



pathfinders today

WINTER 2020

the newsletter of Pathfinders Fellowships

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ELEMENTAL

Niagara Falls

April 25-26, 2020

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BACK IN THE HOOD

by Julie Rains

When I moved back to my old neighbourhood a year ago I knew I was back for good so I started to invest in my neighbours more intentionally. Nothing exceptional, just very simple human things that seem to speak loud in a time when human interaction and connection suffers in many ways thanks to online connections and social media.

Easter Flowers

I dropped flowers and a card that said something to the effect of "Happy Easter" and "I'm happy to be back in the hood" etc. It was a cold and rainy weekend and I dropped them off to four neighbours and the elderly cleaning lady at my gym.

In the following weeks I had people return my vases filled with cut flowers from their own gardens with notes. One neighbour gave me a couple of jars of pickled veggies. The lady at the gym even opened up about being five years cancer free and told me all about her daughter!

Intentional Borrowing

We live in a time when we no longer borrow eggs from our neighbours, we just get in our cars and head to the grocery store. I had a friend coming for coffee and I knew that she liked cream so I went to a certain neighbour and asked to borrow some cream. I showed up with my own cup but they ended up giving me an entire extra cream they recently got on sale. I stayed for over an hour before going home.

I've since borrowed firewood, patio chairs, tools, furniture (to help stage a rental), and other things from different neighbours when I've had the need.

Backyard BBQ

A goal of mine before winter months set in was to clean up my back yard and buy a picnic table so I could host my neighbours at least once before it got cold. They all knew of each other but they had not yet met each another. I was the only one who knew everybody. I designed my little invite, sent it out in a group text message and they all showed up, none of them empty handed! I didn't ask for

them to bring stuff on my invitation but, closer to the actual time, they all reached out and asked what they could bring.

We are a mixed bag of neighbours: a widow, a single person, siblings, a couple, and a family. We range from 8 years to 55 years I'd guess. I had no idea how the group would mix. Although I'd intended the picnic table to hold all the food



and scattered chairs around the yard and fire pit they all just naturally crammed around the table, moving food until we all fit.

Conversations

So much for small talk. It came up that one neighbour had just been diagnosed with thyroid and breast cancer. The neighbour who was 14 months in the clear from his stage 4 nasal cancer was able to contribute his experience to their dialogue. (I have since become Rose's crockpot bone broth dealer as she goes through her chemotherapy!)

Another neighbour, currently in the throes of her own medical chaos, was able to ask if any of the women know of a female specialist they could refer. Two of the guys were off to the side talking about job transitions as well. I initiated nothing by way of conversation, I just facilitated a connection

time. I only put a one-hour time slot on the invitation so that people would have an out if they didn't want to stay. They stayed for over 2 hours. I barely contributed, just manned the BBQ with my dad and made sure their plates were full. A good time was had by all and they left not only with full stomachs, but a new found appreciation for the names and stories behind the faces they had seen from afar up until then.

I had no idea why Karol was widowed and one weekend while we were both painting our front patios I just went for it and said, "Hey Karol, I know your husband passed but I'm not sure I ever learned what from?" We then spoke for an hour about his suicide and his concussion from a car accident a few years earlier that she suspects messed with his brain.

Hallowe'en

I hate Hallowe'en because I can't eat the candy so I shut down the house, visit my family, and see how cute my nieces and nephews are in their costumes. However, this year I decided that there was an excuse to reach out to my neighbours as three had pets they adore. I made use of the fact that my new puppy "Romeo" looked stupid/cute in his costume so I make a little card from my-pet-to-theirs and dropped off little treat bags for their pets! People love their animals, especially those without any other family or kids.

Romeo

I got one text from a neighbour saying "Dear Julie and Romeo, what an adorable care package!" I ran into another neighbour while raking leaves who said, "Hey Julie, tell Romeo that Max says thank you! He looked so cute in that outfit." I have met more people in my first two weeks of owning him and hanging out in the front yard than I had in the entire eight months prior to him coming home :) People can't not touch a dog, let alone a cute puppy! I've met a number of other neighbours and passers-by even further down the street thanks to this little guy!

