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# IS 502 Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry

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**IS502 ExL Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry**  
**SPRING 2005**  
**3 Semester Units**  
**Anticipated Class Enrollment: 22 Students**

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**Course Description**

This course seeks to ask and address the question, How is our vocation as those called to Christian ministry discerned, shaped, and sustained? The purpose of this course is to explore from a Wesleyan perspective the biblical and theological foundations of Christian personhood and vocation by examining the nexus between call to ministry and formation of persons in ministry.

**Course Objectives**

Having successfully completed this course, you should:

1. Understand the nature of Christian vocation (including God's call of all Christian disciples to ministry in church and world) from a Wesleyan perspective;
2. Grasp the relationship between critical reasoning and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the vocation and practice of ministry;
3. Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry;
4. Understand the importance of moral formation and integrity for Christian ministry, with a clear understanding of boundary issues related to ethical/moral conduct;

5. Demonstrate commitment to a life of personal and social holiness through immersion in the means of grace and service;
6. Be able to articulate a coherent narrative of one's own call into God's ministry; and
7. Project a curricular plan for the remainder of your seminary education consistent with vocational discernment.

### **Modes of Instruction**

This class will be taught using three modes of instruction: (1<sup>st</sup>) Class members will view lectures on DVD's; (2<sup>nd</sup>) The class will be organized into on-line Covenant Discipleship Groups that will emphasize "works of piety" and "works of mercy," which are integral to the course; and (3<sup>rd</sup>) the class will work together as a whole in the *Discussion Center*.

### **Means of Student Evaluation**

#### **1. On-Line Discussion**

Your prompt and timely participation in on-line discussion during every week (save reading week) is required. If you are absent (for whatever reasons) for more than three weeks of discussion you will receive a failing grade for the course.

#### **2. Ethnically Different Church Service**

By the conclusion of Module 1 you should have attended one service in a church that is ethnically different from yours (**5% of grade**).

#### **3. Peer Group Evaluation**

You are expected to actively participate in all of your covenant discipleship group discussions. These groups are student led. During the semester you will evaluate your group participation and your peer group members will evaluate the quality of

your participation to the group process and fulfillment of learning goals (**5% of grade**).

#### **4. Group Project**

Your on-line covenant discipleship group will prepare a **Group Project** using creative writing (and potentially a few photographs) in order for your group to give expression to your understanding of "Vocation of Ministry." Or, your group may choose a project that communicates course-related material (devotional guide that focuses on "call" and "vocation" for an age-specific class, etc). Your project should not only contain your collective and personal reflections but it should also include appropriate aspects of our course content. It is expected that this will be a fresh and original work. Please obtain permission for your project before proceeding. This project will count for **15%** of your grade. Each person in the group is expected to invest a minimum of 4 hours in the preparation of the project. Projects will be shared the last two weeks of class.

Along with their presentation each group will submit:

- A). A clear and succinct statement of the purpose of the project;
- B). Learning objectives for observers (artistic) or participants (teaching sessions, sermons, etc.).

Each person in the group will submit:

**A confidential individual log of your time invested in the project, a brief description of your contribution to the group project, and evaluation of each team member's participation in the project.**

Creative Project Grading will correspond to the following questions:

- ☐ How substantial was your individual contribution to the project? (Did your contribution help to move the group project forward to completion in a significant way?)
- ☐ How well did your group present the project to the class? (Did it reflect "one" heart and mind flowing from a unified team or did it seem pieced together and disjointed?)
- ☐ How well did your project integrate course content and personal reflection? (Does your project demonstrate an understanding of course content in addition to your personal journey?)
- ☐ How well prepared was the written material your group submitted in conjunction with the project? (Style of writing, spelling, grammar, documentation, etc.)

**This project represents 15% of your final grade.**

### **5. Social Justice Project**

Participate in a 4-hour social justice project before the end of Module 2 (**5% of grade**).

Each student will select a service/mission project. The project must involve a minimum of 4 hours of service outside the Asbury Seminary community. For example, you can serve dinner at a Ronald McDonald House, work for a soup kitchen, help out at a Food Pantry, provide housekeeping or lawn care for a homebound person, etc. You are to document 1) the nature of the project, 2) a statement of 1 or 2 paragraphs describing how this chosen project is understood theologically as an expression of your participation in the Kingdom of God, and 3) a statement about what 3 aspects of the experience

stand out for you as significant (two page limit). This is due on April 1.

