

Regent University School of Business

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Christian Leaders
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REGENT BUSINESS REVIEW

ISSUE 15



**RESTORING
JOY TO
YOUR
LIFE**

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The questions come up regularly among evangelicals and those who employ them. Christian entrepreneurs wrestle with the issue as well. Just what right does one have to share the Good News of the Gospel at work, as an employee or as an employer? The parameters of U.S. law might surprise you.

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The Apprentice is just a TV show, right? Just another one of those insipid, gimmicky attempts by Hollywood to win the ratings war. In reality, though, this "reality show" can shape the reality of how people think about business and how they behave in organizations. Mere entertainment? We think not.

Regent Business Review is an electronic magazine published by the Regent University School of Business. The mission of RBR is "to equip and encourage Christians to be more God-honoring leaders and managers." As such, we offer practical guidance about what it means to be an authentic Christian in the workplace, as well as tools for better communication, for character development, and for other building blocks of leadership excellence. Driven by a calling to make disciples in the marketplace, we seek to exhort and coach Christians to "excel still more" (1 Thess. 4:1) in their roles as leaders and managers.

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Restoring Joy to Your Life

Michael Zigarelli

The quote is attributed to Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., a member of the U.S. Supreme Court for thirty years. At one point during his term, Justice Holmes was asked about his choice of career and whether he had considered other vocations. He responded by saying: “I might have entered the ministry if certain clergymen I knew had not looked and acted so much like undertakers.”¹

Not a particularly flattering image, but it underscores an important point: Joy is an elusive virtue, even for “clergymen” and other veterans of the faith. But contrary to what our experience may lead us to believe, the amount of joy in our life is not hopelessly unchangeable. It’s not fixed in our genetic code or hard-wired into our personality. We can indeed cultivate and permanently elevate the joy we feel in life.

For clarity sake, though, we should begin by defining the term. From a Biblical point of view, we can define joy as *having a daily spirit of rejoicing through all circumstances*. It’s more than inner contentment, more than gladness, more than overall satisfaction with life. Rather, joy is a spirit of celebrating life, of delighting in all that God has bestowed on us. It means to enjoy our days,

¹ From *Today in the Word*, Moody Bible Institute, June 1988, p. 13.

to take genuine pleasure in them, notwithstanding what those days entail.

How do we get to that point? My research, and that of others, indicates that it can happen by pursuing the catalysts of joy, while avoiding a major obstacle to it.

Contrary to what our experience may lead us to believe, the amount of joy in our life is not hopelessly unchangeable.

The Catalysts of Joy

It’s an enduring, confounding question. It’s a question with which theologians, psychologists, philosophers, and even neuroscientists have grappled for some time. *How do I increase and maintain joy?* To examine that question, I collected data from over 5,000 Christians around the world through my online survey, the Christian Character Index (freely available at www.Assess-Yourself.org).²

² In all, there are 5,011 people in my sample, age sixteen or older, representing all fifty states and almost sixty countries. About

Among other things, the survey estimates the amount of joy in a person’s life through self-report survey items like “I love my life,” “I like who I am,” “When I wake up in the morning, I find myself eagerly looking forward to my day,” “I smile a lot when I’m around other people,” and “I celebrate life.” The Index estimates several virtues, including joy, on a scale to 90.

What I found was striking. By comparing Christians who are consistently joyful to those who report having less joy in their lives, I identified four primary catalysts of joy—(1) a feeling of being forgiven, (2) forgiving others, (3) a feeling of life purpose, and (4) having a strong sense of gratitude—and one major joy killer, burnout. Let’s look at each of these.

Feeling Forgiven Builds Our Joy

People who are confident that their sins have been wiped clean report having a lot more joy than people who are not confident about this. More specifically, when comparing

ninety percent of all respondents are from the United States. The respondents average about thirty-five years of age and about nineteen years as believers. They come from dozens of denominations, with the largest groups being Baptist (26%) and non-denominational (25%). For validity information on the Christian Character Index, please visit www.Assess-Yourself.org

people who say they “often” or “always” feel forgiven to those who say they “sometimes” or “rarely” feel forgiven, *the average level of joy is more than 25 percent higher*. Indeed, feeling genuine forgiveness

People who are confident that their sins have been wiped clean report a lot more joy.

from God can open the door to joyful living. Not accepting that forgiveness slams that door in our faces.

This conclusion will come as no surprise to many people of faith. Their personal experience bears poignant testimony to its truth. So, too, do both the Old and New Testaments. In some of the foremost places in Scripture we see that joy is the natural response to God’s forgiveness and to His promise of salvation: In Psalm 51 (“restore me to the joy of your salvation,” v.12), in the Beatitudes (“rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven,” Matthew 5:12), and in Paul’s letter to the Romans (“be joyful in hope,” Romans 12:12). The assurance and hope of being justified before God is clearly a springboard to jubilation for many Christians. Moreover, this feeling of being forgiven also lays the foundation for a second catalyst for joy: Our forgiveness of other people.

Forgiving Others Builds Our Joy

Christians are clearly called to forgive others, but, as other data from my study indicates, this is the virtue where Christians struggle the most. And when we refuse to forgive, we compromise not only our Christian witness, but some of our ability to live joyfully as well.

As shown in Figure 1 at the end of this article, those who say they are “always” forgiving of others report *twice as much joy* as those who say they are “never” forgiving. And in between, we see a steady, growing relationship between forgiveness and joy. It seems to be the case that lack of forgiveness embeds in us anger, bitterness, indignation, and resentment—obstacles to our inner peace and our joy. Alternatively, choosing to forgive can remove those encumbrances, paving the way for, among other things, more consistent joy.

Life Purpose Builds Our Joy

A third catalyst for consistent joy is what we might call “life purpose.” People who say that “I feel that my life has real purpose” are much more prone to being joyful than people who do not feel this way, as shown in Figure 2. This is similar to the conclusions of many psychologists who have found through their research that “joy is a pretty certain by-product of goal attainment,” and that “the sense of accomplishment or the achievement of mastery in a game, task, or intellectual pursuit can be a stimulus for

joy.”³ Feeling that we are doing things that really matter in life—feeling that we are striving for worthwhile ends through our existence—and then making progress toward those ends generates a cheerfulness and elation. By contrast, a feeling of purposelessness, futility, and ineffectiveness inhibits our joy.

