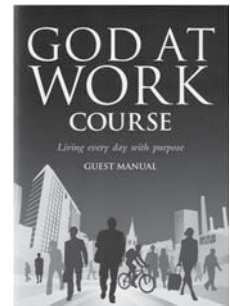


God at Work: Living Every Day with Purpose

by Ken Costa

Accompanying Guest Manual (£1.50) and Leaders' Guide (£4.95)
Continuum 2007 (paperback) 193 pages, ISBN 0-8264-9635-0



■ reviewed by Sally Orwin

What is it?

"I have found that the God who created and sustains the world is also the God of the workplace. If the Christian faith is not relevant in the workplace, it is not relevant at all." (p1)

Produced from the Alpha stable of resources God at Work is a course designed to be run by and for Christians in a church or a work setting.

The published material consists of a book accompanied by a Leaders' Guide and a Guest Manual. James Allcock has already reviewed the book itself in FiBQ 11:1.

The course has all the hallmarks of Alpha material including clarity of purpose and design, direct and engaging marketing and a focus on the practical application of living out faith at work, whether paid or unpaid. The website, godatwork.org.uk, provides further information and support on running it.

It is packaged as an ideal follow-up to the Alpha course itself with six sessions focussing on work matters, ambition and life choices, tough decisions, work-life balance and stress, failure including disappointment and hope, and finally money and giving. The aim of the course is to 'provide a Christian perspective on how to face challenges at work, as well as teaching on how to support our family and friends in the difficulties we all inevitably face'.

Ken Costa is both Chairman of Lazard International and Chairman of Alpha International. He is therefore ideally placed to understand the issues of Christians at work having a foot in both the church and the workplace. The humility with which he describes his own experiences as a Christian in the world of banking is inspiring and enlightening.

The Course

I attended the Manchester launch of God at Work and the course itself, both hosted by Oasis Manchester. The launch was timely in terms of being held in the new year of 2009 immediately after the economic crisis of Autumn 2008 at a point where many Christians were challenged to begin to find a better way forward.

The flexibility of the material allows for course organisers to tailor the setting to the particular circumstances of the participants. In this case, the course was focused on city centre workers. Local Christians who have an influence as leaders were invited to head up each of the six sessions which were held over lunch in the function room of a city centre bar.

In this context, the course had a number of fruitful outcomes. It was helpful to listen to the perspective of a Christian addressing their own experience of a particular issue thus grounding it in concrete reality. It was also encouraging to meet and discuss with other city centre workers facing similar challenges and to break down the sense of isolation which Christians at work can often experience.

Conclusion

I recommend God at Work primarily because of its flexibility. It is crucial to run a course that addresses the particular circumstances of a group of workers, whether in a church setting or otherwise. The benefit of this course is its ability to connect the individual to the eternal purposes God himself has for us and how we collaborate with him in living out faith every day. It provides an opportunity for workers to ask themselves big questions. It cannot provide all the answers, although as a starting point it offers a rigorous framework for working out how the consequences of faith in God permeate the whole of life. ■