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Learning to Take Joy In Our Work: Some Preliminary Theological Reflections

PHILIP D. KENNESON

There can be no joy in life without joy in work.

Thomas Aquinas

Few words in the English language resist definition more than the word “joy.” Trying to explain joy is akin to trying to explain the experience of having a warm, freshly-baked chocolate chip cookie dissolve slowly in your mouth: even if you could pull it off, what most of us want is not a discussion of the experience but the experience itself. The same, I suspect, is the way we feel about joy: we don’t want to talk about joy, we want to experience it.

Yet I also suspect that most people would not routinely associate the experience of joy with their work. Given that fact, beginning an article on work with a brief discussion of joy may seem odd, but I think such an approach may offer us considerable theological insight into our current cultural situation. In short, beginning with joy may not only help us to see more clearly how we currently think about and experience work in our culture but also offer us some suggestions about how to think differently about our work, suggestions that might position us to find greater joy in our work.

Whatever else *joy* may be, the experience of joy offers us an opportunity for transcendence. In the experience of joy we find ourselves swept up by the overwhelming sense that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. For at least a moment, the scales of everydayness fall from our eyes and we catch a glimpse of something bigger, something grander, something far more glorious. Whether it’s the profound joy of a new mother staring into the eyes of her baby for the first time, or of the hiker speechlessly standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon, or of the church member being stirred by the rapturous climax of Handel’s *Hallelujah Chorus*, each experience of joy receives part of its intensity from the deep gratitude we feel for being able to be part of something so glorious and amazing.

Yet life also offers less obvious and more mundane experiences of joy. Indeed, if people experience joy in and through their work, it is likely to be of this more mundane variety. (I doubt, for example, that most people who head off to their places of employment on Monday morning find it as exhilarating as Handel.) Yet here, too, the experience of joy is intimately bound up with transcendence. The experience of joy in work is nothing less than the abiding sense of satisfaction and well-being that comes from knowing that one’s work is part of something bigger and one’s work is making a positive contribution to the well-being of God’s world. This privilege of being part of God’s work in the world can and should be one of the ongoing sources of joy in the life of every Christian.

ON BEING FRAMED BY OUR CULTURE

If the experience of joy is intimately bound up with transcendence, then perhaps we are in a better position to see why so many people experience so little joy in their work. The primary reason for this joylessness is simply this: the frame through which most of us understand and evaluate our work is much too nar-

row. Perhaps the easiest way to see this narrowness is to examine the interlocking, yet largely unexamined, assumptions that underwrite the frame through which most people understand and experience their work.

The first such assumption is that “work” is equivalent to employment; our work, in other words, amounts to what we do for pay. This seems like a sensible assumption, for what else would work be but the activities for which we receive pay to support our lives and the lives of those we care about? Yet as sensible as such an assumption is, and as deeply interwoven as it is in our everyday patterns of speech and thinking, it’s actually a problematic assumption. For starters, there are millions of people who undertake vital tasks every day who receive no paycheck for their efforts. Are these people working? If pressed, most of us would say “yes,” yet these people are not the folk that come to mind when most of us think of “working people.”

In a similar way, when someone asks us “what kind of work we do,” we quite naturally assume that they are asking us about what kind of work we do for pay. Yet even people who have gainful employment might want to resist the notion that their work is equivalent to the work they do for pay. Almost everyone does plenty of unremunerated work each week (in and around the house, in our communities), yet how are we to understand and evaluate that work as Christians if it doesn’t even show up on our radar screens *as work*?

So perhaps the first question to think hard about is this: what *is* our work? If God has placed us in this world partly to work, and as faithful Christians we are called to understand and evaluate our work from the point of view of what God is doing in the world, then will it be enough simply to ask questions about the work we do for pay? The urgency of broadening the range of activities that we consider and evaluate as work will become even more evident as we examine the rest of the assumptions that underwrite our common way of thinking about work.

Work as Identity

Two additional and closely related assumptions follow from the first: that personal identity and worth are directly correlated to the kind of employment we have. In short, we *are* what we do for pay, and whether we are regarded by the world as someone worthwhile depends on the *kind* of work we do for pay. These widespread assumptions are evident every time we introduce ourselves. Once we offer our names to someone for the first time, what’s the next thing they’re going to ask us? Well, there’s a good chance that they’ll ask, “And what do you do for a living?” or, “And what kind of work do you do?”

