



***“My Work, My Ministry”
Book***

By

Mario Simoes

“Mario Simoes, in his book, My Work, My Ministry, correctly identifies work as Christian vocation. You will want to read and reread this superb volume. On one of your rereads you’ll need a highlighter to mark items for frequent review. This book is a page-turner. Simoes, like all great writers, takes profound truth and presents it in simple, straightforward expression.”

Dr. John Edmund Haggai

– Founder and President of the Haggai Institute for Advanced Leadership.

Introduction

“I believe that the next and greatest move of God will be through the Christians in the market place.” Billy Graham

If someone offered you \$100 to cross a steel beam that is one foot wide and 30 feet long, raised two feet off the ground, would you cross it? I believe most people would do it. Very well, lets take this offer to another level...

If they offered you the same \$100 to cross the same steel beam, but this time on top of two building, three hundred feet high, would you cross it? For sure, most people would say “no”! “Why not?” I ask. Most would answer: “Because it would not be worth the risk and I’m not crazy to do it... maybe for a million dollars!”

Now, lets imagine that you are on top of the left building and on top of the other is your family that came to watch you do this act of bravery. All of a sudden, the building on right catches of fire just a few floors below from top. The elevators are jammed and the stairs are blocked. The only way to save your family is to cross over the steel beam and bring them back safely.

Now, would you cross the beam?

What changed? The beam is the same, the width, length and height are the same as before. However, what changed was the risk of losing your family. In other words, the determining factor in this last scene was the “why?”

Why would you put at risk your life in crossing that steel beam? For \$100? NO! For \$100.000? NO! For \$1.000.000? Maybe. But for your family? YES!

How important it is for you to know why you are doing something.

I heard a story of a tourist visiting a small village in Europe that stopped before a construction site. Curious to know that the workers were building, he asked one of them: “What are you doing?” and he answered: “I’m moving stones around.” Then he asked another worker: “What are you working on?” and he replied: “I’m laying bricks on this wall”. Unsatisfied with the answers he asked a third worker: “What are you working on here?” The worker stood still, looked up, gave a wonderful smile and as he opened his arms, he exclaimed: “I’m building a beautiful cathedral!”

It’s of paramount importance for you to always know why you are working. For many people, work is only transporting stones from one place to another, day after day. For others, it’s just a way to make ends met in order to support the family.

However, for some that know and understand “why” they do something, life and work take a new and special meaning. They know who they are, what they are doing, whom they are serving and they know the reason they are doing it.

This book was written for those that are already “building beautiful cathedrals” and also for those that would like to discover “how to build a beautiful cathedral”.

I believe that these next chapters will serve as a manual to help those that are serving in the market place. These pages are filled with biblical principles, teachings, quotes, facts and stories that will be an inspiration to your personal, professional and spiritual life.

Allow me to introduce you to a concept that radically transformed my professional and ministry life. Once you grasp it and put it into practice, your life will never be the same anymore because you will know and discover your purpose and potential. Then you will be able to develop a plan of action and experience the true prosperity that God already prepared for someone so special as you.

The revolutionary concept is this: My work is my ministry!

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Chapter 1

Is work good?

“Most people don’t see opportunities because they come dressed in overalls and look like work.” Thomas Edison

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” Colossians 3:23-24

A pastor friend of mine from a beach city, told me about a surfer who had given his life to Jesus. After a few weeks, at the end of a service, the pastor greeted him at the door of the church and asked: “How are things going?” The recently converted surfer said: “Jesus has radically changed me! I am even thinking about going to work!”

When you give your life to Jesus and ask Him to be your Savior and Lord, everything changes, especially how you understand your purpose in life, work, profession and career.

Which of the following professions do you consider most spiritual: missionary to Africa, local pastor, salesman, teacher, evangelist, businessman, or lawyer? The answer is: they are all equal!

To work is good

The word **work** or **working** is found over seven hundred times in the Bible. It appears as often as the combined total of the words: worship, praise, and sing. This tells us that God considers it of great importance that our life be useful, fruitful and productive. It is for this that He created us. We see that work is a characteristic that is common to the Trinity: God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

God is a Worker

God was the first and great worker. He accomplished a great work in the creation of the Universe in which you and I are His masterpiece. His best and most complete creation.

“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.” Genesis 2:2-3

God also worked through Jesus when He came to this world.

“Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.” John 14:11

Jesus is a Worker

For many years before Jesus began His public ministry, He learned the trade of His earthly father, Joseph, and became a carpenter, which was a profession in much demand in those times.

When he began His ministry, Jesus followed in the line set by the example of His Father, who was the great worker: “Like father, like son”!

“In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” John 5:17

Jesus knew the importance of finally finishing His work, His purpose, and His mission while He was here on the earth. This way, through His work, Jesus honored His Heavenly Father.

“I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.” John 17:4

The Holy Spirit is a Worker

God is not dead. He is alive, working, and through the Holy Spirit, and continues actively engaged in the lives of all people around the world. This includes you, who are reading this book. God is working in your life right now.

“All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.” 1 Corinthians 12:11

You are a worker

You did not come to this world just to use up the oxygen of the planet, watch TV and pay your bills. God placed you here to work, not just to survive, and to come to God and carry out the plans and purposes of God in this present day. This was the charge God gave to the first couple, Adam and Eve.

“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” Genesis 2:15

God wants to work through you

It is incredible to think that in all of His vast creation, God chose you to be an instrument that He wants to use to change and bless the world today. God created people and enters into relationship with them to reach, love and transform many lives. For this to happen, God wants to work **in you** and **through you** to accomplish great things.

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” John 14:12

Believe that God wants to use your life, your gifts, talents, knowledge, experience, resources, influence and work to make a difference today and tomorrow in society.

“Those who work their land will have abundant food.” Proverbs 12:11

Cooperating with God is the best of all. You do your part and He does His part.

“There are two important days that you need to commemorate. First is the day you were born! Second the day you discovered why you were born!”

Possibly you are thinking like many people: “I thought that I could only serve God in the church. I am very busy during the week and hardly have time to go church on Sundays.” Understand that this thinking is common and it has existed for a very long time, or better, for hundreds of years. What we are talking about here is the difference between the Greek dualism and the Old Testament, Hebrew mentality.

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Chapter 2

Sacred vs. Secular

“There is no true division between the sacred and the secular, except what we believe.” Dallas Willard

“Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.” Colossians 3:11

Centuries have passed and still, in the 21st Century, we find evidence of this Greek philosophy. Has anyone in your church ever asked you, “What is your secular work?” meaning, there is work you do for God in the church and there also exists other, supposedly less important, and secular that you do to support your family.

In addition to the separation of the sacred and secular there is a separation has been made between those who are clergy and those who are laymen.

Those who dedicate their lives to the service of God are part of the “clergy” and largely they receive their support through the church. Those who are called “laymen” are those who do not have knowledge of a subject and therefore are marginalized and labeled as inadequate for the work. In this case we are talking about the work of God, where there are a proportionately few “clergy” who do much and many “laymen” who are doing little.

“So I saw that there is nothing better for a person than to enjoy their work, because that is their lot. For who can bring them to see what will happen after them?” Ecclesiastes 3:22

I knew a physical education teacher who worked in a Christian school and who decided to leave that position to become a missionary. He did not see his work as a ministry and, therefore, left his influence in the lives of over two hundred students. The problem is not serving here or there or serving many or few. The problem is thinking that you are only serving God if you are a full time missionary. The reality is that we are all missionaries and we ought to work full time for God! Is there any time in your daily schedule when you don’t belong to God, and you cannot be used by Him in His service?

The Greek mentality

“Many in our culture when looking at work see it in a Greek way: ‘We work to be able to meet our needs’. However, we were created in the image of God and were made to work, create, shape and bring order where there is disorder.” Chuck Colson

According to Plato, one of the most influential of the Greek philosophers, the world is divided into two spheres. In the book “Loving Monday” John Beckett explains:

This Greek thinking and philosophy were the pillars for creating Secular Humanism, in which truth comes from human reason and man is the center of the Universe.

Greek philosophy was responsible for the separation of the Sacred and Secular, where only God (Form) separate and far away, is sacred, and the secular world (Material) is below and inferior, including secular work.

According to Dennis Peacocke “this dualism has seriously contaminated evangelical Christianity.” Many years later this Greek philosophy gained strength in the church when the monastic movement expanded among the people of God. During that time, those who wished to draw near to God, and have a more devoted life, needed to make three vows: Poverty, Chastity and Silence.

