

READER



hugenote kollege

Waar Christenwees grondvat in opleiding

**BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK
YEAR LEVEL: 1**

**READER: MODULE: TEH 111
PERSONAL CALLING, THE CHURCH AND
COMMUNITY**

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1. THE *MISSION DEI* AND CALLING

In this theme, the *mission Dei* (mission of God) and calling will be discussed. For us to discover our personal calling, and to become skilled in assisting churches, congregations and Faith-Based Organisations to contribute to the well-being of communities, we first need to understand the *mission Dei*. We will therefore look at the following terms and then –

- Discuss God's plan for this world,
- Describe and discourse on the mission of God,
- Understand, study and analyse the ministry of the church,
- Discover and then reflect on my personal calling within this world of God.

For assessment purposes, you will need to keep in mind that you must show knowledge, understanding and skills related to the following Exit Level Outcomes (ELO) and their Associated Assessment Criteria (AAC):

Knowledge		
Topic	Exit Level Outcome	Associated Assessment Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe the ministry of the church 	The development and consolidation of a professional identity as a social worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to caring, building humane societies and mutual inter-dependence ▪ Willingness to be for the Other, and ability for empathic entry into the life worlds of people
Understanding and Skills		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain the term <i>missio Dei</i> 	Application of core values and principles of social work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated ability to respect the inherent worth and dignity of all human beings ▪ Understanding the mutual inter-dependence among human beings and between human beings and other living entities, and a commitment to inter-generational equity and continuity (third generation rights) as advocated by 'green' social work

This theme will take place during weeks 1 to 5 and will be assessed by means of a class test, semester test and examination.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Module TEH 111: Personal calling, the church and community.

The social work degree programme offered at the College is founded upon Christian Values. The aim of this module and reader is therefore to encourage students to discover their personal callings, and to become skilled in assisting churches, congregations, NGO's and Faith-Based Organisations to contribute to the well-being of communities. The purpose of this module is therefore to provide first year students in the Bachelor of Social Work Degree programme with basic knowledge, understanding and skills regarding the following aspects such as i) a range of relevant theories; ii) The ethical requisites of the profession: An appropriate range of ethical theories and the complexities of ethical decision-making in day-to-day practice; and iii) The Self-vis-à-vis professional practice (personal calling, professional identity and discipleship).

In line with the purpose of this qualification, this reader will consist of the following learning themes:

1. The *missio Dei* and calling,
2. Calling and professional identity and
3. Serving others.

In terms of Huguenot Kollege's mission statement this module's classes will contribute to the following: In following Jesus Christ and with the aim on the total healing and development of the community, Huguenot College strives to:

- Maintain a Christian ethos of human dignity, inclusivity, transparency, equality of rights and harmonious relationships;
- Integrate faith, knowledge and skills of learners;
- Nurture and enhance the awareness of their calling and willingness to service among learners and staff.

Definition of terms

Missio Dei	Missio Dei is a Latin Christian theological term that can be translated as the "mission of God", or the "sending of God". The <i>missio Dei</i> has two movements, namely an inner-Trinitarian movement and an outer-Trinitarian movement. This means <i>missio Dei</i> firstly refers to God the Father sending the Son, and to God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit. The second movement refers to the Father, Son and Spirit sending the church into the world. The mission of the church has no life of its own. <i>Missio Dei</i> implies therefore, that God works in the world and that He calls and sends people and the church to participate in his work. And since mission is always God's mission, the mission cannot become triumphalist. The <i>mission Dei</i> is the mission of the incarnate and crucified Christ.
Calling	The origin of a sense of calling (<i>vocatio</i>) lies within the religious framework where the individual is said to receive a 'transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role'. Vocational calling is the call by God to His service in the vocational sphere of life based on giftedness, desires, affirmations, and human need. Therefore, when we talk about vocation (or calling), we mean, "Is God calling me/you to a particular job, profession or type of work?"

Church	The definition of church is very broad. At least six forms of the church should be distinguished when conceptualizing the identity and calling of the church, namely: 1) the church as ecumenical church (whether global, national, regional or local), 2) the church as denomination(s), 3) the church as (mostly local) congregations, 4) the church as worshipping communities, 5) the church as individual believers (in the fullness of their personal, private and public, lives), and 6) the church as believers (individuals or groups) participating in initiatives and actions, together with others.
Ministry	Ministry is an activity carried out by Christians to express their faith, such as witnessing. Ministry can also be described as the carrying forth of Christ's mission in the world.

1.2 THE *MISSIO DEI* AND CALLING

1.2.1 Mission

When we go to the Bible to ascertain what it teaches about “mission” we will soon discover that it does not define this term or give a clear description of it. Many Christians who are eager to root their understanding of mission in the Bible first formulate their own definition of mission and then they study the Bible for proof and support of their view and understanding of mission. Although one may discover valuable insights about mission in this process, it is not really helpful to get a clear picture of the exact nature of mission. People with different definitions of mission will find different passages in the Bible to support their views.

Our circumstances, culture and world events affect the way we interpret the Bible. People from different backgrounds may read and study the same passage in the Bible, but may differ on the message of the passage for people today. Their circumstances and life experiences make them sensitive for certain themes or revelation in the Bible and blind them for other truths in the Bible. It is therefore not surprising to discover that churches and believers in different parts of the world and at different times in history differ in their understanding of mission. The same church may even have different views of mission over a period of time.

The understanding of mission is also linked to the understanding of other important concepts of the Bible. For example, different opinions about God, the nature of salvation, the church, evangelism and the Holy Spirit will also lead to different views about the nature of mission.

Although there is disagreement about the exact nature and scope of mission, most churches and individual believers use the word “mission” to describe the task or calling of the church in the world. What is the church supposed to do in the world?

Even although the term “mission” is heard and used so often among believers and in churches, closer scrutiny will immediately show that there is no consensus on its precise meaning. Different believers, churches or even mission organisations attach different meanings to the word “mission”. They differ a lot about the main or primary task of mission.

The question about the real nature of mission is important because it determines in many ways the identity, character and activities of believers and churches. Individual believers and congregations dedicate their lives in serving the Lord. How they do it will be greatly determined by their understanding of what mission should be. However, when talking about “**mission** Dei” we referring to God’s mission. To understand God’s mission, we first need to understand who God is.

1.2.2 Who is God?

The Belgic Confession puts it in this way: “We all believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that there is a single and simple spiritual being, whom we call God -- eternal,

incomprehensible, invisible, unchangeable, infinite, almighty; completely wise, just, and good, and the overflowing source of all good.”

According to the Old Testament God’s name, as revealed to Moses, can be translated as: “The One who is always present with.”²⁰ He wants people to life in His presence, in Latin: *Coram Deo*. On the one hand God came near His people so that they could know Him and walk with Him in all the different phases of their journey through the Old Testament (as wanderers before the Exodus, as slaves in Egypt, through the exodus and desert journey, in the Promised Land and in exile). On the other hand they were always filled with wonder at His greatness and mystery which was completely above any understanding. They often struggled with God in their sufferings, reminding Him of His promises. Their relationship with God influenced their whole lives. They looked at creation as His work and strove to gain and teach wisdom - mastering the art of living in this world on the basis of a relationship with God.²¹ A refrain which runs through the Old Testament is that God is a compassionate and gracious God; slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who forgives. (Ex. 34:6; De. 4:31; Ps. 86:15, 103:8, 111:4, Jonah 4:2).

In the New Testament God revealed Himself through His Son (He. 1:1-3). On the one hand we see the power of God working through Christ who can even command the wind and waves so that the disciples ask in awe: Who is this? On the other hand we discover that this power is paradoxically revealed in the cross, in self-denial, in love. To see and experience His power, we need faith. In Christ, we find the fullness of wisdom (Col. 2:3). And He taught people with authority and not as other wise men (Mt. 7:29). Yet Mark shows us that Christ was not just a miracle worker or healer or wise philosopher as many thought (and thinks). The climax of His work was His crucifixion. Three times in this gospel He makes it clear to His disciples that, if they want to follow Him, they should also deny themselves and take up their cross. His power and victory will also in their lives be revealed in weakness, in suffering, in self-denial and love and compassion. This is the ethos and spirituality Mark wanted to create through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1.2.3 Mission of God as *Missio Dei*

The church consists of people who are reconciled with God through Jesus Christ. They are God’s children and live in an intimate relationship with Him. Through the work of the Holy Spirit they are continually transformed to become more and more like Jesus (2 Co. 3:18). As children of God they worship, follow, trust and obey Him in all aspects of life. Therefore, in order to understand their task and calling in the world (mission), children of God, the church, must grow in their knowledge of who God is and what God is doing in the world. The church should be guided by God’s vision, attitude and actions in this world to give expression to their mission in this world. Since the church is following and obeying God, the task and calling of the church cannot differ from what God is doing in the world. God calls us to become involved in what He is doing in the world.

God is not only active in the world of darkness and suffering, but He also works in believers and in the church. Since the word “mission” is usually used to describe the calling or task of the church in the world, we must focus on what God is doing and wants to do in the world to get a picture of the mission of God and the church.

The essence of God is light (1 Jn. 1:5) and love (1 Jn. 4:8). Jesus came as light to the world to overcome darkness and to shine on all people (Jn. 1:4, 9). God showed his love for the world by sending Jesus so that we might have life through him (1 Jn. 4:9). God did not distance Him from the world and remained passive in the face of darkness and the need of people. In love He reached out to the world in order to conquer and remove darkness, to transform the lives of people and have fellowship with them. In order to understand the mission of God (*Missio Dei*) in the world and therefore the mission of the church, we must have a closer look

at God's work to remove darkness in the world, to bring life to people and have fellowship with them.

The Old Testament is full of examples of how God seeks and establishes community with those He created. When the first people sinned against God and were hiding from Him, we read that He still visited them and called out to them: "Where are you?" (Ge.3:9). When God made covenants with individuals (Ge.6:18; 15; 2 S.7:8-16) and with Israel (Ex.19-20), it expresses God's desire to live in communion with those that He created. God wants to be their God and they must be his people. God wants to take care of them and teach them to accept responsibility for one another. God wanted to be their God and to live with them in the closest relationship. But even though God made a covenant with Israel, He allowed non-Israelites to be included in the covenant with Him so that they too shared in the fellowship with Him and all the blessings and responsibilities related to the covenant between Him and his people.

The tabernacle was built so that God could "dwell" among his people (Ex. 25: 8). The system of sacrifices for forgiveness and reconciliation was introduced to ensure an open and healthy relationship between God and the people. (Le.1-7, 16). In addition to this, there was also the teaching of the law as part of the tabernacle ministry to strengthen the relationship between God and his people. Later the temple was built and in the prayer of dedication it is clear that Solomon also understood it that people could express their deepest needs to God in the temple. He even prayed that God would also listen to the prayers of other nations who may come to worship and pray to God in the temple (1 K. 8:41-43). In Is. 56:6-7 the Lord revealed it clearly that it is his desire that the temple should become a house of prayer for all nations. Whenever the relationship between God and his people was threatened by their idolatry and other sins, God took the initiative and called his prophets to show the people where they had sinned (Je.7) and to call them to repentance and restoration of the fellowship with Him (Ho.14).

God made deliberate efforts to make it possible for people to live in a reconciled relationship with Him. If we take God's desire seriously to live in communion with his people, mission must include efforts to assist people to experience the forgiveness of sins and to be reconciled with God. Mission must reveal God's desire to live in a close covenant relationship with people and help them to understand the nature of His covenant with them.

God's covenant and communion with Israel created a faith community where people did not only experience fellowship with God, but also with one another as the people of God. The fellowship with God gave Israel a unique identity and the ability to live as the people of God in an environment of idols and enmity. Mission is also about the establishment and nourishment of new faith communities of people in communion with the living God.

1.2.4 God's desire to bless people

God's blessings include a wide variety of things. A lot of it has to do with the well-being of people in this world. It is important for God that people live with dignity, joy, health, peace, justice and freedom in this world. Participating in what God is doing in this world (mission) includes efforts to ensure the well-being of people living in this world. God blessed Abraham and his descendants (Israel) to become a blessing to others. Everyone who belongs to God and all the children of God together are blessed to be a blessing. No individual or church is excluded from the privilege and responsibility to be a blessing to the world.

God's desire is to bless all the nations of the world. All peoples and areas of the world were from creation the object of God's blessed activity. Mission must always keep all people and nations in its sight.

1.2.5 God liberates people from powers that prevent them from living a full life

God did not only intervene in the broken relationship between Himself and his people. He also took action with regard to the broken relationships among people and the sad results due to

these distorted relationships. Where harmony, compassion and justice were lacking among people, it usually led to some people being exploited, wronged or impoverished. The Old Testament shows how God intervened to change the situation of the victims of injustice and those who were vulnerable. He rescued them from the powers that oppressed them and He put in place laws and practices which could prevent the exploitation of people. In the course of history this intervention by God took on different forms.

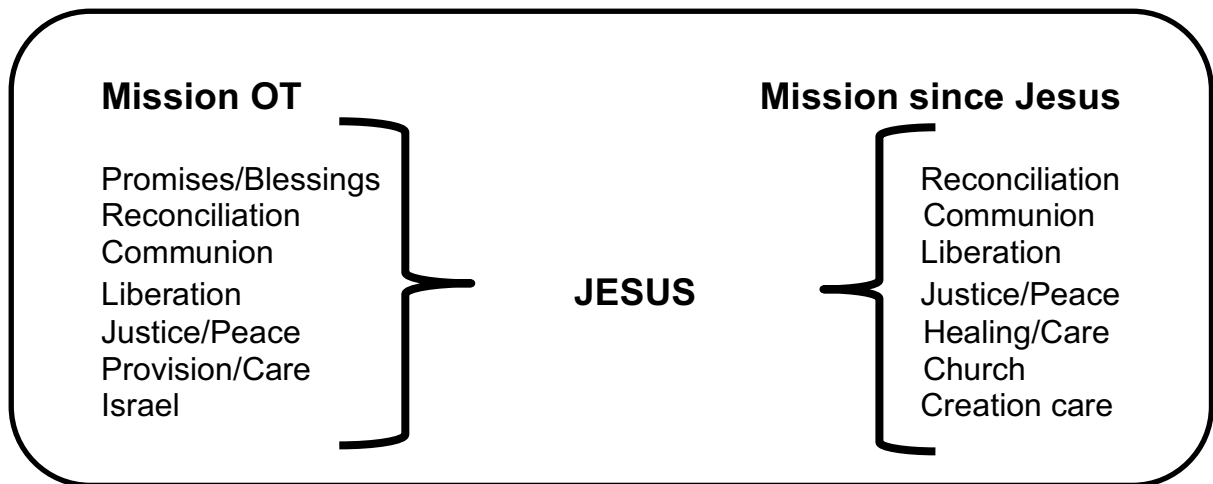
Setting Israel free from slavery in Egypt is the best known example of God's intervention to change the circumstances of oppressed people in need. By liberating the people of Israel from Egypt, God showed that He heard the cry for help from people in need (Ex. 3:7). He revealed his compassion and love for the defenceless and the poor (Ex. 3:8). He used people (Ex. 3:10) and his godly power to change the circumstances of his people. Other Old Testament passages which also illustrate God's compassion, justice and liberating action are for example De. 10:18; Ps. 113; Ps. 146:6-10; Jer. 9:24; Is. 57:15; Is. 61.

