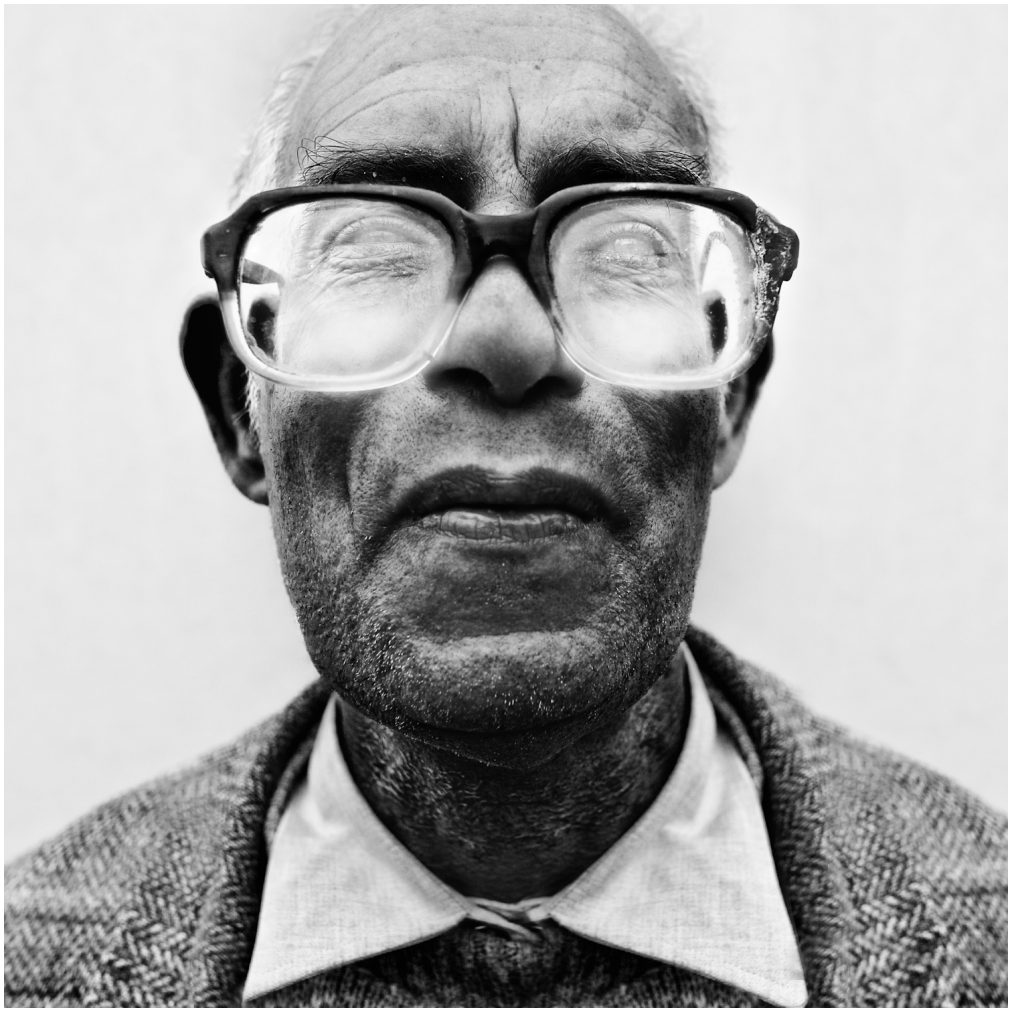
Imago Dei, Part One | A Representative Vocation

Being Human - Week Six
Christ the King Adult Education
March 18, 2018

Being Human

A Course in Biblical Anthropology, or Christian Ethics as Good News



Untitled, Lee Jeffries (2011)

