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WOMANIST UNDERSTANDING OF VOCATION

Womanist understanding of vocation

it is the lived experience of faith

embodied in people

found in the concrete contexts in which people live out their faith

grounded in the context of struggling for faith and justice

it takes on antagonistic dualisms as unhealthy in many places in our faith journeys

it is an ongoing faith-filled process—a ripening and ripening into wholeness

living out vocation—integrating faith and life—means that we recognize that we are made in God's image

God's presence is the very fabric of our existence

immanent & transcendent

close as our breathing

God is not an option or on the supplemental reading list

God's love for us is unconditional

God makes demands, has commands

perhaps the simplest and hardest of these is that we are called to live our lives out of the possibilities not our shortcomings

answering yes to God's what if

this love moves us to grow in compassion, understanding, and acceptance of each other

it is the formation of a divine/human community based on love and hope and pointed toward justice

we are to listen for and hear the word of God

a call for responsibility, contemplation in the lives of others and in our lives

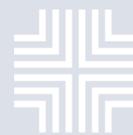
in the sometimes very personal search for our vocations we are also engaged in the human struggle

and in the midst of human struggle we are, some of us, called to step out and step in and lead

but we must stay mindful that vocation involves living our lives with integrity and faithfulness in God

it means coming to a sense of self, finding our identity

for me, vocation encompasses all of life



and as a vocation of life we must take care that we do not spin our lives, our careers, our ministries around a success ethic that is grounded in measurable gains and regrettable losses

rather, we seek to proclaim the dignity of life

and this can be a challenge as we go about our lives

for it is easy to lose sight of this, sometimes, in the midst of budget woes

challenging issues

dueling student interns

unyielding/unreasonable co-workers' phones that ring without ceasing

calls that are never returned

i suggest that if we think about the call to proclaim the dignity of all people as a strength

rather than as a virtue

that we can then draw comfort and sustenance from this proclamation

because i truly believe that it helps us tap into the ability to continually call forth hope and righteous agency in vocation—an unfolding of our faith journeys into wholeness and into the lives of others

a womanist understanding of vocation is that it is embodied, personal, communal

as it brings together the historic force of our spiritual lives with the demand of the spirit to contextualize and live one's faith

it is reflection on the particularity of one's own faith journey lived and unfolded in community

vocation means declaring that part of who we are is about

seeking liberation

daring transformation

living justice

vocation is unfolding our faith journeys into wholeness and into the lives of others

vocation is unpacking the gospel into living

walk around in your journeys, sit down and play

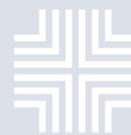
with the holy sand God has given you

womanist thought engages in a renewed search for a moment-by-moment vocation

that can issue in justice-making that builds on (and with) each other's lives rather than pyramids of evil and ruin

vocation is to search for home a place for health, healing, identity formation, resistance, celebration, transformation

not only for one, but for all home is the place where the "real lives" the "real worlds" of people takes place



not the media-driven images we see boldly proclaimed as truth or accurate or whole

not the death-dealing images of success that trick us into thinking our accomplishments are ours alone

not the mind-numbing bromides of leadership that include

fear tactics, terrorist acts, bullying, lying, avoiding, fronting, and simply not giving a damn about anything but the bottom line and piling up legacies

home is the place where the realities of diversity, difference, disagreement, harmony, hope, justice all exist

it is the place that shapes the radical differences within our lives as an eclectic and diverse compendium of communities

it is the place of core resistance to devaluing oppressions

for vocation, home is a place of rest

a place where we get things done, sometimes alone, but mostly with others

a place that we are still learning to create in a social order that features a suffocating regime of interstructured inequality

it is the place of toni morrison's dancing mind

alice walker's world in our eye

sonia sanchez's house of lions

it is a place that we are building, life by life

in which we yoke our individual lives with communal accountability and learn a communal hope that teaches us as we learn

to love our eyes

backs hands mouths feet shoulders arms necks inside parts lungs

life-holding wombs life-giving private parts hearts spirits souls

vocation rooted in justice-making is an important way we gain strength for the journey

so that we learn to live creatively in the tight circle of choices that are given to us by this social order we all live in

but also plot, scheme, and realize ways to craft that tight circle into a spiral of possibilities for this generation

and serve as the standing ground for the next generation and the next generation and beyond

simply put, vocation is doing the work our souls must have