

Serving God Outside the Church

ACTS Monograph Series

Danny McCain

Africa Christian Textbooks

Serving God Outside the Church

Copyright © Danny McCain, 2023

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or hard copy, including photocopying, recording, or any form of storage and retrieval system except for brief quotations in reviews, without permission in writing from the author or publisher.

ISBN:

*Unless otherwise stated all scriptures are taken from the
HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society,
Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House,
All rights reserved.*

ACTS Monograph Series

Africa Christian Textbooks
PMB 2020, Bukuru 930008
Bukuru, Plateau State, Nigeria
Email: acts.jos@gmail.com;
Website: www.actsnigeria.com
Phone: +234 (0) 803-589-5328

Printed in the Federal Republic of Nigeria by:

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Preface..... | v |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Professionals in Ministry Model | 15 |
| Professionals in Government Model..... | 27 |
| Professional in Publish Service Mode | 39 |
| Part-Time Professionals in Ministry Model..... | 45 |
| Former Professionals in Ministry Model..... | 49 |
| Conclusion..... | 53 |

Preface

I was reared in a Christian atmosphere that was very dualistic. That meant that practically everything in our world was divided into two categories.

- There were two kinds of people in the world—the Christians and the non-Christians.
- There were two kinds of Christians—the Christian workers and the laypersons.
- There were two kinds of Christian workers—the pastors and other church leaders who worked in their home countries and the missionaries who worked in foreign countries.
- There were two kinds of missionaries—those who did evangelism, church planting, discipleship and pastoral training—the real missionaries and the support missionaries.
- There were two kinds of support missionaries—those who worked in office and did accounting and general administration and those who did compassionate ministries like agricultural work, medical work, educational work and similar things.

It was the thinking of my church at the time that the real “full-time Christian workers” were those who did what we thought of as the “real Christian ministry.” This included the pastors and evangelists and lecturers in seminaries and Bible translators and similar people. Any missionary who was not involved in this direct “spiritual” kind of Christian ministry

that involved evangelism and discipleship was considered “support missions.” They were doing indirect missionary work.

However, the longer I walk with the Lord and read the Bible and observe various Christian ministries, the more I realize our nice two-fold model of life is not accurate. In fact, it is not what God intended when he told his disciples to go into the world and preach the gospel to all creatures. Jesus promoted a more comprehensive and holistic model of Christian ministry.

I am grateful to the National Evangelical Mission Institute (NEMI) for inviting me to present the material contained in this monograph at a “Tentmaker’s Conference” in Jos on 6 November 2012. This was not the first time I had presented such material but that conference gave me a good opportunity to think through this material and put it in a shape that hopefully will be understandable and helpful to those who read.

To all those who are serving God outside the church, I wish to commend you and encourage you to keep up the good work. You are God’s representatives who will help the world to see and know and experience the kingdom of God.

Professor Danny McCain
University of Jos

Serving God Outside the Church

Introduction

What was the mission of Jesus? What does it mean to be involved in Christian ministry? Obviously, when we are preaching and teaching and evangelizing and planting churches, we are doing Christian ministry. Everyone understands that. However, is Christian ministry broader than that? I will look at one event in the life of Jesus that gives us a hint about what God expects his followers to do—what their real mission in life is. I believe this scripture reflects what we see taught all throughout the Bible.

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He told them: "Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them." So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere (Luke 9:1-6).

One of the most important tasks Jesus had while on this earth was to prepare his disciples to implement his teachings and way of life. It was good for Jesus to teach profound doctrines and perform supernatural acts of mercy but if he was the only one who did them or if these were done only during his lifetime, then his life would have been just a brilliant flashpoint in history. Therefore, Jesus had to prepare his followers to carry on his beliefs and practices. He spent

Serving God Outside the Church

a lot of time teaching the disciples what they would need to know and modeling the things that they would need to do. His life and ministry were not only a sample of the goal that God had for the people of this world but also a curriculum for how they were to get there.

As a good teacher, Jesus knew that his students needed more than just information. They needed experience to be prepared for the task they would be responsible to complete once he left this world. Therefore, Jesus required them to complete a practicum—a semester of student teaching—a field-based exercise.

What were these disciples going to do during this field exercise? The method of teaching then was to have a student attach himself to the master and simply follow him around until he absorbed his mentor's knowledge and philosophy. Students did this by listening to his speeches, by asking questions, and by observing the way the teacher responded to various situations (both positive and negative, private and public). However, a person could learn only so much from observation. The student must have practical experience. He must attempt to duplicate what he had heard from the lips and seen demonstrated in the life of his master.

For 11 years of my life, I was a part-time roofing contractor. During that time, I taught many employees how to do this kind of work. When I first begin teaching the new employee, I would have him just sit on the roof and watch me a while. Then I would explain each step of the process. After they had observed for a while, I would give them a chance to reproduce what they saw me doing. Invariably they would make mistakes and I would then have to correct them. However, after a time, they would be able to do the work the way I wanted it without my direct supervision.

Serving God Outside the Church

This was the method Jesus used in his teaching of the disciples. His disciples had been with him for a number of months. They had heard his teachings and observed the way he had responded to the various situations. They were especially observant of his supernatural ability to address the physical needs of people. Now was the time to determine exactly what kind of students they were. Were they only going to be reporters of what they had seen and heard Jesus do? Or were they going to be able to do the same things he had done? Were they going to be theologians or practitioners or both?

Jesus' Two Kinds of Ministries¹

Before Jesus sent out his disciples, he gave instructions. Their basic task was to be a reflection of what he had been doing. They were to “*preach the kingdom of God*” and they were also to “*heal the sick.*” Those two phrases represent the two kinds of ministries Jesus had developed during the few months he had been doing his public ministry.

Preaching

The first responsibility of Jesus was a ministry of communication that focused on Jesus' philosophy or theology. It was primarily teaching and preaching about the kingdom Jesus came to introduce to the world. It had a heavy concentration on information. Immediately after the baptism and temptation of Jesus, those events that indicated Jesus was now ready to begin his public ministry, Matthew states: “*From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near’*” (4:17). Mark begins his description of Jesus' ministry immediately after the call of

¹ Much of the information in this section originally appeared in my book *To the Ends of the Earth*, Flourish Brands Digital Press Limited, 2010, particularly in Chapter 4.

Serving God Outside the Church

his first disciples: “*They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach*” (1:21). Jesus came to introduce a kingdom that was going to be different from what the disciples and the multitudes expected. Therefore, he had to spend a lot of time explaining the details of the kingdom. All throughout his ministry, Jesus taught about the kingdom. At times, he devoted major blocks of time to teaching the kingdom or some aspect of the kingdom such as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 – 7) and the Upper Room Discourse (John 13 – 17).

Although we sometimes make a difference between preaching and teaching, there is no significant difference between the two. It could be argued that teaching is an appeal to the mind whereas preaching is an appeal to the will. However, they are both oral communication. When Jesus was preaching he was also teaching.

