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IR 700 Senior Reflection Seminar

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WELCOME!

Welcome to your Senior Reflection Seminar. I am looking forward to participating with you this semester. I assume that most of you have become skilled with the Exl format. I must confess, although I have taught on-line many times, this is my first time to teach this course. I am convinced, however, that we can do this and it will be a great opportunity to prepare you for life and ministry.

Since all of you will be asked to share some personal history, let me begin with a few bits of information about myself. I was born in North Carolina, the son of a United Methodist minister. After my undergraduate degree at Duke University, I then completed graduate degrees at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and the Wheaton Graduate School of Theology before completing the Ph.D. degree at the University of Bristol in England.

I then served as pastor of churches in North Carolina and Colorado before beginning my teaching career at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Since that time I have taught at the Oral Roberts Graduate School of Theology, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and Asbury Theological
Seminary (first on the Wilmore Campus before moving to the Asbury Florida Campus in 2000).

As professor of World Christianity I spend most of my time teaching and writing but go out once a month to teach and preach at conferences, universities, and local churches around the world. I have preached and/or taught in nearly every state in the US and in over 30 countries.

I am committed to Christ and Church. My understanding of the Christian faith has led me to a ministry of sharing the good news of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit available through personal faith in Him.

My wife, Dianne, and I have homes near Asheville, NC and on the St. John’s River near Orlando, FL where we enjoy entertaining, gardening, fishing, and visiting with family (four grown children) and friends.

I usually publish a book every two or three years (for over 35 years), most recently completing a manuscript entitled, “The History of Evangelism, BC 3000 to the Present, a Global Perspective,” which should be out this spring.

Perhaps even more important, I may be the most “nonobjective” professor you know (if there is any such thing as objectivity among those who teach what they truly believe). What I mean is that if you think I plan to give Jesus and the Devil equal time you are dreaming. I have a huge Jesus bias. I believe that faith in him alone accesses the power of the Holy Spirit. I am here for one reason and one reason alone, to influence you for God. That in itself, however, does not make me right and the rest of the world wrong. If God is a Triangle and I think God is a Circle, God does not become a Circle to accommodate what I believe God to be. God remains a Triangle. Furthermore, truth has never changed to
accommodate what I believe truth to be. Truth is truth regardless of what I believe truth to be. I am simply fully committed to what I believe the Scriptures teach. In fact, when I am not quoting the Bible what I have to say is only approximate truth. Although I am no fundamentalist (I tend to make fundamentalists a bit nervous), I believe that Scripture is the only absolute truth.

My years in ministry have been a time of learning about and experiencing God’s wonderful grace. That continues today! I believe this seminar will provide you that experience too.

**A PERSONAL REQUEST**

Since all of you in this seminar are close to graduation, I want us to covet to pray “one for another.” You will receive a roster of members who are in the seminar and their email addresses. In addition, you will be provided a list of those in your sub-group. These sub-groups are intended for collegial consulting and sharing. Later in this syllabus you will learn more about the use of these sub-groups. Though we may not be able to see each other that does not mean that we cannot be a support for each other. So learn how to share with each other across the electronic channels the grace and love of God that abounds in each of our lives--both celebrations and concerns.

**SEMINAR DESCRIPTION**

This seminar is normally taken your final semester at Asbury Theological Seminary. It seeks to integrate your seminary experiences of spiritual, intellectual and vocational formation with your personal views of ministry and your life experiences. The integration will be done through a series of discussion papers on assigned topics. This seminar is also designed to give you an opportunity to share your spiritual journey and to celebrate with your colleagues their journey. One goal of this seminar is to help
summarize your academic development and personal experiences while at seminary.

**SEMINAR EVALUATION:**

This two-hour credit seminar is part of the Supervised Ministry grading policy. There are two possible final grades – Credit (CR) or Credit/No Credit (CR/NC). A NC would only be given when a student has not completed the assignments. For those graduating in May 2005, this could mean a delay in your graduation. I do not expect any member of this seminar to be given a NC grade. Unexpected circumstances, however, do arise. A NC would result in a growth plan to fulfill the incomplete (or other concerns). Such a plan would need to be developed within two weeks of the end of the semester and completed in a timely fashion. If you find that happening, please contact me as soon as possible and I will work with you to help you meet the requirements of this seminar. Completion of the requirements on time, as describe later, fulfills the assigned two-hour credit.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Three personal reflection papers,**
2. **Four position papers**

These will be prepared and shared with your group members.

1. **Three Personal Reflection Papers:** The reflection papers will relate to your spiritual journey and other relevant personal experiences. One will be prepared at the beginning and the other two near the close of the seminar.

   The **FIRST** reflection paper is due **February 18** and is to cover your spiritual journey **before** enrolling at Asbury. It is to be a one to two-page (maximum) summary, single-spaced
with double space between paragraphs. Prepare it in a first person conversational style of writing. You will then send it to other members in your sharing group (groups to be assigned the first week) for their reading and response (I have access to each of the sub-groups so you need not send a separate copy to me).

