



THE
SACRED-SECULAR
MISTAKE

Straight Talk about Finding and Funding
Your Contribution in the Kingdom

Edited by Scott Morton

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ISBN 978-0-9972700-0-6

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*This booklet is dedicated to workers in
the Kingdom around the world.
Thank you for faithfully carrying out
your calling in hard places, unknown,
unheralded, next door to everywhere.*

When he saw the crowds,
he had compassion for them,
because they were harassed and helpless,
like sheep without a shepherd.

–Matthew 9:36

Why the Sacred-Secular Mistake Must Be Addressed Today

David Lyons

International Vice President, The Navigators

As I was graduating from college and praying about my future, I noticed many of my friends were going into vocational Christian ministry. I was eager to do the same, but sought the advice of a wise, elderly, pastor, who said, “David, we have too many men in the ministry who don’t know what it takes to put a can of soup on the shelf. Go into business, and let God call you into the (vocational) ministry.”




David Lyons

That was valuable advice! I did go into business, and I learned to walk with God in the rough and tumble of the business world. I was doing good work that pleased God. Men were coming to Christ and becoming disciples. That shaped me. I didn’t want to leave. I loved it.

Later God did clearly call me into vocational ministry. And today He meets my needs through gift-income. And I love it here also. I’m experiencing convergence of my design, and I’m where God has called me.

Recently a commercial pilot friend said, “I wish I was doing something really important like you are.” I replied, “I’m sure your passengers regard what you do as really important. I’m sure that God regards what you do as really important. Don’t devalue the importance of God’s calling for you!”

I pray that those who read this booklet will see that God calls some of His servants to make their living as businessmen or teachers or merchants, while He calls others to make their living through gift income as pastors and missionaries. *Don’t succumb to the sacred-secular mistake* of thinking one is better than the other. Both are equally important in God’s eyes. Both please Him, as long as it is God’s calling to you. 

Full-Time?

Scott Morton

International Funding Coach, The Navigators

Through the centuries the term “full-time” has been misunderstood as the best way to serve God—that is, by becoming a cleric, a professional preacher, missionary or gospel worker living on gift-income.

But isn't every believer in full-time service? When is a believer not on-duty as a Christian? 1 Corinthians 12 makes it clear that all members of the Body are valuable. Each contributes differently, but each one's contribution is vital. And since we walk with Christ 24/7, we are His servants 24/7. When I share the gospel, care for a child or comb my hair I am Christ's full-time servant.



Scott Morton

Over the years this subtle error has left many believers feeling second-rate because they are not pastors or missionaries. This misunderstanding has impeded the progress of the gospel. “Lay-people” get the message that they are not as important as ministers.

A friend longed for his office mates to come to Christ, but he felt unqualified to reach them. I asked him, “Is your pastor coming to your building with an evangelism team to go from cubicle to cubicle?” I was trying to convince him that God could use his personal non-programmatic witness to advance the Kingdom in downtown Minneapolis!

So let's do away with this unholy worldview that says those who are supported by donations are more valuable than those supported by conventional means. Accordingly, the terms, “gift-income” and “conventional-income” are used throughout this booklet.

You'll also find important scriptures and testimonies from others who have dealt with the same issues you face. May God give you grace to follow Him whether you are conventional-income or gift-income. Your unique contribution is needed in the Body!



God Called Me to Be a Business Laborer

Jaime Y. Hernandez Jr.
Philippines

I met Christ out of a Catholic background through an American Navigator intern. My parents thought I was in a cult and were extremely suspicious, but through many conversations and by observing my transformed life they too have trusted Christ.

In the Navigator ministry during my college days “full-time ministry” was strongly emphasized. A secular career was considered second best. Going “full-time” demonstrated you were fully committed! No one overtly taught this idea; it was in the air.

Gradually I became a student leader in The Navigators, but I felt this full-time rush was not for me. I couldn’t have told you why, but I wondered:

“Why has God gifted me with abilities for engineering if He doesn’t want me to use them?”

I felt my calling was to work as an engineer and make disciples in my profession. Resisting the popular enthusiasm to go into full-time ministry, I took a job in Civil Engineering—my chosen professional career.

