

VOCATION AND WORK IN THE SPIRIT: UNDERSTANDING CHARISMS IN RELATION TO WORK AND VOCATION

Stephanie Ann Y. Puen

ABSTRACT

One of the unique aspects of Jesuit Ignatian education is the focus on vocation and discernment. Still, students' misconceptions about vocation are not sufficiently addressed, especially the relation between work and vocation. This paper proposes that Miraslov Volf's pneumatological understanding of work provides insights that can help dispel misconceptions. Understanding one's vocation as a charism can help students make more sense of work in today's context, as well help students understand that work is not simply finding "the right job" that fits their passion and aspiration but also cooperating with and responding to grace in doing the good.

KEYWORDS: vocation; theology of work; charisms; Miroslav Volf; Ignatian discernment

What should I do after I graduate is one question that many students grapple with, especially in their final years in college. While the college curriculum of the Ateneo de Manila introduces students to the concepts of vocation and work, students find it difficult to make choices regarding their

vocation in life and the work they should engage in. This paper presents Miroslav Volf's pneumatological understanding of work, in the hope that it might dispel students' misconceptions and thus help them make better decisions about their work and vocation.

VOCATION AT THE ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY

The Ateneo de Manila University, a Catholic, Jesuit, and Filipino university, tries to help its students decide on what work to pursue by guiding them to reflect on the idea of vocation, especially in theology and philosophy classes. The following ideas are pointed out in the courses Theology 151 (The Catholic Commitment of Today's Filipino: A Synthesis) and Theology 131 (Marriage, Family Life, and Human Sexuality in a Catholic Perspective): (1) from the standpoint of Christian faith, the human being's fundamental vocation is to love; (2) work is a necessary part of vocation; and (3) the Ignatian tradition has much to say to help people understand what vocation is and how they may commit to and fulfill it.¹

The Fundamental Vocation to Love

First, there is a popular misconception that vocation refers to the calling for the religious life, or that vocation is simply something that a person passively deals with and, therefore, is something from which one cannot escape. Theologians, however, have broadened the concept. As Laurence O'Connell puts it, through one's baptismal commitment, God calls all people to love. How one chooses to respond to this call is a free act, neither narrowly limited to religious life nor simply a matter of fate.² Vocation is God's invitation to love that can only be actualized in the context of our students' specific circumstances, communities, and culture.

The basis for this broader understanding of vocation can be found in several of the principal documents of the Second Vatican Council. *Lumen gentium* notes that "all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status

¹ "The New Theology Core Curriculum," Ateneo de Manila University, School of Humanities, Department of Theology, <http://www.admu.edu.ph/ls/soh/theology/new-theology-core-curriculum>.

² Laurence O'Connell, "God's Call to Humankind: Towards a Theology of Vocation," *Chicago Studies* 18 (1979): 147–59.

are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity” through a “universal call to holiness.”³ This is the foundational text for a renewed understanding of Christian vocation. *Sacrosanctum concilium* emphasizes the importance of the laity’s participation in liturgy as part of the expression of their baptized life and that the baptized laity have a common priesthood through assimilation with Christ.⁴ *Gaudium et spes* also highlights the importance of vocation, not just for the priesthood, but also for the laity. *Gaudium et spes* declares that

all Christians must be aware of their own specific vocation within the political community. It is for them to give an example by their sense of responsibility and their service of the common good. In this way they are to demonstrate concretely how authority can be compatible with freedom, personal initiative with the solidarity of the whole social organism, and the advantages of unity with fruitful diversity.⁵

That statement from *Gaudium et spes* shifts the understanding of vocation from a commitment to a life lived within a religious community to an active life lived with a greater social and political awareness. While expounding on the role of the laity in the activities of the Church, it also discusses the laity’s participation in social and secular affairs as part of their vocation. Thus, vocation is not simply a matter of being a priest or a nun, but of each Christian person’s participation in educating sceptics about the Kingdom of God.⁶

It follows from this, that vocation is directed not only at one’s immediate surroundings but also at the greater community and society at large: the “other.” This is a continuous choice that is personal but not private. The Ateneo de Manila University tries to make its students more aware that the “other” is more than their immediate family or friends, given that the prevalent culture seems to delimit the scope of a person’s accountability to just

³ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*), November 21, 1964, The Holy See, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

⁴ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum concilium*), December 4, 1963, The Holy See, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.

