

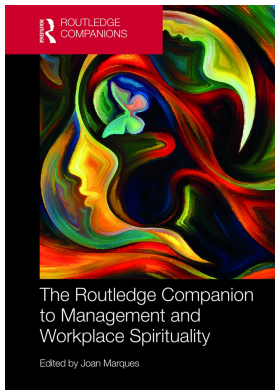
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## **The Routledge Companion to Management and Workplace Spirituality**

Joan Marques

### **Spirituality and Religion at Work**

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# 9

## SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION AT WORK

### Christian Traditions in Action

*Edwina Pio and Peter McGhee*

#### **A Christian View of Spirituality**

Authors often claim that spirituality is a Christian term (Carson, 1994). However, while the words “spirit” (Greek [Gk.] *pneúma*) and “spiritual” (Gk. *pneumatikos*) appear in the New Testament, the word “spirituality” is not a biblical word. According to Principe (2000), spirituality comes from the Latin word *spiritualitas*, a neologism which combines the Latin noun *spiritus* (spirit) and the adjective *spiritualis* (spiritual). Moreover, Principe states there is no evidence of the word “spirituality” being used prior to CE 5th century, when in a letter historically credited to St. Jerome, the author urges the recipient to “*Age ut in spiritualitate proficias*” (Latin [Lat.] So act as to advance in spirituality). However, if the Latin word *spiritualitas* reflects New Testament understandings, and if the first recorded use of this word urged a life lived according to the Spirit, then the New Testament’s use of *pneúma* and *pneumatikos* stands behind early Christian views of spirituality.

Ideas about the Spirit developed from the Old Testament reflection on the breath or *ruach* of God (Hildebrandt, 1995), and were further advanced by St. Paul in the New Testament where the Spirit was linked almost immediately to the risen Christ (Romans 8:9–11; 1 Corinthians 6:17; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 4:6, 5:25; and Philippians 2:1). St. Paul also used the adjective “spiritual” for outworkings of the Spirit (Romans 7:14, 1 Corinthians 12:1; Ephesians 1:3, 5:19; Colossians 1:9). And, most importantly, he compared a spiritual person (Biblical Gk. *pneumatikos anthrōpos*) with a carnal person (Biblical Gk. *psychikos anthrōpos*) (1 Corinthians 2:6–15). From these verses, and others, we infer that a “spiritual person” is one whose life “is under the influence of, or is a manifestation of, the Spirit of God” (Sheldrake, 1992, p. 22). The “worldly person,” on the other hand, opposes the workings of the Spirit in his or her life (Fee, 1994). This opposition, for St. Paul, was not between the spiritual and the physical, but between living two different ways. A dualistic contrast is not part of a Christian understanding of the human person or of created reality in general and hence there is no justification for the denial of flesh or a rejection of materiality (Sheldrake, 2000). In a nutshell, for Christians, spirituality is the exercise of the Holy Spirit in our everyday lives, including the workplace. It is about imaging God to the world and the world back to God (McGhee & Habets, 2018).

### ***The Christian Tradition and Work***

Tradition (Biblical Gk. *Paradosis*, or Lat. *traditio*), means the revelation made by God and delivered by him to his faithful people through the mouth of his prophets and apostles. It does not mean something “handed down” but something “handed over.” The tradition was at first called “apostolic,” because it was delivered by the apostles to the Churches they founded, and later also “ecclesiastic” because delivered again in each generation by the Church’s teachers to the people. Its substance was held to consist of the central facts and beliefs crystalized in the creeds of the great orthodox bishops (D’Lima, 2018, 7 April). From the beginning of the 3rd century, the tradition was sometimes expressly identified with the Gospel record contained in Scripture. The occasional references in early Christian literature to an “unwritten tradition” left by the apostles appear to relate not to the body of information independent of Scripture, but to the evidence of primitive Christian institutions and customs which confirms scriptural teaching (D’Lima, 2018, 7 April). In a more modern sense, tradition means the continuous stream of explanation and elucidation of the primitive faith, illustrating the way in which Christianity has been presented and understood in past ages (Cross & Livingstone, 2005).

