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A Consideration of a High View of God and our Relationship with Work in a Charismatic Context

Andrea Lathrop

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

A CONSIDERATION OF A HIGH VIEW OF GOD

AND OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH WORK IN A CHARISMATIC CONTEXT

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ANDREA LATHROP

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DMin Dissertation

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This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

Andrea Lathrop

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Dissertation Committee:

Primary Advisor: Russ Pierson, DMin

Secondary Advisor: Jason Wellman, DMin

Lead Mentor: Jason Clark, DMin, PhD

Expert Advisor: Jason Wellman, DMin

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the amazing ministerial leaders who work hard to advance the Gospel and help the hurting. "May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully." Ephesians 3:19 NLT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

This research explores the connection between the theological truth that God is not a user and how charismatic Christian ministerial staff change the world without exhausting themselves. Burnout and experiences of being "used" in fast-paced charismatic ministry is a reality that needs addressing with theologically sound ways of working and resting. It is not suggested that God does not use us to change the world, but that God is not an exploiter. There is great work to do and, concurrently, God is interested in us for far more than what we can produce.

The first section describes the problem, suggests contributing factors from culture that exasperate the problem, and offers a consideration that a high view of God from Scripture is the antidote. Section two provides an overview of the Church's historical responses to work and rest. Jesus lived the perfectly integrated life. But from the Patristic period on, Church leaders wrestled with whether the active or contemplative life is superior to the other. This section includes the unique contributions that Puritanism, capitalism and Pentecostalism bring to the tension of work and rest.

In the thesis, I offer the solution that the ministerial leader needs to inhabit the tension of action and contemplation instead of resolving it. The beliefs and practices charismatics bring to working *for* God make it difficult to imagine themselves working *with* God, but a theology of contemplative activism could alleviate this difficulty. I explore ways in which ministerial staff teams can experience this, believing that a theology of contemplative activism for the charismatic Christian leader would result in less burnout, better action organizationally and deeper joy individually.

SECTION 1:

THE PROBLEM

This research project explores the connection between the theological truth that God is not a user and how we relate to our work. While God does use people to accomplish his purposes, he does not practice utilitarian exploitation to accomplish his ends. God does use us to change the world. However, the clear consensus of the historic Christian witness suggests God is better than a user. A user is someone fixated and focused on the exploitation of said resource for their own personal ends. Their agenda is what drives them, and they are devoid of compassion for those working to fulfill their agenda. It is the natural outcome of culturally accepted paradigms of commodification.[1] Most people have experienced the sense of being flattened to a resource, even if they have not felt they were victims of full-blown demeaning exploitation. This truth about how good God is allows charismatic Christian ministerial staff to change the world without exhausting themselves. And it curbs the cycle of using others in our leadership roles and endeavors.

Burnout and experiences of being "used" in a fast-paced charismatic ministry needs to be addressed with theologically sound ways of working and resting. My personal experience revealed a theological misalignment that undergirded and informed a mishandling of work. This mistreatment could be either the experience of the work of the ministry as crushing or that of it being too light and insubstantial. For better or worse, our

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[1] Karl Polanyi, *Origins of Our Time: The Great Transformation* (V. Gollancz, 1945).

beliefs about who God is are intrinsically related to our perception of work and ways we approach it.

The use of a theological filter for this research is intentional, as productivity techniques and tools matter but do not relieve the deeper issue of the "inner murmur of self-reproach"[2] many ministerial leaders face. There are certainly practical, tangible habits and practices that impact the leader's soul. The premise herein, however, is focused on the more subterranean layers of how God is viewed and, subsequently, how one's self is viewed. The technique of calendar blocking could be employed, for example, and perhaps many should make use of it. But if a leader does not deliberately address mistaken, low, or impoverished views of God, the pain with work and the tendency towards burnout will remain in spite of the beautifully blocked calendar.

I bring more questions than answers to this research and offer a small sampling of them hereafter. Are ministry leaders exhausted? What of Christians in general, regardless of vocation? If so, why? Is it in certain seasons or circumstances only (e.g., size of church)? Does it even matter to God? If they are not exhausted, then why not? Are there deep cultural assumptions that impacts the way Christian leaders view work? Does God want us to live without margin since the need of the world is so great? Is God honored by our weariness? What does God want for us ultimately – to enjoy him forever[3] or to make him known to the ends of the earth? If it is yes to both, are both of those goals simultaneously achievable? Where does hard work and admonitions such as "study to

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[2] Judith Shulevitz. "Bring Back the Sabbath." *New York Times Magazine*, March 2, 2003.

[3] *Westminster Catechism: The Shorter Catechism with Proof Texts. Printed and Distributed by Order of the General Assembly*. Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian board of publication and Sabbath-school work, 1893.

show yourself approved" (2 Tim. 2:15 NIV) fit in a healthy ministry paradigm? And what was God's intent in the creation of humanity – work, worship, both, or something else entirely?

I wonder if there are unique challenges that Pentecostals and charismatics bring to working *for* God that makes it more difficult to imagine themselves working *with* God instead. The practical implications of this research will be a clearer understanding of the dynamics contributing to the contemporary charismatic Christian approach to work and activism and whether any theological alignment is needed in order to experience the mutuality of fruitfulness and deep contentment. This, then, would inform the design of staff and leadership development programs at the local church level. Studying a theology of work would use a lens that addresses what God believes about work and also considers the minister's views of God's character that may subconsciously inform his or her relation to work.

Personal Context

My earliest Christian experience was immersed in the cauldron of church leadership. I made a decision to follow Christ at the age of fourteen at a large, Pentecostal church my mom attended following her divorce from my dad a year earlier. The church had recently hired a passionate, enigmatic youth pastor. I decided to join the movement of being a radical Christ follower and quickly became a key leader in the youth ministry. That environment was saturated with the message that it was my responsibility to reach the dying world and to witness to my teenage peers. It was messaged explicitly and weekly that the salvation of my friends was in my hands. My choices would determine where they spent eternity. This may sound ideal and of little wonder to evangelicals. The

strategic, persistent messaging of congregational mobilization for evangelism is essential, but my personal one-sided experience of it made way for several deformities in my spiritual formation.

My youth pastor believed that God had told him that he only needed one student to lead the revival God wanted to bring to our city. My youth pastor's job was to identify the one "golden nugget" and God would do the rest. He believed me to be what he called "the one." I wanted to believe it as well; or at least I did not want another student to be the one God had chosen for this great work. I did my best to live up to the high expectations of being the revival leader. It worked well for a while. Our youth group grew from twenty students in attendance to almost five hundred near the end of my high school career. Eventually, however, he became disillusioned with me. Try as I might, I could not deliver the results the way we had dreamed and prayed. Many friends came with me to church. Some became faithful attenders, but many did not. As my batting average, so to speak, declined, so did my estimation in his eyes. I could never perform well enough to meet my youth pastor's expectations. I began to notice that I could not relieve the internal pressure of my own painfully high demands of myself. I left for Bible college after high school without his approval or affirmation. He believed me to be running away from my unfulfilled responsibility to the church and the awaited revival.

Another contributing factor during those formative school years was the pinnacle emphasis on being used by God. We would hold all-night prayer meetings as a youth group and beg God to notice us in order to be used to change the world. I have vivid memories of pleading with God to be used to make a difference and this haunting sensation that it may not happen. God may be interested in someone more committed or

someone with more talents to offer; I feared that I was not good enough to be used by God.

Unsurprisingly, I emerged from this formative season with a fairly low view of God, believing him to be a taskmaster. I subconsciously pictured God to be difficult to please, bored with my struggles or personal concerns, and disappointed with my ministry results. I intuitively understood that God had moved on to better resources, ones with more potential and zeal than I had displayed. God was obsessed with results. I had failed to live up to the hype of the "golden nugget" to be sure.

But I could not quit trying altogether, for I believed hell to be a real place. I remarked to a friend in my early twenties that I would keep living for Jesus because "I am not an idiot and I do not want to go to hell, but I know I will be miserable for the rest of my life." It was a dismal way to live because I believed I would never experience the peace of God that comes from being approved and accepted. I would have to keep hustling for this elusive reward. Deep down, I knew my only hope was of the rest that heaven would bring.

It was years later, as the pain of my poor theology could no longer be quarantined, that I began to experience relief. God used a myriad of means to reach me with his love. Around the age of twenty-six, the pain stemming from my poor view of God reached its peak and I took a break from ministry. I often consider this season of anonymity and discovery as the greatest gift God has given me. I found myself out of formal church leadership for the first time since I was fourteen. I was certain that all I knew of this exacting, utilitarian God would come crushing down on me when I was no longer producing at a high level for the Kingdom of God. I braced myself for the blow.

The blow never came. Indeed, I began to discover the truth of God's character and view of me, and the false constructs I had erected for all the years prior. The potency of the love of God did a deep work in my life for the few years I was not on a church staff. With hindsight, I can see that I needed these precise circumstances in order to meet God. My lack of church productivity combined with the revelations of God's love was palpably disorienting in the best way. The faint and broken ideas I held of why God might be interested in me disintegrated when I discovered his love on the ministry sidelines.

Productive Pain

Numerous experiences enjoined to form this research project. I cannot make mention of each contribution over the last thirteen years but will highlight three that have significantly informed the focus of this research.

First, the final conversation with my late executive coach was a milestone moment. He told me that one day I would need to work on my life message, and I told him that I did not know what he meant. He replied, "Isn't your life story that God is not a user?" He summed in one sentence the good news that I had been discovering – that God was much better than I believed. All my early, foundational Christian years, I believed him to be a user. But something had fundamentally shifted and changed. I no longer see God this way. I noticed the desire to survey the transpiration of the theological shift.

Another factor occurred several years ago when a colleague observed that I was more "monk than machine." I was serving in an executive role on a large church staff and attempting to live an integrated life of productivity and spiritual vitality. This statement made me wonder if one has to choose between these two options of either monk or

machine. Must one choose between intimacy with God and productively acting within the world? Was there a third option between these two binaries? Can ministerial leaders be productive and holy? This conversation provided an irritant for the furtherance of this research and aided my quest for a third way.

Finally, a poignant question from a counseling session revealed something of interest that informs this research. My counselor asked me to respond with my greatest fear within three seconds without overthinking it. Easily, I blurted out that my greatest fear is that I would disappoint God by not living up to my potential. We sat quietly for several moments. Twenty-five years after my youth pastor and youth leaders lauded my potential and explicitly stated that I was "special," it was sobering to see the internal remnants in my statement to the counselor. I was certain I had disappointed my youth pastor and failed to meet his expectations. But had I disappointed God? Would I? I believe there to be a direct correlation between our view of God and our security in his view of us. If God is not much better than a user, then the occurrence of his disappointment is commonplace. And conversely, if God is better a user, then he is not arbitrarily and customarily disappointed with his creation.

I pray these efforts offered may result in the diminishment of low views of God. As A.W. Tozer has eloquently observed, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."[4] If this is true, our church leadership development programs must address our view of God. Ministerial leaders must intentionally work to improve it and not make assumptions surrounding it. Neuroscience

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[4] A. W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy: The Attributes of God* (Faithful Life Publishers, 2014), 1.

proves what behavioral science has known: our lives move in the direction of our strongest thoughts.[5]

I am mindful that this issue is not new; it has been addressed by many in different ways. I could make an assessment of these evangelical approaches but have chosen a different direction. Brilliant people have done this work and I acknowledge their academic contribution to the broader themes of contemplative and evangelicalism integration. In the following chapter, I will do less of a literature review and more of a tracing of church history through the lens of my thesis. But it should be noted that academics such as Daniel Williams, Melanie Ross, and Rob Warner have made critical contributions to the subject matter under consideration. Indeed, Williams has criticized the "historylessness" of modern evangelicalism. This vague sense Williams names is in part why I have chosen my research direction.[6]

I proceed cautiously as I attempt to diagnose the contributing factors to the problem outlined herein and offer a navigational map as a way of moving forward. I proceed believing there is much at stake. I cannot fully develop a theology of work or rest here and am indebted to the many that have made this important exertion. I am unable to describe and depict in full the character of God, as we only know "in part." I retain an

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[5] Dr. Caroline Leaf writes extensively on this as a Christian neuroscientist in *Switch on your Brain: The Key to Peak Happiness, Thinking, and Health*.

[6] For further study, I recommend the following: D. H. Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1999); Melanie C. Ross, *Evangelical versus Liturgical: Defying a Dichotomy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014); and Rob Warner and David Bebbington, *Reinventing English Evangelicalism, 1966-2001: A Theological and Sociological Study* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008).

open, humble posture and remember that "if you think you understand God, then you have misunderstood him."[7]

Contributing Cultural Forces

What is happening in our modern culture that makes the topic of leadership and usership convoluted? A great deal contributes to our modern dilemma and challenges holding a high view of God and humanity. Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* is a tome that describes the immanence we find ourselves leading and living in.[8] Secularization has been working its way into every crevice of human existence for decades. What follows is a sketch of a handful from the numerous forces stemming from and informing our secular age. These contributions to our leadership reality are simultaneously a result of external infiltration of secularism and our own capitulation to them. The current ministerial leadership context is germane to understanding the building pressure and subsequent potential alleviation of it for the ways we work and rest.

Consumerism and Technology

Life in a capitalistic economy makes consumerism a force to be reckoned with for Christian leaders. At its core, consumerism uses things for personal gain or comfort. If not carefully attended to, it is easy to see how we could use people for those same ends. Vincent Miller's premise in *Consuming Religion* gets at the convolution of the

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[7] Eugene H. Peterson, *As Kingfishers Catch Fire: A Conversation on the Ways of God Formed by the Words of God* (CO Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2017), 257.

[8] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018). Taylor's immanence is the most apt description I have found on both the gifts and damage secularization offers. He describes it as follows in chapter 15: "Immanence affirms that God is contained within the world and thereby, limited to human reason and understanding."

relationship between consumerism and Christianity – that it is not the beliefs or values Christians hold to but the daily practices and behaviors we perform.[9] Miller highlights Guy Debord's work when unpacking how all of culture is now commodified. "If Marx's analysis of early capitalism described a shift from 'being to having,' Debord sensed an equally profound shift under way around him, this one from 'having to appearing.'"[10] What an apt description of our social media era. Many chase down the "good life" and yet it never delivers. Some have traded a simple life of "being" that is found in relationship with God, humanity, and work for one which is never satisfied and continues to amass for the sake of appearing like we are satisfied.

Another nuanced layer of consumerism is it leads to an obsession with self. In the Christian worldview, God is the center and rightfully so. But secular culture entices us to make ourselves the center of our lives. Ross Douthat believes living with God at the periphery of our lives (as opposed to center) leads to deep exhaustion because it is ontologically out of order.[11]

When Christians believe more is always better as consumerism teaches us, there are consequences. At best, we are stretched to believe God is bigger and better than we can imagine. God has more love and grace for humanity – so much that is difficult to fathom. Truly more of God would be the best of gifts. At worst, an obsession with "more" keeps us constantly hustling and suspicious of rest. This will lead to ignoring seasons and rhythms. Boundaries become optional and limits are ignored. It is easy to

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[9] Vincent Jude Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 17.

[10] Miller, *Consuming Religion*, 59.

[11] Ross Gregory Douthat, *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2013), 230-6.

justify more programming, more events, and more things to do and take on. Listening becomes more arduous. And perhaps, as James Davidson Hunter concludes in his important work *To Change the World*, doing "more" for God can become the primary pursuit rather than God himself.[12]

When we spiritualize "more," is there danger? If God always has more for us (and perhaps then, implicitly, more for us *to do*), then it becomes harder to justify rest and leisure and sabbath. Solitude and its deep work cannot be afforded. What is the cost? The cost is intimacy with God and with those who matter most. Superficiality and shallowness would follow in its stead. We trade away depth of relationship and the truly good life if we allow consumerism to creep into our lives.

When thinking about work and rest, one must seriously consider the onslaught of technology. While technology has wrought positive effects in our lives, there are negative implications as well. The access to the internet and to our work increases expectation for productivity. Ministerial leaders cannot soundly assess work and burnout without contemplating the digital revolution and its inundation into every corner of modern life.

