

spring 2019

for today's Christian nurses
& midwives

spotlight

A stylized illustration of a person's face and hands. The person's face is in the upper right, looking down with a gentle expression. Their hands are in the lower right, with one hand resting on the other. A spotlight effect is shown on the hands, with a bright white circle and a greenish-blue glow. The background is a mix of light blue and white circles, creating a bokeh effect.

- work as worship
- reflections from Uganda
- anointing God's feet

spotlight

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inside

5 work as worship

8 work, rest + pray

12 work, wonder + worship

14 the next generation

17 anointing God's feet

23 reflections from Uganda

26 book review

28 let your lights shine before others

30 book review

editorial

In this edition of *Spotlight*, we look at 'work as worship.' Too often we view the world dualistically – where 'spiritual' activities matter, and secular, everyday activities do not. You may have heard this called the sacred/secular divide. It describes the mindset that we often fall into as Christians; we think of some things as being more 'spiritual' than others. This includes certain practices, actions, or days of the week and especially certain jobs. How many times have you heard of Christians talking about going into the 'ministry' (often with lowered hushed voices) as if it's a superstar-status, spiritual thing to do, and all other jobs are secondary in comparison?

I married into a family of church leaders; indeed, I've even been one myself in the past, and being a church 'minister' is a privileged role. But I honestly believe, that being who you are supposed to be as an individual before Christ and doing what you are uniquely called to do as his followers is the most spiritual you can be. Whether this is being a pastor, a nurse, a midwife, a full-time parent or a cleaner.

This idea is expanded in the great little book by Tim Chester that Kate Walker reviews on page 26 called *Gospel-Centred Work: Becoming the worker God wants you to be*.

Steve Fouch biblically grounds this idea of the embodied, everyday nature of faith and practice in his article *anointing God's feet* on page 17, which looks at a God who is still at work in his creation, and the work he calls us to do with him through our day-to-day labours.

Georgie Coster splits her working week between being CMF's Associate Head of Nursing and a staff nurse in Stoke. She writes about her difficult start to qualified clinical nursing and how she was tempted to quit and think of other alternatives. Maybe you are in that difficult place yourself? Her nursing practice was transformed when she began to see it as no less spiritual than when she was leading youth work at church on a Sunday, but as of equal spiritual significance before God. Georgie's call was to be faithful in her work. Her story makes an honest and relatable read and I hope it encourages you.

I also think you'll enjoy reading, as I did, about Vicky in Rosie Housman's reflections on her recent time in the north of Uganda. She was struck at how wholeheartedly this single woman served the community in her palliative care to refugees – a tireless act of worship.

As the woman with the alabaster jar extravagantly anointed Jesus' feet with perfume bought with a year's wages,¹ so we anoint his feet in worship as we give him our work.

It reminds me of Colossians 3:23-24.

'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.'

1. Mark 14:3-9



Pippa Peppiatt, CMF Head of Nursing

Pippa trained as a nurse. She has planted a church for students with her husband, set up a charity for street kids in Uganda, and has been a Friends International Student Worker.

Let us be encouraged by that. What we do, however mundane or tiring, can be turned into an act of worship that is seen by the Lord, blessed by him, and is ultimately rewarded by our God. 🌸

Pippa



New! CMF Prayer Diary

If you want to keep up-to-date with prayer needs for CMF and others working in healthcare, please subscribe to the *CMF Prayer Diary* by emailing prayer@cmf.org.uk



testimony

work as worship

Georgie Coster looks at
how her working life was
transformed by a hospital
prayer meeting

My first year as a newly qualified nurse was possibly the hardest year of my life. The busy AMU of a large hospital was a baptism of fire for a girl who didn't even know how to cannulate. I found myself filled with nauseating anxiety before a shift, often sobbing in bed the night before. I started looking online for other jobs: cleaning, retail, admin. The idea of sitting behind a desk and filling my day with mind-numbing tasks that didn't significantly impact anybody else's life (or death) was so appealing.

Whilst I gritted my teeth and endured time on the unit, I lived for days off where I could serve as a youth worker in my church. That was the really important stuff, I thought. That was my ministry. And I resented every minute spent at work for keeping me from it. There was a very clear divide in my thinking – time spent 'in ministry' was valuable and filled with purpose, while time spent as a hostage in a huge building for twelve hour stretches, was time wasted when I could have been serving the Lord. During this time, a young doctor felt God calling him to begin a monthly prayer meeting at my hospital. Those prayer meetings changed my life.

I have learned that there is something very

powerful when Christian healthcare professionals pray together. For me, hearing my colleagues (even lead consultants) asking God for boldness to carry his light into the darkness of the hospital was pivotal. They were right: our hospital was a place of darkness – it was certainly my unhappy place. It hadn't even occurred to me that God was right there with my crushed spirit.¹ How had I missed such an obvious truth?

In my head, God was very interested in all the spiritual events of the week – church, youth group, evangelism etc. but he drew the line at the big, depressing hospital. This was not his realm, I'd subconsciously decided. What a revelation to hear Christian staff connect the sacred with the secular – asking God for opportunities to be used by him as a testimony to those around them, to stressed colleagues, frightened patients and grieving relatives. I had disconnected faith with work, leaving God at the main entrance on my way in and telling him I'd be back for him when I'd finished my shift. But if our God is abounding in love and compassion as Scripture says,² then surely all the happenings of a hospital have his full attention.

For too long, I lived as though God only saw what I did for him when I had my 'Christian'

hat on. What I've come to realise is, whichever 'hat' I'm wearing, I serve the same Lord. When God called me to be a living sacrifice,³ he meant **all of me**. Not just the time in my week I give to reading the Bible, sharing the gospel, or serving in church, but every hour and every minute. That includes work, which is not an interruption to time spent serving God. Every little thing I do in my working day, from checking the resuscitation trolley to holding the straw so my patient can have a drink, is worship to God. There is so much joy in working 'as unto the Lord'.⁴ How often do you hear NHS staff complaining that they would appreciate more thanks for what they do? When we're working for the Lord and not for man, we can rest assured that not a single act done in love for him has slipped his notice; his 'Well done, good and faithful servant'⁵ will be sweeter than the most glowing review on NHS Choices.

I have now been qualified for almost four years, and I am a very different nurse now. Much of that change is due to increasing experience and competence. I do believe though, that had God not used the prayers of others to transform my thinking and break down my sacred/secular divide, I would now be at best, a competent but miserable nurse, living for days off and annual leave; and at

worst, a competent but miserable retail assistant, living for days off and annual leave.

The average person spends 92,120 hours of their life at work. That's 35% of your waking hours in a 50-year working life!⁶ I really believe that it is too much time to spend counting down the hours until you're somewhere else.

My own experience has taught me the life-changing value of meeting with other healthcare professionals who love Jesus, not just as a one off, but habitually, because we need a regular refreshing and a consistent stirring up to love and good works.⁷ For this reason, I am passionate about the work of CMF in connecting nurses and midwives and organising local groups to meet monthly. I am thrilled to have joined the team as Associate Head of Nursing alongside my clinical work, and am already revelling in seeing God inspire nurses and midwives with the privilege of worshipping him in their work. 🙌

Georgie Coster is the CMF Associate Head of Nursing and a staff nurse in Stoke

1. Psalm 34:18
2. Nehemiah 9:17
3. Romans 12:1
4. Colossians 3:22-24
5. Matthew 25:21
6. *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings*. UK Office for National Statistics. 2017. bit.ly/2HYSrXQ
7. Hebrews 10:24

A photograph of a white cup of coffee, a cupcake with white frosting, a red cherry, and colorful sprinkles, and a black Bible with gold lettering. The items are arranged on a white surface. Overlaid on the image are several semi-transparent beige circles of varying sizes. In the top left corner, there is a circular graphic made of black dots.

report

work, rest + pray

Kara Jackman shares her personal reflections on John Wyatt's talks at Student Conference 2019

HOLY
BIBLE

At the Student Conference in February this year, John Wyatt took us through a three-part series on the theme: Work, Rest and Pray: Living life in God's perfect motion. Here are some reflections on his main points on living life as a Christian health professional and how to choose to become the person that Christ has called us to be, rather than turning our backs on our calling.

living sacrificial lives: the early church and the devastating reality of the plague

During the great Cyprian plague of the 3rd century, 15% of the population of Alexandria perished. At the onset of the disease, pagans pushed sufferers away, throwing even those who weren't yet dead into the streets and effectively shunning their family members to avoid catching the highly contagious disease. But then Christians stepped in. They showed unbounding love and loyalty to their neighbours, took charge of the sick; attended to their every need, and served them through the love of Christ, even at the expense of their own lives.

This led to the formation of some of the first hospitals, which were named after the Latin word *hospes*, which means guest or host. Hospitals became known as places where Christian hospitality could be practised to those who knew nothing of Christ. In those times, being a nurse (a Christian who cared for the sick) became a position of honour and respect.

Nursing remains a highly respected profession today, but it still comes at great cost. Like the early church who nursed the sick whilst risking their lives, we too are called to live sacrificial lives for Christ. Are we prepared to do this? And to do this with joy – just like the Christians did during the plague?

being Christ to our patients

A well-known verse in Ephesians states that 'we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do' (Ephesians 2:10). We are God's masterpieces, and it is his powerful and creative work that has made us. If God has called us, as Christians, to bear his image and to carry out his works in today's world, this means that we dare not treat others with disrespect or as inferior beings. Also, out of gratitude for God's amazing gift of salvation, it is his intention that this salvation will result

in acts of service, serving others with kindness, love, gentleness and respect (some of the fruits of the Spirit). This has big implications for us as nurses, where much of our working lives are spent serving others who are helpless and in need.