God was not only concerned with the well-being of his own people, He was also disturbed when other nations suffered due to the abuse of power and the suppression of their rights (Is. 14:4-12; 19:20; Am. 1). He brought judgement upon those nations who abused their power in their relationships with other nations. God also did not turn a blind eye when his own people Israel were unjust among themselves, oppressed others or showed lack of love for each other (Am. 2:6-8; 4:1; Je. 7:1-10). He warned them about his judgement (Am. 3, Am. 6:1-3; Je. 4:5-6) and through the prophets he called them to repentance (Am. 5:14-15; Je. 4:14).

God employed people to prevent, take away or alleviate the injustice and need of others. That is why he gave such specific instructions and commands about the poor (De. 15:1-11), about slaves (De. 15:12-18), about justice and land (De. 19:15-21; Le. 25), about compassion (De. 10:19) and about sexual relationships (Le. 18). In this way, God wanted to ensure that all people could live in human dignity. True love for God was measured by the attitude towards neighbours (Mi. 6:8).

God did not only liberate people from the oppression and powers of other people who threatened their well-being, but He also intervened when non-human forces threatened the well-being of people. He brought for example healing from disease (Is. 38:1-8; 2 K. 5; Ps. 103:3), gave rain in time of drought and food at the proper time (Ps. 104:14-16, 27).

God acted against people and powers which threatened the dignity and well-being of individuals and peoples. The purpose of mission should include more than reconciliation and communion with God, but should also enhance reconciliation and justice among people and the promotion of dignified living and general well-being of individuals and peoples. Mission is not just about relationships between people, but also about liberation from and destruction of unjust and oppressive practices, systems and institutions.



1.2.6 In the New Testament Jesus became the centre of the *Missio Dei*

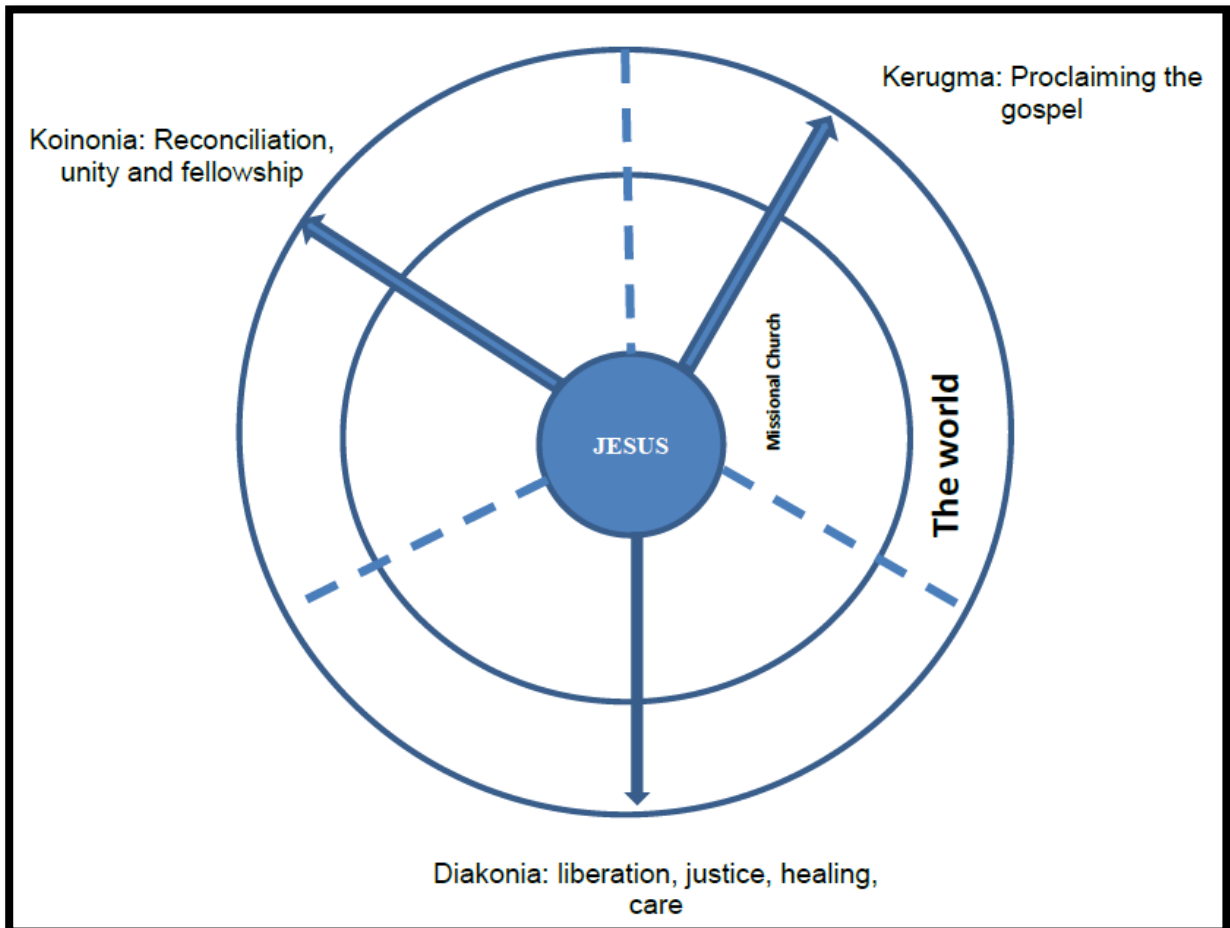
God sent his Son for complete reconciliation, liberation and healing of the whole of creation. The culmination point of God's mission to the world was the coming of Jesus Christ. God continued his reconciling, liberating and healing work in the world in a new and final way through the ministry of Jesus. Jesus was sent by God into this world (Jn. 3:16; 17:3) as part of God's plan to reconcile all of creation with himself (Col... 1:20). In Jesus, God is dealing with the lost and broken world. The ministry of Jesus was marked by the clear conviction that He had been sent by God with a specific purpose (Lu. 4:16-30; Jn. 4:34; 17:4, 18; 19:30; 20:21). Jesus was the chosen instrument of God through whom He would accomplish his plan of salvation for the world so that sinners could share in his blessing (Ep. 1:3, 9-10; 3:11). God's mission required that Jesus should give up the glory of heaven to assume the form of a servant and to sacrifice his own life (Jn. 1:14; Ph. 2:7-8).

The teachings of Jesus and his whole ministry, his death and resurrection, make it clear that everything that God did during the OT dispensation did not only point to Jesus, but, in a certain sense, was also founded upon Him. Jesus came to give the fullest expression to the Law and Prophets (Mt. 5:17). The tabernacle and temple ministry with its sacrifices and propitiation for sin were not only shadows pointing to the sacrifice of Christ. It also had real meaning for the people of the Old Testament because of the one future sacrifice of Jesus through which God reconciled people with himself once for all (He. 9-10). God forgave sins in the OT because the death of Jesus would lead to the forgiveness of sins for the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2).

Certain titles well-known in the OT were given to Jesus. This confirms that He occupied those positions to the fullest extent of their meaning. He is particularly worthy of the title "Son of man" (Da. 7:14) whose dominion and kingdom shall not pass away. Before him all nations shall be gathered (Mt.25:31). Jesus is the "Son of David" (Mt.1:1-17; Lu. 1:27, 32-33). In this way, all the promises made to the descendants of David come to full implementation, for example those in Ps. 110 and Zec. 9:10. Jesus is the final fulfilment of the "Servant of the Lord" who will make the will of God known to the nations in a special way (Is. 42:1-4, Mt. 12:18-21). Just as the Servant of the Lord in Is. 53, He would give his life as a ransom for many (Mk. 10:45). By calling Jesus the Messiah (the Anointed) (Mt.1:23; 2:6, 15; Lu. 2:11), the writers of the NT focus on the fact that God was working in the world through Jesus in a unique way. Thus, the Messianic promises of the OT have come to fulfilment in Him.

The holistic nature of mission is clear from the holistic way that Jesus blessed the world through his ministry. He preached the good news about the Kingdom of God. He liberated people from forces and practices which oppressed them and robbed them of their human dignity. He promoted justice. He healed the sick and provided food for the hungry. He encouraged fellowship and unity among people. Jesus reconciled people and the whole creation with God and destroyed the power of sin and evil forces through his death and resurrection.

Jesus did not prioritize or make very sharp distinctions between the different aspects of his mission to the world. He did not follow a prescribed sequence or priority with regard to matters such as for example preaching about the Kingdom, teaching, healing, deliverance or seeking community with people. Jesus served and blessed people in the light of their needs and concrete contexts. The “vertical” and “horizontal”, the “spirit” and the “body”; the individual and the group dimensions of his ministry were woven together with no tension.



1.3 THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

One of the well-known ways to express the comprehensive nature of mission is to describe it as witness (*marturia*). But this is further expressed in more detail as proclamation (*kerugma*), fellowship and building of a church community (*koinonia*) and ministry and service to the world (*diakonia*). The aspects can be distinguished, but they should never be separated. They are all indispensable for mission and the ministry of the church.

We have seen that we are called from the world to become God’s restored people, his *ecclesia* (church). The *koinonia*, fellowship with and love for the triune God, carries over into *koinonia* within the church. By this love for one another the world will see that we are His disciples. Jesus prays in Jn. 17:21 that the church may be one, so that the world may believe! This unity is not found in external acts like being in one building, belonging to one denomination, having the same uniforms etc. but in the loving and caring for one another.

The call to serve God’s people, to bring liberation, healing and reconciliation, is called *diakonia* in Greek. Again, we must serve everyone God sends across our way, especially those who are exposed and vulnerable, the poor, the disabled, the widows and orphans, the aliens, etc. (Ex. 22:21; Ja. 1:27).

“We do not say that mission is any good activity of the church, but we do think that mission is much more than just proclamation (*kerugma*). It includes (at least) two other dimensions also, namely the loving serving of those in need (*diakonia*), and the planting and building up of community (*koinonia*). The scope of mission is as broad as life itself. This view emphasises that the church’s mission is simply to *be* God’s people, Christ’s body on earth, continuing God’s mission. Instead of taking the *missio(nes) ecclesiae* (the mission(s) of the church) as the point of departure, God’s mission (the *missio Dei*) serves as the foundation. The church finds its identity and purpose in nothing less than her obedience to this calling. The church, therefore, *is* a missionary people, in everything it does. The church has only one task: mission. The ministry of the God-man Jesus serves as the guiding light for the church in envisioning its own mission (Kritzinger 2002: 3-4).

1.4 CALLING: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

God’s love for the world (Jn. 3:16) must pass through us and the church to the world. That is why, as first step in this course in theology, we take a look at ourselves and our congregations – our calling, gifts and spirituality.

It is not always pleasant to look at oneself, or at the church - not if you take a good, deep look! Fortunately, the Gospel first let you look away from yourself to God, and then at yourself in the light of who God is and what He does. You will then also look at God’s world in which He placed you, as well as at his people with whom He placed you here in a new way. All this is implied by the little word “call”. It changes the way you look at yourself, at your fellow believers and at the world. When you are called, you end up being sent, with other believers, to God’s world.

On the other hand, if there is a “call,” then there must be someone who calls, and a purpose in that call. Then there must be a deeper meaning to our life and that of other people, than just competing to see who can be first, the most important or the richest. So, who calls?

1.4.1 Who calls?

Now we have seen that there IS One who calls! Who is this One who calls? It is God, the triune God: The Father sent Jesus, and with Jesus the Holy Spirit, and Jesus and the Holy Spirit calls and sends us. Christ, who completed His mission by becoming human, by dying on the cross and by rising from death, was given all authority on heaven and earth by the Father (Mt. 28:18). With that authority, Christ, as head of the church and cosmos, sends us. This mission of and by the triune God is called *Missio Dei* in Latin.

- In the Old Testament God revealed Himself as Yahweh (Ex. 3:14), a name which literally means “the One who is/is present/is with you”. The name Yahweh emphasizes that we are not dealing with just a god, nor a statue which we can carry around, nor an image in our minds which agrees with what WE desire, but the living, always and everywhere present God, who cannot be controlled or manipulated by us, but who calls and sends US as HE wants. (This name was so special to the Jews that since 300 BC they did not pronounce it but read *Adonay* and wrote *JHWH* with the latter’s consonants. This was often translated wrongly as “Jehovah”).

1.4.2 Who are called?

We see that both individuals and the people of God as a whole are called. In the Old Testament different people were called to be kings, prophets and priests. When we look at the work of Christ we see that He acted in the capacity of king, prophet and priest. When Christ sent the disciples like the Father sent Him, and anointed them with the Holy Spirit, they also became kings, prophets and priests. This is also implied by the fact that believers are restored to the image of God, to be His representatives in the world. It will be wrong if today one person presents him/herself to another believer as a prophet, priest or king (leader) as if that believer is not the same.

The call also comes to believers collectively as people of God or church. In the Old Testament Israel was called to be a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6). In Revelation (5:10) we again read that Christ made the believers a kingdom of priests. Because of this call the Greek word for church in the New Testament is "*ecclesia*" which means: those who were called together/out.