Those faithful monks left society and cloistered themselves in monasteries, and isolated themselves from the world “*where evil dwells*,” that which is dirty, impure, imperfect, sinful and full of darkness.

The Hebrew mentality

The Hebrew mentality begins with the presupposition that God is the center of the whole universe. Truth comes through the divine revelation of God who created all things and everything is in His hands, including man and all that he does. This way of thinking teaches us that work is a form of serving God.

In Hebrew, the word “work” is “*avodah*,” and this same word means worship and service to God. Therefore, work and service to people is an act of worship and service to God. For Him, work is part of our worship to the Lord in the same way that worship and praise to God is an act of service. We even call the meeting in church a “service.”

In the New Testament we encounter the Greek word “*diakonia*,” which means **service** as much as it means **ministry**. Showing that for God, service and ministry is one and the same, whenever and wherever it takes place. However, because of the Greek influence, we make a distinction between service and ministry. This thinking teaches that service is the “secular” work we do from Monday to Friday, and ministry is the “holy” work we do on Sunday. **Service** is what we do to earn daily bread and support our livelihood. On the other hand **ministry** is what we do within the four walls of the church to serve people through the various ministries, such as: ushering, worship, children’s ministries, visitation and counseling. There is nothing wrong with this, much to the contrary, because we were “saved to serve”, but we are not limited to a specific day or place. It makes no difference when or where we are, we need to minister and serve.

It is interesting to observe that the Jewish people today as well as historically, have this mentality about work. For them, going to work is an act of worship to God. Have you ever met a Jew that does not like to work? Nearly all of them that I know are very hard working and prosperous because they have this attitude every day when they leave for work.

“Establish the work of our hands for us— yes, establish the work of our hands.” Psalm 90:17

Missions today

“I believe that Christian in the workplace movement has the potential to impact society as much as the reformation.” Peter Wagner

Ninety-eight percent of Christians work from Monday to Friday outside the church. Only two percent receive their support entirely from the church. These are the pastors, evangelists, missionaries and worship leaders that work full time in the ministry. If we were to compare the church today with an army that only takes action once or twice a week, we would find a comfortable, unfruitful and unproductive church. An army does not win battles when some officers fight and the majority of the soldiers observe from a distance. To win a war (and we are in a war) it is necessary that the whole army be engaged everywhere all the time. The truth is: ***“A weekend army is a weak army!”***

I knew a senior officer in the army who was thinking of retiring at forty-five years of age so that he could have more time to serve God. In talking with him I discovered that he commanded a base with hundreds of soldiers and he wanted to let go of his influence there to better serve God. I asked him the following: “If you continue in your career, where might you go? How many people will you influence?” He responded: “I might reach the highest military position and have hundreds of thousands of officers and soldiers under my command.”

I then used the words that Mordecai said to his niece, Esther when she was in a position of influence in the Babylonian court: *“And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” Esther 4:14.* Then I added: “Have you ever stopped to think that your work is your ministry? That where God has placed you not one civilian could reach, and you can be an influence on these people because of your position!” His response was revealing: “I never thought of that before, but it makes sense.” Years have passed since that conversation and thanks be to God, he has continued to rise in his career, influencing thousands of men in his work.

“95% of believers will never enter the full time ministry, but this does not mean that they are not ministers.” Patrick Morley

The need for leaders within the church these days is so great that a majority of those who take on the role of the church pastor are what we call “bi-vocational”. They serve as pastor on the weekend and the rest of time are salesmen, businessmen, entrepreneurs, and from this work they receive their livelihood. This terminology is not correct because I believe that the leader is “uni-vocational” to serve God both inside and outside the church, independent of where he receives his provision. In reality this is the profile of the majority of workers and pastors active in the Church in the 21st century. They themselves need to accept this paradigm and be at peace with this reality and then teach it to their congregations.

Can it be that the nomenclature “part-time ministry” has produced part-time Christians?

We are thankful to God for the vision of churches that purposefully expand the ministry beyond the Sunday ministry in the sanctuary to small groups. Millions of Christians today understand that their home is also their ministry.

However, there is still a frontier to be conquered, and this frontier is the understanding that your work is also your ministry. Many have called this movement BAM, “Business As Mission.” To the already famous “10/40” window we can add the “9 to 5” window that opens every morning at nine and closes every day at 5. Business hours, or better, ministry hours! Every day God opens this window of opportunity so that we may interact with people we know and people we don’t know. In some way we may be able to influence their life through a word of encouragement, a gesture of love or an act of service.