Within this tradition, Christians have long considered the spiritual nature of work. Initially, the emphasis was on the ascetic; work was both a means for, and a constraint to, a higher spiritual life. For example, Clement of Alexandria (c. CE 150 to c. CE 215) wanted Christians to be “ever labouring at some good and divine work” while at the same time, not being “busy about many things, bending downwards and fettered in the toils of this world” (Volf, 2001, p. 72). The author of the Epistle of Barnabas (c. CE 400) saw work as a means to “ransom thy sins” (Volf, 2001, p. 72). In the 6th century, St. Benedict developed a Rule, which codified work norms for monasteries. For instance, he wrote that, “Idleness is an enemy of the soul. Therefore, the brothers should be occupied according to schedule in either manual labour or holy reading” (Jensen, 2006, p. 31). For Benedict, work was seen “as a spiritual exercise and discipline, a penitential practice” (Volf, 2001, p. 73). Later, Thomas Aquinas, in his 13th century *Summa Theologica*, argued work was important because “without which human beings would not be apt for contemplation” (Volf, 2001, p. 70).

The Bible values work and people who work (Meeks, 1989). Its focus is summarized concisely by Jensen (2006), who notes that in Genesis 1:1, God molds creation into existence, thus making His work the source of all that is. At the same time, Genesis points to the importance of human work, as a response to God (Genesis 2:15). The Old Testament, Jensen argues, recognizes the communal dimensions of work; it protects the land and the vulnerable from profiteering and greed (Leviticus 19:9–10). The Sabbath prevents work from becoming an endless drudgery, while cultivating mindfulness about God’s work (Exodus 23:10–11). And the Jubilee rules set strict limits to work and the profits from work (Leviticus 25:10). When Israel fails to keep these requirements, the prophets reprimand them (Amos 5:11).

For Jensen, similar attitudes are found in the New Testament. Jesus criticizes those that work at the expense of others (Luke. 6:24–25, 11:46–47). His parables are often set within a work context (Matthew 13:3–8, 13:33; Luke 15:3–7), and that work often changes as it is drawn toward the work of Jesus. Moreover, many of Jesus’ parables (Matthew 20:1–16) offer an alternative conception of the value of work:

it is not in its result or the length of time one has been engaged in work, rather, its value is that *people* are doing the work. In the upside-down values of the reign of God, those without paid work are valued as much as those who begin the work at the crack of dawn.

(Jensen, 2006, p. 25)

This alternative conception does not mean people should stop working; indeed, in the life of the early church many remained in secular vocations (Acts 16:14, 18:13). Rather, the New Testament argues that work is valued, not for what it is, but because the doers of work belong to Christ. Ultimately, such work will continue in the afterlife (Revelations 21:6).

### ***The Catholic Tradition***

Tradition is not really a manmade reality; it is part of the gift of God, like the word of God that is given to us, it is also the interpreting of the word of God, which is a gift of God (D’Lima, 2018, 20 April). For the Catholic tradition, the Church is the community in which tradition is recognized and authenticated. In time, and because of polemics, tradition was pitted against Scripture, Scripture being seen by Protestants as God’s word couched in a written language, whereas tradition was seen as man-made and created by the Church (D’Lima, 2018, 7 April). For Catholics, however, tradition means the ensemble of creed, code, cult, and community, as well as the magisterial teaching as put down in Councils or taught by the Pope (e.g., dogma, doctrine), and the practices of devotion that are man-made.

In recent times, two key Papal encyclicals have developed the relationship between spirituality and work further. The first of these, *Rerum Novarum* (Worker’s Charter, 1891), considered the plight of the working class in light of expanding technology, urbanization, and industrialization (Cosden, 2005). This encyclical shifted the historical focus on the soul to include a person’s social context (including work) as being important for their spiritual wellbeing. In 1981, Pope John Paul II published the encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work). Written on the 90th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, this encyclical builds on Pope Leo XXIII’s earlier work, while at the same time offering new insights. Cosden describes three key ideas that emerge from this letter. First, work is a means to an end, both for physical and spiritual needs. Second, work has social power; it unites people and builds community. It is in such community, that our humanity is maintained and developed. Finally, work is a fundamental aspect of humanity’s existence, and as such is linked with what it means to be created in the image of God. By working, human beings are participating in the activity of the Creator; they image God back to himself.

