

Vocation and Higher Education: Hope as a National Leader

David S. Cunningham

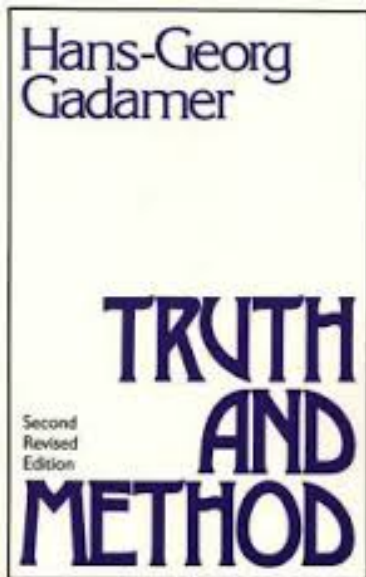
Professor of Religion

Director, The CrossRoads Project



Hope COLLEGE





Hans-Georg Gadamer 1900–2002

How can we help students . . .

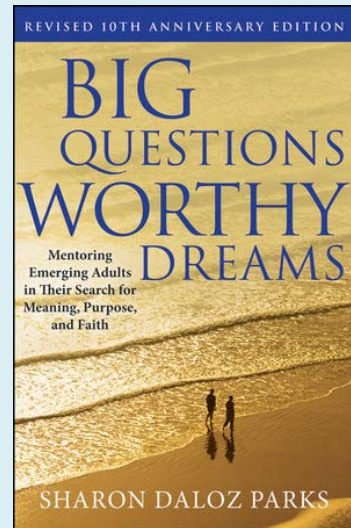
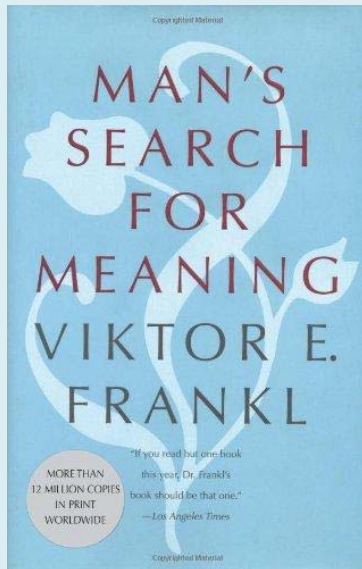
- to consider the role of external (as well as internal) sources of guidance and motivation in their lives
- to prioritize these sources and to reflect on what they might learn from them
- and, when appropriate, to consider the degree to which these sources may originate in, or be sustained by, God

Solang du Selbstgeworfnes
fängst,
ist alles Geschicklichkeit und
läßlicher Gewinn;
erst wenn du plötzlich Fänger
wirst des Balles,
den eine ewige Mit-Spielerin
dir zuwarf, deiner Mitte, in
genau gekonntem Schwung,
in einem jener Bögen aus
Gottes großem Brücken-Bau:
erst dann ist Fangen-Können
ein Vermögen, -
nicht deines, einer Welt.

Catch only what you
yourself have thrown,
It's all just skill and
meaningless gain;
But when you're suddenly
the catcher of a ball
Thrown by an eternal [*],
To you, to your center, with
accuracy and skill, in one of
those arcs of the great
bridge-building of God —
Only then does the ability to
catch become a power:
Not yours. That of a world.

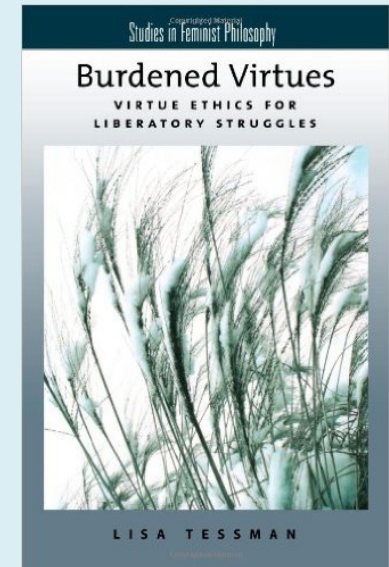
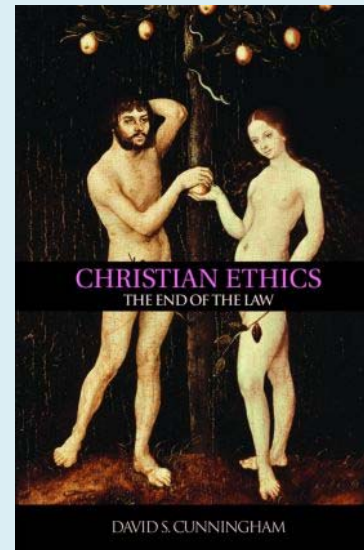
What Language Can Help?

A Life of
Meaning
and
Purpose



Big
Questions,
Worthy
Dreams

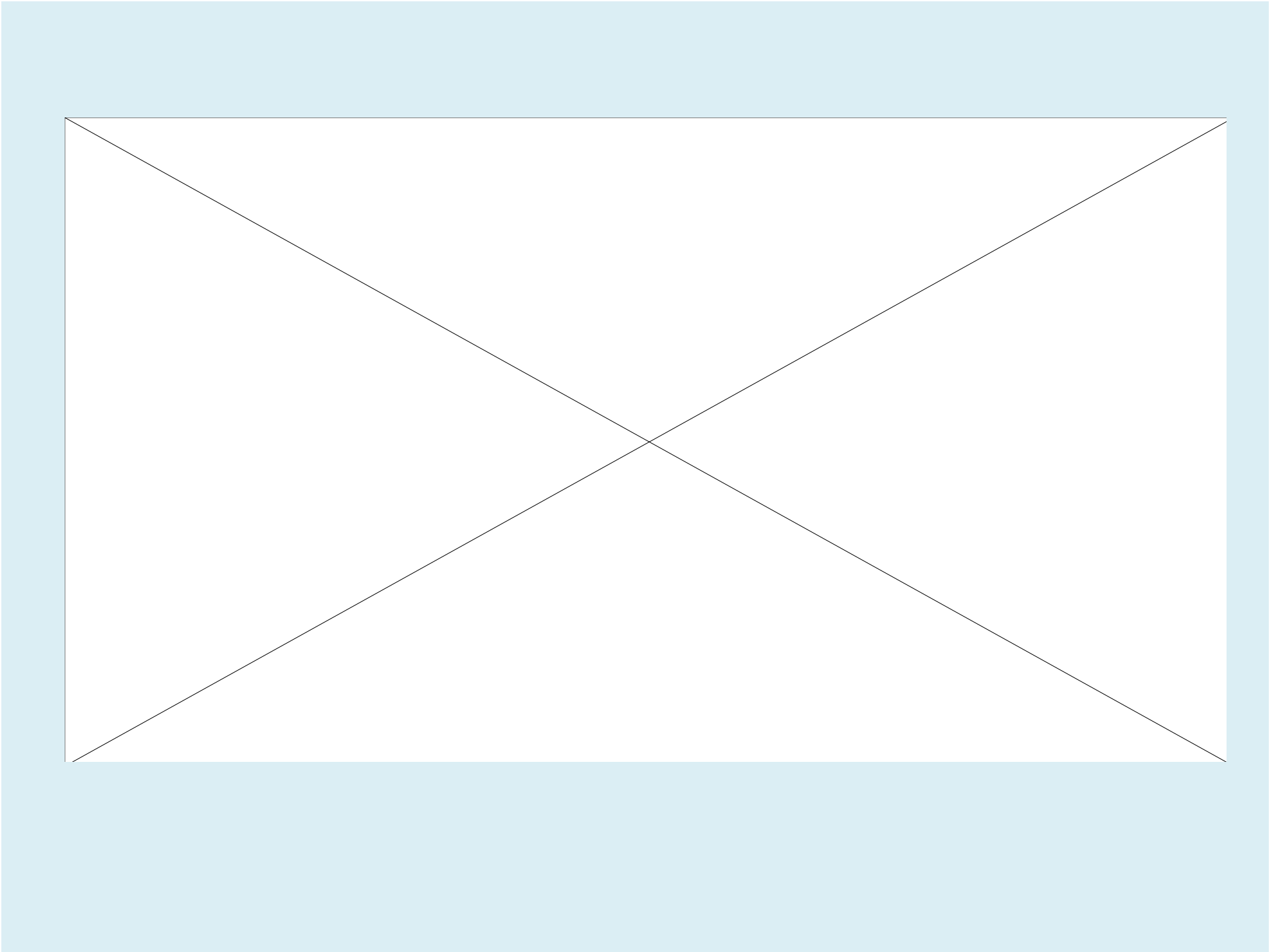
A Fulfilled
and
Fulfilling
Life



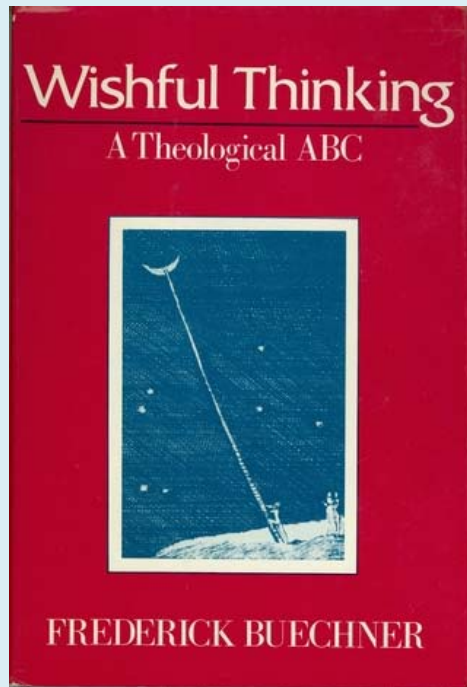
Human
Flourishing
and
Liberation

Toward a New Vocabulary: *Vocation and Calling*

- Origins of the language
- The Reformation-era shift
- “Vocational education”
- Present-day revival
- Capacious, dynamic, elastic



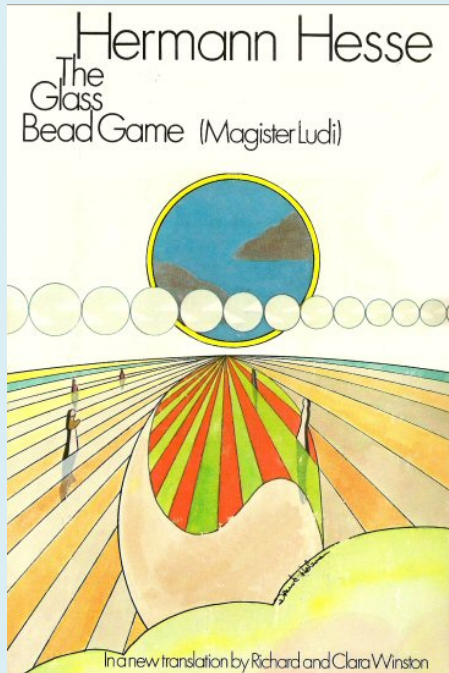
Frederick Buechner



“The place God calls you is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

from *Wishful Thinking:
A Theological ABC*

Hermann Hesse



“There are many types and kinds of vocations, but the core of the experience is always the same: the soul is awakened by it, transformed or exalted, so that instead of dreams and presentiments from within, a summons comes from without. A portion of reality presents itself and makes a claim.” *(The Glass Bead Game)*

