

Spring 2006  
Augsburg College

# TILL & KEEP



*a journal on vocation*

*.....An Interview with William V. Frame*

*.....Money and the Meaning of Life*

*.....David Tiede on Augsburg's Vision*

*.....Vocation and Stewardship of the Earth*

*.....High School Students Reflect on Calling*

# TILL & KEEP

a journal on vocation

*Till & Keep* is a journal published by *Exploring Our Gifts* at Augsburg College, a program for the theological exploration of vocation funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. It is made by and for members of Augsburg and the greater academic community who are interested in exploring vocation and the interplay between faith and learning. For more information on the journal and other programs sponsored by *Exploring Our Gifts*, contact the co-editor, Diane Glorvigen, at <glorvige@augsb.org>.

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“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.”  
—Genesis 2:15

The name of the journal, *Till & Keep*, echoes God's purpose in placing humanity in the garden of Eden. It reflects a central theme of vocation—the call to service in God's world.

Mark Tranvik, co-editor  
Diane Glorvigen, co-editor  
Lynn Mena, production editor  
Ron Helgersen, graphic design

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Chapel Talk, March 16, 2005

## *The Paradox of Vocation*

*by Deanna Thompson*

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*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. This I command you, to love one another.*  
—John 15:12-17

I spent last weekend interviewing high school seniors for the presidential scholarship, the most prestigious scholarship that Hamline University awards. As I read through the student applications, I was overwhelmed, as I am every year, by the sheer volume of activities, honors, and awards these students amass during their high school careers. These lists of accomplishments exhaust me, and I worry about the messages we send to our young people about the value and necessity of busyness. As I took a break from the application-reading, I happened to catch an interview on NPR with actress Annette Benning. The interviewer asked Ms. Benning, who has four young children and a demanding acting career, if she had found a sense of balance in this life full of family and work. Ms. Benning replied simply, “I think balance is overrated. If you’re passionate about certain things, you’re going to fill your life with the things and activities you love.” There’s much talk these days about the busyness of our lives and about the seemingly unachievable goal of balance. The question that interests me is this: how do busyness and balance relate to our sense of vocation as Christians in the world today?

Martin Luther—forefather of the faith for many of us—is known, among other things, for a reformation in the Christian understanding of vocation. Vocation, Luther believed, should lead us *into* the world rather than *out* of it. He insisted that God’s call could be lived out in a variety of professions in the world, in ways that

stretched far beyond the church. While Luther is known for expanding and diversifying the Christian understanding of vocation, it is also important to remember his insistence that “the whole of the Christian life” is contained in one little paradox—that, in his language, the Christian is lord of all, subject to none; and at the same time, the Christian is servant of all, subject to all.

What does this mean for us as contemporary Christians, who often don’t think in terms of lords and servants? I think the opening passage from the Gospel of John offers some help. In those verses we hear Jesus redefining his relationship to his disciples, to any who follow him: I no longer call you servants, but friends.

Jesus further explains that because God has first freely loved us, we are free to love others. This radical freedom of which Jesus spoke is the same freedom that lies at the heart of Luther’s paradoxical vision of Christian vocation: Because God first loved us,

we do not need to spend our time justifying ourselves before God and each other (in other words, “lord of all, subject to none”). Instead, we are freed up to turn outward, toward the world, loving our neighbors as ourselves (“servant of all, subject to all”).

In our overly scheduled lives, precariously placed between the rhetoric of busyness and balance, I’m afraid that we are far from that sense of radical freedom to serve, befriend, and love the world because we do not really

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***...because God has first  
freely loved us, we are  
free to love others.***

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believe ourselves to be justified, especially by God. I have a friend who's a Lutheran pastor and after much soul-searching, she resigned last year from her parish and took a sabbatical of sorts to assess where she was in her life and where she felt called to be. When she talked about what this past year has been like, she said the biggest question she faced was this: Do I really believe it's not works? Do I really believe I'm justified by grace alone, through none of my own actions? Do I really believe I am not bound by external and internal expectations of what I *should* be doing as a Christian?

Another friend of mine recently talked about how he has bounced around in his life from one denomination to another until recently landing at a Lutheran church. He said he and his family had to take new member classes before joining, and it was there he first learned about grace. He learned that we didn't have to do certain things—like play three sports, participate in student council and National Honor Society, and coordinate the Habitat for Humanity chapter at the high school—to be loved by God. And he said that while some may take this as an occasion to back away from serving and befriending others, he found that the freedom to serve others as a response to God's grace and love motivated him more than any feeling of obligation ever had.

Jesus told this to his disciples: love because God first loved you. That's a life-changing message. And I think that for me the reason Luther's preoccupation with human sinfulness and the necessity of God's gift of grace rings so true is that I see in myself, in my friends and family, in our scholarship applicants, and in our society a frenetic insistence on being turned in toward ourselves, trying to run ragged in all the virtuous ways, so that we can make ourselves and others believe we're justified. But Luther's message, which is the message of John's Gospel, is that God—through the appalling love shown through the cross—justifies us whether we have demonstrated ourselves worthy or not. And if we truly believe that it's up to God and not up to us, we are freed up to embody that love of God through our vocation of serving and befriending the world.

*Deanna Thompson is an associate professor and chair of the religion department at Hamline University. The text of this homily has been edited for publication.*



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**William V. Frame on Ambition, Diversity,  
and (You Guessed It) Vocation:  
A Conversation with Augsburg's Departing President**

*Interviewed by Mark Tranvik on July 28, 2005*

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**MT: Thank you, President Frame, for agreeing to talk with *Till & Keep*. I would like to begin with a broad question. Since coming to Augsburg, how would you say that you have changed?**

WVF: I have certainly grown in my understanding of the Christian faith. My grasp of Lutheran theology has improved considerably since my arrival on campus. Of course, I am also aware of how much more there is to understand. My zone of ignorance has also expanded, but that is a function of understanding.

I think the results of this new understanding have also changed me. That is, I am more aware of the fact that I have been accepted by the unwarranted act of a gracious God. I am better able to say to myself that I am okay, and that has allowed me to better handle the tribulations of this work.

I also think that in this faith journey what I hope or wish to cull is self-knowledge. That has grown. I think I understand myself a lot better than when I first came here. I have had to deal more directly with this old disease of wanting to be loved and finding my measure of self-worth within rather than depending on what is happening outside of myself. My faith journey has been crucial for that; I would not have been able to switch the compass location, so to speak, from outside to inside without a faith perspective.

**You also have a love of philosophy and the ancient philosophers in particular. How has that complemented the self-knowledge you have gained from your Christian faith? Or has it complemented it?**

I have encountered a collision of my love of the ancient philosophers with the development of my faith. This collision has come over the question of ancient optimism. The ancients articulated a political form of optimism, though they knew we couldn't build the

perfect regime. At least Plato knew that. He didn't intend the *Republic* as a model. Rather it was to be used as a mirror—something we look at that gives us a better understanding of the world's realities than we would have without that utopian vision. There might, however, be in Aristotle a "best possible world" kind of idea—something that could actually be realized in personal life. But I don't believe that is possible because of the character of the human condition. That is the point of collision. This sort of optimism doesn't sit well with a view that sees man as fallen and in need of grace. My faith has provided me with a new form of hope, and this allows me to accept the shocking disappointments we all discover in life without regarding them as personal failures.

**Might another point of collision between Christians and the ancients be the freedom of the will? While the ancients held to the will's freedom, many Christians—particularly those in the Lutheran tradition—have been dubious about it, at least with reference to God.**

I guess that brings up a related complexity. I still get chills up and down my spine when I think about what the ancients achieved. And we have had some great people in our own age who have been able to muster their energies on behalf of some idea despite the sacrifices it meant for them. The ancients did believe in stretching people to the very limits of their potential.

It might be the case that the Christian proposition, which I am buying into more and more, is somewhat limiting. That is, as Christians we don't reach as high or strain as hard as did the ancients because of our belief in the fallenness of man. The bar is lowered because we don't have anything to prove.

I think I have brought some of the ambition of the ancients to my job—and it may not be entirely Christian.



In other words, I believe that this College has a bright future and that it is, in some inappropriately large measure, my responsibility to make sure we realize it. To a degree, that is ancient ambition, and it sometimes reaches the level of *hubris*.

I wonder whether some of this tension can be resolved by Luther's concept of the Two Kingdoms. If we insist that vocation resides exclusively in the Kingdom on the Left—and that this, too, is God's Kingdom—perhaps we can remain true to its constitution and parameters even as we inject a substantial dose of ancient ambition into it. This is surely where vocation happens—in this realm of laws, rules, and preoccupation with justice. Ambition ought to be here, too—the self-sacrificing kind of ambition which knows that serving one's neighbor is often a burden.

**So there is a sense in which a Christian institution like Augsburg could use an injection of ancient ambition, provided it does it under the rubric of vocation?**

That is what I am driving at.

**Let's switch the topic. Sometimes you hear on campus that there is an irreconcilable tension between diversity and the Christian mission of the College. I know you have given this a significant amount of thought. What are your thoughts on this issue?**

I don't see them as irreconcilable. I remember getting excited about this when I was preparing a speech to give to the deans of Lutheran colleges just before I came to Augsburg. I found a statement of Luther saying something like this: "The world is never going to be full of Christians, and even if it were they would still be sinners." This business of creating an educational community on the assumption that every member of it is going to be a Christian is absurd. Telling the good news doesn't mean that everybody's going to hear and believe it. And even if they do get it, they are still human beings and require law and other things.

If all that is true, then what really matters about us in respect to community is our root, the cause of our fundamental cohesion. On that, we'd better not have a lot of diversity. We'd better have a profound understanding of who we are and why we are here.

And the answer to why we are here is obvious. We are here to tell some good news to people who are coming from other cultures, religions, and languages—and it may be in practice or it may be in word. We have a mission of hospitality, to embrace the world. But that is only possible because of our fundamental cohesion.

