospel to our culture.

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I agree with this renaming of public theologizing as a way to move the word ‘theology’ toward action and application. I will apply the term to theologizing about work and economics as well. This could help solve a problem that can be caused by taking the word theology and combining it with various and sundry topics of individual concern or interest. These have multiplied into so many ‘theologies’ that one hardly knows what to think about any of them. I remember a ‘theology of play’ from many years ago—the source lost to time and memory. But I also recall seeing books about a ‘theology of golf’ and a ‘theology of fly-fishing’ in a Borders bookstore a few years ago. Where does this kind of thing stop?

At the same time, the content of Christian theology is important and flows in many directions. For instance, I certainly believe there is much to be said about a theological aspect of play, or fly-fishing, or golf. This is why I have adopted the term ‘theologizing’ in this project in reference to work matters. Using it to refer to work and economics implies action and an application of the gospel to these important areas, rather than a set of conclusions to be asserted. Theological content is important, but theological content applied to life is the goal of this project. For this reason, the term theologizing will be used throughout the project.

**Missional**

Second, I am approaching faith and work integration from a ‘missional’ perspective. The word missional can mean many things to many people. I, however, am referring to that movement of theologians, missiologists, and ministry practitioners who have taken the work of Lesslie Newbigin, David Bosch, and others and applied it to the
North American context.\textsuperscript{7} Contrary to what many take the word to mean—often a way to get more volunteers in a church to sign up for soup-kitchen duties or mission trips—the essence of being missional is a particular stance toward the cultural context in which churches now find themselves. In the North American context we seem to be in a post-modern, post-Christian, post-denominational age.\textsuperscript{8} Therefore, to be missional means to see a church as a group of people called and sent by God to our culture.

Whereas churches, especially mainline churches, used to be thoroughly embedded within North American culture as one of the primary institutions that undergirded the culture, we are now in the process of being disestablished from that role. Some would contend that we have been almost fully disestablished.\textsuperscript{9} This disestablishment has caused a crisis of identity and purpose for many congregations. In previous generations in the North American context, congregations did not have to ask what their purpose was. They knew their purpose without anyone having to say it. They were “chaplains to the culture.”\textsuperscript{10} But now North American churches do have to define their purpose. One way to do this is to say that they are missional.

George Hunsberger, working with the insights of David Bosch states it this way:

The churches shaped by the Reformation were left with a view of the church…as ‘a place where certain things happen.’ ‘Church’ is conceived in this view as the place where a Christianized civilization gathers for worship, and the place where the Christian character of the society is cultivated. Increasingly, this view of the church as a ‘place where certain things happen’ located the church’s self identity

\textsuperscript{7} I specifically refer here to the work of Darrell Guder, Lois Barrett, Inagrace Dietterich, George Hunsberger, Alan Roxburgh, and Craig Van Gelder in Darrell Guder, ed., Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998). My understanding of Bosch has primarily come from references from these scholars. Some refer to this particular missional approach as the Missional Church Movement.


\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{10} George R. Hunsberger, “Called and Sent to Represent the Reign of God,” Missional Church, pp. 79-80.
in its organizational forms and its professional class, the clergy who perform the church’s authoritative activities.\textsuperscript{11}

A missional understanding of church is different from understanding church as a place where certain things happen. Again, Hunsberger, quoting Bosch, states that a missional self-perception of the church is as a \textit{body of people sent on a mission}: “Unlike the previous notion of the church as an entity located in a facility, or in an institutional organization and its activities, the church is being reconceived as a community, a gathered people, brought together by a common calling and vocation to be a sent people.”\textsuperscript{12}

For a church to be missional, then, means that it gains a self-perception as a body of people sent on a mission. Churches must now see themselves as mission outposts in a culture with little to no understanding of the gospel. Churches must also do this with the same cultural sensitivity that foreign missionaries must utilize when they enter another culture. In short, our own culture has become a mission field.

Furthermore, this mission is \textit{God's mission}. Being missional does not mean having a church-centered view of mission, in which churches engage in activities designed to extend “our own church.” Rather, the mission of God, or the \textit{missio Dei}, becomes the foundation for the mission of the church. God has a mission in the world and gathers the church up into that mission. Wherever the church is, it is a community sent there by God. The \textit{missio Dei} is not a program of a church; it is the essence of what it means to \textit{be} a church.\textsuperscript{13}

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\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p.78. \\
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 81. \\
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., pp. 81-82.
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To summarize: a missional approach is a certain stance toward life and ministry in which churches see themselves as mission outposts, called and sent by God for the sake of God’s mission in the world.

God’s mission, in which the church is gathered up and for which it is sent into the world, can best be spoken of in terms of the gospel of the ‘reign of God’. George Hunsberger makes a case for reorienting the mission and identity of the church around the centrality of the proclamation and living out of this gospel. As the church is shaped by, responds to, and lives out the gospel of the reign of God, the church becomes a “sent people.”

The concept of the reign of God—what it is, how it is to be conceived, and how it is to be lived out by the church—is a large issue. My purpose here is not to enter into a lengthy discussion of its nature, but to point out how important this concept is for a missional mindset in relationship to the integration of faith and work.

Hunsberger points out that the term reign of God is a better rendering than ‘kingdom’ for the Greek word basiléa. Basiléa indicates the reality that the kingdom of God is less a place or an organization than it is the range of God’s effective will for the creation. Therefore, unlike past conceptions of the kingdom of God—which saw the kingdom as something to extend or build—the reign of God is received and entered. Furthermore, the reign of God is directly connected to its fulfillment in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth. “Jesus (is) the action of God that both reveals God’s passion for the world and achieves God’s purposes for that world.”

This conception of the reign of God also has implications for evangelism. “Evangelism would move from an act of recruiting or co-opting those outside the church

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14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., p. 94.
16 Ibid., p. 87.
As the church of God, we receive the reign of God daily and invite others to join with us as those to whom God’s welcome has been extended. In addition, we offer ourselves to assist their reception of the reign of God and their entry into it; then to travel on as co-pilgrims within that reign.  

Hunsberger concludes with the statement that our mission, the missio Dei, is to represent the reign of God. According to him, we carry out this mission in three ways: by being its community, by being its servant, and by being its messenger.

First, in being the community of the reign of God, we are to live under God’s reign in ways that display this reign in our life together.

Second, in representing the reign of God as its servant, the church is to carry forth God’s passion for the world. This means that the gospel of God’s reign extends to all the brokenness of the world that Jesus healed. All of Jesus’ powers of healing—over nature in stilling the storm, over death, evil, and poverty—were exercised to show God’s reign as the way things are intended to be. Thus, when the church exercises authority over all brokenness, domination, oppression, and alienation, we show that the gospel is for the whole range of God’s creation, not just for our private salvation.

Third, in representing the reign of God as its messenger, the church is called to announce, herald, and proclaim the reign of God. Our proclamation should embody the reign of God and invite others into it.

I am coming to believe that a fresh emphasis on the reign of God as the content and method of the mission of the church has powerful implications for how we relate

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17 Ibid., p. 97.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 102.
20 Ibid., pp. 102-108.
faith and work to one another. The reign of God extends everywhere. This means that God’s people are sent as a community, as servants, and as messengers into the workplace, as much as we are sent anywhere with the gospel of the reign of God.

Perhaps it can be said that this emphasis on the reign of God shapes a ‘worldview’ for missional churches. Though the concept of worldview is also large and complex, it also seems to be another implication that comes out of an emphasis on the reign of God.

A worldview is that through which we view the world, not the world we look at. In addition, a worldview provides us with a way of understanding “what’s really important” or “what’s really going on here.” We all have a worldview, or even several of them at once—though we may not know exactly what their contours are. The church, for example, has many worldviews. The important point here is that the reign of God challenges all worldviews, including the worldview(s) of the workplace. Hopefully, over time, a community living together under the reign of God will gain a Christian worldview; and this Christian worldview will help that community fulfill its call to be servants of the reign of God. In order to help this happen, it is important to provide a way for Christian communities to learn the contours of a Christian worldview. It has been common in the West to learn a Christian worldview in terms of a four-fold content, which I describe in the following way:

- **Creation** – God is the maker and ruler of all things. God reigns over creation. This reign is characterized by shalom—the fullness that God intended for creation from the beginning.

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• **Un-creation** – Something is wrong with creation, and God is working to heal it. Creation is not responding well to God’s reign. Something is wrong and God desires to set it right.

• **Re-creation** – God is at work to redeem, re-claim, restore, and reconcile creation to himself. This work reaches its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. In Christ, God re-establishes his reign. 22

• **Consummation** – The future is good and filled with hope. God is working out of the promised future into the present. The reign of God shall one day be completely fulfilled. Until then, it is breaking into the present.

Using this four-fold structure of a Christian worldview *by itself* can be limiting. But when used within the framework of the reign of God, it can expand our concept of being God’s called and sent people in a missional church. Especially in helping people integrate faith and work, a worldview approach has the potential to take the concept of the reign of God and make it practical, while preventing its narrow application only in the private realm. In particular, a worldview approach to the reign of God could be a way to help churches learn how to engage in public theologizing about workplace issues. 23

22 Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982). Brueggemann uses the language of creation, un-creation, and re-creation throughout his Genesis commentary, and I have typically used these terms in teaching and preaching in recent years, rather than the terms creation, sin, and redemption.

23 The concept of ‘worldview’ and its use in Christian thinking is one fraught with debate. Some argue against its use altogether, claiming that the concept is an unwelcome leftover from the Enlightenment impulse to impose an over-arching construct of meaning on everything. Others argue for continuing its use as a way of accepting the validity of Christian and biblical perspectives on reality. I am well aware of the debate as well as the dangers of the worldview concept. In an excellent *tour de force* work on worldview as a concept, philosopher David K. Naugle, in *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), covers the history and use of the worldview concept. He offers a critique of both the dangers and the contributions a worldview approach can offer the church. I am utilizing his work as I seek to fold together a ‘reign of God’ approach to public theologizing with a ‘worldview’ approach. See Naugle, *Worldview*, pp. 253ff.
Public Theologizing

Though it has been around for some time, the term ‘public theologizing’ has taken on a new energy. It is one of the ways churches can be, and become, missional in approach and practice. It is a way of applying the gospel of the reign of God to all of life.24 Let me begin with some basic thoughts about the connection between missional theology and public theology for the church.

First, missional theology and public theology are closely connected. If a missional approach to life and ministry means making sure the gospel is not reduced to a private gift of salvation—as the North American church has uniquely tended to do—then the re-expansion of the gospel to include all of life means that public theology is not optional. It is necessary.

Second, the gospel is public truth. Lesslie Newbigin speaks of the public nature of the gospel as truth.25 This is in contradistinction to the postmodern tendency to treat all truth as both relative and subject to external verification, in order to be granted a visa into the realm of public discourse. Newbigin maintains that the gospel, in its full expression and implications, is the vantage point from which the church begins all thought and takes all action. Secularization has sought to push the gospel and all matters of faith to the periphery of public discourse; it does not admit them unless they first qualify themselves according to secularization’s criteria and agenda. Newbigin reverses this field. He places

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the gospel at the center of the church’s engagement in public discourse, without requiring it to submit to secularization’s criteria or approval. The gospel itself, as truth, challenges all other truth claims, including those of “so-called ‘Christian’ cultures.”

For Newbigin, this assertive claim does not mean a return to fundamentalism or to pre-critical, pre-modern thinking. Nor does he imply that treating the gospel as the starting point grants it supremacy over other vantage points. He is clear that holding out the gospel as public truth will involve ambiguity and struggle, because all truth claims can and will be tested until the day of judgment. Newbigin’s point is this: as God’s called and sent people, the gospel is where we begin; it constitutes our whole approach to being, serving, and proclaiming in the world.

Third, George Hunsberger calls for renaming public theology in a more active way. Since it is something we do, as well as something with a particular content, public theologizing will call for a particular “voice” and “posture” from those who wish to practice it in a missional approach to life and ministry. Regarding voice, Hunsberger calls for the church to be aware of the importance of the way we speak in public theologizing. Our public witness in terms of our voice must be authentic, tolerant, humble, and filled with hospitality. Regarding posture, Hunsberger calls for a spirit of companionship, even as we maintain our identity as an alternative community to the culture around us. This spirit of companionship calls us to work publicly for the common good.

27 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
In light of these renewed calls from Newbigin and Hunsberger for public theologizing to become a central aspect of a missional approach, I would now like to add my own contribution to the discussion on theologizing publicly about work. In order to further the conversation, I would like to suggest six musts that can help set the framework for effective theologizing in this important area. I believe public theologizing will need to deal with these six musts in order to help believers integrate faith and work. Separately and together, they reflect Hunsberger’s call for the kind of voice and a posture in public theologizing that engages us with our culture. I present the entire list below and then discuss each one in turn:

- Public theologizing on work matters must deal with the splits.
- Public theologizing on work matters must deal with the narrowed.
- Public theologizing on work matters must work toward healing the polarization between liberal and conservative.
- Public theologizing on work matters must become conscious.
- Public theologizing on work matters must translate to daily operations in the workplace.
- Public theologizing on work matters must be practiced in community.

The Splits

Public theologizing on work matters must deal with the splits. Here I mean the splits between the realms: public versus private; facts versus values; secular versus sacred; material versus spiritual; work versus faith; career versus family. Even more splits could be listed, but these are particularly pervasive.

The plain fact is this: there is a wide and deep divide between these various
realms. The public realm is seen as the place of facts, is therefore secular, focuses on the material, involves matters of politics, policy, and work, and is real. The private realm is seen as the place of values—of faith, personal convictions, and the spiritual. In the popular way of living with this split, the two realms are held apart. Rarely do they overlap; when they do, they tend to overlap in the private sphere, not the public sphere. In many ways, and for many people, the gospel has been turned into a private and personal matter of values, relegated to the periphery of life, and regarded as a matter of opinion, not truth. As such, there is great suspicion that matters of faith have no place in the public sphere and, indeed, have only created problems when injected into that sphere. Culturally speaking, this seems now to be assumed as the normal way of life and thought in North America.

In my experience, this suspicion commonly shows up in broad applications of the concept of separation of church and state. For example, I once presented a proposal for a chaplain-based Employee Assistance Program, (or EAP), to the leadership of an advertising agency. The proposal was turned down by the CEO because of her explicit concerns about “the separation of church and state”—which she thought this EAP might compromise or violate. She offered this as her primary reason for turning down the proposal, even though providing corporate chaplains is perfectly legal. Not only that, but corporate chaplaincy programs have received the approval of even the ACLU for use in government institutions. When these facts were pointed out to the CEO, she was still adamant that business and religion are to be kept strictly separate.31 Here’s another

31 In fact, there are many EEOC guidelines concerning the legality of the practice of faith in the workplace. For example, prayer to begin a business meeting is actually illegal except under the following conditions: the leader of the meeting must communicate with all attendees ahead of time about the prayer time and must let them know their participation, and even their presence for that portion of the meeting is strictly
example, shared with me many years ago. A worker who wanted to start a Bible study on his own time at work was told by his manager, “You will kindly keep matters of religion to yourself. That’s for church. It isn’t allowed here.” These are all-too-common examples of the compartmentalization of faith and public matters.

Thus, the separation of church and state is projected onto the world of work, even though a private workplace isn’t part of the operations of the state. This is a common cultural assumption on the part of many people, including people of faith. “Business is business, faith is faith—they just don’t work together.” I have been told this too many times to count. So separation of church and state becomes a model for all of life. One is to leave matters of faith at home or, at most, at church.

If work matters are addressed by people of Christian faith, two topics seem to rise to the surface. People tend to think of evangelism—or an expectation to utilize one’s workplace as a forum for church recruitment; and ethics—or the attempt to seek moral integrity in work matters.32

This split seems to be deeply engrained in American business culture, as well as in the culture at large. There is, in fact, anxiety that surfaces whenever the topic of integrating faith and workplace issues is brought up; this is largely because of the unwritten, but strongly assumed, rule that work and faith should not mix. Public theologizing must deal with this divide in general, but also in the particular area of faith and workplace integration. How can a congregation help people across this divide? How

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optional. Many Christian business leaders regularly violate this guideline. In the case of corporate chaplaincy—which has a 200-year history in the U.S.—chaplains cannot bring up matters of faith. If an employee asks to speak of faith matters, a chaplain can respond—but, even then, may not proselytize. 32 I am using ‘ethics’ here in the sense that I have heard many speak of it. There is much more to ethics than matters of right and wrong. There are also matters of character, presence, and virtue. But for many in the workplace the topic of ethics simply refers to matters of honesty and business law.
can the anxiety people genuinely feel in this area be lessened, so that the various realms are integrated with a healthy voice and posture, as Hunsberger has called for?

**The Narrows**

Public theologizing on work matters must deal with the narrows. Currently, public theologizing tends to be relegated to a rather limited set of issues. This is a reduction of the gospel to a narrow list of concerns. As Lesslie Newbigin has pointed out, the narrow range of public theologizing tends to be limited to peace, justice, and the integrity of creation.\(^3^3\) Newbigin affirms that these are all important and enduring issues, but stresses that it is time to expand into other areas, particularly those of commerce, work, and markets.\(^3^4\) Newbigin repeats this call to expand the boundaries and vision of public theologizing in most of his work. Perhaps the most lucid of these is his repeated statements about it in *Truth to Tell*.\(^3^5\) Here is one example:

A psychiatrist who was a devout Christian was recently asked whether her Christianity informed her work in the consulting room. She replied: “But that would be unprofessional conduct.” What kind of preparation is needed to enable a psychiatrist to discern the ways in which her profession could be subverted from its allegiance to other principles and become an area where the saving work of Christ is acknowledged? What would be the specific kind of training for a teacher in the public schools, for an executive in a big corporation, for a lawyer or a civil servant? Do we not need to invest much more of the church’s resources in creating the possibility for such training? It cannot be done by clergy, though they have a part. It calls for the vigorous development of lay programs in which those in specific areas of secular work can explore together the possibilities of subversion.\(^3^6\)

George Hunsberger affirms this need to expand public theologizing to the domains of commerce and work as well:

\(^3^4\) Newbigin, *Truth to Tell*, p. 83.
\(^3^5\) Ibid.
\(^3^6\) Ibid.
Public theologizing is done in a wide range of places – in economic interactions, in the workworld—its cultures and interactions, in media construals of reality, in societal norms and ethnic communities. It is not limited to matters of public policy, social action, governance and politics.\textsuperscript{37}

**The Polarization**

Public theologizing in the area of work must also deal with the polarization often felt between liberal and conservative. Newbigin speaks of this in *Truth to Tell* as a polarization between liberal and fundamentalist.\textsuperscript{38} But the polarization cannot be limited to theological viewpoints alone.

Newbigin sets up this polarization as those who side with objectivity versus those who side with subjectivity—between the Bible as something true from God and the Bible as reflecting the religious experiences of people in a culture and place long removed from our experiences. Newbigin calls for a healing of the breach between various groups through an appeal to Michael Polanyi’s epistemological work. This work has sought to bring the objective pole of knowing together with the subjective pole of knowing. The polarization between liberal and conservative seems to resist this kind of attempt. As a result, it does spill over into the economic and political divide.

How can this polarization be overcome? I suggest that Newbigin’s application of Polanyi can and should be extended to areas beyond the merely biblical. Newbigin calls for a “Committed Pluralism” that sees all knowledge as “neither purely objective nor purely subjective but as that which is available to the person who is personally and responsibly committed to seeking the truth and publicly stating his findings.”\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{38} Newbigin, *Truth to Tell*, pp. 41-42.
\textsuperscript{39} Newbigin, *Truth to Tell*, pp. 56-57.
Public theologizing that encompasses work matters must work toward healing polarizations. In general, the irony in living and proclaiming the gospel as public truth is that disciples of Jesus will find themselves on different sides of many debates because the gospel takes us in surprising directions. Some will see those who live out this gospel in the work world as liberal on some issues and conservative on others. The old labels will simply not apply.

**Becoming Conscious**

Public theologizing on work matters must become conscious. Because of the splits, the narrows, and the polarization discussed above, there is a strong tendency on the part of working Christians to treat the integration of work and faith—if they think about it at all—as something that is implicit, rather than explicit. Because they fear that talking about their faith openly is the only valid way of serving Christ in the workplace, they tend to limit themselves to that form of faith expression, or to focus almost exclusively on ‘ethics’ as they define them.

What is called for is an ability to think and act theologically about work matters in a conscious manner. One way to understand how this ability might be acquired is the move from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence. Let me unpack this statement a bit. Beyond faith-sharing and ethics, many business people seem not to know how to apply their faith to workplace issues. Many do not seem to know that an expanded view is possible. At the same time, average working people feel incompetent at theologizing. If they do reflect on matters of faith and work with a degree of depth, the first experience many have is that of becoming aware of their incompetence.
Then, with an engagement of public theologizing, they become *conscious* of their incompetence. At this point a crossroads is usually reached. Either they will go down the path of trying to figure out how to deal with their felt incompetence; or they will retreat back to the wall of separation between the world of work and the world of faith.

What is needed—and I have heard this almost universally from business people on these matters—is a *way for them to work on becoming and feeling competent* in public theologizing about matters related to their work. If given the chance, it seems to me that most Christians in the workplace could and would learn to theologize publicly. Such learning would produce in them the kind of competent theologizing that happens daily, naturally, and in every domain of life—not just in their workplace world. Thus, the goal of a congregational ministry of faith and work integration would be *unconscious competence in theologizing about work.*

**Daily Operations**

Public theologizing on work matters must apply to daily operations in the workplace. In their study of faith and workplace, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday,* Laura Nash and Scotty McClennan point out an important reality: when it comes to matters of daily operations, most business and working people see little connection to faith. In their book, they cite the following list of daily operations in the workplace:

- Leadership
- Ethics
- Human Resources
- Finance
- Sales/Marketing
- Time
- Board Ethics
- Relationships

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• Economic Systems
• Globalization
• Medical Insurance
• Community Involvement

According to Nash and McClennan, working people do not regard any of these daily operations as activities related to the gospel. Public theologizing on work matters must enable working people to integrate their faith with these daily matters of work, or it will be of little help to them.

Community

Public theologizing on work matters must be done in the context of a community of faith. As I have already noted, today in North America alone there are over 1,300 organizations devoted to faith and workplace issues. Almost all of them are independent institutions or parachurch organizations. Few congregations are actively involved in seeking to help people deal with integrating faith and work. As important and helpful as these 1,300 organizations are, it is my belief that they will have limited effect in this area; this is partly because there is so little support for a continuing engagement with these issues from their churches—and, in particular, from their pastors.

My project is designed to be part of the necessary research to discover what will actually work in a congregational setting, so that public theologizing in this area can receive the support it needs from congregations and pastors. In particular, my hypothesis is this: the type of integrative work necessary to the task of sustained public theologizing in the area of faith and work can best be pursued in a small group setting in churches. Integrating faith and work calls for a place of safety where those involved can come together with a high degree of trust and learn together. This will seldom happen in a
classroom setting with a lecture format. It does seem to happen in a small group setting where there is good communication, a high level of trust, and a regular meeting time.

Thus, I pursued this question: whether or not, and to what extent, public theologizing on the integration of faith and workplace issues—in a small group in a local congregation—does or does not work. My research and this project seek to grapple with these six musts, in order to help congregations theologize publicly about the workworlds that ordinary Christians inhabit. The next chapter will frame the project in light of the call to public theologizing that has been issued by Newbigin and Hunsberger.
Chapter 3

Framing the Project

My project is based on a conviction that the integration of faith and work is a matter of missional and public theologizing. The research project itself involved taking a group of business people through a curriculum of five learning modules that relate faith to work. During the study group process, I interviewed the members of the group in order to see what happened to them through their learning. The goal was to let this research inform what a congregational model for faith and work integration might look like.

Before I introduce the research project itself, I would like to provide some background on the learning modules.

In the last two decades there have been a growing number of theologians writing about work and workplace issues. This has added a great deal to the church’s understanding in this important area. From Bakke, to Miller, to Volf, there is now a growing body of literature to draw upon. A survey of these theologians is contained in Learning Module One, Appendix A-1, so I will not spend time reviewing their work here. Let me simply observe how very good it is that more theologians are focusing on the realm of work as an important area of theologizing.

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Eschatology

One important theological topic in this growing body of work has an out-sized influence on the way everyday Christians will apply their faith to their work. That theological area is eschatology.

In my reading, and in this research project, I am discovering that eschatology is the place to begin in helping people theologize about work. If one’s eschatology holds forth a radical disjunction between this life and eternity, then all other beliefs and actions will flow in a certain direction. That direction will be toward compartmentalization, even separatism. The end result of this will be a negative view of creation in this world—and, correspondingly, a negative view of work. Indeed, from this eschatological vantage point, the work itself is unimportant.

This view tends to create a utilitarian view of work. Work is only important insofar as it enables people to make a living and support their families. Other than that, work is worthless and should not receive the full engagement of the worker. “Don’t polish brass on a sinking ship!” is a phrase I have heard over the years in reference to this perspective. The inference of this quote is something like this: since nothing in this life will be carried over to the next, an investment of time and energy in anything that is not eternal is a total waste. To many who approach life from this perspective, the only things that are eternal are the Word of God and people. Everything else will be destroyed completely in the ‘eschaton’. Accordingly, those who hold this perspective seek to invest primarily in the Bible and evangelism. Little else matters. From this perspective, those who do become involved in social action or service do so primarily in order to win a
hearing for a gospel of salvation from damnation. Simply put, those who hold this view of eschatology will tend not to believe that integrating work and faith has much value.

But if one has an eschatology of hope, if one believes what is done in this life will be carried over into the next in some way, if there isn’t a radical disjunction between this life and eternity, then work will be viewed very differently. From a perspective of hope, what we do in this life, in and through our labor and our careers, can have eternal significance. Such labor carries over into God’s good future.

Darrell Cosden, in The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work,\(^ {42}\) deals extensively with this issue. His primary contention is that the resurrection is the place we should go in order to begin building an eschatology. This is because the resurrection is, in some sense, physical: “I believe in the resurrection of the body.” This statement from the Apostles’ Creed is filled with implications for how Christians face life on this side of eternity. We believe not only in the resurrection of Christ’s body, but in the resurrection of our own bodies at some future date.

According to Cosden, this cannot mean that our bodies are all that is taken into eternity. The resurrection of Christ, joined with the promise in Revelation 21 that God will make a new heaven and a new earth, has broader implications. Together these create some kind of link between this existence and the next. The promise seems to indicate that God will take this heaven and this earth and make a new one—one that is connected to the old one in the same way that our resurrection bodies are connected to our earthly bodies.

\(^ {42}\) Darrell Cosden, The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work, pp. 31-72.
Cosden maintains that this continuity is the primary implication that flows out of the resurrection. In particular, he applies this to the realm of life that has to do with our work. What we do here, what we make in this life, will somehow—perhaps in ways we can not currently fathom—be taken by God into the next existence.

Cosden is careful to maintain that there is a disjunction between the present heaven and earth and the new heaven and earth. But he is contending for a notion that the disjunction isn’t as radical and as complete as has been maintained by some in the recent past. Of course, what Cosden is referring to here is the type of fundamentalism that tends toward premillennialism: the basic notion that there is no connection between this world and the next; that when you die you enter a spiritual realm with no connection to anything that was previous to it. In premillennialism, there is this world; and there is the next world. Both are real, but they are not connected with one another.

This is one perspective on eschatology, but is it the only one? Cosden and others say no. Though other views of the eschaton have always been held, such as amillennialism and postmillennialism, these more hopeful viewpoints of the future are being given fresh attention through the work of many biblical scholars and theologians—the most well known of whom are N. T. Wright and Jurgen Moltmann. The debate over this important issue of eschatology will go on for some time. At some point, however, one must stake out a position and go with it. I personally agree with Cosden that there is a connection between this life and the next; that we should approach life, work, and faith from the perspective of the resurrection of the body—which includes the implication that what happens here in this world has importance for eternity. This whole area of concern is an outgrowth of the ‘theology of hope’ of Jurgen Moltmann. In short, this theological
perspective holds that we are more shaped by the future than we are by the present or the past. This is the approach taken by a theology of hope in general. But Cosden, and also Volf, have taken this theology of hope and are applying it directly to theologizing about work.

When going through a study with a group of business and career people, a theology of hope does seem to be the most important place to begin. If business people cannot, or will not, shake the commonly-held view that this existence will not in any way be taken into the next, here’s what that will mean: they will tend not to see any need to integrate their faith and their work beyond a few narrow concerns. But if they are able to gain a more positive view of this present existence, and its connection to the next existence, they will become more motivated to do integrative work.

One way to get the positive point across is using these twin phrases: *matter matters* and *work matters*. Matter—the elements that make up the universe—matters to God. Matter matters so much that God came into the world of matter and lived within it completely in the incarnation. But God also took matter into eternity through the resurrection. Matter matters to God; therefore matter should matter to us.\(^{43}\)

If matter matters, then so does work. What we make, the services we provide, the time we spend in our careers, the fulfillments we receive from productive work, and the frustrations we suffer in our work—all of this matters to God. Work matters to God; therefore work should matter to us.