The following is provided to help you prepare this reflection paper:

**REFLECTIONS ON MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY**

**A Witness to God’s Grace**

**Before Asbury**

Often persons come to seminary and leave with few opportunities to share their spiritual journey with others or to hear others share theirs. Sharing our spiritual story is one way we honor God for His love and to give witness to His grace and forgiveness. Using the following suggestions prepare a two-page summary of your faith journey before arriving at Asbury.

- note significant events, persons and experiences
- reflect upon important scriptures, worship experiences, preaching, witnesses of other persons, etc.
- revisit any struggles that were significant turning points in your life of faith
- identify when, where and/or what ways you have experienced God’s grace

Send your reflections to your group members by **February 11**. Read those you receive and respond with your thoughts and observations to each other. These responses need not be more than half a page long. Respond by **February 18**.

The **SECOND** reflection paper is due near the close of this seminar, **April 22**. This is to be a one to two page
(maximum) reflection on your time at Asbury. Review your experiences while studying at seminary and write about those important experiences. Follow the style of the first reflection paper.

Here are some suggestions:

REFLECTIONS ON MY SEMINARY EXPERIENCE
A Witness to God’s Preparation and Leading
During Asbury

Seminary preparation is a significant part of your faith journey and preparation for future ministry. As you think about your years at Asbury identify some of the important experiences, insights, etc. that you take with you.
- you may want to describe a chapel or an incident that you will often remember
- or share something you learned, an insight that you gained
- or some skill that was developed
- or some important change or growth that you experienced

Send your reflections to your group members by April 22. Read those you receive and respond with your thoughts and observations to each other. These responses need not be more than half a page long. Respond by April 29.

The THIRD reflection paper is due May 6. This one page (maximum) paper is to include your thoughts and experiences about this Seminar.

Here are some suggestions:

REFLECTIONS ON MY SEMINAR EXPERIENCE
What I Take with Me
As a Result of Taking this Seminar

Describe some things you learned or had reconfirmed doing this semester. You might
- share what it meant to be part of this experience
- share an insight from one of your fellow students
- describe an issue that was resolved as a result of your participation.

Send your notes to your group members by May 6. Respond to others by May 13.

2. The Four Position Papers: A series of position papers will be prepared for discussion. These papers will be sent to your group members for their responses. The purpose of these papers is to assist you in consolidating and integrating your experiences and your seminary learning as related to your present and/or future specific areas of ministry.

The schedule provided later will give times for the preparation of these discussion papers and for consulting with one another as a means to enhance your perspectives and integrations. These discussion papers should represent your theoretical and theological understanding and personal thinking about four areas of ministry.

What informs your views of ministry?
What are the theological foundations that shape your approach to ministry?
What are the practical applications of your views?
What experiences have you had that inform/shape your ministry?

To guide you in this endeavor you are to focus on four dimensions of ministry. Each will be assigned to a different week and due date. These discussion papers will be sent to your group members
for their responses. These areas are:
   - Socio-political-cultural aspects of ministry
   - Pastoral care principles for ministry
   - Educational objectives of ministry
   - Leadership principles in ministry

Here is the suggested format for each of the discussion papers. Since these are not formal papers, but prepared to be read and discussed by others, they should be written in a conversational style. It is expected, however, that each will be appropriate in language and style. Footnotes and references are not required, but may be included to support your thinking and to demonstrate the use of your courses and materials you have read. These discussion papers will only be sent to those in your discussion group.

Each person in your discussion group will read and respond to these papers providing feedback to each other. The purpose of this peer consulting is to provide you the opportunity to learn from others, to draw from their thinking, and to gain additional ideas related to ministry and the topics being discussed.

The overall purpose of these discussion papers and this seminar is to provide you an opportunity:
   - to reflect upon your past and present experiences related to “ministry”
   - to review your seminary learning and training, and
   - to articulate your theological and practical understanding about key areas of ministry.

As you prepare your thoughts for each topic, visualize yourself in your present or a future ministry setting. Ask the questions about each topic that fits that ministry setting. For example: in thinking
about the leadership aspects of ministry, what are the principles of leadership that you want to bring to that ministry setting? What leadership guidelines do you want to use? Are there certain leadership styles that need to be used for different tasks? How do you describe your leadership style? What are some of your leadership strengths? What leadership areas do you need to develop and how might you do that?

