



## Minding the Gap - November 2016

A Faith and Work Publication

Welcome to Minding the Gap, a monthly thought about faith in the workplace!

### "Permission to be Tenacious"

Probably since the mid-Twentieth Century, the philosophy or concept of "**postmodern thinking**" has grown in popularity. Postmodern thinking being the understanding that objectivity is a myth - that the existence of certain truth is viewed with an attitude or sense of skepticism or distrust. As one person stated: "Objectivity is a myth; there is no Truth, no Right Way to read nature or a text." This philosophy or "world view" has grown in popularity. David Brooks, NY Times columnist, comments on his discussions with university students saying: "The default position, which most (students) came back to again and again, is that moral choices are just a matter of individual taste. 'It's personal', the respondents typically said, '**It's up to the individual. Who am I to say**'." This is worrisome, as I definitely believe you have been, are or will be facing such responses as you go about your daily work responsibilities.

I am grateful in being aware of a '*counter belief*' regarding **moral standards**. Ken Goodpaster, Prof. Emeritus at University of St. Thomas has written well of a corporation's moral responsibility to its varied constituencies. The origin of his writing was a series of lectures given at Bentley University in Boston around the theme of "tenacity" within the context of business and the world-of-work. One of his primary points was that **corporations** (and I would include all organizations) have **moral responsibility**. Goodpaster puts it in these words: "...but it is worth pointing out here,...that we attribute personhood to corporations under American law...: US law treats corporations as legal persons and tends to hold corporations themselves, and not merely the managers and employees...accountable." That is to say, corporations have a moral conscience. So, for us

this means as **persons of moral conscience**, we have both principles and legal basis for bringing issues of morality before our fellow coworkers. And, we can and need to be **tenacious** about such issues.

Beyond that, as people who base their existence on emulating the actions of Jesus and principles of Scripture, we have an even stronger reason for being tenacious around a "moral common ground". For you see, according to Genesis 1:26 ("Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over...every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth'.") you and I have within our being the very '**image**'/'**likeness**' of the Creator. Thus, God's sense of morality (goodness) resides within each of us (we have "moral common ground"). Author Richard Rohr expands on the significance of this when he writes: "Only slowly does the truth become believable. Finally the Body of Christ is not out there or over there; it's in you - it's here and now and everywhere. The goal is then to move beyond yourself and recognize that what's true in you is true in all others too." Certainly, this truth is both license and requirement for us to intentionally, with both **grace** and **tenacity**, apply the principles of Jesus and Scripture as we address our varied employment decisions and responsibilities.

Blessings to you this Thanksgiving Season!

- Jim Grubs

Incarnation Lutheran Church, 4880 Hodgson Road, Shoreview, MN 55126