

Kara Martin's latest contribution to the global faith-at-work movement is practical, personal, and passionate. Page after page is filled with tried and tested ideas that will appeal to readers who want to integrate their faith and their work. There is a raw honesty in the book — no glib triumphalism here — as Kara draws on the daily reality of her own and others' experiences, then brings biblical wisdom to bear providing deeper insight. Having worked with Kara on a number of work and faith projects in recent years, it is no surprise that her passion for the gospel impact in the workplace is evident throughout. If you are a church leader, please read this book and be equipped and encouraged with the many easily implemented tools provided. If you are a Christian in the workplace, get a copy — read, mark, and inwardly digest!

Murray Wright, Founding Director, Malyon Workplace, Malyon College

We need this book. We need it because we want to have welcoming workplaces shaped by the heart of God. We need it because we aspire to be leaders who serve with the character of Jesus. We need it because we endeavour to have beautiful work spaces inspired by the Spirit of God. I also need this book. I need it because it gives a clear window into the questions asked by the congregation I serve. I need it because it helps me understand the questions I ask about my own role and calling. I need it because it directs me towards life lived in the kingdom of God through practical and tangible means. I need it because I haven't come across anything like it in its depth of wisdom, breadth of experience, ease of accessibility, and writing shaped by the character of Jesus.

Graeme Anderson, Senior Pastor Northside Baptist Church, Author of Follow: Experiencing Life with Jesus, Adjunct Lecturer, Spiritual Formation, Morling College

Unfortunately, throughout the centuries, there has been little engagement by theologians with the ways God empowers Christians for their ordinary work lives. Kara Martin's work fills a very deep void where Christian discipleship and spiritual formation material for the workplace **should be** in our libraries and Christian bookshops. The practical studies provided in *Workship 2* allow application to the gritty, tangible aspects of life in the real world. I can't wait to redesign our Hillsong College Christian spirituality course with these volumes!

*Tanya Riches, Researcher, Senior Lecturer,
Masters Program Coordinator, Songwriter*

Kara Martin has done it again! Often with movies, music albums, or books, the second or sequel is a fizzer. *Workship 2: How to Flourish at Work* is no fizzer. It has the same characteristic savvy use of Scripture, rootedness in real life, strong biblical relational framework and emphasis, up-to-date statistics, and stories. The 20+ short chapters have a similar holistic structure: a pertinent workplace issue, outline of a biblical and Christian approach, thoughtful questions for groups or individuals, reflective prayers and added resources to go on with. However, many of the chapter subjects are rarely dealt with in the faith and work literature: hospitality and work, beauty at work, women and work, the future of work. It scratches where workers itch, gives them voice, and equips pastors to equip them. It's a recipe for a really rich and flourishing working life and for churches that will flourish as their people do in their work.

*Gordon Preece, Author, Editor of five books on work, Board Member of the
Theology of Work Project, a Leader of Lausanne Marketplace Ministry,
Pastor and Ethicist*

Workship 2 is a page-turner, filled with vivid storytelling and biblical reflections rich and deep in what it means to do kingdom work in everyday workplaces. From celebrating beauty in our work, to learning the unforced rhythms of grace as an antidote to workplace stress, to bringing your church to work, this hand-in-glove companion to *Workship 1* is a treasure trove of practical wisdom anchored in Jesus, “the irresistible leader”. Kara Martin has written an indispensable resource for the everyday worker, for the one who encourages other workplace Christians and for those who train church leaders.

Rosemary Wong, Consultant Endocrinologist, Chair of Melbourne School of Theology, Vice-Chair of Eastern College Australia, Chair Christian Medical and Dental Fellowship of Australia (Vic)

In *Workship 2: How to Flourish at Work*, Kara Martin provides helpful and practical perspectives on how work and worship can be integrated in the workplace. This new book extends our understanding that work and life are gifts from God and they are both acts of worship. She challenged me to think more deeply and creatively on how to lead in humility and service to others. Kara also explores the ways that churches can respond, encourage and develop workplace Christians. It is refreshing to consider how churches can equip us to engage more fully in the workplace with the awareness of God’s presence. The barriers in our minds dividing secular and sacred work can be broken down. How fulfilling it is to live our whole lives for Christ!

