

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
PTH/MHT 544 The Spiritual Formation of the Minister

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Mondays 10:30am - 1:15pm

Spring 2009

3 Hours

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to equip ministers to facilitate the process of lifelong spiritual transformation. While spiritual growth is personal in nature, it is enhanced in a context of authentic community. Toward this end, this course will include opportunities for students to explore a variety of avenues capable of leading to holistic, intentional, and ongoing spiritual growth. In addition to classic spiritual disciplines and virtues, students will consider an array of contributions from various streams of the Christian tradition. The model used in this course serves as a starting point from which leaders can tangibly assist others in experiencing authentic transformation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Each participant should demonstrate through the academic, relational and spiritual requirements of this course that he or she has satisfactorily met the following objectives:

Knowledge

1. A biblical theology of spiritual formation including personal application.
2. A biblical theology of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian Life and ministry giftings.
3. A general awareness of the historic and interdenominational body of spiritual literature.
4. A sound grasp of the classic Christian disciplines and the virtues of the spiritual life.
5. An awareness of the unique Pentecostal-charismatic dimensions of Christian spirituality.
6. An awareness of the unique dimensions of small group peer accountability in Christian spirituality.

Attitudes

1. A healthy self-critical perspective toward one's personal life and ministry.
2. Openness to the edifying work of the Holy Spirit and constructive criticism from fellow members of the body of Christ.
3. A sense of responsibility for, as well as dependence upon, the larger body of Christ, as it relates to spiritual development.
4. Sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in personal life and ministry.

Skills

1. Utilization of empirical inventories as tools of personal growth.
2. Utilization of the Appreciative Inquiry method as a tool of personal growth.
3. Development of ability to effectively engage in a broad range of spiritual disciplines, and meaningfully reflect upon the experience.
4. Participation in small group and spiritual exercises in a timely and professional manner.
5. The ability to identify and maximize one's personal spiritual gifts in ministry.
6. Application of personal spiritual growth to varied corporate settings and responsibilities with a view to future ministry.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Ortberg, John. *The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

Boa, Kenneth. *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

McNeal, Reggie. *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2000.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

Foster, Richard J. and J.B. Smith (eds.). *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993.

Tan, Siang-Yang and Douglas Gregg. *Disciplines of the Holy Spirit: How to Connect to the Spirit's Power and Presence*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

METHODOLOGY

This course will utilize a wide variety of learning methods and approaches including lecture, discussion, small groups, readings, self-assessment, self-reflection, and practice of many of the Christian disciplines both in and out of the classroom. While the course will have a strong cognitive component, it is intended to be a personal experience in the spiritual growth process.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. *Class Attendance*: Students are expected to attend class regularly, and be active participants in class discussions, activities, etc. 15 Points are deducted for each class session missed. In accordance with school policy, a student cannot pass the course if they miss more than two class sessions.
2. *Reading Requirement*: Read the required texts in their entirety and prepare a two page typewritten "Reflective Reading Report" on each of the textbooks (not to exceed two pages). The report should be double spaced with 1 inch margins and 12pt Times New Roman font. You will be graded on writing skill as well as content (edit!). In this report you are to state whether or not you have completed the reading in its entirety and identify the author's thesis or purpose for writing in one succinct statement. Then, discuss 3-4 concepts from the book that were meaningful to you, and why. (This is not a review or summary outline of the book's main points, but a personal reflection on specific insights that were significant/helpful for you personally, and why.)

Ortberg. *The Life You've Always Wanted*.

Due: January 26

Boa. *Conformed to His Image*.

Due: February 16

McNeal. *A Work of Heart*

Due: March 16

3. *Small Group Participation.* Each student will be assigned to a small group. These groups will meet weekly during a portion of the class time. The groups will serve as peer groups to encourage each other in their spiritual development (a crucial function of the body of Christ and this course). Note: Small group grading assessment will be made by group members based on a combination of attendance and involvement.
4. *Develop a Personal Spiritual Growth Plan:* Each student will develop a personal spiritual growth strategy to be carried out for 8-9 weeks of the semester. Your small group should be a great place to encourage and support each other in your progress on your spiritual development plans. Specific details for developing this plan are contained on the attached sheet. The plan is to be approximately 4-5 pages, double spaced, with 1 inch margins, and size 12 font. Growth Plan due: **February 9.**
5. *Maintain a Spiritual Journal:* Students will keep a personal journal of their spiritual journeys throughout the entire semester. Students may record insights from their readings of Scripture, textbooks and assignments, encounters with people, prayer needs, answers to prayer, insight & support gained from small group, etc. **Your primary journaling focus should be on your progress in carrying out your growth plan (record of activity, reflection on insights gained, successes, failures, adjustments to plan, etc.).** (In terms of quantity, to receive a “C” you must have an average of 3 journal entries per week. Quality is another consideration.) Journal due: **March 30.**
6. *Spiritual Transformation Reflection Paper:* Each student will complete a 4-5 page reflection paper discussing their spiritual journey over the course of the semester. This paper should primarily assess the student’s effectiveness in carrying out the spiritual growth plan, but should also make projections for an ongoing personal spiritual growth plan. Specific details for developing this plan are contained on the attached sheet. Double space, 1 inch margins, 12 pt Times New Roman font. **March 30.**
7. *Final examination:* Each student will complete a final exam. The nature of the exam will be discussed in class. The final will be given **April 20.**

GRADING PROCEDURE

	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Class Attendance (15 points deducted for ea. absence)	100	10%
Small Group Participation	100	10%
Reading and Reading Reports (50 points each)	150	15%
Development of Spiritual Growth Plan	150	15%
Journal (re: Implementation of Growth Plan)	150	15%
Spiritual Transformation Reflection Paper	150	15%
Final Exam	<u>200</u>	<u>200%</u>
	1000	100%

Note: Late work will be penalized.

COURSE OUTLINE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Session Topic</u>	<u>Work Due</u>
1/5	Introduction to the Course Assessing Your Present Spiritual Formation	-----
1/12	Facilitating Your Ongoing Spiritual Transformation	-----
1/19	Martin Luther King Jr. Day—No Class	-----
1/26	Understanding Authentic Spiritual Transformation	Ortberg Reflection Due
		CLP & Assess Yourself Due
2/2	Understanding Authentic Spiritual Transformation	Growth Plan Draft to Group
2/9	Understanding Authentic Spiritual Transformation	Spiritual Growth Plan Due
2/16	Understanding Authentic Spiritual Transformation	Boa Reflection Due
2/23	Spring Study Week—No Class	-----
3/2	Understanding Authentic/ Class Chapel	-----
3/9	Understanding Authentic Spiritual Transformation	-----
3/16	How Christian Traditions Shape Sp. Transformation	McNeal Reflection Due
3/23	How Christian Traditions Shape Sp. Transformation	-----
3/30	How Christian Traditions Shape Sp. Transformation	Reflection Paper & Journal
4/6	How Christian Traditions Shape Sp. Transformation	-----
4/13	Brunch at Taylor Home	-----
4/20	Final Exam	-----

Personal Spiritual Development Plan

Purpose: *The purpose of this assignment is to be intentional and proactive in creating a practical strategy to assist you in your spiritual transformation process. The exact nature of this plan will vary from person to person, for we are all at individual stages in our spiritual journeys. The following seven elements should be included in your growth plan.*

Part 1: Assessment of Your Current Spiritual Formation

Discuss your present spiritual formation (where are you personally in your journey of growing in the image of Christ?). Discuss any activities you practice/routines you follow for the purpose of contributing to your spiritual formation. Some questions to get you thinking:

- How are you doing in cultivating God's friendship on a daily basis?
- Does your life have regular elements/time devoted to spiritual growth?
- What does your current devotional life look like? (What elements comprise it? Areas of strength? Weakness? Are adjustments needed in your current patterns?)

Part 2: Reflection on Factors Influencing Your Growth Plan

Your spiritual growth plan should be influenced by intentional reflection on various resources that are designed to assist you in honest evaluation for the purpose of identifying specific areas needing development. Your personal plan should flow out of thoughtful reflection on each of the following:

- Prayer/guidance of the Spirit (Do you sense God's prompting in certain areas?)
- *The Christian Life Profile* test (How do the results of your self-assessment and the three "one-another" assessments contribute to your growth plan?)
- *Assess-Yourself.com* (How do the results of the various assessments contribute to your plan?)
- Input from class small group on the development of your growth plan
- Input from significant others. (Did you seek outside input to catch any blind spots and obtain helpful ideas/suggestions for growth goals and/or steps.)
- Insights/challenges gleaned from course textbooks read to this point
- Reflection on the appreciative inquiry focus questions given in class
- Reflection on personal spiritual timeline exercise
- Optional: Other specific resources that helped you personally identify areas for growth

Briefly summarize/comment how each of these elements has contributed to your present growth plan, or how they may be able to contribute to future growth plans.

Part 3: Identification of Specific Target Areas for Growth (Growth Goals)

In light of parts 1 and 2, identify one specific area in your spiritual life which needs development. (*See samples below.*) Some questions to get you thinking:

- Are there new disciplines or virtues you would like to develop?
- Are there problems/neglects that need to be addressed?
- What can you do to improve your relationship with God and increase your spiritual transformation?

Part 4: Identification of Specific Steps for Growth

For your growth area listed above, identify specific steps (an action plan) you will take to help you experience growth in that area. (*See samples below.*) Things to keep in mind:

- These steps should be tangible and practical. The more specific you can be, the greater the chance of experiencing growth.
- These steps should be realistic. Your plan must fit your current life context.
- In order to carry out your steps, will you have to make changes in your life/behavior?
- As you carry out these steps, are there potential pitfalls or challenges you may face?

Part 5: Identification of Accountability Plan

Identify specific accountability measures you will have to assist you in following your plan. Who or what will help hold you accountable in carrying out your plan? [This can include people (accountability partner, small group, spouse, friend, etc.) as well as other non-human systems/resources (i.e. journals, charts, contracts, reward systems, etc.)] Things to keep in mind:

- Are the means of accountability specific? (Do you have tangible means of accountability for each growth goal?)
- Are the accountability means consistent? (Can it regularly keep you on the right track?)
- Are the accountability means personal? (Will it effectively motivate you to keep up with your growth plan?)
- Are the accountability means realistic? (You don't want to expect more from someone than is reasonable.)

Part 6: Identification of Growth Evaluation Plan

Identify specific evaluation measures you will have to assist you in assessing if the desired growth has occurred. This can include people or other systems/resources that can help you evaluate growth (i.e. journals, charts, assessment tests, reward system, etc.).

- Are the means of evaluation specific? (Do I have tangible means of evaluation for each growth goal?)
- Are the evaluation means measurable? (This is the ideal. The more tangible you can be for each growth goal, the better.)

Note: All supporting documentation should be submitted with the growth plan (i.e. copy of *Christian Life Profile* personal score sheet; copy of three CLP "one-another" score sheets; copy of *AssessYourself.com* score sheets; personal responses to appreciative inquiry reflection questions, personal spiritual timeline, etc.).

Facilitating Intentional Spiritual Growth

Example 1- Area of Desired Growth: Compassion

Part 1: Assessment of Your Current Spiritual Formation

Will vary from person to person

Part 2: Reflection on Factors Influencing Your Growth Plan

Will vary from person to person

Part 3: Growth Goal (*My specific target area for growth*)

- Compassion: I want to have more compassion for people in need around me.

Part 4: Action Steps (*Practical and realistic steps to accomplish this goal*)

- I will volunteer one afternoon a month to the Big Brothers program (soup kitchen, meals on wheels, nursing home)
- I will look each week for one person in need whom I can bless (i.e. give groceries, fix car, provide rides, etc.)
- I will contribute \$20 dollars per month to the Victory Mission (or Salvation Army, etc.)

Part 5: Accountability (*Who or what will hold me accountable?*)

- I will commit to the Big Brother program a six-month minimum commitment.
- I will log in my journal my weekly act of compassion for someone in need
- I will share with my small group at least once of month on my progress in this area.

Part 6: Evaluation (*Tangible means of evaluating if I am growing in this area*)

- In 3 months I'll retake the *Christian Life Profile*. I would like to see an increase in my "compassion" score.
- I would like to hear my spouse/pastor/other give an unsolicited comment on my increased compassion/concern.
- I will log my experiences in my journal. I can look back to see how consistent I have been, how my attitude is, etc.
- I should see an increase in my desire to be involved in activities that show compassion to others. (I.e. more prayer for others, volunteer 2 afternoons a month instead of 1; Give \$30 dollars a month instead of \$20, etc.)

Example 2 - Area of Desired Growth: Giving Away My Faith (Evangelism)

Part 3: Growth Goal (*My specific target area for growth*)

- Evangelism: I want to do a better job at sharing the love of Christ with people who do not yet know Him.

Part 4: Action Steps (*Practical and realistic steps to accomplish this goal*)

- I will commit to pray every morning that God will give me a divine appointment with someone that day.
- I will carry a small New Testament with me at all times in order to be ready to share/give it to someone.
- I will invite at least one neighbor (co-worker, etc.) to dinner in my home each month.
- I will go to one "secular" event each month, such as a coffeehouse, concert, art fair, play, etc.
- I will read at least one book on friendship evangelism during the semester. I will begin with *Gentle Persuasion*.

Part 5: Accountability (*Who or what will hold me accountable?*)

- I will invite neighbors/co-workers to dinner in advance so that I'm committed and can't back out at the last minute.
- I will ask my spouse/pastor to periodically ask me about the last time I shared Christ with someone.
- I will log in my journal weekly my evangelism efforts, prayer requests, etc.
- I will share with my small group at least once of month on my progress in this area.

Part 6: Evaluation (*Tangible means of evaluating if I am growing in this area*)

- In 3 months I will retake the *Christian Life Profile* test. I would like to see an increase in my "sharing Christ" score.
- I will be able to list what neighbors/co-workers have been to my home each month.
- I will log my experiences in my journal. I can look back to see how consistent I have been, how my attitude is, etc.

Spiritual Transformation Reflection Paper

Purpose

Each student will complete a 3-4 page reflection paper discussing their spiritual journey over the course of this semester. This paper should primarily assess your effectiveness in developing and carrying out your spiritual growth plan, but should also make projections for an ongoing personal spiritual growth plan. Reflection Papers should cover the following three elements. Foundational questions to get you thinking have been provided, but you are not limited to these.

Part 1: Development of Your Spiritual Growth Strategy

Reflect on the process by which you developed your personal spiritual growth strategy at the beginning of the semester. Don't give a repeat/summary of your first paper, but now in hindsight and reflection, what have you learned from this process of developing a growth plan?

- Did you invest the necessary time and effort to get an honest assessment of your initial situation, and develop a truly beneficial growth plan?
- Were there specific tools/resources that were more helpful to you in assessing and reflecting on your own spiritual formation?
- Were there specific tools/resources that were more helpful to you in developing a tangible/practical growth plan?
- Were some means of accountability more helpful for you than others?
- In hindsight, were you successful in developing a realistic plan that fit your context and personality?
- What principles can you apply for future growth plans?

Part 2: Carrying Out Your Spiritual Growth Strategy

Reflect personally on your experience.

How well did you carry out your personal spiritual growth plan over the semester? (be specific)

Were you realistic in your plan? Were adjustments necessary? Did you make them?

How well did you do in keeping a personal log/journal of this growth over these weeks?

What kind of growth did you experience as a result of your plan?

Part 3: Projections for an ongoing personal spiritual growth plan.

In light of this semester's experience, where will you go from here?

Immediate/specific projections

What does your immediate plan for ongoing spiritual growth look like? (Be sure to include growth goals, practical action steps, means for accountability, and means of evaluation)

Long term/general projections

Long term, what elements of this whole intentional process will you utilize in an ongoing way in order to assess future growth goals, facilitate future growth, and evaluating your future spiritual transformation? What elements of this process could assist you in future ministry endeavors?

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SPECIFIC DATA

Prepared by Jay Taylor, November 2005.