This personally challenges me deeply. Although as nurses we are so tightly restricted in what we can say about the gospel at work, God has clearly called us to show his love to those whom we nurse in practical ways, bearing the image of Christ to our patients. Although the work can be hard under the pressures and strains of the healthcare system, it is so important that we consider how we can live a working life which is different to those around us, by showing Christ's character to our patients and colleagues.

work, rest and pray; the importance of rest

As well as calling us to work and serve those around us, God also calls us to rest, which is part of the order that he has placed in creation. We work in an action-oriented job. Nursing responsibilities can often overflow into our free time, and it can often seem like there is always something to do with no time to rest. However, God sets a

pattern of work and Sabbath rest, which began in creation. 'On the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy' (Genesis 2:2-3). If he rested from his work, then we shouldn't be surprised that we are also called to rest. God designed us to be creatures of routine, setting us daily, weekly, and yearly rhythms



as part of his creation, with rest factored into each of these rhythms.

Although shift work as a nurse can seem completely uncondusive to maintaining routines, including rest time, it is vitally important that we develop good habits even in the smallest aspects of our lives.


For example, on days off
could you set a rhythm

of waking up at a set time, doing a certain activity (even committing to going to the gym) and closing the day with time with God? On shift days, where it can seem impossible to set any sort of external routine, could you commit to listening to a Christian podcast on your way into work? These suggestions are unlikely to work for everyone, but I would love to encourage you to think about setting your own routines even on the smallest level.

Although Christ sets these rhythms as part of creation, fortunately (as part of his loving and gracious character) he also recognises that it may not always be possible to get enough rest in a physical sense, during certain seasons of our lives. Exodus 33:14 states 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' What an amazing comfort to know that even when we feel so physically weak and tired, we can reach out to God and he will give us the rest that we so badly need. 🌿

Kara Jackman is a student nurse in Southampton





thought

work, wonder + worship

Lorna Oliver urges us to stop,
wonder and worship God in all
he is doing in our busy day

We clock in, clock out. Shift after shift we go through the motions and flop into bed at the end of each hard day. Yet how many times do we stop to consider the beauty and the gifts all around us?

As healthcare professionals, we have a unique privilege to study both the complexities of the human body and to see them in action. Seeing the wonder in creation in the human body is a great gift. As we reflect his image and value each life for which we care, this in turn shows the value God places upon life.

We know that if Christ is in our patients, that should change the way we treat them. If the glory of God is displayed in each medical phenomenon, how should that change the way we talk about the body? Can our awe and respect for the human body itself become a witness? For the human body is a work of art by a divine creator and a work of beauty.

Beauty is placed in this world by God to draw us to wonder. And wonder, in turn, is to naturally overflow into our ultimate privilege as humans created in God's image – worship. Beauty therefore is an incredible gift and a signpost to point us back to the one who is ultimately beautiful.

Creation declares the glory of God. Do you hear the song of God's healing power as you watch blood clot before your eyes? Or feel the completeness of regeneration when you feel a baby moving beneath your hands? When you see a mother kneeling by her daughter's bedside, do you feel the strength of the Father's love for you? Or does the complexity of surgery fill you with awe at the one who created the body? Let us lift our eyes and our hearts to see the beauty of the Lord in all that is in every room of every hospital, theatre room and clinic. Let us view our unique position that allows us these glimpses into the wonder of the human body as an opportunity to see the glory of God more fully all around us. And may that overflow into lives of worship, love and adoration for our creator God. 🌹

Lorna Oliver is a student nurse in Herefordshire



global

the next generation

Camilla Kaltoft, a newly qualified nurse from Denmark, introduces the *Next Generation* network of Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI)

Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI) is a network of around 30 national Christian nursing fellowships (including CMF in the UK) that aims to connect Christian nurses around the world, equipping them to live out their faith in professional practice.

The Mission of NCFI is to equip and encourage Christian nurses to integrate biblical principles and Christ-centred values in clinical practice, leadership, education and research.

the aim of next generation

The aim of *Next Generation* is to create an international network of nursing students

and newly graduated nurses and midwives. Through this network, we want to support each other in living out our faith in our studies and in our work. We want to connect faith and nursing, to discuss ethical issues, and to share and pray for each other. Some of us have met through NCFI's international conferences, and others have connected online.

global fellowship

As students and young nurses around the world, we face many of the same issues. We ask questions such as: Can I pass the next exam? How much can I say to the experienced nurses in the ward as a student? How do I cope financially during my studies? Some of us fear the responsibility we will get when we graduate.

