

When does labor make a comeback?

Happy Labor Day!

As is the case every Labor Day, I'm laboring to bring you the day-after-Labor-Day newspaper. Still, I get to do that from my couch instead of having to cart up to Kendallville for a full day, so I guess it still counts like a half a holiday.

So what better topic to talk about on Labor Day than labor?

A few weeks ago, a bunch of articles started popping up online about a new trend spreading on TikTok or WimWam or BlipBlap or whatever new app kids these days are using (yeah, I'm so old now that I've lost touch with new technology and say things like "kids these days") about "quiet quitting" at work.

Basically, boiled down, quiet quitting is defined as workers opting *not* to go above and beyond, to do what their job description requires and not take on extra work or assignments beyond that without compensation.

Of course, the concept drew all kinds of commentary from different angles.

"It's proof that kids these days don't wanna work!"

"It's workers drawing healthy work/life boundaries!"

"It's harmful and going to stunt your opportunity for upward growth at work!"

"It's not really 'quitting' so much as it's workers flexing their muscles in this new, short-labor economy and getting their hard-earned dollars!"

Anyhow, I read a bunch of different takes on it because I thought it was an interesting concept. I see both pros and cons.

Pro: I do believe, for many people, that the modern workforce is exploitative and unbalanced and I think it is good for workers to fight for what's right for them.

I'm a Millennial and came into the labor force in 2008, right as the national economy took a giant dump. The mentality back then was "Be glad you still have a job." But my generation entered a world where that was a lingering excuse for years for why your pay wasn't increasing and why companies were shrinking via attrition and we're just going to spread all the extra work that other person used to do around and it will be fine, you can just absorb that, right? Great!

I hear about people working these high-paying manual labor factory jobs, where they're working 10- or 12-hour shifts six or seven days a week and maybe you'll get a day off on the Fourth of July. Local employers wonder why they can't get and retain employees and I sit here listening to those stories and want to raise my hand like, "Hey, I have a couple ideas."

Con: I do agree that people who voluntarily don't pick up extra on their plate — even if it's not required of them or not compensated — probably do hamper their mobility. Companies can't carry dead weight.

Let's face it, when opportunities to advance come up, they're looking for someone who is motivated, skilled and, probably, willing to allow themselves to be exploited for slightly more cash and a healthy helping of extra responsibility. But, if you don't put yourself in that position, do you get that opportunity to cash out?

That being said, there are some people who don't want that. I used to scratch my head at people that would come through the newsroom and say they never wanted to rise to the level of editor and run their own newsroom. That perplexed me — why wouldn't you want the chance to run the show? Then I hit some weeks throughout the year that make me go "Ohhh, yeah, now I can see why someone might not want to be in charge."

Whether "quiet quitting" is the right term or not, overall I do think it's probably a good time to rebalance the employer/employee relationship.

That was the original purpose of Labor Day, after all. Back in the late 1800s, part of the fight was to standardize an eight-hour workday and improve health and safety conditions in many workplaces that we'd look at with a modern eye and call deplorable.

The demographics of the market have been kind of helping that along on its own right now. Labor is short and many employers have realized it's time to pay up or do without. Workers have many options and can play the field looking for a job that pays what they want and that has benefits and perks that work for them.

The Baby Boomers are going or gone. The topic of "How is the economy going to adapt after the Baby Boomers?" was one of those rhetorical questions asked for years that no one ever seemed to bother to answer. Now that it's here, businesses are throwing their hands up like the sudden workforce challenges are some mystery.

I don't think hanging around at your desk or your production line doing the bare minimum ala "quiet quitting" is the best course of action.

But I do think that it's time for workers to start being more vocal about their needs and wants. Because the mentality that you're replaceable at work is, well, in many cases, simply not true any more. With 2% unemployment and hiring being a nightmare, the reality at this point is probably that your employer needs you more than you need them.

