

Questions for Vocational Guilds to Consider*

by Amy L. Sherman, Ph.D.

Author, *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good*

1. What is the purpose of our particular calling?

How does our work in this vocational sphere participate in God's ongoing sustaining of His creation?

How does our work in this vocational sphere participate in God's gracious work of restraining evil and corruption in the world?

How does our work in this vocational sphere participate in God's work to renew and redeem all things?

Consider writing together a 2-4 sentence "purpose statement" for your vocational calling.

2. What cultural goods do we create in this profession? [cf. Andy Crouch, *Culture Making*]

What do these cultural goods make possible that was formerly not possible?

What do these cultural goods make impossible that was formerly possible? (Put differently, what have been some of the unanticipated negative consequences of the cultural goods we in our profession produce?)

Through our profession, are we creating and cultivating cultural goods that have a chance of furnishing the New Jerusalem?

3. What are the opportunities inherent in our vocational calling?

How can we act as "cultivators" in/through this vocational sphere? That is, how can we in our sphere "create the conditions for good things to survive and thrive?" And what weeding do we need to do—"sorting out what does and does not belong?" [Crouch, *Culture Making* p. 75]

What are the Kingdom foretastes (e.g. beauty, wholeness, justice, reconciliation) that we in this vocation particularly have opportunities to advance?

4. What are the challenges inherent in our vocational calling?

In what specific ways has the corruption introduced into the world by the Fall affected our vocation?

What are the particular kinds of sin or idolatry that characteristically seem to mark our profession? (Think at both an individual/personal level—what sins mark workers in this profession—and at the corporate level.)

What are the sources of cynicism about our profession? Put differently, was there once a sense of joyful idealism among those engaged in our profession that has been lost or diminished? Why has this occurred?

In what ways has vocational knowledge/power in our sphere been misdirected, so as to cause harm or to hinder human flourishing?

Are there dangerous ideologies (i.e., potentially harmful in the sense of not promoting flourishing) percolating within our vocational sphere? Put differently, are there values embraced or promoted by some people in our vocational sphere that are counter to “the good, the beautiful, and the true” as understood biblically? What are these and what is a biblical response to them?

5. What disciplines must we practice faithfully in our vocational sphere in order to serve with excellence? (for example, doctors keep up with medical research by reading journals)

How might we encourage one another practically in the faithful exercise of these disciplines?

6. What does a daily, functional dependence on God and His equipping Spirit look like in the living-out of our vocational calling?

In what ways can we intentionally embody dependence on God in our daily work in our vocational sphere?

7. Where are there opportunities for us, in our particular vocation, to share power with our co-workers?

How and where can we “make room” for the creativity of others with whom we work (just as God graciously makes room for us by allowing us to participate in His work)?

8. What are the most important needs (in our local community, and globally) that people with our vocational calling and power might uniquely address?

How might we constructively address these needs together?

Where might we partner together more fully to see God’s mission brought to bear through the deployment of our vocational power?

9. Whom are we currently serving through our vocations? (Put differently, who benefits from the ways in which we are currently deploying our vocational power?)

Are there people we are neglecting to serve...or communities that tend to be underserved by professionals in our vocational sphere?

How might we reorder our priorities personally so that our talents are directed in a more intentional way toward the un- or underserved? (This could happen in the course of our daily, “9-5” job or by volunteering our vocational talents outside of our paid jobs.)

How might we advocate for reordered priorities at our places of employment, in order to extend our services to the underserved?

**This document is “in process,” being reviewed by pastors, leaders in the faith & work movement, and my colleagues in the Vocation Infusion Learning Community. Comments welcome! --ALS*