Presumably, the kind of work-for-pay that someone does is an essential key to understanding *who* someone is. This of course might be true in many cases, because the kind of work-for-pay that someone does might reflect their deepest convictions and passions. Or, at the very least, it might tell us something about their interests and abilities. But perhaps more subtly, such questions also make it possible for us to locate people within the culturally-defined hierarchy of work-for-pay that most of us are initiated into rather early in life. This hierarchy is not simply an economic hierarchy, with those at the top being paid more for their work than those below; this hierarchy is also about our perceived worth as persons relative to others. To state the culturally obvious in its crudest form: a doctor is worth more than the orderly, a lawyer more than the secretary, a teacher more than the school bus driver, an architect more than the plumber, a minister more than the church janitor, and a restaurant and hotel manager more than the waitress and maid.

As a professor at a Christian liberal arts college, I am keenly aware of this hierarchy, not simply because I am myself inevitably part of it, but also because I am in ongoing conversation with students about why they are in college. And though I might wish it were otherwise, plenty of students come to college primarily to prepare themselves for a job higher up on the hierarchy. In other words, they have come to college

Followers of Jesus do not believe that their fundamental identities are to be found in the kind of work they do for pay, nor do they believe that some people are worth more than others.

because they learned early on that who they are in the eyes of the world is inextricably linked to the kind of work they do for pay. If you want to *be* somebody, then you need to prepare yourself to be the person who owns or runs the business rather than the person who comes in after hours to clean it.

Now I suspect college students are not the only ones who think of themselves and their life choices largely in these terms. Rather, I suspect there are plenty of people around who engage in the kind of work-for-pay that they do not primarily because they enjoy it, or because they have a passion for it, or even because they are particularly good at it, but because at a critical juncture in life such a job promised certain economic and/or cultural rewards.

I hope that the problematic character of these two assumptions is rather obvious. Followers of Jesus do not believe that their fundamental identities are to be found in the kind of work they do for pay, nor do they believe that some people are worth more than others. Rather, followers of Jesus believe that their fundamental identity is *as* followers of Jesus and that this commitment is to shape every aspect of their lives, including the way they view their fellow human beings, each of whom is created in the image of God.

The world promises us that we can make ourselves somebody if we just work hard enough and catch the right breaks in order to get to the top. The good news of Jesus Christ liberates us from this lie, announcing that in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has definitively demonstrated that we *already are* somebody. Thus, the good news of Jesus Christ should liberate us from the need to use our work as a means for justifying our existence. The gospel frees us to see our work as service to God and neighbor. This freedom has perhaps been most eloquently expressed by Martin Luther, who writes in *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520):

We should devote all our works to the welfare of others, since each has such abundant riches in his faith that all his other works and his whole life are a surplus with which he can by voluntary benevolence serve and do good to his neighbor. ... He ought to think: 'Although I am an unworthy and condemned man, my God has given me in Christ all the riches of righteousness and salvation without any merit on my part, out of pure, free mercy, so that from now on I need nothing except faith which believes that this is true. Why should I not therefore freely, joyfully, with all my heart, and with an eager will do all things which I know are pleasing and acceptable to such a Father who has overwhelmed me with his inestimable riches? I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbor, just as Christ offered himself to me; I will do nothing in this life except what I see is necessary, profitable, and salutary to my neighbor, since through faith I have an abundance of all good things in Christ.'

Work as Instrument

This brings us to the next closely connected assumption that frames our everyday view of work: the value of our work is to be understood instrumentally. An instrumental view of work does not see the value of work in the work itself, but in what the work makes possible; the work, in other words, is just a means, an instrument, to accomplishing something else. For example, seeing work primarily as an exercise in self-justification, as already noted, is itself an instrumentalist view of work, for the value of such work is not in the work itself but in the status and sense of self-worth that it makes possible. But there are, of course, other ways of viewing work instrumentally. Perhaps the most common reason people give for working is an instrumentalist one: we work in order to earn money so that we can buy what we need and want. In short, work has value because the paychecks that such work provides support our families and fund our leisure.

