God is a Worker and I’m Made in His Image

By Jim Hislop, Director of the Center for Leadership Development

A few months ago, in a Transformed post called Walls That Divide, I suggested that there were two walls that divide the church. These walls have grown over time, and even though they are occasionally challenged, they keep showing up. They are the sacred/secular divide and the clergy/laity divide. I wrote a few posts on the clergy/laity divide and now I’d like to focus on the sacred/secular divide.

Mark Green in his three minute Vimeo clip, The Sacred Secular Divide, defines this wall by saying it is, "the pervasive belief that some things are really important to God and other things aren’t.” Mostly we think things that happen in and around the church or the para-church or the mission field—spiritual things— are really important to God and other things—like work, recreation and what we eat—aren’t. We call some of the first group “ministry” and the rest something else. But is that really true? Is that a correct limitation to put on the word “ministry?” Not according to the Bible.

Have you ever noticed that in Genesis 1 and 2, God is not introduced to us as

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prophet, priest or pastor, but as a worker. He doesn’t show up as king, judge or potentate, but as the Creator, that is, a worker. He’s not laying out edicts from heaven to humans to live by after He creates them, but He’s working.

Each day of creation He’s working. He is creating something. He is productive. At the end of each day, He is satisfied. He steps back and looks at what He has made and He says, “It’s good.” At the end of the whole process, Gen. 1:31 says, “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.” Gen. 2:2-3 says, “By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.”

Notice the word “work” appears three times in verse three, where it tells us He “rested from all His work.” Was God tired? Is that why He rested? I don’t think so. I think he was satisfied. I think He sat down and thought, “What a great job I did; all this is very good.” No sermons, no Sunday school classes, no discipleship courses, no mission trips, just work. And it was good.

Is it possible that God intended our work to be good, to be satisfying, and to be meaningful? Yes, I mean the work you do from 9 to 5, not just the work that people who work at the church do or that missionaries do. I mean the work you do at the factory, the hospital, the office, in the school, on the production line, driving the truck, sweeping the floors, in the store, or building a new building. I think so.

Can I ask you, when was the last time you came to the end of your day and paused for just a minute or two, reflected back over the day and said, “That was a good day.” Or, “That child who came to school today obviously upset, went home with a better attitude because I had a chance to chat with her.” “That accounting mistake I found will save us thousands of dollars down the line. That was good.” “That pallet of products I produced will be a blessing to folks as they purchase them and use them in their home. That’s good”. “That couple who came into the hospital today to face the first of many cancer treatments, seemed comforted by the hope I was able to give them. That was very good.” “Those new tires I installed on that lady’s car seemed to give her a peace of mind that had been in turmoil. That was good.” “That kind word I spoke to that grumpy customer as he left brought a smile to his face. That was good.” Were those really sacred acts? Even those done in a secular environment? Even though it wasn’t “church stuff?” Well, Jesus said they are. In Matthew 5:16 he said, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Sounds sacred to me.

I’m thankful for the teachers who taught me to read, to write and to spell (I’m also thankful for whoever invented spell check). I’m also thankful for all the people who used their creative energy and skillful hands to make computers, especially this nice little light-weight laptop that I’m writing this on, sitting up in bed before I go to sleep. I’m satisfied with my work today. “Thank you Lord.”

This article was a reprint from Western’s “Transformed” online community blog at www.westernseminary.edu/transformedblog. To hear more on this topic, join us at the next Alumni Connect event. More details are below.

The Alumni Connect & Co-Labor Event
Tuesday, March 24 from 6:30pm-9pm
Be our guest - dinner and fellowship included!
Topic: Working on Purpose for More than a Paycheck
Panelists: Jeff Louie, Jim Hislop, Pira Tritasavit, Andy Peterson, and Katie Reiff
Location: The Old Spaghetti Factory in Downtown San Jose
51 North San Pedro Street, San Jose 95110
RSVP: Via the Registration Page by March 17. Seating is limited.

Made possible in part by the Kern Family Foundation
Western Alumni and Students presenting at the 2015 BASS Church Workers Conference from March 5-7

FRIDAY, MARCH 6
Kirk Bertsche
Master of Exegetical Theology - Class of 2005
*How Old is God's Creation?*
9:00-10:15 a.m. Room: N10

Jack Hagler (and wife, Liz)
Master of Divinity in Pastoral Ministry - Class of 1987 and coach training
*The Easy Way To Do a Family Devotion*
10:30-11:45 a.m. Room: D5

Joy Liu (formerly Wong)
MA in Marital and Family Therapy - Class of 2008
*Cultivating Character in the Youth You Love: Tools to Impact Even the Most Difficult Kids*
10:30-11:45 a.m. Room: N11

Rolanda Smith
Marital and Family Therapy student
*Creating Good Safety Measures for Youth Ministry*
1:30-2:45 p.m. Room: N10

