

SYLLABUS: SPIRITUAL FORMATION (PM)

Spring 2005

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

Instructor: Garry Schmidt, San Francisco Theological Seminary
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Time: Fridays, September 9, October 28, and November 18 (6:00 – 9:00pm)
Saturdays, September 10, October 29, and November 19 (8:30 – 4:30pm)

Place: MBBS Campus

Course Description:

Christian Spirituality is grounded in attentiveness to personal and communal religious experience which finds expression in loving action in the world. This course will invite students to explore the nature of their own spiritual formation as well as introduce modalities of formation from Christian traditions of spirituality. It will then discern their implication for ministry today. The course seeks to demonstrate that self-care and ministry must be complimentary rather than competitive, so that balance in self, relationship, and ministry can be sustained. It will invite participants to regular spiritual practice and requires a willingness to try a variety of spiritual practices that encourage a contemplative approach to life. A contemplative milieu and the discipline of spiritual direction will inform all aspects of the course.

Course Objectives:

1. To develop a holistic awareness of spiritual formation and spiritual direction.
2. To study and practice a spectrum of personal spiritual practices with the intention of integrating those that are most beneficial into one's life patterns.
3. To share one's experience of these practices in a community setting.
4. To explore one's own spiritual development and God's movement in one's life.
5. To explore the biblical, theological, and historical foundations of Christian spirituality.
6. To reflect on the implications for ministry of the above goals.

Course Outline:

This course will utilize individual study, practice, and discipline within a community dynamic and discernment, using lecture, discussion, music, film, spiritual practice, and contemplative reflection in considering the following topics.

1. Introduction: Towards defining and understanding Spiritual Formation.
2. Contemplative Living and Listening
3. Transition and Transformation
4. Theological Anthropology and Experience
5. A brief history of prayer
6. Bible and Spirituality

7. Spirituality of Systems and Structures
8. Formation and Ministry: Pastoral Care, Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Direction.
9. Disciplines of Faithfulness: Intentional spiritual practices including, Lectio Divina, Centering Prayer, The Jesus Prayer, Christian Meditation Spiritual/Contemplative Reading, Examen, Sabbath, Study, Playfulness, Body prayer, Praying in Nature, Journaling, Walking.

Retreat: Saturday, November 19th will be a retreat day utilizing an Ignatian modality to contemplatively reflect on how God has formed us through individual and interpersonal experience, nature, and the systems in which we live and work. We will end our time together in a Eucharistic celebration.

Required Reading: (Total pages of reading is about 1100-1200) Cost of new books is about \$100 – 125.)

A. Books

Kidd, Sue Monk, When the Heart Waits: Spiritual Direction for Life's Sacred Questions, HarperSanFrancisco, 1990.

Job, Rueben P., Norman Shawchuck, A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants, The Upper Room, 1991. approx. pp. 77-141.
Instructors note: I ask that all students have their own copy of this book as it will form a common community practice during the period of this course. It is available in paperback, hardcover and leather. Begin using this guide on Sunday February 6th as outlined on page 5ff, (How to Use This Book). Utilize a journal for writing your daily reflections as per #2 under course requirements.

Linn, Dennis, Sheila Linn, Matthew Linn, Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life, Paulist Press, 1995.

Mulholland, M. Robert Jr., Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation, Upper Room, 2000. (Chapters 3-5, 10-13)

Palmer, Parker, The Active Life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity, and Caring, Jossey-Bass, 1990.

Peterson, Eugene H., The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction, Eerdmans, 1989.

Stairs, Jean, Listening for the Soul: Pastoral Care and Spiritual Direction, Fortress, 2000. (Chapters 1-5, 7)

Ulinov, Ann & Barry, Primary Speech: A Psychology of Prayer, John Knox, 1982.

Wolpert, Daniel, Creating a Life with God: The Call of Ancient Prayer Practices, Upper Room, 2003.

B. Articles

Burghardt, Walter J., Contemplation: A Long Loving Look at the Real, Church Magazine, (Winter 1989) pp 15-18. Available in Registrar office.

Shalem Institute, Quotations About Contemplation,
<http://www.shalem.org/publication/articles> (See link at bottom of Contemplative Spirituality article)

May, Gerald, Ann Cline, Bill Dietrich, Carole Crumley, Contemplative Spirituality: A Shalem Monograph, (Shalem Institute),
<http://www.shalem.org/publication/articles>

C. Movies (optional) We may view some sections during class time

Babette's Feast
Romero
Chocolate
Dead Man Walking

D. Optional Reading

Bidwell, Duane R., Short-Term Spiritual Guidance, Fortress, 2004. This newly released book takes dynamics of short-term counseling/therapy, and shows pastors and care-givers how they can incorporate the ancient tradition of spiritual direction. *"He provides a way that ministers and concerned laypersons can offer spiritual direction that honors the person, recognizes the context of how the care is offered 'on the run,' and stays true to the historical ways spiritual direction has been offered."* (from the foreword)

McGrath, Alister, Christian Spirituality, Blackwell, 1999. This is a well written introduction to Christian Spirituality, written in a style that is accessible, clear, and designed for theologians, theology students, and adult education situations. One drawback is that it is costly.

