

# Issue at Hand

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I was going to introduce this issue of *Beacon Lights* by expressing the need that we have for teachers. I was going to make the point by referencing a letter that the Federation of PR Schools sent out recently, expressing that great need. I was going to punctuate my introduction with a lengthy quote from John Calvin and a shorter, pithier quote from Augustine.

And all the people yawned.

My problem was that I started writing the introduction before I read the articles. Blame it on deadlines, but I thought I could get ahead of things by writing it early.

The burden of my article was going to be that you, young person, need to consider becoming a teacher because it is a higher calling than that of ditch digger, bean counter, or tile installer. But how do I say that and do justice to the idea of vocation that Luther restored to the church in the Reformation? Maybe being a teacher is a higher calling, but maybe it isn't. "He who engages in the lowliness of his work, performs God's work, be he lord or king."<sup>1</sup>

And then I read the articles, and realized I was approaching this all wrong. Why should you become a teacher? Read Annica Kuiper's article and tell me that it doesn't move you. You can picture those children looking up at her, and then you envision yourself in her shoes, and you see those kids looking up to you, and you desire it. You envy her. Not for selfish reasons, but because you love those children, children you have never met. You read Kyle Bruinooge's article and your heart breaks for those children from a broken home, and you want to help them. You want to be that person that they should have at home, but don't, because their father abandoned them. You desire, for a few hours each day, to be something of the mother they don't have. You don't say it, but as a redeemed child of God, you sense that here, right in front of you, is one of "the least of these my brethren" (Matt. 25:31) and you want to serve them.

And then a part of you says, "But the money isn't great, and if I go into business, I can have a lot more stuff." So you put down this issue, pick up your phone, and after a few YouTube videos, the urge goes away.

But you make the mistake of re-reading the articles, and the importance of that stuff fades away. "The human being who in his vocation serves his fellow-men fulfills his task out of love for Christ and receives the same poor measure of gratitude as Christ did."<sup>2</sup> Money? You tell me a better paying job would have greater rewards than those the authors of these articles receive? Without doing injustice to the cobbler who himself makes shoes out of love for Christ, you realize there is something special in the job of a teacher. The pay represents a "poor measure of gratitude," but you love and serve Jesus Christ, and that is enough.

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<sup>1</sup> *Luther on Vocation*, Gustaf Wingren, 9. I thank Rick Mingerink for bringing this book, and others on the topic of vocation, to my attention.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 31

I can exert myself to convince you to become a teacher because of the great need.

Or I can let the teachers in their own words convince you that being a teacher rivals any job in the world.

Imagine a profession where your work day is a day you “look forward to every single night.” Imagine a career where “for a few hours each day” you get to teach “the precious jewels in the crown of the King.” Imagine a vocation where you exclaim, “There’s nothing like it in the world. What a privilege! What a delight!”

Imagine being a teacher.