Cal Newport's *Digital Minimalism* shows how overwhelmed the modern person is with technology and information. He believes the situation is dire and calls for a "philosophy of minimalism." Minimalists are people who "recognize that cluttering their time and attention with too many devices, apps, and services creates an overall negative cost that can swamp the small benefits that each individual item provides in isolation."[13]

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[12] James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[13] Cal Newport, *Digital Minimalism* (New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2019), 35.

It is a critical contributing factor to weariness, but will Christian leaders answer the difficult call to minimalism? Theological responses must be offered in order to not be swallowed up by these forces. One's view of God will inform one's relationship with consumerism and technology. The greater more subtle danger these forces pose is that they undergird a mechanistic and utilitarian paradigm. The secular world should not be eschewed; yet it must be acknowledged that it will not be able to teach us the best way to live and to work.

Burnout and Anxiety

Closely associated with consumerism and technology is the pervasiveness of anxiety and burnout in modern culture. Could these realities be symptomatic of seeing God and others through a utilitarian lens? An analysis of current work culture and burnout statistics is helpful to our exploration. Are humans exhausted? One would think the technological advances and efficiencies attained would keep exhaustion at bay like never before.

Deloitte US surveyed a wide swath of full-time professionals in 2015. 1,000 workers in external organizations were asked about burnout. 77% of respondents reported experiencing burnout in their current role, with half claiming more than one occurrence.[14] A particularly interesting and applicable finding for this research is the role of passion in burnout. Often the assumption made by leaders is that the antidote to burnout is to work on things of great personal passion; the belief is that passion is an insulator to burnout. But this survey dispels the myth as 87% said they have passion for their job but 64%

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[14] Jen Fisher, "Workplace Burnout Survey: Deloitte US," Deloitte United States, April 24, 2020, https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/burnout-survey.html.

claimed to be frequently stressed.[15] This is a critical finding. Subsequently, spiritual

leaders do not dismiss exhaustion as a phenomenon that can be repaired by simply

gathering more passion for the mission.

Related to burnout is the growing prevalence of anxiety. It is estimated that 13%

of the world's population suffers from anxiety disorders, and the U.S. weighs in at 18%.[16]

Professionals caution these numbers are conservative given the many who do not seek

help or acknowledge their plight. This is a concerning cultural phenomenon taking place

at earlier ages. The Church has an unprecedented ministry opportunity brought on by the

anxiety pandemic, but its leaders are not immune to anxiety's effects.

Not all the research is negative on the state of today's pastors. Most surveys show

gains in important areas over the last twenty years in regard to pay and fulfillment. But

there still exists grave warning signs. 70% report being stressed out and burned out. This

constituency regularly consider leaving the ministry. Thirty-five to forty percent of

pastors actually do leave the ministry, most after only five years. 35% battle depression

and 26% self-report as being overly fatigued. [17]

The attrition statistics for ministerial leaders is nebulous to say the least. Many

articles reference a high number of pastors leaving the ministry each month. The numbers

vary, but 1,500 pastors leave each month due to burnout, conflict, or moral failure.[18]

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[15] Fisher, "Workplace Burnout Survey."

[16] Jim Folk, "Anxiety Statistics, Facts, Information," anxietycentre.com, July 1, 2020, https://www.anxietycentre.com/anxiety-statistics-information.shtml.

[17] Richard Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors: 2016," ChurchLeadership.org, 2016, http://www.churchleadership.org/apps/articles/default.asp?blogid=4545.

[18] Varnel Watson et al., "2017 Pastor Burnout Statistics," Pentecostal Theology, July 19, 2017, http://www.pentecostaltheology.com/2017-pastor-burnout-statistics/.

Notably, LifeWay Research and others find this statistic hard to substantiate. Their study of 1,500 evangelical pastors estimated 13% of senior pastors in 2005 had resigned ten years later for reasons other than retirement or death. Their study concludes that "pastors are not leaving the ministry in droves."[19] LifeWay does put forth concerning percentages about pastors feeling overwhelmed and experiencing crushing expectations but provides evidence of fewer ministry departures and more stability.

For the many pastors that stay, healthy living is a struggle. In Dr. Krejcir's analysis of the 2016 Statistics on Pastors report, he makes the observation that upwards of 50% of pastors are very unhealthy and overweight. This stems from poor food intake and a lack of exercise. He interviewed three doctors who see a lot of pastors that report a "significant increase of hypertension, obesity, cardiovascular problems, and depression."[20] This falls in line with the New York Times article in 2010 that purports "… members of the clergy now suffer from obesity, hypertension and depression at rates higher than most Americans. In the last decade, their use of antidepressants has risen, while their life expectancy has fallen. Many would change jobs if they could."[21]

Pastor Scott Sauls gives succinct insight from the most popular article on his website. According to several studies he puts forth, there is a disproportionately higher rate of anxiety and depression that pastors experience when compared to the rest of the population. There are certainly unique pressures that pastors face that make them "prime

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[19] "Despite Stresses, Few Pastors Give Up on Ministry," LifeWay Research, September 1, 2015, https://lifewayresearch.com/2015/09/01/despite-stresses-few-pastors-give-up-on-ministry/.

[20] Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors."

[21] *Taking a Break from the Lord's Work* By Paul Vitello. A version of this article appears in print on Aug. 2, 2010, Section A, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: *A Break from Work Is Healthy (Even if It's the Lord's Work)*. https://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/02/nyregion/02burnout.html

candidates for relational isolation, emotional turmoil, and moral collapse."[22] He cites reasons of unrealistic expectations from constituents, the social media era of anonymous criticism, poor replenishment habits, family strain due to ministry demands, and spiritual warfare.[23]

These are difficult times to lead spiritually. Many lead lives that are hurried and noisy; this is a precarious way to live as pastors. Dallas Willard asserts that hurry is our greatest enemy when it comes to spirituality; we must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from our lives and hearts if we are to follow God.[24] If true, it is a great challenge to overcome in today's culture, and our church culture is no exception. Clearly, modern secularism does not hold the antidote for the pain many are experiencing. It will need to come from elsewhere and should begin with our theology and practices.

Church Leadership Culture

The pressure to perform and to be great is high in many church circles. Dennis Tourish writes a sobering work *The Dark Side of Transformational Leadership* that lends insight into the underlying challenge with work and rest. The current culture of large church ministries needs further consideration and study without being thoughtlessly critical. For the time being, it is noted that Tourish identifies a danger of work becoming abusive and exploitative when spirituality is connected to one's vocation. He is especially

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[22] Scott Sauls, "On the Rise and Fall of Pastors," Scott Sauls, May 19, 2020, https://scottsauls.com/blog/2020/05/15/pastors/.

[23] Sauls, "Rise and Fall of Pastors."

[24] John Ortberg, *Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014).

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concerned if the organization is led by a visionary, transformational leader.[25] Obviously, this is almost always the case for ministerial staff. The work of the church is by nature visionary and spiritual. Transformational leadership requires people to follow and embody the vision. Therein lies the caution.

The people of God are not "users." The people of God do not exploit others in order to gain – no matter how worthy the goal. And if one were to do so, something fundamental and intrinsic is violated. May we not allow "spirituality to become another control mechanism for getting individuals to work harder in their paid jobs, often at the expense of avenues toward meaningful and fulfilled lives such as family and voluntarism."[26]

I wonder if the pressure to be transformational gives way to over-functioning for God. What begins as a response to God's work in the minister's life can deform into pressure to perform. This is illustrated by a moment in a large Pentecostal ministerial service with Mark Batterson as the evening speaker. At a climatic point in his message, he asks the audience the question "Who wants to do great things for God?" My memory is that all the hands in the room shot in the air, mine included. He paused for a few seconds and then softly rebutted the room with, "God will always be the one to do great things, not you." I experienced some relief from the pressure that evening.

This may be easier to navigate for Reformed pastors or those that hold God's sovereignty much higher than the average Pentecostal Arminian, who hold to a higher

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[25] Dennis Tourish, *The Dark Side of Transformational Leadership: A Critical Perspective* (Hove, East Sussex: Routledge, 2013).

[26] Tourish, *The Dark Side*, 70.

view of man's participation in God's will. Anecdotally, I have found evangelicals eager to do what they can for God and to join the urgent mission to seek and save the lost. This theologically informed belief that personal choices and actions are of grave significance contribute to the way these leaders view work, mission, and even God. With such emphasis on our participation, it requires a greater sensitivity and awareness to ensure that God is given all the glory and honor. It behooves charismatic Christian leaders to consider the admonition from the prophet Jeremiah: "And do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not" (Jer. 45:5 NIV).

Again, pastor and author Scott Sauls offers insight: "When I was a seminary student, an older, seasoned pastor spoke in a chapel service and said, 'Some of you are very gifted. You aspire to do great things in ministry one day. God have mercy on you.' Twenty-four years later, I am beginning to understand what he meant by that."[27]

Theological Foundation Sketch

How do we know that God is not a user? I believe there is enough evidence in Scripture to address this question. What follows is not exhaustive but serves as a cursory study of a few of the numerous themes in Scripture regarding a high view of God and his purposes for humanity.

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[27] Sauls, "Rise and Fall of Pastors."

The Triune God

From the third century on, church doctors and leaders have wrestled with and defended the doctrine of the mystery of God being three and one at the same time.[28] The doctrine of the Trinity is perhaps the most foundational evidence given for the relational nature of God. Germane to our understanding of the character of God is the interdependent relationships between the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, which demonstrates a mutual submission. The lack of hierarchy and competition displays the primacy of love and relationship. This is proof that efficiency and utility are not the highest values in the Kingdom of God. Three distinct beings with complementary and unique roles are what orthodox Christianity espouses and it reverberates with the character of God. God clearly prefers to be in relationship.

One sole leader at the top of the hierarchy holding all power and directing the rest of the team should be held suspect when considering the most fundamental and ontological of beings. Further, the Trinity should inform the institution of Church as endemically relational, inter-connected, and mutually submitted to one another. Our leadership development systems would then flow from this highest of examples and be inherently relational.

Creation Account

As with most tensions in life, the interplay of work and rest is complex. Humans in general struggle to hold tension and polarities. Work and rest are polarities that are not

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[28] Kevin Giles, *The Trinity & Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God & the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 12-3.

necessarily problems to be solved; they are interdependent.[29] But in our strong preference to resolve tension instead of hold it, humans either over-identify with work or reject the valuing of work altogether. It is understandable, but the idolization of either work or rest is not healthy spiritually.

It is helpful and foundational to understand the tension of work and rest by considering the Jewish creation account of humanity in this Genesis 1-3 compilation:

> The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life . . . in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. "Blessed indeed" says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours, for their works follow them" (KJV).

From this we see the beginning of the good work of stewardship through the "keeping" of the earth. We infer that God gave Adam and Eve the purpose of caring for the garden. Conversely, it is inferred that their purpose on the planet is broader than just work and is ontologically relational. It can be understood from the Genesis account that the Fall drastically changed humanity's relationship with work and toil. Labor appears to have moved from natural participation in maintaining God's paradise to a curse to be endured by all afterwards. The definition of work by Henri de Lubac summarizes the complexity nicely: "Work: begot in man by an animal need, and, at the same time, a tool by which to lift himself above animality. A hard bondage and a liberating force. Today still it remains marked by this ambiguous character."[30]

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[29] Jennifer Garvey Berger and Keith Johnston, *Simple Habits for Complex Times: Powerful Practices for Leaders* (Stanford: Stanford Business Books, 2016), 96-8.

[30] Henri de Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 149.

The narrative of Scripture starts with creation, perfection, and absolute goodness. Christians do harm to the story when we, inadvertently or otherwise, begin the story with the Fall. A diminishment of the origin and design narrative is detrimental to our understanding of the whole. Brokenness is our reality, to be sure. However, it is critical for ministers to understand that we were made and created for union and relationship with God, one another, and the earth.

The Life of Moses

The spiritual transformation of the real humans found throughout Scripture provides more fodder for the tension between activism for God and intimate relationship with God. Moses provides an intriguing and well documented case study in his life and leadership. He is, in many ways, the hero of ancient Israel. There are a myriad of insights from his story, but the ending of his life is most pertinent here. The Promised Land was the goal and driving passion of Moses' leadership after his call at the burning bush. After the supernatural rescue of the Israelites from Egypt, Moses leads the nation for forty difficult years circling the wilderness. At the very end of his life, he gets a glimpse of the Promised Land but is not allowed to enter.

Would today's modern ministerial leader consider Moses a success or failure? If success is measured by the accomplishment of goals, then he could be viewed as a failure. But if there is a different definition of success – such as faithfulness to God and one's assignment – then his story satisfies that criteria. Could remaining intimately connected to God be a worthy goal – one that can satisfy in ways that even the most laudable of accomplishments for God cannot?

Moses did not receive the Promise Land but did have intimacy with God. Was that enough? Ruth Haley Barton uses Moses' leadership journey as the lens for her *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership* book. She views Moses' life as an example of letting go in the presence of God, with the pinnacle at the end of life on Mount Nebo. It is the long journey of walking with God that made it possible for him to not over-identify with leadership roles and goals but to be content to "be a soul in God's presence … and no longer need any role or responsibility or task to define him."[31] What a healthy view of leadership – one that does not diminish its important responsibilities, but simultaneously does not confuse them with the primary call to relationship with God and those God gives us in our lifetimes. The epic story of Moses gives credence to the theological truth that God does not exploit his people and is primarily interested in relating to us.

Ezekiel 34

The book of Ezekiel offers another insight into God's primary purposes and character. Chapter 34 contains an indictment God issues against the shepherds of Israel. The scathing review of Israel's spiritual leaders offers significant application for the modern consideration of the pastoral role. The usury that the spiritual leaders of Israel are accused of is sobering. God is deeply offended by their wanton lack of care for the people. Could it be that much of the offense comes not just from his love for the people (sheep) but also from defamation to his character? This is clearly not who God is or how

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[31] Ruth Haley Barton, "Part Four: Re-envisioning the Promised Land," Transforming Center, August 9, 2018, https://transformingcenter.org/2018/08/part-four-re-envisioning-promised-land/.

he accomplishes things, and those that represent him to the people have misrepresented him.

God's response to the sheep's mistreatment and neglect is to perform the role of shepherd himself. "Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock whenever his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Ezekiel 34: 11-12 RSV).

Anecdotally, an unfortunate common experience of the nominal Christian is to view the God of the Old Testament as angry and violent. Indeed, there is violence and anger chronicled. The grievances against Israel are multiplex but one consistent theme is God's fury at the unjust treatment of people, especially people at the margins of society. God takes seriously the plight of the powerless, the poor, the foreigner, and the widow. There are almost two thousand verses that address poverty and justice according to *The Poverty and Justice Bible*.[32] Tracing the roots of wrath reveals the goodness of God's character. The aforementioned Ezekiel passage is further proof that God is not a user, in that he cares deeply about the welfare of the people more than their productive capacity. God establishes the role of shepherd (pastor) to rescue and care for the needs of the sheep (people). It is relational and nurturing in nature, as opposed to self-serving or to use people as resources to accomplish tasks.

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[32] Sandie Barton, *The Poverty and Justice Bible* (Bible Society, 2013), Introduction.

The Life of Christ

The incarnation of Jesus adds to the revelation that God is much better than a user. When Jesus declares that he is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6 NIV), he is offering more than direction or imperatives. Eugene Peterson espouses that the "*way* is not only a route we take but the way we go on the way … the way we talk … the way we treat one another … and on and on, endlessly, the various and accumulated *ways* that characterize our lives."[33] Let us consider a few of these ways.

Christ as Contemplative

Jesus speaks frequently of intimacy with Father God and gives a mandate to abide with God as a prerequisite for fruitfulness in John 15. The verb for abide is *meinate* which means "remaining," "abiding," or "dwelling." Jesus' disciples are commanded to remain in the Vine as Jesus does with the Father (14:10) and as the Holy Spirit would remain or abide with the disciples (14:17). R. Boring has astutely made note that this inter-abiding is a central idea in Johannine thinking.[34] A branch is not a self-contained entity, and neither is the Christian disciple. And as a branch separated from the supply of nourishment cannot produce fruit, neither can the Christian. Fruit bearing for the disciple is totally dependent on a direct connection to Jesus.[35] And Jesus does not only offer a lecture on how we are to abide but offers his life on earth as a model for it. He teaches it and he embodies the message.

