

Thank God It's Monday!

Making a Difference through Living and Proclaiming Faith in the Workplace



They say great things come in small packages. Meet Elaine Kung, a 5' dynamic force that's making her mark. Born in Hong Kong, China and raised in poverty, her family made the difficult decision to emigrate to the United States. She eventually attended Cornell and Princeton Universities, and applied her double engineering degrees as a Product Marketing Director for AT&T Inc.. One of her proudest achievements is the difference she has made through her unrelenting drive to bring faith into the workplace. She led a vibrant bi-vocational life and teaching journey (that is, firstly by living her faith in the workplace and secondly by teaching what she had learnt there) during her 33-year career and her retirement/'reFirement' of five years, enabling a new generation of bi-vocational ministers, mobilising the faith and work movement around the world. Here is her story.

I was born in Hong Kong. Both of my parents worked in blue-collar jobs to make ends meet. When I was very young, due to political and family circumstances, my father lived in China while my mother remained in Hong Kong with my sister and me. She took us to visit our father twice a year. Things were not easy and at one point we were homeless. Looking back, those tough years taught me to be a survivor. At 14, my father was finally approved for emigration to Hong Kong and joined us.

We lived in a cramped 200 square foot room with my family of six, which included my younger brother and my grandma. To respect my family's privacy, I would pull the covers over my head and study by flashlight late into the night, where I found hope in my books. We attended a church school and were required to study the Bible. I did so out of obligation in order to get good grades but to me the Bible was a fairy tale. I did not believe in any God. I only believed in myself and lived by the proverb 'we reap what we sow'. When my school friends invited me to church, I thought it was a waste of time and stayed at home to study instead. I was bad-tempered, greedy, selfish, arrogant, and felt lonely and empty inside.

My parents, struggling to provide for our family, made the decision to emigrate

to America. Arriving in the State of Maryland at 16, I was thrust into a new world. It reminds me of the Chinese fable by Zhuang Zi about a frog who lives in a well and only sees the perspective of life from inside the darkness, viewing the outside world through a sliver of light at the top. Growing up in the small city of Hong Kong, I was that frog, limited by my myopic view of the world of poverty and hopelessness. My one sliver of light was studying. Coming to America was like finally stepping out of my well.

As a foreigner who didn't speak the language, it was hard to make friends in high school. I continued to withdraw into my world of books. When I wasn't in my room studying, I was working at a restaurant earning a minimum wage along with my family. I was frustrated and angry, and continued to be somewhat of a troublemaker.

Among the books I owned was the Bible, and it sat on my shelf, unopened. Despite being introduced to and raised in the Christian faith, my scientific mindset prevented me from believing in God. "After all," I reasoned, "I can't see, touch or hear Him, so therefore He must not be real." Then one day I got a letter from a friend in Hong Kong who said she was continuing to pray for me. Her words got me thinking about God

and faith and the things we believe in but cannot hear, feel or see. My scientific mindset immediately went to the theory of gravity. You can't see it, but you can feel it. I reasoned God transcends time and space, and was capable of listening to my friend's prayer in Hong Kong while watching over me in the States. He's not visible, yet we know He exists.

That actually made sense to me, so I picked up the Bible and began to read. Studying it from both a philosophical and a scientific perspective, the lessons became clear. I was humbled as I questioned my long-held misgivings about God's existence. This Bible verse says it well:

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

I was fascinated to learn about famous scientists who were committed Christians - Isaac Newton, Michael Faraday, Blaise Pascal and others. Pascal wrote in his book *Pensées*, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every person, and it can never be filled by any created thing. It can only be filled by God, made known through Jesus Christ." Reading this changed my life.

I went on to have my most relevant epiphany – accepting the belief that through Jesus, Son of God, who died on the cross and rose again in three days, my sins were forgiven. I accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour and my best friend. My life changed from being a troublemaker to becoming a peacemaker.