Gratitude Builds Our Joy

The last but certainly not least of the catalysts for joy is gratitude. As each one of us has experienced, there is a strong relationship between being thankful and feeling joyful. In my study, I not only found empirical evidence of this linkage, but I also found that the relationship exists because grateful people tend to think differently from the rest of us. Their minds are incessantly focused on what they have rather than what they don’t have. They have disciplined their minds to eschew envy and to reject thoughts about what’s missing

When we refuse to forgive, we compromise our ability to live joyfully.

from life—about how much better life could be “if only...” Instead, grateful people are content with what they have and, consequently, they are significantly more joyful than

³ See Carroll E. Izard, *The Psychology of Emotions*, Plenum Press: New York, 1991, pp. 133, 134.

those who experience less gratitude

Figure 3 depicts the connection between gratitude and joy. It's strikingly linear and steep. Further analysis revealed that there is not just a correlation here, but also a *causal* connection. Gratitude drives joy. So as we work toward becoming a more grateful person, joyful living often follows naturally.

We should be careful to remember, though, that joy is not *guaranteed* to follow. Despite the strong causal connection, I identified nearly 1,000 people in my study who are very grateful, but still not very joyful. Digging deeper, I found that these are primarily people who are in their 20s, 30s and 40s—people who are feeling the crunch of over-extension. Learning to be married, the chaos of

People who feel that their lives have real purpose are much more joyful than are others.

parenthood, working to develop their careers, and trying to balance all of these enormous responsibilities can culminate in exhaustion and lack of contentment with life. So, although gratitude often feeds joy, for many people the effects of gratitude may be more than offset by their lifestyle. This segues us nicely

into a discussion of the primary obstacle to joy: Burnout.

Burnout: A Major Obstacle to Joy

Burnout is a joy killer, not only for people in mid-life, but for people of every age. It's a type of stress, a feeling of exhaustion—usually mental or emotional exhaustion—but it can have physical elements as well like headaches or lack of energy. Sound familiar? It might, because apparently more people than ever are experiencing this condition, often as a result of job or home responsibilities that are simply too demanding. Researchers have also found burnout to be a natural result of excessive interpersonal conflicts, of dealing with other people's problems all day long, and of receiving few rewards or affirmation for one's accomplishments.⁴

However, these lethargic legions are not all innocent victims. In some cases, we inflict burnout on ourselves. Sometimes we do so by creating what has been called a "performance trap" or "high-performance prison";⁵ that is, we try to excel at absolutely everything we do (whether on

the job, in our volunteer work, or at home as "super-mom," "super-dad," or "super-spouse") and then, if that were not enough, we continually try to top our last achievement. Our successes are seldom cause for celebration. Instead, they only

There is a strong causal relationship between feeling grateful and being joyful

serve to raise the bar for next time! We also self-inflict burnout when we allow ourselves to become addicted to over-indulgence—when we repeatedly choose to schedule too many things in our week or when we make a lifestyle out of accumulating and maintaining material possessions. As a result, we never get off the treadmill. We lament the pace of life and we experience its ill-effects, but the irony is that at any time, we have the power to at least reduce the speed of that treadmill, if not step off it entirely. We simply choose not to do so.

And what's the outcome? Burnout's consequences are many and menacing: reduced satisfaction with our job and/or our life, lower self-esteem, and what psychologists call "depersonalization"—the mental distancing from the people around us. This is not exactly the portrait of the "fruit of the Spirit" Christian. And the least of the fruit that burnt out Christians *do* see in themselves is consistent joy. In

⁴ Representative of this line of research is Cynthia Cordes and Thomas Dougherty, 1993: "A review and an integration of research on job burnout," *Academy of Management Review*, 18:4, 621-635.

⁵ See Robert McGee, *The Search for Significance*, (Word Publishing, 1998) and Jennifer McFarland, 2001: "High-Performance Prison," *Harvard Management Update*, Harvard Business School Publishing, Reprint U0106D.

fact, as shown in Figure 4, there is an unambiguously negative relationship between burnout and joy in the Christians that I studied.

If burnout is stealing your joy, then, what can you do about it? This is one of the hot-topic questions of our day, with both Christian and secular resources now cluttering bookstore shelves.⁶ I'd recommend that you read one or more of these resources as an important step toward permanent renewal. But some of the answers may be relatively obvious. For example, it's almost always the case that one should begin by identifying the sources of one's exhaustion, and then make a priority to address them. If it's a complicated, over-indulgent lifestyle, part of the answer is to simplify your life. If it's a "do-it-all-and-do-it-great" mind-set—a high-performance prison, so to speak—then some self-examination regarding your motivations might be the first step. If it's the nature of your daily work—the overload or the conflicts that it creates—then it may be imperative that you get assistance with the workload or, as the case may be, perhaps make the move to a job that

⁶ Among Christian resources, two of the better books are *Beating Burnout* by Frank Minirth and Paul Meier (Inspiration Press, 1997) and *Margin* by Richard Swenson (NavPress, 1995). In the secular literature, consider *Slack: Getting Past Burnout, Busywork, and the Myth of Total Efficiency* by Tom DeMarco (Broadway Books, 2001), *The Truth About Burnout* by Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter (Jossey-Bass, 2002), and *Reclaiming the Fire* by Steven Berglas (Random House, 2001).

improves the quality of your life. The critical point is that if you often feel burnt out, find a way to address the issue. If you elect not to, it will severely limit your joy and your potential to grow into the person God wants you to be.

Joy is Also a *Means* to Godly Living, Not Just an End

God wants us to enjoy our lives. And as we've seen in this article, there are some things that raise our joy, while there

Joy can enable many other virtues that God wants us to cultivate.

are other things that raise it. But I found in my research that there may be even more at stake here than simply restoring joy to our lives. Joy is not just an end in itself. It has outcomes as well as antecedents. In fact, it can enable many other virtues God wants us to cultivate. Dallas Willard makes this point when he says that in celebration and joy, we find "great strength to do the will of our God because his goodness becomes so real in us."⁷ That is, Willard argues, joy empowers our obedience.

