

# Cape Town 2010 Articles

## Being the Whole Church: Leaders Encouraged to View the Workplace as Mission

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, 24 OCTOBER 2010 — At The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, Willy Katiuga said he believed the workplace is the ideal setting for ‘embodying the gospel.’ Willy’s panel discussion on faith in the workplace on Monday of the week-long Congress was so popular that the ‘People at Work: Preparing to Be the Whole Church’ multiplex session was repeated on Saturday.

According to Glenn Smith, Cape Town 2010 Programme Committee, about 1300 packed out the Monday meeting. In addition, four smaller dialogue sessions on the topic during the week were full, accommodating about 80 people each, he said.

In a paper posted online prior to the Congress to stimulate global discussion, Willy Katiuga said, ‘We live in a secular-sacred paradigm that separates the Church from what happens in the workplace. ... [However,] the workplace is ideal for embodying the Gospel, living a life that reflects grace and truth. There are very few evangelistic outlets where this is possible.’

He urged that this must change to make the most of this mission field.

‘The church has to become alive at the workplace by making the workplace sacred,’ he wrote. ‘We need to rethink globally the role of the church in supporting our workplace emissaries and to rethink the role of work in motivating emissaries.’

In essence, Willy says, the Church needs to move from ‘working for a living’ to ‘breathing God’s life into work.’ He describes his company scenario in which he has built a work culture that values accountability, responsibility, excellence, teamwork, discussions in a learning environment, risk-taking, forgiveness, support and celebration.

‘Such an environment is not only an environment for professional excellence but also for co-workers to be disciples long before they make a commitment to faith.’ When they meet Jesus, he says, they enter into a lifestyle that is already somewhat familiar because of the discipling that has already been done.

The advance paper drew great interest online. More than 12,800 viewed it around the world, and more than 85 comments were written by readers – significant interaction since the global conversation site offered 45 advance papers.

One reader from Jordan commented, 'We spend so much time at church praying for the non-Christian [whom] we avoid every day. ... Clergy and Laity should work hand in hand to bring this world to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.'

Another reader from China wrote, 'Until our pastors and teachers get to understand this we will continue to struggle with the concept that work is at best a place to earn money for proper church work and a place where we can do a bit of evangelism (out of duty), as opposed to the setting in which God is displaying his glory through his people through word and deed.'

Interaction on the Web site before the Congress helped to shape the multiplex and dialogue sessions. Six panelists during the 'People at Work' multiplex sessions fleshed out these ideas. Several addressed the need for the Church to support and train those in the workplace. Timothy Yu, committee chair for the Lausanne Marketplace Ministry, said pastors need to know that people in the workplace want to understand the theology of work.

'Pastors aren't against it, it's just not on their radar screen,' he says. 'We need to know how to integrate our faith into life and we need pastors to help us work out this journey.'

Mark Greene, executive director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, gave a practical example from his church experience called 'This Time Tomorrow' in which the pastor asks someone in the congregation to come up on Sunday morning, describe his or her job and any challenges at work, and the pastor prays for him or her. Mark attests that doing this every six weeks or so has changed the culture of his church as people are encouraged to recognize the workplace as a mission field.

Willy added the suggestion that people invite their pastors to their workplace, helping the pastor see their daily environment since many pastors' whole careers have been in the church, not in the workplace.

In an interview, Willy said participants during the week of the Congress have recognized the need for the workplace to be considered ministry. People want to know how to be more effective sharing their faith, he said. 'The calling to secular professions is just as important as the calling to ministry'.

'People want to serve God and want to serve God effectively but have a hard time if they are not valued,' Willy continued. 'If they pray for kids going on a mission trip for two weeks and you work for 20 years and you are never prayed for, it's hard.'

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