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Hawaiian Islands Ministries
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900am

Part I: God's Vision for Work

Andy Mills son was born in Boston and his Dad died within two weeks in England. They never met each other. Andy didn't come to Christ until he was in his 30's after starting and selling a company. His wife becomes a born again Christian and in 1988 two years later, he becomes a Christian. So what does it mean to be a CEO and a Christian? Two things: 1) We have to have high ethics and 2) if anybody wants to talk about Jesus we must be available to talk. But, is that all? Andy for the last 25 years has read the Bible through the lens of work.

He was stunned, remaining in awe of God's work. Through that he began to understand some of the issues, four in particular (problems he wants to describe in the realm of work).

1) We live in a compartmentalized life (church life and the rest of our lives); three great mandates in the Bible a) Great Commandment, b) Great Commission and c) Cultural Mandate (Gen. 1:28-29)

In our church lives we wholly emphasize the Great Commandment and the Great Commission



The whole Christian life...BUT, there is a line that cuts off the Cultural Mandate

David Livingston on the base of the Zambesi River (Victoria Falls)
"Christ, Commerce and Civilization"

Consider the holistic Christian life. These things begin to integrate together because they all begin to work with each other. The real reason why we are working...incoherent lives – it will be uncomfortable because God will not leave you there. We really have the secular spiritual divide

2) Scripture is hard to understand on this topic; if Andy asked, "What does God think about marriage?" We could come together and everyone would have different views and scriptures on it. If someone would have asked, "What does God say about work? What would we say? Do we have a theology of work? What's God's vision? It's on every page in the Bible. Every prophet and every king was fully about work it was the lingua franca of the day. (theologyofwork.org)

3) The Fall – it happened; 1189 chapters in the Bible – most speak about the fall. You've got to get the theology of work right. Work has become marred because of sin – a) the parallel passage in ch3 is childbirth; in Gen 9 after the flood God has a restart – he calls us as human beings to do the same thing – work, multiply and oversee creation; we work with people who cheat, lie and steal, hopefully not us. The presence of sin is like that.

Andy works in Uganda (West Nile Virus, Idi Amin – neither of which are good); their view of work is evil because culturally they believe the Fall made it evil.

4) We are the problem because we are sinful people (yes, we are forgiven); but, we bring our ambitions our agendas to work, our selfishness to work. We find selfish ambition 5 times in the NT. We are just of bunch of broken people trying to work together.

What if we start getting it right? Let's not worry too much about the past. What is God's vision for work? Why are we here? So, how should we work? What are some normative principles that will really challenge us about our work place? Then the intrinsic value of work...

Part II: How do we get it right?

Three building blocks; the meta-narrative of what God is doing (4.5 chapters in a sinless environment); physically, where is God with man in Genesis – in the garden. In Revelation it is a city – the new heaven and new earth. We are not going back to the garden, we are going to the city.

1) God's moving creation from the garden to the city. God's physical creation, human creation is done – he's actually developing us from a societal point of view. God is moving us from one to the other. A city is far more complex. Both places we are in the presence of God, both places sinless, both glorifying God. God's creation is not finished, not done. We are involved in something that is growing. Things we do today will survive and add to this building of creation.

If you look at government in the Bible there is one: Monarchy with a loving – Jesus Christ. 2010 was the first time we had more people in cities than in rural locations. Cities are becoming more dominant.

What God hasn't yet completed is the society that God is building. The products as an output of work survive into that kingdom. Genesis 2:15 says, "...God asked man to work and tend the garden..."

2) God has chosen us to be an integral part of that process. Go work and tend the garden; "work" and "tend the garden" – why work and tend. Make it productive for people's sake and then look after it. Work makes it more productive and bountiful. Tend makes it "looking over" or managing it. In Romans 8 creation is groaning and waiting for redemption. Gen 2:5 says "...God's finished his creation there is not life – nothing going on. Two reasons things don't grow.

