

# **Are We on the Verge of a Workplace Transformation?**

Os Hillman • Workplace, City & Nation Transformation

<http://www.intheworkplace.com/apps/articles/default.asp?blogid=1935&view=post&articleid=12780&fldKeywords=&fldAuthor=&fldTopic=152>

## **Are We on the Verge of a Workplace Transformation?**

Os Hillman

Susan Rudd is going to work today as an administrative operations assistant at the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) in Atlanta, Georgia. However, today she will be involved in one other activity. She will be participating in the chapel service that is sponsored by the Christian Fellowship Group (CFG); the only government approved Christian employee association in existence as of February 2001. When asked why Susan decided to join such a group she was quick to respond, "I was curious as to how believers of diverse backgrounds and denominations could come together. Once I attended the first meeting and felt the positive outpouring of love, camaraderie and encouragement of other believers, I knew I needed to join and support this group." The group has quarterly meetings and Bible studies that are taught on each worksite campus. Many times the meetings are broadcast to other chapters through video conferencing.

Every morning several employees stand gathered around their cubicles or warehouse area at Cardone Industries in Philadelphia for a "Take 5" session that is led by a department leader. A short reading on some work related issue is presented to the group, which is being read to other departments simultaneously among the 4,000 employees all throughout the plant. After this the leader announces, "This concludes this portion of the meeting. The balance of this time, he explains, is voluntary." The leader then proceeds to read a Christian devotional and ends his time by making mention of prayer needs in their division. They conclude with a short prayer.

This time used to be called a "devotional time", says Paul Spuler, V.P. Corporate Culture of Cardone Industries. Spuler's full time job is to foster spiritual development in the employees at Cardone Industries who has four full time chaplains on the payroll. However, in order to avoid violation of EEOC laws related to religious discrimination the company adopted this new way of handling the situation. The opt-in element still provides opportunity to reflect their Christian values and philosophy without imposing them on those who do not wish to participate.

These are not isolated cases but a growing trend among public and private corporations and government organizations. Other Christian groups have begun in unlikely places such as Coca-Cola world headquarters which started the Christian Fellowship of Coca-Cola in Atlanta in 2001. There have been similar groups meeting at Intel, Sears and American Airlines.

## Is There Really A Movement?

Are these isolated cases of God being more integrated in the fabric of corporate America or is there really a spiritual movement taking place today?

The story above is repeated throughout the country as men and women are realizing that making the buck is not the only criteria for a successful life. Even the secular media is recognizing that something is going on. No longer are people turned off with the idea of the importance of mixing faith and work.

An article in the November 1999 issue of *Business Week* magazine titled *Religion in the Workplace* cites:

"A spiritual revival is sweeping across Corporate America as executives of all stripes are mixing mysticism into their management, importing into office corridors the lessons usually doled out in churches, temples, and mosques. It is no longer taboo to talk about God at work"

"With more people becoming open about spirituality -- 95% of Americans say they believe in God or a universal spirit, and 48% say they talked about their religious faith at work that day, according to the Gallup Organizations--it would make sense that, along with their briefcases and laptops, people would start bringing their faith to work." Laura Nash, a business ethicist at Harvard Divinity School and author of *Believers in Business* says, 'Spirituality in the workplace is exploding.'"

Two years later *Fortune* magazine did a cover story on the movement. Two noteworthy quotes from this article cite the reality of the movement.

". a mostly unorganized mass of believers--a counterculture bubbling up all over corporate America--who want to bridge the traditional divide between spirituality and work. Historically, such folk operated below the radar, on their own or in small workplace groups where they prayed or studied the Bible. But now they are getting organized and going public to agitate for change."

"People who want to mix God and business *are rebels on several fronts*. They reject the centuries-old American conviction that spirituality is a private matter. They challenge religious thinkers who disdain business as an inherently impure pursuit. They disagree with business people who say that religion is unavoidably divisive."

Fortune Magazine, July 16, 2001

Ten years ago, one could only identify about 25 formal organizations that existed to help people in the workplace integrate their faith with their work. Organizations like CBMC Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship International, and Fellowship of Companies for Christ (FCCI) were typical. "Today, we have identified over 900 organizations that have a national or international focus," says Mike McLoughlin of YWAM Marketplace Missions who maintains a list of these groups in conjunction with the International Coalition of Workplace Ministries.