All four gospels emphasize that this *ecclesia* did not just fall from the air as something new. It is the restored people of God. That is why Jesus called 12 disciples as Israel had 12 tribes. God restored His people as He promised. In the New Testament we find the same God as in the Old Testament, who calls His people with the same purpose He had from the beginning. His church is the bearer of the same promises He gave His people in the Old Testament: that through them all nations will be blessed.

To make this point clear, that God's plan does not stop with the calling and blessing of one nation, the calling of Adam and Eve was placed in the Bible before the calling of one nation through Abraham. This always reminds us that God is the creator of ALL people and His purpose is that His salvation will reach them all.

When we read passages in the Old Testament which emphasized the separation of Israel from and enmity against surrounding nations (like Nu. 31:1-18; 1 Sa. 15:17-33; Ezr. 10; Ps. 137:8-9) we must read it within the frame of the larger story: in the beginning God revealed Himself as the Creator of all people and at the end the doors are thrown open for the nations to come into His kingdom. Even in the centre of the Biblical revelation where He dealt with one people (Israel) there were instances where it already became clear that it is faith and not nationality that establishes a relationship with God (e.g. Rahab and Ruth). Towards the end of the Old Testament history the prophets more and more proclaimed the promise that one day God will restore his people Israel on behalf of the nations (Is. 49:6) and the nations will come to Zion, that is Jerusalem (Is. 60:1-3).

When we read Revelation, we find in symbolic language a reinterpretation of the holy war theme of the Old Testament. Now it is the blood of the Lamb and the witness of the believers which brings the victory and fulfilment of God's plan. That plan is to bring the nations into His kingdom. At the end of Revelation (and the Bible) we find that the kings of the world finally bring their treasures to the New Jerusalem and the nations receive healing from the tree of life. When we understand this plan of God to make His church catholic (all-embracing), we will also understand the importance of the call to bring reconciliation.

1.4.3 How are people called?

The call comes in different ways. Some (like Moses, Isaiah, Paul and John on Patmos) received their call in an encounter with God where they saw his glory. Some felt the call in their hearts when they heard about the suffering of God's people (Nehemiah). To some the call came through the reading or preaching of the Word of God (e.g. the congregation in Laodicea in Re. 3:20). Others only later discovered that the Lord placed them in certain situations or positions so that they can be instruments in His plan of salvation. (Josef - Ge. 45:1-8; Esther - Est. 4:12-16).

In Ac. 13:1-3 we find that it was the congregation who called Paul and Barnabas to take the Gospel into the world. The calling to fulltime ministry begins in the heart through the working of the Holy Spirit and then it must also be confirmed by the call from the congregation. We must always be willing to submit our calling (e.g., to go and do mission work in a certain country) to other people, especially the local congregation, to make certain we heard the Lord correctly. The Holy Spirit was given to all the members in the congregation and in that way to the congregation as a whole. That is why they have the right to test whether a project, mission or calling which is proposed by one of the members, really comes from God. Even the teachers of the Sunday school/catechism class cannot just appoint themselves. They have to be chosen and appointed by the congregation via its representatives (e.g. the church council). It happens

that people present a project to the church with the conviction that it came from God “since they prayed so hard”. It might then happen that nobody wants to oppose it because it might seem as if they oppose God. Afterwards however, when it brings disaster to the church, they discover that it did not come from the Lord at all. In the time of the crusades there even was a crusade to Jerusalem with children who in the end either died or were sold as slaves. It all started in the way described above with someone who thought that what they were doing was God’s calling.

Because every believer can be misled and think his/her own ideas or plans are that of God, we need other believers to check whether we are correct so as to protect us from going astray. For this reason, believers, especially ministers, must be accountable to local congregations and meetings of congregations together (circuits, synods). When people begin their own churches without being accountable to the church at large, they are in danger of going astray without realizing it and taking others with them.

1.4.4 For what purpose does God call people?

1.4.4.1 Called to fellowship with and worship of God

Many people would immediately answer: We are called to pray. That is correct, but what is meant by prayer in the Bible? What is meant is in the first place to have fellowship with the triune God (1 Jn. 1:3). The Greek word is: *koinonia*. Prayer also includes worshipping God. The Greek word is: *leitourgia*. He gave us His name so that we can call upon Him, talk with Him and listen to Him. The first commandment is that we should love God with all our heart, soul and strength. Prayer is part of our expression and practice of this love. Prayer includes both to wait upon God in silence to hear what God’s will is (Hab. 2:1-2), and to intercede on behalf of his church and the world, those with authority (1 Ti. 2:1-2), those who are ill, etc. (as Abraham interceded on behalf of Lot), Moses on behalf of the Israelites when they rebelled (Ex. 34:8-9), and Jesus who interceded for the church (Jn. 17). This fellowship with and worship of God through *koinonia* and *leitourgia* is again something we do as individually and collectively as his people/church.

1.4.4.2 Called to build the one, holy, apostolic church of God which is catholic

1.4.4.2.1. Called to be one church

We have seen that we are called from the world to become God’s restored people, his *ecclesia* (church). The *koinonia*, fellowship with and love for the triune God, carries over into *koinonia* within the church. By this love for one another the world will see that we are His disciples. Jesus prays in Jn. 17:21 that the church may be one, so that the world may believe! This unity is not found in external acts like being in one building, belonging to one denomination, having the same uniforms etc. but in the loving and caring for one another.

1.4.4.2.2. Called to be catholic (all-embracing)

The danger exists that the church can become like a club for like-minded people who love one another just because they share the same interests, culture, etc. That would be wrong. God wants his church to be catholic, which means: embracing all people of all kinds (see Re. 5:9). If we love only our natural friends, we are still like the sinners and tax collectors. We must love all the people God calls and sends across our way. God loves to call the outcast, poor, lepers etc. (Lu. 14:21; Mk. 2:15-17).

1.4.4.2.3. Called to be holy and apostolic

The church must also be holy (Jn. 17:17) and apostolic. With the latter we mean: to confess the truth of the Word of God as passed on by the apostles. This calling to grow and stand firm in the truth of the Word of God is emphasized in Tit. 2:1; 1 Ti. 1:3; Co. 3:16 and this is according to Ep. 4:14-16 the task of all believers. This calling includes the task to do theology! When you do a course in theology it should not only be to get a qualification to become a minister but to do theology on behalf of the church of God. We are called not just to copy what other said about the word of God but as individual believers and as congregations together (circuits,

synods, ecumenical meetings) to listen to, to reflect on, and to apply the Word to new circumstances the church finds itself in. In Mt. 13:52 Christ says: "... every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old." It is the Holy Spirit who leads the individual believer and the believers together to a deeper insight in the truth of the Gospel (Jn. 16:13); We are called to be both students and teachers of one another (Co. 3:16), with the willingness to learn from the little ones to whom God revealed Himself (Mt. 11:25); teachers who practice what they preach (Ja. 1:22).

1.4.4.2.4. *Putting all the aspects together: called to be one, holy, apostolic, catholic church*

When we put all these aspects together, we find that the holiness and apostolicity (truth of the gospel) makes the unity something very special (we call it: the communion of saints). The catholicity of the church turns this special community inside out, so that it shares its special qualities, its holiness, truth and love, with people of all kinds in the world. In this way, the church becomes a proclaiming, sanctifying force in world, a light and salt for the world (Mt. 5:14).

1.4.4.2.5. *Calling to bring reconciliation*

When the unity of the church is turned inside out by the catholicity of the church, the church also becomes a reconciling force in the world! How can the church be a reconciling force if it is as divided as it is? How will the world believe the church when it preaches the gospel of love but do not live that love amongst each other in the church. Christ prayed that the believers must be one so that the world may believe (Jn. 17:21). Therefore, it is part of our calling to bring reconciliation and unity also within the church of God. This does not mean that we sacrifice the holiness and apostolicity (truth) of the church on behalf of unity. Then the church will lose its saltiness and the unity will have no value or healing impact anymore. We are called to try to take all believers with us on the road of growing in holiness and the truth (confession), trusting that in that way we will grow in unity. True unity comes when we come to share the same confession in the triune God. Therefore, while the church must on the one hand condemn and drive out all sin and false teachings (so that it can truly be one, holy, apostolic church), it must on the other hand strive to be catholic: God's voice calling all people of all kinds, not frightening away or excluding anyone but rather leaving the 99 inside to go and look for the one lost sheep outside the kraal. Otherwise it would cross out the very purpose God has for His church. That is why we say that if you are called, you are also sent.

One practical implication of all this is that when a local congregation is being build, it must always be with the understanding that it is part of the one body of Christ. When new members are baptized or confirmed, they must understand that they do not only become members of that congregation, but members of the one body of Christ (1 Co. 12:13). That fact that Christ has only one body is emphasized in the New Testament (e.g. Ep. 4:4).

1.4.4.3 Calling towards the world

The believers are called together as church from the world so that they can be sent to the world. "World" means both the people in the world, all spheres of life and the world of nature.

1.4.4.3.1. *People*

We must see our calling towards people holistic: to bring the full Gospel to the full person. We must bring a total liberation, healing and reconciliation, as Christ did, and not focus on one aspect only, e.g. only "saving the soul", only exorcisms (driving our demons), only political liberation, only physical healing, etc. This total liberation, healing and reconciliation begin with the forgiveness of sins at the feet of the cross (Mk. 2:5-10). In Lu. 4:19 we again find this truth: to proclaim the year of the Lords favour meant the time of forgiveness and the freedom it brings, as in the Old Testament in the jubilee year all debts were cancelled with the result that all who sold themselves into slavery because of debt could return to their own homes. The call to serve God's people, to bring liberation, healing and reconciliation, is called *diakonia* in

Greek. Again we must serve everyone God sends across our way, especially those who are exposed and vulnerable, the poor, the disabled, the widows and orphans, the aliens, etc. (Ex. 22:21; Ja. 1:27).

1.4.4.3.2. *All spheres of life*

The totality of what the believer receives is the Kingdom of God (Mt. 5:3). This however is both a gift and a task! Every day we should pray for and seek the Kingdom of God (Mt. 6:10, 33), this means: to seek the rule of God through Christ in all spheres of life. We must teach ALL people to obey EVERYTHING Christ commanded us (Mt. 28:20). Our calling is therefore as broad and inclusive as is God's works of creation and recreation. We must do EVERYTHING as representatives of God (in His name) and to His glory (Co. 3:17). Even the slaves were called to do their work not to please men but God (Ep. 6:6-8). There is no sphere of life, no work too "worldly", or too humble, to be service to God. It includes seeking a life in full and justice for all through involvement in the economy and politics (Am. 2:6-8; 3:11-13). Many of Africa's problems like civil wars, corruption and poverty were caused because Christians withdrew from politics.

Our finances should also be part of our calling: to work, earn money, and spend it responsibly. We are called to be good stewards of everything God entrusted to us, which includes our time and money. With that we must care for our families and support all the things which are part of the church calling. It includes our contributions to the church.

This task to proclaim Christ as Lord over everything is called *kerugma* in Greek. This *kerugma* must be accompanied by what is called *marturia* which means: humble witness by the church not only by word but also by deed, by a lifestyle which is in accordance with the Gospel.

1.4.4.3.3. *The world of nature*

The task given to Adam and Eve was to both work and care for nature. We are called to bring sustainable development which does not destroy, but conserve nature. Presently the nature is endangered as never before. Many animal and plant species have already been wiped out while others are on the brink of extinction.

1.4.4.3.4. *Calling to be shepherds: kings and priests*

We are called to be like Christ, to be shepherds who both lead and serve. As kings we must rule, research, develop while at the same time we must be priests who serve and protect God people and nature (Mk. 10:42-44).

1.4.4.3.5. *Each person receives a unique calling*

Each person is called in his/her context. The call of two persons will not necessarily look the same. The one can be called (like the rich young man in Lu. 18:23) to sell everything and to live as Christ did. Someone else can be called to begin a factory and create jobs for other people. Someone else can be called to fulltime ministry. Each one must discover what God expects from him/her at that time and that place. We must not compare ourselves with other people and think that our calling is more or less important than theirs. Some people are fortunate to be called in a time of growth (like David and Solomon). Others are called in a time of crisis and decline (like Jeremiah). The only thing which is important is to be where and do what God expects from you. For some believers, the calling may be to live with a disability or illness or care for a child or spouse with one. The "world" to which we are sent is therefore not only the world far away or outside. It begins in our own lives, homes,

1.5 MY PERSONAL CALLING

1.5.1 Our response to our calling

1.5.1.1. Faith which produces obedience

When God calls people, he expects a response. The first response should be that of faith. It is so important that it is tested by God (Abraham in Ge. 22; 1 Pe. 1:7). Faith means to depend absolutely on the triune God, to trust Him with your whole heart, to wait for Him before you do ANYTHING (Lu. 24:49; Pr. 3:5-6).

1.5.1.2. Repentance/conversion

Real faith produces obedience, deeds of love. (Ga. 5:6; 1 Th. 1:3; Ja. 2:14-26). It goes hand in hand with repentance from sin and conversion to Christ. The road to God and fellowship with God has to pass along the cross (Mk. 8:34; 5:24). The crucified Christ is the way, the truth and the life (Jn. 14:6). There is no shortcut! At the foot of the cross you have to confess your sins and accept the forgiveness granted by Christ (Re. 3:20). Then you receive peace and joy (Ph. 4:4-7), and the yoke which is easy (Mt. 11:28-30). Conversion is something which goes on throughout your life: the putting to death of the old self and its practices and putting on of the new self which is being renewed in the image of Christ (Co. 3:10; Catechism of Heidelberg question 88). With every communion (and even every day) you take the three steps of the Catechism of Heidelberg: confession of sins, acceptance of the salvation in Christ, and a new commitment to a life of gratitude.

1.5.1.3. Sinners/beggars who live from God's mercy

From this it is clear that God does not call perfect people without sin but sinners (Paul in 1 Ti. 1:16; Lu. 5:31), people who initially are unwilling to go and try to sidestep their calling (Moses in Ex 3:11; 4:10; Jeremiah in Je. 1:6-7; The parable of the two sons in Mt. 21:28-32), people who, although they came when they were called, still struggled with doubt and disbelief (The disciples in Mt. 28:17; Thomas in Jn. 20:24-29). God is patient and merciful towards His servants (Ex. 34:6). But the warning is also there not to tempt God by disregarding His patience (Saul in 1 Sa. 105:22-23; the congregation in Ephesus in Re. 2:5).

