

Nov 11, 2008

Brothers and Sisters,

A representative sample of your responses to the question, “In this session, I really hope we get to talk about _____” is listed below. Duplicates have been eliminated. They’re grouped loosely by category; within the categories, they’re in no particular order.

Many, many thanks for sharing your thoughts. Please keep sharing—with me, with each other.

May the Lord Jesus richly bless you as you serve him in the midst of his people.

In Christ,

Prof. Cherney

Attitude and motivation

The blessing and privilege of the call
The joy of being a called minister of the Gospel
How to put joy back into your teaching
How we can show our students that we want to be here
The comfort and also the responsibility that comes from the call
The devil’s foothold and encouragement when you are feeling unable/unconfident
Motivation for ministry
What an honor/blessing it is to be chosen
Keeping the call fresh and in front of me
Keeping us energized to teach children about God’s love
Maintaining the zeal and passion that is needed to carry out the awesome task
 ahead
I hope we understand that it is a way of life—not just a job.
Serving willingly, not begrudgingly, with a positive attitude
The need for a servant’s heart
After all this time of service (25 years, two years ago—unnoted), have I made any
 positive impact? Call it the “It’s a Wonderful Life” Syndrome.
Trusting God when it doesn’t seem to be what you had planned for yourself.
The assurance this call gives in time of opposition or persecution
How it doesn’t matter if we “feel” like we were called to do this and are making a
 difference; God says his Word will not return empty

Called by God

The difference of being called and the perception of the congregation that we are
 hired [Many respondents!]
God’s purpose—why we are called to his church
The doctrine of the ministry, and how our synod views this doctrine differently
 from other synods

How/why the attitude toward the call has changed, even among our pastors and
Synod leaders
Esteem for called workers as called by God in our congregations
How God has chosen us me for this job, at this place, at this time. We all need s
strong reminders of this from time to time.
Respect for the divine call. Let's not manipulate it.
How divine is it really, sometimes? [Many respondents!]
How to justify that teachers are really called, in view of the claim by some that
teachers aren't called
"Niche" calls vs. "generalist" calls—God's plan for using our unique talents in
each
Teaching about it at MLC
If only pastors are called. Teachers are becoming paid staff in some areas of WELS
Are we losing the "divine" nature of the call in the WELS?

The calling process

Is change needed?
How divine the call really is when congregations know little about the people on the
call list and listen to one guy who stands up at the meeting and says I know
them and all vote for him/her.
Should we go back to casting lots?
How do you decide the info provided to the congregation by the CPS office?
All the behind-the-scenes discussion about who should be on call lists and plans
to try to get someone called
Names presented by members—a political process?
Both sides: receiving and extending a call
The human element of calls
Why/how it is that some people get calls to do things not in their repertoire or not
using gifts/abilities they do have
Interviewing for the call
Is the process still applicable given the wide range of schools in regards to rural to
urban continuum?
What should be done when congregations want to change people's (already
received and accepted) calls
How to change and get out of a bad situation
Calling individuals who are related to or have ties to others in the calling body
(congregation/school) [Many respondents!]
How to accept a call, how to deliberate a call, how/why to return a call
Politics + who knows who
How to assimilate those into the ministry who have not gone through our synodical
teachers' college
How did the WELS calling process get started?
How others view it
Why are we not all following the same process?
How schools can find the best teachers in a God-pleasing way
How to explain to people outside WELS what our divine call is {Many respondents!]

How to initiate change in your circumstances
The problem of people who never received calls. While this is in God's hands, is there also a glitch in our system?
Why teachers without synod certification are given divine calls
What information about the candidates is available? How can this information be improved?
How do you answer someone when people have been conveniently placed in a teaching position, that it is a divine call?
Discouraging "campaigning" for calls
The calling process and how it should look
How the call has changed
What is the "divine" part? The process? Then why not draw names out of a hat? Or the call itself?
How to keep the call process more spiritual and less just hiring someone
How to explain the process to children
How do names get put on a call list?
How are you informed if you are receiving a call? By phone, writing, other?
What makes it tampering with the call
Receiving/contemplating a call: do—don't do
What are the rules about when you can get a call (how many can you receive at a time, and when you get your first after you start and such)
Why is it looked down on to visit a location before accepting the call?
Did the right person get called?
How do you know when you are taking a call for the right reasons and not for superficial reasons?
How schools like WLS address the divine call—what is their process?
Why can't women have a voice in choosing the leaders of the church?
Lack of movement of called workers in call system
Keeping the order of the call seeking the man vs. the man seeking the call in proper perspective
The assignment committee and marriage
How to make the call public
Is it OK for the calling body to investigate potential candidates?
Personal responsibility and action toward receiving new calls versus "waiting on God"
Performance reviews

Expectations

Past and current expectations of a called position—are they changing?
Movement within my call (duties)
Dedication, and what is expected of a called worker
Limitations. What's included or expected in this call?
Attitudes toward the call and expectations—from both sides of the call. What is realistic?
Too many expectations
A divine call is not a license to pile more and more tasks of the cong. on a few workers

What's normal in the classroom? What can be expected from parents and students?