⁵ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*), December 7, 1965, The Holy See, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

⁶ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Apostolate of Laity (*Apostolicam actuositatem*), November 18, 1965, The Holy See, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html.

his or her friends and family. The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, in describing the sociocultural context of the Philippines, notes that

ours is a pluralistic society and a prime factor of our pluralism is the diversity of our cultural heritage. . . . The differences notwithstanding, we can speak of a generic Philippine culture. . . . Even as [the Council] note[s] the basic soundness of our values as a whole, however, we have to characterize them as rather too particularistic, too focused on the good of small social groups (the extended family, the clan, the little in-groups of all kinds). This narrow focusing easily lends itself to the factionalization that social scientists say is characteristic of much of Philippine society. Lacking is a more universalistic outlook that would put as much stress on the good of wider groupings, the community, the nation, humanity and the world at large.⁷

Work as Part of Vocation

The second point that is taught in the Ateneo de Manila University's theology courses is that the work that one pursues should be understood as part of one's vocation. While some may see work, especially corporate work, as simply a means to earn an income, Christian theology teaches that work is cooperation and participation in God's creative process and is a response to God's call to love. In *Laborem Exercens*, John Paul II wrote:

As a person, man is therefore the subject at work. As a person he works, he performs various actions belonging to the work process; independently of their objective content, these actions must all serve to realize his humanity, to fulfil the calling to be a person that is his by reason of his very humanity.⁸

Work, therefore, is seen as something essential to being human. John Paul II also remarks that "through work, man *not only transforms nature*, adapting it to his own needs, but he also *achieves fulfillment* as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes 'more a human being.'"⁹

⁷ Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines* (Manila, Philippines: Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1992), 18–22.

⁸ John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*. September 14, 1981, The Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html. All italics are in the original.

⁹ *Ibid.* All italics are in the original.

This self-actualization, however, is not only for personal gain, but also for the benefit of society at large. Underlying the social documents of the Church is the call for change and for the improvement of economic systems and the working conditions of the people. John Paul II positions the individual within the wider community of the nation. He writes that

this society—even when it has not yet taken on the mature form of a nation—is not only the great “educator” of every man, even though an indirect one . . . ; it is also a great historical and social incarnation of the work of all generations. All of this brings it about that man combines his deepest human identity with membership of a nation, and intends his work also to increase the common good developed together with his compatriots, thus realizing that in this way work serves to add to the heritage of the whole human family, of all the people living in the world.

A student’s choice of what work to engage in, or his or her vocation, is not an individual decision for his or her own benefit. Instead, it has implications that affect the nation. For this reason, the choice of work and living a working life, is a matter for sincere and lifelong discernment.

Ignatian Discernment and Vocation

The third point that students are taught is that Ignatian spirituality offers a grammar with which students can speak of their own vocation and work. The focus on Ignatian Spirituality is part and parcel of the Integrated Ateneo Formation (InAF) program. This is a program that seeks to form the students into “persons for and with others who will contribute meaningfully to the transformation of Philippine society as servant leaders engaged in various fields of endeavor” as well as “integrate the personal, academic, socio-cultural, and spiritual dimensions that comprise each student’s person.”¹⁰ The Ignatian way of discerning one’s vocation, embodied in the *Spiritual Exercises*, is taught to students as a way for them to regulate their desires.¹¹

¹⁰ “About the LS Integrated Ateneo Formation (InAF) Program,” Ateneo de Manila University, accessed April 1, 2015, <http://www.ateneo.edu/ls/about-ls-integrated-ateneo-formation-inaf-program>.

¹¹ The *Spiritual Exercises* emphasizes that one needs to do away with “inordinate attachments” to created goods, ambition, and wealth. All these are only to be used insofar as they help the person “praise, reverence, and serve God.” Thus, one needs to order one’s desires, as the desire for things are only a means to the end of being with God. See St. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, trans. Anthony Mottola (New York: Image, 1989).

According to Ignatius, students' desires, actions, and choices should be ordered toward that which impresses God.¹² Ignatian spirituality thus also understands that things ought to be used "to the extent that they will help [a person] attain his end . . . to praise, reverence, and serve God."¹³ In order to do this, Ignatian spirituality teaches that one is to reflect and understand what one desires, and that these desires are important indicators of what a person's vocation is meant to be. As Father James Martin explains it, "Ultimately our deepest desires are those that God has planted within us. So the notion of vocation . . . is less about finding one and more about having it revealed to us, as we continually pray to understand what Jesuits call our governing desires."¹⁴ These desires are personal, and finding one's desires requires one to be self-aware and to know oneself.