Am I useful?

“The greatest offence a person can do to God is to say: ‘I am not a pastor, I am only a layman.’ This is part of an intentional strategy of Satan to neutralize a whole army of Christians, which are already positioned in the marketplace.” Ed Silvoso

We spend 60% to 70% of our productive life at work. Can it be that God is not interested in using this valuable time of our lives? The people of God are inserted in society most of the time. It is there they need to function, serve and make a difference. Christians live in the workplace most of the time and visit the church only one or two times a week. Every time you serve someone you are exercising your ministry. Whether it be teaching, selling, attending customers, building, leading, managing, or producing. If you are a student, understand that today your work is studying. Therefore, take seriously your studies because they will open great doors of work or business in the future. Study is the best way to prepare for serving God.

Some years back I met Paul J. Meyer: multimillionaire Christian philanthropist, entrepreneur, father of the motivational industry and founder of SMI (Success Motivation Institute) at the Haggai Institute in Maui. In his book “25 Keys to Success” Paul explains that when he was young he had a lot of doubts about his calling. He spoke a lot in public and because of this many told him that he should become a pastor, as though this was the only way to be able to minister.

When he was 20 years old and was very successful in the insurance business, he was invited to meet with about 20 of the most influential preachers and speakers in America. “Compared with them I felt that my only talent was to make money.” One of these pastors said to him: “Paul, the will of God for your life may be to earn money. You only need to be obedient and do what He has gifted you to do, because this is your ministry.”

Do you know who the pastor was that said these words to Paul? It was the greatest evangelist of history: Billy Graham. Paul Meyer responded: “His comments brought great peace to my heart. After this I was free because I no longer needed to wonder if I should be doing something more important. Today I see my work as my ministry!”

Praise God that Paul became one of the world’s most successful and influential entrepreneurs of the past century. After achieving great success in the insurance industry he began doing training

and went on to become known as the “Father of the Motivational Industry.” He influenced and left a mark on the lives of many leaders, such as: John Maxwell, Zig Ziglar, Norman Vincent Peal, Robert Schuler, Jim Rohn, Cris Widener, Tony Robins, and on my own life as well.

Paul J. Meyer not only shared all his knowledge, but also his fortune. He invested millions of dollars in schools, universities and hospitals. He also invested in the development of thousands of Christian leaders through the Haggai Institute for Advanced Leadership, founded by his friend, John Haggai.

I am eternally grateful to God for having been influenced, both directly and indirectly, by Paul J. Meyer: both for his training and for his investment in the Haggai Institute.

“So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.” Acts 17:17

A word to pastors

“The ministry of the Christian in the workplace will be a base for innovation of the ministry of the church in the future.” George Barna

Help all the members of your church to discover that their work is their ministry. Teach, train and send these people to influence the workplace as “salt of the earth” and “light of the world.” Study this book with them, sponsor trainings and promote seminars to equip them.

“More than 90% of Christian has never heard a message about Biblical principles applied to their professional life.” Doug Sherman

The church should not be like a football stadium where the fans come to watch the professionals play. Neither should it be like a theater where the spectators come to enjoy the talents of actors, musicians and artists. The church should not have fans and spectators, but rather disciples of Jesus who are active and serve God, each one doing the work of the ministry wherever they are called. This should be the model for the church.

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Ephesians 4:11-12

Every believer should be an agent of transformation, exactly where God has planted him. He should use his gifts and talents in the church, but also needs to be encouraged to use the resources God has given to influence the people encountered daily. Believers are the true “ecclesia,” which means “those who are called out.”

After the worship service on Sunday, bless your people and send them out once again to the marketplace and to use the many opportunities that God will give during the week. And as a priest, pray constantly for them as Moses interceded for Joshua as he fought the battle.

Accordingly, God will work in them and through them. The fruits will come, the Kingdom of God will expand and His church will grow as never before.

Chapter 3 - What is expected of me?

Chapter 4 - The 7 Mountains of influence in the world

Chapter 5 - Discovering my mountain

Chapter 6 - How can I make a difference?

Chapter 7 - My work is a blessing!

Chapter 8 - Have an extraordinary life

Chapter 9 - Conclusion