Being Human

A Course in Biblical Anthropology, or Christian Ethics as Good News

1. *Mysterium Trinitatis*: The Trinity
    - **Covenantal Relationship and Seeking the Face of God**
2. *Ecce Homo*: Incarnation
    - **The meaning of embodied existence**
3. *Creatio Ex Nihilo*: The Meaning of Creation
    - **Gratitude, Boredom, and Technology**
4. *Homo Adorans*: The Chief End of Man
    - **Beauty and Desire**

Being Human

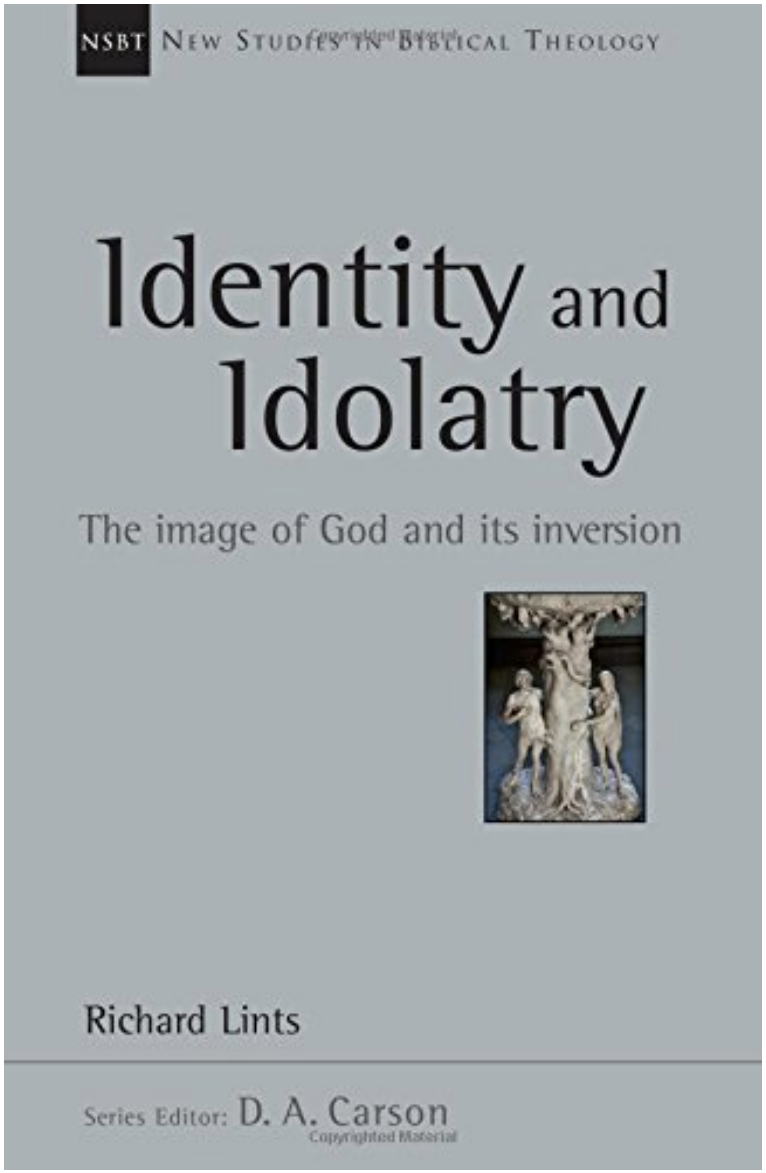
A Course in Biblical Anthropology, or Christian Ethics as Good News

5. *Imago Dei* 1: Humanity as *Representative* of God
    - **Vocation, Work, and Rest**
6. *Imago Dei* 2: Humanity as *Representational* of God
    - **Sex, Marriage, and Friendship**
7. The Church
    - **Service and Authority**
8. Resurrection
    - **Politics, Cultural Engagement, and Loving the City**

Where Have We Been So Far?