Healing

Jesus was not just an academic, dealing only with ideas and information. When Mark describes the first time Jesus taught in the synagogue, he adds that a demon-possessed man began to disturb the congregation. Jesus immediately cast the demon out of the man, much to the amazement of the crowd (Mark 1:25-27). Immediately after Jesus and his disciples left the synagogue they went to the house of Simon and Andrew. Simon’s mother-in-law was sick but Jesus healed her so completely, she was able to get up and serve them immediately (1:30-31). These were only the first of the many practical ministries Jesus did. In addition to healing and casting out demons, Jesus did many other things:

- He fed the hungry (Matthew 14:15-21).
- He counseled the confused (John 3:1-21; 4:7-30).

Serving God Outside the Church

- He assisted with income generation (John 21:1-6; 11).
- He relieved the embarrassment of the disgraced (John 2:1-10).
- He defended the abused (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; John 2:13-17).
- He became friends with the rejected (Matthew 9:10-13; 11:19).
- He assisted the homeless (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20).
- He spent time with children (Matthew 19:13-15).
- He helped pay taxes (Matthew 17:27).

I believe all of these activities are summarized by the phrase “*heal the sick.*” They all helped to fill some emptiness in the persons who were benefactors of Jesus’ generosity.

The word “heal” is the word *therapeuo*. It is the process of restoring normality to one who has had a sick body. It is a summary of all Jesus was doing. When he was comforting the grieving, he was healing the soul. When he was feeding the hungry, he was restoring to normal the empty stomach. When he was paying taxes, he was prohibiting legal problems. Thus, when Jesus sent out his disciples with the instructions to “*heal the sick,*” that was a summary phrase suggesting that the disciples were to be involved in the whole range of practical compassionate ministries they had witnessed in their master.

These two kinds of ministry—speaking and doing, the theoretical and the practical, were part of Jesus’ ministry from the beginning and made up the two arms of Jesus’ ministry. Therefore, in this monograph, I will use “*preaching the good news of the kingdom*” as a summary phrase of Jesus teaching ministry and “*healing the sick*” as

Serving God Outside the Church

a representative phrase of the other practical ministries Jesus did.

The Balance of Jesus' Ministry

When people have multiple responsibilities, it is hard to keep them in balance. We tend to focus too much attention on one aspect of our ministries or we get diverted from one of the ministries we should be doing. For example, I am a husband, a father, a son, a brother, a preacher, a university lecturer, a board member of several organizations, a consultant, a researcher, a writer and a few other things. It is hard to keep all of those responsibilities in balance. I tend to do those things I enjoy doing and ignore those things I do not enjoy doing. However, Jesus was more disciplined and balanced than I am. He managed to maintain this delicate balance between preaching and healing—between communication and practical ministry.

The Balance Teaching and Healing

According to my calculations, the word “teach” is associated with Jesus 62 times, not counting the 45 verses where Jesus was addressed as “Rabbi” or “Teacher.” The word “preach” is associated with Jesus another 14 times. Adding these together, we see the gospel writers using “communication language” of Jesus 76 times.

The word “heal” is associated with Jesus 58 times. Also, Jesus is described as “touching” people or people touching him for healing 29 times. Adding these together, we see gospel writers using “healing language” of Jesus 87 times.

Obviously, this is not an exhaustive list of synonyms for either communication or healing, nor is this a highly sophisticated way of evaluating the balance Jesus had in his life. However, this does demonstrate that Jesus spent about

Serving God Outside the Church

an equal amount of time communicating the gospel and addressing physical needs.

The Balance Between the “Red” and “Black Verses” in the Gospels

Another way of looking at this is to evaluate the amount of space in the gospels devoted to Jesus’ communication and the amount devoted to describing his activities. A simple way of doing this is to count the number of verses where Jesus is speaking, as demonstrated in the red letter versions of the Bible compared to the times when Jesus is acting and not speaking as reflected in the black letters in the red letter editions of the Bible.² The following chart gives us this information in a visual form.

Analysis of Red and Black Verses in the Gospels

| Book | Total Verses | Red Verses | Percentages |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Matthew | 1067 | 643 | 60.2% |
| Mark | 678 | 302 | 44.5% |
| Luke | 1151 | 594 | 51.6% |
| John | 879 | 422 | 48.2% |
| Totals | 3775 | 1961 | 51.9% |

This analysis demonstrates that Matthew focuses more on Jesus speaking than any other book with 60.2 percent of his material being devoted to Jesus’ specific communications. Mark, on the other hand, focuses more on

² In this analysis, I used the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation (second edition)*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 2004) for the red and black verses. Any verse that had any part where Jesus was speaking was considered a communication verse.

Serving God Outside the Church

the actions of Jesus with only 44.5 percent of his gospel devoted to things Jesus said. When all verses in all four gospels are taken together, I discovered that 51.9 percent of the verses refer to Jesus speaking. That means that 48.1 percent of the material in the gospels focuses on the deeds of Jesus.

Whether this was deliberate or unconscious on the part of the gospel writers, this suggests that the gospels portray almost an equal balance between “*preaching the good news of the kingdom*” and “*healing the sick.*” In other words, the writers did not just focus on the teachings of Jesus or the activities of Jesus. They gave about the same emphasis to both types of ministry. And, since we, as Bible-believing Christians, accept the scriptures as having been inspired by the Holy Spirit, we accept this ratio as being the balance desired by God for our ministries. Jesus sent out his disciples essentially to replicate his ministry, as illustrated by the statement that they were to go and “*preach the good news of the kingdom*” and also “*heal the sick.*” These two statements, then, become something of a model for the way the followers of Jesus should be investing their time.

Theology of Holistic Christianity

Genesis 1:1 says: “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” The earth and everything in it was created by God. That means there is nothing in this world that God is unconcerned about or is not under his sovereign control.

Genesis 1:31a states further: “*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.*” Because God is the creator of all things, the earth and everything in it is good. By the time that God made this statement, everything in the world was in place so God was pronouncing his blessing upon the whole creation. The earth was good, including the trees and the

Serving God Outside the Church

rivers and soil. The animals and the birds and the fish in the water were all good. Human beings were good and those things associated with human beings.

- The human body was good.
- Human language was good.
- Human activities were good.
- Human relationships were good.
- Human learning and wisdom were good.

In other words, all that we see around us was originally created by God, and as such are owned by him and were declared to be good by him.

Psalm 24:1 adds this statement: *“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.”* If everything in the world belongs to the Lord, then we should treat every part of the world with dignity and respect. If everything belongs to the Lord, then everything we do is for God because there is nothing that we are working with or for that does not belong to God.

If I owned a factory that made plastic buckets and bowls, I would have many employees who did many different things. There would be engineers who designed the buckets and bowls and technicians who operated the equipment that made the buckets and bowls. On the other hand, my factory would also employ secretaries and clerks who never saw the buckets and bowls. There would be security men and drivers who had little or nothing to do with the buckets and bowls. However, all of these people would be my employees and they would all be important for my business. The point should be obvious. God has many employees in his kingdom. They are not all preachers. They are not all theologians. They are not all missionaries. However, they

Serving God Outside the Church

are all God's workers and whatever legitimate work they are doing is important for God's kingdom.

Matthew 25: 34-40 says:

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

All the inhabitants on the earth belong to God. Therefore, the way we treat them is viewed by God as the way we treat Jesus. All of the workers in my factory are my workers and the way you treat one of my workers is in some way a reflection of the way you respect me. Therefore, any time you are interacting with another human being you are interacting with one of the creations of God and he views that as the same way you treat God himself.

