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M.L.S. or ABC? : A Christian Critique of Professionalism

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A Christian Critique of Professionalism

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ABSTRACT
A dichotomy has developed between professionals and non-professionals. Either you are or you are not. This article argues that this dichotomy is not biblical and offers an alternative that rests on firm theological soil: vocationalism. When librarianship can be viewed as a vocation, its impact shifts form the individual here and now to the kingdom of God, which impacts both the individual and the community; both the here and the there; and both the already and the not yet.

I. Introduction
Several questions arise when an effort is made to look at librarianship from a biblical perspective. Nancy Pearcey, in her book, Total Truth, argues that modern culture has instructed us to look at the world as two stories: sacred and secular. According to this two-story theory, there is not a valid connecting point between them. Christ demands authority over every facet of a Christian’s life, not just the sacred components.

Pearcey argues that in order for this divide to disappear, one must attempt to look at issues from a biblical and theological perspective. This includes one’s view of professionalism and its impact on librarianship.

What makes an occupation professional versus non-professional is a critical component for any job in the twenty-first century (Goode, 1966; Pavalko, 1988; Crowley and Ginsberg, 2005), particularly librarians. In the past, the professional realm saw the job of librarian as menial, repetitive, and thus non-professional work (Albaric, 1989; White, 1991). However, others disagree. For example, Greer, Grover, and Fowler argue in their recent book, Introduction to the Library and Information Professions, that librarianship has earned the merit of a profession.

There are many ways to look at professionalism. However, many of these views either do not take into consideration a biblical and theological understanding of vocation and its role in professionalism, or they do not account for the changes that the 21st century has brought upon life, family, and jobs. However, Miroslav Volf offers a theological concept of vocation. This article will take Volf’s concepts and weave them into a Christian understanding of librarianship.

II. Views on Profession
A. Abraham Flexner
Abraham Flexner joined the research staff at the Carnegie Foundation in 1908. In 1910 his report to the foundation on medical education set into motion comprehensive reforms which led American medical education to its current position as a world leader. From this point, Flexner played a critical role in the development of what is now called “professional education.”

In 1915, Flexner presented a speech to the National Conference on Charities and Correction, entitled, “Is Social Work a Profession?” In this speech, he laid out six characteristics that make an occupation professional. In spite of its date, Flexner’s definition is the standard means by which a job is measured to be professional (Greer, Grover, and Fowler, 2007; Dejnozka, 1978; DiPiro, 2008). Flexner argued that six elements are necessary to make a job professional.

1) A profession must have a body of knowledge. “… a free, resourceful, and unhampered intelligence applied to problems and seeking to understand and master them – that is in the first instance characteristic of a profession” (Flexner, 1915, p. 154).

2) A profession must have a common set of literature which are considered classics. For example, the medical profession uses works like Henry Gray’s Anatomy of the Human Body, which is commonly considered a classic work on human anatomy. This development is essential for an occupation to develop into a profession (Flexner, 1915).

3) A profession must have a venue through which professional development can take place. Thus, in order for an occupation to be a profession the appropriate professional associations must be in place (Flexner, 1915).
4) A profession must have a system of education (Flexner, 1915).
5) A profession must have an accreditation system; a means by which those entering the profession can be measured to see if they are capable of meeting the standards expected (Flexner, 1915).
6) A profession must have a set of professional ethics that are taught and enforced (Flexner, 1915).

Flexner’s ideas fall short in three areas when measured against a biblical perspective: his definition of knowledge, his demand for social envelopment in a profession, and his reliance on positivism.

1) Flexner’s definition of knowledge

Flexner’s concept of a profession having a body of knowledge sounds like a great prerequisite. However, Flexner specifies the kind of knowledge of which he makes reference. He describes this body of knowledge as the working up of ideas into practice, the derivation of raw material from one realm or another of the learned world, and resorting to the laboratory or seminar for a constantly fresh supply of facts (Flexner, 1915). He argues that professions fall short of attaining intellectuality if they employed mainly or even largely knowledge and experience that is generally accessible – if they drew, that is, only on the usually available sources of information (Flexner, 1915).

Flexner argues that the laboratory provides a constantly fresh supply of facts and knowledge. If a profession attempts to survive without consistent access to this laboratory, Flexner suggests that the profession will lose its intellectual character (Flexner, 1915). Flexner alludes that the creation and discovery of knowledge occurs only at the laboratory. One might even suggest that the laboratory is the beginning of knowledge.