Similarly, Richard Foster demonstrates that the power of

⁷ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, HarperCollins: San Francisco, 1991, p. 181.

the spiritual disciplines (prayer, worship, Bible study, accountability, service to others, etc.) is dependent upon their being practiced joyfully, observing that "joy is the motor, the thing that keeps everything else going ... Joy produces energy. Joy makes us strong."⁸

Indeed, God wants us to enjoy our lives. One of the reasons He sacrificed His Son is so that we could experience the overflowing joy of knowing our eternities are secure. But we Christians would do well to think about joy as more than an end in itself. Restoring joy to our lives is also a pathway to consistent Christian living—to authentic witness, to a closer relationship with God, and to blessing abundantly everyone around us.

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Adapted from *Cultivating Christian Character: How to become the person God wants you to be—and how to help others do the same* (Xulon Press, 2002). Used by permission. All rights reserved.

⁸ Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, HarperCollins: San Francisco, 1998 Edition, p. 191.

Figure 1
“I Am a Forgiving Person”

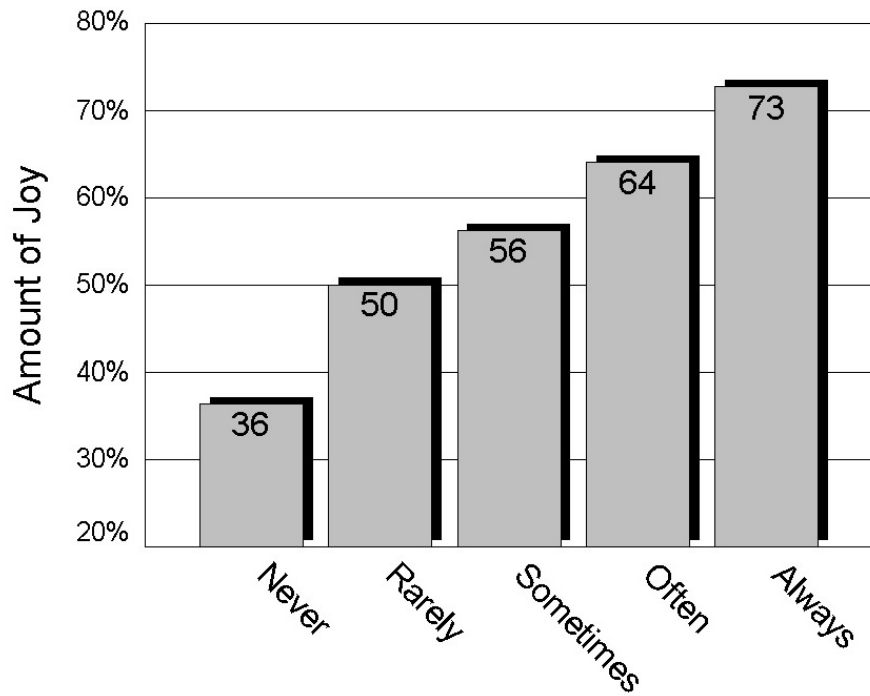


Figure 2
“I Feel That My Life Has Real Purpose”

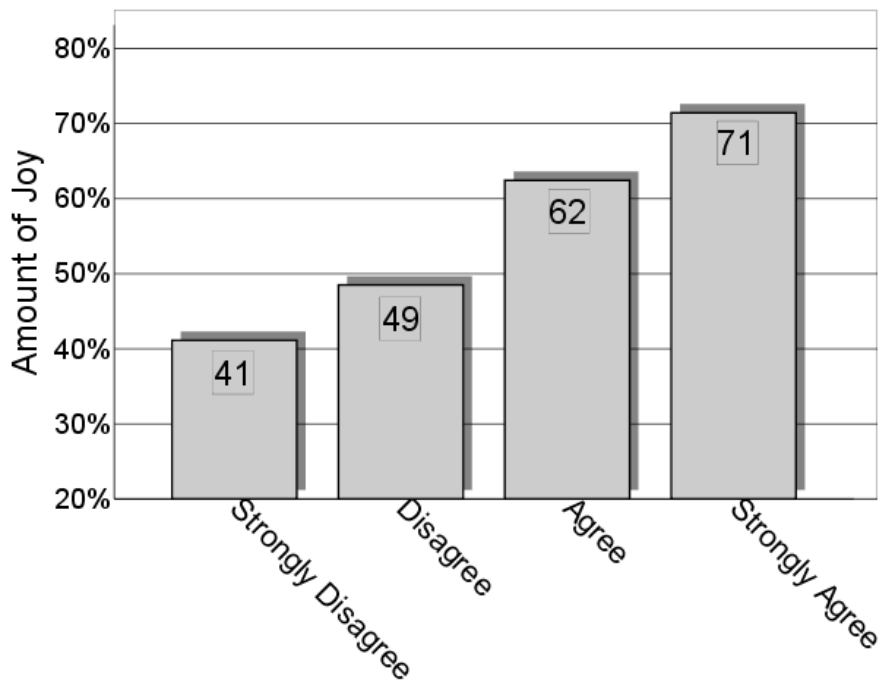
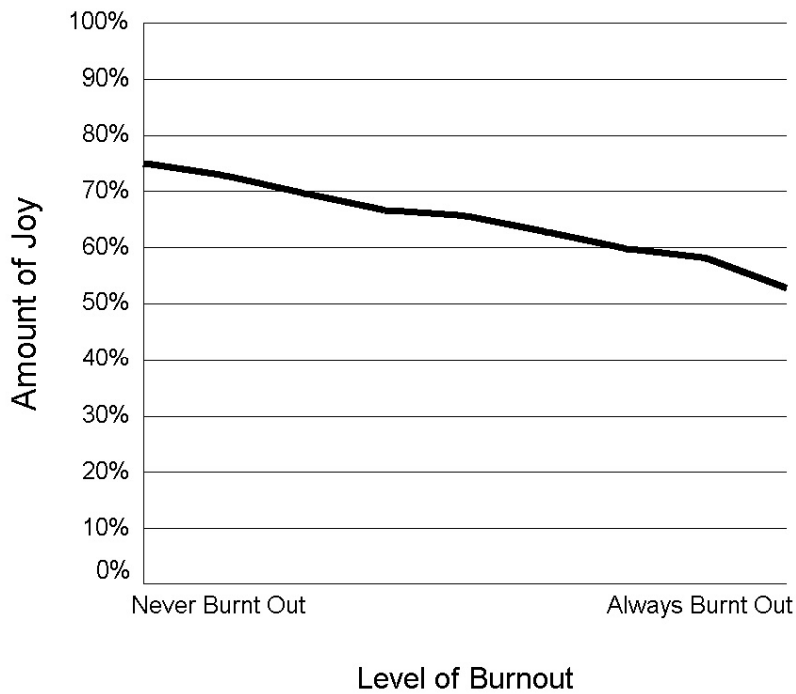