Next we present two modern exemplars of the Catholic tradition, and seek to reflect their lives and their teachings to workplace spirituality.

#### *Mother Teresa (1910–1997)*

Mother Teresa is a figure who devoted selfless acts to aid the poorest of the poor. Her views on spirituality were exemplified by her praxis-in-action illustrated through her work. Of her long life of 87 years, she devoted countless acts of selflessness and support toward those who need it the most (Anthony, 2016), thus epitomizing a Christian tradition of service through the impetus of spirituality. Born in Skopje, Macedonia, 1910, Agnes Bojaxhiu was brought up by her two parents, Nikollë and Dranfile Bojaxhiu. After the tragic death of her father when she was 8 years old, Agnes turned to the Holy Spirit for support and guidance. At the age of 18, she left her mother, home, and country to join the Sisters of Loreto in Calcutta, India. From this point onwards her journey was to assist, support, and provide for individuals who were the poorest of the poor, through exercising spirituality in her daily work.

Established in 1950 by Mother Teresa, the Missionaries of Charity initially comprised 12 devoted members. Of these members, several were Mother Teresa’s previous students from her days of teaching at St. Mary’s High school in Calcutta. Residing in a small, abandoned building, the Missionaries of Charity adapted a parallel lifestyle to the living conditions of their poor

neighbors. This notion was an act of sharing the same suffering in order to develop a greater understanding and thus a deep determination to help India's poorest of the poor. In the context of modern work this can be translated as managers/senior leaders going back to basics to truly understand the lived experience of their employees and then creating policies and actions which focus on community wellbeing. Missionaries were bound to a strict work schedule of 18 hours, 6 days a week, providing to the community, with disregard of age and religion. The Missionaries of Charity was later renamed Nirmal Hriday, "Pure Heart," reflecting their compassion and acceptance to those who were homeless, suffering from leprosy, unable to afford food, had no access to drinking water, medical care, or basic education (Ćwiękała-Lewis, 2015). In 2015, there were 4500 Sisters of Charity serving in over 600 locations in 123 countries globally. Mother Teresa also opened a Children's House, solely providing for unwanted babies left at the Mission's doorstep and abandoned children who lived on the streets of Calcutta.

Mother Teresa noted that people have been smothered by possessions, the love of money, and the things money can buy (Serge, Chenard, & Senechal, 2013). Work, she asserted, must have a purpose beyond money, in order to manifest the workings of the Spirit. Interestingly, Mother Teresa argued that it is not just about helping the community, but also about physically sharing their suffering. An example of this was her initially feeding her 12 members of the Missionaries of Charity plain rice as a staple diet for their main meals. Mother Teresa initially struggled to gain the trust of the people of Calcutta. The surrounding community believed her selfless deeds were merely an act to convert individuals to Catholicism. However, over time, the people of Calcutta found that this was not her intention. Mother Teresa did not discriminate individuals of different religions but welcomed them with open arms. During her lifetime, Mother Teresa was awarded with internationally recognized honors, for example, the Key to the City from the New York Mayor Edward Koch in 1985, the Jewel of India, symbolic of the nation's highest honor, and the Nobel Peace Prize (Brind'Amour, 2007).

Clad in a simple white sari with a blue border, she inspired millions with her fierce will, deep devotion to God, and relentless pursuit for doing good. The white symbolizes peace and charity, reflecting the underlying purpose of those who wear it. The blue bands are representative of the three vows her nuns must take; poverty, obedience, and dedicating their services to the poorest of the poor (Williams, 2002). She believed that "peace begins with a smile" and "if you can't feed a hundred people then just feed one" (Pio, Kilpatrick, & LeFevre, 2017), thus displaying how every person, irrespective of their status at work and in life, can live out the divine plan in their lives.

