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Spiritual calling, work, and family : a review of the literature

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SPIRITUAL CALLING, WORK, AND FAMILY:

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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Spiritual Calling, Work, and Family:
A Review of the Literature

Calling is a word that has been used to name a deep attraction to a particular vocation, type of work, course of action, or life path. It is used in the business world and career literature to describe work that is distinguished from a job or career in that it is marked by greater personal meaning and a sense of destiny (Davidson & Caddell, 1994). Some religious traditions claim people are called to certain ways of life, acts of service, or specific vocations (Hardy, 1990). Theologians Willimon (2000) and Miles (2001) noted that people may also be called to family life. A common thread among those who have studied the phenomenon of spiritual calling is the description of it as an integrative experience that affects many aspects of one's life (Banaga, 2000; Bogart, 1994; Leider, 1997; Palmer, 2000).

While not all people report experiencing a sense of calling (Rehm, 1990), those who do typically report significant benefits which they attribute to their callings. Elliott (1992) reported that people who identified themselves as having life callings used terms such as "profound" and "extraordinarily fulfilling" to describe what their callings meant to them (abstract). Guinness (1998) described calling as providing focus and direction for one's life. Portaro and Peluso (1993) stated that "vocation is essential to meaning" (p. 152).

Such descriptions suggest that calling might play an important role in peoples' perceptions of meaningful work and overall life satisfaction. In addition, community life and society as a whole might be enhanced by the contributions of individuals who act to fulfill their callings. Some writers (Levoy, 1994; Miller-McLemore, 1994; Rubio, 2002) have suggested that the concept of calling may have application to family life as well as to work and community involvement.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to review the available literature on spiritual calling and two important dimensions of human life, work and family. The relationship between calling and family was specifically addressed in the theological writings of Rubio (2002) and Miller-McLemore (1994). In one of the more comprehensive explorations of calling, Levoy (1994) noted that callings may be to work, relationships, lifestyles, or service. In addition, literature addressing issues of work and family (Christopher & Christopher, 1998; Senecal, Vallerand, & Guay, 2001; VanKatwyk, 2001) suggested that balancing the demands of work life and family life is often a challenge. Since calling may address both work and relationships, the question arises whether a sense of calling might play a role in seeking this balance. Clearly there are times in which people may feel called to conflicting responsibilities, among them struggles between what is perceived as their work vocations and their family lives (Peck, 1993; Willimon, 2000). A small body of literature has explored how people might

experience and navigate multiple callings or a calling that encompasses both work and family.

Significance

This literature is significant for several reasons. Some of the studies which will be described in the body of this paper (Banaga, 2000; Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Elliott, 1992), suggested that calling may help individuals address questions of meaning, direction, and life satisfaction related to the whole of their existence. Second, a sense of calling may have implications for community life and the common good (Palmer, 2000; Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997).

Existential theorists (Bugental, 1978; Frankl, 1963; Yalom, 1980) have cited the search for meaning as a central issue for human beings. People who describe themselves as “called” or “having a calling” frequently reported high life satisfaction (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997) and a sense of purpose in their lives (Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Rehm, 1990).

The words of Nora Watson, quoted in Studs Terkel’s book *Working* (1972, cited in Huntley, 1997) expressed the potential importance of calling. She said, “I think most of us are looking for a calling, not a job. Most of us...have jobs that are too small for our spirit” (p. 133).

The other potential benefit of a more complete and systematic study of calling might be a contribution to community or the common good. A consistent theme reported in descriptions of calling was contribution to society or benefit to other people (Banaga, 2000; Palmer, 2000; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). In some cultures and traditions individuals have been called to fill specific roles in the community, thus ensuring that the various needs of the community were met. These roles can include care of children and the aged, often considered family responsibilities in present-day western culture.

Therefore a review of the literature on spiritual calling as it relates to both work and family may offer a perspective for addressing individual life satisfaction, community life, and society as a whole. In the following pages the author will review relevant literature, including 1) definitions of calling, 2) the historical roots of calling in the Christian tradition, 3) calling and work, 4) counseling and career theories consistent with calling, and 5) callings to both work and family. The paper will conclude with a summary of the literature and implications for future research.

