Spiritual Formation of the Minister
Professional Doctoral Seminar – THCH8301
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Winter Trimester  February 22-24, 2021

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Mission Statement
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants
to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

NOBTS Core Values and Core Value Focus

Doctrinal Integrity – Knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we believe it, teach it, proclaim it, and submit to it. The doctrinal statements used in our evaluations are our Articles of Religious Belief and the Baptist Faith and Message Statement.

Spiritual Vitality – We are a worshiping community, with both personal spirituality and gathering together as a Seminary for the praise and adoration of God and instruction in His Word.

Mission Focus – We are not here merely to get an education or to give one. We are here to change the world by fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Characteristic Excellence – What we do, we do to the utmost of our abilities and resources as a testimony to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Servant Leadership – We follow the model of Jesus and exert leadership and influence through the nurture and encouragement of those around us.

Annually, the President will designate a core value that will become the focus of pedagogy for the year. For the 2020-2021 academic year that Core Value is Mission Focus.

Course Description
The seminar delineates the sources, character, and dynamics of the spiritual formation of the Christian minister. Formation is viewed as a foundational ministry and as a reciprocal responsibility of pastor and congregation. It is vitally related to the quality of the congregation’s worship and service, and the integrity of the pastor’s prophetic awareness. Combining trenchant analyses of contemporary religion and culture with insights and analyses from Scripture and the classics of Christian devotion, the study sets forth the classical spiritual disciplines as essential ingredients of authentic formation. The seminar constitutes an urgent call for spiritual maturity in Christian ministry and provides clear directives for achieving it.

Student Learning Outcomes
Students successfully completing the seminar will demonstrate:

- foundational understanding of Christian spirituality and its major paradigms;
- application of personal spiritual formation principles and practices by:
  - Journaling while practicing selected spiritual disciplines
  - Responding to reflection and application questions presented in the textbooks
  - Writing a personal spiritual growth plan
  - Identifying and presenting concepts and practices discerned from the assigned textbooks.
- ability to communicate the value and principles of spiritual formation in the local ministry context through writing an interview report, reflection paper and personal growth plan.

Textbooks
NOTE: Not all textbooks will be required by each participant in the class. Some books are assigned to specific individuals or groups. Review the list of assignments before purchasing textbooks.

Each student is to read the following textbooks and to be prepared to integrate their content into seminar discussions and presentations:

Required Texts:

You will be assigned one of the following classical texts. (read and report)


You will be assigned one of the following contemporary or practical texts. (read and report)


Before the Seminar:

1. **Primary Textbook Reading and Reflective Summary**: You will read the primary textbooks in their entirety. Be prepared to participate in a dialog/conversation concerning the Foster and Issler texts.
   a. Presentations: Each student will present the content and implications of a segment from one of the primary textbooks. Students will present the main ideas, ask relevant questions, and generate group dialogue. Use the time primarily for discussion not content. Assume that all students have read your book summary and expect responses. Assignments will be made by **December 15, 2020**.
   b. As you read *Living into the Life of Jesus* answer the questions at the end of each chapter. Submit a paper detailing a thoughtful but laconic **Reflective Summary** of your responses to the questions. The assignment will be confidential and seen only by the seminar faculty. Be prepared to participate in a class discussion about the content and personal reaction to the text. (5-6 pages) Parenthetical citations are acceptable. A header with Name, Assignment, Seminar, and Date may be substituted for the title page. **Due Date: Feb 15, 2021**
2. **Secondary Book Summaries:** Due Date: Feb 22, 2021
   Each student will complete a 2 page summary on each of the assigned secondary texts (a template will be supplied by the professor). Each summary should include suggestions for personal or corporate application in a local ministry context. Summaries will be submitted in pdf format on Discussion Board in Blackboard by **February 15, 2021.** Be prepared to present/share your summaries with the class. Be prepared for 10 minutes of presentation and discussion (as time allows.) A survey asking for your preference will be sent to you after registration. Respond to the survey ASAP. **Reading assignments will be made on or before December 15, 2020.** Students are expected to read the summaries posted by other students prior to the seminar.

3. **Spiritual Formation Journal:** Due Date: March 31, 2021
   Each student is to keep a spiritual formation journal. A minimum of 5 entries per week is expected for at least 3 consecutive weeks between **January 1 and March 31.** Entries should include spiritual insights based upon the selected reading assignments, personal devotional materials and the practice of spiritual disciplines. Entries will not be reviewed by the faculty instructors but should be referenced in the assigned reflection paper (Assignment #10). You will self-report completion of this assignment in Blackboard.