Figure 3
Joy Increases with Gratitude



Figure 4
Burnout Steals Joy



A Theology of Fair Pay

Michael Naughton

Michael Naughton is a Catholic theologian and a management professor at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota. This article was originally delivered as a plenary talk at the Christian Business Faculty Association 2004 annual meeting.

I have found that one of the most effective statements on the meaning of a just wage comes not from a Catholic, but from a Protestant clergyman in the early nineteenth century, a man by the name of Charles C. Colton. He wrote:

Our incomes are like our shoes; if too small, they gall and pinch us. But if too large they cause us to stumble and trip.

I find this statement insightful, because it reveals a very simply truth: Wages, like most things in life, can be either defective or excessive. Just because a market produces a wage doesn't give it any magical status with respect to its moral worth.

We have seen plenty of excess in the stumbling and tripping of certain executive salaries (large publicly traded companies). We also see the defect in the galling and pinching of sub-living wages. As an example, I want to tell the story of Ruby's pinching here in the U.S.

Ruby's Story

Seven years ago my mother died of cancer at the age of 68. While it was a good death and profound experience for my family, it was also a very difficult time.

Just because the market produces a wage doesn't give it any magical status with respect to its moral worth.

There were two institutions that supported us and helped us as a family: the church, and in particular our pastor from the local parish, and the medical profession, in particular, Little Company of Mary Hospital on the south side of Chicago.

While there were several people from the hospital that assisted us through this difficult event, a woman by the name of Ruby stands out. Ruby was the hospice nurse's aid who helped take care of my mother in the final two weeks of her life in our home. She was an African American Baptist woman, who brought a tremendous amount of joy and consolation to my mother, a traditional Irish Catholic from

County Offaly in Ireland. Ruby came in three days a week to physically care for my mother—bathing her, changing the bed, messaging her ailing body, and lifting the spirits of a dying woman.

Ruby was a natural, both in terms of how she physically took care of my mother as well as how she spiritually engaged her on her impending death. We would often hear them laughing together, sharing stories of their children and talking about the Lord in their lives. Ecumenism was alive and well in that room. While they would not have made much progress on doctrinal unity, they witnessed a profound spiritual union. Ruby's work was a great gift to our family.

Yet, Ruby was not well-paid. As a nurse's aid for hospice work, she was one of lowest paid people in the health care industry. As a single mother with a couple of children, life was not easy for Ruby, and her wages, despite her good work, were pinching and galling.

The question is whether Ruby was justly paid, and if not, what is the nature of the injustice? From a market perspective, the question is relatively clear. The buying and selling of labor is the same as the buying and selling of any other good or service, with its price being determined by the interaction of supply and demand. In the event that

quantity supply and quantity demand are not equal (i.e., not in equilibrium), then the price of labor (the real wage) will adjust upward (to alleviate a shortage of labor) or downward (to alleviate a surplus) in order to re-establish the equilibrium market clearing price. From a market perspective, Ruby's galling and pinching is of little concern here; what is of concern is whether Ruby and the hospital are able to freely contract in maximizing their self-interest.

From a justice perspective, the question is a bit more complex. First, in order to determine whether a wage is just, we need to ask whether wages create "right relationships." Why? Let's look at the word itself. The word justice comes from the Latin *ius* which means "right." In the Christian tradition, "right" is not understood in our typical modern situation in terms of "my rights," especially in terms of my private right to do whatever I want with my body or my property or my company, but rather, inspired by its Trinitarian roots, are we in right relationship as is the community of the Trinity.

Moreover, the Hebrew *mišpāt* (justice) and *šēdāqâ* (righteous) in the Old Testament refer to the fulfillment of responsibilities that arise out of particular relationships within the community—relationships between employer and employee, ruler and people, husband and wife, parent and child, etc. Thus to determine whether Ruby is paid justly, we need to examine very carefully what is the nature of

the exchange between Ruby and the hospital, and what relationship has been established between Ruby and the hospital.

But is it important here to get clear one of the implications of the Hebrew and Latin roots of justice, which serves as "the fundamental insight" of what a just wage is. The insight is

It is better to think of a wage as part of a relationship than as an exchange.

this: work can never be reduced to the pay given; that is, the wage given can never fully account for the labor done, precisely because work is always "more" than its economic output or instrumental value.

The money given to Ruby by Little Company of Mary Hospital cannot fully account for the work—the gift—she gave to my mother and my family. When Ruby works she not only cares for my mother by making her bed, cleaning her body, etc.—that is, in the things she changes—but Ruby's work also changes herself. This is what John Paul II calls "the subjective dimension of work."

So when the hospital pays Ruby, the wage given to her does not equal the work she has done. There is "something more" in Ruby's labor that cannot be accounted for by the wage. If the hospital views the wage/labor exchange as equal,

Ruby's work then begins to be increasingly seen, both by the hospital and by Ruby, in terms of a commodity, where the money given for Ruby's work has somehow exhausted the responsibility the hospital has to Ruby.

While there is no doubt that Ruby's work is exchanged for money and can be partially commodified by the price given for it, work is at the same time forming Ruby's personal, social and spiritual identity that goes beyond the work itself. This is why it is better to avoid speaking of wage as primarily an *exchange* as one finds in economics and business, and to speak of pay instead as part of a work *relationship* between employer and employee, a relationship that when it is in right order can serve to strengthen a community of work.