We also contemplate 'bigger questions' such as: Which clinical area would I like to work in? How do I deal with a stressful working environment? Can I live out my faith as a Christian nurse in a secular society? Can I pray with a patient? Is spiritual care a part of acute nursing?

Some of us find it difficult to stand firm in our Christian values in ethical discussions in class. Some of us don't know how to share our faith with our classmates or colleagues.

Because we have so many things in common, we can share and discuss these issues both at a professional and a personal level. *Next Generation* acts as an essential 'vitamin injection' in our nursing studies and nursing careers. As our body needs vitamins to work sufficiently, we need the knowledge, passion, support and commitment from other Jesus-following nurses to grow as Christian nurses in a secular society. That is why I think it is so valuable for us to connect and learn from each other.

a monthly reminder

Next Generation has contact persons for almost all of the six regions in NCFI. I am the contact person in Europe. Our function is to organise monthly online meetings. At the meetings we share our lives as nursing students or newly qualified nurses, the dilemmas or issues we grapple with, and pray for each other.

Pratika, a nurse from Fiji, says about *Next Generation*: 'I really am pleased by these online meetings as they connect us. We do not feel far away from each other even though we are from all over the globe. It helps me to remember that the work is for Christ, and we learn from each other how to bring holistic care to the patients.'

you can connect

I think it is of great importance to learn about nursing globally. Many different cultures are influencing us in the globalised age in which we live. As nurses we need to understand what background the patient comes from to provide the best possible care. Meeting online with *Next Generation* gives insight and perspective on this, because we are from different countries. Getting to know *Next Generation* also shows how God is working personally and professionally in his people in so many different ways through nursing around the world.

My invitation to you as UK nursing students and nurses is to welcome you to our meetings! We want to share with you and to pray for you. We need your perspective on nursing and we want to learn from you.

If you want to connect with the NCFI Next Generation meetings, you can contact Camilla on ngeurope@ncfi.org and follow their feed on Instagram – [ncfinextgeneration](https://www.instagram.com/ncfinextgeneration) - their webpage is at ncfi.org/about-ncfi/next-generation 🌐

Camilla Kaltoft is a staff nurse at a cardiac medical department in Denmark

NCFI'S SEVEN AIMS

1

Encourage Christian nurses and nursing students to live out their faith in compassionate professional practice.

2

Deepen the spiritual life and cultural awareness of Christian nurses and nursing students around the world.

3

Promote friendship, communication, connection and collaboration among Christian nurses worldwide.

4

Support Regional NCFI Committees and National NCF organisations in their ministry with nurses.

5

Empower Christian nurses to examine and apply Scripture as it relates to professional practice.

6

Equip and support the development of Christian nurse leaders around the world.

7

Represent Christian nursing in the global nursing and healthcare arena.



feature

anointing God's feet:

putting God at the
centre of our work

Steve Fouch reflects on the
biblical message about
whole-life discipleship and
the kingdom of God at work

At a meeting of a mission network that I helped to convene many years ago, we were looking at how medical mission work could measure and manage its impact on the physical and spiritual health of the communities it served. A couple chatted to me in the coffee break, telling me about their work leading a medical mission and how distracting they found it to be constantly dragged away from their spiritual work by worldly work like administration, finances and fundraising.

I was stunned at first, that two Christians working in the frontline of cross-cultural mission had such a divided view of work. But to be honest, it came as no real surprise. I often hear, implicitly or explicitly in church that some kinds of work are spiritual, and some are worldly. Teaching or leading worship, or being in prayer ministry, or on an evangelism team are often elevated as the most spiritual work we can do. Just below this is teaching in Sunday school, followed by being on the church council (where discussions on the type of communion wine or the sort of coffee cups we use are common causes of epic debate!) and below that (indeed, all but ignored) are the roles of church administrator and the cleaner. Work outside of church is never discussed as

Christian ministry at all. I hope you are at a church that both in words and deeds does not create such a spiritual hierarchy of work, but I expect most of us would recognise this divide.

God's view of work

Right from the start of Genesis, we learn that our God is a working God. He laboured to create the cosmos, rejoicing over every element of it,¹ before resting and contemplating all he had made.² There was no sense that any of his work was more or less worthy, valuable, or holy in his eyes. Then, when he created humanity, he charged us to carry on his work, stewarding and tending his creation.³

When we work, we serve as 'God's hands and feet', caring for our world and other people in different ways, using whatever gifts and opportunities God gives us. Work is more than earning a living; it is about creating space for God's kingdom to break in and shape our world.⁴ Work was created to be a joyful act of creativity and service to God, other people and his creation. However, because of the fall we now find work (even at its most enjoyable) laborious, frustrating and stressful to one degree or another.⁵

We see this in two stories from John's gospel. When Jesus is anointed by Mary at Bethany on

his way to Jerusalem,⁶ it is an extravagant gesture of worship, giving the equivalent of a year's work in one gesture of love and service. But when they get to Jerusalem, in the upper room, Jesus then washes his disciples' feet – showing a God who serves and sets an example of service to us.⁷ God washes our feet as we serve him, so we anoint his feet though our work.

