

THIS DOC is designed in pieces—so that you might be able to lift and feed your newsletters and social media feeds with bite sized chunks of the theological ideas that we walked through at our convocation.

THIS is a theological overview. We will also post an overview of the C3 Initiative project.

We thank Rollie Martinson for his continued work here.

EnJOY!-- Nancy Going

**dWe are called by God—as individuals and as a people—into many callings. Our God is always calling.**

### **ONE—CALLING CHANGES EVERYTHING**

While we all have many unique callings, as Christians we all share the same core callings that come from our Triune God, callings that determine the who, how, and what of our lives. These callings sit at the heart of our life and faith.

*Who are we to be?* The calling of the Triune God on our lives forms the core of our identity. We are creatures created in the image of God, baptized in Jesus Christ, and sent to serve by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*How are we to live?* Our values, lifestyles, and relationships are all fundamentally shaped by our called identity in the Triune God. We are called as creatures created in the image of the Trinity, our baptism into the life and death of Christ, and the powerful indwelling of God's Spirit in us. This reality changes and forms our way of living in the world.

*What are we to do?* These core Christian identities, rooted in the Triune God, informs the work, service, and activities that fill our daily lives. They shape how we inhabit our world: how we serve the body of Christ, carry out our professions, build human culture, craft our homes and develop our families, and care for and interact with others—whether as family, friends, citizens, or strangers.

### **TWO: CORE CALLINGS**

As Christians—broken people called out of a broken world by the Triune God—we share in several core callings. We are first called *through* God's creation of us as human beings, called from the dust to life, and called into existence in the image of God. Reflecting the relational nature of our Triune God, we are called into relationship with others and for the good work of building our world. Yet each of us has also become a new creation, individually called by the Holy Spirit through the baptism of Jesus, a baptism into Christ's death and resurrection.

Called *to* Christ, we are found *in* Christ, so that we are called into the eternal life of the Triune God—the God who is love itself, love woven in the relationship within the Three-in-One.

And just as we are in Christ, *Christ is in us*, as we are called to be his people and his body here on Earth. Yet we are not called to all be the same. The Holy Spirit calls us as the diverse people we are, for we make up a diverse body of Christ, where one is a hand, another a foot. And the Holy Spirit calls us *through* this body, *through* one another—the relationships and communities of the people of God. The Spirit calls us to be Christ *in and to the world*, to serve others and to work for the thriving of the world that God loves. And just as God calls us to nourish our own bodies and those bodies in our world, God also calls us to nourish *His* body, equipping God's church to continue to bear witness to Christ in the world.

### **THREE: To Be Called**

At the heart of all life is the concept of calling—the Caller who calls, we who are called, and the callings we receive. And all of this emerges from a gracious God. So the idea of calling saturates our existence. What are callings? They are summons to a mission, to positions that matter, to adventures that carry meaning, and to activities that are oriented towards that which we were created to be and to do. Callings are dynamic—they are not one-size-fits-all, but are unique, diverse, and specific to who we are, how we live, and what matters in our world.

We often come to hear our callings through answers to questions like: Who am I? What am I good at? What do I love? What are my passions? What is my meaning and purpose? Every human being has been called to many things, whether they realize it or not. And callings saturate our lives—we have callings in our family, our work, our community, our church, and our world. And our callings change through different seasons of life and capacities of our bodies, they are always present. ***To be human is to be called.***

Yet we are not always the ones answering these questions of identity alone. Our callings are often understood—or discerned—through relationships. We understand our primary callings as Christians through Jesus. God in Christ calls us into relationship with Him, into a life of discipleship. And our response to that calling comes through faith-formed living. And God calls us through each other. Learning how to understand and follow our callings throughout our lives is a practice of the community of God.

Callings are not always easily understood. They are discerned and experienced differently depending on our context and the situations in our lives. Deep poverty, violence, and discrimination can all negatively impact our callings. At the same time, people can also experience times of struggle, darkness, and brokenness in faithfully living out their callings. Our God is the God that brings life out of struggle, darkness, and brokenness, just as He brought life and resurrection out of Christ's suffering and death. And as the people of God, we play an important role in supporting and encouraging

fellow followers of Jesus as they live out their callings during these times of trial and tribulation.

Our callings are guided by love, through God's love for us and through our love of God, a love that is to consume all of our mind, heart, soul, and strength. And then, flowing from that, through our love for our neighbors as ourselves.

Our callings are empowered by the Holy Spirit, who gives us a diversity of gifts. God creates, sanctifies, and revels in the gifts He has given us through his Spirit, gifts that enable us to live into our callings. The gifts of the Spirit are diverse, and may appear as talents, passions, or powers unique to each individual and their various contexts.

**Our callings are not simply for us**—God sustains creation through our living out of our callings. As we live into our callings, God is not only transforming us, but the world as well.