Definitions of Calling

That calling might play a part in both family life and work is suggested by at least some definitions of calling. Calling has been defined in a number of ways as noted below. However there is no clear, consistent definition of the term.

Bogart (1994) defined calling as “a path to follow or a work to accomplish” (p. 12). He further identified it as an integrative principle in human lives that meets needs for social participation, actualization of one’s potential, and receiving guidance from a higher power (Bogart, 1994). It thus bridges the social, individual, and transcendental or spiritual dimensions. Similarly, Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton (1985) described calling as encompassing activity or work, individual character, and community. They further declared that “calling is the crucial link between the individual and the public world. Work in the sense of calling can never be merely private” (p. 66). Theologian Frederick Buechner (1993) defined vocation as “the place where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need” (p. 119).

Fox (1994) described calling as one’s role in a larger “cosmic drama” (p. 105). He identified calling as a spiritual occurrence and one’s response to calling as an act of obedience. Palmer (2000) stated, “vocation does not mean a goal that I pursue. It means a calling that I hear” (p. 4). He further described vocation as “a gift to be received” (p. 10) and a calling from within to be the person one is born to be. Some would argue with the notion that calling comes from within, instead defining vocation as originating outside of oneself (Huntley, 1997).

Bolles (1991) used the term “mission in life” as a synonym for calling and vocation (p. 9). He argued that mission is a religious term in that it implies that one is called by someone else or determined by destiny to undertake a particular

task. This is consistent with the term “calling,” which also implies that there is a caller who has determined the destination, or at least the direction, of the called (Leider & Shapiro, 2001). Bolles (1991) and Leider (1997) used calling and vocation synonymously. Bogart (1994) noted that they can be but are not necessarily synonymous. He described vocation as “a narrative form or mythic construct describing an individual’s sense of personal identity or project in life as this is revealed” through spiritual experiences (Bogart, 1994, p. 13). In this paper calling and vocation will be used synonymously, as a broad concept that encompasses work, family, and community life (Bogart, 1994; Levoy, 1997).

Historical Roots

The development of the concept of calling through history may shed some light on the definition as well as the experience of the phenomenon. While the word calling has roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition, a similar concept is present in several eastern religious traditions, including Hinduism and Buddhism (Bogart, 1994). Because of the the author’s limited understanding of these traditions and the danger of misrepresenting them, and her particular interest in preparing candidates for Christian ministry, the focus in this paper will be on calling as it evolved through Christian history.

In the Hebrew scriptures of the Jewish tradition and the Christian Old Testament, God’s call was first of all to a nation or group of people, Israel (Genesis 12; Exodus 3). The call was primarily communal, although there were

instances in which individuals were called to particular leadership roles (Bogart, 1994). Most notably, these included the call to Abram in Genesis 17 to become the father of a new nation and Moses's call to lead the Israelite people out of their slavery in Egypt (Exodus 3).

A second type of call was the specific call received by an individual to an occupation or place in society. The Apostle Paul in the Christian New Testament described calling as a summons from God to practice particular spiritual gifts such as teaching, preaching, or prophecy (Rehm, 1990).

In tracing the history of vocation through the centuries, Hardy (1990) noted that during the Middle Ages the primary focus of calling was to contemplation and the mystical union of an individual with God. Work was valued for its necessity and as a means of purification, but it was clearly not the highest calling. This status was reserved for a life of devotion to God best lived out as a contemplative apart from the world in union with the divine (Hardy, 1990).

In response to this mysticism, in the 15th century Martin Luther defined vocation simply as "a task set by God" (Bogart, 1994). Work was a "divine vocation" (Hardy, 1990, p. 47). Rather than leave one's job and retreat to the monastic life, Luther encouraged people to serve God and neighbor wherever they were. He identified vocation or calling as a pursuit which was not freely selected by an individual but as a call from God which one must obey. He emphasized the

importance of work done by common people. The motive and attitude with which one went about one's work was more crucial than the specific task. Luther described vocation as a specific call to love one's neighbor that comes through one's situation and "station" on earth (Hardy, 1990, p. 46). He treated one's station in life as largely a given, perhaps in part because there were relatively few occupational options for people during that time.

