

THE PARTICULARITY OF CHRISTIAN VOCATION

Josh Sweeden, Student
Nazarene Theological Seminary

One of the primary tasks of those working with young adults includes youth's preparation for adulthood. Young adults negotiate many developmental facets when preparing for adulthood, which theorists often categorize as physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.¹ Adolescence typically defines the period of an individual's life where change and transition prove most significant. Educators and others often regard young adults as *in the midst of identity formation*; formation in, but not limited to, the four categories listed above.

As the field of adolescent study grew, theorists understood the greater depths of developmental categories. Physical formation, for example, no longer remains just an acknowledgement of the pubescent stages, but describes specifics with everything from acne to athleticism. In addition to the growing field of adolescent study there have been a growing emphasis upon the final stage of adolescence— young adult. As studies of young adult development have increased the importance for understanding and working with young adults has followed. Acknowledging this intensely formational period of life, society has subtly shifted from little concern to extreme concern about the development of young adults into adulthood.²

Along with society's concern for young adult development, those who work with young adults have begun to address specific issues regarding preparation for the approaching adult life. Vocation remains one of many issues commonly presented to all adolescents as they prepare for adulthood. Who will you be? What will you do? The preceding are inevitably vital issues when young adults are going to enter a society that defines them by how they answer those questions. This writing explores this specific area of study. The reader will move from a general description of vocation to a specific and distinct description grounded in the church, developing an understanding of vocation as specifically Christian. How is vocation to be understood as particularly Christian? How might such a view relate to definitions of vocation within the context of a liberal democratic society—which dominates most traditional understandings of vocation? What are the challenges to forming followers under a particular Christian understanding in the midst a liberal democratic society? Exploring the complexities of Christian vocation and a liberal democratic society provides significant value both for Christian educational institutions and young adult ministers.

The article approaches this exploration through three sections. First, vocation as Christian will be discussed in the most basic and fundamental sense, apart from the way it interacts or is subject to society. Secondly, discussion will turn to vocation within the context of a liberal democratic society and that society's understanding thereof. And third, the writing will outline the form that a distinctly Christian vocation *must take* if it is to remain Christian amidst a liberal democratic society and its imposing definition of vocation.

Vocation as Christian

Youth Minister Anna Aven describes Christian vocation as,

“the overarching story that explains all the other stories in our lives. Vocation is the metanarrative for how we view our lives, our jobs, and our ministries. Jobs are what we get paid to do. A vocation is what we're called to do, and it far surpasses the notion of an immediate job or career—vocation is a life direction.”³

In essence what Aven is describing is the following of Christ that is the task of every Christian. Seeking to be "Christ-like" is who we are and what we do as Christians. It is the purpose of our very being, the intention for which we were created and the goal for which we strive. For Aven the vocation of a Christian is not to be defined as simply one's job or position, but rather, one's very life.

M. Robert Mulholland Jr. takes us a step further as he describes Christian spirituality as inevitably linked to our life or being. Mulholland writes, "Our spirituality is not an 'add-on,' it is the very essence of our being. We are spiritual beings whose emotions, psychology, body and mind, are the incarnation of our spiritual life in the world."⁴ If vocation directs our life and being as Aven points out, and if our life and being are essentially spiritual as Mulholland states, then vocation for Christians is necessarily linked to spirituality. Job, position, and career do not define vocation; it is not an activity or something Christians do, vocation is defined by who Christians are. The task of vocational formation for young adults inevitably ties to the task of spiritual formation. The Vocational progress and growth of a young adult depends upon their spiritual progress and growth. It could be said that as an individual matures spiritually, his or her understanding of vocation matures likewise. This signifies the process of change that comes as Christians continue to learn what it means to follow Jesus. Christian vocation and Christian spirituality are not static; continual maturation in these areas implies a dynamic life-long process conforming us to the image of Christ.⁵

This does not eliminate the importance of vocational formation in an adolescent's life. Life-long processes may begin at birth, but they are aided, sometimes more than others, at specific moments in life. In other words, without assistance, the journey of vocational formation, like spiritual formation, is impossible. A sustaining group, the community of Christ, presupposes successful Christian formation. The young adult years remain some the most transformational in an individual's life and vocational formation makes that transformation successful.

