

Where is God on Monday? Equipping the church for faith at work.

AJ Sherrill

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2014/summer/where-is-god-on-monday.html>



The subject line of Ellen's email read, "Urgent." Her job in the fashion industry placed her on a team with a woman whose presence she had recently begun to dread. Over-worked and under-resourced, the pressures of a deadline can make enemies of us all. But this day was different. Her co-worker had been handed a two weeks notice letter. A single mother of a teenage girl, she was already \$5,000 behind on rent and the repeated eviction threats on her door served as daily reminders of that ominous reality. Welcome to Manhattan.

The woman had long since jettisoned any semblance of faith. And so the email Ellen sent to us concluded:

People are the hinges that swing wide the doors of cultural change.

"Would you prayerfully consider joining me in raising \$5,000 for this woman over the next 48 hours? I think that showing radical generosity in the name of Jesus will be a powerful display of God's heart towards her in this time. May God's mercy be released over her life through this."

It was a big ask, and for the first time in a while, Ellen felt her faith inform her work. She was beginning to discern where God was on Monday.

Manhattan

The Lenape Native Americans called it *Manna-hata*. What once meant "island of many hills" was repurposed into a level, concrete plain of labour. With vacancy rates

hovering at a low 2.8 percent and subways jammed, Manhattan is where people come to work.

When moving here a few years ago, I was haunted by the prospect of gathering a church amidst a society of compelling options. I mean, who would really seek out faith on Sunday in the home of Broadway, Lincoln Center, and Shake Shack? It occurred to me very early that if my ministry did not equip the congregation for the other six days of the week, we simply would not be around for the long haul. And this was no shift of accommodation, but essential to having a biblical witness in a post-agrarian, pro-industry, post-Christian era.

As pastors, we would do well to heed the question of Dorothy Sayers: "How can anyone remain interested in a religion which seems to have no concern with nine-tenths of his life?" Any religion with little concern about the coalescence of faith and work must derive from a different book than the Bible. The Bible begins with a God at work who quickly, it seems, commissions humans to join in and take the narrative forward. As pastors, are we equipping the congregation for the other "nine-tenths"? Or are we overly concentrated with pulling off one hour a week on Sunday morning?

We've never had more tools for this topic than we do today. We stand on shoulders from the recent past such as Abraham Kuyper, the 20th-century Dutch journalist, theologian, and politician. His famous proclamation, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: Mine!" is the reminder that should resound in the ears of every Christian in the work force.

More recently, we have helpful guides in scholars such as Richard Mouw, Steven Garber, and Miroslav Volf; pastors such as Tim Keller, Jon Tyson, and David Kim; writers such as Dorothy Sayers, Gabe Lyons, and Skye Jethani. And there are dozens of others doing important work and creating excellent resources on this topic.

Yet despite these significant voices, does the average congregation grasp even the essentials to create a richer vocational imagination? I suggest these essentials lie in understanding the following questions: