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John Beckett's Key to Business Success: Simply Serve

Speaker Urges Integration of Faith and Work Principles

John D. Beckett, chairman of RW Beckett Corp., told a standing-room only audience Saturday that his Elyria HVAC manufacturing company has three enduring values: integrity, excellence, and profound respect for the individual.

Those values are almost identical to Enron's, he announced ruefully, admitting that we all know what happened to Enron. "We've got to get it off the wall and into people's hearts," he said.

Beckett spoke at the At Work on Purpose-sponsored Faith Forward: Significance at Work event at Prasco in Mason. Beckett said finding significance at work-- any kind of work-- was linked to engaging in servant leadership-- thinking and acting like Jesus Christ.

Beckett knows of what he speaks. Author of bestsellers *Loving Monday* and *Mastering Monday*, he is considered a national leader in the faith-at-work movement. Brought up Episcopalian, as a young man he lived in two separate worlds: the Sunday world and the rest-of-the week world. The sacred and the secular were separate. Faith principles and work mores did not intersect.

In 1963, his father offered him a job at the family-owned HVAC business. Beckett was in his mid-20s, and thought he'd have 10 to 15 years to learn the ropes.

Then the unexpected happened, "two successive hammer blows that had an amazing effect on a young, confident MIT grad," he said. His father died of a sudden heart attack, and the company experienced a catastrophic fire, both in 1965. Beckett was devastated, and wondered whether he should leave the business and go into ministry in order to lead a meaningful life. After all, what was the significance of HVAC work? How could HVAC get him into the Kingdom?

He found answers to his questions in the Bible, and began applying Biblical principals to resolving conflict resolution at work. He began incorporating an intentional process in his company that integrated faith and work mores.

"You can be as much in the center of God's call at work as you can in ministry work," he said. "Simply serve in every situation into which you are called."

This use of the Bible as a guide to doing business has had profound ramifications for RW Beckett Corp. In 1963, the firm had a dozen employees. Now Beckett Corp. has three businesses, more than 600 employees, and annual revenues of \$100 million.

"John Beckett's message is that we all need to see the significance of the work we do every day," said Chuck Proudfit, At Work on Purpose (AWOP) president and event sponsor. "We need to acknowledge and affirm that God is the ultimate boss, and we need to work for Him. When God sees us working faithfully in small things, he offers bigger things to us."

Proudfit is also president of the fast-growing SkillSource business consultancy, which has been named a TriState Success Award winner by Cincy Magazine.

In 2009, under Proudfit's leadership, AWOP was a partner in expanding to 22 Cincinnati locations the region's Job Search Focus Groups, networking organizations for the unemployed. AWOP also helped implement the Career Achievement Network (CAN), a Web site linking the unemployed with jobs. The JSFG organization is the largest city-wide job search help group in the U.S.

AWOP was founded by Proudfit in 2003 as a ministry with three dimensions: to help people link their faith and work lives one work life, one work place, and one work community at a time.

AWOP now has 4,000 members who engage in coaching, chaplaincy, evangelism, executive roundtables, philanthropic BizNistries and consulting, all at the local, national and international level.

For more information, contact the organization www.atworkonpurpose.org.

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