In order to understand what work they are being called to and what their desires are in the context of vocation, students are also taught the Ignatian framework for discernment, known as the Spiritual Exercises. This is a step-by-step method for making choices.¹⁵ By finding God, understanding one's desires, and aligning these desires with the needs of others, one is able to live out his or her vocation. William Spohn explains that the Spiritual Exercises are meant to help the person discerning recognize "God's unique invitation. It does not come like a bolt from the blue or as a direct command, but as an invitation addressed to our freedom."¹⁶

MISCONCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS ABOUT WORK AND VOCATION

Beginning with the understanding of the "universal call to holiness" of every baptized person, followed by a recognition that work is part of this vocation and that work is also of benefit to the nation, students then use

¹² St. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, 47–48.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁴ James Martin, SJ, "After Words: Be Who You Is," *Santa Clara Magazine*, Fall 2007, <http://www.scu.edu/scm/fall2007/afterwords.cfm>.

¹⁵ Jim Manney, "An Ignatian Framework for Making a Decision: 11 Steps for Making a Decision Following the Ignatian Method," Ignatian Spirituality, <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/making-good-decisions/an-approach-to-good-choices/an-ignatian-framework-for-making-a-decision/>.

¹⁶ William C. Spohn, "The Chosen Path," *America*, July 2003, <http://americamagazine.org/node/146566>.

Ignatian discernment to help them to reflect and try to identify, choose, and pursue their line of work.

However, while theology and philosophy classes discuss vocation, not much attention is given to work as a concrete response. There is still a misconception that there is only one “correct” response to God’s call in terms of what work to pursue, and that this response does not change in the course of one’s life. This is an untenable proposition given today’s rapidly changing environment. For example, this misconception is seen when students find themselves torn between becoming a corporate employee, supporting themselves or their families, or working for nonprofit organizations. Students often seem to think that to heed God’s call they should choose a lesser paying, alternative line of work, as if being a corporate employee could not possibly be a person’s vocation. How the university teaches students about vocation, work, and Ignatian discernment needs to be reevaluated given that many students seem to believe that vocation is one unique calling or passion that does not change over time.

A second concern is the students’ awareness that work can be dehumanizing and alienating. Philosophy and theology classes in the university have emphasized that there are work conditions, structures, and systems that have led to people being objectified and reduced to a means towards profit, especially in corporate work.¹⁷ Students thus have a difficult time reconciling that such work can be part of one’s vocation. Similarly, they are at a loss to envision or initiate any creative response to the presence of such dehumanizing conditions in the workplace once they start working themselves.

Work Environment Today

These concerns and misconceptions have arisen, partly, owing to a change in work patterns and the work environment. Whereas before the 1970s, work

¹⁷ Discussed in Ph102 (Philosophy of the Human Person II) are “the social dimension of human existence” and also “various forms of sociality, and the meaning of work.” The lessons are in line with InAF’s Junior Engagement Program, which forces students to work as street sweepers, jeepney barkers, grocery baggers, and movie ushers. This activity gives students a glimpse of the work conditions of the ordinary Filipino. Th141 (Theology of the Catholic Social Vision) also touches on the subject of work, as related to the immersion activity of the students in fisherfolk, farming, or urban poor communities. See “Philosophy Subjects in the Undergraduate Core Curriculum,” Ateneo de Manila University Department of Philosophy, November 13, 2012, <http://www.admu.edu.ph/lisoh/philosophy/core-curriculum>, and “The New Theology Core Curriculum.”

meant a job often at a desk and on from nine to five, today work is driven by other factors. Aside from globalization and technology, expectations about work are also changing, given the amount of flexibility, competition, and opportunities people have today.¹⁸ One of the defining characteristics of work today is that every two years or so, people get promoted, change jobs, move to other industries, or switch career paths altogether. Data from the Ateneo Placement Office indicate that faced with a variety of choices, Ateneo graduates already find a two-year stint in a certain position quite long. The idea of "portfolio careers" (having a desk job during the day and engaging in a side job, freelancing, or venturing into entrepreneurship during the weekends or at night) is now emerging as a trend among Ateneo graduates.¹⁹

