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The Equipping Church Overview

Theology of Work Project

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The Equipping Church Overview

Note: "Overview" articles are full-length explorations of major topics in the theology of work. If you're interested in a specific aspect of the topic, the table of contents can help you jump there quickly. Most sections of overview articles are also on the website as brief resources in their own right.

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of a church's mission largely depends on its ability to mobilize its people in doing God's work in the world. The largest force the church has to accomplish its mission is the People of God engaged in the life of the world every day in the course of their daily work. The church's mission includes bringing people to Christ, guiding their spiritual growth and taking care of their needs. Yet the church's mission to those beyond its congregation is an even greater need. Our purpose here is to focus on how churches equip their people to make the world beyond the church more like the way God intends the world to be.

Fortunately, increasing numbers of churches are developing new ways of resourcing and supporting their people for this work. We will describe both the thinking of these equipping churches and the practical strategies they are adopting. We hope that *all* the resources on the [Theology of Work Project website](#) can be of use to churches and workplace Christians in this regard. We welcome churches and individuals to send us materials and evaluations of resources they have tried for incorporation into future Theology of Work Project resources.

Churches that develop the ability to equip their people for mission in daily work usually find themselves asking the following questions:

- What is God's Mission in the World?
 - How does human work connect to God's work?
 - What does this mean for people in their daily work?
 - How can we equip our people for God's work in the world?
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What is God's Mission in the World?

First of all, God's mission is to inspire people to work with the materials he provides to bring forth new

and good creations and to order the natural world. The world God created is good, and when humans begin to work alongside God in creation, things become ‘very good’ (Genesis 1:31). Unfortunately, because of the Fall of humanity, the world comes up far short of God’s intent, and the human condition ranges from very good (still, at times) to dismal or worse. Nonetheless, over the entire course of history—concentrated first in the nation of Israel, centered on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and continuing in God’s people today—God gives people the grace to return to him. He heals the World’s brokenness, and he opens the way to fully restore his original intent for the world, including humanity’s role of co-creativity with him. Both the creation of the world and its redemption by God’s grace are therefore the mission of God.

Christians participate in the mission of God through every activity of life that expresses God’s creativity, sustains God’s creation, and cooperates with God’s redemption. The church—including church-related organizations—is the one body exclusively dedicated to advancing the mission of God, so all Christians are part of the church. Of course, the church itself is not the kingdom of God, and church work is not the only way believers go about the work of advancing God’s kingdom. As Dallas Willard put it, ‘The church is for discipleship, and discipleship is for the world’.^[1] Gathered in churches, Christians advance the mission of God through a wide variety of activities. Scattered into an amazing variety of workplaces, we have opportunities to advance the mission of God through daily work in every sphere of society. Anglican Bishop D.T. Niles of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) pointed out that ‘the Church is the only society which exists for the benefit of its non-members’.^[2] The church comes into contact with non-members primarily through its people’s daily interactions with people in their places of work.

The result is that churches do the mission of God themselves, *and* they equip Christians to do the mission of God in other spheres of life and work. The latter role—equipping Christians for work outside church bodies—is essential, because unless Christians are trained and supported for it, our work is likely to have little positive effect toward God’s mission. Churches that support Christians at work find themselves on a journey in mission. Their focus has expanded from concentrating on what God is doing in the church to include what God is doing in the world. They also help church members gain a glimpse of the God who goes before them into their workday worlds and invites them to operate as partners in God’s work there.

Among churches that have undergone this shift in perspective, different theological emphases may be seen.

For some churches, it is an expansion of their existing evangelistic emphasis. They now more deliberately recognise workplaces as a strategic priority in their evangelistic outreach. After all, this is where most people spend the majority of their time and where Christians are most often in close contact with non-Christians.

For other churches, understanding God's mission has involved embracing a broader view of mission that involves participation in the creating, sustaining and redeeming work of God the Father, Son and Spirit. Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York, for example, has developed a remarkable faith and work programme dedicated to 'the renaissance of Christian cultural engagement in New York City'.

They understand that God's mission includes 'culture making,' in the city at large, in addition to calling people to come to Christ through the church.^[3] Churches embracing this understanding of mission are often shaped by the influence of thinkers such as John Stott and Lesslie Newbigin. Stott's influence has helped some from conservative evangelical backgrounds to add a new concern for serving others and caring for creation through their work, in addition to introducing people to Jesus.^[4] Lesslie Newbigin warned churches in the West against separating personal spirituality from the way we live and the issues we address at work and in the community.^[5] Miroslav Volf, coming from an eastern European Pentecostal background, adds an emphasis on work in the spirit.^[6]

For some other churches, understanding God's mission in the world has meant re-thinking their perspective on our destination of salvation. These churches have discovered that salvation in Christ is not the escape of souls from this world, but the transformation of the world to become the kingdom of God on earth (Revelation, chapters 21 and 22, see "[A Tale of Two Cities \(Revelation 17-22\)](#)"). This restored world will be brought to fulfilment when Christ returns to earth, and the work we do today contributes to the restoration of the kingdom of God in eternity. Thus, work has an inherent or eternal value on a par with evangelism and worship. Darrell Cosden's book *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work*^[7] is a good source for exploring this topic in biblical and theological depth.

One source that may be useful to churches exploring how to better equip their people for daily work is the Theology of Work Project's [Theological Foundations](#) outline.

Whole Life Discipleship

One British church leader describes what is happening in his church this way: 'This whole-life discipleship stuff is getting under the skin a bit - in our midweek prayer meeting one of our ladies prays for the prosperity of the city, then in the following morning leadership prayer meeting there it is again - we're praying for businesses in Milton Keynes, for our unemployed to not just find jobs but know where they are called to serve God and fulfill that calling in his strength. Deloitte's, Ernst and Young, Home, Milton Keynes Job Centre, Santander, Alanod, Accenture, MK Hospital, Bradwell School, BT, Keune & Nagel, Stowe School, Invensys PLC...Lights are on; salt is getting some taste to it!'^[8]

It is encouraging to find these common concerns among church leaders and thinkers from such diverse backgrounds. In spite of many differences, in each case the starting point is the understanding that mission starts with what God has done and is doing, including not only what we do at church, but also our everyday work at our jobs, at home and in voluntary service in the community.

God's mission is not primarily about getting people more involved in what churches are doing, but getting churches more involved in what God is doing in the world. It is a shift in emphasis from attracting crowds to church meetings towards equipping and supporting followers of Jesus for their work in the world. This is not to suggest that gathering for worship and church meetings is not still important to these churches. Rather these churches recognise the importance of both gathering Christians together and sending them out to do the work of God in the world. Sending people out has become a more serious attempt to forge stronger links in people's experience between Sunday and Monday in order to help them become more effective participants in God's work in the world.

How does human work connect to God's work?