However, Scripture states the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7). All individuals inherit the sin nature (Romans 3:23). Because of this an individual does not by nature fear God (Romans 3:9-18). Flexner’s argument is inattentive of this. “The starting point for unraveling the mysteries of the universe must be the shattering revelation of one’s total inadequacy and recognition of God’s love in Jesus Christ” (Marsden, 2003, p. 81). Without Flexner’s acknowledgment of this, his argument theologically capitulates.

2) Social Envelopment

Flexner’s insistence that one should join the associations that align with one’s profession beckons criticism. Upfront, this sounds legitimate. Much professional development comes from associations. However, Flexner goes further. He argues that the associations should be a means by which a profession develops a brotherhood. “Professional activities are so definite, so absorbing in interest, so rich in duties and responsibilities, that they completely engage their votaries. The social and personal lives of professional men and their families thus tend to organize around a professional nucleus” (Flexner, 1915, p.156).

Flexner’s concept lies on a weak foundation when applied to the 21st century work world. Perhaps in the early 1900’s, when Flexner gave this presentation, Christianity had a stronger component in social venues and thus, true fellowship was a byproduct of social envelopment in a profession. However, that is no longer the case. Fellowship is not a natural byproduct of a profession for many individuals. Therefore asking a professional to engage their social and personal life in a profession leaves little room for interaction outside of that circle. In some cases, this leaves little to no time for fellowship in the body of Christ, which is a critical element for any believer (Erickson, 1998).

3) Positivism

Differing systems of thought abound in the twenty-first century. One active system of thought during the time of Flexner’s presentation was positivism. Positivism
argues that authentic knowledge is based on sense experience (Budd, 2001). This idea beckons alarm for a Christian. While one cannot deny that the human senses provide a means by which knowledge can be attained, several ideas that Christians embrace are not grounded solely on sense experience, and at times even contradict sense experience.

Positivism is interwoven throughout Flexner’s ideology. For example, the idea that the professional needs to resort to the laboratory, where an individual sees, hears, and at times smells the interactions that happen; in order to discover fresh facts suggests that positivism is present in Flexner’s thought. The importance of the laboratory and seminars is critical for the development of many professions, however these are not the sole source of knowledge, as positivism argues, and Flexner alludes.

Epistemologically, positivism leaves no room for God. Thus, Flexner’s concept of a profession, using positivism as a foundation, should be rejected.

B. Profession or Vocation?

Many disciplines accept Flexner’s definition of a profession. However, Scripture demands that Christians look at things differently.

Historically, profession has been a type of vocation; a vocation that requires knowledge of some department of learning and application of that knowledge (Oxford English Dictionary, 1961). Unfortunately, in many circles, vocation and profession are antithetical (Kammer, 1981). A vocation typically refers to one’s life work. However, in many groups the term signifies a program of training or a cluster of occupations reserved for those who are unwilling or unable to enter a profession (Kammer, 1981).

As argued above, the principles that define a profession are clearly unbiblical. Thus, a Christian should perceive their work differently. A proper understanding of work returns to the concept of vocation. A vocation is the action on the part of God of calling a person to exercise some special function, especially of a spiritual nature; or to fill a certain position (Oxford English Dictionary, 1961). This idea of vocation fits many modern job scenarios.

It is ideal if one merges their calling (or vocation) into a career path. However, a calling from God may not always fit into a single job, career, or profession. For example, if one has a calling to pastor a small church, the church is unable to adequately pay the individual, that individual may need to seek other career paths or professions to be financially sustainable while pastoring a small church.

C. Martin Luther

Martin Luther, in his attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church, left some remarkable footprints in many areas of doctrine and church polity. One area that he touched upon was the concept of vocation (cf. Wingren, 1957). Luther developed his understanding of vocation in opposition to the position held by the medieval Roman Catholic Church. They understood the concept of vocation relating explicitly to the priesthood (Kolden, 1983).

Luther stated that vocation should be seen as an individual’s calling to a situation in life, through which they serve God’s through civil and social relationships (Luther, 1955; Wingren, 1957). Luther argues that an individual becomes a co-worker with God when they fill the needs of a neighbor through their vocation (Luther, 1903; Wingren, 1957; Kolden, 1983).

Luther saw three purposes behind an individual’s vocation:

1) A vocation must be of service to humankind. A vocation is not a means to serve God, which is how many in the priesthood understood their responsibilities. God does not need our service, humankind needs our service. By serving humankind, an individual is serving God (Luther, n.d.; Forrell, 1954; Wingren, 1957).