Jeannie Trudel, President, Christian Heritage College, Queensland

Workship 2 is a welcome combination of theology, practice, prayer, and reflection. Many Christians struggle with what it means to see their places of work as places of ministry. It's not just using the workplace as a springboard for evangelism; it is seeing the workplace as an environment in which we can show Christian hospitality, ethics, and creative beauty.

Some jobs lend themselves more easily to being seen as places of ministry, but any legitimate work can be God-honouring. Last week a man who crashes cars for a living (to test safety ratings) asked me about what it would look like to worship God through his work. Having now read *Workship 2*, I feel better equipped to answer the question. This book gives many practical applications for how to bridge the Sunday to Monday divide.

Ian Smith, Principal, Christ College Sydney

Kara Martin's book *Workship Volume 2: How to Flourish at Work* is a wonderful extension to her first book, *Workship: How to Use Your Work to Worship God*. This topic is very close to my heart as a nursing facilitator and in my involvement teaching spiritual care in a nursing context to many audiences around the world. Kara is committed to helping us bridge the gap between our Sunday faith and our Monday chaos. I appreciate her rich biblical foundations and then the counter-balance offering real ideas, encouragement, and motivation to flourish at work and to be change agents with depth, purpose, and love. It is a powerful book and relevant to those who truly desire to infuse work and worship in a dynamic and rich way.

*Gabrielle Macauley, Clinical Facilitator in Nursing, and President, Nurses
Christian Fellowship Australia*

In *Workship*, Kara Martin helped us see that our work, however noticed or hidden, matters to God and to the world. In this follow up volume, she gets even more practical, showing us how to bring beauty and hospitality into the workplace, deal with organisational stress and co-worker conflict, navigate tricky ethical dilemmas, and more. Here is your go-to manual for making the workdays meaningful.

Sheridan Voysey, Writer, Speaker, Broadcaster, and Author of Resilient: Your Invitation to a Jesus-Shaped Life, and Resurrection Year: Turning Broken Dreams into New Beginnings

Kara Martin has provided the whole church with much needed wisdom here. We can no longer just encourage one another to “make a difference” at work. We need wisdom to know how to do that in the midst of the multiple challenges that we face. And pastors need her practical wisdom to know how to really help their workers. This volume is a gift for those of us who believe that all in Christ have a vocation and that it is the task of the whole church to enable us to live out the implications of the whole gospel in our whole lives.

*Neil Hudson, Director, Church Relationships,
London Institute for Contemporary Christianity*

This short book is helpful both for workplace Christians seeking to show forth God’s kingdom through their work, and churches hoping to resource them. Real-life case studies and survey information, Scripture study, theological probing, prayers, and application questions all guide the reader into a deeper understanding of the challenges and joys of being a Christian at work.

Jennifer Woodruff Tait, Editor, The Green Room blog

Workship 2 is not another tick-and-flick guide from which a few key phrases and reflective activities lingered on my mind before being quickly filed away on the 'read' bookshelf. Instead, Kara Martin has brought together a plethora of resources with strong representation from Australian authors, case studies, research and legislation — rare in the “Christians at work” movement which I observe to be dominated by North American male writers and paid urban contexts. It will help Christians — young and old — and church leaders integrate God’s intention for work into discussion, teaching, and practice. I devoured this book, from the first paragraph which elicited one of several “Amen sister!” moments, to the brief cameo of 90s band, Nirvana.