Going Forward

That's it so far. I'm just over a year at the house and I've already been invited into all of their homes. I've seen Karol's AirBnB and wood shop. I've hung out with Stew, Linda, and Teddy in their home and back yard. Romi even peed on their floor as a tiny little guy and they didn't care (their one year old pup is Romeo's good friend)! I have popped over to Rose's place to help her make a costume for her

son's play. He is one of Romeo's best friends and biggest fans. I hang out with Jenn and Curt former hoodies, now friends.



I've been gifted with pet stuff for Romi that their pets have grown out of, saving me time and money. I've had help lifting heavy yard stuff, e.g., stones and tree branches, that I can't move on my own. I was able to buy one neighbour's old mower for fifty dollars for one of my rentals. I've had some show me their renos and offer to help with mine!

Some have pets. Many are sick. Everyone has a need. There is always another holiday just around the corner. That said, there will always be a neutral reason or excuse to connect at the start and ongoing opportunities to deepen relationships with your neighbours once you have scratched the surface!

ELEMENTALNIAGARA

April 25-26, 2020

What elements can help us forge a kingdom response to daily living and mission?



Do you ...

- *Feel stuck in a self-focus vs. others-focus with your faith?*
- *Feel burned out as a leader in your current ministry patterns?*
- *Feel like leaving the church to survive spiritually but don't know the next steps?*
- *Yearning for resources you can bring back to your congregation?*

You are not alone. These are the kinds of questions which ordinary followers of Jesus across our land are asking.

It might be a millennial couple wading through their local church 'options,' a boomer repositioning for a more fruitful impact among their relationships, or even a full-time ministry leader looking to reboot their focus to approaches which are more organic and less organizational.

ELEMENTAL 2020 is a unique 2-day gathering of faith practitioners, young and old, who are not content to sit passively in a pew but who are eager to grow in their faith and be more effective in showing the love of God to others. Are you looking for new tools and ideas to become more effective with others? Join us this spring in Niagara Falls.

Over the past three years, from Toronto to Calgary to Moncton, we have been exploring missional issues together, in a low key, interactive

learning environment which Neil Cole calls an Un-Conference! This year we touch down at Niagara Falls! A wide selection of workshops will invite interaction on themes from *neighboring* to *the poor* to *using the internet* to *changing clergy mindset*.



Michael Frost, a dynamic author and practitioner from Australia, will inspire, provoke, and energize us as our keynote speaker. **Alan Andrews** will share his heart about the need to remember the poor among us. Many young influencers among distinct people and affinity groups will share their lessons, experiences,

insights, and tools to resource us as 'active believers.' This pic is from ELEMENTAL 2017!

Imagine it. Two days beside the Falls, April 25-26! One of the most photographed landmarks on the globe, and on the list of the top natural wonders of the world! We will be right across the road from this striking scene!

\$89 early bird registration (Includes breaks. Lodging and meals on your own.) For more information and to register check:

www.elemental2020.com



LIVING OUR FAITH IN THE WORKPLACE

by James Bruyn



Pathfinders Today (PT):
James, what have you been learning about living our faith in the workplace?

James:

"In our workplaces we..."

- Experience God's faithfulness
- See the potter at work in molding the clay
- Hear God's voice in the context of where we work
- See God's presence in the context of where we work
- Look beyond what is happening in our work and catch a glimpse of God who controls all of history
- Learn to sing the Lord's song in a strange world
- Learn to live out our purpose in God's power and might and love
- Participate in the divine mystery of God's purposes
- Are transformed from brokenness to wholeness, from corruption to integrity, and from violence to a radical love of our enemies
- Learn to be stewards of God's grace

I had the privilege of attending the Lausanne Global Workplace Forum in Manila in June of 2019. Over 850 people participated from over 109 na-

tions.

