Do your best. Work from the heart for your real Master, for God, confident that you’ll get paid in full when you come into your inheritance. Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you’re serving is Christ.”
Colossians 3:23-24 (The Message)
Work That Is Worship to God

“So what do you do for a living?”

I hear that question a lot, and it's very interesting to see how people react when I tell them either that I sell cell phones or that I'm a pastor. The way they react really depends on whom I tell which occupation and what their background is. Some will look down on my retail job and look up to my job as a pastor, while others will do quite the opposite!

Have you ever thought that what you do is less significant than what other people do, that somehow your occupation is less important or less spiritual than those of others? You may have thought “I'm just a _____. “ Well, I'm writing to tell you that you're not a “just-a.” In fact, there are no “just-a’s” in the kingdom of God! Rather, God has a plan for you, and it involves every part of your life, including your occupation.

Whether we like it or not, we tend to divide our lives into categories that can lead to a gap between Sunday and Monday. We tend to approach this gap with a few common solutions to help us deal with the difference.

The first is that we may attempt to commute back and forth between the two worlds. This actually further amplifies the problem of seeing the world through the two lenses of the sacred and the secular. The second is that we may discount the value of work as less important than “spiritual” matters, and this leads to a loss of dignity and a vague sense of guilt for not doing more “spiritual” things. And finally, we may discount the value of faith and its potential to impact on the “real” world. This leads to a secular view of work, in which success is measured by wealth, recognition, and status.

But what does God say about what we do all week long? What does He have to say about our occupations?

I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God.
—Ecclesiastes 3:12-13

Work—and enjoying it—is God's gift. Why would Solomon, the wisest person to ever live, say something like that? Work is God's idea. It is not a consequence of sin, but part of God's original plan:

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed...The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.
—Genesis 2:8, 15

Work is so much a part of God's plan that Jesus said God the Father is always working (John 5:17). Our work is a gift, an extension of God's work, which adds value to the world!

Our occupations are the things we are called to do. As Dorothy Sayers put it, “Work is not, primarily, a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do.” As Christians, our occupations becomes places to pursue our vocation, which is who we are called to be. 1 Peter 2:9 says that we are called to be God’s people, priesthood, and possession, declaring His praises to the world. That's our vocation. Who we are called to be or become is the place out of which the things we are called to do should flow.

So, if what God has called us to be and what He has called us to do are important, how are we to live these things out? And how does that affect our occupations? Paul wrote the following to the early church:

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. . . Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” —Colossians 3:17, 22-24

Paul wrote this when many people were servants, but it is relevant to us today. When you think about it, all of us who work at jobs are serving our employers. If we take this scripture seriously, it changes everything. Suddenly, I have a new boss and new priorities. I'm not working to please a manager or a district manager, but rather Jesus Christ. I've seen this powerfully demonstrated in my job with T-Mobile. When I go to work and my attitude and desires are to do everything in the name of Jesus, it tremendously affects my work, my attitude, and my perspective on how I am doing at my job. When I have the right attitude, what I do in my occupation can actually bring praise and worship to God.

As believers, our work that is done unto God is sacred, not secular; it is worship! It's amazing to see the opportunities I have had and the doors that have opened because I ask God, What do you want me to do today? It's as simple as making Him a part of the decisions we make at work and relying on His wisdom and ability throughout the day. It will change our attitude and our effectiveness to the point that our co-workers and boss will notice a difference in both of these areas.
Every day I ask God to empower me by His Holy Spirit to hear what He wants me to hear, to be who He wants me to be so that I can do what He wants me to do. And whenever I go to work for T-Mobile, I pray that God will give me favor with my co-workers, managers, and customers. I can tell you for a fact that God has done this!

God has not only met our financial needs, but He has given me great relationships with my managers, co-workers, and customers. Through these relationships, God has given me many opportunities to share His love and to pray with and for people. These things would not have happened if I had viewed my job as a secular activity that was somehow disconnected from who God has called me to be. God wants us to be all the time!

I'm not a “just-a,” and neither are you! We can take what our occupations are and belittle them by saying that we're just a _______. We can do that to all the things God has called us to do: I'm just a student, I'm just a stay-at-home mom, I'm just a goalie, I'm just a driver, I'm just a manager, I'm just a janitor, I'm just a department head, I'm just an engineer... Or I'm just an usher, I'm just a worship leader, I'm just a worshipper, I'm just a small-group leader, I'm just a kids' teacher, I'm just a helper, I'm just a... But there are no just-a's in the kingdom of God!

God has called us to be His representatives and bring glory to Him everywhere in everything we do, including our occupations. It is part of His plan, and He wants to extend His relationship with us to this area too. If we know and practice this, our attitudes and actions will be:

- **God is who I'm working for.** He is the one I am pleasing.
- **I am working with all my heart.**
- **I am not just working to pay the bills.**
- **I am living my vocation in my occupation.**
- **My work is worship unto God.**

How can you bridge the gap between Sunday and Monday? Ask God to be a part of your workday and talk with Him throughout it. Study the scriptures, and apply them to your work. Strengthen relationships with other believers as you spur each other on to love and good deeds.

Recognize God's place at the center of your occupation. It is where your vocation defines your occupation, where who you are defines how you do what you do. Jesus gave us these powerful words on how we should live our lives: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

--Pastor Sam Snyder

Continued from page 1

As I became more and more zealous, I began to study the Bible more and more. I began losing interest in all other things, even to the point where I thought that anything taught and done outside of the Bible was a complete waste. I enrolled in a program at Northwestern College and completed a master's degree in theological studies. (I am currently finishing another master's in Bible exposition, and this summer I will begin a Master of Divinity program.) Through my growth, I have learned to be more open minded, and I now see the value of all the different things God has given us to enjoy, as long as He is at the center.

I also went through a time when I discounted my ability to have an impact. During my first year in Christ, I once tried to share my faith with some teachers who were in the staff lounge, talking about their church. They invited me into their conversation, and after I told them about my church, they went on about how their church believed there are many ways to God. I attempted, in a polite manner, to convey my belief that there is no way to Him except through Christ.

One of the teachers scorned and ridiculed me, and I felt it was useless to even try to testify. It seemed that people had already made up their minds and didn't want to hear. However, on that very day I asked God to take away my hurt and anger toward this person. Upon leaving the building, I ran into her, and she humbly apologized.

Since then, the building that had appeared devoid of God now has evidence of His hand at work. I have had opportunities to pray with teachers who have been in distress. Four years ago I knew of no Christian administrators; since then, two non-Christian administrators were transferred and replaced by Christians who support the Bible study program. Christian teachers have been added, including a counselor who listens to KTIS, an English teacher, a social studies teacher, and a science teacher who believes God created everything.

I believe that young people deserve leaders who will direct them to the truth, and God is moving in incredible ways. In this Year of Return, I believe God is at work taking back what is His.

--Michael Humphrey

(“Editor's note: Michael and his family have been attending BCF since last summer and have recently been welcomed into membership.)
Called to Bring Hope to the World

(Editors note: Joel Holm, the founder of Pathfinders International, a partner ministry of BCF, spoke to our church body about developing and growing a missional mind-set in October 2007. In this article, he describes what God will do through us when we put God in His place in our occupations.)

Did you know that...

God's story of bringing hope to this world is told not so much by religious leaders as it is by marketplace leaders and professionals?

The apostle Paul was a businessman who regularly referred to how his business intersected with his Kingdom work? Or that Lydia, a wealthy businesswoman, played a key role in a church that was the primary sponsor of the bringing God's hope to the world?

It was second-century Christian traders who brought God's hope to Arabia? Or that it was Greek merchants who brought hope through the Indian trade routes?

Marketplace professionals in the sixth and seventh centuries brought hope through the silk routes through China so much that Marco Polo would record how he saw Christian chapels lining the route from Baghdad to Beijing?

The first Chinese translation of the Bible was done by a middle manager of the Dutch East Indies Company?

More than half of all the Protestant missionaries in the eighteenth century were professionals and marketplace leaders?

These things shouldn’t surprise anyone when Jesus used a marketplace leader as a role model for His disciples. In Luke 16 Jesus told the story of a professional who was about to lose his job. He planned ahead and did not charge the commission he should have received from the clients, knowing that when he lost his job, they would welcome him into their homes for the good deed he had done. Jesus told the disciples that they needed to learn from the shrewd tactics of this businessman.