#### *Pope Francis (1936...)*

Bishop of the slums, Jesuit, Pope of surprises, Pope of paradox, radical Pope, the Great Reformer ... Jorge Mario Bergoglio was born to Italian immigrants in lower middle class Buenos Aires barrio of Flores in Argentina (Ivereigh, 2014; Vallyely, 2013/2015). He knew his four grandparents and their wisdom helped him develop a moral, cultural, managerial, and religious reservoir. On March 13, 2013, Bergoglio became the 266th pope of the Roman Catholic Church, the first non-European in more than a millennium, the first from the Jesuit religious order, and the first to take the name Francis. The name Francis is drawn from the 13th century mendicant St. Francis, known as the saint of the poor, a man of peace and poverty, who loved and protected creation. Bergoglio, when asked in the conclave of cardinals, if he accepted the vote to become pope, replied not with the traditional "Accepto" but the words: "I am a great sinner, trusting in the mercy and patience of God in suffering, I accept" (Stanford, 2014). Such humility and simplicity in the service of the world is a cornerstone of Christian spirituality.

Pope Francis, with amazing speed, has become a rock star through using 21st century technology for a 1st century role, through his emphasis on humility, prayer, mercy, and grounding himself in his pastoral role with merriment, while rejecting the pomp and privileges of his office. He broke with centuries of tradition, when instead of living in the Apostolic Palace he chose to live in a simply furnished room in the Vatican guesthouse. He visited a juvenile detention center and cleaned the feet of the inmates, including two Muslim women, for the Holy Thursday ceremony, bucking tradition, as the usual practice is to wash the feet of priests. He believes that the church has locked itself up in small things and small minded rules. The Pope through his actions and life seeks to engage with the messiness of humanity, and this is a clarion call for how persons can engage with spirituality in their everyday lives. The Pope does this through a *kairos* of mercy, and asks that we show mercy in renewing and revitalizing the church, and affirming human dignity with generous practical action (Francis, 2014; Ivereigh, 2014).

The Pope emphasizes that the Lord never tires of forgiving and individuals can ask for grace to ask for forgiveness, for God forgives with a caress not a decree. He focuses on the centrality of mercy. The word mercy derives from *miser cordis* which means opening one's heart to wretchedness, and the Pope insists that we can all be part of the solution of our complex world where millions suffer under political oppression, are hungry, lacking in nourishment, and living in poverty. In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*—the joy of the gospel—he exhorts every person to be a missionary disciple, for each one can make the world a better place through living our faith and our actions. In like manner, he challenged bishops to walk among the people to be pastors and remember the smell of the sheep. He has refocused emphasis on the healing mission of the church. Unlike his recent predecessors who were professors of theology, Francis is a former janitor, nightclub bouncer, chemical technician, and literature teacher (Chua-Eoan & Dias, 2013). He says the church must work “to eliminate the structural causes of poverty” and adds that while “the Pope loves everyone, rich and poor alike ... he is obliged in the name of Christ to remind all that the rich must help, respect and promote the poor” (Chua-Eoan & Dias, 2013, p. 2). The five words that have come to define both the promise and the limits of Francis' papacy came in the form of a question: “Who am I to judge?” Francis begins, ends, and dots his day with prayer. He reminds his followers that there are three obstacles which may prevent spirituality in action and these are wealth, vanity, and pride. His inspirational leadership style is one of role modeling with a focus on core competencies and care for the vulnerable. He believes that business is a noble profession, but it must lead people to God (Gregg, 2017; Whaples, 2017).

His papal style can be construed as emanating in some measure from the spiritual exercises of the founder of the Jesuit order, Ignatius of Loyola. Executives who practice the spiritual exercises of the Jesuit founder Ignatius of Loyola, termed Ignatian executives by Lecourt and Pauchant (2011), exhibit leadership attitudes influenced by spiritual values which in turn influence organizations. There are six important categories of this spiritual practice and management in organization: decision-making, human resource management, the organizational mission, social responsibility, career development, and the meaning of work. Furthermore, these executives seek to mesh their work with those who suffer various forms of disadvantage such as racial discrimination or those with disabilities, and they see profits as a means to doing good for the community. Thus, wholeness, knowledge, and social justice are key to finding God in all things as epitomized in these Ignatian practices (Woods, 2015).

Pope Francis also embraces complexity and acknowledges the risk of a church obsessed with its own rights and righteousness which could wound rather than heal. For this, and many other actions:

In a very short time, a vast, global, ecumenical audience has shown a hunger to follow him. For pulling the papacy out of the palace and into the streets, for committing the world's largest church to confronting its deepest needs and for balancing judgment with mercy, Pope Francis is TIME's 2013 Person of the Year.