Approaching vocational formation requires a theological starting point that establishes its journey henceforth. This theological starting point has been termed by theologians in many ways, all of which focus on the grace and relationship of humanity with God the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Christian scriptures, and many theologians and writers since, have used the term *beloved* to express this grace and relationship offered to humanity. Understanding the Christian life as founded upon our acceptance as *beloved children of God*, and our inclusion into God's family as a result, spiritual and vocational formation can be guided by the constant question, "Am I acting as God's child?" The constant posing of this question to the process of life continues to hold the Christian accountable as vocational formation takes place. This foundational question is essentially asking, "Are you being who you have been called to be?" Will Penner, editor for *Youth Worker Journal*, states that an adolescent's identity as a beloved child of God is what establishes the discussion towards vocational discernment.

"I believe the most important function we perform as ministers to young people is to help them fully embrace their identities as beloved children of God. How we do that can vary widely due to context, but that we do it is critical. So our first task was to take what they had traditionally called career counseling, with an emphasis on what kids should do, and reframe it in a broader context—what I call vocational discernment, which creates a new starting point for the discussion."⁶

The understanding of the grace and relationship that have been offered to us by God has been defined by the term *beloved* primarily because of the rich biblical analogies and metaphors available. The language of adoption, particularly in the theology of Paul, evidences our familial relationship to God, who is Father, and to our brother who is Christ, all through the life giving of the Spirit.⁷ We are beloved in God's acceptance and inclusion of us, and this relationship, as any child and father relationship, requires our obedience; the obedience of very lives. The Apostle Paul establishes no originality in this understanding. Language of adoption proceeds from the narrative of the bible, beginning with the calling of Israel, the people of God, that God's own are expected to live out obedience as beloved children of God.

Henri Nouwen in his book *The Return of the Prodigal Son* acknowledges a similar biblical metaphor in the *Parable of the Lost Son* found in Luke 15. Nouwen's book describes the journey of Christian life as moving from lost child to compassionate Father. As children of God we leave our home, our dignity, and our life in pursuit of what the world tells us is of higher purpose. Along this troubled road, however, we become aware of its disillusionment and recognize that we are still beloved by the Father and we make way back home. The journey of the Christian life, according to Nouwen, does not end with the return of the child to the Father, but with the complete process of the child growing into the Father. To do this requires the child to understand who he or she is in relation to the Father; dignified and heir. Nouwen writes, "As the beloved son, I have to claim my full dignity and begin preparing myself to become the father."⁸

Transformation into the life Father can only be accomplished by obedience to the will of the Father. Growing towards the compassionate Father requires the obedience of the child throughout the journey. The maturing child is only able to overcome road blocks and failures by awareness of the love of the Father. This awareness of the love of the Father, and the relationship to the Father as beloved, allows the child to continue in obedience on his or her formative process. The Christian community must mediate this love and carry their brothers and sisters as they journey together. For Nouwen, Christian life and being are wrapped up in the understanding of the beloved child in relation to the Father. Without this understanding as our theological foundation our journey would be directionless.

In summary, Christian vocation should not be understood as what we do or don't do, but as our very life and being. As Christians we acknowledge life as a process and a journey tied to a community of faith. The task of traveling the journey of life demands unique spirituality; and the need for spiritual direction proves essential if we are to become who we have been called to be. Like the prodigal son it remains easy to be disillusioned by a worldly concept of vocation. Returning home, by embracing the Father's call summarizes Christian vocation. The Christian understanding of vocation, however, fails to be the prominent understanding of vocation within the North American context. The questions of spiritual formation and direction imperative to the Christian understanding of vocation hold little importance outside of Christianity. Vocation, as understood in North America, has little to do with the notion of journey and even less to do with community. While there are many reasons for this understanding within North America, a general overview of the concepts behind the liberal democratic society found in North America may prove helpful.

