

LifeWork

Developing a Biblical Theology of Vocation



by Darrow L. Miller



LifeWork: Developing a Biblical Theology of Vocation
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DEDICATION

This little booklet is written as a celebration of the remnants who have gone before us who understood that their work was a place for worship and service, a thread in the fabric of God's unfolding kingdom.

Lifework: Developing a Biblical Theology of Vocation is a work in progress. If you have stories or insights to share that would help strengthen this tool or encourage others, please pass them on to us.

It is dedicated to my friends Bob Osburn and Moses Kim who long to see Christians challenged, trained, and released to serve Christ in their vocations for the discipling of nations.

LIFEWOR

If we look externally there is a difference betwixt the washing of dishes and preaching of the Word of God; but as touching to please God, in relation to His call, none at all.

William Tyndale

Let every Christian walk with God when he works at his calling, and act in his occupation with an eye to God, act as under the eye of God.

Cotton Mather

One effect of this was to give workers in all trades a genuine equality before God and genuine importance in the life of the community.... No menial work was in itself beneath the dignity of prophet, priest, or king. In fact, God chose an obscure shepherd boy as king and an unheralded carpenter as Messiah.

Paul S. Minear
Author of *Work and Vocation*

Laborare est Orare, Work is worship... All true Work is sacred; in all true Work, were it but hand-labour, there is something of divines No man has work, or can work, except religiously; not even the poor day-laborer, the weaver of your coat, the sewer of your shoes....

Thomas Carlyle

We wait, pray and prepare ourselves as if the Lord would return tomorrow. Yet we plant, build and work on earth as if it would continue for another thousand years.

Wilhelm Hofmann
Founder of the Brethren Church of Korntal, Germany

All is, if I have grace to use it so,

As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

John Milton

Our whole life should be nothing but praise to God. Even if the Lord would return tomorrow, I would still plant a sapling today.

Martin Luther

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet will introduce the concept of *lifework* as well as give you a tool—Biblical Theology of Vocation—to help you, a follower of Christ, connect your vocation with God’s Transforming Story.¹

First, you will find a narrative with a study guide to aid you in discovering the wonder of consciously relating your work to the kingdom of God. Second, you will find twelve Bible studies (Basics) that illustrate how God’s Word informs twelve specific vocations. If this whets your appetite and you want to take the time to reflect more deeply, you may use the third section (Advanced) to help develop your own Biblical Theology of Vocation. There are two tools to choose from. Then you will find the Appendix, which offers a series of readings that supplement this study, as well as information on journaling to help you with the Advanced exercises. Lastly, there is a Bibliography for further reading.

God is not just Lord of the religious and spiritual realm. He is the Lord of all, including the Lord of our work. He is the Lord of communication; the Trinity spoke before the creation of the world. He is the Lord of agriculture; he created the system and planted the first garden. He is the master architect; he designed and built the universe, and now he is building the kingdom of God. He is the Lord of health, the healer of individuals and the healer of nations.

This booklet will help you understand your work, not merely as a job or a means of support, but as a vocation, a calling. It is not intended for use in determining your vocation; it assumes that you already know your “occupation.” But rather, it is designed to help you connect your chosen vocation with the narrative of God’s unfolding story.

My prayer is that God might use this tool to help Christians around the world to relate their vocational life to the kingdom of God, to the end that cultures are redeemed and nations disciplined for the coming King.

PART 1: *LIFEW*ORK

DEFINING YOUR *LIFEW*ORK

God is building his kingdom. He has a purpose for history—history is going somewhere—and a purpose for man. For each of his children, God has given us a life purpose for a *lifework*.

God has a general calling for all of the redeemed, first to salvation—justification, and then to the Christian life—to be godly men and women, to be servants, to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness. He also has a particular calling for each follower of Christ, a place to work for his unfolding kingdom. We shall call the former (general calling) *life* and the latter (particular calling) *work*. Together they are one's *lifework*.

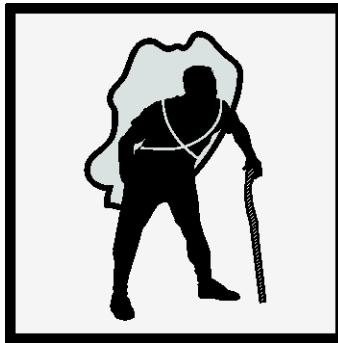
David Wells, in his book *No Place for Truth*, describes how each of us as Christians has a theology on which we base our lives. It may not be good theology. It may not be well-thought out or consciously connected. Nevertheless, we are all theologians. Wells writes,

Let us not think, I said, that we really have a choice between having a theology and not having one. We all have our theologies, for we all have a way of putting things together in our minds that, if we are Christian, has a shape that arises from our knowledge of God and his Word. We might not be conscious of the process. Indeed, we frequently are not. But at the very least we will organize our perceptions into some sort of pattern that seems to make sense to us. The question at issue, then, is not *whether* we will have a theology but whether it will be a good or bad one, whether we will become conscious of our thinking processes or not, and, more particularly, whether we will learn to bring all of our thoughts into obedience to Christ or not. [*Jesus himself had a theology.*] *He explained himself in terms of biblical revelation, understood his **life** and **work** in relation to God, and viewed all of life from this perspective. He had a worldview that originated in the purposes and character of his Father and that informed everything he said and did.*² [emphasis mine]

The Nature of Work

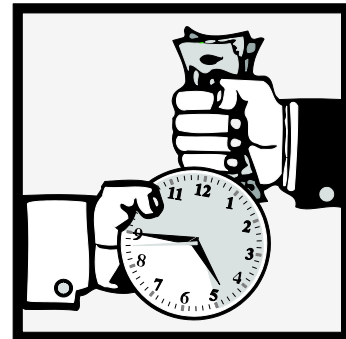
Different people have different concepts of work. The nature of work is usually defined by the majority culture of a society, and that, in turn, is derived from a culture's worldview. Some Christians see the necessity of work as part of the Fall, forgetting that God worked (Gen. 2:2), and that man was placed in the Garden before the Fall to work it (Gen. 2:15). When people see work as part of God's curse on creation, then it is something to be dreaded and to be avoided whenever possible. A friend of mine from West Africa once said that many of the young men in his country pursued college education so that they could get a "tie job." A "tie job" is one in which you can spend your day in an air-conditioned office and not have to "work" (i.e., get your hands dirty).

Let's look briefly at five different concepts of work.

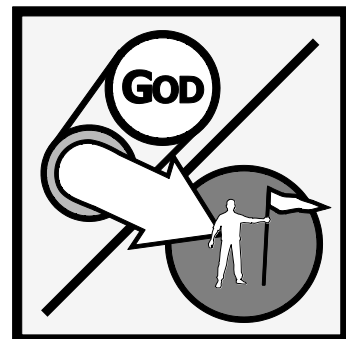


First, the animistic worldview sees work as what one does **to survive**. It is usually seen as a necessary evil. This concept is often found among peoples who live at or below the poverty line. It is a basic feature of most animistic cultures.

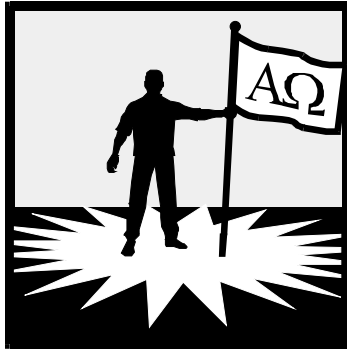
Second, the naturalistic or materialistic worldview sees work as a **career**, as the backbone of modern society. Work is viewed mainly in economic terms. It is what one does to have material things, “the good life.” Work in this sense is usually defined in terms of “success,” upward mobility, and affluence. The end result of work is consumption which is the natural purpose of a secular or hedonistic society.



Third, the evangelical Gnostic³ paradigm provides us with two views of work. The first is work in the “spiritual” sense of **“full-time ministry.”** This is a reaction among certain groups of Christians to a “profane” secular concept of work. If the world and secular jobs are seen as evil or bad, and one wants to be more spiritual, then he or she goes into “full-time Christian service.” This is defined as pastoring, missions, and other “spiritual work.”



The second evangelical Gnostic view sees work as a **place to do spiritual ministry**. Some Christians who do not want to go into “full-time Christian work,” seek to invest spiritual activity *into* their workplace. They see their job site as a place to do spiritual ministry—conduct Bible studies and share the Gospel. Both of these concepts of work stem from a Gnostic view of Christianity.

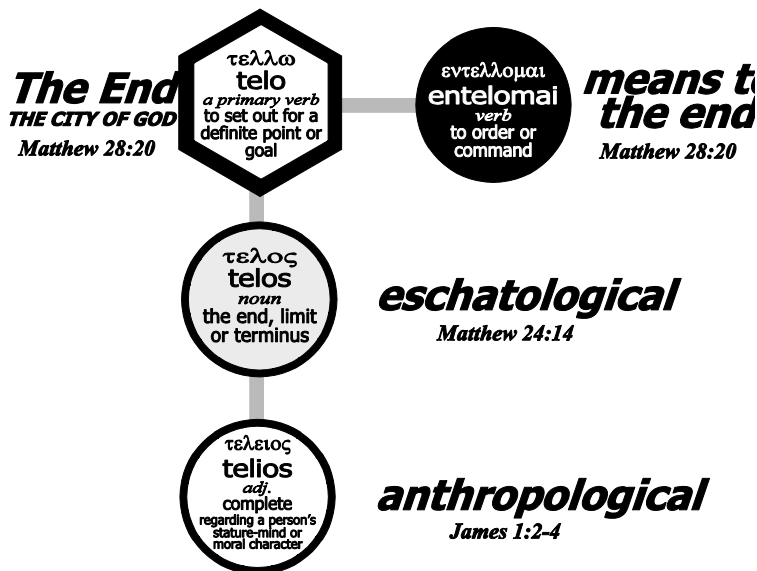


Fourth, the biblical worldview provides a framework for work being sacred, for labor having dignity. This concept of work is that it is a **vocation**—one’s calling. Work is a call of God upon an individual’s life. It becomes the sphere **through** which, not merely *in* which, a Christian serves Christ and his kingdom. It is the occupation—the principle business of one’s life—through which one occupies territory or a sphere of influence (Luke 19:13) *for* Jesus Christ.

This biblical concept understands that God is at work in the world building his kingdom, and that, among other things, he calls us to participate in the building of his kingdom through our work. I have called this concept one’s *lifework*. One’s *lifework* establishes one’s place in God’s unfolding story. Just as all of history is moving towards God’s ultimate purpose, so one’s individual life is intentionally moving towards its *destiny*, to fulfill its purpose in God’s plan. Both modern secular culture and animistic cultures have an inadequate view of time, a view in which there is no future. Among other things, a biblical worldview acknowledges that God is working in history to fulfill his *telos*—eschatological purpose for all of history, and his *telios*—anthropological purpose for each individual life.

ΤΗΡΕΙΝ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΟΣΑ ΕΝΕΤΕΙΛΑΜΗΝ

Word Family: telos



I once heard a story of a reporter who was visiting a construction site in a classical city in Europe where a group of workers was building a beautiful stone edifice. The reporter asked three different men what they were doing. The first one responded gruffly, “Can’t you see, stupid? I’m carrying these stones.” The second one with some pride in his voice said, “I am building a monument for my generation.” The third

said, "I am helping to build the kingdom of God." Three different men doing the same task had radically different understandings of what they were doing.

One's culture and cultural worldview will determine, consciously or unconsciously, one's concept of work. As followers of Christ, we must consciously attach our work—*lifework*—to God's Transforming Story.

The Call of God

In Genesis 1:26-27 we find the creation mandate for development. Here God blesses Adam and Eve and gives them a task. As his image bearer, man is to steward creation, to be God's vice-regent over the created order. In Genesis 12:2-4 we find again that God blesses Abraham. As in Genesis 1:28, the blessing is for a purpose: that Abraham and his descendants would be a blessing to **all** the nations of the earth. In Matthew 28:18-20 the theme continues as the victorious Christ, the King, blesses his emissaries with his Holy Spirit and commands them to make disciples of all nations—*ethnos*. Finally, in Revelation 21:24-26, we find that the King returns with his kingdom. With the nations having been blessed and disciplined, the kings of the nations bring the glory of their nations into the kingdom of God. Within the context of this unfolding history, we find that he has a call upon our individual lives—*telios*.

In Psalm 139:13-16 we find that we are "beautifully and wonderfully made" for a purpose by the Creator from our mother's womb. The apostle Paul understood this and wrote of it in Galatians 1:15 when he said that from his mother's womb he was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles. The same was expressed of Paul at the time of his conversion when the Lord said to him, "Get up and go into Damascus. There you will be told *all that you have been assigned to do*" (Acts 22:10). Paul had an assignment from the King, "to be an apostle to the Gentiles."

We see this same theme reflected in the life of our Savior. In John 4:34 he said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to *finish his work*." The Father had a work for Christ to do and the basis of his life was to finish that work. Towards the end of the Gospel, as Jesus was with the disciples at the Passover supper, he prayed, "I have brought you glory on earth by *completing the work you gave me to do*" (John 17:4). Christ was conscious that he was born for a particular purpose in the unfolding of God's plan. Each of us also has been beautifully and wonderfully made for a purpose within the unfolding kingdom.