Money

How to deal with the stress of not getting paid on time from a spiritual perspective

Financial termination: is it right? why?

What do we do to "ease out of the job" and be able to finance our retirement?

Terminating senior (top of pay scale) teachers solely for budget reasons

Salary reductions of called workers during difficult financial times in the church

Free or reduced tuition for called workers' children

Mutual accountability between worker and calling body

Educating the calling body/congregation/school family on the nature of the public ministry and what they owe to public ministers

The role a congregation and a called worker has between each other

Correctly using Matthew 18 with called workers

The disappointment a congregation can cause a called worker.

The benefits of working with a congregation

Responsibility to the congregation in areas "outside" the limits of the call

What recourse do our schools & churches have to hold us accountable in loving, Christian, building-up kinds of ways?

How we deal with called workers who are destroying their schools or congregations

How is classroom accountability related to the divine call?

What if you're doing a poor job? Does the call protect you?

Evaluating *pastors* for growth/accountability

What if a called worker requests to move his membership to a congregation closer to his home (Male teacher vs. female teacher)?

My call and others

God and his plan for me and my fellow believers as we walk through our ministry together

The respect we need to give others

Called to assist, or take the place of parents?

How the laypeople and leaders of our churches view our call

Educating congregations about what a divine call is, and what that means for the congregation

Others' view of us and respect for us

Respect for the call and ministry by students, members, and parents

How to work with those who feel it is a job

Our relationship with fellow called workers

How faculties should treat the newbie

How we can refocus others on our staff to get involved more and become

members, not just “staff”
Why do pastors get preferential treatment in cases of the loss of Scriptural qualifications?
Why do some pastors seem to think their call is more divine, speaking generally, of course
How do all called workers have a different, but equally important call
Mistakes and how to handle them—loose tongue, family issues, how do kids’ mistakes affect your call
Counseling parents
Untraditional calls, their blessings, and how they affect everyone (i.e. calling a congregational member, a second career call, mission fields)
Recruitment. Why does the college think it is their job and do we really need them to spend \$\$ on that?
Helping parents understand our primary job is bringing the Gospel to their children
Changes in family makeup of students

Termination issues

Facing the possibility of relocation due to spouse’s job
One year calls: are they less divine? Are congregations viewing them as a trial period?
What does this [divine call] mean when it comes to aptitude to teach, and can it ever be recalled when ability to supervise or teach is not apparent or practiced?
The fact that a call is not permanent if you are not doing your job as a teacher/pastor/staff minister
What to do when your divine call is terminated due to down-sizing
When/why to stay or leave the teaching profession
The stigma of resignation
Retirement
Not job security?
The sanctity of the call in view of the “one year calls” and terminations of older teachers we see happening

Professionalism

How to be a better called worker!
How does the divine call change with the changing family circumstances of the called worker?
New ways to be effective in fulfilling our call and how to step outside of our comfort zone
The professionalism of the students entering the field today
Ministry is reaching souls with the Law and Gospel. Ministry is taking the initiative to get the job done well (professionally).
“Teacher” professionalism vs. “called worker” professionalism
How are we sure as a synod that we are sending out prepared teachers?
The continuing need to build called workers together as servant leaders

Spiritual growth—ours and others'

Grow in God's Word
Seriousness of sharing the Gospel
Personal Bible study
How to effectively share the Gospel with your class
How to get the kids to live for Jesus rather than themselves
The use of Law and Gospel in the classroom—particularly motivating children to live in the love of Christ
Instilling a firmer faith in those attending school that are not of a Christian faith—unchurched/nonChristian
The application of doctrine into classroom settings beyond just subjects
Trusting God for results
Outreach

Time management (A very large number of respondents)

Setting priorities
How to convince Congress to pass legislation creating 28 hour days
How to balance our many responsibilities
Balancing our divine call with being a member of our congregation
Handling the idea that the called worker is expected to be at everything: guilt complex
How to balance with your personal life [Many respondents!]
How to serve the Lord, church, husband and family, and still sleep [Many respondents!]
How overwhelming and hard on a family this “more than just a job” is and what to do about it.
Limitations. Can we just say “no”?
What is the proper balance between being with your family and your divine call?
When does/should one take a back seat?
Should be joy, and not “woe-is-me-I'm-so-overworked” attitude
Overcoming the temptation to be lazy
Talk about called women being like a “Lutheran nun”: 1) single female, 2) low pay, 3) total commitment to school, schoolwork
Balance between faithful service and stewardship of health and our temple of the Holy Spirit
Parental stress

Vocation, the Universal Priesthood, and the Divine Call

The perception that called workers are more important than “others.”
Every call in life is a divine call.
The Divine Call as it relates to vocation—God's calling
Every Christian having a divine call