

You may have incidentally received Creatio through forwarding from your friend. If you want to receive your own copy regularly (which means about four issues per year), please send a blank email with subject "Subscribe" to unjournal@vocatiocreation.com.hk. You'll have the additional benefit of receiving our latest news too.

The Point 主题拆局

平衡是废话!?



天意总是弄人，打工族的壮年（三十五至五十岁）正是人生最忙碌的时间，要照顾家庭又要建立事业；五十岁后，家庭压力逐渐减少，事业却也大局已定。平衡不是错，但我们不要期望家庭和事业能够两全其美。假如你要多花时间陪伴子女成长，你便要接受事业受到影响这事实，因为你跟子女骑木马的时候，你隔离房的同事、对面街的竞争对手、远在印度的双料博士，他们正在工作。

我们不要误导自己和家人，平衡不是在某时某刻做一个无处不在的万能侠，而是接受人生须不停地作抉择，生命中不同时间追求不同东西；真相是：假如你要享受生活，你就要牺牲工作上的回报。假如你事业得意、生活悠闲、家庭融洽，请不停感恩，兼且尽情享受，因为这一切可能是很短暂的。

— 余就风（蔡东豪）：《十兄弟》

平衡工作与生活，是很多上班一族梦寐以求的理想。加上近廿年来企业文化提倡生活素质，鼓吹我们要做个能够平衡工作和生活的万能侠，若是做不到平衡，就仿佛感到自己是个失败者。

根据*Fast Company*杂志副总编辑Keith Hammonds的分析，追求平衡生活有两种不同的型态。其一是「成就型」，意谓我们若努力寻求，就必得着，不过成功地过平衡生活的代价可能极高。其二是「撤退型」，意即我们要减少工作到一个基本足够的水平，做到enough is enough，就可安分满足。Hammonds认为两者都有严重的错失，尤其在现今知识型经济的社会，绝不可取。¹

近年来教会也加入唱好平衡生活的行列，很多时平衡生活经被提升到「完美基督徒生活」的必要部分。但根据观察，教会宣扬平衡生活背后的潜台词，大多是希望信徒能减少工作，多注重教会及家庭生活，却鲜有呼吁我们要增加工作，减少家庭及教会生活。明显地，教会是采纳reductionist的进路去提倡平衡生活。结果吊诡的是，教会部分的「职场神学」竟是劝导信徒减低在职场的参与，甚至要离开职场。可是，平衡生活本来就不是以时间来衡量的。心理治疗师David Zelman说得好，平衡生活往往是对过去的生涯事后孔明的诠释。²

¹ Keith H. Hammonds, 'Balance Is Bunk!' *Fast Company* 87, October 2004.

² 同上注。

针对平衡生活的错谬，药方其实很简单，常识得很：就是要回到现实，接纳甚至拥抱不平衡的生活，视之为人生的常态，然后从大处着手，定下人生的使命目标并每一阶段的优先次序，全心全意地活在不平衡底下，勇于抉择，权衡轻重，必要时作出妥协。平衡，不在乎「只争朝夕」，而是要用一辈子经历的功夫。这是「日光之下」的智慧。可惜，在教会越许久，这种智慧却竟离我们越远。

至于「日光之上」，基督徒就根本不应追求平衡生活。在以下的访问中，毕德生（Eugene Peterson）甚至批评，追求平衡生活是一种僭越上帝主权的属灵骄傲。他说，我们应该敬畏和尊重三一上帝恩典的主权，参与祂的工作，而不是在祂以外建构自以为平衡的美好生活。

史蒂文斯（Paul Stevens）的说法就更为具体。他建议我们与其虚无缥缈地追逐平衡生活，倒不如追求「纪律的生活」（disciplined life）反而来得更实际。对他来说，不平衡的生活（unbalanced life）更是一项富教育意义的属灵操练，叫我们辨识上帝的呼召，有目标和使命感地生活。

约伯说：「谁用无知的言语使祢的旨意隐藏呢？」看来，教会是时候回到圣经的智慧传统，重新为信徒搭建入世却不属世的市井神学。



Tell us how you feel about this trial version of Creatio. Do you have a topic in mind that you want us to explore? Or rather, you want to write us something as a contribution? Please email us at unjournal@vocatiocreation.com.hk. Thanks.