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***We can foster this idea of a theology that is for the world, not opposed to it or separate from it.***

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**So you are saying that there is no diversity without a grounding in a tradition?**

Yes, and we should be clear that this diversity is an obligation. Actually, I also see it through the lens of hospitality. Think of the ancient

hospitality toward strangers. In fact, that is the only kind of hospitality that is interesting—to be able to embrace people who are unlike you or whom you don't know. Those are the very people upon whom we are to exercise hospitality. To extend it to a friend or that which is familiar is neither very challenging nor is it real hospitality.

**Lots of places want to hold up diversity as a central value, but it would seem difficult to have diversity itself as the foundation of an institution.**

I absolutely agree. The attempt to create unity from diversity is an absurd project. It is what "pluralism" proposes. I have forgotten her name, but there was a popular author a few years ago who wrote about pluralism in the following way: "Let's celebrate all our differences because if we do we will discover things we have in common." I recall an argument from Plato—in the *Parmenides*—regarding the one and the many. The basic thesis is that you can't get "manyness" out of oneness and you can't get oneness out of "manyness." We have to understand that these are two different principles. Rather, we are allowed to embrace the "manyness" around us because we have this foundation or root, this "oneness." I think the pluralist understanding merges those two ideas, but it's not workable.

By the way, I think one of the big challenges of the Augsburg Center for Faith and Learning is to offer some new ideas on how to reconcile our idea of community with diversity.

**This might be a good point to touch on the relationship between higher education and the institutional church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has had significant**

**difficulties in the last 10 years in terms of budget, direction and support from its membership. Just how do you see the future of the church?**

I think what is going to happen is that the church is going to continue to atomize, and we are going to get more and more “worship malls” where Christians meet sporadically and tentatively in campus-like settings with massive parking lots. Both traditional church life and the idea of the priesthood of all believers seem to be shrinking at an incredible pace. I guess it is beyond the range of this discussion to talk about why that is the case, but it probably reflects larger forces at work in society, particularly the phenomenon of individualism.

I am afraid that in my experience the church has been stultified by bureaucracy rather than creatively seizing upon opportunities for new community. And maybe this is where colleges—colleges like Augsburg—can infuse the church with new ideas and effect some kind of renewal. It may be the case that the Lutheran tradition nowadays is in better shape in the colleges and universities than it is in the congregations.

**You see the colleges as agents of renewal for the church?**

I don't think that is far-fetched. If we can get our Center for Faith and Learning done right, and if other places that have Lilly grants can do the same (Concordia, St. Olaf, Gustavus, Luther, etc.), we have the potential to be a wide-ranging movement of renewal. We can foster this idea of a theology that is for the world, not opposed to it or separate from it.

**And you see congregational life becoming separate or even unworldly?**

It seems like an unhealthy spirit of individualism is taking over. Congregations often drift off into the hands of pastors who are more interested in their relationships with their flocks than with calling them out into the world for service. I still have hope . . . I am always looking for congregations that really get it. But what I see doesn't thrill me much. However, I think there are some hopeful signs in Chicago (the headquarters of the ELCA) by virtue of the mission of the presiding bishop and the recent creation of a new division of vocation that brings together the colleges, schools, and seminaries.

**What about after you leave Augsburg in July of 2006? What are your immediate plans?**

I regard that as a fair question, and that demonstrates that I have discovered that the end and retirement are not

synonyms. In fact—and I know this is a euphemism—what's coming is a new stage of life.

So the question is this: What is my vocation now and how shall I pursue it? I have to confess that this is a new way of thinking for me, because until rather recently I wasn't sure I was going to get out of this present occupation alive! There are, in fact, a couple of things on the immediate horizon. One is a three-year cycle of seminars for college presidents and prospective presidents on the alignment of vocation and institutional mission that Anne and I are leading for The Council of Independent Colleges with the support of a grant from the Lilly Endowment. Those seminars will continue for a couple of years beyond my time at Augsburg. I am told that other tasks will be offered—which is reassuring to one whose sense of vocation still needs maturing; it means that if upon retirement I fall off a cliff and disappear, it will be my own fault.

**I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with me and also express gratitude for the way you have made a theological understanding of vocation a central part of the College's self-understanding. I think this has the power to make an Augsburg education truly transforming and represents a recovery of a piece of our heritage that went underground for the past few decades.**

Thanks, Mark, for your work with the Lilly grant. My years at Augsburg have been remarkably rewarding, and I look forward to tracking the College's progress in the coming years. I think this place has a bright future.

*William V. Frame, a graduate of the University of Hawaii (B.A. and M.A.) and the University of Washington (Ph.D.), has been president of Augsburg College since 1997. While at Augsburg he has worked to strengthen the College's service to the city, underscored the importance of faith and reason as “interactive and mutually reinforcing modes of understanding,” and committed the College to providing first-class educational opportunities to a highly diverse population of both traditionally-aged students and working adults.*

*Mark Tranvik is an associate professor of religion and the director of Exploring Our Gifts, the vocation program at Augsburg College.*



## *Preparing for Abundance*

by David L. Tiede

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**P**resident Frame, Provost Kimball, faculty colleagues, members of the Christensen Chair committee, students, graduates, friends of Augsburg: Grace to you from God who has blessed and claimed your lives with calling. Let us begin with a prayer of thanksgiving and a passage from Paul. The prayer is adapted from a book called *Hours of Prayer* which Gracia Christensen gave to me last May from Bernhard's library. It is a collect of remembrance of a doctor of the church and confessor:

*God, who has enlightened this College with the wondrous learning of blessed Bernhard, thy confessor, and enriched it with his holiness; grant us, we beseech thee, to apprehend his teaching of the faith and to follow his holy example; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.*

The passage comes from Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth: "I planted," declared the Apostle, "Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. . . . For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building."<sup>1</sup>

This is a day for thanksgiving and witness. Many of you have hoped, prayed, and given to make the Christensen Chair possible. We are all grateful to you, and we are thankful to God for our doctor and confessor, Bernhard. Imagine how humbling it is to be named to a chair that bears his name. Just listen to the stories of you who are here, and note the Christian promises of this service. I am grateful to be joining a superb religion department. But the Bernhard Christensen Chair is more a mantle than an academic appointment. This chair draws its occupants into the soul of Augsburg's calling.

Augsburg College nurtures future leaders for vocations of service in the world. In the arena of higher education, Augsburg is self-consciously Lutheran in its identity and hospitably Christian in educating for vocations. This chair is being sown like a seed in the Center for Faith and Learning. Augsburg intends this chair will yield a harvest of callings from God.

Let me tell you a bit of what I will be doing this year, give you a newcomer's glimpse of the remarkable things that are happening at Augsburg, and welcome your help in tilling Augsburg's good ground.

The past summer I was refreshed by reading the history of Augsburg and the Lutheran Free Church, and Augsburg's visionary documents. Many years ago when I was a pastor in Cedar-Riverside at Trinity, Katherine and Elsie Michaelsen gave me a copy of Andreas Helland's biographical sketch of Georg Sverdrup,<sup>2</sup> and Bishop Arthur Rimmereid recently loaned me his copy of Eugene Fevold's history of the Lutheran Free Church.<sup>3</sup> In September, I participated with other new faculty in a superb orientation led by Professor Diane Pike, the director of the Center for Teaching and Learning. Professor Frankie Shakelford recited "Augsburg's History in a Nutshell," recalling *From Fjord to Freeway* by Carl Chrislock.<sup>4</sup> Provost Kimball, Pastor David Wold, and Professors Joan Griffin and Mark Tranvik, among many others, led us into the soul of Augsburg's educational mission.

I also began a discipline of listening to faculty, staff, students, and graduates about their callings and about Augsburg's commitment to nurture future leaders. I am theologically interested in other people's callings. It's

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:6, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Andreas Helland, *Georg Sverdrup* (Minneapolis: Messenger Press, 1947).

<sup>3</sup> Eugene Fevold, *The Lutheran Free Church*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg College, 1969).

<sup>4</sup> Carl Chrislock, *From Fjord to Freeway* (Minneapolis: Augsburg College, 1969).



about God. That means I am listening for how God is at work in them. The president, the provost, and several leaders in the staff and faculty have already opened their souls. A deeply shared spirit is stirring at Augsburg.

Since I am still on a study leave from Luther Seminary, the major portion of my time this year will be given to plunging again into my studies of the New Testament. I have a lovely office in Music 25D. I asked the musicians if I would be expected to vocalize my scales as I pass to and fro in the hallway. They responded politely that this would not be necessary. My scholarship will be focused on a writing project I began several years ago when I regularly taught a course called, “The Crucible of Christianity.” I am fascinated by the way the early Christians moved into the complex and often hostile Greco-Roman world with irrepressible hope. Now Augsburg is pursuing its mission in a world of many cultures and religions! An Augsburg classroom will be a wonderful place for me to renew my calling as a teacher.

Sixty-one years ago this month, Bernhard Christensen delivered an address to the Pastor’s Institute at Augsburg College and Seminary entitled, “The Idea of the Lutheran Free Church.” Pointing back another 50 years to the “the early history of the movement, and especially the writings of Professor Georg Sverdrup, its chief prophet and leader,”<sup>5</sup> President Christensen identified the “thrilling and spiritually dynamic idea” that gave birth to the Lutheran Free Church. He also interrogated the tradition to test its continuing value and validity.

Bernhard Christensen had an ecumenical vision, filled with the spirit of a great God. He objected to the “meticulous doctrinal disputations” of some Lutherans. His confidence in the freedom of inquiry and the value of

diversity invigorated the liberal arts. He was bold about our responsibilities in public education. He declared, “Our particular spiritual heritage should serve as an incitement toward our taking an active part in sound Christian social action.”<sup>6</sup>

Citing Sverdrup, Christensen said, “The Lutheran Free Church was born in a spiritual awakening. Augsburg was founded ... in order that the awakening in Norway might

plant its roots and grow also in America.”<sup>7</sup> That a spiritual awakening might plant its roots and grow in America! Can you hear the echoes of Paul’s apostolate? “I planted,” he said, “Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ... For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.”<sup>8</sup>

The history of higher education in this land is grounded in similar hopes from many traditions. Even state-sponsored institutions regularly called clergy as their presidents, for moral if not theological reasons. I wear Harvard’s robe. Its early mottoes were not only *Veritas*, truth, but *In Christi Gloriam*, to the glory of Christ (1650), and *Christo et Ecclesiae*, for Christ and the Church (1692).<sup>9</sup> Now even “truth” is suspected by many post-moderns as merely a construct of the powerful.