John Calvin, another reformer, identified vocation as both the station and the work to which God calls people for God's purposes (Bogart, 1994). One's calling came from a sense of duty to God (Hardy, 1990). The later reformers in this tradition believed that God gives each human being certain abilities and talents to be used for the good of others. One's duty includes finding a place in which one's gifts can be used to benefit society (Hardy, 1990). Both Luther's and Calvin's definitions would seem broad enough to include a calling to serve God through caring for one's family. For example, Luther acknowledged that one's station in life might be that of parent or child or spouse. One's vocation, however, was to live God's call to love others in whatever station in life one was given (Hardy, 1990). Calvin emphasized a community of mutual support, which included care of children and the needy as responsibilities for which members of the community were called and gifted to fulfill (Hardy, 1990).

During the Renaissance period, work came to be seen as a way to express one's freedom and creativity to help shape the world in which we live (Hardy,

1990). This shift in perspective moved work from necessity to a means of self-expression and personal fulfillment. This view was strengthened by the twentieth century emphasis on individual meaning and satisfaction in one's work (Rehm, 1990).

In summary, the Christian emphasis on calling has evolved from the highly communal focus of the Old Testament to a more individualized sense of calling as relationship with God during the Middle Ages. Since the Renaissance, calling has become increasingly personal, stressing the expression of particular gifts and talents in ways which are meaningful to the individual. There may be evidence that a more balanced understanding of vocation as both personal and communal is emerging (Bellah et al., 1985; Palmer, 2000). The question of where family intersects with calling has only recently been addressed in a specific way that explores work and family together. The focus of most of the literature on calling or vocation is related to work.

Calling and Work

Since the call to family was not addressed specifically in most studies on calling, this section will include highlights from several key writings that help define and describe calling. Four research articles summarize some of the current study on calling and vocation. Several other works describe calling from a conceptual or experiential framework.

Davidson and Caddell (1994) conducted an often-cited study that explored how people viewed their work based on Bellah et al.'s (1985) categories of job, career, or calling. They sampled 1869 church members in 31 Christian congregations to study what factors were correlated with subjects' views of their work as calling, career, or job. Their discriminant analysis showed significant correlations between the variables of religious salience and social justice with a view of one's work as a calling. Despite the limitations of the study, which included a sample made up only of Christians, the study suggested that religion and concern with social justice may lead some people to view their work as calling with sacred significance.

Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) conducted another study using Bellah et al.'s (1985) categories. These authors designed a questionnaire to determine whether respondents identified their work as calling, career, or job. The subjects in this study included employees of a state university health center and nonfaculty employees at a small liberal arts college. The respondents covered a range of occupations and income levels. The researchers found that respondents were clear about whether they viewed their work as calling, career, or job. They concluded that most people found it relatively easy to classify their work in one of these categories based on a descriptive paragraph. In addition, they found that the number of subjects who identified with each category were nearly equal. A factor analysis of the survey results and demographic data suggested that respondents

who viewed their work as calling tended to be better educated, earn higher incomes, perceive their occupations as of higher status, and hold occupations that have a greater objective prestige level than career or job respondents. However the authors noted that in a subsample of 24 administrative assistants, nine viewed their work as a job, seven as career, and eight as calling. They concluded that all three perceptions might be present in a variety of occupations. The study did not address the question of how people come to understand work as calling and suggested this as a topic for future research.

A qualitative study done by Banaga (2000) addressed the question of how people perceive and describe their experiences of work as calling. He conducted interviews with 18 people who described their work as calling. He noted that calling for these subjects often had a broader meaning than occupation. He identified several ways in which people reported discovering their callings. These included introspection, a sense of fulfillment that comes from expressing one's unique talents, and contributing in meaningful ways to society. The limitations of the study included the possibility of interviewer bias, limited generalizability, the use of only one method (interviews) to collect data, and the inability of the computer analysis to detect covert meanings, nuances, and tone.

Elliott (1992) conducted a preliminary study of people with life callings with the purpose of describing their experiences. Like Banaga (2000), she conducted in-depth interviews with adults who described themselves as having

life callings. Among the themes she noted in these descriptions were a sense of fulfillment, passionate interest, a willingness to do the work even if they were not paid, and wanting to make a positive difference in the world or help others in some way (Elliott, 1992).

