



# Links Players

## Notes From Ireland - Put Me In Coach

*But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" (Numbers 11:29, ESV)*

Earlier this year, Nick Dunlap accomplished what only eight other amateurs have ever done: win a PGA Tour event. Others who have won as amateurs include Cary Middlecoff, Fred Haas, Frank Stranahan, Gene Littler, Doug Sanders, Scott Verplank, and Phil Mickelson.

As good as many NCAA players are, we rarely expect them to win early in their professional careers, much less as amateurs. But these eight men did it. Frank Stranahan did it four times!

Usually, however, we see a rigid divide between those who play professionally and those who have yet to break through and get their cards. After all, most NCAA players still have classes to attend, study halls to participate in, and other demands on their time—football games, presumably clothes to wash, and exams to take.

For much of church history, there was also a "hard divide" between the professional ranks and the pew, known as the "clergy-laity" divide. The clergy was to carry on the duties of the sacred world (the church), and the laity, in addition to regularly attending church and tithing, was to handle the secular world. Sadly, the "pew" often went about the secular world in a secular way.

Rather than driving a wedge between the clergy and laity, spiritual and material, and the here and hereafter, these students of the Word recognized that all of life matters to Christ. In other words, Christ's lordship extends way beyond stained glass windows. As my son says, "Jesus is also Lord of the boardroom, bedroom, and billiard hall."

There is no place on earth where we could say, "Jesus' reign doesn't apply here." While the institutional church is at the center of Christ's plans, the circumference of his reign extends beyond the stained glass to every dimension of our cultural life—family, vocation, education, art, science, entertainment, country clubs, and yes, even politics.

Another way to understand this is to understand the promise of the Old Testament's prophetic announcements. Moses, Joel, Isaiah, and other prophetic voices foresaw Messiah's time as a massive outpouring

of the Holy Spirit on all God's children, not merely on the three offices of the Old Covenant: prophet, priest, and king.

This, among other things, means that "God has a calling on all his sons and daughters, and he empowers us by the Holy Spirit to extend the reign of Christ into all dimensions of our lives.

While there remains a permeable divide between professional and amateur golfers, the divide between those called into vocational ministry (i.e., clergy) and those called to "ministry" the other six days in all the spheres outside the institutional church needs revisiting.

May Jesus Christ, the King of the world, help you to discover what he has called and deployed you to do in the power of the Holy Spirit to apply Christ's redemption "as far as the curse is found."

**Prayer: Jesus, may we see that you have set every Christian apart for service to you in the various arenas of life.**

**READING:** Numbers 11:29; Joel 2: 28-29; Acts 2:14-21; Galatians 3:1-9; Ephesians 4:11-14.

1. In your estimation, what is the most significant difference between great amateurs and professional golfers? Is it driving distance, short-game prowess, consistency, all the above, or something else?

---

---

---

2. Should we think that "being equipped for the work of ministry" mentioned in Ephesians 4 only applies to ministry inside the church or both inside and outside the institutional church?

---

---

---

3. Application: how might we better apply biblical truths (principles) in our home, office, club, culture, and other spheres of life where we have influence?

---

---

---