Three Major Aspects of the Call of God

What is the call of God? What is the nature of the call of God? It is a double call on the believer. The call has both a general nature for all Christians and a particular call for each individual Christian. It is a call to Christ and his kingdom for all believers, and it is a call for each believer to be an instrument of the kingdom in the world. The call has both a general and a particular nature.

The general call is God's call to salvation, a call to justification (conversion) and sanctification (to live a holy life in all relationships). This is a common call on all Christians to be saved. It is a call out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

Justification—This is an ordinary calling from Scripture to repent and be saved. Christ’s righteousness is imputed to me (II Cor. 5:21). We are declared holy and just. It reflects our position in Christ. We stand in the shadow of the cross of Christ.

Sanctification—This is a call to all Christians to become what we have been declared to be in Christ. We have been declared holy and just; now we are to live holy and just lives. This second aspect of our calling includes all of man and all of his relationships. We are to worship the King, serve our fellow man, and steward creation.

The *general* nature of God’s call is found throughout Scripture. The prophet Micah described the call of the believer as “To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” —the Micah Mandate (Micah 6:8). In Matthew 6:31-33 Jesus stated that our call is to “seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness [general will], and all these things [particular will] will be given to you as well.” Likewise, Jesus described the kingdom as a harvest waiting to be picked and said that he was looking for laborers for the harvest (Matthew 9:37, 38). He was looking for his disciples to be servants of the King (Mark 10:43, 44). As was mentioned earlier, Jesus issued the charter of the kingdom of God in Matthew 28, “As you go, make disciples of all nations.” In John 20:21 Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” All of these speak of God’s general call for the Christian life.

God gives spiritual gifts through the outworking of the Holy Spirit to complement the natural giftings, talents, temperaments, and interests imputed at birth and gained in life. These gifts are to be employed in the moral framework of our primary call as Christians to serve within the context of the body of Christ. We read in Ephesians 4:11-13 that spiritual gifts were given for the building up of the body of Christ. In Romans 12:6-8 Paul writes, “We have different gifts according to the grace given to us.” In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 he writes, “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.” Some of these gifts are pastoring, teaching, prophesying, working of miracles, healing, helping, and administrating. They help to establish one’s *purpose* within the body of Christ.

The general call to salvation, to enter the kingdom of God, is foundational to the particular call, and takes precedence over and defines in moral and spiritual terms the framework for the particular call.

The particular call is a unique call on each individual Christian. This is a special calling by the Holy Spirit to particular stations, places of deployment and tasks. This is one’s personal assignment. Each believer has a variety of stations, deployments and tasks that make up the uniqueness of their place in the unfolding of the kingdom.

The third area of calling is that of *vocation*⁴ or occupation⁵. Within the context of the biblical worldview, there is **no separation between the spiritual and the physical** as there is in the evangelical Gnostic worldview. Work is clearly more than an economic activity as secularism would hold, and more than merely a survival activity as found in cultures of poverty. Work is transferred to vocation within the framework of God’s *telos*.

The Reformation called all believers to live before the face of God—*coram Deo*, and only for the glory of God—*solī Deo Gloria!* All of life is to be lived only for the glory of God. All of life, including work, is to be under the lordship of Christ (I Cor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36).

Work itself is a holy activity. God is a working God. We see this in his work of creation (Genesis 2:2-3) and sustaining providence (Hebrews 1:3b). We are made like him. We gain dignity by working. We fulfill our destiny through our work. God wants to use our occupations to occupy territory for Christ and his kingdom (Luke 19:13).

As Pope John Paul II has written:

...the Holy Spirit of God writes in the heart and life of every baptised person a project of love and grace, which is the only way to give full meaning to existence, opening the way to the freedom of the children of God and enabling the offering of one's personal and irreplaceable contribution to the progress of humanity on the path of justice and truth. The Spirit does not only help to place oneself sincerely before the great questions of the heart—Where do I come from? Where am I going? Who am I? What is the purpose of life? How should I spend my time?—but opens up the prospect of courageous responses. The discovery that each man and woman has his own place in God's heart and in the history of humanity constitutes the point of departure for a new culture of vocations.⁶

What does it mean to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness within the context of my vocation? When work is viewed as a calling, not only do we see God's hand of providence directing us toward our work, but we have opportunity to manifest the moral and metaphysical values of the kingdom of God *through* our work into the institution and society that we are serving. To put it differently, we have the opportunity to connect the kingdom of God to our vocation, and through that to impact our world.

In the 1930s the humanist educator, John Dewey, debated the classical educator and president of the University of Chicago, Robert Hutchins over the purpose of education. Dewey argued that the purpose of education was to prepare people for *jobs*; Hutchins said that it was to prepare people for *life*. Dewey won the argument, and his secular humanistic moral and metaphysical underpinnings have permeated the education establishment of nation after nation since that time. Unfortunately, there were no Christians engaged in the debate to argue that education is to prepare people to worship God, to serve their fellow man, and to steward creation. Christian educators were not involved in this very important discussion because they had given up a biblical worldview which influences all areas of life for an increasingly narrow spiritual worldview (Gnostic) in which they failed to bring their moral and metaphysical foundations into the work arena to be used for God's purposes. They were Christians in church but secularists in the workplace.

Christ has called his people to *disciple nations*; discipling a nation is more comprehensive than discipling individuals to be spiritual or merely saving souls for heaven. What this means is that as his disciples we are to infuse God's moral and metaphysical order into our spheres of influence, particularly into the institutions where we work. As salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16) we are to infuse kingdom culture (*ethos*) into institutional (*ethne*) settings. As Christians we are to consciously see ourselves as shapers of the workplace and builders of nations.

The sum of our general call to life and our particular call to work is our *lifework*.

Connecting the Kingdom of God to Vocation

How might one connect the kingdom of God to one's vocation? One may be an agriculturalist helping people in a developing country have a sustainable food supply for the first time in their lives. This is a good thing to do! But are we consciously connecting that work and the people with whom we are working to the First Farmer, the Creator of the first garden, and his unfolding kingdom? True sustainability will come only as people are connected to the Transforming Story. To do this, one must understand his work as an agriculturalist within the context of the kingdom of God.

Once when I was visiting the Altiplano in Bolivia, I had the privilege of worshiping one Sunday morning with a group of believers in the town of Huarina, 14,000 feet above sea level. The church is mainly composed of farmers and their families. Economically these people are desperately poor. As the cultural story in Bolivia is similar to that in other cultures around the world, farmers are given very little respect. They are among the lowest members of Bolivian society. After greeting the congregation, I wanted to bring a message of encouragement, so I turned to Genesis 2:8 "Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed." After reading the verse, I paused, then read the first part again—"The Lord God had **planted a garden.**" Then I paused again and said, "And God ... **planted** ... a garden." Then again, "**God** planted a garden." Then I asked the question, "What did God do?" HE PLANTED A GARDEN! I could begin to see dignity coming to the eyes of these beautiful people. For generations they had been told that their work was insignificant and that they were low because they worked in the soil. All of a sudden they came to see that God was a *gardener*, and their work had dignity because the God of the universe was a farmer.

The great missionary statesman William Carey understood that God is the Lord of agriculture.

Carey brought the English daisy to India and introduced the Linnaean system to gardening. He also published the first books on science and natural history in India, such as William Roxburgh's *Flora Indica*, because he believed the biblical view that, 'All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord.' Carey believed that nature is declared 'good' by its Creator; it is not *maya* (illusion), to be shunned, but a subject worthy of human study. He frequently lectured on science and tried to show that even lowly insects are not souls in bondage, but creatures worthy of our attention.⁷

Three things are required to connect our work to the kingdom of God: being *motivated* by Christ, using the *methods* of Christ, and having the *mind* of Christ.

First, our work must be *motivated* by Christ. We are to serve him because he first served us. We are to love others because he first loved us. Our occupation, to serve Christ and his kingdom, stems from a thankful heart for who God is, for the free grace that he has given, and because he is working in the world to advance his kingdom.

It's not enough simply to be motivated by Christ. Our *methods* should also reflect his methods. Sometimes one might think that this means we are merely to do what we do professionally. While it is good to do excellent and professional work, we can do the *wrong* things professionally. As Francis Schaeffer has said, "We are to do the Lord's work in the Lord's way, and not the Lord's work in the world's way." We need to do the *right* things well.

Third, we are to have the *mind* of Christ establish the context for our work. Paul has reminded us to bring every thought captive to Christ (II Cor. 10:5). This means more than bringing all of our religious or ethical thoughts captive to Christ. We are to bring **all** thoughts captive to Christ. Our work is to be done within the moral and metaphysical framework of a biblical worldview, within the context of the kingdom of God.

As an example, Food for the Hungry International, the organization which I work for, is a Christian relief and development organization. For years we have described ourselves as motivated by Christ, but often we find ourselves analyzing the problems of hunger and poverty from a secular paradigm; we've "baptized" our industry's methods with "God words" and assumed that they were thus Christian. As an organization, we have come to repent—*metanoeo* (Greek)—to "change the mind," to "be re-minded." We have come to realize that we must not only be motivated by Christ, but that we need to analyze the issues of hunger and poverty from a distinctly biblical point of view. After all, the way you define a problem will determine how you solve the problem.

When I was facilitating a workshop for our management team in La Paz, Bolivia, a couple of the middle managers came up to me after one session and said, "Darrow, because we are a Christian organization, we want to do our work excellently, but we've realized today that we can do the wrong things with excellence. You have called us to make sure that we consciously evaluate our methods to make sure that we do the *right things right*."

Our vocation is to be connected to the kingdom of God, to the Transforming Story. Within this Transforming Story, there are a number of elements. *God* is the king. The *world* is his kingdom. We are *stewards* of the kingdom for the King. The king has established fundamental principles—a kingdom ethic or *ethos*—for governing His Kingdom. The *task* of the stewards is to have dominion over creation (Genesis 1:26-28); the goal is to extend the blessing of Abraham to all nations (Genesis 12:2-4) and to fulfill Christ's mandate to disciple the nations (Matthew 28:19, 20), so that the glory of the nations will be prepared for Christ's return (Rev. 21:23-26). We are to do this as Christians, not *outside* the context of our work, and not merely *in* our work. We are to manifest the kingdom of God *through* our work into a broken world.

The King and His Work

Let us look at the king and his work. We know that Jesus is a servant-king. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, yet as it says in Mark 10:45, "[He] did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." The full image of God was revealed in Christ through his service; while Christ's primary work was for our salvation, he carried out that work in the context of human life 2,000 years ago, through a number of vocational avenues. He was a carpenter who built furniture and framed doors and windows. He was a teacher who taught both children and adults. He was a "public health worker" who brought both emotional and physical healing.

As we look at Christ during his 33 years on earth, as well as the working of God in history, we find that God reveals himself in his work. The life of one of the heroes of our faith, the missionary stateswoman to India, Amy Carmichael, expresses this well. Below you will find excerpts from the book entitled *Amma: The Life and Words of Amy Carmichael*.

“There they dwelt with the King for His work.

“What is your work? Whatever it be, the Lord, the King, has done that kind of work

Himself, and you dwell with Him here for His work.

“Is your work with the little children, carrying them about, loving them?

“In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old. Thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went.

“Is your work in the sewing-room?

“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin, and clothed them.

“He has done the work that you are doing. You dwell here with the King for His work.

“Is your work cooking, lighting fires in the kitchen in the early morning, getting food ready for others?

“When the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Come this way and have breakfast. (John 21.12. Weymouth.)

“He has done the work that you are doing. You dwell here with the King for His work.

“Is your work tending people, washing patients?

“Jesus riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.

“He has done the work that you are doing. You dwell here with the King for His work.

“Is your work nursing, bandaging sores?

“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

“He has done the work that you are doing. You dwell here with the King for His work.

“Is your work writing—writing on a blackboard in school, writing in the office, answering letters?

“He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone. The Lord shall count when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there. God says, I have written to him the great things of My law. Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground. They are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

“He has done the work that you are doing. You dwell here with the King for His work.

“Is your work account-keeping, teaching or learning arithmetic, or the names of things hard to remember?

“He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names. Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

“He has done the work that you are doing. You dwell here with the King for His work.

“Is your work in the farm with the animals?”

“He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom.

“Is your work in the engine-room, or the carpentering shops? Is it making things or mending things?”

“O give thanks unto the Lord that made great lights.

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God. (The verb is the same as that used in Matt. 4.21, *mending* their nets.) Is not this the Carpenter? and they were offended at Him.

“He has done the work that you are doing. You dwell here with the King for His work.”⁸

God’s nature is modeled and manifest in Christ through the Scriptures. He is the vocational prototype/archetype. He is the communicator, the agriculturalist, the construction worker, the healer, the businessman. His Word—the written word—is the *owner’s manual* or *instruction manual*, not just for the spiritual life, but for **all** of life, including the life of vocation.