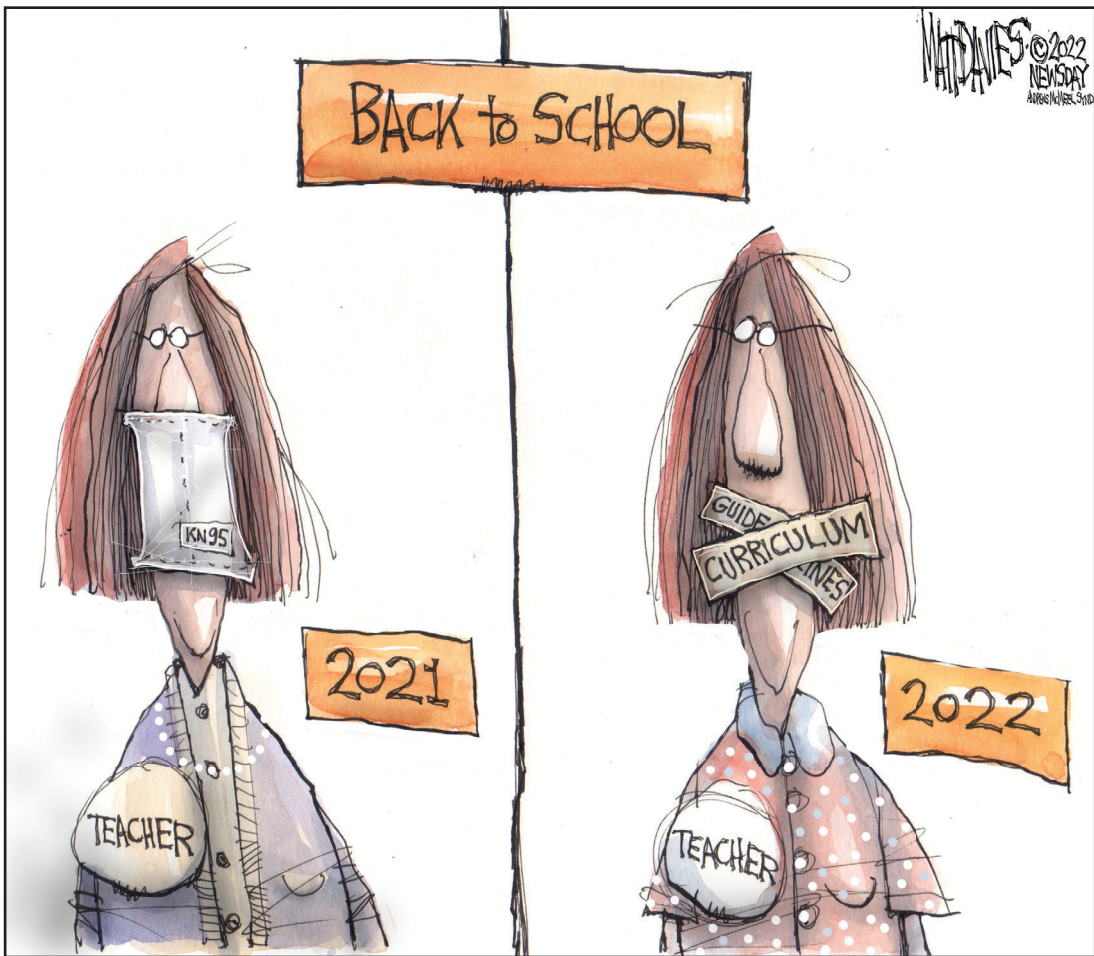
So, like the Labor Day leaders of old, now seems like a good time for workers to use their voice and reclaim some of the power in this relationship.

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THE GARBACZ DUMP

Steve Garbacz



Letter to the Editor

Scripture provides explanation for man and his purpose

To the Editor:

In previous letters, I have criticized wokeness.

A few readers challenged my understanding of wokeness. Particularly, they criticized my favorite label for wokeness: Neo-Marxism.

Perhaps they want me to use the word "progressive" to describe them. I don't believe progressives are moving towards anything but increasing societal chaos.

I would be glad to justify the use of the Neo-Marxist label in a future letter by describing the continuity and discontinuity between Marxism and wokeness.

In this letter, though, I will describe the supreme worldview: Christianity. It is the worldview against which all inferior worldviews are to be judged.

When I apply the term "worldview" to Christianity, I do not use the term in some postmodern, milquetoast pluralistic manner.

Biblical Christianity is objective, revealed truth. When properly understood, Scripture provides a coherent, robust explanation of man, his purpose and the current state of affairs.

Be forewarned, though. Emaciated, liberal versions of Christianity are often nothing more than secularism stuffed in a skin of pseudo-Christianity. And, sadly, some genuine Christian fellowships don't have a well-developed biblical theology robust enough to provide solid

answers to existential questions, either. The content of their message needs improvement.

The overview of Scripture can be described in four words: Creation, Fall, Rescue (Redemption), and Restoration (Consummation).

This explanation is sometimes called the "Big Picture". It focuses on the forest rather than the trees.

Creation is described in Genesis 1-2. Genesis describes the creation of the heavens and the earth from nothingness (ex nihilo), the ordering of it by God, and its population with plants, animals and man.

God created man as a unique creature, in his own image, endowed with attributes analogical to himself, to represent him in the material realm and to glorify him in thought and deed.

God created man male and female. They were commanded to multiply and replenish the earth, filling it with other image-bearers of God, and to maintain the order of the creation.