## **6. Reading Report**

The reading requirement for this course is a minimum of 1200 pages. You will submit a reading report to document the degree of your completion of required course reading. This reading report is due the last day of class, **May 13 (10% of grade)**.

## **7. "In-Process" Paper, Module 1**

You will prepare a four to five page "in-process" personal paper that integrates and cross-references the first four weeks of the matrix on the course content about values, calling, mission and holiness from the readings, lectures, class discussions and assignments. The central theme of the paper is: **"My Call to Ministry."** In your paper you should demonstrate that you have read the assigned readings. Write your reflections on your values and your call to Christian ministry in light of God's mission to the world. Discuss what you learned from the results of your DISC instrument, your sense of your spiritual gifts, talents and work experience that will help, or hinder, your future ministry and how you see your seminary education as a means for preparing you for the work of "equipping the saints" for ministry. This paper should include an answer to the question: *how can growth in personal and social holiness help me fulfill my calling?*

**In this class your papers are personal reflections. They should be written with first person pronouns without an attempt at preaching to others.**

Your paper should use one-inch margins and 12-point fonts and be double-spaced. Document your sources within the body of the paper, for example (Lewis,

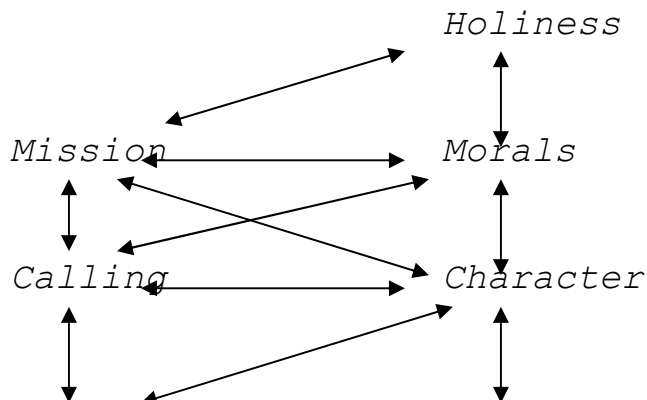
45). Give your bibliographical information at the end of your paper. Please use MLA format according to *Form & Style Twelfth Edition* by Carole Slade.

**Module 1 "In Process" paper due Friday, March 11 (15% of grade).**

## **8. "In Process" paper Module 2**

For the Module 2 "In Process" paper please write a personal five to six page integrative paper on the first seven weeks of the course content from the readings, lectures, class discussions and assignments for modules 1 and 2. The central theme of this paper will be: **"Integrity In Ministry."** Write from the four points of the matrix on virtues, character, morals and holiness. Include an answer to the question: **How can a life of personal and social holiness help develop a life of integrity?** Review the writing instruction for Module 1. Include new material from the first four points of the matrix in Module 1 (material not found in your first paper) on values, calling, mission and holiness. See the design below for cross-referencing this paper from the major topics of the matrix of the first two modules.