Then something strange happened. After a year of working in industry I felt a “call” back to the campus to join The Navigators ministry. I couldn’t explain it: Why leave a good job when so many are unemployed?

The Navigators needed leaders on the University of the Philippines Diliman campus, my alma mater, but they didn’t suggest I quit my job. After much prayer, I quit my engineering job even though I did not have another job. I began looking for work as an engineering professor back at Diliman. Nothing. I wondered if I had missed God’s leading.

But surprisingly, within one month I was offered a job in the Engineering Sciences Department.




**Jaime Y.
Hernandez Jr.**

Today, I work as an associate professor at the Institute of Civil Engineering. I have immediate access to students and faculty, including Navigators on campus. I do not raise financial support because my professorship provides adequate income for my wife, Nestine, and me as well as covering the cost of feeding hungry students at our home! As needed, I invite support from alumni friends to help 20-30 students attend Navigator conferences.

We feel we have God's best. I love to teach engineers, and I love to hang out with students.

My calling journey is not for everyone, but we feel we have God's best —I love to teach engineering and I love to hang out with students to bring them Christ's love.

I'm grateful I resisted the popular rush to "go full-time" when I graduated from college. I followed God's call into industry, then I followed it again back to the campus as a conventional-income Navigator laborer. Thanks be to God.

One of my favorite verses is Prov. 3:5-6 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will keep your path straight." 

In Acts 22, on the Damascus Road, Paul asked Jesus two questions:

1. Who are you, Lord?
2. What do you want me to do?

The second question is difficult to answer unless you focus on the first.

—Lorne Sanny, late former President of The Navigators

Just a Layman?

A lesson from Navigator History

LeRoy Eims (1925-2004)

Navigator Pioneer

Years ago at Glen Eyrie, The Navigators International Conference Center, Navigator pioneer and world traveler, LeRoy Eims introduced himself to a conferee. The stranger gave his name and where he lived. Then he added, “I’m just a layman.”



LeRoy Eims

“Just a layman! Just a layman!” Eims exclaimed. “You’re not just a layman. You are the key to reaching the world with the gospel!”

Early-Navigator LeRoy knew that non-professional ministers often feel like second-class citizens. He encouraged this brother he barely knew that he was not “just a layman!”

The words “layman” and “laity” come from the Greek word for “people” (laos). Laymen are the “ordinary people in many walks of life—joyfully leading integrated lives . . . as fruitful insiders among the lost” as described in The Navigators’ vision statement.

LeRoy and his wife Virginia traveled the world setting conventional-income people free to believe they can take the love of Christ into places and among people who would shy away from a professional.

The Navigators ministry is about ordinary people quietly helping the people in their world to know Christ and to make Him known. You’re not “just a layman!”



Interview with Susan Nantongo

The Navigators Campus Director, Makerere University, Uganda

Q. You have been a gift-income laborer with The Navigators for 12 years. Have you considered a conventional-income job?

A. After my 2 year Navigator internship, I considered a conventional job. My motives were:

a) Parental approval! My parents expected more from me, and this was not what they had dreamt I would become.

b) I wanted to be like my classmates who seemed to be “getting there” by the world’s standards. I didn’t measure up.

But God reminded me that all people are like grass—here today and gone tomorrow. I needed to live to please God who is here for all time. It is His approval that I needed more than my parents or friends.

Secondly, Romans 12:2 spoke to me (“do not conform to the world”). The typical rationale of finishing school, getting a high-profile job because that’s what everybody does was inadequate. God seemed to be saying, “Susan, you will be most fulfilled when you do what I call you to.”



**Susan
Nantongo**

Q. What about fundraising? Isn’t that a burden?

A. Fundraising used to be a burden, but not any more now that I have been through The Navigators’ Funding School. I see it as a privilege of bringing people alongside me to join God in the redemption story. God opened my eyes to how Jesus himself was supported by others, and now I see it as part of my calling (Luke 8:1-3).

Q. We hear about “poor missionaries.” Are you poor? Can you care for your family? Savings?

A. I am not poor! I help with fees for cousins and people from my village.

I support my family and others as needs arise. I also have savings! But all this came after the Fundraising School.