We are called to disciple nations. We are identified as “salt” and “light” in a dying culture. We are commanded to occupy territory for Christ’s return. Ours is a life of passion and not apathy, of work and not of ease. There is a war going on for the hearts and souls of individuals, communities, and nations. When we are called to Christ, we are called into his kingdom and into kingdom work. In fact, we are to “kingdomize” our work. If I am a doctor, I am to be a doctor first for Christ and his kingdom. If I am a teacher, I am a teacher for Christ. If a farmer, I farm for Christ and his kingdom, not for money. That work continues not until retirement (there is no retirement in the kingdom), but until we die! Are we engaged in the battle? Martin Luther’s challenge is for us today:

If I profess with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the Devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved...⁹

The war is to be fought within the context of our *lifework*. We will end with these encouraging words from John Paul II:

I wish, finally, to address you, dear young people, and to repeat these words to you with affection: be generous in giving your life to the Lord. Do not be afraid! You have nothing to fear, because God is the Lord of history and of the universe. Let grow in you the desire for great and noble projects. Nourish a sense of solidarity: these are the sign of the divine action in your hearts. Place at the use of your communities the talents which Providence has lavished on you. The more ready you are to give yourselves to God and to others, the more you will discover the authentic meaning of life. God expects much of you!¹⁰

To begin to apply the concept of *lifework* in your own life, you may want to develop a Biblical Theology of Vocation (BTV). In the following section you will find further readings and both Basic and Advanced plans of BTV to begin the adventure.

LIFEWORk: DEVELOPING A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF VOCATION

STUDY GUIDE

1. Before reading the monograph on *Lifework*, take a moment to answer this first question: "Why work? What is the ultimate purpose of work?"

2. What does David Wells mean by "Everyone is a theologian"?

Do you agree or disagree with Wells? Why?

3. Briefly describe the five different concepts of work.

Which one most closely resembles your concept in #1 above?

4. What is the difference between the general nature and particular nature of God's call?

5. What are the three major aspects of the call of God?

6. Which one of these takes precedence over the others? Why?

7. What three things are essential for connecting one's work with the kingdom of God?

Evaluate, in relation to each of these, your strengths and weaknesses.

8. What is meant by the term *lifework*?

PART 2: APPLICATION EXERCISES

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

On the following pages you will find some guidelines for beginning to read God’s instruction manual for your vocational calling. You will find a set of Bible studies, called **Basics**, on various “occupations” to give you an idea of how the Bible speaks into these vocations. Following that, you will find a suggested plan for doing a search of the entire Bible, called **Advanced**, to help you take a more in-depth, comprehensive look at your vocation.

In searching Scripture with the goal of developing a **Biblical Theology of Vocation**, we can read it with “vocational eyes,” the eyes of the accountant, the farmer, or the health care worker. How does the character of God frame your vocation? Remember that God is the Master Communicator. What does he have to say about communication? He is the Master Architect. What does he have to teach you, his student, about design or construction? He is the Master Teacher. What does he have to convey to you about the philosophy and methodology of education? He is the Divine Healer. What does Scripture have to say about health, sickness, and healing?

In studying Scriptures to develop a biblical theology of vocation, we are not looking so much for proof texts as “context.” In caution, the Bible does not speak exhaustively on any vocation. It does not give what so many of us are looking for—ten easy steps. It does speak in terms of principles¹¹ and precepts.¹² These provide a context for understanding our work and framing our mind, motivation, and perhaps method, of our work. As you search the scriptures, look for principles that have application to your vocation. Another caution is to be careful not to put human attributes on God, but to see things in his nature, as he reveals himself in Scripture and in the person of Christ. God is the prototype/archetype for human activity.

As we do this study, we must remember to look from two vantage points. If we think of Scriptures as a forest, we must first spend some time *inside* the forest studying individual “trees”—verses—as well as their surroundings—the passage or book of the Bible. Second, we must also look at the forest from the *outside*, viewing it from a mountaintop. This gives us the big picture—the meta-story, or worldview perspective. The entire Bible is God’s record of the Transforming Story. We may learn details about vocation from examining individual verses—“trees”—of Scripture as well as gain conceptual understanding from looking from the mountaintop of the Hebrew metaphysic. In Genesis 1:29 God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth...” This provides a mountaintop view of agriculture. God, the Creator of the universe, is The Agriculturalist—he created the concept of seed-bearing plants and the sowing/reaping system. John 15:1-2 reads, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.” Here Jesus used a particular agricultural technique, namely “cutting” and “pruning” as a metaphor for our lives in Christ. Aside from the spiritual importance, we learn that for a vine or tree to maximize its potential, weak branches must be “cut off” and strong ones must be “pruned.”

As you study Scripture generally or in developing a biblical theology of vocation, be sure to spend time reflecting both on the details and on the meta-story.

Some might say, “This is too much work!” I would respond by saying that developing a Biblical Theology of Vocation is not an event in a person’s life; it is part of traveling on the road of life-long learning. We spend most of our lives in some kind of a work capacity. How much more satisfying it could be if we understood the place of our work within the framework of God’s unfolding kingdom.

In this **Basics** section you will find an introduction to the Biblical Theology of Vocation in twelve occupational spheres: accounting, administration, agriculture, art, business, communication, development, education, engineering, government, health care, and relief work. I chose these particular vocations because they represent, for the most part, the broad areas in which people at Food for the Hungry (the international relief and development organization for which I once worked) labor. These twelve occupations are not exhaustive, but illustrative.

For each vocation you will find:

- ◆ **Nature of God:** Offers insight on that part of God’s character from which the vocation may be framed.
- ◆ **Foundation verse(s):** Offers a potential starting point for exploring the vocation.
- ◆ **Discovery verses:** Identifies a few representative verses found in Scripture that may help to shape our vocational understanding. The verses used in the Discovery section are a small starting point. They are representative, not exhaustive.
- ◆ **Vocational insight:** Provides a place to write any insights you gain from the passage. Each vocation has one of the boxes filled in as an example of a potential insight.
- ◆ **Questions for further reflection and application:** Provides a place to answer the question, “How am I going to apply what I am learning?” It is a place to record questions the passage raises on which you may want to further reflect. Again, an example is presented in each vocation.
- ◆ **Quote:** Provides an insight from one of the “great cloud of witnesses” related to the vocation.

As you study, pray and ask God to open your eyes of understanding as to how the truth of Scripture may speak into your vocation.

As you look up the Discovery verses, ask questions of the text in the following order:

1. What does it say? (Hear the text!)

Look for new insights about God, man, and creation as they relate to your vocation. As mentioned earlier, look at both individual “trees” as well as the larger “forest.”

2. What does it mean? (What light does this shed on my occupation?)

Look for principles. For example, a principle for relief work may be found in Ruth 2:15-19. Boaz recognized that Ruth’s dignity was as important as her need for food. How would a relief worker do their work in a way that affirms the dignity of people caught in a crisis?

Look for technical knowledge. For example, under health care, Deuteronomy 23:12-14 establishes the need for “pit latrines.” In addition, note why pit latrines are necessary. What is the relationship between a Holy God and sanitation? What if there is no concept of a Holy God in the culture where a health promoter is working? What are the barriers of that for sanitation?

3. How does it apply? (What am I going to do with this?)

What does God want me to do with this as it relates to my vocation? The passage itself may raise questions in your own mind that require further reflection. Those may be recorded in the column labeled "Questions for Further Reflection and Application."

An individual may want to pick the occupation closest to their own and work through the study to gain a sense of how a Biblical Theology of Vocation can enliven and give depth to one's work.

In addition to processing these individually, a group of people with differing vocations may want to work through several or all of these as a devotional exercise to encourage the group to think biblically in terms of their industry.

Enjoy!

BASICS:

ACCOUNTING *

Nature of God: Just and trustworthy.

Foundation verses: “Do not have two differing weights in your bag – one heavy, one light. Do not have two differing measures in your house – one large, one small. You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. For the LORD your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly.” Deuteronomy 25:13-16

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Genesis 2:9, 16-17		
Exodus 20:15-16		
Deuteronomy 25:13-16	<i>God is just and trustworthy. We are to be like him. Therefore, accounting requires an honest system of measurement.</i>	<i>What happens to a community or a nation when dishonest weights are used?</i>
2 Chronicles 12:6		
Psalms 19:7-11		

*Bookkeeper, auditor, registrar, banker, treasurer

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Ezekiel 45:9-12		
Micah 6:8-13		
Matthew 21:12-13		
Luke 19:5-10		
2 Corinthians 5:10		
Hebrews 4:13		

Looking back over the years as they pass, one sees a progress that is *not* small; but day after day the work is one of such small things, that if one did not look beyond and through them they would be trying—locks to be mended, notices to be served, the missing shillings of the week's rent to be called for three or four times, petty quarrels to be settled, small rebukes to be spoken, the same remonstrances to be made again and again.

... But it is on these things and their faithful execution that the life of the whole matter depends, and by which steady progress is ensured. It is the small things of the world that colour the lives of those around, and it is on persistent efforts to reform these that progress depends; and we may rest assured that they who see with greater eyes than ours have a due estimate of the service, and that if we did but perceive the mighty principles underlying these tiny things we should rather feel awed that we are entrusted with them at all, than scornful and impatient that they are no larger. What are we that we should ask for more than that God should let us work for Him among the tangible things which He created to be fair, and the human spirits which He redeemed to be pure? From time to time He lifts a veil and shows us, even while we struggle with imperfections here below, that towards which we are working—shows us how, by governing and ordering the tangible things one by one, we may make of this earth a fair dwelling-place; and far better still, how by cherishing human beings he will let us help Him in His work of building up temples meet for Him to dwell in—faint images of that best temple of all, which He promised that He would raise up on the third day, though men might destroy it.¹³

Octavia Hill

ADMINISTRATION*

Nature of God: The sovereign servant-king.

Foundation verse: “For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.” Deuteronomy 10:17

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Exodus 18:17-27		
Deuteronomy 10:17	<i>Corruption in government, i.e. of government officials and bribery in society usually stems from the worship of gods and spirits that are capricious—fickle/unsteady/changeable. The God of Israel is a trustworthy and faithful God, incorruptible and not bribable.</i>	<i>What are the implications for this for establishing just and stable societies and trustworthy business relations?</i>
Isaiah 1:23		
Isaiah 9:6, 7		
Jeremiah 5:1		

* Manager, public official, CEO, supervisor, director, vice president

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Jeremiah 22:15-17		
Mark 10:32-45		
Luke 14:25-35		
Acts 10:34		
Romans 3:23		
1 Corinthians 11:3		

Corruption is rooted in a false idea that power is a passport to personal privilege—to lord it over others. Our astrological deities, as a routine, use their powers to harass and persecute innocent people in order to extract bribes from us. Eg. N.T. Rama Rao (Andhra CM) could not enter his Secretariat because the North stars were inauspicious. If gods themselves use their power to extract bribes then it is “godly” (god-like) to do so ourselves.

Nirad C. Chaudhuri says in his autobiography that Indians are venal, because our gods are venal (easily bribed & corrupted).

Corruption thrives when we cease to fear God. There are two ways to economic prosperity: trade or exploitation.

In trading we barter goods for goods, or goods for services. That is, we trade value for value. This means that everyone in society works hard to produce marketable goods or quality services. Such a society prospers. It is wise.

Corruption is exploitation in that the powerful extract value from unwilling but powerless people, without returning proportionate value. The giver works hard to earn money, but gives his hard earned wealth to the receiver, who is a bully. This takes away the joy and the value of work. People pursue power, not diligent work. Therefore, the products and services of a corrupt society are sub-standard. Life-expectancy is short. Character of a corrupt society is brutalized because corruption is forceful extortion of what belongs to others. People cease loving one another. The society disintegrates. This is folly.

The Bible says that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.” The folly of corruption grows because we do not realize that there is a God who will ultimately judge how we have treated one another, especially the weak and the powerless.¹⁴

Francis A. Schaeffer & Vishal Mangalwadi

AGRICULTURE*

Nature of God: Horticulturalist. God was the first farmer; he planted the first garden.

Foundation verse: “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” Genesis 2:15

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Genesis 1:28-30		
Genesis 2:8-9a	<i>Who was the first farmer? God was a gardener. If the God of the universe was a “farmer”, this must be a very worthy vocation.</i>	<i>How can we practically help farmers come to understand/see that their vocation is a very worthy and godly one?</i>
Genesis 2:15		
Genesis 3:17-18		
Leviticus 19:9-10		
Psalms 104:14-15		

* Farmer, gardener, horticulturalist, rancher, agronomist, forester.

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Proverbs 6:6-11		
Proverbs 24:30-34		
Isaiah 24:4-5		
Mark 4:1-20		
Mark 4:30-32		
John 15:1-8		
Revelation 22:1-2		

The creation story, the creation of the world. “In the beginning God...created the heavens and the earth....and God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food:...”

“Behold” there means “look,” “search,” “find out” ... That to me is the most wonderful thing of life.

Responding to the inquiry of an agricultural journalist as to how he had gone about his exploration of the peanut and its uses, Carver replied, “Why, I just took a handful of peanuts and looked at them. “Great Creator,” I said, “*why* did you make the peanut? *Why?*”

With such knowledge as I had of chemistry and physics I set to work to take the peanut apart. I separated the water, the fats, the oils, the gums, the resins, sugars, starches, pectoses, and amedo acids. There! I had the parts of the peanut all spread out before me. Then I merely went on to try different combinations of those parts, under different conditions of temperature, pressure, and so forth.