Portfolio careers are also a trend worldwide. The work environment today is more flexible and allows for more career mobility. A study commissioned in Canada also points to an increased career mobility in the west as well. This is true not just for millennials but also for baby boomers and for Generation X.²⁰ A recent news article analyzed the reason for this trend, citing that one was likely to get a higher pay raise compared to inflation if one transferred jobs every two years, as compared to staying in one's original job.²¹ There is also the perception that work, especially in the corporate environment, simply treats people as a cog in the corporate machine and as a means to an end: profit for the company. Given these changes in work habits and perceptions, it is not surprising that Ateneo students, among others, believe that such work is dehumanizing and at odds with one's vocation.

The following questions are typical of those asked by students: How can one sustain one's work as part of one's lifelong vocation in the continuously changing society people live in today? What if changes in one's career happen or one realizes that perhaps the track that he or she is on is not meant for him or her at all? Are all these changes and events also part of vocation? Many students today opt to have a corporate job and at the same time become

¹⁸ Audra Lee, "Workplace Transformation and the Changing Nature of Work," Organisation Solutions Website, 2012, <http://www.organisationsolutions.com/Resources/Strategy-Execution/Workplace-Transformation-and-the-Changing-Nature-of-Work>.

¹⁹ Florence T. Ladion, Ateneo Placement Office, e-mail to the author, February 5, 2016.

²⁰ Sean Lyons, Linda Schweitzer, and Eddy S. W. Ng, "How Have Careers Changed? An Investigation of Changing Career Patterns across Four Generations.," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 30, no. 1 (2015): 8–21.

²¹ Cameron Keng, "Employees Who Stay In Companies Longer Than Two Years Get Paid 50% Less," *Forbes*, June 22, 2014, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/cameronkeng/2014/06/22/employees-that-stay-in-companies-longer-than-2-years-get-paid-50-less/>.

entrepreneurs, designers, writers, or artists; should one's work be privileged over the other as the person's vocation, or are they both part of one's vocation?

VOCATION AS WORK IN THE SPIRIT

Miroslav Volf has written a pneumatological understanding of work that may provide a broader theological understanding of work and help students find their vocation. Volf is a Croatian Protestant theologian with a focus on practical theology. He situates his theology of work and vocation in today's context of work's tendency to dehumanize people. He acknowledges the negative image of work as drudgery, as well as the different avenues of work that are now available to people owing to the rise of technology and globalization. The use of methods of practical theology in his writings helps the reader understand the context and theology of work more readily. At the same time, the reader can also see for themselves whether the theology of work Volf is proposing is evident in the real world. He provides practical suggestions on how people, theologians in particular, can respond to the current understanding of work in today's world. Practical theology is particularly needed for Filipino students who have difficulties in reconciling what is preached and believed by Christians with what is done by these same Christians. The disparity between the theology of vocation and work they receive in school and their actual experience of work after they graduate is itself an instance of the disparities they encounter.²²

Work in the Spirit and Vocation

In his book *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work*, Volf outlines an understanding of work and vocation in keeping with the documents from Vatican II. The engagement of humans in work is part of the "new creation" and is thus eschatological in nature. Man works as cocreator and works to fulfil God's purpose for the world, for as Volf writes, the "new creation is the end of all God's purposes with the universe, and as such, either explicitly or implicitly is the necessary criterion of all human action that can be considered

²² Jaime Bulatao, "Split Level Christianity," in *Brown Heritage*, ed. Antonio G. Manuud (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1967), 16–33; Dean Tony La Viña, "Philippines: Land of Split-Level Christianity," *Rappler*, January 15, 2015, <http://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/80855-philippines-split-level-christianity>.

good."²³ He uses Martin Luther's two-fold definition of vocation: a person has a spiritual vocation or calling to be part of the Kingdom of God based on the gospels, and an external vocation or calling to serve others and God through his or her profession in life. In this way, Volf usefully counters the misconception that vocation is simply a religious call.²⁴

