

PERIODICAL

SEEDS CARES

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SELF CARE

Much more than a job interview

There's a saying that it's not what you know, but who you know. Guess who is an obvious factor in this equation? You are.

Last week in both Chapel and Convo a theme was examining vocation and calling.

On Monday's Convocation it was announced that Montreat is deciding to offer a retreat-like event for students to discern their callings. Tom Oxenreider and Daniel Bennett presented about how exploring your calling and vocation involve much more than just securing a job.

In fact a lot of that involves the first saying about who you know, and who do you know better than yourself? A powerful moment in Convo was slides of deep questions to ask yourself, they gave some direction in the soul searching process it takes to discern vocation.

Wednesday we had a guest speaker for Chapel Rev. Dr. Thomas Daniel who brought a message about calling. Using the example of King David, he explained that God's calling is on your life—not on your job.

Often in American culture, we start the other way around. Rev. Dr. Daniel used stories with his marriage to show how this focus on your job does not lead to happiness.

People often focus on what job David had and how he was a king. The Scripture for the message was 1st Samuel 16: 4-23 and it drove home a huge point for the message. Is what you are doing in line with who you are?

God knew who David was even when appearances fooled Samuel. David's future was shaped by his character which led to his actions and then came the titles and jobs.

Before people ask, "What do you do?"

Ask yourself, "Who are you?", and seek God's word on who He is calling you to be.

EARTH CARE

I didn't buy-in right away

In high school thinking about the environment wasn't exactly on the list of my priorities.

Until one day I watched a video about the clean water crisis. It honestly blew my mind to think that over a billion people didn't have access to clean drinking water. It was then I realized that things that effect the environment effect people too. I just had to share this, and it turns out there were clubs of other students who wanted to do something about this. Together we raised money and awareness and it really brought our small school together. It felt good to be a part of something important, a part of something good.

The next way I saw how the causes of people and their environment connect was in from a group of creative Ugandan women. While having challenges in their lives like losing loved ones and caring for a large family, they made something beautiful of what was around them: paper.

These women from Uganda banded together to make colorful, vibrant paper bead necklaces and bracelets. People from America imported their necklaces and helped sell them. Not only were they making a better life for themselves and their families, they were reusing what was around them. Recycling and reusing the paper for necklaces helped both the environment and people.

That kind of creativity reflects the best in the human spirit. It was so exciting to receive a box full of these necklaces. Soon people all over the high school were supporting the cause and enjoying these well-made wearable works of art. In the Why Care column I had the privilege to interview Ellen from 10,000 Villages. If you've never been in the store, take a look and you will see that there too, is a place where creative people make some of the most beautiful things out of unexpected materials.

By using what we have around us (and supporting others who do), we are helping other people and the world in which we live.

Sometimes caring about that comes slowly, but when you do become involved it is so worthwhile. Your actions show who and what you care about, make them count.

SOUL CARE

Reverend Doctor Thomas Daniel shared some valuable questions to ponder in thinking about your calling. Reflect on these questions as a guide to be aware of for discerning calling:

-What are you good at?

-What do you enjoy?

-What has God given you a heart for?

As in, what breaks your heart?

-What are areas of consistent struggle or temptation?

WHY CARE?

Justice + Business = Goodness

Fair trade is an issue that usually just brings coffee to mind. Vaguely we know that like coffee, fair trade is a good thing.

Recently I had the chance to interview someone who could add a bit more to that definition.

Ellen from Montreat's own 10,000 Villages, described fair trade this way:

"(It's) focusing on the way business is done with everyone involved in the process. From how products are created, to the safety and respect given to the artisans who make the products.

For building a sustainable type of business that respects environmental responsibility, that respects gender equity throughout artist groups as well as in the stores and operational

headquarters, and that we respect customers as being the people who really make the business happen."

Now that's a working definition. Not only because it expands on the reality that Fair Trade is good, but that the definition works literally in business.

A non-profit retail business sounds almost like a paradox, but for 10,000 Villages it's in the fabric of who they are. Right before the interview, Ellen was training a volunteer to work at the store. That's right, a volunteer in retail.

That simply just doesn't happen in your typical business. Just from talking to Ellen it's clear that 10,000 Villages is no typical business, but a part of the community. Montreat's store has recently celebrated 30 years of being a part of the community. In North Carolina there are five stores, one being in Asheville too.

However, these stores are also all over the US. 10,000 Villages is not only a part of local communities, but a bigger community by partnering with artisans from other nations from all over the world.

Through partnership with artisans worldwide and practicing a Fair Trade mentality, artisans get fair wages and work in a safe environment.

It's no secret that if you treat people well that they work well and the quality of products shows that.

"When you look in our store at products, people are just so appreciative of the quality in products," Ellen begins, "Artisans themselves are just amazingly talented people. And you get a sense of the richness of their cultures and the high quality of the work they do and their creativity."

Customers at 10,000 villages know they aren't just getting a product, they're getting a story, and many products come with the stories of the artisans that made them. This is in stark contrast to scandals that come from bigger companies that exploit people in business.

When you take care as to how you do things, what you are doing can become so very different. 10,000 Villages doesn't just make great products, they share stories and build community all over the world while treating customers and workers well.

Now that is a Fair Trade. In life and in business, doing the right thing pays off.

TAKE CARE

SHAZAAM! Action steps:

- Continue the conversation: November 18th in Howerton. Join Chaplain David Taylor for a Convo on vocation and calling from 7-8pm.
- Missed your calling? (Or the Chapel/Convo week about it.) Listen in online to some really solid messages at: <http://www.montreat.edu/student-life/chaplains-office/chapel-convocation/chapel-archives/>
- Check out your friendly local 10,000 Villages Store right next to the Huckleberry!