

What is Vennture?

GLOBAL SNAPSHOT

Terry Smith · Director of Strategic Initiatives

If you are like me, you sometimes need to just make words up, combining two or more common words. They might look a bit strange, but they somehow just seem to fit together rather nicely. So here is one:

adventure: an unusual and exciting experience or activity.

venture: an uncertain or daring journey or undertaking.

Venn diagram: common elements of the sets being represented by the areas of overlap among the circles.

=VENNTURE

Before I explain what this word means, let me take you on an “advennture” to Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, to witness one of the most innovative ministries I have ever encountered. The Kale Heywet Church, with 10,000 churches and 10 million members is Ethiopia’s largest evangelical denomination. Pastor Yoseph Bekele was a youth pastor and owned several businesses. In 2017, Yoseph was appointed to be the Director of business and discipleship for the Kale Heywet Church. When he started, Yoseph shared that businesspeople were considered “sinful people” in his context. There was no understanding of a Christian or biblical perspective on work. His challenge was to help the church membership to understand whole-life discipleship, including worship and work as critical for Ethiopian Christians.

In three years, Yoseph and his team of trainers have reached nine of the eleven regions of Ethiopia with the message of faith and work. His teams of trainers help pastors and church leaders understand the call of the local church to equip all of God’s people for the work of the ministry from Monday to Saturday. They believe that every church should have a workplace ministry, just as they have a youth and women’s ministry.

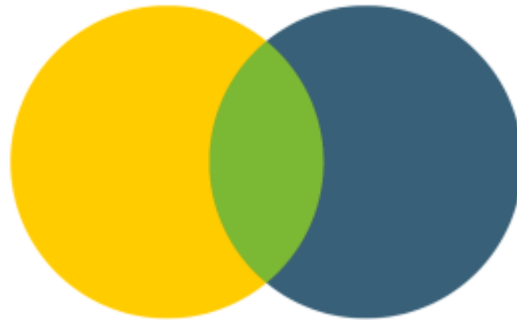
As part of the training, everyone learns the three Great Directives. The Great Commission’s (Matt. 28:18-20) outcome is proclamation. Jesus tells us to go and make disciples, beginning in Jerusalem and reaching the whole world. The Great Commandment’s (Mark 12:30-31) outcome is relational. Jesus tells us that the greatest commandment is about loving God whole-heartedly and loving our neighbor as ourselves. But the outcomes of the Great Commitment (Gen. 2:5), which are to fill the earth and steward it, are economic and ecological.

Today, God is raising up a movement of Christians in Ethiopia who see all of life as an opportunity to live out their calling of discipleship – at home, at school, and at work.

Our travels could take us to other far-reaching corners of the globe, where we could meet passionate Christ-followers who are demonstrating that faith and work are not separate boxes in life but converge together in acts of faithful service. In the Philippines and China, India, South Sudan, Lebanon, Bolivia, Cuba and throughout Latin America, these folks are a living testimony that church on Sunday (typically) is actually a place where God's people can be equipped and enabled to be salt and light in the world for the other six days of the week.

So back to my word **VENTURE**:

Many of our readers know what a Venn diagram is: two-overlapping shapes that demonstrate the logical relationship between two or more sets of ideas. It was named after a British mathematician, John Venn, in 1880, who was trying to help people understand how seemingly opposing concepts can actually be closely linked together. So a simple



version could look like this:

Now hold that thought for a minute and let's share what God has been showing us here at CBM. For many years, we have seen the phenomenal impact that 'ordinary church-goers' were having on helping shape local communities, often through their daily work. They were teachers and health-care workers, government employees, tradespeople, truckers and farmers, business-people, merchants, and day-labourers. They understood that God had called them to live out their faith in and through their work. And they innately knew that they were Christ's disciples in the marketplace.

But conversely, too often the church-leaders, usually pastors and evangelists, were sending a confusing message that God's work was what was being done in the church; singing in the choir, teaching Sunday school, being a deacon, serving on a committee, or sometimes, just being a means of generating income for what they understood to be God's work (i.e., in the church). These people felt like they were second-class citizens in the kingdom, sometimes denigrated for choosing what was labelled as 'secular work' vs the spiritual work of the church.

