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SF 502 The Spiritual Life of the Minister

Steve Harper

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SF 502 The Spiritual Life of the Minister

January 20-23, 2004

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Introduction

This course connects Christian spiritual formation to the vocation of ordained ministry. Using scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as the matrix for exploration, the course focuses upon the personal identity and professional functioning of the clergyperson. The goal of the course is to help students face the opportunities and the challenges of the ministry with the foundation of a sound spiritual life.

Textbooks

Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (Crossroad, 1993)

Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor* (Eerdmans, 1993)

Evelyn Underhill, *Concerning the Inner Life* (Kessinger, 2003)

Warren Wiersbe, *On Being a Servant of God* (Baker, 1999)

It is assumed that these texts will be read prior to the beginning of the class, so that a common theoretical base can be laid for the class. References to particular parts of the books will be made, for re-reading each day.

Course Objectives

1. You will acquire knowledge about...
 - ...a theology of the spiritual life as applied to the vocation of clergy
 - ...the intersection point between “personal” and “professional”
 - ...a style of ministry that will equip you for the long haul
 - ...what others value in fostering authentic spirituality for ministry
2. You will develop skills in...
 - ...fostering the character of a virtuous clergyperson
 - ...functioning as a spiritual leader
 - ...living in ministry as a servant of God
 - ...developing a contemplative lifestyle in the midst of your ministry
3. You will be encouraged to deepen your life in Christ by...
 - ...participating in the “direction in common” model of the class
 - ...using the means of grace
 - ...pursuing matters of personal interest and/or need in your journey

Class Structure

The course uses an adaptation of the “Direction in Common” model designed by Fr. Adrian Van Kaam and Dr. Susan Muto. Dr. Harper will provide a handout summarizing this model on the first day of class. This class acknowledges that spiritual formation occurs in the context of Christian community.

Grading System

The course will follow a traditional pattern for grading, with the assignment of the final grade in accordance with the policies of the current Catalog. The final grade for this course will be determined by the grading of the major paper for the class. Dr. Harper will use time the first day of class reviewing the nature of this paper and the point-values for various segments of it.

Course Requirements

1. Prior to the class----(a) complete your reading of the texts
(b) conduct a pastoral leader interview
2. Attend all sessions of the class----because of the intensive nature of this course, you must be certain that you have nothing to prohibit you from full participation.
4. After the class----write a 10-12 page paper on a theme relevant to the course content. You may use any themes or sub-themes found in the daily schedule, in your reading, or other subjects that bear upon the spiritual life of the minister. The due date is Friday, January 30. You should most likely settle upon your theme and begin preliminary research prior to the class in order to complete the work by January 30.

Course Schedule (Daily—9:00 am to 6:00 pm)

Tuesday	Orientation “Ministry as a Dangerous Vocation” “And Some Apostles” (Wiersbe, ch 1-5)
Wednesday	“Spiritual Leadership” (Nouwen)
Thursday	“The Spirit of Ministry” (Peterson)
Friday	“The Services of Ministry” (Wiersbe, chs 6-30)

(References to texts show the general correlation between each day’s theme and the respective text. Underhill’s book weaves into the entire course)