

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

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The Journey Outward

The faith at work movement—which is also known as ministry in daily life, marketplace ministry, spirituality of work, and the like—is expanding in size and potential influence, documents David Miller in *God At Work* (Oxford University Press [2007], 198 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; \$29.95).

Miller, director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture (409 Prospect St., New Haven, CT 06511; www.yale.edu/faith), knows of over 1,200 faith at work groups in the U.S. He has hundreds of clippings on the topic. His 222-page book has 560 references and 450 entries in its bibliography.

Like any movement, Miller acknowledges, faith at work has no single characteristic or umbrella group. Miller does, however, delineate types of groups and traces those types back to their 19th century antecedents. Note: *God At Work* situates the movement mostly within Protestantism, although Miller briefly refers to Vatican II, to our National Center for the Laity's 1977 charter *A Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern*, to the NCL's INITIATIVES newsletter and to Greg Pierce, former NCL president.

The faith at work movement, Miller concludes, “has the potential” to give “new ethical shape” to society and to renew the church. Yet many Church employees and the theological academy seemingly ignore the movement. It gets far and away more attention in newspapers and business magazines than in religious publications. Only two Protestant denominations, according to Miller, “have shaped specific groups and parts of the faith at work movement.” One of those, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, cut back its financial support in 2004, leaving only the Mennonite Church.

INITIATIVES will have more to report when your editor returns from Cleveland where, during Easter Week, faith at work leaders are gathering under the auspice of Coalition for Ministry in Daily Life (2015 NE Loop 410, San Antonio, TX 78217; www.dailylifeministry.org).

Taking the Initiative *In Business*

The Institute for Business & Professional Ethics (DePaul University, 1 E. Jackson Blvd. #7000, Chicago, IL 60604; www.depaul.edu/ethics) is pushing the idea that directly eliminating poverty is a profitable aim for a business. This is different from businesses tempering poverty simply by creating jobs. It is different too from businesses having an obligation to somehow lend a hand to the less fortunate.

Charitable groups are overwhelmed and “government is impotent” in correcting the imbalance of opportunity in the world, says Stuart Hart, author of *Capitalism at the Crossroads* (Pearson Education [2005], 1 Lake St., Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458; \$29.99). “Business today is the only world force, the only savior that can make the difference.”

IBPE is hosting Hart at a lecture series that also features William Easterly, author of *White Man's Burden: How the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill* (Penguin [2006], 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014; \$27.95).

For the next three years IBPE will explore “commerce as a catalyst for alleviating poverty” through courses at the school, through talks and through contact with business ventures in Chicago and around the globe. (*Chicago Sun Times*, 2/20/07)

Muhammad Yunus (Grameen Bank, 50 F St. NW #800, Washington, DC 20001; www.grameen-info.org) is a prominent name in this business-fights-poverty movement. He received the Nobel Peace Prize (www.nobelprize.org) last year for lending millions of dollars in increments of about \$100 to otherwise destitute customers (often women) who, in turn, start or expand a craft, farming or other small business. More on Yunus in a subsequent INITIATIVES.

Taking the Initiative *For the Working Poor*

Last year Steven Bigari (America's Family, PO Box 26238, Colorado Springs, CO 80936; www.amfol.com) left behind his ownership of 12 McDonald's restaurants to share with small business owners what he's learned about taking care of employees. Employers can reduce turnover and increase profit, says Bigari, by arranging day care and transportation. Owners of small businesses likewise benefit from giving short-term, no interest loans to dependable employees for a car or a computer. Further, employers must steer low-wage workers away from payday loan outfits and toward banks. Thus America's Family offers access to e-accounts and materials on money management. (*N.Y. Times*, 2/4/07)

Bigari's approach to employee assistance raises questions. Why, for example, does America's Family explicitly advise low-wage workers to shop at Wal-Mart, a company that routinely erodes financial and social capital? Why is Bigari silent on labor unions, the normal tool by which—at least in Catholic doctrine—entry level workers gain true participation in the economy?

Nonetheless, Bigari is thinking about an important social problem and putting his time and money into his ideas. INITIATIVES will stay on the story.