In the 1990s George Marsden noted the spiritually barren landscape of American higher education in *The Soul of the American University*,<sup>10</sup> and James Burtchaell’s *The Dying of the Light*<sup>11</sup> grieved “the disengagement of colleges and universities from their Christian churches.” What do you think? Do you believe God has a calling for Augsburg College in the spiritual awakening of American higher education? I do! And Augsburg is ringing the wake-up bell for others to hear!

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***Do you believe God has a calling for Augsburg College in the spiritual awakening of American higher education?  
I do! And Augsburg is ringing the wake-up bell for others to hear!***

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<sup>5</sup> Eugene Fevold, *The Lutheran Free Church*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg College, 1969), 317.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:6, 9.

<sup>9</sup> Kelly Monroe, *Finding God at Harvard* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 14.

<sup>10</sup> George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>11</sup> James Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998).

The Lilly Endowment has been stirred to invite strong colleges with churchly histories to reflect on their “theological understanding of vocation.” We rejoice at Lilly’s effort to re-awaken the idea of vocation in a wide range of colleges. Roman Catholics, Evangelicals, Reformed, and Lutherans have strength to bring. But face it. Even in many schools with Christian histories, any real “theological understanding of vocation” is asleep or moribund.

For some, vocation is at best a “notion,” a conceptual coat hanger for varied schemes of significance. Don’t be too quick to be critical. Some schools cannot pursue the “theological understanding of vocation” without suspicion or even fear. Still, even the “notion of vocation” begins to stir theological memories, thoughts of God. Having even a sense of purpose matters when, as a law professor put it, many faculties have become like “priests who have lost their faith, and kept their jobs.”<sup>12</sup>

In other schools, vocation is a powerful idea, vital to the human spirit. Liberal learning can keep this idea alive, without confessing Christian faith. God bless Parker Palmer and those exploring human spirituality. Students and faculty open to the idea of vocation as a quest to let their lives speak will at least reject flat, secularized understandings of life. Life is more than power, possessions, and prestige. This spirituality creates large human space.

But Lutherans see more, even in the public realm! Dr. Frame, citing Philip Melancthon, professes Christian higher education has a vocation for the public good. The civility of our society relies upon granting “safety to schools both in the state and in the Church of Christ.”<sup>13</sup> Our graduates serve God’s purposes on the left hand, making the world a trustworthy place. Still there’s more.

On the other hand—literally, in Lutheran thought, on God’s right hand—our “theological understanding of vocation” bears the promise of God’s love for the world and all peoples for whom Christ died. The Gospel itself stirs us to radical hospitality for every human caste, clan, and condition. As Ted Grindal’s letter from the presidential search says, “Incorporating our urban setting into campus life, celebrating our commitment to diversity, practicing service to others, and expressing our

commitment to Christian Vocation are all hallmarks of the Augsburg profile.” This is transforming education.

But the soil must be watered. In a 1993 chapel speech, Lilly Gracia Christensen described how Bernhard brought her in 1935 to campus in the depth of the Depression. “That one-square-block-campus then was a dismal collection of dilapidated buildings. The quadrangle itself was a square of grass-less dirt—my introduction to the great Midwestern dustbowl.” But Gracia and Bernhard had the faith to see a garden where Christian callings are nurtured. This rich urban ground bears the promise of a harvest. Augsburg graduations are visions of changed lives, filled with new growth. There is nothing blasé about an Augsburg graduation!

Augsburg’s calling needs a good Frame of Mind, and he has been given to us for this time. And we are blessed with Bernhard Christensen’s soul, swept up in the compassion of God. On opening day, President Frame made the point that vocation is first a matter of the heart. Each is touched in distinct ways. Then he concluded, “We’ve got this far together; we shall go farther still but only if we remain in the same company.” Or to paraphrase Paul—Christensen planted, Frame watered, but God will give the growth.

Many of you have long shared Augsburg’s vocation. As a late arrival, I can see the profound respect in which Augsburg is held by so many others in this community, our colleague institutions, and many broader publics. Augsburg’s eminence was evident among the Faith in the City institutions, not least in the Augsburg Academy with Fairview and in the College House with the non-urban ELCA colleges. Much has been given. Much is expected.

And great work is already happening. Augsburg has every reason for pride and thanksgiving for the national recognition you have received for your service learning, accessibility, and leadership among the fine schools who have received Lilly grants. Now the recently awarded Lilly sustainability grant again raises the stakes. Dr. Frame, how much good news can our “militant modesty” stand?

Actually, Augsburg is owning up to its public calling. Augsburg 2004 and the keystone courses are monuments already set up to the future, and the script for Augsburg’s Center for Faith and Learning announces an abundant

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<sup>12</sup> Kelly Monroe, *Finding God at Harvard* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 15.

<sup>13</sup> William V. Frame, “Philip Melancthon and the idea of Christian Civility,” *The Cresset* (Michaelmas 2005), 6.

vision: “The purpose of the Center is to guide the College in the theological exploration of vocation as understood within the Lutheran tradition. It will provide resources to faculty, staff, and students that enable them to organize faith and learning within a vocational framework.”

**This is a huge educational and institutional challenge.** Mathematics, psychology, the business programs, physics, the physician assistants, StepUP—all enabled to “organize faith and learning within a vocational framework.” This is a transformation of education itself, full of hard, important arguments about what to keep and what to change. Transforming education is no mere public relations slogan, nor is it about weakening academic quality. This is a witness, **a public argument for educational excellence, grounded in faith.**

Augsburg is pursuing a venture that will require many resources to transform the learning that faculty and students do together. How will we engage the immigrant communities of Cedar-Riverside, and what new questions will we bring into our life-science laboratories? What art, science, and human wholeness will emerge in this transformation? How will our graduates grasp, in their minds and in their hearts, the leadership to which they are called?

Augsburg is already helping awaken a spiritual renewal in higher education. Dr. Mark Tranvik, John Knight, and your team are pace-setters among Lilly grant schools. The “Called for Life” Lilly program evaluation grant shared with Luther College, Augustana College, and Luther Seminary is another public sign. More significantly, the immediate results are already being felt in communities and in the lives of Christian witness and service of our graduates, our faculty, and staff. This is not a fad, and we know large visions require disciplined steps.

Our enthusiasm about vocation firms our resolve for the commitments we have made. We must first bring our capital building projects to fruition. This College needs and deserves excellent facilities in science and the arts. As those structures rise from the ground, watch the seeds of vocation sprout! The leadership of the faculty will now invite major educational endowments, just as you have begun with the Christensen Chair, and now

reaching out through the nexus of the Augsburg Center for Faith and Learning. Instead of competing with each other, the centers of the College will be seedbeds of vocations. The Center for Teaching and Learning will increase its impact on faculty development, linking the mission of the College with teaching and research. The Center for Global Education; the Center for Service, Work, and Learning; and the Gage Center for Academic Achievement will increase accessibility inside and outside the classroom. Augsburg will graduate students who rise to the challenges they are given.

Imagine the partnerships that will develop with business graduates considering issues of faith in the marketplace, or health professionals who also weigh their vocations in the scales of healing and community health and even hospice. Augsburg already has colleagues in almost every walk of life, and many are leading congregations throughout America, ready for renewal.

The Christensen Committee has provided splendid leadership. We are called to work for the harvest. You are all here to water this holy ground. This garden in the heart of the city will grow with prayer and work. We are putting a funding plan together to strengthen Augsburg’s mission at its educational heart. A goal of \$8-10 million will be credible, with the opportunity as large as the challenge. The consultations are underway about how such capacity will be built to last.

In June, following conversations with Bishop Mark Hanson, George Nelson Jr. met with President Frame and me to consider how to strengthen Augsburg’s mission. Each of us can find our significant place in the vision. George has agreed to work with the College, forming a team to design and develop the Center for Faith and Learning, including the Christensen Chair planted in its midst. Furthermore, I am thankful to report that George and Tamara have decided to lead the way with a gift of \$100,000.

Augsburg College is moving ahead, confident in God’s calling to “Transforming Education.” Augsburg’s mission of nurturing future leaders in service to the world is a labor of love. This is the Augsburg promise: Transforming Education for Vocation. As President Frame has said, “We have come this far together!” We are called to serve

Augsburg's place in a "spiritual awakening" in American higher education and in our graduates.

Like Paul and Apollos, all of us here have our good work to do, knowing all the while that this is a venture of faith in God. For Augsburg's future? Yes! And for Augsburg's distinctive excellence in higher education? Yes! And for the thousands of leaders who will be nurtured to go out from this place? Yes! And for the blessing of the world God so loves! Amen!

Jesus was not a scarcity farmer. He looked out at the crowds, harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd, and he saw a plentiful harvest in this human need.<sup>14</sup> In the face of rejection, even hatred, obedient to death to God's love for the world, Jesus gave you life in abundance, forever. Now is the time for watering that God may give the growth. "For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building."<sup>15</sup>

Thank you all for your attention. Thank you for your love and care for the mission of Augsburg College. And thanks be to God for a large calling.

*David Tiede has degrees from St. Olaf (B.A.), Luther Seminary (M.Div.), and Harvard University (Ph.D.). He was a professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary before becoming president in 1987. In the fall of 2005 he was appointed the first Bernhard Christensen Chair of Religion and Vocation at Augsburg College. Dr. Tiede combines a deep interest in the Bible and the world of the New Testament with a passion for the mission of the church. (This address has been edited for publication.)*



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<sup>14</sup> Matthew 9:37.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:9.

