

Articles in the Exploring Our Gifts Resource Center

Barkalow, Gary. "Career vs. Calling" [online]. *Boundless Webzine* (28 August 1998 [cited 21 January 2003]). Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.boundless.org/1999/features/a0000019.html>>

One man describes his journey to find his call and offers advice to college students on how to distinguish call from career.

Bertrand, Catherine. "A Theology of Call: How to Be Good News to Others." *U.S. Catholic* 63 (September 1998): 30-34.

In this interview with Sister Catherine Bertrand, a Roman Catholic nun, the editors of *U.S. Catholic* address vocation and what it means to have a calling. Although Sister Bertrand herself has been called to a more traditional vocation within the church, she emphasizes, "No call is more special than another." But she adds, "All of us are called to fidelity, to commitment."

Buchanan, Dan and Amy Carr. "Called to the Everyday." *Sojourners* 28 (July-August 1999): 38-40.

What if you find that, no matter how you look at it and despite your best intentions, you feel more called to be a poet than a social activist? What if you'd rather bake bread than go to a political meeting? Buchanan and Carr encourage us to listen to our restlessness and heed our true callings. Vocations are not limited to a predetermined set of community service roles. Rather, "all of us can best serve the world by embracing our own vocations, because ultimately the only gift we can give the world is ourselves."

Bussert, Janelle. Chapel sermon presented at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN, 10 October 2002.

In her chapel sermon of October 10, 2002, Janelle maintains that even as sinners, like Matthew the tax collector, we are called by God to work in his world.

Christenson, Tom. Composite text from book on Lutheran Higher Education. 2003

Cornell, Deirdre. "A Mother's Divine Office." *America* (21 October 2002): 23-24.

After becoming pregnant with her third child, Deirdre Cornell, a devoted Catholic Worker, realized that she could no longer maintain the active life that her and her husband's work entailed. Faced with her limitations, she rediscovered the sources of her vocation and learned to accept motherhood as a call.

Curry, Andrew. "Why We Work: Today, American society is dominated by work. But there was a time when people could have made a different choice" [online]. *U.S. News* (24 February 2003 [cited 26 February 2003]). Available

from World Wide Web:

<<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/issue/030224/work/24lede.htm>>

Since the industrial revolution, Americans have made a series of decisions, wittingly or not, to trade leisure for consumption and fulfilling work for meaningless jobs. Why?

Dauten, Dale. "Making the Best of It Is the Worst You Can Do." *Star Tribune*, 23 October 2002.

The "Corporate Curmudgeon" Dale Dauten offers a reflection on the importance of doing the job you love and quitting the job you hate.

Davidson, James C. and David P. Caddell. "Religion and the Meaning of Work." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33 (June 1994): 135-147.

"Most studies of work focus almost exclusively on secular antecedents of 'work commitment,' 'work involvement,' and work as a 'central life interest.' [Davidson and Caddell] use data from 1,869 Protestants and Catholics to test a theory that includes six religious factors, five work conditions, and other personal attributes. Work-related factors have the most effect, followed by religion, especially religious commitment and social justice beliefs. Among personal attributes, education, family income, and gender have a significant effect on orientations toward work."

Davis, Lennard J. "I Used to Run a Department, but Then I Got Wise." *The Chronicle of Higher Education, The Chronicle Review* (29 November 2002): B11.

Davis, a professor in the English department at the University of Illinois at Chicago who very recently resigned his position as head of the department, encourages us to consider quitting as an integral part of finding our vocation. "My message," he says, "is not that I quit and bravo for me, but that it is important to listen to the still, quiet, cowardly voice within."

Edwards, James. "The Calling." *Christianity Today* (5 February 1988): 60-63, 65-66.

Emphasizing that "the power of divine calling is not in how one is called but that one is called in the first place," Edwards addresses these questions: How do we know when we are called? To what are we called? How do we fulfill that calling?

Frame, William V. "A President Looks Back 500 Years and Finds His Calling." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (September 6, 2002): B11-B12.

William Frame, president of Augsburg College, relates his own vocational journey from academia to business and back again. From Frame, we learn that calling is found through experience more often than by instinct.

Froelich, Karlfried. "Luther on Vocation." *Lutheran Quarterly* 12 (1999): 195-207.

Froelich examines Luther's doctrine of vocation in four steps. First, he defines the concept of "vocation," and then he "looks at its importance for the self-understanding of every Christian, the self-understanding of the pastor and minister, and finally the self-understanding of a seminary." Throughout, he emphasizes that vocation is something owned by everyone and that it works through our lives in the world.

Furman, Andrew. "I'm Not a Chairman, I'm a Professor." *The Chronicle of Higher Education, the Chronicle Review* (29 November 2002): B10-B11.

Furman, after turning down an offer to be head of the English department at Florida Atlantic University, reflects on the growing value placed on power and position over teaching in academia. He asks professors to rethink their values and, in the process, their vocation.

