

Key to City and Nation Transformation? Engage the 9 to 5 Window

Os Hillman • Workplace, City & Nation Transformation

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I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. (John 17:22-23).

We have heard a lot about the 10/40 window of unreached people groups over the last ten years. These people represent those who have never heard the gospel. However, the "9 to 5 window", where the majority of people spend the majority of their time, also has a large number of unreached people who have the power to impact the entire world for Jesus Christ once they make a commitment to Him and begin to walk in their destiny. Today, we are seeing a move of God among men and women in the 9 to 5 Window, the place where real societal change can take place because of the strategic position many of these believers hold in society. I believe equipping and commissioning this group is key to city and nation transformation.

Background of the Faith and Work Movement

The faith at work movement has its early beginnings in the 1950s when the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International was birthed through Demos Shakarian. This was a group of enthusiastic and passionate businessmen birthed from the Charismatic renewal movement in the '50s and '60s. They now operate in 131 countries.

In 1930 CBMC (Connecting Businessmen to Christ), a non-charismatic marketplace ministry was birthed and continues today with a focus on evangelism to men in the marketplace. These two organizations represent the focus of workplace ministry over the last fifty years. That focus has largely been on executives, men, and evangelism. These ministries were also birthed outside the local church and have often been seen by church leaders as competition to the local church. Many ministries like these have been started because the local church has not understood or embraced their people's passion to reflect their faith in the marketplace.

In the last ten years there is a new paradigm in workplace ministry unfolding. Fifteen years ago we could identify only about twenty-five to fifty formalized workplace ministries. Today, we have identified thirteen hundred organizations that seek to integrate faith and work. These include nonprofit workplace ministries, educational institutions, business organizations, and churches that intentionally focus on faith and work. This incredible rate of growth is why many are saying that there is a genuine move of God taking place in this arena that has the potential for changing the spiritual landscape in the local church and cities and nations. Even the secular media has recognized this trend for workers wanting to depress their faith in the workforce. In 2005 we saw the greatest media coverage ever given to this trend with features by CNBC, NBC, ABC, and the BBC. Newspapers such as the *LA Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe* as well as many regional city newspapers

featured stories on the faith and work movement. Strangely, the Church has been the slowest to recognize this movement.

Not Just an Evangelism Movement Outside the Local Church

One of the key differences in the modern-day movement is that the focus is no longer evangelism to male executives. The modern-day movement is focused on a more holistic approach to applying faith in the realm where so many people spend so much of their time-their work life. These include students, housewives, those in the military, executives, nurses, doctors, lawyers, and people in entertainment and government. Ministries are no longer just birthing outside the local church as para-church ministries, but local churches are now recognizing the need to equip their people and release them into their workplaces as extended missions of their churches.

There is a trumpet call to return to the early church model of biblical ministry that resides with every believer. This call is to the "9 to 5 Window" where there are more unreached people residing than in the 10/40 window. It is a movement that is designed to change the 80/20 rule in the local church-from 20 percent of people doing ministry to 80 percent. And most of all, it is a movement that is designed to ignite transformation in lives, churches, cities, and nations. Many believe it may be how the Lord will bring genuine revival into our nations because those in the workplace often reside in the place of authority in our cities and have the ability to make significant changes in the way things are done. Martin Luther brought the *word of God* back to the people, but today God is bringing the *work of God* back to the people.

If there were ever a time we needed a *tipping point*, it is now. The faith at work movement has the potential to tip the scale from a nation that is falling away from its spiritual roots to a nation that returns to their spiritual destiny. Today, less than 7 percent of people in England attend church. That figure was 30% just after World War II. Less than 30% of Americans attend church today and that figure is dropping every year. Unless there is a tipping point toward God, America will be following close behind England and we will give up more ground to ungodly influences that will lead to the demise of our nation. George Barna reported in his recent book *Revolution* that there is a major exodus among people attending local churches today. Why? It is because the local church has become irrelevant to the world many of these people live in. Our research has revealed that an alarming 90% of people when surveyed say they do not feel they are being equipped to live out their faith where they spend most of their time-the workplace. It is not a question of teaching the Bible as much as making the Bible *relevant* to their world.