Peter Lam (and wife, Emily)
Former student
*The Power of Our Words*
3:00-4:15 p.m. Room: N9

Valerie Doyle
MA in Marital and Family Therapy - Class of 2006
*Singles & Single Parents: What is Behind the Need? Can God Deliver?*
3:30-5:45 p.m. Room: N13

SATURDAY, MARCH 7
Dr. Peter Wang
MA in General Ministry - Class of 1998
*Christian Family and Church Response to “Emerging Adulthood” – How To Encourage Today’s Young Adults Toward Maturity*
8:00-9:15 a.m. Room: N10

Anthony Liu
MA in Marital and Family Therapy with Addiction Studies Certificate - Class of 2008
*Teens Viewing Porn -- It IS a Big Deal!*
8:00-9:15 a.m. Room: N11

Pira Tritasavit
Master of Divinity - Class of 2011 and coach training
*Kingdom Professionals: Coaching Christians for Workplace Witness*
8:00-9:15 a.m. Room: N12

Colleen Lam Nguyen
MA in Marital and Family Therapy - Class of 1998
*Emotions of a Teen: Decoding Depression* (presented in Cantonese)
2:15-3:30 p.m. Room: N10

Winnis Chiang
MA in Marital and Family Therapy - Class of 1998
*Help! Nobody is Listening* (presented in Cantonese)
3:45-5:00 p.m. Room: N9

Pira Tritasavit
Master of Divinity - Class of 2011 and coach training
*Mo’ Money, Mo’ Problems - No Money, Mo’ Problems: Coaching for Financial Peace of Mind*
3:45-5:00 p.m. Room: N9

For more information about BASS, visit www.bassconvention.org.

Western is in need of volunteers to help promote Western at our booth at BASS. Contact Muna Farhat at 408-356-6889 x407 if you have a few hours available to help.
The Christian Therapist Fellowship Presents: Ultimate WORTH

Who We Are: The Christian Therapist Fellowship is a vibrant gathering of local counselors encouraging and equipping one another in Christ for excellence in service.

When: Friday, February 20 from 12:00pm-2:30pm

Presenter: Dr. Russ Llewellyn, Ph.D. has had a significant career as a pastor, a therapist, a speaker, and an author of seven books. He currently serves as the prayer pastor at Peninsula Covenant Church in Redwood City.

The Topic: We will explore the issues of how humility affects our self-esteem, and how adversity, suffering and neglect threaten our worth. From a biblical perspective, we will see how God intends to produce in us and the people we see a worth that lasts forever.

Location: Western Seminary, 469 El Camino Real, Ste. 205, Santa Clara

More info: RSVP by 2/13/15 to stevedarro@aol.com. Not available for CEUs. A free will offering will be taken.

MINISTRY & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
We receive regular contact from churches and para-church organizations. Please see the Ministry and Employment Opportunities binder in the front lobby for more information about these postings:

Cantonese Minister/Pastor (full-time)
Chinese Church In Christ (CCIC-SJ), San Jose
Email John C. Y. Lee at chungyoungelee@gmail.com.

Business Services Accountant (full-time)
Central Coast Baptist Association, Santa Clara
You may view the job description at http://ccbaministries.org/employment-opportunities. Send resumes and references to: employment@ccbaministries.org.

Pastor (full-time)
Full Gospel San Francisco English Ministry, SF
See job posting for six specific requirements to be considered for this position. Contact Deacon Gun Shim at gunshim@hotmail.com.

Director of Children and Family Ministries (FT)
Saratoga Federated Church, Saratoga
Send resumes to federatedjobsearch@gmail.com.

Young Adult Pastor (Mandarin congregation)
Lord’s Grace Christian Church, Mountain View
Must speak fluent Mandarin. MDiv required but past pastoral experience is not. Contact office@lordsgrace.org for more information, if interested.

Bible Study Leader
Campus Crusade, San Jose State
For their new Latino group of 8-12 college students on Thurs. at 7pm to teach foundational biblical concepts. Contact Muna at mfarhat@westernseminary.edu.

Job Opportunity at Western Seminary San Jose

STUDENT SERVICES ASSOCIATE
Western Seminary’s San Jose campus is looking for a well-qualified person to work alongside the Director of Student Services. The Student Services Associate is mainly responsible for assisting the Director of Student Services in providing support (administrative and programmatic) to students throughout their seminary training at the San Jose campus. The Student Services Associate will also provide administrative support in the area of donor event relations. This is a part-time position (20 hrs/wk). This is a heavily administrative position, but also requires customer service skills and aptitudes as well as excellence in verbal and written communication. For a full job description, check out the listing at www.christianjobs.com.

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For alumni news, the Western Front, and additional community events - www.westernseminary.edu/alumni/sanjose (click on the “San Jose” button)

For the Western Wave and other student campus news - www.westernseminary.edu/students/sanjose