



Minding the Gap - September 2016

A Faith and Work Publication

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

"The Importance of One"

"Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance". Yes, this was the Gospel text for a recent Sunday (Luke 15:1-7), and I might say probably not a passage which supports what we often experience life in the world-of-work.

Many, many organizations - especially for-profit businesses do not focus on the **"importance of one"** (even though their marketing and logos may say otherwise). If the CEO of a corporation or any organization would see ninety-nine "units" of the business doing well, I would be deeply surprised if s/he would then be focused on reviving the one failing unit. It simply doesn't make any business sense. Take for example GE's one-time philosophy of evaluating everyone "by the numbers", and the 10% with the lowest totals were dismissed. This approach to running an organization drew a great deal of attention and a good deal of praise. However, our teacher and savior, Jesus the Christ, clearly has a different premise for what is important or vital.

A statement which I once heard (I have mentioned it before) has rung so true for me: **"what goes deepest to the heart, goes broadest to the world"**. This makes a lot of sense and gives strong credence to the "importance of one". Just imagine what will happen

to you; how you'll feel; what kind of motivation you'll have, if you're the **one individual** who's struggling greatly with your work, and a respected colleague comes offering to "put you on her/his 'shoulders'" and give you guidance until you can make it.

Many years ago I had the benefit of just such a person who approached me. I responded to him, and as he'd written: "Out of the blur of a hurrying social paramecium, a human face appears...S/he becomes credible to us. S/he earns the right to be heard, taken account of...". Bill Smith, the author of the above statement, knew I was struggling big time with my current work and position and came to me asking if he could help. He was, as he identified it, a "**guarantor**" for me. His concern and advice didn't change the direction of my career; however, it did affirm both my **significance** and **belonging** in the work I was doing. He was for me that "guarantor", and I am forever grateful for me being of such importance for him.

I have to believe that within our respective work environments there is a coworker for whom we could be just such a "**guarantor**". We could be that guarantor to another who is *not* among the ninety-nine but is the one. **Remember:** It is biblical. I know it is effective. And, **you** could be a '*game-changer*' for her or him.

Blessings in your world of work,

- Jim Grubs

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