Such instrumentalist understandings of work are deeply problematic, not least because they encourage us to ignore questions about the value of the work itself. Once work is viewed primarily instrumentally, if the work is legal and it supports my family, then there can be little reason to question its propriety. As a result, too many Christians justify their work (or don't see the need to justify it in the first place) by insisting that their work renders an important service to their families by supporting them financially. In a similar way,

many Christians would argue that their work is justified because its financial benefits make it possible for them to contribute financially to the church and its outreach.

But such arguments, while not without some merit, cannot completely sidestep the more fundamental issue: Am I engaged in work that God wants done? It seems at least thinkable that there might be some jobs that people might pay us to do that God doesn't want done; if so, then the financial benefits that come from such work would be beside the point. Put as bluntly as I know how, the question is this: Should we be employed 40, 50, or 60 hours a week doing something that works against God's purposes in the world? To answer this question adequately, of course, requires that we be clear about the work that God is doing in the world and the ways in which we have been called to participate with God in that work. I will return to this important issue in a moment, but for now it is enough to note that such an issue isn't likely even to arise as long as we think that work's primary value lies in what the paycheck makes possible.

Work as Necessary Evil

The final widespread assumption about work that I want to identify is the commonly held notion that work is best understood as a necessary evil. If given the choice, many of us would choose not to work. Obviously, such a notion is tied to the previous assumption, for if the primary point of working is to provide a means to supply one's needs and wants, there is little reason to work if such means can be supplied in other ways. Perhaps surprisingly, such an understanding of work seems to be held by many Christians, some of whom mistakenly equate work with God's curse in the opening chapters of Genesis. But Adam and Eve were given good work to do prior to their disobedience; what changes with their disobedience is not that they are now forced to work, but that their efforts are now more difficult and less fruitful.

From a Christian point of view, what is most remarkable about the above assumptions is how generally unremarkable they are to most Christians. Indeed, my limited experience suggests that many, if not most, Christians operate with these widespread but deeply problematic assumptions about work. If that's so, it's hardly surprising that very few of them find joy in something that they largely regard as a necessary evil.

REFRAMING WORK

As suggested above, from a theological perspective most discussions of work are framed much too narrowly. Indeed, everyday discussions about work in our society typically revolve almost exclusively around the individual: that person's aspirations and ambitions, opportunities and limitations, financial needs and goals. In contrast, I would argue that Christians are called to understand their entire lives—including their work—as a participation in the mission of God. What is God's mission in the world? It is to bring healing, reconciliation, restoration, and wholeness to all of creation.

This vision of God's ultimate desire for all of creation is summed up best by the Hebrew word *shalom*, a word which has much broader connotations than our normal understanding of "peace." *Shalom* is God's gift of complete well-being and wholeness, and the good news is that God has in Jesus Christ definitively acted to inaugurate a new social order marked by God's *shalom*. Jesus calls this new social order the kingdom (or reign) of God, while elsewhere in scripture it is referred to as the new creation.

The church as the body of Christ is not itself this kingdom, but the church exists to bear embodied witness to it. In a similar way, the church itself is not the sum total of the new creation, but it is called to be a kind of foretaste of God's new creation. The church, in other words, ought to offer the world a taste of God's new creation, a glimpse of what God's deepest desires are for all of creation. One of the church's most earnest longings should be that God's desires for the world would indeed be fulfilled, a longing that the church brings to expression each time it prays, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

God Seeking Communion

God is bringing into existence a new creation, a new humanity, a new social order. As the body of Christ, the church is called by God to participate with God to effect this new creation. God will not coerce this new creation into existence against its will; rather, God's way from the beginning has been to take the initiative to reach out to the creation, calling it to be all that God desires it to be. But because God's deepest desire is for intimate communion with creation, even God cannot coerce this communion without destroying the character of that communion. God can call; God can woo; God can reach out; God can empower. But ultimately, communion must be willingly embraced for it to *be* communion. And so God waits patiently upon the response of creation to the divine initiative.

The church as the people of God, the body of Christ, the temple of the Spirit, are those whom God has called and who have said "yes" to God and God's ways. As such, they have been called to partner with God to help persuade the rest of creation to say "yes" to its creator. To participate in the mission of God, to participate in the work of God, is nothing less than participating in this work of bringing all of God's creation back into communion with God. This work of reconciliation is what Christians mean by salvation. God is at work bringing wholeness and well-being to all of creation, a wholeness and well-being that cannot be separated from communion with the living God revealed in Jesus Christ.

