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# GOOD NEWS

## *Unlimited*

## What About the Workers?

By S.E. Wirt

The primary goal of the Christian life, according to the New Testament, is to know the will of God and to do it. Invariably, Scripture interprets that will in terms of human beings. When Christ sent out his disciples, he sent them to *people*. They were to witness to *people*, to heal *people*, to offer heart and hand to *people*. They were to follow the example of their Lord, who died neither for truth nor virtue nor any other cause, but for *people*.

The way a Christian goes about fulfilling the divine will among his fellows is known in Scripture as his vocation. The English word ‘calling’, for which ‘vocation’ is a synonym, came into use at the time of the Coverdale translation of the Bible in 1535. It is based on the Greek word *klesis*...

**Jonah did not care about the Assyrians, but he was totally wrapped up in the problem of his conscience before God.**

In the Scriptures, the call of God becomes the specific means of implementing the will of God; and that call is never divorced from people. Abraham was called to found a nation; Moses was called to deliver a nation; Jonah was called—twice—to bring a nation to repentance. The book of Jonah is really a sociological classic, for the son of Amittai held the same attitude toward the people of Nineveh that some missionaries have been criticized for holding toward the “heathen.” Jonah did not care about Assyrians, but he was totally wrapped up in the problem of his conscience before God. In a similar way, evangelists and missionaries have sometimes been charged more with religion’s duties than its people.

That road is a perilous one. The apostle, Paul realized from the moment of his conversion that his task was to spread the Good News among Greek-speaking people all over the known world. His letters are evidence that he did not consider it a duty to be discharged, but a love to be cultivated and intimately shared.

Today, there is a need to restore the word ‘vocation’ to its Biblical significance. It is true that whoever *speaks* for God is engaged in the service of God and that every time a Christian tells someone about the purpose of

God revealed on Calvary, he is fulfilling his vocation. However, the Lord does not call half a man. He does not press a man’s mouth into service and ignore his hands and feet. Spraying the universe with words is not the same thing as communicating with another human being. To be called means putting the whole personality into orbit for God, in the way that is most effective for other men...

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The ordinary man moves in a fairly circumscribed sphere that embraces his home, the homes of relatives and friends, one or two places of leisure-time activity, occasional public gatherings—and his place of work... Work today has become the most important thing in life for millions of people. An industrial society tends to gravitate increasingly, not about the store, the church, or the inn, but about the factory. The one fixed geographical location is the plant, the house of the machine...

On the job, the Christian’s vocation acquires special significance, if for no other reason he can be seen for what he is and not for what he says he is. All the impressive statements he makes in leisure hours can be validated or negated by his conduct at the desk or at the bench. His testimony takes on a new and significant aspect as his fellow workers watch him react to the conditions they face: temptation, unfairness, exploitation, corruption, danger, ennui, abuse, and all the rest. Verbalizing may or may not be part of his witness during working hours. A steel worker on a scaffold can hardly be

expected to be a professional evangelist. Verbal evangelism at the wrong moment has been known to disrupt work and even to jeopardize human life. The Marxist may feel that he can propagandize on the job to the neglect of his task; the Christian who lives by the Bible cannot do so. There is “a time for silence and a time for speech.”

There are many opportunities for a Christian to witness in connection with his

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# EDITORIAL . . .



Pastor Ron Allen

*“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).*

Vivid in our minds are memories of emotional wars and mind contests that took place in our home when we navigated our way through our children’s adolescence. Many battles of wills were fought outside their bedroom doors as they stubbornly insisted on their right to self-determination. The recurring question was, more or less, “why can’t I do what I like?”

During my own life’s unfolding, I have discovered that I have repeatedly raised the same question. In spite of the ‘wisdom of the years’, I still want my desires to be met; I do not like satisfaction’s postponement, and am tempted often to sacrifice perfectly good goals on the altar of my immediate wants.

It is a recognized sign of maturity when a person is able to defer the realization—even of legitimate ambition—for the sake of achieving a higher and more substantial aim. People who do not learn some measure of self-control live chaotic and unsatisfying lives.

We are susceptible to the myth that we would be perfectly happy as long as we could have everything we liked. Sadly, those who always do as they please are seldom pleased with what they do. Our society lacks, in large measure, many constraints and disciplines that were taken for granted a couple of generations ago. This development does not appear to have made people happier. The alarming rate of suicide amongst the young is a confirming sign.