EUGENE PETERSON ON “BALANCED” LIFE

Eugene Peterson, best known for *The Message* – a contemporary paraphrase of the Bible, has served as a pastor to Christ Our King Presbyterian Church for 29 years. After that, he taught at Regent College where he is professor emeritus of spiritual theology. In below he was interviewed by Peter Santucci, his friend and former teaching assistant, sharing his views on “balanced” life, and more.



Santucci: So how do we develop discernment and discipline in a culture that’s not very helpful to us?

Peterson: The answers are the old answers. You respond with silence and solitude.

Instead of the word *balance*, which is a dead word and gives the impression that we’re in control, I’d like to use the word *rhythm*. Rhythm is a living thing.

Santucci: How so? I’m not sure I follow you.

Peterson: In walking, you can walk in a hurry or you can walk rhythmically.

The interesting thing between the managing of our time in our culture by schedule, as opposed to the ancient way of rhythm, is that you can destroy a schedule but you can’t a rhythm. Rhythm is living; it’s organic.

Instead of the word *balance*, which is a dead word and gives the impression that we’re in control, I’d like to use the word *rhythm*. Rhythm is a living thing.

Santucci: But how do you keep a rhythm? Isn’t it difficult to stay in sync?

Peterson: If you’re clumsy.

You never see a good basketball player off-beat. It takes training to do that.



A jazz improvisation is another way of doing that. When they jam together, no matter what one is doing, the partners are fitting into it. The rhythm is not destroyed.

Santucci: You have written on the necessity of Sabbath-keeping for a healthy spiritual life. It seems to me that the keeping of Sabbath every seventh day is a pretty basic rhythm.

Peterson: Holy days are a background rhythm for your life that you fit the rest of your life into. You don't take a day off; you take a day apart. The Sabbath defines the rest of the days. That's a totally different way of viewing time than our culture views it.

Santucci: We often think of the Sabbath as a negation, especially of work. How does Sabbath-keeping support us in our working?

Peterson: It places our work in the context of God's work. Work is the one area of our lives that is most vulnerable to idolatry. If we work off of a foundation of God's rest and God's work, we have a rhythmic and intellectual and emotional understanding that work is not the place we become God-like.

You can destroy a schedule but you can't a rhythm. Rhythm is living; it's organic.

Santucci: Do you mean "God-like" positively, as in godly, or negatively?

Peterson: When we're working well, we feel God-like in a positive way. But it becomes negative because we begin to think of ourselves as gods.

I don't think I'm being overly hyperbolic when I say that work is the greatest vehicle for idolatry. If it is not rooted in a Sabbath, we miss the God-context and then we become the gods.

Santucci: How do we protect the Sabbath from becoming a negative, weighty legalism?

Peterson: I think we have to be very, very flexible and creative in the way we interpret it. I don't care which day it is. But we need to help one another to do it. In the church, in the workplace, in the family. It's impossible to be rigid about it unless you're in a community that's rigid about it. The times and places that it has become rigid have been pretty terrible.

In my translating of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy for *The Message*, I made an interesting discovery. The Hebrew phrase "do no work on the Sabbath" is really "do no necessary work on the Sabbath." It's actually quite loose in the text.

You don't take a day off; you take a day apart. The Sabbath defines the rest of the days.

That's one of the things pastors can do to help their congregations: Help them keep the Sabbath. We're looking for a break from necessity, from being in charge all of the time. It's the hardest commandment to keep. The hardest to figure out how to keep.

Santucci: What role can community play in drawing together an integrated, rhythmic life?

Peterson: I'm going to be very simplistic at this point: Simply worship together.

A great deal of what goes on in the church is unnecessary. We're trying to build community through techniques and programs, but I'm not sure that we're getting community. We're getting enclaves and clubs.

Santucci: Let's take a different angle on balance. When I was growing up, I came across a formula for organizing your life that I'm interested in your comments on. It was a hierarchical, linear approach to life – as opposed to a balanced, integrated approach – that went something like this: God comes first, family and church come second and third, work fourth, and I come last.

AS FAR AS THE **BALANCED LIFE** IS CONCERNED,
WE'RE THE ONES **DOING** THE BALANCING –
GOD HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.
BUT IF **GOD'S IN CHARGE**,
WE GET IN ON IT, ON WHAT **HE'S DOING**.