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# Fair Trade Coffee and People of Faith: Connecting Vocation and Stewardship

by Michael Lansing

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Recently, I spoke in Augsburg's chapel about the importance of using only fair trade organic coffee on our campus and why persons of faith should care about such matters. In so doing, I likely overstepped my bounds. After all, I don't really drink coffee.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not anti-coffee. I grew up among Norwegian Lutherans who as far as I could tell saw coffee drinking as a ritual akin to communion. In fact, the big percolator pot sitting near the entrance of the church I grew up in looms larger in my memory than the communion ware ever did. I'm not sure who slipped it in there, but enjoying a cup of coffee after church seemed to be a third sacrament that my foremothers and forefathers sneaked into Lutheran theology. To speak out against the little brown bean would be to betray my people.

Though I don't drink coffee, as a religious person I've got a lot to say about fair trade organic coffee. Fair trade organic coffee is purchased from farmers around the globe at rates that help those farmers provide a living for their families. It's coffee purchasing that encourages regular crop rotation, composting, and chemical-free cultivation. It's coffee purchasing that fosters grower cooperatives that offer technical assistance and low-interest loans for farmers. In other words, fair trade organic coffee promotes economic equity for the people who work on coffee farms. Fair trade organic coffee also encourages sustainable farming practices that insure the long-term health of local economies and local ecologies. With that in mind, I'm convinced fair trade organic coffee has everything to do with me. I daresay it has everything to do with you, too—coffee drinker or not.

What does it have to do with you? Augsburg College's favorite concept—vocation—is about bringing our talents to bear as we serve our neighbors. In that context we use our gifts to serve God. But there's something missing in our ongoing discussion of vocation, something that an issue like fair trade organic coffee brings to light. I'm

going to be bold here—especially for someone who's been at Augsburg for less than a year. Vocation, as a concept, has a partner that is too often forgotten: stewardship. Our institution's constant discussions about vocation tend not to touch on stewardship and its crucial role in finding and living a vocation. Discussions about vocation that don't include stewardship cut us off from an absolutely crucial task that we face in our daily lives.

What is that task? Simply put, it's to be stewards—stewards of our neighbors, to be sure, but also stewards of the surroundings we share with our neighbors. These two tasks depend on each other. We must work to be stewards of the natural relationships that envelop us and our fellow human beings. Even as ecologists work to describe and understand that envelopment, stewardship points us towards the moral, ethical, and religious choices we might make to ensure its prosperity. Stewardship—which we should think of as acknowledging, nurturing, and serving the interdependence of people and nature—needs to become vocation's overt partner at Augsburg.

Why is stewardship so important? Because God makes an explicit link between the fortunes of our fellow human beings and all other living things on earth. Job 12:7-10 illustrates this clearly:

*But ask the animals and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being.*

Every living thing and every human being, together, in the same verse.

This sense of common origins and continued interdependence echoes the findings of ecologists. For almost 300 years, they busily delineated the intricate relationships that link plants and animals and people and



natural cycles.<sup>1</sup> From both a religious and a scientific point of view, caring about your neighbor without caring about the web of interconnected life that surrounds you both is impossible. In turn, finding your vocation without understanding stewardship in these ecological terms is to find an incomplete vocation.

To be sure, yoking stewardship to vocation creates new conceptual problems. Imagining stewardship as I have requires reclaiming it from its popular usage. For instance, people of faith often imagine stewardship as a reference to another plea for money from church leaders anxious to continue their community's work in difficult economic times. It brings to mind recalcitrant worshippers bristling at the mere mention of the word. Such fatigued cynicism is not easy to overcome.

In the belief that the idea of stewardship can motivate people of faith to consider the dense web of ecological relationships that surrounds us all, many contend that God calls us to be stewards of the earth. But some scholars note the limitations of relying on stewardship to provide a religious grounding for ecological concerns. As theologian H. Paul Santmire recently suggested, faith-based environmental and eco-justice movements often invoke stewardship without considering its managerial connotations.<sup>2</sup> To think of nature as little other than a discrete set of resources that might be supervised to serve our fellow humans is to fall into an old trap. Early 20th-century conservationists in the United States made a similar mistake, with tragic results for both people and the nature they inhabited.<sup>3</sup> Simply envisioning ourselves as managers of nature does not work. After all, nature continuously defies attempts at human management, as any gardener who constantly needs to weed a flowerbed might attest. This means that the managerial assumptions

built into traditional definitions of stewardship—unconsciously invoked by pro-fair trade organic coffee groups such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or the National Religious Partnership for the Environment—remain, at best, problematic.

Santmire, along with others, proposes the term “partnership” as a more eco-friendly foundation for religious intervention in ecological issues since that word implies respect for the internal logic of the natural relationships that entwine us all. Yet “partnership” finds little resonance in existing theological discussions. Furthermore, “partnership” assumes equality between people and nature, an assumption that distorts the widely varying interdependence of people and nature. Indeed, the recent spate of hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us that the most affluent in our societies are often better able to trump nature in times of trial. Finally,

notions of “partnership” do little to help us infuse the search for vocation—where such language means little—with ecological concerns.

This is why the concept of stewardship must be reclaimed and redefined as acknowledging, nurturing, and serving the relationships shared by nature and people. When we acknowledge the ecological

relationships that we all share in (but not always equally), we begin to see the connection between stewardship and vocation. When we nurture the ecological relationships that form the material context of everyday human life, we can use that context to serve justice, peace, and God. Finally, when we put the interdependence of nature and people ahead of individual comfort or gain, we are better able to serve both our neighbor and the earth. Defined in this way, stewardship usefully fleshes out the search for vocation.

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***From both a religious and a scientific point of view, caring about your neighbor without caring about the web of interconnected life that surrounds you both is impossible.***

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<sup>1</sup> For an accessible history of ecology, see Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> H. Paul Santmire, “Partnership With Nature According to the Scriptures: Beyond The Theology of Stewardship,” *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* 3, no. 12 (December 2003), found at <[www.elca.org/scriptlib/dcs/jle/article.asp?aid=190#1262](http://www.elca.org/scriptlib/dcs/jle/article.asp?aid=190#1262)>.

<sup>3</sup> Here I depend on a growing literature in environmental history. For examples of the injustice that resulted from managerial assumptions prevalent in the Progressive Era, see Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) and Nancy Langston, *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares: The Paradox of Old Growth in the Inland West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995).

Clearly, Campus Ministry, the Coalition for Student Activism, and a growing number of other voices rightly propose that our coffee shop and food services at Augsburg use only fair trade organic coffee. Buying fair trade organic coffee isn't an insignificant consumer choice. Instead, it directly relates to our neighbors' standard of living and our earth's long-term viability. Importantly, it is also an easy way to start bringing stewardship into our campus-wide conversation about vocation. These students remind us of our need to both understand stewardship and its many complications and to live as stewards—acknowledging, nurturing, and serving not just people or nature but the relationship that binds the two—if we are to fully embrace vocation. So learn more about fair trade organic coffee because it has everything to do with you and the vocation you seek.

*Michael Lansing is an assistant professor of history at Augsburg College. This article is based on a Chapel Talk that he gave on November 9, 2005.*



## Youth, Habits, and Money: Exploring God's Calling

by Nathan Dungan

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This past October, I was in Indianapolis speaking at two events for the Central Indiana Community Foundation. In between the two events I had some down time at the hotel and was able to get caught up on my voicemail. One of the messages was from Susan Berfield, an associate editor at *Business Week* magazine. She wanted to talk with me because she was doing a story on 30-year-olds and their current financial standing. When most reporters call me to comment on a topic for a story, it is often a very brief conversation because they are usually on deadline (hence the term—"sound bite"). But this conversation was a bit different because Ms. Berfield was deeply curious about the financial choices and habits of young adults in this age group. Suffice it to say she asked some excellent questions. But the one that stood out was her question on the role of the culture: "What role has the culture played in shaping the financial habits and values of this demographic group?" Approximately one hour later, we wrapped up our conversation and agreed to stay in touch for future stories—always a good sign when you are speaking with a reporter from *Business Week*.

So, what would you have said if you had been asked that same question about the impact of culture on the financial habits and values of young people? (A quick sidebar for any professors in the room: I encourage you to take up that question in your next class because it will yield some very interesting dialogue.)

Before I tell you how I answered Ms. Berfield's question, let me offer a few bits of information to put this issue in context:

- ◆ Young people under the age of 19 will **spend** and influence the spending of more than \$1 trillion this year.
  - ◆ Young adults from age 25 to 35 are now one of the fastest growing segments filing for bankruptcy.
  - ◆ Average credit card debt per U.S. household is nearly \$9,000.
  - ◆ The average after-tax U.S. savings rate has plummeted to 0.0 percent.
  - ◆ College students have on average four credit cards and \$3,000 of credit card debt.
  - ◆ Children today spend FIVE times more money (adjusted for inflation) than their parents did at the same age.
- Let me also share a few additional facts from Ms. Berfield's article, "30 and Broke: The Real Price of a College Education,"<sup>1</sup> that will shed additional light on the topic:
- ◆ Real earnings for college graduates without advanced degrees have fallen in the last four years.
  - ◆ The debt-to-income ratio (that is, the percentage of income required to service the debt) for this age group is 8 to 12 percent of income.
  - ◆ Interest rates are heading up.
  - ◆ Tuition has increased 17 percent at private colleges over the past five years.
  - ◆ The average credit card debt for young adults from age 25 to 34 is \$5,200.
- Now, back to how I answered her question, "What role has the culture played in shaping the financial habits and values of this demographic group?" I believe our culture is

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<sup>1</sup> *Business Week*, Nov. 14, 2005.

having an enormous influence on the financial behavior and the value development of young people today. In fact, I believe our culture is working overtime to addict young people to spending. What's more, the social, economic, and spiritual implications are almost beyond comprehension because we have never been here before. In other words, no generation has ever experienced the tsunami of marketing and advertising messages that currently faces young people in America. According to the magazine *American Demographics*, by the time young people reach the age of 21 in America, they will have been the recipient of 23 million ad impressions, which is roughly 3,000 ad impressions a day. Now, I don't know what you think, but I don't see many of those ad impressions encouraging young people to save or share some of their money.

I realize this is a lot to process in a short period of time, but before you think there is no hope I want to circle back to today's chapel reading and repeat what Jesus said in the parable of the sower:

*... some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among the thorns and the thorns grew with it and choked it. Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold ...<sup>2</sup>*

I love the imagery in this parable—flocks of birds eating the seed, and seeds withering for lack of moisture. I believe the connections to contemporary American culture are deep and very real.