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work. An excellent illustration is provided by the organized labor movement. To many respectable church-goers of the past, there was something indecent about the lowly members of the nation’s labor force banding together in an effort to improve their lot in life and to claim a greater share of the national product. They considered that the labor movement smacked of ingratitude, disrespect, sedition, and worldliness. Organized labor has had to contend in its struggle not only against management and ownership, but against the very institution whose Founder was a carpenter. The voting record of English bishops in the House of Lords during the past hundred and fifty years on labor and factory reform issues

It turns out that the happiness offered by Christ really does give us our hearts desire. Ultimately, it’s the do-as-you-please kind. It was St. Augustine who suggested the motto: “Love God and do what you like.” He meant, of course, that love is all embracing and all consuming for Christians. The disciple is held in the grip of an affection that supersedes all competing ones. “We love him because he first loved us.” Love for God speaks to every decision, every choice, every undertaking. Believers are directed by ‘the expulsive power of a new affection.’ They do right because they want to.

St. Augustine knew a thing or two. He grew up the spoiled son of a widow. He trained himself in the habits of self-gratification. He grieved his mother with his profligate antics. Thus, he insisted on freedom, but like all who live to please themselves, he learned to dislike the self he became. Though he struggled against his corrupted appetites, he was held in bondage by them. He learned the truth of Jesus’ words: “Whoever sins is a slave of sin.”

St. Augustine lived long enough to break free of his enslavement. He was liberated by the love of Jesus Christ.

Every day we have duties and responsibilities we would prefer to avoid. Many people hate their work. Love—the love of God in Jesus—is powerful to set us free from such drudgery by helping us see our life—including our work—as a service rendered to him who loves us. Where there is no love, there is only servitude. 

can hardly be construed, by any stretch of the imagination, as “good news to the poor.”

**Organized labor has had to contend in its struggle not only against management and ownership, but against the very institution whose Founder was a carpenter.**

The Church of England was not the sole offender. Some evangelical students of prophecy in America have been known to contend that the ‘locusts’ in the Book of Revelation, with “*faces like men*” and “*power like the power of scorpions,*” were the labor unions. The unions got the message, and workingmen began to leave the church in droves, creating what Pope Leo XIII called the great scandal of the nineteenth century. →

## GOODNEWS *Unlimited*

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Good News Unlimited is an interdenominational Christian organization proclaiming the good news about Jesus Christ and his kingdom of grace. Special emphasis is placed on the message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ’s righteousness alone. GNU also links the gospel to the needs of the whole person, to life-style, and preventive medicine.

Good News Unlimited magazine also seeks to keep readers up-to-date on all aspects of GNU’s ministries. This includes news on national and international radio broadcasts; public seminars, congresses, and Bible schools within the USA (as well as

public meetings in Canada and overseas); and the dissemination of literature, audio and video material. (A comprehensive catalog is available free on request.)

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**This magazine is free upon request.**

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# UPDATE!!! M.A.N.N.A. Outreach

## GREETINGS!

Although we have not reported on M.A.N.N.A. Outreach in quite some time, Good News Unlimited has continued to support and maintain this ministry since 2005 along with your prayers and donations. After a long hiatus from person-to-person interaction, it has been my privilege, since the beginning of 2017, to join again with the faithful servants of this ministry. It is an honor to be able to update our readers, now monthly, on the progress and continued work of Good News Unlimited's faith in action through M.A.N.N.A.



*Some of the faithful weekly volunteers.*

## NOT OUR MINISTRY

Throughout the last decade, there have been many moments that I have thought M.A.N.N.A. would be forced to discontinue service to the homeless for lack of financial support or volunteers that help serve every week. Despite knowing well God's promises in scripture, at times I can fall easily into the constrained human mind that often forgets just

how big God is and what He is capable of accomplishing with or without our involvement.

The GNU board members would be able to testify to phone calls and announcements at board meetings that several times, we have thought the end of both M.A.N.N.A. Outreach and GNU were near. However, within days of such statements, God has miraculously presented new leaders for the homeless outreach or donations that would keep GNU's doors open for

The Bible considers a man's work honorable and necessary. It contains no injunction against the right to strike, nor does it forbid the right of workers to band together for purposes of mutual assistance. To condemn the millions of men and women in organized labor simply because they are organized is contrary to the mind of Christ as revealed in the New Testament...

The labor unions offer a tremendous field for sharing the good news of salvation, as well as the echelons of management and commerce. However, vocation also means social involvement. It means ministering to people where they are by word and deed in the Savior's name. "Make the application of Christianity to present-day life," said Keir Hardie, the father of the British Labor Party, "and none will support it with more zeal than the workers." A Christian carrying his cross must expect to make contact with social issues...

There are many aspects of vocation that affect the Christian's daily stint. The quality of workmanship, the kind of service given to the public, the relationships between employer and employee, all are brought within earshot, so to speak, of the call to discipleship...

several more years. These are constant reminders that although we partner together with you to share the good news and minister to the hungry, thirsty, unclothed, homeless, sick, and imprisoned—we are only the supporters, workers, and messengers of His great promises and love. Good News Unlimited has been—and always will be—God's ministry, which He allows us to serve and be a part.

On behalf of all of the staff and volunteers of Good News Unlimited and M.A.N.N.A. Outreach, it is an honor to work with you in this most important task. May He continue to bless and keep each one of His children forever.

