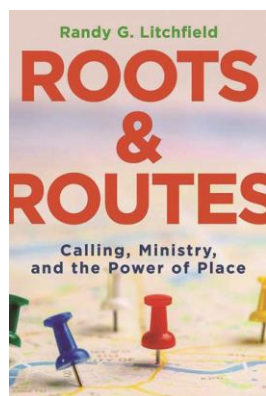


COS Enrichment Session, 2 PM, July 12, 2019

“Calling, Ministry, and the Power of Place,” Dr. Randy Litchfield



***Roots and Routes: Calling, Ministry, and the Power of Place***

Dr. Randy G. Litchfield

Methodist Theological School in Ohio

[Available on Amazon](#)

The roots of my book stretch to when I began part-time seminary classes while an engineer at a division of General Motors. My struggle to discern personal vocation back then has shaped the undergraduate and seminary courses I've taught since.

I am struck by the contrast between the desires of students to make a difference in the world and the apathy of church members that many leaders bemoan. *Why do persons drift from a desire to make a difference to apathy? What passivates people of faith?* There are no simple answers, but I am confident that fostering rich vocational imagination is part of the response.

Vocational imagination fails because we look for abstract vocations, rather than embedded callings for a particular time and place. You see, vocation is not a thing we have but a living partnership with God's work in the world. We encounter God in the places we dwell and move between. *Partnerships with God, our vocations, are birthed and embodied in the womb of place.*

We need to include three ideas in our thinking about vocation. One—vocation involves active partnership with God and not just following. Two--vocation is a process in which the forms of our vocations change over time and in different places—vocation is not a static ***thing*** to possess. Three—vocation emerges from place just as much as it does from an individual.

More than a location on a map, place is the web of relationships from which we come to be and to which we contribute. Place is not the backdrop to our vocations, but rather the fabric of our identity and our vocations themselves.

*Roots and Routes* includes chapters on place-making, way-making, and equipping persons for vocation-in-place. The chapters on place-making and way-making provide detailed methods for discerning partnership. Each chapter has questions for reflecting on one's personal life, leadership, and congregation.