

First Year seminar

The Economy of Order

Go to the link on moodle which will bring you to a video segment on the "Economy of Order". View the video and write your reflections to the questions/statements below.

- 1) Recall from the vocation video that two critical components of our "lived callings" are community (local and global) and personal (especially the relationships we foster). The FEN document suggests that racism "is ultimately a matter of systemic and institutionalized misuse of power". How might racism affect both our "lived callings" and the "order" discussed in the video? Are they related? Explain.

Racism will cause division and chaos in the "order" of the world, because it replaces hospitality with hate. Order and justice rely on the common belief that everyone is equal, everyone is made in the image of God, and that everyone should help one another. Racism is one of the many ways in which mankind loses that idea. Through racism, men and women of one group claim superiority over another. As a result, people from both sides are more likely to not give hospitality to others and even inflict physical and psychological harm on those deemed less valuable. Without the God-given idea of everyone being made in the image of God, people don't treat others as they would themselves; they treat them with hate, disgust, and contempt.

Not only will racism destroy order, but it will also reduce diversity in our "lived callings" or our occupations in society. With racism, employees will most likely find themselves working with others more like themselves in looks and appearances, because racism separates people by racial features. As a result, the ideas, the work, and the culture at one's job will become narrow-minded. The lack of diversity will result in a loss in creativity, an increase in arrogance, and intellectual ignorance. However, the situation worsens if the racism is enforced by law. In such cases, there would be segregation and abuse by employers. The race deemed inferior would be given less opportunities in the work force and would not be able to pursue their true calling in life.

- 2) Briefly describe the gardener analogy in the video (what is the role and purpose of the gardener). Do you feel like this is a good analogy for an institution like Calvin? For an individual like you? Explain

To maintain order in a group of people, certain institutions such as Calvin College are tasked with managing and organizing people so that everyone can achieve his or her best. In the same way a gardener places plants in a garden in organized locations, educational institutions and even individuals work to lead students to their right occupation. For example, someone who might think they would like to go into engineering but isn't called to that occupation will find out at Calvin that the engineering soil is right for their needs. By grades, teachers, mentors, and peers, schools naturally place students where they truly belong. Sometimes, the gardening work gets dirty and difficult. Weeds of negativity, thorns of racism, and the pests of the past can infest the garden. Calvin college, other schools, and people such as parents often face these hardships and have to fix the problem. Through natural selection of lived calling and through discipline and support groups, Calvin takes the role of the gardener for cultivating the harvest of students.

- 3) What is the relationship between Love (our primary calling), Hospitality, and Justice according to the video?

According to the video, justice and hospitality both stem from love and dignity. Without acknowledging the God-given dignity everyone carries, one would not be motivated to love someone; without love, there is no reason for justice and hospitality. When someone loves something or someone, he or she is willing to do anything for that person or that thing. Whether it be a college degree or a soon to be fiancé, the object of that love will receive attention and dedication from the lover. The lover even commits to doing things which may be uncomfortable or difficult, such as letting a stranger crash into your house at night or attending your boring daughter's dance recital. Without love, which requires recognition that God created all people equally and deserving of love, people will only care about themselves. This in extreme situations leads to chaos, where everyone does what is good for them, and not good for others.

- 4) In the video it says "you don't give dignity, you affirm it". What does this mean to you? What is the ultimate source of our dignity?

The video specifies that Christians are not to be the givers but the affirmers of dignity, because only God is the one who gives dignity. If Christians were to give dignity, we would naturally err by claiming we are superior to the dignity receivers, and we would possibly unequally distribute dignity. Even if Christians managed to somehow present others with dignity perfectly, the dignity itself would be worthless as it is manmade and therefore breakable by man. Dignity is only valuable when it comes from God, because God shows no partiality and it is God's perspective which matters at the end of times. Affirming dignity rather than giving shows that God is the one in control. We are merely the tools with which he transforms the world to His will.