Clare, Ordinary Worker

Workshop 2

How to Flourish at Work

Kara Martin



Workshop 2

How to Flourish at Work

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Workshop 2: How to Flourish at Work
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Foreword

My journey of discovering that my work is an act of worship to God has spanned the last 10 years. Over that time, I have read almost every title on being a Christian in business. So, I am delighted to be asked to write the foreword to the latest and most helpful book on bringing faith into the everyday aspects of our work.

Kara Martin's book *Workship 2* is a guide to awaken and equip us for the roles where many of us spend much of our time and effort. I first met Kara when she was working at Ridley College's Marketplace Institute. Since then, we have collaborated on a range of projects in the area of faith and work, and I have always valued Kara's practical insights on seeing our work from God's perspective.

I have had the amazing privilege of working in a number of senior leadership roles in the technology and government sectors across the Asia Pacific, from Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, to Taipei, Manila, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, Jakarta, to Sydney, Melbourne, and Auckland. I find it fascinating to compare how people in these different cities work, lead, create businesses, products, or services, and what they will do to obtain fulfilment from work.

From my observations, there is one thing these cities have in common. Not only does work occupy a large part of people's lives, but it is also becoming more complex and increasingly how people define themselves.

Workers are hungry for career guidance and advice on issues such as working with difficult people, navigating ethical challenges, handling stress, and balancing the demands of work with family. I have heard these questions asked by both women and men from every cultural, language, and income group.

I am convinced there is a deep human desire in each of us to understand, "*What is the true purpose of our work?*" While there are nu-

merous books to help us discover our purpose, we are still left with the real-world challenges of integrating our faith with everyday work.

So here is the good news... the wait is over!

Many of us appreciate practical wisdom, so when I read Kara Martin's *Workship 2*, I knew I had found just the tool. Baby boomers are often asked to mentor the next generation of leaders, yet they struggle to find practical and accessible tools to use with their mentorees. Many Gen Xers and Gen Ys crave the sense of being valued and equipped which come from being mentored. But often they don't know how to approach a mentor or frame the deeper questions on faith and work.

From Singapore to Shanghai, from Manila to Melbourne, people are wrestling with questions like: How do I do my work God's way? How do I bring his purposes alive by my work? Is there a biblical framework for how I decide how to work? Each chapter of *Workship 2* lays out these deeper issues in a simple accessible way and concludes with probing questions and a relevant prayer.

Like iron sharpening iron, Kara challenges our thinking with these contrasts — gospel work vs. secular work, ministry vs. other work, eternal work vs. temporal work. Both volumes of *Workship* use as foundation a radical yet liberating claim “that our work is actually God's work.” Any consideration or understanding of our work and career will be incomplete if done in isolation from God.

Workship 2 also brings fresh, insightful, and biblical affirmations into the highly volatile issue of how women and men can work alongside each other in ways that both can flourish. Workers in both secular and Christian organisations will find that this chapter equips them to have meaningful marketplace discussions on such a vital societal issue.

No thoughtful book on faith and work can end without providing a biblical framework for processing the experience of unemployment, and for looking at the future of work and the changes that will likely affect people. Kara provides ways to examine and respond to these issues at the personal, structural, and Christian community levels.

Whatever your work, wherever you live, however long you intend to work, there is wisdom in every chapter. I commend this book to

you. Mentors and mentorees, small group leaders, student Christian groups, book clubs, senior ministers and ministry teams, and leaders of faith-based organisations — grab some friends or colleagues and read it together. Your perspective on work will be transformed.

Wendy Simpson OAM is the executive chair of Wengeo Group, a private investment company based in Sydney, Australia. She was formerly the Senior Vice President for Alcatel Asia Pacific based in Shanghai, and the North Asian Trade Commissioner for the Victorian Government, based in China. She is Board Member of World Vision Australia, the first female recipient of the Ridley College Faith and Work Award, and has been inducted into the Australian Businesswomen's Hall of Fame.