I loved college and maintained a 4.0 average (equivalent to an A). It caught the attention of my physics professor who encouraged me to transfer to his *alma mater*, Cornell University. That’s when I experienced God’s presence and guidance in my life. I won a scholarship to pursue a double major in Electrical and Materials Science Engineering. Cornell is also where I met Dominic, my husband, a PhD candidate in Chemical Engineering. During my junior year at Cornell, a renowned professor of semiconductors hired me to work in his research lab through the Federal Work Study financial aid program. He introduced me to AT&T Bell Laboratories where I was hired as a summer intern.

Upon graduation, Dominic and I received great job offers in the State of New Jersey and we got married. I went to work full time at AT&T where I would remain for over 30 years. AT&T paid for my tuition to get my Master’s degree from Princeton University, and sponsored my Executive Education training at the Columbia, Cornell, and University of Pennsylvania Wharton business schools.

The Lord kept working miracles in my life. AT&T values diversity and encourages employees of various cultures and beliefs to come together to develop their professional skills. In addition to serving in the Asian-American employee resource group as a speaker and leader, I formed a faith-based group whose mission was to integrate our Christian-based principles into the workplace. We gathered at lunch to apply biblical principles to the practice of leadership. Both in America and when I started my international ministry, I discovered that people find teaching easier to remember when I use words that start with the same letter

or together make up another word, i.e. acrostics. I personally put an empty chair in my office for Jesus and invited him to become part of my work life. I was determined not to leave Jesus at church and at home. As a result, I became more effective because Jesus, my CEO, ‘showed up’ to guide me with his Five Blessings, that is, his:

- Presence,
- Promises,
- Power,
- Provisions and
- Pleasant surprises.

During the many years of my rewarding career, I have held numerous roles with many bosses including wireline (cabling), mobility, network solutions and application services. At every job change, I enjoyed seeking God’s will and experienced those Five Blessings in these five ways of guiding me to a clear decision:

- God’s Scripture,
- God’s Spirit,
- God’s Support (people),
- God’s Surrounding (circumstances)
- God’s Sovereignty.

teach the meaning of work, using five ‘W’s – Why, Who, When, Where and What; and also five ‘Knows – God’s will; the five Ps (Purpose, Principle, Passion, People, Performance); Self; Others; and be Known; and “How” to work.

The "How" to work curriculum teaches the Art of Eight Quotients or Qualities (8Q) Leadership as a holistic relationship with God, with Self, with People, and with Projects. I believe these eight Quotients have built me up as a servant leader, rising above the challenges, influencing beyond limitations. My definition of leadership in eleven words is: “Influencing others to be their best and accomplish a shared vision”. Hence, everyone is a leader, regardless of your title. I have applied these eight Quotients to my work, home, teaching, church and local community.

My leadership and faith journey

My leadership and faith journey has matured through these three stages



The process of experiencing God is as important as the result of the decision. Being a Christian at work, I am Called To Work, and I value the importance of workplace discipleship, exercising my spiritual discipline at work. Based on my learning from the Bible, my career journey (filled with failures and successes), extensive executive education at Cornell, Columbia and Pennsylvania Universities, and a variety of leadership training at work, I have developed a series of Called To Work workplace discipleship curricula. These

in the 33 years of my career: During my first 10 years, even though I was already a committed believer, when I focused so much more on Projects than on People, I came across as arrogant, picky and selfish. I was a workaholic, so I expected others to work as hard as I did – not a realistic and reasonable expectation. I was ignorant in my “self aware” and “others aware”, so I often hit the wall. During my next 15 years, while I tried to overcome the past mistakes, I was still quite demanding and was a perfectionist. Others gave me

How to Live out our 6M Prayer Christian Influence @ Work		
Live 6M	I should	I should NOT
Model [SQ] Godly character	Put on Christlike examples	Put on wolf skin going with the flow
Make [AQ,IQ,XQ] good work	Do my best, trust God w/ rest	Be a mediocre worker
Minister [EQ] grace & love	Love unlovable, forgive/forget	Get mad and get even
Mold [LQ] office culture	Positive influence in the office	React to negative politics
Mouthpiece [CQ] truth & justice	Speak up, integrity, assertive	Hide my faith as a secret agent
Messenger [HQ] of gospel	Share faith in actions, words	Miss opportunity on reason of hope

the notorious personal brand of “crash and burn”. Despite my successful project execution and results, I would sacrifice some relationships along the way. During my final eight years, I eventually learned how to put People before Projects. I became a committed Servant Leader, building trusted and respectful relationships. I was serious in developing and practising the Art of 8Q Leadership and the 6M (see above) characteristics from the LICC (London Institute of Contemporary Christianity). Later I developed the 6M workplace prayer used at the 2019 CMC altar call (see below), one of the workplace prayers posted in our website, well embraced by thousands.