Colossians 3:17 reads: *"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."* All that we do is to be done in the name of Jesus, since we are his representatives. The word "all" is a very comprehensive word. It covers everything we do in life. All that we do, we

Serving God Outside the Church

do in the name of Jesus. That means that there is no such thing as “secular work” in the world.

- If you are driver, you are driving in the name of Jesus.
- If you are a farmer, you are farming in the name of Jesus.
- If you are a civil servant, you are doing your duty in the name of Jesus.
- If you are a businessman, you are doing your business in the name of Jesus.
- If you are a police officer, you are maintaining peace and justice in the name of Jesus.

All Nigerians in the world are doing all they do in the name of Nigeria, whether they know it or not. That is why Transparency International stated some years ago that Nigeria was viewed as the most corrupt country in the world—everything Nigerians did was done in the name of Nigeria. It is unfortunate that many Nigerians go out of Nigeria or use electronic media to go outside of Nigeria to enrich themselves at the expense of innocent people. This is what destroys Nigeria’s reputation. On the other hand, I have brought many visitors to Nigeria. None of them has ever had a bad experience. Nigerians have all treated them well. They departed from the country with a positive impression of the country because of the good people they met. Everything done to them in Nigeria has been done in the name of Nigeria, whether good or bad.

Colossians 3:23-24 states: *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”* All we do is to be done as to the Lord, since he owns all things, including us. Whatever job we do is for the Lord since he is

Serving God Outside the Church

the owner and master of all things. Note that he did not say, “when you are witnessing” or “preaching.” Therefore, when you are serving as a medical doctor or an engineer or a painter or a plumber or doing any other legitimate work, you are doing that job to the glory of God. This thought has two immediate and important applications:

- Every legitimate thing that I am doing is good.
- I must do everything I do very carefully and conscientiously, as to the Lord.

These verses teach that everything and every person in the world belongs to God and therefore every word we speak and every activity we perform is a part of our understanding of who God is and our service to him.

How Do we Implement the Ministries of Jesus?

We can understand how to follow Jesus in his communication ministry—his teaching and preaching, because these things were not done through supernatural means. He communicated like any other ordinary human being would. However, it is more difficult to understand how to follow Jesus’ model of healing the sick if we do not have access to his supernatural power. Is there a way that we can do what Jesus did on the “healing the sick” side without using supernatural power? I certainly think that there is. Just like we use our natural talents and training to preach and teach, we can also use our natural talents and training to heal the sick.

When Jesus healed a person, that healing was instantaneous, verifiable, complete and provided without charge. So, naturally, supernatural healing is faster and cheaper and more complete. However, supernatural healing is not the only model of healing we have. God is the one who created all the natural laws and substances and declared that

Serving God Outside the Church

they were all good. Therefore, unless there is some specific reason to use supernatural power, God is normally going to work through the good natural laws and substances he has created. That means that if we are going to be able to “heal the sick” successfully, we are going to do most of this through natural means.

- We need medical researchers and other scientists that develop medicines and equipment and procedures for the healing of sickness and injuries.
- We need doctors and nurses to implement what the scientist have developed and help people recover from sickness and accidents.
- We need water engineers to help people find and assess good drinking water.
- We need nutritionists that will teach us the proper foods that will keep us healthy.
- We need therapists and technicians that can use and maintain medical equipment.
- We need good teachers to explain to God’s people how all of this works.

Here are two important points that we need to remember:

- God’s work is not all done supernaturally.
- God’s work is not all done by preachers and evangelists.

All of us know the gospel part of Christianity.

- We can quote the Ten Commandments.
- We can tell someone how to become a Christian.
- We can tell people about prayer and fasting and repentance.
- We understand and often experience praise and worship and fellowship.

Serving God Outside the Church

We clearly understand all of those things are part of our responsibility to God. These are what we commonly describe as “spiritual things.”

Most people are aware that there are people who devote 100 percent of their time and energy to God’s “spiritual” work. In the Old Testament, those people were priests, prophets and Levites. However, even that statement needs to be clarified. All priests had been trained in a profession or occupation as well. In the New Testament, all of the disciples abandoned their original professions and did the work of Christ full time. Therefore, they became full time Christian workers.

Fortunately, that is not the only model of doing God’s work. What I will do in the remainder of this monograph is to go through the Bible and look at various models of doing God’s work outside of the official profession of being a prophet or priest or evangelist or pastor. I have identified five models in the Bible that I will talk about that have parallels with the way the Church does her work today.

Professionals in Ministry Model

Bezalel is an example of a man who used his professional skills in spiritual ministry.

Background to Bezalel³

Moses had successfully led the Israelites out of Egypt. A few weeks later Moses had received instructions from God about building an appropriate portable facility for meeting God. Moses was a great leader who knew how to interact with God. He knew how to motivate people. He knew how to solve problems. However, he was neither an architect nor a builder. God had to raise up someone else to design and build this portable structure. (There is an important lesson here. No matter how great a leader you are, there are things that you cannot do.) God has called people to be specialists in many ministries.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship. (Exodus 31:1-5: See also 35:30-36:7).

Who was this Bezalel? He was a specialist whom God used to build the tabernacle. He was not a prophet nor a priest. He was not even a Levite. He had no claim to being able to minister “spiritually” to the people of Israel.

³ I have used treated Bezalel in a similar way in my book, *Serving God Away from Home*, Africa Christian Textbooks, Bukuru, 2004, chapter 4.

Serving God Outside the Church

Therefore, he could not be considered a “full-time Christian worker” by anyone’s definition. However, he was indeed doing God’s work.

Qualifications for Doing God’s Work

What were the qualifications Bezalel possessed that qualified him to do God’s work? I believe they are similar to the characteristics of all who work for God.

Chosen by God

The call was initiated by God. “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘See I have chosen Bezalel’” (Exodus 31:1). Here is the point. The call of God is just as important for the person doing non-theological work as the person doing evangelism or church planting or teaching in a seminary. Business persons and engineers and bankers need to hear the call of God also. Another way of saying this is that the qualifications to be non-church based Christian workers should be the same as being a pastor or a church-planting missionary.

- They should have the same evidence of being born again in their lives.
- They should have the same commitment to and respect for the Word of God.
- They should have the same attitudes toward simplicity and self-denial and discipline.
- They should have the same faith and call of God in their lives.

With regards to spiritual qualifications, there should be nothing to distinguish them from the evangelist or church planter or preacher or missionary.

The call should have a specific focus. “I have chosen Bezalel . . . to make artistic designs . . .” (31:4). It is

Serving God Outside the Church

important to discover your gifts and try to discern an area of concentration in which you can focus your ministry. Bezalel did not just hear the voice of God saying, “I need you. I am calling you.” He knew the call was to ***make artistic designs***. Bezalel was not called to preach or be a prophet or translate the holy scriptures. He was chosen to make artistic designs.

Sometimes I am given a complimentary card by someone that reads like this:

Danjuma Chinedu Boloade

Building Architect, Road Contractor, Importer of Medical Supplies, Manufacturer, Business Mentor; Management Expert; Health Counselor; Education Consultant; Shipping Agent; Printer; Book Distributor; Dealer in Spare Parts; Seller of Food, Computers, Clothing, Generators, Fairly Used Automobiles, Smart Phones and Fruit Juices.