The family relationship was meant to reflect aspects of God's image in a communal sense. God is communal and relational by nature. The Trinity doctrine reflects this.

Harmony characterized the pre-Fall relationship between man and God, man and his wife, man and the land, and man and his own body. Life in the presence of God in Eden was true life.

God told man he could eat of all the trees of the garden but one, the tree of

the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3 recounts the Fall. Our common parents rebelled against God and took from the forbidden tree. Their natures changed.

Man became alienated from God, fellow man, the earth, and their own bodies.

Man reflected God's image at creation. After the Fall, this image was shattered or severely marred.

Man's judgment followed. Man experienced spiritual death, which is separation from the presence of God, the source of life.

God did not leave all mankind in spiritual death, though. He sent his Son to redeem a remnant. Jesus, the sinless, unique, eternal Godman, died a substitutionary death on the Cross to cover the sins of this remnant. Those who repent and place their faith in Christ are resurrected from spiritual death in Adam to receive new spiritual life in Christ.

Finally, the consummation occurs when Jesus exercises wrath and judgment upon unrepentant mankind and gathers his glorified saints into the New Heavens and New Earth; a glorified Eden-like creation where righteousness dwells. The Curse is reversed. Revelation 21-22 describes the Consummation.

Secularists scoff at Scripture as a myth. I feel pity for them. They have no coherent, robust explanation for man and his purpose.

Robert Sparkman
Rome City

September brings us beauty and change

September. Everything is near perfect in September. No air-conditioning and no heat with windows wide open for the evening breezes and the viewing of Saturn and Jupiter as they continue to light the way for ships at sea. (Well, at least they used to!)

Venus is still visible during the morning hours, but better hurry, soon it will be hidden by the rays of the sun. The summer constellations are still around, but Orion is just begging to be part of our sky and it is sneaking in its first appearance.

September brings the full Harvest Moon Friday evening. It does seem a bit early, but the Harvest Moon is the full moon nearest the autumn equinox so there it is Friday night. It was aptly named in Europe and then in the United States as the Harvest Moon as farmers could work late into the night by the light of the moon. I know the folks at the farmers market will delight in next Friday's moon as they continue to gather and harvest the end of the summer's bounty and beginning to bring in the autumn delights.

I must say I am trying to hold back on the autumn decorating, but I have to sneak in a few things each day. I have replaced the geraniums in the window box with blooming purple asters! There are a few fragrant mums showing up in my gardens as well. My long standing sunflowers, which had just started to bloom, are now amass among the summer garden thanks to last week's storm. I thought they would be safe as they grow next to the garage, but alas, alas. Hopefully the bees can find their way into my garden. But why not? The

zinnias are still strong and blooming and the purest blue morning glories dot my fences and curl around anything possible.

September brings the harvest, and memories of the harvest seep into my dreams and my thoughts daily. When we were all young on the farm, we all worked at harvest time. One year we raised so many cabbages that we made kraut in huge crocks. I picked, washed and dried the cabbages and then grated them into the crock, alternately with the salt for preservation. My boys were little so I

could lift them up one at a time, barefoot as they stomped down the cabbage. I believe we had kraut with every meal that winter! However, to this day, those boys do not eat sauerkraut, let alone make it from their own gardens.

The last of the jams and jellies will be cooked down and set in small jars for the winter. There was that time I made enough for the whole winter, but now I make the jam for holiday gifts to family and friends. What really is better than homemade blackberry jam? I think nothing!

I see the changes in the landscape as Lola and I follow the dusty back roads full of chicory and goldenrod. I stop at every little corner market to buy onions and garlic and the last of the sweet corn. The field corn is curling and turning brown to the eye and soon the great

harvest machines will dot our fields and our roads. Be kind when driving behind the harvest vehicles; they are producing food for us. A friendly wave is always encouraging to the farmer behind the wheel.

The sun slants now as we head into harvest season. Where sunbeams used to fall in this old house, they have now drifted, letting other parts of the room feel the morning light. I find darkness comes rather quickly once the sun departs the sky. And the smell of September is pungent with neighbors sporting campfires with hot dogs and marshmallows with the lingering coals filling in the dark places.

It is September. Truly such a marvelous month of beauty and change. Don't miss it. Let the air blow the curtains wide and cool in the evenings.

Don't forget the full moon on Friday. I just mailed a box of dried rose petals to the Charleston Children for them to toss into the night sky on Friday. You can do the same with your rose petals, and if no flowers grace your doorway, then just make a wish under the light of the moon.

T. H. White once wrote, "The summer was over at last, and nobody could deny any longer that the autumn was definitely there."

Happy September.

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