2) A vocation aims to help us defeat our old self and keep others in subjection to God (Luther, 1955).
3) A vocation intends to help God defeat Satan. Since our work is God’s work, if we do it, we help defeat the forces of Satan. However, if we refuse to work, or if we do our work improperly, we do evil works and aid the devil (Luther, 1955; Watson, 1949).

According to Luther’s view of vocation, a librarian serves both God and the patron when they assist an individual with a reference question. Providing reference services to an individual, according to Luther, helps the librarian defeat their old self and keeps them in subjection to God by serving another individual. This service assists in defeating the work of Satan because, Luther argues, serving an individual plays a part in God’s work.

Luther’s idea appears to be an excellent example of seeing a simple task of a librarian as a sacred responsibility. However, it must be looked at through the lens of scripture and the lens of the 21st century. Luther’s concepts align with scripture.

Self-less service to individuals is a key component to Christianity. It is emphasized in Scripture (Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 5:22-23) and lived out through the ministries of Jesus (Matthew 20:28; Luke 22:27) and Paul (2 Corinthians 11:16-12:21; 2 Timothy 1:3).

Work helps an individual defeat their old self. Proverbs picture of the sluggard exemplifies this. The sluggard is an individual who refuses to work (Proverbs 21:25). An individual’s refusal to work leads to poverty (Proverbs 13:4) and ultimately to death (Proverbs 21:25). It is necessary to work because work impedes the development of a sluggard. Thus, as Luther argued, work helps an individual defeat their old self by not allowing an individual to develop the lifestyle of a sluggard.

Luther’s third point is a development of the concept that work helps an individual defeat their old self. If an individual is not working, they often resort to laziness, which Scripture condemns (Proverbs 10:4; Hebrews 6:12). A vocation often keeps an individual from laziness which helps God further his kingdom, thus defeating Satan.

Theology must be biblically accurate, but it also must be contemporary (Erickson, 1998). While Luther’s theology of vocation is biblical, it has some points that make it difficult to apply in the 21st century.

According to Luther, one has vocational responsibilities in family, church, community, and a job (Luther, n.d.). What happens when the responsibilities of one vocation (a job) do not allow an individual to meet the responsibilities of another vocation (family or church) (Feinberg, 1979)? Luther says that we must fulfill our vocation in each station of life (Luther, n.d.). What exactly Luther means by fulfilling vocation is challenging. If an individual needs to take a second job because of financial restraints and thus stops participation in a particular ministry, they would not fulfill their vocation in the station of the church, which, according to Luther’s ideology, is wrong.

Another difficulty arises when Luther argues that it a worker must stay in his own vocation and not forsake it (Luther, 1967; Wingren, 1957). Many situations arise where an individual, either by choice or not, acquires a new job, and even at times change careers. According to Luther’s ideas this is wrong.

Luther’s idea of vocation also stirs up issues in the twenty-first century workplace when it comes to considering another job for economic reasons. Luther argued that God called an individual to a particular job and to leave that job simply for economic reasons was not viable (Wingren, 1957). He suggested that economic considerations should be ruled out when thinking about selecting a job or changing work (Feinberg, 1979). However, in order for an individual to faithfully serve in all vocations, a job change with financial incentives may be necessary. It is clearly difficult to apply Luther’s vocational concepts to the twenty-first century.
While some hierarchy must be present, 1st Corinthians 12 argues that equality and mutual respect must be present if a workplace is truly dedicated to the Lord’s work.

Another challenge with Luther’s view comes when a worker’s right and motivation are considered. Luther claims that in the earthly kingdom our work is creative and it helps suppress the activities of the Devil (Watson, 1949). If that is indeed correct, an interesting question arises.

Does a worker have a right to go on strike for higher wages? If an individual’s work is involved in God’s ongoing creativity in the world, and if it suppresses Satan, then an employee must always be at it, even if they are being paid unfairly or treated unjustly by an employer. On the other hand, if the employee does not strike for higher wages, it may be impossible for them to meet the financial obligations of their home, and thus, it will not be possible for them to completely fulfill their vocations. So, on the one hand, it seems that an employee does not have a right to strike if they are to fulfill vocations in one area of life, but on the other hand, it seems necessary if they are to fulfill responsibilities in other areas (Feinberg, 1979).

Much has changed since Luther developed his idea of vocation. In Luther’s time one had very little choice in vocation. A vocation was a civic duty and responsibility. While duty and responsibility still exist for vocational fields; economic needs and mobility have impacted one’s devotion to a vocation. Clearly it is difficult to apply Luther’s concept of vocation to the 21st century workforce.