And most of the time, this person took a public transportation vehicle to come visit me.

We can partially understand young business entrepreneurs having that kind of approach to life because they are hungry and trying to find any way to make a living. However, I have learned that the level of one’s success in any project or ministry is directly proportional to how sharp the focus is. Those people who are really successful have a laser focus in life. They know what they are doing and where they are going and are not willing to deviate from those things to do other things.

If God has called you to be a Christian lawyer or farmer or civil servant, you do not have to apologize for the fact that you are not a preacher or a Bible teacher. Bezalel never tried to take over any of Moses’ responsibilities or the duties of

Serving God Outside the Church

the priests or Levites. He simply focused his attention on building the tabernacle. Remember this:

- A great builder may make a bad priest.
- A great surgeon may make a very flawed preacher.
- A great computer scientist may make a very poor church planter.
- A great electrical engineer might make a very imperfect Bible college lecturer.

Obviously, there are some business people who are also good preachers or good teachers or have other skills that overlap with pastors or missionaries. However, if you do not have those multiple skills, you do not have to feel you are unprepared. If you are fulfilling the calling of God in your life, even if you are working with tractors or drones, you are doing God's work just like every pastor is. Just be a good Bezalel and don't worry about those other things.

Christian architects must be called by God and they should focus on that which God has called them to do, not on that which people expect them to do. Hearing and responding to the call of God is that which will lead to a successful and fulfilling life.

Filled with the Spirit

When God spoke to Moses about this position he said: *"See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah and I have filled him with the Spirit of God . . ."* (Exodus 31:2). The phrase *"being filled with the Holy Spirit"* is a unique phrase in the Old Testament. There must be some reason why this phrase is used of Bezalel.

The phrase *"filled with the Spirit"* is a controversial phrase. Pentecostals stress this phrase and normally insist that the initial evidence of being filled with the Spirit is speaking in tongues. Those who do not speak in tongues do

Serving God Outside the Church

not like that particular interpretation. Sometimes we associate “*being filled with the Spirit*” with preachers or evangelists or other kinds of advanced church leaders or senior saints. The point this passage makes is that the Christian professional who may be an engineer or banker or dentist needs the filling of the Holy Spirit as much as the pastor or evangelist.

Observations about Being Filled with the Spirit

Being filled with the Spirit is a special privilege for followers of Jesus.

The example of Bezalel notwithstanding and the few other Old Testament references to the Holy Spirit, being filled with the Holy Spirit is primarily a New Testament privilege that has been made available to those who believe in Jesus. As suggested above, there are many ideas within Christianity about the meaning of being filled with the Holy Spirit. However, the least it can mean is that those who are filled with the Spirit exhibit the fruit of the Spirit as given in Galatians 5:22-23; “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*” If God calls you to work with any kind of people, you will have many opportunities to practice all of those aspects of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

- There will be plenty of opportunities to practice love—to love the unlovable, even those who abuse and mistreat you.
- There will be plenty of opportunities to practice patience—patience with people who do not keep their promises, patience with people who violate your trust, patience with people who waste your money.

Serving God Outside the Church

- There will be plenty of opportunities to practice gentleness. The world is filled with harsh and unkind and troubled people who need to be treated with gentleness.
- There will be plenty of opportunities to practice your goodness. There will be so many needs that you will not even know where to start.

I cannot overstress the importance of allowing God the Holy Spirit to work in your life to produce these various aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. You may not be a preacher but you will need all of the grace and all of the wisdom that any other kind of Christian worker needs to be successful. All God's workers need to be filled with the Spirit, with the fruit of the Spirit overflowing in their lives and in ministries.

Being filled with the Spirit provides special leading and direction.

Acts 16:6-10 says:

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' After Paul had seen the vision we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

One of Paul's missionary strategies was to go to large population centers to preach. There were exceptions but Paul knew the best place to plant a church was in big cities. During Paul's second missionary journey, Paul tried to go

Serving God Outside the Church

directly west from Antioch in Pisidia to Ephesus, one of the largest cities in the world. The Holy Spirit stopped him. He then turned north to go to the city of Byzantium (later named Constantinople), another major city in the ancient world. However, he did not get halfway there before the Holy Spirit stopped him again. He then turned back to the west. It was when he got to Troas that the Lord revealed to him where he should go next. During that period of time his travels looked like a big Z. However, he was being led by the Holy Spirit the whole time.

One of the blessings the Holy Spirit provided for God's people was to give special leadership and direction. I believe that the Holy Spirit can guide the businessperson or the legal professional just as much as he can guide the evangelist or missionary. The important thing is to make sure you are listening to and being led by the Holy Spirit.

Being filled with the Spirit implied special talents.

Exodus 31:3 states: *"I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts."* Many people think of being filled with the Spirit as a subjective experience that involves speaking in tongues or other big emotional experiences. This may be true in some cases. However, the characteristic of being filled with the Spirit in Bezalel's case is that he was given *"skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts."*

This seems to be consistent with what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:4-6; *"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are differing kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men."* It is not easy to understand everything about this passage. However, it states two things very clearly.

Serving God Outside the Church

- The Holy Spirit gives many different kinds of gifts.
- Some of the gifts the Holy Spirit are practical, ministry-oriented gifts.

In the subsequent list of gifts of the Spirit mentioned later in this chapter, Paul mentions such things as knowledge, wisdom, teaching, administration and helping others. There is nothing particularly supernatural about those kinds of gifts and nothing that restricts them to pastors and evangelists. They are simply abilities given by the Holy Spirit to aid in the ministry of the church. And the same Spirit that builds up the church is also interesting in building up God's kingdom outside the church and he will use Spirit-filled professionals to do it.

Two Additional Observations

One of the best ways to determine whether or not you are called by God is whether or not the Holy Spirit has given you the gifts to do the job. It would have made no difference how much Bezalel thought he was called of God to design and build the tabernacle—if he did not know anything about designing and building, he would not have been called by God for this task. That is true about any other discipline.

One thing I have learned in Nigeria is that Nigerians are very self-confident. When I first moved to Jos, I spoke to a security guard at our university one day about needing someone to help me build a little guard house. He quickly said, "I am a builder." That was good news. I did not need to look further. I gave him the job to build my guard house. However, when he started building it, I noticed he didn't seem to have much idea about such things. I had to suggest to him, "Don't you think we should put a door in this building?" When it was completed, the building sagged to one side; the roof leaked; the door was hard to close and it looked terrible. I learned that not everyone who professes to

Serving God Outside the Church

have an ability actually has that ability. On the other hand, it is a delight to work with people who have discovered and developed the practical gift the Holy Spirit has given to them. Here are two facts about gifts.

- *Gifts are given to us by God.* Therefore, we cannot take much credit for them.
- *Gifts can be improved with hard work.* Jesus told several stories about this—men who given a certain amount of money. They went out and improved what had been given to him and were greatly blessed by God.

There is no substitute for having skill. The best tools, the most sincere motives, the greatest amount of enthusiasm will not substitute for skill. If God has called you to be a businessman or professional, he wants you to be the best person in that area. In other words, if you are a professional, it is important for you to be competent in your field.