Hofrenning, James B. "Sent Into the World – Mask of God." Chapel sermon presented at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN, 20 November 2002.

In his chapel sermon of November 20, 2002, James Hofrenning responds to Luther's statement, "What is our work in field and garden, in town and house, in battling and ruling, to God, but the work of his children. Our works are God's mask, behind which [God] remains hidden."

Hofrenning, Stella Koutroumanes. "Greek Orthodox Perspectives on Economics." Working paper prepared for "Christianity and Economics: Integrating Faith and Learning in Economic Scholarship," Lilly Fellows Program Second National Research Conference, Baylor University, Waco, TX, 7 November 2002.

Offering a brief introduction and history of the Greek Orthodox church, Hofrenning proceeds to analyze the church's economic perspectives on environment and social justice. The paper demonstrates the church's interest in affairs of the world and how it is able to locate its interests within its theology and history.

Hurd, Jean Larson. "Women and Vocation: Co-Creating with God." *Word and World* 15.3 (Summer 1995): 272-278.

Women often trivialize their work as mothers, homemakers and caretakers, not recognizing it as "God's work." Luther, on the other hand, extended sacred space to the home and maintained that women's work within it should be recognized as vocation. Unfortunately, history has sometimes construed Luther's words to uphold the idea that women's work is *only* in the home and that they must maintain the family structure at all costs, even at the risk of their own self-respect or lives. Hurd answers the feminist critics

of Luther's vocational theology with a reminder that all of us are at work with God in our most ordinary tasks.

***Intersections* 14 (Summer 2002).**
(An entire issue devoted to vocation.)

Jodock, Darrell. "The ELCA College and the Church: Strengthening the Partnership." Keynote address at "Here We Stand,' A Gathering of ELCA Colleges and Seminary Presidents and Bishops of Regions 3&5," Minneapolis, MN, 19 August 2002.

Jodock confronts the role of ELCA colleges in relation to their church. He upholds that ELCA colleges, in light of their Lutheran identity, should not simply be non-sectarian or sectarian but rather should follow a third model which "takes religious diversity seriously enough to engage and struggle with it, while at the same time remaining deeply committed to the importance of its own Lutheran tradition." It is important, Jodock, maintains, the colleges remain tied to the Lutheran churches that they were founded to serve *and* keep their academic integrity.

Johnson, Thomas S. "How the Notion of a Calling Manifests Itself in the World of Business: One Viewpoint." *America* 162 (10 February 1990): 117-120.

In this essay on the calling of business and the business of calling, Johnson writes, "We all need to answer questions about the meaning and goodness of what we do and about how the varied activities that fill a day can be made to fit together into a pattern that is consistent with God's plan for us. How can our secular lives be made a part of our journey through life according to God's plan?" Johnson maintains that business can be a part of a moral and spiritual life and, if practiced with right judgment and compassion, is a vocation equal to a call to the church.

Jones, L. Gregory. "Going and Staying." *Christian Century* 114 (10-17 September 1997): 800.

Jones reflects on the wonder of Abraham's and the disciples' willingness to follow God's call, even when it meant giving up their home and all that they had known. He questions his (and our) own ability to give up the possessions that burden and bless us and asks whether we would be willing to respond to God's call.

Jones, L. Gregory. "Vocation." *Christian Century* 116 (14-21 July 1999): 716.

Jones observes that many graduates from high school, college, and even professional schools do not have a sense of vocation. Addressing how one knows and finds one's vocation, Jones cites Gail Goodwin's *Evensong*, in which it is written, "Something's your vocation if it keeps making more of you." Yet, he notes, it is equally important that our calling not merely be self-serving, for, as the gospels indicate, to find one's life one must lose it. And we must help one another in our vocational discernment.

Karmel, Miriam. "Big Man on Campus: Silas Purnell helped thousands of disadvantaged kids earn college diplomas." *Utne Reader* (Nov-Dec 2002): 64.

Silas Purnell, who himself never received a college degree, encouraged and helped thousands of African-American youth in the Chicago area to attend college.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. "Our God Is Able." In *Strength to Love*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963.

In this impassioned but reflective sermon, Dr. King reasserts God's power. Too many, King states, have come to rely on men's strength, when it is truly God who leads us and keeps us safe through our days. In the worst times, human invention fails and God alone remains to uphold us.

Koger, Alicia Kae. "The Seduction of a Scholar: a Tragedy in Multiple Acts." *The Chronicle of Higher Education, The Chronicle Review* (November 29, 2002): B15-B16.

Koger must assess the true value of her work when her visions of fame as a scholar are thwarted by the production of a documentary.

Kolden, Marc. "Christian Vocation in Light of Feminist Critiques." *Lutheran Quarterly* 10 (1996): 71-85.