The result was what you see—these 202 different products, all made from peanuts!¹⁵

George Washington Carver

ART*

Nature of God: The first artist; the Creator of the universe

Foundation verse: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1 “

Discovery Verses	Vocational Insight	Questions for Further Reflection and Application
Genesis 1:1-31	<i>God is the first artist! Throughout this chapter, like an artist, he stands back to examine what he is making. He declares it “good.” At the end (vs. 31) he examines his work of art and declares it “very good”!</i>	<i>God wants man to fill the earth (vs. 28) with what? With other artists?</i>
Exodus 15:19-21		
Exodus 35:30 – 36:1		
1 Chronicles 25:1-7		
2 Chronicles 5:11-14		
Psalms 27:4		

* Music, poetry, dance, painting, writing, crafts

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Psalm 96:1-13		
Proverbs 31:19-24		
Song of Songs 1:1-4		
Isaiah 61:3		
Jeremiah 18:1-6		
John 1:1		
Acts 9:36-39		
Revelation 21:23-26		

Mystified by the power to create, it is no wonder that man should imagine the artist to be godlike. In the West, belief in a Creator-God was a way of confessing that the power to make the new was beyond human explanation. By deifying the Creator, the West somehow encouraged and endorsed the new. Of course man's power to create did not depend on a theory, and the human need to create has transcended the powers of explanation. Peoples of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome who did not know a Creator-God, who made something from nothing, still created works unexcelled of their kind. And peoples of the East who saw a cosmos of cycles created works of rare beauty in all the arts. Across the world, the urge to create needed no express reason and conquered all obstacles.

Still the West, whose unusual hospitality to the new was rooted in many causes and many mysteries, found added incentive in the vision of a Creator-God and a creator man. Creators in the West found their own ways to make a legacy, our heritage of the arts. In this book I describe the who, when, where, and what. But the *why* has never ceased to be a mystery.

Man's power to make the new was the power to outlive himself in his creations. He found the materials of immortality in the stone around him or the artificial stone that he could make. He flexed his muscles of creativity in structures whose purpose would remain a mystery, and in temples of community. He dared to make images of himself and of the life around him. He made his words into worlds, to relive his past and reshape his future.¹⁶

Daniel J. Boorstin

BUSINESS*

Nature of God: Entrepreneur/steward

Foundation verse: “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.” Genesis 2:2

Discovery Verses	Vocational Insight	Questions for Further Reflection and Application
Genesis 2:2	<i>God worked and rested. Both of these are important in the life of a businessman and those who work for him. He also must work six days and live seven, thus there is a need for saving for the seventh day. Saving becomes a virtue.</i>	<i>How can we help people have a balanced work/rest cycle like God did?</i>
Exodus 22:22-27		
Proverbs 11:24-25		
Proverbs 16:3		
Proverbs 21:20		

* Economist, entrepreneur, executive

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Proverbs 22:16		
Proverbs 22:22		
Proverbs 31:10-31		
Matthew 13:44-46		
Matthew 25:14-30		
Luke 16:1-15		
Luke 19:11-27		
Ephesians 4:28		

This book is based upon a simple assumption: The way God runs His Creation qualifies Him as the most prominent and productive businessman of all. When Christian business professionals see this reality and begin to operate their business the way God does His, then it will radically change them, what we call Christianity, and the entire world in the process...

Today we face many crises. None of them is more basic than the answer to this question: How should mankind justly care for the Earth's resources and distribute its wealth? If Christianity really is God's message to the world, and the Bible is His "manufacturer's handbook," then scripture must address this most fundamental question of human concern. Has our Maker established laws governing our labor, our currencies, our productive justice, and other general laws related to what we commonly call "economics?" If so, how do they work? Does the Bible address those laws? What are the penalties for individuals, businesses, and nations for breaking those laws?¹⁷

Dennis Peacocke

COMMUNICATION*

Nature of God: God is, by nature, the first communicator.

Foundation verses: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:1-4, 14

Discovery Verses	Vocational Insight	Questions for Further Reflection and Application
Genesis 1:3		
Genesis 1:26	<i>“Let us make man in our image,” reflects a conversation that is going on between the members of the Trinity before the foundation of the world. Before the foundation of the world, there was communication, communion, and community. God was the first communicator.</i>	<i>What principles of communication does God unfold for us?</i>
Genesis 3:13		
Exodus 20:16		

* Public relations, media, reporter, public speaker, commentator, announcer

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Exodus 24:12; 32:15-16		
Proverbs 19:22		
Proverbs 30:8		
John 1:1-4, 14		
John 8:42-47		
Romans 3:4		
2 Corinthians 3:2-3		
Ephesians 5:6		

In England during the 1500s and 1600s, and in most of its American colonies during the 1600s and early 1700s, the role of journalists was to do public relations for the king, the royal governor, or the Anglican state church. Journalists (often Puritans) who undermined public confidence in these individuals or entities were seen to be acting unethically.

Some of those Puritans, however, had a different vision for journalism.

They placed God's honor above the PR needs of earthly powers, and they believed that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Ethical journalism, they believed, means building God's kingdom by telling the truth.

They did not believe that those who were doing wrong should be propped up. You can imagine the official response, especially by those who saw themselves as righteous. *Unethical!* they cried. Some Puritan journalists were killed. Others had their cheeks branded or their ears cut off (so they would not be able to hear any more news). There is a great cloud of journalistic witnesses made up of men with names that are now forgotten but should not be: John Stubbes, John Hodgkins, Alexander Leighton, William Prynne, and John Twyn are some of my favorites, and each has a story too long to go into here.

Nourished by the courage of such martyrs, the tree of Christian journalism grew and flourished in America during the late 1700s and early 1800s, by which time three-fourths of American newspapers and magazines were Christian, and hard-hitting articles were not unusual. My favorite magazine from the 1830s, *McDowell's Journal*, exposed early abortionists and businessmen who rented out their buildings and brothels.¹⁸

Marvin Olasky

DEVELOPMENT*

Nature of God: Creator/developer

Foundation verse: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’” Genesis 1:26

Discovery Verses	Vocational Insight	Questions for Further Reflection and Application
Genesis 1:26-28	<i>God blessed Adam and Eve for a purpose—to develop the earth, to expand the garden, to ?? Mankind is God’s vice-regent, the caretaker of his household. His intention is that his servants expand and beautify his creation.</i>	
Genesis 2:15		
Genesis 2:19-20		
Genesis 12:1-4		
Psalm 8:3-6		

* Community mobilizer, community illustrator, contractor/consultant

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Psalm 33:6-9		
Isaiah 11:7-9		
Isaiah 25:6-8		
Matthew 28:19-20		
Hebrews 11:3		
Revelation 21:23-26		

One of the nearer biblical equivalents to the word “development” is in fact “revelation”. Something revealed is un-covered, un-veiled, laid bare or disclosed. In the Bible God is usually the one who does the “revealing”. Who then is the chief agent of development? The object of human development is obviously man, himself. He is also in some sense the subject of the process, but is there not another purpose unfolding beyond his own? An attempt to define development in the light of Scripture, as well as in its modern context, must somehow relate to God, himself. Human development on such terms could be described as the progressive realisation of man’s potential and the enrichment of his life, according to God’s purpose, through the good use of the material and spiritual resources available to him. Perhaps as a working definition that formula will serve.

God’s purpose as it relates to development finds its echoes throughout the Scriptures. The greatest consummation is found suggestively in the book of Revelation, and the first references occur in the opening chapters of Genesis. God said to man, newly created, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion ... over every living thing ... I have given you every plant for food.” This first great commission given to man was a commission to develop. It was world-wide in its scope, but it was to have a direct application to his immediate surroundings. We read that God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden “to till it and to keep it”. The suggestion here is that man was to have an active role in development, and that he was to start his work where God had put him. He had a global, but also a local, responsibility. Are we then to imagine that Eden was the location of the first development project? In fact a far greater enterprise preceded it. The whole creation is presented as a work of cosmic development. In the beginning the earth was “without form and void”, but with a craftsman’s skill God progressively shaped, filled, organised, beautified and peopled it. The framework of the “days” of creation make us think of one who “goes forth to his work and to his labour until the evening.” This master craftsman rests, having accomplished his task; like a great artist, he stands back to appreciate his canvas. The writer to the Hebrews adds a final comment: “The builder of all things is God.”

In Scripture the Creator is revealed to us as the great Developer, and the development commission is given to man created in his image. It is within man’s nature to be creatively engaged in development, because that activity is part of God’s nature too. In this respect, as in others, man is called to reflect the divine genius.¹⁹

Maurice Sinclair

EDUCATION^{*}

Nature of God: Truth and wisdom

Foundation Verses: “To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’” John 8:31, 32

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Exodus 33:12-13		
Deuteronomy 6:6-9		
Job 12:7-12		
Proverbs 1:1-7		
Proverbs 3:13-15		
Proverbs 4:1-9		

* Teacher, trainer, pastor, instructor, mentor, coach, parent

Verses	Vocational Insight	Questions for Further Reflection and Application
Proverbs 25:2	<i>God has created a universe waiting to be discovered and explored. As an educator, he creates an intense innovative learning environment for man.</i>	<i>How can we mimic God by creating opportunities for people to discover truth?</i>
Luke 10:25-37		
John 13:14-15		
2 Timothy 2:2		

The end of learning is to repair the ruin of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him.

John Milton

A Christian Philosophy of Education

ENGINEERING*

Nature of God: The master builder

Foundation verse: “For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” Hebrews 11:10

Discovery Verses	Vocational Insight	Questions for Further Reflection and Application
Genesis 1:1, 2:2	<i>God created the entire universe. He is the master-builder, the great contractor. He established all the principles of all the engineering systems and he built with beauty in the design.</i>	<i>How can we build beauty into the things that we construct?</i>
Exodus 35:35-36:7		
Job 38:4-11		
Psalms 127:1		
Amos 7:7, 8		
Matthew 7:24-27		

* Builder, construction worker, architect, draftsman, designer

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Luke 14:28-30		
Ephesians 2:19-22		
Hebrews 11:3, 9-16, 12:28-29		
Revelation 21:1-2		

'William Carey introduced the study of Astronomy into the Subcontinent,' declares a student of **Mathematics**. He cared deeply about the destructive cultural ramifications of astrology: fatalism, superstitious fear and an inability to organize and manage time.

'Carey wanted to introduce India to the scientific culture of astronomy. He did not believe that the heavenly bodies were "deities that governed our lives". He knew that human beings are created to govern nature, and that the sun, moon, and the planets are created to assist us in our task of governing. Carey thought that the heavenly bodies ought to be carefully studied since the Creator had made them to be signs or markers. They help divide the monotony of the universe of space into directions—East, West, North and South—and of time into days, years, and seasons. They make it possible for us to devise calendars; to study geography and history; to plan our lives, our work and our societies. The culture of astronomy sets us free to be rulers, whereas the culture of astrology makes us subjects, our lives determined by our stars.'²⁰

Vishal Mangalwadi

GOVERNMENT*

Nature of God: King of Kings and Lord of Lords

Foundation verse: “May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth.” Psalm 67:4

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Exodus 21:1-17		
Deuteronomy 17:14-20		
2 Samuel 23:2-4		
Proverbs 31:8-9		
Isaiah 9:6-7		
Isaiah 33:22		

* Law, politics, justice, public policy

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Matthew 28:18-20		
Mark 12:13-17		
Acts 5:27-29		
Romans 3:23	<i>Because all people are sinners, we need to design political process for sinners, not saints.</i>	<i>What are the results when a government is designed for saints?</i>
Romans 13:1-7		
1 Timothy 2:1-2		
1 Peter 2:13-17		

Thus when the Supreme Being formed the universe and created matter out of nothing, he impressed certain principles upon that matter from which it can never depart and without which it would cease to be.... Man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the laws of his Creator,... ...it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his Maker's will. This will of his Maker is called the law of nature²¹ Hence it follows, that the first and primary end of human laws is to maintain and regulate these *absolute* [God-given] rights of individuals.²²

Sir William Blackstone

HEALTH CARE*

Nature of God: Healer

Foundation verse: He said, 'If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you.' Exodus 15:26

Discovery Verses	Vocational Insight	Questions for Further Reflection and Application
Genesis 3:16		
Exodus 15:26	<i>God is the God who heals. He is the healer. Before the Fall, there was no brokenness; there was no wounding. God seeks to make the broken whole, the unhealthy well.</i>	<i>Since God is the divine physician, what health care teaching has he made available to us in the Scripture?</i>
Exodus 23:25-26		
Leviticus 13		
Numbers 21:4-9		

* Public health worker, nutritionist, health educator, nurse, medical doctor

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Deuteronomy 14:1-21		
Deuteronomy 23:12-14		
Psalms 103:1-3		
Mark 2:1-12		
Luke 7:18-22		
John 9:1-3		
Revelation 22:1-2		

... Raised in the royal court, [Moses] “was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22). No doubt, he knew and used the Egyptian remedies.

Moses had been steeped in these infection-spreading practices. Who would expect Moses to make breakthroughs in epidemic prevention? Yet Moses recorded an unlikely promise to the ancient Hebrews:

“If you give careful attention to the voice of the Lord your God, do what is right in his sight, give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you.” Exodus 15:26

“None of these diseases!” What a promise! For centuries epidemics had killed thousands of Egyptians and Hebrews. Ancient treatments rarely helped. Often the “cure” was worse than the disease. Yet here God made a fantastic promise—freedom from diseases.