When it comes to answering the question, 'Does our work matter to God?' most churches say yes. But they give different answers when it comes to explaining 'How does our work matter to God?' For some, work is just about people earning money to support themselves and the work of the church. Others prioritise the importance of evangelism in the workplace. Neither of these approaches sees work as being a spiritual exercise and having intrinsic value. For these people work has only instrumental value, work matters only for what it means in terms of making money and opportunities for evangelism. Others expand on this to include work as a context for serving other people. For example, Christians involved in what are sometimes called 'helping professions' (doctors, nurses, social workers, counsellors and teachers) sense that their work matters to God in a way that people involved in most other professions don't. Most churches seem to affirm the worth of more direct, person-to-person service kinds of work, and words like 'ministry' and 'service' are often applied to this work. Christians involved in other industries also look for opportunities to help people in their workplaces, but fewer churches affirm the intrinsic value of work outside the helping professions. Perhaps, the term 'helping professions' is part of the problem, as it suggests that the other professions—such as business, law, engineering, finance and all the rest—do not help anyone. In reality, all good work is a helping profession. A biblical understanding asserts that all work matters to God and provides an opportunity for people to participate in God's ongoing creative work, as called for in Genesis 1:26-28.

A more complete understanding of the meaning of work can be visualised as a three legged stool. Each of the legs represents one of the three great callings we read about in the Bible; the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-38) and the creation calling—or "Cultural Mandate," as it is often called (Genesis 1:26-28). The Great Commission emphasises the importance of Christians being involved in sharing their faith and making disciples. The Great Commandment emphasises the importance of Christian service, demonstrating love in action. The Cultural Mandate emphasises that our work in itself can be an act of worship and participation in God's work. It is actually the first of all commandments, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it,' (Genesis 1:28), and the others complement, but do not supersede it. Hence, just as a stool

requires all three legs to stand, so an integrated theology of work needs to affirm the importance of witness, service and intrinsic worth, although particular people according to their different giftings or circumstances may emphasise one more than the others. See *Theological Foundations* and *Vocation in Historical-Theological Perspective* at www.theologyofwork.org for more on a biblical theology of work.

What does this mean for people's daily work?

Lunchtime Prayer Triplets

Work-related Prayer Triplets: People meet in groups of three just for half an hour to pray for each other over breakfast, or lunch, or supper. Ideally they all work in the same organization, or at least in the same field. They pray specifically for each others' work, workplaces and co-workers.

An integrated understanding of work from a biblical perspective needs to include a clear sense of Christian vocation, or calling. As Christians we are called first of all to find our identity in our relationship with God. This is our primary calling. We are called to 'belong' and to 'be' in relationship with God through Jesus, and then we are called to 'do' and to follow Jesus in all of life, including our daily work. It is a vocation centred on Jesus and not on the work that we do. At the same time, this is not discipleship divorced from our work, but rather a call to follow Jesus in all our daily activities—house work, voluntary work and church work, as well as employment, are included. Our calling is not just about our job. It is about our whole life's work, becoming a follower of Jesus in all that we do.

Just as our calling in Christ guides us in our daily work, applying our faith to our daily work helps us grow spiritually. It is a two-way street. Consider the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. It is important to learn *about* the fruit at church, but the place we actually develop the fruit may well be our workplace. For example, doing our present job to the best of our ability—even while hoping to find another, better job—helps us develop patience and self-control. For more on how spiritual formation connects to work see, (*CONTENT NOT YET AVAILABLE) *Spiritual Formation and Work* at www.theologyofwork.org. For further reading, the books, *After You Believe* by N.T. Wright[9] and *The Callings* by Paul Helm[10], explore how daily work contributes to spiritual growth.

The church has an important ministry of vocational guidance which it needs to rediscover. According to the Bible, this is less about us finding personal fulfilment in our work and more about us finding opportunities for service in our work—finding opportunities to serve God and other people through our work. Work, in Christian perspective, is about service, and churches are being challenged to take much

more seriously the support and equipping of all Christians for this ministry in daily life.

This does away with any notion that clergy do the work of God, while lay people support the clergy by giving money and volunteering at church. Clergy and church leaders *do* have a unique role, yet lay people in non-church-jobs have an equally important role in God's mission. Lay people *do* support clergy and church workers by giving money and volunteering at church, yet this is not the *primary* way they contribute to God's mission. This is not a matter of diminishing the role of clergy, but of equipping every person to do all their work as a service to God's kingdom.

How can we equip our people for God's work in the world?

How can a church become more effective at equipping its people? The need for a reorientation outward and embarking on a journey in mission has already been identified—so has the need for an understanding of our Christian vocation and calling that includes a new appreciation of the role our daily work can play in the mission of God. It's also helpful to ask, what does it look like in practice for a church to operate in a way that reflects these changed perspectives and priorities? Churches that have embarked on this journey demonstrate a number of common characteristics.

Equipping churches:

- [have a vision of God at work where their people work](#)
- [actively hunt for examples and resources](#)
- [connect daily work to worship](#)
- [address the opportunities and challenges their people face at work](#)
- [invest resources in equipping people for daily work](#)
- [create structures to sustain this ministry](#)
- [empower and collaborate with people in the congregation to lead the ministry](#)
- [release and support their people for work outside the church](#)
- [encourage everyone to take responsibility](#)
- [include daily work as part of youth ministry and compassion/outreach/service ministries](#)

Perhaps this list can provide a useful benchmark against which you can measure, evaluate and envision developments in your own church setting. We will examine some of the issues surrounding each of these developments.

Equipping churches have a vision of God at work where their people work

[Where is God's work being done today? \(Click to listen\)](#)

Equipping churches see their people's daily work as part of the church's ministry. These churches have begun to ask, 'Where are our people during the week?' They have started to develop ways of identifying where their people are and what they are doing during the week. This may be identified as pins on a map, or a photo board, or a PowerPoint presentation of people at work, or a booklet listing people's jobs and interests. These churches give the people of God a sense that they have been strategically placed by God in their working worlds to make a difference there.

This is Our Church on Monday

Digital photos of people in their work settings are screened during a time for meditation and prayer while a song about the meaning of work is played through the sound system. Some people laugh as they see church members dressed differently than they have ever seen them before. Some in suits and ties. Others in boiler suits, or white coats and rubber gloves.

There is no single model or simple formula. This is about each church embarking on its own journey towards resourcing Christians to serve God in their daily work. Each church must start with the people God has already given it and the places and types of work that already occupy their lives. This is not about heaping extra expectations and obligations on people already struggling to make time for church involvement. These churches affirm that teaching school children how to write is godly work, that excellence in making beds gives glory to Christ, that managing a company budget is good stewardship of God's creation. Equipping churches offer encouragement and help to add a new sense of purpose to people in their existing weekday lives. It is about churches helping people to hold pressured lives together by better integrating faith and work and family and all of life.

Prayer For Workers

A teacher said to Mark Greene, 'I spend 45 minutes a week teaching Sunday School and they call me up the front of the church to pray for me. The rest of the week I am a full-time teacher and the church has never prayed for me.' In contrast, another church is praying for a different group of workers each month. They have gone right through their church list with the aim to include everybody in special prayer for their daily work at least once a year.