1.5.2 Faith, love and HOPE

In 1 Th 1:3 Paul thanks God for the faith and love of the Thessalonians, and also for their endurance inspired by hope. These three go together: faith, hope and love (See also 1 Co. 13:13). Through faith we put our trust in what God did and is doing through Christ, and in hope we look forward to what He will do when Christ returns. This two, faith and hope, enables us to a life of love in the present. Our calling is made easy, our yoke light, by the knowledge that God will complete His work of salvation and restoration since He already accomplished it through the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee that in the end we will all come to that point where His plan is fulfilled and we share in His glory (Ep. 1:13-14).

Everything we do must be a response to this Gospel, to who God is, and what He did, does and will do! That is why John is given an open book in Re. 10:2, 9. It was opened in Re. 5:7,9 by Christ who through His blood already set people from all nations and cultures free to be a kingdom of priests, serving and worshiping God. Christ already conquered everything which stood in the way of God's plan: the Satan, sin, and death. Because of His victory, we can be sure of victory. Despite how difficult our calling may be, how impossible the task, how disappointing the results, we can fulfil our calling filled with hope and joy. We have the certainty of victory in the end. And already we are more than conquerors amidst all the suffering, failures and disappointments (Ro. 8:37). Because of Christ's victory we can expect and allow Him to work His miracles in and through us every day. Sometimes we will be able to see these miracles with our eyes and count them. At other times, we will only discover them through faith. And always we must remember that we are still like the pilgrims in He. 11:9-10; 13-16, aliens and strangers on earth, looking out in hope for that day when God will bring everything to

completion, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, (Phil 2:10-11) when we will arrive at the city of which God Himself is the architect and builder.

The four attributes of the church - unity, holiness, apostolicity and catholicity - are in the first place gifts granted to the church because of Christ's fulfilled work and in the second place it is tasks, a calling, to which the church must respond and by doing that becomes what Christ has made it!

Now that we have already learnt that each person receives a unique call in his/her specific circumstances...Discover YOUR own calling!

2. CALLING AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

In this theme, Calling and Professional identity will be dealt with. In order to grasp this theme, we first need to distinguish between professional identity and calling and secondly explain the relationship between calling and professional identity. We will therefore first look at the terms such as professional and Identity and then afterwards:

- Faith and Professional Practice
- Calling: The meaning of work
- Social work as calling
- Social Work and Christianity: A Biblical Comparison
- Some of Social Work's Core Values and Jesus' Mission
- Social Work and Christianity: A Literature Review
- Professional Identity and Calling
- Professional Identity and Social Work
- Identity Development
- Imago Dei and Identity Development
- Influence of the Faith Community

For assessment purposes, you will need to keep in mind that you must show knowledge, understanding and skills related to the following Exit Level Outcomes (ELO) and their Associated Assessment Criteria (AAC):

Understanding and skills		
Topic	Exit Level Outcome	Associated Assessment Criteria
Distinguish between professional identity and calling	The development and consolidation of a professional identity as a social worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to work toward social justice and egalitarian societies ▪ Understanding the Self as an important instrument of intervention ▪ Commitment to caring, building humane societies and mutual inter-dependence ▪ Willingness to <i>be for the Other</i>, and ability for empathic entry into the life worlds of people
Explain the relationship between calling and professional identity		

This theme will take place during weeks 6 to 7 and will be assessed by means of a semester test and examination.

Definition of terms

Professional	A professional is a person who is following an occupation as a means of livelihood. In this case a Social Worker in the social work profession and who is an expert at his/her work.
Identity	Identity refers to the distinguishing character or personality of an individual.
Professional Identity	Professional Identity refers to the distinguishing character or personality of an individual in a specific profession. Furthermore, a professional identity is the image a person based on the way he/she performs a job or operates within a career field. It is often compared to a brand identity, which is a company's public image. A distinct professional identity is often helpful in building a successful career.

2.1 FAITH AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

In making a career choice many Christian students find the social work profession a good fit with their religious faith, or at least at first glance it appears so. For example, as part of the application process the social program I teach in, students are asked to explain why they have chosen social work as a major. What motivates them to enter this field of Study? Some answered the question by relating to past experiences with social work services or role models who were social workers, but almost all describe a moderate or fairly strong religious impulse to serve people and society.

Many specifically relate their faith to their choice of social work - stating something like this: in being loved by God, they in turn wish to share some of this love with those who are poor or hurting or in need of help of some kind. Some of these students believe that to be Christian social workers they must work in an agency under religious auspices, whereas others plan to work in programs that do not have a specific religious base or affiliation, but are of the larger community of governmental social welfare responses to those in need. Despite these differences, almost all are interested in finding ways to integrate their faith and their newly chosen field of study.

But it does not take long in their social work studies for these students to begin recognize the complex tensions between their religious faith, agency auspices, and the secular values of the social work profession. This discovery is not surprising; social work is, after all, a secular profession. At times, students find the profession very critical of religion, even suspicious of anyone who claims to have religious motives for helping others.

This feeling is understandable, for in the last thirty to forty years, the social work profession has simply ignored religious insights and accepted the principle of separating the sacred and secular. Religion has simply no particular insight to offer or relevance for everyday professional practice. Because of this attitude, recent professional literature does not offer much help to students in thinking through the relationship of religious faith and professional practice. It is ironic that social work which claims as its unique focus the "whole person" in the whole environment, has for so long neglected the religious dimension of life.

Not only do students continue to come to the profession with religious motivations, but the roots of social work are largely grounded in religious faith (Devine, 1939). Social work originated and came of age under the inspiration of the Judeo-Christian traditions and the philanthropic and service motivation of religious people. As Leiby (1985) indicates, the Christian biblical command to love God and to love one's neighbour as oneself was directly translated into a sense of moral responsibility for social service. As the social work profession secularized in the 20th century, earlier religious rationales and models for service were replaced by doctrines of natural rights, utilitarianism, and humanistic ideology.

Dealing with human need apart from religious motives and methods is actually a very recent development in the history of charity and philanthropy. The notion of a secular profession focused on responding to human suffering would have struck many of our professional ancestors as quite inconsistent and confusing. Many of them were religiously motivated and expressed their faith by means of social work as a vocation, a calling from God to serve their brothers and sisters who were in need. With their perception of social work as a calling, a vocation, they formalized a link between their religious faith and social work practice.

2.2 CALLING

2.2.1 Calling: The Meaning of Work

Luther's concept of vocation or calling fits neatly within the compass of his thought since he draws a basic theological distinction between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of earth. To the kingdom of heaven belongs our relationship to God, which is to be based on faith; to the kingdom of earth belongs our relationship to our neighbour, which is to be based on love. A vocation (calling), properly speaking, is the call to love my neighbour that comes to me

through the duties attached to my social place or station within the earthly kingdom. A station in this life may be a matter of paid employment, but it need not be. Luther's idea of station is wide enough to include being a wife or a husband, a mother or a father, a judge or politician, as well as a baker, truck driver, farmer or social worker. Thus, the call to love one's neighbour goes out to all in general. All of these callings represent specific and concrete ways of serving my neighbour, as I am commanded to do by God himself.

What do we accomplish when we discharge the duties of our stations in life, when we heed the call of God to serve our neighbour in our daily tasks? Luther believed the order of stations in the kingdom of earth has been instituted by God himself as his way of seeing to it that the needs of humanity are met on a day-by-day basis. Through the human pursuit of vocations across the array of earthly stations, the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed, the sick are healed, the ignorant are enlightened, and the weak are protected. That is, by working we actually participate in God's providence for the human race. Through our work, people are brought under His providential care. Far from being of little or no account, work is charged with religious significance. As we pray each morning for our daily bread, people are already busy at work in the bakeries. Luther conceived of work as a way of serving others. He never recommended it as either the road to self-fulfilment or a tool for self-aggrandizement. We, of course, find it natural to assess the attractiveness of a particular job on the basis of what it can do for us. But Luther saw quite clearly that work will always involve a degree of self-sacrifice for the sake of others, just as Christ sacrificed himself for the sake of others.

During the time of Luther, and for many centuries preceding him, people thought the human society to be stable, as incapable of change as the order of nature itself. Shortly after Luther's time, however, European civilization underwent a dramatic transformation under the combined influence of a rapidly expanding market economy, accelerated urbanization, technological innovation, and vast political reorganization. In the face of these astounding changes on all fronts of social life, humans soon saw that the structure of human society is itself in part a product of human activity and affected by sin. Once people recognized this fact, it became clear, in turn, that to the degree this activity is motivated by sinful desires and worldly ambitions the society thus produced is likely to be structurally unsound and in need of reform. An economy based upon greed and a government based on the arbitrary use of power stand in just as much need of repentance as the individuals who are a part of them. For this reason, other reformers insisted that not only the human heart but also human society must be reformed in accordance with the Word of God. The emergent vision of the Christian life at the dawn of modern social work practice, then, required not only that people obey God in their callings, but that the callings themselves be aligned with the will of God.

2.2.2 Social work as calling

What is meant by viewing social work as a calling? Several recent articles have addressed this "old fashioned" concept of calling or vocation, sensing its power and value for current social work practice (Gustafson, 1982; Reamer, 1992). However, these writers essentially have attempted to take the religious concept of calling and use it in a secular fashion. They have done so in order to provide a moral purpose for the profession to counteract what they perceive to be the focus on self-interest inherent in social work that becomes increasingly professionalized, specialized and bureaucratic. It is important to reintroduce the religious model of calling as used by Christian social workers, past and present, in linking Christian faith and professional social work practice.

2.3 A BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL WORK

2.3.1 Social Work and Christianity: A Biblical Comparison

We are God's chosen people, created in His likeness with a yearning to be united in social harmony with Him. Genesis 1:26-27 elucidates this relationship between the Creator and His creature, stating that "God created man in his own image." David further articulates this eternal

social linkage. “What is Man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honour” (Psalm 8: 4-8). As unique creations, we have a spiritual design essence whose most salient feature is our ability to understand, exercise and respond to authority for the purpose of being obedient and faithful stewards of God’s social order on earth, living and working for Jesus Christ. Yet something horrible has breached this perfect Creator-created bond. Severed are the ties that linked us to the unmarred divine resources and perfect social order we were originally destined to share. Sin has wreaked havoc with the security and focus that we were created to live with. In our post-modern daze we look everywhere for meaning and purpose.

David also noted this dilemma in Psalm 39: “Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and from: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it” (Verse 6). At no time in history has this postmodern truth been more perspicuous than in our modern world of technology, affluence and leisure time, where the phenomena of apathy, depression and suicide are all in the process of increasing exponentially. Social and material advances, which are supposed to be a blessing to human life, are found to be correlated instead with feelings of hopelessness and social breakdown. From the Biblical viewpoint, however, the correlation seems perfectly reasonable. Apart from an intimate connection with God, our existence is hopeless. What is surprising from the Biblical point of view is that this pall of futility does not hang even more heavily over the unbelieving postmodern world (a phenomenon to be attributed to the complete spiritual blindness which sets in once God is rejected and materialism and relativism rule).

The Bible, especially Old Testament tenants, has historically played a central role in crafting social meaning, building civil and social order, and defining individual rules and norms. God’s covenant in the Old Testament demanded that society and social responsibility as a whole should be ordered in accordance with the will of God. God’s covenant with His people demands that social commitment and responsibilities be ordered in harmony with the His will and His divine plan. Throughout history, God’s chosen people have lived selfless lives in service and sacrifice for helping those who struggle for meaning and survival.

In Luke Chapter 4, Luke gave the account of Jesus reading from Isaiah 61:1-2. Jesus the Messiah, the anointed one, proclaimed the following mission through the Isaiah passage in Luke 4: 16-19 (NIV):

- proclaim the good news to the poor
- bind up the broken-hearted
- proclaim the freedom for the captives
- release from darkness the prisoners
- comfort all who mourn

“The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty” (NASW, 1996, p.1). Jesus’ public ministry was filled with examples of his concern for all people, especially the marginalized in society (sociologically and economically). He cared about the lepers, the tax collectors, the Samaritan woman, the blind beggar, and the children. A social worker’s mission compliments Jesus’ proclamation in Luke 4.

One of the most significant Biblical texts delineating the Church’s mandate for helping the “least of these” is Matthew 25. This passage sets forth the evaluation criteria for life’s final portfolio exam for one to be considered fit for the eternal Kingdom.

Matthew 25: 31-46

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them

one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, in as much as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, in as much as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25: 31-46).

This is one of the last lessons taught by Jesus. Here he summarizes what his life of service was all about. While he has taught many constructs, this one highlights the overall expected outcome for each of our lives.

Our motivation is not to be fear, but love. We are to love God with an untiring commitment. That becomes our motivation for living a life of selfless service. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with your entire mind; and, Love your neighbour as yourself" (Luke 10: 26-28).

Social work's professional value base is uncompromisingly congruent with the Bible. While other disciplines may struggle with finding a Biblical mandate for their existence, social work does not. "The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human well-being by strengthening opportunities, resources, and capacities of people and to create policies and provide services to prevent and address conditions that limit human rights and the quality of life. Acknowledging a global perspective, the social work profession strives to eliminate poverty, discrimination, and oppression" (Council on Social Work Education, 2008). Social work embodies the commission of Matthew 25 (doing "unto the least of these") through organized, professional services that use social work policies, practices, and expertise to accomplish its purposes.

Jesus' life and teachings aptly illustrate the social work mandate to serve with the right motives. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus cautioned, "Take heed that you do not do your righteous works before men to be seen of them" (Matthew 6:1). Service is not to be done for the applause of humanity. Jesus continually shrank from being in the limelight. Whenever crowds threatened to make him king, Jesus quietly slipped away. He would not be moved by the praise of people. In contrast, Jesus performed acts of service in obedience to his Father's will. "Your Father which sees in secret will Himself reward you openly" (Matthew 6: 4). This implies that Jesus was directed by the Father in serving His fellow human beings.