God then gave Moses many health rules, filling a whole section of the Bible. Would Moses have enough faith to record the divine innovations, even if they contradicted his royal post-graduate university training? If Moses had yielded to his natural tendency to add even a little of his “higher education,” the Bible would contain such prescriptions as “urine of a faithful wife” or “blood of a worm.” We might even expect to him to prescribe the “latest” animal manure concoction. But the record is clear. Moses recorded hundreds of health regulations but not a single current medical misconception.

Thousands have died through the centuries, however, because doctors ignored the biblical rules. Finally, when doctors read and tried these guidelines, they quickly discovered how to prevent the spread of epidemics. Thus Moses could be called the father of modern infection control.

Even today we are still benefiting from God’s 3,500-year-old instructions.²³

S. I. McMillen, M.D. and David E. Stern, M.D.

MOTHERHOOD

Nature of God: Nurturer

Foundation verse: “Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.”
Genesis 3:20

Discovery Verses	Vocational Insight	Questions for Further Reflection and Application
Genesis 1:26-28		
Genesis 2:18	<i>Our creator determined that it was not good for the man to be alone. Woman is God’s suitable helper for man and created with that purpose primarily in mind.</i>	<i>If God created woman intently for the purpose of being a suitable helper, how does that affect her role as mother?</i>
Genesis 2:20b-24		
Genesis 3:20		
Deuteronomy 32:10-12		
Numbers 11:12		

<i>Discovery Verses</i>	<i>Vocational Insight</i>	<i>Questions for Further Reflection and Application</i>
Proverbs 31:10-31		
Isaiah 49:13-15		
Isaiah 66: 10-13		
Matthew 23:37		
Ephesians 5:22-33		
1 Timothy 5:9-10, 14		
Titus 2:3-5		
Revelation 19:6-9		

The Hand That Rocks The Cradle Is The Hand That Rules The World

Blessings on the hand of women!
Angels guard its strength and grace,
In the palace, cottage, hovel,
Oh, no matter where the place;
Would that never storms assailed it,
Rainbows ever gently curled;
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.

Infancy's the tender fountain,
Power may with beauty flow,
Mother's first to guide the streamlets,
From them souls unresting grow--
Grow on for the good or evil,
Sunshine streamed or evil hurled;
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.

Woman, how divine your mission
Here upon our natal sod!
Keep, oh, keep the young heart open
Always to the breath of God!
All true trophies of the ages
Are from mother-love impearled;
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.

Blessings on the hand of women!
Fathers, sons, and daughters cry,
And the sacred song is mingled
With the worship in the sky--
Mingles where no tempest darkens,
Rainbows evermore are hurled;
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.

- William Ross Wallace

RELIEF WORK*

Nature of God: Christ was a refugee.

Foundation verses: "As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, "Even if she gathers among the sheaves, don't embarrass her. Rather, pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don't rebuke her." So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah. She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough. Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!" Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz," she said." Ruth 2:15-19

Discovery Verses	Vocational Insight	Questions for Further Reflection and Application
Genesis 3:22-24	<i>Adam and Eve were banished from the garden and became the first refugees. In a sense, since then all of "the children of Adam and Eve" have been a race of refugees. There must be a longing in the breast of every man to return to their "homeland", to the kingdom of God.</i>	<i>How can I be more sympathetic to people who are refugees?</i>
Genesis 41:41-57		
Exodus 23:9		
Ruth 2:15-19		

* Poverty worker, social worker, rehabilitation manager, compassion worker

Psalm 9:9		
Proverbs 31:8-9		
Isaiah 25:4		
Isaiah 58:6-10		
Matthew 2:13-21		
Matthew 25:31-46		
Luke 4:1-4		
Read these passages in sequence. Acts 11:27-30 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 2 Corinthians 8:1-14		
2 Thessalonians 3:10		

James 1:27		
1 Peter 1:1 2:11		

Let Food for the Hungry be known as the relief organization that plants flower seeds in refugee camps.
Dr. Larry Ward
Founder of Food for the Hungry

ADVANCED:

INTRODUCTION TO THE ADVANCED BIBLE STUDY

If you have found the concept of developing a biblical theology of vocation (BTV) helpful from the Basics exercise, you are ready to move on for an advanced, more serious study.

The Basics exercise was meant to “get you on the road” to developing a BTV. The Advanced exercises will help you “walk the road” of being a life-long learner, of connecting your vocation to the kingdom of God.

A young Japanese Christian thanked me one time for sharing my thoughts on BTV. She had studied city planning while in university in Japan. She knew that God was building a city (Hebrews 11:10), and thus he must be interested in cities. She told me that during the four years of university studies, she read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation to see what God had to say about cities. Intuitively she wanted to integrate the Word of God with her profession. This should be common practice for Christians. Hopefully these Advanced exercises will give you a tool to begin to develop a BTV for your profession.

There are two different tools offered here. One is a Word Study (WS) tool and the other is a Reading through the Scriptures (RS) tool. The RS tool can be used by anyone. All you need is a Bible.

The WS tool will give you a means to examine the Scriptures through the study of words related to your vocation. (See “Why Words?” in the Appendix.) Because this tool uses the Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary of English as a necessary resource, the process will only work for people who read and write English and who have internet access. The dictionary is found at www.christiantech.com.

In either exercise you will need to journal. For information on journaling, please see the Appendix at the end of this booklet.

TOOL #1: READING THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES

In this Reading through the Scriptures exercise you will find a suggested plan for doing a search of the entire scriptures to help you have a more in-depth, comprehensive look at your vocation. Feel free to customize this process to meet your own needs.

This comprehensive look, in addition to being done by an individual, can be done by a group all working in a common vocation. For instance, the Bible might be broken up into a number of different sections, and each person could study one section and then communicate their insights with the larger group. As an example, the following eight divisions could be used for a group process.

- ◆ Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible)
- ◆ Historical Books part 1 (Joshua-2 Kings)
- ◆ Historical Books part 2 (1 Chronicles-Job)
- ◆ Wisdom Literature (Psalms-Song of Solomon)
- ◆ Prophets part 1 (Isaiah-Lamentations)
- ◆ Prophets part 2 (Ezekiel-Malachi)
- ◆ The Gospels and Acts
- ◆ The Letters and Revelation

Enjoy the adventure!

Step 1:

Have a clear concept **or** at least a general sense of your vocational calling. In the space below, identify your vocation and briefly list some of the key elements of your work.

Example: Agriculture

Key Elements of Agriculture: harvesting, plowing, planting, nurturing, cultivation

Your vocation:

Key Elements of Your Work:

Step 2:

Prayerfully read the Bible through in one year (or whatever time frame you want to establish), from Genesis to Revelation.

Step 3:

Keep a daily journal of your reading. As you read through the Scripture, ask the question, "Does this text speak in any way to my vocational calling?" If it does, then:

- a) Identify the chapter and verse of the text.
- b) Write down the insight that you have gained from that text in relationship to your vocational calling.
- c) Identify questions for further reflection.

- d) Identify potential answers to the questions, “So what? How could I potentially apply what I have learned in my vocational sphere?”

Step 4:

As you are doing your reading, begin to share some of the insights with others. This will reinforce what you are learning and also begin to help others understand their need for developing a vocational theology.

Step 5:

As you reflect, identify a “foundation verse” for your vocational theology. This should be the primary verse that “ties everything else together” or is the end of the “thread” that you are going to pull on throughout the Scripture. You will find examples of foundation verses in the Basics section.

The foundation verses should clearly reflect something of the nature of God because it is his character that is to be manifest into our vocational areas.

Step 6:

After you have read the scriptures through in one year, go back and review your journal.

- a) Organize the materials you have discovered.
- b) Consider the questions for further reflection.
- c) Begin to develop a biblical framework for your “life work.”

This should result in the establishment of a series of principles to guide your vocation.

Step 7:

Develop a series of inductive Bible studies in your vocational sphere. This can be used to teach others who share your vocational calling.

TOOL #2: CONDUCTING A WORD STUDY

Step 1:

Identify the key word that describes your vocation.

Example: Agriculture

Step 2:

Make a list of words that are synonyms or related words to your vocation. This list may be used to identify other words to study. Make sure you have a minimum of six additional words:

Examples:

- ◆ Farming
- ◆ Farmer
- ◆ Seed(s)
- ◆ Planting
- ◆ Nurturing
- ◆ Harvesting
- ◆ Food
- ◆ Garden(ing)
- ◆ Cultivation
- ◆ Weeds
- ◆ Soil
- ◆ Plough

Step 3:

NOTE: This step will require you to have or to purchase a copy of *Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary*.²⁴ Look up the words and write down the definitions. Highlight or underline other critical words or phrases that you observe in this definition. (See examples in *italics* below). Keep track of your insights and questions in your journal.

AG'RICULTURE, n. [L. ager, a field, and cultura, cultivation. See Acre and *Culture*.]
In general sense, the *cultivation* of the ground, for the purpose of producing vegetables, and fruits, for the use of man and beast; or the art of preparing the soil, sowing and planting seeds, dressing the plants, and removing the crops. In this sense, the word includes gardening, or *horticulture*, and also the raising and feeding of cattle, or stock. But in a more common and appropriate sense, it is used to signify that species of cultivation which is intended to raise grain and other crops for man and beast. It is equivalent to *husbandry*. *Agriculture is the most general occupation of man.*

OPTIONAL – For additional insight, look up the same word in a modern dictionary, such as a *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*. Pay particular attention to whether the definition of the word has changed over time as a result of the secularization of western culture.

Step 4:

Choose a significant word (or words) within the definition in Step 3 and look up this word in Webster's 1828. Write down the definition and highlight or underline any key significant words or phrases. Step 4 can be repeated to create as deep or broad a study as desired.

Example: We chose the word "culture."

CULTURE, n. [L. See *Cultivate*.]

1. The act of tilling and preparing the earth for crops; cultivation; the application of labor or other *means of improvement*.

We ought to blame the culture, not the soil.

2. The application of labor or other means to *improve good qualities* in, or *growth*; as the *culture of the mind*; the *culture of virtue*.

3. The application of labor or other means in producing; as the culture of corn, or grass.

4. Any labor or means employed for improvement, *correction* or growth.

Step 5:

Scripture Search a) Look up the Scripture passages that might have been found in Webster's 1828 definitions. Then begin to cross reference in your study Bible, to other passages where this theme is found. b) Use a concordance, in the back of your study Bible, or an exhaustive tool like *Strong's Concordance* to trace the word throughout Scripture. c) Use a Bible dictionary or biblical encyclopedia as a study tool to further explore the word or topic in Scripture. Step "c" should be done after you have done a rather exhaustive search on your own through "a" and "b" above. Keep track of your insights and questions in your journal.

Examples:

- ◆ Genesis 1:11-13: Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.
- ◆ Genesis 1: 28-29: God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food."
- ◆ Genesis 2: 8-9: Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.
- ◆ Genesis 2:15: The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
- ◆ Genesis 2:19-20: Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

- ◆ Psalms 104:14-15: He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.

Step 6:

Repeat steps 4-5 with other words from Step 2.

Step 7:

Deduce basic biblical principles from the word study in Steps 3-5.

Examples:

- ◆ God is the First Farmer and he planted the first garden (Genesis 2:15).
- ◆ God designed the miracle of the seed (Genesis 1:11-12, 29).
- ◆ Farming is a godly profession.
- ◆ Man was put in the garden to conserve the land (make it healthier) and to progress it (to increase its production).
- ◆ In naming the animals, man is having dominion over nature and is a creator of culture.
- ◆ There is a wonderful relationship between *agriculture* and culture.

Step 8:

Establish some applications for the principles in Step 6:

Examples:

- ◆ A farmer should establish practices for leaving the soil on his farm in better condition than when he inherited it.
- ◆ A farmer needs to *think* about farming, so that his work is consciously contributing to cultural creation.
- ◆ A farmer should seek ecologically sound ways of increasing the yields of his land.

Step 9:

Write down a definition of the word that relates to your own vocation.

Example: Agriculture, the first and most general occupation for man, involves the cultivation of the soil to both conserve it and make it bountiful; it also includes the cultivation of the soul and mind as the agriculturalist is to name the animal and extend culture.

Step 10:

Develop a series of inductive Bible studies on your vocation, for sharing with others who are part of your vocation.

PART 3: APPENDIX

WHY WORDS?

By Darrow L. Miller

Come on! You have got to be kidding! We are going to study words? Why study words when the world is so broken around us?

Words are powerful. Through his spoken Word God created the universe (Gen. 1). Jesus is referred to by the Apostle John as the Word of God (John 1:1, 14). Man was created by The Word-maker to be a word-maker. When man uses language, he shapes culture and the destinies of entire nations. The words we use stem from our worldview and reveal what we value. Words frame the discourse of a society and are directly connected to the behaviors, laws and structures of a society. As Mark Talbot says:

“Human beings cannot make sense of life without...words. Long before we get to the Christian faith, words are necessary for people to live distinctively human lives. The great news of Christianity is that God has given us His very words. We are ‘verb-ivores’—word eaters...Psalm 32:8-9 says, that’s just the difference between human beings and everything else in creation. By means of words, we become human; by means of God’s words, we become what we are supposed to be.”²⁵

The words we use in our industry, words and phrases like “target population,” “food security,” “civil society,” “holistic health,” “reproductive rights,” all reflect someone’s ideas and are shaped by a particular worldview. These words ultimately shape policies and programs. A few years ago, we saw how the shift from “child survival” to “reproductive health”²⁶ marked a dramatic change in programs on the field.