Members of the *Imagine Project* in Britain have worked out that most Christians can give no more than 10 hours per week to church activities (including worship, small group and some other ministry) unless they are employed by the church or have a lot of voluntary time. They have started to ask, 'How can this 10 hours be best used to equip one another to live well for Christ in the other 110 hours invested in work, family and leisure?' and 'What would change if we were really serious about equipping?' In particular they are asking:

- What would we pray for when we were together?
- How could preaching really help us to live well for Christ, wherever we were?
- What issues would be given most time in leadership meetings?
- What songs would worship leaders choose?
- What would we talk about in small groups?
- What stories would we expect to hear when we came together?
- What criteria would decide whether we had had a good time together?[11]

Equipping churches actively hunt for examples and resources

This Time Tomorrow

The *Imagine Church Project* in London encourages churches to invite a different person each week to answer three questions about *This Time Tomorrow* (TTT) in their worship services. What will you be doing this time tomorrow? What opportunities or challenges will you face? How can we pray for you?[12]

Leaders and people together are attempting to learn what they can from the examples of other churches engaged in this process elsewhere. They are actively on the hunt for good theological and practical resources for personal and group studies and worship. The sidebars throughout this article describe a variety of practical strategies that churches have adopted. All of these are activities we hope will stimulate readers to think about creative options in their own settings.

From his study of a number of American churches that have embarked on the faith-at-work journey, Stuart Dugan drew four important conclusions:

1. There is no single model for marketplace ministry that fits all churches or communities.
2. Large churches are able to draw from more internal resources than small churches. Churches in business communities have a different orientation from those situated in labour or agricultural settings. Affluent churches are often better able to make a wider impact than those whose people are struggling just to make ends meet.
3. Churches that adopt another church's model without due consideration of its own ministry context, level of spiritual maturity, or regional need will most likely become frustrated. In other words, any church wishing to embark on this journey must discern its own path and follow the Spirit in its own congregation.
4. No single model is adequate in and of itself even within a single congregation.

Successful churches never limit themselves to a single approach. Instead, they assess, re-evaluate, adjust and innovate to gather the strengths from different modes of operation, and they selectively adopt those best suited for their own needs. The church has much to learn from this entrepreneurial spirit that quickly adapts to changing market circumstances. Just as businesses must be highly adaptive

in order to stay competitive in an ever-changing market, so too the church needs to respond flexibly and quickly in order to best serve the ever-changing needs of its people and community.

One key to the success of these efforts is the concept of permission-giving. Men and women who are already successful in their professions outside the church need to be given permission to convert their skills, contacts and passions into Kingdom-enhancing ventures. Traditional clergy-led churches often have the mindset that the pastor knows best and that the most effective approaches and programs come out of seminaries and Christian publishing houses. However, experience is teaching us that even greater things can be done by granting people who are already successful in businesses the permission to be successful in ministry beyond the congregation.

Where do I fit in God's Jigsaw?

Where do I fit in God's Jigsaw? Avonhead Baptist Church in New Zealand includes a lot of high school and university students about to graduate. They do a series of Sunday evening services and mid-week workshops on career and life planning. They find that a number of mid-lifers are also interested and looking for help in this area. They are using some outside expertise at this time. But they are hoping that some people graduating from this course can be trained to offer it to others themselves. [\[13\]](#)

Willow Creek Church has offered a 9 week workshop for people who are in transition and exploring new directions, and Bob Buford's 'Halftime' resources have also been widely used in American churches for mid-lifers. [\[14\]](#)

There is a wealth of creativity still to be tapped, and innovative models to be developed that will far outpace what is currently being done.

When given permission and adequate support, innovators in the field of faith-at-work ministry will likely accomplish what has not yet even been imagined. In the current age of ever-changing technology and workplace dynamics, including the impact of the global informational age, the types of marketplace ministry needs will be changing constantly and in need of new innovation. Robert Lewis, pastor-at-large at Fellowship Bible Church says it clearly, 'Underneath the fabric of American Christianity are people who are crying out for a personal, hands-on experience for being difference makers, not serving difference makers. They come to the church to be cared for and challenged, but there needs to be a point of ultimate destination - a hands-on ministry of their own. Helping them find this opportunity should be our greatest passion'. [\[15\]](#)

Just 4 Questions

When asked, 'If there was only one thing you could do to change the culture of a congregation to support Christians at work, what would you do?' R. Paul Stevens says 'Give me three minutes and four questions in a service every Sunday for a year. I would get a different person up in front of the congregation each week and ask them: 1. Tell us about the work you do? 2. What are some of the issues you face in your work? 3. Does your faith make a difference to how you deal with these issues? 4. How would you like us to pray for you and your ministry in the workplace? Then we would pray for them.'

Strategies for helping churches become better equippers need to be worked on thoughtfully over the long term. It requires changing the congregation's expectations and culture. A broad spectrum of participants from across the church is needed to accomplish so much change effectively and sustainably.

Another approach to implementing this sort of process has been adopted by churches involved in the Imagine Church Project that Neil Hudson is heading up for the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity. The process they follow is circular and continuing as churches are encouraged to revisit and reinforce changes that have been made previously. The six steps they picture moving clockwise around the circle include:

1. Cast a vision - the vision of becoming a whole-life disciple-making church.
2. Focus on the frontline - those contexts for mission where people already spend time in the world outside the church.
3. Grow a core team - a group of personally engaged people to communicate the vision, encourage initiatives and pilot the change process.
4. Make one-degree shifts - promote small but effective changes that act as levers reinforcing each other towards an overall change of culture.
5. Share stories - celebrate small and everyday signs of growth and change, listen for the stories that are told in conversations that can be shared to encourage and bless others.
6. Redefine the church contract - a change of focus as leaders and members learn to see church not primarily as a place to receive pastoral care but primarily as a place to develop vocational capability.

[16]

Equipping churches connect daily work to worship

These churches are changing their approaches to worship. The connections between work and worship are explored in the songs they sing, the prayers they pray, the testimonies they share, and the themes that are sounded in the preaching. These churches have realised that worship is not just what happens in church. As a Sydney Anglican paper on the *Meaning and Importance of Worship* says, 'Worship is the appropriate response of the entire person to God's revelation in Christ: it is an all-of-life activity (e.g., Romans 12:1)'. [17] These churches are encouraging their people to practise what the apostle Paul talked about when he said, 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...It is the Lord Christ you are serving (Colossians 3:23-24).

There are many ways in which stronger links between faith and work can be forged in our corporate worship events. Some examples include:

Preaching

Steve Graham, pastor of a Pentecostal church in Christchurch, New Zealand, is preaching a series of sermons on Joseph. He feels challenged to try harder to understand Joseph's daily work circumstances and relate these insights to the working lives of his congregation. He is stunned by the warm response from people and the feedback they provide. He gets some of them to tell their stories in church. He starts getting questions about other ethical dilemmas. So he decides to do another series based on the 10 commandments, also with a workplace emphasis. The lively feedback and stories continue. [\[18\]](#)

Preaching and Teaching: Many Christians say they cannot remember hearing a sermon or lesson about the meaning of work from God's perspective. [\[19\]](#) Equipping churches are learning how to teach and preach the Bible story from work-related angles. [\[20\]](#) In sermons based on exploring a passage of scripture ('expositional' preaching), it is probably more effective to incorporate work-related themes into sermons on a weekly basis, rather than to preach one or two sermons on specially-selected workplace scriptures. The Theology of Work Project's online commentary covering every book of the Bible can be a very useful resource for this.