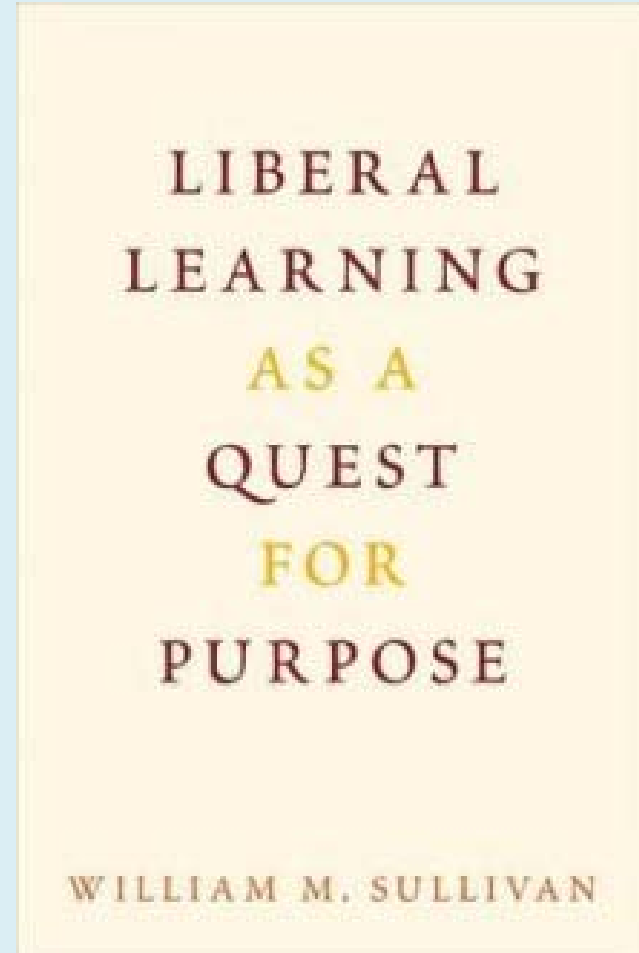
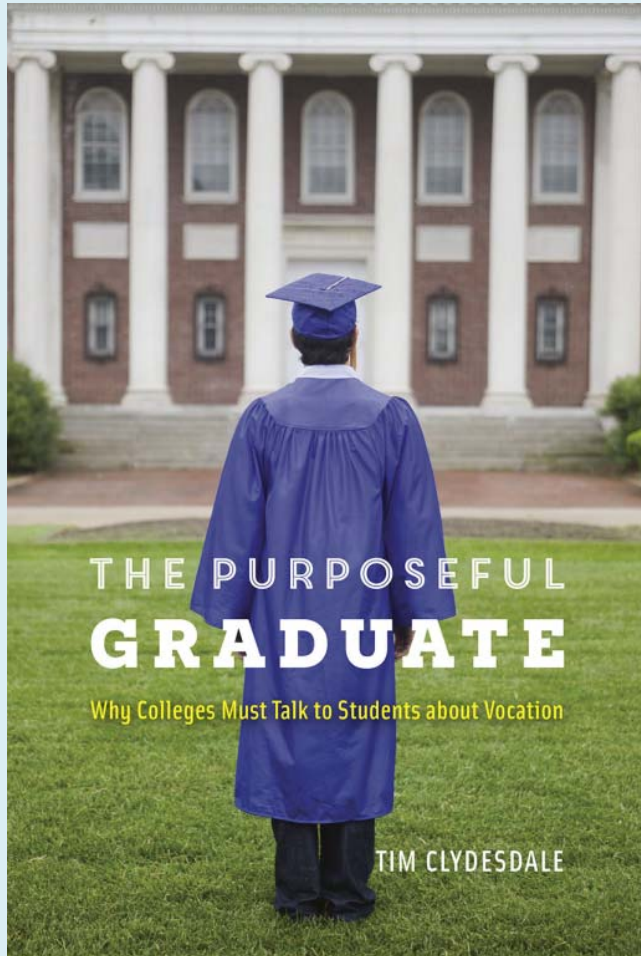
How Vocation and Calling Re-entered the Academy (and Hope College)



Why Programs Succeeded

- A good fit to the institution
- Based in the academic program
- Deep connections to coursework
- Broad involvement of the faculty
- Eventual institutional integration