Did you know that you, as a professional, are part of a very elite group? Throughout history, professionals like you have fulfilled this teaching of Jesus by being cunning in how they bring His hope to a hurting world. And today, in this twenty-first century, you and your group are best positioned to lead the charge of bringing God's hope to a hurting and lost world.

In just a few decades, the world has seen a radical shift take place. In the twentieth century, the world was characterized by a Cold War system, in which there were two wars. In the twenty-first century, the world is characterized by a global economic system. In the twentieth century the symbol of the world was the wall of Berlin, division amongst

governments, especially superpowers. In the twenty-first century, the symbol is the World Wide Web, where the world has become highly integrated. Power has shifted from super national powers to super global markets, and no one is fully in charge.

God is using this shift to bring hope to the world. When China wanted to join the World Trade Organization, it was forced to decentralize some of its control, giving people greater freedom to bring hope to their community. And to stay economically competitive, Bhutan, a small Buddhist nation in the Himalayas, opened communication with the world to its people by allowing the Internet.

A church had no recognition in its city until a few business leaders helped the church start a business and credit union to help the community. Now the mayor of that city calls the church, wanting breakfast with the church’s leadership.

Whether you are a business owner, an educator, or a middle manager, God has made you—as a professional, a marketplace leader—part of an elite group. You may often be unnoticed, and yet, you are at the lead of bringing God’s hope to this world.

Historically, the professional has been known as one who supported the work of hope. But if all God gets is your money, He will not get the best you have to offer. You are called to bring hope to the world. This global season has you positioned exactly where you need to be to fulfill that call.

Five Questions to Guide the Professional in Bringing Hope to the World

How does being a professional or a marketplace leader position you to bring hope to a hurting world? Here are five questions for you to consider in optimizing your professional position. If possible, discuss these questions with others who have a similar role. Learn from each other. Pray for clarity and then for courage. Take time to answer these questions, starting with the one that best matches your current role.

1. How can my professional goals interface with my Kingdom goals?
   Don’t separate bringing hope from your vocation.

2. What professional problems is my church facing, and do they require professional solutions in my area of expertise?
   Use your gifting to serve your church.
3. Who can I influence to grow in their role as a professional to bring hope to the world?  
Influence others to start bringing hope.  
You don’t have to go it alone.

4. Who has God put in my path in my professional world so I can bring them hope?  
Set goals for changing people’s lives, based on your professional calling.

5. Where in the community can I take my church to bring hope?  
Lead your church into relationship with a hurting world.

A man started an import business, and these five questions strongly influenced his business decisions. He defined his business goals by the number of currently unemployed families that would now have work, so he intentionally positioned his factory in a lower income neighborhood. He set goals for how many people would join his church and support its work. He started a mentoring program for young adults, providing internships within his company.

Through his factory, this Christian business leader opened the eyes of his church to a hurting world. His business began an after-school program to get kids off the streets, and he invited his factory’s vendors to join in bringing hope to his hurting community. He faced enormous challenges and difficulties. His profits were not as high as they could have been because of the strategic decisions he made. But his import company was an amazing success because through it, he brought hope to his world.

--Joel Holm

Wisdom for the Workplace

*Authors note: As part of our congregation’s Saturate: Scripture Immersion Experience (see page 19 for the complete schedule), I was reading in the book of Romans and was impressed with these clear-cut instructions that tell us exactly how we should live as we Put God in His Place in our Occupation.

An average day can be divided roughly into thirds:
Eight hours we sleep, and eight we play, and eight we have to work.
The Lord wants to hold center place in all things, every day.
Our lives should point the world to Christ in all we do and say.

The way to be a light that draws your co-workers to God
Is by sincerely loving them – don’t put up a façade.
Run from evil, cling to good in every situation.
Work hard without expecting any public commendation.
Don’t try to do this on your own, but gain your strength from Him;
By spending time with Jesus, your flame will not grow dim.

Consider that you’re serving Christ in every task at hand.
Don’t quit when things are difficult; hold on to Him and stand.
Be on the lookout for a way to help someone in need;
Welcome them with friendship, and you’ve planted a seed.
For those who may not like you – respond to them with blessing.
A godly attitude toward them will keep your heart from stressing.

Rejoice with those who are rejoicing; mourn with those who mourn.
Don’t ever treat another person with a prideful scorn.
Don’t retaliate if someone angers you one day.
Be at peace with everyone, no matter what they say.
It’s not your job to take revenge when someone causes ill.
The Lord says, “I’ll take care of it. Let your heart be still.”

If someone’s actions make you feel like throwing a punch,
Respond with generosity and buy that person lunch.
Don’t let evil triumph; that will only cause discord.
You’ll overcome the darkness with the goodness of the Lord.

--Liz Kimmel

From Romans 12:9-12

Hats

We wear hats to adorn our heads;
To make us more appealing to those around us,
To shield our eyes from the sun
To warm our ears from the winter cold.

You wore no hat, except the crown of thorns.
It did not make you more appealing,
Nor did it shield your eyes,
Nor warm your ears.
It cut deeply into your precious head
And you bled -
For me.

--Liz Kimmel
Anointed as a Workplace Minister

(Editor's note: The following article by Steve Venarchick, who began attending BCF a few months ago, tells how he has learned to put God in His place in his occupation.)

Through God's Word and what He says about me, I am anointed as a workplace minister. That's His place in my occupation.

We spend over 70 percent of our time at work. What an opportunity to use the gifts and talents God has given each of us to equip us to be workplace ministers. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). And 1 Peter 2:9 adds:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

In this season of my life, a little over five years now, God has placed me at the Minneapolis International Airport. My main job is to issue security passes to people who are not flying but need access to the secure side of the airport. I also work part-time for the Airport Police Department. I interact with a diverse international work force that includes Muslims, Hindus, animists, and everything in between, quite a mixture in the spiritual realm.

The airport is one of most spiritually contaminated places in the Twin Cities. Between 33 and 35 million people pass through it yearly, and with that comes harassment from the enemy. So many lost people and a variety of demonic activity, both locally and internationally, passes by me daily. When this happens, I meditate on Psalm 62:7: "My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge." I dress for the occasion by putting on the armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-17.

I had a little orphan mentality until several years ago, and I was not living up to my full potential in the workplace. Then one day I asked my Father quite boldly to expand my territory or move me out of this place! Well He did just that, according to the promise of John 15:7: "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." And He did it in ways that were unbelievable, "For nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

God cleared the path for me to spread the gospel and interact on a daily basis with the greatest to the least at the airport. The favor of the Lord was quite evident in this process, according to His promise in Proverbs 8:35: "For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the Lord."

How do I know what to say to the people God brings across my path each day? I rely on these biblical truths:

For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

—1 Corinthians 2:16

Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

—2 Corinthians 3:5, 6

Mostly, I love the people rightly as Jesus would and share with them what God has done for me, not only today, but for eternity.

Throughout each day, as I continue to draw nearer to the Lord, I work for Him, not man, according to Colossians 3:17: “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

I encourage you to look at each of the scriptures I have shared here to learn the truths of what His Word says about you and receive what the Lord has for you in your workplace. At the present time I am mentoring several people in their faith journey at my workplace. I am called to be a very bright light that chases away the darkness each day I am at my workplace, and I am praying with those who would like or desperately need prayer to deal with demonic spirits.

Everything I have in this world is God's. He gave me all the things that I have to bring Him honor and glory! "Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all" (1 Chronicles 29:12). (My recreational ministry is golf, and I have a captive audience four hours or more. Can you imagine the opportunity for ministry?)

May the Lord bless and encourage you each day as you serve Him in the marketplace.

--Steve Venarchick
I had been awakened out of my slumber, ready to walk more fully in the relationship that was lost when Adam fell in the Garden of Eden, a relationship now possible through the redemption of Jesus Christ. A recognition, realization, or coming into awareness of something. A renewal of interest in religion, especially in a community; a revival. The start of a feeling or awareness in a person.

Beginning of the Awakening Conference

In October, 2010, we received a call from World Trumpet Mission about an awakening summit they were planning in Chicago for this past November. As we sought the Lord in prayer, we heard clearly that we were to host a site for web streaming these meetings. During the meetings our ministry team and partners were significantly impacted by the messages Holy Spirit was imparting through John Mulinde and their team. The Lord told us to raise up a team to travel to Kampala, Uganda which is a city at the heart of the transforming revival that has been vibrant in that nation over the last 15 years. We recently returned and we want to faithfully deliver to you the messages we received from the Lord in grace and humility knowing these messages are piercing our hearts and praying they pierce yours.