Librarianship through these two lenses (Flexner and Luther) looks quite different. According to Greer, Grover, and Fowler, using Flexner’s ideology, librarianship is a profession. Because of this dichotomy that Flexner created in the early 1900’s between professional and non-professional, clearly a professional should be in a managerial position, paid more, but also more should be expected (vision, leadership, professional development, etc…). From a pragmatic perspective, this works well. Unfortunately, as already noted, theological difficulties lie behind Flexner’s presumptions. Luther takes a different approach. According to his work on vocation, everyone has been called to a job, a task, or what Luther called a station. Regardless of what that station is, whether it is a para-professional position, a reference librarian, or a dean, it should be seen as equal. While there is much truth to Luther’s ideas, difficulties arise when it comes to practice. According to Luther, it is not right for an individual to leave their station (Luther, 1967; Wingren, 1957), as it is God-appointed. Therefore, it is wrong for a para-professional to pursue a Master of Library Science program and desire to be a librarian. According to Luther, this para-professional forsakes their God-appointed station in so doing.

If Flexner’s concept of profession does not fit into a Biblical framework, and Luther’s idea of vocation does not correspond to the context of the 21st century, what should be done?

D. Miroslav Volf

Miroslav Volf offers an alternative to Luther’s concept of vocation. He argues that all activities that are done to satisfy one’s own needs or the needs of others should be understood from the perspective of the operation of the spirit. In other words, an individual’s work should correspond to their spiritual gifting (Volf, 1987).

Volf argues that one particular eschatological barrier must be removed for one to completely understand the theological value of work. Many theological traditions believe that the entire earth will be destroyed at the second coming of Christ, however there are some that argue contrary (Berkouwer, 1972; Bruce, 1976; Hendriksen, 1998; Hoekema, 1979). This particular theological position bears weight on how one considers their work on earth.

If the end brings about annihilation and a new earth will be created from nothing, then the work that is accomplished in our life time is only for earthly significance. It serves the purpose of meeting the needs of the worker, the worker’s family and others until Christ’s
The results of humankind’s efforts throughout history will be destroyed and without ultimate significance (Volf, 1987).

The late John Walvoord, previously president of Dallas Theological Seminary, notes in his commentary on Revelation that the new heaven and the new earth discussed in Revelation 21 are not simply the old heaven and old earth renovated (Walvoord, 1966). He argues that the earth in which we currently live will be completely destroyed with fire upon Christ’s return. (Walvoord, 1966).

Walvoord justifies his view with passages like Isaiah 65:17; and 2 Peter 3:10-13. In Isaiah 65, the prophet writes about God’s judgment and the salvation of Israel. Isaiah moves from stating that Israel will have food, drink, and joy, while others will be in hunger, thirst, and sorrow. A transition occurs at verse 17 where the prophet begins to discuss what Israel can anticipate. Verse 17 states, “Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”

At first glance this verse strongly suggests annihilation. However, there are differing interpretations of this passage. Some argue that the term “heavens and earth” are figures used to indicate a complete renovation of the current state of affairs (Young, 1965). The whole of created order is to be renewed (Grogan, 2006).

Second Peter 3:10, 12 is another passage that some suggest argues for complete annihilation. It says, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare .... That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.”

One can easily understand this passage without reference to complete annihilation (Volf, 2001; van Genderen, 2008). The Greek words used for fire and heat are commonly used metaphorically to correlate with judgment throughout the New Testament and the Septuagint (Isaiah 49:10; Jonah 4:8; Matthew 13:6; Hebrews 6:8; James 1:11). Peter’s reference to heat and fire are metaphorical in this context. In order to understand Peter’s expression differently one neglects other passages that explicitly refer to God’s renewal of creation.

Romans 8:20-21 states, “For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”

The idea that creation will be set free strongly suggests that the ultimate destiny of creation is not annihilation but transformation (Moo, 1996; Calvin, 1947; cf. Matthew 19:28; Acts 3:19-21; Revelation 21:24-26).

If the world will not be destroyed, but transformed, then human work has eternal significance in a direct way (Volf, 1987). Nothing will be wasted.

…whatever is beautiful, true and good in human cultures, will be cleansed from impurity, perfected and transfigured to become a part of God’s new creation. The assurance of continuity between the present age and the age to come is a strong incentive to cultural involvement. The results of human work form building materials which, after being transfigured, will be made part of the glorified world (Volf, 1987, p.176).