Bible Readings: Most people are not used to listening for work-related themes in Bible readings. It often helps if such readings are introduced in a way that more explicitly invites congregation members to think about any connections with life and work concerns. The commentaries covering every book of the Bible at www.theologyofwork.org offer ideas for applying hundreds of Bible passages to work and may help congregations learn how to look for work-related themes in the Bible.

Children's Talk

The pastor grabs a big bag full of interesting objects and invites the children to come forward and see what's inside. It is full of uniforms and objects from people's daily work. The kids put on the uniforms and guess who they belong to. There is a carpenter's belt and blocklayer's trowel and big white gumboots and a laptop computer and a plumber's wrench and.... The noisiest moment is when the pastor starts up a chainsaw. The kids have a lot of laughs and end up praying for people in their work.

Children's Sermons: There are many different ways that work-related stories or object lessons can be included as part of the children's talk in a service, as the sidebar 'Children's Talk' suggests.

Hymns and contemporary songs: There are many traditional hymns that talk about aspects of faith related to daily life and work, but contemporary songs that do this are harder to find. A number of work-related songs can be found at <http://www.faithatwork.org.nz/hymns-songs-2/>.

Participatory Prayer

As people file into Opawa Baptist Church they write down three different kinds of paid and unpaid work they are likely to do this week. During the offering, their writings are pegged on string lines in the auditorium. Later, during a prayer time, a couple of people walk along the lines reading off some of the different kinds of work listed there and everyone is invited to offer their work to God.

Intercessions: Regular prayers of intercession can include specific or more general expressions of concern for people in their places of work and the issues they are working through there.

Liturgy: This includes both formal and informal worship forms that forge stronger links with daily life outside the church by incorporating elements (both verbally and by using symbols and images) of people's every day circumstances and concerns. One online source of work-related liturgical resources can be found at <http://arc.episcopalchurch.org/ministry/daily.htm>.

Meditation and Prayer

Reflection Time: Music plays and is interspersed with some brief readings about God's work and our work. At the same time, a series of images illustrating different aspects of God's work in creation and also human work are projected onto a screen. This concludes with a corporate responsive prayer.

Visual images: Along with the usual images that appear in church sanctuaries it is good to include some that relate to people's daily work in the world as a visual reminder of God's involvement. These images offer another invitation to connect worship and work. This can be in the form of work tools or work-related sculptures or pictures of people at work.

Bridging the Sunday Monday Gap

Small Boat Big Sea is a Christian group in Sydney that has adopted a pattern for its community life that includes talk about work as part of their regular sending function. A Christian lawyer is invited to talk about his job, what he enjoys, what he struggles with, and how his faith influences his approach to work. People also ask him some other questions. He is then asked what he would appreciate prayer for and the community gather around to pray for him. A different person is invited to talk about their daily work each week. [21]

Commissioning Services: Numerous churches are experimenting with different ways of offering prayer and support for peoples' daily life and work, similar to the way they do for people's work in the church and its ministries. Sometimes this takes the form of a formal commissioning ceremony, but

often it means just simply acknowledging and praying for different occupational groups on successive Sundays. It is important, however, not to give the impression that such ceremonies are second-rate versions of clergy or church worker commissionings. For example, instead of ‘ordaining’ someone for ‘ministry’ in their workplace—which uses terms most people regard as pertaining to clergy—it may be more helpful to ‘commission’ or ‘authorise’ someone for ‘work’ or ‘service’ in their field. Whatever terms are used, equipping churches pay attention to the overall pattern of recognizing and supporting congregants’ work. For example, if people are commissioned for short-term missions, but not for their daily work, it sends a message that church missions are more important than regular work. Or if doctors and nurses are commissioned for their work, but retail workers and homemakers are not, it sends a message that some jobs are more important to God than others are.

Festival of Work

In numerous churches the traditional Harvest Festival service has been transformed into a festival of work. Other churches use Labour Day services for this purpose. People come dressed in their work clothes and bring objects related to their work to place around the front of the sanctuary. The high point is a commissioning service in which everyone is commended to God for their ministry in daily life. In Bakewell in England they arranged a week-long festival of work with the whole town involved in a variety of displays and activities and culminating in a special service to celebrate and say ‘Thank you’ for different types of work in the town.^[22]

Festivals: Many churches are using Harvest Festival, or Rogation or Industrial Sunday, or Labour Day festivals to celebrate workplace experiences and explore work-related issues in creative ways.

Worship and Small Groups: Surveys suggest that although pastors think people talk about work issues in small groups, in fact they seldom do unless these issues are also raised in the congregational setting.^[23] Most Christians have never talked at any length to others in their group about their regular working lives, except when they have experienced a crisis at work. This suggests that work-related issues need to be named in preaching and prayers and testimonies and other meaningful ways in services if they are going to stimulate conversations beyond the worship service.

Are Your Home Groups Working?

At Ilam Baptist Church (Christchurch, New Zealand) several home groups decided to take the daily work of their people more seriously. They began by spending the first part of each evening listening to one person’s story of their work history and an explanation of the opportunities and challenges they now face in their work. Where they can, they have decided to visit that person’s workplace. They ask questions and end by praying for that person in their work and for the good of the enterprise and people they work with.

Worship and Spiritual Growth: A recent survey at Willow Creek Church and a number of other congregations discovered that church attendance and participation in church programmes is not directly connected with spiritual growth except for a believer's early Christian experience.^[24] The development of personal spiritual practices is the key to ongoing spiritual growth. The report concluded that churches need to transition from the role of spiritual parent encouraging dependence on church programmes to spiritual coach providing resources for people to feed themselves. Churches that focus on this transition have begun to explore concrete methods of spiritual for whole-life discipleship. They also consider how the form and content of their worship services may need to change.

Faith and Work Resource Centres

A number of churches have started faith and work resource centres and web pages. At one church this includes a library of books for individuals to read and study resources for small groups, such as Mark Greene's *Christian Life and Work* 6 week DVD series; *Going to Work with God* by Robert and Linda Banks (8 sessions); *Where's God on Monday?* by Alistair Mackenzie and Wayne Kirkland (12 sessions). Faith and Work resources designed specifically for churches may be found, among other places, at the websites of:

- [Redeemer Center for Faith and Work](#)
- [Faith at Work \(New Zealand\)](#)
- [Episcopal Church Ministry in Daily Life Resources](#)
- [Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Mockler Center](#)
- [Le Tourneau University Center for Faith and Work](#)
- [London Institute of Contemporary Christianity](#)
- [Rightnow.org](#)

Worship and Ethics: Does churchgoing make a difference to the ethical perspectives of regular attenders? According to research done by Robin Gill and others who have examined the results of values surveys in Britain, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, the answer is a clear, but qualified, yes. Qualified, because according to these surveys, this is only true with regard to a few issues of personal morality (in particular sex, stealing and accumulating wealth), and not related to wider ethical considerations having to do with business, the environment and government.^[25] It would seem that going to church does make an ethical difference, but only as it relates to issues that are regularly addressed in church. Churches need to expand the range of issues they are prepared to name as important (this doesn't mean that lots of service time needs to be devoted to detailed discussion of these issues, just that they have been put on the agenda). We can also start to explore more deliberately and carefully the working lives of biblical characters who faced ethical challenges in their places of work and encourage Christians to relate these examples to their own circumstances.