(Gibbs, 2013)

### ***The Protestant Tradition***

In 1517, a German monk called Martin Luther published his “Ninety-five Theses” and inflamed a spark that would become the Protestant Reformation. The main themes of the Reformation were the purification of the church and the idea that the Bible, not church tradition, should be the only source of authority. Apart from these, Luther, and his fellow reformers (e.g., Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin), railed against the notion that only the clerical class had a spiritual calling, and that only church work had value (Volf, 2001). Countering this view, the reformers argued that all work was spiritual, and that all believers had a calling. Luther, for example, believed that all Christians had a spiritual and a worldly vocation. The spiritual call was internal to the believer; it was God's call on their life. The external call was to serve God in the world through one's work (Jensen, 2006). For Luther, there were two calls but both came from the same source, the Spirit of God.

An early convert to Luther's ideas, John Calvin applied them all to human conduct. He wrote:

We are consecrated and dedicated to God, and therefore, should not henceforth think, speak, design, or act, without a view to His glory . . . Let this, then, be the first step, to abandon ourselves, and devote the whole energy of our minds to the service of God.

(1560, III.vii-1)

For Calvin, every human action (including work) has value because God calls us to it, by his Spirit, in order that we might glorify Him. Developments in the 17th and 18th century saw a narrowing of this broad definition to two main aspects: duty and occupation (Stevens, 1999). Callings became “a means of serving God and sustaining God's world through supporting oneself, family and commonwealth” (p. 77). At this point, ideas of religion, work, and lifestyle began to merge. Ultimately, this perspective became the bridge between ancient views of work and our modern understanding most clearly identified in Max Weber's (1905/1976) Protestant Work Ethic.

Despite this, the core idea of being called by the Spirit of God to our work, which images God to the world and back to Himself, has remained consistent in much of Protestant thought (Cosden, 2005). Next, we discuss two exemplars of modern Protestant thought on spirituality and religion at work: Dorothy Sayers and Miroslav Volf.

### *Dorothy Sayers (1893–1957)*

Dorothy Sayers was the daughter of an Anglican clergyman. She was born and raised in Oxford, England and studied at Oxford University where she gained a first class honors degree in modern languages. She was a well-known author of detective novels in an age where woman did not publish in this genre (Galli & Olsen, 2000). She also established her reputation as a religious writer with a series of plays (e.g., *The Zeal of thy House*, *The Man Born to be a King*). And from 1940 she published several works containing studies, lectures, and essays on theological topics.

These writings, as in her plays, provided fresh and penetrating insights into the meaning of Christianity in the modern world (Cross & Livingstone, 2005).

Her deliberations on work came primarily from a lecture called *Why Work*, later published in a book called *Creed or Chaos*. In this essay, Sayers (1949/2011) compares work with the act of divine creation; we are to view it as:

A way of life in which the nature of humanity [*sic*] finds its proper exercise and delight and so fulfils itself to the glory of God. That it should, in fact, be thought of as a creative activity undertaken for the love of the work itself; and that human beings [*sic*], made in God's image, should make things, as God makes them, for the sake of doing well a thing that is well worth doing.

(p. 15)

By elevating human beings to the status of creator, Sayers portrays human work as participating in the creation via the Holy Spirit. Thus, as a creative activity, work acquires a new dignity that makes it a proper inquiry in its own right. This should lead us to “ask of an enterprise, not, will it pay?” but rather, “is it good?” and of ourselves, not “what do we make?” but rather, “what is our work worth?” (p. 18). From this idea, three propositions arise.