Through my ups and downs, I have learned many painful lessons from my own immaturity and shortcomings. Yet I have failed forward, not backward. I have built up my ABC: ‘Adversity Builds Character’ (Romans 5:3-5). As executives and servant leaders, we need to be good **L.I.S.T.E.N.E.R.S.**, so I have summarized these eight qualities as an acrostic,

highlighting the key areas to be developed in each. In addition to these qualities, effective communication is crucial and foundational to how I convey and demonstrate my leadership skills. I have developed a curriculum and delivered a few series on Workplace Communication in biblical and practical ways, such as SHINE Your Talk series.

Years later, I decided to expand our mission and partnered with Jason Browning, a fellow Christian at Lucent Technologies Inc (now part of Nokia Corporation). In 1996, we founded an annual Christian professional development conference, “Called To Work” *to edify and expand the kingdom of God around the world by encouraging and equipping working Christians to be spiritual ambassadors for Christ in our everyday life*”

Our website, <http://calledtowork.org> describes our fast-growing teaching ministry, especially during COVID. It shares our history and resources. Drew Crandall, our critical ministry partner, provides valuable and practical resources on faith and work, and sends out weekly

Quotients	Development
Leadership – LQ	Inspire vision and mission
Influence – EQ	Energise, align, collaborate
Self-aware – HQ	Humility, SWOT*, testimony
Transformation – XQ	Thrive in uncertainty, adapt
Excellent learning agility – IQ	Fast learner, find creative solutions
Noble character – CQ	Courage, culture, curious, diversity, integrity
Effective communication	ABCDE** skills, SHINE*** values
Resilience – AQ	Adversity, grit, fail forward
Spiritual – SQ	Faith foundation, relationship centred

* Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis
 ** Active listening, Body language, Character praise, Disciplined tongue, Express affirmation
 *** Leadership and communication values – see the SHINE acrostic in the next column

devotional emails to thousands in our distribution network. During COVID, we have translated and sent out weekly Thank God It’s Monday (TGIM) Chinese devotions to thousands who have attended our Chinese series of Called To Work type conferences and courses around the world.

We invite practitioners from corporations and organisations to share their lessons in leadership and experience of faith in the workplace with the other conference participants. Our speakers have ranged from White House staff to national and global Fortune 500 (the 500 companies with the highest turnover) executives sharing stories of working in excellence. They share the importance of enjoying what you do since that is where many people spend most of their waking hours. We also offer a multitude of practical workshops designed to help leaders grow, and we ask God to guide us to **S.H.I.N.E.** in five areas:

- S**ervant leadership and **S**ensitivity to care for people
- H**umility to apologise and **H**onesty to seek 360° feedback
- I**ntegrity to lead and **I**nfluence with servanthood and vision
- N**urture courage to speak up wisely and **N**urture respect with others
- E**dify, **E**mpathise, and **E**quip others to be their best for the greater good.

During COVID, we have expanded our conferences, workshops and courses to online, reaching out to thousands globally – enabling a new generation of ‘bi-vocational ministers’, helping every worker to live out their dual roles: in their calling at work and in teaching believers. We also partner closely with other workplace ministries, expanding our influence worldwide – mobilising the faith and work movement across churches, companies and communities in English and in Chinese.