With the backdrop of a hopeful eschatology in place, the learning modules can now be introduced.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., p. 31.
The Learning Modules

I will give a summary of each learning module utilized by the research study group. These modules were developed as a part of my previous coursework for the Doctor of Ministry program at Western Theological Seminary. Each of the learning modules was originally designed to be offered in either a six-week format or a weekend retreat setting.

Learning Module One: A Theology of Work

- **Field of Learning** – This six-week learning module takes a small group through a curriculum designed to give the participants an introduction to Christian theology as it is applied to matters of work. What is work? How does one integrate faith with work? What does the Bible teach about work? Who are the major theologians in this area? How can a group apply their learning to specific work case studies? What is each person’s life purpose? All of these major topics are explored in this learning module.

- **Expected Outcomes** – The goal of this learning module is for participants to gain a basic level of confidence about how to integrate their faith and their work. It is expected that each person will gain greater self-awareness and insight through the *LifeKeys* course.\(^4^4\) It is also expected that each person will become familiar with the case study method of applying a Christian worldview to cases from their own workplaces.

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Materials – The primary text for the module is *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*, by Darrell Cosden. We also read and work through the book, *LifeKeys*, by Kise, Stark, and Hirsch, along with its companion workbook.

Key Affirmations – The module covers five main areas:

- We look at the need for integrating faith and work.
- We survey the major theologians working in this area and their contributions.
- We survey the Bible as it relates to work matters.
- We work together on each person’s life purpose and how it informs their work.
- We learn to use a Christian worldview approach to the Harvard Business School Case Study Method.\(^45\)

Format – The format of learning is a small group setting, with presentations on content together with discussions and interaction. Toward the end of the

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\(^45\) Here I am referring specifically to a method of instruction and teaching developed most fully by the Harvard Graduate Business School. Though the Harvard Business School has been using the case-method of instruction since the 1920’s, it wasn’t until the leadership of C. Roland Christensen in the 1960’s and 70’s that the method was examined and expanded. Christensen wrote two books on the case-method of teaching, and I used the general principles as he developed them as one of the bases for my approach in the entire learning experience for the research study group. The specific resources I used were: Louis B. Barnes, C. Roland Christensen, and Abby Hansen, eds. *Teaching and the Case Method 3\(^{rd}\) ed.* (Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 1994), and C. Roland Christensen, David A. Garvin, and Ann sweet, eds., *Education for Judgment: The Artistry of Discussion Leadership* (Boston, Harvard Business Press, 1991, see especially chapters 1-2). As noted on the website of the C. Roland Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard, the core principles of the case method of teaching are: 1) it is instructor-guided, discussion based learning, 2) It introduces complex and often ambiguous real-world scenarios into the classroom, 3) Typically through a case about a protagonist facing an important decision, 4) It is participant-centered, rather than instructor-centered, 5) It’s goal is to “Go beyond the transfer of knowledge and include the development of analytical decision-making and communication skills, and the cultivation of self-awareness, judgment, and the capacity to lead.”, and 6) Students and the instructor must prepare the case in advance of the class session. Christenson Center for Teaching and Learning. “Case Method in Practice—Core Principles,” Harvard Business School. http://www.hbs.edu/teaching/case-method-in-practice/resources/additional-reading.html accessed May 9, 2010.
module, case studies are worked on as a group. The learning is designed to be relational and interactive.

- **Structure** – We meet for six sessions of one and a half hours each. (Note: The research study group met monthly for three and a half hour sessions and covered each learning module in an average of two sessions.)

**Learning Module Two: A Theology of Economics**

- **Field of Learning** – This learning module applies a Christian worldview approach to economics. It is designed to help participants look at money and financial systems from a perspective that will enable them to critique and understand the main economic systems in place today. The module will also aid the participants in forming their own theological convictions about money, profits, and financial management in their own places of work.

- **Expected Outcomes** – The goal of this module is for participants to construct a theology of economics as a group. The group will also respond to the current economic situation in the U.S. by writing a letter to the President and congressional representatives, outlining their concerns and/or agreements about current government policy regarding the economy.

- **Materials** – There are two texts for this module: *Cash Values: Money and the Erosion of Meaning in Today’s Society*, by Craig M. Gay; and *Economics in Christian Perspective: Theory, Policy and Life Choice*, by Victor V. Claar and Robin Klay. We also survey the Bible’s main passages regarding money and economic issues.
• **Key Affirmations**
  
  o The Bible is not an economics textbook, but it does have much to say about money and economic justice. A Christian worldview approach toward economics must be well-informed about biblical teachings in this area, so we survey the main biblical passages that relate to money and economics from Genesis through the New Testament.
  
  o We take what we are learning and examine two case studies on economic practices in corporate settings.
  
  o We survey major theologians working in the area of economic systems.
  
  o We then discuss the books for the module.
  
  o The group constructs a theology of economics that is designed to aid them in the economic practices and decisions in their own workplaces.

• **Format** – We meet in a small group format for lectures and discussion. We will work together on a group project at the end of the module.

• **Structure** – We meet for six sessions of one and a half hours each.

**Learning Module Three: Interpreting Workplace Culture**

• **Field of Learning** – This learning module takes the missional nature of the church in North America seriously by teaching participants how to see their workplace as a distinct culture. We learn how cultures are interpreted in general, and then practice the interpretation of cultures by observing some major U.S. corporations from this perspective.
• **Expected Outcomes** – The goals of this module are for participants to be introduced to cultural interpretation and to be able to name their own workplace culture.

• **Materials** – The primary resource for this module and the next is the book, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, by Edgar H. Schein.\(^{46}\)

• **Key Affirmations**
  
  o Interpreting workplace culture is a part of being missional as a church.
  
  o We learn how to do what Clifford Geertz calls “thick description” of a culture.
  
  o We practice thick description by taking a look at a major U.S. corporation.\(^{47}\)
  
  o American business has its own distinct culture. We cover a survey of American management culture and how it has impacted the larger American culture in which all of us live.
  
  o The end goal of the module is for each participant to be able describe their own workplace culture and report this to the group.

• **Format** – This module will be primarily lecture and discussion, combined with working as a group to learn the art of interpreting cultures.

• **Structure** – We meet for six sessions of one and a half hours each.

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**Learning Module Four: Leadership for Cultural Change**


• **Field of Learning** – This learning module explores how a person can lead for cultural change in their workplace. The thought is that by theologizing about work and economics, and then learning how to interpret workplace culture, a missional approach to work will usually lead to a need to change the culture in some way.

• **Expected Outcomes** – The participants will come up with a personal philosophy of leadership and a plan for leading cultural change in their workplace. It may be that no cultural change is really called for in a particular workplace. Participants will be encouraged to develop a plan in any event, primarily to learn how to lead in this way.

• **Materials** – The primary resource for this module is the same as in the previous module: *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, by Edgar H. Schein.

• **Key Affirmations**
  
  o We explore ways that organizations function well in order to change their culture.
  
  o Each participant will discover their own leadership type in order to deepen their self-development.
  
  o We survey the leading thinkers in the field of leadership:
    
    ▪ Edgar Schein on leading for cultural change;
    
    ▪ Ron Heifetz on adaptive leadership;
    
    ▪ Steven Covey on principle-centered leadership;
    
    ▪ Patrick Lencioni on dealing with silos and turf wars;
- Everett Rogers on innovation;
- Rosabeth Moss Kanter on the importance of confidence.

- **Format** – The format of the module is small group lecture and discussion, along with the following application of learning by each participant: development of a plan of action for leadership in the workplace.

- **Structure** – We meet for six sessions of one and a half hours each.
Chapter 4
The Interviews

The Hypothesis Revisited

The area of missional and public theologizing about work and workplace issues has been an interest of mine for over twenty years. I have spent hundreds of hours walking with people through the issues they face at work. I have learned to respect their work, their heart to be followers of Christ in the marketplace, and their desire to apply their faith to their work. I have read broadly on this area over the same period, but have read more deeply in the last five years for this Doctor of Ministry program.

I began the program with a hypothesis: It is important that congregations with a missional outlook create and support ministries of public theologizing in the area of integrating faith and work; and local congregations can best create these ministries through sustained theologizing in long-term small groups. This hypothesis has been sharpened and focused as I have engaged in the research for this project. But there are also some questions that arise from the hypothesis: Can a group that goes through the five learning modules in a small group setting demonstrate the ability to theologize about work? Can a congregation do this?

This hypothesis was based, as I said earlier, on over twenty years of ministry experience and reading. Yet it was only a hypothesis. When I began my Doctor of Ministry studies, it had not been proven. I designed the research project to try to evaluate the hypothesis. The goal was to discover what can and will actually work in a
congregational setting to promote the integration of faith and work. In order to research this, I designed a project of qualitative social research.

In particular, I decided to use action research as an observer/participant in a small group. I put a small group together from diverse working backgrounds, took them through the learning modules described in pages 46-52 above, observed what was happening for the participants during the modules, and, finally, conducted three rounds of interviews with the participants to gather data about their experiences. Individual interviews were conducted early in the study group and about two-thirds of the way through the learning experience; the final interview was conducted with the entire group at the conclusion of the learning experience.

Let me expand a bit on action research, since it is important to an understanding of the research project and the results gained from it. Action research is a form of qualitative social science research designed to generate practical application from data.

The purpose for using action research for this specific project is because, although I began with a hypothesis, I had little data against which to test it. I did have anecdotal data, as well as personal observations over many years of pastoral ministry. I also had the wisdom of others, but I had no formal collection of data to observe. My theory was that people can theologize about work issues and that small groups within a congregational setting are the best way for people to learn how to integrate faith and work. But I wanted to remain open to the possibility that I would need to reform or reset my theory based on data.

As I took the research study group through the learning modules, I expected that theories would emerge as we went forward with the study process. The goal in action
research is to find the categories and concepts within the data, not to bring them to the data. This was what I sought to discover through the interviews. I wanted to look at the data, develop theories as the data were analyzed, then test the emerging theories against further data as later rounds of interviews were conducted.

Furthermore, action research is a form of grounded theory research in which researchers are involved in the research directly as an observer participant. As Punch puts it, “Action researchers engage in careful, diligent inquiry, not for the purposes of discovering new facts or revising accepted laws or theories, but to acquire information having practical application to the solution of specific problems related to their work [italics mine].”

There does seem to me to be the following problem with faith and workplace issues: many people, whether lay or ordained, have a hard time seeing work as a place to apply their faith. Few churches or pastors are helping people theologize about their work. The problem to be solved is how this can be changed so that congregations are helped to engage public theologizing about work. I see action research as a way to help close this gap. As Punch states, “A primary purpose of action research is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives.”

According to Punch there are five parts to action research: research design, data gathering, data analysis, communication, and action. I endeavored to utilize this model in designing and executing my own research. In summary, I used action research that generated questions, derived theory from the data received, and formulated the

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48 Ibid., p. 161.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
framework for conclusions. In addition, I used this approach with a goal to get to a point of action: helping congregations create ministries of public theologizing about work.

**The Timeline and the Research Study Group**

The research study group took a total of twenty months from beginning to end. A calendar with the timeline and specific dates for each meeting as well as the time-frames for the interviews is contained in Appendix C, (p.205). What follows is a timeline with details for each part of the process.

- **Planning Phase** – This phase lasted five months, from May 2008 to September 2008.
  - The research study group was organized with a desire to include people from various types of workplaces.
  - I also sought to have a mix in age, gender, and racial diversity. I sought to have a mix of people working in large companies and small, private sector and government, for-profit and non-profit, and at least one entrepreneur.

- **Invitation Phase** – This phase also took five months, from October 2008 to February 2009. This phase lasted longer than I expected. It took more time than I had hoped to draw up a list of potential participants, contact them, give them a chance to pray and think about it, and get back to me.
  - *My invitation* – In my recruitment process I gave each participant an overview of my entire Doctor of Ministry focus: theologizing about work with the goal of helping congregations learn how to create ministries of faith and workplace integration. The participants knew
from the outset that this would be a research project and that their experience of the study process would form the basis for the data I gathered, as well as for the conclusions I would reach.

- **The Group** – I was honored to have seven people accept my invitation to be part of the research study group. For the most part I was able to put together a group that reflected my goals. All participants are active members of a church. Five of the seven are members of my own congregation, where I serve as head-of-staff. One is a former member who attends a congregation in Portland, Oregon, and one is a member of a sibling congregation in the city of Vancouver, Washington.

  - **Gerald Baugh** – Gerald has worked for seventeen years in economic development for the State of Oregon, and the cities of Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington. He is fifty-seven years old and an African-American. Gerald has been responsible for a number of urban redevelopment projects and is currently in charge of facilitating biomedical research and research and development of the software industry for the City of Portland Economic Development Council. Prior to his government service, Gerald worked in the banking, insurance, and automobile industry in various management roles.

  - **Dave Christel** – Dave is a lawyer in general practice, focusing on business, real estate, and probate. He also does quite a bit in the area of guardianship law. He has been practicing in the
Vancouver, Washington area for over twenty years. In addition to his law practice, Dave is a Federal Magistrate Judge for southern Washington. In that capacity he adjudicates matters related to federal lands and parks, focusing on law enforcement cases.

- **Russ Garrow** – Russ Garrow is an entrepreneur in his early forties. With a background in banking, including a stint at the Federal Reserve Bank, he then spent a number of years in the banking industry. He has recently started the Garrow Equity Group, a private equity firm, where he is the president and majority stockholder.

- **Nancy Johns** – Nancy trained as an electrical engineer and is in her early sixties. She worked for many years in the high-tech industry and has expertise in both manufacturing and customer representation. Most of her work was in management. For the last fourteen years, Nancy has worked as a real estate broker. In addition to serving her clients, she also manages a real estate office of about sixty agents.

- **Robert Knight** – Robert is a retired Army officer as well as a West Point graduate. He is in his early fifties. After his retirement from the military, he worked for a freight company engaged in national long-haul trucking, and also in marketing for a dental supply company. For the last five years he has
worked as an administrator in higher education and is currently the president of Clark Community College in Vancouver, Washington.

- **Robert McFarlin** – Bob is a retired logistics command Army general officer in his mid-sixties. After his career with the Army, he worked for five years for EDS, a major data management company, as an independent consultant. Since his full retirement, Bob has been active in helping our congregation focus on a long-term relief and development outreach ministry; this ministry focuses on an unreached people group in Senegal, West Africa and is a partnership with World Vision.

- **Jennifer Mears** – Jennifer is in her forties and works in property management for a regional fast food chain called Burgerville, owned by The Holland, Inc., headquartered in Vancouver, Washington. Her family started this company three generations ago. Along with working in the family business, Jennifer has a Masters degree in organizational development.

  - **Small Group Design** – I used basic small group dynamics in order to get the group to a place of safety and trust. Part of my pedagogical philosophy is that adults engage in transformational learning primarily through relationships. If they are part of a group in which trust is high, they will participate much more readily than if relationships are not
built and trust is not as high. In order to facilitate a high trust level, we spent a great deal of time at the beginning of the group getting to know each person’s history and sense of being. This was done by instituting and maintaining four basic rules that must be in place for a group to gain a high degree of trust:

- A commitment to attend regularly.
- A commitment to strict confidentiality on personal matters.
- A commitment to listen rather than fix.
- A commitment to good boundaries—or what I call the pass rule. If someone prefers not to participate in something the group is doing, he/she can pass, no questions asked.

With these parameters in place, my observation was that this group came together pretty quickly and easily. The first two meetings were spent hearing a great deal about each person’s life and work history, and the basic rules were rearticulated at the beginning of each meeting.51

- **The Study Phase** – The study phase lasted eleven months, from March 2009 to January 2010. The group went through the four learning modules in a small group format. We met once a month for close to three hours, from 5:30 p.m. to around 8:30 or 9:00 p.m. We began with dinner and a brief log-in time,

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51 Roberta Hestenes, *Using the Bible in Groups* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983). For this part of the group’s organization, I used the insights gained over the last forty years in the small group movement in the U.S. I reference Roberta Hestenes at this point because her book is probably the best place to go for the important basic dynamics that create healthy small groups. Part of what I have included above comes from training materials my wife, Laurel, and I have developed over the years for small group ministries in local congregations.
followed by lecture and discussion. As the group progressed through the learning modules, I made a few modifications to the content of the modules that were being presented, based upon feedback I was receiving from the participants during the interviews and conversations. What follows is a specific timeline of the study experience over the eleven months the research study group was together, along with my observations of the group’s responses to the content of each module.

- **A Theology of Work** – March-September, 2009. This learning module was the longest and took place in three distinct phases: March-May, June-August, and September.
  - March, 2009 – We began the study process with an extensive introduction to the project and an overview of all the learning modules. This meeting also included extensive group-building time as well as planning all meeting dates and times through September.
  - April-May, 2009 – April was the first actual study time for the group. They had each been provided with the books for the entire module, and had been able to read *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*, by Darrell Cosden. I covered the material that gave a biblical grounding on a theology of work and did a survey of the primary theologians working in this area. It took through the May meeting to cover the entire module up to the point of the *LifeKeys* study.
Reflections on the April-May group process – There seemed to me to be a high degree of motivation on the part of the group. People seemed to be honored to be in the group and were pleased to be a part of helping others learn how to do this kind of ministry. After the lecture in April there was a quite a bit of healthy discussion regarding the material covered. For the most part, the participants had done their reading. The whole issue of a theology of hope was new to everyone. The idea that matter matters to God and that therefore, as one participant put it, “widgets matter,” was both stimulating and challenging for the group. They could see how important relationships are in the workplace, especially for them as Christians. But some had a hard time seeing how something like an oscilloscope could possibly be taken into eternity. I didn’t try to resolve the internal tension on this point, focusing instead on the importance of the perspective of a new heavens and a new earth—and how these might be connected in some way to the current heavens and earth. The whole point seemed to me to have a pretty positive impact on the group as a whole. May was spent finishing the
survey of theologians and preparing the group for the

*LifeKeys* process.

- June-August, 2009 – *LifeKeys*. The *LifeKeys* book and workbook are a side module embedded within the *Theology of Work* learning module. *LifeKeys* is being used by Columbia Presbyterian Church, where I serve as pastor, to help us equip our people for service in the church and in the world. I included it in the *Theology of Work* module because of years of experience with it. *LifeKeys*, in my experience, is effective in helping people gain a larger understanding of their calling in life. For this reason, I wanted to see if using *LifeKeys* as part of the study process would help with integrating faith and work. I wanted to see if it would give the group participants the ability to understand and name their specific calling in their workplaces more clearly.

- Reflections on the *LifeKeys* experience – I would have to say that the group responded very positively to the *LifeKeys* experience. Each participant filled out the *LifeKeys* workbook. Then I led the entire group in a process of helping each person go through the workbook categories of life story, life gifts, spiritual gifts, passions, values, Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator, and context. Then the group helped each
other construct life purpose statements designed to help them articulate how they could use their gifts and calling at work, in church, and in life. The group got into this process. By the end of the summer, the group had become surprisingly good at helping each other name their life purposes in creative ways. Several of the participants found this part of the research study group to be the high point of the entire study.

- September, 2009 – Case studies. With an introduction to theology and work in place, and with the LifeKeys study completed, I turned the group to applying theology to workplace issues using the Harvard Business School Case Study Method. We did two case studies. For the first case study I presented the case and then took the group through the WorkMatters Worksheet. (This case study can be found in Appendix B, pages 200-201. The WorkMatters Worksheet is in Appendix B, page 203.)

- Reflections on the case study presentations – I intentionally did not show the group too much about how the worksheet functions, choosing to let them struggle with how difficult it is to theologize about a real issue. Then I presented the second case study with

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52 Christensen, et al., *Education for Judgment*, pp.1-75.
the WorkMatters Worksheet already filled in. (This case study and the worksheet are in Appendix B, pages 202 and 204.) The group responded favorably to the case study method. One participant thought it would have been better to reverse the order of the presentation of the case studies—with the second case study going first, so the worksheet could been seen filled out; and then addressing the first case study and filling in the blank worksheet with something to serve as a guide. Everyone agreed that the case studies should be introduced earlier in the module in the future, and be used as a way to learn both the process and the content of theologizing about work.

- *A Theology of Economics* – October-November, 2009. The *Theology of Economics* learning module was covered in these two sessions in lecture and discussion format. The meetings were not as lengthy, lasting for two and a half hours each, for a total of about five hours. The group had been able to read the book, *Economics in Christian Perspective: Theory, Policy, and Life Choice*, by Victor V. Claar and Robin Klay, before the module was presented. We spent quite a bit of time the first evening surveying the biblical passages related to money and economics. This portion of the module covers the entire Bible and is quite extensive, taking all of the first session. In the second session
we covered the primary theologians working in this area, including Roman Catholic encyclicals.

- Reflections on the theology of economics module – My sense was that the group was engaged, but more quiet than with previous modules. They were attentive, but there was not as much discussion as there had been in the past. However, there was a fair amount of side discussion about the current recession and the economic crisis that surrounds it. We only had time to cover the material. I had determined beforehand that trying to have people construct a theology of economics as a group would have been overly ambitious at this stage of their time together. I was already learning from the group that the modules contained too much material—and also that the group would have preferred an earlier emphasis on case studies to learn how to theologize about both work and economics. At the same time, my sense was that the participants were gaining confidence, or competence, in their ability to theologize in these areas. They seemed increasingly conscious of the worldview and reign of God issues involved in economic matters. This consciousness was not stated specifically and was more general in nature, but it kept showing up in the discussions. People spoke more often about creation issues, and about sin and salvation issues. They could articulate how a
healthy economy is a part of understanding what God intends for creation.

- *Interpreting Workplace Culture* and *Leadership for Cultural Change* – December, 2009. By December it seemed that it would be best to combine the two learning modules on culture into one. For one thing, I was realizing that the scope of each of the modules was simply too large and was overwhelming the participants. A second factor was the reading material for this module, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, by Edgar Schein. This material combined much that had been included in the original design of the third module, *Interpreting Workplace Culture*. I included a historical survey of American management culture, a discussion of Clifford Geertz’s concept of thick description, and then moved on to Edgar Schein’s work on leadership for cultural change. We were able to cover the material in about two hours, and it seemed to work pretty well.

- Reflections on the combined modules – I was surprised at the response to these combined modules on interpreting workplace culture and leadership for cultural change. Most of the participants connected strongly with the material and the subject matter. Almost everyone read Schein, and they were pulled in by the way the book mixes theory with two extended case studies that are used as examples throughout the book. At the end of the evening, one participant remarked, “This is all..."
good, but there’s nothing Christian about it.” When pressed to explain what she meant, the participant communicated that what we had been learning that evening was practical, but didn’t seem to have a theological center. I would agree with this assessment. I believe that more work is needed at just this point: workplace cultures can and should reflect the reign of God if Christians are in leadership there. But how do we do this properly? I agree with George Hunsberger’s general approach that we are sent with the message of the reign of God by being its community, its servant, and its messenger. But more needs to be worked out at the practical level of what a workplace culture that reflects the reign of God might look like. I have a belief that a workplace culture can be affected in this way even if the Christians there are not in positions of leadership. This is an untested opinion on my part, based on Jesus’ teaching that we are salt and light in the world (Matthew 5:13-16). Part of what I think he means in that passage is that we will have an effect on the cultures in which we live and work even when we aren’t exactly aware of what that effect is. But how can we help the church do this without descending into coercive utopianism, or focusing on policies or programs that may not have the reign of God in mind? This is actually a

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53 Hunsberger, Missional Church, p. 102ff. I have treated this topic at length in this project on pp. 19-23.
place where the integration of faith and work may be most
important and promising, yet also the most challenging.

- **Research Group Wrap-Up** – The group met for the last time in January, 2010 to reflect on the group experience as a whole and to offer suggestions on how ministries in the area of faith and workplace integration might look in the future. This also served as the final interview in the action research process. It was plain to me as an observer that the group had come a long way in what was a fairly brief time. We had met for fourteen sessions over ten months, for a total of fifty hours. In addition, by this time I had interviewed each participant for about one hour on each of two separate occasions. This had given me a sense of what had connected with the participants and whether or not the goals of the learning modules were being achieved. The original goal was that they would have basic confidence in theologizing about work. It seemed to me that this goal, for the most part, had been achieved. The next section on the interviews, and the analysis of the interviews, will give more information on what the participants were experiencing as they went through the small group study. What was clear to me in the January meeting was that they had, indeed, come a long way.
The Interview Design

As the group went through the curriculum, I did a series of one-on-one interviews to observe what was happening to the participants as they went through the learning modules. I interviewed them toward the beginning of the study, about two-thirds of the way through, and again at the end. I conducted the final interview with the entire group, rather than one-on-one.

- **First Round Interview Design** – I wanted to conduct the first round of interviews after group members had completed a basic introduction to theology, but before they had encountered any case studies. The reason for this was to see if the participants picked up anything from their first few hours together. The *LifeKeys* portion of the course was in process, but not yet finished, as I was conducting the first interviews. This first round was accomplished within a two-week period from July 30 to August 12, 2009. I interviewed each participant in their place of work, because I wanted them to feel comfortable with their surroundings during the interviews and also wanted to see them in their work contexts. For the first round of interviews I designed a series of questions that I asked each of the participants. In addition to these questions, spontaneous follow-on questions also arose in the course of the interviews; these encouraged the participants to reflect more deeply on their own experiences. These are the questions I designed for the first interview round:

  - Describe the ways in which you currently apply your faith in your workplace.
○ What are some specific faith issues that come up for you in your work? How would you name them?

○ Looking back over your church experience, in what ways have you received help from your church in applying your faith to your work?

○ If you could, how would you structure your workplace so that it would better reflect faith issues?

The follow-on questions usually focused on clarifying what the participants had just said, or asking them to expand on what they were trying to talk about. For instance, some typical follow-on questions were:

○ So how would you name the values you just mentioned?

○ How would you name the aspect of faith that is being applied to the situation you just named?

○ Why is “making widgets” different from relating to people?

These are examples of how the follow-on questions tended to flow. This first round produced 96 pages of text.

- **Second Round Interview Design** – I conducted a second round of interviews after the group finished the learning module, *A Theology of Work*. In particular, I wanted to see how the participants would respond to the case study approach and the WorkMatters Worksheet. This round of interviews was also conducted after we had covered the module on economics, but before we had covered the combined modules on interpreting workplace culture and *Leadership for Cultural Change*. I conducted these interviews one-on-one between December 7, 2009 and December 22, 2009.
The action research approach led me to look for what had changed from the first interview to the second. Rather than asking a prepared set of questions, this time I asked a more general question designed to help the participants reflect freely on the whole learning experience. I asked the same question in a few different ways: “What has the study group been like for you?”; “What’s different for you now as you think about applying your faith to your work?”; and “What has happened to you as a result of the study group?” I was watching for whether the participants demonstrated a greater ability to name theological categories in reflecting about their work, and whether they had a more comprehensive view of what integrating their faith and work might look like. The second round of interviews generated sixty-six pages of data.

**The Interview Analysis Method**

I analyzed these interviews between mid-December, 2009 and mid-January, 2010. As the interviews were gathered, they were typed into the computer. Each interview was put into a separate file for analysis. I interpreted the interviews in the following manner:

- I made notations and highlighted remarks that had some degree of conviction behind them. If someone was intense or more focused when talking about a certain topic, I noted it in the margin of the interview.

- I looked for repeated and related words and phrases across the interviews and assigned them to categories. Sometimes participants used different words to refer to the same idea or experience. For example, words like *perspective, viewpoint,* or
understanding were commonly used by the participants; I assigned these to a single category, which I called awareness, since the participants were all clearly describing their own levels of awareness.

- I then counted the frequency of use for the various phrases and categories and assigned them a ranking, based on those used most frequently down to those used least frequently. I also tried to filter the rankings based on strength of conviction related to the categories. My own memory of the interviews was a factor in this filtering process. I found that I was able to remember quite accurately the portions of the interviews in which the participants were actively engaged, as well as those where they were less engaged. If a topic was mentioned often, but only in passing, I ranked it lower than a topic that was mentioned strongly, but slightly less often.

- I called these rankings findings, and in my judgment these findings can be used to develop a model for congregational ministries of faith and work integration.

Analysis of Interview One

What follows are the findings for Interview One. The findings are presented in range of importance, in descending order.

1. **The Primacy of Relationships** – Every single participant spoke of work as an important source and place of relationships. Furthermore, four of the seven spoke of relationships at work as the primary way they see matters of faith intersecting with matters of work. Whereas a company might manufacture widgets, as one interviewee put it, widgets are only things and last for a few years at most—yet people have primacy over widgets. Participants commonly
stated their desire to learn how to create structures at work that could make work relationships healthy relationships.

- In addition, faith was seen as the central motivation for being “caring” people in the workplace, and being caring was seen as one of the primary ways faith can be applied at work. This last point was mentioned nine times by four participants.

- Relationships were understood by two participants to exist in slightly different categories: home, work, and church. While it seemed clear to them that these categories overlap somewhat, they regarded them nevertheless as mostly separate relationship realms.

- Conflict was mentioned four times by three participants. For one participant, an experience of significant, systemic conflict had been a dominant theme in a workplace setting. That experience had led this person to a deep conviction about having good relationships in the workplace in the future.