Taking the Initiative *With Coffee*

Many college students are being exposed to the fair trade concept with their morning *cup of java*. At Dominican University (7900 W. Division St., River Forest, IL 60305; peace@dom.edu), to mention only one example, all coffee served on campus is now purchased through fair trade outlets.

Stephen Coffey from South Boston (yes, his real name is Coffey) is spearheading a fair trade coffee outlet located in cyberspace: www.thousandhillscoffee.com. The beans come from cooperatives in Rwanda. In addition to improving life for those farmers, Coffey's venture supports the Maranyundo School for Girls in Nyamata, Rwanda (Paraclete Foundation, 207 E St., South Boston, MA 02127; www.paraclete.org). The residential school, in the last stage of construction, has 75 students in grades seven through nine. The

Nyamata area was devastated during the genocide of the mid-1990s.

Fr. Bill Walton, SJ of Oregon also has a cyber-company (www.madremonte.com) that sells coffee; this time from Columbia. Again, in addition to helping the farmers, sales of Walton's coffee support a development project in Columbia, under the supervision of Jesuit missionaries there. (*Florida Catholic*, 1/18/07)

Some fair trade leaders in the U.S. want to apply the concept in the processing and marketing of food and other goods in this country. Organic Valley (1 Organic Way, LaFarge, WI 54639; www.organicvalley.coop) is part of a fair trade conversation among small farms, farm workers and organic suppliers. The Agricultural Justice Project (RAFI, 274 Pittsboro School Rd., Pittsboro, NC 27312; www.rafiusa.org) is developing a marketing label for sustainable farms that adhere to its *domestic fair trade principles*. (*Social Policy* [Fall/06], 1024 Elysian Fields Ave., New Orleans, LA 70117)

Taking the Initiative *Against Child Labor*

Remember when Kathie Lee Gifford was a TV star—over ten years ago? Remember when she launched a clothing line at Wal-Mart? It so happened that children in Honduras, often in slave-like conditions, made the clothes. The National Labor Committee (540 W. 48th St. #300, New York, NY 10036; www.nlcnet.org), with assistance from many student and consumer groups, successfully used the Gifford scandal to get some big-name clothiers to address child labor in their overseas plants.

The story is far from over, however. The situation, NLC warns, can easily regress. Specifically, NLC complains that Hanes Inc. (1000 E. Hanes Mill Rd., Winston Salem, NC 27105) and a few other U.S. companies are doing business with Harvest Rich in Bangladesh. In cooperation with Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity, NLC finds over 200 children working at Harvest Rich.

Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production (2200 Wilson Blvd. #601, Arlington, VA 22201; www.wrapapparel.org) gives Harvest Rich a "certificate of compliance." But WRAP, launched by the American Apparel Manufacturers Association in the wake of the Gifford scandal, does not adequately measure international labor standards, according to NLC.

Because U.S. companies are falling behind in this matter, Senator Byron Dorgan (PO Box 2579, Bismark, ND 58502; www.dorgan.senate.gov) is spearheading Congressional legislation (S3485 & H5635) prohibiting imports of goods made in overseas sweatshops.

Taking the Initiative *On Health Care*

The concept of universal health insurance has been consistently defeated by its opponents in the business community and elsewhere. Now business may switch positions.

As INITIATIVES previously reported, Lee Scott, CEO of Wal-Mart (Bentonville, AK 72716; www.walmartstores.com), nearly endorsed universal health insurance during a talk in February 2006. This February Scott participated with Andrew Stern (Service Employees International Union, 1313 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20005; www.seiu.org) in a press conference announcing a “Better Health Care Together” campaign.

“Government alone won’t and can’t solve this [insurance] crisis,” Scott says. He supports a summit meeting in May on universal insurance. (*Democrat & Chronicle*, 2/7/07)

Meanwhile, executives from U.S. auto manufacturers broached the idea of universal health care with President George Bush in a private meeting last November. Some U.S. executives admit that Japan’s system of health care gives an advantage not enjoyed by Ford or General Motors.