Q. Do you ever get discouraged? What keeps you going?

A. YES, I do get discouraged. I have learned that challenges and trials come to test my faith and mature me. I know God can use me to see other lives transformed if I don't give up. It is worth everything!

Q. Did your family ever encourage you to get a “real job?”

A. Yes, but I was clear to them that God had called me to disciple-making. I have openly allowed them to watch God meet my needs. God also helped me understand that they are genuinely concerned and I need to let them express their opinions and not take offense.

My big question was: Whom was I living to please—God or family? They respect that.


Q. What Scripture helps you in your career?

A. Mathew 28: 18-20 “Go and make disciples of all nations.”

I see student ministry as God's avenue to reach the world through the different nations represented on the campus. After school these students spread to different corners of the world. My small part at Makerere University advances the gospel into the Nations.

Q. Any advice for people considering a career like yours?

A. Be clear on what God is calling you to. Tough times will come and if your calling is not in place you will lose your bearing.

Raising funds is part of the package. Don't imagine it will somehow go away—so tighten your seat belt! God will mature you lots through your fundraising experiences. 

Can the Fundraising Goliath Be Slain?

Noel Owuor
Kenya

As the eldest son of a large family, my father drilled into my mind that one day it would be my responsibility to care for my younger siblings. Naturally, he was eager for me to get an education and a good job to help him get them through school.



Noel Owuor

But I sensed that the Lord was calling me out of my career as a high school teacher to gift-income ministry. I did not want to go. What will my peers think of me? Will I ever raise enough money to help my siblings through school? Will I make enough money to support a family?

And, especially, what will I tell my dad?

Finally, after much prayer and counsel in January of 1990 with several unanswered questions and in “disobedience” to my father, I joined The Navigators as a gift-income laborer. I was single, extremely flexible and could live with other singles on small money. God was blessing our discipling efforts and many lives were changed. My dad even was partially pleased—partially!

Five years later I found the woman of my dreams and wished to marry. I knew my father would have questions, but I was most worried about what my fiancé’s father would say about his precious daughter marrying a “missionary” living on gift-income.

“You two are Africa’s best and brightest!” he said. “Why would you waste your lives in ministry? Can’t you still help people and have a respectable job?”

I had no answer! I simply knew that I was being called away from teaching school.

For the first few years of gift-income living with The Navigators, our funding bounced all over. Many times God provided last-minute-money provisions. But many times we could not pay our bills. It was frustrating and my mind was often on money (or the lack of it) rather than evangelism. We thought fundraising was

the giant Goliath on the opposite hill taunting us about our financial frustration.

But in 2006 I did a Bible study on how God funds His workers and everything changed! I learned how to raise support without feeling like a beggar.

Back to my wife's father. Just before he died he confided, "I see now that you are truly helping Africa by teaching the gospel. I am proud of you!"

Wow! What a confirmation! And by learning about fundraising for ministry, I came to discover that God cares not only for His work but also His workers! That includes me!

God has now called me out into church pastoral ministry so I am still a "gift-income laborer." When people ask me if it is possible to be fully-funded as a missionary, I look back to my experience in The Navigators since 2006 and say, Absolutely!"

When I was faithful and courageous to do my part in fundraising, God provided. And Goliath was slain!

"For the worker is worthy of support." –Matthew 10:10



*In the Kingdom,
work is not to be divided
into secular and sacred.
All work is holy
as we do God's will.*



Esther Waruiru

Associate to the
International Executive
Team, The Navigators

Understanding the Pros and Cons of Your Decision!

As you listen to missionaries describe their calling as gift-income laborers you get the idea that they have the ideal balance of life and ministry. And sometimes as you listen to conventional-income laborers you hear “this is the only way to reach the world!”

Here is the fine print!