- The competitive nature of work relationships was mentioned directly at least twice. Indirectly, it was mentioned four times.

Overall, the importance of relationships, the desire for healthy relationships, and the primacy of people over every other concern constituted the clearest area of congruence in Interview One. Almost every other issue of importance that came up in this interview related back in some way to the primacy of relationships in the workplace. Here is a quote that summarizes most of what was said in this round of interviews about relationships in the workplace:
There was friction all the time, conflict all the time at work… There were a lot of hurt feelings, a lot of feelings about, “I’ve been wronged, I’ve been taken advantage of, I’ve been hurt, I’m entitled to retribution.” So it was a struggle, personally. I happened to be in a discipleship group at the time, so the group of guys that we were discipling, they helped process it. And through that process, and this is where I think faith comes in, of all the issues that were going on, the one that gave me a way through the conflict was that the relationships with the people were the most important thing, no matter what happened.

2. **The Great Divide** – Every participant brought up the issue of the divide between faith and work. One person said, “It’s like I’m one person Monday to Saturday, and then there’s the Sunday me.” There was a pervasive sense that faith and work are two totally different realms, with a wide chasm between them. It seems clear that this is one example of the public/private, fact/values split that is part of life for so many in our culture. I saw this as evidence of how pervasive this split really is at a daily, functional level. It is also evidence that this split is an entrenched part of North American culture. It was assumed by the participants in this study that there is a divide between faith and work—between life Monday through Friday and life on Sunday. One participant said: “I don’t like the disconnect. I don’t like the feeling that I’m two different people sometimes, because somewhere, at some time—and I don’t know where that comes from—we were told, or learned somehow, that we don’t do that. The secular sacred split has always been there.”

- On several occasions, participants mentioned their fear and anxiety about trying to bring the two together, as though faith and work really should not mix. One participant said, “Applying faith to work…for some reason that whole conversation feels weird to me and I’m not
sure what about it makes me feel that way.” The anxiety seemed to have a great deal to do with not wanting to violate the separation between church and state, which seemed to get translated into not taking faith into any public sphere, especially work.

- It was clear that issues related to faith in the workplace, and to integrating faith and work, were new concepts to every participant. They were intrigued by it, and interested in learning more, but also nervous about it at the same time. “I’ve never really thought about it in these terms.” This comment was repeated at least twice.

- No one could ever remember hearing a sermon that was explicitly about work, or any other direct references to work and work matters from the pulpit. This is one of the ways the divide between the public and the private had been reinforced for them. Simply asking questions about applying faith to work matters was both exhilarating and anxiety-producing to most of the participants in the first interview.

3. **Prayer** – Every participant talked about prayer as one of the ways they saw faith being a part of their work lives. Most mentioned prayer as a way they apply faith to work generally. Two participants spoke of praying specifically about work projects and issues throughout their work day: “I found myself praying about everything. Everything. I prayed about meetings I was walking into, the presentations that we were getting ready to do, the day... just this ongoing conversation.”
The participants all saw prayer as central to their work. But it seemed to me that they were unaware of this until they were asked about the ways in which they take their faith into their workplace.

Some talked about praying with clients. They spoke about this as something that was a delicate matter. It wasn’t clear to them whether or not it was polite to ask clients (and, in one case, a colleague in another practice) if they would like to pray. But they also reported that their offers to pray were appreciated.

One participant spoke of praying over each and every deal made through the business. This was not presented as prayers for success, but prayers for guidance, wisdom, and help in making the right decisions.

Everyone indicated that some of their prayers related to work are about co-workers. They pray for their coworkers’ families and personal lives, as well as for the work issues that seem to cause them stress.

4. **The Ethics Assumption** – Everyone assumed that ethics—as they define it—is a major area of integration of faith and work. My sense of how they saw ethics at this point in the study process was in terms of rules about right and wrong. They spoke of integrity in general terms, as something to be highly valued, but no real definition of integrity was given. Ethics and integrity, and what constitutes both of these, were simply assumed. “Ethics is a constant,” one participant said emphatically. Each person mentioned the ethical challenges that are faced at work on a daily basis. One participant told a story
about eventually having to resign from a position for ethical reasons. This person was being asked to lie about major deadlines on a regular basis: “I quit. I couldn’t do it. I had credibility with the customer, and I couldn’t do it. It was terrible. It was pretty tough. It was just tough. I hadn’t had an ethical issue before at work that was very big, and this one was huge. It was awful. It was awful. It was pretty bad.”

- Whether the ethical approach was deontological or teleological was not something the participants were aware of, nor did the distinction seem important to them. The basis for ethics and ethical choices was not spoken of. It was assumed that I knew, that they knew, that everyone knew what was meant by ethics—what constituted right and wrong—whenever this came up in the first interview.

- It was clear that ethics was also seen as a crucial part of relationships at work and through work. One participant mentioned this as a simple fact: if a person is not ethical in their business dealings, word will eventually get around and they won’t last very long in the business community in the Portland/Vancouver area.

- Values were also spoken of consistently. For at least one participant, values were seen as the primary way faith enters into his work life. Though most hadn’t thought about it beforehand, several participants could name the values that are an important underpinning for their ethical philosophy at work.
Values and ethics were presented as being foundational to good character, and having good character was seen as another primary way faith has an impact on work.

5. **Hearing a “Call”** – Three of the participants talked about having a sense of “call” about their work. By a sense of call they meant having a clear sense of purpose about their work. One participant used language about “how God wires you.” What was intended in this phrase was a belief that people are made by God in certain ways and that it is important to find out what those unique personal qualities are, so that a person can do most what they do best. This is what was seen as constituting a sense of call from God.

- The purpose of work was important to those who spoke of having a sense of call from God at work. Without a clear sense of why their work is important, or what its purpose is, some in the group had a hard time seeing work as a calling. But for participants who could name why their work is important, it was much easier to see the calling aspect of their work.

- Four of the seven participants expressed a desire for the greater availability of personal development help from the church—help that would include a spiritual component. This was seen as taking them much further into an integration of faith and work than the “thin” versions of personal development programs they have been exposed to on a regular basis over the last few decades. For instance, several people talked about the Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator as a good
tool—but then went on to talk about how that particular tool, and most like it, left out some of the most important parts of who they are. It left out their spiritual gifts, their life story, and their experiences in life and at work. They wanted a more holistic way to engage in self-discovery and growth in their personal development. This was seen as helping them become more aware of their sense of call in the workplace.

Here’s an example of the statements on this: “I think, ideally, everyone should be doing what they are gifted and called to do. And then, I think, in the end, whatever needs to be done will be getting done because people will be in the right places. But it seems that we start in the reverse—we try to figure out what needs to be done and then we plug people in.”

- This desire for self-development work, with the inclusion of a spiritual component, was pretty strongly expressed. The participants do want this, and they would like their church to provide it.

6. **Teachable Hearts** – As I analyzed the first set of interviews, it became clear that the participants *wanted* to engage in theologizing about faith and work, even though they had yet to go through the curriculum. They did express anxiety about crossing the great divide between the public and the private, between facts and values, but they also expressed a yearning to learn.

- A common word used by four of the participants was “awareness.” They wanted to become more aware of the faith categories that would apply at work.
They also used the word “naming.” They expressed frustration that they did not know how to name the aspects of faith that might be applicable at work. They knew that ethical matters and faith-sharing are a part of faith at work. But they also knew there is more to it than that, and they wanted help in learning how to name what that more might be.

One person mentioned a desire to have—or be given—a list of principles that could be studied and applied in specific situations. The participant did not have any examples of what a principle would look like, but still wanted some. Again, this seemed to me to be a desire to name the ethical and theological issues that would cross over into work; and, if this could be accomplished, then the whole integration of faith and work endeavor could become practical and pragmatic, rather than remain theoretical.

7. **A Cry for Leadership** – A finding mentioned directly by four of the participants, and indirectly by all seven of them, was the cry for leadership in the workplace. Regardless of workplace, the crucial need for leaders to lead well seemed to be one of the strongest felt needs of the participants. But they were not referring to leadership in general. They were speaking of Christians as leaders, and the importance of Christian leadership, for creating workplaces that are conducive to faith and also a good workplace environment.

“Servant leadership” was specifically mentioned by two participants.

In each case, they saw leadership offered by a teachable, humble
person who leads by example as one of the best ways to integrate faith and work.

- The underlying cry also seemed to be for leadership at church regarding work and faith—and how faith and work go together. As mentioned above, no one could remember a single sermon on work, and no one had received any direct help or encouragement from their church on workplace issues. This simply corroborates other research, but it also points toward a desire on the part of the participants for pastoral leadership that understands what they face in the workplace and honors what they do for a living.

8. **Cash Values** – Though it was not a major issue, three participants did talk about money. One person in particular said he would like more help on money matters. This desire had to do with more than personal money management. That was important, but it was money itself—its power and how to handle it—that the person was talking about. In all the sermons and talks on stewardship these three participants had heard over the years, they had not received the help they really longed for. What they longed for was teaching on stewardship from the larger perspective of how to treat money in a culture that has lost its financial way.

- Only one participant saw their work as primarily a paycheck—a way to survive and pay the bills. Everyone else saw work as an important part of life, worthy of their investment of time and energy.
9. **The E-Word** – Evangelism. Every single participant brought up the issue of evangelism in negative terms. Everyone was uncomfortable with the concept of evangelism as proselytizing others. Yet, at the same time, every participant wanted to be able to share their faith with co-workers in a good way. This “good way” of evangelism was named by one participant as “natural faith-sharing.”

   - It was assumed, generally, that faith-sharing (along with ethics) is what integrating faith and work is all about.
   - People felt fine about sharing their faith by example and through conversation, but also seemed to feel pressure to share their faith—as though evangelism is expected of them in the workplace by the church or other Christians.

10. **A General Backdrop** – A common theme in the first round of interviews was how faith and beliefs form a general backdrop to work. Participants experienced their faith impacting their work primarily in terms of faith providing them with an attitude of values and ethics that helps them in a general way. For example, many of them said their faith gives them an inner strength and centeredness for work. One participant said that faith is in the background, not the forefront, of work.

   - Only one participant could name a theological category in talking about a work situation: “I saw the gospel of grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation at work in the situation.” This statement helped me to see that the whole concept of faith being integrated with work is new.
to most church people. Furthermore, their approach to integrating faith and work—if they haven’t heard anything about work from the pulpit—tends to be vague and generalized.

- Yet, this was mixed with a strong desire to learn how to take their faith into the workplace in ways that go beyond ethics and evangelism. A vague, general sense of being strengthened by faith for the stresses of work was not enough for these participants. They all indicated they were looking for more, but could not name what that was.

As I reflect on these ten findings, or common themes, from the first round of interviews, it is not surprising to me that all the participants were taking their faith with them into the day-to-day issues they face in the workplace. But they simply could not name how their faith operates with reference to their work. For them, as is mentioned in my tenth finding, they mostly had a vague and general sense that their faith in Christ informs and supports what they do for a living.

All the participants actually live out their faith in many wonderful ways. Even at this early stage of the project, they approached work matters with theological categories that I could discern, such as a strong creation theme of honoring the personhood of others. But they could not give names to these. At this point in the group experience, they had little ability to see how what they were doing, or how they were going about their work, was theological. They seemed to realize this and to be frustrated by it. They all wanted to be able to theologize about work. I would say that, except perhaps in one case, they all enjoyed their work, were highly motivated, and believed what they do is important. But they might not be able to name very clearly the larger purposes their jobs
fulfill; and they would like a clearer sense of purpose for work beyond the utilitarian view of earning a paycheck and stalking a pension.

The analysis of the second round of interviews will show whether or not a particular curriculum of study can change this vagueness into something more specific. Can they theologize about work? Will this help them in practical ways with the actual internal operations of their workplaces? Can they put the integration of faith and work into some kind of comprehensive approach that moves from unconscious incompetence to conscious competence?

As stated previously, action research is designed to cause the issues and questions to rise to the surface during the course of the research. The questions just named are not entirely new; but in light of the content of the ten findings from the first round of interviews, I see the questions as more sharply focused around one main issue going forward: What will work for congregations to help their members integrate faith and work? What will actually get motivated believers to the place where they are theologizing about work in ways that lead to *doing* their work according to the expanded gospel of the kingdom of God?

**Analysis of Interview Two**

After the group completed the first interviews, I introduced them to the Harvard Case Study Method. The goal of this was to teach them how to theologize by utilizing the WorkMatters Worksheet. The second round of interviews was accomplished right before the group took the last two learning modules, *Interpreting Workplace Culture* and *Leadership for Cultural Change*. We finished the final study group session in December, 2009.
Right away during the second round of interviews, I noticed the energy level of the participants. Each one seemed to be energized by the group study experience and wanted to do more work together. Part of this seems to be because of the power of the group itself. By the time we had gone through the *LifeKeys* coursework during the summer, the trust level of the group had deepened quite a bit. This may be part of the reason for the high degree of energy I noticed in the second round of interviews.

But another basis for the higher degree of energy seems to have been the learning that had taken place. People had gained a great deal through the study process. The study experience had opened up their perspectives on matters of faith and work.

As in the first round of interviews, the findings are arranged in order of importance in descending order:

1. **Awareness** – Every participant found their awareness of faith and work matters heightened in comparison to their awareness at the beginning of the study process.
   - “Increasing my awareness of these issues has been significant—more than I may have expected. It was like a wall was removed and opened this whole context of life that really connected. The awareness piece was enormous. I think back to the start, where you said work matters. Work matters now, work matters then.”
   - There were many comments like this: “Now I see this everywhere.” Or this: “I’m asking myself theological questions all the time now.” These are good examples of how the study process opened the participants up to integrate faith and work.
Participants experienced this awareness as a bridging of that great divide between faith and work they had talked about in the first interviews. Though they expressed a continuing need for more help on bridging this divide, they nevertheless saw the different sides of the chasm coming much closer together by the end of the study group.

One participant spoke of how the generalized, in-the-background, nature of faith and work moved to the forefront for them. What was mentioned in the first round of interviews was merely a general sense of being strengthened in work by prayer and faith values. In the second round this general sense became more specific: “I can see connections everywhere. [This learning] brought faith from the background to the forefront, and gave me more categories for how to move faith into my work.”

There was, for one participant in particular, a greatly expanded view of the gospel. “The gospel is about *everything* and it goes *everywhere*—it goes everywhere I go!” This same person resonated with the Christian worldview approach of applying faith to case studies. His understanding of the gospel widened from a private gospel to a public gospel.

Along with this greater sense of awareness, two participants also mentioned, even though they had greater clarity than before, that they wanted even more clarity. “It’s still a bit fuzzy…I need the principles listed maybe…” The other person asked, “How do you become more
self-aware?” I think the finding here is this: the more participants learned, the more they became aware of what they did not know. Though their awareness was taken to a higher level, this made them want to go deeper and gain greater confidence in their ability to apply faith to work matters.

2. *LifeKeys and Personal Development* – Some of the greatest energy in the second round of interviews was around the study module on personal development. For this module we used the book and workbook, *LifeKeys*. This material combines a number of personal development tools into one process, but adds spiritual components that other personal development programs lack. For instance, the material helps people determine their spiritual gifts, values, and passions, while few personal development programs in the workplace cover such aspects of a person’s make-up. The group resonated deeply with the material and the process. For at least one participant the *LifeKeys* process has been life-changing, perhaps even career-changing.

- Every participant said that the material would not have been as helpful outside the context of a group that has a high degree of internal trust. This underscores the power and importance of a small group approach if congregations want to successfully engage in faith and workplace ministries.
- Another powerful aspect of doing this personal development work within a group context was the awareness of other people’s gifts and life purpose statements, not just one’s own. The entire group
participated in helping each participant work out their *LifeKeys* process. We put the results of each person’s work on a white board and asked probing questions of each other regarding gifts, abilities, experiences, and dreams for the future. There was a great deal of affirmation for each other in this part of the group experience, and affirmation is one of the deepest forms of trust in a group.

- The surprising finding for me regarding the *LifeKeys* module was the way it seemed to motivate the participants to go deeper in theologizing about faith and work. When participants learned more about how they are made by God, it made them want to take this learning back into their daily work.

3. **The Group Experience** – Close behind the *LifeKeys* experience for most participants was the experience of the small group itself. Several said that the small group was the “key” to the whole study for them. “Powerful” was a common word used to describe the group experience. There were several important aspects of this positive group experience.

- According to two participants, being in the group and having a good group experience led people to become more engaged with the material. They indicated that they would not have engaged as much with the process of integration had they not been in the group. “When you’re in a class it’s all individual effort; but in the group you have interaction, and it was powerful.”
At least two participants found that the group process helped them deal with some work matters that were going on at the time of the study. This experience also seemed to deepen their motivation to engage positively with the learning.

I would say that the positive response to being in a healthy group is a significant finding. Offering a class alone will simply not have the same impact that having people in sustained small groups will have.

4. **Pastoral Leadership and Encouragement** – It became quite clear in the process of conducting the second round of interviews that the participants would like to see a greater emphasis on work matters in church. In particular, they would like their spiritual leaders—their pastors—to help them with the integrative challenge posed by faith and work.

They want the church to affirm their work, to honor what they do, and to hold them accountable for how they do it. They already hear words of accountability about work matters from the pulpit; but they seldom hear words of affirmation of work for work’s sake. They feel this more acutely now that they have studied in this area.

They would like church to provide space for this kind of reflection, leading to action. By space, they meant both relational space—groups—and structural and physical space. By structural space they meant they would like some programming from their church in this area. By physical space they meant a classroom or some other room—a place where they could gather.
A significant finding, mentioned several times, was the desire to use their pastor as a sounding board for issues they face at work. The same participant made the following remarks in the same portion of his interview: “I was fortunate that I had on my staff chaplains who…provided me advice and counsel which I found valuable”; and also, “I wish business people would utilize the pastor more about the issues they face. A lot of pastors don’t feel confident in that way because they feel they have nothing to offer the person in the working world.”

5. Case Studies and Theologizing – The group, to a person, found the case study method helpful. They also universally wanted to do more case studies. (We only had time to do two.) They had much to say on this subject.

- They consistently said that the best way to learn how to theologize about work in future small groups would be to have a good introduction to the theology of work and economics, and then dive right into case studies. The case studies could then be the way participants learn more, rather than putting too much content and lecture at the beginning of the learning process.

- Having used the case study method of theologizing about work, several participants said they planned to apply it to similar cases in their workplaces in the future. One participant talked of doing case studies until they become “second nature.”
One person was emphatic that the case studies we had done in the group helped immediately with a situation in his workplace.

There was a consensus that the participants would also benefit from learning how to put their own case studies together. They thought this would deepen the way they pay attention to faith issues at work. They then suggested that the group could do one case study every time they meet, as a way of learning what one person called “the skill set” of theologizing about work and economics.

One participant hoped that the case studies would lead to applications that are practical and measureable.

The case study method was seen by several as a way to make the worldview approach more understandable. One person spoke of how important his ability to see life through the worldview “grid” was becoming. He found the worldview approach quite helpful, even telling a story of how he had recently applied it to a situation at work. But he also wanted the application of the worldview to become “more practical.”

The use of the case study method for learning how to theologize seems to require, at the outset, the help of a pastor or another person equally skilled in public theologizing. The group seemed stuck on the first case study apart from my leadership; but the second one was easier for them to grasp.
6. **A Philosophy of Work** – Another significant finding in the second round of interviews was the desire—mentioned directly by two participants and indirectly by two others—for the study process to lead to what they called “a philosophy of work.” One participant called it a “faith and work action plan.” In their thinking, all the study, discussion, reading, and learning—even the use of case studies—needed to propel them toward the creation of a written philosophy, or set of principles, that could guide them in integrating theology and work on an ongoing basis.

   - According to one participant, part of coming up with a philosophy of work would be the compilation of a list of guiding principles derived from the study process. It was noted that “writing something like this down, and then referring to it regularly” would go a long way toward applying one’s faith at work.

7. **The Modules** – The second round of interviews included an assessment of the four learning modules, plus *LifeKeys*. As mentioned previously, *LifeKeys* was well-received. The other four modules were also appreciated. Here is some of the input from the participants:

   - Though everyone thought the information in the learning modules was good, there was general consensus that there was too much content. It was suggested that there be one or two hours of theology basics, followed by the case study method. Participants thought the case study method should be utilized for the purpose of learning how to theologize about work and economics more deeply. It was further
suggested that the books were good, but should not be read until after the case study method had been used for a time. The participants seemed to think that the books would be better understood after a period of learning and reflection, rather than at the beginning of the process.

- Several participants found the economics book and lecture motivating. It was also noted that more books on economics from a Christian worldview perspective would be helpful.

8. **Leadership for Cultural Change** – Everyone found the book by Edgar Schein on cultural change to be practical and helpful. This is a significant finding. The ability to interpret, name, and then lead in the transforming of workplace culture came to be seen by the group as a valuable component of integrating faith and work. This means that it could be correct to say that the context for seeking to integrate faith and work is truly missional. Workplace culture is unique and distinct from the culture at-large. Each workplace has its own culture. The ability to see the cultural aspects of what a Christian does, and of how Christians go about applying their faith in the workplace, is a key to public theologizing in this important area. Every Christian is part of what it means to be a mission outpost; this is true wherever Christians go, but perhaps it is especially true at work. As the one participant put it, “The gospel goes wherever I go…”

- It is one thing to theologize about work and economics. It is quite another to enter work as though it is a foreign culture, in order to effect change within that culture.
Effecting this kind of cultural change will require another set of skills that can and should be learned by Christians at work. One participant referred to leading for cultural change as a “skill set.” The implication seemed to be that leading for cultural change is something that can and should be learned, and then used in the workplace. The study group affirmed that this area is engaging and important in terms of future learning and application.

9. **Eschatology** – Every participant mentioned, either in the interviews or in conversation in the study group, that their learning regarding eschatology will determine whether or not they will seek to integrate faith and work, or will keep them separate.

   - “Matter matters. That was a huge insight for me,” said one participant. Another participant agreed with the power of an eschatology of hope, but found the concept of “the widgets being a part of eternity” more difficult to grasp. Throughout the learning process, the term “widgets” was used to refer to the actual products created in manufacturing; this participant resonated with the idea that relationships in this life get carried into eternity, but consistently had a hard time with how matter—“widgets”—might be carried into eternity.

   - The group found Darrel Cosden’s book to be revolutionary in helping them see the biblical case for applying an eschatology of hope to workplace issues. Is there a radical disjunction between the old heaven/old earth and the new heaven/new earth? Or is there a
connection between them? If there is a connection rather than a radical disjunction, then there is a strong case to be made for our work here mattering to God for eternity. If, instead, there is a radical disjunction, then this world and our work here might count for very little, if at all. The implications of eschatology for work are enormous, and the group grappled with this at a serious level.

As I reflected on the second round of interviews, which was conducted two-thirds of the way through the small group learning, the findings seemed to indicate that congregations can definitely encourage public theologizing about faith and work. The findings also seemed to suggest some of the elements that will need to be in place for churches to do this faithfully. What follows are my reflections on these findings.

First, much will depend on pastors. It is certain that committed Christian disciples can learn to theologize about work, economics, and cultural change in the workplace. But without regular, positive words about work from the pastor in the pulpit, people tend to feel dishonored in church concerning this area of their lives. I would not go so far as to say that a congregational ministry in the area of faith and work integration is totally dependent on the pastor’s leadership; but pastoral leadership certainly seems to be crucial. One way to encourage pastors to lead in this way is for resources to be made available that will help them gain confidence in their understanding of work and workplace issues.

Perhaps a workshop for pastors on “the world of work” would be a tangible way to further this area of public theology in the future. It seems to me that such a workshop would best be taught by non-pastors. Pastors can be encouraged to do office visits as a
way of learning what their parishioners do with their lives, rather than limiting
themselves to home and hospital visits. Pastors can learn to ask questions about the work
their people do. Most people are proud of what they do for a living. They want to be
asked about what they do with most of their waking hours. An unfeigned interest from a
pastor about what they do at work and how their work is going, is encouraging to most
people.

Structuring church programs and meetings in a way that honors the time demands
of work is also something very practical and direct that pastors can do. Beginning and
ending meetings on time, holding meetings at times that give busy people time to be with
their families, and consolidating mid-week programming are examples of structural
changes that may honor the working lives of disciples, and such changes should be
considered by pastors and churches.

Pastors could also profit from a realistic reading list in this area. The goal here
would be to shorten the learning curve most pastors would have, getting them to a point
of confidence in the areas of workplace matters and economics as quickly as possible.

Second, there is a need to move more quickly to case studies. A significant
finding from the second round of interviews is that teaching people how to theologize
needs to move quickly from theory and content to reflection and practice. This will help
working people engage better with public theologizing about work. A specific finding—
and, in fact, a suggestion from the study group itself—was to present a basic introduction
to theology, and how theology applies to workplace issues, and then move into the case
study method.
The point of this suggestion was that moving more quickly to actual theologizing might both broaden and deepen the ability of working men and women to bridge the gap between faith and work. A related suggestion was that the course content in the areas of theology, economics, cultural interpretation, and leadership for cultural change might be learned by using the case study method for the entire learning experience, rather than presenting toward the end of the learning experience.

Third, a sustained small group context is important. It certainly seems that a small group context is an excellent way for this kind of practical learning, or theologizing, to take place. This was not a surprise to me. Pedagogically, the power of learning in healthy small groups is common knowledge. This finding relates to the timeframe necessary for disciples to gain confidence in their ability to theologize well about work, rather than pooling their ignorance and wallowing in frustration.

How long does it take for disciples to theologize well about work? From this study, it looks like it will take at least twelve to eighteen months before people will be able to theologize about work in a way they can feel good about. Thus, a sustained small group experience is a key to a ministry of public theologizing on matters of work.

Some of the questions regarding a sustained small group experience for the purpose of helping people learn how to theologize are these: How often and for how long can a group meet and keep people’s motivation and interest? Would it work to meet every week for six weeks for an introduction to the course content, and then begin to meet monthly for case studies? Or would it work best to start with meeting monthly for an initial period? How long should that initial period be? And where does the LifeKeys module fit in? LifeKeys was mentioned as the favorite module in the curriculum, but by
itself it is not enough. Theological content related to work, economics, and cultural studies is also necessary for competent theologizing on work matters. *LifeKeys* alone takes anywhere from five to seven weeks (or meetings) to complete in a group of seven participants. Furthermore, *LifeKeys* cannot be started until the group has had time to form a certain level of trust. A six-week introduction, several months of case studies, and five to seven meetings related to *LifeKeys* could take a small group up to seventeen meetings.

What is the best way to structure the frequency of the group meetings? Is it weekly? Monthly? Quarterly?

These issues were discussed in the third round of interviews. It became clear to me at the end of the second round of interviews that a sustained group that meets on some kind of regular basis is necessary for the integration of faith and work to take root in the lives of ordinary Christians. If the goal in this area of public theologizing is to move from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence, it will take *time* for the knowledge and skill sets to develop. Given these knowledge, skill, and timeframe requirements, it is clear that a few sermons and a class here and there will not help people develop the ability to theologize about work.

I am encouraged to have research confirmation that congregations *can* provide a way for public theologizing to take place in the area of work and workplace issues. The participants in this group have definitely had their awareness levels raised and, for at least a few of them, raised significantly. Several participants took big strides in the direction of a genuine ability to theologize about work. Most of the participants want to do more learning and continue a sustained group time for going over more case studies. I believe
my research demonstrates that this kind of ministry can have a place in the life of any congregation.

What is needed going forward is a model of small group ministry that can be taken and used, or modified, to suit a particular congregation’s needs. What will also be required is a dedication to this arena of ministry on the part of at least a small group of people in a church.

**Analysis of Interview Three**

The third interview was conducted with the entire group in one sitting and took place in a discussion format. We met for two hours and focused on a central question: *What would an effective model for congregational ministry in the area of faith and work integration look like?*

The research group had been together for almost a year at this point, had spent over fifty hours together over that time, had been through all five learning modules, and had been interviewed individually on two occasions. I decided, as the result of the previous two rounds of action research, that it was time for the group to hear each other reflect on the results of the first two interviews. Based on this decision, I also wanted to give them a chance to participate in the general design for a model for ministry in the area of integrating faith and work.

A number of findings emerged from an analysis of the group responses in the third interview. The interview and the findings center around the issue of a congregational model for faith and work integration.

1. **Begin With The End in Mind** – The research group discussed at length their need to understand from the outset the envisioned outcome of a curriculum
like this one. It was suggested that the Great Commission is the larger context into which this kind of theologizing fits. Whether the envisioned outcome is a philosophy of work, or a “Faith and Work Action Plan” (as one participant had named it earlier), the group understood that the outcome is related to the public nature of the gospel. The group said their learning had shown them that the gospel really is public truth, and one of the public realms to which it speaks is the domain of work. One participant said that he had experienced this as “liberating,” because he now has a way to take the gospel everywhere he goes. But now he means the expanded gospel of the reign of God, not the reductionistic gospel of pietism. Though his language was not this specific, it was clear to me that this is what he meant. He kept repeating the phrase in several contexts, including private conversation, “The gospel goes everywhere.” The point here is that the group came to believe in the importance of communicating clearly the goal for learning to theologize about work.