Workplace Fellows and Intern Programs in Faith and Work

Some churches have started year-long fellows or internship programs for recent university graduates committed to integrating faith and work. The fellows form a close-knit community of worship and prayer under the leadership of a local pastor and a workplace Christian. They study the biblical and theological foundations of work, then apply their studies while working in ordinary jobs. They are paired with Christian mentors in their fields.

Some large churches have created programs on their own, including the Falls Church in Alexandria, Virginia, USA, and Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York. Smaller churches can work together to create programs, and in many cities, they have received assistance from [The Fellows Initiative](#), an outgrowth of the program at the Falls Church. Often a local university, seminary or workplace ministry contributes expertise and organizational stability.

Benediction

The congregation of Dumfries Baptist Church in Scotland turn to face the exit door as they say , 'May the love of God sustain us in our working, May the light of Jesus radiate our thinking and speaking, May the power of the Spirit penetrate all our deliberating, And may all that is done witness to your presence in our lives'.

Benedictions: Benedictions that speak of God sending his people into the world to make a difference there can remind people that God is with them in their work. By utilizing people in such a way, God is fulfilling His words to Abraham, 'By your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves' (Genesis 22:18).

Equipping churches address the opportunities and challenges their people face at work

Faith at Work Breakfast

Once a month people gather in a central city venue in Christchurch, New Zealand. People pay \$10.00 at the door, file in and choose what they want for breakfast. It is 7.00am. For the first 20 minutes there is buzz of lively conversation. At 7.20 a different person from the group each time is invited to share something of their faith and work story. The aim is to keep it honest, down to earth and catch a glimpse of everyday discipleship, rather than focus on more dramatic stories from professional speakers. There is time for questions. Sometimes a case study is presented for discussion. Formalities are concluded by 8.00 am. Many cities around the world have similar gatherings.

These churches are helping their people discover new ways of nourishing and living out their faith in

the course of their daily work. This includes helping to provide people with Bible reading and prayer resources to encourage personal spiritual disciplines, as well as other recommended readings and taped or video material dealing with work issues. It may also mean encouraging the congregation to get involved in small work-related prayer groups, personal mentoring, peer groups, or seminars. Sometimes these approaches are embarked on in partnership with other churches or parachurch ministries.

What kinds of topics and issues need addressing?

Members of the Theology of Work Project decided that three sorts of resources were particularly lacking. These included a commentary on each book of the Bible explored from a workplace perspective, a simple statement of core beliefs to help in the construction of a sound theology of work, and the exploration of key workplace topical issues from a biblical and theological perspective in an easy to read format. These are now freely available on the Theology of Work [website](#).

But what might the core curriculum for a church look like?

Adult Education Modules

Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York runs regular classes lasting five weeks each that deal with faith and work issues. These series include *Why Work? A Theology of Work*, *Vocational Decision Making*, *Leadership, Work and Cultural Renewal*, and *Ethics*.

It is clear that not everyone starts to examine faith and work issues for the same reasons. David Miller identifies four different doors people walk through to explore the integration of faith and work: Evangelism, Ethics, Experience (integration of a compartmentalised life), and Enrichment (a more nourishing everyday spirituality). Miller pictures these as four quadrants in his so-called 'Integration Box'. One quadrant may be the initial concern that gets a person started in the process of seeking a more holistic integration of faith and work, but they may also go on to explore other dimensions of integration over time. Hence churches wanting to support Christians at work need to be aware that different approaches are required to connect with the needs of people at different starting points. Moreover, a holistic approach should probably include all four dimensions.^[26]

Some topics worth thinking about in preaching, teaching, seminars and discussion groups include:

- Your work matters to God. God's work and our work in the Bible. An introduction to a theology of work. (See TOW Project's *Theological Foundations*.)
- What in the world is God up to? An introduction to a theology of mission and of ministry, especially as this relates to the world of work. (Something like what we have developed in the opening sections of this paper.)

- Does God call Christians into work outside churches and Christian institutions? A theology of calling and vocation related to the work of all God's people, both inside and outside the church. (See [Vocation Overview](#).)
- How do I find where I fit? Practical exploration of what calling and vocation specifically mean for individuals, including practical processes for clarifying gifts and values and for discerning the guidance of God. (See [Vocation Overview](#).)
- What about prayer in the fast lane? Exploring understandings and practices for developing a spirituality for everyday life.[\[27\]](#) (See **Spiritual Formation and Work*, CONTENT NOT YET AVAILABLE)
- How can I share my faith at work? Resourcing the people of God for evangelism in the workplace. (See **CONTENT NOT YET AVAILABLE Evangelism and Work*)
- Ethics for the marketplace – theory and case studies. (See [Ethics at Work](#))
- Managing competing time demands: family, job, church, community and leisure. What does healthy whole-life discipleship look like? (See **CONTENT NOT YET AVAILABLE Rest and Work*)
- The work of Business. Models of Christian business and entrepreneurship. Business as mission and models for marketplace mission.
- How should we work as Christians. (See [How Should We Work as Christians](#))
- The work of artists.
- Cultural and social transformation? Workplace ministry and cultural transformation. (See James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World*,[\[28\]](#) Tim Keller, *Center Church*,[\[29\]](#) and Andy Crouch *Culture Making*.[\[30\]](#))
- Christian leadership for the marketplace and the world.

Contacts, Counsel and Kudos for Job Seekers

[Crossroads Career Network](#) is a not-for-profit ministry at Perimeter Church, Atlanta, USA, which seeks to provide contacts, counsel, and encouragement to help you find a job, a career, your calling. Perimeter's Crossroads Career Ministry offers monthly career meetings that become foundations for support and spiritual growth. Each meeting includes a short presentation by a guest speaker or expert in the business community. Attendees gain insight and instruction on what scripture teaches about employment and provision from God. There is no charge to attend.

For Eugene Peterson the challenge lies in affirming the worth of the everyday ministry of all the people of God:

One of the most soul-damaging phrases that has crept into the Christian vocabulary is “full-time Christian work”. Every time it is used, it drives a wedge of misunderstanding between the way we pray and the way we work, between the way we worship and the way we make a living.... Most of what Jesus said and did took place in a secular workplace — in a farmer's field, in a fishing boat, at a wedding feast, in a cemetery, at a public well asking a woman he didn't know for a drink of water, on a country hillside that he turned

into a huge picnic, in a courtroom, having supper in homes with acquaintances or friends.... Twenty seven times in John's Gospel Jesus is identified as a worker: "My father is still working and I also am working" (John 5:17). Work doesn't take us away from God; it continues the work of God. God comes into view on the first page of our scriptures as a worker. Once we identify God in his workplace working, it isn't long before we find ourselves in our workplaces working in the name of God.[31]

Creative Video Presentation

To introduce the work theme to a group of young people a humorous, but also sobering, video clip of oppressive work conditions from Charlie Chaplin's film *Modern Times* is screened, interspersed with digital photos of youth group members in their work places. The rock song 'We gotta get out of this place' by The Animals is playing at the same time. During each chorus pictures are overdubbed with the words 'We gotta get out of this place' until the last line when the following words are added 'Or do we?' A presentation on faith at work follows.

