

Taking God to Work

David W. Miller serves as Executive Director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture (www.yale.edu/faith) at Yale Divinity School, and as Assistant Professor (Adjunct) of Business Ethics. The mission of the center is “to promote the practice of faith in all spheres of life through theological research and leadership development.”

David also leads the center’s “Ethics and Spirituality in the Workplace” program, and teaches business ethics at Yale Divinity School and Yale School of Management. His course is called, “Business Ethics: Succeeding without Selling Your Soul.” He has particular interest in ethics and spirituality in the workplace, moral leadership and helping companies become faith-friendly. David’s book, *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2007), challenges business academics and executives, as well as theologians and clergy to think differently about faith in the workplace.

He received his Ph.D. and M.Div. degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary and is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). While doing his doctoral work, David co-founded The Avodah Institute in 1999 and served as its president. Avodah’s mission is to help leaders integrate the claims of their faith with the demands of their work.

David brings an unusual “bilingual” perspective to the academic world, having also spent 16 years in senior positions in international business and finance. Prior to academia, David lived and worked in London, England, for eight years, where he was an equity partner in a private bank that specialized in international investment management, corporate finance and mergers and acquisitions. Before that he was a senior executive and director of the securities services and global custody division of Midland Bank plc (now part of the HSBC Group). He first moved to London as the managing director of the European operations of State Street Bank and Trust, a leading U.S. securities services bank. He started his management career, after graduating from Bucknell University in 1979, working for IBM for eight years in a variety of sales and marketing management positions in New Jersey and New England. David also speaks German, having lived, studied, and worked in Germany.

David serves as an advisor to several corporate CEOs and senior executives on questions pertaining to ethics, values, integrating faith and work, and becoming a

faith-friendly company. He is a frequent speaker at gatherings of business leaders, industry associations, academic conferences and church programs. His views are often cited in the media, including in the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Fortune Magazine, NPR, ABC, NBC, and CNN.

We met with Miller at Yale Divinity School and the offices of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture and spoke for about an hour. When we were done, a Fox Network News crew was waiting in the outer office. CNN was scheduled for the next day, seeking an interview about his book. So we started our conversation by asking why the issue of God in the workplace is so popular.

HOMILETICS: Why is this whole issue of faith at work so popular right now?

MILLER: In a way, it’s not popular right now. It’s been popular in the eyes of men and women who work every day for some time, and some of the themes that I tease out in the book *God at Work* illustrate that there’s a huge amount of activity with men and women who want to integrate their faith and work. They’ve been doing it under the radar for the past few decades. What’s changing now is that people are coming out of the closet. The media is picking up on it: CBS News, Fox News and business journals. They are discovering what has been going on privately before.

HOMILETICS: In the past, have most companies asked people to check their faith values at the door?

MILLER: Most wouldn’t say that overtly, but that certainly was the tone that was set. There were three taboos in business: You don’t talk about sex, politics and religion. Well, of course, people talk about sex at work now and think about policies of sex having to do with hiring, gender orientation — all sorts of issues. Politics: People talk about it, all companies support different PAC groups for lobbying in Washington. It seems like religion is the last one to come out.

HOMILETICS: When I hear about people taking their faith to work, what I hear is: witnessing.

MILLER: One of the things that I struggled with when I was studying this movement is just this question: How do you describe it? Is it faith at work? Spirituality at work? Is it religion at



David Miller

work? Each of those words has a different meaning sense, and — based on where you are in the country — people draw different conclusions. So when I talk to people about faith at work, they’ll say, “Oh, that’s about evangelizing, witnessing.” And I say, “Well, that’s an element of it, but it’s only one *element* among many.” Or people think that faith at work is about ethics, because religion is a great platform for the teaching of ethics and how to

be ethical in the marketplace.

But these polarities of either/or, ethics or witnessing, didn’t seem right to me. They didn’t resonate. I developed, instead, a matrix, a typology if you will, that I call The Integration Box or Integration Spheres. There are four different ways that faith typically manifests itself when people are thinking about integrating their faith with work. One is this theme of **evangelizing**. Many people feel it is a part of the Christian tradition to share our faith. How one does it, of course, is another question. There are appropriate and inappropriate ways to do this.