2. **Make it Practical** – To a person, the group affirmed their individual experience that the modules as presented were too content-laden and needed to move faster in the direction of practical application. To this end, it was a consistent suggestion that there be an introduction to theologizing that gives theological and biblical basics, followed by the utilization of the Harvard Case Study Method for learning how to theologize more deeply. The idea they expressed was to “learn by doing” until the theologizing becomes second nature.
3. **Be Innovative With Delivery Systems** – By this the group meant that there are various ways to offer the modules for this kind of theologizing, not just one. They suggested that a future possibility would be to look into webinars, social networking, a workbook, and other ways of getting people into the learning and growing process.

4. **Leadership is Crucial** – By this the group meant both pastoral leadership and lay leadership. In the group’s opinion, for the integration of faith and work to take place in a congregational setting, both kinds of leadership will be required. They indicated that a pastor can set the tone and direction of public theologizing about work either positively or negatively—can either honor or dishonor work from the pulpit and their overall position of leadership. Their desire, of course, is that pastors will set a positive tone and direction in this area. But, and they made this point with particular emphasis, the pastor does not have to be the primary leader for this kind of ministry to happen. They believe that pastors should be encouraged to honor work from the pulpit, but equally important is the need for others who can help lead the learning modules and small group experiences.

5. **Competition for Time** – Since there are so many important and urgent claims upon people’s time, a model for ministry in the area of faith and work must be sensitive to the time pressures that so many working people experience. This was pretty strongly expressed by the group as a whole. Any model for ministry about work issues must be structured to fit into busy lives. At the very least, the issue of competition for time must be treated with respect by
churches and pastors, whether or not a congregation pursues a specific faith and work ministry.

6. **It Should be Hospitable** – The group believes that this type of ministry in a congregational setting should be able to include all levels of work responsibility and authority. It should be able to reach a production line worker as well as a CEO, a teacher as well as a construction worker or nurse. A consistently expressed concern related to focusing on *leaders* in workplaces and businesses to the exclusion of others, with the likely result that the need to integrate faith and work would be seen in a hierarchical way. From the group’s vantage point, a hierarchy is not what the gospel of the reign of God is about. It is about bringing people together, not splitting them apart. The group also recognized that there is a need to make room for substructures of people with work affinities, or what they called “cohorts,” so that people can share and learn in ways that enhance their common concerns. For example, in a module on basic theologizing about work, a small group of teachers might benefit from meeting alongside the larger group in order to apply their learning to a specifically educational setting. It was also mentioned that it is important for men and women to be in groups together, because women and men bring different sets of questions and approaches to all matters, including work matters.

As I looked back at all the input I received and analyzed from the research study group, and in particular as I analyzed the third interview session, I found myself affirming the hypothesis with which I began: *A sustained group context of*
transformational learning is the best way to empower people to theologize about faith and work. I was not sure whether this was true when I began the research project, but I became convinced that it is not only possible, it is doable. All the findings listed above are valid and helpful, and they do lead in the direction of an emerging model for congregational ministries in this area.

One major finding is important to revisit at this point, and it has to do with time. People are increasingly pressed for time in our culture. Over the last few decades, some of the studies I have read indicate that the average working person (as distinguished from retired people) has lost as much as 20% of their leisure time on a weekly basis.\textsuperscript{54} If this is true—and people feel that it is true even if they don’t know the actual facts—then there are a number of time issues that become more and more important for considering a congregational approach to theologizing about faith and work.

First, there is the issue of availability. When would working people have time to fit a group or a class into their already overloaded lives? In the midst of all the other important matters that clamor for their time, would they see value in spending a little more time on a group dedicated to their work? The experience of the research study group indicates that when a group is able to form a moderate level of trust, and has a chance to begin learning how to theologize about work, they recognize the value of the experience and will make the time commitment.

Second, there is the issue of the length of time it takes for people to learn how to theologize about work. The research study group met on a monthly basis for almost a year. My own sense was that the group was just getting to a point of being able to

\textsuperscript{54} NPR, \textit{All Things Considered}, March 7, 2009, “Professor Champions More Free Time.”
theologize at all, much less on a regular, day-in/day-out manner. Realistically, I believe it will take at least eighteen months to two years for a curriculum of this kind to have any real effect on the ability of participants to theologize about work. Will people be able to commit to that kind of timeframe? Can the timeframe somehow be shortened? These questions remain for future research to explore and are beyond the scope of this project. But, once the learning process is engaged, my experience suggests that there is a good chance participants will stay with the process until they have confidence in their ability to theologize about work with some degree of competence.
Chapter 5
A Model for Faith and Work Integration in Congregations

The goal of this project was to research what might lead to a workable model for congregational ministries of public theologizing in the area of faith and workplace issues. It is my personal conviction that the biggest gap in the area of faith and work ministries is that of congregational commitment. As I have previously mentioned, there are plenty of parachurch organizations already working in this area, but few of them are doing public theologizing. Most are focused on evangelism and discipleship; and, as these groups tend to define evangelism and discipleship, their ministries relate primarily to Christian disciples’ private lives. In my opinion, a congregational approach could do a much better job of reaching more people—and also a better job of expanding the theology of faith and work beyond reduced notions of evangelism and discipleship, to include the whole-life concerns of the gospel of the reign of God.

It has been my hypothesis that, with proper research into what will actually connect with people in the area of theologizing about faith and workplace issues, it should be possible for motivated congregations to fill this gap. I believe my own research with this particular study group points out a way forward. The direction that follows is the result of years of personal reading and learning about the issues Christian disciples struggle with about work. It is also the result of analyzing the research data gained in observing and interviewing the research study group over a ten-month period. The direction I am about to propose is the outcome of my coursework for this doctoral
program as it is reflected in the five learning modules in Appendix A, 1-5. I have read, reflected on, written, designed, and field-tested these modules to be used for study in a group setting in a church. I have been able to research whether or not they have helped people.

This research project was designed to lead toward a model for congregations to utilize in the area of public theologizing about faith and work. In light of the research findings, it is clear to me that rather than a detailed model, a focused direction is emerging; but a direction that also calls for further development and research.

By a “focused direction” I mean there are some definite findings from the research that can guide practitioners in a current implementation of faith and work ministries in congregations. By “further development” I mean that more learning modules or specific courses do need to be developed for congregations to use. By “further research” I mean that there are several questions this project uncovered which call for exploration.

What is the focused direction that this project has uncovered for congregational ministries of public theologizing about faith and work? There are four contours of a focused direction:

- Introductory Learning
- Personal Development
- Case-method Learning
- Pastoral Encouragement
Introductory Learning

The first contour of a focused direction which can move public theologizing about work forward has to do with introductory learning. It is a common observation in most mainline church settings that adults tend to be largely un-catechized in the basics of the Christian faith. Though beliefs are certainly held, few people, if asked to articulate the faith beyond personal feelings or convictions, seem to be able to do so without further instruction and learning. Beyond the ability to articulate the basics of the Christian faith, even fewer people seem to have the ability to take theology and apply it to matters of the world in which we live. This was certainly seen in the research study group process for this project. At the beginning of the study, the way each member of the group tended to approach applying faith to work was with faith as a “general backdrop.” Specifics were lacking. By the end of the research study group process, there was greater awareness of the theological issues that apply to workplace issues, as well as a growing ability to apply theology to those issues.

In light of this, it is important that there be an introductory learning course, or learning level, that introduces the contours of Christian theology in a more specific way. The introductory content should cover at least these areas:

- An introduction to Christian theology in a practical format. In my learning modules, I used the schema of creation, un-creation, re-creation, and hope. This is a common way of structuring the biblical and theological content of Christian faith at an introductory level. It enables people to begin interpreting and acting in the world with a more conscious application of faith to a wide range of matters, including work. This schema covers the
major areas of creation, sin, redemption, justification, sanctification, eschatology, and ethics. Before people can begin to think and act toward an integration of faith and work, they need to be able to reflect theologically. This approach in the research study group was moderately successful.

- An introduction to looking at both work and economics from a theological perspective. Once the basics of a theological approach to life are introduced, it seems clear that people do need some basic teaching and learning regarding theologies of work and economics.

- An introduction to cultural studies. Of course, this is an area that can seem daunting. Yet I discovered, given an introduction to looking at their workplaces as unique cultures, that the participants in this study were able to grapple very readily with this area. In my opinion, this kind of learning and training needs to be a part of every believer’s way of life.

- An introduction to case-method learning. Though many in the working world are accustomed to this type of collaborative and discussion-led learning, others are not. If, as this research indicates, it is true that the case-method is a good way for people to become skilled at theologizing, then an introduction to it as a learning experience is important.

Whether this introductory level is taught in six weeks or twelve, in lecture or in discussion, in large groups or small, is all open to congregational context. Some churches will have a learning culture that allows for twelve to fourteen weeks for this kind of
introduction. Others will only be able to keep people involved for five to six weeks at a time.

Personal Development

It was a significant finding of the action research that the LifeKeys course—as I modified it to include personal life history, leadership style, and individual versus team context—was a powerful motivator for the participants in the research study group. It motivated in the sense that it gave people a clearer vision for who they are and what they can bring to their work from their faith.

Thus, it is clear that a learning experience focusing on issues related to a personal sense of vocation and uniqueness is an important contour of the direction forward on integrating faith and work. Whether this personal development learning experience is a part of the introductory level, or operates in a stand-alone fashion, is unimportant. What does seem to be important is that personal development work needs to be an early part of the group or individual learning process in this area. Though there are many options for working on personal development, the primary insight from the research was this: adding elements to personal development specifically related to faith—such as discerning one’s spiritual gifts and naming one’s passions and values—was new and helpful to the participants. This contour of a focused direction makes biblical and theological teachings on vocation practical. People can gain a sense of why they are unique and can consciously begin to operate out of that base of insight and motivation in their daily work.
Case Studies as Theologizing

That the case-method of instruction and learning is one of the contours of a direction forward for integrating faith and work is a clear finding of this research. Case studies, through which participants learn how to approach specific issues or problems from a Christian theological worldview, do show evidence of helping people utilize a theological approach to their own workplaces. It is also clear that people become ready rather quickly to learn how to develop cases from their own workplaces. These are a way for them to apply faith directly to their own day-to-day workplace realities.

What is necessary for the case-method of learning, however, is a small group setting with a high level of trust, as well as a prerequisite introductory level of theological learning. Case-method learning assumes a certain level of knowledge as the basis of using cases effectively. For example, in the literature presented on the website of the C. Roland Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning at the Harvard Business School, all the examples of teaching by means of case-method are related to graduate school contexts. This is an example of assuming a certain level of knowledge prior to using the case-method of instruction.\textsuperscript{55} Therefore the case-method of theologizing about work can only be introduced at the introductory level, and will need to be utilized more fully at a secondary level of learning within congregations.

Pastoral Learning

One more contour for the direction forward has to with pastoral learning. The research corroborated the findings of others that people in the pews hear little about work either from the pulpit or from pastors directly. The overwhelming sense is that what

people do pick up from pastors about their work is negative. It is clear, then, that pastors need resources to help them gain a sense of awareness about the working lives of those they lead and serve in congregations. Whether this takes the form of a seminar for pastors or a small book, or both—the need is obvious. Without the support of pastors in local congregations, theologizing about faith and work integration will tend to continue to spawn parachurch organizations. But the need is for this kind of theologizing to take place in congregations. Whether the support and encouragement of pastors is direct or indirect is less important than the support and encouragement themselves.

To summarize, these four contours form the direction forward for congregations to learn how to help people theologize about work: introductory learning experiences, personal development, case-method learning, and pastoral support.

**Future Research**

A number of areas have emerged from this project that call for further research. The first relates to the case study method of learning and teaching. The research study group responded positively to the case-method of learning and urged an earlier adoption of the case-method as a way of learning how to theologize. I have already addressed the need for an introductory level of learning in order to utilize the case-method as developed by the Harvard Graduate Business School. What is now needed is more action research on how to further the use of case-method instruction and learning in congregational settings. Here are some of the questions that need to be answered: What is the best way to put cases together for learning how to theologize? Can the case studies collected over the years by Harvard be adopted and utilized? Or will new cases need to be developed that

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56 Ibid.
call for a clearer focus on integrating faith and work? Are others using the case-method of learning for the integration of faith and work? If so, what are their findings? Are there other forms of case-method learning that are better or more suitable for learning how to theologize? These are important questions to explore in future research projects if the case-method is to be fully utilized.

Leadership Development is another area that raises a set of questions worthy of exploration. I led this research study group after years of reading and thinking about how to integrate faith and work matters. What will it take to train and equip lay leaders to teach others in this area? How can leaders be developed so that this kind of ministry is not dependent on a few people, or just a pastor alone? How long does such leadership development take? What are the resources currently available for this? What new resources need to be developed?

Creating learning modules, or units, in a workbook format is another area for future development. It has become clear to me that learning and teaching materials in some kind of printed and/or website form do need to be developed for churches to use in this area. I believe that the four learning modules—in the areas of theology and work, theology and economics, cultural interpretation, and leadership for cultural change—all need to be re-written, field-tested, and then made available for congregational use. Perhaps this is less a set of questions than a clear area for further work. The materials I developed in the course of my Doctor of Ministry program will need to be redesigned. They were too content- and theory-laden for ongoing use. But it is equally clear to me that few churches, if any, have the time or inclination to develop their own study materials in the areas necessary at an introductory level of learning. It will be important
for these materials to be developed and published if faith and work integration is to take place within congregations.

Another area for further research has to do with replication. What kinds of materials and learning experiences will multiply from one congregation to another? What are the best ways to take what works in one congregational setting and share it with other congregations? Are there forms of learning that utilize technology, such as distance learning, that can be faithfully utilized congregationally? Industrialized education models from the past seem to be overly limiting where transformational and relational forms of learning are concerned. Yet, the future calls for transformational and relational learning. What are the best ways forward on this? Can a group of churches band together to share learning experiences? If so, what are the best ways to do that? And what about generational and cultural differences in learning and teaching styles? For example, will materials that work for Boomers and Busters be equally effective for Millennials? What about congregations with unique and highly specialized work-worlds, like those located in factory towns, or medical research communities, or financial districts?

All these questions and more call for exploration. I invite others to join in the quest to seek answers to these questions and also to engage the further questions that will surely arise as more and more congregations begin helping people integrate faith and work.

The Musts, Redux

One question from the beginning of this project remains: What about the musts? In Chapter Two (pages 29-37) I outlined a series of musts that public theologizing needs to deal with in order to help believers integrate faith and work. These musts, as stated
earlier, follow from George Hunsberger’s call for the kind of public theologizing that can engage effectively with our culture. Does this model grapple adequately with the musts I have outlined? Here is my assessment:

- Public theologizing on work matters must deal with the *splits*. This model, as evidenced by the interviews with the research group, does help people begin the process of overcoming the split between the public and the private, between the realm of values and facts.

- Public theologizing on work matters must deal with the *narrows*. The model as experienced in the study group does expand the vision of participants beyond matters of personal evangelism and ethics, and into areas of operations, culture, work structures, and the goodness of work for its own sake.

- Public theologizing on work matters must work toward healing the *polarization* between liberal and conservative. This remains to be seen. In the study group, I went out of my way to include people from various social and political perspectives. They seemed to be able to allow the gospel to be their central focus and to discuss openly and freely from their various viewpoints. My research was inconclusive on this point.

- Public theologizing on work matters must become *conscious*. I would say that the research study group got to the point of conscious competence, as I defined it earlier in this project. It seems to me that the participants wanted very much to get to the point of unconscious competence. To that end, the group will continue to meet to do more case-method study. I intend to continue my research on this point in particular.
• Public theologizing on work matters must translate to *daily operations* in the workplace. I cannot say that this was satisfied in the course of this project. What I can say is that the participants found themselves able to apply a broader Christian worldview to specific matters at their workplaces. This indicates the likelihood that they can become increasingly specific at the level of daily operations, especially as more case studies are brought to the group in the future.

• Public theologizing on work matters must be practiced in *community*. I have definite confirmation that learning how to theologize on work matters in a healthy group context is powerful and effective. The larger issue of how well the same small group format will work in other congregational settings remains to be explored. However, I want to reiterate a significant finding: much will depend on the pastors of the particular churches involved. If a pastor is interested in this area and supportive of it, a ministry of faith and work integration is likely to be effective. It can also be safely assumed that encouragement and personal growth will take place. The importance of theologizing about work in a community setting cannot be over-emphasized.

   I believe the six musts, delineated both here and earlier in the project, have been effectively addressed by the research. It is possible and important for congregations to theologize about faith and work, though more remains to be discovered as to how to bring the liberal and conservative poles closer together, and how to apply faith to specific areas of daily work operations.

   I end this project where I began: with a desire to continue to find ways to help congregations do public theology in the area of work and commerce. I can affirm that the
focused direction forward I have outlined above can be as effective in the future as it has been with the research study group. I can also say with confidence that this kind of public theologizing can be pursued with vigor within the life of congregations. The elements that make this possible are both simple and profound: simple in that a few, well-designed learning modules can have a great effect in people’s lives; profound in that people can go as far with this as they desire, once they begin to grow in their ability to theologize about work matters. I am already seeing several members of the research group venture forward on this very path. I can only hope and pray that hundreds of congregations and thousands of believers will one day have a chance to venture forward in the very same way and on the very same path.
Introduction to the Appendixes

There are four appendixes. Appendix A contains the content of the four learning modules that the participants in the research study group went through in the nine-month study. In addition, the fifth learning module, LifeKeys, is presented in outline form.

The learning modules are presented in Appendix A as they were presented to the participants. Two were given in the form of lecture and discussion: A Theology of Work and Interpreting Workplace Culture. The next two modules, A Theology of Economics and Leadership for Cultural Change, were presented as power-point presentations. LifeKeys utilized the book and workbook of the same title. There has been no attempt to alter the format of the learning modules from that in which they were originally presented.

Appendix B contains the texts of the two case studies the research study group utilized in the course of their learning process, plus what I have called a WorkMatters Worksheet, which was designed to help them learn how to apply faith to the case studies from a Christian worldview perspective. The case studies and the worksheet are presented in Appendix B so that they can be referred to easily as one is reading the project.

Appendix C presents the research study group calendar.

Appendix D gives examples of two sermons that speak to the issues working people face in integrating faith and work. It also contains an example of an office blessing service that was performed a few years ago which the participants found engaging and helpful.
A Theology of Work
A 6 Week Course

Slide 1

Week 1 – Why a Theology of Work?

- Contributes to God’s creative and redemptive work.
  - More on this later, but, as an example – according to Genesis 1-3, we are called by God to work with God as co-creators – this is one of many implications for our work from the Bible.
- Most people are dissatisfied with their work
  - According to some surveys, up to 60% of people would like to change jobs.
- Most of us have to work
- Work is powerful - We shape it and it shapes us.
- Most believers would like to receive help to integrate their daily practice of faith and their work and careers.
  - Leading to a host of questions:
    - How – how do I do this?
    - Why should I? Aren’t work and faith two separate things entirely?
    - Is it ok to make or seek profits?
    - I don’t know how to go about it…

Slide 2

A Theology of Work

Kulani Mamas

This is a quote from a blog-site from South Africa. A professional woman from the U.S. was involved in a project to help mothers with AIDS in a township in Cape Town, South Africa. The program provided these mothers with parenting support and education, with social interaction, and support of other kinds. They were also helping them start a co-op to make papier-mâché bowls for sale in curio shops. After a number of months working with these women, the author, a journalist by training and job, wrote the following entry…

“I’ve been interviewing the women of Kulani Mama to put together some marketing materials for the bowl project. I finally realized why it has been so hard to learn their names: they all start with N. Nonkosi, Nophelo, Nosintu, Nandipha, Nelisa, Neliswa, Nosiseko…”

“From the interviews, I’ve found out a lot more than they usually tell us about themselves. Nearly all were born in the Eastern Cape, the rural Xhosa-speaking area about 600 miles away where Nelson Mandela grew up. It’s where most of the transplants to Cape Town’s townships come from. None of the women finished high school and several only got as far as the 6th or 7th grade. Most live in shacks and have never had a job. About half are married. Their universal dream is work. All of them said that’s why they moved here. When I asked them what they wanted to be or do in
10 years, most said they wanted to have a steady job, any job, and enough money to own a brick house and a car. One said she wanted to become a doctor.”

- 15-20 minutes - Break into Groups of 3-5 -
- Pass out the Kulani Mama Quote -
  - Give the background -
  - Give them a few minutes to read to handout -
- Have them work on the questions in groups -
  - What was your first real job?
  - What is your current job or career?
  - How did you get into it?

Slide 3

- Realities: Before we go any further, let’s look at some realities of the way work and the workplace is more and more central to the lives of most North Americans – it is perhaps more constitutive of life than any other institution. We can decry this as much as we want to and wax nostalgically for a golden age in the past when everybody lived and worked together, forgetting that it’s actually been about 300-400 years since this was the actual experience of any culture as a whole. The truth, further, is that it probably never was what people think. Since the industrial revolution, industrialization has shaped our world-views in ways we seldom examine. Furthermore, we’re now moving into a knowledge economy, which will merely push the ‘realms’ even further apart if we’re not careful.
- Work and workplace issues are central to life - There are many reason for the way business culture is constitutive of North American culture.
  - A few facts -
    - 50-90% of population doesn’t have regular connection to a faith community.
    - 65% of people will move every 3-5 years, and are cut-off from family support systems.
  - Therefore, most people look for and have their sense of community and most of their significant relationships through the workplace.
    - e.g. - Kraft Foods study.²
    - The top two desires of employees at every level, according to a Kraft Foods study are:
      - To have a sense of community at work -
      - To be appreciated for what one does -
      - Money was listed at level 5.
  - This is exemplary of what most people think and feel about their workplace.

Slide 4

¹ Tina Lam, The Kulani Mama Blogsite, June 23, 2006
Gordon Smith and the 4 Crises:

- **Crisis of Employment** – unemployment and underemployment brought about by the vast shifts from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge economy, and from regional to a globalized economy brings about a sense that employment issues will be in crisis for the foreseeable future.

- **Crisis of Confidence** – because of the aforementioned tectonic shifts in a globalized economy, many people feel ‘in over their heads’ as they face the future of work and career. This is especially true in a world where working for one company is long in the past and a common worker should expect anywhere from 5-7 career changes in their working life-time.

- **Crisis of Focus** – this is the crisis of hectic, unfocused, scattered lives, “caught up in the activity which seems to have no meaning…” but which must be done. A sense of meaningful leisure seems to be lost.

- **Crisis of Meaning** – all of the above lead to a crisis of meaning in our work, in our identities and in our lives as a whole.

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2/3 of life is often ignored in church -

- **Competing Realms** - As a pastor, I’m acutely aware of the tension most church members feel as they’re caught between the competing claims on their lives of church, work, community and family.
  - **Each realm seems to demand ultimate loyalty.**
  - **One approach** that many have taken to deal with this is to find ever better ways to manage their time – as if a more efficient and effective use of scheduling will solve this problem. It rarely does.

- **Churches, especially, and pastors in particular**, can be insensitive to the almost daily experience of this tension.
  - **We present each person and family with a list of demands:**
    - **Come to church every week** -
    - **Give us 10% of your money every month** -
    - **Serve on a committee – at least 2 hours a month, and more** -
    - **Teach in Sunday School or serve in another way** -
    - **Be in a small group weekly** in addition to all the other demands we place on you -
  - **Additionally, in most church contexts** where work or business is mentioned, they are almost always covered in a negative context.
    - **Making money – especially making a profit** – is, if not wrong,

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3 Gordon T. Smith, *Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential* (Downers Grove, IL, IVP, 1999). This lengthy discussion comes from pages 15-20, and is an excellent introduction to the experience of most regarding work in the North American context.
then at the very least, a highly questionable activity for Christians.

**Slide 6**

- **Dennis Bakke** talks about the hierarchy of importance that most church settings hand out, either openly or underneath the surface...
  - *in descending order:*
    - Missionaries -
    - Pastors -
    - Educators -
    - Government Service -
    - Non-profit Organizations -
    - For-profit business

- This is exactly reversed in the ‘business world.’

**Slide 7**

- **Laura Nash and Scotty McLennan**, in their book, *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday*, speak of how most Christian business-people see no way to apply their...
  - Faith to the
  - Daily operational issues of:
    - Finances
    - HR
    - Marketing
    - Sales
    - Research & Development
    - Culture

**Slide 8**

- **Most pastors**, even those who’ve worked in another career before entering the ministry, seem to have little sensitivity to the concerns or experiences that the workplace raises.
  - In fact, I might venture to say that the response is rather the opposite of what most would like – The fact that most people find their significant community and sense of meaning in the workplace and from their work is seen as a lack of discipleship by many pastors.
  - Or even as a threat to the pastor’s central goal -
    - to build up the activity level of ‘their’ church.
- **Those who love their work** and are committed to the integration of faith and work may be seen as less than committed.
  - **If they were really 'spiritual'** they would make the church a higher

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priority.

- **In a survey done by Stephen Hart and David Krueger**, reported in *The Christian Century*, regular church goers couldn’t ever remember a constructive sermon dealing with work.  

- **Thus many pastors are ignorant of the day-to-day realities** and questions that shape much if not most of the lives of their people.
  - **There is a large separation**, or gap between what the pastors think and talk about and feel, and what most of the people in the pews talk about, think, and feel.
  - **There’s even suspicion** in some cases between pastors and those who work outside the church.

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**Slide 9**

- As David Miller has written recently in *Theology Today*, “Logically, one would think that the church would embrace this opportunity and seize the chance to equip the saints for the work of the Kingdom. Yet empirical and anecdotal evidence reveals another story. Most business people experience a ‘Sunday Monday gap,’ in which their Sunday worship bears little to no relevance to their Monday workplace. While notable exceptions exist, generally speaking, sermon topics, illustrations, liturgical content, prayers, and pastoral care seldom recognize, much less address, the spiritual questions, ethical challenges, pastoral needs, and vocational possibilities faced by those who work in business.”

- **The end result** is an ever-widening split between the ‘realms’ -
  - **Personal** – family, home, recreation
  - **Church** – spiritual
  - **Community** – ‘paying your civic dues’
  - **Work** – career

- **More on the ‘split’ later** (Hefner 1993)
- **When do we turn this around** and start asking how churches can help people integrate faith and the ‘realms’?
- **How can we help you with what God has called you to do** with 2/3 of your waking hours?
- **How can we solve the ‘split’** between the private and the public – values and facts?

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**Slide 10**

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SHOW FILM CLIP – “Herding Cats”

Lesslie Newbigin’s Thesis –
- The Great Divide - At this point it becomes crucial to understand the way all this has gotten into place: how did we get this divide between the ‘realms.’ This hasn’t come out of nowhere. It’s the result of the history of the Western world from the last 200-300 years.
  - Lesslie Newbigin
    - Divide between:
      - Public vs. Private
      - Facts vs. Values
      - Secular vs. Sacred
      - Material vs. Spiritual
      - Work vs. Faith
      - Career vs. Family

There is an intellectual history to this -
- Plato – Greeks -
  - Spirit vs. Matter.
    - Spirit is good, matter is bad
- Constantinian ‘Script’ in our collective minds.
  - The role of religion is to provide moral glue, and chaplaincy for life – leaving the ‘important matters’ for other areas of expertise.
- Medieval Splits -
  - Sacred vs. Secular.
    - Showed up in every aspect of life.
    - Work is secular, holy orders are sacred and the secular is dependent on the sacred for its validation.
- The ‘Enlightenment.’
  - Rejection of revelation for reason and the ability to organize all of life around reason.
    - Faith was pushed to the private and seen as a value.
    - Schleiermacher’s response.
    - E.g. – today, the religion section of the local newspaper will often be called the values section.
  - Basic way of organizing life is to treat matters of faith as matters of personal preference, subjectively true, but not fit for public matters in ANY realm.
- Reification in society -
  - Separation of church and state is the model for all of life – especially as it relates faith and all other realms.
  - You leave matters of faith at home or at most, at church.
    - Pietism or even quietism.
    - A few biblical verses sprinkled into vision statements.
    - Seeing the corporation or business as ‘family.’
• **Imposition of biblical ‘principles’**, which usually mean prayer meetings and evangelism.

**Slide 12**

- The mind-set of many believers when it comes to how they approach their work and careers from the vantage point of the Gospel is:
  - Their work is *worldly* – or mundane.
  - Work is a necessity to live.
  - **Instrumentalism** - There is no lasting significance to their work – to what they produce or the service they provide – that will last beyond this world. It will all fade away.
    - This is called ‘instrumentalism.’
  - What is eternal lasts forever - this world will pass away, and so they feel that they will have to invest themselves in ‘spiritual’ things if they want to invest in that which is eternal, and that certainly isn’t their work!
  - There is a *sense of living in two parallel universes* – or maybe even three - church, work, and family. Each sphere is distinct from the others and do not, and maybe should not, intersect – after all, don’t we believe in the separation of church and state?
    - **In the world of work** one set of realities are in place that call for a separate set of values, operations, philosophy, and persona.
    - **In the world of church and faith**, which is a private world, another set of realities is in place that calls for a kinder, gentler set of values, discipline, operations, philosophy and persona.
    - The same being true for family.
- There is a great deal of confusion and guilt about money and profit.
- There is almost no reflection or thinking or application of beliefs to the public world of career and work, because there is little or no ability to think biblically about anything in their lives.

