

The Fourth Lausanne Congress Equipping Believers in the Workplace

5,000 Christians from more than 200 nationalities came to this congress, with over 1000 participants choosing the workplace track and examining the potential of the workplace as a platform for outreach and ministry. Kina Robertshaw recounts the progress in their daily meetings from being called not just to share the Gospel in the workplace but also to serve and minister; to seeing work as worship in the context of a fractured world; to overcoming injustices in the workplace; to empowering and supporting the current generation.

A major theme of the Fourth Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Incheon, Korea, was equipping believers in the workplace to share the gospel and participate in the Great Commission (Matt 28:20).

Attending the Fourth Lausanne Congress in South Korea has been one of the most extraordinary experiences of my life. I

extend my deepest thanks to all who devoted their time, resources, and prayers to the Congress and the Korean Church for their remarkable efficiency and warm hospitality. Over 5,000 Christians from more than 200 nationalities gathered in Incheon, South Korea, for this extraordinary event, which combined worship, fellowship, and teaching in

an inspiring experience. Delegates represented a diverse array of nations, demographics, and mission interests. I had the privilege of speaking during the Workplace Track, discussing work as a form of worship, and drawing on numerous inspiring examples from the Christian entrepreneurs I have engaged with through my research on faith and business.



Initiated in 1974 by Billy Graham and John Stott, the Lausanne Movement was designed to unite global evangelical leaders in sharing the gospel. The inaugural Congress in Lausanne, Switzerland (after which the Movement was subsequently named), established a framework for faith and mission. The movement promotes collaboration and innovation in Christian outreach through various congresses and initiatives, fostering dialogue and action across denominations worldwide. One of the most significant outcomes of the first Congress was the establishment of the Lausanne Covenant¹, a powerful document that remains highly relevant today.

Lausanne Global Workplace Forum

Workplace ministry was initially introduced at the Second Lausanne Congress in 1989. Since that time, numerous workplace ministries with both local and regional focuses have been established. The significance of the workplace was formally recognised as a component of "God's good purpose" during the Third Lausanne Congress in 2010. The Lausanne Global Workplace Forum, held in 2019 in Manila, convened leaders and practitioners from across the globe to deliberate and collaborate on strategies to effectively integrate faith and work. At the 2019 Workplace Forum, I first became involved with the Lausanne Movement, collaborating with Richard Higginson. This gathering attracted over 900 leaders from workplaces worldwide to examine the potential of workplaces as platforms for outreach and ministry.² It is notable that approximately 65 per cent of the attendees, representing 110 countries, identified as Christians whose primary professional settings lie outside traditional church or ministry organisations. Richard and I shared examples of discipleship in the marketplace, drawing on illustrations from our book *A Voice to be Heard*.³

Workplace Track

The workplace offers significant opportunities for evangelism. For

several decades, Richard Higginson has been a passionate advocate for workplace ministry, a passion that we mutually share. The Workplace Track at the Lausanne gathering attracted individuals interested in Workplace Ministry, Business as Mission, Tentmaking, and the Academic Ministry & Educators Network. Remarkably, over 1,000 individuals registered for the Workplace Track, highlighting the importance of workplace ministry. The workplace is a vital environment where believers and non-believers interact, making it vital for the fulfilment of the Great Commission.

Full-Time for Such a Time as This

The Workplace Track theme, "Full-Time for Such a Time as This," was inspired by Esther 4:14, Mordecai's challenge to his niece Queen Esther, at a critical time in the Jewish nation's fortunes: 'Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for such a time as this'. The track covered four topics, each featuring speakers and panel practitioners sharing their experiences.⁴

Day 1: Every Believer Called to Every Purposeful Work

The speakers discussed the concept of purposeful work related to creation and redemption and the call for every believer to engage in meaningful labour. Each believer is designed to fulfil a unique purpose through their work, integral to God's plan for humanity. In Genesis, we learn that work is not a result of sin; instead, it reflects our creation in God's image and our ability to create through our endeavours. This applies to all valid forms of work, whether spiritual or physical, visible or hidden, temporal or eternal (Genesis 1). The Cross redeems not only individuals but the entirety of Creation. Consequently, God calls every believer not just to share the Gospel but also to serve and minister, embody the Gospel in their lives, and participate in the redemption of the world's flawed systems.