Richarson, Ronald W., Creating Healthier Churches: Family Systems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life, Fortress, 1996. (Especially chapter 13, *Becoming a Better Leader*, pp172-182). Describes the necessity of a "non-anxious presence" for effective leadership.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance at all sessions, arriving on time, mastering assigned reading and participating actively with colleagues in spiritual practices, reflection, and discussion.

2. Keep a spiritual journal, reflectively interacting with the daily communal experience as structured by A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants. If desired the journal could utilize the format of the daily examen as outlined in Sleeping with Bread. **Begin this journal the Sunday before the first seminar day (Sept. 4th)**. These reflections can inform the experiential basis of your final integrating paper. These journals, or copies of them, should be handed in on Friday, November 18th.
3. Write a spiritual biography reflecting formative experiences of your life. Trace early influences, significant persons and defining moments, recounting the outer facts as well as reflecting on their inner meaning. (4-6 pages, double spaced) Identify your Myers-Briggs Type in the biography (see #4). **Due the first day of class.**
4. Prior to first class each student should determine his/her Myers-Briggs temperament type. You may take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator free at the following website: www.humanmetrics.com (Jung Typology Test)
5. Write a concise 2-4 (single spaced) page book notation on Stairs, Listening for the Soul, and any other three of the required books. Your notation should be structured as follows:
 - a. Title and brief *bio* of the author.
 - b. Summary of the core message of the book. One short paragraph
 - c. Your critical thinking about the book, including helpful contributions made to your understanding of spiritual formation, as well as any reservations. Is there anything you would like to ask the author?
 - d. Provide 2-3 questions, or use quotes with discussion prompts, that you could use when leading a small group discussion of the book.

Stairs, Listening for the Soul due on or before September 23rd. E-mailed notation is acceptable. If mailed, should be postmarked on or before September 23rd. Notations 2 due on or before October 7th. Notation 3 is due on or before October 21st. Notation 4 is due by the end of class on October 29th.
6. Write a final **integrating** paper utilizing required reading, classroom lecture and discussion, spiritual practices, journaling, and retreat time. Address the following broad topic in any way you choose. (10-12 double spaced pages)
 - a. What is your current understanding of Christian spirituality and formation?
 - b. Relate this current understanding of Christian spirituality to the scriptures, the church, and the world.
 - c. What “rule of life” or embodiment/practice of spirituality have you adopted currently? What benefits and struggles have you experienced in this process?
 - d. How might spirituality and formation affect your future life and ministry?
 - e. At the end of your paper attach a short (1-2 page) written evaluation of yourself and your work in this course. Outline your areas of strength and growth as you experienced them during this course. Indicate what grade

you believe you have earned based on your class participation, reading and writing.

You may choose an artistic way to address the above questions, the written text may be shortened accordingly, provided the text covers the above points clearly enough that the link between the artistic medium and the integrative issues can be clearly seen by the instructor.

This paper is due by November 25th. Late papers will receive a grade reduction. The instructor prefers to read final assignment in hard copy. Papers will be considered on time if postmarked November 25th or earlier. Please send them to the following address and enclose an addressed return envelope.

Garry Schmidt
115 Ross Ave
San Anselmo, CA 94960

Suggested Reading & Assignment Schedule

1. Starting **September 4th** begin devotional reading of week 45, page 276: ***Forgiveness*** in *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*. Begin journal entries as per course requirement #2 above.

2. Read before first class September 9th:
- Contemplation: A Long Loving Look at the Real (article)*
 - Contemplative Spirituality (article)*
 - Sleeping with Bread*
 - Begin reading *Listening for the Soul*.

Assignments due September 9th: Spiritual biography & Myers Briggs Type – see course requirement #3.

3. September 10th - 23rd : Complete *Listening for the Soul* and read *Primary Speech*. Submit book notation #1 on or before September 23rd.

4. September 24th – October 7th. Read *When the Heart Waits* and *Creating a Life with God*.
Submit book notation #2 on or before October 7th.

5. October 8th – October 21st. Read *The Contemplative Pastor* and *The Active Life*. Submit book notation #3 on or before October 21st.

6. October 22nd – October 29th. Read *Shaped by the Word*. Submit book notation #4 by the end of class on October 29th.

7. November 18th – Hand in journal entries.

8. Final integrating paper and self-evaluation due November 25th or earlier.

Grading:

Meeting the course requirements satisfactorily, as outlined above, will generally ensure a grade of “B”. A higher grade will require a higher quality in writing and reflection.

Grading will be weighted as follows:

Class attendance/participation	10%
Biography and journal	20%
Book notations & reading	30%
Integrative paper	40%

Academic Policies:

MBBS academic policies are described on the MBBS website at www.mbseminary.edu/policies. They include policies on extensions for incomplete course work, academic integrity, non-discriminatory language, academic appeals, etc. Students should be familiar and comply with MBBS academic policies

Confidentiality

Students who wish to have their work kept confidential should submit it in an envelope and it will be returned the same way. Our classroom times will also constitute a covenant community and confidentiality guidelines will be reviewed on the first day of class.

*If someone pays attention
Too the part of me that struggles to know God
My search intensifies
The questing spirit grows bold enough
To claim its path*

*If someone believes with me
In the amazement of grace,
Prays with me, and reminds me
Of God's tenderness,
I live more thoroughly and bravely
In sacred time.*

Author unknown

Bibliography: Available on or before the first day of class