Vocation within the Liberal Democratic Society

Liberal democracy by nature resists definition. It prefers to be seemingly eclectic, taking the good from a variety of traditions, evaluating them through alleged

principles of shared rationality, and establishing a norm derivative of modern individualist society.⁹ In this way liberal democracy is not subject to any one tradition, but remains applicable to all traditions by finding and promoting the general good available to each individual. Liberal Democratic Society has no unique claim to North America. As a matter of fact, its roots stretch far beyond the confines of the North American continent and are evident in various post-Enlightenment philosophical movements. Nonetheless, liberal democracy has found comfort in the North American mindset. The United States, in particular, has identified with liberal democracy and its ideals are pumped through schools, media, and government. Competition, individualism, prosperity, and freedom, are great examples; these liberal democratic ideals define, more than any other, what the United States is. When we think of liberal democracy, therefore, we should not necessarily be thinking of representative government and open elections. Liberal democracy integrates far more subtly than that. Looking beyond mere governmental organization we see liberal democracy establishing a normative worldview that defines a set of ideals; choice, autonomy, and universality. The sociological implications of these ideals are awe-inspiring. Beginning at childhood competition solicits encouragement in schools and individual autonomy and self-reliance are praised. Meanwhile, those incapable of independence are set aside in other classrooms, held back, and often fall behind. Media and culture are no better. There are numerous music groups and television shows expressing to the youth the importance for freedom and individuality. "Don't be like the rest," is what they are saying, "be you, be unique." People say that, "America loves its heroes." And why wouldn't it, strong independent individuals conquering their competition, obtaining their freedom, and gaining power. Heroes are the fulfillment of liberal democratic ideals, and the more we see and praise them, the more natural that way of life seems. It is truly overwhelming that by the time an adolescent graduates high school his or her worldview exists almost completely formed by a liberal democratic polity, which, limited as such, remains not near as narrow-minded as their assumption that the liberal democratic society proves both natural and correct for humanity.

Not much changes after high school. Even if college, graduate school, social awareness, travel, and hard times in life are experienced by a young adult, change is still minimal if any. The majority of colleges and graduate schools only affirm the surrounding liberal democratic society rather than offer any healthy critique. Meanwhile, work atmospheres, aided by competitive capitalism, leave no room for needed discernment. The hope of an awareness of social injustices, which may in turn sprout doubt as to the success of the liberal democratic polity (displaying its deception instead), are becoming more difficult as rich and poor are being further separated by location, community, language, education, and health. The simple fact remains that now, more than ever, one can live an individuated, prosperous life, without ever truly interacting with neighbor, friend, or fellow human. There are certainly possibilities for change, but the task of re-socialization proves daunting and overwhelming; a task that may only be accomplishable through the guidance and support of others, as limited as our access to *others* may be.

The ability of the liberal democratic society to consume opposing worldviews impresses as well. The growing strength of liberal democracy, the promise of autonomy and freedom (its ideals), convinces whole generations of their individuality while they remain subjected to the latest advertising ploy. In other words, liberal democratic society is deceptive. It creates a belief that particulars are possible when in truth it seeks to seduce all particulars as it creates one universal. "Liberals claim to celebrate diversity, promote equality of respect and avoid indoctrination; generally they assume they are adopting a neutral stance on controversial issues where

notions of the good life are contestable. But this is not quite the case."¹⁰ This deception exists necessarily for liberal democracy to achieve its overarching goal; a nation of unity full of supposedly empowered individuals. John Wright explains this dynamic well,

"All forms of liberal polity are constructed on a simple but far-reaching presupposition. The fundamental tenet of liberalism asserts that humanity exists as autonomous, rational individuals who seek to pursue their own self-interests. The ability to engage in this pursuit is called freedom or liberty—a formal category of the will that possesses no specific content, except as it is filled by the individual's choice. Because individuals all pursuing their own self-interests would bring about social chaos, individuals voluntarily submit themselves to a sovereign government via consent of the people (i.e. democratic elections)."¹¹