## **Christian Leaders Are Beginning to Acknowledge the Movement**

One of the recent trends in the movement is the recognition that there really is a move of God taking place in the workplace arena by recognized Christian leaders. Consider the following quotes that came out in 2002:

"I've never seen the activity of God this deeply in the business community as I do right now," says Henry Blackaby. Blackaby, author of the best-selling *Experiencing God* bible study series, has had a major focus of his ministry the last few years to Fortune 500 CEOs who want to know more about what it means to experience God in the corporate world. "They want to know, 'How do I relate my relationship to God as a Christian CEO to the workplace?' When we talk with them about the fact that, in the Bible, most all of the activity of God that changed society was done in the workplace and not in the church, suddenly the lights come on and they say, 'How can I then make decisions in the workplace that make a radical difference?'"

The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has taken note of the movement as well. "I believe one of the next great moves of God is going to be through the believers in the workplace" says Dr. Billy Graham. Franklin Graham has also noted the movement: "God has begun an evangelism movement in the workplace that has the potential to transform our society as we know it".

The International Coalition of Workplace Ministries (ICWM, of which this writer is the director) is a fellowship of non-profit workplace ministries, for-profit businesses, and churches and church leaders founded in 1997 who want to learn more about what God is doing in the workplace. ICWM has hosted annual summits for leaders in the movement since 1997.

After the May summit was held in Atlanta in 2002 the Billy Graham organization contacted ICWM and asked how they could assist in furthering the movement. "We recognize that if we are going to evangelize our nation and other nations of the world, we must target areas where people have not experienced a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The workplace is one of those major areas," says Chad Hammond, Managing Director of New Ventures in Evangelism Training, a new division of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

The 2003 Workplace Summit will be hosted by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in Asheville, NC March 31-April 3 at The Cove training centre. The summit is being co-sponsored by the Billy Graham organization, the International Coalition of Workplace Ministries (ICWM) and several other workplace ministries throughout the US and world.

Kent Humphreys, a CEO of a business in Oklahoma City and the newly appointed CEO of the Fellowship of Companies for Christ, a ministry to Christian CEOs, says he has never seen the activity in the faith and work movement as great as today. "I have been at this workplace thing for about 20 to 25 years. I see a Kingdom mentality that has not existed until now. I see openness of pastors and church staff that is very new. Church leaders are seeing God at work and want to know what is going on. I am totally blown away and see the last 90 days as the obvious hand of

God in the movement, our organization, my friends, the media --secular and Christian -- and grass roots interest everywhere -- African American, Hispanic, large and small, big city and rural. I promise you that we are within weeks or perhaps months of a major move of God. It will break loose. I have never seen the openness and obvious move of God in my personal life in the marketplace in the 25 years anything like this. People are starving for materials, and for models."

### **Publishing Initiatives**

Another sign of a genuine movement is the number of books being published on the subject. In the year 2000, 79 books were published on the subject of spirituality in the workplace. That represented four times the number from the previous year. However, in the year 2002, 24 books a month were being released according to Pete Hammond, executive VP of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and recognized as one of the early pioneers in the modern-day movement. Hammond was also the general editor for the only Bible that has been specifically developed to address faith and work. The Word in Life Study Bible was published by Thomas Nelson publishers a few years ago and contained more than 500 articles on faith and work. Sadly, it has gone out of print and Hammond is seeking to resurrect it with another publisher.

This brings up another sad note to the publishing area. There have been several magazines launched to serve the workplace movement. *Life@Work* magazine was the third magazine publishing effort to fail at the end of last year. Many of the books that are released become back-listed in less than 2 years. Why? Because most books that are published by Christian publishers are thrown into their normal distribution channels hoping for it to sell without realizing this is a new market that must be developed. Men and women in the workplace often do not purchase books from the typical Christian bookstore outlet where 80% of books are purchased by women. This movement requires a new market to be developed. Some of the secular publishers are being successful with the category. *God is My CEO* by Larry Julian is one such case. In the first year of release more than 30,000 copies were sold. These books could be found in non-traditional places like OfficeMax, Barnes & Noble's business shelf, and other business oriented outlets where working people visit. Christian bookstore chains would be wise to open a new category in their stores on faith and work to attract this new and flourishing market.

### **The Church in the Marketplace**

Peter Wagner, one of the foremost authorities in church growth today, has recently come on board with the movement. Wagner, now president of Global Harvest Ministries and founder of the International Coalition of Apostles, sees this movement as one of the most important movements in the church since the protestant reformation. He believes the only way we will see true city transformation in our world is to ignite the men and women in the workplace because this is their place of authority. Local church pastors cannot do this.