This changes our perspective; work is not a punishment or a grim necessity, at least in its origins. It is a good gift from God to bless us and through it we bless others⁸ and the whole creation, sharing in God's creative and redeeming work in the world and in so doing, worshipping him. We are working towards an end – God's new creation – his new heavens and new earth. 'There is a future healed world that he will bring about, and your work is showing it (in part) to others.'⁹

OK, let's be honest, on a Monday morning sitting bleary eyed in the ward office with a mug of coffee before checking the electronic handover notes for the coming shift, work might not feel so God-ordained. On a Sunday evening, after our fourth twelve-hour shift in a row and contemplating the sheer ecstasy of a night's sleep and a day off, our work probably feels even less like a divine calling. But as Tim

Keller says, 'No task is too small a vessel to hold the immense dignity of work given by God.'¹⁰ Even writing up care plans and doing ward administration is God given work that we can do to his glory.

It is about our inner orientation towards God, rather than external circumstances. Do we see our work as an opportunity to serve God, his creation and our fellow human beings, or just as something we must do to pay the bills? That orientation has a lot to do with what used to be called 'vocation', or more commonly (in Christian circles at least) our sense of 'calling'.

calling

What does it mean to be 'called' to a work or a career? I remember spending my teens, twenties and thirties trying to work this out, always suspecting that I was not fulfilling my true calling because work seemed so hard, or because I felt I was following the vision and direction of others rather than my own. I was worried I had not been listening to God. Surely, I should be doing something more exciting, fulfilling and 'spiritual' than the often dull and mundane work that I was doing? Where was my vision, my passion?

It was some time before I realised that I was exactly where God wanted me to be. Not

because I heard trumpet calls from the sky, not because I felt especially confident and passionate about all aspects of my work, not even because I saw huge fruit from my labours. It was simply that when I stopped and looked around I noticed two things. First, all that I had done, learned and experienced in so many jobs that did not always fill me with passion had nevertheless uniquely equipped me to do the work I was doing. Second, I had supportive people around, working and praying with me.

You may have heard a trumpet call to nursing or midwifery. You may have a huge passion – maybe for a particular aspect of your profession, or to a particular nation or area of ministry to which your profession gives you unique access. For several years for me it was to work with gay men living with HIV and AIDS. Being a nurse opened a doorway that being a heterosexual Christian male would otherwise have slammed shut.

Alternatively, you may have stumbled into your career, and then discovered that this is something you were always meant to be doing. Or you may still be trying to work all of this out and asking if you really are called to this work – does it fit my character, gifting and passions?

I was greatly encouraged when a speaker at a conference last summer made the point that Abraham was 75 when God called him.¹¹ He spent decades just being an ordinary man tending his flocks and cattle. Jesus spent the first three decades of his life being a carpenter in an insignificant village. If you are wondering where God is calling you, it may be that these are just your ‘carpentry years’, and you have an ‘apprenticeship’ to serve before God shows you what he wants you to do.

I have friends who have had varied and diverse careers, never quite finding their calling until later in life. One served in the army as a nurse, a clinical measurements specialist, then as a liaison with the Department of Health when his military hospital was handed over to the NHS. After retiring from the army, he helped lead a local church in various capacities before being ordained. He became particularly adept at ministering to the bereaved and members of the church family and local community facing difficult illnesses. Then, in his sixties he had the opportunity to serve as a hospital chaplain. He asked everyone who knew him if this might be an opportunity from God, to which we all said ‘Yes!’ He ended up being a spiritual support to a whole hospital, from CEO to domestic staff, as it went through CQC and Monitor special measures after the Francis Report. His whole

career had been preparation for a role for which God had uniquely gifted him.

Another point that Abraham's story (and my friend's) illustrates is that calling is never in isolation. We are called to serve God as a community, and our individual part in that calling is discerned and worked out with others. That will include your church, your family and your colleagues. So always seek prayer and wisdom from others to see what God may be saying. Others will see details and perspectives that we miss. God did not make us to work alone.¹²

so how do we worship God in our work?

We have evolved a practical theology in many churches that worship means singing, dancing and praying out loud. And these are all very biblical means of worship. But worship is so much more than just that hour or so on a Sunday.

