



As a corporate chaplain he offers care to employees dealing with personal and professional issues

BY CYRIL GOWLER

Early in 2006, the ministry God was shaping for me took an unusual and exciting turn. By then several years into church ministry, I questioned God as to why he had allowed me to ‘languish’ in a fast-paced, production-oriented environment where people would come to me with family, marital, or personal difficulties. I soon found

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out how God would use these experiences. One day I had a visit from several owners of All Weather Windows Ltd.

in Edmonton. The story they shared fascinated me!

Prior to their visit, one of the company owners, Gord Wiebe, had been searching for what the Lord had for his life and his company. He learned that an effective way to influence positive morale and employee stability, and to stimulate continuous potential for increasing employee satisfaction in a faith-friendly company could be achieved, in part, by hiring a corporate chaplain.

A chaplain could reach out to those of other faiths and to those who did not embrace any faith. With unobtrusiveness and a relaxed, confident sincerity, together with a genuine desire to connect and relate, the chaplain could potentially meet every employee in the company on some level.

Working in an environment with over 1,000 employees representing more than 46 countries, speaking in excess of 20 different languages and dialects, I was in for the challenge of my life! I realized too, God was answering an old question for me. All the time I believed I had

‘languished’ for 24 years in the secular world, the Lord helped me realize those years had undeniably great impact, value, and influence, not only then but also in the present.

I learned quickly that one key to reaching people is through responding to felt needs, providing the immediate as an investment to earn the right to share the way to the eternal. People need to know that someone genuinely cares.

I have the privilege to serve in a capacity that weaves the truth of Jesus’ words in Matthew 25, (“hungry and you gave me food”) together with the loving imperative of Matthew 28:19 and 20, (“Go therefore...!”). Chaplaincy work, whether institutional or marketplace, military, police or hospital, is work grounded in truth, trust, respect and a genuine caring relationship with and for people in need. Chaplains bring a reflection and substance of God’s love, an extension of the Church (ecclesia) the way God intended, to a world of lost people right next door or in our daily places of work or learning.

A recent article quoted a Barna Group research statistic that many churches in North America have up to 95 percent of their activity and energy happening internally! It greatly concerns me that only about five percent of what we do in our churches today is considered external! This fact alone should motivate us all to be involved strategically in getting out of our buildings and into the community in a tried and true, effective way—chaplaincy! ☩

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