- If you are a doctor, you must be good at what you do.
- If you are an architect, you must understand the world of construction.
- If you are a teacher, you should know a lot about reading and learning and teaching.

Once when I was coming back from attending a certain function in Abuja with many other expatriate missionaries, I came upon one of our missionary friends, who was having mechanical problems. I stopped and we raised the bonnet of his vehicle. We thought we could see water coming out from under the engine block. It looked very serious. I have a modest understanding of automobiles so I poked and twisted around for a few minutes. Nothing happened. Another missionary came along who was a doctor. He looked at the engine and gave his opinion. A third missionary came along

Serving God Outside the Church

who had a red tool box full of brand new tools inside. We got a couple of the tools out and poked and twisted in what we thought were the appropriate places. Nothing happened. Soon there were six vehicles filled with foreign missionaries, standing around, trying to help repair this disabled vehicle. It was getting late in the day so we decided that all the other missionaries should leave and I would remain behind to help my friend. I drove back to Wamba, the closest village, to try to find a mechanic. It was January 1st and apparently the village had had a big party. I finally found a very drunk mechanic who could hardly walk straight but was very happy. He assured me he could be the best mechanic in Wamba and could fix my problem. I was so disgusted by this fellow. I bought some rope in the village because I was sure that I would have to tow my friend at least to the next village.

The mechanic talked very loudly as we were returning to the disabled vehicle. He smelled like alcohol. When we got back to the vehicle, I apologized to my friend that all I could find was this drunk mechanic. Out of courtesy, we should give him about two or three minutes to work on the vehicle. I told him that after that I would hook up the rope to his vehicle and try to pull him to the next village.

The mechanic shouted out, "Open the bonnet." I did. He poked around about 30 seconds and then shouted again, "On the ignition." I did. About 30 seconds later, he hollered out, "Start the engine." I did and the vehicle started and was running perfectly. The mechanic slammed the bonnet down and said, "Oga, you can go for Jos." A drunk mechanic in 90 seconds did what all these medical doctors and PhD's with all their sophisticated tools could not do in an hour. Why? Because he had the right skills. I have often told my friends that if my vehicle were spoiled on the road, I would rather have a drunk mechanic who was a professional in his work than a preacher who was saved and sanctified and baptized

Serving God Outside the Church

by immersion and spoke in tongues. The point: God's workers must discover and develop the gift of the Spirit which has been given to them so that they do so with excellence.

If you are going to be a Christian professional, it is good to be holy and have good theology. However, to really be successful one needs to know how to do his or her job? Make sure you are filled with the Spirit and capable of doing the job you are called to do.

Summary

Bezalel represents the professionals who use their professional skills to do God's work in a very specific sense. Bezalel designed and built a house of worship not a sports center. This was not a business project that Bezalel worked on. It was a spiritual house. This suggests that sometimes business and professional people will use their gifts and training and talents and experience to do something specific in the church.

Another Biblical character who fits into this category is Asaph who was a Levite and a professional musician. However, when called upon by King David, he devoted his professional music training full time to the service of God in the Temple and palace.

There are many people who have used their professional talents to work in the church. We still need architects to design and build houses of worship today. Most of these people will not be pastors. They will be professionals. We need accountants to help make sure that we are using and accounting for our money wisely. We need people trained and skilled in management to help supervise our Christian ministries. I had a student once who was a lawyer. He had left the private practice of law and had gone to his church

Serving God Outside the Church

headquarters where he worked as the full-time legal advisor for the church. These are examples of people who use their professional training to do God's work. We still need skilled professionals like that in our churches today.

Professionals in Government Model

I will now discuss two persons who used their skills and their positions in government to build up God's kingdom.

Nehemiah

Nehemiah was a steward in the household of King Artaxerxes. One day he heard about the terrible conditions of the city of Jerusalem. It affected him so much he wept. He began planning and praying. He eventually made a decision. He went to the king and volunteered that he would change from being a comfortable civil servant who had a secure and highly respected job to being a government official in a distant and difficult country. The king accepted Nehemiah's offer and Nehemiah became the governor of Jerusalem and Judea. This was not an easy responsibility.

- He had to travel back from Babylon to Jerusalem, a long, hot, and dangerous journey (Nehemiah 2:4-11)
- He planned, organized and implemented a massive voluntary rebuilding program (2:121-6:19).
- He experienced the grumbling of the people because no one can make everyone happy (4:10-14).
- He faced the nation's enemies and did not allow them to succeed or intimidate his people (4:1-23; 6:1-14)

Because Nehemiah was in a position of authority, he was able to seriously impact the nation for God, even in those areas that might be considered spiritual or religious. He really honored God during his tenure in office.

- He demonstrated that a civil servant and a political leader can also be a man of prayer (1:4-11; 2:4; 4:4; 4:9; 5:19; 6:9).

Serving God Outside the Church

- He exhibited courage, integrity and humility in a political office. He illustrated that a man of God can live a holy life in political office (2:1-10; 5:14-18; 13:1-31).
- He demonstrated that the power of God was greater than the power of God's enemies (4:1-23; 6:1-14).
- He helped the poor and needy with the resources of the state and also reversed the policies of the state that took advantage of the poor people (5:1-13).
- He supported and enhanced the priests and the sacrificial system that affected the spiritual welfare of the people (12:1-26, 34).
- He had the Mosaic Law reinstated as the centerpiece of the society (8:1-8; 13:1-3).
- He led Israel into publicly confessing their sins and seeking God (9:1-38) which led to publicly signing a covenant with God by the leaders (10:1-39).
- He reorganized the Levites, the full-time personnel who did God's work (8:6-28).
- He organized a massive dedication ceremony of the walls of the city which gave much glory to God (12:27-47).
- He enforced the laws of God and traditions of Israel (13:1-3, 6-13, 15-22, 23-28).

These are some major accomplishments for one man who was not even a priest or a prophet. He was a humble civil servant who volunteered to engage in the dirty and difficult realm of politics.

Esther

The story of Esther is well known. She was an orphan who had been adopted by her uncle. Her uncle Modecai saw potential in her and encouraged her to contest for the vacancy of the queen. She obviously competed against the

Serving God Outside the Church

best qualified women in the kingdom and won the right to be the most important female in the Babylonian kingdom. The following are some observations about her and her political calling and ministry.

Esther Overcame Formidable Obstacles.

We would like to think that God has called each of us to fulfill some important duty. However, the path to fulfilling important responsibilities is often difficult. Although Esther was later able to do some amazing things, those things did not come easy. She paid a big price for her success.

Esther was raised as an orphan. “Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother.” (2:7). There is a lot of sadness in that simple statement. It takes a father and a mother to produce a child but this child’s mother and father were taken from her at an early age. However, the difficulties that she experienced as a child were part of her preparation for ministry.

Esther was raised in a foreign country. We do not know how old Esther was when she was taken to Babylon. Esther was either very young or perhaps was even born in Babylon. In any case, she was almost certainly raised as a foreigner in that land.

- She probably struggled to learn the Babylonian language.
- She perhaps was discriminated against as a child because she was not an indigene.
- She probably did not enjoy the foods her family was accustomed to eating because they were difficult to get in that foreign land.