Think of all the places we hear messages to pursue something other than what God is calling us to do. How about a couple of current shows on MTV? Like *MTV Cribs*, where the “consumer products” of rock stars and athletes are held in such high regard. Or *Sweet Sixteen*, where parents celebrate their child's 16th birthday by throwing lavish parties that cost well into six figures. Are these the images and is this lifestyle that Jesus had in mind when he gave us the parable of the sower? Mother Teresa said it best: God didn't create poverty; people did when they decided not to share.

Three thousand times a day our culture pummels us with messages to spend and, even worse, tells us that we will truly be happy if we just purchase one more thing. After all, isn't that what success is all about? And then here comes Jesus with an explanation of the parable, just in case we didn't get it the first time:

*As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart and bear fruit with patient endurance.<sup>3</sup>*

Patient endurance. Step by step, little by little we make our way in the world pursuing what God is truly calling us to do ... and be. And do you know what? The research supports us on this one. That is, people who focus less on spending and more on saving and sharing not only have healthier values, but they also live happier lives. So as you step back and reflect on life's choices, especially in this season of hyper-consumption and Advent, I encourage you to stop and think about how God is calling you to be “the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart and bear fruit with patient endurance.”

*Nathan Dungan is the president and founder of Share Save Spend™, an organization that promotes a values-centered approach to money and helps people of all ages develop and maintain healthy financial habits. He received his undergraduate degree from St. Olaf College and completed the Executive Education Program at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management. Prior to founding Share Save Spend™, Nathan was a financial advisor and vice president of marketing for Thrivent Financial, a Fortune 500 financial services company. He is a nationally recognized financial educator. For more information, visit <[www.ShareSaveSpend.com](http://www.ShareSaveSpend.com)>. (The text of this Chapel Talk has been edited for publication.)*



<sup>2</sup> Luke 8:5-8.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 8:14-15.

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# Memories of the Holocaust

Book review by Sue Kneen

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*Hungarian Jewish Women Survivors Remember the Holocaust: An Anthology of Life Histories*, Ilana Rosen, University Press of America, Inc., 2004.

As I sat down with this book for the first time and thumbed through the pages, my eyes settled on the chapter headings—a simple list of women’s names. Each chapter appeared to be the personal account of a different Hungarian Jewish woman who had survived, for the most part, the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. I began to wonder what I had gotten myself into. After all, I remembered, I’d never been able to watch even acclaimed movies about the Holocaust like *Schindler’s List* and *The Pianist*. Rosen’s book was not, however, what I had feared it to be—gruesome accounts of unending torture and horror. To be sure, one does feel in a very real sense the terror of the Holocaust, but the book is much more than a catalog of suffering. It is also a powerful and emotional telling of “testimonies of elderly women—not professional or well versed storytellers—who have told their life histories as best they could in simple and non-presumptuous language, using only their own memories” (5). I read this book through Rosen’s lens of paradoxical ideologies: namely, that the Holocaust teaches us about the need to fight and be strong while at the same time it teaches us, or ought to teach us, about compassion.

One cannot read these women’s accounts without being angered by the inhumanity with which the Jews were treated. Rosi S. recounted how Jewish people were forced in front of others, including those with whom they lived in the Jewish “ghetto,” to grovel in full, deep pits of their own feces. Rika S. wrote, “Once, after we had been disinfected, everyone grabbed for a dress, but I didn’t get anything to wear. I remained naked and so did two or three other, older, women” (82). Some of the accounts include descriptions of children, one minute innocently

playing and acting like children, and the next being tormented and killed. Leah S. told of her uncle who had to dig graves and bury fellow Jews: “Since many Jews were buried alive, my uncle had seen the earth move for three days. When he came home after that, he yelled and sang all evening; he acted totally crazy and out of his mind” (97). On a personal level, I was startled to discover that murder had actually taken place on the very park grounds and railroad tracks I had walked along on the now comfortable and scenic shores of the Danube River in downtown Budapest just a year ago on an Eastern European study tour. Hilda T. told the story: “... the Arrow Cross gathered Jews from all over the city: men, women, children, and shot them on the banks of the Danube” (76).

But one is also profoundly moved by the courage, strength, and depths of compassion and love witnessed in account after account of women who refused to be defeated by the atrocities unfolding all around them. Ariella G. testified, “I will tell you what kept me alive during the hard times. It was my strong will to survive. I was hungry, cold, and sick, but I said, ‘You will not destroy me.’ It was my strong will. I still have it, but it was even stronger in those days” (44). There is triumph in the stories of emaciated women who held up the collapsed bodies of unknown fellow prisoners next to their own at roll call to save them from execution. Rosi S. confided, “If it weren’t for the children, I wouldn’t have stayed alive ... Now that I have children and grandchildren, something draws me towards life ... We must be made of iron” (58). Shoshana M. explained, “I was released from the camps and I suddenly realized that all I wanted to do was live my life like any other normal person in the world, not like a survivor. And when I had my children, I said to myself, My children will be normal, like I wanted to be” (92). Every chapter is, by the very nature of its



inclusion in this book, a testimony to each woman's survival through some of the darkest times our world has known.

Although most of these women's accounts described extremes of human cruelty and even sometimes mentioned Auschwitz's infamous "Angel of Death," Joseph Mengele, it was, ironically, in the quietness of their everyday lives that my heart was most moved by testimonies of lives so similar to mine. The commonness of these women seemed to disturb me almost more than many of the things they endured during the Holocaust, perhaps because I was reminded of the insidious nature in which this hatred crept into each of their lives and the potential for that hatred today. Zsuzsa D. wrote of her home, "We were brought up strictly and received a good education. None of us were allowed to go out alone at night. We had to do our share at home, too ... That was the story. We had knitting evenings with Angora wool and we sewed dresses ..." (71-2). Magda G. recalled the time she and her neighbors were whisked away to the ghetto, "I remember this lady, Mrs. Weiss, who after a night of crying and moaning said in the morning that she could hear her rooster calling at home" (28). These women's lives were brought right into my own home.

Rosen uncovers the wide variety of people involved in the Holocaust, and, interestingly, these people do not fall into neat and tidy stereotypes. The book reveals great diversity within the Jewish community itself. There were Jewish families who never experienced anti-Semitism alongside Jews who had been victims of extreme racism. Some Jewish women belonged to Zionist and communist parties while others were non-practicing Jews who "knew no Yiddish at all because at home there was a general aversion towards anything Jewish, including Yiddish ..." (36). There were spitfires like Hilda T., who boldly demanded that the authorities in Budapest exempt her husband from the labor service and who would not let the Holocaust ruin her life: "I remember walking to Headquarters ... They did not exempt my husband, but they gave him a six months' leave" (76). And there were emotionally sensitive women like Magda G. who admitted, "It is hard to talk about it all, even 46 years later ... It is all open wounds. Whatever I do is affected

by what I went through. I somehow lost the ability to be happy, to be able to laugh" (27).

The book reveals another layer of diversity in the way people treated each other. Contrary to popular belief, not all Germans behaved cruelly, as Ariella G. made clear when she testified, "The Lagerfurer, on the contrary, was very kind and kept saying, 'Do not be afraid, children'" (42). Some German managers slipped the prisoners food and were kind and encouraging, and some German families took in Jewish escapees and gave them food, shelter, fresh water, and soap. By the same token, not all Jews stood in solidarity with each other. For example,

Rosi S. said her fellow prisoners from other countries hated her because she was Hungarian, their resentment stemming at least in part from the fact that the Hungarians did not arrive in the camps until 1944 while the other Jewish women had been imprisoned since 1939. Another account explained, "One [Jewish] woman who was in charge of our block would do anything to keep her two daughters alive. She beat us and humiliated us more than the Germans. Another, a woman from Carpathia, was also exceedingly cruel to us" (31).

I find that Rosen's book comes back to me at the oddest of times—while listening as a Jewish colleague in my Pentateuch class at Luther Seminary shares the Judaic view of the Old Testament, or while watching people downtown board a bus advertising the Jewish Community Center of St. Paul across its sides. Scrambling to board are all variations of people—tall and short, thin and round, animated and quiet. There are young boys with skull caps alongside elderly red-haired matrons. Everyone is anxiously pressing to get home. I cannot help but think that, had they been born in different places and times, these people could easily have been boarding a train eastbound to the Auschwitz death camp. It is always a startling and unsettling reminder, but perhaps that is just the point.

*Sue Kneen graduated from Augsburg College in December 2004 with a double major in English and religion. While at Augsburg, she participated in the Lilly Scholars program. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in church history and theology at Luther Seminary.*

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# Reforming the Morality of Usury

Book review by Jeanne Boeh

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*Reforming the Morality of Usury*, David W. Jones, University Press of America, Inc., 2004.

In his recent book *Reforming the Morality of Usury*, David W. Jones has done an excellent job of compiling and analyzing sources to first delineate and then critique three Protestant Reformation theological positions concerning usury. Jones is an assistant professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and because of his scholarly approach to the material, the main audience for this book will be theologians. However, despite its orientation towards a very select audience, aspects of the book will be interesting to the lay reader as well.

Historically, usury has been viewed as a grievous sin. However, the notion of what exactly constitutes usury has indeed changed over time. Prior to the Reformation, there was wide agreement in both Judeo/Christian and Islamic traditions that usury meant the charging of any interest on a loan. Today Islamic law still requires adherents not only to forgo charging interest but also forbids the acceptance of interest on any bank deposits. In contrast, most Christians have become fully integrated into modern economic systems, paying and receiving interest without any conscious thought about how unacceptable these practices would have been in earlier times.

The book begins with a concise but superb history of changes in Judeo/Christian thought regarding interest. Jones explains how scriptural, philosophical, and historical precepts were all traditionally used as the basis for the prohibitions against the charging of interest. He then outlines the historical framework and the reasoning behind changes in the theological restrictions against

usury, focusing on the Anabaptists, Calvinists, and Lutherans. The notion that only high rates of interest were unacceptable was first formulated during the Reformation. With the exception of the Anabaptists, theological shifts have gradually allowed Christians to participate in the financial systems of Western civilization.