Thus, the intent of this seminar is to encourage you to reflect upon your life experiences and especially your seminary training and to articulate a theological and practical position on key areas of ministry. Tell you colleagues what you think are the important principles and aspects that will help you to be an effective leader in your ministry setting. Your thoughts and theirs then becomes the “grist” for the group discussion. This format can help you gain a clearer understanding what you want to apply in these areas of ministry and to objectify what you think and believe about these areas. These discussion papers are not graded. It is not like a final test of your knowledge in these areas. Think of each as an opportunity to meet with a group of your colleagues and friends and say, “Here are some of my opinions and thoughts about these areas of ministry. What are some of yours? Let’s talk about them.”

**WORKING WITH THE ELECTRONIC PROCESS:**

Send messages to my email address, robert_tuttle@asburyseminary.edu, or direct personal contact by phone, 407 482 7658.

You will also use email to communicate with your colleagues. Send your reflection and discussion papers to each other as “attached files” or as part of the e-mail format. Your shorter responses to each other’s materials may be included in e-mail
messages.

I will check my emails on a regular basis. I will always let you know when I am away from my computer. I will respond to them in the order they were sent. If you are facing a problem with a deadline let me know immediately. Meeting the due dates is the primary requirement for credit. In addition your material is part of the collegial sharing process of this seminar.

EXL CONTACT INFORMATION:

For general questions regarding the Exl program, email exl_office@asburyseminary.edu

For technical support, email exl_office@asburyseminary.edu

For library reference support, contact Information Commons at information_commons@asburySeminary.edu

For library loans, contact Dot James at dot_james@asburyseminary.edu

Obtaining Library Materials and Reference Assistance:

General Questions:
information_commons@asburyseminary.edu  Toll-Free 1-866-454-2733. This is the best place to start when you have questions about library resources. Help is available Monday-Thursday from 8am-7pm and Friday-Saturday - 8 a.m.-5:45 p.m.
If the people at the desk cannot answer your questions, they will direct you to the person or department who can.

Materials Requests:
library_loan@asburyseminary.edu  Toll-Free 1-866-454-
ExL students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/reference books from Asbury Seminary’s Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the library loan office for information on costs and instructions on how to make requests. ExL students within a 50-mile radius of either the Florida or Wilmore campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

Research Questions: 
**hannah_kirshch@asburyseminary.edu** (toll-free number plus ext. 2189). ExL students are encouraged to contact Hannah Kirsch for research assistance including help choosing a paper topic, determining the best sources for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using online databases or other library materials

Online Databases:
To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to www.asburyseminary.edu/library and enter your 10-digit student ID number in the login box. Your student id is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration web page. Add a 2 and enough 0’s to the front to make a ten-digit number (20000XXXXXX where XXXXX is your student ID). If you have questions, contact the information commons desk.

**SEMESTER SCHEDULE AND MODULE ASSIGNMENTS**

The following modules are to be completed as indicated. **REVIEW** the instructions in previous sections. **NOTE:** There is only one criterion to be met to receive credit for this seminar--
**meet the due dates!** If you have any questions, email me or call if
needed.

“Getting Acquainted”

During the first week (February 7-11) write a one-page summary including the following:
- introduce you and your family and where you presently live.
- describe your ministry or occupation.
- share one thing about yourself you would like your colleagues to know.

Send your summary to your group members. Respond to others as able.

Module 1:

Prepare notes on “Reflections on my Spiritual Journey—Before Asbury” (see syllabus). Send them to members in your group for response. Due February 11. Respond to others by February 18.

Module 2:

Prepare notes on your theological/theoretical beliefs about the “Socio-Political-Cultural” aspects of ministry. Address issues about the role of the church in culture, family, the marginal in society, ethnic, etc. concerns. Send your notes to members in your group for their review and response. Due February 25. Respond to others by March 4.

Module 3:

Prepare notes on your theological/theoretical beliefs about
the “Pastoral Care” aspects of ministry. Address mission of care giving, role of lay care giving, and other aspects like the meaning of incarnation in care giving. Send your notes to members in your group for their review and response. Due March 11. Respond to others by March 18.

Module 4:

Prepare notes on your theological/theoretical beliefs about the “Educational” aspects of ministry. Address issues related to the overall role of the church’s responsibility to education. Send your notes to members in your group for their review and response. Due March 25. Respond to others by April 1.

SPRING READING WEEK (March 21-25)

Module 5:

Prepare notes on your theological/theoretical beliefs about the “Leadership” aspects of ministry. Address the role of leadership from the pastoral and laity perspective. How is administration part of the mission? Send your notes to members in your group for their review and response. Due April 8. Respond to others by April 15.

Module 6:

Prepare notes on “Reflection on my Seminary Experience – Doing Asbury” (see syllabus). Send your notes to members in your group for their response. Due April 22. Respond to others by April 29.
Module 7:

Final Reflection paper. Prepare a one-page reflection on “What I will take from this Seminar.” Send it to members in your group. Due **May 6**. Respond to others by **May 13** (semester ends **May 20**)

Congratulations! You have finished all your requirements for credit. For some of you, graduation is next.