Contrasts and Similarities of Each Calling:

Career Factor	Conventional-income laborers	Gift-income laborers
Time available for ministry	All work is ministry but less control of time	More control of time
Opportunity for interaction with lost	Hourly—good penetration of culture	Limited depending on job assignment
Financial freedom	Yes, if biblical stewardship guidelines followed	Potential for poor funding and less freedom
Understanding from family and friends	Easy to understand	Why don't you get a real job!
Effect on spouse, kids (if married)	Positive unless job becomes an idol	Family ministry potential, but ministry can become an idol
Long range financial well-being	Good if biblical guidelines followed	Good if biblical guidelines followed
Mobility: ease of changing geography	Less mobility	Greater mobility, especially while younger
Ministry fruitfulness	Less discretionary time to invest in people. By grace through faith!	More discretionary time to invest in people. By grace through faith!
Feel connected with a team	Often feel isolated unless you initiate	Usually good, but depends on leadership
Connecting with local fellowships	Usually good, can consume all free time	Usually good, depending on culture
Opportunity for professional development	Personal ministry growth not monitored	Depends on leader, should be excellent
Flexibility/Capacity	Less flexibility, less capacity outside job	More flexibility, more capacity for people

4 Types of People Needed to Advance the Gospel

(Which One Best Describes God's Calling for You?)



Pioneering Laborers

Move to new places or new contexts to plant the gospel and lay foundations of generational ministry. Usually funded by **gift income**.

–Acts 13:1-4



Local Laborers

Sometimes called *Insiders*, local laborers carry the gospel into the normal pathways of life to penetrate the culture. Funded by **conventional income**.

–Phil. 2:15-16



Local Leaders

Those gifted to care for and build community among local laborers. Usually funded by **conventional income**.

–1 Cor. 12:28



Mobile Alongsiders

Leaders who travel to come alongside local laborers and leaders (above) to encourage and shepherd. Ideally most able to travel when funded by **gift income**.

–1 Thess. 3:5

“To the building up of the body of Christ.” –Ephesians 4:12



Interview with Irene Offia

Irene is a business owner, homemaker, mother of two, laborer for Christ, and happily married to The Navigators Nigerian National Director.

Q. What caused you to launch into business?

A. As a single, I wanted to make money to support my mentors who were missionaries in another country. After we got married, I stayed home to raise our children. When the youngest was six, I took a job to augment our gift income, and I started a business.



Irene Offia

Q. Pros and cons of running your own business—while raising a family and working as a Navigator staff?

A. One reason I went into business was to be in control of my time! But I found I didn't have as much free time as I wanted for ministry and family—perhaps because I was starting from scratch. I even turned down one enterprise because I realized it would consume me.

I found I didn't have as much free time as I wanted.

—Irene

To expand my capacity I run my work from home to stay involved with the goings-on of my family and running a busy household. But if the


business grows much more, an outside office will be needed.

My business brings lots of contacts I could turn to ministry opportunities if I were more intentional. We have also been able to recruit giving partners through the business.

Even though I am involved in business I see myself primarily as a missionary. The business helps fund our ministry.

I hope to be more intentional about involving my clients in Bible studies henceforth, God helping me.

Q. Advice for others?

A. Watch out for “pie in the sky” expectations about making tons of money and having tons of free time and ministry time! Be realistic. 

God Called Me out of Business to Be a Kingdom Mobilizer

Barry Brown
Navigator Collegiate Alumnus

In 32 days I will go from conventional-income laborer to gift-income laborer. On the first of February, I join our church staff “full time” as the Executive Ministry and Missions Director with a focus in missions mobilization and training.



Barry Brown


I worked since graduation in agri-business and loved it. By the grace of God I was successful in the world’s eyes.

But recently I felt a calling to do more with missions directly. But here is the big thing that many people don’t understand: I don’t consider my call to work full time in the church to be any more “holy” than the work I was doing when

I worked for a seed corn company for years, and now God has called me to be a missions pastor. But this work is no more “holy” than the work I did to market seed corn to Iowa farmers!”

–Barry

I managed a seed corn company. In fact, I know I will have fewer chances to engage non-believers in the gospel than when I was in business. In business, I interacted with non-believers every day, but now I will have to deliberately choose even to be in the same room with non-believers.

I told our senior pastor that if in my new role I am not advancing the gospel somehow I will do something else where I can! In whatever role God calls us, the point is to advance the gospel! 

–Barry Brown is a Navigator collegiate alumnus of the University of Minnesota and former North American C.E.O. of a regional seed corn company.

Editor’s Note

In your context, working within a local fellowship may be your best place of service. If so, determine to humbly serve within your gifting rather than taking on many overwhelming roles. Navigator founder Dawson Trotman said, “Don’t do what others can and will do.”