There are two maxims that relate to our subject. First, a sociological maxim:

You must change the language of the society before you change the society.

The second maxim, which comes from our friend Vishal Mangalwadi, is a theological maxim:

God spoke and created the universe. Man speaks and creates culture, which shapes the universe.

Whoever controls language controls history and shapes the future of a people and a nation. Others have expressed the power of words in similar fashion. Rudyard Kipling wrote: “Words are the most powerful drugs used by mankind.” Tristram Gylbert wrote: “Whoever controls language controls culture.” John Locke said: “Whoever defines words defines the world.”²⁷ Dennis Peacocke, writing in his September 2000 newsletter “The Bottom Line” calls people who want to see societies transformed “Word Warriors.” He writes: “Words have incredible power because they set agendas for whole nations. The words we use to describe a situation or problem frame the way we approach it. It’s [words] that ultimately win wars. A bullet won’t make you die for someone, but the right word lodged within you make[s] you fearless.”

Let's look at two examples. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the language that many western societies used to describe the value of human life shifted from the old "*sanctity of life*" to the new "*quality of life*." The first phrase is rooted in the Judeo-Christian worldview—a worldview that acknowledges the existence of God and believes that man is made in His image. Because of this, all human life—from the youngest to the oldest, from the smallest to the biggest, from the most broken and vile to the most famous and wealthy—is held to be sacred, having an intrinsic value because of the imprinted image of God. The *sanctity* of human life produced laws that were designed to protect life and to endow it with certain unalienable rights—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to name a few. However, with the shift from the biblical worldview to the secular worldview, the word *sanctity* was replaced by the word *quality*. Today, it's uncommon for people to use the word *sanctity* in public discourse. This simple change in one word marked a sea change in the western world. Instead of all of human life having value, pragmatism or utilitarianism now reigns. Darwin's framework shapes life—the survival of the fittest. Life that is productive, healthy, strong and "wanted" is valuable. The weak, the unproductive, the unwanted are not fit to live. The "hunger houses" in Germany were the precursors to the death camps. In the USA, "Women's Health Clinics" and "death with dignity" are the euphemisms for places and procedures reflecting the Darwinian paradigm.

Second, let us look at the change in meaning for the word "compassion." In 1800, the Earl of Shaftesbury wrote, "To compassionate, i.e., to join with in passion...To commiserate, i.e., to join with in misery...."²⁸ Compassion was seen within the framework of the biblical incarnation. To be compassionate required a personal and direct involvement in the lives of the hurting and broken. This is most dramatically illustrated in the life of Christ. Noah Webster's 1834 American Dictionary of the English Language defines compassion as: "A suffering with another; painful sympathy...." The 1997 Random House edition of the Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, however, defines compassion as "a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for someone struck by misfortune, accompanied by a desire to eliminate the suffering." Noah Webster was living in a world that was shaped by the biblical worldview in which the God of the universe joined in our suffering (John 3:16, Hebrews 2:10, 14, 18). When the worldview shifted from the biblical to the secular, the meaning of the word compassion—and the very nature of what it meant to be compassionate—shifted. It shifted from "suffering together" with another and sacrificially giving of oneself, to establishing universal "programs" aimed at eliminating poverty through the redistribution of money. Incarnational ministry gave way to the hiring of "professional" charity workers. The impact of the shift in the definition of the word compassion is reflected in welfare and relief and development worldwide, as well as in the lifestyle of the average modern Christian.

IN PRAISE OF THE STRENUOUS LIFE

Theodore Roosevelt

As a sickly, weak child of a wealthy New York family, Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) could certainly have found plenty of excuses to fall into a life of rich, idle ease. But that was not his way. With unyielding determination, he committed himself to rigorous physical exercise, turned himself into a devoted outdoorsman, and threw himself into a life of public service. Roosevelt gave this speech in Chicago in 1899, a few months after becoming governor of New York, and it has remained one of his most popular. Here he speaks to a nation just beginning to feel tremendous wealth and power, and he cautions against the temptation of the life of "ignoble ease" that prosperity and security can bring. He reminds us that the character of a nation—like that of an individual—appears through its work.

In speaking to you, men of the greatest city of the West, men of the state which gave to the country Lincoln and Grant, men who preeminently and distinctly embody all that is most American in the American character, I wish to preach not the doctrine of ignoble ease but the doctrine of the strenuous life; the life of toil and effort; of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes not to the man who desires mere easy peace but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph.

A life of ignoble ease, a life of that peace which springs merely from lack either of desire or of power to strive after great things, is as little worthy of a nation as of an individual. I ask only that what every self-respecting American demands from himself, and from his sons, shall be demanded of the American nation as a whole. Who among you would teach your boys that ease, that peace is to be the first consideration in your eyes—to be the ultimate goal after which they strive? You men of Chicago have made this city great, you men of Illinois have done your share, and more than your share, in making America great, because you neither preach nor practice such a doctrine. You work yourselves, and you bring up your sons to work. If you are rich, and are worth your salt, you will teach your sons that though they may have leisure it is not to be spent in idleness; for wisely used leisure merely means that those who possess it, being free from the necessity of working for their livelihood, are all the more bound to carry on some kind of nonremunerative work in science, in letters, in art, in exploration, in historical research—work of the type we most need in this country, the successful carrying out of which reflects most honor upon the nation.

We do not admire the man of timid peace. We admire the man who embodies victorious effort; the man who never wrongs his neighbor; who is prompt to help a friend; but who has those virile qualities necessary to win in the stern strife of actual life. It is hard to fall; but it is worse never to have tried to succeed. In this life we get nothing save by effort. Freedom from effort in the present, merely means that there has been stored-up effort in the past. A man can be freed from the necessity of work only by the fact that he or his fathers before him have worked to good purpose. If the freedom thus purchased is used aright, and the man still does actual work, though of a different kind, whether as a writer or a general, whether in the field of politics or in the field of exploration and adventure, he shows he deserves his good fortune. But if he treats this period of freedom from the need of actual labor as a period not of preparation but of mere enjoyment, he shows that he is simply a cumberer on the earth's surface; and he surely unfits himself to hold his own with his fellows if the need to do so should again

arise. A mere life of ease is not in the end a satisfactory life, and above all it is a life which ultimately unfits those who follow it for serious work in the world. . . .

I preach to you, then, my countrymen, that our country calls not for the life of ease, but for the life of strenuous endeavor. The twentieth century looms before us big with the fate of many nations. If we stand idly by, if we seek merely swollen, slothful ease, and ignoble peace, if we shrink from the hard contests where men must win at hazard of their lives and at the risk of all they hold dear, then the bolder and stronger peoples will pass us by and will win for themselves the domination of the world. Let us therefore boldly face the life of strife, resolute to do our duty well and manfully; resolute to uphold righteousness by deed and by word; resolute to be both honest and brave, to serve high ideals, yet to use practical methods. Above all, let us shrink from no strife, moral or physical, within or without the nation, provided we are certain that the strife is justified; for it is only through strife, through hard and dangerous endeavor, that we shall ultimately win the goal of true national greatness.

The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories, ed. William J. Bennett (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 416-418.

A QUIZ: WHO WAS WILLIAM CAREY?

IMAGINE A QUIZMASTER AT THE FINALS of the All India Universities competition. He asks the best-informed Indian students, "Who was William Carey?"

All hands go up simultaneously.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY AND BOTANIST

"William Carey was a Christian missionary," answers a science student. "And he was also the botanist after whom *Careya herbacea* is named. It is one of the three varieties of eucalyptus found only in India.

"Carey brought the English daisy to India and introduced the Linnaean system to gardening. He also published the first books on science and natural history in India, such as William Roxburgh's *Flora Indica*, because he believed the biblical view that, 'All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord.' Carey believed that nature is declared 'good' by its Creator; it is not *maya* (illusion), to be shunned, but a subject worthy of human study. He frequently lectured on science and tried to show that even lowly insects are not souls in bondage, but creatures worthy of our attention."

INDUSTRIALIST

"William Carey introduced the steam engine to India," pipes up a student of mechanical engineering. "And he was the first to make indigenous paper for our publishing industry. He encouraged Indian blacksmiths to make copies of his engine using local materials and skills."

ECONOMIST

"William Carey," announces an economics major, "introduced the idea of savings banks to India, to fight the all-pervasive social evil of usury. Carey believed that God, being righteous, hated usury, and that lending at interest rates of 36 to 72 percent made investment, industry, commerce, and economic development impossible.

"The moral dimensions of Carey's economic efforts," the student continues, "have assumed special importance in India, since the trustworthiness of the savings banks has become questionable due to the greed and corruption of the bankers and the nationalization of the banks in the name of socialism. The all-pervasive culture of bribery has, in many cases, pushed the interest rates up to as much as 100 percent and made credit unavailable to honest entrepreneurs, and has forced economists to rethink their separation of economics from morality.

"In order to attract European capital to India and to modernize Indian agriculture, economy, and industry, Carey also advocated the policy of allowing Europeans to own land and property in India. Initially the British government was against such a policy because of its questionable results in the United States. But by the time of Carey's death, the same government had acknowledged the far-reaching economic wisdom of his stand—just as our Indian government today, after a half century of destructive xenophobia, has again opened the doors for Western capital and industry."

MEDICAL HUMANITARIAN

"William Carey," asserts a medical student, "was the first to campaign for the humane treatment for India's leprosy patients. Until his time they were sometimes buried or burned alive because of the belief that a violent end purified the body and ensured transmigration into a healthy new existence. Natural death by disease was believed to result in four successive births, followed by a fifth birth as a leper. Carey believed that Jesus' love touches leprosy patients, so they should be cared for."

MEDIA PIONEER

A student of print technology stands up next. "Dr. William Carey is the father of print technology in India. He brought us the modern science of printing and publishing, then taught and developed it. He built what was then the largest press in India. Most printers bought their fonts from his Mission Press at Serampore."

"William Carey," responds a student of mass communications, "established the first newspaper ever printed in any oriental language, because he believed that, 'Above all forms of truth and faith, Christianity seeks free discussion.' His English-language journal, *Friend of India*, was the force that gave birth to the social reform movement in India in the first half of the nineteenth century."

AGRICULTURIST

"William Carey founded India's Agri-Horticultural Society in the 1820s, thirty years before the Royal Agricultural Society was established in England," says a postgraduate student of agriculture. "Carey did a systematic survey of agriculture in India, campaigned for agriculture reform in the journal *Asiatic Researches*, and exposed the evils of the indigo cultivation system two generations before it collapsed."

"Carey did all this," adds the agriculturist, "not because he was hired to do it, but because he was horrified to see that three-fifths of one of the finest countries in the world, full of industrious inhabitants, had been allowed to become an uncultivated jungle abandoned to wild beasts and serpents."

TRANSLATOR AND EDUCATOR

"Carey," says a student of literature, "was the first to translate and publish in English great Indian religious classics such as the *Ramayana* and philosophical treatises such as *Samkhya*. Carey transformed Bengali, previously considered 'fit only for demons and women' into the foremost literary language of India. He wrote gospel ballads in Bengali to bring the Hindu love of musical recitations to the service of his Lord. He also wrote the first Sanskrit dictionary for scholars."

"Carey was a British cobbler," joins in a student of education, "who became a professor of Bengali, Sanskrit, and Marathi at Fort William College in Calcutta, where civil servants were trained. Carey began dozens of schools for Indian children of all castes, and launched the first college in Asia, at Serampore near Calcutta. He wanted to develop the Indian mind and liberate it from the darkness of superstition. For nearly three thousand years, India's religious culture had denied most Indians free access to knowledge; and the Hindu, Mughal, and British rulers had gone along with this high caste strategy of keeping the masses in the bondage of ignorance. Carey displayed enormous spiritual strength in

standing against the priests, who had a vested, interest in depriving the masses of the freedom and power that come from knowledge of truth."

ASTRONOMER

"William Carey introduced the study of astronomy to the Subcontinent," declares a student of mathematics. "He was deeply concerned about the destructive cultural ramifications of astrology: fatalism, superstitious fear, and an inability to organize and manage time.

"Carey wanted to introduce India to the scientific culture of astronomy. He did not believe that the heavenly bodies were 'deities that governed our lives.' He knew that human beings are created to govern nature, and that the sun, moon, and planets are created to assist us in our task of governing. Carey thought that the heavenly bodies ought to be carefully studied, since the Creator had made them to be signs or markers. They help divide the monotony of space into directions—East, West, North, and South; and of time into days, years, and seasons. They make it possible for us to devise calendars; to study geography and history; to plan our lives, our work, and our social order. The culture of astronomy sets us free to be rulers, whereas the culture of astrology makes us subjects, our lives determined by our stars."