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[33] Peterson, *Kingfishers*, 230.

[34] Rainer Borig, *Der Wahre Weinstock (The Real Vine) Untersuchungen Zu Jo 15, 1-10* (München: Kösel, 1964), 44–46.

[35] Cf. H. Bussche, "La Vigne et ses fruits (Jean 15, 1–8), *BVC* 26 (1959): 12–18.

The Gospel accounts record several instances of Jesus leaving crowds and their tangible needs to pray and tarry with God. In addition to communal prayers chronicled, the following are records of Jesus' engagement of private prayer throughout the Gospel writings: Matthew 14:23, 26:36-44; Mark 1:35, 6:46, 14:32, 35; and Luke 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 11:1. It is uncertain what these times of prayer entailed fully but it can be conservatively concluded that solitude was featured in the care of his soul.

From New Testament accounts, it is understood that Jesus honored the Jewish practice of Sabbath. In particular, Jesus challenges the religious Jewish leaders on the regulations that had accumulated over centuries regarding the practice of Sabbath in Matthew 12:1-14. This can be interpreted as evidence of Jesus' adherence to Sabbath but with less emphasis on external conformity and more emphasis on the spirit of the practice. The fact that Jesus does not demolish the Sabbath but claims to have fulfilled it would imply a deeper regard of rest rather than its opposite implication. He reminds his hearers that Sabbath was made for man and not the other way around.[36] It is a gift from God and is not something we earn if we work hard enough.

Christ as Worker

Without question, Jesus lived a life of service and sacrifice. His practical compassion for people is seen clearly in all four Gospel records. Jesus taught parables that explained stewardship and accountability, such as the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25. But earlier in Matthew, he also tells his hearers: **"**Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from

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[36] Mark Aldham Buchanan, *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2006), 107-12.

me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30 NIV). This is more of an invitation to partner with God in his work.

What was the work that Jesus came to do? He claims to fulfill the prophecy from Isaiah 61 to help free and heal people. Gospel accounts show Jesus touching lepers, talking with the spiritually hungry, casting out demons, teaching crowds and much more. He is perfectly self-differentiated and connected at once.[37] Jesus' work is relational in nature. It is work that is carried out in his body and involves the use of his feet, hands, mouth, the senses and so on. It is clear that Jesus had work to do and that it was done in partnership with his Father.

Jesus' life was the best life ever lived.[38] He is the perfect model of the emulsification of being and doing. Jesus does not appear to be hurried and harried; yet His mission and responsibility was greater than any human can imagine. His life was not one-sided or dualistic but the very definition and ideal of holistic and integrated. Leadership studies would do well to give serious consideration to the polarity integration of Jesus' life as seen in three years of public ministry recordings in the Gospels. What Jesus models better than anyone is what leadership academics Nohria and Khurana highlight for today's leader:

> In contrast to knowing and doing, scholars who focus on "being" highlight that leadership is perhaps more importantly a matter of developing the identity of a

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[37] Edwin Friedman writes that this is the goal of leadership but is extremely difficult to achieve, if even possible at all, in chapter 5 of *A Failure of Nerve*.

[38] Dallas Willard makes a thorough case for this in his book *The Divine Conspiracy* where he comes against the modern tendency to view Jesus as nice and pithy for his time. Willard asserts that either Jesus was the most intelligent, beautiful, excellent life ever lived or He was an imposter.

leader—a self-concept that enables someone to think of himself or herself as a leader and to interact with the world from that identity or sense of being.[39]

Summary

Modern day ministers are more susceptible than ever to a variety of maladies. The life of Jesus shows that the world needs action – good and godly action. Solid ecclesiology and missiology are more critical than ever before, yet many of us are prone to extremes. This is played out in the political arena and with the excessive polarization seen in culture. It is logical, therefore, that work would be subject to this similar treatment of extremism. It means too much or it does not mean enough. However, the biblical witness offers a different way of handling work. It begins with an ever-increasing high view of God throughout the worker's life. And from that purview, we receive the invitation to both work and rest. We idolize neither productivity nor leisure. Only God holds the central space of our lives.

A theological framework asks questions related to how our theological systems of beliefs undergird our behaviors. If, in general, ministerial leaders do not relate to work in a healthy, sustainable manner, then what are the beliefs about God that contribute to that paradigm? A theology of work uses a lens that addresses what God believes about work and also considers the minister's views of God's character that may subconsciously inform his or her relation to work.

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[39] Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: A Harvard Business School Centennial Colloquium* (Harvard Business School Publishing, 2010), 21.

Grenz and Olson offer a helpful model to engage and construct a contextual theology with the use of the *trialogue* – the interplay between our understanding of Scripture, church history, and our cultural context.[40] This is a Venn diagram of sorts that moves us toward improved theology. Additionally, the trialogue provides structure in order to answer the important question raised: "What integrative motif brings coherence to my Christian beliefs?"[41] This is a critical consideration when addressing work and provides a framework for implementation of this research. A sketch of Scripture and cultural context have been presented here; a church history sketch will follow.

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[40] Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 111-2.

[41] Grenz and Olson, *Who Needs Theology,* 145.

SECTION 2:

HISTORICAL SOLUTIONS

The tension of work and rest and its tie to theology has been present since the beginning of the creation of man. The following section attempts a tracing of Church history in relation to the tension of both the active life and the contemplative life. The active life focuses on what we do for God in the way of work and mission, while the contemplative life focuses on being intimate with God. After considering the origin of these tensions, the emphasis will be on Protestantism, Puritanism, and Pentecostalism. The roots of these are believed to be endemic to understanding more modern responses and the subsequent thesis. Increased awareness of these more subterranean historical layers aid in navigating pitfalls and in forming healthy leadership development for the Church today.

Patristic Period

Most scholars agree that the Patristic period is from the end of the New Testament times (AD 100) to the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451). According to Sweeden, the Patristic period's view of work is that of the traditional Greek perspective - work was toil and an undesirable reality of life. Avoidance was ideal but not often practical.[42] It is in this that one can see the early roots of the monastic movement. For if work was mere toil and a kind of necessary evil, one could and should find a way to avoid it and attend to

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[42] Joshua R. Sweeden, *The Church and Work: The Ecclesiological Grounding of Good Work* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 26.

God alone. Surely that was a superior way of living out one's time on earth. But others would counter that a low view of work was not the original perspective of the early church.

Max Weber sees in Jesus' prayer "Give us this day our daily bread" a reflection of the classic attitude of the antique-Oriental. Further, he believes St. Paul and apostolic writers to look upon worldly activity with almost indifference, most likely from the lack of sources that evidence tension. The New Testament era was so filled with eschatological hope and the imminent return of Christ that "there was nothing to do but remain in the station and in the worldly occupation in which the call of the Lord had found him, and labour as before."[43] This is certainly far from an idolization of work and vocation, and yet New Testament Scripture does not teach a repudiation of work either.

The early church followed the New Testament precedent to stay engaged in everyday work and life. While there are rare occasions of a call to withdrawal in Scripture, there is no generalized call to retreat or isolate oneself. Paul Marshall draws the following conclusions about the approach of the early church to daily work: "For the first century after the Apostles it would appear that Pauline views continued to set the pattern for the Christian church - a strong commendation of work, but with no specific doctrine of calling."[44]

Increasingly, however, the Church Fathers started to adopt more Greek and Roman views of work which resulted in a lower view of work than is found in

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[43] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, and Other Writings* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), Loc. 1033.

[44] Paul Marshall, *Callings: Spirituality, Work and Duty in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (Unpublished manuscript, 1993), 33.

Scripture.[45] Donald Heiges draws from Eusebius, writing about AD 315, who speaks of

two ways of life given by Christ:

> The one is above nature, and beyond common human living; it admits not marriage, child- bearing, property nor the possession of wealth, but wholly and permanently separate from the common customary life of mankind, it devotes itself to the service of God alone … such then is the perfect form of the Christian life. And the other, more humble, more human, permits man to join in pure nuptials, and to produce children … it allows them to have minds … the other more secular interests as well as for religion … a kind of secondary grade of piety is attributed to them.[46]

Augustine of Hippo (c. 354-430) is an important figure that moves this discourse

ahead. Augustine's *City of God* is credited by later theologians and activists for giving

language to the value of the active life for those civilly and politically minded. Augustine

saw the active and contemplative life as "two stages of the interior life of study"[47] and as

such attributed value to both practices. These two ways could be considered temporal and

eternal from a Christian perspective. The Apostle Peter is viewed as exemplifying the

active, temporary life and John as the other. Peter takes action throughout the Gospels

and in the book of Acts, sometimes it seems without thinking. John writes deeply about

the primacy of love and refers to himself as the Beloved. Lombardo sees John as a rare

example of the contemplative life while on earth as it was believed that the contemplative

life was eternal and experienced after death.[48]

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[45] Alistair Mackenzie, "Faith at Work: Vocation, the Theology of Work and the Pastoral Implications" (dissertation, 1997), 2.

[46] Donald R. Heiges, *The Christian's Calling* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 45.

[47] Paul A. Lombardo, "Vita Activa versus Vita Contemplativa in Petrarch and Salutati," *Italica*59, no. 2 (1982): p. 83, https://doi.org/10.2307/479134, 87.

[48] Lombardo, "Vita Activa versus Vita Contemplativa," 87.

Interestingly, Augustine used language that indicated that the contemplative life was possible to begin on earth. The types of life he described included the "undisturbed contemplation (*otioso*), the second as being busily active (*vitae negotiosum*), and a third as a moderated mix of the other two."[49] This moderated mix of the active and contemplative is a significant contribution to this research. Attention to God (contemplative) and attention to the affairs of mankind (active) are both given credence by Augustine.

During this same period, John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) spoke consistently of human work in his sermons. They reveal a Christian social order that is to be achieved through the good action of the wealthy and the church to that end. He held a vision that each other's needs would be met through everyone's skills acted out in love. He spoke about the gap between the rich and poor frequently. Chrysostom believed that the most important commodity was not money but the ability to share what one possesses in the way of skills and materials.[50] It is an early, high view of the importance of actionable love in the world to engender the common good of society. This was the purpose of work and action. Chrysostom's heavenly ideal and critique of the power brokers of the day was the cause of his exile.[51]

This is a beautiful vision but can have unintended dangers. Because of the acknowledgement of the social order, later in Christian history similar arguments would be used to justify things like slavery and church hierarchy. It could also be used to

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[49] Ibid.

[50] John Chrysostom and Robert Van de Weyer, *On Living Simply: The Golden Voice of John Chrysostom* (Liguori, MO: Triumph Books, 1997), 4-5.

[51] Sweeden, *Church and Work*, 28.

commit a person to inhumane work.[52] But Chrysostom could not have imagined this outcome as he endeavored to interpret a New Testament social order with the sharing of goods and meeting of needs according to one's given position in society. The Patristics appear to not have made an idol out of work and action but do not disdain it either. Their example of holding the contemplative and active life in tension is a critical contribution to the theology of work and rest.

Monasticism & Middle Ages Period

Reflecting on the declining view of worldly work and labor, one can understand the roots of monasticism. The withdrawing from the cares of the world and its drudgery to attend to God would naturally be the Christian ideal. However, it is not simply a low view of work that monasticism responded to but other spiritual concerns in the Church. Holl asserts that it was the practice of entering the Church primarily through infant baptism, instead of an adult personal decision that led to a growing apathy. This resulted in a "rising tide of diluted discipleship and undemanding nominalism."[53]

But to view monasticism as a rejection of work would be an error. Instead, Sweeden offers a simple conclusion of the paradigm of work for early monastics to say that it was instrumental. It was impossible to reject work entirely but instead it was to be viewed as a "means to livelihood and self-sufficiency, a way of truly being ascetic and providing freedom to be contemplative."[54] The choice to give one's self to God fully in

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[52] Ibid., 30.

[53] Karl Holl and Heber F. Peacock, "The History of the Word Vocation (Beruf)," *Review & Expositor* 55, no. 2 (1958): pp. 126-154, https://doi.org/10.1177/003463735805500202,128.

[54] Sweeden, *Church and Work*, 34.

the monastic life enables one to steer clear of living lukewarm Christianity. They saw no other way but to separate from the world. However, there was no way of survival without the works of their hands. This was not condemned but required.[55]

In general, for the monastics, the role of work was not held to have spiritual value but rather to keep the sin of idleness from creeping in. Except for the writing of spiritual and devotional material, work was mechanical and instrumental and should not get in the way of thinking about God at all times.[56] Holl asserts that this evidence, among others, shows the elevation of the contemplative life over the active life. It was the contemplative life that was a true calling. He holds this pattern to be a powerful shaping force in Christian thinking and the progression of monasticism.[57]

An additional important theological voice in the Middle Ages was that of Thomas Aquinas. His Summa Theologica is considered by many one of the most influential writings in all of Christian theology. Although human work was more of a side note in light of more significant issues for Aquinas, his views came to permeate theologies of work naturally. He encouraged the contemplative life and spoke of the natural hierarchy of society often.[58] This was enough, given his position, to seep deeply into the Christian view of work.

Aquinas discusses the story of Mary and Martha when considering whether the "active life is more excellent than the contemplative?" Because Mary had "chosen the

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[55] Mackenzie, *Faith at Work,* 2-3.

[56] Ibid., 3.

[57] Holl and Peacock, "History of the Word Vocation," 126-7.

[58] Sweeden, *Church and Work*, 31.

best part" according to Jesus in Luke 10, she represents the contemplative life. He uses the words of Jesus to conclude that indeed the contemplative life is "more excellent than the active."[59] Aquinas' assessment is in line with the Gospel account. And yet one assumes that the meal Martha prepared was greatly appreciated and useful for the bodies of those present. This story gives insight to the primacy of intimacy with Jesus without condemning activity. Martha receives a gentle reminder and correction for her anxious activity; Mary's choice of sitting with Jesus is affirmed.

But Aquinas uses another teacher to develop his argument further. The philosopher Aristotle had eight reasons for the same conclusion of the superiority of the contemplative life. It is an interesting connection made. All reasons weigh heavily, but Sweeden mentions the fourth and eighth as most impactful to the development of a low view of work in this period from Aquinas.[60] The fourth reason is that in the contemplative life "man is more self-sufficient, since he needs fewer things for that purpose." This value of the simple, unencumbered life is seen in monastic roots. The eighth is that "the contemplative life is according to that which is most proper to man, namely his intellect; whereas in the works of the active life the lower powers also, which are common to us and brutes, have their part."[61]

Weber does not miss the contribution of Aquinas to the problem of work either. He points out that Aquinas holds labor as necessary only for the maintenance of the individual and the community. Work does not hold great meaning otherwise. And this is

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[59] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (New York, NY: Cosimo Classics, 2007), Q. 182, 157.

[60] Sweeden, *Church and Work*, 31-2.

[61] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* 182, 157.

true for the human race and not the individual. Therefore, if a person is able to live without labor because of his position and possessions in the world, then contemplation is the better choice. This spiritual form of action is to take precedence whenever possible. In this way, Aquinas undergirded the high view of monasticism during this time.[62]

Another important contribution for this research comes from the Rule of St. Benedict. His order blends the contemplative and active life together in a fresh way during the monastic period. Benedict's understanding of work and its benefits for monks provides a model that subsequent church leaders continue to consider.

In monastic movements prior to Benedict's, work was seen as a means to an end. Work was a necessary reality, only performed to make way for the ultimate end, which is the love and worship of God. But Sweeden believes that Benedict sees work as valuable, not simply as utility but as part of the purpose of one's life. It is the means and part of the end; it is complementary to the spiritual life.[63]

Joann Chittister comments that Benedictines were to "earn their bread by the labor of their hands," and no devotion was to take the place of the demands of life.[64] It is not that Benedict believed the monk was made for work but that it was a useful commodity with which to grow into God. He ties it to the good work given in the Garden. And it was likewise useful to keep idleness at bay, which he refers to as the enemy of the soul.[65] Therefore, the monks of his order "must be occupied at definite times in manual

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[62] Weber, *Protestant Work Ethic*, Loc. 1884.

