

Naming What We Do—Doing What We Name
Exploring Our Callings

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***What does God require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness, and
to walk humbly with God?***
(Micah 6:8)

What does God require of you? ✠ What does God require of you?

I. Naming and Exploring What We Do

Describe a recent moment or encounter that seems closest to expressing your call at this time. If not now, describe one from the past.

After reflecting on that, describe the prayer you might pray?
After reflecting on that, how would you “name” what happened?

II. Playing with the Names for What We Do

Names for What We Do

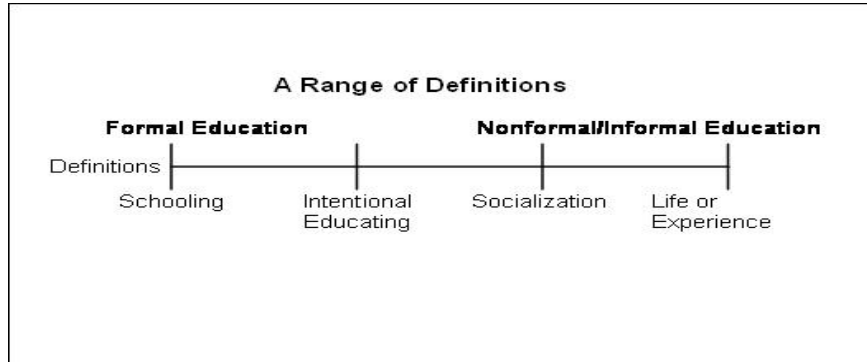
Indoctrination	Catechesis
Instruction	Direction/Guidance/Companionship
Schooling	Counseling/Care/Therapy
Education	Conscientization/Transformation
Enculturation/Socialization	Formation
Nurture	Others:
Development	

Modifiers/Aims of the Names for What We Do

Faith	Belief
Moral	Religious
Biblical	Congregational/Church/Parish
Liturgical	Christian
Pastoral	Others:
Spiritual	

What is delightful about this form of what we do? What is troubling?
Where is God in this? What is the hoped-for result?

IV. Exploring the Range of Meanings



From Robert Pazmiño's *Foundational Issues in Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988) 77.

Form or Name for What We Do	Distinct Gift/Emphases	Primary Voices	Seeks to Resist	Questions and Concerns	Context, Primary Audience	Role of Leader	Implications for You

Among these forms, which are more in favor, popular, and receive "backing?"
 Which forms are marginalized or held in suspect?
 What form does your congregation most want you to perform?
 Which seems to be the one hungered for?
 What form seems to draw closest to your own call at this time?

V. What Does God Call from You?

"God, to what are you calling me at this time? In your grace, name it."

Today's catechesis demands evidence, and evidence assumes a third role in addition to midwife and mourner. This is the role of witness that may even spill over into the role of martyr since that is one meaning of the word "witness." But certainly catechetics summons all Christian people to witness.

It summons them to go about the world planting the seeds and being the juices of justice that attest to resurrection as this people in this age go out to gospel Jesus.

It summons them to witness a risen world to all the laity – young and old, yes, but also straight and gay and Latino and Anglo and black and white and red and yellow and women and men.

It summons them to a relational, sacramental spirituality that includes not only other people and other religions, but the nonhuman animals too, as well as the air, the water, the mountains, and the trees.

It summons them to mourn the death of structures and privilege honestly, even as they witness to the Easter and Pentecost messages so clearly that those messages are impossible to deny.

And what *is* the message? What *is* the catechesis? It is the amazingly simple one with which teaching this way began and continues to this day:
The Christ has died. The Christ is risen.
The Christ, the universal and cosmic Christ, will come again.

Maria Harris in "Teaching the Way" in *Reshaping Religious Education: Conversations on Contemporary Practice* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox:1998) 54-55.

A Sampling: What We Do

1. Edward Farley: "to transmit by means of a sequential process of disciplined didactic activity both the insights and deposits of the past and the methods and modes of thought and work that enable new insights." In Peter C. Hodgson's *God's Wisdom: Toward a Theology of Education* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999) 58.
2. Werner C. Graendorf: "Christian education is a Bible-based, Holy Spirit-empowered teaching learning process. It seeks to guide individuals at all levels of growth through contemporary teaching means toward knowing and experiencing God's purpose and plan through Christ in every aspect of living. It also equips people for effective ministry, with the overall focus on Christ the Master Educator's example and his command to make mature disciples." In *Introduction to Biblical Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981) 16.
3. Sara P. Little: "[T]he pervasive, unifying theme of religious instruction is the affirmation of the process of understanding, deciding, and believing, as they impinge on the engagement with and response to the gospel. And there is a renewed call to make teaching ministry an integral part of the total life of the church. There is more to the teaching ministry than religious instruction, but religious instruction is at the heart of teaching." "Religious Instruction" in *Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982) 52.
4. Mary Boys: "Religious education is the making accessible of the traditions of the religious community and the making manifest of the intrinsic connection between traditions and transformation." In *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989) 193.
5. Craig Dykstra: "The fundamental aim of Christian education in all its forms, varieties, and settings should be that individuals—and indeed whole communities—learn [the practices of the Christian faith], be drawn into participation in the them, learn to do them with increasingly deepened understanding and skill, learn to extend them more broadly and fully in their own lives and into their world, and learn to correct them, strengthen them, and improve them." In *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices* (Louisville: Geneva Press, 1999) 70.
6. John Westerhoff: "Christian education is all the deliberate, systematic, and sustained efforts we make in any aspect of our parish life which enables us as persons and as a community of faith to be more Christian in our individual and corporate lives. . . .The church's educational ministry is to be judged by how well it (a) sustains and transmits the Christian faith tradition; (b) nurtures the expansion of faith and the spiritual lives of persons; and (c) equips and motivates the church and its members to fulfill their Christian vocation in the world." In *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (San Francisco: Harper & Rowe, 1976) 105.
7. Thomas Groome: "a political activity with pilgrims in time that deliberately and intentionally attends with them to the activity of God in our present, to the Story of the Christian faith community, and to the Vision of God's