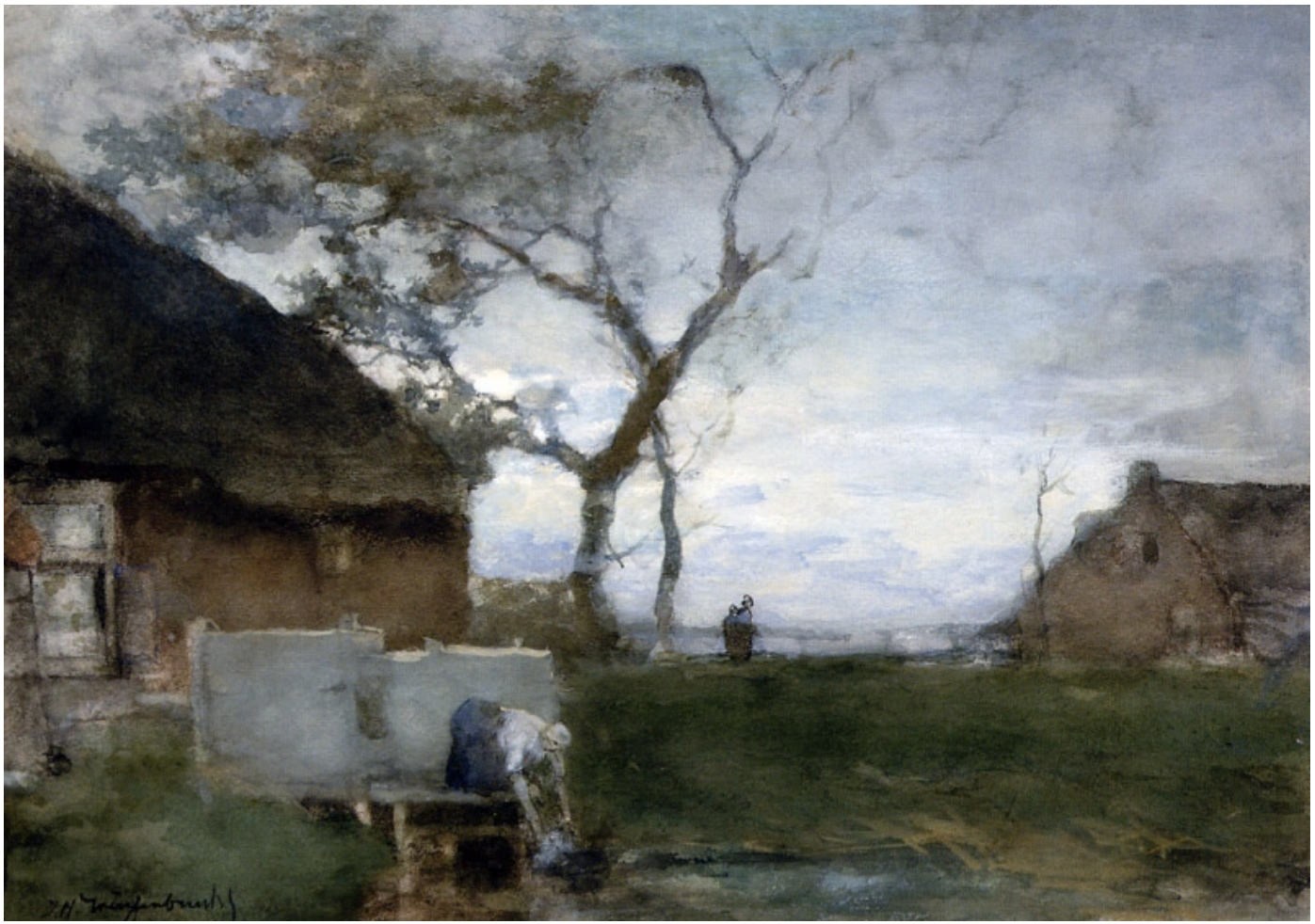
- Jesus reveals humanity to itself:
    - Jesus of Nazareth is the perfect expression of the eternal life of the divine Word of God, under the terms of humanity, in perfect obedience to the Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit
- Creation from nothing means that its being and ends are given
- The purpose of creation is worship
    - “The lovely things kept me far from you, though if they did not have their existence in you, they had no existence at all.” - Augustine, *Confessions*

We Become What We Worship



- Worship is central to our identity, both when it's rightly directed and when it's not.
    - The language of being made in the image of God is directly related to worship - the second commandment tells us to fashion no image of God because *we* are the image He has placed in His temple.
- Being made in the image of God - in our work and our relationships - will take us to two practical, and misunderstood, areas in which we work this out.

