

THE NEW CLERGY

written by Salome De Klerk

She held on for a little too long. Her embrace felt without release as she tearfully let go of me, instinctively suggesting that her tears had very little to do with what our disciplinary policy calls “corrective counselling” but were more indicative of something much deeper.

Her tears had my decisions cornered. Do I continue “doing my job” or do I respond to the corrective counselling within, letting God do his job through mine. Welling up within my own emotions was a cry for His help – “God, how do I do both well?”

Here, submitted to His corrective counselling, I find my conversion. It’s a conversion echoing the words of Douglas Sherman: “We cannot afford a preference for church work and a depreciation of daily work. Rather, we must do God’s work, whenever it needs doing, (Sherman D: 1987).

The question asked, as I let His corrective counselling mature my perspective of work, was “Lord, how do I let You do Your work, through mine?”

This question led me to realise that we cannot excel in anything, especially our daily work, beyond God’s heart. John 3:16 showcases the heart of God in all things, including our work: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life”.

The spiritual reality is that God still sows sons and daughters into the world out of love for the world. Love for the world, for the people within our workplaces, is still the primary motivation for the sowing of us. If you haven’t felt specially sown lately, be reminded of this spiritual reality, that we carry within us daily the hope of Christ’s love and his finished work to a dying world and workplace.

If our labour does not carry this spiritual reality, we may potentially be sitting with a false and futile reality for all our work and service. 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, shows us a way of labour that fundamentally honours Christ’s existence, namely demonstrating God’s love for the world. This supported by Neuman’s comment that we go to work for the same reason we go to church, namely to worship and serve (Neuman D: 1987).

It’s here where my conversion moves me from a place of professional disengagement from my colleague’s tears to a place of spiritually recognising her absolute worth and value before the Father. This very recognition unleashes the laity within, thereby trusting God to do His work through mine.

His focus on commissioning for all of us as His “new clergy” has not changed – we are the saints equipped for the work of God’s ministry, according to Ephesians 4:12.

My prayer: may the eyes of our hearts be enlightened to recognise the spiritual reality that our daily work is an extension of God’s work of love.

Moving forward, may we be His sons and daughters revealed in our places of work (Romans 8:19).