Each church needs to identify the *particular* opportunities and challenges their people face in their places of work. Do people work as professionals, managers, labourers, technicians, public servants, teachers, or service workers? The opportunities and challenges vary widely between these types of work. Do congregants' jobs have high status, pay, opportunity, power, security, and mobility, or low? *Initiatives*—a quarterly online publication of the National Center for the Laity in the USA (www.catholiclabor.org/NCL)—gives details in each issue of ways that local churches identify and are responding to the particular workplace situations their people are in. This could be a resource for churches looking for examples.

Equipping churches invest resources in equipping people for daily work

Professional Groups

At Redeemer Church in New York there are at least 18 major professional groups, e. g. Arts, Education, Entrepreneurs, Finance, Legal, IT, Marketing etc. (plus a variety of other sub-groups) whose members meet once a month, usually around a meal and then in small groups, with the aim 'to equip, connect, and mobilize professionals towards gospel-centered transformation for the common good'. Redeemer also runs a 9 month Gotham Fellowship internship program based on set readings, discussions and seminars to encourage spiritual growth and methodical reflection as interns continue to work. Redeemer also runs an annual competition for entrepreneurs.[32]

Smaller churches may work together, perhaps in partnership with a seminary or other organization, to form a larger pool of workers so that most occupations can have their own group.

Effectively equipping church members for daily life and work requires significant investments of money and staff time. This may mean reallocating resources to support ministry in daily life and work. At the most advanced equipping churches, this is now a budgeted item. This is a fair test of how seriously the challenge has been taken. Those churches that do invest realise daily life and work is where faith is lived out in front of the world and is where the future of the church is being decided.

Equipping churches create structures to sustain this ministry

Equipping people is a complex business. Structures can help to facilitate or hinder ministry. What is a help for the first generation often becomes a hindrance for the next, because energy ends up serving and resourcing the structure, but not necessarily serving the originally intended function. Form should always follow function and not the other way around. The dream that births any structure needs revisiting regularly to see if it is still being pursued or if that vision has been lost or distorted.

At the same time, any successful attempt at ministry or mission also needs structures to maintain and facilitate its sustainability. Perhaps the most elaborate example of this in terms of churches involved in workplace ministry is the structure that Katherine Leary Alsdorf and her team (now led by David Kim) have developed at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York. Their Faith and Work Center includes a team of staff members who each head up different areas of ministry such as their Arts Ministry, Entrepreneurship Initiative, and Gotham Fellowship intern programme. The staff also co-ordinates the leadership of eighteen different Vocational Groups, each of which also includes a number of sub groups. A number of other churches also have staff who specialise in resourcing and supporting those who are unemployed or looking for work.

A Megachurch Approach

Saddleback Community Church provides resources every week for small groups that serve some 4000 Christians who meet regularly to discuss biblical perspectives on faith and work issues. These are in addition to Saddleback's hundreds of regular home groups. One church member is contracted part-time to prepare studies for these groups. They also run a website and send out weekly Workplace Wisdom emails for encouragement and to stimulate reflection.^[33]

The challenge for churches just beginning on this journey is deciding which structural elements are important to start with. The Imagine Church Project suggests beginning with the formation of a core team. This helps provide continuity and maintain adequate funding and other resources. But it can slowly diminish the vitality and vision of the church's workplace programs if it becomes too bureaucratic. The challenge is to create an institutionalized centre while maintaining the flexibility to engage a younger generation to build their own ministries.

Equipping churches empower and collaborate with people in the congregation to lead the ministry

The leaders of equipping churches have started to think about the complete mission of God as well as church growth. They are thinking about how they can help to enhance the everyday ministry and mission of their people in the world as well as through their own church programs and ministries. They are thinking about what their people are doing all the time and not just with their spare time. They also realise their own limitations and are recruiting lay leaders to head up workplace ministries.

It is easy to blame church leaders for the failure of churches to resource their people better for ministry in daily life. Leaders are only partly to blame, though. For many church members, it may be a relief to leave the responsibility for ministry up to the professionals and avoid accepting responsibility themselves. The equipping church vision is about the whole church accepting responsibility. In most churches where an equipping movement has begun to happen, it has been the result of new levels of conversation and partnership between church leaders and grass-roots church members. Sometimes this has also been assisted by input from resource people involved in other churches or other faith and work ministries. This is sometimes in-person and sometimes through their books, videos or online resources. For any of these initiatives to be sustainable requires vision casting from the top, ongoing energy and enthusiasm from the grass roots memberships, and outside resourcing.

Many pastors recognize the need to empower every believer in the ministry of daily life, but they experience multiple roadblocks when attempting to address this need. Dwight Dubois' report "[Equipping Pastors Conversations](#)" explores the myriad difficulties that pastors face. View or download the full report: [Equipping Pastors Conversations \(PDF\)](#).

If equipping is to become embedded as a priority in the life of a congregation, pastoral leadership and how it is exercised are crucial, though it is difficult to unpack what such leadership looks like. David Miller identifies five factors that are related to core aspects of pastoral ministry in general, which he thinks need to be more specifically applied to the workplace by church leaders. These include:

- A ministry of presence or listening in the work sphere, by visiting people in their places of work
- A ministry of preaching and prayer that intentionally and constructively addresses faith and work issues
- A ministry of teaching designed to address faith and work issues, also using the experience and expertise of other church members for input
- A ministry of personal integration that ensures that congregants are trained to utilise personal prayer and devotional study in their daily lives
- A ministry of gatherings of business people, perhaps in partnership with other marketplace ministries

[34]

Workplace Visits

British Baptist Pastor David Coffey says, 'In my time as a Pastor I made a regular pattern to visit church members in their place of work, whenever this was appropriate. I have sat with the defence lawyer in a court room; I have watched a farmer assist in the birth of a calf; I have spent time with a cancer consultant in his hospital; I have walked the floor of a chemical factory and sat in the office of a manager who runs a large bookshop. I have driven a tank and spent time with some senior military officers; I have shared the tears and joys of family life with homemakers; I have visited a London hostel for the homeless and walked round a regional prison with a Governor. The purpose of such visits is primarily to encourage and disciple a church member in that place where God has called them to be a worker.'^[35]

Bible scholar Dale Bruner reports, 'The revered Presbyterian preacher, George Buttrick, told a preaching class that the reason he gave a considerable amount of his workweek to visiting his parishioners in their homes and offices in downtown New York City was a passage from John's Gospel: 'the sheep will not listen to the voice of strangers' (John 10:4-5). I could believe that much of Dr. Buttrick's effectiveness as a preacher was this care for and time with his parishioners'.^[36]

Miller comments, 'my research has found that lay-led and lay-founded groups are generally more effective at understanding and meeting workplace integration needs'.^[37] William Diehl has said something similar:

The key to bringing the workplace into the worship place is the pastor. If he or she has to have tight control over everything, it will not happen. There are two reasons why the pastor should not totally try to control: very few pastors have the breadth of knowledge of workplace issues to be able to design educational programmes of relevance; and secondly, lay leadership must be involved in both the planning and presentation of programmes in order to give them credibility in the eyes of the rest of the congregation.^[38]

Robert Banks also argues strongly for the involvement of 'ordinary' Christians if we are to develop a useful theology of everyday life, because:

- Ordinary Christians can best identify their everyday concerns.
- Ordinary Christians already have some elements of an everyday theology.
- Everyday theology is a co-operative effort between ordinary Christians and professional theologians.
- A workable theology of everyday life requires practical testing by ordinary Christians.
- Only a theology forged in the cut and thrust of everyday life will have vitality and relevance.^[39]

What Should Church Leaders Do?