Volf argues, however, that the traditional understanding of work as part of vocation and in the context of creation is not comprehensive enough, especially in the face of concerns regarding work today raised earlier. Rather than understanding work based on vocation and creation alone, Volf proposes understanding work as cooperation with God through the living of one's charisms. This living of charism now explicitly connects one's "spiritual calling through the gospel and external calling through one's station [in life]" with today's context of industrialization and career mobility.²⁵ Most importantly, Volf defines charisms as "not just a call by which God bids us to perform a particular task, but is also an inspiration and gifting to accomplish such a task."²⁶ This distinction will help students find an answer to how one can perform work. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, Paul acknowledges that "to each is given a manifestation of the Spirit"; different gifts and talents or charisms, yet "all these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses" (1 Cor 12:7-11).²⁷ Through the Spirit, one is enabled to act, and so "when people work exhibiting values of the new creation (as expressed in what Paul calls the 'fruit of the Spirit') then the Spirit works in them and through them."²⁸ For Volf, what is called for in the midst of the crisis of work today is participation in and cooperation with God in transforming work, and consequently the world, through the Spirit by understanding and reflecting upon one's charisms. One is certainly called to do the good amid distressing work conditions that may be either unjust or dehumanizing, and it is through identifying and understanding one's charisms that one will be able to understand more fully what he or she is called to do in such work situations. Understanding one's charisms and engaging in transformative work cannot be done without the Holy Spirit.

Volf argues that the pneumatological understanding of work is easily applicable to the context students find themselves in today: having to choose

²³ Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 81.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁷ All Scripture passages are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

²⁸ Volf, 114.

among many different jobs and perhaps shifting careers or jobs every so often. Volf also assists in helping to dispel the misconception that there is only one “correct” response to God’s call. Volf explains that

in the pneumatological understanding of work, one need not insist that the occupational choice be a single event and that there be a single right job for everyone (either because God has called a person to one job or because every person possesses a relatively stable pattern of occupational traits). People are freed for several consecutive careers in rapidly changing work environments; their occupational decisions need not be irrevocable commitments but can be repeatedly made in a continuous dialogue between their preferences and talents on the one hand, and the existing job opportunities on the other.²⁹

Volf’s pneumatological understanding is also “easy to apply . . . to the synchronic plurality of jobs or employments.”³⁰ Similarly, a Pauline understanding of charisms shows that people can have many charisms, and as such are asked to “strive to excel in them” (1 Cor 14:12). Volf takes up this idea, writing that in the midst of a plurality of charisms, where people have many different gifts from the Holy Spirit, there can be multiple work opportunities, without any one of them necessarily being less than the other. Hence, corporate employment, for example, is neither greater than nor less than the work one does in a foundation; nor is an assembly line worker any better than an analyst.

Work in the Spirit in Response to Alienating Labor

Volf also proposes that a pneumatological understanding of work in the context of vocation is a working towards a “new creation”—the *transformatio mundi*. Work in the spirit, aside from facilitating engagement with one’s charisms, is also work toward an eschatological end: one’s work elevates and builds upon the material found in the world and leaves a “permanent imprint” on this world. It adds to the whole human project that generations of people have been working on, what Christians call the Kingdom of God.³¹ Volf claims that the eschatological end is not an annihilation of the world but a transformation. Volf quotes F. F. Bruce, who writes that Paul’s apocalyptic language in Romans 8:21 signifies “the transformation of the present universe

²⁹ Volf, 116.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

so that it will fulfill the purpose for which God created it."³² This *transformatio mundi* is not possible without the Spirit: "For the Spirit, as Paul says, is the 'firstfruits' [*sic*] or the 'down payment' of the future salvation (see Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 1:22) and the present power of eschatological transformation in them. In the Gospels, too, Spirit is the agent through which the future new creation is anticipated in the present (see Matt. 12:28). . . . A theology of work that seeks to understand work as active anticipation of the *transformatio mundi* must, therefore, be a *pneumatological* theology of work."³³

Volf thus concludes that one's work is aimed toward this transformation of creation in response to God's call to love. In this way, whatever profession it may be, one's work must be seen as engaging in humanizing rather than alienating labor. Work can be seen as dynamic rather than static.

Volf ends by discussing the transformation of alienating work, another frequent concern of students, into humanizing work. He discusses the different ways work becomes alienating and its causes, such as a lack of self-direction and autonomy, lack of opportunities for development in work or participation in decision-making in an organization, the tendency of the management sciences to refer to people as simply "resources" of the company, and the effects of technological development on the work that people do.³⁴ He then responds to each of these issues, urging the development of different charisms and the freedom of the people engaging in work. He describes how the different charisms of people complement each other in the communal aspect of work to help society progress.³⁵ However, while Volf does address how people can respond to alienating work, the book does not acknowledge in detail the concern that there are those who are in dehumanizing work because they do not have a choice.