What does any of this have to do with work? Not much, as long as we continue to think of work primarily as our culture has taught us to as sketched above. In the conventional scenario, our work is simply what we do for pay in order to make something of ourselves and/or to support ourselves and our families. There's little impetus to locate our work and its meaning in any larger scheme for our work is not expected to have any meaning beyond the contribution it makes to our sense of worth or our family's livelihood.

Working with God

But what if we come to realize that such an understanding of work is too narrow? What if we come to see that we are called to offer our entire lives, including all of our work, as an expression of our discipleship? What if we come to recognize that all of our actions in the world either work *with* God to bring healing, wholeness, and restoration to all of creation, or work *against* God to bring further injury, brokenness and alienation? What if we wake up one day and realize that our entire lives are always bearing witness to some kingdom, and that the most pressing question can only be about which kingdom it is to which our lives bear witness?

Such realizations have the potential to utterly transform the way we think about and experience our work. Perhaps most importantly, such recognitions help us see that encouraging people to reflect theological-

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ly *on* work is not the same as urging them to try to be a Christian *at* work. The latter is not unimportant, of course, but such admonitions only make sense once we have wrestled with matters that are more theologically fundamental, such as whether the work we are engaged in aligns with God's purposes for the world. In other words, to encourage people to be prepared to witness at the water fountain or the coffee pot is not the same as asking people about what they are bearing witness to simply by participating

in a particular kind of work to begin with.

To be clear, I in no way mean to suggest that the only kind of work worth doing is professional "church work." Quite the contrary, I think it's quite possible to imagine at least some kinds of "church work" that may, at least arguably (even if regrettably and unwittingly), work against the purposes of God. Rather, my suggestion is that we seek a wider frame in which to evaluate all of our work, and that the only frame that

makes sense for the Christian is the work that God is doing in the world. This wider frame generates a much more interesting set of questions than is usually the case when Christians reflect on their work. I offer the following as examples of the kinds of questions that I believe Christians should be asking of themselves and each other as they seek to be faithful disciples.

1. In what ways might the work I'm doing be understood as continuing the work that God wants done in the world? Specifically, in what ways might the work I'm doing be understood as participating in God's work of *shalom* in the world—that is, God's work of bringing wholeness, healing, and reconciliation to all creation?
2. Are there any reasons for thinking that God *doesn't* want this work done? Are there specific and identifiable ways in which this work causes injury, fosters alienation, or otherwise contributes to the world's brokenness?
3. Given that God's deep desire is that each of us be conformed to the image of Christ—who was fully and truly human—in what ways does the work I'm doing make me more human or less human? In what ways does it help make other people more human or less human?
4. In light of the above, in what ways might the work I'm doing be understood as rendering genuine service to God and neighbor? If I cannot do so, am I not resigned to living a radically fragmented life where what I do for many hours each week remains separate from my commitment to God's work in the world?

Countless people do good work in the world each day, being used by God (even if they aren't aware of it) to bring wholeness, healing, and restoration to God's created order. To be given a glimpse of one's role in that big picture is to be liberated from the narrow view of work that would encourage us to evaluate our work strictly in terms of how it benefits us socially and economically. Moreover, to be given a glimpse of what God is doing in the world is to be reminded of the countless ways in which our work—including our unremunerated work—may be used to further God's purposes in the world.

What an amazing service a church would render were it to encourage its members to reflect seriously about the work in which they are engaged. Moreover, what a precious gift it would provide to those same members were they led to think of and evaluate their work primarily in terms of its contributions to God's purposes in the world.

UNCOMFORTABLE QUESTIONS THAT WON'T GO AWAY

My conviction is that Christians would be having much more interesting and potentially helpful conversations about work if they were urged to wrestle with questions such as those above. If this were to happen, however, it would also create (or more accurately, bring to the surface) difficult tensions that wouldn't easily be resolved. For example, the most obvious tension it would surface would be those connected with questions regarding the kinds of work Christians should be willing to do.

As noted earlier, currently, these questions go largely unasked because the conventional position is that it doesn't matter what kind of work you do as long as you "do it as to the Lord." In other words, the *kind* of work you do is not nearly as important as the *way* you do it. As long as you're not doing something illegal or morally contemptible, then the only issue is how you go about doing your work and whether you are a good witness for the Lord while you are doing it.