First, work is not simply about making money to live but, rather, it is something one does to be fully human, to reflect the image of God. According to Sayers (1949/2011), we find “spiritual, mental, and bodily satisfaction, and the medium in which we offer ourselves to God” (p. 18). Failure to view work thus confuses means with ends, and alienates us from our labor. Second, work is a vocation, whether it be secular or not. Our labors “serve God, and the work itself must be accepted and respected as the medium of divine creation” (p. 21). Consequently, work that is contemptible, soul destroying, or harmful, that is, work unreflective of God's image within us, is unacceptable. Moreover, because our labors serve God, “Christian work is good work well done” (p. 23). If we focus on the demands of our work, then this is a guarantee that divine ends will also be met and met well (Breclaw, 1993). Finally, Sayers (1949/2011) claims, “the worker's first duty is to serve the work” (p. 24). By serving the work, we put God before ourselves. When we serve the community first, we make human beings the measure of all things. By putting the work first, we ensure our hearts are fully in it, thus producing “good work.” Work that “is not good serves neither God nor the community; it only serves Mammon” (p. 25). Such a focus also ensures our sense of debt is not to others; rather the work becomes our reward. Consequently, we are less likely to falsify our work to please others. If we take these ideas as foundational, then several implications transpire for Christians in modern workplaces.

The gap between the sacred and secular is non-existent. Christians “are uniquely equipped and have a duty to provide a new and proper attitude towards work, informed by theological beliefs regarding human nature and God's purpose for humanity” (Miller, 2011, p. 10). Building on ideas from the Reformation, Sayers argues work is a holy calling from God, who uses it to build His kingdom (Harrison, 2004). We have the potential to take ordinary work that may be neutral in its content and purpose, and imbue it with meaning and value through the Spirit of God that resides within, and works through, each of us.

A Christian's reward comes from the satisfaction of doing the task well; this is their divine act of creation. Payment need only be enough to ensure that the work continues, and for a reasonable living standard (Harrison, 2004). Valuing work thus, minimizes the appeal of dehumanizing and degrading jobs, even if they pay well. Moreover, if we do the work for which God gifts us, then we reduce the problem of cheap labor, and of pursuing the highest paid occupations, since neither are conducive to growing God's kingdom. Admittedly, as Miller (2011) notes, this may



not always be possible in developing countries and lower socio-economic contexts. However, if these ideas were implemented, then such contexts may become redundant.

Regarding work as a pleasure and privilege means Christians change their attitude toward leisure. Instead of viewing leisure as the best part of life, and trying to get through the working week as quickly as possible, we “should look on our leisure as the period of changed rhythm that refreshes us for the delightful purpose of getting on with our work” (Sayers, 1949/2011, p. 20). This shift in perspective ensures that we fight to make our work good. As Sayers writes, “there would be protests and strikes—not only about pay and conditions, but about the quality of the work demanded and the honesty, beauty and usefulness of the goods produced” (p. 21). Rather than regarding work as something to avoid, Christians are to give it primacy, to make it the end of our being. If we love our created work, then we display love for God who created all things through the Son and by the Spirit—including us (Harrison, 2004).

*Miroslav Volf (1956...)*

Miroslav Volf was born in Osijek, Croatia, which was then part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As a consequence of living through the Balkan war in the 1990s, he forged a theology of forgiveness and non-violence (Short, 2005), about which he has written several books. Perhaps his best known work, *Exclusion & Embrace*, was written in response to a question posed to him, “But can you embrace the cetniks [the Serbian fighters who killed Croatian woman and children during the war]?” (Volf, 1996, p. 9). Other areas of theological focus have included the nature of Christian community, the public role of faith, and human work. Educated in Croatia, the United States, and Germany, Volf has doctoral and post-doctoral degrees from the University of Tübingen in Germany. He is currently the Director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture at Yale University and considered “one of the most celebrated theologians of our day” (Williams, 2005, p. 9).

Volf (2001) argues that the Protestant idea of calling (or vocation) needs revamping in modern society. He offers several reasons for this. Calling tends to emphasize the individual at the expense of the community, while also endorsing the status quo thereby tying people to menial work and unfulfilling jobs, especially in developing economies. Moreover, in modern organizations, there are significant challenges in balancing one’s internal and external call; often the need for security, status, and wealth override a person’s spiritual inclinations. Finally, there is difficulty adapting the concept to the social mobility of modern societies, where regular job change and dual occupations are common.

Volf’s solution is that of the “new creation” whereby our work contributes, via the Spirit, to God’s eschatological transformation. In other words, our labors co-participate with God in the redemption of the world. How does the Spirit accomplish this? He gifts (*charisms*) us the ability to work in ways that exhibit the values (i.e., the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) of God’s new creation. This means certain principles guide our actions in “structuring the reality of human work” (p. 81); principles reflective of these values, and reflective of what God ultimately desires for His world.