LIBRARY PIONEER

A postgraduate student of library science stands up next. "William Carey pioneered the idea of lending libraries in the Subcontinent. While the East India Company was importing shiploads of ammunition and soldiers to subdue India, Carey asked his friends in the Baptist Missionary Society to load educational books and seeds into those same ships. He believed that would facilitate his task of regenerating Indian soil and empowering Indian people to embrace ideas that would free their minds. Carey's objective was to create indigenous literature in the vernacular. But until such literature was available, Indians needed to receive knowledge and wisdom from around the world, to catch up quickly with other cultures. He wanted to make such knowledge available to Indians through lending libraries."

FOREST CONSERVATIONIST

"William Carey was an evangelist," begins a student from the Indian Forest Institute. "He thought that, 'If the Gospel flourishes in India, the wilderness will, in every respect, become a fruitful field.' He became the first person in India to write essays on forestry, almost fifty years before the government made its very first attempt at forest conservation, in Malabar. Carey both practiced and vigorously advocated the cultivation of timber, giving practical advice on how to plant trees for environmental, agricultural, and commercial purposes. His motivation came from his belief that God has made man responsible for the earth. It was in response to Carey's journal, *Friend of India*, that the government first appointed Dr. Brandis of Bonn to care for the forests of Burma, and arranged for the supervision of the forests of South India by Dr. Clegham."

CRUSADER FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

"William Carey," says a feminist social science scholar, "was the first man to stand against both the ruthless murders and the widespread oppression of women—virtually synonymous with Hinduism in the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The male in India was crushing the female through polygamy, female infanticide, child marriage, widow-burning, euthanasia, and forced female illiteracy—all sanctioned by religion. The British government timidly accepted these social evils as being an irreversible and intrinsic part of India's religious mores. Carey began to conduct systematic sociological and scriptural research on these issues. He published his reports in order to raise public opinion and protest both in Bengal and in England. He influenced a whole generation of civil servants—his students at Fort William College—to resist these evils. Carey opened schools for girls. When widows converted to Christianity, he arranged marriages for them. It was Carey's persistent, twenty-five-year battle against *sati*, widow-burning, which finally led to Lord Bentinck's famous Edict in 1829, banning one of the most abominable of all religious practices."

PUBLIC SERVANT

"William Carey," says a student of public administration, "initially was not allowed to enter British India because the East India Company was against the proselytizing of Hindus. Therefore, Carey worked in the Danish territory of Serampore. But because the Company could not find a suitable professor of Bengali for Fort William College, Carey was later invited to teach there. During his professorship, lasting thirty years, Carey transformed the ethos of the British administration from indifferent imperial exploitation to 'civil' service."

MORAL REFORMER

"William Carey," reflects a student of Indian philosophy, "revived the ancient idea that ethics and morality were inseparable from religion. This had been an important assumption underlying the *Vedic* religion. But the *Upanisadic* teachers separated ethics from spirituality. They thought that the human self (*Atman*) was the divine Self (*Brahma*). Therefore, our spirit cannot sin; our *Atman* only gets deluded and begins to imagine itself as distinct from God. What we require is not deliverance from sin but enlightenment, that is, a direct experience of our divinity. This denial of human sinfulness and emphasis on the mystical experience of our divinity made it possible for us in India to be intensely 'religious' yet at the same time unabashedly immoral.

"Carey began to affirm that human beings were sinners and needed both forgiveness for sin and deliverance from its power over them. He taught that it was not ignorance but sin that had separated us from God, and that it was impossible to please God without holiness. According to Carey, true spirituality began only when we repented of our sin. This teaching revolutionized the nineteenth century religious scene in India. For example, after Raja Ram Mohun Roy, one of the greatest Hindu scholars of the nineteenth century, came in contact with Carey and the other missionaries at Serampore, he began to question seriously the spirituality then prevalent in India. He summed up his conclusions thus:

The consequence of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been that I have found the doctrine of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and better adapted for the use of rational beings, than any other which has come to my knowledge.

CULTURAL TRANSFORMER

A student of history stands up last. "Dr. William Carey is the father of the Indian Renaissance of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hindu India had reached its intellectual, artistic, architectural, and

literary zenith by the eleventh century A.D. After the absolute monism of Adi Shankaracharya began to sweep the Indian subcontinent in the twelfth century, the creative springs of humanity dried up, and India's great decline began. The material environment, human rationality, and all that enriches human culture became suspect. Asceticism, untouchability, mysticism, the occult, superstition, idolatry, witchcraft, and other oppressive beliefs and practices became the hallmark of Indian culture. The invasion, exploitation, and resulting political dominance of foreign rulers made matters worse.

"Into this chaos Carey came and initiated the process of India's reform. He saw India not as a foreign country to be exploited, but as his heavenly Father's land to be loved and served, a society where truth, not ignorance, needed to rule. Carey's movement culminated in the birth of Indian nationalism and of India's subsequent independence. Carey believed that God's image was in man, not in idols; therefore, it was oppressed humanity—not idols—that ought to be served. He believed in understanding and controlling nature instead of fearing, appeasing, or worshiping it; in developing one's intellect instead of killing it, as mysticism taught. He emphasized enjoying literature and culture instead of shunning it as maya. His this-worldly spirituality, with as strong an emphasis on justice and love for one's fellows, as on love for God, marked the turning-point of Indian culture from a downward to an upward trend. The early Indian leaders of the Hindu Renaissance, such as Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen, and others, drew their inspiration from William Carey and the missionaries associated with him."

So, who was William Carey?

He was a pioneer of the modern Western Christian missionary movement, reaching out to all parts of the world; a pioneer of the Protestant church in India; and the translator and/or publisher of the Bible in forty different Indian languages. Carey was an evangelist who used every available medium to illumine every dark facet of Indian life with the light of truth. As such, he is the central character in the story of India's modernization.

Vishal and Ruth Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey*, (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 1999), 17-25. Used by permission of the author.

GOD SPEAKING TO MAN THROUGH THE THINGS HE HAS CREATED

The novelty value of Carver's research, combined with his compelling personality and humble origins, made him a journalist's dream. Some writers, unfortunately, embellished what would have been a fascinating biography left unembellished. As the list of Carver's products grew, so did the popular mythology that portrayed him, in seemingly contradictory terms, as a great scientist whose work bordered on wizardry.

With his deep Christian faith and mystical nature, Carver himself added to this confused image. He told of arising each morning at four to walk in the woods, commune with the Creator, and receive his orders for the day. He called his laboratory "God's Little Workshop," and he liked to quote scriptural passages that he believed had particular relevance to his work and thought.

In an article published in a Baptist periodical, a writer told how he asked, "What, Dr. Carver, is the most marvelous fact of the age, or of the ages, the most wonderful conception of your mind?" Carver's answer, said the writer, was "immediate and like a flash":

The creation story, the creation of the world. "In the beginning God . . . created the heavens and the earth . . . and God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food: . . ."

"Behold" there means "look," "search," "find out" . . . That to me is the most wonderful thing of life.

In an essay published well before his rise to national fame, Carver described how beholding creation could bring a closer relationship with the Creator:

To me Nature in its varied forms is the little windows through which God permits me to commune with Him, and to see much of His glory, by simply lifting the curtain and looking in.

I love to think of Nature as wireless telegraph stations through which God speaks to us every day, every hour, and every moment of our lives.

In 1924, Carver addressed an audience at Marble Collegiate Church in New York. As reported in an Associated Press story, he asserted that "No books ever go into my laboratory. I never have to grope for methods; the method is revealed at the moment I am inspired to create something new. Without God to draw aside the curtain, I would be helpless."

An anonymous editorial writer in the New York *Times* found such talk deplorable. "Real chemists, or at any rate, other real chemists," said the writer, "do not scorn books out of which they can learn what other chemists have done, and they do not ascribe their successes, when they have any, to 'inspiration.' Talk of that sort simply will bring ridicule on an admirable institution and on the race for which it has done and still is doing so much."

Carver believed his words had been seriously misinterpreted. In a response to the editorial he wrote,

I regret exceedingly that such a gross misunderstanding should arise as to what was meant by "Divine inspiration." Inspiration is never at variance with information; in fact, the more information one has the greater will be the inspiration.

He went on to name many chemists who had influenced him and noted that he received "the leading scientific publications."

In another response to the *Times* editorial, Carver expanded on his definition of inspiration. A writer for the *Golden Age*, a Jehovah's Witness magazine, quoted him as follows:

I know that my Redeemer liveth. I know the source from whence my help comes. Inspiration, as I used the word in my New York lecture, means simply God speaking to man through the things He has created; permitting him to interpret correctly the purposes the Creator had in permitting them to come into existence. I am not interested in any science that leaves God out; in fact, I am not interested in anything that leaves out God.

To the end of his life, Carver's approach to his work closely combined his profound appreciation for creation with his faith in the Creator. Recalling Carver's visit in 1939 to the Starr Commonwealth home for boys in Albion, Michigan, Christy Borth told how Carver had held a youthful audience spellbound for three hours:

What began as a lecture on botany soon developed into a soul-stirring recital of how intimately all of the plants are related to one another, of how the plants and the animals—mankind included—are inextricably interdependent, and of how the whole of creation is related to its Creator.

Perhaps Carver's approach to life is best captured in a story related by his Tuskegee colleague B.B. Walcott. Describing the opening of the Carver art collection at the school in 1941, the writer told of the aging educator's response to someone who asked how he had done so many different things in his life:

"Would it surprise you," he replied gently, "if I say that I have not been doing many DIFFERENT things? . . . All these years . . . I have been doing one thing. The poet Tennyson was working at the same job. This is the way he expresses it:

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

"Tennyson was seeking Truth. That is what the scientist is seeking. That is what the artist is seeking My paintings are my soul's expression of its yearnings and questions in its desire to understand the work of the Great Creator."

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. *In a lecture at the Marble Collegiate Church, Carver told of receiving God's help while working in the laboratory.*
 - Why was Carver criticized for his comments?
 - How did he define the kind of inspiration he received?
 - Have you ever experienced a similar kind of inspiration in your life?
2. *Christy Borth recalled a lecture in which Carver described "how the plants and the animals—mankind included—are inextricably interdependent, and. . .how the whole of creation is related to its Creator."*
 - What did Carver mean when he said plants, animals, and humans were interdependent?
 - Can you think of an example of this interdependence?
 - How is the "whole of creation" related to the Creator?
3. *Carver said that the different things he had been doing for many years were really just one thing.*
 - What was the "one thing" Carver had ultimately been trying to do?
 - How well did he succeed in his quest?

John S. Ferrell, *Fruits of Creation: A Look At Global Sustainability Through The Eyes Of George Washington Carver* (Shakopee, Minn.: Macalester Park Publishing Company), 61-66. Used with permission.

WHERE THE ACTION IS

Since the time of Bacon the world has been running away from, rather than toward, first principles, so that, on the verbal level, we see "fact" substituted for "truth."

Richard Weaver

As I travel around the country and speak to different groups, I am often asked what I think is the greatest threat to the integrity and security of American life and culture. I suppose that those who ask the question expect me to name one of the many humanistic juggernauts that seem to be forever laying siege to justice, mercy, and humble faith.

Perhaps they expect me to name the American Civil Liberties Union. And for good reason. There can be little doubt that the ACLU has subverted justice in this land to an extraordinary degree. With more than six thousand cases in the courts each year and with a blatantly political agenda, the vast reach of the organization has tragically affected virtually every community and every family in America. But I don't think that it actually poses the gravest threat to our culture today.

Perhaps they expect me to name Planned Parenthood. And for good reason. There can be little doubt that the organization has subverted mercy in this land to an extraordinary degree. With nearly two hundred affiliates and more than eight hundred clinics nationwide, the multi-billion-dollar abortion and sex education conglomerate has defiled the minds of children, exploited the predicaments of the needy, and appropriated the resources of tax-payers in horrifyingly unprecedented ways. But I don't think that it actually poses the gravest threat to our culture today.

Perhaps they expect me to name the National Education Association. Again, for good reason. There can be little doubt that the NEA has subverted humble faith in this land to an extraordinary degree. Now controlling more than 90 percent of the government schools in America, the organization and its army of lobbyists, bureaucrats, and activists are largely responsible for the profound failure of public education today—its ideological extremism, its lack of academic achievement, its brutal administrative centralization, and its insensitivity to the unique integrity of families, schools, or communities. But I don't think that it actually poses the gravest threat to our culture today.

Perhaps they expect me to name some homosexual activist group like Act-Up, an environmentalist group like Greenpeace, a globalist group like the United Nations, or a New Age group like Tikkun. And certainly each of these organizations ought to raise our alarms and cause us great concern. But I don't think that any of them actually poses the gravest threat to our culture today.

In fact, all of these groups taken together still do not seriously threaten justice, mercy, and humble faith. They are merely symptoms of a deeper problem. Even with their access to billions of corporate philanthropy dollars and tax revenues, their huge professional staffs, their monolithic control over the major media outlets, and their stranglehold on the apparatus of cultural power, they do not have the wherewithal to wreak havoc on the essential fabric of our society.

Only one earthly institution has that kind of power: the church.

