

GOD'S CALLING AND PASTORAL CANDIDACY
AT KOREA BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

by

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INTRODUCTION

When I entered Korea Baptist Theological Seminary, the number of new students was 52. When I graduated from the seminary, there were only 8 graduates. This implies that 44 students dropped out of the seminary for various reasons. Since I became a teacher at the Seminary, in 1960, I have seen many students leave the seminary. I have found that there are many reasons why they left the seminary. One of the main reasons is the matter of God's calling. In order to lead the students into the will of God, I decided to research the matter of God's calling.

First of all, Biblical understanding about God's calling is researched. There are some different views on God's calling in the Christian history. These different views are surveyed. Finally, the matter of God's calling in the situation of Korea Baptist Theological Seminary is researched.

BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING ABOUT
GOD'S CALLING**The Meaning of Calling**

In the Old Testament, the verb, *qara'* means to call. Calling in the O. T. refers to both the individual and the group(nation). The nation, Israel, was collectively called by God and became the people of God(Ex. 20 : 1—20). Within the national context, God called various individuals for the people of God. They performed particular functions for the people of God and for God's redemptive purpose in the world. These people were Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, etc.¹⁾

¹ H. H. Barnette, *Christian Calling and Vocation*(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), pp.16f.

In the New Testament, the noun *klesis* is used for calling. In the A.V. *klesis* is translated into "calling" or "vocation"(Eph. 4:1), but in the R.S.V. it translated only as "calling."² In the N.T., "calling" is used in both cases; the individual and the group. *ekklésia* in the Greek means "called out," or "church." It is a called assembly made up of those who have been called by God.³ Because Israel failed to carry out God's redemptive purpose in the world, he called a new Israel(church). Within this context, God called individuals. Yet God's calling is not many, but one.

The call is always to salvation and service in the Kingdom of God... There is but one call in the Scripture to be a child of God and to behave as such. It is at this point that calling has meaning for work, leisure, worship, service, and every other human activity. The Christian is to "walk worthy of his vocation"(calling of God to salvation) in all his relationships(I Peter 2:9-4:11).⁴

Exposition of I Corinthians 7:20

There are two different opinions about "calling" in this verse. One opinion is:

...in I Cor. 7.20 St. Paul also applied the term to the daily work of the Christian. The R.V. brings out the double sense of the word in this verse, "Let each man abide in that calling(i.e., job) wherein he was called(i.e., when he became a Christian)⁵

The other opinion is:

The frequently misapplied I Cor. 7.20f. ("Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called; was thou called being a slave...?")

² J. MacQuarrie(ed.), *Dictionary of Christian Ethics*(Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), p.355.

³ R.L. Calhoun, *God and the Common Life*(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), pp.254f.

⁴ Barnette, *op. cit.*, p.79.

does not bid the Christian to remain in the secular "calling" (e. g. that of a slave) in which he was when he became a believer, but to remain faithfully to the calling of God by which he was brought out of heathen darkness into the light of the truth. The word *Klēsis*, *ekklētoi*, *ekklēsia* have nothing to do with the secular occupation of the Christian disciple.⁶⁾

Here we can see that the different views are based upon the different interpretations of the word *klēsis*. The former opinion interprets *klēsis* as the secular calling of the man. The latter opinion interprets it as the religious calling of the man. Married or unmarried, bond or free, and circumcized are not God's calling, but are the outward conditions of life affecting God's calling.⁷⁾

Christian Vocation

In the Christian doctrine of vocation, Paul's conception of calling is very important.

Paul teaches that the Christian is called in three senses: first, to salvation; second, to service in the church; and third, to glorify God in one's work and station (See I Cor. 7 : 20f. ; Eph. 4 : 11 ; I Cor. 12 : 28 ; Rom. 12 : 6—8 ; and Philemon). Hence, the Christian calling is a calling to the Christian life, including the way a man makes his livelihood.⁸⁾

Vocation of salvation

The primary christian vocation is the proclamation of the King-

⁵ MacQuarrie, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

⁶ A. Richardson, *The Biblical Doctrine of Work* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1963), p. 34.

⁷ W. R. Nicoll, *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. III (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans' Publishing Company, n. d.), p. 829.