A very prominent Australian businessman commented in his acceptance speech at a dinner in his honour when he was presented with a prize for integrity in public and working life that while he had spent ten years as churchwarden of his Anglican church, as a support to and confidante of the ordained minister, not once in those ten years did that minister ask about his work or how he expressed his faith there.^[40]

Businessman Kent Humphries, when he was President of *Fellowship of Companies for Christ International*, emphasised the important role that pastors have to play as equippers and mentors for ministry in the marketplace.^[41] It is clear that many pastors feel out of touch with the modern marketplace and inadequate for task. Some feel threatened by the enthusiasm and big dreams of marketplace entrepreneurs. Yet the clear message is that pastors have a very important role to play—not by pretending to be the experts, or as controllers, but rather as encouragers and supporters.

Initiating a process of partnership between pastors and working people will take a lot of time, a lot of conversations and a lot of collaboration. This sort of partnership also has the power to realise the dream of the whole church mobilised and supported in mission and ministry all of the time. Debra Meyerson explains the sort of leadership that is involved in her description of the best culture changers:

They bear no banners; they sound no trumpet. Their ends are sweeping, but their means are mundane. They are firm in their commitments, yet flexible in the ways they fulfill them. Their actions may be small but can spread like a virus. They yearn for rapid change but trust in patience. They often work individually, but pull people together. Instead of stridently pressing their agenda, they start conversations. Rather than battling powerful foes, they seek powerful friends. And in the face of setbacks they keep going.^[42]

Equipping churches release and support their people for work outside the church

God@Work Group

This small group at Opawa Baptist Church meets monthly and follows a set three-part format, the three 'dwellings'. Each part is delegated for a different person to lead each meeting.

1. Dwelling in the Word

Choose a Bible passage relevant to work. The group listens to the passage read and stops to think in silence about what it says to them. Then members of the group each share in turn their responses before reflecting together on what they are hearing.

2. Dwelling in the Work

Choose a case study from your work experience. The group listens to the experience described. Each person is invited to think about their response to this in silence and then share with the group their response. They concentrate particularly on answering two questions:

- What strikes you as standing out as important in the situation?
- What questions does this raise for you?

Everyone offers their feedback before there is any discussion.

3. Dwelling in the Practice

Choose a particular practice that you have found helpful and/or that might be of help to the group. Group members discuss how they see the implications of this for them. The group time concludes with members sharing needs and offering support and prayer for each other.

Equipping churches encourage their people to build relationships with both Christians and non-Christians in the marketplace. They recognise that this may mean some people have less time available for church roles. They resist the fear that emphasising the importance of ministry in daily life might undermine the recruitment of people for other important church leadership functions. They believe that people will be more committed to supporting a church that sets in front of them a large and exciting vision of God at work in their world and that helps them to discern their part in this and resources them for it. As Miroslav Volf says, 'We need to build and strengthen mature communities of vision and character who celebrate faith as a way of life as they gather before God for worship and who, sent by God, live it out as they scatter to pursue various tasks in the world.'[\[43\]](#)

Equipping churches encourage everyone to take responsibility

This article has been produced by a mixture of pastors and marketplace people and homemakers. We are very aware that, even as we seek to live more seamless lives that integrate faith better with our daily work, we are still guilty of living unintegrated lives that accentuate the gap between Sunday and Monday in many ways. We have not done as much as we could to bridge the gap between pastors and workplace Christians so that we can explore and express our faith together rather than being isolated in separate worlds. We have not done enough to initiate dialogue that transforms energy currently dissipated by frustration at the workplace into enabling energy that changes workplace environments. Nor have we done enough to transform energy consumed by frustrations within churches into positive movements towards more effective mission. We are on the same team, but we will only become

effective when we learn from each other. We have to both educate each other and to be educated by each other in a spirit of humility.

Peer Groups

Create small groups where people in similar jobs (for example, a group of architects, or moms, or teachers, or CFOs) share what is happening in their work and seek guidance from a Christian perspective. The point is that members have enough in common to actually help improve their abilities on the job.

Meet for 4-5 hours once a month, including dinner. Each month two people share a situation in their work, and other members ask clarifying and seeking questions. Then they ask, Does this bring to mind anything from the Bible? In addition, Bible or occupation-related readings, prayer, and personal sharing may occur. Groups like this have been developed by C12, Redeemer Presbyterian Church (NYC) and others.

Billions of people go to work each day to earn their living. Most church-goers are part of that workforce but many are not exercising their calling. They are not effectively using their gifts and the call God has given them to transform their workplace into an environment where God can move freely and change lives. The challenge facing the church today is to equip, encourage and enable workplace Christians to live out that calling effectively. Workplace Christians want to change their world and to be active in God's plan to do so. They want their pastors to be an integral part of what God wants to do in their workplaces. However, until workplace Christians and pastors move proactively together to bridge the current gap between church on Sunday and work on Monday, this gap will remain. The cultures represented in the Bible (and those in many places still around the world) see humans more holistically as combining body, soul and spirit and all life activities as sacred. The idea that one goes from a sacred into a non-sacred activity or environment is alien to these groups. We need to learn from the Bible and more holistic cultures how to live life seamlessly. We confess that we have much more to learn about living seamlessly. We cannot expect others to do this for us. We must take responsibility ourselves. We can support each other better and work to start changing the environment within our own spheres of influence.[\[44\]](#)

Equipping churches include daily work as part of their compassion/outreach/service ministries

JustWork

One example of a church creating a community economic development program is Grandview Calvary Baptist Church (GCBC) in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. In the early 2000s, GCBC began praying and asking God how it could best serve its surrounding community. The church realized that some of the unemployed nearby were people who had education and skills, but were having trouble finding or working at full-time jobs.

The church tapped David Holcomb, an entrepreneur with a background in business and community development to create [JustWork](#), a business incubator. Its aim is to create revenue-generating businesses that could offer dignified, meaningful work for people facing barriers to work. As of 2013, JustWork has created three such: JustRenos, a renovation firm; JustCatering, a catering service for meetings, conferences, weddings, parties, etc.; and JustPotters, which sells handcrafted pottery throughout North America. As of the end of 2013, the three JustWork enterprises employ 28 people.