“In the end, private business leaders [not unions or consumer groups] may become the loudest advocates for government-supplied health care,” reports Terry Golway. (*America* [12/11/06], 106 W. 56th St., New York, NY 10019)

INITIATIVES hopes the Catholic *principle of subsidiarity* plays a role in whatever universal insurance policy emerges. That is, INITIATIVES believes that government programs, like health insurance, can be more efficient and empowering when delivered by mediating institutions, not by government agencies. Stay tuned.

Taking the Initiative *For Life*

A pregnant college student (single or married) wouldn’t have to look far for information about abortion. Soon, however, that student might have easy access to information and resources on pre-natal care, parenting skills, financial and academic assistance or adoption perhaps. That’s the goal of Rep. Marcy Kaptur (1 Maritime Plaza #600, Toledo, OH 43604; www.kaptur.house.gov) and Rep. Sue Myrick (6525 Morrison Blvd. #402, Charlotte, NC 28211; www.myrick.house.gov).

The two have introduced a bi-partisan bill to establish service offices for pregnant and parenting students at qualifying colleges. The bill is named in honor of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902), a feminist champion who upheld the sacredness of all life, born and yet-to-be-born.

Kaptur and Myrick foresee these college offices being similar to the Pregnancy Resource Center at Georgetown University (37th St. & O St. NW, Washington, DC 20057; chooselife@georgetown.edu), which began in 1997 as an effort of Feminists for Life (PO Box 20685, Alexandria, VA 22320; www.feministsforlife.org).

Work Prayers

Joe Frankenfield of Mt. Pleasant, MI is a longtime friend of our National Center for the Laity. He supplies the following meditation (edited) for those who want to relate the Mass to their work lives, to their effort to pay the bills and to make a difference in the world:

First, take responsibility for the gospel. The priest and other ministers at Mass don’t give us the gospel any more than physicists give us the laws of nature. Jesus’ word to us has always been that God is working with us to transform the world into a place of peace, justice and joy.

Next, don’t think of the priest at Mass as bringing Christ to us from somewhere outside. Christ has been with us all week at work, building, caring, teaching, discovering and bringing joy and peace.

Then, respect the bread and wine at Mass *before they are placed on the altar*. Real people sweating over a hot oven or in a dusty vineyard made them. The bread and wine symbolize our daily work. Honor the

bread and wine as it is carried to the altar. It will soon come back as the presence of Christ, the promise and foretaste of the kingdom.

Finally, remember at Mass that we are not petitioners, begging favors from a reluctant sovereign. We are co-creators of the world that God gives us. Remember the promise Jesus made and began in us. With that awareness we can take a hammer, a law book, a computer or a skillet and, working in the Spirit, complete what God gives us.

Oh, one more thing, when the priest announces that the Mass is ended, it's a good opportunity to gather with the folks we have been praying with. If the parish doesn't offer such hospitality, go to the diner across the street. It is friends like those at Mass who will be standing next to us doing the work of God throughout the week.

News and Views

Over the coming months the U.S. Catholic bishops—individually, through their state conferences and at their national office—will encourage their flock to vote on November 4, 2008. The bishops ask the laity to bring a Catholic sensibility to the voting booth. A few bishops will give a nod toward or away from specific candidates.

Many Catholic organizations will similarly encourage people to vote in November 2008. They typically publish a “voter’s guide” that measures candidates against the group’s list of “Catholic positions.” As is well known, these Catholic groups do not always agree with one another. In last year’s election, for example, one Catholic group highlighted positions on housing vouchers but said nothing about stem cells. Another group highlighted abortion (a very important topic) but said nothing about the Catholic doctrine on labor relations.

Just before the bishops and these Catholic groups “go to press” with their 2008 pamphlets, INITIATIVES poses some friendly, non-rhetorical questions (and invites replies from its readers):

- Is there really such a thing as a *Catholic voting block* in the U.S.?
- Is there a single candidate anywhere in the country who regards a so-called *Catholic group* that selectively pushes one or more issues as anything other than a lobby group—to be treated

according to its ability to deliver votes? In other words, does anyone think a group carries some additional moral authority in partisan matters because it calls itself *Catholic*?

- Is there any evidence that a bishop or a group of bishops can deliver any vote but their own?
- What is the difference between *conscience-based politics* and *tactics-based politics*?
- Although a case can be made that a Catholic citizen should vote for the candidate, not the party, cannot a moral case be made for voting the ticket? Could it even be argued that Catholic morality favors voting the ticket and thereby upholding the party system?