The Biblical verses condemning usury are all found in the Old Testament, e.g., Lev. 25:35-38. Interestingly, the verses in the Old Testament distinguish between loans made to other Hebrews and to strangers. Interest could not be charged or earned for loans made to the poor or to any Hebrews. It was, however, considered acceptable to charge interest to foreigners. Jones contends the prohibition against lending to fellow members of the Jewish community was based on the concept of brotherhood, e.g., it was considered unacceptable to make money due to the misfortunes of your more destitute neighbors.

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***Both the scriptural and philosophical arguments to outlaw usury rested primarily on the perception that it harmed the poor.***

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The early Greek philosophers' writings, which provided the second supporting pillar against the charging of interest or usury, were predicated on the belief that money was barren. By itself, money was not able to produce any additional money except through the charging of interest. It was viewed very differently from other assets such as crops because crops provide the seed for the next season. However, since money couldn't reproduce itself, it wasn't regarded as having any intrinsic value. The barrenness of money became a core tenet of Christian belief up to the time of the Reformation.

Both the scriptural and philosophical arguments to outlaw usury rested primarily on the perception that it harmed the poor. Beginning with the First Council of Carthage (A.D. 348), successive councils found it

necessary to repeatedly ban the collection of usury. Nevertheless, as Jones wryly notes, this consistent legislating against and penalties for collecting usury would not have been necessary had the practice not been so common.

Theological prohibitions against usury began to fall during the time of the Reformation. Economists studying the history of economic thought disagree on whether economic theory is developed independently or whether these theories are a result of the economic setting and/or turmoil surrounding the author. The issue of the changing standards towards usury is not exempt from this debate. However, Jones argues correctly that such a dichotomy is a false one and that the relationship of the factors is actually interactive. The economic underpinnings of society were affected by changes in church teaching regarding usury, and at the same time the various churches (with the exception of the Anabaptists) felt compelled to allow the charging of interest due to the overwhelming changes in the everyday economic system that necessitated the taking of loans.

One strength of the book is the way Jones shatters some misconceptions concerning Calvin's views on economic matters. He argues that Calvin was not in fact an apologist for any and all business practices, and he disputes the conventional wisdom that John Calvin was an unabashed supporter of the new economic systems, including unlimited collection of interest. Calvin appears to have regarded usury as a very important but distasteful topic. He wrote more about usury than any other financial issue but always reluctantly. Calvin wrote, not as an economist, but from a pastoral viewpoint based on his understanding of the relationship between church and culture. He believed it was the duty of Christians to change worldly culture by converting others in order to alter their behavior so God's order could be restored to the world.

Calvin believed a Christian was obliged to live his/her life according to the notion of authentic love. Love, in this context, was not a joyful or self-indulgent emotion but rather a dutiful type of love and was essential in order to attain justice or equity. An important aspect of justice required equitable payment for work and for the use of possessions including money. Thus, Calvin argued that interest could be charged provided all transactions were undertaken in this spirit of love for one another. Remnants of the original Greek belief concerning the barrenness of money can still be seen in Calvin's strictures

against professional money lending. Love and justice prohibited the charging of interest to the poor because it inevitably worsened the situation of the poor person.

Martin Luther's views concerning usury changed over his lifetime but were always related to his theological precepts of the two kingdoms. Initially Luther saw two very distinct realms—the heavenly Kingdom ruled by God, and the Kingdom of the World ruled by Satan. Beginning in approximately 1524, Luther began to contend that both kingdoms were ruled by God. Furthermore, the Kingdom of the World was actually necessary for the operation of the Kingdom of God. This change occurred simultaneously with Luther's shifting views on usury. Initially, he believed in a complete prohibition of usury, but he gradually changed his beliefs to the point where he viewed interest as distasteful but necessary. Ultimately, he stated that usury was permissible as long as three basic rules were followed—all loans had to be backed by collateral, risk needed to be shared by both borrower and lender, and finally the government was obligated to regulate these transactions to prevent abuses, especially of the poor.

The Anabaptists differed from both John Calvin and Martin Luther, in part because they never established the formal structures of either the Reformed or Lutheran churches. Even more importantly, they were opposed to their members integrating themselves into society in any way. Their calling required them to live in complete obedience to the laws of Christ in opposition to almost every aspect of their culture. From their perspective, one could not be a true Christian and live in the secular world. For example, there was a complete prohibition against private property. Usury remained a sin for any Anabaptist despite the surrounding theological revolution of the Reformation and the concurrent economic transformation of society.

Jones' omission of the contribution of Roman Catholic thinkers is a flaw in this otherwise well-researched book. St. Thomas Aquinas was responsible for profound changes in the Christian view of such economic concepts as just price, yet Jones dismisses the impact of Roman Catholic theologians on the changing views of Protestant leaders regarding usury. In actuality, both Calvin and Luther implicitly followed the simultaneous changes in Catholic theology. For example, Martin Luther's requirement that collateral is required for loans mirrors St. Thomas Aquinas' position regarding the distinction between consumptible and non-consumptible goods. A

non-consumptible good is not destroyed by its use. Therefore, it was acceptable to borrow money for land or a house because these goods are not destroyed by their use. On the other hand, goods such as food are consumptible. Consequently, the charging of interest for food represented a violation of justice because use destroys it. The value of interest received for such goods would be greater than their intrinsic value and hence violate justice, especially since only the poor are likely to borrow money for food. Examples such as these demonstrate that had Jones been willing to consider the interplay of changes in Roman Catholic theology and the burgeoning Protestant tradition, his arguments would have been even more compelling.

The notion of paying and receiving interest is fully entrenched in today's society; it is hard to imagine that today anyone regards it as a sin. The sin of further hurting the poor undergirded the early restrictions against usury. Given the exorbitant rates of interest and the types of loans used in the flipping of homes and other such "business" deals, it seems reasonable to conclude that the world would be a better place if we returned to the belief that such practices were a grievous sin. Martin Luther and John Calvin believed that any interest must be obtained using Christian principles. Think how differently people would live their lives if they combined the directives from Lutheran, Reformed, and Roman Catholic teachings. For example, consumers would save themselves from future trouble if they borrowed only for homes and not for vacations, clothes, and electronic equipment. Justice would prevent business owners from supplying and abetting the most unethical types of lending to the poor, such as payday loans and appliance rent-to-buy schemes.

In summary, David Jones has provided an insightful and interesting history of the changes in theological understanding of usury over time. His overall purpose is not simply to trace the historical development of the concept of usury but to explore how these Protestant views on usury can help us understand the Christian's place in the secular world. In the process, he shows that the message of Calvin and Luther are still applicable today.

*Jeanne Boeh is the chair of the economics department and an associate professor of economics at Augsburg College.*



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## High School Students Reflect on Calling

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In June of 2005, 21 exceptional high school students spent a very intense week at Augsburg College. It was a milestone along the lifelong quest to discover God's purpose in their lives.

These students were participants in Augsburg's Summer Vocation Institute (SVI). All were nominated by their home congregations because they exhibited a gift for theological inquiry, and they came to the institute with ideas and questions already churning. In the words of SVI program director Ross Murray, "Young people want to learn about faith, life, and God. An experience like this helps them articulate what they believe and why they believe. It gives them permission to have theological imagination."

The week included academic, experiential, and emotional forays into the concept of "vocation." Under the guidance of Murray and religion professor Dr. Mark Tranvik, these students spent three hours each day learning about the theological foundations of the Lutheran understanding of vocation. Tranvik and Murray led the students on an exploration that touched on a variety of topics—life without vocation, Luther and vocation, responding to vocation, and action in the world. Every day of the SVI was filled with lively debate and discussion, and the students were clearly moved and inspired by the ideas they shared with one another. In addition, participants learned the basics of research writing, took part in devotions and worship led by Augsburg students, and visited congregations that are living out God's calling in their contexts.

As an outcome of their learning and their experiences, each participant wrote an essay reflecting on theology, life, and vocation. What follows is a collection of excerpts from some of these papers. Many thanks to the four students who shared their insights and who here represent the theological voice of youth in the exploration of vocation:

**Lisa Harney**, Rochester, Minnesota  
Bethel Lutheran Church

**Katie Mercadante**, Economy, Pennsylvania  
Rehoboth Lutheran Church

**T. J. Rydeen**, Stillwater, Minnesota  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church

**Ruth Senum**, Maple Grove, Minnesota  
Advent Lutheran Church

### *The definition of vocation:*

*"There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one."* (1 Corinthians 12:4-5)

In his first letter to the people of Corinth, the Apostle Paul gives a real-world definition of vocation. God gives each of us many gifts. There is a variety of work to be done, so we all use our gifts in different ways, but we still glorify the same God.

~K.M.

People can have many vocations during their lifetimes. A person can be called to be a spouse, a son or daughter, a parent, a mechanic, a friend, a neighbor, and a child of God all at once.

~T.J.R.

Many people believe that callings are only of a religious nature and automatically assume that when someone is called by God, that person will become a pastor. Those people are wrong. Every day, God calls everyone to use their gifts. He may call them to any number of professions or circumstances.

~L.H.

God is like an artist assembling a mosaic for each of us, shaping each of us into unique individuals through our experiences, talents, gifts, and passions. Each piece of the mosaic has its own purpose and gives meaning to the overall design. When we become aware of these defining characteristics, we see a clearer picture of our true calling in life—our vocation. God calls each of us, and the way that these callings combine with our experiences shapes



us into the masterpiece that God intended. We aren't given the ability to see the final mosaic, but we are given the ability to trust God and believe that He is at work in our lives, shaping and creating us each day in a way that is pleasing to Him.

~L.H.

Being used can be a good thing.

~T.J.R.

### ***The importance of all callings:***

The tiles used in mosaics differ not only in color, but in size as well. Even though we often view larger things or larger works as more important, the smaller, more intricate pieces add depth to the mosaic and in no way contribute any less than the larger pieces. God will not always call us to do the big things in life, but the small things please Him just as much and bring beauty and character into our individual mosaics.