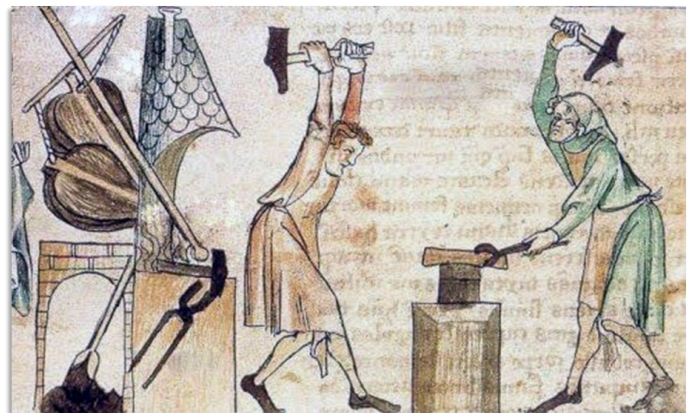
Over two-thirds of these participants work outside churches or ministry organizations. The purpose of this conference was to begin a global dialog of catalytic influencers as to what workplace ministry will look like in the future and to explore what it means to be the face of God in our work.

The key theme of this conference was: 'The 1%—pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and others—may have *primary* occupational responsibility for evangelism, discipleship, and missions but it is not their responsibility *solely*. In fact, their primary responsibility is to train, commission, and support the evangelism, discipleship, and global mission work of the 99%.'

PT: Are there some biblical examples of faith in the workplace?

"In the west we are encouraged to find jobs that utilize our strengths and to find jobs in healthy work environments. Yet when we read the Old Testament often this is not the case.

Consider the stories of Daniel, Moses, and Hagar. God gave Daniel knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning (Dan 1:17). God, in His infinite wisdom, places Daniel in one of the most toxic work environments of history surrounded by colleagues who are out to roast him alive and devour him. Moses was trained as a leader in



Egypt yet God allows Moses to work as a shepherd, in a job that isn't directly related to his strengths or skills. What is one of the most surprising stories of faith in the workplace is the story of Hagar. After being mistreated by her employer Sarah, we find Hagar fleeing to the desert where God

reveals to her that He is “El Roi”, the God who sees. And then, in a strange twist of fate, God sends her back to the same miserable work situation.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians that he had learned to be content in all situations (Phil 4:11-13). When we explore the meaning of the word “content” we see that this is not a passive word but an active word. Contentment is growing into the likeness of Christ.

If people like Daniel, Moses, and Hagar can experience contentment in their work situations, can Christians in the 21st Century workforce experience ‘contentment’ and ‘grow in Christlikeness’ in whatever jobs or work environments they find themselves?

It’s easy to gloss over the word ‘learn’ in Phil 4:11. I am very appreciative of the fact that Paul states he ‘learned’ to be content. This gives me hope because contentment does not come naturally. This also poses a unique challenge for evangelists, disciple-makers and pastors - how do we teach people to be ‘content’ or to ‘grow in Christ likeness’ in their work contexts?”

PT: How do you conceptualize the challenges of living our faith in the workplace?