The second theme is **ethics**. The Bible is full of teaching about how to carry ourselves, not just in general, but in the marketplace in particular. Most people don’t think about this, but if you go back to Leviticus, for example, you find a holiness code; you get the sense that it’s all about business ethics — a bit complicated with burnt offerings and doves and pigeons and so on — but if you can culturally transpose those things, it’s all about fair weights and measures, and scales, and how to treat people if they’ve treated you poorly, or you them. Fair disclosure, full disclosure.

The third area I call **experience**. How do you experience your work? Is it just a job to pay the rent, or is it a call, a vocation, a *vocatio*, a sense that God has placed you in *this* business, in *this* organization, with a particular purpose and plan; not only *what* you do, but *how* you do it. We can see the difference in the persons who are engaged in their work because they believe that God has them there for a reason, and then there are the people who are just going through the motions to get a paycheck.

The fourth area is **enrichment**. This is an inward way of thinking about faith at work. People might get up a half hour early before the rest of the family for quiet prayer or devotional

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

time. They may turn to their faith for spiritual nurture. Let's face it: The business world can be pretty brutal sometimes. People steal credit for your work; you get passed over for a promotion; you had your whole income riding on closing a deal and you don't get it, so you don't get your bonus; companies downsize; you lose your job for no reason, it's not your fault. So there are a lot of hurting people, angry people in the workplace. Well, faith can be a form of healing, a restorative power. So this enriching dimension in faith at work is important.

So there are these different modalities of how we integrate faith at work, and while it *includes* witnessing, that does a disservice to a broader sense of Christian life at work.

HOMILETICS: *I was intrigued by what the welcoming note on the Web site of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture says. It refers to a segment of Christians who don't take their faith to work, because for many, faith doesn't really make a difference in their lives.*

MILLER: As I have listened to thousands of stories over the years, I have noticed some patterns emerging. One pattern is unfortunately a message that too often comes from the pulpit. People get the message that there are two classes of citizenship: those in ordained ministry, and those doing everything else. They often get the message that lay ministry is not about how do I become a more ethical CPA, but rather, they get the message from the pulpit that being a good lay Christian means being more active as a Sunday school teacher, being an elder, being a deacon, being a greeter, being on the finance committee or building committee and so on. The church almost turns in on itself. So you are rewarded in the church and by your pastor and by the system for being more active in the church. Seldom are you rewarded for your daily work.

Here's a classic example. When I teach before pastors on this topic I say, "Straw poll: How many here send your youth on mission trips to Guatemala or someplace?"

Of course, almost everyone's hands go up. And then I ask, "How many of you call them forward for some commissioning or anointing or prayer or whatever the language of your tradition is?" And again, the hands go up.

And I ask, "How many of you when you're starting the new church year in September, and you want to kick things off, have your Sunday school teachers stand up and receive a round of applause and give them a blessing." Everyone's hands go up.

And then I say, "How many of you at the beginning of April ask all the CPAs in your congregation to stand up because they're about to enter the most hellacious two weeks of their

year? And you bless and pray for them. Or how many of you have sales reps or sales managers in the office, or people on some form of quota, and at the end of their year you pray for them that they might be successful in all the hard work they've invested in the year and that they might enjoy the fruits of their labor, and pray for them." No hands go up! We're sending a signal to people that we glorify and honor Sunday-centered, stained-glass window work, and we're indifferent to, perhaps even hostile to, daily work.

So after a while — people are smart — they say, "Okay, I guess my faith doesn't have much to do with my work."

HOMILETICS: *The Web site suggests that, if that's true of some people, i.e., that their faith doesn't make a practical difference in their lives, the site goes on to say that the other part of that is that if faith does make a difference in their lives, it's the wrong kind of difference!* [laughter all around]

MILLER: Right! My colleague, Miroslav Volf, talks about the twin malfunctions: We seal away our faith as a Sunday enterprise and it doesn't in any way act as yeast in our daily living. That's one malfunction. The other malfunction that Miroslav talks about is that we use it but we actually misuse it or abuse it. God is a Santa Claus when we're praying to get out of a jam, or we want to win something or be successful. What we try to talk about at the Center for Faith and Culture, and particularly in this area of ethics and spirituality in the workplace, is "How can faith be a deep, rich and sustaining resource to shape and guide every aspect of life including — what does it mean to be an investment banker, or what does it mean to be a writer, or a journalist?" Faith ought to be a vibrant part, not the only part, but a vibrant part of our tool kit when thinking about engaging situations, people, decisions and workplace.