Imago Dei: A Representative Vocation



The Washing Place, Johan Hendrik Weissenbruch (b. 1824, Dutch)

- How did we get so busy?
- Work as one of the ways we bear God's image
- Work is a good gift: it is not the curse, but it is also not God
- Sabbath

How did we get so busy?

- Recent articles in *The New Yorker* and *The Economist*

- Both refer to a 1928 essay by John Maynard Keynes, “Economic Possibilities of our Grandchildren”

    - Predicted that by 2028, the average workday would be no more than three hours.

    - Mankind would face a new challenge: what to do with leisure

- Similar prediction made in 1967 Senate testimony: by the end of the century we would enjoy either a twenty-two hour workweek, a six-month work year, or a standard retirement age of 38.

How did we get so busy?

- Why have these predictions failed?
  - Greed/keeping up with the Joneses?
  - Work is more fulfilling, or pays more?
  - Today, “[w]ork has come to offer the sort of pleasures that rich people used to seek in their time off. On the flip side, leisure is no longer a sign of social power. Instead it symbolises uselessness and unemployment.” - *The Economist*, April 19, 2014

How did we get so busy?

Most of us take [our] worries with us, in our laptops and mobile phones, wherever we go… The once sacrosanct borderlines separating home from office… have all but been effaced, and so each and every moment of life becomes a moment of choice – a choice between career and moral obligations, work duties and the demands of all those people needing our time, compassion, care, help and succor.

– Zygmunt Bauman

How did we get so busy?

- So - why are we like that?
- The Worship of Work - deriving our identity from our idolatry
- Miroslav Volf: Work has acquired in society the significance of defining one's identity, such that people have come 'to understand themselves as working beings whose highest destiny is to work and whose very being consists in the process of becoming something through work which they would not have been without it.'

How did we get so busy?

If I work incessantly to the last, nature owes me another form of existence when the present one collapses. - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The *Imago Dei* and Work

- What does it mean that we are created in God's "image and likeness"? (Gen. 1:26-27)
    - Representational (next week, relationships - Genesis 1:27)
    - Representative (this week, work - Genesis 1:26)
        - ANE kings often referred to as "the image of the god"
- Notably, these two aspects of the image of God come together in the blessing of Genesis 1:28: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over [creation]."

Work in the Garden

- Work is a good gift - given before the fall. What is it for?
  - Adam given the mandate “to guard and to keep” (Gen. 2:15)
    - God filled his creation with kings; humanity given an expansive dominion over all
    - This is also a *priestly* mandate
    - “…[Y]ou are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation…” - 1 Peter 2:9

Work in the Garden

- Work is a good gift - given before the fall. What is it for?
    - Humanity also told to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28)
        - Implies a filling and an expansion of order over chaos
        - Humanity has a role to play in extending the dwelling place of God with man (Beale 11-12; Walton, *Genesis*, 186)
- “When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices…” (Pr. 11:10)
    - “The wicked disadvantage others to advantage themselves, but the righteous disadvantage themselves to advantage others.” - Waltke

Work in the Garden

- But of course, we live after the fall.
    - Work itself is not the curse, but the *toil* is
    - Man loses his role as priest, but 'the seed of the woman' is promised, indicating that God has not given up on humanity but will redeem
        - "After the Fall... without God and his wisdom, generic *adam* is brutish, a tyrant (Prov. 30:2-3, cf Ps. 73:22); with God and his revelation, *adam* is humane, crowned with dignity and honor. In other words, humankind is created to establish the rule of God on earth." – Bruce Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, p. 219.
- The fall sent us out of the garden, but our work can still bear witness to our hope for "a better country, that is, a heavenly one." (Heb. 11:16)