APPLICATION: WORK IN THE SPIRIT AND DISCERNMENT

Addressing Students' Concerns

Confronted by the reality that keeping one job is less common today with the growing trend of portfolio careers, students often ask about the validity of

³² Bruce, quoted in Volf, 95.

³³ Volf, 102.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 168–80.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 181–90.

their discernment if a few years later they should have other desires or needs that would incline them to another line of work. Work understood as charisms reminds the students that God's call is for them to love and cooperate with the Spirit in transforming the world in whatever work condition they happen to be in. Ultimately, their call is to become mature Christians and the most developed person they could be. Thus, a pneumatological understanding of work helps them understand in reality that work and vocation are dynamic and not static. How one chooses to respond to this call can evolve based on the changing circumstances and context of the person making the choice, and the people involved, over the course of one's life. One's traits, talents, and desires do change over time, and it is important to take note of such developments in relation to one's vocation. Discernment is seen as an ongoing dialogue with God's invitation. It is possible, then, to think of career shifts or portfolio careers as part of one's life journey of work in response to God's call.

Volf expands the notion of vocation from consisting of only one career to the possibility of many different jobs over a lifetime and also the possibility of diverse side jobs in addition to a main career. This broadening of the notion of vocation is especially important in today's society where people are opting to take on two or more jobs, as work expectations have become flexible. If one accepts the proposition that one can have multiple work, yet still be responding to the call to do the good, one is also encouraged to reflect and integrate all the work that he or she is doing. A Christian vocation of work applies to all of the different work the person is doing. Thus, there is no disjointed character to her vocation. The individual will be able to make connections among the different desires, passions, and works that he or she is doing in order to see a cohesive whole: all this work that he or she is doing contributes to building the Kingdom of God.

Work in the Spirit, Vocation, and Discernment

Lest it be thought that Volf replaces the current teaching about vocation, one must state that work as charism enhances the Ignatian writings of O'Connell, and complements the understanding of discernment in Ignatian spirituality. It also helps students further discern what his or her vocation is in today's constantly changing world, even after he or she has made that first decision to participate in a certain work. Vocation as a response to God's call changes depending on the context and situation, and thus is a lifetime commitment that can take many different forms. As Volf writes, "the pneumatological understanding of work is thus also open to redefinition

of work, which today's industrial and information societies need," especially when society today is characterized more often by change rather than constancy.³⁶ Ignatian spirituality teaches the alignment of oneself with God. A manifestation of this ideal is aligning oneself with what society most needs. Ignatius's belief that it is possible to find God in all things complements Volf's idea of vocation as well. It is possible to find God in many different areas of work as long as the work is good and can lead one to a deeper union with God. Ordering one's desires will include aligning one's work with these desires, and Ignatian spirituality understands that one is to use all things, including one's talents, skills, and knowledge, in so far as they help bring the person to union with God. O'Connell's understanding of vocation is based on God's general call to love, but at the same time, on one's personal and unique response. This general call is seen in, and suited to, the charisms that people have, and the personal response entails one's using these charisms in the choices and commitments one makes in life. While the Genesis story highlights the transformative aspect of work, as well as our being cocreators with God for the good of the other, and Ignatian discernment gives a method in discerning choices, Volf takes a step further by expounding on charisms as the way for one to engage in transformative work in order to actualize what the Genesis story imparts. Volf's work also gives additional matter for one to reflect on during Ignatian discernment. Aside from discerning one's feelings of consolation and desolation while looking at the advantages and disadvantages of each choice, Volf's use of charisms emphasizes another question for the person discerning to ponder on: what are my charisms and how can I engage in transformative work and my vocation through them?

Vocation, then, is constantly renewed, evaluated, and reflected upon. This act requires self-awareness. One must understand the self, one's own skills, talents, and characteristics, and how one interacts with others. This self-awareness and understanding of work as charisms also involves integrating the different kinds of work one engages in with one's vocation: what kind of work is in line with one's vocation, as well as with one's own capabilities, personality, and resources? Volf's understanding of work as charisms encourages discernment, and Ignatian discernment helps students reflect upon and dialogue with their own desires, thoughts, and prayer with God in order to understand what is being asked of them in terms of work during different stages in their life. No matter how mundane the work is, one is called to be engaged in working toward the "new creation" and toward humanizing work.