As I look back on my journey, I define it as evolving from living on the edge to living out my dream in America, better said as my dream in God’s kingdom. I hope my legacy demonstrates the value of being a servant leader of integrity. My life purpose has been and always will be to help others become better leaders

surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses

1996	2011: 15 yrs	2012-2015	2016: 20 yrs	2019 Breakthru	2020-2022 Accelerate Movement
1 st annual English conference in NJ	15 th annual last English conference in NJ	CTW talks: US, Overseas, English, Chinese	Dallas reunion DTS faith/work networks	Lausanne GWF Theology of Work Moment -> Movement	10 Ministries founded WAMSA 15+ Global ministry partners for courses 40+ Coaches/trainers, 4 generations 70+ Weekly TGIM Chinese CTW devotions
Launch	Wait	Prepare	Grow	CMC: 6 talks + Bi-voc Altar Call 4K+	25+ course/broadcast series; 10+ Books 10K+ audience online/offline
250+ attendees	100 ~ 200 attendees	Hundreds	Hundreds	Thousands	10+ Global WAMSA Eng/Chinese webinars ~7K Global registrants ~60 countries 20+ 1on1/month; 6 graduations in 11 days 30+ Talks/month during peak

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through faith. God did not waste any opportunity with me. He used every adversity, talent, valley and mountain-top experience to equip me to serve him and his children – all by God’s grace, for God’s glory.

In God’s divine appointment, He has guided our Called To Work teaching through these six distinct stages during the past 26 years: Launch, Wait, Prepare, Grow, Breakthrough from moment to Movement, Multiply the Movement with acceleration during COVID.

2019 is the year filled with breakthroughs, locally, regionally and globally, transforming from the past Called To Work *Moment* (events) to *Movement* (ongoing equipping and expanding). Some breakthrough examples included: attending the Lausanne Global Workplace Forum in the Philippines and being filmed for the Global Classroom; chairing the Chinese Board for Theology of Work; giving the bi-vocational ministry call to come forward to the altar at the Chinese Mission Convention (CMC) with some 4,000 attendees where over 400 responded to the altar call; giving 26 talks in November travelling in person; witnessing the 50 companies light up with Christian fellowship in the San Francisco Bay area within three months after speaking at the local workplace conference

During COVID in 2020–2022, Called To Work experienced the Movement accelerating and multiplying! In 2020, we relaunched our annual English conference named Work as Global Local Mission (WGLM), partnering with Go Live Serve and Theology of Work. In 2021, I invited nine ministries and one seminary to meet and we founded the Work As Mission Strategic Alliance (WAMSA), launching our annual Chinese WGLM conference. As of September 2022, we have held over ten webinars and conferences online in English and Chinese with diverse speakers, blessed with some 7,000 registrants from some 60 countries.

WAMSA consists of nine influential Chinese ministries and one seminary:

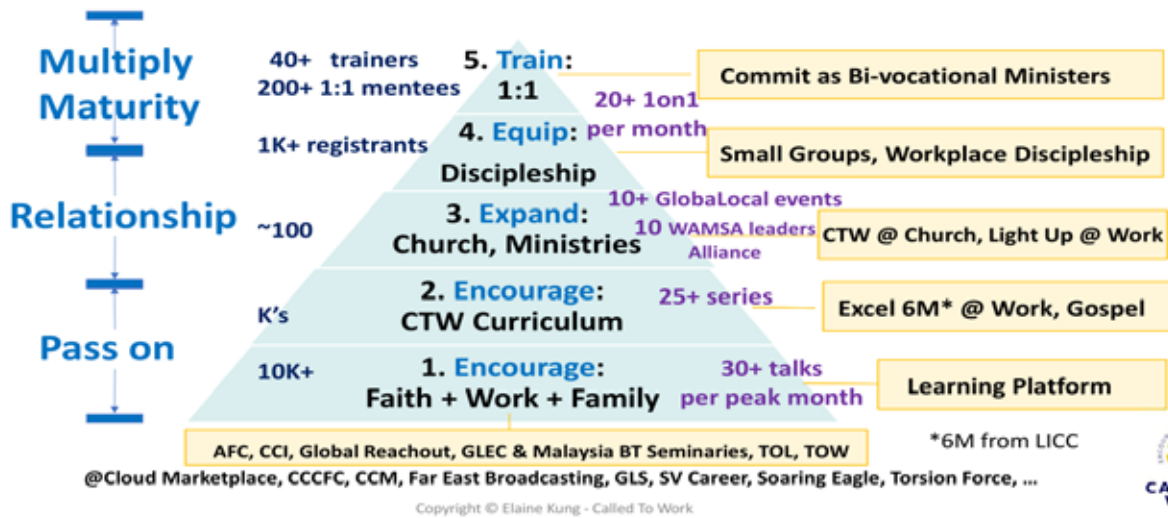
we are uniquely positioned to mobilise the faith and work movement in local churches. We are targeting three audiences with our four ‘E’s: **Encourage** the employers/employees with Workplace Discipleship programmes, **Equip and Empower** the bi-vocational ministers with *train the trainer* programmes, **Expand** the reach to local church leaders and pastors using the Round Table technique.