First reason, there was no rain. Second reason, there was no man to work it. Without a man to work it there is no production. Without us it doesn't go forward. "You need to be there for this to happen." This is the way he has chosen to do it. We are the people God said, "Look after it and make it productive." Gen 2:19 God is looking at the animals and naming them and God's just watching. God has made us an integral part of his creation. Without us there is no progress. Unless we do it, nothing will happen. We are in built to progress his creation. When we do our work God is watching us. Is he smiling as he watches us work?

Do you take back with you that God is watching over you when you work? And that God is taking pleasure in what you do

3) He has provided (gifted) us differently with all the gifts and skills to play the role he has set for us. He doesn't leave us without the ability to fulfill – to progress creation. Everyone has a different set of gifts and purpose. He's wired us in certain ways that we are better at some things and not as good in other ways.

Many young people today are spending time doing things that do not match their skill set (i.e. young people in Korea wanting to please their parents)

Going back to childhood – pick up on the skills, gifts and passions – restart doing something completely different in their lives.

One of the key things we should do is find out what we are gifted at. Much of what people do does not match the wiring (the gifting) – setting someone off to 40 years of conflict. Look at our kids and help them learn how they are gifted. What have you always been good at? And how do we point our children in that way?

Bezalel (Exodus 31) was endowed by the Holy Spirit with the ability to make the work of the temple of finest qualities. Is God gifting us with a new gift as we go along – as he did Bezalel to build the Tabernacle? He can do it, but, it is not necessarily the norm. One of the things we struggle with is "gifting envy." This is the gift in which God will give you the greatest joy and contentment. Be satisfied and thankful for the gifts you've got. How am I going to use them to the best of my ability?

When Andy was leading a company in his pre-Christian days, he would look at people as assets and stick them in a hole. But, then they started evaluating people – what person finds where people fit – same cost, different output. Productivity comes out of the minds of people. Even in our own work place think about that. What are they doing well? What can they do better?

Calling – human need meets your gifting and passion

We have lost this sense of integration. There is no separation in the Bible between work and a deeply religious faith. It was the Christians who were leaders of the great movements. Think of the Daniels, Josephs, Wilberforces, Shaftsbury, Pascals, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Guinness (Arthur – building a beer company – brewed in Ireland and England – it is nutrition and limit the amount you will drink – he created it as a Christian), Neal Clark Warren (eharmony to create strong marriages in society). These are men who understood, “Christ, Commerce, Civilization.”

In the early part of the century Christians have moved to the “organized” suburbs out of the city (because it was dirty). We have got to get back into the game. The church needs to commission and we must know we go with the power of Jesus.

Our role is not just to help God, but, work with God.

Andy's daughter (ophthalmic technician) - “This is terrible, I can't work here any longer – the way people treat each other, sniping – a litany of a poor workplace.” One of the technicians says, “You're not going to last – you're too nice.” Andy asks, “What are your gifts?” She says, “People pleaser, gifts of service...” He asks, “Is it possible this is not a mistake – is this not where God would want you to be?” She stayed. Two years later he learns that doctors say the work place changed because of her – and the HS began to redeem the workplace through her.

Are you going to work on Monday morning or going to help God progress his creation?

When we think of ourselves as stewards of God's creation we miss something. A steward takes something that is already here. Manage may not be the same word. We are responsible for the part of the creation God has put us in to progress it, not just manage it. There are a few Christians who have this vision of God's work. The reason Andy feels so confident about this is the enemy attacks at the point of strategic importance. As a result, many young people go around in certain circles asking that – and end up doing nothing. We've been invited by God with opportunities and gifts to do things. God's probably got you where he wants you to be. Get on with it. When God's wants to move you on, he'll move you on.

Work is the way money gets built-up to be used in different ways. But it can get too big in certain instances.

Bill Hendricks, *A Person Called You*

People God uses (mentoring) go through an extremely long training process. Things will take a long-time.