A Prayer for Work

Lord,
I will always be disappointed at work —
by the perceived defects and inadequacies of my colleagues,
by inefficient systems,
by corporate and individual failure to live up to projected ideals,
and by my own failings.
I will always be disappointed
unless I look to you.

Unless I look to you for purpose and know you as
my source of inspiration and energy,
I will not last.
You alone can be my reason,
pure and unending; to persevere,
to keep giving of myself,
to keep responding to failures of ideals with kindness and patience.

Unless I see my work as **your** work
I will grow conceited or disheartened.
Unless I recognise that
you, with great grace, are allowing me to participate in your work,
work will become an idol or something I resent.

Unless I keep stepping back and viewing work in the context of
your good plan
I risk distraction and distortion.
I risk losing sight of your hands
shaping and moulding all things for your purposes.

Lord, I cannot do any of these things myself.
I do not have the memory or the perspective
To cleave to you always through my working.
I want to see my work through your eyes,
through the lens of your plan.
With joy!
You will have to make this happen.
Please Lord, work so in me to remember all these things.
To be your hands and feet
And to walk in step with you always.

Imogen Herperger

(Imogen wrote this poem-prayer after reading Workship Volume 1)



Introduction

In April 2017, in a beautiful café on magnificent church grounds in the heart of Singapore, I launched the first volume of *Workship*.

It was a surreal experience. Dr Clive Lim, himself an entrepreneur and Regent College lecturer, spoke warmly about my book. His daughter, a famous model, was the first person to ask me to sign her copy of my book. My response was to laugh awkwardly as I had never expected to be asked.

Since then, I have grown accustomed to the experience of being an author. But I have never gotten used to the way God has used the book and in his grace allowed me insights as to its impact.

I received a text from Angela, an administrator in a hospital:

I feel I've been given a voice. To be acknowledged that working is important and not second class to full-time mission. At my previous church, I was made to feel guilty for working full time, but we workers were still required to support the 'real' work of those in full-time church work. I feel heard and appreciated and worthwhile.

Later she wrote:

Mission month at my church is coming up in June but *just* those first two chapters give mission month a *whole* new meaning!

It's not just about those in full-time overseas mission work — it needs to include me! The humble pen pusher with a different view of my day-to-day mission on the ground at the hospital, for crying out loud!!! Me!

Clare came along to my Brisbane book launch with her copy of the book, already purchased, read, highlighted, underlined, and with notes scribbled on nearly every page. She had first connected with me on my *Workship* Facebook page where she wrote:

A wonderful, wonderful piece of work, *Workship*. Have prayers, commitments, and snippets from the book posted around the home and office computer screen! Looking forward to Volume 2 — buy Volume 1, people, buy!

Since we made contact, Clare has used her work at a university to help research the future of work chapter in this volume.

Yenny from an Indonesian Bible study group, who evidently knew my book better than I, asked me if I had failed to make the point that God made us to work. I had not been explicit about that point, and I agreed that the evidence from Genesis was that God had made us in the image of himself, a working God, and given us the command of working to care for his creation.

Patrick told me about the difference it had made thinking of work as a place where people can express their worship of God.

Usually people think of the church as the only place they can do work for God, but the idea of *Workship* helps people think about their work in a different way. It too can be a place where you can worship God.

While these stories are encouraging, I am conscious that a book alone is not going to change the situation for Angela, Clare, Yenny, and Patrick in the long term. What they need are churches that are supporting, encouraging, and equipping them for their everyday work.

They need affirmation and application ideas, and a sense of being part of a community that is doing God's work in the everyday.

They also need more examples of what it means to see work as **kingdom work** — to face the challenges of everyday workplaces, and

to see the opportunities for giving colleagues and customers a sniff of the fragrance of Christ through their ordinary work.

I never felt this more acutely than when I was running a meeting with a guest speaker, Trish, the Australian leader of a large overseas organisation. She had just explained how hard she focuses on her decision-making, to make decisions that reflect the character of Jesus. She told us how she spends significant time praying through her daily routine.