By serving humanity, Jesus felt closer to the Father for He was actively engaged in doing the Father's will. When social workers offer effective service to those in need, it must be from a heart that longs to be like Jesus and the Father. Ellen White, a divinely-inspired Victorian period social welfare author, herself notes in her book *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, "Only like can appreciate like. It is as we give ourselves to God for the service of humanity that He

gives Himself to us” (p 81). By serving others, we can more easily receive Jesus into our own life. In beholding Him in the faces of “least of these” we become changed into His likeness.¹⁰ Who was Jesus’ target population? During His time of active ministry, Jesus was known for associating with the undesirables. Jesus was not afraid to touch the “untouchables.” Similarly, professional social workers are commissioned to work with those whom the rest of society rejects. Social workers serve the poor, homeless, orphans, older adults, prisoners, persons living with HIV/AIDS, domestic violence abusers and victims, sexual assault victims and perpetrators alike, drug addicts and alcoholics, to name only a few.

By Jesus’ example we are to touch the “untouchables.” In John 4, Jesus gives us an example of approaching a person that was considered far beneath Him. The Jews never voluntarily talked to a Samaritan. They were allowed to trade with them out of necessity, but not to socialize in any way. When the town’s “harlot” came to get water at the most unlikely time of day, Jesus did not hesitate to engage her and affirm her worth and dignity.

Another group was marginalized, not on the basis of culture or occupation, but morality. The woman at the well and Mary Magdalene both illustrate this type of “untouchable.” Mary was considered an immoral woman. She was tricked into an illicit sexual relationship that nearly cost her life, yet Jesus was not afraid to touch her and later in a public setting be seen allowing her to anoint His feet with costly perfume and wash them with her tears of gratitude. This was such a serious social error that, in the mind of the host of this event, if Jesus were a prophet, this would not have happened.

Related to the cautions of interacting with “the immoral” is the prohibition of interacting in any way with people inflicted with leprosy. People with leprosy were considered cursed by God. The Bible records several examples of Jesus healing people with leprosy. Anyone even casually touching a person inflicted with leprosy became unclean, but not Jesus, our touch-friendly Saviour.

Jesus interacted with hated cultural groups, occupational groups, and people who were considered immoral and unclean. Thus, Jesus is the social workers’ example in reaching out to those on the margins of society, the despised, and those considered contaminating and unworthy to mix with.

Modern missiologists speak of hungers (often labelled “felt needs”) among people. In a more restricted sense, felt needs are deeper personal needs—the life issues that all of us face: loneliness, managing relationships, family and parenting, handling money, finding fulfilment, coping with stress and worry, workplace problems, illnesses, and the tragedy of death. None of these is directly what we might call a ‘core spiritual issue’ (e.g. sinfulness, fallen human nature, rebellion against God, and the need for salvation), though all of them are impacted by “The Fall” and our own sin and self-centred nature. But they are precisely the amplifier that God very often uses to begin a process that ends in conversion. Of course, God is sovereign throughout this process. But it helps us to understand the progression. Jesus addressed the environmental context of the human existence that included physical hunger resulting from poverty, social hunger resulting from injustice and marginalization, emotional hunger resulting from socio-familial disconnect, and spiritual hunger resulting from a disconnect with the divine. How did Jesus model this for us? How did he go about doing good? Jesus set the example for social work by meeting people’s material, physical, and emotional needs as His initial approach in ministering them. Jesus’ first miracle was performed during the wedding feast at Cana. Jesus’ mother performed a key role in the wedding arrangements, and when she discovered that there would be a lack of wine, (therefore indicating a lack of courtesy), she told Jesus with the secret hope that He would perform a miracle. In connection with this story, Ellen White in *The Desire of Ages*, states, “Not alone from the pulpit are the hearts of men [and 12 women] touched by divine truth. There is another field of labour, humbler, it may be, but fully as promising. It is found in the home of the lowly and in the mansion of the great; at the hospitable

board, and in gatherings for innocent social enjoyment” (p. 152). In His first miracle, Jesus gave us an example of meeting temporal felt needs.

Along the same lines, after a long day of teaching on a mountainside, Jesus challenged his disciples to implement a mass feeding program for 5,000 men, not counting the women and children. After scouring the multitude for food to share, the disciples found a boy that was willing to give his lunch of five loaves of bread and two small fish. People were hungry and Jesus provided food from the scant supply. Feeding hungry people is so important to Jesus that he involved his disciples actively in the process and left us a model for social work to follow. Christian social workers need to use the resources at hand. They may seem meagre and insufficient, but in the Lord’s hands they will multiply and fill unmet needs.

Much of Jesus’ life as recounted in the Gospels was dedicated to healing physical disease. To the casual reader, these many actions may have nothing to do with social work. But with closer examination, the lesson for social workers and others is clear: to bring healing is central to gaining a foothold in people’s hearts. Jesus often spent entire days engaged in healing. People would begin bringing their sick to Him early in the morning, and Jesus would continue to heal until late into the evening. He was steadfast in His mission to bring healing in spite of the cost to Himself. Social work’s focus centres on socio/emotional healing rather than physical healing; however the principle of reaching out to heal hurting people remains the same. Health care providers can attest that when doing holistic interventions, professionals cannot separate the psycho and somatic issues in treatment.

Finally, an act that occurred as one of Jesus’ last deeds was to wash the feet of His disciples. This single act of service embodies the image of Jesus as a humble social worker. There is no room for pride in social work. Social workers must engage in whatever service is needed, however humbling, in a given situation. Jesus saw a need and acted to fill that need. He was proactive in his approach to service. Social workers must be diligent in noticing and meeting human needs. We must not wait around hoping for someone else to do the “ugly” jobs. We must be like Jesus; see the need and address it.

Jesus’ life modelled humility in service. Besides his own example, Jesus told of another’s example of service with such high regard that the story’s protagonist has become synonymous with service—the Good Samaritan. When faced with an apparently unanswerable question about to whom we must minister, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan. A man of a hated race reached out and tenderly cared for another person at his own expense and at the peril of his life. At the end of the story, to bring home the point, Jesus asked, “Who proved neighbour to him that fell among the robbers?” (Luke 10:36). Even then the listener would not answer Jesus’ question by a direct answer that required him to say the word “Samaritan.” Instead the questioner answered, “The man who had mercy on him” (Luke 10:36). Jesus’ example of whom we should help commended the Samaritan in a way that must have been scandalous at the time, but would remain throughout history an example to which to aspire.

While Jesus’ life cantered in service, we have recorded at least one Biblical caution about serving in Luke 10, directly following the Good Samaritan story. This passage tells of Jesus being invited to Martha’s home for a feast. Martha welcomed Jesus into their home and began making all of the appropriate and expected arrangements. Luke mentions Martha’s sister (clearly Mary was the referent person here) who “sat at Jesus’ feet” (Luke 10:39). Luke begins the next verse with the word “but.” “But Martha was distracted” (Luke 10:40). This indicates that there is something amiss, something needing correction. It was nice that Martha welcomed Jesus into her home, *but* she was distracted “*with much serving*” (Luke 10:40).

The story that precedes this vignette proclaims service to others as the cornerstone of a relationship with Jesus. By its placement, the Mary and Martha story offers a balancing theme. Jesus had just explained that service is to be central in the life of a Christian. At the same time,

sitting at Jesus' feet is crucial. It is our relationship with Jesus that fits us for service. Balance and priorities are important to Jesus. "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42). If either professionally-trained or untrained caregivers are to be fit servants for Jesus, they must take the time to sit at the feet of Jesus. This is the "good part." Whatever are the pressing needs of those we serve, all caregivers need to take the time to sit at Jesus' feet and there receive the refilling of our own, and often empty, cups of compassion.

2.3.2 Some of Social Work's Core Values and Jesus' Mission

Social work professionals conduct practices guided by the profession's six core values: service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. The following discussion explains each of the social work core values and its compatibility to Jesus's mission.

2.3.2.1. Service

Social work scholar Barsky (2010) explained that the value of service is fulfilled by a "social worker [subjugating] their personal desires in order to focus on the needs, interest, and wishes of the people they serve" (p.21). There is very little doubt that Jesus was committed to put others first as demonstrated in His death on the cross. Jesus explained His upside down kingdom to His disciples in Matthew 20:26-28 (NIV): "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." It is so important for us to put others first that Jesus implored us to "love our neighbor as ourselves" after the first commandment to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37-38, NIV).

2.3.2.2. Social Justice

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8, NIV). The social justice principle encourages social workers to challenge social injustice, pursue social change, educate others on various forms of societal oppression, and to remove obstacles to accessing resources (NASW, 1996). There are many conflicting viewpoints on how social justice should be carried out in our society. However, being compassionate to those in need is not about a political view point. It is about emulating Jesus' love and compassion: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

2.3.2.3. Dignity and Worth of the Person

NASW (1996) explained this ethical principle in this way: "Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity" (p.5). Our creative God not only created the beautiful world, He also created mankind in his own image. "Male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27, NIV). Each of us reflects the glory of our creator. As C.S. Lewis (1949) expressed in the *Weight of Glory*: "There are no ordinary people. You have never met a mere mortal" (p.46). Jesus placed the value of our worth above Him by sacrificing Himself for us.

2.3.2.4. Importance of Human Relationships

Social workers are encouraged to seek partnership with those they serve in order to create change. The NASW (2014) Code of Ethics affirms the importance of relationships in cultivating change. Our God is a relational God and the Bible has given us guidelines for our relationships with God himself, our spouse, our fellow brothers and sisters, and even with our enemies. God cares about relationships and so do social workers.

2.3.2.5. Integrity

Jesus remains deeply in love with us even when we are undeserving of His love. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8, NIV). Jesus is dependable and trustworthy. The social work practice must be undergirded by a social worker’s trustworthiness in order to be effective. For example, the core value of service will have little meaning if it is not carried out with honesty and integrity. “In social work, where the character of the agent has long been understood as inseparable from the professional act or intervention performed, the virtues refocus attention on the character of the practitioner and the professional use of self” (Adams, 2013, p.300).

2.3.2.6. Competency

This principle is closely tied to the principle of integrity. Social work is a complex profession as we often provide various levels of care. It is vital for social workers to conduct honest reflection and self-examination to explore areas that need improvement. Barsky (2010) explained the value of competency as the “knowledge, skills, and self-awareness required to perform social work tasks in an effective manner” (p.25). The NASW (2014) Code of Ethics holds the expectation that social workers should pursue the development of professional knowledge and skills to enhance competency. We are given a variety of gifts to serve God and we can honor God by being excellent at what we do in our profession. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters” (Colossians 3:23, NIV).

Pittman (2008) on her part also highlighted some of Social Work’s values with supporting biblical texts as follows:

Social Work Values	Texts Supporting Core Social Work values
Service	Matthew 25:31-45 & Luke 10:25-37
Social Justice	Micah 6:7-9 & Isaiah 58:6
The dignity and worth of the person	Isaiah 49:14-16 & Matthew 10:31
The importance of human relationships	Matthew 5:23-24 & Mark 12:31
The integrity and competence of the worker	Matthew 25:13-30 & 2 Timothy 2:15

Therefore Ressler (1998) also goes through each of the six core values and principles of social work (NASW, 1999) and compares them to similar Christian values and principles. The social work value of “Service” is also an extremely important Christian value. Ressler cites Matthew 20:26-28 as a key passage supporting Christian service. In this passage Jesus Christ states that even He came to serve and not to be served.

The second social work principle mentioned, “Social Justice,” also has Biblical roots. Ressler (1998) cites Micah 6:8 to support the Christian view of justice. Micah states that the Lord requires us “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (New International Version).

Third and fourth are the principles of “Dignity and Worth of the Person” and “Importance of Human Relationships.” Ressler (1998) notes that the Christian symbol of the cross is the ultimate reminder of God’s unconditional love. Closely related to Christ’s love for mankind is His command for us to love one another unconditionally (Luke 6:27).

The fifth and sixth social work values are “Integrity” and “Competence.” Ressler (1998) draws parallels between the value of “Integrity” and the command in Ephesians 1:4 for Christians to “be holy.” He appeals to the command in 1 Timothy 5:4 to be beyond reproach as a parallel to these social work values as well.

THE GREAT COMMAND POEM ¹

I am ... sick and tired – by Jacques Walter Beukes

I am commanded to be sick and tired.
Not sick such as mentally or physically
nor tired such as lazy ... No!
I am sick and tired such as fed-up ... Yes!
I am sick and tired of being sick and tired.

I am sick and tired of seeing disempowered people, I will empower!
I am sick and tired of the state of our neighbourhoods, I will make a difference!
I am sick and tired of turning a blind eye for my neighbour's need, I will care!
I am sick and tired of living in a world where some children do not experience real love, I want to give love!
I am sick and tired of brokenness, I want to fix!

I am sick and tired of just receiving, I want to give!
I am sick and tired of seeing corruption and crime and do nothing about it, I want to speak up!
I am sick and tired of people who are sick and tired, I want to heal!
I am sick and tired of people pointing fingers, I will start by myself and use all **my** fingers to bring change in this world!
I want to be the voice of the voiceless.

Because I am called to do so!

My God of Unity, Reconciliation and Justice called me,
God prepared me,
God formed me,
and God moulded me
for doing what is right and just!

I am called to do justice, to bring reconciliation, to love kindness, to unite and to walk humbly with my God.

I am commanded to go into the world to be sick and tired of being sick and tired!

by Jacques Walter Beukes

2.3.3 Social Work and Christianity: A Literature Review

Despite the rich history of the integration of Christian faith and social action, according to Harris (2008) it seems that today some people from both the secular and Christian camps believe that Christianity and social work are incompatible. Johnston (1998) states: "People in both worlds want to build walls that separate and divide rather than bridges that connect and support" (p.72). Johnston points out, however, that both Christianity and social work are historically inclusive, not exclusive. While he recognizes that there are tensions between the two, "there are many areas where theology and social work are very much in agreement" (p.72).

Hugen 1998 identifies four principles that have guided Christians in their motivation to help the poor and less fortunate. These principles include justice, love, self-fulfillment, and responsibility. Sometimes two additional principles are added, including the belief that actions should produce some sort of good, and the belief that order is needed in society. These

¹ This poem was shared at the 2015 "DiacAfric" conference hosted by Hugenote Kollege, Wellington on Diakonia, Social Work and Theology.

motivations do not seem that different from the social work principles of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence (NASW, 1999).