"We have been seeking to transform cities in our nation but cannot find one city that has actually been transformed spiritually, despite all the good things we have done. We have seen it overseas, but not in our own country," says Wagner. Wagner

believes the reason we have not seen transformation is because the gatekeepers and transformational agents are in the marketplace. "Pastors will not be the agents of change because they have no authority in the marketplace," says Wagner.

There is a paradigm shift coming in the way we view church. We must realize there is a church in the marketplace today. The church in the workplace is probably more representative of the church Jesus had in mind from the beginning. When a group forms in a corporation or workplace, you often find more diversity in ethnicity and denominational background. It requires the people to find a common ground in order to have unity in their mission, which is often in the context of the unsaved, often harsh workplace environment. They are more likely to see their mission with a battlefield mentality than the local church because they are in the trenches and see the negative spiritual forces upfront and close.

## **Two Types of Churches**

Wagner says there are two types of churches today-the nuclear church and the extended church.

The nuclear church is the local church that most of us are familiar with. However, there is an extended church where most of the people who are also part of the nuclear church spend their time. These two churches have two different rule books just like any culture has its own rule book. Those who operate in the nuclear and extended church understand both rule books. However, those church leaders in the nuclear church *do not* understand the rule book for the extended (workplace) church," says Wagner. Herein is a major problem in the movement as it relates to churches.

Ed Silvano, president of Harvest Evangelism agrees. "The most common self-inflicted put-down is 'I am not a pastor-I am just a layperson. This is all part of a clever satanic scheme to neutralize apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers along with the entire army of disciples, already positioned in the marketplace.'" Silvano talks about this great division in the church in his book *Anointed for Business* that was released in 2002 and is currently one of the more popular books in the movement.

Christian researcher George Barna is predicting that the workplace movement is a major part of the future church. "Workplace ministry will be one of the core future innovations in church ministry." *George Barna, Boiling Point, Regal Publishing*

## **The Biblical Precedence**

What is interesting about this movement is the fact that it should not be a movement at all. What we are really talking about is the priesthood of all believers, which was established when Jesus began His priestly ministry as both a carpenter and priest. This concept is commonly taught among evangelical churches, but sadly is not really exhibited in practice. Jesus chose 12 men from the workplace and spent most of his time investing his life in those 12 to perform the same miracles He did.

Consider the following facts:

- Of Jesus' 132 public appearances in NT, 122 were in the marketplace.
- Of 52 parables Jesus told, 45 had a workplace context. Of 40 divine interventions recorded in Acts, 39 were in the marketplace.
- Jesus spent his adult life as a carpenter until age 30 before he went into a preaching ministry in the workplace. Jesus called 12 workplace individuals, not clergy, to build His church.

In Ephesians 4:11 we find the core basis for ministry and equipping: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:11-13). Nowhere do you find that the qualifications of these five offices are to be held exclusively by paid clergy. The early church was not led by paid clergy, but men and women from the workplace sold out for Jesus.

### **So Why the Problem Today?**

Part of the reason the church does not operate through this philosophy is due in part to the failure from the one person you would think would be most supportive - the pastor. Greg Ogden is the executive pastor of discipleship at Christ Church of Oakbrook, Illinois and author of *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*. In his book he comments: "Robert Munger says the greatest single bottleneck to renewal is 'the hesitancy of clergy to trust the laity with significant responsibility. Too often our pastors seem to treat us as only fund-raisers (pastors don't want to be too closely associated with filthy lucre) or cooks or office equipment operations when our hearts are crying out for meaningful ministry. This lack of entrusting to God's people both responsibility and authority for authentic ministry betrays the priestly view of the pastoral role. Pastors - perhaps unconsciously - have accepted the view that God's presence is borne by them to a higher degree, so by implication others cannot be full of channels of God's activity. The pastor's distrust becomes an obstacle to equipping those who may be more gifted than they to carry out certain kinds of ministry. For how can the professional trust the untrained with people's lives? If you want it done right, you must do it yourself." *The New Reformation, Greg Ogden, Zondervan Publishers, p.88*

Pastor Harry Heintz of the Brunswick Presbyterian Church in Troy, New York agrees with Ogden. They have abolished the term laity and avoid using any terminology that would elevate the offices of vocational pastor more than any member of their church. Heintz sees this elevation of clergy as one of the most damaging things churches do that prevent workplace believers from seeing themselves as priests in the marketplace and equal in their spiritual callings.