She described how close she feels to God when she is in a boardroom, how she feels God's presence as she relies totally on him. She had told us of recent spiritual conversations as people wondered why she was different.

She asked for questions, and someone asked: "What are you doing for your local church?"

I had to interrupt and explain that we were listening to someone who saw her daily work as her place of ministry. My guest graciously replied that she travels two Sundays a month, so being part of regular rosters is very difficult. She said that she recently had a conversation with her pastor to explain her lack of attendance and the nature of the work she did.

The questioner was unperturbed: "But surely you could give a talk, or use your leadership skills. The church could use you."

My guest admitted that she helped out at the coffee cart when she could, which seemed to somewhat appease her audience.

I bit my tongue, but this precisely illustrates my great frustration. The church's function is to equip its people to do God's work. Rather than being a place where my guest felt guilty for not giving more, it should be a place of refuge, nurture, teaching, and prayer that empowers her to be Christ's light in otherwise dark places. It should be the place where she gathers with others to celebrate God, and is then sent out as the church, scattered to work for his glory.

The questioner should have asked: "What is your church doing for you, to support the great work you are doing for God?"

So, I humbly present Volume 2.

Section 1 includes practical wisdom for the workplace: positive ideas for making a difference, and helpful suggestions for how to respond to common issues.

Section 2 provides information for churches about responding to the needs of workplace Christians in their congregations. There are ideas for equipping activities within church services, within church communities, and beyond the church walls.

I want to thank the churches, Bible study groups, media outlets, colleges, and conference organisers who have asked me to participate in their services, meetings, podcasts and programs to speak about how we can *workship*. Some of what we explored together is included in this volume. May God use it to his glory, to increase his kingdom and to bless his earth.



Introduction to Section 1: Practical Wisdom for Working

Volume 1 of *Workship* established a sound biblical basis for understanding God's view of work, and how the gospel can be expressed through workers who are Christians, in their working and in their workplace via the spiritual disciplines. It also examined some core concepts for all Christians in thinking about their work and their organisations:

- Vocation
- Work and identity
- Working relationships
- Kingdom business

In Volume 2 of *Workship*, I have collated more practical wisdom for your daily working.

There are positive ideas for making a difference in the workplace:

- Hospitality at work
- Jesus-shaped leadership
- Beauty in the workplace

There are helpful suggestions for responding to common issues:

- Ethical decision-making
- Dealing with stress
- Work-life balance
- Handling bullying and conflict
- Toxic workplaces

- ☾ Non-selfish ambition
- ☾ A biblical reflection on unemployment

There are ideas for new areas of Christian thinking:

- ☾ Women and work
- ☾ The future of work

These are some of the issues most often raised at speaking engagements and mentoring sessions. I cannot pretend to deliver a complete answer to each of these issues, but I hope to point you to some biblical concepts and practical ideas that will help you make a difference as a Christian in your workplace.



Chapter 1

Hospitality and Work

(Portions of this chapter appeared in an article on the website Life@Work, hosted by City Bible Forum, Melbourne¹)

When I started at my new job I was a little surprised by how unfriendly it was. People sat in their cubicles and seemed to avoid each other. If I stopped to say hello, sometimes they wouldn't even look up. There was no sharing or offers of help. People seemed to prefer avoiding "hello" in the morning and "goodbye" at the end of the day. Sometimes, I was surprised to discover I was the last person left in the building.

This led to an atmosphere that was the antithesis of hospitality. Hospitality is the generous welcoming of guests or strangers. It is about creating a safe and friendly place to build relationships and do work.

It is also something I see as foundational to being a Christian. Even in the ancient world providing hospitality was considered an obligation. The Greeks made it a virtue, but Christians added a new element, *koinonia* — the provision of fellowship.