Rest in Peace

Nina Polcyn Moore (1914-2007)

In 1935 the German consulate in the U.S. and German ships docked in Great Lakes ports displayed the swastika. Therefore, Moore—over six years before Pearl Harbor awakened the U.S. public—was picketing. She was, at age 21, very disturbed by Nazi anti-Semitism.

Two years earlier Moore, while a student at Marquette University, co-founded Holy Family House, the first Catholic Worker outpost in Milwaukee. After graduation she taught in public schools there.

In 1942 Moore moved to Chicago, joining the empire of Bishop Bernard Sheil (1928-1969), founder of the Catholic Youth Organization. Moore was a librarian in the Sheil School of Social Studies, in the basement of the CYO building. She gradually converted the library into a popular bookstore and gallery known as St. Benet’s Book Shop. Moore also tried to organize a union of CYO employees in her building.

In 1954 the Sheil empire began to dissipate. Moore acquired St. Benet’s and ran it independently until 1973. (The Sheil School of Social Studies became the Adult Education Centers under the leadership of National Center for the Laity’s founders Russ Barta and Msgr. Dan Cantwell and then under Vaile Scott, current NCL president.)

For several years St. Benet’s was the place to find the best liturgical resources, novels by Catholic authors, the latest in theology and a

friendly place to meet personalities from around the country and overseas. Through her store, Moore had a “profound influence” on Chicago Catholicism in the 1940s and thereafter, says her friend Bernice Barta. St. Benet’s “became a focal point for many Catholic activists.” It was a place of common ground because Moore “held no prejudices and never spoke a negative word about anyone, a model for all of us.”

Moore was a close friend of Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker. Day often visited Moore in Chicago; the two traveled together, including a peace mission to Russia in 1971. Moore is quoted in nearly every biography of Day.

Moore married widower Thomas Eugene Moore in 1973. He died in December 1995.

In recent years Moore remained active through the Sheil Catholic Center at Northwestern University and in other groups. In 2003 her goddaughter, Kate Marciniak of California, was at a peace rally in downtown Los Angeles. When Marciniak ran into some Catholic Workers, she inquired about Moore. They replied: “She’s here! She’s somewhere in this crowd of 50,000.”

Rest in Peace

Francis Pierce (1925-2007)

Pierce of Greece, NY operated several small businesses over the years, including a junk business, a popular grocery store, a real estate office, and a bookstore. He was a leader in Cursillo (PO Box 210226, Dallas, TX 75211; www.natl-cursillo.org), a retreat and small group movement with 102 affiliated centers in the U.S.

Pierce, with Mary, his wife of 60 years, raised eight children. Their oldest is National Center for the Laity’s former president Greg Pierce (Acta Publications, 5559 W. Howard St., Skokie, IL 60077; gfpierce@aol.com).

Rest in Peace

Edmund Rooney Jr. (1924-2007)

Rooney was a *street reporter*. He went to the scene of his stories, whether in Chicago, Alabama or other parts of the country. His car was equipped with a police scanner and a two-way radio to the city desk.

Rooney began his career in journalism after returning from service in World War II. He was a reporter for the *Chicago Daily News* from 1952-1978. During those years he was also a part-time instructor at Loyola University. In 1978 he joined the faculty full-time. Amazingly, Rooney didn’t have his undergraduate degree until 1977. He subsequently earned a master’s degree in urban studies and a doctorate in education.

Rooney was a big fan of the Bill of Rights, especially freedom of the press. He was, in fact, the leading expert in Illinois on freedom of information issues. He was involved with several press associations, including the Chicago Headline Club (333 N. Michigan Ave. #2032, Chicago, IL 60601; www.headlineclub.org). He was a founder of the Ethics Advice Line (www.ethicsadviceforjournalists.org), a service housed in the Center for Ethics and Social Justice (6525 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, IL 60626).