Liberal democracy has been equally as deceptive concerning Christian vocation. Of the great examples of this are the church's universities which should be, as John Wright argues, "no longer church-related and liberally based, but rather, ecclesially based and liberally related."¹² The university experience should be one of the primary opportunities for a young adult to develop an understanding of Christian vocation. The problem, however, is that many Christian universities are no longer fundamentally Christian. Referring to the many church-related universities welcomed by the U.S. John Wright states, "such universities have compliantly and uncritically adopted a role as the mediator of societal norms, practices, and institutions provided by liberal democratic polity."¹³ What we are seeing are institutions more driven by liberal democratic ideas than by the church.

When Christian universities function as church-related and liberally based, its formation of students will inevitably be reflected as such. Vocation, like any discipline offered by the university will not be inherently Christian, but only deceptively Christian. It will wear the label of *Christian* or *Religious*, but in actuality be yet another entity consumed and maintained by the liberal democratic society. As a university becomes more distinguished the task of remaining Christian is faced with greater difficulty. Nationally recognized professors, applicants with high grade point averages, alumni with money, political ties and community importance are all goals of universities. The more elite a university, the more successful it appears. Are these goals inherent to the church, or are they "further evidence of a liberal hegemony wishing to perpetuate its own values?"¹⁴

An educational institution that serves the liberal democratic society will form students of a liberal polity. Christian vocational formation proves impossible when the formers (the educators) are allied with a liberal polity rather than an ecclesial polity. This is at the center of the church's struggle to form its members as vocationally Christian. If the university exists liberal based and only church-related, the same, logically, can and should be said of its graduates. A university formed, established, and maintained by the liberal democratic society will produce graduates who are formed, established, and maintained in like fashion. It is a matter of allegiances. And "at the root of the historical and contemporary difficulties of the church-related university, therefore, is that such universities remain liberally based—they have been and are fundamentally formed by, live within, and serve the polities of a liberal society."¹⁵

For vocational formation to be Christian it must be founded, rooted, and formed as Christian. Servitude to the liberal polity will only produce vocational understandings and lifestyles bound within the liberal democratic society. The task for the church is

to offer young adults, who are in their formative years, a distinct and truthful mission of vocation.¹⁶ The private, autonomous freedom and prosperity deceptively offered by the liberal democratic society will unavoidably form adolescents unless the church offers formation through its distinct and truthful mission. This, of course, requires first the Church's obedience to that distinct and truthful mission.

Christian Vocation in the Midst of a Liberal Democratic Society

"Rather than running the kingdoms of the world, Jesus went about establishing a new kingdom, a kingdom in this world yet not of it—what he called the kingdom of God."¹⁷ An understanding of vocation as Christian requires an allegiance to the kingdom of God. Jesus' establishment of God's kingdom conflicts with the kingdoms of the world and presents a distinct and truthful mission that demands the response of God's people. Obedience is the reply of the faithful. These are God's people who accept the calling of being distinct and truthful, who understand the necessity of its journey, and the difficulty of its embodiment. God's people are the church, allegiant to God's kingdom and therefore uniquely capable of understanding Christian vocation precisely because they themselves have traveled the road of vocational formation. As the people of God, allegiant to God's kingdom, the church stands able to understand *who they are*. The very being of the church presupposes an understanding of God's people as spiritually formed. The vocation of the church entails obedient fulfillment of the distinct and truthful mission, which is the same vocation offered to its members. It requires allegiance to the kingdom of God and the embodiment of its journey.

"To be Christian is to be adopted by a new nation, the kingdom of God. For the first time in our lives, those old labels and divisions that cause such grief—male/female, slave/free, rich/poor, New Jersey/Texas—are washed away, overcome, not by saying that such divisions don't mean anything, but rather by showing that they have been relativized, subordinated, and washed by our new citizenship. Now, the only division that makes much difference to us is church/world."¹⁸

Knowing the distinctiveness of the kingdom of God enables the church to understand *who* they are to be, but the question of *how* they are to be remains.