What Genesis tells us about Work

- Work is created
- This means that work is good, but it is not God.
- Work is fallen

Pennsylvania Coal Town, Edward Hopper (1947)

What Genesis tells us about Work

- Work is oriented toward worship, because that is what the world is *for*.
    - This is not to deny that there is a specific mission given to the church to make disciples, or that we are specifically called to the gathered worship of the church.
    - But it is also not to say that “secular” work is less important than “sacred” work - in fact, it calls that very divide into question
    - *All* work is designed to be oriented toward worship: neither work nor rest is to be *enjoyed* in and of themselves, but are to be *used* to *enjoy* God (the “lovely things”!).
- Let’s flesh this out a bit

Keep and Guard

- What does it mean to “keep and guard”?
- Just maintain the status quo?
- Because creation has an *end*, “keeping and guarding” and “cultivating” are not in conflict; indeed, cultivating the world toward its natural end in God is *how* we keep it!
- Our task includes discerning the nature of things so that we can understand how they are meant to be used (and how they are not!)
- This work requires secular vocations working with a biblically informed vision of the ends of creation.

Keep and Guard

"The maid who sweeps her kitchen is doing the will of god just as much as the monk who prays - not because she may sing a Christian hymn as she sweeps but because God loves clean floors. The Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship." - Martin Luther

"The only Christian work is good work, well done." - Dorothy Sayers, *Why Work?*

What About Rest?

And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:2-3)

- On the seventh day God does four things:
  - Finished
  - Rested
  - Blessed
  - Sanctified
- What does this mean?

Cityscape #1, Richard Diebenkorn (1963)

The Rest of God

- John Walton:

What does divine rest entail? Most of us think of rest as disengagement from the cares, worries and tasks of life. What comes to mind is sleeping in or taking an afternoon nap. But in the ancient world rest is what results when a crisis has been resolved or when stability has been achieved, when things have "settled down." Consequently normal routines can be established and enjoyed. For deity this means that the normal operations of the cosmos can be undertaken. **This is more a matter of engagement without obstacles than disengagement without responsibilities.**

- Note how this avoids putting work and rest in opposition to each other!

- God establishing himself in the place from which he will reign and dwell with his people

The Creation of Worship

- On the seventh day, God affirms and enjoys the goodness of creation
- In Genesis 2, the Garden is the sanctified *space* where God dwells with people (later, the Temple, and within the Temple the Holy of Holies)
- But the first reference to sanctification is not space; it's time: "God blessed the seventh day and made it holy"
- The *rest* of God "finishes his work" (Gen. 2:2) because the work of creation was oriented toward worship.

Sabbath

- The 4th commandment represents a bridge between God and neighbor
- Given twice, with two rationales
  - Creation
  - Exodus
  - “While the deities of other peoples were associated with places or things, the God of Israel was the God of events.” – Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath* (7)

Noon Rest After Work, Vincent Van Gogh (1890)

Sabbath

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. **For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.** Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

- Exodus 20:8-11

- (Note the references to God and neighbor…)

Sabbath

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. **You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.** Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

- Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Creation and Exodus are both about Worship

- God created in order to dwell with and be glorified by his people
- The purpose of the Exodus was worship too.
  - ‘Let my people go…’ - the root of slavery was idolatry (don’t go back to Egypt!)
  - More than half of Exodus remains after the crossing of the Red Sea
  - Focused on the construction of the Tabernacle

Tabernacle and Cosmos

- What is prohibited on the Sabbath?
  - In the later rabbinic tradition, 39 specific types of labor
  - Derived from the instructions for making the tabernacle
  - On the Sabbath, we rest from making the world (Heschel, p. 28); it is a day to receive and to enjoy
- So - can you receive a gift?