[63] Sweeden, *Church and Work*, 35.

[64] Joan Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict: A Spirituality for the 21st Century* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 2010), 134.

[65] Benedict, *Saint Benedict's Rule for Monasteries* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1948), 117.

labor and at other times in *lectio divina*."[66] It was a practical and a spiritual approach to life that gave way to the rhythm of prayer and work and the integration of the contemplative and active life.

The Rise of Evangelicalism & Working Hard

It is clear that in order to be effective for the duration of the Christian life on earth, a solid understanding of God's character is essential. The arena of daily work is one place where subterranean belief systems hold great consequences. But where does one start to discover the layers that reside in these deep places? History is an important place to consider – especially the historical intersection of one's own country and faith tradition. And when it comes to the generalized but current context of an American Protestant Christian today, serious consideration should be given to the fabric of Evangelicalism and early Puritanism in America.

Protestant Reformation

The Protestant Reformation in the 1500s brought a shift away from the contemplative, monastic life and some of the abuses of the Catholic Church. It placed an emphasis on the whole life of ordinary Christ followers. Luther and his contemporaries rejected the notion that the secluded spiritual life was superior to the ordinary life. For the research purposes here, this break is mutually helpful and harmful. The elevation of the *vita activa* over the *vita contemplativa* was of great consequence for Protestants.

Max Weber outlines this transition lucidly:

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[66] Benedict, Saint Benedict's Rule, 117.

Christian asceticism, at first fleeing from the world into solitude had already ruled the world which it had renounced from the monastery … But it had, on the whole, left the naturally spontaneous character of daily life in the world untouched. Now it strode into the marketplace of life, slammed the door of the monastery behind it, and undertook to penetrate just that daily routine of life with its methodicalness, to fashion it into a life in the world, but neither of nor for this world.[67]

The Reformation's impact on the theology of work invites further consideration beyond the scope of this research. Martin Luther and his contemporaries sought to correct the Catholic practice of penance and claim our justification before God to be based solely on God's grace, not our works.[68] Protestants are well-known for this doctrine of grace. Protestants are simultaneously known for associating hard work in this life with godliness.[69] There is great tension inherent in the movement. Summarizing a seismic shift such as the Reformation should be done with trepidation and it is with such that the following is offered: Christians cannot do anything to earn a right standing with God and Christians should work hard for God once they have received such a gift as evidence of their conversion.

Evangelicalism

Evangelicalism is an enormous force with large-scale implications for how its members view work. It is in Evangelicalism's foundation that activism as a core tenant of Christian faith can be traced. Bebbington asserts that there are four core beliefs that have held evangelicalism together through the centuries: conversionism, biblicism, activism

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[67] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic,* 101.

[68] Ibid.*,* 262-4.

[69] To be espoused further in the section following called "Weber's Thesis: Capitalism and Work Ethic."

and crucicentrism.[70] This period emphasized the need for people to convert to

Christianity, along with the growing awareness of the Christian's responsibility to

proclaim this message so that conversion was possible.

Prior to the Reformation, there was a diminished emphasis placed on activism and

evangelism of "heathen." For several hundred years after the conversion of Constantine

and onwards, much of the emphasis and efforts of the Church was building and

expanding its proverbial footprint. But as the Protestant Reformation made way for

Evangelicalism, the Church's view of mission and emphasis on activism was

transformed.

One definition offered of activism is the "expression of the gospel in effort."[71]

Indeed, to identify as a missionary, no matter one's vocation, is an evangelical

distinctive. By adding activism as the distinguishing hallmark of evangelicalism, activism

and evangelizing the world is emphasized.[72] The message that there is a lost and dying

world and it is the Church's responsibility to do something about it is deeply impressed

upon adherents.

Hughes believes the Protestant "work ethic" handed down from Calvin and other

early evangelical leaders overemphasizes the extremes of contemplative life and creates a

rift between action and contemplation. It ends with over-valuing certain aspects of work,

although too narrow for Hughes: "In their attempt to reinstate the significance of the *vita*

activa, the Reformers and their successors exalted mere work in the narrow sense of

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[70] David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 2015), 15-6.

[71] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain,* 16.

[72] Ibid.

secular vocation, or employment as we might say; thus, simultaneously over-rating this, and under-rating the rest of the *vita activa*."[73] These early narrow definitions of work and action contribute to the convolution experienced today within ministerial leadership.

Puritanism

As the Church of England responded to social, political and religious upheavals brought on in part by the Protestant Reformation throughout Europe, Queen Elizabeth pressed harder to keep the state church intact. It is here that the Puritans first surface in name. The Puritans were as varied and nuanced as any grouping of humans were and are, but a few generalizations must be allowed. Definite identifiers and boundaries can be named while still allowing that individuals flexed along the spectrum. One of these identifiers is their early association with the basic tenets of Calvinism. This impacts their view of God and work.

John Calvin reluctantly became the leader of what would become another stream of the Protestant Reformation in the early to mid 1500s. He differed from Luther on a few issues and is considered by many the second-generation leader of the Reformation.[74] The Puritans owe John Calvin a great debt as the one responsible for the movement's theological foundation.[75]

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[73] John Hughes, *The End of Work: Theological Critiques of Capitalism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007), 14.

[74] Justo L. González, *A Brief History of Sunday: From the New Testament to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017), 108.

[75] Charles Pastoor and Galen K. Johnson, *Historical Dictionary of the Puritans* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 71.

The tenets of Calvinism were codified at the Synod of Dort in 1619 and are as follows: total depravity of man; unconditional election of certain human beings by God; limited atonement of the work of the cross for the elect only; irresistible grace for the elect; and the perseverance of the saints in their salvation.[76] While each of these are critical, it may be easiest to discern in the doctrine of predestination, or unconditional election, the foundation for the Puritan's view of work. Many scholars have scrutinized the correlation through the centuries.

The Calvinist predestination distinctive held great consequences for the way in which Puritans lived their daily life. The theological belief that God is ultimately sovereign and acts fully on His own to save the elect informs the Puritan's work ethic. For while one could never be completely certain that one was "elected" and a saint, good works would certainly help to allay the fear. This strengthened the early tie of salvation and election to one's work ethic and efforts.

To the Puritans, a person by nature was inherently sinful and corrupt, and only by severe and unremitting discipline could they achieve good. Each person should be constantly reformed by the grace of God to combat the "indwelling sin" and do right before God. Thus, they considered hard work a religious duty and emphasized constant self-examination and self-discipline. They believed that humans were duty-bound to do God's will, so one could understand best by studying the Bible and the universe which God had created and which he controlled.[77]

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[76] Pastoor, Historical Dictionary, 70-1.

[77] Ning Kang, "Puritanism and Its Impact upon American Values," *Review of European Studies* 1, no. 2 (2009), https://doi.org/10.5539/res.v1n2p148, 148-9.

The Puritans high view of work is germane to this research. To work is human and vice versa. Applebaum credits the first two centuries of America's history, beginning with the forming of Jamestown in 1607, with the founding of the American work ethic.[78] It was during this time that clergy spoke vehemently against the accumulation of wealth, which they believed led to idleness and a valuing of material goods over spiritual ones. Preacher Timothy Dwight avowed that idleness was "not only a gross vice in itself, but the highway to all the other vices."[79]

Puritans, in many real ways, had to work hard or die. The original intent of Puritans for the New World may have been the ideal society with God at the center, but the realities that faced them made this extremely difficult, if not impossible. The frontier life demanded the same characteristics of business, that of "perseverance, sobriety, thrift, and prudence."[80]

In large part, the Puritans' work ethic stemmed from their view of God and understanding of salvation. The hard work of sanctification was a means of justification. This is in step with the Reformed confession of the sixteenth century.[81] While there are several closely related understandings of conversion for the Puritans, many scholars agree that it is somewhere between an experience and a set of phases. Tipson is one that rejects the view that Thomas Hooker and other contemporaries comprehended it as anything

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[78] Herbert Applebaum, *The American Work Ethic and the Changing Work Force: An Historical Perspective* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 3.

[79] Timothy Dwight, *Sermons* (New Haven, CT: H. Howe, 1831), 308.

[80] A. Whitney Griswold, "Three Puritans on Prosperity," *The New England Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1934): p. 475, https://doi.org/10.2307/359674, 482.

[81] David D. Hall, "Transatlantic Puritanism and American Singularities," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 68, no. 1 (2017): pp. 113-122, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022046916000610, 117.

other than a "life-long process."[82] One could assume this process of conversion will need

a great deal of diligence and work to achieve. It most definitely will not transpire with

laziness.

Richard Baxter receives a great deal of attention from Weber and others for good

reason. He was a prolific writer and produced an estimated one-hundred thirty books and

pamphlets in his lifetime. His writing was reason-based and clear.[83] Baxter is

painstakingly clear on his views of work and ambition. He warns his readers to abstain

from worldly ambition and to not confuse hard work with the "sordid spirit of

worldliness" that is connected to the making of wealth.[84] He speaks often of love and the

common good. The pursuit of profits is viewed as a lack of love for one's neighbor since

"… the bees labor to replenish their hive so man, being a sociable creature, must labor for

the good of the society which he belongs to, in which his own is contained as a part."[85]

Merton in *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England* takes

special interest in Baxter and attributes him with advancing the ideal of virtue with "good

works." He notes the progression of good works becoming linked with utilitarian values

and objectives. This connection between good works, especially through labor, and God

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[82] Baird Tipson, "The Terrifying God of William Perkins, Thomas Hooker, and Samuel Stone," *Hartford Puritanism*, 2015, pp. 146-194, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190212520.003.0006, xvii.

[83] Joel Mokyr, *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 231.

[84] Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2000), 151.

[85] Baxter, *Practical Works*, 376.

being glorified was "useful and profitable in a worldly sense … at first blush, sheer utilitarianism."[86]

It is Baxter, among others, that rails against idleness. What is now considered leisure in modern society would presumably be akin to sin at the height of Puritan influence. Max Weber believes Puritans held wasting time as the deadliest of all sins because it was lost labor for the glory of God and "… thus, inactive contemplation is also valueless, or even directly reprehensible if it is at the expense of one's own daily work."[87]

The doctrine of predestination that the Puritans held to leads to an unprecedented individualism precisely because no one else, including yourself, could assure your salvation. Belonging to the Catholic Church or receiving of the sacraments were no longer available indicators of salvation for Puritans. It was a new kind of isolation for these Christians and perhaps, the deepest kind of isolation. "Individuals should achieve salvation individually" was the new mantra from within Puritanism according to Griswold.[88]

One could cautiously assert, given the large gaps of space and time, that the earliest Puritans could not have desired or anticipated such associations of their worldview with the amassing of wealth and idolization of productivity. One should not suppose that they perceived God to have been a taskmaster; on the contrary, they held a very high view of God. Their love for God, for Scripture, and their new homeland was sincere. And their heavy emphasis on sanctification through good works, of diligence, of

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[86]Robert K. Merton, *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England* (New York, NY: Fertig, 1970), 62.

[87] Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, 157-8.

[88] Griswold, "Three Puritans on Prosperity," 480.

frugality, of individualism and the sort, do lead us toward utilitarianism. Whether intentional or not, it swings the pendulum from the contemplative life to the active life.

Weber's Thesis: Capitalism & Work Ethic

Capitalism is a force that greatly relates to how we understand work and rest. This economic system emerges around the time of the early Puritans. Because Christianity and capitalism are enmeshed in the West, it is difficult to understand where one ends and the other begins. Capitalism and the creation of free markets was and is an important force shaping the role of work, both within and outside the Church. Max Weber's seminal work "*The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*" purports that capitalism and the "Protestant Work Ethic" are intrinsically connected. A seismic shift took place among Protestants in the late 1700s that moved church leaders from a general wariness of possessions and profits to seeing these same things as evidence of pleasing God. It could be said that God was pleased by our hard work and efforts.[89]

Weber posits there were ideological shifts Protestantism brought to bear on society that made way for capitalism to flourish in Western Europe and beyond. It was John Calvin's and others' emphasis on work as the highest purpose and good, along with frugality, that helped Christians be certain of their election for salvation. The unintended additional benefit was the increase of wealth and reinvestment of that wealth into the local economy.[90] In this way, one could ascertain the connection between hard work and God's blessing more lucidly.

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[89] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, 262-4.

[90] Ibid.

Capitalism is additionally credited for the transformation of commodities from goods produced from the land only to the universality of commodities. Subsequently, and when scarcity is the filter, it is easier to understand how we arrived at the commodification of laborers. As Asad Zaman explains in his summary of Karl Polayni's *The Great Transformation*:

> Certain ideologies, which relate to land, labour and money, and the profit motive are required for efficient functioning of markets. In particular, both poverty, and a certain amount of callousness and indifference to poverty are required for efficient functioning of markets. Capitalist economics require sales, purchase, and exploitation of labor, which cannot be done without creating poverty … the existence of a market economy necessitates the emergence of certain ideologies and mindsets which are harmful to, and in contradiction with, natural human tendencies.[91]

As Christians, it is important to wrestle with the issues of poverty and the discrepancies capitalism perpetuates and how our systems undergird and reinforce the gap. And we need to wrestle with what happens when we see people as labor instead of humans. Exploitation and injustice are surely the result.

Weber is at pains to stress the "unnaturalness" of this rational ascetic spirit of capitalism and Hughes expounds:

> In most societies people work because they are poor and stop working when they become rich. People prefer leisure to profit … The spirit of capitalism, it seems, is so unnatural that it must be learnt, requiring extraordinary motivation (for Weber this is provided by the anxiety over salvation created by the Calvinist doctrine of predestination). However, once it is initially established, its extraordinary successes can be attributed to its inherent instability: unlike "natural" lifestyles which always aim at the stable equilibrium of rest, the spirit of capitalism always seeks more and is without its own inherent checks, hence its spread is virus-like, consuming all that stands in its way.[92]

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[91] Asad Zaman, "The Methodology of Polanyi's Great Transformation," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2014, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2457299.

[92] Hughes, *End of Work*, 42.

Weber sees the need to assure one's salvation through good works as fundamental to his argument. The Calvinist belief that election for salvation was never quite certain would keep devout Christians hustling. Idleness was deplorable and definite proof that one had not been elected. Weber sees a clear delineation that "unwillingness to work is symptomatic of the lack of grace.[93]" But Tawney disagrees with Weber and instead believes, "'The capitalist spirit' is as old as history, and was not, as has sometimes been said, the offspring of Puritanism. But it found in certain aspects of later Puritanism a tonic which braced its energies and fortified its already vigorous temper." [94]

Hudson's journal article "Puritanism and the Spirit of Capitalism" is useful as a critique of both Weber and Tawney's views of the corresponding intersections. Hudson believes Weber has grossly overstated the connection between the two. He presents his case for numerous non-Protestant forces associated with the rise of capitalism. Hudson believes "The victory of the spirit of capitalism in a very real sense meant the defeat of Puritanism."[95] This sentiment makes sense when one carefully considers the early Puritan's devotion to God and aversion to profit. Hudson suggests the rise of capitalism would have been devastating to true, early Puritans.

Richard Foster makes an appropriate concluding statement that gets at the heart of the tension: "Works is opposed to grace. Effort is not opposed to grace."[96] The early

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[93] Weber, *Protestant Ethic,* Loc. 1894-5.

[94] R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2012), 226.

[95] Winthrop S. Hudson, "Puritanism and the Spirit of Capitalism," *Church History* 18, no. 1 (1949): pp. 3-17, https://doi.org/10.2307/3161054, 14.

[96] Richard J. Foster and Nathan Foster, "Richard Foster - A Well-Functioning Life (Streams: Holiness)," Renovare, August 5, 2019, https://renovare.org/podcast/richard-foster-streams-holiness.

Protestants and Puritans lived near this fine line between works as a means to earn salvation and healthy effort in their life for God. For this, we have much to be grateful for, as well as a responsibility to think critically about our own view of work in our generation.

Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is a relatively young movement that recently celebrated its centennial. It is estimated that there are more than 643 million Pentecostals and Charismatics in the world today.[97] The growth is truly remarkable by any standard. Projections indicate that one-third of all Christians will identify as Pentecostal by 2025. David Martin's 2006 assessment is that Pentecostalism had been the "largest global shift in the religious marketplace over the last forty years."[98] Given the massive numbers of Spirit-filled Christians in the world, it is imperative to understand the belief systems that inform behaviors.

The highlighted distinctive of Pentecostal theology is that of speaking in tongues as the "initial physical evidence" of being baptized in the Spirit. The accounts in Acts are viewed as normative human behavior once someone is baptized in the Holy Spirit.[99] While tongues had materialized irregularly in America before 1901, the first person to

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[97] "Status of Global Christianity," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 39, no. 1 (January 2015): pp. 28-29.

[98] David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2006), introduction.

[99] The Assemblies of God "Statement of Fundamental Truths" use the following texts to support the claim of "initial physical evidence" and that the baptism of the Spirit is a separate and subsequent experience of salvation: Acts 8:12-17; Acts 10:44-46; Acts 11:14-16 and Acts 15:7-9. The listing of all the fundamental truths can be found at https://ag.org/Beliefs/Statement-of-Fundamental-Truths.

verbalize a doctrine of "Bible evidence" of tongues was Charles Parham.[100] This doctrine

still stands today as the most differentiating. For the Assemblies of God, licensed

ministers are required each year to concur with it in order to renew credentials.[101] But

Wacker reflects on the inherent tension this distinctive brings:

> This claim, unique in the history of Christianity, defined a relatively rare,
> relatively difficult physical activity or skill as a nonnegotiable hallmark of a fully
> developed Christian life. Not incidentally, it also defined believers who did not
> speak in tongues as second-class Christians. By definition they had not received
> the coveted baptism experience.[102]

Lest it is inferred that tongues and power are the only markers of the Spirit-filled

life, the book of Acts implies other benefits: unity (Acts 2:42-47); compassion (Acts 3);

courage (Acts 4); discernment (Acts 5); leadership (Acts 6); and direction (Acts 16). The

doctrinal statements of the Assemblies of God word it this way: "With the baptism in the

Holy Ghost come … overflowing fullness … deepened reverence … intensified

consecration … more active love …"[103] But as is often the case, it is not the

commonalities of Christian experience that get highlighted but rather the differences.

Pentecostal eschatology naturally led to urgency of mission. The "soon coming

King" motif inferred that time was short.[104] Early Pentecostals interpreted their personal

Holy Spirit empowerment and understanding of living in the "end times" as a grave

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[100] Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997).

[101] "Gaining Minister Credentials - Assemblies of God USA," Gaining Minister Credentials, accessed August 22, 2020, https://ag.org/About/Credentials.

[102] Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 5.

[103] "The Baptism in the Holy Ghost," *Minutes of the 50th Session of The General Council of the Assemblies of God with Revised Constitution and Bylaws*, August 3, 2003, pp. 91-92.

[104] Lee Roy Martin, *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader* (Leiden, Holland: Brill, 2013), 8.

responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission. This sense of urgency permeated their

missiology and ecclesiology, becoming known for their zeal for world evangelism. And

missions work around the world transpired as a result, along with theological

development:

> Pentecostal missionaries … traveled overseas in droves believing they possessed the ability to speak in native languages. When this was not the case however, they were forced to reexamine their newly formed Pentecostal theology. Early Pentecostal leaders demonstrated their trademark perseverance and tenacity by simply adjusting their theological constructs on Spirit Baptism. Instead of missionary tongues they opted for Spirit Baptism to be the sign of missionary empowerment, a view that proved sturdy enough to survive.[105]

Another consideration is the innate synergism of Pentecostal soteriology and how

it informs activism. Pentecostals view the work of salvation as shared, which

distinguishes it from a Calvinist approach. It is the paradox that God does all of the

saving and yet humans play a role in it. Human participation by means of submitting to

the will to God, implies synergism. And this thread of synergism is seen throughout

Pentecostal orthopraxy. Development of an orientation of both/and helps one understand

the response to mission and evangelism. Humans must perform their part in partnership

with God in order for the Gospel to go forth. It is an interesting observation to notice the

different origins from which Pentecostals and Calvinists approach work.

The Pentecostal weight given to Holy Spirit empowerment and the passion to

fulfill the biblical mandate to make disciples is noble. Pentecostals furthered the

evangelical tenet of "activism" greatly.[106] Willingness to work hard and to go to the ends

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[105] Gary B. McGee, *Miracles, Missions, and American Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 102.

[106] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 15-16.

of the earth as missionaries embodies the activism ethos. An oft-quoted Scripture in Pentecostal circles is Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (NIV)." The Holy Spirit intention is empowerment so that believers will "go and make disciples." That early Pentecostals understood this there can be no doubt.

20th Century Work Theologians: Barth & Volf

John Hughes' *The End of Work: Theological Criticisms of Capitalism* offers a view of four critical Christian perspectives on the goal of work from the nineteenth and twentieth-century. He begins with the theologies of Karl Barth, Marie-Dominique Chenu, John Paul II and Miroslav Volf before offering his own.[107] His writing lends insight into the complexity of the question of work after the Enlightenment, Reformation, Evangelicalism, capitalism, and many other forces; these voices speak to the subject matter during a time of great upheaval. Barth and Volf are voices referenced herein.

Karl Barth remains an important voice for further consideration as he writes extensively on the Sabbath and resistance to the idolatry of work that he believes has infiltrated the Church. Barth claims:

> … the Sabbath commandment explains all the other commandments … it points [man] … back to what God is for him and will do for him. It is this day which gives meaning to the working week rather than vice versa, rest which is somehow prior to, the necessary precondition of our work.[108]

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[107] Hughes, *End of Work*, 2-4.

[108] Ibid., 12.

Barth wants Christians to view activity as "service" not work and believes the distinction to be a significant one for Christians to consider.[109] He writes extensively about this and becomes known for being anti-work, but Hughes believes he is attempting to curb currents in liberal Protestant circles and is "writing to refute the glib identification of Protestant ideology with capitalist modernity."[110]

Miroslav Volf offers a critical perspective for consideration and is best known for his emphasis on working with God in order to bring about God's future Kingdom. He does not call for the subversion of current systems of economics but asks how Christians engage from the ethic of Christ.[111] "Such a policy will be concerned primarily with individual freedom, meeting the basic needs of all, and preventing unsustainable damage to our natural resources."[112]

An additional key contribution from Volf is his Pentecostal background which he brings to his writings. He is focused on the future, our cooperation with God to bring that future about, and the Holy Spirit's impartation of gifts with which we serve that end.[113] Volf desires the Spirit to be brought into the sphere of the external, not relegated to the interior life only as many Protestants would have it.[114] Yes, there is much work to do, but comfort is taken from the Spirit's empowerment and companionship for the journey.

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[109] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 475.

[110] Hughes, *End of Work,* 13.

[111] Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 10–11.

[112] Volf, *Work in the Spirit*,18–20.

[113] Hughes, *End of Work,* 14.

[114] Ibid., 15.

Current Contemplative Spirituality Sketch

There is rising interest in a further centered, grounded, mystical experience of the Christian faith. This can be seen in the growing popularity of Franciscan Richard Rohr. It appears there is an increasing segment of American Christians, from mainline to the spiritually seeking and disillusioned, that identify with Rohr more so than with traditional evangelicalism.

Richard Rohr writes broadly and considers his primary call to be the proclamation of the Gospel and is willing to use as many means as necessary to do just that. Themes he employs and explores are myriad: "Scripture as liberation, the integration of action and contemplation, community building, peace and justice issues, male spirituality, the Enneagram, and eco-spirituality."[115]

Humanity is seeking spirituality in unprecedented ways, and Westerners consider themselves "spiritual" while simultaneously moving away from formal, organized religion.[116] Postmodernists would attribute this to the death of certainty, reason and modernity. The experiential emphasis within Rohr's teachings defies modern formulaic approaches to spirituality. This, along with the popular emphasis on self, are probable causes for the resonance with such a diverse audience.

Rohr resonates with spiritual seekers, especially if "God" and "Christ" are not central motifs. In Douthat's *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics*, he

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[115] Peter Mudge, "God Heals Holes in Souls' – Four Key Themes Linked to Suffering and Vulnerability in the Writings of Richard Rohr," *Journal of Religious Education* 59 (2011): 5.

[116] "Tracking the Growth and Decline of Religious Segments: The Rise of Atheism," Barna Group (FaithView Group, January 15, 2020), https://www.barna.com/rise-of-atheism/.

writes that one of the great heresies of western Christianity is the delusion of the "god within." He purports that culture today has given prominence to the individual, actualized self. The self is what is worshipped. When culture becomes consumed with self, then no longer is God at the center but we are. While I am grateful for authors that have encouraged my self-esteem, helped me discover my personality wiring, and fanned my personal development, there is a limit to these messages. Douthat believes that the religion of the "god within" does not produce more Teresa of Avila's but an "excuse for making religious faith more comfortable, more dilettantish, more self-absorbed – for doing what you feel like doing anyway and calling it obedience to a higher power or supreme self."[117]

Even as the potential dangers are acknowledged, what of the evangelical and Pentecostal response to what the world is aching for? Proponents of contemplative spirituality insist that it is endemic to the Christian faith; this stream of practice was present at the birth of Christianity. It was only later that the fractures occurred, and it was relegated to its own domain. It should be considered concurrently that Jesus practiced many spiritual disciplines. Again, his life was not one-sided or dualistic but the very definition of holistic and integrated. He is beyond our modern categories of contemplative, evangelistic, spirit-filled, fundamental and liberal.

Richard Foster's *Streams of Living Water* is his attempt to identify the major contributing streams of classical Christianity and acknowledge the gifts and challenges of each. Foster identifies seven streams including the contemplative, charismatic and

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[117] Douthat, *Bad Religion,* 230.

evangelical traditions.[118] He does not address Rohr, but he does situate contemplative spirituality within historical, classical Christianity. And Foster believes it has gifts for all modern believers today.

Foster uses the life of the Apostle John as the biblical paradigm for the contemplative tradition in *Streams of Living Water.* He chronicles the movement of John from a Son of Thunder to self-identifying as "the disciple Jesus loved." John's transformative journey with Jesus led him to where he would write in 1 John "dear children, let us love one another" and "perfect love casts out fear" and "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God."[119]

Summary

Jesus models both the contemplative life and the active life. It is as Christianity continues forward that we see the pendulum swing, from monasticism to the Reformation and so on. Abuses and extremes at either end of the action and contemplation pole require correction. This is a timid assertion from personal experience, but it is as if the pendulum has swung to action and is not centered for a large swath of Western Christianity. Evangelicalism's appropriate emphasis on activism and the mission of God is correct. The influence of activism is palpable and the emphasis on the *vita contemplativa* is under-represented.

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[118] Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Essential Practices from the Six Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 2001), xi.

[119] Foster, *Streams of Living Water,* 45-7.

While Rohr may be seen as too extreme on the contemplative side of the aisle, I wonder what would be missing within Orthodox Christianity without some voices represented from that pole? To digest him exclusively and disconnectedly may not be wise, but to dismiss contemplative voices altogether would neither be healthy. Like Wheaton professor Milliner implores, readers of Rohr need to stay intimately connected to the larger Christian faith and practices and "cleave to the classical theological and liturgical Christian traditions that shaped him (Rohr)."[120] Evangelicals should remain grounded and connected to orthodoxy, which will include Christ-centered contemplative practices that will enable us to experience the love of God in ways that may prevent burnout while we continue on with the mission of God.

It is only when we become more certain as to why God grows us and gives us work to do that, we will be more clear on why we in turn develop staff, leaders and volunteers at the local church. The love of God is received into the believer's life and then empowers the person to grow and change. The order of this transformation is critical. It is a high view of God and the middle way of love and service that today's ministerial leaders desperately need.

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[120] Matthew Milliner, "Richard Rohr: A Field Guide," Comment Magazine, July 12, 2019, https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/richard-rohr-a-field-guide/.

SECTION 3:

THESIS

My proposition is that one of the great tasks in front of the Church in the twenty-first century in America is the formation of the Christian's beliefs about who God is and who He is not. How the Gospel is contextualized and presented to our anxious, harried culture today should include a robust theology around work and rest. This theology should be grounded in a high view of God and we should do the difficult work of guarding against the unintentional formation of lower views. In the Pentecostal effort to preserve the doctrine of free will and emphasize our participation, we may have inadvertently increased the pressure to always act, perform, and be "good enough." The pressure can build until there is an explosion – either internal or external. Can we avoid this by addressing the recipe for charismatic ministerial leadership success? We need to keep the important ingredients of hard work, an orientation of action, and our free will, while including additives that may be missing.

Map-making Methodology

The methodology employed for this theological research is that of map-making. Maps are an approximation, as opposed to a prescriptive approach that focuses on offering the right answer. This kind of offering is imperfect but provides enough information to get from one place to the next. While abstractions do not work in all circumstances, it is appropriate for this subject matter dealing with themes like work and rest.

My process has been to understand my story enough to give others navigational tools that enable charismatic ministerial leaders to think differently and to continue in their own learning about the topics of work and rest. This is heuristic in nature. The hope is to take myself and others somewhere – to higher views of God and to life-giving practices. My personal experience is limited and incomplete; the research subject matter is extensive. This is precisely why the mapping methodology is employed. For, "a map always *manages* the reality it is trying to convey. No map perfectly captures the territory it surveys; there is always too much to see; too much to weigh and discern; too much to be interpreted and then refracted back. All maps are partial interpretations of reality."[121]

Finally, the intention herein is one of offering constructive elucidations. This is to say that I do not spend more time than necessary on the pathology in the Church around these subjects. I hope my map employs reparative methods, instead of methods that tear down and destroy. In the medical field, a pathologist will tell you what will kill you, but a reparative will tell you what will keep you alive.[122] While I do not hold the cure, I do hope to make a contribution that will lessen the pain. My respect for the Church and for the evangelical ethic of action has increased through this research. It is with this reverence that I move forward.

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[121] Martyn Percy and Pete Ward, *The Wisdom of the Spirit: Gospel, Church, and Culture* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 31.

[122] Jason Clark, "Research Methodologies," *Leadership and Global Perspectives Program* (October 3, 2018).

Spiritual Discipline of Holding Tension

It is my conviction that what will keep us energized as charismatic ministerial leaders is a deeper appreciation and practice of holding tension. Tension is often something to be avoided. In many instances, one would want to avoid tension, especially when it comes to headaches, stress, and relationships. I have never delighted in relational strain between myself and another person. Certainly, I do not appreciate the experience of tension in my neck. The natural instinct is to alleviate tension and to move on. Should this be our same approach when it comes to our life in God and our subsequent leadership?

I refer to holding tension within our orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Dr. Len Sweet's observation is that "orthodoxy is paradoxy." He employs the metaphor of hearing the Gospel in "surround sound" and to hear only one side of the Gospel is to remove the tension.[123] The sound is flat, and the music loses its allure and draw. Sweet reflects that "when a house of worship becomes an echo chamber, the gospel is reduced to a comfortable set of opinions."[124]

It is further complicated by our generalized binary thinking and high preference for action in the West. Wu highlights the problem we face with having a more nuanced, robust and diverse faith expression in that "Westerners are generally prone towards either-or thinking. When this enters the church, people easily confuse what is true/false with what is primary/secondary. We need an approach to contextualization that takes a

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[123] Leonard Sweet, "DMIN 8143 On-Campus Engagement," *DMIN 8143 On-Campus Engagement* (January 28, 2020).

[124] Leonard Sweet and Mark Chironna, *Rings of Fire Walking in Faith Through a Volcanic Future* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 2019), Loc. 5075.

both-and approach."[125] Perhaps an application of what Wu purports can be found in the integration of work and rest. We need both our orthodoxy and orthopraxy to deepen. Future ministerial leaders will need handles and conviction about action *and* contemplation and how they intersect.