HOMILETICS: *You write that a lot of business people want to take their faith to work, and they might not know quite how to do that. One of the places they won't turn for help is to the clergy.*

MILLER: Let me start by saying that I love the clergy. I am one. My work and my project are not meant to be anti-clerical or clergy-bashing. That said, where do the clergy most likely learn how to be clergy? Either from the pastors they saw when they grew up, the mentor figures in their lives, or from their professors in the divinity school world. So to go upstream in the formation process, you will be hard-pressed at any seminary or divinity school to find any teaching or classes on a theology of work. You can probably count on one hand how many across the whole nation are talking about a theology of work. There might be a passing, fleeting reference in some doctrinal or

systematic theology course about doctrine of work or doctrine of calling. But that's it.

HOMILETICS: *So people are trained simply to be Sunday-centered clergy?*

MILLER: That's right. Why doesn't Joe or Sally, the sales rep or clerk or CEO, why don't they turn to their pastor? They will turn to their pastor if they have a substance abuse problem, or a marriage problem, or if their kids are on drugs, but they won't go if they are having some moral or ethical problems at work. I think pastors have either directly or indirectly sent the message from the pulpit that "I don't really value your work, your daily work." And/or, they send the message, "I don't really understand your world, I don't know the vocabulary, I don't know the issues you face." And some pastors have told me privately, "Frankly, I'm intimidated." Particularly if the person is well heeled, drives a nice car, wears nice clothes. They can walk into a cancer ward, an AIDS clinic and minister to people who are physically sick, but they're reluctant to walk into an office, or a factory, or a glass building, where people might be emotionally or spiritually sick. On the outside people are well heeled and put together and are screaming out, "Help me!"

HOMILETICS: *What does it mean to be a faith-friendly company?*

MILLER: I think that's potentially one of the most exciting things a company can do. The old way of thinking is that you didn't bring your personal life to work. This was the model of *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, and *The Organization Man* (and it was "man"), and *The Rational Manager*, the classic business texts. Henry Ford was quoted as saying, "Why do I get the whole person when all I want is a pair of hands?" The old model is to treat people as objects. The new model of enlightened companies is that if you treat people holistically, well, surprise, surprise, they respond well if you treat them with dignity and respect. So there's been a pattern over the decades that different things which were once considered too personal and too emotional, companies now embrace.

In the 60s, the big emotional issue was race. And enlightened companies, forward-thinking companies, became race-friendly, not just because the law said you had to after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but because it was the right thing to do.

In the '70s the big issue was *women*. Companies became smart about gender issues.

In the '80s, the issue was *family*. In the old days, you didn't bring your family problems to work. Let's say you're a dad and your kid was sick. You didn't take care of the kid; your wife did that. Today, you might be a single parent.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Today companies understand that you might come in two hours late today and you have to take Johnny to the doctor because your wife has a very important case she has to try, and she can't do it. So companies understand. So the 80s, with flex time and other things, companies became family-friendly. Companies realize that if [workers] bring the whole person to work, if they help them holistically, well [those workers] are going to be happier, more content, more loyal, more dedicated, more productive and so on.

The 90s, arguably was about gender-orientation. Do you have medical policies that have same sex benefits? Do you discriminate against gays? Those sorts of questions. So many companies developed gender-orientation friendly policies; at a minimum not to discriminate against gays, and in some cases actually to encourage their presence. All the old taboos in terms of being gay, of being a family dedicated to your kids, and so on — they're gone.

Now I want to differentiate between faith-friendly and faith-based.