Homo adorans as *Homo faber*

- We now inhabit a world which has largely been emptied of the sacred (the "immanent frame")
- Functionally, we live as though we have to create the world and our own identity within it
- Hannah Arendt: *Homo Faber*, the one who thinks of things "in order to" rather than "for the sake of," and who therefore rejects "the very quintessence of the human condition," which is to *receive* the givenness of the world and our place in it.

Sydney Bridge, Bridge Pattern, Arch of Steel, Harold Cazneaux (New Zealand, 1934)

Homo adorans as *Homo faber*

- But we are fundamentally worshiping creatures
- Rather than using work and rest as means to enjoy God, many of us end up trying to enjoy - to worship - our work and our rest
  - Neither can deliver
  - We do neither well

People Sleeping on a Night Train in Japan, Nicholas Bouvier (1964)

Hotmail tools for the new busy

Go to Windows Live | Sign up for a Hotmail account

Microsoft

THE NEW BUSY:

ARE NOT LIKE THE OLD BUSY. Let the OLD BUSY HAVE their STRESS BALLS, their ANTACIDS and their CRAZY EYES.

WE are the New Busy. are redefining busy.

Because we know that HAVING A FULL CALENDAR means HAVING A FULL LIFE.

TAKE A LOOK AROUND, EXPLORE THE WORLD OF THE NEW BUSY. AND CHECK OUT HOW HOTMAIL CAN HELP YOU DO IT ALL.

Share

HAVE A SPAM BODYGUARD.

WOULD BE OPEN TO TAKING A CLASS IN THEIR SLEEP.

THINK 9 TO 5 IS A CUTE IDEA.

ARE NOT THE TOO BUSY.

LOOK FOR INTERESTING WAYS TO BE BORED.

HAVE 100 GOOD REASONS WHY IT WILL WORK.

WOKE UP WITH A BUNCH OF STAMPS ON THEIR HAND.

MAKE BEAVERS LOOK LAZY.

PUT THEIR PANTS ON BOTH LEGS AT A TIME.

ALWAYS KEEP A SUITCASE PACKED.

MIGHT TELL YOU THEIR SECRET SAUCE RECIPE

MAKE PANCAKES INTO EXOTIC ANIMAL SHAPES.

LIKE TO PLAY "FILL THE CALENDAR."

PREFER ONE-STOP INBOXING.

LIKE IT WHEN THEIR EMAILS GET ALONG.

GIVE YOU LINKS BEFORE LINKING UP.

