

Martin, Kara. *Workship: How to Use Your Work to Worship God* (Singapore: Graceworks, 2017). 173pp. \$24.99. paperback.

Kara is one of the leaders of the faith and work movement in Australia. She has contributed to the School of Christian Studies at Robert Menzies College, Macquarie Christian Studies Institute, The Marketplace Institute at Ridley College, the SEED entrepreneur incubator, and Deaconess Ministries—the range of institutions indicating how difficult it has been to establish a viable model for faith and work ministry in Australia. Her writing is informed by real world experience and her role as a mentor to many workers grappling with the issues—especially women.

Workship has three parts—the first laying out a biblical view of work—as gift, as a good thing, yet cursed, as something that can be redeemed and righteous, and of eternal significance. Throughout the book there are stories from Kara’s own life, and others like Louise who persevered to minimise the damage done to clients by a dubious developer and Stephan who turned around struggling and corruption-riddled business. A sadness in many of the stories is how little help the church can be with workplace issues—and in some cases probably the opposite. As well as the intertwined stories there are end of chapter questions and prayers. Even in this section the book is intensely practical: this combined with an unostentatious theological good sense is rare.

The second part on spiritual disciplines for work is not so much about disciplines in say Richard Foster’s sense but attitudes to work. These are “Holy Working” where the emphasis on personal honesty, purity at work, ‘Gospel Working’ where the emphasis is evangelism, “Prayerful Working” about the personal walk with God at work, “Incarnational Working” where being God’s hands is emphasised, “Spirit Empowered Working,” and “Social Justice Working” where the results are more in view, especially justice. As with the first section there is rich practical guidance. It has something in common with David Miller’s categories of faith and work integration in *God at Work: The History and Promise of the Faith at Work Movement* and David’s subsequent work to translate this into a survey instrument.

The third part is a series of chapters on particular issues. She begins this section with a chapter on vocation, where Kara deals with the biblical material about the general call of Christians, before recounting the Luther’s critique of the elevation of priestly and monastic life, and the more recent history of the notion of vocation. As she points out there is danger of vocation discourse reinforcing our contemporary individualism and obsession with choice. Then the question of identity where she discusses the dangers for both the employed and unemployed of tying identity to the workplace. Our Christian identity is so helpful in a world that struggles with this. Then a wise chapter on workplace relationships, and chapter outlining the modern Business

as Mission movement. As other parts of the book Kara often repackages the work of others, making it accessible and useable by a wider audience.

Overall this is a fine and very useful book. It does not have the theological depth of a book like Miroslav Volf's *Work in the Spirit* or the lightly worn learning of Robert Banks books, and is perhaps closest to Paul Stevens's contributions. Though I think I'd recommend Kara's book as more useful to most Australian Christians struggling to integrate their faith and work—with the stories and payers being particular strengths.

For Pentecostals the language may be a bit different—"workplace discipleship" resonates more than "faith and work" but these are important issues. My sense is that Australian Pentecostal churches are much more helpful to workers than most other evangelical churches, though both still have some catching up to do with parts of the Catholic church in depth of reflection and pastoral practice. Pentecostal helpfulness may come less from theological reflection than from different background and training of their pastors. Pentecostal pastors tend to have more fluid boundaries between church ministry and other work—many live simultaneously in both worlds or moving frequently between them. Their training involves far less clericalisation than the mainstream churches. Many see starting a church as just like starting any other business, and much more willing (in fact forced) to take more risks than ministers in mainline denominations.

In a sense the need for a book like this is a symptom of the theological and practical deformities of some of the mainstream churches, including parts of the evangelical movement. I remember the moment in our Master of Leadership Integrating Research Unit at Alphacrucis trying to explain to a group of young Pentecostals puzzled how I could think there was a division between faith and work. They did pray for me. The future of Australian Christianity is theirs.

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