All of these difficulties helped to toughen this young lady by forcing her to work harder for what she got than

Serving God Outside the Church

other people. The sacrifices she had to make as an orphan in a foreign land were good preparation for the sacrifices she should make while competing for the queen's position.

Psalm 119:67 says: "*Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.*" Most successful Biblical characters were forced to go through many difficulties which toughened them and prepared them for their ministries. Here is a sample of how that worked in Hebrews 11:

- 11:35-38: *Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.*
- 11:33-35: *. . . who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again.*

If you are going to become a Christian politician or senior civil servant, you must be prepared to go through a lot of difficulties to prepare you for that ministry.

Esther had very strenuous competition. Esther 2:8 says: "*When the king's order and edict had been proclaimed, many girls were brought to the citadel of Susa and put under the care of Hegai.*" These were the most beautiful and

Serving God Outside the Church

talented girls in the land. Most of these would have no doubt been local girls who knew the customs and culture much better than Esther. Others were from royal families. These were girls who had fathers and uncles who were influential in the kingdom and who could speak to the people surrounding the king on behalf of these young ladies.

However, there is no evidence that Mordecai or Esther prayed for a miracle to be queen. She worked hard so that she would earn the right to that exalted position. At that level of competition, any one of these girls would have probably been qualified so it was the person who worked the hardest who eventually was successful. In life we must learn to compete fairly. It is good to pray that God will help you get a job. However, others who are trying to get that job are also praying. Therefore, you have to help yourself. You have to work harder and present yourself better than others if you want to succeed in life.

Do you believe God is a God of justice? Would it be just for God to take a job away from a person who is better qualified and give it to someone less qualified simply because the less qualified person begged God more? No, I do not believe we serve that kind of God.

If you want to succeed in life, you must commit yourself to being the best at what you do. And specifically, if you want to be a Christian politician, you have to commit yourself to be better than others.

- You must work harder.
- You must rise up earlier.
- You must be more conscientious.
- You must be more sensitive to others.
- You must acquaint yourself with the issues.
- You must earn the right to be selected over others.

Serving God Outside the Church

Esther had to forego many privileges. We look at being a queen as being a great privilege, with helpful maids, beautiful clothes, expensive jewelry, exotic food, and unprecedented fame. However, it was not easy getting to that position.

- When other girls were eating, Esther was exercising.
- When other girls were chatting with their friends, Esther was studying so that she could discuss things intelligently with the king.
- When other girls were relaxing, Esther was soaking herself in the perfumes.

Jesus said, *“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”* (Matthew 8:34). We live in a world of consumerism not a world of sacrifice. However, anyone who has ever done anything successfully in this life has done so because he or she has been willing to make great sacrifices.

Some time ago I read an article about a man named Malcolm Gladwell who had conducted some research related to the 100 most successful people in the world in business, sports, education medicine, literature and other disciplines. Gladwell learned there was no real secret to these successful people. Most of them were not smarter or from better families than others. He attributed their success to what he called the “10,000 rule.” This rule states that anyone who works at one thing for 10,000 hours is going to be an expert at that thing. All of these highly successful people had spent at least 10,000 hours doing what they had become the world’s experts in doing.

We tend to focus on privileges but there are many sacrifices before the privileges come. If you are going to be a Christian politician, you will have to forego many privileges. This will require sacrifice and self-denial.

Esther Demonstrated Unusual Wisdom.

Esther listened to the advice of her elders. When her uncle told her what to do, she did it. He told her to apply for the job (2:8). She did so. He told her not to reveal her ethnic identity. She did not do so (2:10). He later told her to help her people. She was willing to do so (4:1-17 and most of the book). When Hegei, the person responsible for preparing the girls for the king, told her what to do, she followed his advice very carefully (2:15).

If you want to be successful in politics, seek out the advice of people older and more experienced than you are and try to follow that advice.

- Spend time with older people.
- Ask specific questions from the elderly.
- Cultivate the friendship of senior people in society.
- Seek and follow the advice of those who have lived a long time.

Esther did not talk too much. “*Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so*” (2:11). Later when she requested the king to come to a banquet she had arranged, he had come but she did not tell him what was on her mind until she invited him back for a second banquet. Because she did not talk too much, she created curiosity in the king so that when she did explain the reason she wanted to see him, he was ready to listen.

When I first came to Nigeria, I was mentored by a medical doctor, Dr. Friday Nwator. He used to tell me, “Danny, you Americans talk too much.” And it is true. We think that everyone deserves all the information we can give them. However, my friend taught me this African proverb. “What you have not said, you can always say.” That is a very

Serving God Outside the Church

important statement. If you have not said something, you can always say it but once you have said it, it is difficult to unsay those words. To become successful in politics or any other discipline means that you must learn to control your tongue.

Esther did God's work without being overly "religious."

The word "God" is not found in the book of Esther. However, the evidence of God is found all throughout the book.

- Esther did not carry a big Bible everywhere she went.
- Esther did not put her private worship of God on a PA system so that everyone could hear her praying.
- Esther did not proclaim to people that God had called her to be the queen and placed her on the throne.

Esther did not speak a lot about her faith but she lived her faith in such a way that the king and others were very impressed by her life. In other words, Esther did not make the protection of her people a religious issue. There is nowhere in the record she uses any kind of religious language or argument. She appealed to things that the king would understand. Therefore, this book provides us with a unique model of how to influence the society to be godlier without particularly making it a religious thing.

- There is a time to pray publicly and there is a time to be quiet.
- There is a time to witness publicly and there is a time to keep silent.
- There is a time to publicly identify ourselves as Christians and there is a time when we should simply let our faith shine out through our lives.

Jesus said that his followers should be like a city set on a hill. *"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that*

Serving God Outside the Church

they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

Wale Adefarasin sponsored a project a few years ago in Lagos. It was a public lecture by former Ambassador Walter Carington on “The Values that Brought Obama to the White House.” All of the big people in Lagos attended the event, including the governor. Also speaking on that occasion was Chris Koloadé, former Nigerian ambassador to the UK. He spoke on the traditional African values. However, the traditional African values were a beautiful description of Christian values. He only selected those African values that overlapped with Christianity and he was able to publicly promote Christian values in a very high profile manner without ever quoting a single Bible text.

Esther focused on developing good relationships (or good public relations).

It was natural for her uncle Mordecai to believe in Esther. However, she worked hard and won the favor of everyone she came in contact. She won the favor of the head person; “*And Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her*” (2:15). This does not say that Esther enjoyed the favor of those who saw her. It says that she “*won the favor.*” That meant that she worked hard at the job. Esther eventually won the favor of the king. “*Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins*” (2:17). This was not an accident. She ***earned*** the favor of the king. Esther 2:17 says “*she won his favor.*” She was the best competitor; therefore, she won the position.

The wise man believed in good relationships.

- Proverbs 3:3-4; “*Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them*

Serving God Outside the Church

on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”

- Proverbs 22:1 *“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.”*

What is a good name? It is a reputation of treating people fairly and honestly and lovingly. It is the way people perceive you. Remember, to most people, perception is more important than reality. You may treat everyone fairly but if others perceive that you are being unfair, in their minds, that is just as bad as if you were unfair.

Being good at developing relationships and being good public relations require hard work and sensitivity. Good public relations means . . .

