

Ministry Redefined: Bringing the Priesthood into Corporate America

Father Greg McBrayer

Greg McBrayer is Chief Flight Dispatcher and Chaplain at American Airlines Flight Operations Center IOC in DFW. His career includes more than 35 years as a licensed airman in Part 121 Commercial Flight Operations. He currently serves as the Christian Employees Business Resource Group Diversity Advisory Council Representative overseeing Christian Ministries within American Airlines worldwide.

This COVID-19 Pandemic has affected people and businesses all over the world. Two areas greatly affected have been aviation and faith. The one thing this Pandemic has personally affirmed to me is the importance of God's unique calling in my life and ministry. Unlike many in this current crisis, I have been busy, working and serving on the front-line in my profession and vocation at American Airlines.

In the middle of the busy Flight Operations Center amid countless work stations stacked with computers and radars, operated by hundreds of essential employees, is a raised platform called The Bridge. That is where I work and serve as Chief Flight Dispatcher and Chaplain.

I came to this industry more than 40 years ago and have spent my entire career in Flight Control Centers at major airlines. My journey had taken me through three painful mergers before the mega-merger between USAirway's and American formed the New American Airlines. In 2015 the merger was completed when the new "Integrated Flight Operations Center in Fort Worth, Texas, was opened. This massive Flight Control Center that runs American Airlines worldwide is where God deployed me to serve. I have a day job, and I have a calling – and the two are one. Although I wear many hats today, I only have one boss and one mission, to serve and glorify God!

Growing up in Georgia, I was raised in the church and have always loved aviation. After receiving my license with the FAA, I later attended seminary and took Holy Orders in the Anglican Church in North America, where I currently serve as a priest. Both my passion for aviation and my love for God certainly proved useful in His ministry plan for my life.

God revealed that plan to me on the Flight Control Floor of USAirways on Sept. 11, 2001. On that infamous day, after the intense stress of getting my flights safely on the ground had passed, I remember saying to myself, "God help us, we need you here!" In the deafening silence of that moment, I heard, "God's still small voice," say, that's why you're here. My purpose and call to Bi-Vocational Ministry was set in motion that day.

The 1990s had already been a very turbulent time for our airline and our industry. Many carriers were already struggling before 9/11, but after that day, the struggles quickly intensified to an unhealthy, unsafe level, and there was no end in sight. That's when I suddenly found God using me more and more pastorally in my workplace than in my church. In the very challenging months that followed, the need for a spiritual presence continued to grow, and it fed my desire to serve God in a more profound capacity.

Although we received health care benefits, we weren't being provided the spiritual care we so desperately needed at that time. I saw this as a divinely appointed opportunity to bring a holistic healthcare component to my struggling coworkers and our company. After much prayer, I approached senior management and asked, 'If I could come out on my own time and teach a Bible study and then asked if

they could provide me a room.’ To my surprise, they agreed a spiritual presence was needed, and I was allowed to use a vacant conference room.

On January 7th, 2002 the “Monday Ministry” was planted in Flight Operations Center of USAiways. I knew the ministry would have to prove fruitful if it was to last, and by God’s Grace, it did, and it is still impacting lives today in the new IOC Flight Center in Texas.

Almost immediately after planting the Monday Ministry, it proved fruitful. It drew coworkers from across denominational lines together who were seeking fellowship and renewed hope around God’s Word! Our executive leadership quickly noticed a change in our office. Employees were more focused on their jobs, and there seemed to be a newfound peace in our stress-filled office. Soon we had managers joining us, and instantly, all our working relationships began to improve.

What I had envisioned as a Bible Study, was far from what God had in mind. Eventually, I began offering Holy Communion, and it wasn’t long before God’s divine plan, as well as my identity and ministry, were fully revealed to me and everyone around me. I soon found myself being sought-out for counsel as an intercessor between the floor and management. As a coworker once told me, “your collar has become a visible reminder to all, that God is with us at all times, even in this dark, spiritually void place.”

For a time, such as this!

After many years in aviation and bi-vocational ministry, I thought I would never live to see anything to surpass the challenges we overcame after 9/11. Yet this Pandemic has far exceeded those challenges in every way to reaffirm the ever-growing need for spiritual first responders in the workplace to provide the ministry of presence.

As people faith, we know, this Pandemic is part of God’s divine plan, and it will last only as long as it takes for Him to accomplish His will. God’s will, is to be among us where ever we are, which includes the place we spend most of our lives, the workplace. This Pandemic can be an obstacle or an opportunity for those called to serve the Lord in the workplace, and I have seen it as a divine opportunity.

Unlike 9/11, which polarized faith groups, this Global Crisis has provided an opportunity to unite people. This virus indiscriminately affects us all, we’re all in this together like it or not! We may not all be in the same boat, but we’re certainly all in the same storm! This Global storm has provided a unique opportunity to model our faith and “love others as we love ourselves,” including coworkers and neighbors who are different from us.

As God’s children, we have been provided a divinely appointed opportunity to both offer and receive comfort and encouragement, regardless of our faith convictions. While we all find ourselves wearing masks to protect us and others from this virus, we have seen the mask come off our character to reveal a Godly love that resides deep in our hearts.

One thing I have found encouraging during this crisis is the “love of neighbor” I have witnessed both at work and in my community. I inspired by an Interfaith Prayer Event hosted by the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation, which gathered people from different faith-based ERG’s (Employee Resource Groups) from other corporations to pray together. It wasn’t an attempt to blend our beliefs but a respectful gathering of people from different faith groups united by pray to the God of their understanding for strength, support, and comfort, which creates a better workplace environment.

Faith@Work Matters (DRAFT | not for circulation)

Unlike many of my colleagues who are only offering virtual ministry at this time, my bi-vocational calling has allowed me to provide both personal and virtual pastoral care. It's been a blessing to have the opportunity to serve as a spiritual first responder to so many essential front-line employees when they have needed it most.

I have been busy sending out weekly encouragement devotionals to all our American Airlines Christian EBRG members worldwide. I've been leading a Monday Morning Prayer Convocation, sending coworker care updates, assisting with fundraisers, doing pastoral visits in the workplace, and offering virtual and in-person counseling sessions.

The one thing that's certain in these uncertain days is workplace fears and anxieties will exist far beyond this current crisis as they have in the past. My prayer is, someone will be encouraged by my story. And I pray that the person reading this, who didn't get the call to serve in that church they dreamed of, want to see it as a disappointment but rather a redeployment to the most robust mission field in the world today.

Unlike years past when our faith had to remain behind closed doors. Today there are growing workplace ministry opportunities in Corporate America that are being supported by a growing acceptance of faith-based "Employee Resource Groups" in the workspace, which are improving the workplace environment.

This growing faith-based ERG movement provides employees the opportunity to bring their whole self to work "clerical collar" and all, and it is blessing lives! The highlight of my entire aviation career was being recognized and presented the coveted American Airlines "Chairman's Award" by Senior Executives in 2018. I wasn't honored and recognized for my decades of dedicated service in Flight Operations, but instead, for the years of Kingdom Work, God called me to do among our coworkers and their families.

If you find yourself today trying to discern "God's still soft voice," I encourage you to consider Bi-Vocational ministry in the workplace where "the harvest is plentiful, but the labors are few." For additional information, email me at, gsmcbrsayer@aol.com.