Finding Your Calling


Clues from the Bible about Discovering Your Role in God's Kingdom

1. Two types of "calling"

A. Notice the difference between the two callings in Romans 1:1 and 1:7. For this study we are not talking about our common calling to follow Christ but rather our calling for unique ministry as we follow Christ.

Called as an _____ Called as a _____ Rom 1:1,7

2. Calling Chart: How were these Bible characters called for ministry?

<u>Name</u>	<u>Passage</u>	<u>To Do What?</u>
Moses	Exodus 3:1-12; 4:1-5	_____
Isaiah	Isaiah 6:1-13	_____
Jeremiah	Jer 1:4-10	_____
Bezalel	Exodus 31:1-6	_____
Peter	John 21:15-23	_____
Elijah	1 Kings 19:9-18	_____
Nehemiah	Neh 1-2:8	_____
Mary	Luke 1:26-45	_____
Jesus	John 1:29-34	_____
Paul	Acts 26:15-18	_____
Timothy	Acts 16:1-5	_____
Jonah	Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-5	_____
 Me!	_____	_____

“We must not forget that we as an organization don’t call anyone. God is the Caller!”



Mike Treneer
*Former International
Director, The Navigators*



Do you feel God is calling you to gift-income? Does anyone else agree? Too often zealous laborers who are eager for ministry do not have confirmation from their friends, leaders, or local fellowship. Your calling for ministry needs the confirmation of the Body. “Lone Rangers” who are sent without the blessing of a local fellowship create problems on the field.

Called for a Short or Long Term?

How Funded?

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4. Paul's example of conventional-income and gift-income. Note how Paul was funded during his ministry. What conclusions can you draw?

	<u>Location/Event</u>	<u>Funded By</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
1 Thess 2:9	_____	_____	_____
Acts 15:3-4	_____	_____	_____
Acts 20:33-35	_____	_____	_____
Acts 18:1-5	_____	_____	_____
Phil 4:10-20	_____	_____	_____
1 Cor 16:17	_____	_____	_____
Rom 15:20-24	_____	_____	_____
1 Cor 9:3-18	_____	_____	_____

The Nature of Work

5. Describe Adam's calling before the Fall? What does this imply about the nature of work?

Gen 1:26-28 _____
 Gen 2:15 _____
 Gen 2:19-25 _____

6. Identify the professions in these Scriptures. Describe how they can advance God's Kingdom today.

	<u>Professions</u>	<u>How Advance Gospel</u>
Luke 3:12-14	_____	_____
Acts 8:26-40	_____	_____
Acts 10:1-2	_____	_____
Acts 13:6-12	_____	_____
Exodus 31:1-6	_____	_____
Eph. 6:5-8	_____	_____
Eph. 6:9	_____	_____
1 Tim 2:1-4	_____	_____

7. Rewrite 1 Thess 4:11-12 in your own words:

8. This quote is from Charles Spurgeon, the great British preacher of the late 1800's. Agree or Disagree?



Charles Spurgeon

If you can do anything else do it. If you can stay out of the ministry, stay out of the ministry. I would certainly say that without any hesitation whatsoever. I would say that the only man who is called to preach is the man who cannot do anything else, in the sense that he is not satisfied with anything else. This call to preach is so put upon him, and such pressure comes to bear upon him that he says, "I can do nothing else, I must preach."

9. Which is the higher calling—being a Christ-centered engineer or a Christ-centered pastor? Defend your answer with Scripture.

10. What is the relationship between gifting and calling?

Rom 12:3-8

1 Cor 12:4-11; 27-31

Eph 4:7-13

1 Peter 4:10-11

"Kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands." –2 Timothy 1:6

It seems to me that Paul is not reminding Timothy to "kindle afresh" a spiritual gift, but rather to "kindle afresh" his calling to advance the Gospel.

–David Lyons, International Vice President, The Navigators

11. Identify the gifted ministers in these passages. Describe their gifting:

Person(s)

Gifts

Genesis 41:41-49	_____	_____
Exodus 35:30-36:2	_____	_____
Daniel 6:1-4	_____	_____
Acts 6:1-6	_____	_____
Acts 9:27; 11:22-26	_____	_____
Acts 18:24-28	_____	_____
Colossians 4:12-13	_____	_____

12. Making It Personal

a. Describe your personal gifting.