⁸ H. H. Barnette, *Introducing Christian Ethics* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1961), pp. 155f.

dom of God, giving witness for Jesus as Christ, or salvation of the lost. "All other work is contingent upon the call to the service of the Word of God."⁹

Vocation of service in the church.

God gives each of the called assembly some appropriate gift of the Holy Spirit in order to serve in the church. He is a minister whether he is a full-time minister or a part-time minister. The gift of the Holy Spirit is mentioned in Rom. 12 : 6—8; I Cor. 12: 9—10, 28—30; Eph. 4 : 11; and I Pet. 4 : 10—11. But, "no exhaustive catalogue could limit the liberty of the Spirit which animates the Body of the Church according to its needs."¹⁰ The Christian should be a full-life minister whether he is a fulltime minister or a part-time minister. We are called to "full life' service."¹¹

Vocation to glorify God in one's work and station.

Our daily work is not our vocation, but a means to the vocation. In our work and station, we should glorify God. Christian vocation relates to every aspect of the Christian life. "Christian daily work is primarily something rendered to the Lord and not to men. It is the fulfillment of a duty, and its aim is not reward or profit, but the glory of Christ."¹²

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ABOUT GOD'S CALLING

Mediaeval Catholicism

Until the second century, in the church, there was no distincti-

⁹ Barnette, *Christian Calling and Vocation*, p.63.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.23.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.64.

¹² Richardson, *op. cit.*, p.42.

on between “clergy” and “laity” or “priest” and “people.” In the fourth century, we can see the distinction between them and dual morality.

By A. D. 318, there emerged, as seen in Eusebius’ *Demonstratio Evangelica*, a double standard of life, i. e., the life of those who would be perfect, to whom religion meant separation from all secular interests and employments, and the life of those who remained in the world and carried on the ordinary functions of human existence with a sort of second-grade piety.¹³⁾

Work outside of ecclesiastical circles were recognized as secular work.

Mediaeval Catholicism marked the distinction between sacred and secular callings. Vocation meant only the calling to the “religious life”¹⁴⁾ or “the monastic life.”¹⁵⁾ The clergy was a first-class status and the laity was a second class status in the church.

Reformation

The idea of work as calling began with reformers such as Luther and Calvin.

The Reformers, Luther and Calvin, first began to use the expression *Beruf* and *Vocatio* of men’s everyday task and stations. It is important to note that they did this as a protest against the Mediaeval use of *vocatio* exclusively as the call to the monastic life. They wished to destroy the “double standard” and to show that God could be glorified in the workaday world.¹⁶⁾

Luther and Calvin sought to destroy this double standard of

¹³ Barnette, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, p. 156.

¹⁴ C. F. H. Henry (ed.), *Baker’s Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker’s Book House, 1973), p. 700.

¹⁵ Calhoun, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁶ Richardson, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

morality and to recover the Biblical doctrine of vocation. But, they tended to equate divine calling with everyday work.

...divine calling became identified with daily occupation, job, and profession. And the Reformers' emphasis upon calling as one's status or station paved the way for the secularization of the Biblical view in later centuries.¹⁷⁾

Protestantism

The protestants thought work was a means both of glorifying God and serving one's neighbor and community. They thought "man was blessed of God with wealth because he was diligent, sincere, and upright in his calling."¹⁸⁾

The Industrial Revolution largely influenced the Christian doctrine of calling.

With the rise of the Industrial Revolution, the Christian doctrine of vocation was largely lost in the increasing secularization of work. Daily work and divine vocation, long separated by the double standard, and bound together in Reformation theology, once again fell apart... While the terms "vocation" and "calling" are still used, they have come to mean "little or nothing" more than worldly activities pursued with diligence for their own sake, and for the sake of worldly rewards.¹⁹⁾

In the contemporary period, the calling of God became more secularized. Calhoun defines "Daily Work as Divine Calling."²⁰⁾ In a word, daily work became divine calling.

¹⁷ Barnette, *Christian Calling and Vocation*, p.46.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.47.

¹⁹ Barnette, *Introducing Christian Ethics*, p.157.

²⁰ R.L. Calhoun, *God and the Day's Work*(New York: Association Press, 1943), p.45.