Augustine of Hippo provides language for this integration early in church history with his understanding of *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*.[126] I wonder if creating these categories, although helpful at several levels, can also be unhelpful. Does it force one to choose when one should not choose? Does it require one of them to be superior when that should not be the case? Perhaps Augustine and many others emphasize these *vitas* not because one way should win out but because both are essential. The early church period appears to struggle the least with this inherent tension. Both contemplation and action were assumed, like the life of Jesus models. It is as Christianity becomes more accepted and nationalized that the tension becomes more problematic. The nationalistic nominalism that led to the pendulum swing to a life of contemplation is understandable. Just like the Reformation's swing back to action becomes understandable given their unique circumstances. Abuses and extremes at either end of the action and contemplation pole require correction.

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[125] Jackson Wu, *One Gospel for All Nations: A Practical Approach to Biblical Contextualization* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015), Loc. 932.

[126] These terms are often attributed earliest to Augustine of Hippo and a great resource for Augstine's explanation can be found in as follows: Paul A. Lombardo, "Vita Activa versus Vita Contemplativa in Petrarch and Salutati," *Italica* 59, no. 2 (1982): p. 83-7, https://doi.org/10.2307/479134.

Charles Taylor believes this flattening and missing tension is part of what the Church has lost in the age of secularism.[127] He calls for the Church to inhabit the historic godly tensions instead of attempting to resolve them. Taylor speaks not of a pendulum swinging back and forth but of the tensions lived and held together. The pulls of a prayerful, spiritual life and the very real demands of work were tensions that the Church was not trying to resolve. It was not a problem they were attempting to fix. The requirements of routine everyday human life and the call of our faith to complete transformation were inherent tensions that had to be lived out.[128] But something has been lost. James K. A. Smith expounds: "What changes in modernity is that, instead of inhabiting this tension and trying to maintain an equilibrium between the demands of creaturely life and the expectations for eternal life, the modern age generates different strategies for resolving (i.e., eliminating) the tension."[129]

The question around these two ways of living is not one of superiority or of personality or preference. It is more the question of the gifts and provision of both. Together they are a powerful combination for a modern Christian life. I believe that to live divorced from either *vita* is to miss the abundant life Jesus offers in John 10:10. Part of the beauty of this tension is how accessible both ways are. I can hear the invitation from God to embody both *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* as the path forward while on earth. This invitation is healthy and loving at its core, and our response is one of

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[127] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), 44.

[128] Taylor, *A Secular Age,* 44.

[129] James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 33.

gratefulness for having such a perfect Father. I have attempted to make the case that there is much at stake if we do not embody the tension.
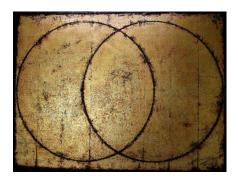
Mandorla as a Map

Figure 1-Mandorla

     If tension is endemic to Christianity, then I believe the *mandorla* offers a concrete representation for ministerial leaders. *Mandorla* is *almond* in Italian and the shape is formed from two overlapping circles. The Christian history of the *mandorla* can be traced to early church art. Many saints have been depicted within the almond shape. The initial Christian symbol of the fish (*Ixthus*) is that of an almond on its side that opens up. But the imagery and metaphor of the almond has earlier roots in the Old Testament. When the Levites were forming a rebellion against Moses and Aaron in Numbers 16, God miraculously performed the sign of whom he had chosen by way of a sprouted, flowered, and fruited almond branch overnight. Later in the building of the Tabernacle in ancient Israel, the lampstand was fashioned with almond flowers hammered onto it.

     Dr. Len Sweet believes the *mandorla* to be the sweet spot of Christianity and how the Church has historically constructed orthodox theology. Christ's humanity and divinity forms a *mandorla*, as well as the image of Lion and Lamb. Another consideration is the two different, but symbiotic statements Jesus makes that are overarching precepts for

following him. One is the Great Commandment to love God with everything one has and to love others as yourself. The other is known as the Great Commission and is the set of last instructions given to Jesus' disciples before his ascension that implore them to go and make disciples of every people group.[130] Which one supersedes the other? Or is there a better question to ask of these well-known directives? Do they make for an excellent application of *mandorla*? Instead of one of these commands surpassing the other, could they be taken together for a healthy spirituality? They are interdependent and presuppose the other – the ongoing development of love for God and others is essential for the fulfillment of mission and vice versa. If pulled apart or by elevating one, something may become deformed in us. Without the healthy tension of the Great Commandment and Great Commission, we may subconsciously begin to perceive God to be a user.

The *via media* is reminiscent of the *mandorla*. It is Latin for the "middle way" between two extremes. While traced originally to Aristotle, the *via media* is rooted in the Anglican Communion tradition. Historical accounts reveal the *via media* was crucial for the Church of England to find its way between Roman Catholicism and the Puritans. The constructive use of this expression refers to the "golden mean" which is preferable to the perceived weakness to a more extreme position.[131]

The inherent tension within Christianity has been deeply impressed upon me and has applications for contemplation and action. Both circles are necessary; damage is done to ourselves and to the Christian cause when we act in one-dimensional ways. This is

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[130] Great Commandment is located at Matthew 22:37-39 and the Great Commission at Matthew 28:18-20.

[131] Donald S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church: A User-Friendly Reference for Episcopalians* (New York, NY: Church Publishing, 2000).

especially true when it comes to our work for God. James Davidson Hunter makes this case in *How to Change the World.* He sees an irresolvable tension within Scripture on work and warns that we should not emphasize either the instrumentality or the dignity of work over the other. Work holds both the mundane and holy; we must hold the tension.[132]

Pentecostal Soteriology as Mandorla

In turning the attention to charismatic and Pentecostal leaders, there is a remarkable thread of holding tension within the tradition. Grant Wacker's work on the Pentecostal root system in *Heaven Below* provides useful insights. He observes early in the movement what he calls "primitive" and "pragmatic" impulses and traces these seemingly opposing threads."[133] The belief held of the primacy of God and the deep desire to know and experience God characterize the best of Pentecostalism. It refers to the longing to be guided by the Spirit in every way and at every juncture. And yet, he observes other functions and emphases simultaneously – that of working out doctrines, organizational frameworks, and structures. These very practical, pragmatic endeavors also had to be attended to by these early reformers. It is endemic to the movement to function both pragmatically and mystically or, stated another way, to be both idealistic and realistic.[134]

The conviction that God needed their participation has produced incredible results in the world. An adage in Pentecostal circles that summarizes the synergy is "we pray

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[132] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 246.

[133] Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 10.

[134] Ibid.

like it is up to God, but we work like it is up to us." There is no doubt that this line of thinking leads to bouts of activity for God. One hopes that the aforementioned prayer keeps the worker sufficiently dependent on God and fosters a paradigm of working *with* God, not just *for* God.

Worship services also reveal the bent toward activism, with external manifestations of the gifts and bodily expressive worship accentuated. Even waiting on God in prayer and worship involved work on the part of the individual to remain in the proper spiritual posture for which to make reception of the Holy Spirit possible. One wonders if the fire of Spirit baptism and the experiential nature of worship services allowed for the energy to continue the "going." In other words, if Pentecostals were not practicing the presence of God and receptive to the outpouring of his love, their subsequent missions and evangelism would not have been sustainable.

This is the best of the movement – the middle way of receiving from God and then giving it away to those in need. Synergism is a wonderful gift that enacts human activity and responsibility. However, it could also stifle the development of a theology of rest or God's role in the synergism, especially if too much credence is given to the demand made of humanity's role in the equation.

Pentecostals may have an advantage here if considered thoughtfully. Their history reveals comfort with synergism and lived-out tension. They can be adept at understanding what their part is in God's mission. The attendance to God's part in the synergism equation has been perhaps malnourished but it is not too late to correct course. To have clarity around such synergy and tension, grounded in a high view of God, would

lead to a life of great joy and great service. And this work of development intersects with the world's dire need. It could truly be another gift that Pentecostals offer to the world.

Theology of Contemplative Activism

The Pentecostal roots of both mysticism and mission lend itself to the adoption of a more contemplative activism. Pentecostals need contemplative practices to complement the ethic of action. The contemplative tradition mirrors certain aspects of the Pentecostal primitivism – a focus on God, his presence, and receiving from him. Disciplines such as silence, solitude, and fasting are contemplative means of opening us up to God. These are more inward focused in nature and serve as ways of quieting the propensity for constant action. In some ways, contemplative practices represent the Great Commandment circle of loving God, others, and self.

By activism, I do not mean acts of social justice or protesting inequities. While inclusive of those, a broader definition is necessary that incorporates any action or work one takes in the world on behalf of building God's Kingdom. This is the Great Commission circle of going out – acts of service and the proclamation of the Gospel. It is embodying of the Acts 1:8 command to be God's witnesses to the world.

A response to our hurried, anxious context could be the addition of contemplative practices that complements the active, external ones held more naturally by charismatic Christian leaders. Proponents and practitioners of contemplative spirituality insist that this way is endemic to the Christian faith. When Church fractures occurred, it was consigned to its own sphere.[135] With the Evangelicalism tenets of conversion, biblicalism,

cruciocentrism, and activism, there has not always been much space left for the contemplative practices.[136]

The theology of contemplative activism for the charismatic Christian leader, if embraced, would result in less burnout, better action organizationally, and deeper joy individually. This journey would be in many ways unique to the individual, and yet embody shared parallels and themes. Church history is full of saints that have traversed these same waters and have gifted us with their observations. The Holy Spirit guides each seeker in our modern context and brings us back to the perfectly lived life of Jesus Christ. God the Father is invested in our knowing him more and better. In no way are we on our own as we work to establish this Kingdom of God on earth and living out a contemplative activism enables us to remember this truth. Contemplation does not lead to inaction but to good and right action in the world.[137]

Benefit of Better Motivation

One can experience enormous pressure as a pastoral leader. Both numerically large and small contexts have their unique pressure points. Repeated revelation of the love of God has been the sole element that has relieved the pressure I have carried to perform. This has been brought about by adopting contemplative practices. Often, I have wondered how this would impact my productivity. Would I accomplish as much for God if I did not allow the "inner murmur of self-reproach" to drive my activity in the world?

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[135] Richard Foster wrote an excellent book on this subject in *Streams of Living Water* where he looks at six traditions within historical Christianity, one of which is contemplative.

[136] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain,* 15-6.

[137] Richard Rohr, *Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 71.

Would sinking into my core identity as the beloved of God lead me to an unending sabbatical lifestyle, filled with contemplation and reflection? There may be a concern of decreased productivity if one leads with less fear and more love; however, the issues resolved by holding a higher view of God and self far outweigh that possible drawback. Instead of a wanton lack of effort and production on my part due to contemplative practices, I came to find a deep, healthier, sustainable energy towards service as a result.

While conducting field research, I was struck by two conversations that afforded insight into a different frame of reference I had not considered. My paradigm was that of the minister as over-engaged and driven. The formative perspective I held was that of God as the byproduct, and ministry leadership as the real goal. I sought ministry leadership as the treasure instead of God. Because of my poor view of God, I believed him to be a poor consolation prize. The real prizes were titles, roles, and distinction among peers. This perpetuated the exhaustion. But what of those that did not share my challenges and perspective?

I held a brief interview with well-known Christian author and speaker Ann Voskamp. Upon hearing my thesis and story of being worn out working for God prior to contemplative practices opening me up to God's love for me, she remarked that the love of God had the opposite effect on her life. As a natural contemplative with propensity to hermitage, the love of God at work in her life has moved her to activism and evangelism. I had not previously considered the other end of the drive spectrum and the work of God.

A related question was raised during my field research about the perspective of ministers as lazy and disengaged; they are not seen as hard workers. A pastor asked what I would say to the ministry leader that is not working hard enough. This question

increased my awareness that not everyone shares my story. Indeed, there are those in similar ministry positions that have had the opposite kind of struggle. It is becoming clearer to me that the contemplation of the love of God provides what both need on each end of the spectrum – it provides rest for the weary activist and motivation for those disengaged from the mission of God.

It should be considered that not every minister is in need of the message of the rest of God. Some need the opposite. There are those that need the encouragement that work is worship and our best efforts should be offered. They need to be admonished that the mission of God is real, people are hurting, and their efforts are needed. While these kinds of ministers seem rare, it is critical to acknowledge that they do exist. I wonder if this is why some church leaders resist the message of rest, as it may give a few that are already disengaged more ammunition and permission to not act. But we must believe the love of God to be powerful. For it is this love that can both motivate the lethargic and calm the driven.

It is not surprising that we struggle to hold work appropriately – our mission is urgent and yet should not be crushing. Our Western culture idolizes work because it idolizes profits and accumulation. But the Christian has a different relationship with our work. It is held higher in some respects but should never be the center of our lives. That place is reserved for God and God alone. Hunter addresses this when parsing Colossians 3:22-24:

> … if we perform our tasks "as working for the Lord," we will want to pursue them with all the skill, care, and quality we can bring. At the same time, when we engage our tasks "as working for the Lord," there is a built-in safeguard against

work – whatever it is – becoming a source of idolatry. … we see our labors as a means by which we honor God and pursue obedience to him.[138]

My research interest was piqued with the application in Hunter's third essay that included a holistic approach to work and the primacy of loving God. Hunter's work makes an important contribution because he values the goodness in work and indeed, spends a great deal of time defending it. But he also cautions against its idolatry.[139] His thorough entreaty of holding what we do for God subservient to knowing and loving God himself is a real treasure to me – both in my research topic and in my life. Hunter's conclusion resonates with my experience and research. So how do we change the world?

> The question is wrong because, for Christians, it makes the primary subservient to the secondary. By making a certain understanding of the good of society the objective, the source of the good—God himself and the intimacy he offers—becomes nothing more than a tool to be used to achieve that objective. Christianity is … about establishing righteousness or creating good values or securing justice or making peace in the world … these are goods we should care about and pursue with great passion. But for Christians, these are all secondary to the primary good of God himself and the primary task of worshipping him and honoring him in all they do.[140]

Church Staff Development

The aforementioned informs the kind of church staff development needed. While each ministry context should be considered uniquely, there are a few underlying assumptions that are universal in application. Namely, I suggest senior leaders adhere to the following truth: ministry staff members are not just the means to the mission but are

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[138] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 247.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid., 285-6.

simultaneously the mission themselves. This belief implies that we must shape missional endeavors and outreaches that would honor the laborer, alongside the one being reached. The roles of leader and the unreached are not mutually exclusive in value; the drive and compassion extended to the non-Christian applies to the ministry worker. All are beloved and valuable humans.

Christian organizations can keep high standards of production and character for ministry leaders that are undergirded by systemic processes within each church and non-profit ministry. Lance Witt's book on the intersection of high performance and team health provides helpful nomenclature. His premise is that these two things are inextricably tied together.[141] I cannot think of a senior leader that does not long for high performance from their team. Yet, a team will never experience it for a prolonged period of time without substantial attention to the health of the team. Health is not solely about rest and pace but also the atmosphere of trust and honest communication.

It is my personal, anecdotal observation that motivated, healthy ministry leaders do not need an exorbitant amount of support in this area. It would not cost seniors leaders too much in the way of time and money to improve this within their organization. Of course, it will cost something, in the way that intentionality usually exacts. I believe the simple articulation of the aforementioned (ministry leaders as the end as well as the means), along with a few resources, could quiet the murmur in large part. How it is approached must be grounded in biblical conviction instead of a technique employed to appease or placate the team.

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[141] Lance Witt, *High-Impact Teams: Where Healthy Meets High Performance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2018).

A simple example would be the consistent teaching around this subject matter. The leader could use a myriad of scriptural text. One in John 10:11 identifies Jesus himself as the Good Shepherd, and "the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." How do ministry leaders think about this claim? For years, I had only heard this as a command to lay down my own life for the sheep, the church and unchurched people. I held an unconscious assumption that everyone else was a sheep worth being shepherding except myself. I was the shepherd being held to the constant standard of self-sacrifice. Do we believe that we are also sheep? Do we believe that ministry leaders and pastors are both roles – that of shepherd *and* sheep? Do we teach this tension and live with its implications? And do we design ministry and staff development with this premise? It is not the purpose of this project to expound further on this one point but suffice it to say that leaders have a responsibility to offer thoughtful, holistic teaching and encouragement for their team on these kinds of subjects from Scripture.

