



Can your goal, be our goal, be His goal?

Do you believe “your goal can be our goal and His goal?” What does this even mean?

These were some of the questions that an esteemed panel of leaders including Mike Mannina (VP of Strategic Partnership, Thrive Farmers Coffee, and Director of ThriveWorx), Joe Iarocci (Director of the Cairway Center for Servant Leadership Excellence), Joe Labriola (Executive Director of Second Helpings Atlanta), and Armando del Bosque (Executive Director of His Way at Work) discussed with a very engaged audience at the BELIEVES session on Tuesday, October 10, 2017, focused on “Can your goal, be our goal, be His goal?”



When asked “do you believe your goal can be our goal and His goal?” each of the leaders on the panel weighed in.

“Not only is it possible, but it’s the only way to go,” Armando Del Bosque said.

In his work leading His Way at Work, a non-profit helping other companies to change their mindset on making money as a service, not an obligation, Del Bosque said fundamentally he believes companies aren’t there to make money.

“They need to make money, but it’s about serving people,” he added. “The business environment is so competitive with ISO and other standards that the next evolution in Capitalism and leap in productivity is happening by working in, through, and for people.”

At His Way at Work, Del Bosque and his team have worked with close to 120 companies serving 120,000 employees to put a strategy around caring programs and efforts to serve people in companies.

Joe Labriola, who started his career in the corporate world with IBM, said that in emotional situations you don’t have to win or lose – it’s about what’s the right thing to do.

“This allows people to align with mission, and move away from ego,” Labriola said.

Labriola added, “For me personally I had a crisis of conscience during my corporate career. I got to a point where I said ‘this no longer feeds my soul.’”

From that moment, Labriola was led to ultimately work with 2nd Helpings Atlanta, which rescues 1.5 million pounds of food each year fueled by the belief that “the collective power of small actions can change people’s lives.”

Joe Iarocci, began his career on Wall Street, then later moved to Atlanta where his wife is from, and worked as the General Counsel at CARE. It's at CARE that Iarocci came to believe the solution to any problem is leadership – not money or anything else.

“After I switched to CARE, people would say they saw happiness in me and wanted it,” Iarocci shared. “I would tell them, ‘you are where you are.’”

Mike Mannina, shared with everyone that prior to joining Thrive Farmers Coffee in the last few years, he spent his career in a very different sector.

“Before joining Thrive, I worked in government for 12 years – a place where faith wasn't as encouraged by peers.”

The panelists opening remarks prompted Fernando Silva, a board member for a publicly-traded company who attended the session, to ask, “How would you talk to the Board of Directors of a public company about how to be intentional in aligning with faith?”

“I'd start with what's the right thing to do,” Iarocci responded succinctly.

Silva followed asking, “If the Board has responsibility for shareholders' value, how do you get them to give up profitability for this?”

“Why do you think it's giving up (profitability)? Doing good is the most/best business strategy,” Iarocci stated.



Labriola added, “The minute an organization views employees as an asset, it is game over. You lose that loyalty. When companies stop investing in employees, it gets stale.”

Mike Kirschner, a CTK parishioner and frequent BELIEVES attendee, said, “I had this happen in a company I was with. A numbers guy came in and people were then numbers. The culture vanished.”

Mannina jumped back into the conversation saying, “Two real forces are at play in today's business culture that makes this easy to address – retention and recruitment. These are always what's at the heart of millennials. Plus, retention costs money.”

Mannina added that he believes the marketplace – at least with consumers – rewards companies that show environmental care.

“We can match price, beat price, and show impact on the planet and that we care.”

At this point another BELIEVES attendee spoke up and asked a question that changed the direction of the conversation some when he asked, “What question would you ask when interviewing to end up at a company like you all are discussing?”

Del Bosque answered right away without hesitation.

“What’s the company’s purpose? What’s work? Why do you work? Why do you work here?” he said.

Alan LeBlanc, CTK Parishioner and President of the Brewed to Serve Restaurant Group, then asked a different question.

“What is your faith formation history, and how do you exercise that to stay strong in work?”

“Faith is fundamental,” said Del Bosque. “We can’t just have faith. We let faith lead through us.”

Mannina then said, “I think you’re asking the right question – it’s at the core of the human struggle. For me it involves studying the Bible, and dependence on prayer. Those are part of what I exercise.”

In his time in the government sector, Mannina indicated he wound up in a lot of tough situations – and turned to prayer to get through them.

“We need God. I do believe God pursues us,” he said. “In Atlanta, there’s a culture of Christianity and we find it easy to blend in, but do we really believe?”



CTK Parishioner Walter Kozik then commented, “Armando, earlier before the session, you and I were talking about faith and trust. Can you share more from what you were telling me?”

“Faith is long-term,” Del Bosque said. “Trust is what’s sought, but faith is the energy to get there.”

Labriola followed by commenting, “I go back to what I hit on a moment ago – the obstacle is the journey. We may not know what’s happening at the moment, but there’s something to come out of it. What I seek to be mindful of is ‘what am I trying to be taught here?’”

Iarocci closed out the responses to LeBlanc’s question with a focus on three things.

“First, in my younger days, I thought I could control things and figure it out,” he said. “Second, it’s about service. Service to community is what reinvigorates faith. Finally, I often wind up thinking, ‘If I can just get out of my own way, and let God work His will.’”

After the engaging spontaneous question and answer between the panel and attendees, the panelists then were asked to compare and contrast some of their career experiences in secular versus faith environments.

Labriola kicked off the remarks.

“In my corporate career, I was involved in a layoff situation where a formula was created. People were ultimately viewed as numbers, and then they went on a list. This led me to a point of pushing back. I understand the need for layoffs, but we had to look at people as individuals and consider what’s best for the org and people.”

BELIEVES attendee Alan LeBlanc jumped in again with a comment after hearing Labriola’s remarks.

“Joe, what you’re saying is leadership – leadership based on faith. It gets at ‘what’s the step of leadership, or is there leadership in every step?’”

Del Bosque then said, “Leaders are like teachers. You can be a student without a teacher, but you can’t be a teacher without students. Leadership isn’t assigned, it’s from those around you trusting.”

Mannina built on the evolving dialogue stating his belief that faith is key.

“As a leader, you often won’t get affirmation, and it can be lonely. I’ll often feel like I’ve done everything right, but the circumstances still feel dire. God will say, ‘don’t worry.’ The crux of leadership is those quiet moments in the AM saying ‘God, I need you.’”

Following Mannina’s remarks, there was time for one more question to pose to the panelists – what was/is the most common misconception or fear you think people have about how “your goal can be our goal and His goal?”

“I’d say it’s that religion in the workplace is exclusive,” Iarocci said. “In Wall Street, we didn’t have prayer breakfasts. I’ve been surprised here in the South how faith is so in the language. What I believe across the board is that we have to ‘preach the Gospel at all times, and use words when necessary’ as St. Francis of Assisi said.”

Del Bosque shared his thoughts next.

“If we believe people will work for fear, instead of for love this assumption alone will eventually kill initiatives, and companies. It is only when we invite God into the workplace that we can make businesses/organizations thrive and sustainable in the long term.”

Labriola then closed out the session with the final words of the session.

“I think there are two words to abolish from our language – good and bad – because in that there’s judgment. Removing those words from the way I respond breaks things down to ‘it just is.’ With less judgment there’d be more creativity and love in the world. There’s a purpose for everything that’s happening.”

