

VIII. WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES RELIGIOUS FAITH MAKE?

Even serious attention to what is going on in ourselves, within our organizations, and in business transactions as they unfold still is not enough. As judgments are made, decisions taken, and action initiated, those interested in moral decision-making may ask, "What difference does one's religious faith make in this situation?" Actually, questions about the role of religious faith, gospel values, and finding God spontaneously arise as one undertakes the journey outlined by the topics.

One view holds that our faith marks an encounter with God and God's grace moving us to meet and address instances of social dysfunction and sin. This occurs wherever we are we are called to harness the cooperation of others. It happens when we see the possibility for seeking the good. In gratitude and appreciation for God's gifts to us, faith motivates us to discover and choose God's will in the concrete situation at hand. It empowers us to face up to the challenge, take on the conflicts, and renew the structures that govern our firms and our business transactions. We are charged to identify and address the roles and patterns of cooperation within and among our business organizations. We are enabled by faith to look for God's grace in the middle of a crisis. It is a power that transcends and reconciles the cumulative effects of laziness and inattention, bias and suspicion, cynicism and mistrust. Our religious faith, working intelligently in the middle of business transactions, empowers us to have a beneficial influence on our organizations and society.

Christian faith acknowledges decline and evil in the world; but, by reason of God's redemptive act it claims that sin is not the last word. It sees the transformative power of divine love at work in everyday life on the job and at the office. This realization directs our concerns and desires as we search for solutions to human problems. It lines us up for an encounter with God's grace resulting in attitudes of joy and gratitude. It leads us in the search for forgiveness and reconciliation and the quest for the greater good.

IX. CONCLUSION

As the WBC chapter meeting referred to earlier drew to a close, the group returned to the question of how to locate what was morally correct. One executive said he saw an answer from Peter's story:

What would the motivation be for Peter's turnabout? When Jesus looked at Peter standing in the courtyard, their eyes locked and their personal relationship came alive. This was a man that Jesus loved and respected very deeply. When that happened, Peter saw someone he really loved. He must have recalled the community in which they shared their lives and values together. It all came alive to Peter in that look. Then Peter realized that what he had done was not up to snuff. Sure, he had been very confused and may even have thought, "What good could he have done?" But, the basic question is, not so much what do you think, but who do you love? When push comes to shove, the values of our communities, groups, and the people we love will guide our actions. We are sustained by

our communities of love. I think it is there that we will be able to retrieve our moral compass.

Life is too important to leave it to happenstance, hunch, intuition, or hit-or-miss. We need to discover and understand this unfolding structure of human operations in ourselves, in the context of where we work. We also need to realize that we are in this together. We need to collaborate, and do it as well as possible. It is hoped that WBC members notice in themselves a growing skill for knowing and doing the right thing and that WBC chapters as communities can produce tangible statements that can serve others in their journey of moral understanding and acting.

Participation in a WBC chapter offers the opportunity to engage in a unique process. This is more than a prayer circle or a support group, although the process includes prayer and a community of mutual support often results. Rather, it is an opportunity to exercise talents, intelligence, and emotional and social skills all within a process of meditation, reflection, discernment, and action. Underlying this process is a spirituality of engagement which is designed to move participants in "practical wisdom," to promote Judeo-Christian values as we direct our organizations so that we can contribute beneficially to our firms and to the broader society.

Like other WBC members, you will see a gradual, cumulative, progressive depth of appreciation that only comes from this iterative process of repeated probing. Moreover, insights into a situation or an issue will come in most unexpected ways during the course of the ordinary working day. A particular event might trigger a whole new insight on the issue or case under study that is inevitably—because of periodic prayer—lurking close to the surface. Relationships between a topic discussed at a meeting and something at work suddenly spring up.

From this Woodstock process the meshing and blending of prayer and daily work experience becomes a quasi-habitual *modus operandi*, a prayerful, reflective way of regarding all the different issues, cases, decisions, and dilemmas. As that disposition grows, we become Moral Leaders in the Marketplace.

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