-Molly

*If you feel led to financially support M.A.N.N.A. Outreach directly, you can either make checks out directly to: M.A.N.N.A. Outreach, or you can note M.A.N.N.A. in your check made out to Good News Unlimited. Either can be mailed to: P.O. Box 6687, Auburn, CA 95604*

*Or, if you'd like to donate by credit card, please feel free to call our office at: (530) 823-9690 or visit our webpage at: [www.goodnewsunlimited.org](http://www.goodnewsunlimited.org).*

*Thank you for your continued prayers as we partner with you to serve the homeless.*



*Director of MANNA, B.J. Tillis (left), delivering prayer, offering hope through scripture, and one of the many emergency blankets donated by a generous supporter during the last cold winter's months to the homeless.*

William Temple hinted that the concept of vocation may even solve ethical problems that cannot otherwise be unraveled. It can secure the conscience in the performance of its duty. It can forge a connecting link between theology and ethics. "The idea of vocation is the central concept of Christian ethics. It recognizes both that love is the fulfilling of the law and that the practice of love is never merely the application to concrete situations of a preconceived principle, but is always potentially a fresh revelation of God's will and God's grace" -N.H.G. Robinson.

To know the will of God and to do it seems a fairly simple challenge and call on Sunday morning; on Monday morning, it is something else. It is to the Monday vocational arena that the disciple is being called by the Lord of the church. No Christian is expected to parade his religion, but neither is he to mask what he believes. Jesus said: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). That means in part that the Christian wins acceptance for his testimony on the job by the way he works. "The medium is the message," as Marshall

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# COMMON MERCIES: The Power of a Wagging Tail

By Charles Brown

I remember once hearing the story of a man who was brought to a higher life by the wagging of his dog's tail. He was a rich man, living a careless life, never thinking of the God who had given him so much that was beautiful and enjoyable, a happy home, and wife and children. Until one day, when coming home after a long absence, he was met at the door by his dog, who greeted him with every manifestation of canine delight, barking and leaping and wagging his tail.

The master's dull soul was stirred by the sight. He began to reflect on how much God had done for him and how poorly he had acknowledged his goodness. He had given him all that was needed to make life perfect. In addition, He had endowed him with a mind to think and a heart to enjoy. What return had he made for all these things? He realized his ingratitude, and resolved to live henceforth a different life. He became a religious man and a great philanthropist, spending his wealth

in the service of his fellow men. Sometimes, when asked how he had been led to the work he did, he would reply with a laugh, "It was my dog that did it. I was converted by the wagging of my dog's tail."

-Charles Brown:

Harvest Home, p.82, 83. 



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McLuhan tells us. Jesus sold Peter, in part at least, by surpassing him in his own trade as a fisherman (John 21:6) ...

**Driving to work is as much a part of his vocation as anything the Christian does all day long.**



Immense vocational values are to be found in the post-war institution known as the 'coffee break.' Leisure-time activities organized around common professional interests offer the Christian opportunities to testify to that which God has called him to do. Driving to work is as much a part of his vocation as anything the Christian does all day long. The behavior of motorists in a line of traffic can show, as quickly as any other situation, what the grace of God really means to an evangelical.

"The spirit of man," said the wise one, "is the candle of the Lord" (Proverbs 20:27). As long as that candle remains unlit, man toils in darkness. His soul is dead. His human equation does not work out; his melody is played in a minor key. However, once the taper of the soul is lighted, all is changed. The working hours can become radiant. The work itself can acquire meaning and if that does not happen, the hours away from work will still provide the time and occasion for a man to serve his Lord. Thus, the Christian's sense of vocation becomes a divine summons to a strong and fruitful life. It is an event in eternity actualized in time.

-S.E. Wirt: THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE OF THE EVANGELICAL, pp. 55-64. 

## The Astonished Heart

To begin with, Christianity is not a religion; it's the proclamation of the end of religion. Religion is a human activity dedicated to the job of reconciling God to humanity and humanity to itself. The gospel, however—the Good News of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—is the astonishing announcement that God has done the whole work of reconciliation without a scrap of human assistance. It is the bizarre proclamation that religion is over, period. All the efforts of the human race to straighten up the mess of history by plausible religious devices—all the chicken sacrifices, the fasts, the mysticism, the moral exhortations, all the threats—have been canceled by God for lack of saving interest... Admittedly, the church may use the *forms* of religion—but only because the church is the sign to the world of God's accomplishment of what religion tried (and failed) to do, *not* because any of the church's devices can actually get the job done. The church therefore, must always be on its guard against giving the impression that its rites, ceremonies, and requirements have any religious efficacy in and of themselves. All such things are simply sacraments—real presences under particular signs—of the indiscriminate gift of grace that God in Christ has given everybody.

-Robert Farrar Capon: THE ASTONISHED HEART, p. 2. 