HOMILETICS: *I was going to ask you about that! [laughter all around] Let me pitch the ball; you swing at the pitches! [laughter again]*

MILLER: Our president talks a lot about faith-based organizations — actually Clinton did too, although people forget this — and I think they're marvelous and fine if they are a 501c3 nonprofit. So a faith-based soup kitchen, a faith-based after school reading program, a faith-based drug rehab program. Marvelous. I think they're great.

Should a publicly-traded company be faith-based? I would argue no. And the reason is — and obviously I am a deeply committed Christian so my faith is important to me — but the minute you say a company is faith-based, you're privileging one tradition over another. It's always a little problematic when the word Christian becomes an adjective instead of a noun. So what is a Christian company? What is a Jewish company? What is a Muslim company? I don't really know. Companies aren't going to heaven; people are. Companies are comprised of Christians; they're comprised of Jews, comprised of Hindus, and so on. I think it's consistent with Christian teaching, thinking, for example, of Paul's going to Mars Hill to debate and to engage with others in the language of the day. We shouldn't be afraid of people of other traditions. Companies ought to embrace the concept that our faith is important; for many people it's the defining element of what constitutes their humanity.

So faith-based can be discriminatory and problematic; faith-friendly legitimizes the topic and welcomes everyone to the table.

HOMILETICS: *But there are bound to be potholes and minefields as a company becomes faith-friendly.*

MILLER: One issue that emerges when you bring your faith to work is the overzealous proselytizer. Technically, there's nothing illegal about proselytizing, but it becomes a problem when the overzealous evangelizer starts to harass someone and disrupts and interrupts the work flow and the dynamics of the community at work. So that is a problem and people shouldn't do that. So companies need to make clear that while within certain bounds of common sense it's okay to share your faith, if it becomes obnoxious and borders on harassment, just like sexual harassment, well, obviously, you can't do that.

What are other possible dangers? Someone might have a bizarre ritual or practice, or their faith might include hatred of other types of people. In such cases, companies must make very clear that while they are faith-friendly, the company's core values and ethics statements trump any practices that you may have that are inconsistent with our company policies and practices or the law of the nation.

So in other words, you differentiate between behaviors and beliefs. So maybe your beliefs teach you to hate some particular group, to pick an example. You are allowed to hold that private belief, but you cannot act on that belief, and if you do act on that belief, you will be uninvited to stay at the company.

HOMILETICS: *What does the law say about the free exercise of religion.*

MILLER: I'll start by saying that I am not a lawyer — although I've been married to one for 28 years! Let's put aside for the moment being a federal employee for a minute. That's a different kettle of fish. While there are opportunities for integrating faith at work, it is more delicate. But in the private sector, there is actually a fair bit of latitude, and indeed companies even have a certain responsibility to allow people to practice their faith. In broad strokes, employers have an obligation to meet the needs of employees with sincerely-held beliefs. If an employee says, "My faith requires me to do this," companies have an obligation to try to accommodate, so long as, and here's the caveat, it doesn't unduly disrupt the business.

HOMILETICS: *So if you're Jewish, you might get off early on Fridays?*

MILLER: So long as it doesn't duly disrupt the business. Some of this has worked its

way through case law with the EEOC. Again, a healthy dose of common sense goes a long way. A good employer will probably recognize, "Well, if I have a Jewish employee, I probably shouldn't plan a staff meeting at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, because they might want to leave early for Shabbat service, or if I am planning a national convention, I probably shouldn't schedule it for Yom Kippur." These are elements of being faith-friendly. It's simple courtesy. It's being attentive; it's being sensitive in the same way you're sensitive to the needs of vegetarians. You try to accommodate.

But the bar is pretty low. Most companies could simply say, "Tough, we're going to have the meeting when we want to have the meeting."

HOMILETICS: *So there is no constitutional element here that would protect you if you wanted off to attend a Good Friday service, for example?*

MILLER: No. It's a mixture of freedom of speech, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as amended in 1972 which talks about "Thou shalt not discriminate on the basis of several things, religion being one of those." Someone could say, "Hey, it's the nature of the business that we need people here today. It's not a federal holiday. Now, if you want to take a personal day for it, you could take that off for Good Friday or for what's called a minority religion holiday."