4. **Interview:** Due Date: Feb 21, 2021
   Interview an experienced and respected minister (pastor, staff, chaplain, etc) on the theme of spiritual formation. Prepare a written summary (3 pages) of the interview highlighting the most salient responses. Be prepared to discuss your conclusions during the seminar. Ask the minister to:
   - Define spirituality and state the value of spiritual formation for the minister
   - Identify marks of spiritual maturity
   - Indicate how spiritual maturity can be achieved
   - Ask about maintaining spiritual vitality in ministry (and failure to do so.)
   - Note particular challenges or problems related to personal spiritual formation

**During the Seminar:**

5. **Seminar Participation:** Students are expected to be active participants in all sessions of the seminar. Note: The seminar actually begins with the receipt of the syllabus and continues through the material completed after the three-day session.

6. **Discussion of the Primary Textbooks:** Students are expected to demonstrate critical thinking and reflection through discussion of insights, questions, disagreements, comprehensions and criticisms of the primary textbooks.

7. **Reports on Interviews:** Students will report briefly on their interviews.

8. **Group Presentations:** Students will be placed into groups and assigned topics from the *Devotional Classics* textbook to read and to present during class time. Assignments will be made by **December 15, 2020.** Students will be expected to succinctly present the main ideas, ask relevant questions, and generate group dialogue. Allow approximately 12-15 minutes for your group’s presentation. (see assignment #1)
9. **Presentations of the Secondary Textbooks:** Each student will present the summary of assigned secondary textbooks (probably in pairs or small groups.). The template for the summary is available on Blackboard. Allow approximately 10 minutes for your presentation and class discussion. Use the time for both content and concept dialogue. Assume that students have read your book summary and expect responses. (see assignment #2)

**Following the seminar:**

10. **Reflection Paper - Due April 15, 2021**
Submit a paper synthesizing the content and experience of this seminar. The paper, 6-7 pages in length, should utilize the data gathered from the interview (Assignment #4), personal practices and theological/theoretical concepts. The paper will have two sections, personal and corporate. (You are urged to formulate your content as you complete your course assignments.) *Address the following topics and questions in your paper.*

**Personal:**
- Compare the interview responses to the principles learned during this seminar.
- Which 3 disciplines are most impactful to *your* spiritual formation?
- Which spiritual discipline(s) do you most need to add to your lifestyle? Why?
- Which spiritual discipline seems the most difficult to continue in your life? Why?
- What insights about your spiritual walk or personal life did you discover?
- How does your own spiritual life influence the spiritual health of the congregation or leadership team?
- What disciplines should be emphasized more strongly in your congregation?

**Corporate/Congregational:**
- State how a minister may facilitate spiritual formation of the congregation.
- Discuss how spiritual health shapes a minister’s priorities, perception of authority and power, leadership style, and the content and spirit of preaching/teaching and congregational worship.
- Offer suggestions how a minister can make spiritual formation a more integral part of local Christian ministry.

11. **Final Project - Personal Growth Plan - Due: Due April 30, 2021**
Design a one-year personal spiritual growth plan. Determine your spiritual formation weakness/needs and articulate specific goals to address them. (base on assignment #10) Include spiritual practices presented in class such as Bible reading, meditation, prayer, readings, group life, etc. Growth Plan will be individual so creativity is encouraged. Include a bibliography of texts to be read or used, cite websites, resources, etc.

**Evaluation**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Reading and Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Summaries 2@10</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
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<td>Journal (self-report)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project (PGP)</td>
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Class Schedule: (Subject to Change)

The seminar is scheduled to meet from 1:00 to 9:00 p.m. (Central Daylight Saving Times) Monday, February 22; 8:00am to 4:00pm on Tuesday, February 23, and 8:00 to 4:00pm on Wednesday, February 24.

**Monday**
- 1:00 - 1:45pm: Introductions and Seminar Overview
- 1:45 – 2:45pm: Issler Text - Discussion
- 2:45 - 3:15pm: Break
- 3:15 - 4:45pm: Biblical/Theological Backgrounds
- 4:45 - 5:15pm: Break
- 5:15 - 6:15pm: Interview Report Discussion
- 6:15 - 7:00pm: Conclusion, Presentation Preparation (dismiss)

**Tuesday**
- 8:00 - 8:30am: Devotion & Review
- 8:30 - 10:00am: *Devotional Classics* – Review and dialogue
- 10:00 - 10:15am: Break
- 10:15 - 11:45am: *Devotional Classics* – Review and dialogue continued
- 11:45 - 1:00pm: Lunch
- 1:00 - 2:30pm: Book Reports - Contemporary
- 2:30 - 2:45pm: Break
- 2:45 - 4:00pm: Debrief, Discuss, and Apply

**Wednesday**
- 8:00 - 8:30 am: Devotion & Review
- 8:30 - 10:00am: Spiritual Development Theory
- 10:00 -10:15am: Break
- 10:15 - 11:45am: Book Reports - Classic
- 11:45 - 1:00pm: Lunch
- 1:00 - 2:30pm: Observations & Discussion
- 2:30 - 3:30pm: Assessment and Application
- 3:30 - 4:00pm: Wrap up, unfinished business, follow up assignments.
Selected Bibliography


______. *With Christ in the School of Prayer*.