Our God Provides Hospitality

Our God is hospitable: he creates and provides everything we need in abundance. Even when we reject him, he continues to reach out in love. In the Old Testament, he provides specific commands to welcome the stranger and foreigner, and provide for them. In Deuteronomy 10:18–19 he says, "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt." The prophets warned the Israelites of judgement because of their poor treatment of foreigners: "This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place" (Jeremiah 22:3).

¹ Kara Martin, "Creating a welcoming place at work", *Life@Work*, 7 March 2015. <https://lifeatwork.org.au/content/creating-welcoming-place-work> (cited 7-Feb-2018).

Jesus is the ultimate example of God's expression of hospitality. He left a place of comfort, security, and power, to enter our world as a vulnerable baby and a man rejected by all (Philippians 2:5–11). In spite of the way others treated him, Jesus offered food and healing and welcomed all — even those who were ignored or rejected such as children, tax collectors, common sinners, and prostitutes.

God, in his grace offers salvation to all, not wishing anyone to perish. This salvation is a free gift requiring no work or effort from us, merely assent. It is an offer to enter a hospitable place with God (Ephesians 2:8–10).

So, in offering hospitality we are bearing witness to the character of God, and also giving a glimpse of the coming kingdom. It is also a direct command: “Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Romans 12:13).

For an in-depth examination of biblical material, especially pointers to Jesus' practice of hospitality, see “Hospitality” by Patricia Kerr in *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity*.²

Practising Hospitality in the Workplace

I decided that I would try and make small changes in my workplace:

- ☾ I kept my door open so that I could see and hear when people walked by, and I called out to them when they do.
- ☾ Whenever people paused by my door, I would invite them in and ask them to be seated.
- ☾ I made my office fun with coffee poetry magnets, posters, and interesting objects.
- ☾ I had laughter if they had something fun to share and tissues if they felt sad.
- ☾ I shared chocolate.
- ☾ If I went out for coffee I asked if anyone else would like one.

² Robert Banks and R. Paul Stevens (Eds.), *The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity* (Singapore: Graceworks, 2011).

- ☾ When I was leaving for the day, I went around and said goodbye.
- ☾ I invited people to lunch for one-on-one conversations, or for drinks when there was something to celebrate.

After a while, I noticed changes at my workplace. People tended to stop by and chat. No one left without saying goodbye to me. I made good use of the tissue box as people shared hard things. I enjoyed many laughs. People came in to share important life-stage news with me: engagements, wedding arrangements, and pregnancies.

The German word for hospitality is *gastfreundschaft*, which means “friendship for the guest”. I hope that in reaching out to my colleagues, I had helped people move from being strangers to friends with the God whom I serve.

More Examples in the Workplace

Some of my work has been with the Christian Medical and Dental Fellowship of Australia, and I have noted that several of their biggest breakthroughs in reaching colleagues is through providing hospitality.

Alex told me about the time he and other fellowship colleagues bought a huge basket of hot cross buns and left it in the hospital staffroom with a note explaining it was a gift for Easter from the CMDFA.

The group had more feedback and questions from this simple act than any other event or activity.

Food is naturally linked to hospitality and can be used effectively. Everyone in the office will know when you have baked something, hosted a birthday celebration, or shouted a round of coffees.

City Bible Forum in Melbourne ran an effective outreach activity where members were encouraged to invite a work colleague to lunch. The free lunch initiative was a way of showing hospitality and developing deeper relationships.

The Potential of Hospitality

Henri Nouwen is much more eloquent than I:

Hospitality is not to change people but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines. It is not to lead our neighbour to a corner where there are no alternatives left, but to open a wide spectrum of options for choice and commitment. It is not an educated intimidation with good books, good stories, and good works, but the liberation of fearful hearts so that words can find roots and bear ample fruit.³

³ Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1986), 71–72.

Prayer:

Dear Lord,

Thank you for teaching us what hospitality is.

Thank you that even when we were strangers, you welcomed us as friends. Thank you that you provide a welcome place for us.