Evaluations of PTEV Programs





CROSSROADS

Thinking Theologically About Career, Calling, and Life



THE COUNCIL OF
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

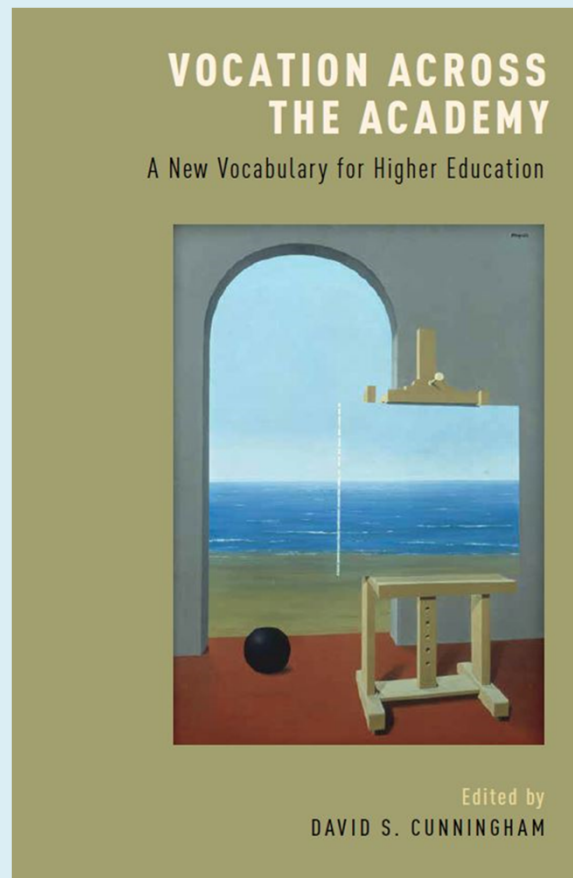
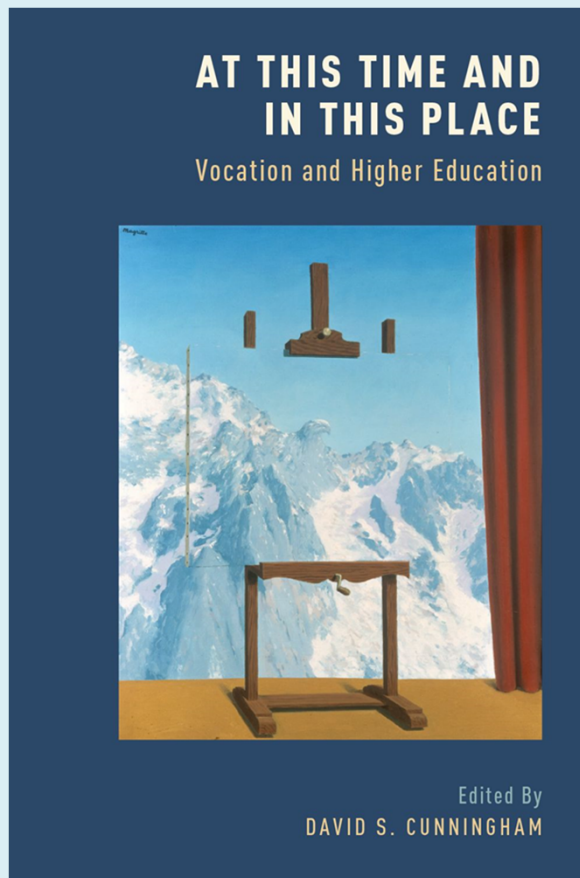
NetVUE



NETWORK FOR VOCATION IN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

- National and Regional Gatherings
- Consulting and Campus Visits
- Program Development Grants and Awards
- Programs to Strengthen Campus Chaplaincies
- Online Resources & Networking Opportunities

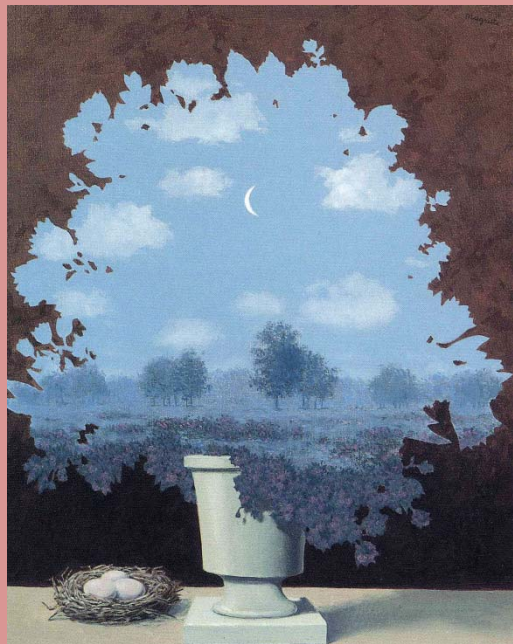
The NetVUE Scholarly Resources Project



Vocational
Exploration
in Multi-Faith
Contexts

Vocation in a Multi-Faith Context?

**WHAT TITLE COULD WE
POSSIBLY PUT HERE?**



- The language has deeply Christian roots
- Other faiths have no precise equivalent
- Students identify with an increasingly diverse range of faiths and worldviews
- How can we offer insights from the conversation to a wider range of students?

A Christian Theological Argument for Addressing a Multi-Faith Context in Christian Colleges and Universities

- Christianity has always operated in a multi-faith context
- Christians need to be prepared to practice their faith in a multi-faith world
- Christian institutions should seek to expose others to what Christianity offers
- Interfaith leadership strengthens one's faith