Why Workplace Leaders are Key to Societal Transformation

Workplace leaders are important to city and nation transformation because they are often in places of power to make changes. Dr. C. Peter Wagner, former seminary professor, church growth expert and author of his recent book, *The Church in the Workplace*, makes the following observations in the foreword to my book, *The Faith@Work Movement*:

For years we have sought after transformation of our cities. We have prayed, held pastor prayer conferences, prayer-walked our cities, etc. Still, not one U.S. city has been transformed. Why is that? I feel I finally know the answer to that question. It lies in the fact that pastors and church leaders do not hold the authority in the cities where the change must originate. Business and government leaders hold that authority. So, until we in the church equip and release the apostles in the workplace, we will never see our cities transformed by Jesus Christ.

Wagner has gone on record to say that he believes this movement has the potential to impact the Church as much as the Protestant Reformation did.

Dr. Henry Blackaby and myself were recently speaking in Phoenix, Arizona. During one of his addresses he made the following amazing statement: "We will not see transformation in America through our pastors or our political leaders. We will see transformation through marketplace leaders. God is marshalling His people in the workplace as never before in history." He proceeded to explain his statement through a recent story. Blackaby has been mentoring more than 175 CEOs from Fortune 500 corporations through monthly conference calls and one on one training sessions. He is now seeing fruit from his efforts after more several years of doing this. He shared one story with me.

Early in 2006 a network television show entitled *Daniel* was about to be released. It was a very wicked program that stereo-typed a minister and his family. The Christian community was outraged at the program. The show was about to begin until an executive with Proctor and Gamble, who was a major sponsor of the network's programming, had to give final approval to the program. He was part of Blackaby's mentoring group. When he saw the program he immediately axed it. It never got on the air.

That is the power of influence that marketplace leaders have to influence society for good.

7 Mind Molders

There are seven mind molders in society that affect how our culture will be shaped. If any group or individual can affect all seven of these mind molders, we will change that society. These include 1) business, 2) education, 3) government, 4) media, 5) arts and entertainment, 6) religion and 7) family. This is why it is so important that local churches begin to encourage our young people to enter these seven areas with a biblical worldview that can not only shape society, but even transform it. In 2004 I was interviewed by the *New York Times* for a cover story they planned on faith and work. They interviewed me three different times before they were ready to proceed with the article. In the final interview they said they planned the story to be a cover story on the *New York Times* magazine as an insert in their Sunday paper. However, they had one problem. They needed to build their story around someone who was actually doing what I described in my interview with them. I recommended that they speak with my friend, Chuck Ripka, who was an executive with a bank in Elk River, Minnesota. Chuck is a great example of a workplace leader who is transforming his workplace and his city for Christ. He has led multiple people to Christ in his bank and has been strategically involved in city transformation efforts in his community. The

writer not only interviewed Chuck, but flew there and spent a few days following him around.

Chuck and I prayed that the story would be balanced and bring glory to Jesus Christ. We prayed for the writer. God answered both prayers. The *New York Times* is known for its bias and liberal agenda. However, this article was very balanced and before the writer left Chuck's office, he received Jesus Christ as his saviour. Do you think such a writer might have influence in society now that he has come out of the dark side?

Keys to City Transformation

Graham Power and Dawie Spangenberg and his wife, Isebel, lead a worldwide prayer initiative called the Global Day of Prayer. I hosted Dawie once in Atlanta in which he made a startling comment to a Christian workplace lunch group: "If a business owner is operating a business in a city and is not directly involved in transforming that city, he is raping that city. He needs to leave that city!" These are strong words, but Spangenberg is convinced that business leaders need to stop trying to see what a business can do for them, start determining why God gave them their business, and then seek to build the kingdom of God in their communities.

The problem that exists today is that workplace apostles are not being recognized- nor do they even recognize themselves. They have not seen their careers as holy callings and have not understood the redemptive nature of their work and calling. Consequently, they often resign themselves to being financiers of God's work instead of being major catalysts for transformation of their workplaces and cities. And yet, when a man or a woman becomes willing to be used in the context of the workplace, God can accomplish a great deal.