Recently, several authors have noticed an increase in interest in the field of social work when it comes to issues of faith and practice. According to Russel (2006), religious content has increased in both social work literature and education over the past fifteen years. Ressler (1998) states: "After decades of neglect, the topic of spirituality has become increasingly popular in social work in recent years" (p.169). Ressler also notes that more people seem to be recognizing how important religion is to both colleagues and clients.

The reality that religion and spirituality are extremely important to a large portion of the American public is a reality social workers need to be able to face in order to provide the best possible services to clients. If spirituality is important to a majority of Americans, social workers need to be comfortable and competent to address spiritual issues. Russel (2006) identifies just how important religion and spirituality may be for the American population: National opinion polls reveal that 96% believe in God or a higher power (*Pew Religion and Public Life Survey*, 2005); 89% report a belief in heaven, and 85% believe that they will personally go to heaven (ABC News, 2006); 55% report believing in spiritual healing (Gallup Poll, 2005); and 74% believe that the Devil or Satan exists (*Princeton Survey Research*, 2004). (p.49).

2.4 PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND CALLING

In her article, "Professional identity: What I call myself defines who I am", Neary, 2014 argues that Professional identity is the concept which describes how we perceive ourselves within our occupational context and how we communicate this to others. She reasons that there are varying academic definitions of professional identity. Ibarra, 1999 suggests that it evolves through work socialisation and observation of our peers. Larson, 1977 are also of the opinion that it is based on shared expertise. Professional identity can be established and supported by the infrastructure which contributes to creating a shared sense of commonality amongst practitioners. Hughes, 2013, presents counselling as an example of an occupation that has a clear identity because it is underpinned by a professional association, a body of knowledge, nationally recognised qualifications, a national register explicitly defining CPD requirements, client contact hours and supervision. Professional identity is not static but fluid; it is strongly influenced by how we see ourselves, how we perceive others perceive us and how we are viewed by society at large, Beijgaard et al. 2004.

2.4.1 Professional Identity and Social Work

According to Webb (2015) Professional identity is not a stable entity; it is an ongoing process of interpretation and customisation which is shaped by contextual workplace factors. In this respect identity formation is viewed as more interactive and more problematic than the relatively straightforward adoption of the role or category of 'professional social worker'. Professional identity does not come ready-made but is continually fashioned in the movements along ways of organisational and professional life.

How and why do some people develop a satisfying and sustainable social work career and have resilient coping responses, while for others social work becomes burdensome and overwhelming, leading to vicarious trauma, distress, burnout, and even impaired practice? Pooler (2011) are of the opinion that for social workers who are Christians, their understanding of their relationship with God may help them develop a healthy work life balance, and others may experience almost compulsive urges to keep giving even when they are depleted. Social workers have other factors that impact their work experiences based on years in practice, quality of supervision, maturity, diverse workplace, work environment, available resources, funding, leadership styles, organizational culture, practice setting, client population, caseload size, and the list could continue. All of these factors affect people's experiences with their

career, but some of these factors are not very malleable, and individual workers have varying levels of control over them.

Professional flourishing happens at the intersection of being satisfied with one's job, having a sense of effectiveness at work, and having a healthy balance between work and life. Self-care undergirds professional flourishing. Self-care, although not widely discussed, is not new to the literature. Collins (2005) suggested spiritual practices to enhance self-care such as finding silence, keeping the Sabbath, and being grateful. Much of the discussion of self-care happens in organizations and in-service training, and the focus is on healthy behaviors like exercise, eating in moderation, and getting appropriate sleep. These ideas are common knowledge to social workers, but in my opinion are sometimes not practiced very well.

It is critical to examine the thoughts and motives that guide identity rather than focusing only on the behaviors of self-care or urging social workers to simply try a little harder. A shift at this level may in fact be the place where permanent change originates. Role identity theory and social identity theory make explicit the process of how social workers develop their identity, making this process more explicit gives social workers an opportunity to reflect on their practice, uncover things over which they have some control, and make appropriate changes, so their practice may be more sustainable. This is also important for social work educators and administrators to consider because it has implications for curricula, class discussions, and organizational policies and practices.

2.4.2 Identity Development

Professional identity or how a social worker thinks of herself or himself as a social worker is often defined as a practitioners professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). Professional identity guides behavior in relation to clients, colleagues, community leaders, supervisors, and supervisees. Examples of its influence in the workplace could include decisions such as when to say "yes" or "no," when to set boundaries, when to take sick days and vacation time, how many hours to work per week, and how to care for one's self. Core beliefs about important occupational matters stem from our personal identity and its correlate self-concept—how one sees one's self compared to relevant others (Ng & Feldman, 2008). Self-concept is complex and is influenced by personality, peers, parents, church, community, education, the media, and social interactions with others (McCall & Simmons, 1978). Self-concept is created by multiple social roles ranked by subjective importance based on perceived appearance to self and others, and these roles guide behavior (Burke & Tully, 1977; Siebert & Siebert, 2007).

Role identity theory and social identity theory are two related theories that clarify the identity development process. Role identity theorists explore the components of self and differentiate them by "roles" and the salience of each role in the construction of self-concept (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). Social identity theory provides additional clarity regarding professional identity by exploring the group differentiation process in which helping professionals may conceptualize themselves differently from relevant others, such as clients, as they form a professional identity (Chu & Dwyer, 2002; Ng & Feldman, 2008). Two sub components of social identity theory explain this differentiation process. **Self categorization** is when professionals identify themselves with other professionals (their in-group) and make a differentiation between self and others (clients/non-professionals). Self-concept is further enhanced through **social comparison**, which assumes that people need to see themselves positively in relation to important comparison groups (e.g., clients) (Charng, Piliavin, & Callero, 1988; Grube & Piliavin, 2000). Social workers may focus only on those positive elements of their "role identity," such as competence and capacity to offer help, and minimize problems that are associated with clients, such as being depressed that is not associated with their role.

Darcy Siebert advanced identity theory by including social workers who have a "care-giving" role identity. Using an anonymous survey, she randomly sampled 1000 practicing NASW

members in North Carolina. Over 800 social workers responded and 751 returned usable surveys. In the research package a new measure to capture the salience of a care-giving identity was included. A care-giving identity is characterized by someone feeling an obligation to help friends and family with their problems and having difficulty saying “no” to the requests or demands of others. The two dimensional “caregiver role identity scale” captures the salience of this kind of role identity (Siebert & Siebert, 2005) by measuring self-perception of care-giving and perceptions of others’ expectations in relation to care-giving. The scale was used to examine relationships between a salient care-giving role identity and personal and professional challenges (Siebert & Siebert, 2007).

A positive relationship between a salient care-giving role identity was found with depression, alcohol misuse, and difficulty asking for help (Siebert, 2005). Pooler (2008) used the caregiver role identity scale with social workers and found that close to half of the sample had a salient care-giving role identity and that there was a positive association with distress. Siebert and Siebert (2005, 2007) used “role identity theory” to explain how a salient care-giving role identity creates vulnerability to professional impairment and found that a strong care-giving role identity is not congruent with appropriate help-seeking, and social workers with this kind of identity may have difficulty with self-care. A care-giving role identity develops as one responds to the expectations of family, friends, colleagues, and clients. When relevant others associate a social worker with giving care and helping people, the care-giving role will be more likely to merge with the social worker’s self-concept (Finkelstein & Brannick, 2007). As the role of care-giving and self concept fuse, future actions are chosen that reinforce actions of care-giving as the social worker behaves consistently with the identity.

There is little external validation from clients to set limits or boundaries with them or to say “no” to requests; in fact, clients may reinforce the opposite—offering praise for going above and beyond their expectations. There may be little internal validation to appropriately limit oneself, especially when a care-giving identity is prominent.

Role identity theory explains how the most prominent identity develops through the role in which someone functions most frequently and how that role is idealized (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). For social workers, the care-giving role is often idealized; the result may be internal expectations of behavior that are not consistently attainable in life. When social workers have difficulties, such as addictions, mental health problems, relationship problems, or dysfunctional behaviors which create distress, those are incongruent with their idealized care-giving role. In order to appear more competent (congruent with their idealized roles and less like clients) social workers could not only deny the existence of those problems, they may engage in behaviors that bolster and enhance the care-giving identity (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Siebert & Siebert, 2005, 2007). Social workers may actually work longer, see more clients, or give until they are depleted, which can exacerbate problems that are already present.

Research suggests that between 40% and 60% of social workers have salient care-giving role identities and that a salient care-giving role identity has been linked with poor workforce outcomes such as distress, alcohol misuse, depression, and difficulty asking for help with such problems (Pooler, 2008; Siebert & Siebert, 2007). This leads to the question, “How can one’s self-concept be modified so that a care-giving identity is less salient?”

2.4.3 Social Profession Identity

Any diaconal work in this case, Social Work, is based on sensitivity for ethical issues and therefore moral decisions are sought in all aspects. It forms part of education and training, planning of services and contact with the world. Values include the following: (Diakonie Texte/Dokumentation, 2008:5).

- Human dignity and human rights;
- Gender equality and equality for all;
- Inclusion of people with special needs-

- Environment, actions and activities must make all people feel welcome;
- Cultural diversity-
 - Development of skills based on abilities;
 - Accept and value differences and;
 - Proper assessment of abilities, needs and context;
- Non-judgemental attitude towards people;
- Respect and;
- Participation; (Church of Norway, 2008:16; Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland, 2013:19-30).²

2.4.3.1 Social responsibility³

- Be a prophetic voice in society;
- Be consistent and self-critical in these issues in its own daily life and practice; and
- Be creative and inventive in order to find sustainable solutions to the real needs of individuals and society (Church of Norway, 2008:23).

A diaconal worker should portray the following characteristics (Diakonie Texte/Dokumentation, 2008:50; Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland, 2013:19-30):

- Trustworthiness and honesty: what he/she says should really be reliable.
- Clarity of communication and action: what he/she says should be clear and reasonable.
- Ability to set visions and goals and to formulate them.
- Ability to network and mobilise and utilise a variety of resources.
- Contact and cooperation with other churches and service providers.
- Recruitment and training of volunteers.

2.4.4 Imago Dei and Identity Development

Social workers who are Christian may have challenges and opportunities leading to different outcomes regarding job satisfaction and personal challenges. Literature to date has not explored the identity development of social workers who are Christian, and I have not found research which explores how a social work professional identity is influenced by Christian beliefs and practices.

Faith is an important aspect of the developing identity of Christian social workers, and I cannot cover the full range of ways that faith informs identity development. Therefore, I offer one aspect of identity development that can be explored in the rest of the paper. I want to suggest that social workers who are Christian have an opportunity to reflect on and use *Imago Dei*, the notion that people are created in the image of God, to enhance or modify their identity.

Christians refer to Genesis 1:26-27 as the primary source for this concept which says, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness. . . . so God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (NIV)." It is often used to delineate the distinctiveness of persons in God's created order (Capper, 1985). There is considerable theological debate and lack of consensus about how God's image is expressed through people (Capper, 1985; Ruston, 2004). There is more agreement about one aspect of *Imago Dei*, namely, that because human beings are created by God, they have inherent dignity irrespective of utility or function (Sands, 2010). Hodge and Wolfer (2008) use this practical dimension of *Imago Dei* to support the imperative for social workers to value clients deeply. I use this aspect of *Imago Dei* as an imperative to value ourselves, not just as caregivers, but as people. The notion that social workers have inherent value as persons, not because of the role in which they function is most useful for this discussion of identity development and may be a lynchpin to having a less salient care-giving identity.

² cf. 1 Sam 9; Mark 7:31; Mark 8:22-25; Hand 10; Matt 28:19; 1Kor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Ef 4:5; Matt 25:31-46

³ cf. Matt 24:40 en Spr 19:17.

Before going further, I want to make a distinction between identity and function, which should clarify where knowledge of our inherent value can be applied. Social workers are trained to care for others by using scientific evidence and professional skills to intervene on behalf of vulnerable and underserved populations at micro-, mezzo- and macro-system levels. Social workers function as helpers or caregivers in a professional sense, so giving care to others is obviously not the concern - it is the strong identity or sense of self as caregiver that leads to poor outcomes like alcohol misuse, depression, and difficulty asking for help with those problems.

People who develop an identity around giving care may use their work and the outcomes of their work to provide a sense of self or self-esteem. They may also help family and friends in the same way they help clients—care-giving becomes a way of life. Their most salient identity is fused with role—“I am what I do professionally and personally”—a caregiver. Social workers rarely have opportunities to step out of role. Family, friends, and acquaintances know when someone is a social worker. If social workers are going to have other salient roles that shape their identity it will have to be at the level of their own self-concept and shaped internally.

People who have less salient care-giving identities have other roles that are more prominent in their self-concept. There are multiple ways that self-concept can be constructed and other significant roles that can be arranged, such as husband, wife, daughter, sister, pianist, poet, or tri-athlete. For the social worker who is a Christian, being a child of God is a role which can be incorporated into self-concept. When using the term “child of God,” I am referring to the theological and practical implications of what it means to be made in the image of God—acknowledging inherent value irrespective of their role as a social worker.

The irony is that being a healthy social worker may be linked to an identity that goes beyond a professional social work identity. Healthy and balanced social workers may, in fact, arrange the care-giving role lower in the hierarchy of importance. One positive consequence of a less salient care-giving role and a more prominent “child of God” role is freedom to learn to “be with” God and enjoy “being” a child of God, instead of having to “do something” or “help someone” to be valuable. This may mean learning to enjoy a relationship with oneself. It involves focusing on one’s intrinsic worth and value, and realizing that worth is not based only on external valuation by clients, family or friends. A social worker who is learning to use *Imago Dei* may not necessarily look different than any other social worker, but there will be internal validation of oneself as a child of God, rather than looking for the social work role as the point of validation.

Self-care behavior may flow more naturally for people who value themselves first as children of God. Their theological identity as children of God would trump their social work identity. Social workers using *Imago Dei* may give themselves more permission to care for self. Also using *Imago Dei* could empower a social worker to know that calling to social work or to a life of service does not exclude self-care and times of pulling back to refresh and gain perspective.