A great part of what it called Church Renewal in the latter half of the twentieth century has come from an extension of the idea of calling, so that it now includes all aspects of common life...Why should not a fireman be conscious of a holy vocation? Why should not a woman sense that she is called to be a mother, a wife, or a librarian?²¹⁾

On the other hand, "Daily work becomes divine calling" implies that there is no sense of divine calling in daily work.

Millions who work in giant factories and corporations today see little connection between their work and christian calling. There appears to be little incentive to glorify God through daily work. Work is no longer seen as a grateful response to God's calling. To the contrary, calling is given a narrow technical meaning, in terms of one's job or profession.²²⁾

Summary

Historically, there are two extreme views on God's calling. One is that God's calling means the calling to the religious life. The other is that God's calling means the calling to a job or daily work.

PASTORAL CANDIDATE AT KOREA BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Korean Situation

In Korea, the work of God is related to the church. The work outside of the church is called secular work. God's calling is the calling to salvation and to the church related service. The servants of God are full-time ministers, such as pastor, evangelist or

²¹ Henry, *op. cit.*, p.715.

²² Barnette, *Christian Calling and Vocation*, p.48.

missionary. The laity is recognized as the people of God. The church related work is worthy and valuable in the Kingdom of God, but secular work is worthy and valuable only in livelihood.

There are several factors that influenced such misunderstanding of the Biblical vocation. First, Buddhism influenced such a concept. Generally, the Korean Buddhists think their temple is holy and human society is secular.

The second influence is the Confucian view on occupation. They divided occupation into four classes: the scholar, the farmer, the artisan and the merchant. The scholar is high class, the farmer is middle class, and the artisan and the merchant are low class. The scholar is respected by other classes. In other words, physical work is neglected. In the church, full-time ministers are respected as scholars.

The third influence came from the nation-wide hatred against the Japanese dominion. Korea had been dominated by Japan(1919—45). During this period, Korean people would not co-operate with the Japanese government, and would not pay any tax or work for the government. The Korean Christians thought Satan dominated human society and God ruled the church. They viewed the church-related work and the outside-of-church work as secular work.

Recently liberal theologians imported secularized theology on God's calling, from the West. They now equate the calling of God to daily work. Generally, young people follow the liberal theory. Those who follow the traditional view work hard in the church, but do not connect God's calling to their daily work. That is why they are easily involved in social injustice. Those who follow the new imported theory work hard in daily work, but neglect church work. Sometimes they criticize the church's religiousness.

Pastoral Candidate

Most of the new pastoral candidates at Korea Baptist Theologi-

cal Seminary identify the calling of God with the call to the full-time minister in the church. They follow the traditional view on the calling of God.

Some of the new students drop out of the seminary because they find that the pastorate is a hard work. Some of the new Students drop out of the seminary because they find out that the full-time minister is not the only servant of God. Some of the new pastoral candidates drop out of the seminary because they think that daily work is God's calling.

Pastoral Counselling

When I counsel with those students who have such problems(as mentioned above), I first emphasize the consciousness of God's calling to be a pastor. Discipleship is hardship, in a sense. Those who would escape from the hardship of the pastorate should give up the discipleship of Christ. We can overcome such hardship through the power of the Holy Spirit. Don't be reasonable, but be faithful.

I agree with the opinion that the full-time minister is not the only servant of God. We should be full-life ministers rather than full-time ministers. But, if one is called by God to be a pastor, one should be a pastor whether or not other workers can be servants of God. God can use various ways, even our misunderstanding, when he calls us to be a pastor. Some students emphasize that they would not enter the seminary, if they previously understood that a pastor would not be the only servant of God. I suggest to such students to be ready to hear the second calling of God, such as Jeremiah(Jer. 1 : 4—10, 11—19). Don't be reasonable, but be faithful.

Daily work itself is not God's calling, but a means to it. Man can be a full-life minister of God in daily work. But, if he is called by God to be a pastor, he should be a pastor whether he

can be a full-life minister of God in daily work or not. Don't be reasonable, but be faithful.

Generally, the new pastoral candidates who enter the seminary are called by God to be pastors. But, there are other reasons why students do not continue their education, such as lack of finances. Counselors must find out these reasons and then revive students' consciousness of God's calling and let them be faithful to their first decision, by helping solve their problems.

Paul was called by God to be an apostle, not a tentmaker.

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