My Spiritual Gifts Seem to Be:

Because . . .

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

b. What type of ministry roles do these gifts point you toward?

• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____

c. What have others said that confirm or do not confirm your gifting and calling?

What have you been told?

d. What doubts or issues come to mind regarding your future?

• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____

e. To whom can you go to receive wise, unbiased counsel?

• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____


Key Passages of Scripture that God Uses in My Life

<u>Passage</u>	<u>Direction I Received</u>
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____

Calling Conclusions:

If you were to describe your personal calling as you understand it now (not general calling for salvation) to a friend in a paragraph, how would you say it?

Additional Resources

- International Fundraising Bible Study: a four-hour study to get you started. Go to www.scottmorton.net (website to empower gift-income laborers to reach full funding)
- *Money and The Navigators*: in-depth Bible study done internationally in 2007. Go to navigatorsworldwide.org/money-and-the-navigators.
- *Funding Your Ministry*: by Scott Morton (NavPress.com)
- *The Call*: by Os Guinness, Available on Amazon.com. An insightful review of how the sacred-secular divide came about with practical insights on finding your calling.
- *Scriptural Roots of Commerce: Six Bible Studies on Biblical Worldview for Professional Life*: Available on Amazon.com. 

Interview with Rebecca Harrington from Great Britain

Introduction: Becky just finished a one-year internship with The Navigators of the United Kingdom in the Connect ministry. She raised full financial support and served at Nottingham University spiritually mentoring young women and leading bible studies.



**Rebecca
Harrington**

Question: Becky, you are now leaving the campus ministry and going into business. Why? You were successful in campus work, did you consider staying in “gift-income” campus ministry as a career?

Becky: Yes, I could continue on the campus, but I sense God leading me to minister in the secular world. I find it exciting to be with non-believers being “next door to everywhere” as The Navigators vision says. Whether serving Christ as a Navigator staff on the campus or in the business world I am still a “laborer.”

Question: Did the task of fundraising deter you from staying with campus work?

Becky: No. I received training in fundraising and succeeded in raising support for Connect—amazingly so! I am not running away from fundraising.

Question: Do you have the gift of evangelism?

Becky: (laughter) I don’t think so. I am not sure I know what my gifts are! I find that I relate to non-believers well. Ephesians 6:6 has a phrase that I like: “Work with enthusiasm!” (TNIV). The Great Commission implies not only going across the ocean to a new country but to reach secular people here in my own country. I want to influence non-believers to experience the gospel by my being among them with my life and words.

Question: Becky, as a Psychology major, are you ready for the secular world?

Becky: (laughter) I think I am. I am aware of what it is like being among people in the secular world. I hope to go into Human Resources.

Question: What about your parents?

Becky: At first my parents wondered if I was in a cult of some kind (laughter), and they were skeptical about the fundraising for Connect, but I actually did bible study with my Dad on biblical fundraising and he changed his mind—especially when he saw all the money come in! They are happy with my decision to go into business also.

Question: How do you find the will of God in matters like this?

Becky: Psalm 37:4 says, “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” I believe God wants us to live out our desires as we delight in Him. When we delight in Him our values and thoughts will be like His.

I also check the bible closely and monitor peace in my heart as I make decisions—and I take counsel from trusted friends—like my parents!


But sometimes you just have to try something!

You won’t know until you dive in! In my case I feel God said, “Becky, both your career options are good. *You* choose!”

A career decision is never final.

—Becky

Question: What suggestions do you have for others who are making career decisions like this?

Becky: You never outgrow your need for fellowship of like-minded believers—people who can speak into your life. Also, a career decision is never final. I could see God leading me back to campus ministry as a “gift-income” laborer someday. Be open to God’s leading one day at a time. 

Interview with DG Elmore

Chairman of The Navigators U.S. Board of Directors
and CEO of Elmore Companies

Q. During your history with The Navigators in Indiana, were you invited to join the staff “full time?”

A. (laughter) Oh yes! A Navigator Director invited Gini and me to join the staff and shared John 6:27 “Do not work for the food which perishes but for the food which endures to eternal life...”