With our partners around the world, we are developing a whole new focus, called **VENNTURE**, which seeks to help show the marvelous convergence of faith and work. As our new VENNTURE logo shows, we see that discipleship is the great integrator, the very heart of life as God's people. It is where faith meets work and equips people with useful resources to live out their faith every single day of the week.

Our strategy is quite straightforward:

1. **FORMATION:** Through teaching, training, coaching and mentoring, we will help equip the whole people of God to participate in God's work and to bring about transformation.

2. **CREATION:** Vennture works within a partner network and in a spirit of mutuality, to assist in the creation of transformational businesses that lead to human flourishing and provide meaningful work for individuals.

3. **MOBILIZATION:** Vennture is building networks in order to mobilize God's people to see their work as mission and accept their role to help heal a broken world through it.

In the next issue of CBM Responding, we will unwrap our **FORMATION** pillar and fill you in on how this is developing internationally and in Canada, as well as share opportunities for you to grow in your understanding of faith and work theology and the practice of whole-life discipleship.

Living an Integrated Life

GLOBAL SNAPSHOT

Michael Waddell · Senior Associate,
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The average person will spend 90,000 hours or one third of their life working. We will spend more of our time working than we will at school, in church, on the soccer field, or even watching TV. It's difficult to fathom this enormous portion of our life, but it should make us pause and think intentionally about how we are stewarding our time.

What is the point of work? What does work mean? Who benefits? What is good work? Whose work matters to God?

Many people see work simply as a means to an end (i.e., "I work to put food on the table for my family") or something to endure (i.e., "Everybody's working for the weekend").

But have you ever met someone who really loves their work and sees it as meaningful? Someone who is full of passion and joy for their work? I have and it's really powerful to see.

Just imagine if all of God's people saw their work as a witness to, and a demonstration of God's love and justice in the world! Every part of our lives is valuable to God and meaningful for us. Work matters, and how we work matters.

Too often, people have been told to separate work and faith between the sacred and the secular, between Sunday and Monday. They were not taught how to integrate faith in their workplaces. This has resulted in a dualistic approach to life where only the things Christians do in and through their church count for God.

At CBM, our Faith+Work strategy enables us to help equip and mobilize women and men for whole-life discipleship through their work. By seeing their work as calling, and using their abilities, skills, and service in and through their work, God's people are helping to heal a broken world.

In 2016, my family moved to the Philippines to work alongside CBM's partners, Kabuganaan Philippines Ministries (KPM). During our time there, we helped churches see that work matters and is an integral part of God's plan to redeem and restore his creation.

God at Work in the Word and in the World

There is no one better to demonstrate the power of work than God himself. From the beginning of scripture, Genesis opens with God at work, creating the universe. Throughout the Bible, we see images of God as a worker. He is a gardener (Gen 2:8), shepherd (Ps 23), potter (Jer 18:6), physician (Matt 8:16), teacher (Ps 143:10), vineyard-dresser (Is 5:1-7), and metal worker and refiner (Mal 3:2-3, Ez 22:20). Just as God is at work, he also uses the work of his people to accomplish his purposes in the world.

Through our work, God invites us to participate in his redemptive plan for all of creation and to contribute to the flourishing of individuals and communities. When God's people recognize that their work matters and that it is meaningful to God and others, amazing things begin to happen!

The Power of Ordinary Work

GLOBAL SNAPSHOT

Brenda Halk · Senior Associate
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We hear a lot about the value of hard work. Our parents, grandparents, and teachers all promote the message. My husband's grandfather always asked only one question: "Are you getting enough work?"

My paternal grandfather was a teacher, boatbuilder and pattern maker who worked into his mid 80's, still building boats. Both men lived through two world wars and the Great Depression. They both had a deep-rooted faith and knew that living it out through their work and in all aspects of life was integral and essential to life itself.

But somehow this has gone astray, and our lives reflect the unbiblical sacred/secular dualism where what happens at Church on Sunday is ministry, and Monday to Saturday are for secular activities.