1. condition of the Church. The Church of America is far from the heart of God. We think we are fine but we are blind and naked and poor. We need to repent and return to God in a radical way. We have become entangled so much in the worldliness of our culture we cannot even see how far away from the Kingdom we have drifted. We cannot continue to preach "peace, peace" when there is no real peace. God is calling us back to Himself. We cannot afford to keep coming up with theologies and doctrines to explain why the presence and power of God are not found among us.

2. urgency of the hour. One of our greatest weapons in the battle against the apathy and complacency that have gripped the Church is to preach the urgency of the hour. We are in the end of days. All of the major end time prophecies are being fulfilled before our very eyes. The major missions organizations are saying that every people group in the nations will experience a saturated gospel witness in the next 10-25 years. While we don't know the day or the hour of the return of Jesus, we need to consistently bring the urgency of the hour we are in before the Body of Christ so we come out of the spiritual coma that has us believing that its going to be another 2000 years before the Lord returns.

3. need for God. We need to return to waiting upon the Lord and inquiring of Him for direction in every detail of our personal lives and ministry. We need to repent of self sufficiency and for allowing ministry to move forward programmatically without truly seeking and waiting upon the Lord. We understand the love and grace of God but we also need the fear of the Lord. We need to cry out to God for deeper revelation of our neediness for Him. We need to repent of exchanging lots of ministry activity for lasting Kingdom fruitfulness. We need to move from saying we need God to demonstrating we need Him through a lifestyle of radical prayer and fasting.

4. count the cost. God is challenging us to count the cost of seeing Him release transforming revival upon our cities. The Spirit of the Lord is searching the nations for those who are willing to answer the call to complete surrender. Are you willing to give up everything to see God move in our cities? Control? Your free time? your ministry? Even your own life or the lives of those you love? These are challenging questions but they are completely consistent with biblical Christianity. Do we really want the Kingdom of God to come? When the Kingdom comes it leaves no room for the works of the flesh or the glory of man.

--Steven Uggen

Testimonies of Awakening

(Editor's note: In early March, some from BCF were privileged to participate in the Awakening Conference with John Mulinde of World Trumpet Mission sponsored by Trinity Works at Redeeming Love Church in Maplewood. We asked those who were part of this conference to share brief reports of what God did in their hearts and lives as they met with others in God's presence. Three of them responded with the testimonies below, and we trust that their words will encourage you to also open your heart to the awakening of God.)

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The act of awaking from sleep.

A revival of interest or attention.

A recognition, realization, or coming into awareness of something.

A renewal of interest in religion, especially in a community; a revival.

The start of a feeling or awareness in a person.

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I had been led by the Lord to set aside the whole month of March to seek Him. I wasn't looking for a religious experience, but a lifestyle of daily walking with the Lord. I had missed times of intimacy with Him. The timing of the Awakening Conference (for me) was kairos (a Greek word meaning "the right or opportune moment"). The Lord was very present in the deep, sustained times of worship that were woven before, during, and after the messages.

I had been awakened out of my slumber, ready to walk more fully in the relationship that was lost when Adam fell in the Garden of Eden, a relationship now possible through the redemption of Jesus Christ. A new hunger and passion for His presence has been ignited.

--Tom Oestreich

I attended the conference on Friday, March 4. The speaker shared about how we need to be desperate for God, and the way he shared has impacted my life. I found myself realizing how desperate I have been for other things besides Jesus. Three examples are that I desire men's approval, a great, untroubled family, and a worry-free life.

Now when I pray, I pray with a desperate heart for God because He is literally the only One who can answer my deepest heart needs. He is the One who can turn my heart away from evil. He is the One who can show me the true paths of righteousness. I desire to want Him more than anything else. I have said this many times in my life, but now my desire is to practice it through every season of my life. I don't want to wait until something bad happens before I become desperate for Him. I want to walk in His ways and allow His kingdom to come in my life as it is done in heaven.

--Sharon Holmgren

This was my experience at the awakening meetings this past week. God gave me greater love for pastors and the body of Christ. I could feel the brokenness in His heart at how far away His people are from where He is calling us.

My understanding of God's plan and purposes became more clear and refined. He continued to show me how the world systems and our cultural influences have taken us/me away from the kingdom of God. The very ways I am used to thinking and doing things—even things related to the work of God—need to be changed. I received revelation about the honor of being called to lay down our lives for the Lord so that others can enter into the fullness of the kingdom of God.

What an amazing blessing to see all the believers having the fire in their hearts stirred even more. Nothing in this world is more incredible than “selling everything”—all our heart connections to this world—for deeper fellowship with Jesus.

--Sharon Holmgren

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A recognition, realization, or coming into awareness of something.

A revival of interest or attention.

A recognition, realization, or coming into awareness of something.

A renewal of interest in religion, especially in a community; a revival.

The start of a feeling or awareness in a person.

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We need God to demonstrating we need Him through a lifestyle of radical prayer and fasting.

--Trinity Works Leadership Team

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You Can Bless Our Somali Neighbors

You can have an eternal impact on the many Somalis who have moved right into our own neighborhood. Find out how at a training session geared toward both new workers and veterans here at Bethel Christian Fellowship on Saturday, March 26. See the sidebar for more information.

Opportunities abound to tutor the Somalis in English study, extend friendship, and provide transportation as a means of expressing Christ’s love and truth to them. BCF’s David Pestel directs a tutoring center, and several other Bethel people help in various ways. I’m involved in taking Somalis to the tutoring center for their evening classes. Here’s a typical transportation run:

5:10 p.m. I roll into the church parking lot. The blacktop is pretty clear of snow and ice. Thanks, Lord, I'll be able to walk faster. Pulling up next to the church van, I get out of my car just as Pastor Jim roars up, rolls down his car window, and says, “Hi, Bus Driver.” I laugh, wishing I could think of a comeback.

5:12 p.m. I unlock the two passenger-side doors. On the driver’s side, I unlock the door, hoist myself up behind the steering wheel, start the motor, and I’m off! Down Portland; left on Hamline; stop lights at Selby, Marshall, Concordia, and St. Anthony; right at the next light and through the Target parking lot; right again at the dead end; up the block to the back entrance of Skyline Towers; through the parking lot; and around the building.

5:33 p.m. As I pull up at the front entrance, three Somali women come out. Oh, oh, I know they’re going to have trouble with that side door. I must let Liz know about it. I gesture for them to pull hard, but they don’t understand. One woman opens the front door and climbs in and over the passenger seat to open the door from the inside. I’ll bet David Pestel hops out and opens it before they get there—wish I were more nimble! They come a few at a time. I smile at each one and say, “Hello.” Some respond with, “Hi, how are you?” Of course, I counter with “Great!” I wonder if they have learned that word yet. Everyone is chatting, and suddenly someone says, “Go! Come back.” I respond, “Come back.” The sun is just low enough that it hits me right in the eyes; I adjust the visor, head the van out of the parking lot onto St. Anthony, and pray, Lord protect and cover us. I ease into the traffic coming off I-94. Left onto Hamline, over the freeway, left again halfway down the block into the Concordia University parking area, and stop.

5:50 p.m. The Somalis all pile out, a few thank yous here and there. The lady who seems to be the leader of the group always waits for everyone to get out, says, “See you next week,” and slams the door.

5:55 p.m. I’m off to retrace my route and pick up anywhere from two to five more people. Then, we go back to Concordia.

6:10 p.m. I pull into the church parking lot, lock the van, and head for home. As I pull onto Summit Avenue, I find myself wondering how in the world David Pestel does it all. He takes the Tuesday and Thursday runs and also leads the English as a Second Language program.

An hour out of my week to provide transportation for some people who need to know Jesus—what a small, fun service!

If you are available to help with transportation or any other part of the SALT ministry, please contact David Pestel. (651-340-1616 Dpestel@wr.org). And consider attending the training seminar on March 26. You will be blessed!

--Jennette Gudgel
SALT TRAINING

Do you need encouragement and insight as you share Jesus with your Somali neighbors? **Come Saturday, March 26, for a faith-inspiring, skill-sharpening day of training.** New workers and veterans alike will learn more about Somali culture, Islam, and how to share Jesus through ESL-literacy, friendship, and other vital expressions of God's love.

Rajo (Somali for "hope") Ministries and Somali Adult Literacy Training, (outreach ministries of World Relief Minnesota) are offering this Training, which includes a training packet, excellent resources like the Somali language Jesus Film DVD, and a hot, savory Somali lunch.

Faysal Sharif, who grew up as a Muslim in Yemen and put his faith in Jesus Messiah in 1980, will be the keynote speaker.

