

Reflection on Vocation - Bill Coy

I graduated from FST in 1982. The path since then is not one I could have envisioned.

Currently I am the director of a leadership development Fellowship in Honolulu Hawaii. It is funded by an internet billionaire and philanthropist, Pierre Omidyar. The purpose of the Omidyar Fellows is to create a cross sector community of leaders in Hawaii who are more effective, connected and collaborative. We see ourselves as a societal change entity, not just a leadership development organization.

The career path from theology student to my current position has been anything but linear. Since my graduation from FST I have been a pastoral associate, head of a department at a Chancery Office, a Director of Human Resources, head of Training and Development for a visual effects firm, a marriage therapist, a partner in a consulting firm. Now I find myself in my last job before I retire.

The famed guitarist from the Eagles Joe Walsh once said, "When life is happening, it seems like a series of disconnected events, but when you look at it in retrospect, it reads like a well-crafted novel.

Here is what I have learned:

- Theology needs to partner with another discipline in order to have power, impact and employability. The theology degree is most powerful when combined with a catalytic compound such as education, management, or clinical/therapeutic skills. Theology provides meaning and understanding. It is most powerful when partnered with a practical application. Tom Waits, another old musician said, "Every song needs an address".
- Embrace the uncertainty, we never know where it all leads. That does not imply a lack of intention. The narrative you craft is like driving at night. Know where you are headed but pay attention to the 100 yards ahead of you. One chapter will lead to another. Oh, and never forget that you will learn far more from your failures than your successes.
- Define ministry and vocation on your terms, not on anyone else's. How you understand your place in the world, your call, must come from within you, not from any external source.

I am deeply indebted to the Franciscans, the wise men and women who taught me to appreciate and nurture both wisdom and compassion. Those who I serve, and influence owe a debt of gratitude to them as well.

Carl Jung had a small sign over his desk in Zurich: *Vocatus Atque Non Vocatus Deus Aderit*. "Called or not called, God is present." Something we should all keep in mind as we walk with each other down the road. Peace and Good, Bill Coy