Bogart's (1994) research question was how does one discover one's vocation or life opus? His experience and the historical sources he cited emphasized vocation or life calling as an integrative phenomenon that incorporated most aspects of one's life. He also identified a social dimension to most callings. His conclusions were limited by his focus on sudden mystical events. Others (Levoy, 1997; Leider, 1997) have observed that most people do not discover their callings in such dramatic ways.

Levoy's (1997) book, *Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life*, is one of the more extensive works on the topic of calling. The author's stated purpose was to help people view their lives as a process of calls and responses. He interviewed people who described themselves as called and who had responded by following their perceived callings. Like Banaga (2000), Levoy found that for many people calling was broader than work or public vocation. One might be called to do something, be something, move toward something, or move away from something. Levoy also noted that sometimes "circumstances rob us of our calls" (p. 208).

Other writings on calling include Parker Palmer's (2000) book *Let Your Life Speak*, Davis's (1997) essay, and Willimon's (2000) book on calling as a foundation for clergy ethics. Palmer summarized the theme of his book in the statement, "Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you" (p. 3). Like Palmer, Willimon wrote from a Christian faith perspective. Both identified a spiritual component as central to calling and noted that, for most people, following their callings is a process that involves hardships and questions as well as successes and clarity. Davis (1997) also emphasized the spiritual component in his description of calling as divine summons and "a compelling experience" (p. 131). Willimon (2000) further observed that since a person can be called to more than just occupation, one calling may conflict with another. For example, one's calling to some specific work or occupation may conflict with one's call to parenthood or marital relationship. He argued that the call may not be consistently clear and may change over time (Willimon, 2000).

In summary, the literature described calling as a spiritual phenomenon that implies guidance from beyond oneself (Banaga, 2000; Palmer, 2000; Willimon, 2000). Calling can be distinguished from a job, which is done primarily for money, and career, which may be described as important work that often contains an element of personal development and accomplishment (Bellah et al., 1985; Leider & Shapiro, 2000; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Calling was described as

compelling (Davis, 1997; Palmer, 2000) and meaningful work, which people typically reported they would do even if they did not get paid for it (Davidson & Caddell, 1994).

While all of these studies focused on calling as related to work, the definition of calling was broad enough to allow for people being called to other aspects of service. The writings of Bogart (1994) and Levoy (1997) emphasized the broad integrative nature of calling as a phenomenon that involves one's whole life and not just one's occupation. Several theories of counseling and career development also address multiple dimensions of human life, including both work and family. Several of these will be described below.

Calling, Counseling, and Career Development

Career Theory

One of the earlier writers to address career development from a holistic perspective was Richard Nelson Bolles, who challenged the idea of "the three boxes of life," namely education, work, and retirement (Bolles, 1978, p. 5). He proposed that too often the career life cycle involved early years of adulthood devoted almost exclusively to education, middle years to work, and later years to leisure or retirement. He devised a model that incorporated education, work, and leisure at all stages of life. While this work focused almost exclusively on the world of work, Bolles did acknowledge the work of individuals whose labor was not paid employment but care of home and family or volunteer community

service (Bolles, 1978). Bolles also addressed work from a spiritual perspective in which he focused on helping people identify their missions in life (Bolles, 1991). While Bolles (1978, 1991) clearly emphasized the world of work, his approach addressed spirituality and family issues in a limited way.

Donald Super's life stage model of career theory dealt with "the life span and the life space, with the course of life and with the major life roles" (Herr & Cramer, 1996, p. 235), an approach that incorporated many factors into the career development process. He suggested that occupation, family, community, and leisure interacted and thus influenced one another. As comprehensive as Super's model was, Cochran (1990) observed that the works of most traditional career theorists, including Holland and Super, are useful in helping people match skills and interests with jobs yet are "not likely to clarify a vocation" (p. 7).

Calling as the integrative phenomenon described by Bogart (1994) would seem to fit, at least to the extent that it is a holistic approach, with Miller-Tiedemann's (1989) Lifecareer concept. Her approach is a comprehensive, process model that views an individual's life, not just her work or occupation, as her career (Miller-Tiedemann, 1989). The emphasis on individual self-empowerment may not fully incorporate the importance of community and the common good that at least some authors identified as a key concept in understanding calling (Palmer, 2000; Willimon, 2000).