SALT Outreach Training

9:00 am – 2:00 pm  
Saturday, March 26, 2011  
Bethel Christian Fellowship

$20 – SALT volunteer or college student  
$30-$35 – all others (enter the word *Group* for the promotional code $5 discount if you carpool with a spouse or one or more friends); Includes training packet, Jesus DVD, and a hot, savory Somali lunch.

Keynote speaker:  
Faysal Sharif, former Muslim  
Heads ministry to invite Muslims to Jesus and disciple Muslim background believers.

To register or for information:  
Dave Pestel  651-340-1616  
DPestel@wr.org or go to rajo@wr.org.

A Husband-Wife Team  
That Serves God in Nursing

**Guided by Christian Principles and Values**

The job I do requires lots of patience, caring, and compassion. I take care of the sick, long-term residents, some who may be helpless and others who lack mental cognizance and are thereby unable to verbalize their problems. In these circumstances, I must anticipate their needs.

My Christian principles and values guide me at all times as I practice nursing. This takes into consideration holistic health care with a cross-cultural approach. The integration of my values as a Christian and my different cultural background has been a great tool for me on the job.

--Chris Williams

**Practicing Love for Others**

As a patient care assistant (PCA) in the rehab section of a care center, I come across residents from different walks of life. Some residents have lost hope about recovery, are discouraged about being in a care center, and are despondent and lonely because there is no relative to visit them.

With these conditions and circumstances, I, as a Christian, spend extra time assisting and encouraging residents to reach their maximum level of functioning. To encourage and assure residents, I sing some Christian hymns while performing my duties.

Whenever time permits me, I conduct devotions for residents before lunch hours. And when a co-worker is sick or bereaved, I empathize with that person by giving a card or finding material with encouraging words to share.

I practice love for others because when love is shown, God is also glorified. In Christ’s love, everyone is somebody.

--Anna Williams
Twins Learn to Trust in God in Lithuania Study Trips

(Editor's note: Molly and Martha Barrett, identical twins who share in the fellowship at BCF, studied at separate times in Lithuania in the past two years. In the following articles, they share what God taught them in their travel and study abroad.)

Learning God’s Nearness in a Faraway Place

I was so excited to go to Lithuania. Surprisingly, I was extremely calm the night before I left and while I was traveling there. I thought this was going to be the best experience of my life. Then, when I finally arrived after a long plane ride, that idea quickly vanished as I realized that I was lost in the airport. More realizations came into my mind—I was in a new and different country with no money, no food, no phone, and I only knew how to say “hello”—and I cried.

After crying for probably over half an hour, I did the only thing I could think of doing; I took out my devotion book and prayed to be calm enough to attempt to ask for help. My first attempt failed when I asked a woman sitting on a bench if I could use her cell phone. She shook her head and gave me an evil glare. I went back to the bench and cried some more.

Then I noticed that the teenage boys sitting next to me were using a cell phone. I asked them if I could please use their phone, and they were very kind and said I could. However, they told me that there were no minutes on the phone, and they were only using it for games. They suggested that I ask an airport employee.

I saw a man with an outfit close to that of an airport employee, and I walked toward him very quickly and began to explain my situation. He graciously dialed the number on my emergency contact card, and in a half hour, I was picked up by my study-abroad team. I felt a little better about being in Lithuania, but these feelings were, unfortunately, only temporary.

When I arrived at the hostel, the study-abroad staff suggested that I not go to sleep because it would make it even harder to get over my jet lag; the best solution would be to get outside in the sunlight. So I went out and explored Vilnius (the capital city of Lithuania) with a group of three other American study-abroad students and two interns. I tried to be social and get to know all of them. Everything seemed just fine.

But when we decided to eat lunch at a restaurant, tears came flooding down my face faster than I could comprehend why. It suddenly hit me that I could not go home for four months; I needed to adjust to life in Lithuania. I could not accept this reality, so as soon as I got back to the hostel, I cried some more and wrote down all the reasons I should go home.

The study-abroad team comforted me by telling me I could go home if I wanted, but they encouraged me to give Lithuania more of a chance. I decided they were right and felt comfort in calling home, using Skype. I talked to people back at home for hours. This, however, was not a good idea since it made me miss home even more.

After experiencing such a deep depression and asking God to help me make a good decision, I decided to at least see the school and go with the group to Klaipeda, a city four hours away. I am so glad I did because that was truly one of the best experiences of my life. I felt a peace that only God could give, and I knew everything would be alright.

I immediately started getting involved in activities to strengthen my faith. Although I have been a Christian for many years, I still had many questions, and I had the privilege of being a part of the Alpha ministry. I also auditioned to help lead chapel worship. I originally came to help support a friend, but was asked to audition anyway. To my surprise, I was chosen to be a team leader.

Throughout my time leading worship, I improved my confidence as a leader to help others worship.

Other ways I was able to strengthen my faith were through my involvement in a weekly Bible study, a spiritual-life retreat one weekend, church on Sundays, and chapel every Wednesday. I even put my faith into action by volunteering to go and play with the children at the local orphanage every other Sunday. God truly shaped me so much and taught me as I did these things.

Although I had a rough beginning in Lithuania, I know that God was with me the whole time. He did not leave me, and He will never leave me no matter how far I travel. Through the many differences in surroundings, language, time zones, food, and unique people, I still managed to do more than I ever thought I could. Discovering who I am and what purpose God had for me in Lithuania was accomplished. I needed to be stripped of everything I was familiar with so I could trust God fully. Praise God indeed!

--Molly Sena Barrett
Putting the Pieces Together

I personally know what it means to have God work all things together for those who trust in Him. Studying abroad in Lithuania was definitely an act of faith on my part and an act of favor on God’s part. I never would have thought I would follow my sister’s footsteps, let alone study in a place I had never heard of and had no desire to go. However, God had a different plan for me and put all the pieces together so that I could go to Lithuania.

First, I decided to study abroad in Lithuania after the initial application deadline had passed, so I was certain I wouldn’t even have a chance to be accepted in the program. Also, Northwestern College made many exceptions to their policies for me, including permission to study abroad in my last semester. Because I was a transfer student, I still needed certain psychology credits to graduate, and I could only take them in the fall. However I received permission to earn them through independent study and online during my summer in Lithuania. I knew it was going to be challenging, but God saw me through every step of the way.

Another piece that fell into place was the fact that the LCC International University, which I attended in Lithuania, worked with me so that I could complete all my courses, have my credits accepted back at Northwestern, and graduate on time. Also, I did a psychology practicum, working at a school for children with special needs instead of doing a senior seminar that Northwestern students are required to take. I feel that the practicum was much more helpful and valuable for me. What a blessing it was that it worked out well!

One of the last things that almost stopped me from going was my desire to travel with someone from my school. I did not want to be alone, but no one else wanted to go. I doubted that God would provide friends and positive people in my life, and I feared that my four months abroad would be lonely. However, I took a leap of faith and was reassured that God is a faithful God and does provide for our every need.

God did provide much more than I had ever thought was possible. The experience I had in Lithuania was so valuable to me because I woke up every morning, putting my full trust in God to protect and provide for me. It wasn’t always easy, but it was so worth it.

It has now been a little over two months since I have returned from Lithuania. Looking back, I can see just how blessed I was to have such a unique and valuable learning experience with so many great people. Now it is a little easier for me to trust God because I just tell myself to remember when I almost passed up the opportunity to study in Lithuania. Any new opportunity I have now will also turn out for the best if God is leading me there.

--Martha Barrett

The Place of Prayer in Our Occupation

The earthly life of Jesus Christ was full of work, and everything He did was life giving. In John 4:34, Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish complete His work” (New King James Version). Yet, as much as He was willing and desiring to work according to the will of the Father, He never relied on His own strength. He relied solely on the Giver of strength, God the Father, and this made His work very fruitful and life giving. There is no doubt that prayer was the key to His effective life on earth.

The Lord Jesus demonstrated the importance of prayer through many examples, which are great sources of reference for us believers. His legacy of prayer has helped many believers as they go about their occupations or vocations. Over the years, I have learned to depend heavily on prayer in my occupation. It has worked tremendously for me over the years in my work as a teaching assistant/instructor and in every activity in which I am involved. I have learned to depend on the Lord as my Enabler. Scripture rightly states:

He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:30-31, NKJV

Just as Isaiah and many believers have experienced, I must confess that the Lord has truly been my strength. There have been many occasions when I felt very inadequate before I went to teach. However, whenever I turned to Him in prayer, He always gave me boldness and confidence to deliver the lessons very effectively.