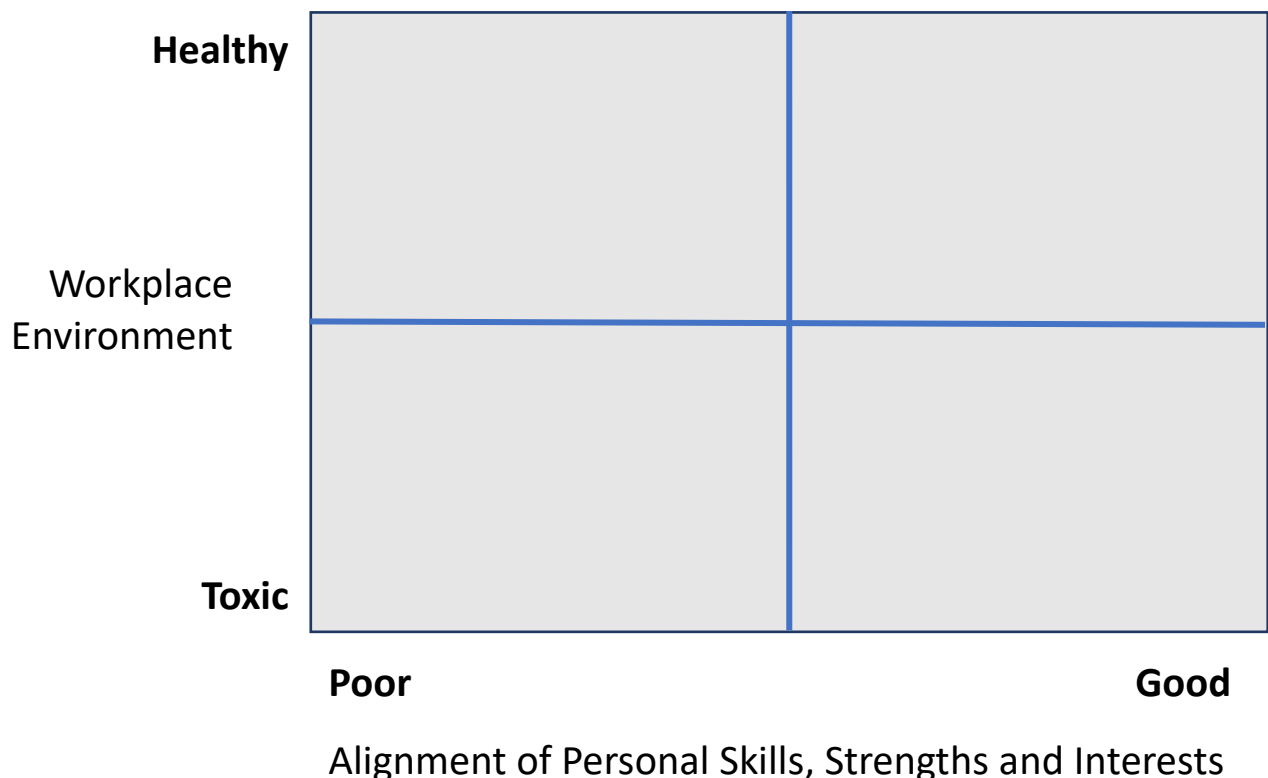
“I have designed the following four-quadrant model to conceptualize the challenges of life in the workplace.

The horizontal axis explores the dimension of alignment of one’s personal skills, interests, and strength to their job. The scale on this axis ranges from jobs where there is no alignment between a persons skills, interests and strength to their job, to jobs where there is very high alignment.

The vertical axis explores the work environment dimension. The scale on this axis ranges from toxic work environments to healthy work environments.

This model illustrates that a person can be working in a job that uses their strengths while working in a toxic environment.

I am studying for a DMin in Workplace Theology, Ethics and Leadership through Gordon Conwell Seminary. This course has given me an opportuni-



ty to attend lectures at Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge and, in early 2020, at Melbourne Business School. For my thesis project I am researching the experiences and issues that Christians face in each of the quadrants of this model. My hope is that this model will be useful to aid pastors, evangelists, and disciple-makers in contextualizing the Gospel to the workplace. If Christians can learn to be 'content' in their work context they will have a powerful testimony to their co-workers.

What has intrigued me is that many people who see this model respond by saying people should strive to find a job in the upper right hand quadrant. But, according to Gallup research, less than 30% of the workforce in North America and less than 15% of the workforce globally have jobs in that sought after upper right hand quadrant.

As I study Scripture I see numerous examples of the temptations that individuals have succumbed to in that upper right hand quadrant (e.g., David and Bathsheba) which makes me wonder if the upper right quadrant is really everything we expect it to be. Part of my thesis project will explore what the Bible says about the effects of the Fall on job fit and work environments.