DG Elmore

The temptation on one side was: If you really are a man of God you will join the staff. On the other side, “the plan” had always been to go back to Chicago and join the family business. We were forced to prayerfully consider what God had for us. That was helpful.

Q. Going into business means you are “working for food which perishes?”

A. That’s not what he meant; *he* had been in business. Jesus is challenging his followers to put God first no matter what their career. When Jesus worked as a carpenter, was he “working for food which perishes?”

Q. How did God lead you into business?

A. I was conflicted. We wanted training with The Navigators, but the longer we stayed in Indiana the more I was cutting myself out of a growing business back in Chicago. We stayed in Indiana and received valuable growth in ministry, marriage, and character development. In the end, I did not “feel a pull in my heart” toward gift-income staff.

I decided to continue being a Navigator but not as gift-income staff. God has led me to where business, ministry, and life come together.

Now, as Chairman of the Board, I do more Navigator ministry than I do business! (laughter) Many Navigator leaders tell me they are glad I didn’t join staff in those early days because of my contribution now.

Q. Any advice for others considering staff or business?

A. Listen to the Lord more than to the opinions of friends or family.

Case Study: A “Fork” in the Road

Names and places are changed to preserve anonymity.

Rikki was disciplined by The Navigators in Africa and his life was dramatically changed. After graduation he married Demi, who had also been touched by The Navigator ministry, and they began life together in the capital city.

They experienced the usual difficulties that college grads endure in finding employment, figuring out an affordable place to live and then the stretching experiences of raising up two young children while both parents work demanding jobs, Rick as a mechanical engineer and Demi at a bank.

Today they continue to serve with The Navigators, joining other alumni in similar situations. They lead two bible studies, one with Nav alumni recently arrived in the city and the second with high-schoolers in their church. They are also in charge of a Navigator ministry on a not-so-nearby campus and seek to meet weekly with students in a small group.

Here is the conversation Rikki and I had as we drove from his home to a meeting downtown.

Rikki confessed, “I don’t think we are doing justice to the campus work. The students seem to be losing interest. They enjoy it when I come, but I don’t have time to spend with them beyond bible study. Also, the campus is far from our home and traveling around our city is draining.”

Next, Rikki asked me if I thought he should cut back on his engineering hours so he has more time to minister. “I love to disciple young guys,” he says. Rikki admits that he is gifted in personal ministry, but he admits, “I just can’t do everything.”

“Would your boss let you cut back your hours to four days per week,” I enquired as we bumped along the busy streets.

“Probably, but that would be career suicide. He wants to give me more challenging projects that will take more time, not less. Also, I am contemplating going for advanced training in my field to improve my long-term credentials.

“What does Demi think about cutting hours?” I asked.

“She’s okay with it. Secretly she thinks that being gift-income is a higher calling. Her parents are pastors. But I think working as an engineer is a high calling also—isn’t it? For a while I felt guilty that I wasn’t as ‘spiritual’ because we didn’t go into full-time ministry, but I think secular work is a calling too . . . or is it?”

I cautiously enquired, “Do you think God might be calling you to live via gift income and join The Navigators official staff?”

He nodded his head. “I’ve considered that. Maybe . . . I don’t know. I love to be in ministry, but I worry about the fundraising. I see the pain that other gift-income staff go through.”

Silence.

“That’s a big issue for me, living off the charity of others. My parents would go nuts if we became ‘missionaries’!”


Questions for group discussion. In your opinion . . .

1. What advice would you give Rikki and Demi regarding their future?

2. What misconceptions do you think they have?

3. What scriptures might guide them?

Food for Thought

What are the emotions behind the characters in the cartoon? 



God Called Me to Both Conventional Funding and Gift-Income Funding

“W”

Malaysia Missionary to Asia

Q. What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a gift-income missionary versus a conventional-income business person?



“W”

A. All types of Kingdom laborers are needed. I have worked both as a gift-income missionary and also as a 60-80-hour-per-week designer for the Kuala Lumpur Twin Towers. Gift-income missionaries tend to become disconnected from the lost. Also, non-believers turn up their caution lights up when they sense a clergyman nearby. On the other hand, full-time business people face two big drawbacks: lack of time and lack of mobility. It is difficult to make time for bible study, prayer and group meetings when you work 60-80 hours per week. Also, the rest of the team must accommodate their schedules to when you can be available to attend meetings. But you can advance the gospel in either role.