- putting others first in your life.
- giving up your own personal rights.
- being sensitive to the feelings of others.
- anticipating how others will see your actions.
- not allowing minor things to create big problems.

Good public relations is a fulfillment of the verse in Romans 12:8; *“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”*

It is amazing that most of the great Old Testament saints were politicians or in leadership roles in their nations. These include Abraham, Joseph, Moses and David. This should demonstrate to us that we can serve in politics and still be holy people. Is it possible today to serve honorably in politics? Is there any honorable thing that a politician can do in the realm of politics?

About 25 years ago, two young men created an organization to interview political candidates about their

Serving God Outside the Church

family values. During the next election, they were not happy with any of the candidates so one of them, Dr. David Weldon, decided to contest for US Congress and won. During our first Jos crisis, I kept hearing a lot of grumbling about the VOA Hausa section. About three weeks after the crisis, one of my friends bitterly complained that on that day, a man from Bauchi had been interviewed on VOA and he was essentially calling for violence against Christians. I wrote my friend Congressman David Weldon an email telling him what I had heard. He immediately went to see the head of VOA and reported my complaint. The VOA director demanded a translation of the program my friends had complained about. When he got the transcript, he was upset. Within four weeks, there was a new head of VOA Hausa section. One American Christian was able to make a difference in a problem in Nigeria because he was willing to get involved in politics.

Is God calling you to serve him in politics? I challenge you to find people who would be good in politics and support them.

Serving God Outside the Church

Professionals in Public Service Model

This category of professionals are those who chose to remain in their public service and not leave it to work for the church. I will note two Biblical characters that illustrate two different points.

Daniel – Demonstrating the Principles of God

Daniel was a civil servant. In fact, he was a civil servant in a foreign country. Daniel was not a prophet or a priest or any other type of religious worker. He was what we would call a layman. However, Daniel is one of the most holy and most revered men in the Old Testament. He taught about his God through his public life.

- He taught the value of **conviction**. He refused to compromise his convictions in his education (Daniel 1:8). He refused to compromise his convictions in his career (6:10).
- He taught the value of **excellence**. He was the best in the school. He was the best in his work. In fact, Daniel 6:3 says, *“Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm”* (KJV).
- He taught the value of **prayer**. All of his colleagues knew his prayer habits. That suggests that he did not try to hide them. However, he refused to compromise them when put under pressure (2:18; 6:10).
- He taught the value of **revelation**. He was close enough to God to know the voice of God. He could interpret dreams and at times could see the future (2:19; 4:19-27). He wrote down the things he saw.

Serving God Outside the Church

- He taught the value of ***faith***. Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, over whom Daniel had great influence demonstrate their faith when they said to Nebuchadnezzar, "*O Nebuchadnezzar . . . If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us . . . But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up*" (3:16-18). Daniel committed himself to God and God delivered him from the lion's den. The story of Daniel in the lion's den has been an inspiration to many people about how faith can be exercised in times of difficulty and stress (6:10-24).
- He taught the value of ***honesty***. When the king wanted to know the truth, he told him the truth. Daniel lived in a time when it was not popular to tell a king negative things. The bearer of bad news was often held responsible for that bad news.

This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven . . . Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue." (Daniel 4:24-27).

Daniel was very blunt and truthful with the king, telling him he was a sinner that was going to come under the judgment of God.

Daniel's life and service to the Babylonian government was a public testimony about God.

Serving God Outside the Church

The Bible says we are made in the image of God. Sin has distorted that image. However, Daniel shows us how the image of God can be so restored that it testifies about God in public life. One of the reasons that God calls and places civil servants and businessmen and other professionals in public life is to use them to demonstrate God's qualities. Jesus said, "No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket" (Matthew 5:15). God does not want to take all the successful businessmen and turn them into pastors. He wants godly layperson to demonstrate the love of God.

William Wilberforce became a member of the British parliament in his early 20's. When he was 26 years old, he gave his life to Christ. He went to his pastor, John Newton and told him he thought God was calling him to be a pastor. Newton asked him what he was doing at that particular time. Wilberforce told him that he was serving as a member of the parliament. John Newton told him rather forcefully that God was not calling him to be a pastor and that he should forget about that. God had called him to be a member of the British parliament.

Wilberforce followed the advice of his pastor and went back to serve as a member of the parliament. And, by serving in that position, he did more to advance the kingdom of God than perhaps any preacher of his generation. He helped to outlaw slavery in the UK which eventually affected the whole world. In addition, he created a deliberate strategy and challenged other senior people in society to transform the rather coarse and vulgar British society into what became known as the Victorian Era which was paralleled with the great missionary movements. William Wilberforce's service to God as a layman in the political realm is consistent with the examples of the great civil servants in the Bible like Nehemiah and Daniel.

Onesiphorus - Serving the People of God

Onesiphorus is mentioned twice in the New Testament, both in 2 Timothy. However, only one passage gives us the basic facts about him:

May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus (2 Timothy 1:16-18).

This passage tells us the following things about this rather obscure man.

- He often “*refreshed*” Paul when he was in prison in Rome. This probably suggests that Onesiphorus was a man who had the financial assets to “refresh” people.
- He was not ashamed to be associated with Paul, even when he was in prison in Rome. When Onesiphorus came to Rome, he did not know where Paul was but he vigorously sought him out.
- He helped Paul in many ways when he was in Ephesus.

So, what can we conclude about Onesiphorus from these brief statements?

- He was from Ephesus.
- He was likely an international businessman who traveled to Rome for business. It was while he was in Rome that he sought out and provided assistance for Paul.

Serving God Outside the Church

Here is the point: Onesiphorus was a businessman who used his resources to support God's work.

This is one of the most traditional ways we have viewed Christian business persons. We have regarded them as sources of revenue for the church. As I have demonstrated, I believe that there are many other ministries of the Christian businessman. However, one of the most important duties of some of God's servants is to make more money than they personally need so that they can invest money into the work of God. This is certainly one of the most important responsibilities of Christian businessmen and women.

Floyd Coates was a businessman who was a good friend and good supporter of our ministry. He had a factory with 150 employees. He made millions of dollars in his life. However, he lived in a modest house and drove a 20 year old pickup truck. He chose not to invest his money in material things but in the work of God around the world, including my own ministry. There are many thousands of businessmen who are like Floyd Coates in the church around the world. They provide us with a great model for how to serve God outside the church.

Serving God Outside the Church

Part-Time Professionals in Ministry Model

This is the normal model of businessmen and women who mix their normal profession with some specific Christian ministry.

Paul's Example

Every Jewish rabbi and priest had to not only study theology but had to learn a practical trade. The trade that the young Saul of Tarsus learned was tent making. When Saul who later identified as Paul got to Corinth, he met fellow-Jews, Aquilla and Priscilla, who were also tent makers. Paul went to the market and worked with them for a while to generate enough money for his own personal expenses and ministry (Acts 18:2-3).

In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul makes the very strong argument that one who does the work of the Lord has the right to receive enough remuneration from that work to take care of his basic needs. However, Paul says twice that he did not use that right.

- 9:12: *But we did not use this right.*
- 9:15: *But I have not used any of these rights.*

So apparently Paul's model of financing his ministry was to travel to a city, go to the market and work for a few days or weeks, making tents and then use that money to finance his real ministry which was evangelism and church planting.

