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## **Faith And Work Movement Arrives In Sarasota**

*Event Focuses On Christians Integrating Faith Into The Workplace*

**SARASOTA, Florida, November 16, 2006** – In an environment frequently characterized by greed, dishonesty, and ruthless competition, a growing number of entrepreneurs who think of themselves as Christian businesspeople are bringing their faith to work. And the organizers of this weekend's "Nourish The Dream" event believe God wants them to do it.

"Business is a holy calling... no less significant than Billy Graham's calling," says David G. Johnson, CEO of Sarasota-based Epiphany Consulting, "For whatever reason, this idea crept into religious thinking that God wants you to be poor and therefore you were somehow not right to be involved in making money. Or if you did make money, the Church would thank you for your tithes and send you on your way," he says.

What does it mean for Christian entrepreneurs to integrate their faith into their businesses?

"It means that Christians base their operations on Biblical teachings," says Michael Q. Pink, author of *Selling Among Wolves... Without Joining the Pack!* "The idea is that God knows stuff, and filled Scripture with principles that can be applied to business practices," says Pink, who purports to have helped business increase sales by millions of dollars through his books, CDs and consulting work.

### **Christian Cash Cows?**

Johnson and Pink are on a mission to help Christians in the business world become all that they can be, and to do it with excellence.

"Gone are the days when Christians entering the business world are thought of as second-class within the Church world," says Johnson, who also serves as a Pastor in his local congregation, "Today, we recognize that they play a critical role in the Church of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and they're more than just a funding source for Christian work," he says.

Johnson and Pink are part of a line-up of speakers at "Nourish The Dream," which is being held Friday and Saturday at the Sarasota-Bradenton International Convention Center. With topics such as *7 Wealth Secrets of the Rainforest*, *Your Destiny in the Marketplace*, *7 Laws of Persuasion – How the Holy Spirit Persuades the Heart*, the event promises to teach attendees how to increase profits, reduce stress, and find fulfillment in the world of business.

### **Nationwide Movement**

They aren't alone. According to a story featured on the front cover of the February 1, 2006 "Fortune Small Business" magazine there are hundreds of businesses in the U.S. that claim to be serving God. Yale University founded its "Center for Faith and Culture" in response to the growing movement.

"Faith should not be locked away in stained glass buildings. Rather, it should be found in the nitty gritty of daily business; not in simplistic slogans or cliches, but in forming who we are and how we lead our organizations," says David Miller, Executive Director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture, which counts executives from Goldman Sachs International, Tyson Foods, Inc., and PepsiCo, Inc. among its board members.

## Using Faith

According to Johnson, there is some validity to the charge that some businesses label themselves as “Christian” or use a “fish symbol” purely as a way to attract customers. In other cases, he says, some businesses will attempt to excuse shoddy work, incompetence, lack of true customer service, and other shortfalls by leaning on their so-called “Christianity.”

“I refuse to use ‘Jesus’ to try to sell something,” says Dean Olinger, owner of the Wireless Giant store at 6115 S. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota. “We have valuable products and services, and I don’t need a cheap shortcut to try to win somebody’s business.”

“We are growing great companies for a greater purpose than just making money,” says Chuck Frary, who is a local representative of C12, the organization featured in the Fortune Small Business article. “These companies are attempting to make changes in peoples’ lives,” he says of the companies that make up his membership roster, which include Sarasota-based Hide-Away Storage Services, Inc. and Tri-County Air Conditioning and Heating, Inc.

C12 is one of the corporate sponsors of Nourish The Dream, which is scheduled for Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 7pm and continues Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup> from 8:30am to 1pm at the Sarasota-Bradenton International Convention Center. Online registration (\$47 for individuals and \$67 for couples) and additional information is available at <http://NourishTheDream.com>. Other speakers include Carlos Ramirez, President of Sarasota-based Ethnoslink International and Justin DeStoppelaire, President of C Service Consulting, Inc., based in Saint Petersburg, FL.

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Michael Q. Pink is the Founder of Selling Among Wolves ([www.sellingamongwolves.com](http://www.sellingamongwolves.com)), which provides training, coaching, and consulting services in the U.S. and abroad. He is the author of several best-selling books and has been featured on numerous radio and television programs, including *The 700 Club*. His office can be reached at (941) 377-9384