HOMILETICS: *That doesn't sound particularly friendly to faith.*

MILLER: Well, when you have a nationwide company with a hundred thousand employees, it can get complicated. Do you get the day off with full pay? Or is it a better solution to give everyone four personal days. You can pick whatever day you want. And that's the way most companies are going as opposed to closing down the business on Good Friday, for example.

HOMILETICS: *If you're a federal employee, you have the freedom of religious expression and the issue of separation of church and state colliding?*

MILLER: Yeah, that's a bit more complicated. I still think there are more opportunities for Christians to somehow bring their faith to work. They probably have more latitude than they think. One of the things Clinton passed was called RFRA, The Religious Freedom Restoration Act. In essence, it was an attempt to provide guidelines for what you could or couldn't do. The Supreme Court in the end, struck that

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

down, but by executive order it remains as a good role model for government-employee situations. The reality is, there's a lot you can do. But it goes back to what we were talking about earlier: What does it mean to bring faith to work? A lot of people think that it only means talking about Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and how to come to know Jesus Christ in your life. Well, that's not an unimportant question, but there are all these other dimensions, too, that are quiet, and you don't have a neon sign on your forehead saying, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus."

HOMILETICS: *If you're a teacher in the public school system, many principals will not allow you to have your Bible visible on your desk.*

MILLER: That's true, and many will. It depends on what part of the country, the politics of the area. I think it would be an interesting conversation to have if I were on a faculty committee. How do we think through this? Can I wear a cross on a necklace? Personally, I think separation of church and state is a good thing. It's a good thing that we don't have an established religion, so that does put some constraints on some behaviors.

HOMILETICS: *But some people feel that even though Christianity is the dominant religious presence in this country, they, as Christians, are easy targets. In other words, would principals have the same reaction if a Muslim teacher had a copy of the Koran on the desk? Or would instead, many principals regard such a behavior as an expression of the school's interest in multiculturalism and diversity?*

MILLER: I would never want to suggest that people who are anti-religious in nature, are consistent in their arguments. [laughter]

HOMILETICS: *Is it good economic sense and business practice to be a faith-friendly company?*

MILLER: You know, I am in the middle of research on that very question. I am trying to figure that out. My answer to those who ask me that question is a very clear "I don't know." However, my previous experience in the business world tells me, well, "What kind of employees do I want to hire?" I want to hire employees who are honest, who are ethical, who are hard-working, who believe in doing excellent work, who believe in being servant-leaders. I don't want people who cut corners, who only think of themselves, who are trying to

get ahead and are just looking out for number one.

Well, many people who take their faith seriously, fall in those former categories. They have a lot of virtuous characteristics, a God-pleasing life, a Christian life, a life of good discipleship. So at some level, it's a no-brainer. This applies to any faith. If the employee is Jewish, I want that person to be a good, practicing Jew. If a Muslim, I want that person to be a good, practicing Muslim. So intuitively, to me, it makes sense that you're going to have some of the best and brightest people of the highest character and creativity who believe in excellence. So that's only going to be a good thing over time.

I am also quick to say, that I am a big critic of the "prosperity gospel" in its various permutations and genres, and when I'm talking to my students in my M.B.A. classes, and when I talk to companies, I remind them: "Look, let's never believe that following Christ is easy and that it's not without carrying our cross daily." Sometimes, if you're faith-friendly, some employees may not put up with certain things. They may feel pressured into doctoring the numbers to reach some revenue targets. A devout Christian might feel that since his faith tells him not to lie, steal or cheat, he might raise his hand, might feel uncomfortable. Some employers might not want people with such a high level of ethical probity.

So I guess I'm saying two things: Instinctively, I think it would be good for companies. It would bring the best out of the human soul, and therefore the best and most creative work will occur. But let's not for a minute conclude that there's always a one-for-one correlation. Sometimes good guys don't finish first and sometimes the person who cheats wins the business deal.

HOMILETICS: *What was your impression of David Neeleman, CEO of JetBlue, in the wake of the weather disasters of last winter?*

MILLER: Yeah, I know him.