As I was working on this thesis project, I realized that it would be helpful to have a tool to help individuals live out their faith in the workplace.

I went to the Lord's prayer, and developed the following based on the themes of the Lord's prayer."

PT: James, tell us how Faith At Work Network (FAWN) developed and what you're hoping to realize through it.

"Faith At Work Network arose initially out of a desire to see a workplace faith community in every office tower in downtown Calgary. When I moved to Calgary 30 years ago, I was surprised to see pastors hosting Bible studies in downtown office towers .

Five years ago I got a call from some young people who wanted to start a Bible Study in their City Hall. We studied how Scripture related to the challenges of the workplace and within a few months regularly had 10 to 15 people attending each week. People were baptized, entered into discussions about working with integrity with management after studying the life of Daniel, and went for

Our Father who art in heaven	What does it mean that I am God's child, and God is my Heavenly Father in the context of my work?
Hallowed be your name	What do I know to be true of God's character in the context of my work?
Thy Kingdom Come	What promises of God give me hope for today and tomorrow for my work context?
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven	Where / how does my work context fit into God's story?
Give us today our daily bread	What are the resources / blessings that God has placed in my life (Financial, relational, emotional, spiritual, intellectual) and how can I wisely and generously steward these going forward?
And forgive us our trespasses	What's my contribution to my work context for which I need forgiveness?
As we forgive those who trespass against us	Who do I need to forgive and take off my emotional hook and place on God's hook?
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil	What are repeated behavior patterns that I routinely fall into at work and how can God change me so that I don't repeat them?
For this is the Kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever	How can I demonstrate Christ's love to my coworkers and customers in this season of my life? How can my story glorify God and demonstrate God's power?

and went for coffee with their colleagues, encouraging them in the midst of some toxic situations.

After that I was approached by people who wished to start a faith community at a downtown head office. They in turn helped start a group at another corporate site. Since then we have seen several new workplace faith communities start across Calgary. One recurring comment I hear from individuals who find out about these groups is how alone they felt as a Christian in their organization and how grateful they are for the fellowship and opportunity to discuss how their faith relates to the issues they experience in their work. If you had told me 30 years ago when I moved to Calgary that one day there would be Christians gathering for worship before Easter or Christmas in the board rooms in Calgary I never would have believed what God would do.

It's our desire at FAWN to create a national network where individuals involved in the faith and work movement collaborate together to impact workplaces for God's Kingdom. Our desire is to see workplace faith communities spread out from Calgary across Canada. Our desire is to provide a library of resources, coaching, and mentoring for people who wish to start their own workplace faith communities.

To learn more about
Faith at Work Network go to
www.faithatwork.ca or email James at
james@faithatwork.ca



STEM CELLS IN THE WORLD CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

Editorial by Doug Hamm

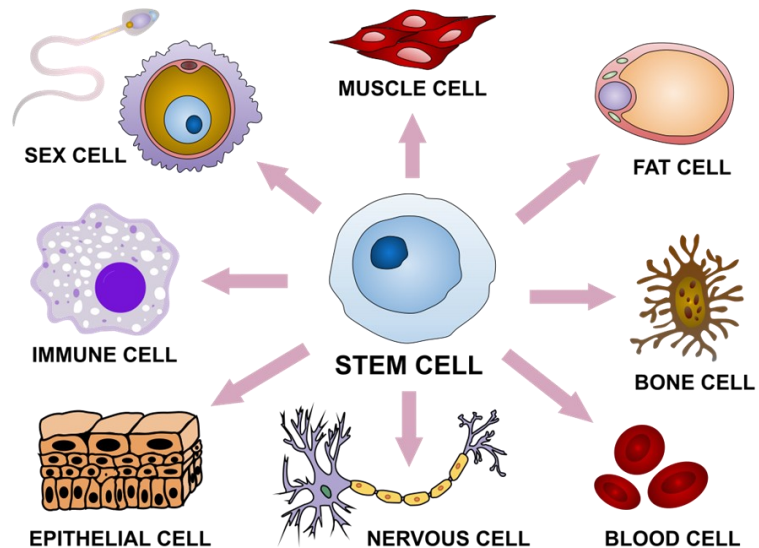
The interesting stories in this issue by Julie Rains and James Bruyn illustrate the potential of small groups in the expansion and expression of our Christian faith.