**Slide 13**

- This is the result of two things:
  - Pervasive biblical illiteracy in most churches to begin with
    - Which itself is exacerbated by privatistic interpretations for many people who aren't Biblically illiterate.
    - You can't apply what you don't know...
  - Lack of a theological approach or reflection to any area of their lives.
    - **That's the pastor's job** and even then, it should be a theology that deals with private, individual matters: sins and redemption, not things like work.
  - Or if work matters *are addressed*, only two matters are available for discussion:
    - Evangelism -
    - Ethics -
Which Leads us back to Newbigin - Newbigin Redux

Slide 14

Lesslie Newbigin’s Program– Hunsberger, et al.
  
  Not Newbigin alone, but he has stated it perhaps in the best way:
  
  Public Theology – a call to bring matters of faith back into every realm, from the vantage point of the Gospel.
    - Truth of the gospel is public truth – it belongs to the whole world.  
    - This public truth has to do with the good news of the Reign of God, which is present in Jesus Christ.
    - This public truth is a shaping story that calls all believers into all of life as the location of our mission.
  
  This view has often been applied in a few realms:
    - Governance
    - Social Policy
    - Politics
  
  It’s time to expand theologizing in the public square to all other matters – one of the largest being Workplace cultures, economic interactions and systems.

Slide 15

Theologizing in and about the workplace is a way to respond to the current call to heal the ‘Great Divide’ by taking our beliefs into the public square.

  Addressing our Nervousness - about this – is the purpose of this course

Nervous about inappropriate methods -

  “Bible on the desk, devil in the contract.”

Ethical in private and shady in business.

  Christian ‘jargon.’

Nervous about Details

  How would I/we apply matters of faith to matters of specific areas? What does faith have to do with the research and development budget?

Nervous about perceptions

  Being seen as a religious nutcase

  Door-knocker, Bible-thumper

Nervous about lack of knowledge or skills in applying faith to workplace issues

  I’d love to, but I don’t know how to approach anything from a faith standpoint – how do you do it?

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9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., p. 18.
Slide 16

- Assign Groups
- Pass out the Hunsberger Article for reading for next week
- Introduce the Cosden book – and schedule for reading it
- Introduce LifeKeys and the schedule for working through it

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A Theology of Work
Week II

Slide 1 - A Theology of Work

- Hunsberger & Public Theology – Discuss Article -
  - Questions -
    - What’s the main Point?
    - What did you find new? – Challenging?
    - How could you begin to apply the challenge of developing a
      public theology in the area of your workplace? Where are some
      areas you can already see doing that?

- Group Questions
  - What was your first ‘real’ job?
    - How did you…
    - Choose,
    - Fall into, or
    - Find,
    - Your current career or job?

Slide 2 – A History of the Faith at Work Movement

- Some History of the Faith at Work Movement -
- Three Previous Waves.
  - 1890-1914 – Social Gospel era.
    - Rauschenbush.
    - Positive view of the future.
    - Rise of ‘Lay’ parachurch movements.
    - Small Group Movement & Lyman Coleman
    - Keith Miller & Howard Butt.
  - 1990-2000 – Faith@Work.
    - Rise of general interest in spirituality & work issues.
    - *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday*, by Nash and McLennan,
      2001. A good introduction to this understanding.

- We May be moving into the 4th Wave -
o **Essential idea** – that the business itself – its area of products or services and the way it operates, is itself an aspect of the Missio Dei.
  - Not only in terms of evangelism,
  - But in terms of economic activity and all that it entails.

o Over 1,200 Organizations Nationwide -
  o Much higher now and impossible to count.

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**Slide 3 - Vocation**

- **The Biblical concept of vocation** is still the primary way most Christians choose to gain an understanding on how to see their work as a part of their discipleship to Christ. They see their work as their calling from God, or they are at least trying to do so, and this concept seems to be a rallying point.
  - This week, we will cover a brief history of the concept of vocation.
  - Then we’ll take a look at the major theologians working in this area and what their significant contributions are to a theology of work.
  - Then we’ll become practical in applying all this to our lives through a Life-Vision Workshop.

- **A Brief History of Vocation** – I commend a book of readings on Vocation that transcends most of the history of Christianity, by William Placher. It is titled, *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation*, Published by Eerdmans.\(^{11}\) The readings are good, but the real worth of the book is in Placher’s introductions to each major section and how the Christian concept of vocation was covered in each.
  - **Early – 100 to 500 CE** -
  - **Medieval – 500-1500 CE** -
    - This is where the separation between sacred vs. secular and spiritual vs. mundane took place.
    - A vocation in the Middle ages meant that a person was ‘called’ away from the day-to-day world of work and family, and into the spiritual realm of ‘holy’ orders, and was more valuable than the mundane.
    - In fact, the prevailing view of vocation in this worldview was that those with a ‘vocation’ actually built up a storehouse of spiritual merit from which the rest of Christendom could draw upon to cover their own spiritual and moral inadequacies.
  - **Reformation – 1500-1800 CE**
    - **Luther**
    - **Calvin**
      - The Reformation sought to correct the errors of dualist thinking about vocation that had prevailed throughout the medieval period.
      - All Christians have a vocation, since we are all priests, therefore work and day-to-day tasks were brought into one’s

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belief system much more rigorously.

Slide 4 - Vocation

- **Contemporary**
  - **Much talk**...
    - The word, ‘vocation’ is used in all kinds of contexts, most of which have nothing to do with the biblical or theological understanding of it.
    - People talk about their calling with no sense of a call from God.
  - **Little application**...
    - So there is little if no application of the work involved in determining one’s sense of call from God,
    - And the Reformation understanding.
  - **New Angst** -
    - Anxiety to find a calling, with no understanding of the history or source of the concept.

- **Group Questions**
  - Describe your Vocation
  - What are the areas where you have trouble defining it?

- **A Process**
  - LifeKeys

Slide 5 – Leading Theologians

- **Miroslav Volf** – is perhaps the leading protestant theologian of work operating today. His book, *Work in the Spirit*, is the place to start for a thorough work on the concept of vocation from a Christian perspective.

- **Unique to Volf’s approach** is that he critiques vocation as a central concept for understanding how to integrate faith and workplace issues, arguing instead for the concept of Charism – or spiritual gifts instead. Here is his critique of vocation:
  - **Luther** – The primary reason Volf argues against vocation as the beginning point for the integration of faith and work is because of Luther’s mistakes on vocation.
  - **A Luther Vocation Primer**
    - **Two Kingdoms** – this is a key to Lutheran thinking, even today:
      - God’s eternal, heavenly kingdom.
        - The inner person and matters of the spirit.
      - God’s earthly kingdom.
        - Daily matters – the outer person governance of nations, work.
    - The former is more important, the latter, less so.
    - **Vocation** – Luther did away with the medieval ‘storehouse of merit’ thinking, and held that everyone has a vocation from God, but he emphasized that everyone had that call within …
      - Station – their station in life.
Stations had to do with guilds and classes and other social divisions.

- A call from God was a call within one’s station.
  - Results – thus Luther maintained a feudal worldview, even locking it in place, rather than allowing the Gospel to challenge the prevailing worldview.
  - Deepening of Public/Private split - some suggesting that it later enables the Nazi take-over.

**Slide 6 – Leading Theologians**

- Darrell Cosden -
  - Eschatology as the starting point -
    - A New Heavens and a New Earth – The promise that God will make a new heaven and a new earth means that…
      - This world will be taken into the next.
      - Therefore our earthly work has heavenly good.
  - This is in great contrast to the dualisms that saw a radical disjunction between this world and the next:
    - “Don’t polish brass on a sinking ship.”
    - Therefore our earthly work is ultimately worthless apart from any eternal service it might support, such as…
      - Evangelism,
      - Tithing,
      - & Ethics for the sake of honor and blessing.
  - The Resurrection is the lens through which we should look at everything, including work.
    - Cosden challenges common notions of the temporal nature of matter and all creation, including the world of work, with an extended discussion of the resurrection of Jesus and it’s implications of our view of what God thinks of creation, matter, our bodies, and, by extension, all our activities in this life.
    - His basic point here is that matter matters. It is an error to separate spirit completely from matter and treat spiritual things as more important. Religious work is not more important than work for profit in a market economy. Furthermore, the standard hierarchy that exists for most Christians in which religious work is the highest in importance, followed by work in the non-profit sector, which then descends down to work in the helping professions, leading to the very lowest rung on the ladder - work for profit - is not a biblical hierarchy and must be challenged in order to apply a theological approach to work.12
    - Cosden takes the resurrection as the primary lens through which to view all this biblically.

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12 Darrell Cosden, *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*, (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006). Cosden also takes care to avert the opposite error from dualism — a materialistic monism in which the only thing that matters is matter. This is the ‘flip’ version of the spiritual hierarchy. p. 28.
- In each, he examines the nature of the continuity versus the discontinuity of what is taken from this existence into eternity by Jesus’ resurrection, contending that the resurrection is the means by which God saves all of creation, not just human souls.
- “The fundamental question underlying this entire project concerns what God will and will not in the end take into eternity. What is the final destiny for the whole of this creation, physical and spiritual? And what conclusions related to spiritual meaning and Christian life in the world can be drawn from this?”

- Cosden clearly states that human work is as much and to the same degree an object salvation as the rest of material creation.
- As we are included in Christ through faith, the creation is included in us, and thus, eventually, all things are saved, including those aspects of our work that have been made holy. Work and the results of it are like everything else in creation – it must all be transformed by the work of Christ as it is taken into the new heaven and the new earth, but it does go with us. We say a lot when, in the Apostles Creed, we affirm a belief in the resurrection of the body. “Who we are and what we do in this life has a heavenly, resurrected future.”

- Second, he takes a fresh look at Genesis 1-11 as an entry point into what our work really means in the Kingdom reign of God.

**Slide 7 – Leading Theologians**

- Cosden makes five points through his Genesis study:
  - **Humans in ordinary work are God’s apprentices** - his co-workers - work does not make us who we are. God makes us who we are. But in and through all our lives, including our work, we have a God-given mandate to, “…extensively shape and re-shape the world through our work.” In fulfilling this mandate, we are following after God, the creator, who is already ahead of us or beside us, shaping, making, and above all, making all things new.
  - **Central as it is, work is not all there is to this life** - the Sabbath is the final word and the goal of life, not work. Work is good in and of itself, but even then, it is not the end. Sabbath rest is the end. Sabbath is not,
however, inactivity, but the freedom to be what God intended creation to be from the beginning.

- Imaging God through our physicality is our destiny and identity as humans - when God created all that exists, he called it 'good'. Therefore we need not diminish the material over against the spiritual.

- We work now in a world that is not yet redeemed - Work is good in and of itself, yet it still exists as part of the fallen world and is under the curse. What we produce and offer through our work will always be ambivalent at best.

- We work now in a world that is already redeemed - but fallen-ness, frustration and decay are not the only or final word on work. We have been set free in Christ, “…to flourish.” We are to anticipate the new creation and use our work to, “…bring about a state of affairs that anticipates the future glorification of ourselves, of nature and of our work.”

Cosden finishes his book with an exploration of implications of this theological underpinning for work. Clearly, he is making a case for our hope in Christ as it is expressed at work as being an integration of faith and life in the work realm. Thus a spirituality of work will transform how we go about our ordinary working lives.

- First, a proper spirituality of work honors the created world as much as the spiritual.

- Second, it denies that we create or justify our existence or our salvation through our work. Work is valuable and it is part of what God redeems and takes into eternity, but it is not salvific. Like the fruit of the Spirit, it is the result of salvation, not its cause. Cosden carefully criticizes theologies of work that even hint that our productivity proves that God made a good choice in saving us. A spirituality of work will avoid workaholism – whether in ministry, public work, or in a for-profit business. Furthermore, work cannot bring about heaven on earth as is the belief of both Marxism and Capitalism when they are not brought under the reign of God. The future is in God, not any human systems of economics. Work is good, but it cannot bring about a utopia. When we believe the error that work can redeem the world we will always have a tendency to destroy more than we create. The fact that God will incorporate our work into the new heaven and earth fills our work with meaning and purpose, but it doesn’t level a crushing burden upon us either. Sabbath is the source of work, not a rest from it in this theology of work.

- Third - a good theology and spirituality of work will give full allowance for our identity as the source of what we do for a living. “Our work is an outworking and expression of who we are.”

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18 Ibid., pp. 99-100.
19 Ibid., p. 110.
20 Ibid., p. 107
is not true – who we are is an outworking of what we do – as is so
commonly experienced in our work-drenched culture.

Slide 8 – Leading Theologians

- **Armand Larive** - is a retired professor of Philosophy from Washington State
University, as well as an Episcopal priest. He is a carpenter in his retirement,
and thus brings a fresh perspective to the theology of work. In fact, he brings
4:

  - **First, Larive argues for a replacement** of substitutionary atonement
    theories of redemption with a Christus Victor theory of atonement.
  - **Second, he argues for an emphasis on the Kingdom of God as a
    paradigm for how we integrate work and faith.**
    - Three Evidences:
      - **Created co-creativity** - is our human role, rather than the role
        of bringing redemption to that which is lost. Based on the work
        of Philip Hefner, a created co-creator is the idea that God
        intentionally equipped humans to be partners in the ongoing
        work of creating goodness. But since humans are created co-
        creators, our creative powers are derivative from God and
        gradually build on everything else we've learned and
        experienced. This gradual growth of learning and building on
        what has come before is very important, in that it can unravel
        and be lost. We're called, not just to preserve that body of
        learning or culture, but to use it to create new things and ideas.
        This is a sign of the in-breaking of God's Kingdom, especially
        when it happens in the workplace.
      - **A Fully Empowered Laity** - Lay people should be
        theologically astute and not dependent on a trained elite for
        their theology. They should also be reflective practitioners of
        theology in the way they work it into what they do in the
        workplace.
      - **Metemphatic Spirituality** - a metemphatic spirituality is
        distinct from kataphatic spirituality. In kataphatic spirituality
        things or people or ideas point beyond themselves to God and
        are instrumental. In metemphatic spirituality the thing, event,
        person or idea is valuable in itself. Thus work is instrumental in
        part, but even more, is valuable as work in and of itself. This is
        also a sign of God's Kingdom in relation to work.
  - **Third, Larive offers an apologia for maintenance work** as equally
    valuable to that of stretching or creating.
    - As created co-creators, we will spend most of our time simply
      maintaining structures, systems, and even life itself. Though

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this kind of work sometimes seems like mere drudgery, it is just as much a part of God's work as anything else we do.

Slide 9 – Leading Theologians

- Fourth, Larive discusses what it means for work to be both good and godly:
  - Work that is good is work that pulls people together rather than pushing them into competition.
  - calls on them to use their skills and gifts in ways that allow the people themselves to:
    - flourish,
    - produce beautiful results, rather than destructive ones.
- Godly work is work that builds up and creates fullness rather than scarcity.
  - The metaphor for Godly work is the biblical concept of God as householder, in which…
    - goods are allocated in a just way,
    - so that life for all can flourish,
    - and the virtues and skills are encouraged.

Slide 10 – Assignments

- Personal Vision Statement
- Life Keys in groups
- Mapping a future

A Theology of Work – Week III

Slide 1 – A Theology of Hope and the Present

- Crucial - view of the future determines how we live in the present
  - If you believe the future of the universe is positive, you will tend to act a certain way.
    - One way or another, this universe will be transformed and is connected to the next universe.
    - You will invest in things as well as people, in spirit as well as matter, because it all matters.
  - If you believe the future of the universe is negative you will tend to act in a certain way as well.
    - This universe will pass away and be destroyed and is unconnected to the next universe.
    - You will tend to invest only in things that will last forever – and only people will do that, but not their bodies.

- Prevailing View
  - The general viewpoint of most of Christianity in the North American context is negative about the future of the universe – it will pass away.
When this worldview is applied to the workplace, it results in certain predictable responses:

**Slide 2 – A Theology of Hope and the Present**

- Work itself is not important, nor is it valuable in itself
- It is only valuable insofar as it serves a higher purpose or purposes (instrumentalism):
  - Evangelism
  - Finances for ministries
  - Ethics that honor God, because it’s always right.
- These are the companies that put Bible verses on trucks, shirts, and caps, and have prayer-rallies to open the work week.
  - One famous example of this is Chic-fil-A
    - Tithe income and take Sundays off. That’s all there is.

**Slide 3 - A Reappraisal**

- A Reappraisal is taking place at many levels of theological and biblical thinking.
- Moltman and a theology of hope
  - Volf - recap
  - Cosden - recap
- Moltman Redux
  - Hope
  - Spirit
- Smedes & Hope
  - Dreams
  - Desire for the dreams to come true
  - Belief that they will

**Slide 4 – A Reappraisal**

- Biblical Themes
  - Resurrection - Cosden
  - Genesis – Cosden and Larive
  - Prophets – the message of Shalom and Justice – this has direct bearing on work.
  - Great Commission -
    - The Great Commission has to do with the whole range of ministry in daily life:
    - “Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you…”

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- **Acts 1 – Ascension** -
  - Christ takes our humanity into heaven, thus promising that this life will be taken into the next.
  - Therefore, as Cosden says, “Our earthly work matters for heaven.”
- **Revelation** – New Heavens and Earth

### Slide 5 – A Reappraisal

- **Implications of this theological view**
  - **Work Matters** -
    - **for its own sake.**
    - **Instrumentalism** is not the proper view. We are to love our work as best we can. This too is part of our discipleship.
  - **Redeemed co-creators** – this is our primary job description and identity.
  - **The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work** -
    - **Priests** –
      - We are priests who stand in the gap between God and creation. Our work is one of the ways we stand in that gap.
    - **Realism** –
      - Yet the world is filled with sin and God's redemptive, reconciliating work is not finished yet, so work is not salvific, nor is it to be worshipped.
      - Work can be, and often is, demeaning and de-humanizing.

### A Theology of Work – Week IV

#### Slide 1 – A Worldview Approach

- **Worldviews**
  - **A Worldview is the way we approach the world** without thinking about it.
  - **We receive it from our culture as we grow up** – it forms the grid out of which we see, understand, speak, and act.
- **Christian Theology** is simply the content that shapes a particular worldview.
  - **Seldom applied, because of the ‘splits’**
    - **People seldom sit down and think through** their work, or any other area of life from a theological framework because they don’t know their beliefs, and they don’t know how to apply them.
- **Contours of a Christian Worldview**
  - Creation
  - Uncreation
  - Recreation
Slide 2 – The Case Study Method

- Harvard & Case Studies
  - We will use case studies in applying the theology we’ve been learning.
  - The case study method has a long and good history – it started at Harvard Business School, and is now the primary way business education is done.
  - This is usually the way we work on major issues in a work environment, so we’ll use it here, too.

- The Importance of Groups
  - Plus, it taps into the Christian concept of covenant –
    - We are all inter-connected with each other in Christ.
    - This means that our community life is crucial to our ability to think and act theologically in the world.
    - That’s one reason why you’ve been assigned to groups.

- The Challenge of Worldview Thinking
  - You will find this hard to do at first.
    - It’s like learning a foreign language.
    - But the more you do it, the easier it becomes.
    - And soon, it’s the way you think all the time.

- The Goal of Bible Study and Theology:
  - Application – All that we do is designed to help you learn how to bring learning and insight into action in your workplace.

Slide 3 – A Worksheet

See Appendix B for the Workmatters Worksheet

Slide 4 – The Case

“JACK”

Jack, a manager at a large company, is a lapsed Catholic. He looks at the church’s social policies with dismay, but feels a strong personal connection to the religion. He values being a good person at work, by which he means being considerate, honest, and if at all possible, generous. He told us his story.

He has to make a choice: to decide whether or not the company should continue offering its current policy of paying for certain disabilities. It is generous, treating any disability as a total disability, and the successful claimant receives total benefits for life. New economic circumstances and changing claimant patterns have rendered the policy an ongoing financial loss for the company. Moreover, many people with disabilities are still able to work, but not at their previous jobs. It seems ethically preposterous to demand that the company fund their leisure for life, although by legal rights this is the contract.

In reviewing whether to reformulate this type of policy, Jack summons up a panoply of utilitarian arguments to decide whether it is morally and financially right to end or modify this offering. He reasons that the claims will hurt many other people by eating up so much of the company’s revenue. Insurance costs will go up in other categories, and jobs will be lost. What is more, the policy encourages people to lie.
Corporations seeking to lay off workers have been known to tell their employees to claim total disability as a way of continuing an income, and they even find doctors who reinforce these claims.

Secular utilitarianism, humanistically applied, mediates the problem, taking into account the various constituencies affected. But as Jack comes to this conclusion, a second level of meaning intrudes itself, one that has to be called “religiously based.” He finds himself thinking about human dignity, about “defending and opening up the possibilities of life,” as John Paul II advocated in *Centesimus annus*. Jack has always liked that phrase, and it frequently occurs to him like a mantra.

The disability program under scrutiny does not open up the possibilities of life. It degrades the claimant, in his view, and threatens the livelihood of employees and shareholders. But simply ending all such policies because they are likely to be unprofitable is also unacceptable: some people truly need permanent, total disability. Can his company choose to offer it, or will the decision fall to the state?

**Slide 5 – Creation Questions**

- **Creation Questions** –
  - The Christian belief on creation says that all that exists is made by God and therefore has inherent value and worth. Work is good, all that we see that exists is good and worthy of our attention and effort. Furthermore, human beings, because they bear the image of God are of inestimable worth to God, and therefore to us. People are not things or to be seen as a mass, but as unique creations of God and to be treated with respect – as is all of creation. It is under this area of Christian belief that the whole issue of vision and mission comes as well, because the fact the God made everything implies purpose and meaning. We aren’t accidents and the world isn’t here by accident. We can and should find out what our vision for life is as individuals, but also this should be clear for our workplaces and even our areas within our particular companies or organizations. Questions:
    - Where is the worth and value in this issue?
    - What is the client’s real need related to this issue?
    - What is the vendor’s real need?
    - What is my/our company’s (or practice, or business or organization’s need)?
    - How does this person’s sense of call or vision fit into this situation?
    - How can I bring meaning and better structure to the chaos of this situation?
    - How can we approach this situation from the vantage point of our Vision Statement?

**Slide 6 – Un-creation Questions**

- **Un-creation Questions**
Sin is seen biblically as a ruptured relationship of trust with God on the part of human beings that then ripples out and infects all other relationships. It affects our relationships with others, with nature, and with ourselves.

Sin is everywhere and though sometimes is hard to see, is always an element of every situation – even the seemingly innocent situations we encounter day to day. Sometimes sin so affects people that they stray over the line of return and can become involved in actual evil practices – though the person himself or herself is not evil, the situation can be.

Human nature is therefore of inestimable worth, (creation) but naturally sinful as well. (because of the Fall) Sinful doesn’t mean awful, but means we are all prone to sin, or that our natural inclination is toward sin. We cannot avert our eyes from this truth as though, if nature were allowed to take its course, everybody would eventually do the right thing. If there are no restraints, people will usually veer off, especially if more than one person is involved. Like every other organizational aspect of human life, the working world is capable of great good – and great wrong-doing. In order to do case studies well, we must learn to discern where the brokenness is, and what it is doing, even if only slight. Some questions:

- Where is the brokenness of creation showing up in this situation?
- Where could it show up?
- How would I name the sins involved?
- Where does this ‘tug’ at my own brokenness?
- What are the long-term ramifications of this situation of not dealt with in some way? (i.e. – who will be affected, how might they be hurt? How might they be tempted?)
- Is there difficult truth that must be spoken? Or can it wait?

Slide 7 – Re-creation Questions

- Re-creation questions –
- Redemption is something only God can do. We have no power to redeem or forgive sin at its core. Only God can do it. God has acted decisively in Christ to redeem the sinfulness of the world. This redemption has three basic aspects:
  - First – God HAS redeemed us. God has redeemed us from the penalty of sin. “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,” Paul says in Romans. Those who have placed their faith in Christ’s person and work for them experience this pardon from sin. Those who have not placed their faith in what Christ has done for them have not experienced this blanket forgiveness, and feel it. (By the way… tough we have been redeemed from the penalty of our sins, we are not protected from their consequences. If we sin as Christians we are already forgiven for them, but we may have to suffer the consequences for sinful acts or choices nonetheless.)
  - Second – Those who are in Christ are BEING delivered from the power of sin on our lives and in the world as we continue to grow in Christ. All persons of faith are experiencing this as they go through life, day by day. This is where we also experience frustration as we try to apply to our lives the good
we know we should do, or to refrain from the wrong we know we shouldn’t do – it’s hard work. We fail! But we fail in the context of forgiveness already won for us and applied to us by Christ. The Holy Spirit helps us and empowers us for this day-to-day journey of growing in Christ-likeness.

- **Third** – one day we SHALL be redeemed from the presence of sin and sinfulness. This will happen. It is the promise of the Gospel. It will either happen when we die and enter God’s eternal realm, or when Christ returns to earth. There shall be no more sin or sinful actions, thoughts, attitudes, at all – anywhere. There will be only good.

- **This is the area in which we have much to offer in our work worlds.** This is where we really matter and our work really matters to God. This is where we are salt and light in the world by the ways in which we seek out how to bring redemption into the situations we face. Yet this is the hardest part to figure out. What does that mean exactly? There is much to be worked on and discovered here, but let me suggest at least a few ways to apply this to the specific situations we face:
  - It is appropriate to be present to our fellow workers with our faith so that they might want to explore a commitment to Christ and receive the redemption that is found in Christ. That’s right. I’m talking about faith-sharing. The way we do this is key – we can’t and shouldn’t force it, or be disrespectful. We shouldn’t proselytize, which is not the same thing as sharing our faith.
  - But that isn’t all there is to redemption. We should also be salt and light in our workplaces by looking for the ways and the places and situations in which we can bring goodness onto the disordered sinfulness of the working world. This takes time and thought, but can be very fruitful. How can we help fellow workmates reconcile if there’s been a rift? How can we find win/win solutions? In sum, how can we build up the world, rather than contribute to its corruption? How can we make this situation better?

- Anyway… here are some questions to ask in using the Worksheet.
  - **What is a redemptive way to deal with this?** (i.e. how can we reach a solution to this case that builds people and the business up, rather than tears down?)
  - How can the decisions I/we make here improve the lives of all involved?
  - How can the solution or approach we reach make a contribution to our vision and mission without tearing other entities visions and missions down?
  - How can we seek a Kingdom of God approach to this situation?

**Slide 8 – Hope Questions**

- What would it look like in the future if we were to …
- Who do we need to include in this issue?
- Where is God leading us/me to act?
- What is a general time frame for the future on this course of action?
What are the clear ‘rights’ and ‘wrongs’ in this situation?
Are any of the 10 commandments a part of this situation? Which ones? What’s the positive affirmation that is on the other side of the negative prohibition in this command?
Anything from the Sermon on the Mount that applies here? (Matthew 5-7)
Are there other biblical passages or stories that speak to this issue?
What are the gray areas?
To whom do we need to spend more time on the ethical issues with in this situation? (Legal? HR? Higher-ups? Pastor?)
How can we create a climate of safety and trust so that ethical issues can be squarely faced?

Slide 10 – The Solution

“The Rest of the Story”
Jack - might have resolved this problem with a tough-minded look at the numbers, finding a pricing structure for such insurance policies that makes them available (but only to people in exceptionally generous companies or who personally have the wealth to finance them). Instead, Jack forms a task force of doctors, insurance executives, and customers. After several years, a number of innovative practices emerge to ease the cost of this kind of insurance. Legislation to approve graduated degrees of disability payment is submitted thereby allowing partial claims payments and opportunity to demand that claimants seek some sort of work. Additionally, the company works closely with one of the leading rehabilitation hospitals in its area to develop new therapies and hardware to allow disabled people more mobility.

The irony is, Jack barely recognized this process of faith in his own work life until our interview. He is so used to seeing his church as being hostile to business in his industry and to its extensive family policies on child care and birth control that he has erected a secular filter for conscience. A business decision might be personally meaningful, but is basically a secular matter.

Slide 11 – In Groups

Generate Your Own Set of Questions
Generate any Rows that need to be added
How Would you redesign the Worksheet?
Find a Case Study from your Workplace and ‘Worksheet’ it together this week.
Slide 1

- This week we will start to wrap everything up.
- LifeKeys –
  - First, we’ll work as a group on compiling everything from the LifeKeys work you’ve been doing in groups. It’s important to look at this together, visually. I have a grid drawn on the board, and we’ll fill it in as we go around the room with your LifeKeys information.
- Case Studies
  - Then we’ll take a look at your case studies, using one I’ve completed as an example,
- Observation and Reflection
  - Then we’ll observe and reflect on what we see and what we’re learning

Slide 2 – LifeKeys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Gifts</th>
<th>Spiritual Gifts</th>
<th>Personality</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Passions</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Slide 3 – Life Purpose Statement

- Salt and Light
  - Sermon on the Mount
    - Identity and place in the Kingdom
- Self-understanding & Development
  - LifeKeys is a start
  - Groups are Key to ongoing growth
- Theological Reflection and Application
  - Dare to Be Different

Slide 4 – Case Study II

The Case

An industrial equipment sales rep has a client with a time sensitive need. The client must remodel an in-house recreational center for a large company, and part of that process is to replace all the employee lockers. He only has a one week time window during the Thanksgiving holiday to receive the product and have all the installation work done. Three bids are being considered. It is a highly competitive environment, with oversupply and soft demand. The sales rep is being pressured to make quota by his company and is worried he might lose his job if things don’t pick up.