Some answers to the question of *how* are obvious—God's kingdom is a peaceable kingdom¹⁹, a kingdom of grace, a kingdom of love—but the majority are muddled in the midst of history and culture. Discovering and enacting how God's people are to live in an ever changing world displays a task that requires both patience and forgiveness. Being assured that God in love grants patience and forgiveness does not relinquish the church from responsibility, but rather demands in love that the same be done. Christianity affirms, therefore, that discovering and enacting *how* presupposes a journey, a journey that remains part of the church's still unfinished formation; vocational and spiritual.

As the church seeks to live responsibly to God's kingdom formative practices become necessary. There are a variety of practices that church has traditionally enacted—Eucharist, baptism, prayer, reading scripture, passing the peace, serving others, tithing, and many others. All practices have minor shifts throughout the course of history and in different cultures and contexts, but the purpose of formative practices, to embody God's kingdom, remains. The practice of baptism exemplifies the diversity a single practice can have within the church catholic. While some cultures and traditions affirm infant baptism, others affirm adult baptism. Some sprinkle water, others pour water, and many completely submerge. Disagreement between the various cultures and traditions does exist, but the central purpose and intention of the baptismal practice is maintained. Baptism, within all Christian tradition, signifies

the formative moment in a person's life when she or he becomes enveloped into the Body of Christ, marking both adoption into God's family and brother or sisterhood with Christ. As the church has sought to live responsibly to the kingdom that the formation it requires, Christian vocational practices have been established. Just as all practices maintain a degree of particularity for their context, Christian vocational practices are also particular. Acknowledging the context we have been discussing, Christian vocational practices particular to a liberal democratic society are essential to the North American church's question of *how* it will live responsibly.

Michael Cartwright, in discussing Christian formation and vocation, alludes to three ways the church can responsibly live out its vocational calling in the midst of a liberal democracy. Cartwright's three statements provide insight for the church as it seeks to prepare young adults for adulthood. His statements are more than abstractions; they are statements that guide the purpose and intention of the vocational practices of the church. First is to understand that "Christian formation is more about apprenticeship than knowledge acquisition."²⁰ Mentoring has always played a fundamental role in the life of the church. A Christian community that understands the journey of faith will continually seek guidance. In this way Christian formation presupposes apprenticeship—it is learned—not by an objective test or knowing the right answers, but by following someone who has come before; one of the faithful. The importance of establishing personal faith with the faithful community exposes part of the *how* of vocational formation. Unlike the liberal democratic society, vocation for Christians means not individual autonomy but communal dependence.

Second, Cartwright states that "Christian formation is more about craft than about technique."²¹ In the context of liberal democracy, achievement demands utmost concern. Learning the proper technique allows people to quickly and more efficiently achieve their goal. As Cartwright says, technique focuses on "means and ends"²² identifying highest importance by what can or must be accomplished. Should the only concern be that which necessitates achievement of a task? A Christian understanding of vocation affirms the process toward achievement, because through process formation occurs; the process of constant formation of life into the Father's life. As Nouwen said, we are "to become the compassionate father."²³ Becoming implies process, not just achievement.

Third, Cartwright says that "Christian formation is more about cultivation of wisdom than about career training."²⁴ Growing into the compassionate Father requires a process of maturation, not simply obtaining the right skills. Obedience to God's kingdom may be possible for a short period of time with the right skills, but for the long term, obedience requires discernment. "Career training" offers skills and specialties; providing a quick answer to a tough question. Discernment, although requiring more developmental time, offers thoughtfulness and sensitivity; a realization that some questions will always be tough—and that there will always be questions. "Seeing beyond the guidelines of professional certification may take a variety of forms," Cartwright states, "but in every case it will mean valuing Christian vocation above the established 'career paths' of a liberal democratic society."²⁵