Peterson: It's a very recent, very evangelical formula that's only been around in the last 50 years or so. What it does is to put you in charge of making things work. There is a hierarchical system, I think, but we're not in charge of it. God is. The minute we try to manage it, we interfere with the sovereignty. And it's very artificial.

Work is the greatest vehicle for idolatry. If it is not rooted in a Sabbath, we miss the God-context and then we become the gods.

Again, we are in charge of it. As far as the balanced life is concerned, we're the ones doing the balancing – God has nothing to do with it. I'm in the position to tell what's in the forefront if I'm in charge. But if God's in charge, we get in on it, on what He's doing.

Christian thinking isn't hierarchical, it's Trinitarian. The Trinity is our model, the Trinity which is mutuality, which is personal, which always is receiving, always responding. There is a hierarchy in the "great chain of being" of the ancient philosophers. But it's not Christian. We inherited it from the Greeks. The "chain" starts with God, works down to humanity and on to vegetation and rocks. But we have a much better image to work with – the Trinity. When we are Trinitarian in our approach to life, we are participants in what God is doing. It makes everything particular – there are no generalizations here – and relational. Nothing is done outside of the sovereignty of God, nothing is done impersonally, nothing is done generally.

The three-personal trinity is our uniquely Christian image, not an impersonal abstract hierarchy.

Excerpted from *The Life@Work Journal*, Vol. 3 No. 6
(Nov/Dec 2000)

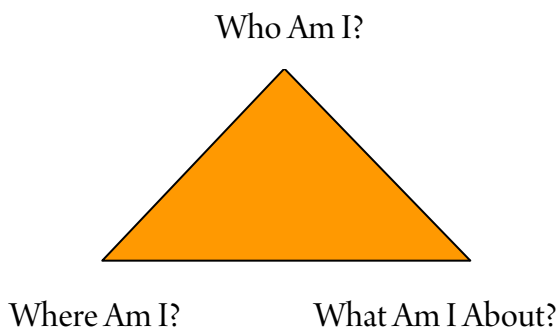
CHRISTIAN THINKING **ISN'T** HIERARCHICAL,
IT'S **TRINITARIAN**.

WHEN WE ARE **TRINITARIAN** IN OUR
APPROACH TO LIFE, WE ARE **PARTICIPANTS** IN WHAT
GOD IS DOING.

HOW TO LIVE AN UNBALANCED LIFE?

Trying to live a balanced life is a losing proposition. R. Paul Stevens, professor emeritus of marketplace theology at Regent College, has a smarter way to think about living a disciplined life. But living a disciplined life is intrinsically personal and particular because it is concerned with one's calling. Many of the following are taken from his recent Vocatio Creation lecture on "Breaking the Myth of Work-Life Balance: Living an Unbalanced Life Graciously."

Paul Stevens says there are three basic questions that help us unpack how to live a disciplined life: (1) Who am I? (2) Where am I? (3) What am I about?



1. Who Am I?
As each of us is different, we do need to know ourselves: our strengths, personality, talents, spiritual gifts, weaknesses and dysfunctionalities, central motivational thrusts or passions.
2. Where Am I?
This includes understanding our family background and foreground, relationships and interdependencies, geographical and cultural location, and life stage. There are quite different purpose-questions in each of our life stages:
 - Preteens: What do I want to be when I grow up?
 - Teens: Why do people want me as a friend?
 - Twenties: How will I do my living?
 - Thirties: What qualities do I want to centre my life around?
 - Forties: What do I want to become?
 - Fifties: What difference am I making in my world?
 - Sixties: Why do I get up in the morning?
 - Seventies: What is my legacy?

3. What Am I About?
Walter Wright, the mentor of Paul Stevens and the past president of Regent College, said we should ask ourselves these three questions for uncovering our life:
 - What is the single most important thing in your life to you?
 - What do you want life to be about?
 - At this point in your life what do you want to learn next?

Paul Stevens has also given some suggestions to help busy Christians lean into the tension of unbalanced life.