The client informs the sales rep that his bid is slightly higher than the others, but
will be awarded the (sizable) contract if he can guarantee the delivery and installation time. The others have given this guarantee already, but the client has some questions about their truthfulness, and wants to deal with this particular rep, but must have a guarantee. If not, the contract will be awarded to one of the other competitors.

The rep knows that this guarantee cannot be kept. He also knows that none of the other competitors can keep it either. All are subject to manufacturing schedules beyond their control, and all use independent trucking companies to deliver their products, which means time frames can only be general, not specific. He knows that the competitors have, in fact lied.

What does he do? If he lies too, he will win the contract, but will put the client in the position of finding out at the last minute that he may miss his one week window of opportunity to get the work done, thus putting the client in a bad position in his own company. If he tells the truth, he will probably lose the contract, thus putting his own job in jeopardy. If he tells the truth about his competitors, he will be seen as engaging in slander and his personal ethics tell him not to speak ill of others.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORLDVIEW ISSUE</th>
<th>CHRISTIAN</th>
<th>WORKPLACE</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>The client and his job are important to God. The competitors are valuable as persons, even if they are lying. The rep’s job is to honor all the above, yet speak truth. He has a good product at a good and fair price. Rep’s vision for his life is to help clients be successful in their jobs.</td>
<td>The client is there to be used as a means to the end of meeting the needs of the sales rep. Never worry about honoring your competitors – all’s fair in love, war, and selling. Everything’s on back-order, what’s the big deal? Vision is to make a lot of money.</td>
<td>Approach the whole situation in terms of honoring others, while engaging in fair competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-Creation</td>
<td>Sales rep is being tempted to lie in order to keep his job, and is being pressured to deliver a promise he can’t keep. He is being undercut unfairly by his competition – this has happened before, with the same people.</td>
<td>This is business – it’s just the way things are. Don’t be such a prude. Little lies don’t hurt anybody – everybody’s doing this. Anything for a sale – you have a good product and since nobody can give that guarantee, why can’t everybody lie about it?</td>
<td>Rep determines not to give in to temptations – either to lie, or to make the others look bad for lying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-Creation</td>
<td>Rep can deliver the product in as timely a fashion as anyone else, and can do it fairly without diminishing competitors in the client’s eyes. He can maintain his conscience and his</td>
<td>Not my problem – if it gets me the order I’ll do it, and if I can make the other guy look bad, I’m in better shape the next time. Welcome to the real world.</td>
<td>Prayer for the situation, that he can handle it truthfully and in a positive manner, without making others looking bad. Share personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>composure in the midst of cut-throat competition. Name all forgiveness issues.</td>
<td>vision statement with client, ask client about his personal vision statement. Forgive competitors (in heart) for trying to undercut him.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hope</strong></td>
<td>Long-term vendor and customer relationships that enhance workplace for all involved.</td>
<td>No long-term view. Seek to build a way to reflect on this experience together as vendors and customer for future partnerships.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethical Questions</strong></td>
<td>How can he speak the truth in love in this situation? Is it ever ok to lie? Is it ever ok to skewer the competition, even when you know they’re doing something unethical? 10 Commandments: lying, coveting, putting God first Sermon on the Mt.: love your enemies, do unto others as you’d have them do to you</td>
<td>Get the order – you have a good product at a fair price too – just don’t get caught. Explain how production and shipping take place in the equipment world in general, then give the time frame the rep can commit to. Work closely with the shipper and upper management to track the shipment. Be personally available during Thanksgiving to solve any problems that occur, commit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Slide 6 - Case Study II – The Rest of the Story

- The sales rep met with the client. He went over the way the metal industry manufactures and ships products like metal lockers, explaining how things normally work. He then informed the client that he couldn’t give a firm guarantee that he could definitely meet that target dates, because it was too close to Thanksgiving – there was not enough lead time.

- He then gave a manufacturing time frame that he’d been promised from the factory, and the shipping range of dates he could commit to. The sales rep then promised to do everything he could to track both the manufacturing and the shipping, and would inform the client by phone when the manufacturing had been completed and when it had been shipped, so he could know everything the rep knew, as it happened. This was the best he could do, and all he could offer.

- He was awarded the contract.

Slide 7 - Case Study Presentations

- Case

- Worksheet

- Rest of the Story

Slide 8 – Assignment

- Groups
  - Prayer
- Write Individual Philosophies of Application,
  - In which you address how to integrate Christian Faith and Work issues within your workplace context.

A Theology of Work – Week VI

Slide 1 - The View Ahead

- Putting It All Together
- Becoming Interpreters
- Putting the Two Together
- Becoming Practitioners

Slide 2 – Putting It All Together
Closing the Great Divide
- Public & Private
- Facts & Values
- Secular & Sacred
- Material & Spiritual
- Work & Faith
- Career & Family

Slide 3 – Becoming *Interpreters*

- Learn to Interpret the Word
  - The Living Word – Christ
  - The Written Word – Scriptures
  - The Goal is to apply
- Learn to Interpret Work
  - The Culture –
  - Few ever do this
- Do This until You *Become* it
  - Skills
  - Identity

Slide 4 – Putting the Two Together

- Faith & Work
- The Importance of Groups
  - Communities of interpretation
  - Communities of Action
- Case Studies

Slide 5 – Becoming *Practitioners*

- Brainstorming in Groups
- Plans of Action
- Across the Full Spectrum
  - Operations
  - Finance
  - Marketing
  - Sales
  - HR
  - Product Development
  - Etc

Slide 6 – Wrap-up

- Worldview = Theology
Interpreting Workplace Culture

A 6 Week Course

Slide 1 – Interpreting Workplace Culture

1. The Task:
   a. Applying Faith to Work
      i. Involves a practical theology of work – we covered this in the first course, and it may be necessary for this second course.
      ii. Approaching your workplace as a distinct culture – That’s what we’ll be covering over the next 6 weeks.
      iii. Theology of economics – This will be the next course.
      iv. Leadership for change – Disciples need to learn how to be agents of change in the workplace. This will also be a future course.

2. The Goal: a practical method of cultural interpretation – that you can take and use in your workplace, and which will enable you to become a cultural interpreter wherever you find yourself.

Slide 2 – Basic Concepts

3. This course is about workplace culture
   a. Some basic concepts:
      i. Missional Church Movement –
         1. What it isn’t – it isn’t about going on short-term mission trips and getting more people involved in mission projects locally and regionally. These are good things to do, and they might be part of being a missional church, but that’s not what it is in essence.
         2. What it is – The Missional Church Movement is about how churches see themselves within the context of the North American context. We are no longer in a situation of Christendom, in which the culture around knows or understands the Christian faith. We are in a situation similar to that which a missionary would find themselves in upon entering a foreign culture. They have to find ways to communicate and live out the Gospel in a culture that isn’t naturally receptive to them. Churches must now be willing and able to do the same things here as missionaries have had to do elsewhere.
      ii. Culture and Worldviews
         1. Lots of them overlapping at once:
a. Western – North American  
b. Regional  
c. Family  
d. Church  
e. Workplace

**Slide 3 – Thick Description**

4. Thick Description  
a. Clifford Geertz – “The Interpretation of Cultures”  
  i. Culture can and should be understood\(^\text{24}\)  
  ii. Culture is: webs of significance we have spun.\(^\text{25}\)  
  iii. We approach those webs of meaning…  
    1. Not ‘observationally,’ not to analyze scientifically in search of laws, but  
    2. to Interpret – to look for meaning\(^\text{26}\)  
b. Example – Geertz Quoting Gilbert Ryle:  
  i. Two boys with their right eyelid fluttering  
    1. ‘scientific’ approach – a right eyelid is fluttering – it’s a twitch  
    2. Interpretive approach – no – it is an instance of one boy signaling something – it’s a wink.  
    3. But what if there’s a third boy – who’s also winking, but not to signal, to parody the second? And parodying the second in order to fool another set of boys into thinking that the wink means something other than it really does?  
  ii. Thin description – rapidly contracting the right eyelids  
  iii. Thick description – “Practicing a burlesque of a friend faking a wink to deceive an innocent into thinking a conspiracy is in motion.”\(^\text{27}\)

**Slide 4 – Thick Description & Symbolic Action**

c. The essential point of all this is that human behavior is always symbolic action – even when people don’t know that.  
  i. Human action means something.  
  ii. We cannot be simplistic in assuming how to interpret these meanings.  
    1. Geertz is really helpful on this point he points out:  
      a. Limitations of Objectivity - Objectivist, analytical, ‘chartist’ and table formats of strict detachment are

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\(^{25}\) Ibid., p.5.  
\(^{26}\) Ibid.  
\(^{27}\) Ibid., p. 7.
limited – very limited in their ability to get us inside what’s really going on in a culture.28

b. Entering the Imaginative Universe - what we’re after is the ability to enter “…the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs.”29

2. Wittgenstein quote – “We… say of some people that they are transparent to us. It is, however, important as regards this observation that one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country’s language. We do not understand the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them.30

Slide 6 – Sidebar…

5. Sidebar Discussion-
   a. How do we apply this basic approach - of thick description – to business culture in America?
      i. Lead discussion - basic issues will normally lead to some of the following:
         1. Business culture in America consists of several levels
            a. Macro-culture – the larger culture of “the business world.”
            b. Micro culture – two levels
               i. Regional – business culture on the East coast isn’t the same as business culture on the West coast.
               ii. Particular workplaces themselves
         ii. Use the Wittgenstein quote – pass it out – put it on the screen.
            1. Use the example of the difference in cultures between for profit, government, non-profit, educational, and church work cultures.
            2. People are using the same language, but don’t understand each other.
            3. What don’t they ‘understand?’
            4. What are actual differences at the surface level?

Slide 7 - Tools

6. Tools
   a. Thick description as a way of life –

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28 Ibid., pp. 10-13.
29 Ibid., p. 13
30 Ibid.
b. **Geertz again:** “Culture is not a power, it is a context, something within which social events, behaviors, institutions and processes can be ‘thickly’ described.” & “Meaning varies according to the pattern of life by which it is informed.” But never forget that, “Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete.” We never stop learning how to do this. It’s more a way of life than it is a project we finish and file away either mentally or literally.
   i. **Understanding a culture** exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity.
   ii. **This is important** – it doesn’t matter what something means to us – what matters is an understanding of what it means to them.
   iii. **This is why tools are so important**

7. **I propose a simple way to get started:**
   a. Observe
   b. Interpret
   c. Consolidate

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**Slide 8 - Observe**

8. **Observe** – learn to watch and enjoy watching. Notice things, write them down, enter into them. Linger over them. Savor them. Just learn how to look at what’s going on around you.
   a. **Who** – who are the heroes and heroines – the people who are talked about and revered or remembered – good or bad.
   b. **What** – what is remembered about them?
      i. **What are the important stories** - either of the past or the present – that are told and retold?
   c. **How** – are things and people measured and valued?
      i. **What are the values of the culture?**
   d. **Symbols** – what are the cherished symbols of a society or a group or a company? It doesn’t matter what the official symbols are – what matters is what the functionally important symbols are.
   e. **Where** – what are the important places and what happens in them?
      i. **What’s the ‘soul’ of a place?**
         1. e.g. – **my time in San Antonio**, looking for work – the soul of the city was in the taquerias – at 10:00, the city took a break and had a burrito and visited! If you didn’t understand how to do that, you missed out on the place as a whole, even if you didn’t participate.

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**Slide 9 - Interpret**

9. **Interpret**
   a. **Get into Groups**
   b. **Pick a Major U.S. Company from the following list:**
      i. Exxon
      ii. Ford
iii. Microsoft

c. Go through the observation process
d. Make an attempt at interpreting what each area of observation means to those in that company.
e. Report to the larger group in 15 minutes…

Slide 10 - Assignment

10. Wrap up – in Large group bring everything together
a. Assignment – in groups – do this with
   i. American Business Culture in general

The Homeless Mind

Week Two

Slide 1 – The Homeless Mind

1. Recap
   o Groups – present homework to the larger group
   o Reflection – what have you learned about:
     i. The process?
     ii. American Business Culture?

Slide 2 – Cultural Interpreters

2. Some Reflections of Others
   o N.T. Wright – On Worldviews…
     i. N.T. Wright’s 4 things that worldviews do:
        1. They provide the stories through which human beings view reality.
        2. The stories help groups answer the basic questions of human existence:
           a. Who are we?
           b. Where are we?
           c. What is wrong?
           d. What is the solution?
        3. I would add – they help ask what the basic questions are
        4. The stories and the answers are expressed in cultural symbols
           a. i.e. victory parade after a war - two symbols are brought together - skyscrapers and heroes of battle.
              i. Osama Bin Laden knew he was attacking a symbol in the trade towers.
              ii. The symbols of the flag and the cross at the clean-up were very powerful.
        5. Worldview provides a way of taking action.
           a. Especially if the actions are so instinctive or habitual as to be taken for granted.
b. e.g. (a micro worldview) in my family, it never occurred to me not to apply for college when I was 18 - it was just assumed. For other families there were other assumptions.

ii. N.T. Wright, again: “Worldviews… are like the foundations of a house: vital, but invisible. They are that through which, not at which, a society or an individual normally looks; they form the grid according to which humans organize reality, not bits of reality that offer themselves for organization.”

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Slide 3 – Cultural Interpreters

3. Peter Berger – the Homeless Mind –
   - The Homeless Mind, published in 1973, like much that Berger has produced, is still relevant today, particularly in his understanding of understanding a culture in terms of ‘thick description.’
   - Sociology of knowledge is a key to interpreting life. The cultural forces that shape us are changing rapidly, and Berger’s conclusions now need to be re-assessed, even as much of his observations remain intact.
   - His basic approach is:
     1. Everyone has a Social Life World that enables them to navigate life on a daily basis. (introduction, pg. 12.)
        - The web of meanings that we operate out of come from two realities:
          a. Outside Reality – specifically the institutions that confront us.
          b. Subjective meanings – that which is experienced in the consciousness of the individual.
     2. The social life world comes about as a result of a dialectic between these two. (introduction, pg. 12.)

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Slide 4

ii. The Social Life World is a collection of other locations of input: (introduction, pg. 14, ff.) There are 10:
   1. Reality Definitions – the social life-world is constructed by those who inhabit it, not by those who don’t.
   2. Fields of Consciousness – which are shared by groups.
   3. Organization of Knowledge – or the what of conscious experience.
   4. Cognitive Style – or the how of conscious experience.

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5. **Background** – or the general frame of reference for a culture.

6. **Symbolic Universe** – overarching reality definitions that give meaning to life as a whole.

7. **Carriers** – Those institutions and institutional processes that create the social base for specific structures of consciousness.

8. **Plausibility Structures** – or whatever makes a social consciousness plausible, or believable. The statement, “I prayed to God this morning.” Is not as plausible as it once was.
   a. “Social change invariably entails change in plausibility structures.” (Introduction, pg. 16)

9. **Carryover** – this one is a bit tough to grasp at first, but very important for our purposes: it is any diffusion of structures of consciousness from their original institutional carriers to other contexts. (Introduction, pg. 16.)
   a. For example, let’s say a worker brings home an expectation of efficiency as it is experienced at work. Or better yet, takes that same expectation to church. That’s diffusion and it happens all over the place. It’s why work exerts such powerful influence in American Culture.

10. **Packages** – those ways that social consciousness is carried from one framework to another.
   a. Example – in a society where people expect to experience trances, their factory work requires that they never do this. They are trained to keep that way of thinking separate. But the factory work then becomes a package carrying a new worldview into the larger society.

**Slide 5**

4. **Two Social Life Worlds** that impact American culture, especially business culture: Technological Production & Bureaucracy

5. **Technological Production** – the fundamental logic of this is productivity.
   o **Organization of Knowledge** –
     i. **There is a vast body of Scientific and Technical information** which not everyone needs to know in order to use.
     ii. **There is a Hierarchy of Experts** – who will be in charge of this knowledge, and upon whom everyone else depends.
     iii. **Mechanisticity** – the actions of a worker are intrinsic in a machine-like process.
     iv. **Reproducibility** – every action can be reproduced – nothing is original or unique.
v. **Sequence of Production** – the worker is a single participant in a large organized sequence of production.

vi. **Measurability** – everyone and everything can be evaluated precisely.

O **Cognitive style** –

i. **Componentiality** – the components of reality are self-contained units, whether human or otherwise, which are interchangeable. Everything is analyzable and can be taken apart and put together again in terms of those components.

ii. **Inter-dependence** – of Components and Sequences -

iii. **Separability of Means and Ends** – there is no necessary connection between a particular sequence of componential actions and the ultimate ends of those actions.

iv. **Segregation of Cognitive Style** - in various settings - e.g. work and family there are two different sets of cognitive style. This leads to a segregation of work from private life.

v. **Problem Solving Inventiveness** – there is a tinkering mentality with this Social Life World. This carries over readily to private life – especially to one’s relationships and personal development.

vi. **Anonymous Social Relations** – because of technological management, a componential self-concept results.

vii. **Assumption of Maximalization** – there is a tendency toward maximal results, or making more product for less money.

viii. **Multi-tasking/Relationality** – there is a presumption that workers will have an ability to be alert to many things happening at once.

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Slide 6 -

6. **Bureaucracy** – the fundamental logic here is process.

O **Organization of Knowledge**

i. **Background** – there is a background for each bureaucracy out of which it operates. This is a large, sometimes vast system.

   1. **Different backgrounds – have different jurisdictions** –
      The Postal Service can’t help you with a tax question, the IRS can’t help you with your Social Security number.

ii. **Competence** – each bureaucrat is competent only in their assigned sphere and is supposed to have expert knowledge appropriate to this sphere.

   1. **Example** – pastors and business leaders.

iii. **Referral** – a key bureaucratic category.

iv. **Coverage** – within its category, standard operating procedures, rules, and staff will expand to meet needs.

v. **Proper Procedure** – there is an expectation of this, along with avenues of redress for wrongs.
vi. **Anonymity** – this is a huge expectation in bureaucracies. Rights and duties are not attached to concrete individuals, but to holders of an office and to clients. This happens both directions.

1. **Example** – in a passport office, the clients right to a passport is defined by their citizenship, not because of who they are, or who they know. The duty to issue a passport is vested in the bureaucrats office, not their person.

2. **Breaches of this are seen as corruption**

**Carryovers – Both from and to bureaucracies**

i. **Organization of families** – along lines of anonymity – a chore assignment chart, for example.

ii. **Or a neighborhood association.**

iii. **Or a Church** – Building usage, standard procedures, smooth operations, etc.

**Cognitive Style**

i. **Orderliness** – there is an expectation for systems of categories for jurisdictions and procedures.

   1. “The universe is dumb chaos waiting to be brought into the redeeming order of bureaucratic administration.”

ii. **Taxonomic Propensity** – which leads to differing understandings of terms.

iii. **Problem solving** – is the opposite of technological production. Here, the bureaucrat brings everything into one place – or box, and then leaves it for others to fix. There is not an expectation of innovation, or taking something apart to understand it.

iv. **General and Autonomous Organizability** – in principle, everything is organizable in bureaucratic terms.

   1. **In Technological Production** – the bureaucracy is controlled by production. In a bureaucracy, the production is controlled by the bureaucrat.

v. **Predictability** – it is assumed that a bureaucrat will operate with regular procedures, which are known and can be predicted.

   1. **Example** – “To get a passport, I’m going to have to bring a photo and fill out some forms.”

vi. **General Expectation of Justice** – this means that everyone is expected to receive equal treatment. There will be no favoritism.

   1. **This results** in what Berger calls, “Moralized anonymity.”

   2. **This also leads to a non-separability of means and ends.** Unlike in Technological production, where there is a separation of means and ends, here the means are as important as the ends.

   3. **Goal Displacement** – which leads at times to goal displacement, in which the original goal of the agency is set aside for carefully followed procedures.
7. **The Homeless Mind** – Berger then puts these two in a larger context, leading to his thesis that most people in modern societies today live in a setting where they can never really be ‘at home.’ Their social life worlds are constantly shifting and there is no unifying life world.

   * **To be human is to live in a world** – a reality that is ordered and gives sense to the business of living.
   * **These life-worlds** are collective and go forward by consent.
   * **Through most of history**, people lived in life-worlds that were unified.
   * **The unifying factor was religion.**
     1. **Religion is:** “A cognitive and normative structure that makes it possible for people to feel ‘at home’ in the universe.” In doing this, it provides an overarching canopy of symbols for meaningful integration of society. Pluralization has taken this away through secularization.
     2. **The same integrating symbols** permeated the many sectors of life. They were religious symbols.
   * **Family, work, politics, festivities, and ceremonials** – all were in the same social life-world.
     1. **No More.**
   * **Social Life-worlds are different, if not discordant.**
     1. “Modern life is typically segmented to a very high degree and has important manifestations on consciousness. This is pluralization. A fundamental aspect of this pluralization is the dichotomy of the public and the private spheres.” (pgs 64-66.)
     2. **This leads to an attempt to create a ‘home world’ which will serve as the meaningful center to his or her life.**
       1. **Examples** – the popularity of ‘3rd Places’ – Starbucks, Pubs, Home churches.
       2. **Increasingly – the workplace is expected to be the ‘home.’** Hence the number one desire on the part of workers in a recent Kraft Foods study was a sense of community at work.
     3. **This attempt almost always fails. Thus, the ‘Homeless Mind.”**
       1. **This also explains:**
           a. The yearning for a ‘leader.’
           b. The anger and distrust of the Islamic world for the West. Modernization, yes, Westernization, no. They still have an overarching sacred canopy, but are afraid of losing it.
           c. The clash of church and state issues in American life.
Slide 8

8. Reflections on Berger –
   i. Yes, but no…
      1. Technological Production – is now in the context of a knowledge-based economy, in which the world is flattening out, and expect to have a say in everything, and to know everything.
      2. Globalization – was not an issue when he did his research for this. Globalization has as much an effect on our social life-worlds as anything else. This needs to be explored.
      3. Secularization – is a both/and experience for people right now. Berger is correct when he says that the religious canopy has disappeared and society is no longer unified. But secularism has not really taken over completely either. He overstated it. This is worthy of further study as well.

Slide 9 – Cultural Interpreters

9. Lee Hardy – a survey of management theory and business culture
   i. Perhaps no social force in America is as powerful as the social world of the workplace. Education is also powerful, but arguably, since we work far more years than we go to school, it can and should be said that the way work is structured goes on to structure almost everything else about our common life.
   ii. From Taylorism and the company man, to Drucker and workers as persons, Hardy takes us on a tour de force through the thinking and application of management theories and their effect on workplace culture from the perspective of a Christian worldview.
   iii. Hardy has the view that we must, as followers of Christ, be able to understand and perhaps challenge or even seek to change the social structures in which we work. This is true, and is as important as a theological approach to the world of work for the purposes of integrating faith and workplace issues. It will not do simply to take a desire for ethics into our workplaces. We must also be able to be a part of creating social structures that honor what God thinks work is supposed to be. This task is largely ignored by most Christians, even those who want to practice their faith in the ministry of daily life. For example, they may hold a Bible study in a conference room at noon, but never address the vagaries of the management theory being practiced in their workplace that treats people as things and machinery or computers as assets.
   iv. “The content of a job in an institutional context is not automatically determined by the task of that institution together with the current state of

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relevant technology. Rather, it is intentionally organized in a particular way, as opposed to a number of other ways in which it could be organized. Typically, it is organized according to certain managerial assumptions about what makes human beings work, and what makes their work productive. The examination, criticism, and elaboration of those assumptions are the province of that sub-discipline in management theory known as ‘job design.’” (pg 127.)

- **Hardy’s point here** is that, in order to change something, you must be able to understand it, name it, and then strategize to change it. Sometimes this will not be possible and the worker who is also a disciple may need to leave. Hardy both issues this challenge, but then affords workplace believers a good basic survey to what those theories are. His contention is that, following Bonhoeffer, work ought to be a ‘place of responsibility’ - a place, “…. so structured that that it is possible to serve others through the free and responsible use of a significant range of their gifts, talents and abilities.” (pg 127.)

- **Hardy then shows how much of management theory** in the 20th century created social structures at work that engendered the opposite of responsibility and freedom on service to others, but instead took as much responsibility as possible away from workers and treated them as things.

10. **Taylorism** - The most famous of these theories, and one which has shaped more of American thinking that perhaps we realize, even today, is Taylorism. For good or for ill, Taylorism has had a powerful social impact on American life that continues to this day, even though Taylor’s theories and practices have been widely either jettisoned altogether, or vastly altered. Hardy’s synopsis of Taylorism gives a brief history of its development and basic tenets, and then moves on to a critique from a Christian viewpoint. (pg 128, ff.)

- **The essence of Taylorism is Scientific Management** – the application of the scientific method of observation and experimentation to workplace processes – either in manufacturing or service jobs. Taylor’s goal was to find the single most efficient way to do each job and each part of each job. Once this was discovered, all responsibility and decision-making was to be shifted away from workers and to management. Management was to determine the most efficient operations of jobs, then was to train the workers in those new operational guidelines, and then was to supervise to see that the new methods were rigorously followed. All instructions, responsibility, and decisions were to come from higher up.

  i. **Ironically, Taylor’s stated goal in his theory of scientific management was to improve the relations between management and labor** by giving both what Taylor thought they wanted: greater productivity for management, and higher wages for workers. It never worked. Productivity and wages did rise as scientific management was adopted at the turn of the 20th Century, but it made the gulf between management and labor worse, not better.
ii. **Hardy points out two major implications** arising from Taylorism that clash with a Christian view of work.

1. **The first is de-humanization.** Taylor’s scientific management theories brought into the mainstream the treatment of workers, not as human beings worthy of value in themselves because they bear the image of God, but as animals or machines, incapable of thinking for themselves. Wherever Taylorism was applied, workers were treated almost as commodities, but at best as things, not people. This is where the approach to the company balance sheet that lists machines and equipment as assets and labor as costs came into being.

2. **The second implication** that clashes with a Christian worldview from Taylorism is de-vocationalization. Taylor saw workers as desirous and motivated only by a wage. If this had been true, his theory would have solved the problems between labor and management that he originally envisioned. But God didn’t create humans to want money alone for work. God blessed work before it was cursed after the Fall. Every person wants work to be a place where they are able to produce and contribute to something of which they can be proud. Most significant relationships in our culture arise out of work. Perhaps it can be said that people desire more from their work than work can deliver: meaning, purpose, a living, and creative satisfaction. But Taylor thought people desired only one thing: money. And that is a major failing on his part.

o **Hardy points out that Taylorism did add at least one good thing into management theory,** and that is the practice of workplace analysis. Eliminating workplace inefficiencies has helped most workplaces improve not only work, but the life of the workers, and this has been good.

i. **Overall, however,** it’s not hard to see how much the approach of scientific management has entered into the cultural mindset of American life – from work, to the management of the home, to friendships and parenting, indeed, even the running of a church. There is still a preponderance of the belief that decisions must come down from on high and that everything in life should be managed scientifically, broken down to its respective parts, made efficient, and then put back together in order to live a good life. Lower-downs are to do what they are told. Everything is to be given over to experts, who are then to tell others what to do. Though this may sound like an overstatement, it can also be alarmingly true. Taylorism’s effects remain with us today as a major component of contemporary culture.

11. Elton Mayo –
The next phase of management theory was a reaction to Taylorism and was written about most extensively by Elton Mayo of Harvard. (pgs. 140 ff.) He was brought in to help Western Electric interpret the strange results of a famous four-year experiment in productivity that took place at the Hawthorne assembly plant in Chicago from 1928-1932. This experiment has been known ever since as the Hawthorne Experiment. This was an experiment designed to test what the most optimum assembly conditions might be and involved research with over 21,000 workers over the period of the data collection. What puzzled the researchers was the discovery that productivity seemed to rise, not with newer methods of assembly, but simply be whether or not the worker was involved in the research project itself. Elton Mayo was brought in to figure this anomaly out. His results were that the productivity increased for the workers in the study as compared to those not in the study for the simple reason that the workers in the study were treated differently than those not in the study. Those in the study were queried for input, were listened to, were given the ability to participate in some decisions and were given input into the assembly process.

Mayo’s interpretation of the Hawthorne Experiment led to the new management approach called ‘human relations’ – which began to see workers as people, not objects. Though it was a good step in the right direction from a Christian perspective, it must be said that the human relations movement was still an attempt to treat a worker as someone to get more out of. It was still an attempt to get more work out of fewer people for a lower cost. It still was a way of using people more effectively, simply by adding a subjective, psychological element to scientific management theory.