Help us to make our workplaces hospitable.

Challenge us to be creative and generous in what we do to make others feel welcome, in creating a friendly place.

Thank you for the inspiration you give us in terms of creativity and generosity.

Protect us from self-interest, pride, or ambition that might stop us from being more hospitable.

Teach us to honour you.

AMEN



Taking It Further:

1

How hospitable is your workplace? Where are the places that you could make a difference, starting with your immediate work area?

2


How can you initiate intentional acts of hospitality? Could you bake? Host a celebration? Shout a round of coffees? Take someone out for a free lunch?

3

Flick through the Gospel of Luke, noticing all the different acts of hospitality that Jesus showed. How many of these things could you do? (Feeding, praying for others, taking time to listen, etc.)

4

Read Henri Nouwen's quote and think through the times you have been shown such hospitality. What new ideas are prompted in terms of how you might make your working/workplace more hospitable?



Chapter 2
Jesus-Shaped
Leadership

A Tale of Two Leaders

The first story is of a woman who ran a startup digital technology company that grew quickly during boom times but became very vulnerable during the global financial crisis. Her company was doing the best they could to prepare their new product for launch, but it started to become obvious that there were significant issues with the marketplace's appetite for new products during a downturn.

The woman worked long hours and was honest with her employees who all worked hard and innovatively. When it became obvious that their financial backers were pulling out, she tried hard to secure another buyer. Throughout everything she kept everyone informed.

Finally, the buyer pulled out and the money ran out. She notified everyone that the next day would be their last with the organisation. At that point she had a long discussion with God in prayer. What had happened to all the good work they had done? Why had God not blessed them? She had tried to be faithful in her working, why was that not enough?

When the employees met together the next day, she told them the most recent developments and what would happen next. She would be organising to sell off remaining assets and their intellectual property, and continuing to do her best to ensure the product they all believed in would make it to the market.

She thanked them for their work and celebrated their achievements. When she finished, she received a standing ovation which brought her to tears. At that point she realised there was still value in all the work that had been done — the relationships that had been formed, and the creative culture she had worked and prayed to form.

The second story is about a Christian leader in a large bank that underwent a significant restructure. For a couple of months, he and his team were in limbo about what would happen as there was no apparent role for him or his team in the new structure.

Eventually, he called a meeting with his team to make an announcement. "I have bad news and good news," he explained. "The bad news is that there is still a lot of uncertainty about the future. The

work we do still needs to be done, but this team will probably be split up, and in all likelihood there will be some redundancies.

“The good news is that the company has found a new role for me, which I will be starting in a couple of weeks’ time. After that you will need to continue without a leader for a period.”

When he finished there was stunned silence.

The Intimacy of Leadership

Leadership is actually a very intimate relationship, even in a work situation. Leadership requires followership, and followers need to have confidence in the competency of their leaders, and in the care the leader has for them as a team. When this dynamic is working well, there is incredible opportunity for effective working and personal growth. When it goes badly, there is a lot of pain and disappointment, and poor work with the potential for conflict.

Christians have a lot of opportunity and resources to speak into the leadership vacuum in the world. We follow one of the greatest leaders of all time. Jesus was a superlative recruiter, educator, communicator, visionary, strategist, and influencer.

He has also given us the most powerful concept of leadership: being a servant leader, which was entirely counter-cultural at that time, as it often seems today.

We do hear positive stories of leadership when great things are achieved, but frequently the proving ground for leadership is during the difficult times, the setbacks, and the failures.

Jesus: The Irresistible Leader

During my time at Bible College, and following, I have had the privilege of teaching leadership and management to students. When I was first planning the unit with the founding dean of the Marketplace Institute, Dr Ken Barnes, we agreed on one characteristic of Jesus’ leadership that most inspired us — he was irresistible. His ideas and behaviour attracted many but threatened those in religious authority and the politically powerful.