Practitioners such as Allegretti (2000) and Holderness (2001) have described approaches that combine the spiritual aspects of calling with established career theories. Allegretti's (2000) faith-based perspective incorporated both action steps consistent with traditional career theories and spiritual practice that enables people to "listen, watch, wait, and respond" to the Spirit (p. 181). In much the same way, Holderness (2001) advocated a combination of spiritual disciplines and career development activities in her curriculum for youth and young adults. Banaga (2000), in suggesting directions for future research, recommended "the integration of the concept of calling in career counseling so that the focus is not only on identification of talents but also service to the wider community and rooted in the spiritual self" (p. 216).

Counseling Theory

Though initially calling might seem most related to career theory, perhaps its true home in the counseling world lies in existentialism. While existentialism is arguably not a true counseling theory but a philosophy, many counseling theory textbooks include chapters on existential counseling (Corey, 1996; Hansen, Rossberg, & Cramer, 1994; Kottler & Brown, 1992). Cochran (1990) declared that questions addressed by vocation are questions of meaning. A primary goal of existential counseling is to help clients find meaning in life and their place in the world (Hansen et al., 1994; Ivey, 1987). Corey (1996) included finding or creating one's own identity, relationships with others, and the search for meaning

among the basic dimensions of human experience which are the focus of existential counselors. Themes of meaning, relationships, and belonging seem to overlap in the literature on calling as well as existential counseling theory.

Calling, Work, and Family

Career and counseling theories may encompass issues related to both family life and occupation or work. A growing body of literature specifically addresses the benefits and challenges faced by people who strive toward productive and satisfying lives that incorporate both family and work outside the home. There is far less literature that explores these issues in the context of spiritual calling.

Work and Family

Senecal, Vallerand, and Guay (2001) proposed a motivational model of work-family conflict. They developed a model based on self-determination theory and the hierarchical model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. They tested the model by distributing questionnaires to French Canadian psychologists and physical therapists. The participants included in the study were heterosexual, lived with their love partners, had at least one child, and worked either full-time or part-time. They were told that the purpose of the study was “to learn more about feelings and behaviors of people toward work and family” (p. 179). They received 786 completed surveys. The questions included in the survey addressed feeling valued by one’s partner, feeling autonomy-supported by one’s

employer, motivation toward family activities and toward work, family alienation, a work-family conflict scale, and an emotional exhaustion scale (Senecal et al., 2001).

One of the items on the questionnaire was “Why are you doing this kind of work?” (Senecal et al., 2001, p. 180). Participants were given a list of responses which they rated on a Likert-type scale, and the answers were then used to compute a self-determination index for work motivation. The researchers (Senecal et al.) used a structural equation modeling method to analyze the data and determine whether the model was supported. They did find support for the model, although they acknowledged several limitations. These included a sample that included only professional workers and the potential influence of variables such as economic status and personality which were not addressed by the study (Senecal et al.). While Senecal et al. focused on the role of interpersonal motivation in work-family balance, a related question is what role spiritual motivation, including a perceived sense of calling, might play in work-family issues.

Haddock, Zimmerman, Ziemba, and Current (2001) studied families who successfully balanced work and family. They interviewed 47 two-earner, middle class couples with children and used grounded theory to analyze the data gathered from qualitative interviews. Their goal was “to let the data speak for themselves” (p. 449). They noted that 42 couples identified their ability to find meaning from

their work as important to their success (Haddock et al., 2001). Forty-one couples stated that it was important to them to set limits or boundaries to their work.

Again, this study did not mention calling specifically. However, Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) described calling as “fulfilling, socially useful work” (p. 21), a description similar to meaningful work. Some of the anecdotal literature on calling included stories of relationships that suffered because those who felt called failed to set boundaries on their work (Adrienne, 1998; Bronson, 2002).

In a study of clergy husbands and their wives, Morris and Blanton (1994) found that work-related stressors, including the time demands of ministry and intrusion on family boundaries, were inversely related to marital, parental, and life satisfaction. This would seem to be consistent with Haddock et al.’s (2001) conclusion that maintaining work boundaries is important to successful work-family balance. The participants in Morris and Blanton’s (1994) study included 136 couples from six Christian denominations. The researchers used separate regression analyses to determine relationships between the work-related stressors and scores on the satisfaction instruments. The study was limited due to self-selection bias of participants, a lower-than-anticipated response rate, and a homogeneous sample (Morris & Blanton, 1994). Though it is generally assumed that clergy are by definition called to their ministries (Willimon, 2000), Morris and Blanton (1994) did not explicitly mention calling in their study.