It is only when the church fails to fulfill its calling in this poor fallen world that we have to really worry. It is only when the church fails to uphold the standards of justice, mercy, and humble faith that the onslaughts of the enemies of truth can possibly have their intended ill-effects. It is only when the church creates a vacuum by its own inactivity and impiety that the minions of this world have the opportunity to exploit the innocent, the foolish, or the inattentive.

That is one of the reasons this book has not been filled with war stories, horror stories or heart-tugging tear-jerking and soul-searching stories. I didn't want to leave the impression that the ACLU is to blame for the obvious deterioration of justice today, or Planned Parenthood for the absence of mercy, or the NEA for the subversion of humble faith. Because they're not.

The only reason these groups have been able to make headway with their vile plans is that the church has not been all that God has called us to be or done all that God has called us to do. G. K. Chesterton once quipped that any new book of modern social inquiry is bound to be all too predictable in both its form and function:

It begins as a rule with an analysis, with statistics, with tables of population, decrease of crime among Congregationalists, growth of hysteria among policemen, and similar ascertained facts; it ends with a chapter that is generally called *The Remedy*. It is almost wholly due to this careful, solid, and scientific method that the remedy is never found. For this scheme of medical question and answer is a blunder; the first great blunder of sociology. It is always called stating the disease before we find the cure. But it is the whole definition and dignity of man that in social matters we must actually find the cure before we find the disease.

This book is obviously born of a concern for the disease of moral and social disintegration in our time. But as Chesterton has said, we need not approach our subject medically—which might lead us to trust mere institutional or political remedies. Thus, I have taken the tack of essentially announcing the cure rather than offering yet another diagnosis or description of the malady.

And the cure is simply the church adhering to its essential calling. It is found when the elect of God yield to their divine mandate in every aspect and in every detail of their lives.

A Culture War Maelstrom

One of the greatest men and most brilliant minds Africa ever produced was Augustine of Hippo. He was born in 354 at Tagaste—in present-day Algeria—of a pagan father and a Christian mother. He was brought up as a Christian but not baptized.

He studied rhetoric at the great university in the city of Carthage in order to become a lawyer, but later gave up his plan for a career in teaching. His study of philosophy—with an emphasis on Platoism and Manichaenism—resulted in a complete renunciation of Christianity. He lived a self-confessedly debauched life—including keeping a mistress for fifteen years by whom he had a son.

In pursuit of opportunities to improve his academic standing he took teaching posts—first in Rome and later in Milan. It was in this latter city that he fell under the sway of the great bishop and rhetorician

Ambrose. After a long and bitter battle of the soul—described in his classic work *Confessions*—Augustine was converted under Ambrose's ministry and was baptized in 386.

After some two years of intensive discipling and catechizing, he returned to Africa and established a quasi-monastic community in Hippo. There he founded his famous *Classicum Acadmae*—devoted to study, writing, and the work of cultural transformation. The school was famed for its emphasis on art, music, politics, and ideas.

In 391 Augustine's steadfastness, holiness, and giftedness were recognized, and he was ordained against his own objections. In 394 he was elevated as coadjutor in the diocese. And in 396 he was elevated to the bishopric of the city.

Most of his quite brilliant writings have endured the test of time—I have eight thick volumes that sit on my desk—and are widely read to this day. His commentaries—on Genesis and Psalms particularly—are of inestimable value. His apologetics—like his *Contra Manichae* or *Contra Pelagae*—continue to set the standard for orthodoxy. And his didactae—such as his *Sanctus Dei* or *De Trinitate*—formed the first, and arguably the best, systematic theologies the church has ever produced.

But he is perhaps best known for—and made his greatest contribution with—his analysis of the culture war here on earth and its relation to the war in the heavenlies. Entitled *De Civitate Dei*—or *The City of God*—the book continues to define the terms of the debate better than any other work written before or since.

According to Augustine, culture is not a reflection of a people's race, ethnicity, folklore, politics, language, or heritage. Rather, it is an outworking of a people's creed. In other words, culture is the temporal manifestation of a people's faith. If a culture begins to change, it is not because of fads, fashions, or the passing of time; it is because of a shift in worldview—it is because of a change of faith. Thus, race, ethnicity, folklore, politics, language, or heritage are simply expressions of a deeper paradigm rooted in the covenantal and spiritual matrix of a community's church and the integrity of its witness.

The reason he spent so much of his life and ministry critiquing the pagan philosophies of the world and exposing the aberrant theologies of the church was that Augustine understood only too well that those things matter not only in the realm of eternity determining the spiritual destiny of masses of humanity, but in the realm of the here and now determining the temporal destiny of whole civilizations.

Augustine recognized that people's dominant worldview inevitably shapes the world they have in view. And he also recognized that the church is the starting point for the development of that worldview as it faithfully fulfills its calling to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Almighty God.

Tiny Pushes

Bridging the gap between activism and devotion, the Micah Mandate describes a comprehensive and integrated worldview of vital faith and meaningful activity for the church. It presents what C. S. Lewis called "Mere Christianity," what John Stott called "Basic Christianity," and what William Wilberforce called "Real Christianity." It delineates the ingredients of a balanced Christian life. It provides us with an incentive to walk in the footsteps of those uncommonly common heroes who have gone before us—to get our priorities straight, to put first things first, and to emphasize what really matters most. It outlines a strategic plan for us to begin to do what God wants us to do and to be what God wants us to be.

It is time for us to change the world with our tiny pushes of justice, mercy, and humble faith.

It offers the church a model not only of fealty and faithfulness—but of anticipation and hopefulness as well.

After all, the future of our culture does not depend upon political messiahs or institutional solutions. Neither does it depend on the emergence of some new brilliant spokesman or inspiring leader who has the strength or ability to overcome the forces of darkness.

Instead, the future of our culture depends upon ordinary men and women in the church who are willing to live lives of justice, mercy, and humility before God. It depends on people like you and me who determine to live balanced lives in accord with the good providence of God before a watching world.

Writing to one of her many literary friends, the remarkable blind-deaf-mute, Helen Keller said:

I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along not by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.

Now it is time for all of us who comprise the aggregate to begin to live out the prophetic implications of that kind of faith ourselves by accomplishing the humble tasks of the church's ministry to the world—as though they were great and noble. It is time for us to change the world with our tiny pushes of justice, mercy, and humble faith.

George Grant, *The Micah Mandate* by George Grant. (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press), 215-220. Used with permission.

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Fountain, Dr. Daniel E. *Health, the Bible, and the Church: Biblical Perspectives on Health and Healing*. Wheaton, Ill.: The Billy Graham Center, 1989. Dr. Fountain's book helps us to see health care through the lens of a biblical theology.

Leax, John. *Grace is Where I Live*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996. A collection of essays that demonstrates how creative writers benefit from consideration of their effort to make words work. This book on writing as a Christian vocation would stimulate Christians in any vocation to consider what is required by their vocation and what they should demand in return.

Mangalwadi, Ruth and Vishal. *Carey, Christ & Cultural Transformation*. Carlisle, United Kingdom: Paternoster Publishing, 1997. The Mangalwadi's book helps us to understand how the Christian mental infrastructure sees life lived *coram Deo*, every area of life, every vocation, brought under the lordship of Christ.

Peacocke, Dennis. *Almighty and Sons: Doing Business God's Way*. Santa Rosa: REBUILD, 1995. Dennis Peacocke takes seriously that God is a businessman who is in business with His sons. This book gives some biblical principles for economic activity.

Ryken, Leland. *Redeeming the Time: A Christian Approach to Work and Leisure*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995. This book will give more detail to the concept of work as vocation or occupation.

NOTES

¹ The Transforming Story refers to the meta-story of the Bible which includes two components. First is redemption history. The story begins in a garden—Genesis 1—and ends in a city—the end of Revelation. It records Creation, the Fall, and God’s work to reconcile *all things* to himself in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It concludes with the return of Christ with his kingdom, the consummation of history. The second component of the meta-story is that the Bible reveals what has been called the Hebrew metaphysic or the Judeo-Christian worldview. For our work to flourish as vocation or “occupation,” it needs to be connected to both the redemption history and the Hebrew metaphysic of the biblical narrative.

² David Wells, *No Place for Truth*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 3,4.

³ Evangelical Gnosticism: The Greek dichotomy between the spiritual realm, considered sacred, and the physical realm, considered profane. In the 2nd century, Valentinius led the early Gnostic sect within the church. One of the church fathers, Eusebius (~260-340), Bishop of Carthage, contributed to the branch of Gnostic thinking in the church when he distinguished between the “perfect life” of spiritual pursuit and the “permitted life” of secular pursuit. Christians who view “religious” or “spiritual” activities as superior to “secular” or “worldly” activities are most often operating from a Gnostic worldview.

⁴ Note that vocation is related to God’s grace and call upon a person’s life. *Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines vocation as 1. Among divines, a calling by the will of God; or the bestowment of God’s distinguishing grace upon a person or nation, by which that person or nation is put in the way of salvation; 2. Summons; call; inducement; 3. Designation or destination to a particular state or profession; 4. Employment; calling; occupation; trade; a word that includes professions as well as mechanical occupations. Let every divine, every physician, every lawyer, and every mechanic, be faithful and diligent in his vocation.

⁵ Note the relationship between “occupation” (one’s *lifework*) and “occupying,” in this case occupying for Christ’s return. *Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines occupation as 1. The act of taking possession. 2. Possession; a holding or keeping; tenure; use; 3. That which engages the time and attention; employment; business. 4. The principal business of one’s life; vocation; calling; trade;

Occupier, n. 1. One that occupies or takes possession. 2. One who holds possession. 3. One who follows an employment. Ezek. 27.

Occupy, v.t. [L. occupo; ob and capio, to seize or take] 1. To take possession. 2. To keep in possession; to possess; to hold or keep for use. 3. To take up; to possess; to cover or fill.

Occupy: To follow business; to negotiate. Occupy till I come. Luke 19.

⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Message of the Holy Father for the XXXV World Day of Prayer for Vocations*, May 3, 1998, www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/vocations/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_24091997_xxxv-voc-1998_en.html.

⁷ Vishal & Ruth Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1999), 17.

⁸ Elizabeth R. Skoglund, *Amma: The Life and Words of Amy Carmichael* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 110-112.

⁹ Martin Luther, cited in George Grant and Mark Horne, *Legislating Immorality* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993), 239-240.

¹⁰ Pope John Paul II, *Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the XXXIII World Day of Prayer for Vocations*, August 15, 1995, www.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/vocations/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_15081995_world-day-for-vocations_en.html.

¹¹ Principle: “..., the cause, source or origin of anything; that from which a thing proceeds; ... A general truth;” *Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*.

¹² Precept: “..., any commandment or order intended as an authoritative rule of action;” *Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*.

¹³ Octavia Hill, *The Bedfriending Leader: Social Assistance without Dependancy*, ed. James L. Payne (Sandpoint, Idaho: Lytonn Publishing Company, 1997), 55, 56.

¹⁴ Francis A. Shaeffer & Vishal Mangalwadi, *Courruption vs. True Spirituality* (Minneapolis: The MacLaurin Inst., 1998), paraphrased from pp.26-28 & 31-33.

¹⁵ George Washington Carver, in John S. Ferrel, *Fruits of Creation* (Austin, Minn.: Macalaster Park Publishing Company, 1995), 62, 50.

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- ¹⁶ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Creators: A History of Heroes of the Imagination* (London: Vintage Books, 1993), 71.
- ¹⁷ Dennis Peacocke, *Doing Business God's Way* (Rebuild, 2008), ix
- ¹⁸ Marvin Olasky, "Throw the Book at us Please," *World Magazine*, June 1997, <http://www.worldmag.com/articles/956>
- ¹⁹ Maurice Sinclair, *The Green Finger of God* (Carlisle, Eng.: Authentic Media, 1980), 18-91.
- ²⁰ Vishal & Ruth Mangalwadi, *Carey, Christ and Cultural Transformation: The Life and Influence of William Carey* (Carlisle, Eng.: Authentic Media, 2 ed, 1997), 4.
- ²¹ Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England (1765-1769)*, (Novi, Mich.: Lonang Institute, 2003, 2005), Vol. 1, Introduction, Sect. 2, <http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/blackstone/bla-002.htm>.
- ²² Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Vol. 1, Chapt. 1, <http://www.lonang.com/exlibris/blackstone/bla-101.htm>.
- ²³ S. I. McMillen, M.D., *None of These Diseases: The Bible's Health Secrets for the 21st Century*, 7th ed., (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2008), 10-11.
- ²⁴ Why this particular dictionary? Dictionaries are tools that shape our thinking and reasoning as through them, words are given precise meanings. The writer of the dictionary determines the worldview that is propounded through it. The *Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language*, defines every word both in the original language and *from the biblical usage*. Modern dictionaries reflect current cultural corruptions and erosions of vocabulary by atheistic philosophies.
- ²⁵ Mark Talbot, "Distinguishing Confessing Evangelicals from Generic Evangelicals," *Modern Reformation Magazine*, March/April 2001, 35.
- ²⁶ The World Health Organization defines reproductive health as "fertility control." Included in the official definition of fertility control is "termination of pregnancy" or abortion.
- ²⁷ Quoted by George Grant in *Grand Illusions*, 4th Rev. Ed. (Nashville: Cumberland House, March 2000), 118.
- ²⁸ Earl of Shaftesbury, in Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 3.