And here we come to see more specifically what this relationship begins to look like in terms of Principles.

Moral Principles

This understanding of justice leads us to see at least three main principles to help clarify what this "right relationship" between an employer and employee would look like as regards to pay. They are need, contribution, and order.

The Principle of Need and a Living Wage

A wage that fails to meet the needs of an employee (in particular, a full-time adult) is a wage that will struggle to carry the weight of a real relationship. In order for this relationship to flourish, an

employer must recognize that employees “surrender” their time and energy and so cannot use it for another purpose.

A living wage, then, is *the minimum amount due to every independent wage earner by the mere fact that he is a human being with a life to maintain and a personality to develop.*

To get a macro perspective on how well “need” is fulfilled, consider the statistics, illustrated in the form of a champagne glass in the Figure below. Twenty percent of the global population reaps more than eighty percent of the global income. When one thinks that God has given us all dominion—that creation has been gifted to all humanity—but that most of the resources are allocated to a small minority of the population, we have created an economic system that needs to be improved. What becomes less clear is exactly how to improve it.

The Principle of Contribution and an Equitable Wage

While the principle of need is *necessary* for determining a just wage, alone it is *insufficient*, since it only accounts for the consumptive needs of employees and does not factor in their productive contributions to the enterprise. Because of effort and sacrifice as well as skill, education, experience, scarcity of talent, and decision-making ability, some employees contribute more to the organization than others, and are “due” more pay. In other words, a living wage, while a minimum floor, is not necessarily an equitable wage.

To honor someone in the wage relationship is to recognize her talents and efforts.

An equitable wage, then, is *the contribution of an employee’s productivity and effort within the context of the existing amount of profits and resources of the organization.* I have to tell you that the Pope himself runs into this problem of contribution and equity all the time. A

As Aquinas noted over 700 years ago, it is a failure of justice when workers are paid equal wages for unequal work.

journalist once asked him how many people worked at the Vatican. He paused, and then said “about half.” Jokes aside, as Aquinas noted over 700 years ago, it is a failure of justice when workers are paid the same wages for unequal work, or unequal wages for equal work.

One of the more striking signs of inequity we have seen lately has been the growing wage gap between executive pay and worker wages, particularly in large publicly traded organizations. While some, like Dennis Kozlowski, may justify such compensation numbers, most people realize, especially in our knowledge-based economy, that the economic value of the company is increasingly in the knowledge and skills of all its

employees, and not merely in the executives.

The Principle of Economic Order and a Sustainable Wage

Pay is not only income for the worker, it is also a cost to the employer, which has a significant impact on the economic order of the organization. Without the foresight of how a living and equitable wage will affect the economic order of an organization, a just wage becomes a high-sounding moralism that is impractical. A sustainable wage, then, is *the organization’s ability to pay wages that is sustainable for the economic health of the organization as a whole.*

Managing the Tensions among the Principles

These principles, as well as the fundamental insight of justice, will help a manager to realize that there are at least “three bottom lines” to a just wage: (1) needs of all employees, (2) the different contributions of each of the employees, and (3) the economic order of the organization. But the manager of a company will often find these principles in tension with one another and will be tempted to emphasize one or two, but ignore a third.

Let me share with you how one company wrestled with the tensions among these three principles and how they were able to reach a certain synthesis in their compensation policy based on these principles. I must say from the outset that this synthesis is not a static one, but dynamic that can easily be lost, but difficult to regain.

The company I want to talk about is Reell Precision Manufacturing in St. Paul, Minnesota. It is a producer of hi-tech clutches and hinges for the office machine and computer industries. The company operates on the practical application of Judeo-Christian values for the “growth of people.” Based on its mission, Reell believes that all its workers should at least be paid a “living wage” or what they call a “target wage.” But because they operate within a market system, they are faced with the following situation:

The Market Wage: The actual market wage or “sustainable wage” for assemblers in the company was \$7/hour (\$14,000/year).

The Living Wage: In 1996 their estimate of a living wage in St. Paul was \$11/hour (\$22,000/year).

The Gap: How to make up the difference? The four dollar discrepancy between a living wage and a sustainable wage was a tension between two principles operating in the company: The principle of *need* and the principle of *economic order*.

While the management of Reell desired to pay its employees not only their market worth, but also the worth of who they are (persons made in the image of God who deserve at least a minimum of need), management was all-too-aware that customers would only pay for the “instrumental value” of work. If Reell would pay \$11/hour to its employees while

competitors paid \$7, Reell’s cost disadvantage would increase their likelihood of losing customers. *Realizing that the “ought” of a living wage always implies the “can” of a sustainable wage*, the company had to seriously rethink how it was doing business and then act creatively. This rethinking took on several dimensions:

Living Wages and Distributors of Justice

First, Reell’s management resisted capitulating their responsibilities to the

The “ought” of a living wage always implies the “can” of a sustainable wage.

mechanical force of labor markets. They saw themselves as moral agents, as *distributors of justice* in the marketplace, and not as mere market technicians. Nor were they simply working toward a “target wage” because they thought it would “attract and retain” employees who would make the company more money. Nonetheless, Reell’s management enhanced morale by showing employees their commitment to establishing “right relationships,” that is, concern for their need.

Equitable Wage and the Principle of Subsidiarity

What concretely enabled Reell to pay a living wage was a whole new way of doing work at the company. Reell redesigned their assembly-line

from a Command-Direct-Control management style, where management and engineers made all the decisions concerning the conception of the assembly area, to a Teach-Equip-Trust management style where employees were taught inspection procedures, equipped with quality instruments, and trusted to do things right on their own assembly-line. Employees decreased set-up times for new products, reduced the need for quality inspection, increased overall quality, and required less supervision. By reducing these costs, the company not only was able to pay a living wage, but also created more humane work.

Reell’s management began to live the theological principle of “subsidiarity,” by pushing responsibility and authority to the lowest possible level, and thereby tapping the talents of employees, providing them the resources to pay a living wage.