The studies reviewed above are only a few of the many articles found in a literature search on “work and family.” Very few resources included discussions of calling as related to work and family. Most of those that did were written by clergywomen or other religious women (Miller-McLemore, 1994; Miles, 2001; Rubio, 2002; Wiborg & Colier, 1997).

Callings to both work and family

The initial inspiration for this paper came from the experience and reflections of a mother and seminary professor expressed in her essay, “An ambidextrous sense of call: Reframing the questions of work and family” (Miles, 2001). She observed that the church has contributed little to the dialogue on work and family. Miles (2001) proposed a theology of Christian vocation as a framework for navigating the dilemmas and choices of combining work in the public sphere and the more private commitment to family. She argued that God’s call is not a one-time event but something that must be discerned and revisited as we move through life. She advocated for a developmental understanding of calling.

Like Miles (2001), Miller-McLemore (1994) declared that neither scholars nor pastoral counselors “have paid sufficient attention” to problems in either practices or theology of family, work, and love (p. 25). Her book, *Also a Mother*, suggested a developmental approach that blends Protestant theological tradition with Erikson’s theory of developmental crises. She related Erikson’s

“generativity” stage, which encompasses both procreation and meaningful vocation, to theological doctrines of creation and procreation, vocation, and redemption. Key elements that shape a generative life include the beliefs that family and parenthood are valued vocations and that both family and work commitments are secondary to the reign of God (Miller-McLemore, 1994).

While Miller-McLemore (1994) presented a far more comprehensive discussion than Miles (2001), both raised questions and about work and family as related to calling and suggested a developmental understanding of spiritual calling. That is, one’s calling to specific vocations of work and family might evolve and change over time as one moves through the stages of both individual life and the family life cycle. Another similarity is that both Miles and Miller-McLemore are mainline Protestant theologians. It is unclear whether their questions and applications apply to a broader audience. Miller-McLemore acknowledged this limitation and stated quite vehemently that it is crucial to listen to women who are religiously, ethnically, culturally, and economically diverse as their experiences may be very different from one another (Miller-McLemore, 1994). Miles wrote from her own perspective as a scholar-mom. The purpose of her essay was less to provide a generalizable model or theory than to reveal a need that has been largely unaddressed (Miles).

Consistent with Miller-McLemore (1994) and Miles (2001) in seeking a Christian theology to address the tensions of work and family, Rubio (2002)

proposed a “dual-vocation” model (p. 6). In this conceptual article, Rubio argued that most theology on the family emphasizes only one part of a dual vocation to family. She defined this dual vocation as caring for one’s own and working or serving in a more public arena. She critiqued the work of Methodist theologian Stephen Post, who asserted the importance of parents claiming their vocation and call to parenting, as diminishing the importance of the call to care for those outside the family (Rubio). At the other end of the spectrum, she criticized the approach of Catholic ethicist Lisa Sowle Cahill as putting primary focus on social responsibilities and seeming to diminish the parental calling to nurture one’s own children (Rubio). Rubio identified a limitation of Miller-McLemore’s (1994) work as too focused on self and the needs of the mother for the fulfillment of working in the public realm. In summary, Rubio stated that few Christian theologians “make explicit the idea that Christian women and men are called (not just entitled) to serve both at home and the world” (Rubio, 2002, p. 6). The remainder of her article proposed a theology of call that incorporated both the call to family or the private arena of nurturing one’s own and the call to public service.

Rubio (2002) distinguished between a split vocation and a dual vocation. According to Rubio, in a split vocation the woman has primary responsibility for nurturing the children and the man has primary focus on public vocation or paid

work. At the same time, contributing in some way to the broader public good is also important for women and the secondary, albeit important, responsibility for men is nurturing children. She concluded with the suggestion that what parents want is a dual vocation (Rubio, 2002). She proposed that both men and women want to “serve and enjoy life both at home and in the world” (Rubio, 2002, p. 19) and that a theology of calling must include one’s private vocation at home as well as one’s public vocation in the world.