12. Chris Argyris –

Following on the human relations movement, Chris Argyris of Yale began looking at organizational behavior and dynamics. (pgs. 145, ff.) He discovered that, though human beings go through recognizable development phases, moving from dependency to independency, and from passive to active, nonetheless, within organizational development, it becomes more effective to organize a business from the top down, focusing each business unit narrowly on a few task or responsibilities, and empowering those at the top of the organization with most of the power. Though Argyris discovered that the needs of the person and the needs of the organization must therefore necessarily clash at some point, in the workplace, the needs of the organization trump the needs of the person. But Argyris also discovered that, though this was the most effective way to run an organization, over time, it produced bored and ineffective workers, because it ran counter to their psychological needs for personal development. Thus, there must be a blend of seeking input from workers and the creation of participatory leadership which will add meaning to a specific job, while at the same time, keep the needs of the institution
firmly in place. Jobs must be enriched, but only in a way that helps the organization as a whole.

13. Frederick Herzberg and the motivation of work:

- **Another thread in the fabric of management theory comes from Frederick Herzberg.** (pgs. 151, ff.) Herzberg’s research in the 50’s discovered that there are two different ways of viewing job satisfaction in the workplace: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic factors come from achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement. The extrinsic factors he found were: company policy and administration, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations, and working conditions.

- **Scientific management had focused on the extrinsic factors in an attempt to make workers more productive.** Herzberg found that, when these factors were the focus of management, especially pay, it actually increased job dissatisfaction.
  
  i. What was required, he discovered, is the absence of negative factors, and the presence of satisfying factors, or the intrinsic factors of job satisfaction. In particular, employees led by management to focus on factors extrinsic to the work itself will become ‘chronically dissatisfied.’ (pg 153.) Herzberg sought to turn management toward a focus on the basic human need for recognition, achievement, responsibility and a freedom to express individuality. In meeting human needs people gain happiness, and this is as true for the workplace as it is in life in general, maybe even more so.

  ii. “Properly designed, work can be of intrinsic value to the worker.” The mistake of scientific management was to treat workers as if they were only economic animals. They aren’t. They are humans, motivated by a desire for meeting needs that transcend wages and benefits. Work is a place for creativity, personal growth and advancement. Herzberg’s primary point was that work needed to be re-humanized in order for workers to be productive.

14. Douglas McGregor and management by integration took Herzberg’s work and infused it with Abraham Maslow’s theory of hierarchy of needs. (pgs. 155, ff.)

- **McGregor then critiqued Taylorism** as completely inadequate for contemporary workers, calling for workers to participate in job design so that the needs of the worker could be aligned with the needs of the organization, thus harnessing their natural inclinations for the good of the economic unit of the company or organization. McGregor believed that, with a proper understanding of and application of social and psychological knowledge, the response of individuals in any organization could be both predicted and controlled in order to serve the economic objectives of the enterprise. (pg. 155) He called this integrative management.
15. Peter Drucker - Along comes the great catalyst, Peter Drucker. (pgs. 160, ff.)

- Drucker critiques the previous management theories as well as Taylorism precisely at their most vulnerable spot from the perspective of a Christian worldview. He noted that they were all simply different ways of controlling workers in order to get them to do what the company wanted them to do. Taylorism sought to do it scientifically and treated workers as things. But the iterations which followed simply shifted tactics in the same strategy, and sought to control or even manipulate workers through psychological awareness or a focus on intrinsic motivators rather than extrinsic motivators. No matter. They were simply trying to do the same things by different means. The end was always the good of the company at the expense of the worker. Furthermore, all the previous theories put managers in the position of omniscience – needing to know all and be all for all employees. According to Drucker this was an absurd impossibility.

- Drucker began saying that the good of the company and the good of the person were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Management needed to approach workers with respect; respect for who they are and that they are sufficiently motivated to want to work well for themselves as well as the organization and therefore needed to be brought into the management process, by having the organization manage through objectives. Management by objective meant an integration of the objectives of the employee and the objectives of the organization. By keeping these together through allowing those who do the work to also plan the work, both respect for persons and respect for the organization could proceed together.

- According to Drucker, workers have three needs:
  i. They have the need to draw upon scientific and analytical studies of their work.
  ii. They have the need to receive regular feedback on their performance.
  iii. They need continuous learning.

- Management’s job is to supply workers with what they need in these areas in order to fulfill their tasks effectively. Neither the workers nor management are omniscient and must rely on each other. “Management does need to supply the expertise of technical assistance, advice, information, communication, coordination with related elements of the organization, and guidance related to making the work contribute to the organization’s objectives.” (pg.166)

- As simple as this sounds in retrospect, it was revolutionary as it came forth. Managers were not to be seen as supervisors, but teachers, trainers, coaches, and guides. The workers were to be responsible and empowered. People are resources, not problems, and need to be led, not controlled. Drucker’s theories are much closer to what a believer in the workplace
would be able to affirm and apply than what came before, even though Taylorism and its reactions certainly contributed to helpful knowledge along the way.

16. Robert Levering & the Importance of Trust. Robert Levering is the last management theorist mentioned by Harding. (pgs. 167, ff.)

- Levering’s contribution is, in many ways, the final piece to get in place from Harding’s perspective, because even Drucker’s management theory can be used to manipulate employees for the sole benefit of the company. Levering’s theory is that the key building block to companies that workers truly love working for is the building block of trust. Rather than looking for specific policies in place, Levering discovered that the key to great places to work is in the relationships between the company and the employees. The key element of a working relationship is trust. Over and over again in his research Levering would hear both workers and management at good companies talk about how they believed in, or trusted each other. They could rely on the company, and the company could rely on the workers.

- Furthermore, Levering discovered that workers were quite good at knowing when they were working for a company that simply wanted to use management techniques simply to get more productivity out of them, and this approach on the part of the company eroded trust. But when workers knew that the management wasn’t simply trying to get more out of them, but were genuine in what the company wanted, and when the company was able to build trust into the fabric of its life, workers responded in kind. According to Levering the most common denominator in this type of company was that they had genuine trust in their employees and unfeigned interest in their welfare. “Trust on the part of management means ‘believing that there is usually someone close to the problem who is able to solve it, or someone who is close to an opportunity who is able to exploit it.’” (pg. 173.)

- Workplaces that had built respect and trust for employees into their culture also had a passion for openness and fair play, each of which furthered the trust levels even more. The end result, of course is always greater productivity, but not as a form of manipulation and control. Trust is the building block for making a workplace a great workplace.

17. Re-discuss American Business Culture

- The Macro View
  - N.T. Wright & Worldview – Name American business Culture together using these aspects of worldview:
    1. Stories
    2. Questions
    3. Symbols
    4. Actions
ii. **Berger & The Homeless Mind** - How are these two areas still functioning or not? How do they shape American Business Culture?
   1. Technological Industry
   2. Bureaucracy

iii. **Hardy & Management Theory** – How do you see management theory operating today in ways that shape American Business Culture?

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**Slide 12 - Assignment**

18. Assignment – Pick a particular company or organization and do Thick Description for next week.
   - Read *The Angel of Detroit*

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**Week Three**

**Slide 1 – Particular Thick Description**

1. Recap
   - The Goal…
   - A Practical Model of Cultural Interpretation in the Workplace

2. The Big Picture
   - The Homeless Mind
   - American Management Culture

3. Presentation of Studies of Thick Description

4. Discussion of *The Angel of Detroit*

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**Slide 2 – The Powers**

5. The Powers
   - Ephesians and Colossians
     - The Powers
       1. Walter Wink
       2. Hendrikus Berkhof
   - The Basic Point
     - Elemental structures in creation
     - They are not good or evil in themselves
     - They can be used for either good or evil
     - When evil – they can take over a culture or society
     - Examples?
       1. Lead a discussion here – use obvious examples – Naziism, Enron. But what about more subtle ones?
Slide 3 - Application

6. Back into Groups
   a. Apply the biblical viewpoint of ‘the powers’ to your studies
      i. What powers can you see and name?
      ii. Are they being used for good?
      iii. Or ill?
   b. Report in 15 minutes

Slide 4 – Christ & the Powers

7. The Cross & the Powers

8. The Lordship of Christ

9. The ‘Business World’ & the Powers

10. The ‘Business World’ & the Lordship of Christ

Week Four

Slide 1 – The Strange World of the Bible

1. Ancient Near Eastern Worldviews & Contemporary Western Worldviews – a beginning
2. N.T. Wright’s Schema revisited
   a. Therefore what are the contours of a Christian Worldview?34

Slide 2 – The Story

b. The Story
   1. Creator and his creation
   2. Humans made in his image and given honor and tasks to perform
   3. The rebellion of humans and the dissonance of all creation therefore,
   4. The Creator acting decisively in Israel, culminating in Jesus, to rescue creation from its plight
   5. The Creator continues to act through the church to move creation to the full restoration which is his goal for it.

Slide 3 – Basic Questions

34 This whole schema is from N.T. Wright and is masterful, ibid, pp.132-135
c. Basic Questions:
   i. Who are we? Humans, made in the image of the creator. We have responsibilities that come with the status.
      1. Not fundamentally defined by race, status, gender, or geography, or success – nor are we pawns in a deterministic game.
   ii. Where are we?
      1. In a good and beautiful, though transient world, with a job to do. We aren’t in an alien world, (as in New Age or Gnosticism) nor is this world all there is. (A god itself.)
   iii. What’s wrong?
      1. Humanity has rebelled against the creator, which is reflected in a cosmic dislocation from the creator, thus the whole world is out of tune with God’s intentions for it.
         a. Christian faith rejects dualisms which see evil in creation itself,
         b. And monisms, which analyze evil as humans being out of tune with the environment itself
         c. And half truths presented as wholes - as in Marxism and Freudianism
   iv. The Solution?
      1. The creator has acted, is acting, and will act within the creation to deal with the weight of evil set up by human rebellion
      2. And to bring this world to the end for which it was made
         a. Which is: to fully reflect and resonate with the Creator’s goodness and glory.
      3. This solution comes through Jesus and continues through the Spirit’s work.

Slide 4 - Symbols

d. Symbols
   i. Liturgy
   ii. Sacraments
      1. Lord’s Supper
      2. Baptism
   iii. Buildings themselves
   iv. Specific symbols - cross, fish, clothing
   v. Bible
   vi. Music

Slide 5 - Actions

e. Actions
   i. We are for the world - in the world, but not of it.
ii. Worship
iii. Fellowship
iv. Service
  1. Hospitals
  2. Schools
  3. Missions
v. Imperfect, but this doesn’t negate the direction, “We are muddled, mistaken, foolish and wayward.” But, “Still are given a sense of a clear direction, which is to work in the world in a way that glorifies the creator and heals the broken sinfulness of the world.”

Slide 6 – A Few Observations:

f. Let me step back and make a few observations about the Christian worldview:
   i. It is very aware of the supernatural.
   ii. It is affirming of nature, but doesn’t worship it.
   iii. Both are under the good authority of a personal/tri-personal God
       1. All arenas of life are God’s – there are not compartments that are cut off from the Lordship of Christ.
   iv. There is a real problem - dislocation of relationship of trust and love with God.
   v. Only God can fix it.
   vi. He calls us to be a part of that process – a big part of it!
   vii. The structure of creation is connectional.
       1. This is both positive and negative.

Slide 7 – The Business Worldview

g. Discussion:
   i. What is the business worldview?
      1. Story (stories)
         a. IBD, Fortune, Forbes, Business Week, Wall Street Journal
      2. Questions
         a. Who? Your career
         b. Where? Work is the locus of the center of life
         c. What’s the problem?
            i. Lack of productivity
            ii. Inefficiency
            iii. Ineffectiveness
            iv. Poor Management

36 Ibid.
v. Poor margins

3. Symbols
   a. Wall Street
   b. NYSE
   c. Computer
   d. Spreadsheet
   e. Financial Statement

4. Actions
   a. Work first

Slide 8 – A Few Observations:

h. Observations:
   i. Focused on the visible - even the measurable
   ii. Tends toward idolatry of work and business practices (the REAL world)
      1. No other arena - Church (put into the larger category of non-profits and charities), Non-profits, Education, Military, or Government - really experiences real life, and should seek and accept the practices and wisdom of competitive business. (MBO)
   iii. Authority stops at the boardroom or owner
   iv. Highly compartmentalized and specialized - (division of labor)
   v. Problem? not enough freedom of markets - regulatory burdens
   vi. Only you can fix it - self reliance (lead, follow, or get out of the way)
   vii. Darwinist - survival of the fittest
   viii. The structure of life is individualistic

Week Five

Slide 1 – Presentation of Designs

1. The Goal
   a. The goal is to be able to enter any environment and be a cultural interpreter as a part of discipleship.
   b. Presentation of Group Designs

Slide 2 - Consolidation

2. Consolidate designs
   a. Use a white board to gather everybody’s basic designs
   b. Gather all the tools that are common.
   c. Add anything that is chosen.

Slide 3 – Back to the Drawing board
3. Take the First Company you worked on, and use this new tool
4. Report Next Week

Week Six

Putting It All Together
1. Recap
2. Reports
3. Discussion of Method and culture
   a. How do these designs reflect the culture out of which they arise?
   b. What do they tell you about you?
   c. How would you alter them to reflect your discipleship?
4. Where Do We Go From Here?
A Theology of Economics

• **YOUR WORK MATTERS TO GOD**

• **WHAT ABOUT THE PROFIT MOTIVE?**

• **QUESTIONS:**
  • What did you do with your first paycheck?
  • What’re some of your earliest memories about money?
  • How would you describe the current state of the economy?
Bible Studies

- Genesis – Creation and stewardship
- Leviticus – Redemption and Sabbath
- Ruth – The people of God and the common Good
- Kings – and property
  - David and the Temple Mount – purchased, not taken
  - I Kings 21:1-24 -- Ahab & Naboth’s vineyard - taken, not purchased
- The Prophets and Classism
  - Amos
  - Micah 6
  - Habakkuk 2
Bible Studies II

- **New Testament**
  - **Jesus**
    - Sermon on the Matthew 6:19-34
    - Matthew 19:16 ff – the Rich Young Man
    - Matthew 22:15-22 – Bearing the Imprint and Cash Values
    - Luke 16 – the purpose of money
    - Luke 19 – Zach and salvation
  - **Acts 4:32-5:11 – Property II**
Epistles

- Romans 13:6-10 – taxes, government and the law of love
- Philippians 4:10-20 – the secret of contentment
- Colossians 3:5 - greed and idolatry
- I Thessalonians 4:11 – Personal responsibility
- II Thessalonians 3:6-15 – idleness and work
- I Timothy 6:3-19 – Love of Money a root...& the responsibilities of wealth
- Hebrews 13:5-6 – love of money & the sovereignty of God
- James 2:1-13 – Equality in the Kingdom
  - 4:1-6 – envy and the world system
  - 4:13-17 – making plans as though...
  - 5:1-6 – the dangers of wealth
Session II

- Putting it All Together
  - List the Biblical principles of economics & money you learned from the last Session
Putting it All Together – Cont.

- Theological Basics:
  - Creation
  - Sin
  - Redemption-salvation
  - The End in Mind
A Case Study (or two)

- AES – and Beehive economics

- Burgerville - and medical benefits
Session III

- Economics – a short history
  - Feudalism
  - Mercantilism
  - Capitalism
  - Socialism
  - Interventionism
Economics and Theologians

- Aquinus
- Leo III
  - The Holy Family
- John Paul II
  - Centisimus Annus
Resources

- Ron Sider – Rich Christians In an Age of Hunger
  - An Impact
  - Awareness of the Global Poor
  - Economic Justice to the Forefront
- Michael Novak - Spirit Of Democratic Capitalism
  - Capitalism within moral boundaries
  - The three-legged stool
- Bob Goudzwaard – Capitalism and Progress
  - A History of Capitalism
  - A Way Forward - disclosure
Resources, Cont.

- Bob Gay – Cash Values
  - The Power and Reality of Money

- Rob Schneider – The Good of Affluence
  - A Response to Sider
  - God’s Will is for people to flourish

- Claar & Klay
  - Tour deforce
  - Introduction to economics within a Christian framework
  - The 5 Basic Christian Principles
Claar and Klay – the Big 5

1 – Humans are given the calling and responsibility of stewardship
2 – Humans are created to enjoy creation and show gratitude for it
3 – Humans have an obligation to work
   ○ Work is the principle means for exercising stewardship
4 – Society must make provision for the poor
5 - Humans are called to develop resources and apply their talents
Session IV

- Construct a Theology of Economics - as a group
  - Basic principles
  - How you will put it into action at work
  - One sheet explanation

- Write a response to the current crisis
  - A letter to the President and Congress
Leadership For Cultural Change

- The Need For Leaders
- The Pyramid For Leaders

Vision

Structure

Skills

Culture
Leadership Style

- Discover your style
- Use it
# Session II - Adaptive Leadership

## Heifitz and Adaptive Leadership

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Work</th>
<th>Leadership Task</th>
<th>Adaptive Challenge</th>
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<tr>
<td>Provide answers</td>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>Ask questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protect</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>Face reality</td>
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<td>Orient to</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Dis-orient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smooth over - quell</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Draw out, use as tool</td>
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<td>Establish - reinforce</td>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
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Adaptive Leadership - Part Dieux

- **Technical – Level I**
  - Problem – Clear
  - Solution & Implementation – clear
  - Locus of Responsibility – Leader (expertise)
  - Kind of Work - Technical

- **Blended – Level II**
  - Problem – Clear
  - Solution & Implementation – Requires Learning
  - Locus of Responsibility – Leader and Organization
  - Kind of Work – Technical & Adaptive

- **Adaptive – Level II**
  - Problem – Requires learning
  - Solution and Implementation – Requires Learning
  - Locus of Responsibility - Organization with Leaders Guidance
  - Kind of Work - Adaptive
Dealing with Adaptive challenges

- **4 Tasks:**
  - **Discern the challenge – adaptive? Or technical?**
    - The gap between aspirations and reality and focusing on the issues created by that gap
  - **Regulate the Stress caused by confronting the issues**
    - Pace
    - Process
  - **Understand the role of Authority –**
    - Authority is always both a resource for leadership and a constraint
  - **Type III may be broken down into Type II and Type I components**
    - AS LEARNING TAKES PLACE!
Edgar Schein – *Organizational Culture and Leadership* - the state of the art

“In an age in which leadership is touted over and over again as a critical variable in defining the success of failure of organizations, it becomes all the more important to look at the other side of the leadership coin – how leaders create culture and how culture defines and creates leaders.” (Schein, pg. xi.)

Discuss The Handout
Leadership For Cultural Change

- **Learn and interpret the Culture** — If you don’t become conscious of the culture in an organization, it will manage you.
  - An organization is....

- **Levels of Culture**
  - Artifacts
  - Espoused beliefs and values
  - Underlying Assumptions
Leadership For Cultural Change - Cont.

- Organizational Typologies
  - Coercive
  - Utilitarian
  - Normative

- Covey’s Thesis
  - All Organizations now must strive to be or become normative

- Because of...
Leadership For Cultural Change – Cont.

- Managing Cultural Change

- Three Steps:
  - Unfreezing/Disconfirmation
  - Cognitive Restructuring
  - Refreezing
Everett Rogers – Diffusion of Innovations

Definition of Innovation – an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new
  - Most cultural change will be felt as an innovation

Definition of Diffusion – the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system

Definition of Communication – a process in which participants create and share information in order to reach mutual understanding
Diffusion of Innovations – Cont.

- **History**
  - Iowa farmers and the seed revolution
  - Most cultural change will be felt as an innovation

- **The Basics**
  - The ‘S’ Curve
  - Interpersonal channels are more effective
  - The Innovation Decision Process
    - Knowledge
    - Persuasion
    - Decision
    - Implementation
    - Confirmation
Diffusion of Innovation – Cont.

- Types of Innovation Decisions in Organizations
  - Optional
  - Collective
  - Authority

- Some Freebies
  - Organizational Slack
  - Be a Champion
Rosabeth Moss-Kanter
- Empowerment as leadership

Confidence
- Self Confidence – emotional
- Confidence in One Another – behavioral
- Confidence in the System – organizational
- External Confidence - environmental
Rosabeth – Cont.

- **Leadership for Building Confidence**
  - Espouse – the Power of Message
  - Exemplify – the Power of Models
  - Establish – the Power of formal Mechanisms
Techniques – Cont.

- Covey
  - Principle-Centered Leadership
    - The 4 needs of people
      - Live
      - Love
      - Learn
      - Leave a Legacy
    - The 4 needs of organizations
      - Personal
      - Interpersonal
      - Managerial
      - Organizational
  - The 8th Habit
    - Find Your voice
    - Help Others Find theirs
Lencioni

- Death by Meeting
  - Healthy conflict leads to good meetings
  - Lightning Round
  - Thunder Round

- Silos, Politics & Turf Wars
  - Thematic Goal – what’s the one thing the organization will focus on over the next 6-12 months
  - Defining Objectives – list of actions to reach the Thematic Goal
  - Operational Details – the day-to-day that must carry on and need to be covered regularly
Session V

- Your Philosophy of Leadership
- Your Plan of Action for Your Workplace
LifeKeys

LifeKeys is a personal development curriculum developed by David Stark, Jane A. Kise, and Sandra Krebs Hirsch.¹ It formed a portion of the course on A Theology of Work.

Table of Contents:

1. LifeKeys to Discovering Who You Are, Why you’re Here, and What You Do Best
2. Life Gifts – Doing What comes Naturally
3. Spiritual Gifts – God’s Special Instruments
4. Personality Types – Melodies for Life
5. Values – Chords That Touch Your Soul
6. Passions – What God Puts in Your Heart
7. Life Choices – Orchestrating Your Priorities
8. Service – For Whom Will You Play?

The Workbook follows the same table of contents and adds a section on putting all the work that is done on each chapter together on a single page, which captures the work visually. The result is a life purpose statement that each participant could look at, discuss with others, and use for their own further thought and growth.

The Research Study Group took a couple of months in the summer to work with each participant one at a time on creating a life purpose statement. The group put all the information for each participant on a white board, and then added a few categories that I have discovered help the process. These added categories are: whether a person is a team person or a ‘lone wolf’; what the person’s best context is in terms of groups or ages or circumstances of working with or serving other people; and their life story—or history. It’s been my experience that many people’s trajectory in life is set by their early experiences. In particular, their experiences in their grade school years. We spent a fair amount of time working with each member of the research study group to see what they gravitated toward when they were young, what they were asked to do, what role they

played in their circle of friends, and what their interests were at an early age. This added category seemed to help the process a great deal.

The Research Study Group experienced the LifeKeys portion of the Theology of Work Learning Module as highly motivating and fun. Several have gone on to utilize it with friends and, in one case, with a small group that person has been leading for a number of years.
Appendix B
Case Studies and WorkMatters Worksheet

Case Study I

From *Church on Sunday, Work on Monday*

**Jack & Disability Policy**

Jack, a manager at a large company, is a lapsed Catholic. He looks at the church’s social policies with dismay, but feels a strong personal connection to the religion. He values being a good person at work, by which he means being considerate, honest, and if at all possible, generous. He told us his story.

He has to make a choice: to decide whether or not the company should continue offering its current policy of paying for certain disabilities. It is generous, treating any disability as a total disability, and the successful claimant receives total benefits for life. New economic circumstances and changing claimant patterns have rendered the policy an ongoing financial loss for the company. Moreover, many people with disabilities are still able to work, but not at their previous jobs. It seems ethically preposterous to demand that the company fund their leisure for life, although by legal rights this is the contract.

In reviewing whether to reformulate this type of policy, Jack summons up a panoply of utilitarian arguments to decide whether it is morally and financially right to end or modify this offering. He reasons that the claims will hurt many other people by eating up so much of the company’s revenue. Insurance costs will go up in other categories, and jobs will be lost. What is more, the policy encourages people to lie. Corporations seeking to lay off workers have been known to tell their employees to claim total disability as a way of continuing an income, and they even find doctors who reinforce these claims.

Secular utilitarianism, humanistically applied, mediates the problem, taking into account the various constituencies affected. But as Jack comes to this conclusion, a second level of meaning intrudes itself, one that has to be called “religiously based.” He finds himself thinking about human dignity, about “defending and opening up the possibilities of life,” as John Paul II advocated in *Centesimus Annus*. Jack has always liked that phrase, and it frequently occurs to him like a mantra.

The disability program under scrutiny does not open up the possibilities of life. It degrades the claimant, in his view, and threatens the livelihood of employees and shareholders. But simply ending all such policies because they are likely to be unprofitable is also unacceptable: some people truly need permanent, total disability. Can his company choose to offer it, or will the decision fall to the state?
THE REST OF THE STORY

Jack might have resolved this problem with a tough-minded look at the numbers, finding a pricing structure for such insurance policies that makes them available (but only to people in exceptionally generous companies or who personally have the wealth to finance them). Instead, Jack forms a task force of doctors, insurance executives, and customers. After several years, a number of innovative practices emerge to ease the cost of this kind of insurance. Legislation to approve graduated degrees of disability payment is submitted thereby allowing partial claims payments and opportunity to demand that claimants seek some sort of work. Additionally, the company works closely with one of the leading rehabilitation hospitals in its area to develop new therapies and hardware to allow disabled people more mobility.

The irony is, Jack barely recognized this process of faith in his own work life until our interview. He is so used to seeing his church as being hostile to business in his industry and to its extensive family policies on childcare and birth control that he has erected a secular filter for conscience. A business decision might be personally meaningful, but is basically a secular matter.
Case Study 2

A Sales Dilemma

An industrial equipment sales rep has a client with a time sensitive need. The client must remodel an in-house recreational center for a large company, and part of that process is to replace all the lockers that the employees use. He only has a one-week time window during the Thanksgiving holiday to receive the product and have all the installation work done. Three bids are being considered. It is a highly competitive environment, with over-supply and soft demand. The sales rep is being pressured to make quota by his company and is worried he might lose his job if things don’t pick up.

The client informs the sales rep that his bid is slightly higher than the others are, but will be awarded the (sizable) contract if he can guarantee the delivery and installation time. The others have given this guarantee already, but the client has some questions about their truthfulness, and wants to deal with this particular rep, but must have a guarantee. If not, the contract will be awarded to one of the other competitors.

The rep knows that this guarantee cannot be given. He also knows that none of the other competitors can give a guarantee either. All are subject to manufacturing schedules beyond their control, and all use independent trucking companies to deliver their products, which means time frames can only be general, not specific. He knows that the competitors have lied.

What does he do? If he lies too, he will win the contract, but will put the client in the position of finding out at the last minute that he may miss his one week window of opportunity to get the work done, thus putting the client in a bad position in his own company. If he tells the truth, he will probably lose the contract, thus putting his own job in jeopardy. If he tells the truth about his competitors, he will be seen as engaging in slander and his personal ethics tell him not to speak ill of others.

The Rest of the Story

The sales rep met with the client. He went over the way the metal industry manufactures and ships products like metal lockers, explaining how things normally work. He then informed the client that he couldn’t give a firm guarantee that he could definitely meet that target dates, because it was too close to Thanksgiving – there was not enough lead-time.

He then gave a manufacturing time frame that he’d been promised from the factory, and the shipping range of dates he could commit to. The sales rep then promised to do everything he could to track both the manufacturing and the shipping, and would inform the client by phone when the manufacturing had been completed and when it had been shipped, so he could know everything the rep knew, as it happened. This was the best he could do, and all he could offer. He was awarded the contract.
## WorkMatters Worksheet

**Date________________**  
**People________________**

**Place________________**  
**Reference ________________**

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<tr>
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<th>CHRISTIAN</th>
<th>WORKPLACE</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Un-creation</td>
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<td>Re-creation</td>
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<td>Hope</td>
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<td>Ethical Questions</td>
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WorkMatters Worksheet

Date_________________ People_________________

Place_________________ Reference _______________

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>The client and his job are important to God. The competitors are valuable as persons, even if they are lying. The rep’s job is to honor all the above, yet speak truth. He has a good product at a good and fair price. Rep’s vision for his life is to help clients be successful in their jobs.</td>
<td>The client is there to be used as a means to the end of meeting the needs of the sales rep Never worry about honoring your competitors – alls fair in love, war, and selling Everything’s on back-order, what’s the big deal? Vision is to make a lot of money.</td>
<td>Approach the whole situation in terms of honoring others, while engaging in fair competition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Un-Creation</td>
<td>Sales rep is being tempted to lie in order to keep his job, and is being pressured to deliver a promise he can’t keep. He is being undercut unfairly by his competition – this has happened before, with the same people.</td>
<td>This is business – it’s just the way things are. Don’t be such a prude. Little lies don’t hurt anybody – everybody’s doing this. Anything for a sale – you have a good product and since nobody can give that guarantee, why can’t everybody lie about it?</td>
<td>Rep determines not to give in to temptations – either to lie, or to make the others look bad for lying.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-Creation</td>
<td>Rep can deliver the product in as timely a fashion as anyone else, and can do it fairly without diminishing competitors in the client’s eyes. He can maintain his conscience and his composure in the midst of cutthroat competition. Name all forgiveness issues.</td>
<td>Not my problem – if it gets me the order I’ll do it, and if I can make the other guy look bad, I’m in better shape the next time. Welcome to the real world</td>
<td>Prayer for the situation, that he can handle it truthfully and in a positive manner, without making others look bad. Share personal vision statement with client, ask client about his personal vision statement. Forgive competitors (in heart) for trying to undercut him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Long-term vendor and customer relationships that enhance workplace for all involved</td>
<td>No long-term view</td>
<td>Seek to build a way to reflect on this experience together as vendors and customer for future partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Questions</td>
<td>How can he speak the truth in love in this situation? Is it ever ok to lie? Is it ever ok to skewer the competition, even when you know they’re doing something unethical? 10 Commandments: lying, coveting, putting God first Sermon on the Mt.: love your enemies, do unto others as you’d have them do to you</td>
<td>Get the order – you have a good product at a fair price too – just don’t get caught.</td>
<td>Explain how production and shipping take place in the ind. equipment world in general, then give the time frame the rep can commit to. Work closely with the shipper and upper management to track the shipment. Be personally available during Thanksgiving to solve any problems that occur, commit to truth telling up front on these matters.</td>
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<td>Planning &amp; Preparation</td>
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<td>Organizing Work</td>
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<td>1. March 3 Organizational Meeting</td>
<td>3. April 23 Theology of Work</td>
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<td>5. May 28 LifeKeys</td>
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Appendix D
Sermons and an Office Dedication

“You Are Called”
Various Verses

September 6, 2009
The Reverend Fitz Neal

We have finished as of last week our series on the questions of Jesus. What an incredible way it has been to spend the summer: listening to the questions that Jesus asks of us. I encourage you as you read through the Gospels in the future, to make sure you are paying attention to those questions of Jesus; that you are listening to them. That you are paying attention to the questions he asks of you in particular. Beginning next week we will be looking at the Parables of Jesus. As we were living the questions during the summer, throughout the fall and leading up to the season of Advent, when we celebrate the marvelous truth of Christ coming to be with us, we will be living the stories of Jesus. But this Sunday we are going to focus on a very important Biblical truth for all of life because the weekend itself calls for it.

