

and Deffenbaugh take the position that “any immigration reform should provide a path to permanent status and citizenship for persons who put down roots in America and want to become contributing members of society” (79). That is an ideal that is shared by this reviewer.

However, if that implies that as a matter of political strategy advocates of immigration reform should oppose expanding guest worker programs and insist on the ideal of increasing the number of permanent resident visas, the practical result may be that any opportunities for would-be immigrants to improve their well-being by working in the United States will be reduced.

Lant Pritchett points out that countries with the highest proportions of foreign-born workers such as Singapore and the Persian Gulf states do not treat citizens and foreign-born workers equally (*Let Their People Come*, 2006). While such discrimination is offensive, the foreign-born workers stay in those countries voluntarily and would certainly be worse off if they were denied access to those labor markets. Demands that foreign-born workers and citizens be treated equally may result in restrictions on international labor mobility that leave those born in foreign countries worse off.

In his foreword to this book, Martin Marty writes, “‘politics’ knows the dirty secret of history: violence. Politics is an effort through give-and-take, argument, winning-some-and-losing-some, and compromise to minimize the violence of history” (xiii). Restrictions on international labor mobility are enforced by government coercion. As Christians engage in politics to reduce this coercion and to expand opportunities for mutually beneficial migration, they must be willing to compromise ideals and to use economic analysis to support their arguments.

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## Toward a Theology of Work

**Jane Seybold-Clegg**

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*I would not give a fig for the simplicity on this side of complexity, but I would give my life for the simplicity on the other side of complexity.*

—Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

The late Jane Seybold-Clegg was first of all a business woman and, by all accounts, a good one. A talented marketing professional, Seybold-Clegg formed her own company in 1983 after working for many years in product development and advertising for corporations such as BF Goodrich and W.W. Grainger. She was the recipient of several awards and grants and twice nominated for *Inc Magazine's* Entrepreneur of the Year award. Her

company, Nytek Corporation, developed and copyrighted eighteen computer software products between 1992 and its sale to media giant Bertelsmann in 1997.

While business was Jane's first calling, it was not her only interest. In addition to bachelor of science and master of business administration degrees from Kent State University, she also earned a doctor of ministry degree from the Graduate Theological Foundation in Indiana in 2001. According to her biography, Dr. Seybold-Clegg's intention was to take the lead in developing a theology of work that would inspire Christian business people to look more deeply into the meaning of their endeavors. Although already suffering from the cancer that would eventually take her life in 2003, Seybold-Clegg started yet another enterprise, CIM Publishing, and began to edit a quarterly newsletter called *Work as Ministry*, distributed to some three hundred key corporate executives in the Midwest.

This volume, which began as her dissertation, "Toward a Theology of Work: A Model of Theology and Spirituality in Relation to the Corporate Community," was published by her late husband and colleague, Ambrose Clegg, several years after her death. It represents her synthesis of a staggering number of concepts and models from both management theory and the Christian theological tradition. It is truly a valiant effort, no doubt capturing Seybold-Clegg's intuitive and elaborate vision of many conceptual connections between these bodies of knowledge. It also represents one among a growing number of important efforts to articulate the theological and moral context of business in terms that will invite the business community to reflect more deeply on its own purposes and methods.

Intended as an extended case study with Nytek Corporation as its locus, Seybold-Clegg states that, though she will be relying on a carefully developed research design, the study must be seen as a "'work-in-progress' ... a model or a blueprint for a corporate organization that reflects a theology of work in an environment which is held to be sacred." Model building is fragile work, and the reader is warned about the limitations of the study from the outset.

Seybold-Clegg begins with a review of the literature, which seems redundant in light of the fact that almost every concept and author cited is going to make it into the study itself. What seemed promising at the start—finally a business executive also trained in theology and now investigating the religious context of work—is in the end, disappointing, and even frustrating. Her account suffers from both too much and too little information. It is at once simplistic and almost overwhelmingly complex: simplistic in its use of theological terms with inadequate or, in some cases, flawed explanations; complex in its reliance on dizzying system diagrams that attempt to capture every possible connection and relationship in flowcharts with far too many moving parts.