A practical consequence of meditating on the implications of *Imago Dei* and allowing it to influence behavior and thinking is that what I “do” for a living becomes less important. There is not as much at stake in my identity if I am “successful” at work or not, or if clients get better or fail. I am not suggesting that social workers care less about competent and ethical practice; in fact, they ought to care more. It is that social workers do not have to give care to be of significance, and clients can fail without the social worker’s self-worth being adversely affected. Social workers can have boundaries, say “no,” care for themselves, and develop other interests outside of work. Motivation to be helpful or function in a professional role is much clearer if my identity as a person of worth is rooted in my understanding of *Imago Dei*; I am less likely to be driven by a hidden agenda or strings attached to client outcomes or expectations. It is clearer that I am being helpful to a client because it is my job and I care

about the client's well-being, rather than being driven to have a positive outcome with a client so I can feel better about myself. Our core beliefs regarding identity often motivate us and guide our behavior. Using Imago Dei allows social workers to work from a place of internal validation and affirmation and a place of "being" instead of having to rely on "doing" social work for validation. Therefore, when good experiences and positive consequences arise from the work we do, they can be enjoyed in the moment and not misused to provide us with a sense of self, where we continually require good outcomes for our own sake. When social workers demand successes in order to feel okay, we may be blinded to clinical realities of clients and not pay attention to areas of client functioning that need to be addressed. We may also be blinded with regard to our personal challenges.

2.4.5 Influence of the Faith Community

Many experiences in faith communities enhance Imago Dei and encourage clear healthy motivations for working with others. Many churches value service when it comes from mature spirituality and support healthy relationships and appropriate boundary setting. Developing a healthy professional identity requires a high level of self awareness and critical analysis of the "thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Sadly, some faith communities can exacerbate the care-giving identity in the same way that clients might (e.g. offering praise for giving more and more of self, regardless of the consequences). Pastors and leaders in churches encourage people to serve. Churches can inadvertently deplete a person whose self-esteem and value are derived from external affirmation and giving help to others, especially if there is not a great deal of attention given to self-care in the congregation. Churches socialize people to give "selflessly," which may be interpreted by people with a prominent care-giving identity as giving until one is depleted.

Considering others as better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3) often is lived out as neglecting self at the expense of giving to others. People who give until it hurts are sometimes reinforced as being "great servants," instead of people who might not be well or who lack boundaries. In regard to the church, social workers who are Christian could either be more vulnerable to developing a care-giving identity with its consequent negative outcomes, or have additional tools and strengths from which to form a healthy professional identity depending on their experiences. Social workers who are Christian will have to sort through the helpful and hurtful influences faith communities have had on their development, their choice to be in social work, and how well they care for themselves.

In the following section Pooler (2011) provide a case vignette that illustrates how someone can use Imago Dei to modify their self-concept and enhance self-care. This vignette shows a change process that might be ideal, but I acknowledge that life is often far more messy and complex.

Case vignette

Julie, age 25, finished her MSW a little over a year ago and is working as a case manager in a community mental health center. Her clients have severe and persistent mental health problems requiring high levels of monitoring and support to remain in the community and out of the hospital. Julie spends a lot of time with clients in their homes, ensuring that her clients have the supports they need. Instead of finding joy in her work, Julie finds herself perplexed and distressed about the people on her caseload, specifically she obsessively thinks about her client Fran.

When Julie started working with Fran they really connected. Fran was a needy and fragile 36-year-old woman with bi-polar disorder and she was in and out of relationships with what Julie called "questionable" men. Fran was very friendly and open and at first Julie felt good about her work with Fran, but that started to change. Seven months ago when Fran came in with a scratch on her neck and a bruise around her eye, Julie was immediately concerned

about intimate partner abuse. Over the past seven months Julie and Fran have had multiple conversations about domestic violence, staying safe, and about setting boundaries with Miguel, the man in her life who continues to abuse her. Julie has literally spent hours with Fran in the office and in her home providing support and counseling, even working past the end of the work day. Julie is worn out.

The same pattern happens every time: Fran seems to have some real insight about her own life, her low self-esteem, and is fully aware that Miguel is not a healthy person. At every session, Fran tells Julie that she has plans to let Miguel know that she doesn't want him in her life. But they continue to stay together, and at least once a month Fran is injured by Miguel in some way, and today the ER social worker calls Julie and says Fran is in the ICU in a coma. Julie is angry and feels betrayed.

This crisis with Fran creates a personal crisis for Julie. For at least two days Julie has trouble working, has times of self-loathing, and feels responsible for Fran. Julie is struggling with her effectiveness as a social worker and feels depressed. As a Christian, Julie has been praying all along for Fran, but now Julie's spiritual world just doesn't make sense to her. Julie thinks, "how come I can't help her, what is wrong with me?" Julie realizes that the kind of emotional investment she is making in her work is not sustainable; at age 25 she is already feeling somewhat burned out.

This pain motivates Julie to do some hard work and make some changes. As she reflects, Julie realizes that she often works more than 40 hours per week, and takes work home and thinks about her clients while not at work. Since earning her MSW fifteen months ago, Julie has been increasingly consumed and swallowed up by her work and her spiritual life and social life have suffered.

Julie's first change is getting more honest with her clinical supervisor about what has been going on with her. She also seeks out a few safe women at church in a support group where she can talk openly. Through this process Julie confronts some ideas she has embraced that need to change. Julie faces the fact that she went into social work because she believed helping others would help her feel better about herself. Julie gets honest about her own gnawing emptiness and her own low self-esteem. Her support group helps her see that she has been misusing her work to give her a sense of being okay. Julie had always been a doer—helping others almost constantly. In her support group she allows the women around her to love her as Julie, not as Julie the social worker. For the first time Julie admits she needs care and support from healthy people in her life. Julie is starting to take off her hat of "social worker" that she wears all the time and lets go of being responsible for others. She embraces the idea that she is loved, valued and cherished by her heavenly Father, simply because she is Julie and she is His daughter. Julie is using Imago Dei with the help of her faith community to change her self-concept.

These changes in her self-concept and identity show up in tangible ways in her personal and professional life. After four months, Julie works 40 hours a week most weeks. She can say no much more easily and is not perplexed when clients do not accept her help or when clients make bad choices. She is able to set boundaries with clients more easily and help them understand realistically what she can and cannot do for them. Julie is at peace and is learning to carry her weather inside—she is less swayed by what is happening at work and with her clients. She can affirm herself and not look for other people to validate her. Julie is more effective with clients and is satisfied with her job. A bad day at work has less overall meaning in her life.

Julie's personal life is robust. She is taking a cooking class, spending more time with friends in her support group, and has started exercising more. Her relationship with God is good. She is free to fail, to make mistakes, and she allows herself to be human and teachable. One month after Fran was admitted to the hospital, she died. Although she struggled at first, Julie is no longer consumed with thoughts of Fran, nor does she feel responsible for Fran's death. Julie changed some personal and professional behaviors, but the fundamental change happened in her self-concept. Her very identity changed. Instead of compulsively helping others to fill a void in her life, Julie is free. She knows that she is loved and valued simply because she belongs to God. Work is now work, and her personal life has much more meaning.

Julie's identity as a person who has intrinsic value trumps her social work identity. This allows her to embrace her calling and her passion even more. She takes care of herself, and has more to offer clients and colleagues. Julie is starting to flourish.

Social workers like Julie function in settings and organizations that may be challenging because of scarce resources and the needs of marginalized people. These dynamics create vulnerability to distress (Pooler, 2008). Balance, health, integrity, and self-care are important.

The concept of Imago Dei can provide a starting point for social workers who are Christian to re-vision self-care and explore the resources that come from their faith and their communities of faith that impact their personal and professional lives. Social workers who are Christian can discuss what empowers them to have a balanced life where self-care is valued.

Support groups, life groups, 12-step groups, and deep friendships are places where relationships are enhanced and identity can grow and change. These are the places where the notion of self-care can change from the inside out. Healthy relationships are the touchstones of identity change and where people can be safe and honest. Relational resources like social support and mutual aid flow from such dyads and groups and can often be found in faith communities.

Role identity theory explains how roles are prioritized in a social worker's self concept. I suggest that an intentional focus on our intrinsic value can be a salient part of our social worker identity that may moderate the need to use that role as a form of affirmation of one's identity.

2.5 MAKING IT PERSONAL

2.5.1 Identity and Calling

So, after all the theories, knowledge and information given in this module so far, we need to come back to us. We need to make it personal in order to integrate yourself (past and present), your calling and your faith with your future service as social profession practitioner.

By being "here" in your life and at Hugenote Kollege, you are facing major transitions in your life and with it also questions concerning the directions of your life and career. Why did you decide to study Social Work? How do you decide between study and work? While there are many factors behind these questions, the underlying issue is how can you be faithful to God in and through your career? Also, how can you be Christian and stay Christian in a broken society. These questions can be answered when we think christianly about work by building a biblical perspective on how we discern God's calling in our lives and how we can honour God through our attitude towards work itself. Therefore the following questions are of outmost importance:

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- Where am I going to?
- What happened to me?
- Why did it happened to me?
- What is my purpose?
- How will God use me?
- Am I called? Or what is my calling?
- How can I be of service (*diaconia*)?

2.5.2 The term “diaconia”⁴

“Diaconia is the caring ministry of the church. It is the Gospel in action and is expressed through Loving your neighbour, Creating inclusive communities, Caring for creation and Struggling for justice” (Church of Norway, 2008:9).

The Biblical foundation of diaconal work is relevant and in line with social welfare services, and therefore related to the qualifications offered at the Huguenot College. Therefore, this foundation leads to the following ground principles that should guide learners in practice:

1. Diaconia means service: Different forms of service through actions, preaching and teaching.
2. Diaconia has the Christian view on the human being as its starting point: Every person is unique and created in the image of God.
3. Diaconia is Christian charity/caritas/neighbourly love carried out in praxis: The preaching of Jesus as the role model for the diaconal work and its praxis.
4. Diaconia is action and its task is to redress human suffering: Diaconal work is aimed at people in precarious situations, groups at risk and individuals who suffer.
5. Diaconia is to speak up when human lives are violated: Diaconal work must interfere and partake in public debate where structures alienate and destroy people’s lives.
6. Diaconia is to “be able to speak more languages”: Diaconal work focuses on the whole human being and must therefore master more “languages” and thus know when it is best to listen, to act, to preach, to recount, to commit oneself and to back out.
7. Diaconia has many different means of expressions and forms of activity: Diaconal work has developed and is still developing a richness of methodical plurality.
8. Diaconia can be practised by individuals and institutions and organisations alike: All people and organised groups who have the gospel at heart and who are inspired by the teaching of Jesus can practise diaconia.
9. Diaconia is to hold the church to the connection between word and deed: Diaconal work must continually reflect on its congruence in terms of what is preached and what is done.
10. Diaconia is to continually be challenged by the gospel: Diaconal work must continually challenge itself at its own starting point; translate and operationalize the message in view of a timely or modern expression. (Danish Diaconal Council, 2008:2).

The above principles then directs how social or diaconal workers relate to people, and how they plan and organise support.

The professional social worker must therefore be able to think critically. In order to think critically a person must think about how he/she thinks while he/she is thinking in order to understand thoughts influences behaviour. This is necessary to be developed as a person’s current way of thinking is normally self-directed, subjective and based on pre-conceived ideas. The new professional way of thinking should therefore be organised, objective and disciplined and based on knowledge.

3. SERVING OTHERS

⁴ cf. Mk 10:45; Mt 20:25-28; Mt 5:43-48; Mt 25:31-46; Phill 2:7; Acts 4:34-35; Acts 6:1-6; Rm 12:7; 1 Pt 4:11; Gal 6:1-2 & 10; etc.

In this theme, we will discover what is meant by discipleship. In understanding of discipleship, we will then recognize how we respond to God's calling in obedience are also modes of discipleship. We will therefore first define the terms applicable to this theme followed by the sub-themes such as:

- What is spirituality?
- Spirituality and discipleship,
- Discipleship: Responding to God's calling
- Spiritual discernment ("dwelling in the world" context),
- Discipleship and community building (conviviality) within the social work profession,
- Serving disciples,
- Spiritual leadership.

For assessment purposes, you will need to keep in mind that you must show knowledge, understanding and skills related to the following Exit Level Outcomes (ELO) and their Associated Assessment Criteria (AAC):

Understanding		
Topic	Exit Level Outcome	Associated Assessment Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss how the "word" influences how we view the "world" in terms of the South African context 	The development and consolidation of a professional identity as a social worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to work toward social justice and egalitarian societies ▪ Understanding the Self as an important instrument of intervention ▪ Commitment to caring, building humane societies and mutual inter-dependence ▪ Willingness to <i>be for the Other</i>, and ability for empathic entry into the life worlds of people
Skills		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify personal and leadership skill needed to pursue a personal calling 	Application of core values and principles of social work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated ability to respect the inherent worth and dignity of all human beings

This theme will take place during weeks 8 to 15 and will be assessed by means of an assignment and examination.

Definition of terms

Discipleship	While Webster's Dictionary describes a disciple as "a pupil or follower of any teacher or school of religion, learning, art, etc.," a Christian disciple follows Jesus. A Christian disciple is one who loves God with everything one has. A Christian disciple, by God's grace, becomes more and more like Christ through a life of faith and obedience.
Spirituality	Spirituality can be describe as the experience or expression of the sacred. It also refers to a set of beliefs and practices related to the issue of what exists beyond the visible world, generally including the idea of the existence of a being, group of beings, an external principle or a transcendent spiritual entity. Within religion, spirituality thus has to do with religious beliefs – formed within the context of practices and rituals shared by a group to provide a framework for connectedness to God.
Discernment	In short, discernment means to judge well. It is the ability to decide between truth and error, right and wrong. Discernment is the process of making careful distinctions in our thinking about truth. In other words, the ability to think with discernment within Christianity is synonymous with an ability to think biblically.

	Discernment -- the ability to think biblically about all areas of life -- is indispensable to an uncompromising life.
Conviviality	Conviviality with its Latin roots for 'with' and 'living', has long been associated with sociable, friendly and festive traits. It means building community. However, we need to distinguish between two types of conviviality namely Liberal Conviviality and Communitarian conviviality. Liberal conviviality refers to "living with" others who are committed to comprehensive doctrines different from one's own, sometimes uncompromisingly so. This conviviality is found when citizens in a democracy get along with each other in a peaceful and fair manner despite the fact of religious pluralism. The opposite though, communitarian conviviality, generally refers to the more intimate sort of conviviality present when one banquets with those who share one's own comprehensive doctrine.