Vennture aims to help break down the sacred/secular dualism in the church, redirect Sunday toward Monday, and empower the whole people of God for service and ministry in the world.



Let me introduce you to someone who many would say had a boring, meaningless job. He was a kitchen aide, and spent his days cooking, cleaning, and doing chores. Yet no matter how mundane the routine, he found God's love and presence with him. This man became known as Brother Lawrence, who was born in 1614 and worked as a monk in France.

Brother Lawrence modelled to those around him how to find God while doing what he called 'common business'. For him, the issue was not the sacredness or worldly status of the task, but the motivation behind it. For Brother Lawrence, he simply needed to 'bring oneself into the consciousness of God's presence.' The size of the task mattered little, and he shared the following wisdom: "We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed." The most effective way Brother Lawrence had for communicating with God was to simply do his ordinary work.

Do you wish you could find meaning in the mundane? Do you desire to find purpose through your work? At Vennture, we are teaching God's people to 'do little things with great love.' Through our key pillar of Formation, we offer foundational and practical teaching, training, coaching and mentoring in order to help equip people of faith to transform every square inch of the world through their daily work.

Understanding the Theology of Work helps Christians to integrate their faith with their work. Learning this theology helps us apply God's truth, purpose, and passion to our everyday lives. Whether we're a student, businessperson, teacher, missionary, or have a different vocation, all of our lives are affected by what we believe about God and work. An understanding of workplace theology is foundational because our work is the most significant mission field in the world!

Several of our global partners are already reshaping their previous views of work and worship and are integrating a more holistic understanding of a theology of work.

Teaching, training, coaching, and mentoring helps our partners, churches, and individuals grow in their understanding of marketplace theology and practice the integration of faith and work in their daily lives.

Our partnership with the Institute for Marketplace Transformation (IMT) has provided opportunities for our global teams to study and learn about the biblical theology of work and how they can integrate their faith with their work seven days a week. Both the Africa and Latin America teams are pursuing a Certificate in Marketplace Transformation through IMT.

Gato Munyamasoko, CBM's Peace and Reconciliation Specialist in Rwanda shared the following: "My understanding of the theology of Faith and Work has grown in the sense that I came to realize that God is not only in the church but everywhere that work is done for the wellbeing of his people and creation. Secondly, I came to understand that there is a gathered church on Sunday and a scattered church the rest of the week (Monday to Saturday) and every believer is a minister when he does everything by Faith, Hope and Love."

The Africa team recognized from the very first course they took that contextualization for their specific culture was needed. That course is now in its final edit phase as they prepare to meet with denominational leaders in Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Together, they will learn and discuss how best to introduce this theology of whole-life discipleship to pastors, workers, leaders and church members.

"The things that we have studied and learned over the past couple of years regarding faith and work have not just been something new that I have added to what I already knew," said Darrell Bustin, CBM Field Staff in Rwanda. "It was deeper than that. It was more of a paradigm shift. I have grown up in the church and have been reading the Bible my whole life. But suddenly it is like I have new lenses on. I am reading verses that I have always been very familiar with, but now I am seeing them in a whole new way. It has deepened my understanding of the integral mission to which God has called us."

In Latin America, as the team also studies in the certificate program, materials are being taught weekly to groups of pastors in Guatemala and Bolivia as quickly as they can be translated. The growth and enthusiasm in the field is exciting.

IMT also offers a [free video series](#), "Doing God's Business", that is ideal for an introduction to workplace theology for individuals and small groups, and comes with discussion questions and a study guide.

"IMT courses have given me an understanding that God cares for me in every single aspect of my life (including my work) and reinforces the fact that God loves me and can use my whole being for his kingdom," said Patty Nacho, CBM's Program Officer in Bolivia.

In Canada, formation is also taking place in several ways. Conferences, workshops, small group studies, and webinars all help individuals and churches to understand their faith and work as a part of whole-life discipleship.

As a mission organization, CBM, through Vennture, recognizes Formation as a key step in equipping the scattered church to make a kingdom impact at their work.

More resources can be found on the CBM website.

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