Also, in situations where I am short of ideas, prayer has helped me obtain wisdom from God. Our Creator is faithful, and His Word is true. When we need wisdom, God’s Word promises, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5, NKJV).

There is no way anyone can confidently rely on his or her own strength for the activities of life without experiencing some flaws. No matter how strong or wise we may be, the ultimate source is our living God. He is omnipotent, and the Giver of life.

--Felix Amenumey
At Day Camp 2011 we will explore many ways in which we can connect with God through art. We were all created in the Creator's image and have the ability to create.

Art can be fun. Art can be a powerful tool. Through it, we can worship and connect with God. I believe He can speak to us and minister to us on a very deep level through our creative expression in a way that words often can't.

How does one define art? I believe it is an expression of something that comes from deep within. Not all of us were given the ability to paint beautiful landscapes or sing like a songbird, but we are all creative! We need to expand our definition and ideas about what art is. Prayer is a powerful form of art! Cooking can also be a way to express our creativity, as can storytelling or playing an instrument.

Embrace your creativity and who God created you to be!

So many times we have been told that our creation is 'not right!' We are programmed that everyone else does it better, and it must look a certain way to be acceptable. We want to help our children understand that the creative expression inside them is unique and right! We want to create an atmosphere of total acceptance and grace for our children to truly express themselves and be the beautiful masterpieces God created them to be!

I asked Greta Sandquist to share a little of her journey as an artist:

As an artist, I didn't always connect my faith with my talent. I thought it was of little value in the kingdom of God. Sometimes my artistic gifts could be put to use by way of projects around the church, but I thought they were inconsequential compared to the gifts that are more typically associated with the church, gifts such as being a missionary, a teacher, or a preacher.

Through a series of events, which I now see as being guided by the hand of God, I became a part renter of an artists' studio space in Lowertown St Paul. In this space, I began to paint again after many years of letting my paints collect dust. Most of my previous paintings had been for the approval of someone else, perhaps a school assignment, a work project, or a freelance portrait. This was the first time in my adult life that I could paint anything I wanted without having to please anyone.

So, alone in the studio and late into many nights, I began a journey with God where He showed me the joy of painting as an act of worship. I began to paint images that were deeply connected to my soul. I wrestled out painful life journeys with Him through my paintings. Prophesies came to life and seemed to become solid and real when I made their image appear.

God began to put pictures in my head as I heard scriptures and teachings. I painted about Him. I painted to Him. I painted for Him. And I painted with Him. It became a very deep connection point between Him and me. My paintings became like prayers and meditations. As I painted about His character, the truth of what I was painting would seep into the depths of my soul in a way that Bible studies or traditional prayers never had. I felt so alive! And, He felt so alive!

It seemed like I had stumbled across an amazing secret that He was revealing just to me. He showed me that art could be a beautiful language between Him and me. And because of this new language, I have had powerful and life-changing moments with God. Not in a sanctuary, but in a studio. Not with a prayer booklet in hand, but a paintbrush. Not textbook Christianity, but definitely real.

God is calling us to a place of deeper connection and intimacy with Him—connection on a raw, authentic, gut level with no barriers, no secrets, no shame. I believe art is often the conduit that brings us there.

--Amy Hernandez
A Practical Lesson from the Ants

The average lifetime of an ant is ninety days. That is shortened if they happen to be right under my shoe as I walk along the sidewalk. I have yet to see a single ant doing nothing. They are always moving somewhere, often with something in their pincers. They are shoving dirt out of their hole or dragging their “babies” from one place to another. They are always doing something, and they have no boss looking over their shoulder as they work.

In Proverbs 6:6-9, The Message says:

Look at an ant. Watch it closely; let it teach you a thing or two. Nobody has to tell it what to do. All summer it stores up food; at harvest it stockpiles provisions. So how long are you going to laze around doing nothing?

Many times we miss practical lessons when we delve into Scripture, searching for some deep meaning or profound truth. Unlike the ant, we may live long enough to see the results of our work, but we still need to weigh our motives on the job. The Book of James says that it is possible to work and strive and still not receive our desire because we are working for the wrong reasons.

You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. James 4:2-3

This first warns us against being more willing to fight than to ask and trust God, and then it says that our asking and believing may actually reflect our desire for God to play an accomplice to our lusts.

The apostle Paul learned on the Damascus road that his whole life was a matter of pressing hard against the will and purpose of God or, as Acts 9:5 identifies it, “kick[ing] against the pricks” (King James Version). He later confessed that he considered all his work as refuse (waste), save for the cross of Christ. Every tent he made, every day he sat at the feet of the teacher Gamaliel, every Christian he persecuted, his participation in the riot that consumed Stephen—everything he did he considered refuse and waste.

So what are our motives? Are we so unaware of our motives that we become like Simon the sorcerer? Desiring the good gift of the Spirit, Simon still had a heart that was not right before God because his desire was for power, not intimacy with God. If only a person like Peter would stand up to us and confront our actions, even when we think we are doing the right thing. On our jobs, we can work harder than everyone else, seeking promotion and trying to increase our visibility with those who will decide who gets a raise. We may not realize that our hearts are not in right standing with God.

You may be linking work with faith and trusting God for your career advancement. Yet, like Cain, you may not know that your offering is not accepted because you are not doing “what is right” (Genesis 4:7). Cain went through the motions of giving the toil of his hands to God, but his heart was not right. Sin overtook him, and he took his frustration out on his own brother, who gave his offering to God with a good heart.

If we don’t get the job we think we deserve or have earned, do we become jealous of the one who does? Do we take it out on our boss when we think we could do so much better if we had that job? What lessons in the Bible are we willing to heed for our work? It may be proper to start by observing ants.

But don’t expect them to stop for you. They have far too much work to do.

--Adam Ebacher

SAVE THE DATE!! DAYCAMP 2011 Aug 1-4!!
CONNECT WITH YOUR CREATOR :: Artful worship

How YOU can help!

PRAY! We need to bathe this outreach in prayer. We want our kids to Connect with God! Experiencing the supernatural power and love of God. Real love and passion for Him. Out of the box.

VOLUNTEER! Do you feel a nudging to help out? We literally need an army of volunteers. From leaders of art workshops, to teachers, to kitchen staff to nursery workers, to sound booth operators. It’s fun, I promise!! (Contact Amy Hernandez 651/216.4468 amycayennepeppy@gmail.com)

DONATE! We need resources to make this happen! From $$, to supplies (watch for future updates) to time (set construction, set-up, tear-down...)

INVITE! This is open to ALL kids entering K-6th grade. Bring your neighborhood!!

Day Camp will be held Monday-Thursday, Aug 1-4 from 9-2 pm. All kids entering K-6th grade are invited. It will end Thursday evening with a family BBQ and worship service that will be led by the kids.

BE THERE OR BE SQUARE!!
Remember Whom You Are Called to Serve

I chuckle to think that the Lord chose me to write this article about the very thing I have been struggling with the past year.

When I first decided to become a nurse, the Lord gave me a vision of a dark room full of cardboard boxes. The room was full of people groping in the darkness, stumbling over the boxes, and trying to find their way out of the room. Suddenly, a candle was lit, and I was the one holding the candle. As I stood in the room and held the candle, all the people who had been stumbling over the boxes knew exactly where to go and walked out of the dark room into the light. For me, that was my vocation, what the Lord called me to be.

*You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.* Matthew 5:14-16

I have been a nurse now for seven years. In the last year, the Lord has brought to my attention that I had lost sight of my vocation. I had become so focused on trying to help people by moving boxes out of the way to please them, and I had forgotten whom I was called to serve. I wanted my light to shine so they could see me moving boxes for them. I was doing my work for the glory of men. I wanted people to like me, to think that I was a “nice person” and a “good nurse”. I realized that when I was doing my work with these reasons as my motivation, I was serving man, not the Lord.

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

So, I want to encourage you: remember whom you are called to serve. If you get focused on moving boxes, what will happen to your light? Do you want to allow it to grow dim? If your light grows dim, it won’t matter how many boxes you move. The room will still be dark.

--Carolyn Durkin

A Millwright’s Testimony of Trust in God

I have been a millwright four years now. The fact that I am even in this line of work is a miracle because I had no idea what a millwright was before I became one. God predetermined me to this line of work, set me in the places I needed to be, placed specific people in my life to guide me here, and helped me relearn what I needed to know for the test to get into the apprenticeship program.