Paul tells us to use our bodies to glorify God. Not primarily in our spirits, our minds or even our words, but in our bodies.¹³ Our bodies are where our spirits and minds meet the world. Our bodies give our words sound and shape. We act out in our bodies individually what is in our

Paul tells us to use our bodies to glorify God. Not primarily in our spirits, our minds or even our words, but in our bodies.

inner being, but also what we do with our bodies shapes our inner self.

What is more, our individual bodies act together with other believers to form the body of Christ.¹⁴ As with our body's organs, so each of us plays a vital part in what God is doing in the world. By extension, when you are working with your midwifery or nursing team you are an integral part of what that team is doing, and your role is as vital as anyone else's. So how we work, how we act, how we use our individual bodies as part of that 'bigger body' is our true and spiritual worship. Whether that is dealing with admin, changing beds, holding the hand of a dying patient or writing up our notes, all we do in our bodies can be an act of worship.¹⁵ It is, once again, about our orientation towards God.

Taking time in the sluice, staff room or office to say a swift, silent prayer of thanks, or to intercede for a colleague, patient or ourselves, is a good idea. Finding others to pray with before or after a shift, or in break time can be invaluable as well. Bring God into your workplace (he is there already, but he is waiting for you to notice him and talk to him about it). Keep that 'upward' orientation towards him throughout the day, so that every bit of your work, mundane or marvellous, unpleasant or joyful, is transformed into work you do with

and for God, for his glory and his kingdom. And others will see that.¹⁶

Finally, remember that Jesus told us to live in the present, in the day that God has given us.¹⁷ Pray at the start of the day for the day ahead. Pray at the end and note all that God has done and shown you. Be thankful! Find others with whom to share your thanksgiving and prayer. And remember, nothing is wasted in God's economy. You may never see the fruit of your labours in this life, but Jesus will reveal them when he returns.¹⁸ 🙌

Steve Fouch is CMF Head of Communications

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Genesis 1 | 8. Ephesians 2:10 |
| 2. Genesis 2:1-3 | 9. Keller T. Op cit:30 |
| 3. Genesis 1:27-30 | 10. Keller T, Op cit:49 |
| 4. Keller T. <i>Every Good Endeavour: Connecting Your Work to God's Plan for the World</i> . London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2012:21 | 11. Genesis 12:4 |
| 5. Genesis 3:17-19 | 12. Genesis 2:18 |
| 6. John 12:1-8 | 13. Romans 12:1-2 |
| 7. John 13:1-17 | 14. Romans 12:4-8 |
| | 15. Colossians 3:17 |
| | 16. Matthew 5:16 |
| | 17. Matthew 6:34 |
| | 18. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 |

reflections from Uganda

Rosie Housman reflects on the difference made by godly nurses giving palliative care to Sudanese refugees in Uganda

This summer, I had the opportunity to spend two weeks with an NGO called Peace Hospice Uganda. Founded by Vicky, a local nurse, and run by a small team in the remote Adjumani District, Peace Hospice provides palliative care to a local population of approximately 500,000 people, over half of whom are South Sudanese refugees. During the two weeks, my aim was to gain insight

into palliative care and to explore the lives and healthcare needs of refugees. As an emergency nurse in the UK, this experience was both inspiring and humbling.

A typical day started at the office at 9am ('African time'), with team prayer and a morning handover before setting off on community visits. Each day, I joined the visits with a nurse called Christine, and our

palliative care volunteer and motorbike driver, Victor. The three of us would squeeze onto the motorbike, and ride sometimes up to an hour to see patients either in the refugee settlements, in hospitals, healthcare centres or in patients' homes. The roads were truly awful – the phrase 'we're eating dust' was frequently used. We waded across rivers and rode through maize fields. It was challenging but always rewarding to see people's reaction when they saw us coming. After visiting a new patient who had been diagnosed with breast cancer, she said 'I can now sleep tonight knowing that you know where I am and that you are supporting me.' For many, Peace Hospice is their only connection to health services and so the support is invaluable.

As in many developing countries, supplies, were often limited. Vital stocks such as oral morphine, laxatives, dressings and appropriate antibiotics were sporadic, but were provided free to patients if available. This meant it was often the luck of the draw whether a patient could get the medical treatment they needed. Surgery, chemotherapy or radiotherapy was not possible for most with the high cost of treatment and the cancer centre being a ten-hour bus ride away in Kampala. Because of this, much of palliative care was focused on patients' psychosocial and spiritual needs.

On reaching each of our patients, Christine would listen to them about how they were coping. Many felt forgotten by the national health system, were facing stigmatisation from the community, or were struggling with their faith. The majority of patients were Muslims or Christians. While some patients talked about the positive impact of their faith in giving them strength, others were struggling, so Christine would encourage the latter in their faith to remain prayerful, and to find support from their churches.