This position is not unique to Volf. Gerrit Cornelius Berkouwer, a leading theologian in the Netherlands, who occupied the chair of systematic theology at the Free University of Amsterdam argued that God’s power is manifested in the goodness of all things, but if everything is annihilated at the second coming, this goodness is obsolete. Thus, Berkouwer argued, serious consideration must be given to the idea of a transformation, not annihilation, of God’s creation at Christ’s second coming.
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(Berkouwer, 1972; see also Bruce, 1976; Hendriksen, 1998; Hoekema, 1979).

With the theological barriers removed, Volf argues that one’s work plays a role in developing building materials which will be made part of the glorified world (Volf, 1987). Thus, work, according to Volf, is an honest, purposeful, and methodologically specified social activity whose primary goal is the creation of products or states of affairs that can satisfy the needs of working individuals or their co-creatures, or (if primarily an end in itself) activity that is necessary for acting individuals to satisfy their needs apart from the need for the activity itself (Volf, 2001, pp.10-11).

Volf argues that a Christian should work under the inspiration of the spirit and in the light of the coming new creation.

III. What does this mean for librarians?

Volf’s theology of work makes it possible to understand work from the center of the Christian faith. For example, when an individual responds to God’s call and becomes a child of God, the Spirit gives the individual both callings and capabilities in the form of spiritual gifts to perform particular tasks either in the Christian fellowship or in the secular world (Volf, 1987).

As a librarian, a pneumatalogical understanding sees work as cooperation with God that completes creation and renews heaven and earth (Volf, 1987). For example teaching students how to find information and use the correct resources is a critical component to the new heaven and new earth because in doing so, the student often discovers truth. As a librarian, one cooperates with God in assisting the student’s effort.

There are four areas of librarianship where a pneumatalogical concept of work has direct impact: hierarchy, wages, service, and hiring.

A. Hierarchy

First Corinthians 12 exposes us to the concept of spiritual gifts. In this context, Paul is discussing what spirituality should be to the Corinthians and how that spirituality should edify others (Fee, 1987). This passage addresses a primary issue in the Corinthian church: the gift of tongues. The gift itself was not an issue, but misuse of the gift was. Individuals in the Corinthian church often thought that an ability to use the gift of tongues was equivalent to spiritual maturity (Fee, 1987).

Paul argues in 1st Corinthians 12 that all parts have a specific role to play in the body and that each role is critical. Every member in the church has value. In order for a church to work effectively, love must be precedent. Love leads to cooperation among every part. Without this love and cooperation a church cannot work effectively.

Although this passage is directed to a church, there are principles from this passage that can be applied to a work place. In a time when tasks are becoming more and more specialized, a believer should consider any kind of ability that is dedicated to the Lord’s work as a spiritual gift (Blomberg, 1994). Much of what a librarian does is dedicated to the development of the institution they work for, which for many institutions is equipping Christians in some facet or another to impact the world for Jesus Christ. This includes cataloging, management, information literacy instruction, and a wide variety of tasks that librarians accomplish. All of these tasks are critical to the development of faculty, students, and the institution as a whole.

In this case, what is true at a church is true at a library: regardless of pay, position, or seniority, the different parts of the body are to treat one another with respect (1 Corinthians 12:21-26). This respect is manifested in several ways: being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger (James 1:19) and not treating individuals with favoritism (1 Timothy 5:21) are two of many ways that respect can be manifested.
While some hierarchy must be present, 1st Corinthians 12 argues that equality and mutual respect must be present if a workplace is truly dedicated to the Lord’s work. This argument for equality and respect brings about another question that comes to the forefront: Is pay differentiation justified between what Flexner would classify as professional and non-professional jobs?

### B. Wages

Scripture argues that when people work, they deserve wages. It is not right to withhold pay (Leviticus 19:13). In Luke chapter 10, Jesus is addressing the seventy-two who are about to go out ahead of Jesus to various towns. He says that when these individuals arrive in a town to let the individuals they are staying with provide them food and a place to stay, because a “worker deserves his wages” (Luke 10:7).

Matthew 25:14-29 is the parable of the talents. In this parable, a master gives three of his servants large amounts of money. Two of the three wisely invest the money and thus return the amount given to them, plus some. One of the servants simply returns the money given to him. The master is angry at the one who simply returns the money and gives it to one of the other men who invested the money.