~L.H.

The word *vocation* has many meanings. God calls everyone to do some task on earth, but not every calling is the same. Some people seem to have a particular talent, and some seem to have multiple gifts, and others yet seem to be sure of the goal God wants them to achieve. To God, it doesn't matter because God already has a plan for us. It's just a matter of having trust and keeping our ears open to listen to God's word. The time we spend on earth is limited; I believe that we should spend this time wisely by doing the simple tasks God lays out for us. *"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love"* (Ephesians 4:1-2).

~R.S.

### ***Youth and vocation:***

Vocation and calling can be a tough subject to sell to teenagers. With things like calculus and prom to worry about, teenagers have other things on their mind besides whether God is calling them. In schools today, being the overly "churchy" kid isn't cool. Being able to quote passages from the Bible isn't valued as much as knowing the lyrics to the latest rap song or the latest sports statistics and news. With teams scheduling practice and games on Sunday mornings, it is sometimes impossible to even attend a worship service because of a commitment to a team. A lot of the time, church isn't a priority. Consequently, when asked what his or her vocation is, a

typical teenager will answer that he or she is a student or may mention whatever he or she happens to do at their part-time job. With so little emphasis on calling and so much emphasis on get-rich-quick professions, it is no wonder that people end up in a job that makes them miserable and then switch professions mid-life.

~ K.M.

### ***Discerning one's vocation:***

In modern society happiness is rated by how successful someone is and how much money someone has. When they do become successful they wonder, "When will I be happy? What is my purpose in life?" To answer these questions we must understand what it is God calls us to do, how he calls us, and what happens if we get lost along the way.

~T.J.R.

Over a year ago, sometime before Rehoboth made its first trip to Minnesota and SVI, Pastor Scott approached me about the topic of seminary. I laughed, hard. There was no way I would be going to seminary. Since I have been in third grade, I have wanted to be a meteorologist. More specifically, I want to be the nut that heads to places unknown until hurricane season and reports "live from the eye of the storm." So, seminary was out of the question. I thought Pastor Scott was crazy. Me, in seminary? That would be like mixing oil and water.

So, as I sit here finishing this paper, I am just one week from entering college and reaching for my dream. Soon I will be sitting in a classroom listening to lectures in my Intro to Meteorology class. However, I can't help but wonder, should I still consider seminary? What if Pastor Scott sees something in me that I don't see in myself? What if my passion isn't really my passion?

~ K.M.

Callings change and grow with time. God guides us to our callings and to new ones when the time is right. All we have to do is to use our free will and choose the option that God has put in front of us as the best choice. If we listen and trust in God, then God will use us in ways that make the world a better place for us and others.

~T.J.R.

Sometimes we try to add our own pieces to the mosaic or interpret them the way that we want to see them. There are many voices to listen to in the world, and it is hard to distinguish what God is actually calling us to do as opposed to what we want to do. The Gospel

of Luke tells us that when people begin to focus on possessions and materialism, they stray from what God is calling them to do. In Ecclesiastes, the author writes that he tried everything to find happiness and a higher purpose but was unsuccessful.

God, however, has a purpose and plan for everyone. We often focus on the seemingly “meaningless times” and “ungifted people,” but even these times and people are there for a reason that God alone knows. In these instances God will allow us to question why but will guide us so that Creation stays complete.

~L.H

The world we live in has trouble with trust. When something goes wrong, we decide that we are the only ones who know what is best for us. Instead, we need to trust God and follow where He leads us.

~T.J.R.

Most people go through life without even thinking about whether or not they are doing what God wanted.

~R.S.

In my own experience, I know that my vocation has changed and will change again many times in my life. When I came to the Summer Vocation Institute last year, my plan was to go to the University of Minnesota to become a nurse or doctor. I knew that it would require a lot of schooling, but the job seemed secure and would pay well. While at Augsburg, I took several “gifts” tests, and I figured out that I should choose a job because I want to do it and have the gifts for it. Perhaps being a doctor or nurse was something I could do with a lot of hard work, but I didn’t really have a passion for it. I realized what I really love—little kids and teaching—so instead I want to major in education. God is calling me to do something that matches my gifts and that will allow me to do what I enjoy—helping others. I believe that my vocation right now is to be a teacher, but I know that it could change. God has a plan for me, though, and no matter how long it takes, I’ll figure out what it is.

~R.S.

Sometimes God calls us to do things that we don’t understand. It could be as simple as stopping to smell a flower or as complicated as what God asked the prophet Hosea to do. God called Hosea to marry a prostitute and have children with her. Then God called him to name his first son Jezreel because the Israelites massacred the people at Jezreel. When he had a daughter God had him name her No-Mercy because he had run out of mercy for

Israel. The second son God had Hosea name Nobody because the Israelites had become nobodies to God. This may seem like a strange calling, but God has plans for everyone and sometimes calls us all to do things that we would never have thought of doing.

~T.J.R.

Life is a road. Sometimes it is paved, and at other times it’s gravel; it can be wet and it can be dry, but most importantly it is ever changing. Every day our road forks off into more roads. God gave us free will to choose our own path, but God never abandons us no matter what path we take. And God gives us a million of little signs pointing us in the right direction.

~T.J.R.

### ***The challenge of fulfilling one’s vocation:***

The Bible contains constant references to God telling others what to do, and it shows how these people react. One example is the story of Moses, a young man that God used to help free the Israelites from Egypt. Moses was unsure that he was the right one for the job, but God gave him the gifts to do His word. Noah is another example. He had a task that was nearly impossible, but God helped him to accomplish it. Noah was given the materials and talents needed to build the ark, even though he was probably skeptical about the idea at first.

~R.S.

It isn’t always clear what God is truly calling someone to do. One example of this is the life of Martin Luther. Luther was born into a middle class Catholic family, and with the support of his father, he became a lawyer. It was what he believed God called him to be, but God had other plans. Instead, He chose Luther, with his talents for preaching and standing up for his beliefs, to revolutionize the Christian religion. However, God knew that without the speaking skills acquired through law school, and without his devotion to Christianity and God through his experiences as a monk, he would never prevail. For that reason, God put those experiences into Luther’s life “mosaic.” Luther interpreted those pieces as he saw them, leading him first one way, and then another, but until the mosaic formed more and more fully, Luther really had no true concept of what God had in store for him.

~L.H.

### ***God, self, and the community:***

Although vocation is generally regarded as what we can do as individuals to please God, there is actually a

whole different dimension that should be taken into account. Vocation should instead be looked at in three parts: God, self, and the community. All these things are interrelated. God calls people to do big or small things and gives them gifts to accomplish their purpose. Instead of simply accepting our blessings and using those gifts to our own benefit, we should use our gifts to serve the community. We can then experience God within the community, not just within ourselves, adding more to our human perception of God. Using our gifts in this way then pleases and gives back to God. It benefits the community and introduces God to others in a positive way.

~L.H.

Ask just about anyone how they hope to be remembered, and they will tell you that they want to make a difference in the world.

~ K.M.

*Augsburg College plans to continue providing opportunities for youth to explore theology. In the summer of 2006, the College will host a Summer Theology Institute. If you are interested in nominating a young person to be a part of this program, please contact Ross Murray, campus ministry associate and Exploring Our Gifts project assistant, at Augsburg College. His e-mail address is <murray@augsborg.edu>.*



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## The Augsburg Center for Faith and Learning

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In the spring of 2002, the Lilly Endowment in Indianapolis granted Augsburg College a marvelous opportunity to expand the College's commitment to connecting faith and learning. Their grant of \$2 million over a five-year period allowed the College to create *Exploring Our Gifts*. In the fall of 2005, the Lilly Endowment awarded Augsburg a generous sustainability grant, matched by the College, to help support the program for an additional three years.

*Exploring Our Gifts* focuses on helping students, faculty, and staff discern their vocations in service to God and the world. The results thus far have been extraordinary, with hundreds of students, faculty, and staff benefiting from a wide range of new programs and academic opportunities, described in the project updates that follow.

We are now turning our attention to the future to ensure that this important work and the benefits it provides to the College community continue beyond the life of the grant. Our goal is to clearly signal that the Christian faith informs and inspires how we prepare students for their lives in the world. To this end, the College is currently developing the *Augsburg Center for Faith and Learning*, a lasting presence on campus that will build upon the spirit, momentum, and accomplishments of *Exploring Our Gifts*.

The identity and shape of this new program are already emerging. The purpose of the Center is to provide resources to faculty, staff, and students that enable them to organize faith and learning within the framework of calling. The role of the leadership of the Center is to guide the College in the exploration of vocation as understood within the Lutheran tradition, with the Bernhard Christensen Chair of Religion and Vocation (an endowed chair in the religion department) providing a theological vision grounded in the mission of Augsburg. The College plans to renovate Augsburg's historic chapel in Old Main to serve as a meeting space for events organized by the Center. The programmatic focus of the Center is four-fold:

- ♦ **Scholarship and teaching:** This program will promote excellence in scholarship and teaching by encouraging faculty to examine how the Christian faith is linked to particular disciplines and how this may be communicated to students. Included here are critical conversations and seminars about vocation, book discussions, and the nurturing of leaders for the College's keystone courses.
- ♦ **Student exploration of faith and vocation:** Students will be given the opportunity to think about life and learning within a vocation framework. Many of the current *Exploring Our Gifts* programs for students will be continued.
- ♦ **Congregations and alumni:** *The Augsburg Center for Faith and Learning* will promote relationships with congregations, encouraging them to be learning centers that reflect theologically on vocation. This program also aims to deepen connections between the College and alumni with a strong sense of calling.
- ♦ **Faculty and staff orientation and development:** A two-year program for new faculty and senior staff will acquaint them with the Lutheran heritage and the larger mission of the College. Participants will also learn about Augsburg's concept of vocation and its understanding of how faith, life, and learning are to be integrated. The College's Center for Teaching and Learning will coordinate this effort.

The goals of this new program are both inspiring and ambitious. It is work that has the potential to be truly transformational, both at the individual level and the institutional level. There will be many opportunities for friends of Augsburg to contribute to this effort in many different ways, and we welcome your partnership as we continue to build the *Augsburg Center for Faith and Learning*.