While Miles (2001), Miller-McLemore (1994), and Rubio (2002) focused their discussions of calling on work and parenthood, Willimon (2000) emphasized marriage as a calling. In writing on clergy ethics, Willimon noted that one’s pastoral vocation sometimes conflicts with other callings, most often the “marital vocation” (p. 27). He observed that the greatest sacrifices for many clergy are not the material luxuries they give up but the sacrifices they ask of their families so that the pastor might pursue the vocation of ministry. He proposed that the vocations of marriage and ministry might be complementary, each enhancing the other. Like Rubio and others (Miles, 2001; Miller-McLemore, 1994), Willimon declared both nurture of family and ministry in the world as ways of service. He further suggested that marriage might be a calling that is not intended to stand alone and that other responsibilities and interests are necessary to make the lifelong commitment of fidelity in marriage possible. More research and

reflection would be helpful in addressing specific ways in which callings to marriage, family, and work might be effectively combined.

One of the few research studies to incorporate the concepts of call, occupation, and family is the four-year United Methodist Clergywomen Retention Study (Wiborg & Collier, 1997). This study focused on problems faced by clergywomen in the United Methodist Church, among them conflicts between their professional ministry and family responsibilities. The purpose of the study was to explore why clergywomen were leaving parish ministry at a higher rate than male clergy. To accomplish this purpose, questionnaires were sent to 2796 current and former United Methodist clergywomen with 1388 questionnaires returned and included in the analysis. In addition, 123 interviews were conducted with selected clergywomen. While the specific percentages varied slightly depending on factors such as marital status, ethnic background, appointment status, and primary reason for seeking ordination, one of the major reasons women clergy gave for leaving parish ministry was conflict between family and pastoral responsibilities.

The Clergywomen Retention Study was limited by selection bias. The questionnaires were sent to 2945 clergywomen on record with the United Methodist Division of Ordained Ministry. Of these, 2796 were received, and 1388 were returned (Wiborg & Collier, 1997). Those clergywomen who returned

the survey may have been those who had particularly strong feelings about the topic.

Writing from a family-systems perspective, VanKatwyk (2001) observed that women have often been assigned the vocation of nurturing their families without the corresponding balance of public vocation in the world. This seems consistent with Rubio's (2001) concept of dual vocation.

Haddock et al. (2001), cited earlier in this paper for their exploration of work and family balance in healthy dual income families, found ten strategies that helped these families thrive. These included valuing family, striving for partnership, deriving meaning from work, keeping work boundaries, being productive at work, taking pride in dual earning, and making family fun a priority. Among the beneficial strategies they identified were focus on the private world of nurturing family and the public world of work (Haddock, et al.). Again, even though not addressing calling, these twin foci seem to reflect aspects of the dual vocation proposed by Rubio (2001).

Some of the anecdotal literature included stories in which family, work, and calling seem to be interrelated. Among these is Mark Albion's (2000) story of his own transformation, triggered largely by the impact of his mother's battle with cancer. Leider and Shapiro (2001) stressed the importance of one's parents' attitudes toward the nature and meaning of work. Po Bronson (2002) included a section on relationships and family in his bestseller, *What Should I Do With My*

Life, in which he reported interviews with people around the United States of America who have struggled to find their callings. A particularly interesting feature of Bronson's work is that he interviewed people in a wide variety of occupations about their callings, including an engineer, a trucker, and an attorney as well as artists, social service workers, and spiritual leaders.

Conclusion

The overwhelming conclusion from this review of the literature on calling, work, and family is that more research is needed. The research that exists tends to be very specialized, emphasizing religious vocations (Miles, 2001; Miller-McLemore, 1994; Wiborg & Collier, 1997). Other literature addressed issues of faith and work, even specifically calling and work (Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), but did not address the influences of calling on family life and vice versa.

Yet from the anecdotal stories of Bronson's (2002) bestseller to the writings of religious women who struggled to understand dual callings (Miles, 2001; Miller-McLemore, 1994; Rubio, 2002) to the reflections of theologians (Hunt, Matthaei, Kohler, & Garcia., 2000; Jones, 1999; Willimon, 2000), issues of family emerged in explorations of calling. It may be time to examine the interplay of calling, work and family more intentionally and systematically.

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