HOMILETICS: *His mea culpa was widely praised and admired. The cynic might say, "Well an apology is just good business sense." But you have to allow for the possibility that a CEO can be genuinely contrite, mortified and humiliated as he said he was.*

MILLER: I can say this, since it is public knowledge, although I know him privately. He's a man of deep faith, a Mormon. And certainly there are differences between our Christian faith and the Mormon faith, but I believe it was his religious identity that made him a different kind of CEO. He could have stood up and said, "Hey, it wasn't our fault. It was air traffic control. This happens all the time. You're just picking on us;

it happened to Delta, too. He could have said all that stuff. But no, he had a sense of integrity and honesty and openness and a serving heart which is very consistent with his religious teachings. The cynic might say that he was just playing a game, but I don't think that's it.

HOMILETICS: *You talk about "cultural competence." You, or someone else, has referenced the company that embroidered verses from the Koran on the rear ends of their jeans, and then were surprised at the uproar in the Muslim community.*

MILLER: Cultural competence is a popular phrase in H.R. circles and strategic thinking and leadership studies. If you've always been doing business say, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and suddenly you're going to be doing business in Sierra Leone, it helps to be aware of the cultural differences, things that you've never encountered before. Part of cultural competence includes religious competence. Let's say I am an evangelical Christian. What does that mean when I encounter a Buddhist? What does that mean when I encounter a Muslim who is equally devout in their practice? I need to know that it might be offensive to put your holy scriptures on the rear end of the jeans I'm manufacturing. By the same token, let's say that same company put "Jesus Saves" or "John 3:16." Many Christians would find that morally repugnant.

HOMILETICS: *I love that expression, because if it's important for companies to be culturally competent, it's equally important for churches or pastors to be culturally competent. Unfortunately, too many of us don't seem to be have a clue about the culture in which our ministry, or "product" is located.*

MILLER: Exactly! I teach a course here at the divinity school for future clergy, and it has a fancy title, but the thrust of the course is the need to overcome the Sunday-Monday gap. One of the things I tell the clergy is that they should subscribe to *The Wall Street Journal*. Perhaps it's not quite as appropriate for a rural setting, but in an urban setting, you'll find more illustrations than you'll find in any Christian magazine. Reading the *WSJ* and the business section of the local paper, and so on, they can develop cultural competence.

When I am talking at clergy sessions, I ask them how many do hospital visits. Everyone's hands go up. How many do home visits? Well, they don't do as many as they did in my grandparents' day, but still a number of hands go up. How many of you do workplace visits? "Well,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 73

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 67

what do you mean?" they ask. I mean, how often do you go to see Charlie and Sue and just walk around their office building with them, and not take a lot of time because they might not have a lot of time, but just have a coffee with them, and ask them, "What are the issues you're wrestling with? Do you have any moral dilemmas you're struggling with?" Pretty soon a relationship develops. "Do you mind if I pray for you about that big meeting you're worried about on Friday?" That would mean the world to people.

And you get real-life illustrations—with the person's permission, and properly disguised — and you say, "Well, I was visiting one of our parishioners, and here's a story that comes from that experience." And you tell the story, and you say, "Isn't this uncanny, the way this story relates to this parable we've been talking about?" And I tell you, you will have everyone going, "What? He's talking about my world, my day, my life, my pressures, my fears, my hopes."

HOMILETICS: *What are you doing teaching business ethics at a divinity school?*

MILLER: The class is fun. It's called: "Business Ethics: Succeeding Without Selling Your Soul." That is a little clue as to how I teach the class. There are two things that are different about the class: One is that it's not just taught at the divinity school; I teach it also at Yale School of Management. So half the class are M.B.A. students who want to go out and make a million dollars after they graduate, and the other half are clergy. And we're in the same room. And you can imagine the dynamics! The first day, you can see the M.Div. students looking across the aisle at the evil capitalists, and equally, you can see the M.B.A. students looking at the divinity school students thinking "Oh they're just a bunch of churchy, do-gooder types who don't have a clue as to how the real world works" —