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# Exploring Our Gifts Project Updates

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## **Theme 1 — Vocation as Life Approach**

### **Vocatio Worship**

Since fall of 2002, the Vocatio Worship series has been running once a month. Speakers have come from a wide variety of backgrounds and touched on many different aspects of vocation. Some speakers have led the worshipping community through exercises, while others have shared stores of personal vocation. Students have also been given the opportunity to go further in depth with the chapel speaker over an informal lunch after chapel. The program has been attended by classes, individuals, and guests from off campus.

### **Orientation and Augsburg Seminar**

Students who are new to Augsburg get exposure to vocation in a number of different ways. They hear a presentation on vocation at the new student orientation in the summer. They also devote at least one session of their Augsburg Seminar to reflection on vocation. In addition, parents who accompany their sons or daughters to orientation have several opportunities to hear about *Exploring Our Gifts* and how Augsburg has made vocation the overarching theme that guides its classroom work and service in the world.

### **Alumni Mentoring**

The Alumni Mentoring Program brings together students, alumni, and employees. They are assigned to teams that meet regularly to share interests, hopes, and dreams. Sometimes all the teams join together as a large group to hear speakers discuss vocation from their various perspectives. As members of individual teams, participants explore the city together and share bits and pieces from their own lives. Our hope is that students will forge relationships that will empower them to move into the next phase of their vocational journey, no matter what that phase may be. Since the inception of the program, approximately 100 students, 60 alumni, and 30 faculty or staff members have participated.

### **Mentoring in Spiritual Practices**

Each academic year a group of up to 20 students, faculty, and staff members meet monthly to learn about various spiritual practices, such as prayer, meditation, journal keeping, and Scripture reading. These spiritual disciplines foster the discernment of vocation, which is a continuous quest. Toward the end of the school year group members participate in a weekend silent retreat that is based on the ideas of Ignatius of Loyola concerning discernment.

### **Vocation Quest Retreat (Quest 24)**

Each fall and winter, 10 to 12 students board a van to get away from campus and study vocation in a relaxed atmosphere. Staff members from Campus Ministry and the Center for Service, Work, and Learning help guide students through various exercises that help them discover their gifts, strengths, and passions. This experience has created the opportunity for some excellent discussions and has helped initiate freshmen and sophomores into the vocation conversation.

### **Student Vocation Assessments**

Vocation assessments are used in the Center for Service, Work, and Learning as a tool for increasing self-awareness and engaging students with their life purpose/spiritual journey. Over the last three and a half years, we have administered and given feedback using several assessment tools, including Career Liftoff, StrengthsFinder, and Enneagram. We continually evaluate the effectiveness of our assessment selections and have found them to be successful as students apply the results to their lives.

## **Theme 2 — Vocation in the Curriculum**

### **Core Curriculum**

Augsburg has placed the concept of vocation at the heart of its new curriculum. Entering students take two courses, *Christian Vocation and the Search for Meaning (I and II)*, that have the concept of calling as their main

organizing principle. In addition, every Augsburg senior must take a keystone course that includes significant reflection on vocation. Most departments at Augsburg are currently in the process of incorporating vocation into their keystone offerings.

### ***International Exploration***

The Center for Global Education's Lilly project explores faith and vocation in a global context, with the goal of infusing all Augsburg study abroad programs with a discernment component. So far, there have been three project initiatives to further this effort: 1) development of an independent study journal for study abroad students to guide them through their faith and vocational journey; 2) creation of a resource guide for faculty members who are leading international seminars to give them tools to explore faith and vocation issues in their courses; and 3) the implementation of nine international seminars that serve as pilot programs for embedding vocation in the study abroad curriculum. In May 2003 an Augsburg professor of education implemented one such seminar in Namibia. In 2004, CGE coordinated three international seminars: an education program to Guatemala, an alternative spring break to Mexico, and a religion course to El Salvador. In 2005 a history course went to Namibia and South Africa, and three seminars are scheduled for 2006. A final seminar will take place in 2007 under the initial grant. Seminars will continue until 2010 through the sustainability grant. The response of students and faculty has been very positive so far and has affirmed the impact of the seminars.

### ***Lilly Scholars***

We are in the fourth year of the Lilly Scholars program. Each year 10 students are selected to meet seven times in a seminar format with facilitators Mark Tranvik, professor of religion, and Rosemary Link, professor of social work. The seminar focuses on developing a Lutheran understanding of vocation and helping participants determine their sense of calling. Also included are opportunities to discover the resources at Luther Seminary and an in-depth description of the Augsburg's dual degree program in social work and theology. All participants receive a \$2,000 scholarship.

## ***Theme 3 — Vocation as Education for Service***

### ***Church Leader Development (Camp Stipends)***

Since research shows that many church leaders have

been inspired by a significant camp experience, the Church Leader Development project encourages students to spend a summer working at a camp. We direct students to certain camps and help them to explore the opportunities. We also seek to capitalize on the new skills they acquire while working in a camp setting, so the program helps create a cyclical pattern that benefits both the camps and the campus. So far, 40 students have participated in this project.

### ***Lilly Internships***

Since spring 2003, 32 Augsburg students have participated in the Lilly Internship Program. These interns engaged in 12 weeks of hands-on experience at faith- and service-based organizations combined with a bi-monthly seminar focused on exploration of vocation. The students represented majors from business to biology to religion, and a variety of internship sites were chosen to closely match students' diverse interests—including, to name a few, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Family and Children's Services, Fairview Hospital, Central Lutheran Church, Augsburg Fortress Publishing, World Relief, Youth and Family Institute, The Division of Indian Work, Faith Inkubators, MN Advocates, and the Basilica of Saint Mary Social Ministry. Consequently, the internship program served a wide variety of constituencies and needs, such as church youth groups, seniors and the Faith Chest project, children with mental health issues, Native American adolescent males, and refugees and immigrants. There is no question that students have benefited from the skills and confidence they developed doing meaningful work at the internship sites and that they appreciated learning from the internship supervisors who modeled lives of vocation in the context of work, but they derived just as much benefit from the seminar discussions. Students often shared that the seminar time—which was devoted to discovering their talents and gifts, connecting their faith to career exploration and using their talents and gifts in life and work—was intensely energizing, though “scary” at times. One Lilly intern reflected, “I want my career to be connected with my call, and my call to be in line with my gifts. The internship has changed the way I think about career and work. This was a fabulous opportunity for growth and learning.”

### ***Urban Immersion***

The Urban Immersion project is planning its fourth annual spring break trip to Washington, D.C., which will take place March 18-25, 2006, with student participants



coming mainly from metro-urban studies and sociology, augmented by students from the Honors Program. As in past years, Luther Memorial Church and its Steinbruck Center will host the group in the congregation's hostel and provide information about "N Street," a comprehensive program and residence for homeless women and families. In addition, the group will spend a day with faith-based Manna Community Development Corporation, which builds affordable housing throughout the district, as well as Marshall Heights Community Development Organization, which operates in Ward 7/Anacostia. Students will also have the opportunity to shadow a federal employee and visit the office of Augsburg alumnus Congressman Martin Sabo. Also, the group will be hosted on two evenings by Augsburg alumni Margaret and Donald Mattison and two young couples who are engaged in community change/revitalization vocations and supported by their involvement in the Church of the Savior in D.C. Following a visit to the Holocaust Museum, the students will take advantage of being in D.C. to explore their own interests prior to returning.

So far, 32 students have explored vocation in the city through the Urban Immersion project, and 11 students will participate in the upcoming trip.

#### ***Summer Vocation Institute***

This program has continued to evolve. Since June of 2004, 39 high school youth have come to campus for a week-long institute to explore their gifts, the God who created them, and the world around them. These exceptional students questioned themselves and the people around them. They learned about vocation and wrote a paper about what they learned. In June 2005, Augsburg began offering these students a scholarship to continue their study at Augsburg. In 2006, we plan to further develop the academic component of the program. Registration is currently open, so contact Ross Murray at 612-330-1151 or <murray@augsborg.edu> for more information.

### ***Theme 4 — Developing Vocational Awareness in Faculty, Staff, and Students***

#### ***New Employee Orientation***

This project welcomes new employees to the College by offering the opportunity to participate in a mentoring team. The composition of the teams is as follows: four new employees (a mixture of faculty and staff from differing

departments) and two current Augsburg employees (typically one staff member and one faculty member). The goals of this project are three-fold—to promote better understanding of and broader engagement in the institutional mission and culture, to develop familiarity with programs and resources available to support the employees' work, and to cultivate mutual appreciation for the work of faculty and staff. Mentoring teams meet three to four times per semester for group activities or for discussion of topics such as the College vision document, Lutheran higher education, and the concept of vocation.

The project benefits new employees because it provides a ready-made cohort for social support and because it helps them acclimate to Augsburg's environment and culture. Current employees also benefit because the mentorship experience helps them build connections with colleagues they might not otherwise have known.

The faculty/staff mentoring project is now in its fourth year. So far, 180 new employees have participated, and though the success of the experience varied between groups, it is clear that new employees appreciate the welcoming spirit and the opportunity to learn about Augsburg.

#### ***Professional Development on Vocation***

Ron Petrich, an assistant professor of education at Augsburg, continues to offer popular retreats centered on vocation. Using a style that invites personal reflection, Ron nurtures faculty and staff in their understanding of their sense of calling and challenges them to reach beyond conventional categories in their exploration of vocation. Currently, religion professors Mark Tranvik and Phil Quanbeck II are leading 17 Augsburg faculty in a seminar on a theological understanding of vocation that will culminate in a trip to Germany and the Martin Luther sites in May of 2006.

#### ***Forums***

*Exploring Our Gifts* has sponsored several campus-wide events involving well-known speakers. Visitors who have come to Augsburg to address issues around vocation have included authors like Sharon Parks, Parker Palmer, and Lee Hardy. In addition, *Exploring Our Gifts* regularly holds luncheons featuring faculty and staff presentations on their own understanding of what it means to be called and what this calling means for work, family life, and civic responsibility.



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*Notes*

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