Jeremiah Lanphier is a good example of what I'm talking about. He was a businessman in New York City in the mid-1800s. A simple prayer, a willing heart and an act of obedience resulted in city transformation throughout the United States. Here's his story:

In a small, darkened room, in the back of one of New York City's lesser churches, a man prayed alone. His request of God was simple, but earth-shattering: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" He was a man approaching midlife, without a wife or family, but he had financial means. He had made a decision to reject the "success syndrome" that drove the city's businessmen and bankers. God used this businessman to turn New York City's commercial empire on its head. He began a businessmen's prayer meeting on September 23, 1857. The meetings began slowly, but within a few months 20 noonday meetings were convening daily throughout the city. The *New York Tribune* and the *New York Herald* issued articles of revival. It had become the city's biggest news. Now a full-fledged revival, it moved outside New York. By spring of 1858, 2,000 met daily in Chicago's Metropolitan Theatre, and in Philadelphia the meetings mushroomed into a four-month long tent meeting. Meetings were held in Baltimore, Washington, Cincinnati, Chicago, New Orleans, and Mobile. Thousands met to pray because one man stepped out. This was an extraordinary move of God through one man.⁴

What is Required for City Transformation?

There are four key ingredients required among its Christian leaders to see a city transformed. These include prayer, humility, unity and knowledge of God's ways. Let's discuss each of these.

Prayer

In every city in which transformation has taken place, believers have come together to pray for their city. Prayer changes the spiritual climate of a city. Some of the main areas of influence that must be the focus of our prayers include churches and businesses; the legal, political, educational and medical fields; and the media/entertainment industry. "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14). Workplace leaders must be strategically aligned with intercessors to impact their city.

Humility

God uses men and women who recognize that they need each other and who do not seek glory for their work. "He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way" (Ps. 25:9). The workplace leaders that God is using today care little about being in the limelight. They have a Kingdom perspective that avoids bringing attention to themselves or any one group in order to impact the city for Jesus Christ.

Unity

Jesus said, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:23). God calls each of us individually and corporately to represent Christ to the world, but our independence, pride and egos often prevent us from becoming unified in the purposes of Christ. We are scattered in our church affiliations and in our city transformation efforts. Unity is built when we roll up our sleeves and determine to work together—pastors, priests and people from every walk of life. The marketplace and the Church must come together to bless the city with practical initiatives that benefit the city.

Knowledge of God's Ways

Those of us in the workplace are often zealous for God, but we can move in presumption instead of in a faith that is rooted in knowledge of God's ways. Such was the case of David, who wanted to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the city of Jerusalem. He was zealous for God and celebrated as he brought the Ark into the city. However, the ark was being carried into the city on a cart instead of by priests on poles, as God required. When a man named Uzzah reached out to catch the Ark when the oxen stumbled, he was immediately struck dead by God. "When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah because of his

irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God" (2 Sam 6:6-7). David was devastated.

We must connect with our priests and pastors to jointly work on bringing the presence of God into our cities. Otherwise, we will fail like David and be guilty of presumption. "For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge" (Romans 10:2).

City Transformation "Trinity"

I also believe there is a city transformation "trinity," if you will allow me to use that word in this way. I believe three groups of people are vital to bringing change to the spiritual climate in a city: (1) intercessors, who are called to intercede for the city; (2) pastors and nuclear church leaders who have a vision for their cities; and (3) marketplace leaders. These are men and women called to impact their cities through their spheres of influence in government, business and education.

In 2003, the Lord began to impress upon me that I was to start bringing the workplace leaders and ministries together in the city of Atlanta for a vision of transforming the city. We partnered with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in April 2004 to host a workplace conference for the city. However, nothing really sparked any ongoing initiatives from that meeting.

I continued to meet with the workplace ministries, but nothing seemed to be happening. I kept trying to find intercessors in the city, but I was unsuccessful. Finally, I got to know Alistair Petrie when I had him speak at our international conference in October 2004. Alistair is an authority and researcher on city transformation. When I shared my frustration with him, he said, "Oh, you need to meet Jacquie Tyre. She is one of your key city intercessors." I met with Jacquie, and things immediately began to happen. I began connecting with some of the city church leaders.