We are going to be looking today at the Biblical truth that each of us has a call or a calling from God—otherwise known as our Christian *vocation*. Now note I did not say, ‘vacation.’ I said ‘vocation’. Its Labor Day weekend. What is Labor Day weekend famous for? Well, first of all it’s famous for the fact that after this weekend you can’t wear white slacks if you’re a guy. One time I wore white slacks in October. You need to know I have to pass inspection before I’m allowed to leave the house every morning. Laurel nicely said, “You aren’t wearing those slacks today are you?” And I said, “Sure, what’s the problem?” And she said, “It’s after Labor Day.” I really didn’t understand until this was completely explained to me.

It’s Labor Day weekend. It’s that time of the year when we stop, take a day off as a nation and remember what work is about. Christians give thanks to God for the goodness of work. As you will recall from last spring, when we talked about the implications of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we learned that our work matters to God for its own sake. I spent a little bit of time in that sermon on the reality that we have a call or a calling from God. Today we are going to focus on it more particularly, and this will be one of those sermons in which I ask you to look at a few places in the Bible. This is where we take the Bible’s teaching on vocation and pull it
together. So I’m going to ask you to take your Bibles now and turn them to the first Epistle of Peter, then we’ll be looking at a passage in Ephesians and a few other places.

The word vocation comes from the Latin word, ‘to call’ and it means ‘a calling’. Every believer has a calling from God and many Christians are not aware of this but it’s true. There are a couple of things that are very important for us to remember about our calling and the first is this—all of us have a general calling from God as believers that we share in together, and that first aspect of our calling that we all have, whether we know it or not—is to be priests. Look at 1 Peter 2:9-10.

The most direct point from 1 Peter 2:9-10 is that each and every Christian believer and all of us together have a calling from God to be priests. A priest is one who stands between God and the rest of the world. We represent the world to God. Through our worship and our prayers we bring the words of people before God as priests. But we also represent God to the world. That is our number one job—to be priests. The primary way that we represent God to the world and the world to God is through worship. As priests I could say that our chief calling is to worship God. To magnify and glorify the greatness, the majesty, the work and the wonders of God fully revealed in Jesus Christ, and through the stories and pages in words of the Bible. That’s our job. We are also to minister God’s presence into the world as priests.

In 1935 the King of England was about to make a national address to the people of the United States. In this day and age, someone making a national address is something we take for granted, but at that time it was one of the first times that someone from across the pond, shall we say, was going to try to speak to all the American people. As the speech was getting underway, right before the King made his address, someone rolled a heavy caisson equipment cabinet across the power cable to the radio equipment that was transmitting the speech. Everything went completely dead. There was a General Electric engineer helping that day in the studio. He looked at the cable. He knew that if he were to pick up both ends at exactly the same time the power would flow through his body, the connection would be completed and the speech could go on. He also knew that if he didn’t pick up both ends at exactly the same time it would kill him. He took a deep breath, said a prayer, reached down and picked up both ends of the power cable at exactly the same time and the power coursed through him. The King was able to communicate with the nation.

Folks, that’s what our job is. Our number one job in life is to stand between God and the world, to stand between the world and God, to be those who are connected to the power of God so that God can speak to, communicate with, and even redeem the world which he loves and for whom he died through Jesus Christ. It happens primarily through
our worship. Not just the worship that we engage in on Sunday mornings, but the worship that is our life as we magnify God.

I want to read to you from Ephesians 1:20-23 from Eugene Peterson’s translation called The Message. Follow along with me.

“All this energy issues from Christ. God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven in charge of running the universe; everything from galaxies to governments. No name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all—has the final word on everything. At the center of all this Christ rules the church. The church you see is not peripheral to the world. The world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ’s body in which he speaks, and acts and by which he fills everything with his presence.”

Note what he said there. It’s a fine translation. “The church is not peripheral to the world”, as though what we do in our life together is an option or an activity that just takes place on Sunday mornings. It is who we are, wherever we are every moment of our lives. It is our job to be Christ’s body. The church is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to us. Christ acts and speaks through us. We have a calling that no one and nothing else can do: to be a kingdom of priests passing on the presence of God every day. In every venue where you find yourself you are called there by God to worship and pass on his presence. We all share in that vocation together. But then all of us together and each of us individually are also called to a life of discipleship. We are all called to live a life of committed discipleship in following Christ.

Turn back to the Gospel according to Luke 9:23-24. We are called to lives of committed discipleship in following Christ. That’s another part of our calling from God, our job that we have been given by him. Jesus, verse 23 chapter 9, said to them all (all the disciples and all of the crowd),

“If anyone would come after me he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his or her life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.”

We are called to a life of following Jesus Christ. So, we have a calling that we share in together. God’s calling is for all of us as a body of believers both here and around the world, but we also have a calling that is personal and individual. It is not private but it is personal.
Every single believer has a vocation—a calling from God for their life. Again, many Christians are not aware of this. The reason why many people are not aware of this is because of an erroneous view of what a calling is—that only religious professionals have a calling from God, everybody else just has a job. Those that are “Called” have work that is eternally important. Like Bruce and me! Those who aren’t called have work, but it doesn’t count for much. That’s the erroneous view. It grew up in the Middle Ages and is still with us in various forms.

The way this used to be talked about was to say that a person had a “Call to Ministry.” But according to the Bible, every single believer—not the pastors alone—every single follower has a call to ministry. Some are called to a particular role in the church but all are called to ministry and that call to ministry does mean here in the operations of this church. But it especially means that each and every one of us is called to a ministry in daily life. This view of a calling came from a re-emphasis on what the Bible teaches about it from Luther and Calvin, the great reformers who did away with the medieval notion that only religious professionals were called. Every single believer has an individual call from God.

Turn back to Ephesians 4:11. This is one of the places where the New Testament talks about the spiritual gifts. But it’s not just talking about spiritual gifts, it’s talking about how Jesus calls each one of us to particular tasks and duties in all of life: “It was Christ who gave some to be apostles; some to be prophets; some to be evangelists; and some to be pastors and teachers. Every Christian is given gifts by God and called to certain tasks in life, which prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature—attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

So what are the main points we need to remember about our vocation? From the New Testament and from the Bible as a whole, I have six points that we need to remember:

- **Each believer is unique and does have a unique calling from God.**

  Each person has a unique personality. Each of you has unique passions and interests and aspects of life that you care about. Each of you has unique life experiences which have shaped you and continue to shape you. Each of you has unique talents that other people don’t have and each of you have spiritual gifts. God creates us uniquely and redeems our whole life to fit in with God’s call for each of us individually.
• **Accept the fact that you have a calling from God.**

  Many Christians, for some reason, want to back away from this truth and want to say that they aren’t unique; that they have no gifts; that they have nothing important to offer. Don’t do that. God has gifted each and every one of his children. Your calling is a responsibility to accept from God. Embrace it. Embrace the simple fact that you are unique and you have a calling from God.

• **Work on discovering and developing your personal sense of call.**

  Pray about it. Ask friends and loved ones what they think it is. What your unique gifts and passions are—where you belong in life. And, take the *Life Keys* course the next time we offer it. This course has been offered and will be offered in the future as a way for us as a church to keep working and discovering our uniqueness. Then develop it and finding a way to deploy it in the church and in life.

• **“Calling” and “Job” aren’t the same thing.**

  There may be a close fit between your job and your calling or there may not. Paul as a tentmaker wasn’t even close to his calling as an apostle. I once knew of a man who was a warehouse worker but his calling was to lead Bible Studies in which he was masterful. It’s good if your calling and your job can be brought close together but it’s not necessary.

• **A word about retirement:**

  If you are retired, praise God. You are now free to pursue your calling full time. I cannot find any verse or any passage in the Bible that gives us the concept of retiring from our calling from God. The cultural ideal is that we graduate from work, responsibilities and all time commitments. I realize that what I’m about to say is very counter-cultural on this point. But whether or not you are retired or looking forward to retirement, what most of us dream about is to shed ourselves of all commitments. The truth is that most of us are going to be retired for very long periods of time—anywhere from ten to thirty—sometimes even forty years. Does the Bible teach that this is a time for unfettered relaxation? No, it teaches us that retirement is a time for fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. I want us, here at Columbia, to be rethinking this whole retirement culture biblically. I want us to be able to discover together what it means to follow Christ fully in retirement. Let’s work on this together. I don’t know exactly how to do that, neither do some of you. I just know that God is calling us to that.
Knowing our calling and doing it is one of the greatest sources of joy in our life.

I could talk about the joy of knowing our calling from God or I could have a picture teach us what joy is. There is a picture I have of a young boy—his name is Caidn. He’s the grandson of one of my best friends from high school whom I visited just a couple of weeks ago. When you look at his picture there is absolute, total, pure joy on his face. But Caidn was born with just about every strike against him. He is partially paralyzed from birth from the waist down. Like so many, he is a kid with incredible energy. He has a vocation and a calling in life—to work through the disabilities that are holding him back. When I first saw this picture I knew it was an illustration of the joy of one very particular thing, and that is that Caidn has a goal to reach. On this day the goal was to get on first base. Caidn has just hit a baseball off of a tee ball holder. With a group of people who help disabled children experience the joy of team sports he is on his way to first base. And he knows he’s going to get there. If I could distill Caidn’s joy and brightness in life I would. I would put it in a bottle and sell it to the world. I would say, “This is what happens when you know your uniqueness from God, accept it, develop it and use it in life.” It is one of the sources of the greatest joy we can ever experience in life.

As we are about to enter into another year I want to hold up one set of callings in particular—that of students and educators. If you are a student and you are in the sanctuary this morning, I want to remind you that your calling while you are in this time of your life is to learn. So I want you to accept your calling with everything that is in you. If you are a student—whether it’s college or graduate school, high school, middle school, grade school or kindergarten and below—learn. That’s your calling from God. Learn to love learning for its own sake. Explore the arts and the sciences. Use your mind. This glorifies God. Encourage your fellow students. Share your faith with them. Get behind your teachers, administrators, coaches and parents. Part of their calling is to help you discover yours. They need your best attitude and your prayers.

But I also want to speak to teachers and educators this morning. Last week you began a new year of fulfilling your calling. It’s some of the hardest, most rewarding work the world has ever seen. We are glad that you’ve answered that incredible calling from God. Thank you for your service.

This morning I want you, as we conclude this time in God’s word, to pray for these people. Join me now as we pray for them.
“O Lord, bless our educators. You are the great teacher and you are wisdom itself. You are the truth and to know you is to know the Father. Help them to teach as you do with love and understanding; not only the teaching of subjects but of students. Give them the right kind of love for the children entrusted to their care—the young men and women—that their love will be a reflection of your love. Keep them mindful that you created these students and have given them different talents, all of which are intended to glorify you. And Lord, bless our students. Bless them with friendships that lead to spiritual growth. Imbue them with a love for truth—your truth—and fill them with a heart for lifelong learning. Help them where they struggle and use this time in their lives to change the world and to prepare them for their vocations. We lift all of these people up, and all of our schools and learning, wherever it takes place, in the name of Jesus our master teacher. Amen.
November 8, 2009
The Reverend Fitz Neal

According to Jesus everything in life depends upon making the right investment. If we make the right investment, we will have the lives we dream of. If we make the wrong investment, we’ll miss out on life here as well as life in the next life. In other words, invest in God. Be rich in the Lord and you will have life according to what you need for life here and life in eternity. Invest in the things of this world alone and you’ll lose everything, including having a narrow, constricted life for your whole time on earth. This man—this rich fool—is interpreted in this painting by Rembrandt (shown on screen), the great Dutch reformation painter. This is HIS rendition of this very passage. This rich fool is instructive. Look at this piece of art for just a moment. It is dark. The only light in the painting is the light of the candle by which this rich fool is examining a coin. You have to look hard to see what he’s doing. He has a coin in front of the candle and his entire focus is on that coin. There is a symbolism in this picture according to the art of the day. Books stacked like that around a person’s office is symbolic of self-sufficient pride. Every pastor I know should take heed. We LOVE books!

Compartments

There is no mention of God in this man’s thoughts in this story by Jesus. It’s all self-centered. He might be a believer in God but he is a functional atheist. You know something? That’s entirely possible in life. It happens this way: it’s called compartmentalism – we have these air-tight compartments that do not interrelate. We have the private, personal compartment where we have values and spiritual things, but we relegate them to the realm of our private, individual lives. But then we have other compartments: we have the compartment of work, the compartment of money and we say, “These two compartments? It’s a whole lot easier if you just hold them apart.” Then we have another air-tight compartment—that’s the compartment of the large social issues and what’s going on in the world. When we have compartmentalism going on everywhere in our lives and hold the compartments away from each other it is entirely possible to be a theoretical person of faith and a functional atheist; to act as though God does not even exist when it comes to the compartments other than faith and values.

Control

Apparently, that is what this rich fool has done. Furthermore, he’s all alone in this story. I don’t know if you noticed. He’s completely isolated—there’s not mention of anybody else in his life. What he’s after in this story is control. In fact, he is after controlling the market. That is why he wants to build bigger and better barns: to store his bumper crop. There is another option for him. Instead of storing his crop, he could have sold it on the market. The only problem with that is the law of supply and demand.
Here’s the way it works: if you have a really big supply of something and the demand is constant, it floods the market and the price goes down.

He could have sold his excess grain and could have lowered the price so the poor people could have afforded more food. He didn’t want to do that. He wanted to ‘corner the market’ to build a bigger and better barn so he could control the price of grain, keep it high, and take care of himself and himself alone for years to come. He was after control so he could live however he wanted. He’s utterly and energetically focused on this work of taking care of himself at everyone else’s expense.

It takes a lot of energy to tear down one set of buildings, develop a set of plans and hire people in order to build a new set of buildings. It takes all of his energy and all of his focus; almost all of his effort. He ignores God. But then, when his life is over – it’s over before he expects it – and he has made no investment in God, it turns out that everything is wasted. His earthly life is wasted and all that he has collected for himself in the story is handed over to someone else, which makes perfect sense. Have you ever seen a U-haul behind a hearse?

This guy, according to God, was a dummy. It’s one of only two times in the Gospels where God speaks of a human being as a fool. This man is one of them. The point of this whole story is: be rich toward God. Be wealthy towards God—towards the things of God—now, not later.

Most of the world has a way of saying, “Well, I’ve got to get things now and take care of them…I’ll be rich in the things of God later.” Later never comes. No, be rich towards God right now and then everything else will take care of itself. That’s the point. But the question is great: how do we do it? It’s one thing to say, “Be rich towards God.” But I will say most of us know this – unless you’ve been hiding under a rock for about the last 5,000 years. You would have heard this, time and time again. It is one of the most constant themes of the entire history of the people of God dating back to the time of Adam and Eve.

It is always tempting to be rich in the things that we can see and touch that give us a sense of security here, and not to be rich in the things of God which are for the most part, invisible. It’s quite another thing to be rich towards God in actual practice.

How do we do it? This parable gives us some “how-to’s”. Let’s just admit this morning (I’m going to say something for all of us that is true) when it comes to becoming rich and wealthy toward God we’re all dummies. We need to learn from God how to invest, and we can learn it from this story. So let’s pretend we don’t know anything about investing in God. This is “Investing for Dummies” this morning. There are four ways, according to this story, to invest in the things of God.
Choose

The first is to choose. To make a choice in what we will value or treasure. Jesus clearly means to say that we have a choice in life as to whether or not we will value the things of God or our “stuff”. The rich fool chose to value (or treasure) his stuff over God. Which one will we choose? What I am about to say is very important for us to learn: value is always conferred. Value does not exist inherently in anything. Not in gold, not in money, not in houses or cars. The values that those things have are there because we have conferred value upon them.

Let’s use a Stradivarius violin as an example for this. It’s just a bunch of wood and some catgut strings and some black ivory tuning pegs—that’s it. That’s all it is. In terms of worth it’s probably not that much—maybe a few dollars worth of materials? But in actual fact we know that a Stradivarius violin is worth, in some cases, hundreds of thousands of dollars! Did you know that a ‘bow’ that goes with a Stradivarius violin can be worth as much as 50 or 60,000 dollars alone? It is worth that much because we value the sweetness of the tone of a Stradivarius violin. In the hands of a virtuoso, it can make you weep it’s so beautiful. It has value because we place value upon it.

Jesus is saying that God gives us the responsibility of making a choice of what we will value. Will we place value upon God above all other things, or will we place value upon our stuff? Jesus put it this way, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will also.” The revolutionary part of that statement is that you and I have the power to choose God first.

Research

The second way to invest in God—Investing for Dummies—is to do your research. The rich fool seems to know everything about crops and barns but nothing about God. No one except a fool would invest in anything that he or she hadn’t researched thoroughly before hand. There are people, apparently, who will invest in something based on a tip from their barber. But would you really do that in life, in normal life? Only a fool would do that!

There is content to the Christian faith. It is both simple (though never simplistic) and profound at the same time. So learn everything you can about God. We do that through reading and studying the Bible and we do it by participating in worship on a regular basis. Above all, however, we learn about God when we do what Jesus said to do. Jesus said, “You don’t really learn anything about God unless you do what I say.” In the great commission at the end of Matthew Jesus said, “Go therefore to all the earth making disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” We know that part really well. But then we tend to skip the next part. He says, “Teaching them to do everything I commanded you.” He didn’t say, “Teaching them everything I commanded you.” He said, “Teach them to DO everything I commanded you.”
The parable that Bruce preached on so eloquently last week, the parable of the Good Samaritan, is a parable about DOING what God said to do, not knowing it. You don’t know until you do. But when we do what Jesus said to do we engage in action research. Then our investment in God will grow. There is some effort involved.

A number of years ago, a Presbyterian pastor (and I checked this out, this really is a true story) got on an airplane to go to a conference and as is usual he sat down next to someone and asked the person next to him “What do you do for a living?” The gentleman said, “Well, I’m an astronomer. I’m a research astronomer and I’m going to a scientific conference.” They talked about that for a few minutes; it was very interesting. Then the astronomer turned to the pastor and said, “And what do you do?” He said, “I’m a pastor.” The conversation immediately went silent.

I’ve had this happen to me. What’s happening in those moments is people going through their mental rolodex and asking themselves, “Have I said a cuss word or anything stupid in the last five minutes?” If they aren’t people of faith they really don’t know what to do with you. It’s odd.

After a few moments of silence, the gentleman sitting next to the pastor said, “Well you know, I don’t know much about religion or faith, I just figure it’s all the same: it’s about being nice to people and doing the best you can.” The pastor thought to himself – that’s not true – that’s completely wrong. What do I say?

Then God gave him a word and he turned to the astronomer and said, “Well you know, I don’t know very much about astronomy but I figure it pretty much can be summed up in, “Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are?”

Isn’t that just perfect?! They then went on to have a wonderful in-depth discussion about the truth of the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ: that there is a God, this God is personal, is triune in nature, that he has come to this world to rescue us from sin and darkness and evil; to reconcile the world to God and then to each other by faith through God’s grace. They had a discussion of depth. Research. Every Christian, every disciple should know what they believe and why they believe it.

**Expert Advice**

**Point number three: seek expert advice.** If you were going to choose to start making some financial investments, in order to do well, you would seek out a financial advisor or a broker. Or at least you would join an investment club so that you aren’t trying to invest by yourself. The Bible, by the way, is a place where experts have been gathered into one place. That’s one way to look at the Bible. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, men and women put into words what God wanted to communicate to the human race in verbal form.

But there are also people in your life, people in this congregation, who are ahead of you in their walk with Jesus Christ. Seek their help out in learning how to invest in
God and how to become rich in the things of God. Read some books! There are some marvelous books being published about life, right now. Take the Alpha course if you haven’t, or help someone else take the Alpha course – which is a basic introduction to the Christian faith and is very beautifully, wonderfully done. Take the Bethel Bible series which I teach on Wednesday evenings. Get in a group and pray and study and work at it a little bit together with some other people.

This rich fool was totally isolated. There is no one else in this painting. He’s all by himself. Get together with some other Christians and seek out some expert advice. As Hebrews 10:24 says, “Do not forsake your own assembling together as is the habit of some.” Some people get out of the habit of being together with God’s people. “Do not forsake that”, the writer of Hebrews said, “but consider how you may stimulate one another to love and good deeds and so much the more as you see the day approaching.” Which day is that? The day when God will wrap up history and bring it to a close in God’s good purposes. Before that day each one of us is going to face a day before God. Once in a while we need to remember that it is serious business and we need the help of experts to be prepared for it.

Commit

Point number four—commit. If you are making an investment in something like the stock market there comes a point of commitment. You have to write a check to somebody. You can’t just say, “Well, that’s a good idea.” You have to sit down and write a check and hand it over to somebody. This is no less true with God. In terms of investing in the things of God we must commit to living with God at the center, period. No kidding.

Here’s what this means – to commit: hand your life over to Jesus Christ as you know him. All of it—your cash, your cars, your career, your house, your children, your grandchildren, your past, your present, your future, your dreams—hand it over.

That’s what it takes. Jesus says when we do that everything else falls into proper place. God is so generous! When we give God everything, God hands 90% of it back so we can live life and enjoy it; so we can enjoy life to the hilt! This also glorifies God. But make a commitment to leave the 10% where it belongs.

This will put everyone who tries it into a place where they must live before God by faith, rather than like a rich fool who sought control. The opposite of control is not chaos. That’s a myth. We think that if we don’t have control everything will go into chaos—no it won’t. If we give up control and trust in God then we will live by faith. Trust is the opposite of control. Do you trust God this morning? Have you handed your life over?

Prove it.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit let us pray.
O Lord we thank you for this simple, direct truth and grace that you have spoken in this parable. O Lord, give us ears to hear and then empower our decisions and commitments to invest in you first and before all other things. This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen
An Office Dedication

This is an example of the kind of honoring of work that pastors can do. It is an office blessing ceremony. It’s similar to the Celtic house blessings common in many Episcopal and Roman Catholic traditions. The idea in this case is to go through an office, reading a passage of scripture and offering a prayer appropriate to that space within the office as a whole.

This particular dedication was done at the request of the CEO and founder of a small advertising agency. The company, 3rd Degree, had recently finished a major office remodeling. The CEO informed the employees about the dedication, letting them know that it would be taking place fifteen minutes before the workday started and that everyone was invited to attend on a volunteer basis. It was also made clear that it was really ok not to be there.

About 5 employees showed up that morning, and after introductions, I led the group through the office, having them read the scriptures, and offering the prayers. Each of them had a copy of the text that follows, in a small bulletin format. The service took about ten minutes. The CEO was thrilled with the response from those who did participate. He said that they were all quite positive about the experience, and shared it openly with those who hadn’t been able to attend.

An Office Dedication:

At the Reception Area
Hebrews 13:1-2
   Sovereign Lord, you are the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: may your blessing rest upon all who enter here; be their constant companion and guide, enable them to enter into life and work joyfully in the light of your grace and truth. Through Christ, the one who welcomed all who came to him, we pray. Amen.

In the Account Management Area
Philippians 4:5-7
   Lord of love, fill this place with mercy and understanding, that those who work here may be given the grace to serve the clients who need their help with honesty, intelligence, imagination, and patience. Help them foster bonds of friendship that will outlast the workday and give hope to all who need it. Through the One who came that we might have life, and have it abundantly, we pray. Amen.

In the Creative Area
Exodus 35:30-35
   O Lord of all beauty, creator of all the colors and sights that inspire awe in all the earth, inspire the creative work of all who gather here. May their ideas be filled with glory that draws the hearts of all who see it to you, the master designer of all that is. Through the Master Artist, we pray. Amen.
In the Media Area
John 1:1-5
Master of many stories and weaver of words that have changed the world, bless those who work here, that, in a world confused by many messages, they may bring clarity and kindness to clear light. Let all communication that flows through these rooms be filled with grace, through your dear name, we pray. Amen.

In the Management Area
Mark 10:42-45
Give these leaders vision and a heart for all who come in these offices; may their decisions be careful, and their communications laced with listening. Lift their hearts to follow you, the servant of all, in all they do. Through The suffering servant, we pray. Amen.

In the Gathering Area
Colossians 3:12-17
May this, O Lord, through your presence, be a place of friendship, of lasting relationships of trust and laughter, dreams and plans, that minister to all those who spend time here day after day, week after week. May your peace be upon this place. Through Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Ecclesiastes 3:9-13 & 22
Almighty and everlasting Lord, grant to this office the grace of your presence, that you may be known to those who work here and that your love may be experienced by those who arrive here as clients and vendors. Fill this place with your Holy Spirit, that your Word may dwell here richly, that those who enter in the morning and those who depart in the evening will find their fulfillment in you alone and in the enjoyment of their work and friendships here. Keep them safe in their travels and close to your Word. We pray for those who work in Dallas and in North Carolina that they may also receive all these blessings from your hand. Bless 3rd Degree, that through its work, you may be glorified. We ask that you be the defender of this place, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Bibliography


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Curriculum Vitae
The Reverend Thomas Fitzsimmons Neal

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND
Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan
   Doctor of Ministry – May, 2010
Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey
   Master of Divinity, May, 1986
Baylor University, Waco Texas
   Bachelor of Arts (Classical and New Testament Greek) December, 1977
Alaska Methodist University, Anchorage, Alaska
   Matriculated, (Geology) 1972-1973

MINISTRY EXPERIENCE
Congregational Ministry
Columbia Presbyterian Church, Vancouver, Washington, July 2007-Current – Pastor and Head of Staff
First Presbyterian Church of Crown Point, Crown Point, Indiana, August 2005-June 2006 – Co-Pastor
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, January 2004-August 2005- Interim Associate Pastor
First Presbyterian Church, Edmond, Oklahoma, September 1998-September 2003-Associate Pastor for Evangelism and Workplace Ministries
Grace Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 1999-July 2000-Interim Pastor
First Presbyterian Church, Ouray, Colorado, September 1990-June 1998- Pastor and Head of Staff
First Presbyterian Church, San Antonio, Texas, September 1986-September 1990- Associate Pastor for Adult Discipleship

Specialized Ministry
Marketplace Chaplains USA – Oklahoma State Director, September, 1998-August, 2000

Denominational Leadership
General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, USA:
   Commissioner for Indian Nations Presbytery, 215th General Assembly, Denver, 2002
Presbytery
   Cascades Presbytery:
      Congregational Relations Committee, 2008-Present
Indian Nations Presbytery:
   Moderator, Evangelism and New Church Development, 2000-2005
   Member, Presbytery Council, 2000-2005
Western Colorado Presbytery:
   Member, Presbytery Council, 1997-1998
   Moderator, Presbytery Council, 1996-1997
Moderator, Presbytery, 1995
Moderator, Special Investigating Committee, 1991-1992
Mission Presbytery
   Committee on Preparation for Ministry, 1987-1990

**International Ministry**

Senegal:
   Columbia Presbyterian Church and World Vision Partnership, Kollore Gui Federation, Baba Garage, February, 2009

Kenya:
   First Presbyterian Church Mission Trip, Tharaka, Kenya, 1988

Mexico:

**SPECIALIZED MINISTRY TRAINING**

Healthy Congregations Certification, 2010
Corporate Chaplain Training, 1998
Pastoral Counseling Program, 1991-1992
Bethel Bible Series Training Conference, 1988