HOMILETICS: *—No cultural competence.*

MILLER: No cultural competence. "And oh, by the way, they're hypocritical anyway because they only want our money for the annual pledge drive!" [*laughter*] So you start with these two stereotypes—caricatures, to be sure, but after a while the divinity school students are shocked to find out that some of these so-called cut-throat M.B.A. students have a deep and abiding faith and are yearning to connect the dots; they're yearning to figure out how their faith can make a difference as an investment banker, lawyer or CEO. So that is one difference. And you can imagine, the pedagogical possibilities

are marvelous. And all the students, the future clergy, say, "I will never preach the same as a result of this class. And all the stereotypes and images I had about these heartless and uncaring people who only care about the bottom line, and that not only is this a false stereotype, but maybe business can be a source and force for good, and if you have more ethical Christian business leaders out there, well, maybe they will pay attention to questions of justice, mercy and the poor in and through their businesses and the decisions they make."

And the other big difference in the course is that I talk about God in the classroom. I don't teach ethics as law and compliance in the class. I teach ethics as character and culture, which begs the question: "What shapes your character? What shapes your culture?" Well, of course, religion is one of the essential components.

HOMILETICS: *Let's talk about your book for a moment. God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement. You trace the current "faith at work" movement to the mid-80s or something, but of course, you also note the preparation for the current expression of the movement in what was happening in the late-19th century and early 20th century. Names came up like D.L. Moody, Frank Buchman, and others. What of Rauschenbush and the Social Gospel movement?*

MILLER: Sure. The book, broadly speaking, is broken up into two parts. The first half traces the antecedents, or the history, or the roots of the modern wave or phase of this movement. As I began studying this, I realized that this isn't a phenomenon that just "popped up" in the late 80s. I picked the starting point of the modern era of the movement to be the Social Gospel. I start with Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, and shortly on the heels of that, there was a Protestant version, and Walter Rauschenbush, who has a marvelous sermon which says that we should encourage "bright young" Christian men and women not just to go into the clergy but to go into industry and be captains of industry because they'll be a *different* sort of captain!

That's Wave One. It comes to an end with World Wars I and II. Wave Two comes in the wake of World War II and the new fervor and hope: Vatican II occurs, the World Council of Churches is formed, the Evanston meeting that speaks to the powerful role of the laity, so I call Wave Two the Ministry of the Laity. But that starts to wind down in about 20 years, because the church co-opts the movements so that it's not about how to be a different kind of biologist, scientist, lawyer, secretary, ditch-digger, bricklayer or CEO and how does my faith

infuse, form and shape that role, but rather the church co-opts the movement to make lay ministry mean being a deacon, an elder, serving communion, being a greeter, and being on the building committee or finance committee. So the church turns in on itself again. The church hijacks the movement to serve its own Sunday-centered needs.

The current wave we're in right now, I see starting in the late 1980s somewhat symbolically with the fall of the wall in Berlin in 1989, the fall of communism with its official posture of atheism, and the beginning of the information-age explosion and all sorts of social dislocation and upsizing and downsizing and rightsizing and the beginning and foretaste of the PC movement, and dot com, and Internet. Chaos reigns in the marketplace. And whether you're a winner or loser in this new business world, more and more people start asking the God question: Where is God in all of this? My therapist doesn't help me make sense of it; science, technology, the government don't help me make sense of this. Maybe I need to return to my faith to help me order all these complexities that I see in my life right now.

HOMILETICS: *Why did you write this book?*

MILLER: I once had a teacher who said, "A lot of people spend their whole life thinking about one question." Maybe this is my one question. How do I integrate the claims of my faith with the demands of my work? How do I try to have a sacred view of the world that often seems very fallen and secular?

The workplace to me is a marvelous laboratory for working this out. When we're outside the safety and sanctity of the pew, we're into the rough and tumble of the marketplace where there are pressures and forces to not live a life informed by Christian teaching and thinking. And yet as a follower of Jesus, as a baptized person, [we find] there are certain claims on our lives in terms of how we're supposed to carry ourselves. Not that we're going to be or supposed to be perfect, but how do we let our faith inform and shape our world.

»H

NEXT ISSUE'S HOMILETICS INTERVIEW:

Tyler Wigg Stevenson, author of the forthcoming book (Seabury Press), *Brand Jesus*.