We might liken such groups to “stem cells.” Stem cells are a special biological class of our body’s cells that have the potential to become many different types of functioning cells, e.g., blood cells, neurons, muscle cells, hepatocytes, retinal cells, you name it. The best known stem cells are *embryonic stem cells* (ESCs), first isolated in 1998, but we now know that we also have somatic stem cells throughout our organs, e.g., stem cells in our bone marrow, first identified in 1961. Bone marrow stem cells are used in cancer treatment to repopulate a patient’s entire blood cell system after chemotherapy for malignancies.

We have also discovered that somatic cells in our various differentiated organs can either be *induced* in a lab to revert to *pluripotent stem cells* (iPSCs) or can be “robbed” of their DNA to be inserted into an unfertilized egg (*nuclear transfer stem cells* – NTSCs) to create a clone – as was done with Dolly the sheep in 1996 (now you can clone your own pet in the same way, see viagenpets.com/!)

Jesus based his world wide movement on a stem cell strategy. He chose a small cell group of 12 unlikely people to live with him as he healed and taught in first century Palestine. He delegated his ministry to them, corrected their misunderstandings, encouraged them, and sometimes rebuked them. But his stem cell group abandoned him when he was arrested and went underground after his execution. However, his resurrection electrified them to become the pluripotent stem cell group that changed the world.

How did these first Christians spread their faith across their known world? I think the evidence shows that they did so through replicating mission-stem cell groups in scattered cities across the Roman Empire. The Apostle Paul had his own stem cell-planting team which, at various times, included Timothy, Silas, Luke, Barnabas, Titus, Aquila and Priscilla, and probably others.



The first Christian stem cell implanted in Europe received its pluripotent DNA from Paul’s team in about AD 50 at Philippi (Acts 16). When Paul writes to them, ten years later, their stem cell had differentiated into a self sustaining larger group with an organizational structure (“overseers and deacons”) and the capacity to send him a generous donation (Phil 4:18). Other stem cells planted by Paul met in houses, e.g. Priscilla and Aquila’s house group (Acts 18:19; 1 Cor 16:19), Nympha’s house group in Laodicea (Col 4:15), Gaius’s house group in Corinth (Romans 16:23), etc.

What was the inner life of these early Christian stem cells? They regularly ate together (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 11:20-34) in a home. Unbelievers might be present (1 Cor 14:24). Some regular collection for the needy was taken (1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8:1-4) and at some point in their meeting, there was an opportunity to share a teaching, a scripture, a song, or an interpretation (1 Cor 14:26). The group might appoint people to special ministries, e.g., sending someone to another church to bring news or letters (Acts 15:22-23), or sending someone to provide personal care (Phil 2:25). A letter received from a leader might be read (Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27). There might be prayer for traveling ministries (2 Cor 1:11; Col 4:2-3), healing (Jas 5:16), for one another (Eph 6:18), and for those in authority (1 Tim 2:1-2). These early Christian stem cell groups were the pluripotent precursors of the worldwide body of Christ.

There is a “stem cell” potential in small groups. After all, God himself is a triune “small group.” On a human level, we are socialized into small groups when we are born into a family. We form small groups with friends, in our workplaces, on sports teams, in clubs, committees, churches, and on our social media. We spend much of our lives in small groups. Our thanks to James and Julie for highlighting the possibilities of small groups for outreach, ministry, and discipleship.



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