Even the fact that I am at BCF right now was ordained by God. I was using a dating site through which I met a man who came to this church. He offered to bring me along to church, and I accepted what was our first and only date. He was a wonderful man, but I knew from our first meeting that God had someone else waiting for him. He came into my life to bring me here to Bethel, and I have been coming here ever since. God places us where we can grow and be nourished spiritually. He chose BCF for me.

God has always been faithful to me. Even when I have gone astray or walked the edge of His boundaries He has been there for me. He has never left me nor forsaken me. I am so very thankful for God’s grace and provision. When I have needed confidence to work along the edge of a platform, climb into a confined space with potentially toxic gases, work below 250-ton machines, climb heights I have never had confidence to climb, and trust co-workers I barely knew with my life, I have trusted God to get me through.

My line of work is hard physically, mentally, and emotionally. I work long hours close to dangerous pieces of equipment and around nuclear radiation. I have long drives to and from work and must stay alone in hotels and motels, leaving my family for weeks at a time. The only way I can do all this is with Jesus Christ in my life and the Holy Spirit guiding me. I have put my trust in God.

I am in my last year of schooling now and need four thousand work hours to make it to journeyman. I am confident that God will continue to guide me and help me through. As a union millwright, I don’t work consistently by any means. Yet, God has blessed me by taking care of all my needs each year and even giving me some of my wants. I have even been able to help others financially and with my time. God has blessed me with a job where I can work off and on, spend time with my kids and grandkids, enjoy my personal life, and enjoy my work time. I am truly a blessed woman.

--Cele Yingling
God's Touch on Our Lives

I was recently asked to submit an article on putting God in His place in my occupation. This is an appropriate topic for me since God never seems to tire of reminding me just where His place is: He is Master and Creator; He gives, He takes, He plans, He executes, He hides, He reveals, He frustrates, He delights. Are you noticing a bit of paradox here? In any case, He seems to be determined not to let me get any illusions that I’m in charge. Whenever I do, there is usually a fall coming. Ouch!

I am self-employed, and any of you who are also self-employed can probably relate to all of the above statements. You know, you’ve got the title, but God likes you to know that He’s the Boss. It’s a good thing too, because I never would have planned what He has planned.

So what am I? I am a massage therapist. I have the great blessing to work constantly in awe of God’s marvelous creations—our bodies. The more I learn about the body and how it works, the more awesome it is. And what we now know is small compared to what we don’t yet know.

Because massage is a quiet, contemplative sort of occupation, there is ample time to pray while I work. This brings good results! I’ve found that God is never far from me when I pray. It seems that my most potent prayer while I work is this: Please help me, God. I don’t know what to do. Because I specialize in chronic pain cases, there certainly are times when I am stumped. I think that the Lord loves it when I admit my weakness and ask for help.

As a result of God’s help and guidance, I’ve often seen miraculous results. Praise God for His mercies! I see this best when I have a client who is also praying in his or her heart, Please, God, let this work! In my heart, I’m praying the same thing, so we are “two gathered” (Matthew 18:19, 20). God loves to hear us and answer us.

In addition to my massage practice, I also teach a hand-care class, in which I show others how to use self-applied massage techniques to reduce the risk of repetitive stress injuries. Some of you may remember my prayer request related to a video production for this class last November. I have a big thank you to all of you who prayed! I was definitely upheld by your prayers and am very pleased with how it all turned out.

This class began in what seemed to be a tragedy. As you can probably tell, I love my work! But in my fourth year of practice, I began having trouble with my hands—pain, numbness, tingling, the whole nine yards. This was tragic because I had no health insurance, no money. Because of a medical condition (multiple chemical sensitivity), I was very, very limited in my choices of how I might earn a living. Over and over, I cried out in prayer, Why, God, why?

The heavens were silent, and I finally got around to asking a different question: What do You want me to do? This question got results. To make a long story short, I researched the issue of hand and forearm pain and found several techniques that I could use on myself. The results were miraculous. I was so happy and thankful that I couldn’t stop talking about it. My sister sent me two friends who wanted to learn what I was doing, and from that, the idea for the class was born. Now I know the answer to my first question, Why?

Isn’t it good to know that God is still in charge, even when things look their worst? And while He may be silent when we ask why, He loves to answer when we ask the more practical question What should I do? For guidance and protection, for love, and for blessing, His touch is on our lives.

--Diane Girod

Each one should use whatever gift she has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.

1 Peter 4:10
“My Work Is for God”

As many people can attest to, a common line of questioning for a young adult can be as follows: Where are you going to college? What is your major? What will you do for a job after you graduate? While we may have certain aspirations for what we will do or how we will feel about the job we will have, many times the reality is far less glamorous than we imagined. We have built up the hope of a career around an identity we would like to embody.

My career path has been somewhat of a potpourri, and the journey has taught me a couple key lessons. The first is about my identity. I have always been a rather intense and focused person who strives to do well in every arena, including my work. The blessing and the weakness is that I am ambitious and motivated. Part of this was driven by fear. I had to come to understand that while my work product was important; my identity was not wrapped up in what I was able to produce. My job is what I do (my occupation); it is not who I am (my vocation).

It is a constant battle to find my identity in Christ and see myself through that lens. My identity in Christ provides a secure and grounded knowledge that I am loved, cherished, and saved not because of what I have been able to accomplish, but by Jesus’ death on the cross. If my identity is based on my work, it is prone to vacillate, depending on what I can or cannot do and how that is judged by others.

While I was attending university, I began to work as an executive assistant for the president of the top-performing luxury real-estate team in Chicago. During the almost four years I worked there, both during and after college, I came to manage the marketing department, client-care team, and new business development. I had never envisioned myself in the corporate world; I was political-science/global-studies double major with a minor in Spanish!

I enjoyed certain aspects of the job and consciously counted it as a blessing (stable income), but overall it was a very tough, secular environment that demanded a lot of sacrifice (long hours and constant critique). I could not fathom that this was what God had planned for me. I was supposed to be working on social justice issues, on the front line, advocating for the marginalized. I looked for other jobs, but nothing materialized. As I grappled with my desire to change career paths and my inability to do so, I received excellent counsel from Carol Warner, BCF’s former Executive Pastor.

Change for the sake of change is rarely productive. And may I quote someone we both know and love (your father [Pastor Jim Olson]). “Be sure you’re being led and not driven.”

While I hoped for an open door, I felt that God very clearly challenged me to be faithful where I was. This was the second key lesson I have learned on my career path. It meant I had to consciously integrate my worlds, my vocation (who I am called to be as a Christian) and my occupation (what I am called to do at a given season). I was very good at being an excellent employee at work and a Christian off the clock. This was a season of me opening up about my faith to my co-workers, most of whom saw faith in anything beyond what you can control and manipulate as a weakness. It was not easy, but it was intentional.

Two scriptures spoke to me about my work situation.

Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them. —1 Corinthians 7:24

Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward You are serving the Lord Christ. —Colossians 3:24

What if we hate it? What if we struggle? Remember, it is Christ we are serving and our reward is in heaven. Be faithful where you are.

Through a series of events, God made a way for me to become a part of Alpha USA, a Christian non-for-profit. My current position as the National Training and Partnerships Coordinator engages both my passion and my faith. And who would have thought, but the skills I honed in the corporate world have been brought to bear on behalf of the kingdom of God. The training and life experience I received, albeit reluctantly, has been extremely helpful in what I am doing now. As I reflect on this, I am able to see God’s guidance and plan to prepare me for where I am now.

In my work with Alpha, I am surrounded by a dynamic community of people, who come from many different walks of life and work experience. They love Jesus passionately and want to give others the opportunity to experience the joy, grace, and assurance of salvation we have in Christ. Practically, Alpha is a course that covers the basics of Christianity. It is modeled after the example of Jesus, who asked a lot of questions and allowed people to inductively work out their faith. For more information on Alpha, visit www.alphausa.org.

Even as I am surrounded by wonderful, inspiring men and women of faith, I constantly have to remind myself that my work is for God and through His power. As the post-it note on my desk reads, “Not by my striving, but by Your power.”

--Eleanor (Olson) Cercavschi
Teaching at Rosslyn to Bring Glory to God

Last year at this time, I never would have guessed that I would be where I am today, teaching at an international Christian school in Nairobi, Kenya. I now realize more than ever that God’s plans are not our own. A verse that has stuck with me since I first heard it is Proverbs 16:9: “In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.” After holding onto this verse for many years, I have now experienced it firsthand in an obvious way.