If we want to stem the tide of ministry fatigue and failure, we will need to think differently and more holistically about staff development. As a small step forward, senior leaders could consider and envisage about their staff more, not less. An annual assessment of budget allocation for staff development could be embedded within the organization. But careful attention should be given to how these funds are designated with an emphasis on the whole person and their connection to God, in addition to productivity and skills training. Does the plan consider ways for the staff to grow in other spheres or just professionally? If financial support is not possible initially, are there ways of adjusting the paid time off policy to reflect the value of spiritual development? Perhaps

the entity cannot underwrite personal retreat expenses but can offer two days a year of paid time away for such a purpose.

Staff Development as Personal

Pastor and theologian Eugene Peterson expresses a grave concern when it comes to language we use as ministers of the Gospel. In a seminary chapel, he tells the story of when he first heard the use of the word "resource" in a ministry context. This word was introduced innocently enough perhaps, but it has had devastating consequences in ministerial leadership. Viewing people as "resources" to accomplish the mission leans utilitarian. He concludes that language matters because it can lead to depersonalization and commodification.[142]

Peterson's call to move us from abstract and unpersonal to deeply personal should be heeded. Contemplative activism can become a means of warding off the experience of being used in ministry by spiritual leaders. This is done by encouraging practices that help us disconnect from work when needed because we acknowledge each person as an individual loved by God. People are not machines, and we should not treat them as such. It allows for the tension of ministerial staff cultures to be both relational and accountable – a mirror of the tension between contemplation and action.

Staff Development as Inclusive

Unsurprisingly, I have developed a sensitivity to leaders who press and push teams too harshly. This is not biblical pastoring or shepherding. There can be a dark side

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[142] Eugene Peterson, "God's Ministry, God's Way: A Message of Love," (February 14, 2014).

of transformational leadership where the success of the mission can subtlety become more important than the people.[143] Language can sometimes be used in a way that elevates certain gifts over others. We all want to feel special and unique. Truly we are each intrinsically unique. However, as leaders, we must be careful to not manage or control people through superlatives. The "best," the "one," etc. are not necessarily off-limit words but ones we must be very careful with.

Tom Camacho's approach to coaching is an emphasis on the universality of gold in people. "Gold is everywhere."[144] We both believe that it lies in every person, as opposed to the view that only rare people have a gold deposit within. Some may take more excavation than others, but what is important is the belief that it does inherently exist. Vineyard's mantra that "all get to play" undergirds this belief and pushes against celebrity church culture. A spiritual mentor encouraged me to consider "our gloriously common calling" to serve and love God. This has helped me to not idolize uniqueness, to compete with others less, and release the pressure to do something impressive to make a name for myself.

Staff Development as Boundaried

It must be noted that senior leaders are not entirely responsible for the soul-health of their ministry teams. Individuals are ultimately responsible for themselves, their boundaries, and their relationship with Jesus. Concurrently, I believe the top leaders of ministerial organizations share some liability. This is a difficult tension to wrestle with,

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[143] Tourish, *Dark Side of Transformational Leadership,* 70.

[144] Tom Camacho, *Mining for Gold Developing Kingdom Leaders through Coaching* (La Vergne, TN: IVP, 2019), 5-6.

complicated by the Western emphasis on autonomy and individuality. My observation is that our cultural values can easily bloom into leadership shirking any responsibility for health, placing all the onus on individuals. Interestingly, if this is not in balance, employees can behave as victims. There is a self-differentiated space that leaders and employees must work and rest from in order to maintain sustainability. As Drs. Cloud and Townsend have shared in their well-known book, *Boundaries*, the Bible teaches we are not responsible *for* one another but that we are responsible *to* one another.[145] The example of pace is an apt application.

The pace of ministry and life chosen at the top echelons of ministry organizations absolutely impacts the whole. If the drive and schedule of a supervisor(s) is overloaded and without limits, it will be difficult for others within the organization to live differently. It would take an unusually secure and mature individual to live in contrast to their leader. I think of it as "organization seep." What is done at the top has a way of seeping down into all areas of the culture. This is one example of the almost subconscious liability held by senior leadership. Even if supervisors say they want their team to observe Sabbath, if they themselves do not practice it, the team's experience of Sabbath becomes convoluted at best.

It is a struggle for many large church staffs to honor the Sabbath as an organization. I am encouraged by some groundswell in this area in recent years, however. Placing guidelines on communication during days off is one example of intentionality that does not cost much but can make a significant difference for restorative rest. This

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[145] Henry Cloud and John Sims Townsend, *Boundaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 51-3.

usually involves identifying texting as an "emergency only" means during one's day off. And it is helpful to verbalize that people are not expected to respond to emails on that day; encouragement to check email whatsoever is even better. These are simple things but offer clarity and relief to those that are driven and want to please their supervisors. Often, teams need expressed permission to practice Sabbath.

Another consideration is that of a Sabbatical policy. There are objections to this from some who see sabbaticals as unfair and unnecessary, or perhaps outdated in today's culture. I have heard senior leaders oppose this on the grounds that laity in the marketplace do not get this benefit and, therefore, those in church roles do not need it either. It most definitely defies our American obsession with productivity. But God's people were given a different way than other people groups in ancient times. A time of extended break from ministry and church demands after seven years of service is worth deliberating. This will not be arrived at without a careful study of Sabbath and sabbatical from the Old and New Testaments; it should become a theological conviction that will demand action. Ideally, deliberations would include all ministerial staff, in addition to senior leaders.

Staff Development as Phased

Contemplative activism is broad enough to include handles for each season of life. I have held an emergent question as I age. My interaction with college age people has enabled me to consider my research from a different vantage point. Do young people today need the same message I need at 28 or 42 or 62? When we train them in spiritual formation, should our message predominately contain a call to contemplation or to

action? Should we consider stage and season of life in our development programs or does one size fit all?

Fr. Ronald Rolheiser believes it is imperative that season and life phase be considered within Christian discipleship programming. He identifies three seasons of life with a corollary struggle:

- Essential discipleship – The struggle to get our lives together

- Generative discipleship – The struggle to give our lives away

- Radical discipleship – The struggle to give our deaths away[146]

Each phase has unique questions that must be answered. When many of the big life questions are answered after puberty and during young adulthood, we no longer ask "How do I get my life together?" This now becomes: "How do I give my life away more deeply, more generously, and more meaningfully?"[147] These two questions are quite distinctive from each other, and it is plausible that the answers would be likewise. This sort of framework is helpful to consider when designing leadership development programming. Ministers never grow out of the need to be pastored because they never graduate from being human. A theology of contemplative activism embedded in leadership training systems makes space for listening and paying attention to different questions that arise in each season. The contemplative portion enables holistic and human development in ways that a solely action-orientation does not.

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[146] Ronald Rolheiser, "The Three Levels of Christian Discipleship," The Three Levels of Christian Discipleship Comments, September 9, 2012, https://ronrolheiser.com/the-three-levels-of-christian-discipleship/.

[147] Ronald Rolheiser, "Three Levels of Christian Discipleship."

Summary

The Gospel offers and invites a full life. This life contains both meaningful work with God and deep rest and joy. If predominately focused on rest, it would lead to apathy, indulgence, and lethargy. We would miss the compassion and mission of God in the world. This kind of disengagement does not lead to an attractive or satisfying life. Research shows that increased selfish consumption and focus correlates to increased anxiety, not satisfaction. A life like this does not take the Great Commandment or the Great Commission seriously. It is not a loving way to live; the Christian's life should be marked by love. As dangerous as it is to see God as a taskmaster, it is also hazardous to see God as a parent who spoils or is overly indulgent. Consumerism could lead us to believe God to be solely fixated on giving us every whim and wish for our pleasure. This is too low a view of God.

Similarly, if the predominate focus of life is on work and service, it would lead to burnout and compassion fatigue. There is a subtle danger here as well that must be guarded against. This life can view God more often as taskmaster instead of father. This then informs the view of self and, consequentially how we treat others. Spiritual manipulation and exploitation can result if there is no space held sacred for facets of life outside of work. Even when the work is ministry and Kingdom-related, the danger is present and perhaps more insidious. This, too, does not do justice to God and is too low a view of him.

God is not a user. He does not exploit people. From Creation to the Revelation, we have evidence that God is not interested in us only for what he can get out of us. People are not only tools or resources for God to deploy for mission fulfillment. God is

better than that. The truth of God's character and intentions towards humanity informs the way we see ourselves and, subsequently, how we regard others. It informs our leadership development systems and our evangelism strategies. God does not "use" people in the negative sense – tossing them aside once their value has been extracted or when a better resource becomes available.

Likewise, God's people do not behave in these ways. We do not diminish people's value to their skillset and talents or to the contribution they can make to our mission. Leaders care deeply about the whole person and their continued intimacy with Jesus. We carry this ethic for those from ministry team members to new converts to those outside church walls. This can be especially germane for when a leader or volunteer transitions away from our ministry. No one is on the exception list, even our own selves.

As the Church labors to articulate the Gospel in our time, I am encouraged by the opportunity for reaching others with the greatest story ever told. The Christian's witness as one who holds work well, in that it does not "weigh" too heavily or too lightly, is a powerful testimony to our faith and this story. With so many being crushed by work or by leisure, the Church can offer a better way forward by living a contemplative activism. May it be so.

SECTION 4:

ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

Given the charismatic ethos of activism, embedding intentional practices that slow down the ministerial leader is crucial. Hopefully, ministerial leaders are convinced that going slow is as important of a skill as is the ability to go fast. The demands of fast-paced, mega-church ministry call for both gears to be developed in a leader's repertoire. I have attempted to make the argument that the slower "gear" is often underdeveloped in Christian organizational leadership circles.

What is the greatest need that a human has? Much research has shown it is the need to be loved and to belong. The following spiritual development design is cognizant of this and creates space within a leader's busy work life to connect with God and others. Once this primary need is met, Harvard researchers Kegan and Lahey purport that the greatest human desire is to grow. Their research shows that the single leading cause of work burnout is not work overload but working too long without experiencing your own personal development.[148] When organizations tap into this desire that is already latent in their people and teams, amazing things can happen.

Most large churches are clamoring for leadership development programs. Church leaders lament the lack of disciple-making that takes place, in spite of all the programs and activity available. Pipelines and programs are being established and deployed to laity across the country. A typical response is to focus on how to make disciples among our

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[148] Robert Kegan, Lisa Laskow. Lahey, and Matthew L. Miller, *An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2016), 2.

congregation, but I suggest a different starting point. Since we know that God is not a user and we understand that we never outgrow the need to be discipled, we should ensure that the staff team is intentionally cared for spiritually. Therefore, this artifact begins with the staff and team. We begin with incremental changes. Given the compounded stress of the current pandemic crisis, I recommend small and consistent steps toward embedding spiritual health within the staff culture.

The artifact is a staff spiritual development plan for Oaks Church called *Via Media*. *Via Media* means the "middle way" and encapsulates the desire to both love God and build the Kingdom of God simultaneously. *Via Media* is a two-year staff development program designed to increase spiritual vibrancy throughout the entire life of the participant.

Oaks Church is a one-hundred-year-old Assemblies of God congregation in south Dallas. Weekend attendance averages 3,000 and there are 64 staff members. There are unique ministry opportunities that impact staff size and pace, in addition to the normative array of departments. One is an after-school program for the charter school students on our campus. The other is the Oaks School of Leadership with over 70 college students and interns at our campus five days a week.

It should be noted this is the spiritual formation piece of a holistic development plan. The following are the components for undergirding a high view of God and practicing spiritual development together:

- o Individual initial spiritual health assessment, with four follow-up meetings outlined throughout the two-year program

o Quarterly All Staff Chapels with *Via Media* programming, to include communion, teachings and practices

o Traditional Church calendar awareness increased in church staff culture with readings, reflections, and practices offered to that end (Advent, Lent, Holy Week, Pentecost Sunday, etc.)

o Spiritual retreats introduced to all team members with an emphasis on silence, solitude and rest

o All staff off-site retreat at the halfway point of the program

o Quarterly spiritual direction sessions available for any staff member

o Spiritual health questions that generate shared language and values that are used in supervisor-led meetings on a monthly basis

o Reading spiritual classics and reflecting on readings within teams

SECTION 5:

ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION

Goals and Strategies

● What are the main goals for the Track 02 Artifact?

- o Goal: Oaks Church staff will experience spiritual vitality and intimacy with God while working at the church.
- o Goal: Oaks Church staff will increase their theological understanding of their role as a shepherd and grow in the actualization of that role. There will be shared language of what we mean by ministerial leadership among the staff culture.
- o Goal: Oaks Church staff will ultimately realize more effectiveness in ministry endeavors as they lead from a place of strength instead of depletion. Serving from a place of overflow will be the primary experience of ministerial leadership at Oaks Church.

● How will you test a "beta-version" of the Artifact and assess its success?

- o I will present my artifact and proposal to the senior pastors of Oaks Church in February 2021. Then we will present to the executive team. From there, I will begin a phased roll out the artifact to the Oaks Church staff through my role as the Executive Pastor of Leadership Development. If necessary, we will begin with the eight pastoral department leaders as a "beta-version" before implementing it across the organization.

● How will you measure the success of your Artifact?

- o I will measure the success of the artifact in a two-fold manner. We will begin the artifact initiatives alongside the introduction of the Gallup Q12 survey.[149] This survey assesses the employee engagement at Oaks Church. This provides a baseline from which to measure annually. We believe that as we attend to spiritual health, we will see a correlation with employee engagement and productivity in the near future. Second, we will inquire of supervisors monthly in our Pastoral Staff Meeting of their feedback, both personally and on their

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[149] See appendix B for list of Q12 questions.

teams. This is anecdotal and qualitative measurements but provides a critical feedback loop.

● How will you adequately maintain the finished product over the long-haul (of its life)?

   o As this development program is part of my current role portfolio, I will ensure that this product is improved and maintained. However, even after I am no longer on this particular church staff, it will be maintained by me and my passion to serve ministerial leaders.

Audience

● Who is the primary intended audience/user of your completed Artifact?

   o Large church paid staff teams is the intended audience. Specifically, it will be introduced at the Oaks Church, which employs 64 full-time equivalents as of 10/1/20.

● What do you want the audience/user to do/think/experience after encountering your

Artifact?

   o I want the audience to experience the value they have as a human in the Kingdom of God. When they receive personal care, inquiry and instruction on spiritual disciplines, for example, they begin to believe that they are sheep and not just shepherds. This will enable them to prioritize their only spiritual health and vitality and to take more personal ownership for their interior life. This, then, will inform the way they lead their teams of volunteers.

Artifact Scope and Content

● Define the scope of your Artifact. What will be the technical and content parameters

for your Artifact?

   o The scope of my artifact is as follows:
       o Available to paid, full-time employees of Oaks Church
       o Incremental introduction of practices and habits that are seen as additives to an already thriving church culture. In other words, this is more proactive than reactive in nature.

      ○   Content will be delivered through the following levels: individual; teams; and all staff over two years.

● How will the content of your Artifact be organized?

      ○   It will be organized on our shared Asana platform that manages all departments and projects across the organization. Meeting questions, book lists, retreat guides, spiritual assessments, and all other existing resources will be made available there according to supervisory levels.

● What special technical or functional requirements are needed?

      ○   There are no new technical or functional requirements needed to implement the artifact at Oaks Church. Asana, a project management software is already deployed across the organization. This is an internet-based tool.

Budget

● What is the entire budget (line-item) for the Artifact?

Annual Items	Amount per Employee (64)	Total	Notes
Books & Supplies	$30	$1920	2 per FTE
Retreat Expense	$125	$8000	Gift toward expenses
Special Guest Honoraria		$5000	
Total	$155	**$14,920**	

● Outsourcing fees?

      ○   There may be times that an outside speaker or trainer may be brought in for staff development and is reflected in the overall budget.

● Ongoing personnel/administrative support costs?

      ○   My current position oversees the implementation of the artifact. I have an administrator that will continue to assistant me as needed. No new resource is requested at this time.

Promotion

● How will you market or make available your Artifact to your intended audience/users?

   o   After proposal acceptance at Oaks Church, we will add *Via Media* to meeting agendas in March 2021. This will be made available in the following order: executive team meeting; pastoral staff meeting; elders and directors' meetings; and all staff meeting.