Sustainable Wage and Prudential Judgment

Reell’s management realized that every action has a reaction and that raising wage levels without changing the work process would have serious consequences to their cost structure. So in order to raise *labor rates* to pay a living wage, they would have to reduce their overall *total costs*. They eventually saw that low wages were merely a symptom of a much larger problem of how the company worked. When work is designed to use seven dollars of talent, it is difficult to pay people anything more than that amount.

Prudence dictated that the living or target wage could not come automatically. The reason the company called it a target wage was that it was something it worked toward. When an employee is hired with no experience and no skills, the company pays the worker the market rate (\$7/hour or whatever it is at the time), but then makes a commitment to move that employee to the target or living wage (\$11/hour) through training and skill development. So as employees learn the skills and gain experience, which Reell provides, their pay goes up accordingly.

There is more to be said about how Reell's mission guided its decision-making on wages, but it is important to be clear where the company's responsibilities lie in light of the Christian social tradition. This tradition, especially as it is articulated in Catholic social teaching, does not hold Reell (or any firm) responsible to pay employees in excess of a sustainable wage (a wage consistent with the sound financial management of the firm), even if that wage falls below a living wage. To do so would unjustly place Reell—and all the firm's employees—at risk of economic failure. In a market economy, no firm can be obligated to pay without regard to labor costs' effect on its competitive position, since that would amount to the imprudent choice of self-defeating means. Nevertheless, Reell does have an obligation in justice to create right relationships with employees to work toward a living wage.

This is why Reell can pay less than a living wage, so long as it is working toward correcting the situation through some set of means such as training and skill development.

A Closing Word for Those Who Teach

So what does this mean for those of us who teach? I believe one of the special calls that we have as Christian teachers is to engage our students in a process that moves them from a rather private, therapeutic and achievement-driven notion of work (often described as a "career") to a richer notion of work infused by a moral and spiritual wisdom (often described as "calling" or "vocation.") A critical part of this entails helping our students to move from seeing themselves as *maximizers of interests* to *distributors of justice*. This is no easy task, since there are elements in our culture that cause businesspeople to bristle at terms like "justice" and "distribution." Let me explain.

First, businesspeople are often suspicious of the language of "justice," and for good reason. Justice has become somewhat politicized both within the wider culture and within the church in particular, making it almost unusable in business. Justice can be reduced to a bully club by which the state coerces business to do so-called "good things" or to a prophetic denunciation by which the church condemns business behavior. This has generated a certain reservation among businesspeople, both towards the church and the state. In

this sense, businesspeople have good cause to be suspicious of a stunted notion of justice and its relationship to distribution. Yet, the unfortunate result is that more often than not, businesspeople give up on the language of justice and then do not have a language that can help them personalize their responsibility, as agents of the corporation, to distribute wealth within their own sphere of influence.

Second, businesspeople in general are somewhat apprehensive of the word "distribution." Influenced by their own education in business and economics, as well as by their own experience, businesspeople will often see wealth distribution best handled as a market decision determined by mechanistic forces of supply and demand. Often, they see no relationship between, on one hand, their decisions, their behavior, and indeed, their growth in virtue, and on the other hand, their fostering a more just distribution of resources. The question of distribution is often relegated to the private sphere of individual giving. Examples like Andrew Carnegie and others tend to be the model, where distribution is promoted not in the business itself but in the charity or foundation of the corporation.

Readers of the Scriptures cannot escape the sense that distributing wealth is an important part of living a life of faith—so important that the Old Testament (see the prophets Jeremiah, Amos, Isaiah) and the New Testament alike (see in particular Mt.

25:31ff. and Lk. 12:16–21; 16:1–13, 19–31) warn that our salvation may be at risk if we fail to distribute the resources within our sphere of influence. Scriptures are abundant with the failure of those who are simply maximizers and not distributors.

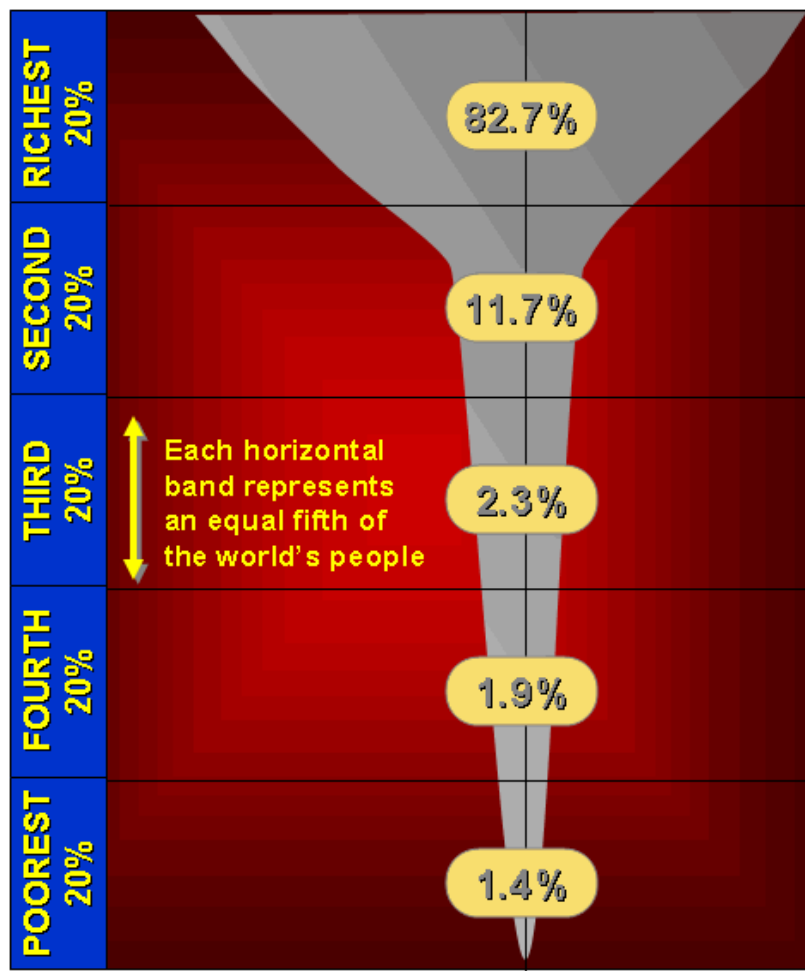
As Christian teachers, we are called to engage our students to understand themselves as distributors of justice. It is business more so than

government and private foundations that creates and distributes wealth. But if we neglect this call as educators, we ourselves will be under the same judgment given out to the rich man who failed to see Lazarus in his midst.