The palliative care nurses had a seemingly unlimited supply of compassion and care for their patients, despite the daily challenges and barriers they faced. Christine divided her time between working for Peace Hospice and the local hospital. After each night shift at the hospital she would still do a full day of community visits. When I asked her where she found the energy to do this, she said that her hospice volunteer work was her way to show Jesus' love to people and to worship him.

A patient I will always remember was Hassan. He had cancer that was eating away at his face. The consequent infection had been treated well by applying crushed antibiotics onto the wound. However, with his face so disfigured and raw that he always wore a

facemask, which Christine removed when we arrived. She spoke to him for half an hour, looking directly at his raw face. I could see how much it meant to Hassan that someone was looking directly at him, listening to him and treating him with such compassion.

Due to the state of healthcare in Uganda and many other places in the world, people with cancer, HIV and other chronic conditions are often marginalised and forgotten by the system. Vicky's motto is that she is 'the voice for the voiceless', and this was a reality for her and the rest of the team. They reminded me of how Jesus noticed the people on the outskirts that others forgot about. One such patient, a Sudanese refugee and former English teacher, had been on the medical ward at the local hospital for several days with severe liver ascites and widespread oedema. On ward rounds each day the doctors passed her by. She told me how Vicky came in one day and saw her, took her history and gave her pain relief and medication. She responded so well to diuretics, that by the time we visited her at home, she was well recovered and cleaning outside her house. As we sat outside under a tree, she told me how she thought she was going to die on the medical ward, but how she had been given new hope and had her faith reaffirmed.

Peace Hospice showed me in the most practical way that even in remote and difficult places, it is possible to give hope to the hopeless, to be compassionate and to restore dignity. Working within this team, it was evident in their daily interactions with patients that their work was part of their daily worship. They showed sacrificial love to others because God loved them first.¹

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1. 1 John 4:19

According to the Uganda Cancer Institute,
5,000 CASES OF CANCER
are diagnosed annually with
only a **20%**
five year survival rate

Uganda
currently houses over
1.25 MILLION REFUGEES
from surrounding nations,
the majority in the
NORTH OF THE COUNTRY

From World Health
Organisation - Uganda



Gospel Centred Work: Becoming the worker God wants you to be

Tim Chester

The Good Book Company
2013, £3.39 (E-Book only), 112pp
ISBN: 9781909559363

Reviewed by **Kate Walker**,
a practice nurse in north London

Have you ever wondered 'what work does God want me to do?' Not what work I think looks fun or impressive, earns lots of money or fits with what my parents, partner, friends or society *think* is valuable, but *what work did God intend for me to do?*

Think you know? Unsure? Haven't a clue? Then I have the perfect book for you!

Tim Chester has written what can only be described as an eye-opening, earth-shattering book, designed to challenge our attitude towards work in the 21st century and feed us with a gospel-centred outlook on our purpose in the world of work.

I have to admit, I approached this book with a fair degree of self-righteousness and judgment. I thought I knew what the book was going to say (I mean, the clue is in the title, surely?) and believed it would be the same old spiel: we should be nice to our colleagues, show compassion to our patients, etc... etc... What I didn't expect, however, was to have the very foundations on which I stand knocked out from underneath me. Let me explain.

We live in a culture where who you are is defined by what you do and your worth is based on what you earn. We are told that we must climb the career ladder and earn more money to be considered successful. It's no wonder that so many of us feel dissatisfied, disillusioned and fed up with work.

In *Gospel Centred Work*, Chester reminds us that the equation is in fact inverted; work should be a product of our identity. As children of Christ, our identity is already secure, thus what we do (our work) should be the means of giving God glory and blessing others. As nurses, many of us have been granted unique gifts and skills such as compassion. We should honour those gifts and use them to serve others, rather than seeking a doomed pursuit of passing success.

This small book will take you on a journey; it starts with understanding why we were created to work and explores how to work in a fallen world. It follows Jesus' example and recognises what good work looks like. Written for individual or small group discussion, it provides practical reflections and activities on how to work in a hostile environment, whether that be due to an oppressive boss, difficult colleagues, fear of failure or unachievable demands.

Finally, Chester reminds us of our call to be a blessing to others and a witness to non-Christians. He challenges us on how our faith and calling plays out in the decisions we make and the communities we seek to build, and how as brothers and sisters in Christ, we can support one another along the way.