3.1 WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

Spirituality according to Lezotte (2010) is an aspect of religious traditions, and also of existential value systems. Lezotte (2010) gives this definition: "Spirituality, which comes from the Latin, *spiritus*, meaning breath of life," is a way of being and experiencing that comes about through an awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life, and whatever one considers the Ultimate" (Lezotte, 2010).

A spiritual belief holds that there is a transcendent, spiritual dimension to life and that the universe is unfolding in a meaningful, purposeful way. Spirituality is the belief that people can connect with something that is beyond mind and matter. Lezotte (2010) defines spirituality as the "search for purpose and meaning involving both transcendence (the experience of existence beyond the physical/psychological) and immanence (the discovery of the transcendent in the physical/psychological), regardless of religious affiliation." "To be spiritual is to stand in a relationship to another based on matters of the soul. Spirituality is the way we make meaning out of our lives. It is the recognition of the presence of Spirit within us and a cultivation of a style of life consistent with that presence. Spirituality provides a perspective to foster purpose, meaning and direction to live. It may find expression through religion" (Lezotte, 2010).

In the Protestant tradition, spirituality is usually referred to as devotion or piety. Roman Catholicism thinks of spirituality as one's distinctive way of following Christ, communing with God, and growing in the life of faith. Spirituality in the modern Orthodox tradition has come to refer to a person's life and activity in relationship to God, and to oneself, other people, and all things in reference to God.

The concept of spirituality is often confused with religion. Recent social work literature includes a number of attempts to delineate these terms and distinguish them from one another. Edward Canda (1999) has analyzed the major themes in these various writings and proposes the following definitions:

- Religion "involves the patterning of spiritual beliefs and practices into social institutions, with community support and traditions maintained over time" (p. 303). Spirituality has also been defined as the beliefs and practices that develop based on personal values and ideology of the meaning and purpose of life. It refers to the belief that there is a power or powers outside of one's own that transcend understanding. It has been stated that there are three dimensions to spirituality:
1. Making personal meaning out of situations
 2. Coming to an understanding of self
 3. Appreciating the importance of connections to others

Wilfred Cantwell Smith defines religious faith as the way in which an individual lives out his/her religious tradition. Religious faith is not only what is espoused, but what is operationalized in

one's orientation of the personality, to itself, to one's neighbors, to the universe. It is a total response, shaped by a religious tradition's understanding of a transcendent dimension (Smith, 1983).

Religion is a personal awareness or conviction of the existence of a supreme being or of supernatural powers or influence, controlling the destiny of the individual, humanity, and nature (Webster's Third International Dictionary 1986). Religion is a system of beliefs, values, rules for conduct, and rituals. It is a way a person's spirituality is expressed. Ideally, religion provides an atmosphere for spiritual development (McBrien, 1981). Religion is concerned with practices and rules of conduct that are often associated with particular religious institutions.

Pargament and Mahoney argue that, for many, spirituality involves searching to discover what is sacred, and this journey can take either traditional pathways (such as organized religions) or nontraditional avenues (such as involvement in twelve-step groups, meditation, or retreat center experiences.) Thus, spirituality is a broader concept than religion, and spiritual expression may or may not involve a particular religious faith or religious institution.

Social work scholars distinguish spirituality from religion (Canda & Furman, 1999). Spirituality has been described as the basic essence of the individual (Carroll, 1997 & 1998), as well as how an individual finds meaning and purpose through relationships with "self, others, and a higher power" (Canda & Furman, 1999; Barker, 2007, p. 148). Spirituality encompasses an experience of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment in relationship with self, others, and God, or a perceived transcendent reality, that is innate in all human beings (Canda & Furman, 1999; Hodge, 2006).

While spirituality is generally seen as referring to human experiences that transcend the self, religion is generally described in terms of formal institutions for spiritual beliefs and practices. Accordingly, religion has been defined as a "communal setting" through which beliefs are organized and spirituality is practiced (Hodge & McGraw, 2005; Barker, 2007, p. 148). As Dudley and Helfgott (1990) have noted, "religion is encompassed within spirituality, but spirituality is viewed as broader than religion" (p. 288). Likewise, Cowley and Derezotes (1994) have observed that spirituality is not connected to any particular theology and is not equivalent with religion. Therefore, as Dudley and Helfgott (1990) have observed, spirituality can be expressed outside any particular religious context.

Canda & Furman (1999) write that "there are two major ways to thinking about human development." First, when we think of spirituality as an aspect of the person that strives for a sense of meaning and purpose, our attention focuses on the way people develop meaning. This can be through immersion in spiritual groups and belief systems and through questioning of meaning systems; prompted by personal doubts and life challenges, such as crises. Second, when we think of spirituality as the wholeness of what it is to be human, our attention focuses on how people develop toward a sense of integration and integrity between all aspects of themselves (bio-psycho-social-spiritual) and in relation with other beings and the universe. For those who believe in a transcendent or divine ultimate reality, this actualization of wholeness is seen as an accomplishment of communion, between oneself, others and the divine.

Spiritual development may be understood in relation to everyday life, including the ordinary events and circumstances of our personal lives and our professional work with clients. Of course, there may be an occasion of a powerful insight or breakthrough. Some view these sudden insights or epiphanies and refer to them as quantum change. It is believed that these experiences cause rapid and dramatic transformation in ordinary lives. Like spirituality, just when you think you have encircled it with a neat line, it escapes your boundaries. This much seems clear: quantum change is a vivid, surprising, benevolent and enduring personal transformation.

3.2 SPIRITUALITY AND DISCIPLESHIP

Hill (2016:385) deliberates on the following question: So what are the characteristics of Christian spirituality and discipleship? And how do they relate to each other? He then answers, when we consider the minor differences between spirituality and discipleship, we see that the two overlap. And they're integrated.

Spirituality seeks participation in God's being. Discipleship learns participation in doing. Spirituality relates to our responses to meaning, persons, creation, sacred things, transcendence and, most importantly, God. Discipleship is the whole gamut of disciplined life in response to the call Of Jesus. Spirituality is relationship to God, others, self and creation. It's about how those relationships manifest themselves in our Christian faith. Discipleship is about the practices of following Jesus Christ. It's about integrating the concrete practices of those spiritual relationships into the whole of our lives as we seek to be Jesus' disciples.

Spirituality isn't necessarily Christian. But when it is Christian, we manifest it as faith in, and relationship with, the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ. Discipleship is the outworking of that relationship in conformity to Christ Jesus. Spirituality, when it is Christian, is defined by discipleship to Jesus Christ. Discipleship isn't simply doing what Jesus commanded or following his example. Discipleship is becoming like him. This involves engaging in the spiritual reality of the kingdom of God and seeing that reality become manifest in the world.

Again, while there are some differences between spirituality and discipleship, there is substantial overlap. Jeffrey Greenman defines Christian spiritual formation as "our continuing response to the reality of God's grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

3.3 DISCIPLESHIP: RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALLING

In the first section of this reader (see 1.5.1) we said when God calls people, he expects a response. God often calls us to serve Him now—not at a time of our convenience. The place He asks us to go in His service may be right in our own neighbourhood, but for some it will be a most unlikely place, perhaps far away. We can know the work God calls us to do will never be beyond our capability to respond. Through that work, the gospel will be presented in action, giving to us the opportunity to lead others to believe in Jesus Christ.

If you long to make a difference in the lives of others, take time to be still and listen for God's voice. I believe you will hear Him calling you to serve Him and telling you what it is He has planned especially for you. Then you can respond to Him, "Yes, Lord, I'll go; send me." If you do this, you will be led to know His great truth: life becomes full when you begin to give it away.

3.4 SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT ("DWELLING IN THE WORLD" CONTEXT)

Dwelling in the World is a practice that focuses on the interactions – deliberate and spontaneous – of believers over a 7-day period with others (strangers and acquaintances). Its aim is to help believers discern that their everyday encounters with others are missional opportunities for conveying God's peace to those with whom they interact.

According to Niemandt (2010:405-406) Dwelling in the world entailed a process of dialogue and engagement with the contexts in which the respective congregations found themselves. It is hardly surprising if viewed against the background of the important role of the theological concept of *missio Dei* in the partnerships for missional churches. If a congregation is serious about discerning God's activities in his creation, attention will certainly be paid to the context in which the congregations find themselves. This is exactly the reason that the question: "What is God up to?" is so important. Cultural and contextual exegesis and a theology of culture (Malphurs 2007:95) become very important: "We must discover how to use our culture and

that of others to clarify and promote the gospel". Van Gelder (2007:59) says, "The church must seek to discern what the Spirit of God is doing in relation to the dynamic changes that are taking place within a particular context". Dwelling in the world can be described as a process of engaging context and community (Roxburgh and Boren 2009:85).

A significant amount of congregations participating in this study indicated the importance of the role of dwelling in the world within congregational life. It can be seen in:

- Processes that were instituted to cultivate sensitivity to the context of the congregation and community.
- Some congregations explicitly asked the question: "What is God up to in our world?"
- Events in community life were consciously reflected in worship services.
- Congregations explored possibilities of engaging with community organisations, businesses and persons not part of the church membership, in order to discern what is happening in the community.

A core attribute of dwelling in the Word, and dwelling in the world, was that it focused on discernment. Hendriks (2007:1012) elaborates on this important aspect by stating that theology is a question of discernment that hermeneutically correlates the following:

- a contextual situation with its problems and challenges;
- the identity of the people of God; and
- the role and purpose, or mission, of the people of God that flows from their knowledge of Scripture and tradition.

3.5 DISCIPLESHIP AND COMMUNITY BUILDING (CONVIVIALITY) WITHIN THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

Mission means sending and that God is a sending God. Mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather, mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation. 'Mission' means 'sending' and it is the central biblical theme describing the purposes of God's action in human history."

The term Conviviality, basically means 'the art and practice of living together'. It refers to the Spanish term 'convivencia' and it encompasses living together in solidarity, in sharing resources and in the joint struggle for human dignity and sustainable community life. It draws from old traditions of neighbourhood support in sustaining common life and the traditions of migrant communities in supporting life in new environments, which in some cases are not as welcoming as one would hope and expect. Conviviality as a concept leads directly to ideas about diaconal practice and action and to a concern for justice and dignity.

The term community within the context of conviviality can also sometimes refer to communities who can be exclusive and can build up walls which prevent them from relating to people from 'other' communities. Community also has a number of different meanings—it can be linked to place (the village or neighbourhood) or interest or identity.

Professionals, practitioners, diaconal workers, volunteers or just any person who engaged in diakonia take part in a process of creating conviviality. They are building community (koinonia) on the basis of their own biography and motivation for their work and with their inner spiritual and theological, and professional resources they are active with some of the most marginalised people across the community. In many cases they are in a reciprocal relationship of 'giving and receiving', surprisingly very often receiving new insight as a gift from those with whom they are working. Diakonia is viewed as 'Gospel in action' and as a mark of and task for all the disciples of Jesus. The perspective of the neighbour as being the image of God and as sister or brother in Christ—and therefore as equals should always be the driving force for conviviality.

Theologically we can also say that the picture of the Christian who engages in diaconal work is that of an imperfect person helping another imperfect person to find the way toward fullness of life. This viewpoint prevents patronising and excluding attitudes which can reflect so negatively on the church and the gospel.

3.6 SERVING DISCIPLES

In contrast to our natural tendency to self-serve, God has called us to “other-serve.” The authority given to Christ in Matthew 28:18, which He has in turn passed on to his disciples, is the authority to serve (2 Cor. 10:8). The early church understood this and left us a legacy of service as she built inns for travellers, hospitals for the sick, alms-houses for the poor and orphanages for the fatherless. Our service stands as a dynamic testimony that we believe the biblical message is true. In other words, the fulfilment we long for will never be found in the world’s agenda but only in Christ’s plans.

3.7 SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

During the last three decades, this leadership style expressed through servanthood has been called servant leadership. The term servant leader was created and popularized in the early 1970s by Robert K. Greenleaf. Inspired by the vision of Greenleaf, other contemporary writers have produced an appreciable body of literature embracing servant leadership as a means for renewing institutions and creating a more caring and compassionate society.

As a leadership model, servant leadership has crossed many boundaries and has been applied in universities, health-care organizations, and foundations. When applied to the Christian leader, servant leadership is characterized by authentic service that prioritizes the enrichment and enhancement of those served. The test for Christian servant leadership is the progressive spiritual health, freedom, and autonomy of those served. Servant leadership focuses on the needs and growth of those being led, not the needs of those who are leading.

Leadership models that are oriented toward power and control continue to be problematic for the church. Power-oriented leadership laden with posturing, protectionism, cynicism, and adversarialism may contribute to a low-trust ministry environment in which leadership effectiveness is marginalized. On the other hand, wise church leaders will revisit the teachings of Jesus and other New Testament writers and allow their perspectives to bring refreshing insights to the ministry of leading the church.

The concept of servant leadership emerges from the teaching of Scripture concerning the individual as servant of God. The concept of servant has roots in the Old Testament. The Hebrew ‘eved was originally applied to a slave, but came to mean a trusted servant. This term was often applied to those who did a work for a ruler or God. Kings and prophets were often called servants of the Lord (2 Samuel 3:18; Isaiah 20:3; Ezekiel 34:23, 24).

Isaiah painted vivid pictures of servants who, through serving God, serve others (42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–9; 52:13 through 53:12). Contextually, Isaiah’s servants have three levels of identification: the nation of Israel serving God; a godly and faithful remnant who served God in difficult times; and the Messiah who would become the suffering servant.¹ These examples from Isaiah clearly confirm that the fundamental spirit of the biblical servant first embodies a deep and intense feeling of serving God. Through mediating the covenant and bringing others into God’s will, biblical servants had a consuming desire to flesh out essential service to God through ministry to the world around them (Isaiah 52:7–11). Formationally speaking, biblical servants first anchor themselves in service to God and stand ready to serve and lead others, if called.



4. Prescribed Study Material

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