Certainly, there is much wisdom in this line of thinking, for every kind of good work can be corrupted by doing it in the wrong ways and for the wrong reasons. That being said, I worry that this line of thinking

is too often taken to mean that we need not reflect *at all* on the kind of work we do, because all that matters is how we do it. This line of thinking is closely connected to a principle often articulated in churches and Christian colleges all across our land, a principle that goes something like this: we need Christians in every profession and line of work, because if we don't, we just abandon that field to the pagans. This largely unexamined principle, once widely accepted (as it is today), tends to cut off serious reflection about the *kind* of work we do, since it assumes that any work that is legal is legitimate for Christians to do.

Certain Exceptions Assumed

We do, of course, make a few exceptions, insisting, for example, that good Christians should not work as bartenders or serve as salesclerks in video stores that rent X-rated movies. However, such examples illuminate little more than the widely assumed hierarchy of sins within American cultural Christianity. Such conventional Christian wisdom would suggest that if you're engaged in work that promotes the use of alcohol or encourages lust, then you probably ought, as a good Christian, to consider another line of work. This accounts, I suspect, for why we don't hear many Christians saying, for the sake of consistency, that we need to encourage some of our brightest young people to enter the (largely legal) pornography industry or alcohol business lest we hand it over to the pagans. Presumably, Christians know with some clarity that these activities are inappropriate for Christians to engage in, since they promote practices and sensibilities that they regard as contrary to the way of Jesus.

Yet, the assumption that Christians have a responsibility to enter every field of legally legitimated work as a form of witness and influence begs to be examined more carefully. This assumes that nothing about the activity of engaging in a particular kind of work itself is part of our witness to God and God's work in the world; rather, the assumptions seem to be that our presence itself—and the influence we might bring about as a result of our presence—is our witness. But surely it's possible that such Christian presence legitimates the activity as nonproblematic in the first place, which is presumably why many Christians have a problem with the idea of Christian bartenders and pornographers.

Other Suspects?

But once you open that "Pandora's box," naming certain kinds of work as potentially suspect, it's incredibly difficult to get the lid back on before you find yourself asking disturbing questions about a lot more kinds of work than we normally do. For example, if a Christian shouldn't be employed in the pornography industry because this industry denigrates the human person, warps God's good gift of human sexuality, and generates profits by preying upon human weakness, then is it possible that other types of work might also be suspect for analogous reasons? Are there other kinds of work that directly or indirectly denigrate human beings? Are there other kinds of work that intentionally and deliberately warp God's good gifts? Are there other kinds of work that generate profits by preying upon human weakness? Is it possible for Christians to be involved in such work as Christians? Is it possible to do such work "as to the Lord"?

I submit that easy answers to such questions are not likely to be forthcoming. Yet this is all the more reason why Christians should be prayerfully discerning these matters together. I fear that if we turn our back on these difficult matters, then we also turn our backs on all those who struggle everyday to make sense of the relationship between their work and their discipleship.

Issues of Economy

If the difficult issue of what kinds of work Christians ought to do won't go away, neither will lots of other thorny matters that seem equally intractable. A second such issue that should at least be acknowledged, just to get it on the agenda of Christians even if it cannot be adequately discussed in such a short article, is how Christians are to understand and evaluate the economic systems in which their work is largely framed.

The work-for-pay that most of us do is embedded within a complex economic system, a system that is arguably the best system known yet to humankind but a system that is still terribly flawed and rife with inequity.

For example, Christians in the United States find themselves part of an economy that requires for its “health” the ever-expanding consumption of goods and services. As political scientist Michael Budde notes, our economy today puts people in a difficult spot when it comes to consumption because it depends on us producing and consuming—and convincing our neighbors to consume—more than any of us needs:

Reversing St. Paul’s dictum (“anyone unwilling to work should not eat,” 2 Thes 3:10), [our contemporary] economy dictates that if people will not eat (and drink and buy compact disks and travel abroad and purchase the latest fashions, home appliances and the like) in sufficient volume, then no one will work.”¹

As a result, the moral justification for many kinds of jobs these days that require people to engage in largely meaningless work is simply this: it pays the bills. Here’s the dirty little secret of economic growth in our current context: in order for citizens of our society to raise their “standard of living” every year (as we assume is our birthright), we must continually create new products and services for people to buy, and we must find or create new markets in which to sell them. But surely one doesn’t need a crystal ball to discern that at some point this escalating cycle of endless consumption must indeed come to a crashing halt. To insist that it can’t or that it shouldn’t is to insist that people are incapable of contentment, that they are incapable of recognizing that they have enough.