A short time later, in February 2005, Graham Power, founder of Transformation Africa and the Global Day of Prayer, came through town. I was asked to host a meeting for Graham to share the vision of the Global Day of Prayer. Up to this point, the city had not made any decisions about joining this initiative; but that day about 100 leaders in the city came to hear Graham and by the end of the meeting made a commitment to hold an Atlanta Global Day of Prayer. Things started moving fast. Within 30 days \$225,000 was raised, a 20,000-seat venue was reserved and the city began coming together. However, we have learned that events are not what changes a city, but they are merely the catalyst to get leaders working together toward a common goal in the city.

I believe the reason that all this happened is because these three groups of people came together in a unified effort to impact our city-intercessors, apostolic church leaders and workplace leaders. Another trend taking place is that God is birthing coalitions in cities today for the express purpose of transforming that city. I find that God is using marketplace leaders to be the catalyst to bring the three core groups of people together more and more. Perhaps this is because marketplace leaders don't have turf issues to wrestle with like local church leaders.

Blessing the City

The final piece of the puzzle that has been missing in city transformation efforts is the intentional efforts to bless the city. Eric Swanson and Rick Rusaw have written a book entitled, *The Externally Focused Church*. In this book they cite a trend taking place across the nation where churches are becoming intentional about impacting social problems in the city.

"The first paradigm shift pertains to where we, as the church, see ourselves in relation to our communities. Will we remain outside of the community inviting people in or will we go to our communities, seeking to be a transforming agent? The church is called to be separate in lifestyle but never called to be isolated from the people it seeks to influence. For many years founding pastor, Robert Lewis, of Fellowship Bible Church (FBC) in Little Rock was content to be growing a successful suburban mega church. By his admission, FBC was a "success church." Success churches seek to grow by having attractive programs and offerings that people can come to and benefit from. But Robert grew increasingly dissatisfied with the impact FBC was having on the community. So he made an appointment with the mayor of Little Rock and asked one question, "How can we help you?" The mayor responded with a list of challenges facing the greater Little Rock area.

FBC then challenged themselves with the question, "What can we do that would cause people to marvel and say, 'God is at work in a wonderful way for no one could do these things unless God were with them?'" That one question was the first step in becoming what Lewis calls a "bridge-building church." For the past four years, FBC has joined with over 100 other churches and over 5,000 volunteers in the greater Little Rock area and served their communities by building parks and playgrounds and refurbishing nearly 50 schools. They set records for Red Cross Blood donations and have enlisted thousands of new organ donors. They began reaching out to the community through "LifeSkill" classes (on finances, marriage, wellness, aging, etc.) in public forums like banks and hotel rooms, with over 5,000 people attending. In the past four years the churches of greater Little Rock have donated nearly a million dollars to community human service organizations that are effective in meeting the needs of at-risk youth. They have renovated homes and provided school uniforms, school supplies, winter coats, and Christmas toys for hundreds of children. After getting new shelving for her classrooms, one school principle said, "I think this is the most fabulous day of my life as far as education is concerned. I've been in this 29 years and this is the first time a community or church project has come through for us."

The churches of Little Rock have let their light shine in such a way that Jesus Christ is made real to the community. Once a church makes this mental shift regarding how it lives in its community, it is only limited by its creativity in how it can serve its community and be the salt and light it was meant to be. It makes the transition from providing ministry programs for the community to forever changing its relationship to a community."^[1]

We see very few communities throughout the nation that have come together collectively to impact the city like Little Rock. In most situations we see individual churches operating as silos in their communities. They do have some impact, but not what they could have if done as a collective Church of the city.

When all of these efforts become focused the net result is we begin to fulfill Deuteronomy 28:13,14: The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. In almost every case where we see the Church serving the city, it results in giving the Church more authority in the city among its leaders. This is biblical Christianity. We win by serving and becoming unified as one Body of Christ.

In summary, if we want to begin to transform our cities we must affirm workplace leaders as having a key role in establishing the Church in the city by equipping them and validating their ministries through our local churches. We must be intentional about bringing intercessors, workplace leaders and pastors who have a vision for their city together with an intentional process that allocates money and resources to projects that will bless the city. Then we will begin to see the transformation of cities.

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