● What is your overall marketing strategy?

   o   My marketing strategy is simple because it is an internal initiative. Once the senior leaders are convinced and committed, they will help lead the rollout.

Action Plan

Prior to Launch (February – March 2021)

   o   Present *Via Media* to senior leadership team for discussion and approval
   o   Review current chapel content and approve *Via Media* dates with Executive Team per plan
   o   Train all supervisors on spiritual leadership questions to be used in monthly 1on1 oversight meetings
   o   Present and obtain approval for staff paid time off policy to include 1 night/2-day spiritual retreat in each full-time employee benefits package
   o   Plan the extended chapel *Via Media* rollout to introduce overall program and Q1 content

Post-launch (April – October 2021)

   o   Plan all staff off-site retreat logistics for April 2022
   o   Research area retreat centers; make individual retreat guide and follow-up available
   o   Plan Advent, Lent and Holy Week readings and reflections during this especially busy time for Oaks Church staff
   o   Plan and execute a 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting staff emphasis during January churchwide campaign
   o   Schedule special guest speaker for a fresh perspective on soul health and pace

SECTION 6:

POSTSCRIPT

It is tempting to provide another curriculum or overhaul in staff programming as an answer to the problem I have raised in this research. Truthfully, my own "inner murmur of self-reproach"[150] wants to offer something that is novel and life-changing, but I do not have that kind of expertise and insight. I do have my own experience. To be sure, there have books, curriculum, and resources that have greatly impacted me; I am indebted to those authors. But without the spiritual community around me, my growth would have been greatly impeded, no matter the content. Continuing to think through the engagement of spiritual friendship for the team and congregation is an unending task. Self-initiated and organic friendship is ideal but not often actualized in the minister's life.

Another consideration is that of tool integration. Oaks Church currently uses several personality and self-awareness tools. The inclusion of current staff development tools into the *Via Media* is a future deliberation. Thought should be given to how we synthesize information to serve the spiritual growth of individual staff members. I have observed a shift in the broader church culture of moving towards business practices and tools as means of leading. This is certainly beneficial on many levels. It does, however, have its limits. Business principles are limited within church contexts in that they do not attend to the soul level of constituents. Our development programming should include helpful secular tools and assessments, without neglecting the sacred tools and guides available to us. I aspire for more integration in the future.

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[150] Judith Shulevitz. "Bring Back the Sabbath."

An additional consideration is that of nomenclature. The denomination that I am associated with is multifaceted and diverse. And yet the charismatic stream does not often intersect with the contemplative stream. This is unfortunate, as there are gifts to be received from either tradition. How to introduce contemplative practices and language without making one defensive could be a challenge. Finding ways of speaking of contemplative activism within denominational circles will take practice and nuance.

Finally, I believe the greatest challenge to consider is that of leadership buy-in for *Via Media*. I am reminded daily of the real events, tasks and pressures to be managed in local church ministry. My ability to connect this program with tangible outcomes is necessary. For example, I desire to hold spiritual direction training for all pastoral level leaders. The benefit to the organization is without question in my mind but I must work to clearly articulate the value. Quantifying what staff engagement, reduced turnover, spiritual maturity, etc. would infer for the church is part of the task ahead. And it is my great joy to work *with* God toward these ends.

APPENDIX A:

ARTIFACT

Via Media
Staff Spiritual Development

Oaks Church
777 I35E South, Red Oak, Texas 75154
www.oaks.church

Via Media Program

Via Media: Holistic Staff Development

At Oaks Church, we believe development to be holistic. This fundamentally includes practicing the middle way (*via media*) of giving *and* receiving. We want to see our staff grow closer to Christ, in their leadership, and in their relationships while they serve on the Oaks team.

- Spiritual Development
- Leadership Development
- Interpersonal Skills Development

Mission

At Oaks Church, we grow generations that transform communities. We believe that mission begins with our great staff and reverberates through the rest of our community.

Values

- We are for your family
- We are party people
- We are generous givers
- We are for this community
- We are always getting better
- We are always inviting

Calendar Rhythm

These are the spaces where we will slowly embed questions, practices, and training on spiritual health and vitality.

- Monthly: all staff chapels; 1on1 meetings
- Quarterly: spiritual emphasis theme introduced and action steps
- Seasonally: Advent and Easter spiritual emphasis
- Annually: offsite retreats

Via Media Program Components

Emphasis 1 – Individual

- Individual spiritual health assessment meetings held 4 times at 6-month intervals
- Spiritual retreat available for 1 night/2 days annually; schedule templates offered; follow up required
- List of spiritual readings available; Oaks will purchase 2 books/year from list at employee's initiative
- Mentoring and spiritual direction sessions available to individual quarterly; scheduled at employee's initiative

Emphasis 2 – Teams

- Quarterly team spiritual health emphasis
- Spiritual direction questions asked & discussed in at least monthly 1on1 supervisor meeting
- Team spiritual health activities available as a resource

Emphasis 3 – All Staff

- Optimize monthly All Staff Chapels for spiritual development & practices
- Quarterly communion together
- Advent & Easter special spiritual emphasis
- Offsite retreat held together at mid-point of program

Via Media Road Map

2 Year Program: April 2021 – March 2023

Individual Pre-work
- Spiritual Health Assessment
- Read 1 John

Year 1 / Quarter 1 (April 2021)
- Theme: Triune God
- Spiritual Health Assessment activity
- Individual Assessments Held (1 of 4)
- Program Kick-off: Extended All Staff Chapel

Year 1 / Quarter 2 (July 2021)
- Theme: Creation
- All Staff Chapel
- Individual retreat planning

Year 1 / Quarter 3 (October 2021)
- Theme: Life of Moses
- Individual Assessments Held (2 of 4)
- All Staff Chapel
- Advent Practices introduced & encouraged

Year 1 / Quarter 4 (January 2022)
- Theme: Spiritual Shepherding
- All Church Daniel Fast (January)
- All Staff Chapel
- Lent Practices introduced & encouraged

Year 2 / Quarter 1 (April 2022)

- Theme: Life of Christ as Worker
- Individual Assessments Held (3 of 4)
- All Staff Chapel
- *Via Media* all staff retreat

Year 2 / Quarter 2 (July 2022)

- Theme: Life of Christ as Contemplative
- All Staff Chapel
- Silence & solitude practice

Year 2 / Quarter 3 (October 2022)

- Theme: Church History
- Individual Assessments Held (4 of 4)
- All Staff Chapel
- Advent Practices introduced & encouraged
- Rule of Life activity submitted

Year 2 / Quarter 4 (January 2023)

- Theme: Pentecostal Leadership
- All Church Daniel Fast (January)
- All Staff Chapel
- Lent Practices introduced & encouraged

Via Media Quarterly Content

Year 1 / Quarter 1

Triune God
- God as Relational
- Orthodox understanding of the Trinity
- God desires a relationship with each of his children
- God desires his children to have healthy relationships with one another
- Sabbath teaching: theological & practical

Action: Individual spiritual health assessment reflection; Sabbath template submitted

Reading: *The Rest of God* by Marcus Buchanan

Year 1 / Quarter 2

Creation Account
- Our Story: Perfection – Fall – Reconciliation
- Core Identity work
- When the world began, God started it with a garden
- Nature walks – seeking of beauty

Action: Personal retreat & connection with God

Reading: Genesis 1-3 & *Abba's Child* by Brennan Manning

Year 1 / Quarter 3

Moses Case Study
- What is leadership all about?
- Jethro account of investing in others
- What of the ending of Moses' life? Was he successful even though he did not enter the Promise Land?

Action: Group-based book study

Reading: various passages from Exodus & *Strengthening the Soul of your Leadership* by Ruth Haley Barton

Year 1 / Quarter 4

Ezekiel 34 - Spiritual Shepherding
- Biblical shepherding & caring for others
- Servant Leadership – what it is & is not
- Boundaries in ministry
- Listening as ministry

Action: Empathetic listening exercise

Reading: Ezekiel 34; John 10; *In the Name of Jesus* by Henri Nouwen; Andy Stanley podcast "Not So with You"

Year 2 / Quarter 1

The Life of Christ - Christ as Worker
- Definition of work
- Social justice & liberation theology
- Purpose & gifting discovery

Action: gifting & personality assessment projects; personal mission statement activity

Reading: various Gospel accounts & *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer

Year 2 / Quarter 2

The Life of Christ - Christ as Contemplative
- Why did Christ have a prayer life?
- What do we know from Scripture of Jesus' rhythms?
- Silence & solitude teaching
- Abiding

Action: Receiving spiritual direction/coaching

Reading: various Gospel accounts; *The Praying Life* by Paul Miller

Year 2 / Quarter 3

The History of the Church with Work & Rest
- Church history overview
- *Vita activa* & *vita contemplativa*
- Evangelicalism & activism

Action: Rule of Life project

Reading: *Church and Work* by Josh Sweeden; Readings by Teresa of Avila, St. Benedict, Mother Teresa, St. Augustine

Year 2 / Quarter 4

Pentecostal Leadership
- Unique gifts & challenges that Pentecostalism brings to leadership
- Orthopathy & the role of emotions in discipleship
- *Mandorla* & capacity for tension
- Worship & missions

Action: *Via Media* closing reflection paper

Reading: *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Pete Scazzero

Via Media Spiritual Health Assessment

A spiritual director once said that our reality is a friend of intimacy with God. So, let's begin with what is real in the presence of God and each other.

Individual:

Date:

Please take 20-30 minutes to fill out this form after a few moments of prayer.

Can you describe how you imagine God to look? What about God's eyes specifically?

Do you think God likes it when you rest or take a break from working? Do you believe God is please when you work hard and fulfill your responsibilities? Why or why not?

How heavy or light does your ministry work feel in this season?

What spiritual disciplines are you currently practicing? When and where?

Do you regularly practice Sabbath? What does that day look and feel like?

How frequently do you experience being hurried, frenzied and/or anxious?

When is the last time you practiced silence or solitude? Do you find these valuable practices? Why or why not?

Do you feel overwhelmed or anxious about any of these questions? Why or why not?

Read the following and reflect on it: "Once we get caught up in leadership roles of responsibilities and accountabilities, it is easy to lose sight of an all-important question: what are we really inviting people into when we invite them to join us on the spiritual journey? With all of our emphasis on external signs of progress, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that we are not primarily inviting people into our plans and schemes. *We are inviting them into a life-giving way of life in God* (emphasis mine)."[1]

Do you think your way of living is currently a life-giving way of life in God? Why or why not? How so or how not?

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[1] RHB, Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership, 128.

Via Media: Individual Meeting

Triune God – Beginning with Relationships
Meeting 1 of 4 (April 2021)
> Review Spiritual Assessment together
> Discuss areas of celebration & growth
> Fill out form together
> Make a copy for individual & for Staff Development Director

Individual & Current Role:

Person Facilitating Meeting:

Date:

Discussion

- What were your Spiritual Assessment learnings?

- Rolheiser's 3 phases of discipleship: Which phase do you find yourself in? What is unique to the season you are in? What are the questions you are asking?

- What are the most significant relationships in your life? Discuss the health & investment rhythms of each. Note for Personal Inventory exercise.

- What brings you great joy right now? What drains you?

Action Plan

- Personal Inventory Activity

- Recommended Meetings, Readings, & Spiritual Practices:

- Retreat Date Consideration:

- Next Follow Up (6 months) & By Whom:

Via Media: Individual Meeting

Life of Moses – Personal Leadership
Meeting 2 of 4 (October 2021)

Review Meeting 1 form together

Discuss areas of celebration & growth

Fill out form below together

Make a copy for individual & for Staff Development Director

Individual & Current Role:

Person Conducting Meeting:

Date:

Discussion

- Review action plan from Meeting 1: What worked? What didn't work?

- In relation to your leadership, where is there strength and satisfaction? Dissonance? What is an area of your leadership that needs to be developed? What would growth look like to you?

- What brings you great joy right now? What drains you?

Action Plan

- Recommended Leadership Development Practices:

- Recommended Readings & Spiritual Practices:

- Retreat Feedback:

- Next Follow Up (12 months) & By Whom:

Via Media: Individual Meeting

Christ as Worker – Calling & Identity

Meeting 3 of 4 (April 2022)

>Review Meeting 1 & 2 forms together
>
>Discuss areas of celebration & growth
>
>Bring SOI, Strengths Finder & spiritual gifts inventory
>
>Fill out form below together
>
>Make a copy for individual & for Staff Development Director

Individual & Current Role:

Person Conducting Meeting:

Date:

Discussion

- Review action plan from Meeting 1 &2: What worked? What didn't work?

- Review SOI, strengths, and gifts assessments. What stands out to you? Can you identify themes?

- In what settings do you feel the strongest? How often does this happen for you?

- What brings you great joy right now? What drains you?

Action Plan

- Personal Mission Statement activity

- Recommended Readings & Spiritual Practices:

- Retreat Feedback:

- Next Follow Up (12 months) & By Whom:

Via Media: Individual Meeting

Pentecostal Leadership – Middle Way of Giving & Receiving
Meeting 4 of 4 (October 2022)

> Review Meeting 1, 2 & 3 forms together
> Discuss areas of celebration & growth
> Fill out form below together
> Make a copy for individual & for Staff Development Director

Individual & Current Role:

Person Conducting Meeting:

Date:

Discussion

- Review action plan from Meeting 1, 2 & 3: What worked? What didn't work?

- What does "giving" to others look like currently? What does "receiving" from God and others look like currently? Which one is most natural? Why or why not?

- Discuss your current Sabbath practices. Discuss what is filling and life-giving for you.

- What brings you great joy right now? What drains you?

Action Plan

- Rule of Life activity

- Recommended Leadership Development Practices:

- Recommended Readings & Spiritual Practices:

- Next Follow Up (12 months) & By Whom:

Via Media Retreat

We have intentionally gifted you with space and time to rest, reflect & enjoy God.

Retreat Schedule
Day 1
10:00 am - Check in Room
10:30 am - Retreat Begins
- Opening Reflection Exercise (found on bed)

11:15 am - Session 1: Soul Care
11:45 am - Response Time
12:15 pm - Lunch
1:00 pm - Silence Hours begin
- Solitude, Rest & Reflect

4:30 pm - Session 2: *Mandorla*: Christ as Worker
5:00 pm - Response Time
5:30 pm – Dinner & Break Silence
7:00 pm – Worship & Prayer
7:45 pm – Solitude, Rest & Reflect

Day 2
7:30-8:30 am - Breakfast / Devotional Time
9:00 am - Session 3: *Mandorla*: Christ as Contemplative
9:30 am - Response Time
10:00 am - Closing Reflection Exercise
11:00 am - Retreat Ends

Resources Available

Ready, Set, Rest by Alicia Chole
Scripture Meditation Exercises
Reflection Questions / Journal Prompts

Via Media Question Resource

These are reflection questions to be embedded in 1on1 meetings at least monthly for supervisors to use. Choose one based on your connection and knowledge of the recipient and allot 10 minutes of meeting time to listen and discuss.

When was your last day off? What did you do? Did you experience it as restorative?

Have you been in Sunday morning worship services? Why or why not?

How are your daily rhythms with God these past couple of weeks? Has something changed significantly?

What have you been sensing from God in this season? Is there a theme?

Do you have a scripture or "word" for this year? If so, please share more.

How is your physical rest and sleep patterns? Other health indicators?

How much are you working during family time or down time?

How is your relationship with technology? Is this an area of growth or anything you need to adjust?

Are you a part of life-giving community? A group? How can we support you in finding this if needed?

How are your family rhythms? Are you able to meaningfully connect with those closest to you?

When is your next vacation? What do you plan to do?

What are you grieving? How are you attending to the loss?

What are you celebrating? What does this look like for you?

APPENDIX B:

RESOURCES

GALLUP'S Q12®

01 I know what is expected of me at work.

02 I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

03 At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

04 In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

05 My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

06 There is someone at work who encourages my development.

07 At work, my opinions seem to count.

08 The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

09 My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

10 I have a best friend at work.

11 In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

12 This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

151

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[151] https://www.gallup.com/access/239210/gallup-q12-employee-engagement-survey.aspx

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