All-Consuming Consumption

But it’s not only a question of whether Christians should make products that are of questionable worth that people don’t really need and which fail to enrich anyone’s lives except for those making a profit on them. This would wrongly suggest that the only difficult issues were in the area of production. Equally important, and equally difficult to discern, are the questions that surround the need to stimulate consumption.

By all accounts, economists tell us that the United States left the age of production behind some time ago; ours is the age of consumption. What this means in terms of economics is this: because the majority of people in our society already have their basic needs met, the economic challenge is to stimulate desires within people so that they will want considerably *more* than they need. This means that many of our fellow citizens, as well as many of our fellow Christians, are engaged in industries whose work involves the stimulation of disordered desire: the advertising and marketing industries.

Yet such a recognition raises disturbing questions. For example, if it would be uncharitable of me to try to convince my next-door neighbor that she needed something that I knew she didn’t really need and which I was rather sure wouldn’t enrich her life, would it be charitable of me to draw my paycheck by doing this very thing to my other nameless not-so-next-door neighbors whom I am also called by Jesus to love as myself?

My point here is not to single out these particular industries for special approbation, for clearly the point could also be made about many other kinds of work. Nor is my point to suggest that Christians in these industries are defective in their discipleship in ways that others of us are not. Rather, my point is that we find ourselves embedded in an economy that encourages us to evaluate work almost entirely in terms of the wages that people make. In our society, a “good job” is one that pays well and offers decent health and retirement benefits. But shouldn’t a “good job” also involve being asked to do “good work,” that is, work that is good not primarily because people get paid to do it but because it’s work worth doing?

So much of the work in our society that people are willing to pay others to do is largely meaningless if not also dehumanizing. That is, it’s the kind of work that few people feel good about at the end of the day or week or lifetime. It’s the kind of work that doesn’t make the world or the lives of our fellow human beings

richer or deeper. On the contrary, it's the kind of work that harms God's creation and cheapens and trivializes human life.

Of course, not everyone has the luxury of choosing the kind of work they do; some people will likely always be trapped in jobs that are largely meaningless. Such persons, I suppose, might take some small comfort in knowing that their contribution to God's work in the world is not limited to the kind of work they do for pay. Yet such an admission should hardly be used as an excuse for indifference toward those stuck in such jobs. At the very least, Christians should be encouraging those who do have the luxury of choosing their work to be good stewards of that opportunity by devoting their energies and talents to genuinely meaningful work.

DESPERATELY NEEDING THEOLOGY OF WORK

Moreover, of all people, Christians should be most willing to talk about whether all is well with an economic system that requires for its "health" both the formation of perpetually dissatisfied consumers and the employment of countless numbers of our fellow creatures in largely meaningless work.

But the vast majority of Christians don't, for the most part, seem all that interested in such conversations. Why, for example, aren't there more Christians at the forefront in arguing for so-called "sustainable" economies, that is, economies that are not premised upon the notion that "health" equals perpetual economic growth purchased at the cost of endless consumption? Instead, it seems that for every person such as Wendell Berry who suggests that Christians should care about these matters as much or more than other people, there are 10,000 more Christians who assume that any such talk is un-American and probably part of some nefarious plot to destroy civilization.

Christians desperately need a more robust theology of work if they are to learn to find joy in their work and if they are to find work in which they can take joy. In this short space, I have not attempted to offer anything as grand as a full-blown theology of work. Rather, I have simply tried to name some of the common cultural assumptions that frame—whether we recognize it or not—the default theology of work that many Christians operate with every day. And I have pointed to a couple of critical problems pertaining to work that arise once we begin to frame our understanding of work differently.

Again, I do not assume that there are easy answers to any of these problems; nor do I assume that Christians will ultimately all agree about how best to address them. But I would like to think that if we could forge some preliminary agreements about how such issues might be framed theologically, then we could at least have some interesting disagreements. Currently, the silence of most churches on these matters is both deafening and maddening.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Michael Budde, *The (Magic) Kingdom of God: Christianity and Global Culture Industries* (Westview Press, 1997), 26.