"There is a certain fear that comes over a pastor when you begin to talk about a workplace ministry," says Rich Marshall, author of *God@Work* and pastor for 35 years, now working full time in the workplace movement. "They fear that the marketplace believer is going to take over their church. They fear losing their tithe. They fear losing control." The interesting thing is that when pastors start equipping those in the workplace to fulfill their unique call, the exact opposite takes place. These people become your greatest asset. They bring others to your church. They actually give more money." Rich began ordaining people in his church to their call to the workplace to be on par with those he ordained for vocational ministry.

This reality came through to me one day when I received an email in response to my daily devotional that I write, *TGIF Today God Is First* which is subscribed to by more than 75,000 individuals each day throughout the world. A large number of pastors are subscribers. The note I received from a pastor one day simply said this: "How can a businessman have such wisdom?" What was he saying? First, he had evidently not known any "spiritual" businessmen. Second, he viewed himself, as a pastor, to have the inside track on mature spiritual insights. This one incident spoke volumes to me as one of the major problems in the church today and why such a movement has not taken place before now.

However, having said that, it should also be said that the blame cannot totally be laid at the pastor's feet. We in the workplace have passed the "ministry responsibility" to the pastor by abdicating our call to be priests in our workplaces. In some instances, the workplace believer has used this to justify their lack of spiritual involvement which has contributed to the segmentation problem of faith and work.

### **Early Signs of Change at the Local Church Level**

Whenever I speak at a conference I ask a question of the audience: "How many of you have been intentionally trained and equipped to express your faith in and through your workplace calling by your local church?" Less than 1% of the audience raises their hand. Dr. Myles Munroe said, "Church leaders often train us to do *their* ministry, instead of *our* ministry in the workplace." So often, this is at the core of the problem. Church leaders have not realized that men and women have a unique calling to their workplaces where they spend the majority of their time.

There are early signs of the movement beginning to penetrate this void of training. Doug Spada, a businessman from San Diego, has begun a new ministry called His Church at Work which is a comprehensive training and equipping ministry designed exclusively for the local church. He has a passion to help pastors and local churches understand the workplace believer in their church and to help equip them to be ministers in their workplaces. He has created a professional website that serves churches [www.hischurchatwork.org](http://www.hischurchatwork.org) and provides tools and strategies for the local church to make this a priority. He has several major churches in the US that have contracted with him to help bring this into their churches.

Spada is one of the many new pioneers God is plucking out of their full time business enterprises to focus on a new calling - a priestly calling to the marketplace. "I have a burden to help the local church pastor understand how to

reach the workplace believer who is crying out to know how to impact his or her workplace for Christ. When we consider that the workplace is where the majority of people spend the majority of their time interacting with the majority of lost people, we realize what a ripe mission field the workplace represents. Pastors often don't know how to relate to the workplace believer. And because I come out of the workplace, I can help the church understand the needs of the Christian in the workplace that is sitting in their church every week," says Spada.

### **Where Is This Leading?**

So where is all this leading? Why might God be calling forth a new movement among those in the workplace? Peter Wagner and Ed Siloso believe it is all about transformation. If we are going to see a real revival in our nations, it will come as a result of men and women transforming their workplaces and cities for Christ. Ed Siloso, in his book *Anointed for Business*, describes four types of Christians he sees in the workplace. The first is the Christian who is simply trying to survive. The second is the Christian who seeks to live by Christian principles. The third is the Christian who seeks to live by the power of the Holy Spirit. The fourth is the Christian who is transforming their workplace for Christ.

Tim Habeck, president of a 200 plus employee insurance company in Atlanta, Georgia leads a family owned business which has been committed to glorifying God in their business. It is only recently that he believes his company has moved from being a company that is based on Christian principles to being empowered by the Holy Spirit for transformation. In the last few months he has seen God move mightily in his company with more than a dozen salvations, physical healings among his managers and employees, and a new understanding of how to hear the voice of God in their work lives. He now has three intercessors who are also employees that support their management team by praying every morning at 7AM and two chaplains. And they have several Bible studies that meet in their offices every week.

When we start to see this kind of thing happen exponentially throughout corporations, we then might begin to see city transformation like the one in Almolonga, Guatemala where 90% of the city is now Christian, the jails have closed, the local farmers are harvesting produce two and three times the size of normal produce.

Or perhaps we will see another revival like the 1857 revival in New York City led by a businessman named Jeremiah Lanphier who started a noon-day prayer meeting a few blocks down from where the World Trade Center was which led to a revival that broke out all across the nation and spread overseas. The result was more than 1 million people coming to Christ. Now that is marketplace transformation. Come Lord Jesus to our workplaces!