

International Presbyterian Church - Ealing  
Why business matters to God?



Calling and vocation: the beginning of ethics

Richard Turnbull, March 2021

Rev Dr Richard Turnbull, Call and Vocation: The Beginning of Ethics

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Calling and vocation

Why business matters to God?

- 18<sup>th</sup> January *A biblical theology of work*
- 22<sup>nd</sup> February *Divine imperative of wealth creation*
- 15<sup>th</sup> March *Call and vocation*
- 19<sup>th</sup> April *Enterprise and entrepreneurship*
- May *In person discussion evening*

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2

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Calling and vocation

'...is the business of the Church to recognise that the secular vocation as such is sacred.'

Dorothy Sayers, *Why Work? An Address Delivered at Eastbourne, April 23rd, 1942* (London: Methuen, 1942), p. 17.

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3

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Calling and vocation

'If your heart is not wholly in the work, the work will not be good – and work that is not good serves neither God nor the community; it only serves mammon.'

Dorothy Sayers, *Why Work? An Address Delivered at Eastbourne, April 23rd, 1942* (London: Methuen, 1942), p. 17.

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4

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Calling and vocation

Calling and Vocation

- Scriptural foundations
- Luther and vocation
- Vocation and calling in later Protestantism
- The collapse of modern evangelicalism into pietism

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5

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Scriptural foundations

- Creation mandates and command to work (Gn 2:15)
- The endowment with skill (Ex 35:30ff)
- Participation in Christ means participation in the creative activity of God (Jn 1:1-3)
- All are called, not just some (1 Pe 2:9)
- Called to serve in whatever we do (Col 3:17,23)

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6

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Luther and vocation

- Luther's theology of two kingdoms
- Luther's rejection of the priority of the spiritual office

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7

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Calling and vocation

'pure invention that pope, bishops, priests and monks are to be called the "spiritual state"; princes, lords, artisans, and farmers the "temporal estate".'

Martin Luther, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, <https://web.stanford.edu/~jsabol/certainty/readings/Luther-ChristianNobility.pdf>.

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8

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'A cobbler, a smith, a farmer, each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops, and every one by means of his own work or office must benefit and serve every other.'

Martin Luther, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, <https://web.stanford.edu/~jsabol/certainty/readings/Luther-ChristianNobility.pdf>.

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9

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Calling and vocation  
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10

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‘agriculture, architecture, shoemaking and shaving are lawful ordinances of God.’

Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.XIX.34, Library of Christian Classics, vol. XX, ed. J. T. McNeill (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960).

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11

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‘. . . we understand hereby, that the family, the business, science, art and so forth are all social spheres, which do not owe their existence to the state, and which do not derive the law of their life from the superiority of the state, but obey a high authority within their own bosom; an authority which rules, by the grace of God, just as the sovereignty of the State does.’

Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, Lecture 3 (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), p. 66.

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12

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‘the duty is now emphasised of serving God in the world, in every position of life.’

Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, Lecture 1 (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), p19

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13

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‘Wherever man may stand, whatever he may do, to whatever he may apply his hand, in agriculture, in commerce, and in industry, or his mind, in the world of art and science, he is, in whatsoever it may be, constantly standing before the face of God, he is employed in the service of God, he has strictly to obey God, and, above all, he has to aim to the glory of God.’

Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, Lecture 2 (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), p37

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14

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15

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Calling and vocation

‘The sacralising of an especially sacred career has come to an end theologically on Reformation soil.’

Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology*, p. 142.

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16

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Calling and vocation

‘Ordinary, daily, mundane work was at best a mission field, and at worst a distraction in the spiritual life.’

Darrell Cosden, *A Theology of Work: Work and the New Creation* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2004), p. xv.

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17

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‘You cannot forget that any worthy, noble and honest work at the human level can – and should! – be raised to the supernatural level, becoming a divine task.’

Josemaría Escrivá, *The Forge* (first published 1987), p. 687; [http://www.escrivaworks.org/book/the\\_forge.htm](http://www.escrivaworks.org/book/the_forge.htm).

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18

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Calling and vocation

‘we Christians must not abandon the vineyard where God has placed us.’

Josemaría Escrivá, *Friends of God* (first published 1977); [http://www.escrivaworks.org/book/friends\\_of\\_god.htm](http://www.escrivaworks.org/book/friends_of_god.htm), p. 48.

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19

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Calling and vocation

The vocation of the businessperson is a genuine human and Christian calling. Pope Francis calls it ‘a noble vocation, provided that those engaged in it see themselves challenged by a greater meaning in life; this will enable them truly to serve the common good by striving to increase the goods of this world and to make them more accessible to all’. The importance of the businessperson’s vocation in the life of the Church and in the world economy can hardly be overstated. Business leaders are called to conceive of and develop goods and services for customers and communities through a form of market economy. For such economies to achieve their goal, that is, the promotion of the common good, they should be structured on ideas based on truth, fidelity to commitments, freedom and creativity.

Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace, *Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection*, 4th edn (Vatican City: Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace, 2014), p. 5.

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20

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