- Kingdom, the seeds of which are already among us." In *Christian Religious Education* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980) 20.
8. Debra Dean Murphy: "Catechesis historically has been about the reshaping of identity and the transformation of the self into the likeness of Christ....catechesis was (and is) the process of making new converts available to the working of the Holy Spirit, which means habituating them over time in the practices of the Christian community, namely eucharistic worship." In *Teaching that Transforms: Worship as the Heart of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids, Brazos Press, 2004) 110.
 9. Mary Elizabeth Munro Moore: " We can affirm that faithful living is a response to God's sacramental presence in all times and places and God's calling for people to mediate divine grace through the ordinary stuff of creation for the sanctification of human life and the well-being of all creation. Such a perspective transforms spirituality into a life lived, in every detail, in response to the Holy; it transforms religious education into a teaching-learning process that is constantly formed and transformed in relationship to the Holy. Such ministry draws upon every available theological and educational resource to inform its purposes and practices, and seeks God to be the primary guide, luring people toward discernment, decision-making, and action." In *Teaching as Sacramental Act* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2004).
 10. Anne E. Streaty Wimberly and Evelyn L. Parker: "Christian wisdom formation refers to the ongoing journey of imagining, gaining insights, and deciding how to live as faithful and responsible Christians." In *Search of Wisdom: Faith Formation in the Black Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002) 12.
 11. Carol Lakey Hess: "It is the particular task of Christian education to create environments in which we are brought to the 'limen' [limits] of our personal world constructions in a context where security in God is both taught and embodied and where an understanding of the the cross invites both openness and vulnerability on the part of both learners and teachers." "Educating in the Spirit" in *Theological Perspectives on Christian Formation: A Reader on Theology and Christian Education* (Grand Rapids:Eerdmans, 1996) 128.
 12. Susanne Johnson: Christian education can be defined as the dynamic, intentional process of teaching and learning through which the faith community is initiated into ever more faithful and complex participation in God's creative and redemptive activity in the world." In *Christian Spiritual Formation in the Church and Classroom* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989) 143.
 13. Steve Kang: "True learning involves a holistic, formational process as an opportunity for the Holy Spirit's transformational work, which often takes place in and through the faith community. It consists of encouragement, empowerment, and guidance as people mature in the image of Christ and commune with the Triune God." In "The Formation Process in a Learning Community" in *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004) 152.
 14. Tilden Edwards: In spiritual direction the focus in on the divine force, on God, as the integral core of our being and purpose. We go to a spiritual director because we want to become more attuned to God's Spirit in our spirit and

- freely live out of divine love, with the background help of scriptural interpretation and experiential tradition such love looks like." In *Spiritual Director, Spiritual Companion: Guide to Tending the Soul* (Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2001) 24.
15. Maria Harris: "Education...is toward the fashioning and refashioning of the life forms of ministry, as this people we [embody] them in the world. Knowing the lore and obeying the law of God are at the heart of this work, but even they must be set in the larger context. For genuine education in the church is toward creating and living more and more adequately as religious beings in the world. Education is toward the continuing remaking, re-creating, reconstructing, and reorganizing of our human experience meaning and helping us decide where to go and what to do next." In *Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989) 50.
 16. Daniel Schipani: The church is the primary context for transformative learning and growth in faith as well as for communal and societal change in the direction of the ethics and politics of God. Congregational education calls for ministry to be perceived, oriented, and evaluated in light of the gospel of the reign of God. . . .Christian education for transformation consists of becoming skilled in recognizing the fashioning of justice, peace, love and hope in our midst. We must thus enter into solidarity with specific communities of suffering and resistance." "Educating for Social Transformation" in *Mapping Christian Education: Approaches to Congregational Learning* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997) 38, 39.
 17. William B. Kennedy: "Transformative education has a special interest in the process by which the new consciousness and those critical movements are generated and developed. . . .Education for transformation can thus be understood as a consciously counter-ideological effort toward options for the human situation than those embodied in the status quo." In *Pedagogies for the Non-Poor* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987) 238. Also: "Conscientization" names the process of emerging critical consciousness whereby people become aware of the historical forces that shape their lives as well as of their God-given potential for freedom and creativity; the term also connotes the actual movement towards liberation and human emergence in persons, communities and societies.
 18. Choan-Seng Song: "We must learn to listen to the stories of all people. This will inevitably force us to reconstruct our Christian education and theological education on a foundation laid by God the Creator, not by the Christian church as the sole possessor of God's truth. That foundation is built with the realization that God is disclosed not only in the history of Israel and Christianity, but also in the histories of other nations and peoples. That foundation is built by acknowledging that God's saving activity is to be encountered in the lives of people of other religions, as well as in the lives of Christians." In "Christian Education in a World of Religious Pluralism" in *Theological Approaches to Christian Education* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990) 177.

Image of Holy Moment, Holy Encounter

Journaling
“O God, where are you in all this?”