What difference does Volf’s (2001) approach make? First, it clarifies the notion of calling. All Christians have the same call from the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit to participate in God’s redemptive plan. Work is not ideological, but rather is a spiritual partnership with God on “the project of the new creation” (p. 116). Second, this approach ensures individuals can change jobs. Switching roles does not infer a lack of faith; rather it is a new way of living out one’s spiritual call. Such variation does not create uncertainty as Luther argued (Jensen, 2006), nor does it encourage laziness as the Puritans feared (Weber, 1905/1976). What we do is not

important, rather the person who works receives a call to which his or her talents (*charisms*) make an adequate response feasible.

Perhaps most importantly, Volf's (2001) approach helps evaluate "good work." He argues in this present world, some forms of work are not part of God's plan for His new creation. Work not influenced by the Spirit (i.e., work unreflective of spiritual values such as peace, love, joy, kindness, patience, and so on), is work that does not cooperate with God and, therefore, is of little value from a Christian perspective. Rather, Volf writes, such labors interact with the evil powers that scheme to ruin God's good design. For example, using sweatshop labor does not reflect the values of the Spirit, and it does not collaborate with God to make the world a better place. Contrast this with work done in the Spirit—the Bible describes this as precious and eternal (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:12–15).

Along similar lines, we can gauge "meaningful work." From a Christian perspective, work that participates in God's new creation is always meaningful, even if at the time it does not seem apparent, because it provides the building blocks for God's eschatological *transformatio mundi* (Volf, 2001). Conversely, work contra the Spirit is often dehumanizing and destructive of creation, and ultimately meaningless, since it does not participate in God's plan for the world. For example, work that damages the environment disproportionately is unlikely to be meaningful from a Christian viewpoint because it destroys God's good creation, and does not anticipate what is to come.

Volf (2001) claims that as Christians, we live in the era of the Spirit. We are the first fruits of this new era, given gifts to work with God in the restoration of the world. Instead of a functional view of work, Christians determine that good and meaningful work contributes to the flourishing of others, and anticipates and reflects what is to come, a creation in perfect communion with God. Such a perspective should, in principle, reduce any sense of alienation Christians feel in their work, while minimizing the exploitation of others for instrumental ends. Correspondingly, it should encourage personal autonomy and development of individuals, while re-appropriating the communal dimension of work. In practice, this might include such things as caring for the marginalized, manufacturing in sustainable ways, avoiding cheap labor, paying a living wage, and largely operating in ways that honor God, the environment, and human beings.

### Managerial Implications

What do these two related Christian traditions (Catholic and Protestant) tell managers about modern work? And how do these four dissimilar individuals (a saint, a pope, an author, and a theologian) enlighten us as to how Christian spirituality might be applied in modern organizations? Below are several implications for managers.

For Christians, work is a spiritual gift from God, and thus should be directed back to Him; it is an important means of imaging God back to himself (McGhee & Habets, 2018). Managerial emphasis on the substantive ensures work becomes the practice and nurturance of God's gifts, rather than a more functional box ticking and meeting profit targets exercise (Jensen, 2006). Many Christians want to excel at work because they view it as a calling, not just a job, and see it as a means of blessing (or thanking) God. Thus, their labor is its own reward (Sayers, 1949/2011). Managers who legitimize Christians in exercising their Spirit-led talents freely and fully are likely to reap significant benefits. For instance, evidence suggests that religiosity/spirituality augments employee wellbeing (Arnetz et al., 2013; Crawford, Hubbard, Lonis-Shumate, & O'Neill, 2009; Kolodinsky, Giacalone, & Jurkiewicz, 2008; Tejada, 2015) and enhances decision-making (Fernando, Dharmage, & Almeida, 2007; McGhee & Grant, 2017; Phipps, 2012).