A secular job must be taken seriously. It is not merely a “platform” or an “access vehicle” but a ministry in the mission field. You must be an asset in the marketplace.

Also, a promotion in business is not always God’s will. I was once offered a job advancement in New York City that was too good to turn down. My boss even said, “Pack your bag and get your passport. You’re on your way to New York!” But I had no peace in my heart so I turned it down and opted for half-time instead at my current job.

Q. What Scripture encourages you when you get discouraged?

A. I am constantly drawn to Isaiah 45:1-3—making the “rough places smooth.” This promise keeps me focusing on Him and His purpose to unravel the “treasures of darkness.” I feel like I am on a treasure hunt with God! He leads in my career paths even though I don’t always know what is going on.


Q. What advice would you give to someone considering living by gift-income versus staying in conventional-income employment?

A. Your personal **calling** from God is crucial.

When I was working in Australia, God impressed me with Genesis 12 that He wanted me to be a blessing to my *family*, my *people* and the *country of my ancestors*. But it seemed impossible! None of my family were believers at the time and I had no idea how this 4000-year-old promise to Abraham could apply to me. Still, when I read that passage during a fasting and prayer retreat in Australia, the words jumped off the page. I couldn’t forget them.

So I keep this promise in mind whenever job opportunities came – be a blessing to others—and God is answering!

Secondly, **context** of your service is important. Who are you reaching out to and your ministry situation helps dictate where your funding comes from. For example where I serve, the government does not grant mission visas so working a conventional job is the only option.

Thirdly, the **role and responsibility** and the **stage of ministry** should be considered. I have done both tent-making and lived by gift-income. The latter enabled me to be more available for the ministry and to have time to think strategically, lead and connect. 

Many local missionaries find that their funding in developing countries is ‘messy’—a little of this and a little of that! Similar to the apostle Paul’s.

—Editor

Interview with Bryce Weedon from Australia

Bryce recently graduated from the University of New South Wales with a five-year degree in Urban Planning. He has a career choice to make: Urban Planning as a conventional-income laborer or join The Navigators as a gift-income laborer.

Q. What is attractive about The Navigators?

A. It's something that God has put on my heart—to serve with them on a full-time basis as a vocational job. It's not in terms of if but when—whenever God sees fit. He might want me to go into Urban Planning for a bit then join the staff. I'm waiting for doors to open.



Bryce Weedon

Q. What's attractive about the Urban Planning choice? That's a big opportunity too...

A. I desire to apply what I've studied for the last five years and put those skills into practice. I definitely enjoy Urban Planning, but it might not be where God wants me long term. But for now God is leading me to share the Word in the secular environment.

Q. Your parents supported your desire to attend university. . . . What are their thoughts about you going with The Navigators?

A. My parents want me to be secure financially. They would like me to fulfill the degree that I've done, but they are open to me trying different things. They've had lots of different thoughts about my future and talking it through with them has been helpful.

Q. Are you getting pressure, one way or the other?

A. Yes and no. Part of me wants to go into Urban Planning to see if I can do it! But God has also put desire on my heart to serve vocationally. I have to weigh those two options. I feel no force-pressure.

Q. What about fundraising? If you go into vocational ministry, you'll have to raise your own support.

A. It's something that I'll have to learn about and then grow in. I am willing to see how God is going to work and teach me to rely on Him more. My biggest fear? I'll admit it—financial security.

Q. What verses do you find yourself going back to while considering?

A. Psalms 32:8 has stuck out to me. It says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you." It's been a solace to know that God already knows what I'm going to do and He will tell me at the right time.

Editors Note

- Since this interview Bryce secured a position in urban planning for the city council in Sydney.

Not Set in Stone

Your decision on your calling is not necessarily forever. A fork in the road may be for a season of life and a second fork can take you to a different type of ministry for another season. Sometimes a fork takes you back to an earlier path. Your places for ministry are not set in stone forever. The Apostle Paul had several types of ministry. May God richly bless you as you trust Him!