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“The Champagne Glass” The Distribution of Global Income, in Quintiles



The Legal Boundaries of Witnessing at Work

David C. Gibbs, Jr.

Full-time American workers spend an average of 8.3 hours a day on the job, so many believers recognize that their workplaces provide an obvious venue for sharing the gospel. But, such Christians are facing increasing opposition from employers for engaging in witnessing activities.

Just how much can you talk about Jesus Christ on the job? Is it legally permissible for managers to mention Bible verses when conversing with clients, or to pray for their employees? At what point does witnessing constitute harassment...or does it ever?

Often company officials do not understand their employees' religious rights, and sometimes they wrongfully discipline them for activities that are entirely appropriate. Far too often, employers mistakenly treat religious speech like sexual harassment and create a "zero tolerance" policy. Religious speech and sexual harassment are worlds apart, though. The former enjoys both constitutional and statutory protections that have never been granted to the latter.

Notwithstanding, more and more Christians are being told that their faith has no place at work. Some employees have even been terminated for exercising their right to religious expression. Here are a few examples:

- A state university department supervisor faced disciplinary action for violating the university's "harassment" policy. Human resources personnel informed him that because he was a supervisor, he could never talk about religion to

Often, employers mistakenly treat religious speech like sexual harassment and create a zero-tolerance policy.

- another employee. This interpretation of the law was incorrect.
- An employee of a large retail establishment in Illinois frequently shared her faith with coworkers. Because this employee knew the laws regarding religious speech, she always made a point to ask her coworkers to tell her if they did not want to discuss religion. None of her colleagues ever complained to her, yet she was terminated for violating the store's "harassment policy."
- The employer of a Florida man warned him to cease all

voluntary religious discussions with coworkers. Employees who consistently violated the company's profanity policy, however, were not disciplined.

As these individuals later learned, one key to being an effective witness in the workplace is to understand exactly what your rights are. Some important questions we'll consider are:

- When does sharing your faith constitute harassment?
- Are there greater restrictions on religious expression for supervisors?
- Does it matter if you are witnessing to your company's customers or to your coworkers?

Religious Discussions with Coworkers

Title VII Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides general rules for all private workplaces employing fifteen or more people. It stipulates that a company that allows employees to engage in non-work related conversations, such as those about politics, family, sports or other such topics, may not prohibit voluntary religious discussions between employees either. The water cooler and employee lunchroom are a type of public forum where citizens share ideas and interact at a variety of levels. In informal settings, such as break rooms or

hallways, and at times when workers voluntarily interact about non-work issues, employees may discuss their religious views or voluntarily pray together. The same rules apply as would to any other private conversation.

Any employer may restrict employees from conversing about religion with clients, patients, or customers...

Other employees may not stop religious exchanges simply because they overhear a religious conversation. For example, at a large retail store in Indiana, an employee and several coworkers met informally and as privately as possible each day for a brief word of prayer before clocking in for work. They asked God to bless their supervisors and colleagues and prayed for other needs. One day, company management asked the group to stop because another employee had been offended when she saw them quietly praying. The employee contacted Christian attorneys who informed store management that another worker's offense at this quiet religious activity did not justify prohibiting it. If the workers had been discussing the previous night's TV programming, no question would have been raised.

Despite clear legal protections, Christian employees often face discipline for sharing their faith. Incredibly, some employers will allow non-Christian religious expression yet forbid religious expression from Christians. For example, an employee was disciplined for sharing his Christian perspective on suicide and salvation with a coworker who had just expressed his belief in reincarnation and stated that he was contemplating suicide. The Christian was fired for sharing the hope of life found in Jesus Christ and for pleading with his coworker not to commit suicide!

Limits on Religious Discussions with Coworkers

While Christian employees have broad rights to express their faith to coworkers, there are two legal limitations.

1. An employee must not allow religious discussions to interfere with work. Stated differently, an employer has the right to insist on the employee's full attention during working hours. Therefore, a Christian employee should be careful not to create even the perception that religious discussions are interfering with job performance. Also, it is easier to prove that talking about religion is the reason for discipline if the employee has a good work reputation and a clean record as an excellent, dedicated employee. In one case, a Christian employee's attorney was able to point to the employee's glowing performance evaluations

(copies of which he always kept at home) when management insisted the employee was not a victim of religious discrimination, but rather was being disciplined for poor work performance.

2. If a coworker indicates directly or indirectly that she does not wish to discuss matters of religion, the Christian employee should immediately stop discussing it with her. If the Christian does not stop, he can be disciplined for harassment. This rule is legitimate. Think of this limitation in terms of "the shoe being on the other foot." If a Christian works with a Satanist, that Christian worker has the right to prevent the Satanist from talking to him about occultist practices. This precaution does not mean, however, that every time someone who has asked you

...but there are no limitations on a Christian employer's right to witness to his customers.

not to talk about religion walks into the room, your conversation with others must stop. But, you should be sure not to direct the religious conversation to the employee who has objected. Religious conversations at work should take place privately and voluntarily. In

fact, it may be wise to take a conversation elsewhere when a person who has objected comes on the scene, since this type of person would be most likely to press the issue.

Religious Discussions with Customers

Although nothing prevents Christians from discussing faith with coworkers during free time on the job, any employer—public or private—may restrict employee conversations with clients, patients or customers about religion. On the other hand, a business owner may also choose to permit such religious conversations—and many do. The decision regarding religious conversations with clients rests with the private employer and not with the employee.

We recently handled a case in which a California employer terminated an employee for engaging in a religious conversation with a client. The employee had inquired about a mutual acquaintance who happened to be a pastor. The client shared how the pastor encouraged her and her children to attend church and how excited she was to have her children learning about the Bible. A coworker reported this completely voluntary conversation to a supervisor, who fired the Christian. This termination was unlawful because the Christian employee had never been instructed not to discuss religion with customers, and because it was

the client who brought religion into the conversation.