It is all too easy to slip into the secular world's view on life and work and join the rat race in pursuit of unachievable fulfilment and happiness. It is all too easy to forget who we are: to forget that each and every one of us has a unique purpose. Work can be such a joy and a blessing not only to ourselves, but to our community, our patients and indeed, to God. Don't let yourself lose sight of what work is really about. Centre yourself on the gospel, on your Creator, and let him use you to transform his kingdom. And if you need a bit of help to get started... buy the book. I promise it's worth every penny! 🍀



reflection

let your light shine before others

'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

Sonja Campbell-Scott
shares the impact that godly
colleagues have had
on her life

Over thirty years ago, during my nurse training, I was an unconverted, lost soul. In my early twenties, already married but desperately unhappy, I found comfort in my training course. That may sound strange to you. Comfort from being confronted with illness and death? Comfort from demanding shift patterns and having to combine serious study with hard work? Yes, for amidst all the demands, uncertainty and challenges, several people crossed my path who, unbeknown to them, were like a light to me. They had an air of joy about them that I had never seen before. They were gracious and kind when I and others challenged them harshly. They were not perfect, but they were different.

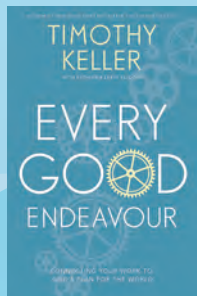
One of them, a consultant surgeon, spoke to his patients with such kindness and humility, that even when he had to break bad news his patients were able to accept it calmly. The other was a senior physiotherapist on a hectic neurosurgical unit, who was always full of hope, kindness and laughter. She was supernaturally able to get the best out of the patients in her care and the nurses she worked with.

I remember the nurse who sat me down after I had made a serious misjudgement. She spoke the truth in love,¹ knowing that I was lost and blind. Finally, I remember my fellow student Rachel. She was kind and compassionate towards me, despite me pushing all manner of buttons and throwing all sorts of temptations at her. Years later, we bumped into each other and I had the joy of telling her that her prayers for me had been answered and I was now her sister in Christ.

Dear reader, no matter how senior or junior you are, if you are struggling with the demands of your job or training, be encouraged and remember what Jesus said, that as his disciples, we are the light of the world.² He is reaching out to others through you, so let your light shine before others. 🌟

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1. Ephesians 4:15
2. Matthew 5:14



Every Good Endeavour Timothy Keller

Hodder & Stoughton
2012, £9.99, 288pp
ISBN 9781444702606

Reviewed by **Esther Chevassut**,
CMF Associate Staff Worker

Do we see work as our life's purpose? A good, an evil or a means to an end? Do we work in order to earn the money to live and relax for the 'real part of life'? As Christians, is our work primarily a place for evangelism or raising money for ministry, or is there value in our work in itself? This book brings to light the biblical view of work, as a fundamental part of being human and made in the image of God.

Keller helpfully unpacks God's plan for work in its design and dignity, and the purpose of work as cultivation and service. We see God at work from the beginning of time: God forms and fills the earth in Genesis 1. From here, Keller uses the biblical narrative to show that in our work we imitate God and thus our work has innate value and dignity.

We can see throughout both the Bible and history many facets of God working, as an artist, teacher, carer, architect, engineer, lawyer, manager and parent. Furthermore, work was a part of Eden, not an evil result of the fall (although work is of course affected by it). God created the universe, and us, out of love, so that we can have a relationship with him, and glorify him through our lives and work. Adam and Eve were the first human

beings to begin the God-mirroring and God-glorifying mandate to fill the earth and subdue it by working in the garden, cultivating the ground, using the raw materials God had given them for their livelihood and enjoyment, and bringing order out of chaos and fullness out of emptiness.

Additionally, Keller helps us understand our problems with work. We all know the feeling of work being fruitless, pointless and unsatisfying, and it never fully reaching our hopes or being fully completed. It is valuable to analyse the pain of work resulting from the fall (external) and our idolatry and selfishness (internal). We must let the gospel change our conception of and compass for work and be aware of the influence of the psychological idols within our hearts as well as the sociological idols in our culture and profession. The world we live in both idolises and devalues work from what God created it to be. Keller encourages us that our work on earth is not futile; it has eternal value. God continually shapes us as his workers to glorify him. Work's painful toil will be redeemed in the new creation; there is hope for our work now and for eternity.

Although Keller mainly uses examples of business in New York City, *Every Good*

Endeavour can certainly encourage and challenge us in our work as nurses and midwives. We have the privilege of bearing God's image as we care for humans holistically, showing them their intrinsic value and dignity. We can display God's love and see them as God does.

This book encourages us to assess ways we idolise work, and for healthcare professionals, this could be moral superiority and pride. Keller describes and defines the model for work by looking to Jesus, who supremely worked for the benefit and service of others. We are also called to serve God, by serving others and bringing glory to him. In light of God's mandate for work, we are freed from the world's measures of success. We can strive to do our work excellently with the gifts he's given us in the workplace he's placed us in, to bear his image, serve others and bring glory to him.

I found this book very enriching and challenging for the way I think about work, both to see its godly value and to understand why it can feel burdensome and unsatisfying. Keller provides a thought-provoking, challenging and encouraging read, which draws on foundational and relevant biblical wisdom to address our questions about work.

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