

# People at Work: Preparing to be the Whole Church

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Marketplace Ministry is a term that is commonly used to describe activities related to promoting God's Kingdom at the workplace. While it is a catchy phrase, there are many who do not consider themselves as part of the marketplace. Public servants, hospital workers, factory workers, lab technicians, engineers and a host of other professions go to a workplace to earn their living and not the marketplace.

At our workplaces God has given each of us the high privilege of preparing our co-workers for a faith journey. While there are many resources to equip believers to invite others to discover God, there is often little encouragement from local churches. Without this encouragement, the momentum of inertia significantly diminishes the passion in the workplace that would normally attract others to the Gospel. Believers who have been in their workplace for many years have attained a high level of discomfort to share their faith or even to touch on the topic. New employees are either at a loss or uncomfortable in sharing faith because they feel vulnerable and do not want to jeopardize their career or jobs. Both older and newer employees are often stuck in a "freeze" mode.

The disturbing reality is that Every day, millions of workers go to work without seeing the slightest connection between what they do all day and what they think God wants done in the world.[1] The Biblical reality is that God calls workplace Christians be the whole Church all of the time, including weekdays.

Paul Stevens writes Since work was given before the Fall, it has intrinsic value (it is good in itself and may even be therapeutic), instrumental value (it meets needs and creates edifying results) and spiritual value (it is a way of loving God and being loved by Him).[2]

The Bible is a book by workers, about workers, for workers.[3] Human beings are designed and commissioned by God to work out the Seven Verbs of our Mandate: Rule, Be Fruitful, Increase, Fill, Subdue, Work, Take Care Of.[4] Indeed, purposeful work is one aspect of what distinguishes us from animals.[5] We actively go out to our work but the animals wait passively for God to provide.

Evangelism is about Calling the Whole Church with the Whole Gospel for the Whole World.[6] Sharing faith at the workplace is more about "being" than "doing?". How we live our lives at work adds power to the words we speak. Then their good character will shine through their actions, adding luster to the teaching of our Savior God.[7] Luster is needed to attract people to God.

Ignoring the relevance of those who spend forty hours a week in workplace is not an option. The role of the church is to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.[8] The role of believers in the workplace is to proactively invite others to join us on a faith journey.

So God challenges all of us today to be People at Work: Preparing to be the Whole Church.

Willy Kotiuga with contributions from Donald McGilchrist and Jean Allan

[1] Your Work Matters to God, Sherman & Hendricks, NavPress, 1987 [2] Doing God's Business: Meaning and Motivation for the Marketplace, Paul Stevens; Eerdmens, 2006 [3] Images of the Church in the New Testament, Paul Minear, Westminster Press 1960 [4] see Genesis 1:26-28 & 2:15 [5] see Psalm 104:14, 15 & 21-23 [6] From the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism slogan [7] Titus 2:10, MSG [8] Ephesians 4:12- TNIV