The Spirit of God is the source of all life (Moltmann, 1997). God's willingness to share His Spirit with us should underpin our own sharing and interdependence with others (Jensen, 2006). When work is hoarded or owned exclusively by others, workers can experience alienation from their labors and/or exploitation at the hands of the rich and powerful (Volf, 2001). Managers responding to the divine life within them, by contrast, should do everything they can to avoid such outcomes. How might this be achieved? Jensen (2006) suggests three ways. First, spread ownership across all workers, and/or amplify workers' voices in management decisions. In doing so, workers are not merely valued for utilitarian ends, but are grounded in who they are and whose they are, for all belong to God. Second, move away from conflictual strategies in the workplace. Instead of the zero-sum game that characterizes much of management–employee engagement, focus on abundance and sharing. The Spirit demonstrates that when good work is shared, then the bounty increases. After all, both management and employees want the same thing, “the creation of good products and services; the maintenance of a decent standard of living that comes, in part from good labor; and the continued ecological sustainability of work practices” (p. 103). Finally, reject the hyper-specialization of workers that results from a focus on efficiency at any cost. Any system that values ends over people is idolatrous since it violates the principle of respecting workers for who they are and for whose they are. Several methods such as job enrichment, job rotation, increased training and development, and increased worker autonomy and co-determination can all reduce such “Taylorism” (Prujit, 2000).

Individuals such as Mother Teresa and Pope Francis, who personify a lived, and fully engaged, spirituality with the world can inspire all Christians, as well as those from other faith traditions, to respect and love the marginalized, the outcast, the hungry, the poor, and the oppressed. Indeed, such behavior was incarnate in, and modeled by, Jesus Christ, who came to save the lost, to set the captives free, and to empower the last, while humbling the first. Global market capitalism, while improving the living standards of many, has led to widespread inequality between the haves and the have nots (Moe-Lobeda, 2002; Volf, 2001). Such disparity, whether it be wealth, gender, or ethnicity, contributes to many adverse economic and social outcomes (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010). Managers who emulate the Christian tradition can display a praxis-in-action through working for the flourishing of both the organization and the community.

At an operational level, this means enhancing diversity, improving compensation structures for the least well off, reversing the use of contingent workers, and resisting the overall increase in employment insecurity (Riaz, 2015). At a strategic level, this involves transforming the dominant schema of organizations from that of technocratic egocentrism (Gull & Doh, 2004), to: (1) a deeply held shared compassion for human and non-human stakeholders (including the environment); (2) a value system built around openness, transparency, and service; (3) a focus on humility that recognizes all good gifts come from God and are to be distributed fairly; and (4) a long-term perspective that partakes in and hopes for the renewal of creation (Walsh & Keesmat, 2004). At a societal level, this necessitates reflecting on how products and/or services might contribute to economic deprivation. For instance, subprime mortgages did not reduce inequality, instead they kept families in financial lack through high interest rates and eventual foreclosures (Mahmud, 2012).

Finally, Christian spirituality surpasses the dual vision inherited from Greeks, augmented by René Descartes, and so prevalent in our modern organizational worldview (Giacalone, 2004), that the spiritual and physical are opposed realities. The Spirit of Christ makes the transcendent immanent; God is here and now, there is no insuperable abyss. Thus, our primary identity as Christians connects us with our material reality. Indeed our flourishing is inextricably tied to the flourishing of the earth. Pope Francis (2015), in a recent encyclical, “On care for our common home,” articulates a similar idea. He argues that the “human environment and the natural

environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation” (p. 33). Contrary to popular belief, Christianity does not present a license for humanity to exploit nature. Instead it offers a moral foundation for environmental stewardship, upholds the intrinsic value of nature, and provides hope for the future. Thus, Christian managers should think of business, society, and nature as interconnected, and act in ways that enhance this system so that all life can flourish.

## Conclusion

Throughout Christian history, work has been viewed both as a curse and as a means of fulfillment. In every age, work has been unavoidable, even if the topic has not held the explicit attention of most Christian theologians. Our experience of work at times reflects our estrangement from God, and at other times reproduces our communion with the Creator. Although work is a necessity, it is also a gift of creativity, of communion, and of co-creation with God (Jensen, 2006). When our work responds to that gift, we catch a glimpse of good and great work in action. While Christians often vary in their theology and practice, when it comes to work they all share a deep longing for the Spirit of God to be among people, and in their labors, as together they redeem creation and show God’s love to the world.

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