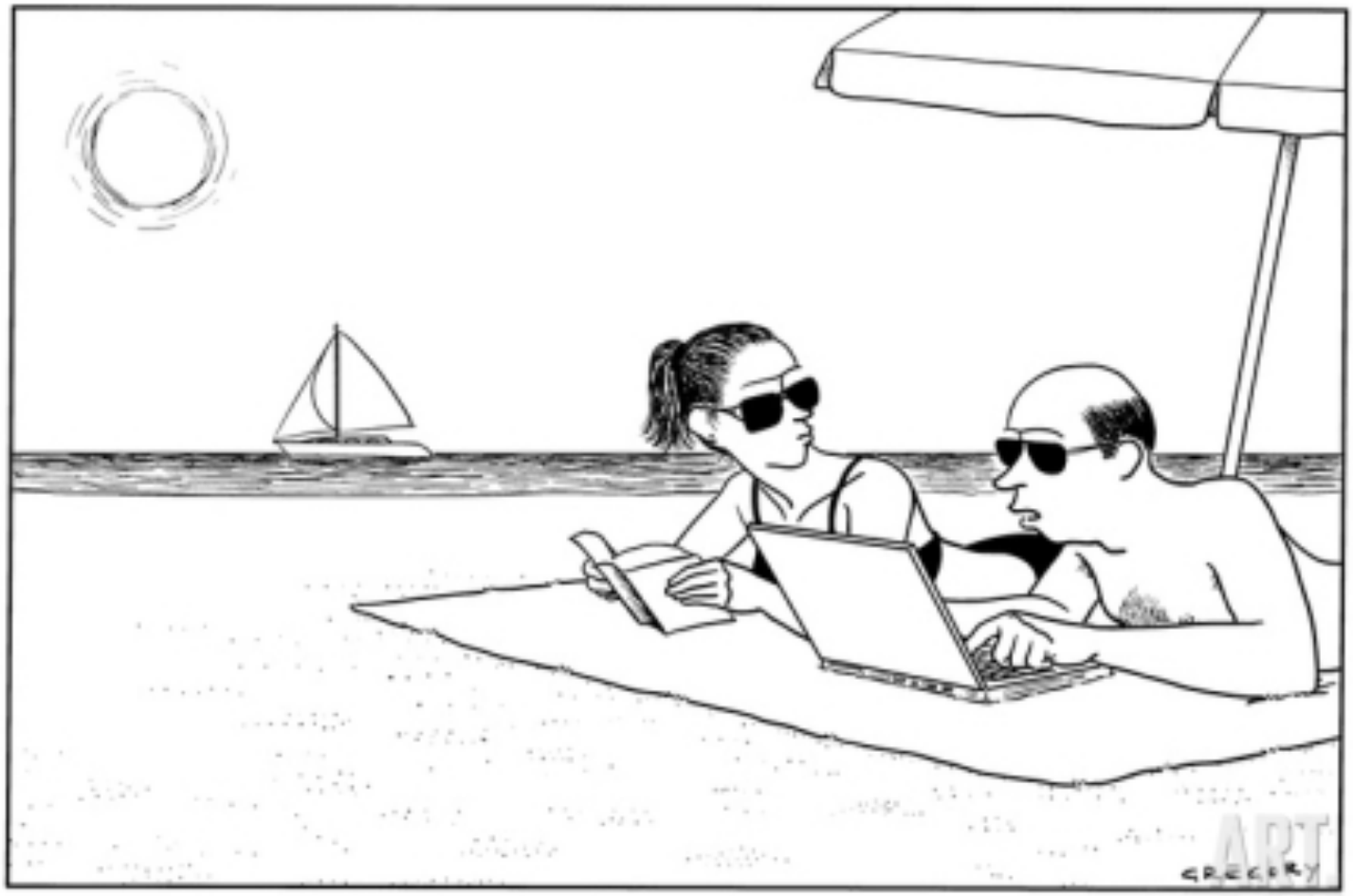
DON'T NEED A DESK TO GET IT DONE.

ARE FLUENT IN EMOTICON.

The New Busy Refuse to Receive a Gift

- Worship, prayer, contemplation are fundamentally receptive activities (note: not *inactivies*)
- But, in a world of “total work,” everything we do has to have a utilitarian justification
- Increasingly, we identify virtue with hard work - busy for the sake of busy
- Even our rest becomes oriented to work (“recharging”, “work hard, play hard”)

How did we get so busy?



"I am not a workaholic. I just work to relax."

What Happens when Work and Rest become Religion?

- Work and rest are both deprived of their "use value" when we try to enjoy them instead of God.

    - "Cut off from the worship of the divine, leisure becomes laziness and work inhuman. … The vacancy left by absence of worship is filled by mere killing of time and by boredom, which is directly related to inability to enjoy leisure; for one can only be bored if the spiritual power to be leisurely has been lost." - Joseph Pieper, *Leisure as the Basis for Culture*, p. 68.

- Once again we see the parodied freedom of acedia: declaring that God was wrong when He said the world was good. The slothful *lack* desire, adopting the disposition that nothing is worth desiring.

Can you receive a gift?

- The question isn't how to get more time; the question is how to receive time *at all*.

- "To witness the perpetual marvel of the world's coming into being is to sense the presence of the Giver in the given, to realize that the source of time is eternity, that the secret of being is the eternal within time. … All week long we are called upon to sanctify life through employing things of space. On the Sabbath it is given us to share in the holiness that is in the heart of time. … Eternity utters a day." – Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath* (101)