This parable argues that the interim period between Christ’s resurrection and his second coming is not intended to be an empty, meaningless delay, but a period of opportunity to put to use skills that have been entrusted to his servants (France, 1985). It is the master who has allocated the amount of responsibility, but it is the servant’s responsibility to faithfully carry out the role entrusted him (France, 1985).

Each of these servants were given various amounts of responsibilities, and their pay varied with the amount of responsibilities given to them and how they handled them. A Christian view of wages should follow the same model: the amount an individual is paid should reflect the responsibilities that an individual has and how they handle those responsibilities, not necessarily seniority.

This biblical example follows Volf’s view of pay differentiation. He argues that it is not justified on a basis of whether or not the position is considered “professional,” “para-professional,” or “clerical.” He argues that the expectations of an individual filling these positions should differ dramatically. Consequently, the amount of salary should reflect the merit and responsibility of the individual and not necessarily seniority (Volf, 1987).

### C. Service

A pneumatological understanding of work allows an individual to see work as service to fellow human beings (Volf, 1987; cf. Mark 10:45; Luke 22:27; Galatians 5:13). Librarians, both Christian and non-Christian, would typically agree with this statement; librarianship is a service profession. However, Volf’s concept forces a librarian to see service as more than a means to an end.

For example, if a librarian serves on a small regional committee, this service is more than a means to serve on a larger national committee. From a Christian perspective, this committee work should be seen as service to fellow librarians, service to the profession and service to the organization; service simply for the sake of service.

### D. Hiring

Volf’s theology of work insists that that the hiring process is looked at from two angles: the need of the institution and the giftedness of the individual. In an ideal setting, the spiritual gifts of the worker fall in line with the needs of an institution.

Because of this, one must take certain precautions in hiring and placing. When hiring, it is easy to look at seniority or experience rather than spiritual gifts. While both have their place in the hiring process, it is ideal to find an individual with the spiritual gifts necessary to do the job and the experience to confirm their gifts.
When listing a job, instead of asking for prior experience as a necessity, perhaps one should have spiritual gifting or talents as a necessity. Once several candidates are found with spiritual gifting that will fulfill the needs of the institution, those individuals should be interviewed.

For some jobs, the job is flexible enough so that individuals with a variety of gifts could fit into the position. For example, a circulation manager oversees student workers, handles circulation statistics and does some general clerical work. This position fulfills a variety of roles that a variety of gifts could fulfill. The individual hired has spiritual gifts in the area of pastoral skills. This individual is a great people person, has a pastoral care and concern for student workers, hires great student workers, but lacks in administrative abilities. In this situation, according to Volf’s position, the overseer has biblical responsibility to make certain that the needs of the institution are being met by the individual hired and that the job falls in line, as much as possible, to the individual’s spiritual gifts. Finding a balance between institutional needs and gifts is challenging.

With the tension between institutional needs and spiritual gifts, it is difficult to eliminate all responsibilities that do not align with an individual’s gifts. However, it would be worthwhile to encourage this individual by recognizing their strengths and giftedness and being gracious in expectations that do not align with these.

Another precaution can take place in the hiring process. As a supervisor is hiring, they should have a good idea of what a job will entail, particularly if the responsibilities are not flexible. It may be worthwhile to include a test that assesses an individual’s spiritual gifts in the interview process. This gives the supervisor an idea as to whether or not their gifts can align with the needs of the institution.

The greatest commandments are to love God and to love your neighbor as you love yourself (Matthew 22:38-39). These commandments can often be reflected in how easy or how difficult this person is to work with. For example, if an individual loves their neighbor as they love themselves, they will be careful in their interactions with other individuals, watching their moods, and controlling their tongue when interacting with them. This will likely make the individual easier to work with, easier to correct, and easier to train.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to get a clear picture of an individual when hiring. However, many times personal references are asked for when a person is being hired. It may be worthwhile to ask these individuals how these two commandments are reflected in the candidate’s life.

IV. Conclusion

In discussing the sacred-secular divide, Pearcey argues that Christians must be utterly convinced that there is a biblical perspective on everything: library and information science, librarianship, and even librarianships role in the 21st century professional-paraprofessional dichotomy.

In an effort to eliminate this dichotomy, we must return to a correct understanding of the concept of vocation. When understood correctly, this concept encourages individuals to be used according to their talents and gifting. This not only allows individuals to enjoy their jobs, but it utilizes individual’s strengths, eliminates much of the pride often associated with hierarchies, creates an environment where the love of God can be manifested, and assists in the development of God’s kingdom.
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