Extraordinary ordinary call for most of us. We should not wait for that to happen (it won't for most of us) – though it can.

Credibility through production – can share best principles

Part III: Are there some things I should be doing differently at work?

Andy can't get caught up in a prescriptive role.

Five principles of wisdom on things we should be doing differently at work. To work:

1) As if you are yoked with Jesus Christ

Yoking was a main mode of transportation. Large yoke was laid; the bulls were locked could not move out of benefit of each other. Being in lock step. We are together no matter what happens. In Matthew 11 Jesus talks about "carrying my yoke." When someone says "My yoke is light" the immediate sense people would have would be weightiness. Counter culture, it is like; 2 Corinthians 6 "Do not be unequally yoked" – could be widened out in business – who should we be yoked to?

What does it mean to be yoked with Christ. Think of ourselves close by in an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Whatever he would do we would do. An intimate walk to be the representative of Jesus to basically fulfill his creation mandate. Do it in line with the way Jesus would do it. We only know how to be yoked to Jesus if you know who Jesus is. The basis of this work is an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. A couple attributes of Jesus relevant to the workplace.

In Psalm 89:14 the previous verses extolled the majesty of God. "Lovingkindness and faithfulness go before him." The king of all kings describing the foundations of his throne. In presidential politics, "How consistent are they?" They don't say who they are and they don't always stick to what they say. God says who he is, "Righteousness and justice." Right and just. How do we think about righteousness and justice (1 Kings 10:9; 2 Sam 8:15). If we are yoked with Jesus, justice and righteousness in the work place – "What is right?" and "What is fair?" These are things we think about when we consider the workplace – a society the idea of justice and fairness is very important. When there is unfairness, it tears at trust. When we are yoked with Jesus Christ. When you are right it is true, correct and moral – without favoritism, based on merit.

There's a way to fire people in a way that is right.

What is fair about firing people? Have open communication. Give them opportunity to change. Help them with training if needed. After 6 months do the evaluation (Andy's approach saved up to 30%). This corporation cares. Right and just.

Printing company (West) merger in acquisition. "When we know you will know." Thanks to the management team on how they closed the facility. The reputation is far more than the money spent.

2) Be mindful of God's evaluation metrics

Matthew 25 (parable of the talents) – 3 servants given 5, 2, and 1 talent. The words and phrase we want to hear, "Well done, good and faithful." When we are given three terms he is telling us something about our cultural mandate. Did we produce the product on time? Make your numbers? "Well done." That's the bottom line. But God is interested in the process. "Good" speaks of the nature of the person, the character. "Faithful" speaks of...

Everything legal is not necessarily right.

Machiavellian – the end justifies the means. Christ calls to the process and lets the outcome be what it must be. We are so stressed because we take responsibility for what is God's. What's our process? Are we being faithful? Are we being good? Are we trusting God.

3) We should work always in service to others

One of the direct attributes of love is service. Serving our neighbor is loving our neighbor. Jeremiah 29:4-7 (Babylonian captivity; it is a tough place, tough task masters) v. 4 God is talking to this group. "Build houses, plant vineyards – be normal – live life." Then work for the prosperity and peace of the city. Wait these are captives, brutal guys and pray for them. If you do that you may also prosper. How many could do that? Those who have killed your family.

God would say the same thing to us today. We've got to do this to bring peace and prosperity to the city – not for prosperity, but, response to God's request. As Christians we should excel in service. If as leaders (we can lead everywhere where we are); if we make others successful, we become successful.

4) We should work with an appropriate rhythm of work and rest

It is something about balancing life – a foolish thing to search – it implies equilibrium. It is living life in tension. All kinds of things can pull. One of the things of life in tension is rest – a time in the week when you need rest. God took a stop and looked at what he'd done and said it is good and he rested. We need to take some

time off to be refocused. There's only one place to go – back to Jesus. The ability is based on his power coming through us. Make sure we are taking vacations, time off.