Systems thinking is essential in sustaining a successful enterprise and the flowchart is an excellent management tool for documenting and improving the processes that translate inputs into the desired outcomes. Seybold-Clegg does a masterful job of capturing a mind-boggling number of elements in her diagrams. Included are several management theories and practices from a variety of sources. From Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline*, we are introduced to systems thinking and the learning organization. Notions from Hendricks and Ludeman's work, *The Corporate Mystic*, are invoked, as are visionary leadership,

Open Book Management, Activity-Based Costing, profit-sharing, business planning, cost models, and teams. In short, virtually every management theory that gained currency during the past several decades (except, curiously, the principles of quality management) is mentioned and briefly explained, then pictured in a flowchart.

This visual presentation could have been its own significant contribution. Popular management theory is plagued by the relentless introduction of new formulae on a more or less biannual basis, each claiming in turn to be the new, most indispensable guide for business practitioners. To have attempted an integrated vision could have been a real service to those seeking clarity and coherence about the way these approaches fit together.

However, Seybold-Clegg has a bigger picture in mind: Her interest is in looking at these management concepts in relation to the elements of a theology of work. Thus, we have another set of ideas to consider. Although no one in the Christian theological tradition seems to have done a comprehensive job of articulating a theology of work, except perhaps for Father John Haughey in his 1994 book, *Converting 9 to 5* (which she cites frequently), Seybold-Clegg finds insight in the trinitarian theology of Saint Augustine, the rule of Saint Benedict, and the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, especially the rules of discernment. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin provides an eschatological vision in his signature work, *The Divine Milieu*. Brief reference is made to the papal social tradition as well as the thought of Marie-Dominique Chenu, Michael Novak, and Matthew Fox.

Selected elements from these two bodies of knowledge—management theory and theology—are reduced to the bare essentials, given headings, and captured in thirty-eight system diagrams of varying complexity throughout the book. Some are renderings of business concepts, some are of theological concepts, and some are of both.

Admittedly, there is something unsettling about seeing Augustine's trinitarian theology and his reflections on how form is brought to formlessness pictured as feedback loops. It can be a bit of a shock to find the Ignatian Rules of Discernment captured in a complex systems diagram with a color key. Even to the trained eye, it is not clear what purpose the models serve other than to integrate a great deal of information on one page. The process of going back and forth between the diagrams and the definitions was itself exhausting, and it proved almost impossible to hold all those meanings together as one attempted to interpret the models.

All this though is not the central problem of the book. After all, something like this approach may be exactly what the busy executive needs if one is to translate theological reflection into the language of business. The central problem is really that of a kind of conceptualism run amuck. What had been profound theological reflection is diluted, reduced, and extracted from its context without critique, then "applied" in a corporate setting.

For example, Seybold-Clegg invokes Anselm's classic definition of theology as "faith seeking understanding" but also adds her own gloss that it is actually the study of "mankind's relationship to God and how God relates to human beings." By my reading, this latter is more precisely theological anthropology. Perhaps that is why the author seems to conflate the meaning of theology with the action of grace when she later refers to man's ability to understand "the theology in which he lives" and claims that because

we are made in God's image, "we are spiritual, but we are all theologians as well." We are cocreators with God, and God's work is our work, plain and simple.

In a later chapter, the author seems unaware of the Platonic nature of Augustine's theories of illumination when she invokes his argument that we are born with knowledge of God in our minds. Our responsibility, she asserts, "is to remember our God-given memories so that we can represent the Kingdom of God on earth," that is, in the workplace. (Oops, the Forms make their appearance again but, this time, without a footnote.)

In her effort to establish a connection between theology and the structures of corporate life, Seybold-Clegg relies once again on Augustine's understanding of how the human person comes to know. Here, we learn that his description reveals a process that is "Trinitarian in its approach"; thus our minds have a "natural tendency to create form out of formlessness." This formulation is then immediately relied on to explain the human tendency to "create missions, plans and implementation methodologies" subsequently captured in system diagrams. Seybold-Clegg leaves it to the reader to fill in the missing pieces between "formlessness" and the forms of corporate structures and processes.

The effort to identify the connections that already exist *in fact* between theological meaning and the business enterprise is an enormously important endeavor. Perhaps, now more than ever, the business community is open to the insights of those whose project it is to forge those connections. The challenge will be to persuade that community that understanding will only result from a deeper and sustained reflection on the meaning of human existence, something that cannot be rendered intelligible with a flowchart.

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