

ICS Conference
April 2018
Calling and Vocation



Matthew 4:19-20

- Calling ('Come...follow me')
- Leaving ('at once they left their nets..')
- Responsive following ('at once...they followed him')
- Formation ('...and I will *make* you fishers...')
- Service (making disciples)

Our own story today

- Calling (individual? community?)
- Leaving (a profession? A country?)
- Responsive following
- Formation (college? course? curacy?)
- Service (ordination and deployment)

How far can I understand my own story
in the story of Simon and Andrew?

God in
Christ: the
caller



The one
who is
called

Those to
whom
they are
called

Thinking about 'vocation'

- Vocation describes well the sense of being chosen/impelled/destined for something (John 15:16)
- Without this sense, work (and life more generally) loses purpose
- My yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:30)

Luther's doctrine of vocation

- All Christians have callings
- Christians become priests to their neighbours
- Work is no longer just a job or occupation
- Vocation is where the Spirit sanctifies the Christian's life
- 1 Cor 7:20 'remain in your calling'



Luther's doctrine of vocation:

- Work fulfils the second commandment
- Worship fulfils the first commandment

- And so work is placed in its proper context.
We are saved by grace not work!



How do we ensure the priority of the grace/worship axis over the work/service axis in ministry?

Luther's idea of vocation – some reservations

- Does it fit a mobile society where people may change jobs frequently?
- Does it adequately describe a plurality of employments?
- Does it risk overvaluing work?
- Are all jobs really vocations?



- Vocation: is it still the right concept?
- Is it for everyone or just for clergy and other religious workers?

Hearing Jesus without going through Luther

- Jesus's summons involves mobility
- Jesus summons frees the fishermen from their work
- Following Jesus isn't mainly about learning new tasks
- Jesus makes new people rather than new jobs

We over-emphasise the work we do rather than the people we should be

Doing and Being

- The Christian life is a following and an imitating of Christ
- Calling is more about becoming a certain kind of person than doing a particular job
- This is a life in which we manifest the beatitudes and display the fruit of the Spirit.
- This kind of spiritual growth is not the same as 'success' – indeed it may be displayed by someone who fails (e.g. Jesus himself).

The Good life

- John 10:10 'life in all its fulness'
- Classical *eudaimonia*: blessedness, happiness, prosperity
- Virtuous character, good habits and good actions reinforce each other
- Because happiness is social it means pursuing the 'common good'

Does our church community nurture
'goodness' [virtue] in its members?

A Virtue Ethics Perspective on Work Organisations



Fernando and Moore
(2015)

God in
Christ: the
caller



Me: the
one who
is called

Those to
whom I
am called

Me in
relation
with God

Me in
myself

Me in
relation
with my
community



Me in myself: C.L.A.N.G.E.R.S

- Connect with others (inc. family)
- Learn new things
- (be) Active
- Notice the world around you
- Give back (volunteer, smile)
- Eat well
- Relax (take time out, chill)
- Sleep (6 to 8 hours per night is fundamental)

Me in relation to God

- Find a rhythm and rule of spiritual life
- Participate in worship as well as leading it
- Enjoy sermon preparation
- Go to conferences and celebrations that feed you
- Have people with whom you share deeply (spiritual guide, cell group)
- Read good theology
- Spend time with people who encourage you

Me in relation to my Community

- Love and be loved
- Invest in church officers
- Encourage the good people
- Be clear that bullying is unacceptable
- If things go wrong, involve an Area Dean or Archdeacon before things become impossible
- Know when it is time to move on
- Remember it is God's church

Me in
relation
with God

Me in
myself

Me in
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