In essence, Cartwright's three-part suggestion of how the church can live out its vocational calling presupposes the centrality of spiritual direction. Christian vocational formation exists as a process and a journey; a process and a journey that parallels and coincides with spiritual formation. The foundational starting point for this journey is the beloved child's response to the love of God as she or he acts in obedience. The church community nurtures and maintains a person's obedience as life is formed in allegiance to God's kingdom. Ultimately, the very being of the beloved child—spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional—is formed, like the

community, to the likeness of Christ. What form should vocation take if it is to be Christian in the North American context? The church must not avoid this question, because avoidance will only build ignorance, and ignorance is not bliss. Instead the church must approach the question head on by responding through its distinct formative vocational practices. The distinct vocational practices of the church must overshadow the vocational practices of the liberal democratic society if the church desires to present young adults with an alternative understanding of vocation to that of society. Only through enacting Christian vocational practices will the church responsibly live out its calling as the “called out” people of God.

Conclusion

Christian vocation should be a particular vocation. The distinct and truthful mission of the church establishes an understanding of vocation very different than its surrounding society. This should be evident in North America where the church remains in the midst of a liberal democratic society—Christian vocation should be particular. The deceptiveness of liberal democracy has allowed the church to believe that it lives a distinct and truthful mission while instead living obediently to the liberal democratic society. The church’s uniting with liberal democracy, whether intentional or not, has inevitably taken away her particularity. The church has been amassed into the dominating polity of the society, making it a universal rather than a particular.

Christian vocation suffers because of this. The particularity of Christian vocation as life-long formation and growth has been swallowed up by the universalizing liberal polity. Meanwhile the church, unaware of this transformation, has united with society’s understanding of vocation. Jenny Baker gives simple examples in stating,

“Part of the problem is we’ve reduced our understanding of what it is to be a Christian at work to issues of superficial morality and behavior. Our view of a Christian banker is someone who is honest, doesn’t cheat on her expense claims, and doesn’t swear. Our view of a Christian trader is someone who doesn’t open his shop on Sunday and who doesn’t stock *Harry Potter* books. A Christian artist is someone whose pictures have an obvious link to a Bible passage, a verse across the bottom, or an easily understandable moral ‘meaning.’”²⁶

The Christian understanding of vocation is no longer different than society’s understanding. Jenny Baker makes this assessment well by acknowledging the assumption that vocation is about what we do.²⁷

Liberal democratic society tells people that vocation must be about what we do and don’t do. Christian vocation, however, should not be about *what we do*; but about *who we are*. Applying Christian language and morals to vocation does not make it Christian. Instead it reiterates the fact that the church has ultimately become allegiant to a liberal polity, allowing the church to be continually deceived. A Christian understanding of vocation can not just be an add-on to a societal concept of vocation. Christian vocation is fundamentally different, foundationally unique, and therefore particular. For vocation to be Christian it must be rooted in its theological starting point; the obedience of the beloved child in response to God’s love.

Perhaps the most practical step the church could take in reviving its vocational distinctiveness is what Michael Budde suggests as lifelong catechesis. “A lifelong catechumenate represents a lifelong invitation to learn more, do more, risk more, and become more fully a herald of the Kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed and discerned.”²⁸ Michael Cartwright affirms Budde’s notion of the “lifelong

catechumenate” as he emphasizes the fundamentality of the Christian community and the formational influence its members have.²⁹ As a model for Christian vocation lifelong catechesis affirms a process of formation requiring the influence and guidance of the church community. Further, lifelong catechesis affirms that the church community exists in a formational process as well. Even as a person within the community discovers her or his vocation the church discovers and re-discovers its own vocation.

