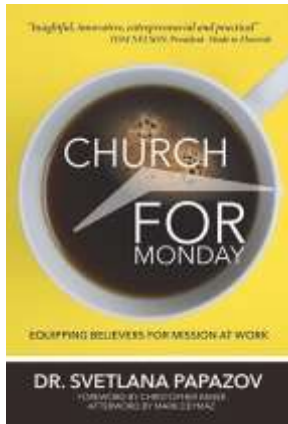


Reviews



Church for Monday: Equipping Believers for Mission at Work by Svetlana Papazov

Oviedo FL: Living Parables Publishers, 2019. 184 pp.

This is one of the best and most enjoyable reads I have had in the past few years! Author Svetlana Papazov's energy, charisma, and endless ideas and insights almost knocked me over. While reading! Papazov has an inspiring personal story of living in a theologically and entrepreneurially repressed society behind the Iron Curtain, then coming to America, the land of the free and home of the brave. Her Christian faith nurtured in her by her parents grew to full maturity. But she was puzzled by the lack of living, fruitful engagement of the Christian church with a culture moving in the wrong direction. She got herself educated on both the business (specializing in landscape architecture) and theological sides (including a Doctor of Ministry), then got some great experience on the staffs of churches in Dallas and near the nation's capitol.

Then in Richmond, Virginia, Papazov planted Real Life Church—and partner organization Real Life Center for Entrepreneurial and Leadership Excellence. In *Church for Monday* Svetlana Papazov is not just sharing good ideas—she is sharing in-the-trenches experiences. Since the book came out in 2019, she has had to cope with the pandemic shut-down and distancing requirements just like the rest of us in our church, work, and social lives. How on earth do you move effectively and faithfully from “hands-on” and “face-to-face” mentoring and leadership to socially-distanced, virtual, on-line methods and means? (Attend our August 7, 2021 WP313 Forum to hear about this newest chapter!).

Church for Monday is presented in three parts. Part One, “Faithful Reorientation” is fifty pages that are by themselves worth the price of the book. It is a whirlwind but beautifully expressed. She defines the terms, provides the strong biblical case for us becoming marketplace churches (like Jesus and the New Testament pattern), and explains how marketplace-embedded churches bless their neighborhoods and cities with God-honoring, people-helping, creation-preserving goods, services, and relationships. That is valuable in its own right but it also leads more often than not to inquiries about the faith that grounds and motivates us. Honestly: I have been very busy working on this topic for 55 years—but I felt like every good idea I ever had about integrating faith and work got expressed and practiced by Papazov. Pastors should visit workplaces and read some business/workplace literature. Empty spaces in church buildings could be used to incubate and coach start-ups. Congregants in various lines of work could be commissioned in church services for their service in the market-lace. And so on.

Part Two, “Culture and Church,” is sixty pages of reflections on the philosophical, sociological, and spiritual condition of the culture in which God has planted today's church. This will be helpful to readers.

My only quibble is that today's "post-modernism" (which Papazov correctly opposes for its relativism and chaos) was itself a reaction against the inadequacies of "modernism," the predecessor culture of rationalism, scientism, technologism, individualism and the exaltation of (Western) Man (and yes, you can also say "male). This is not a criticism of Papazov but a reminder that there is more to be said on this topic. Her critique and analysis of the cultural context is spot on in itself and this is relevant to our marketplace churches. We need to understand the cultural values embedded in the places we wish to salt and light.

Part Three "Fruitful Application" suggests a new "scorecard" for evaluating our churches (and businesses). Not "how many converts" has our church made" but "how much impact have our people had where they work and live?" In the final chapter Papazov reflects on the impacts Christian faithfulness can make on the business world, on government, education, technology, the media, arts, entertainment, and on women, millennials, and Gen Z. Lots of concrete examples. This is all what I call "Workplace Discipleship 201"—the next course after the basics, getting specific and concrete about our various job specialties. It is the lifelong adventure of following Jesus Christ. Thank you Svetlana Papazov.

David W. Gill Executive Director & Chief Writer

David studied at UC Berkeley (BA), SF State (MA), and USC (PhD). He served as professor of Christian ethics and workplace/business ethics for forty years at New College Berkeley, North Park University, St. Mary's College, and Gordon-Conwell Seminary. His ninth book, *Workplace Discipleship 101*, is forthcoming in 2020. David was ordained at Allen Temple Baptist Church. He lives in Oakland and is a member and "Workplace Discipleship Coach" at First Covenant Church. dgill@wp313.org