1. See God in all of it
We've to see God in the middle of life, but not in the margin. In all the experiences – in work, in sleep, in leisure, in church, in eating and dressing – in all aspects of our lives to see God in it. But especially when you're feeling tension and pressure, God's there.
2. Recognize there will be seasons
We experience time in seasons: a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to seek, and a time to lose ... (Eccl. 3:1-8). This is not an endless round without inner coherence or sense. Time, like work, is an evangelist to take us beyond the present to recognize that we are being sought by God (3:11).
3. Experience the spirituality of time
Regard time not as a resource to be managed but as a gift of God. We are stewards entrusted with time but not owning it, and are accountable to God for our stewardship. God never asks you to do more in a given day than He's given you time to do. If you're stressed, pushed and can't accomplish what you think you're supposed to do in a day, it's probably because you're doing things that God doesn't want you to do. We have enough time.
4. Adopt spiritual practice for living a disciplined life. For example, the Ignatian *Examen* is particularly helpful when practiced at the end of the day:
 - a. Place yourself in God's presence
 - b. For what moment today am I most grateful?
 - c. For what moment today am I least grateful?
 - d. Review your day slowly
 - e. What are you thankful for?
 - f. What do you regret?
 - g. What patterns do you see over the last day, week, month, or year?
 - h. What do these patterns tell you about your relationship to God?

- i. Take your observations into prayer, telling everything to God and asking God for understanding. Allow God to move you – and to surprise you, if necessary.



R. Paul Stevens has been a pastor, a student counselor and a businessman. From 1999 until 2005 he was professor of marketplace theology and leadership at Regent College. Through teaching, coaching, advocating and writing, his mission is to empower ordinary people to integrate their faith and life from Monday to Sunday. More about him can be found at www.rpaulstevens.com.

Extended Resource 延伸资源

More resources for you to live an *unbalanced* life ...

Keith H. Hammonds, 'Balance Is Bunk!' *Fast Company* 87, October 2004. Downloadable at: www.fastcompany.com/magazine/87/balance-1.html

An extremely powerful argument against pursuing a balanced life in a non-religious language. A must read.

R. Paul Stevens Marketplace Lectures DVD (Vocatio Creation, 2008) ISBN 978-988-99601-2-4

Disc 1: Taking Your Soul to Work: Experiencing God in the Marketplace

Disc 2: Breaking the Myth of Work-Life Balance: Living an Unbalanced Life Graciously

Can be ordered at:

www.vocatiocreation.com.hk/products.html

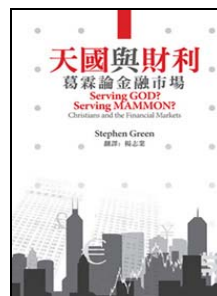
Busyness is pathological in our fast-paced society and global marketplace. Parents feel they cannot give quantity time to their children so they try the time-saver, quality time. But they strive to hold it all together: work, family, social responsibilities and, if they are Christians, church life. Can it be done? Done as a perfectly balanced life? Examining the sources of busyness as well as the extraordinary life-pattern given to us by Jesus, Paul will lead us to explore another model of "keeping it all together": Living the tension well.

Book Review 书评

Title: *Serving God? Serving Mammon? Christians and the Financial Markets* (《天国与财利》原著)

Author: Stephen Green (HSBC chairman)

Publisher: Harper Collins (1996)



Close your eyes and flash the following images through your mind: The Hang Seng Index tumbled 1,000 points in a day ... The Japanese Yen fell to a ten-year low ... Another financial crisis in the headlines ... The markets in turmoil ... Dealers surrounded by screens and telephones and shouting out buy and sell orders in a frenzy ... A reckless trader brought down the whole company ...

To many people, the financial markets have a dreadful reputation because they behave like casinos. Slick traders, earning huge salaries and bonuses, gamble ruthlessly with depositors' money. Hedge fund managers bring a government to their knees by shorting the country's currency. For Christians the world of financial markets raises many challenging issues. How do they benefit humanity? What effect do they have on the spirituality of those who work in them? How can it be right to devote such energy, talent, and inventiveness to what many people regard as nothing more than speculation? Can the Kingdom of God be found in the midst of all these aggressive, brutal, and frantic financial activities? Is the financial world nothing but a temple of Mammon – to be avoided and denounced as the unacceptable greedy and materialistic face of capitalism?