Day 2: To Serve in Everyday Ministry

In this context, the speakers, including myself, discussed the interrelationship between work and worship. The Hebrew term "avodah" conveys meanings of both worship and service. We are inherently designed for worship, and in the absence of worship directed towards God, our worship tends to gravitate towards various other things. Therefore we must worship God through our daily work, extending beyond the physical boundaries of our church buildings. Worship within the context of a broken world of work raises pertinent questions. How do believers navigate the challenges presented by this fractured world, including its inherent corruptions, injustices, inequalities, and inequities? How can believers strive against these prevailing currents to contribute to the common good and promote human flourishing?

Day 3: Witnessing in Every Aspect of Life

On the third day, we welcomed three speakers and a panel discussion. The speakers addressed how to overcome challenges in the workplace, the role of Christians as both providers and witnesses, and the global Christian communities' responsibility to equip the church for witnessing in every aspect of life. As believers encounter various challenges and temptations in their work environments, how can we, as communities witnessing for Christ, overcome them? Workplace Christians serve as God's means for Kingdom advancement. The Good News aims to provide support to the underprivileged (Isaiah 61:1-4 cf Luke 4:18-19), which includes the economically disadvantaged, the hungry, thirsty, homeless, and those who are hurting or in bondage (Matthew 25:35-40). Resources produced in the workplace are intended to benefit both the local community and those beyond (Romans 10:15). How can we directly or indirectly support these individuals through our daily work?



Day 4: For Everyone and Everything Reconciled in Christ

The final day of the Track focused on equipping the saints for the workplace and acknowledging the differences in generations, from overarching worldviews and value systems to priorities and concerns. Dwindling numbers of professed followers of Jesus point to a crisis of belief and a questioning of God's existence. How can we empower and support the current generation? How can we encourage and disciple a new generation of workplace champions and leaders?

1. See <https://lausanne.org/statement/lausanne-covenant>.

2. FIBQ 20.1 reported on this event, with articles by two of the Forum speakers, Ruth S. Callanta and Courtney Rountree Mills.

3. See Richard Higginson and Kina Robertshaw, *A Voice to be Heard: Christian Entrepreneurs Living out their Faith*, IVP, 2017.


4. Speakers included Joseph Vijayam, Catalyst for Lausanne Movement Workplace Ministry and CEO of Ovile Technology and the Executive Director; Steve Osei-Mensah, chairman of the Langham UK Partnership; David Doong, General Secretary, Chinese Coordination Center of World Evangelization; Mats Tunehag, Chairman of BAM Global; and Henry Kaestner, Co-Founder of Faith Driven Entrepreneur and Faith Driven Investor.

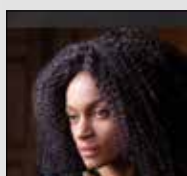
Lausanne and World Evangelical Alliance Launch Global Day of Faith at Work

Each participant received a Business Bible commissioned by Lausanne leadership for the workplace. The Global Day of Faith at Work (GDFW) will become an annual global event beginning on May 1, 2025. Samuel Chiang, Deputy Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance, remarked, "This initiative has the potential to change the way Christians engage with their work environments. By supporting believers, we recognise the workplace as the largest mission field, allowing them to showcase their faith on a daily basis."

Planned for May 1, 2025, the GDFW coincides with International Labor Day, emphasising that work can be an act of worship and highlighting the vital role of Christians in the workplace. This initiative is inspired by the vision of the late Rev. Billy Graham, who believed the next significant move of God would occur through believers active in their jobs. Billy Graham noted that the workplace is the final frontier for mission.

Questions for Reflection

Why is workplace theology often overlooked in theological education? How can Christians support and partner with church leaders to meet humanity's needs? I'd love to hear your thoughts; feel free to email me at revkinarobertshaw@gmail.com. 



Kina Robertshaw is the Rector of the Highley, Billingsley, Glazeley, Deuxhill and Chelmarsh Benefice in the diocese of Hereford. Originating from Angola and Zambia, she shifted from a career in retail fashion to serve as a parish priest, while also working with Christian entrepreneurs and engaging in workplace ministry. Kina holds a Master's degree in Theology with a focus on Christian entrepreneurship and is committed to sharing the gospel.