Kolden answers critics of the doctrine of vocation, including feminist and liberation theologians who uphold that vocation reinforces static, stereotyped roles, sectarian Christians who believe that a Christian cannot have a calling in a fundamentally evil world, and critics of the specific Lutheran view of vocation who maintain that vocation suffers from Luther's dualisms.

Niedringhaus, Robert. "Science as a Christian Vocation." *Word and World* 13 (Summer 1993): 230-233.

Niedringhaus asserts that Christian faith and science affirm and complement one another. Through stories of his experiences as a physician, he relates how faith and science have worked together in his profession both to make him a better doctor and to make him feel that there is hope and purpose in his work.

Norris, Kathleen. "Plain Old Sloth." *Christian Century* (11 January 2003): 8-9.

Sloth, Norris maintains, is not simply physical laziness but rather "an inability to concentrate on serious matters, and profound weariness of soul." It is important, but often difficult when confronted with grief or other trials, to live each day as if it were a gift.

Olson, Sandy. “Welcoming Silence.” Chapel Sermon presented at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN, 15 January 2002.

Sandy Olson, a practicing Quaker, emphasizes the need for silence in discerning God’s call.

Palmer, Parker. “On Minding Your Call – When No One Is Calling.” *Weavings* 11 (May-June 1996): 15-22.

Palmer, feeling frustrated as a young man with the Quaker tenet, “Have faith, and way will open,” complained to an older Quaker woman, “‘Way’ may open for other people, but it’s sure not opening for me.” The woman responded that ‘way’ had never opened for her, either, but “a lot of way has closed behind me – and that has had the same guiding effect.” Leaping from this exchange, Palmer explains that failures and disappointments, deficiencies and limitations can lead the way to vocation. All we need to do is to accept the nature that God has given us and follow its lead.

Razdan, Anjula. “Can’t You Hear Your Inner Voice? 11 Questions to Help You Find Your Mission in Life.” *Utne Reader* (Nov-Dec 2002): 68-69.

To those who are less inclined toward self-examination, Razdan offers 11 simple, practical questions that can act as guides on the search for vocation.

Savage, Deborah. “Work as Participation in the Life of the Trinity” [online]. St. Paul: University of St. Thomas, 2002 [cited 22 October 2002]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/mgmt/goa/SAVAGE.HTML>>

Savage writes, “How can I bring my whole self to work? That the question is an important one cannot be denied...The caution I have about it is two-fold, one for the community of management scholars and practitioners, and a second one for the theologians and all those working to forge linkages between faith and work. First, if the field of management science is to undertake a serious consideration of the role the transcendent can play in our working lives, we had better be aware of and sensitive to the unspeakably important effort this represents...A spirituality of work cannot become a new management theory, overlaid on top of other management theories, but must result in a new and concrete understanding of what it means to be human...”

Seligman, Martin E.P. “How to See the Glass Half Full” [online]. *Newsweek* (16 September 2002 [cited 7 November 2002]). Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.msnbc.com/news/805116.asp>

In the section of his article entitled “Turn Work Into Play,” Seligman reports that people with callings, a passionate commitment to work for its own sake, are consistently happier than those with jobs or careers.

Servais, Jacques. "The Lay Vocation in the World According to H.U. von Balthasar." *Communio* 23 (Winter 1996): 656-676.

Servais outlines Hans Urs von Balthasar's plan to establish an organized religious activity of the laity in the Roman Catholic Church in the early twentieth century.

Smith, C. Fraser. "Mayor O'Malley and the Gonzaga Test." *Baltimore Sun*, 9 June 2002.

An opinion piece on the mayor of Baltimore, Martin O'Malley, this article examines a commencement speech that the mayor delivered to his alma mater Gonzaga High School on June 2, 2002 and speculates on how its content reflects on his subsequent decision not to run for governor of Maryland, despite public and political pressure to do so. Martin O'Malley seems to have decided on duty over power, and his words and actions bespeak a strong belief in his own vocation as a mayor in a violent city.

Steinfels, Peter. "A Lay Vocation in the Marketplace." *Origins* 29 (10 June 1999): 57-61.

Using his father as a model, Steinfels comments on the centrality of work to human fulfillment in its most spiritual sense.

Tranvik, Mark. "Luther on Justification and Vocation." *Augsburg College*, 2002.

Tranvik explains the connection between justification by faith and vocation. Luther's teaching that people are saved by faith and not works made it possible for the work of those who were not living as priests, monks or nuns to be considered as holy as work for the church.

VanOosting, James. "Vocation Education." *America* 187 (July 1-8 2002): 8-11.

Van Oosting proposes encouraging students to take a vocational rather than professional approach to making decisions about their careers.

Willimon, William H. "Back to the Burning Bush." *Christian Century* (April 24-May 1, 2002): 7.

Challenging the growing concept of a "science of leadership," Willimon uses the story of God's calling of Moses to illustrate that leadership comes from God rather than through one's own deeds.