In *Serving God? Serving Mammon?*, Stephen Green attempts to answer these questions not only from the perspective of Christian faith but also from the inside. He maintains that "too often the Christian Church has spoken out against money and the market from the outside. But we can never see the kingdom of God properly from a distance. Jesus reminds us that only when we are in the midst of it all can we find the kingdom is in our midst. So the aim is to find the answers from within. Christians who work in the

markets – are they serving God? Or are they fooling themselves and serving Mammon instead?” Green’s emphasis on the inside perspective distinctively separates his book from the rest in the area. Is he qualified to take up such an ambitious task? His unusual background suggests so. The author is an experienced senior executive with an international banking group. At the same time, he is also an ordained non-stipendiary minister of the Church of England. Given his professional and clerical background, he is well positioned to tackle the issues from both perspectives.

As revealed by the chapter titles, the author’s main concern is the relationship between the financial markets and the traders. Who are the servants? Who are the masters? To address these issues, Green first highlights some special features of modern financial markets and then surveys the attitude of the Christian Church to the financial markets down the centuries. From very early on, Christian teaching treated money as the root of all sorts of social evil. For example, Church teaching until at least the fifteenth century held that usury (taking interest on loans) was contrary to the law of God. Augustine bluntly called usury a crime. Thomas Aquinas considered taking interest in any form to be morally wrong. Luther expressed that moneylenders deserved to be excommunicated and should be denied a Christian burial. Against this historical background, Green begins to offer his biblical and pragmatic analyses of the financial markets.

As an academic economist, I shared most of Green’s views on the functions and contributions of the financial markets. However, Christians who are not familiar with modern economics and finance may find his propositions difficult to understand and accept. For example, he claims that the Church has mistakenly been more ready to talk about the moral issues involved in the distribution of wealth than to grapple with the specific dilemmas involved in the creation of wealth. He argues that there is no such thing as a just price for anything. Had the Church really understood this fundamental concept, then there would not have been so much hostility against the financial world and so many grave mistakes made. More importantly, Karl Marx might not have any audience and communism would not have prevailed.

As a Christian, I am impressed by Green’s persistence in treating work as a calling and taking work seriously. He contends that Christians in the marketplace are called to work there, not by chance or through drift or because it is the way to wealth or to excitement, but because God wants them, personally, to work in that corner of his kingdom. Christians in the workplace are either serving God or serving mammon, and there is nothing in between. While

Green acknowledges that it may not be easy to serve God in the financial world, Christians have to respond to the challenges with responsibility and integrity. He offers some practical advice for Christians to achieve these goals.

Green has produced an admirable book on a very important topic. While one may not agree with all his viewpoints and analyses, his accomplishment in studying the problems from both a Christian perspective and an inside perspective should be highly commended. All Christians should share his enthusiasms towards work. Although his Christian perspective offers few new insights on the issues, his analysis from within may surprise some readers.

*Reviewed by Dr. Siu-fai Leung (Professor of Economics,
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology)*

Events 活动

23-26 Oct 2008@Tsimshatsui Swatow Christian Church
(尖沙咀潮人生命堂)

Conversion and Transformation: Enabling Personal & Social Transformation in the Marketplace

信主与更新：内圣外王的职场圣徒

Rev. Dr. Gordon T. Smith (President, reSource Leadership International; formerly associate professor of spiritual theology and VP/academic dean of Regent College; personal website: www.gordontsmith.com)

- *Open Lecture 1* (23rd): The Language of Revivalism has Failed Us—Re-Framing Conversion for Marketplace Christians [何谓信耶稣？从奋兴运动说起]
- *Open Lecture 2* (24th): Conversion is (Only) a Good Beginning: The Call to Personal and Social Transformation [信主仅是开始：个人更新与社会改革的呼召]

June 2009

Table Spirituality: Eating, Hospitality and Mission

Rev. Dr. Simon C. Holt (Lecturer in Spirituality and Pastoral Care, Whitley College, University of Melbourne; blog: <http://simoncareyholt.typepad.com>)

18-20 Sep 2009

Walking in the Ways of the Lord: Old Testament Ethics for the Church and the Marketplace

Rev. Dr. Christopher J. H. Wright (International Ministries Director, Langham Leadership International)

Dec 2009, R. Paul Stevens: **Liberating the Laity**