Work will expand to fill any void – like the cuckoo placing its eggs in someone else's nest – the other birds are pushed out and they die.

5) Work with an *oikonomon*

Oiko means house

Nomos means law

Economy

Oikonomon is the master of the house

It occurs 11 times in the NT; Luke (4x) – manager or overseer; Romans – treasurer of the city; 1 Corinthians 4 – those who have been entrusted with the mysteries of God – the entrusted one with the counsels and mysteries of God; Titus 1; 1 Peter 4:10 “Each one should use whatever gifts he has received to use it...”

Slaves, servants, managers, etc.

In history we had different kinds of slaves – *doulos* (is the one we think of today), household manager is some other kind of slave – someone that is entrusted. Highly responsible positions – even to look over the children of the landowner.

We are God's representatives in its fullest sense; and he's entrusted this to us. Your workplace is the place you have been entrusted by God. Our challenge is to think how do I engage this place the way God would want me to. I'm entrusted by him.

Part IV: The value and impact of the Cultural Mandate

1100 world population 300mil

1927 – 1960 3bil

1974 – 1987 5bil

1999 6bil

2012 7bil

The average lifestyle is better today than any time in history; God is providing and managing to provide while this growth is taking place. How do we do it? Through the Cultural Mandate.

God has created a productive creation. It is important to make our creation productive.

1) Vital for human flourishing

Malthus is the one who said there are limits to everything (proven not to be correct?)

Not only through the cultural mandate we have managed, but we have grown arts – things of beauty, music, etc. that have added to the quality of our lives (qualitative change); Uffizi Gallery in Florence – the history of arts through the centuries “God more proficient in the art but lost God along the way”

God is not just a mechanistic provider of things

2) Major opportunity for evangelism

2010 Lausanne Congress in Cape Town – what emerged was the clear commitment that the workplace was the most important place for evangelism; more reached there than in the 10/40 Window. New England 2 generational post-Christian environment; totally secular; the workplace gives an opportunity to change that around – the way we think about people.

Once a month 600 or 630, “Do you have a few minutes?” Knock on the door. Work place is stressful and tough. People struggle in the stress and tension. There is so much less hope among people. We can be such bright lights in that darkness. The great thing about that is people come and seek you out.

Don’t initiate conversations. Respond to conversations. Be gentle and kind.

In evangelism – its not an outcome God is looking for – what’s more important is that you give an authentic expression – that is terribly powerful – it’s our responsibility to represent.

The great thing about work is that you will be with people for years.

“Would you like me to pray for you?”

3) Work, when we do it right can be the basis of a deeply meaningful, contented and joyful life

When we are aligned with God’s will for our life we will experience great contentment. Why don’t we? We are still struggling with selfish ambition. Paul struggled all his life. If we know about it at least we can work on it. God is unbelievable in his mercy and grace. “All work and all achievement spring from man’s envy of his neighbor.”

We live compartmentalized lives. We will never be content that way because our lives are incoherent. How do we live the faith life in which everything works

through? Faith is not an independent variable. How do you just live it everyday? It's all the same stuff no matter who you are with and where you are.

Frankly, sometimes we are just disobedient to God. Are we living the life we want to live hoping God will bless it? Or are you living the life God has for us? It requires a yieldedness, a trust, it is a deeply integrated life of Jesus Christ – no separately independent variables.

How do I start this journey? Start reading the Bible.

Friday 1030am
March 20, 2015
Seminar

God's Vision for Work (2nd Round Review)

70% not engaged at work today
Utilitarian – work in order to do what I really want to do

Mid 30's CEO when he became a Christian

Andy's read the Bible from the lens of work.

He found it is absolutely filled with how we should live our lives.

Why does work exist?

What is the problem with work? We live a compartmentalized life.

Work is interlaced through virtually every page of Scripture which makes it hard to gather a select group of passages to have normative principles of work to create a theology

Joseph and Genesis 50 “...Because of this thousands of people survive – the community healthy...