Paul's model was serving as a part-time businessman to finance his Christian work. There are many advantages to this model:

Serving God Outside the Church

- The worker pays for his own ministry.
- The worker gets exercise from doing physical work.
- The worker has to spend less time raising funds to support his or her ministry.
- The worker gets a mental and psychological break from the intense spiritual ministry.
- The worker has natural opportunities to interact with unbelievers in non-threatening situations.
- The worker maintains an understanding of the real world rather than becoming isolated from the real world as many pastors and other full-time Christian workers do.

Paul's Model Today

This type of Christian ministry is normally called the “tentmaker” model and is one of the common forms of ministry today. The only way that “missionaries” can get into some countries is to use this model. They go as businessmen or medical specialists or educators or in some other profession and create or engage in some legitimate form of business but they are also doing evangelism and church planting on the side.

I have a friend who went to a communist country in Asia to teach in a university. It was against the law to proselytize in that country. Citizens who tried to evangelize could be thrown into prison for five months. Foreigners who attempted this could be expelled from the country. After my friend had been in the university a couple of years, he decided to return to the US for a small holiday. His faculty decided to have a party for him. During the party, the dean said, “Sir, we notice that there is something very different about you than many other Americans we meet. We are inviting you to tell us what it is that makes you so different.” My friend stood up and said, “The thing that makes me so

Serving God Outside the Church

different from other Americans is that several years ago I met a man whom many people think has been dead for 2000 years. I met Jesus Christ.” He then gave other testimonies about how God had changed his life. The last I heard that professor had led 28 people to Christ, in a communist country where it was against the law to proselytize. His outstanding academic career and his personal piety opened natural doors of opportunity for him to share his faith.

Paul’s model is the best example of the tentmaker model. However, it is not the only model of businessmen serving God.

Serving God Outside the Church

Former Professionals in Ministry Model

This is a model whereby a man uses his professional training to prepare himself for another professional responsibility within the church.

Luke's Model

Luke was a physician which is a professional occupation. To become a medical doctor requires years of study and apprenticeship. Physicians are well educated people. Luke joined Paul's missionary team in Troas on Paul's second missionary journey. However, there is not a word said about Luke ever practicing medicine after that. It appears that he gave up or at least suspended his professional occupation to do something else. There is evidence that Luke fulfilled another professional responsibility. He wrote two large documents, the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. These two documents make up a little more than 25 percent of the New Testament. Although the professional training required to take care of sick people is different than the professional training required to do research and write books, the education and experience that Luke had acquired as a physician at least partially prepared him for his writing career.

So here is the model: A professional lady uses her professional training and experience to prepare her for another professional responsibility that will be a blessing to the body of Christ. This is what happened to Luke. He gave up being a physician in order to become a Christian researcher and writer who would document the life of Jesus and the first 30 years of the early church. And Luke's writing

Serving God Outside the Church

career had a far greater impact on the body of Christ than his profession as a physician ever would have.

Luke's Model Today

Many of us have known people like this. I have recently concluded two and a half years of Pentecostal research. One of the things that we have noticed about a number of the major Pentecostal leaders in Nigeria is that many of them have had professional training which they have abandoned but which provided them a good foundation for ministry.

- W. F. Kumuyi and E. A. Adebayo were both university lecturers.
- Paul Adefarasin was an architect.
- Wale Adefarasin was a management consultant.
- Sam Adeyemi was an accountant.
- Tony Rapu was a physician.

Most of these people have abandoned their former professions in order to devote their full-time effort to the work of God. However, I am sure that all of them have benefited from their experiences and contacts in the professional world.

In the professional world there are many things you learn.

- You learn how to do things excellently.
- You learn how to make and live within financial budgets.
- You learn the importance of planning and good organization.
- You learn how to be sensitive to the needs of customers and clients.
- You learn how to supervise employees and assistants and aids.

Serving God Outside the Church

- You learn how to get along with other professional people.

Luke was not the first person to undergo such a transformation.

- God called Abraham from being a local farmer to being the head of a nation.
- God called David from being a shepherd to being a king.
- God called Amos from being a farmer to being a prophet.

Jesus called men from being fishermen and tax collectors and other careers to be apostles.

Serving God Outside the Church

Conclusion

There are other models of the ways God uses businessmen and other professionals in doing the work of God. There is no one single way that it is always done.

In 1986 God began to prepare me to put into practice some of the things that I have outlined in this presentation. God gave me a vision to help develop and enhance academic Christian studies projects in public universities. I started an organization called International Institute for Christian Studies (now called Global Scholars). Originally we felt called to place Christian theologians like me in public universities so that we could help create Christian studies projects and help positively influence those that already existed. We did this for several years.

However, the Lord began to force us to think more broadly. Is it only theology that is important to God? Is God not the creator of all academic disciplines? Would God not be honored to have academics from all disciplines go and serve God in the public arena, not primarily as pastors or evangelists but as Christian academics who serve in the mainstream academic community?

I am happy to report to you that as of 2018, our organization had placed 311 academics in 148 universities and 54 countries. These Christian scholars have served in 22 academic disciplines. In Africa, we have had an expert in English serving in the Gambia. In Nigeria we have had an educational psychologist serving in the University of Jos. In Cameroon, we have had a philosopher serving in the University of Yaoundé. In Uganda, we have had a plant geneticist serving in the Makerere University. In South

Serving God Outside the Church

Africa, we have had a medical physicist serving in Cape Town. We have had a professor of pathology serving in the University of Rwanda.

None of these people are traditional missionaries. Most of them are paid a livable wage to share their expertise in their respective universities. However, they have all gone with more than just their professional expertise. They have gone with the mandate of Jesus to go into all the world and preach the gospel and heal the sick in every part of society. They are all academic missionaries who are serving in the public arena. All of these people are serving God outside the church and outside of church structures. They are in the mainstream part of society. However, they are all seriously involved in building God's kingdom up in the world.

The profession of academics is only one of the places where Christians can serve publicly. I challenge you to find those other places out in the world and let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Here is my final appeal to Christians:

- We must not allow ourselves to fall into the trap of believing that pastoring a church is more important than working as a businessman or professional. We must understand that God calls people to the business world just like he calls people to various forms of Christian ministry.
- We must encourage and teach our Christian business people and professionals and academics that the work that they do is just as important in building up God's kingdom as the work of a pastor or evangelist.
- We must be sensitive to the leadership of the Spirit as he leads all of us into diverse but important professions and ministries.

Serving God Outside the Church

Prof. Danny McCain is the founder and international ambassador of Global Scholars (formerly International Institute for Christian Studies). This organization seeks to mainstream God's kingdom through recruiting, equipping and placing Christian academics in public universities around the world. McCain is a professor of Biblical theology in the Department of Religion and Philosophy, University Jos, Nigeria and also the Director of the Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies. He worked closely with the Ministry of Education and federal and state level to develop materials and training seminars for CRE teachers. He has also been in the forefront of developing faith-based materials and programs for addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic. He is one of the founders and currently serves as chairman of Africa Christian Textbooks (ACTS) and is the author or co-author of over 30 books and instructional manuals. Danny McCain and his wife, Mary, have lived in Nigeria since 1988, where they reared their three children.