Once upon a time candidate Ronald Reagan stopped in Chicago for a “no questions allowed” appearance. A recent graduate of Rosary College (now Dominican University) was just starting her career at the famed City News Bureau. She shouted an innocuous question to Reagan about the health of a California personality. The Secret Service impulsively punched the young reporter. An enraged Rooney stood up to them and an altercation ensued. Finally Reagan agreed to answer the question.

Rooney, who with his wife Mary raised six children, was an original signer of our National Center for the Laity’s 1977 charter, *A Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern*. During the 1980s he was a participant in the NCL’s [Msgr. Dan] Cantwell Roundtable, a monthly gathering of illustrious thinkers who, over pasta and wine, solved many ecclesial and political problems.

Happenings

The National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers (300 College Park, Dayton, OH 45469; www.nacflm.org) will hold its annual conference June 26-28, 2007 in Denver.

John Cort (1913-2006) was a longtime editor of *Religious Socialism* (536 W. 111th St. #37, New York, NY 10025; www.religioussocialism.com). The first issue of the newsletter since Cort's death just arrived in INITIATIVES super-size mailbox. It includes commentary on pending Congressional legislation, a report from India, book reviews and more. Subscriptions are \$10. The Institute for Democratic Socialism, publisher of *Religious Socialism*, holds its convention November 9-11, 2007 in Atlanta.

Early in 1982 the first edition of *Newsletter Among Ministers At Work and Others Concerned* appeared. It was the glue for a mostly Anglican network of worker priests in England, called Ministers in Secular Employment. Methodists and Presbyterians and others joined the network and in 1993 the group changed its name to National Association of Christians in Secular Ministry (40 Fairwater Crescent, Alcester, Warks. England B49 6RB; www.chrism.org.uk). The 100th edition of its newsletter, now called *Ministers At Work*, is just off the press. Each newsletter (actually a 40-page booklet) contains an essay or two on the state of the faith at work movement, announcements of conferences, notices of publications and a sampling of relevant websites.

Websites

Rev. Wayne Schwab retired as an Episcopalian pastor in 1993. Now he voluntarily runs the Member Mission Network (10 Jubert Ln., Plattsburgh, NY 12901; www.membermission.org). MMN publishes a monthly cyber-newsletter that contains stories and resources about people living the gospel in their workplaces and family settings. Like your INITIATIVES' editor, Schwab is compulsive about listing addresses in his newsletter items, allowing readers to obtain more information. There's a Schwab book too: *When the Members Are the Missionaries* (Member Mission Press, PO Box 308, Essex, NY 12936; \$19.95).

Tim Meagher and his colleagues at American Catholic History Research Center (620 Michigan Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20064; <http://libraries.cua.edu/achrcua>) maintain an information website on labor relations and U.S. Catholicism, women leaders in U.S. Catholicism and other topics. The History Center recently collaborated with the Life Cycle Institute and the Center for American Catholic Studies—all three at Catholic University—on a five session series on Catholic social justice.

The website for Intervarsity Ministry in Daily Life (PO Box 7895, Madison, WI 53707; www.ivmdl.org) has an extensive bibliography on faith and work. It also has a directory of eight national organizations dedicated to that topic, including our National Center for the Laity. There is a list of about 30 key leaders in the U.S. and Canada who facilitate faith and work support groups. Most are evangelical.

His Church At Work (4080 McGinnis Ferry Rd. #204, Alpharetta, GA 30005; www.hischurchatwork.org) consults with evangelical congregations that desire to equip people for "ministry where they spend the majority of their time, at work." HCAW provides articles, workbooks and facilitators.

Last October the John A. Ryan Institute (2115 Summit Ave. #55S, St. Paul, MN 55105; www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies) sponsored a conference in Italy titled "The Good Company: Catholic Social Thought and Corporate Social Responsibility." Most of the papers from that conference are now in the Institute's website. In addition the website has scores of links to organizations interested in Catholic social thought, both in the U.S. and overseas.

Franklin McMahon is a reporter who covers events with a sketchbook and colored pencils. He was on the scene during the civil rights era, at cultural events, at Vatican II and more. Now over 1,500 of his drawings and paintings are digitized and can be downloaded from www.corbis.com for use in brochures, bulletins and other publications. McMahon, by the way, is an original 1977 signer of our National Center for the Laity's charter, *A Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern*.