Most churches have ministries to serve the communities around them, which often are called compassion, outreach or service ministries. Equipping churches include programs to equip those they serve to be successful in their own workplaces. Such ministries include business incubators, job transition or employment programs, economic, community and social development programs, trade schools, women's business cooperatives, re-entry programs for former prisoners, and banks and finance corporations, to name just a few. Often churches draw on the expertise their members have developed in these areas through their occupations. In the USA, the [Christian Community Development Association](#) is a network of about 1000 churches and other organizations with development ministries. Churches with such ministries include:

- [Abyssinian Baptist Church Development Corporation](#)
- [Bright Star Community Outreach](#)
- [Lawndale Community Church Development Corporation](#)
- [Voice of Calvary Fellowship Church - Voice of Calvary Ministries](#)
- [Wooddale Church Job Transition Support Group](#)
- [Calvary Baptist Church JustWork](#) (see sidebar)

Conclusions About Equipping Churches

Christians in every kind of legitimate work are called to work according to God's vision for the world. Doing so requires training, support, and encouragement. Most Christians have no place besides their church to be equipped for this work. Many churches do a great job of equipping people for other aspects of the life of faith, and this is vitally important. However, most churches are not yet capable of equipping their people for the workplace.

There is no single way for a church to become an equipping church. We have provided a glimpse of

some methods, techniques, programs and ideas that have been pioneered at churches and workplaces around the world. Hopefully, some of these might be useful at your church too. However, becoming an equipping church does not happen by slapping on a few methods and programs. Instead it takes a deep belief that the daily work of people in all occupations is — or could be — service to God. It takes a commitment to keep trying, practicing, and adapting ways to prepare and support the work of every member. We hope that the resources on the Theology of Work Project [website](#) can be of use to churches and workplace Christians in this regard, and we welcome people to send us materials and evaluations of resources they have tried.

ENDNOTES

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- [2] Rt. Rev. D. T. Niles, Bishop of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), speaking at a student conference in Madras (now Chennai) in 1964, as reported by audience member L.T. Jeyachandran at the Theology of Work Project working session on August 20, 2013.
- [3] Keller, Timothy with Katherine Leary Alsdorf. *Every Good Endeavour* (New York: Dutton, 2012). ‘Culture-making’ is also a term used by Andy Crouch in his book *Culture-Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2008) which Keller also quotes from. The other comments about Redeemer come from Redeemer Vision Paper #6 Christians and Culture from www.redeemer.com.
- [4] See for example John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 4th edition, 2006).
- [5] See for example Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 222-233.
- [6] Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock reprint, 2001).
- [7] Darrell Cosden, *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006).
- [8] Quoted in Neil Hudson, *Imagine Church* (Nottingham: IVP, 2012), 40.

- [9] N.T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (Harper, 2010).
- [10] Paul Helm, *The Callings: The Gospel in the World* (Edinburgh; Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987).
- [11] Neil Hudson, *Imagine Church* (Nottingham, IVP, 2012) 100-101.
- [12] Neil Hudson, *Imagine Church* (Nottingham: IVP, 2012), 100-101.
- [13] Alistair Mackenzie, Wayne Kirkland and Annette Dunham, *SoulPurpose: making a difference in life and work* (Christchurch, NZ: NavPressNZ, 2004).
- [14] See <http://halftime.org>.
- [15] Dugan, Stuart D., *Faith at Work: How Churches Can Better Enable Believers to Integrate Their Personal Faith in the Workplace*, Unpublished DMin Dissertation for George Fox Evangelical University. Portland OR, Nov 2010.
- [16] This process is explained in detail in Neil Hudson's book *Imagine Church: Releasing Whole-Life Disciples* (Nottingham, England: IVP, 2012).
- [17] Anglican Church: Diocese of Sydney Report 25/86 *The Meaning and Importance of Worship* received by Synod October 1988. See clause 8 in online version at <http://www.sds.asn.au/Site/103259.asp?a=a&ph=cp>
- [18] See http://thegospelcoalition.org/resources/topic-index/work_and_vocation for 100 vocation and work sermons online.
- [19] Alistair Mackenzie "Supporting Christians in the Marketplace 1993-2001: results of research and survey work" p.6, published online at <http://www.faithatwork.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Supporting-Christians-in-the-Marketplace-1993-2001.pdf>. Also Mark Greene, "Thank God it's Monday" (London: Scripture Union, 1994) pp.18-19.
- [20] Two recent books produced by church leaders that include plenty of seed thoughts for preachers are *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* by Timothy Keller with Katherine Leary Alsdorf (New York: Dutton, 2012), and *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work* by Tom Nelson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011).

- [21] See <http://smallboatbigsea.org/>
- [22] Dr David Clark (Bakewell) is the source for the Bakewell example.
- [23] Alistair Mackenzie "Supporting Christians in the Marketplace 1993-2001: results of research and survey work" p.6, published online at <http://www.faithatwork.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Supporting-Christians-in-the-Marketplace-1993-2001.pdf>.
- [24] See *Reveal: Where are you?* By Greg L. Hawkins and Cally Parkinson (Chicago: Willow, 2007).
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- [26] See David Miller, *God at Work*, pp. 125-142.
- [27] See for example Gregory F. A. Pierce, *spirituality@work* (Chicago, Loyola Press, 2001). Also Joyce Huggett, *Finding God in the Fast Lane* (Guildford, Eagle, 1993); and Mark Greene (editor), *Pocket Prayers for Work* (London, Church House Publishing, 2004).
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- [31] Peterson, Eugene H. *The Pastor* (New York: Harper One, 2011) pp.280-281
- [32] See <http://www.faithandwork.org>
- [33] See <http://saddleback.com/connect/ministry/Saddleback-at-Work/lake-forest>
- [34] David Miller, *God at Work*, pp. 146-148.
- [35] Rev David Coffey in an unpublished paper, "Supporting Church Members in the Workplace", produced for the Church Leadership Commission BWA Council Dresden, July 1999.

- [36] Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 1230.
- [37] David Miller, *God at Work*, p. 148.
- [38] William Diehl, "Bringing the Workplace into the Worship Place" in Robert J. Banks, *Faith Goes to Work* (Washington DC: Alban Institute, 1993).
- [39] Robert Banks, *All the Business of Life* (Sutherland, NSW: Albatross Books, 1987) pp.119-131.
- [40] Alan Kerr at the presentation of his Zadok Prize for integrity in public and working life in February 2002 in Melbourne. Found in "Lausanne Occasional Paper 40 Marketplace Ministry 2004", p.13, published online at http://www.lausanne.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/LOP40_IG11.pdf.
- [41] Kent Humphries, *Lasting Investments: A Pastor's Guide for Equipping Workplace Leaders to Leave a Spiritual Legacy* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004).
- [42] Quoted in Neil Hudson, *Imagine Church*, p.66 - taken from Debra Meyerson, "Radical Change, the Quiet Way" (*Harvard Business Review*, 2002).
- [43] Volf, M. "The Church's Great Malfunctions" (*Christianity Today*, October 2006) quoted in Neil Hudson, *Imagine Church*, p140.
- [44] The wording of this last section borrows extensively from a piece written by Dr. Willy Kotiuga who was an invited member of the discussion group that helped to birth this article. **Willy Kotiuga** is Senior Director of the Power Systems Consulting Group in one of the world's largest engineering firms and also an active participant in the Lausanne Workplace Network.