When it comes to role, Christian young adult ministers are the guides and instructors during a young adult’s catechesis. The context of this catechesis could be a youth group, college ministry, or university setting; wherever the church engages its young adults, Christian vocational formation is required. If the concern of the church is merely to help our young adults get good jobs and contribute to society then no particularity of vocation is needed. But if the church seeks to live out its distinct and truthful mission it must constantly be discovering and re-discovering its vocation. As the church continually understands its participatory role in the kingdom of God young adult ministers must be prepared to continue the process of Christian vocational formation in a young adult’s life. If the church, via its young adults ministers and the broader body, remains unable to form young adults according to Christian distinctions then society will do the job for us. The liberal democratic society’s influence in North America proves inescapable. The role of the church, therefore, is not to escape, but to distinguish—Christian vocation must be particular.

Notes

¹ John W. Santrock, *Adolescence*, 11th Edition. (Columbus, OH.: McGraw Hill 2005); Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). See also the National Study of Youth & Religion, available online (accessed June 15, 2006) at <http://www.youthandreligion.org/>.

² Arnett, Jeffrey, *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from Late Teens through the Twenties* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004) see also Arnett’s website available online (accessed June 15, 2006) at <http://www.jeffreyarnett.com/>.

³ Anna Aven, “Scattered yet Focused: Vocation as a Context for Life” (*Youthworker e-Journal*. Vol. 2 No. 4), 2 available online (accessed June 15 2006) at <http://www.youthspecialties.com/articles/topics/vocation/scattered.php>

⁴ Robert M. Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 13.

⁵ Mullholland, 15. Mulholland defines spiritual formation as “(1) a process (2) of being conformed (3) to the image of Christ (4) for the sake of others.” He continues on in the book by describing the journey of faith and how the image of Christ for others places us in “the covenant community of God’s people” which is a distinct, called-out community living Christ in the world.

⁶ Will Penner, *What do You Want to be When You Grow Up? Beyond Career Counseling to Vocational Discernment* (*Youthworker Journal*, March/April 2005), 2.

⁷ Romans 8 provides a primary example of Paul’s understanding of adoption. Further examples include Ephesians and Galatians.

⁸ Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (New York, NY: Image Books, Published by Doubleday, 1992), 53.

⁹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988) 335.

¹⁰ Mark A. Pike, *The Challenge of Christian Schooling in a Secular Society* (Journal of Research on Christian Education. Vol. 13, No. 2, Fall 2004), 153.

¹¹ John Wright, "How Many Masters? From the Church-Related to an Ecclesially Based University," in Michael L. Budde and John W. Wright (eds.), *Conflicting Allegiances: The Church-Based University in a Liberal Democratic Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), 15.

¹² Wright, 26.

¹³ Wright, 23.

¹⁴ Pike, *The Challenge of Christian Schooling in a Secular Society* (Journal of Research on Christian Education. Vol. 13, No. 2, Fall 2004), 163.

¹⁵ Wright, 25.

¹⁶ Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986). Newbigin uses similar language concerning the mission of the church as distinctly truthful in the midst of western culture. The role of the church, in Newbigin's missional understanding, is for the church to claim her visible (distinct) nature in order to promote and establish the true purpose of God's creation. *Truth to Tell*, 1991, and *The Gospel and Pluralistic Society*, 1989, are also valuable Newbigin resources for this topic.

¹⁷ William H. Willimon, and Stanley Hauerwas, *Lord, Teach Us: the Lord's Prayer and the Christian Life* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 52.

¹⁸ Willimon and Hauerwas, 55.

¹⁹ Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

²⁰ Michael G. Cartwright, "Moving Beyond Muddled Missions and Misleading Metaphors: Formation and Vocation of Students within an Ecclesially Based University" in Michael L. Budde and John W. Wright (eds.) *Conflicting Allegiances: The Church-Based University in a Liberal Democratic Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), 207.

²¹ Cartwright, 208.

²² Ibid.

²³ Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (New York, NY: Image Books, Published by DoubleDay, 1992), 53.

²⁴ Cartwright, 208.

²⁵ Ibid.,

²⁶ Jenny Baker, *Holy Vocations: God's Calling Beyond the Church Doors* (Youthworker Journal, March/April 2005), 33.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Michael Budde, *The Magic Kingdom of God, Christianity and Global Culture Industries* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 135.

²⁹ Cartwright, 191.