Before graduating from Bethel University with my teaching degree last spring, I had decided that I was only going to apply for teaching jobs in the Twin Cities area. I wanted to stay close to my family, especially to be involved in the lives of my siblings. However, from the moment I first heard about Rosslyn Academy in Nairobi and its opening for a high school math teacher, there was something special about it. I was surprised that the possibility sparked such an excitement in me, and I knew it must be God. I couldn’t explain it, but it just seemed like the right thing, even though I had not planned on moving outside the Twin Cities area, let alone to another country!

It all came together incredibly fast. I first heard about the school and the job in mid-June and applied a couple days later. After an interview over Skype and a lot of prayer, I decided that I would accept the position if the school offered it to me. It did offer me the job, and I only had two weeks to get ready. Imagine all the things you would have to do before moving to Africa: make travel arrangements, get vaccines, pack, and say good-byes. Those two weeks were crazy! I really think it was a miracle that everything worked out in such a short period of time. Most teachers have at least six months to prepare for coming here.

Teaching at Rosslyn is truly a gift. I am blessed to be working alongside other believers God has also called to be here and to be teaching such a wonderful group of students. I have really enjoyed getting to know the students here, especially since they have such interesting and varied backgrounds and life experiences. For example, the fourteen students in one of my classes have lived in a total of at least seventeen different countries. Our students represent more than thirty-five different “home” countries, and about half of them are missionary kids.

It is not always easy to teach teenagers or students from such diverse backgrounds, but it is so rewarding and fun at the same time. Even in the occasional difficulties that come up, I can see God’s hand in the situation. It is in these times that I know God is really teaching me something—and I find that exciting.

My weekdays consist of teaching Algebra 1 and Algebra 2 to high school students, often meeting with several of them during lunch and after school to provide extra help and support. I love being able to openly share my faith with my students, and I pray with and for them in class. I also try to get involved outside the classroom after school and on weekends by volunteering at or attending school events, games, and performances. It is not too difficult to be involved since I am blessed with being able to live on campus.

I also try to get out and visit orphanages and ministries in the area when the opportunities arise, but currently I feel most called to minister to my students here at Rosslyn. Usually I feel that my students (and their families) are the main reason God has called me here, but other times I feel that God has me here because there are things He wants me to learn.

It is encouraging to know that the work I do each day at Rosslyn Academy is an extension of God’s work. My passion as I teach here is to be a Christian role model in the lives of my students and to help them gain the skills and knowledge they may need to do what God calls them to in the future. But most of all, it is my hope and prayer that my work and life brings glory to God.

--Emily Reis

"I'VE ENJOYED SPENDING TIME WITH THE RASMUSSEN FAMILY, AS WELL AS ROSIE PIERRE (PICTURED WITH ME HERE), SINCE SHE IS STUDYING ABROAD IN KENYA THIS SEMESTER. NOTICE OUR SCHOOL'S FLAGS IN THE BACKGROUND. THEY REMIND ME OF BCF."

"VISITING A SMALL SCHOOL IN THE KIBERA SLUM OF NAIROBI WITH ANOTHER ROSSLYN TEACHER"
I Am a Living Testimony

My dear Bethel family and friends,

I want to give you a beautiful greeting by saying, “Praise be the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior.” Let us bring this greeting to our families and use it in our homes and everywhere we go. Also, when we leave our homes, let us say, “Praise be the name of Jesus.” Let us bring Jesus into every part of our lives, in everything we do, just for who He is: “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6).

My name is David Celestin Mengata. I was born in West Africa in a country called Cameroon. I am married to Madeleine N. Mengata since May 30, 2009, and God has blessed us with an exceptional child named David Josh Assako Mengata.

When I was a little boy, I was abused and mistreated by relatives. And as a very young man, I was poisoned and was close to death. I suffered defeat and was constantly battling illness. As I was facing those unexplained circumstances and near to giving up my life, Jesus our Redeemer showed up, and not only delivered me, but turned all that evil around for my good. He traded all the sorrow, the pain, the sickness, and the trouble for the joy of the Lord.

Friend, God has given me victory over Satan. He has made me a strong soldier of His army. He has infused me with His mighty power and fully equipped me with the full armor of God. I stand strong in the Lord, and this day I am in the train of the gospel that goes around the world to carry His people and make all nations His disciples. Dear lovely brethren, what can I say to you more than I am a living testimony? And what can I give you then?

Still, after fourteen years, I asked God, Why me? Why have you chosen me? God gave me a great gift of singing; He put a strong desire for worship deep down in my heart, but at the same time, a great responsibility as a disciple. Friend, I have a responsibility to sing His glory, to worship and praise His name to you; but more importantly, I will someday stand before God and be responsible to Him. I am a new creature in Christ. I accepted and received His gift, and my call is to sing Him praise, to worship and to help His children to discover and understand that worship is as essential as breathing. I pray daily that He will strengthen me so I can follow His will:

But the time is coming—it has, in fact, come—when what you’re called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter. It’s who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That’s the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship. John 4:23 (The Message)

Friends, I am therefore a living witness to the fact that God is among us and loves us dearly. He is alive and has so much in store for us. What He has done for me, He will do for you. God is not far from us; we are the ones who have gone far away from Him. He came to my rescue when I was down and thought my journey on earth was over. He got me right back up to keep on running my race and to reach the goal of eternity...

Dear Bethel family, I can’t explain and describe the intensity of blessings and favors that are germinating from the seed of joy our Lord planted inside me, but I know this: The Lord has given me victory.

I am blessed and cannot be cursed.

I am chosen; I am called.

I have the favor of God.

I am refreshed; I am renewed.

I am talented; I can do all things through Christ.

I have what it takes; I am fully equipped.

And above all, I am a child of the Most High God. Therefore, I will praise His name forever and ever.

I pray daily for God’s healing power in all the families of the world. I am asking you to begin praying for your family and to pray for the Bethel Christian Fellowship family as well because there is power in prayer. Thank you for being such a great family of praise. And to Rev. Dr. Jim Olson, our beloved pastor, and all my brothers and sisters in the All-Nations Worship Choir, I want to say that I love you very much; you are very dear to me. Please remember always that Jesus is Lord!

God bless you!

--D. C. Mengata
A member of BCF’s All-Nations Worship Choir
**Saturate: A Scripture Immersion Experience**

Reading through the scriptures together beginning in January, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting/Discussion</th>
<th>This Week’s Reading:</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/09/2011</td>
<td>Celebration Orientation</td>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>28 Chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/16/2011</td>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>16 Chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/30/2011</td>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>21 Chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/6/2011</td>
<td>NO MEETING</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/13/2011</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Acts</td>
<td>28 Chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/20/2011</td>
<td>Acts</td>
<td>Romans</td>
<td>16 Chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/27/2011</td>
<td>Romans</td>
<td>1 Cor. - 2 Cor.</td>
<td>29 Chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/6/2011</td>
<td>1 Cor. - 2 Cor.</td>
<td>Galatians - 2 Thess.</td>
<td>28 Chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/13/2011</td>
<td>Galatians - 2 Thess.</td>
<td>1 Timothy - Hebrews</td>
<td>27 Chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/20/2011</td>
<td>1 Timothy - Hebrews</td>
<td>James - Jude</td>
<td>21 Chapters</td>
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<td>3/27/2011</td>
<td>James - Jude</td>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>22 Chapters</td>
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<td>4/3/2011</td>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>4/10/2011</td>
<td>NT Reflection</td>
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<td>4/17/2011</td>
<td>How we Got our Bible</td>
<td>Genesis 1 - 25</td>
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<td>5/1/2011</td>
<td>Genesis 1-25</td>
<td>Genesis 26-50</td>
<td>25 Chapters</td>
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<td>5/8/2011</td>
<td>Genesis 26-50</td>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td>40 Chapters</td>
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<td>5/15/2011</td>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td>Leviticus</td>
<td>27 Chapters</td>
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<td>5/22/2011</td>
<td>Leviticus</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>36 Chapters</td>
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<td>5/29/2011</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>Deuteronomy</td>
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<td>6/5/2011</td>
<td>Deuteronomy</td>
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**SUMMER HIATUS FROM 6/12/11 - 9/11/11**