Christian Employers Who Witness

There are no limitations concerning the right of a Christian employer to witness to his customers. In fact, many Christian employers regularly incorporate witnessing into their business practices. For example, Christian employers may place a gospel tract in outgoing mail and print Bible verses on company invoices, purchase orders or other commercial documents. They may answer the phone with Christian greetings, either on a regular basis or on religious holidays, such as Christmas.

In contrast to the relatively unfettered right Christian employers have to share their faith with customers, federal and state laws restrict the rights of Christian business owners to witness to their employees. Under Title VII, business owners or supervisors are permitted to communicate their religious beliefs through their company policies and practices provided that 1) they do not give prospective or current employees the perception that employment or advancement requires workers to adopt a certain religious belief, 2) they accommodate employee objections, and 3) they do not require employees to participate in religious worship experiences. In other words, an employer or supervisor may witness to employees as long as he is careful to accommodate

employees who object to any of the company's religious practices, and as long as employees are clearly informed that their religious beliefs or non-beliefs play no role in hiring, termination, promotion, or in the terms, conditions or privileges of employment. (However, religious organizations, such as churches and other ministries, are generally exempt from Title VII and state law religious requirements.)

A Last Resort

As the above examples show, there is growing hostility in modern America to religious speech at work. Despite some employers' desire to create a "religion free workplace," Christians have the right to witness in the workplace—subject to certain limitations. If you face difficulties for sharing your faith in the workplace, contact a Christian attorney who specializes in religious discrimination. This person can provide information regarding your rights and assist you if you are disciplined or terminated for sharing your faith at work.

David Gibbs is the president of the Christian Law Association, an organization that has provided free legal assistance to thousands of workplace believers. For more information about the legal missionary ministry of the CLA, please call (727) 399-8300 or visit www.ChristianLaw.org

Decoding *The Apprentice*

Michael Zigarelli

I'm one of the few people in this world who can honestly say that it's my job to watch NBC's stratospherically-popular program, *The Apprentice*. On the show, eighteen candidates vie for the opportunity to land a six-figure job running a company for Donald Trump, the leading real estate developer in New York City. "It's a fifteen week job interview," says Trump—an interview process where candidates are divided into two teams, the teams compete each week on a managerial task, and then one person from the losing team is "fired" (i.e., booted from the show). Ultimately, the last candidate standing gets the job offer and is crowned Trump's apprentice.

I say that it's my job to watch the show because I'm the dean of a business school that cares deeply about the direction of our culture. Consequently, I'm asked by the media on occasion to comment on the show, and it hardly makes for good press to say: "I've got better things to do with my Thursday nights...and you should too."

So I've ingested every minute of this season and frankly, I'm annoyed by more than the lost evenings. The show advances some of the very assumptions about business, leadership, interpersonal relations, and success that our magazine seeks to correct. Directly or

indirectly, among the values advanced on the show are these:

- *Money and possessions are synonymous with "success."* The show's theme song says it all. In 60 seconds, it uses the word "money" no fewer than twenty times—even going so far as to use the term

With a weekly audience of sixteen million viewers, perhaps nothing in our day has done as much damage to the movement toward enlightened business leadership

"Almighty Dollar"—while flashing copious graphics of luxury cars, corporate jets, and thousand dollar bills. To top it off, this linkage between possessions and the good life is reinforced with the boldfaced graphic: "What if you could have it all?"

- Relatedly, *profit is the purpose of business.* It's the ultimate objective. Almost every week, the winning team is determined exclusively by

who made the most profit. Nothing more, nothing less. End of discussion.

- *Trump is a role model for leaders.* Accordingly, good leaders are terse, pretentious, feared by employees, and impatient. They have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to failure. Which leads us to the next Donaldian value...
- *Under-performance demands capital punishment.* You screw up, you're gone. Make whatever eloquent case you can for why things didn't work out, but at the end of the day, the least competent person from that week is sent packing.

In Trump's world, finger-pointing, gossiping, backbiting, and ganging-up on people are acceptable behaviors. In fact, they're virtues because they're pragmatic. *The Apprentice* devotes a generous amount of time to contestants conspiring against one another and forming political alliances against members of their own team before going into the boardroom. That's because once in the boardroom, Trump actually *requires* his subjects to blame one another for problems that are typically group deficiencies. Hedge for even a moment when Trump asks you who should be fired,

and you risk committing suicide.

Now, in fairness, the show does champion creativity, quick thinking, resourcefulness, and good stewardship—values that we cheer. But those values are eclipsed by the show’s stereotyped view of what business is all about, of what it takes to succeed, and of what constitutes “success” in the first place. Given its audience of sixteen million viewers per week (and forty million for last year’s final episode), perhaps nothing in our day has done as much damage to the movement toward enlightened business leadership.

That enlightened view, showcased in non-Trump corporations like Southwest Airlines, ServiceMaster, Men’s Wearhouse, Mary Kay, Chick-fil-A, The SAS Institute, AES, and countless others, entails conceptualizing profit as a means, not an end in business. It views the corporation as

having a broad social responsibility to all stakeholders—as an agent of good in this world, as a tool that exists to improve people’s lives.

That enlightened view entails management by humility and servanthood, not by fear and intimidation. It prefers people to profits, relationship to rivalry, grace to greed, and often—newsflash, Mr. Trump—forgiveness to firing.

Moreover, when it comes to defining “personal success”—the show’s darkest hour—an alternative view is that success is uncorrelated with money or possessions. One would think that we would no longer need to make such axiomatic statements, but clearly we do. They’re not getting through to many of the culture-shapers of our day.

And for Christians in leadership positions—as well as Christians throughout the

workforce—there’s one final take-away from *The Apprentice*. We too should strive to be apprentices. Not of Trump, of course, or of any mere mortal for that matter. As Dallas Willard reminds us in *The Divine Conspiracy*, we are to be apprentices of Jesus, seeing him clearly, surrendering to him daily, emulating him in everything we do.

That’s real success in business and in life. Success in God’s eyes.

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