³⁶ Ibid., 117.

While one may not automatically see the effects or results of one's work, one is asked to take a step back and remember this bigger picture. The *transformatio mundi* that Volf writes about requires cooperation with God and can happen only through being a person aware of his or her charisms and cultivating them. Only by doing so can one become a person in the Spirit.

CONCLUSION

This paper presented how Volf's pneumatological understanding of work could possibly supplement the current teachings of the university regarding vocation and work. It proposed some areas where Volf could respond to some student concerns regarding how they understand vocation and work. There are still other areas for further research that can be done: the actual method, or lesson plan, to incorporate Volf in the teaching of vocation alongside O'Connell and Ignatian Spirituality; and specific suggestions as to how the university can further support the discernment process of students in their varying contexts and challenges, especially in the face of structures and systems that can make work dehumanizing and alienating. As the students reflect on what they will do once they graduate from college, the university faces the challenge of reflecting how it can help students discern their work and vocation, both for themselves and for the good of others.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “About the LS Integrated Ateneo Formation (InAF) Program.” Ateneo de Manila University. <http://www.ateneo.edu/ls/about-ls-integrated-ateneo-formation-inaf-program>.
- Bulatao, Jaime. “Split Level Christianity.” In *Brown Heritage*, edited by Antonio G. Manuud, 16–33. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1967.
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines*. Manila, Philippines: Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1992.
- Ignatius of Loyola. *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*. Translated by Anthony Mottola. New York: Image, 1989.

- John Paul II. On Human Work (*Laborem exercens*). September 14, 1981. The Holy See. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html.
- Keng, Cameron. "Employees Who Stay In Companies Longer Than Two Years Get Paid 50% Less." *Forbes*, June 22, 2014. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/cameronkeng/2014/06/22/employees-that-stay-in-companies-longer-than-2-years-get-paid-50-less/>.
- La Viña, Tony. "Philippines: Land of Split-Level Christianity." *Rappler*, January 15, 2015. <http://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/80855-philippines-split-level-christianity>.
- Lee, Audra. "Workplace Transformation and the Changing Nature of Work." Organisation Solutions, 2012. <http://www.organisationsolutions.com/Resources/Strategy-Execution/Workplace-Transformation-and-the-Changing-Nature-of-Work>.
- Lyons, Sean, Linda Schweitzer, and Eddy S. W. Ng. "How Have Careers Changed? An Investigation of Changing Career Patterns across Four Generations." *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 30, no. 1 (2015): 8–21.
- Manney, Jim. "An Ignatian Framework for Making A Decision: 11 Steps for Making a Decision Following the Ignatian Method." Ignatian Spirituality. <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/making-good-decisions/an-approach-to-good-choices/an-ignatian-framework-for-making-a-decision/>.
- Martin, James, SJ. "After Words: Be Who You Is." *Santa Clara Magazine*, Fall 2007. <http://www.scu.edu/scm/fall2007/afterwords.cfm>.
- O'Connell, Laurence. "God's Call to Humankind: Towards A Theology of Vocation." *Chicago Studies* 18 (1979): 147–59.
- Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum concilium*), December 4, 1963." The Holy See. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.
- . Decree on the Apostolate of Laity (*Apostolicam actuositatem*), November 18, 1965. The Holy See. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html.
- . Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*), November 21, 1964." The Holy See. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

- . Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*), December 7, 1965.” The Holy See. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.
- Spohn, William C. “The Chosen Path.” *America*, July 2003. <http://americamagazine.org/node/146566>.
- “The New Theology Core Curriculum.” Ateneo de Manila University School of Humanities Department of Theology. Accessed July 8, 2014. <http://www.admu.edu.ph/lisoh/theology/new-theology-core-curriculum>.
- Volf, Miroslav. *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2001.

Stephanie Ann Y. Puen is a faculty member of the Department of Theology at the Ateneo de Manila University. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Management Engineering, minor in Finance, and a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from the same university. Her research interests include moral theology and business ethics. She may be contacted at spuen@ateneo.edu.