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<th>Meeting/Discussion</th>
<th>This Week’s Reading:</th>
<th>Length</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/18/2011</td>
<td>The Historical Books</td>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>24 Chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/2/2011</td>
<td>Judges - Ruth</td>
<td>1 Samuel</td>
<td>31 Chapters</td>
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<td>10/9/2011</td>
<td>1 Samuel</td>
<td>2 Samuel</td>
<td>24 Chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/16/2011</td>
<td>2 Samuel</td>
<td>1 Kings</td>
<td>22 Chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/23/2011</td>
<td>1 Kings</td>
<td>2 Kings</td>
<td>25 Chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/30/2011</td>
<td>2 Kings</td>
<td>1 Chronicles</td>
<td>29 Chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/6/2011</td>
<td>1 Chronicles</td>
<td>2 Chronicles</td>
<td>36 Chapters</td>
</tr>
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<td>11/13/2011</td>
<td>2 Chronicles</td>
<td>Ezra-Nehemiah-Esther</td>
<td>33 Chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/20/2011</td>
<td>Ezra-Nehemiah-Esther</td>
<td>None</td>
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**HOLIDAY/THEME SUNDAY HIATUS 11/27/11 - 1/8/12**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/15/2012</td>
<td>Wisdom Literature</td>
<td>Job</td>
<td>42 Chapters</td>
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<td>1/22/2012</td>
<td>Job</td>
<td>Psalms 1-41</td>
<td>41 Chapters</td>
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<td>1/29/2012</td>
<td>Psalms 1-41</td>
<td>Psalms 42-72</td>
<td>31 Chapters</td>
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<td>2/5/2012</td>
<td>Psalms 42-72</td>
<td>Psalms 73-106</td>
<td>34 Chapters</td>
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<td>2/12/2012</td>
<td>Psalms 73-106</td>
<td>Psalms 107-150</td>
<td>44 Chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/19/2012</td>
<td>Psalms 107-150</td>
<td>Proverbs</td>
<td>31 Chapters</td>
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<td>2/26/2012</td>
<td>Proverbs</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes/Song</td>
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<td>3/4/2012</td>
<td>Ecclesiastes/Song</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>3/11/2012</td>
<td>The Prophets</td>
<td>Isaiah 1-39</td>
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<td>3/18/2012</td>
<td>Isaiah 1/39</td>
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<td>Jer. 30-52/Lamentations</td>
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<td>4/8/2012</td>
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<td>Jer. 30-52/Lamentations</td>
<td>Ezekiel</td>
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<td>Ezekiel</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
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<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Hosea/Joel/Amos</td>
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<td>Hosea/Joel/Amos</td>
<td>Obadiah/Jonah/Micah</td>
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<td>Obadiah/Jonah/Micah</td>
<td>Nahum/Habakkuk/Zeph</td>
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<td>5/20/2012</td>
<td>Nahum/Habakkuk/Zeph</td>
<td>Haggai/Zech/Malachi</td>
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<td>5/27/2012</td>
<td>Haggai/Zech/Malachi</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/3/2012</td>
<td>From Malachi to Matthew</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>XXX</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/10/2012</td>
<td>CELEBRATION SUNDAY</td>
<td>None</td>
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**SATURATE: A SCRIPTURE IMMERSION EXPERIENCE:** It has been reported that fewer than 10% of professing Christians have ever read the entire Bible. The purpose of this endeavor is to help you to become part of that elusive 10%. The pace we have set will be challenging for some. We will be reading large portions of Scripture - usually five or six chapters a day, five or six days a week. This kind of Bible reading cannot be accomplished in a few minutes of spare time. It will need to become an intentional priority. This endeavor will require rigor from those who participate, but the rewards will benefit you for the rest of your life.

At this printing we have read and discussed 19 of the 27 New Testament books of the Bible as a congregation. It's been wonderful, and we would love for you to join us! There is no pressure to participate, no reprimand if you should ever miss a portion, no testing involved to see what you have learned . . . Just a heartfelt invitation. God is going to do great things among us as we spend time corporately in His word.

At 6:00 PM on Sunday evenings we will come together for a time of small group discussion so that we can encourage each other with the things we have been hearing from our time with the Lord. Please join us in the Fellowship Hall at Bethel’s St. Paul site.
A Gripping Illustration

As I was thinking about this LIFELine and its focus on putting God in His place in our occupation, my thoughts traveled to a book I read about this time of year in the mid-1960s. If my memory is correct, I was fourteen when a small paperback copy of In His Steps, Charles M. Sheldon's late nineteenth-century novel, came into my possession. The contents of the book gripped my attention, and, almost fifty years later, I consider it one of the most influential books in my life.

The book begins on a Friday morning, when Rev. Henry Maxwell of the First Church of Raymond was trying to finish his Sunday morning sermon on 1 Peter 2:21: “For hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow his steps.” As he was working on his third point, the necessity of following Jesus in His sacrifice and example, he was interrupted by the doorbell and a visit from a young man, shabbily dressed, who was looking for help in finding a job. As quickly and politely as he could, Rev. Maxwell told the tramp-like man that he could not help him and returned to his desk to finish his sermon.

But that is not the last time Rev. Maxwell saw his Friday visitor. On Sunday morning, just after the conclusion of his sermon and before the church's quartet choir can rise to sing its closing selection, the same shabbily dressed man began speaking to the congregation as he left his seat under the gallery and walked down the middle aisle to the open space in front of the pulpit. He told how he had walked through the city for three days, trying to find a job, with no word of sympathy or comfort except from Rev. Maxwell. Referring to the sermon the church has just heard, he asked, “What do you Christians mean by following the steps of Jesus?”

Moments before the man fell to the floor, he challenged the congregation, “But what would Jesus do? Is that what you mean by following His steps?” He was taken to Rev. Maxwell’s house, where he died early the next Sunday morning. But his brief, unexpected contact with Rev. Maxwell and the First Church congregation resulted in fifty of it members committing themselves to ask “What would Jesus do?” as they made decisions about everything they would do in their daily lives during the coming year.

Of all the stories In His Steps chronicles about individuals who asked what Jesus would do, my teenage interest was most intensely drawn to the portrayal of the actions by Edward Norman, the editor of the Raymond Daily News. I could almost see the editor kneel down by his desk and pray for God’s wisdom and direction when he went to his office early Monday morning. And I was deeply challenged by Edward Norman’s courage, fifteen minutes after his prayer time, to decide not run an article about the prize fight the day before.

In the days following, the newspaper editor made a number of difficult decisions as a result of his pledge to do what Jesus would do. He chose to refrain from providing detailed descriptions of crime, to drop advertisements of liquor and tobacco, and to discontinue the Sunday edition. In addition, he announced in an editorial that he would evaluate political questions by the standard of the spirit and teachings of Jesus and, before the year’s end—at the risk of failure—converted his newspaper into a journalistic force dedicated to promote Christ-honoring principles and values.

You may or may not agree with Charles M. Sheldon’s choice of actions for Edward Norman, but the editor’s characterization is, I believe, an illustration of what it means to put God in His place in our occupation. He demonstrated that his occupation as a newspaper editor was the place God gave him to pursue his vocation, his calling as God's servant, to bring glory to Him.

Whatever our occupation may be, we all face numerous choices in our daily work responsibilities. Even if our choices seem insignificant, we, like Edward Norman must prayerfully evaluate them and receive His guidance and direction in what we do and how we do it. God is God, and His rightful place is the center of our lives, integrating into everything we think, say, and do.

But this can only happen if we open our hearts to God and give Him complete control of our lives. It involves repentance from sin—turning from anything that separates us from God—and childlike faith in Jesus Christ’s provision of forgiveness for our sin. If you have not taken these steps to Christ, do so today. He will come to live and rule in every part of your life, including your occupation. He will enable you to fulfill His calling and vocation, beginning now and extending through all eternity.

--Ken Holmgren

There is an easy way to raise money for BCF Missions just by searching the Internet with GoodSearch.com. It’s simple. You use GoodSearch.com like any other search engine — the site is powered by Yahoo! — but each time you do, money is generated for BCF. The more people who use this, the more money will go to the missions program here at Bethel.

It's easy to get started. Just go to www.goodsearch.com and enter Bethel Christian Fellowship Missions as your non-profit of choice. Make goodsearch.com your home page or add it to your toolbar….then search away! (Please note that image searches do not count toward fundraising AND, your search must be legitimate. You may not search for google.com on goodsearch. That is considered a fraudulent search and will not be counted toward our goal.)

You can also see how much has been raised by clicking the “amount raised” button on the main page. An average of 1 penny is donated for every search we do. Every bit helps!

You can also do a good portion of your shopping online and earn varying percentages of your purchase price for missions. Check it out at the following address:  http://www.goodsearch.com/goodshop.aspx