God is using Called To Work to influence growing numbers of attendees, enabling four generations of bi-vocational ministers as St. Paul advised in 2 Timothy 2:2: *train the trainers*. In addition to the increasing number of courses and global attendees that I

https://lausanne.org/lausanne-global-classroom/workplace-ministry-episode?utm_source=Lausanne+Movement+List&utm_campaign=6d4118405a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_04_01_07_18_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_602c1cb67d-6d4118405a-91739167

Called To Work: Multiply Discipleship Movement

Active Learning, Coaching, Small Groups, Life Application, Accountability



teach, the new milestone is the number of increasing graduations led by my students (trainers) who teach our Called To Work curricula to their local churches, companies and communities.

In late 2021, Called To Work celebrated our 25th anniversary. God blessed us with 25 diverse speakers who are leaders of influential ministries and seminaries from 19 states and countries. They are movers and shakers in the faith and work movement. They are my friends, mentors and co-workers from the past 25 years. Praise God for building these kingdom connections, expanding our ministry partnership globally.

What's next? After working in corporate America for over 30 years, Dominic and I retired in late 2017. God made it very

clear to us when, where and how to retire. Since retirement, we have been serving in full-time teaching. During COVID, I have taught over 25 series of Called To Work courses and broadcasts. Those teaching materials are being transcribed into 11 books in 2022 and 2023, far exceeding our expectations. These 11 book topics represent the following S.W.I.M. acronym, depicting the four concentric circles of life transformation from the inside out. With the gift and power of God's living water – the ripple of life influencing life – this is the core of our Called To Work teaching in Whole Person Discipleship including work.

We want to take our workplace faith mission to a whole new level. Our Called To Work mission is to **Encourage** workers, **Equip** leaders

and organisations, and **Expand** workplace ministry partnerships and geographic networks. We want to partner with local churches and global organisations to implement faith and work initiatives aligned to their needs.

We continue to give back to the community by sharing how the Bible has equipped us with many life skills, sharing our experience from the past decades on marriage, parenting, leadership, career development, and faith and work, travelling in the States and overseas. One of our favourite principles, *Let Go and let God*, teaches life lessons depicting how to let God guide our way. Though Dominic and I are retired, we find ourselves "ReFired" to deliver God's message to the workplace, families and universities.

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Ripples of Living Water: Life Influencing Life

- S**ELF CARE 自我关爱: 【工作生活平衡】，【Work-life Balance】，【职场高手的精力管理术】 Managing Your Stamina = 3 books
- W**orkplace discipleship 职场门训: 【职场使命】 职场门训系列, 【Called To Work】 curriculum, 【八高领导力的人生】 Life of 8Q Leadership, 【Art of 8Q Leadership】，【职场沟通八达通】，【SHINE Your Talk】 Workplace Communication = 6 books
- I**ntegrated life 整全人生: 【幸福人生下半场】 7F Half-Time = 1 book
- M**oving forward 保持前进: 【职场使命职场灵修 Called To Work TGIM Workplace Devotions】 = 1 bi-lingual book

【Elaine-Called To Work's 11 Books in progress】

S.W.I.M. - Secrets of Life Journey www.CalledToWork.org

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