**Module 2 "In Process" paper is due Friday, April 8 (20% of grade).**



Values  $\longleftrightarrow$  Virtues

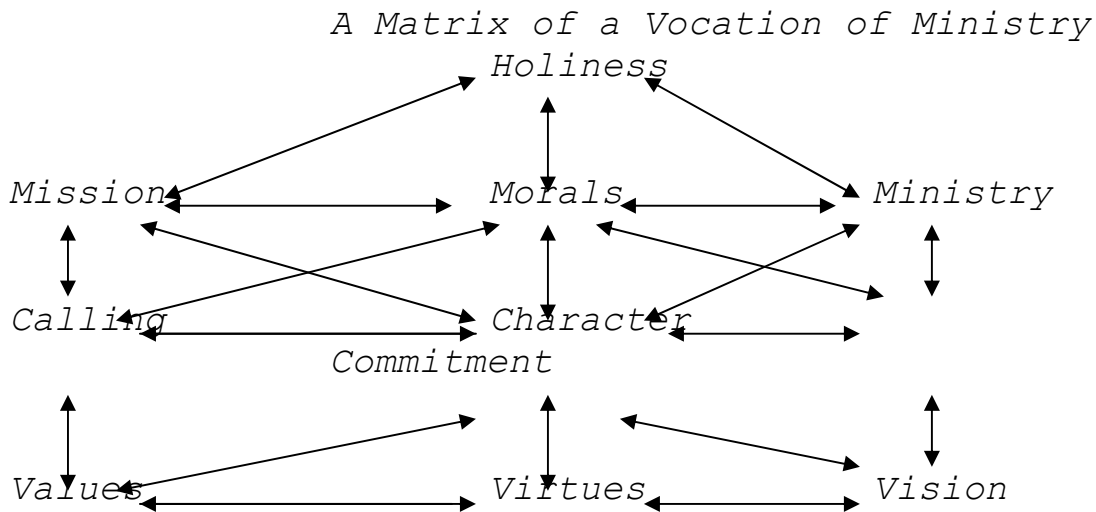
### 9. Module 3 "In Process" paper

Please write an eight to ten page personal integrative paper that cross-references all class material to date in modules 1, 2, and 3. The purpose of this assignment is to help you create an integrated understanding of ministry. The central theme of the paper should be: **"My Commitments to a Vision For Ministry."** Write about the present state of your vision for your future in ministry. Include your views about working in a multi-cultural world with persons from different races, socio-economic status and gender different from your own. Describe the kind of personal, family and institutional commitments you are willing to make to fulfill your calling to ministry.

You will be evaluated upon the written demonstration of your ability to reflect on the assigned texts, class lectures, discussions and class assignments. In your paper avoid repeating things you wrote for Modules 1 and 2. Do not just list words from the various units of study. Review the writing instructions in Module 1 and the grading rubric guidelines before writing your paper. The completion of this document should help you choose Seminary courses that will best prepare you for fulfilling your vision for ministry. It will also provide material for responding to written and personal interview questions regarding your call, motivation and preparation for ministry. Use the matrix design below to conceptualize the task of integration.

**Module 3 "In Process" integration paper is due May 6 and represents 25% of your final grade.**





### Required Textbooks

Foster, Richard J. Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth. San Francisco: Harper, 1998 (228 pages).

Groothuis, Rebecca Merrill. Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality. Grand Rapids: MI: Baker Books, 1997 (Chapters 1, 2, 5, 8, and 9).

Guinness, Os. The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life. Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2000 (292 pages).

Muto, Susan and van Kaam, Adrian. Divine Guidance: Seeking To Find and Follow the Will of God. Pittsburgh, PA: Epiphany Books, 1994 (206 pages).

Grenz, Stanley and Bell, Roy D. Betrayal of Trust: Sexual Misconduct in the Pastorate. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, (213 pages).

Sire, James W. (2000) Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2000 (263 pages).

Wesley, John. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1777 (119 pages).

#### Required Reading on C.D.

Collins, K. J. (1998) "Spirituality and Critical Thinking: Are they really so different?" Evangelical Journal, 16 (1), 30-43.

Martyn, Stephen L. "A Shortcut To Hell: Red Flag Warnings For Those In Ministry" Catalyst March 2000, Volume 26, No. 3.

#### Recommended Textbooks

Conde-Frazier, Elizabeth; Kang, S. Steve; Parrett, Gary A. (2004) A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic (224 pages).

Smith, Gordon T. (1997) Listening To God In Times Of Choice: The

Art Of Discerning God's Will. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, (150 pages).

Stevens, R. Paul. (1999) The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective. Vancouver, British Columbia: Eerdmans/Regent, (289 pages).

Willimon, William H. (2000) Calling & Character: virtues of the Ordained Life. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, (182 pages).

### **Late Papers**

**A one-point deduction in grade will be assessed for every day that your paper is late.** Late papers receive a grade, but little written feedback. If you need to negotiate an alternate due date, consult with the professor **BEFORE** the due date.

### **Incomplete Policy**

A grade of "I" denotes course work has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does not include failure to turn in course work or attending to church work or other employment. Incompletes are seldom given. See the Asbury Seminary Catalog for further clarification.

### **Covenant Discipleship Group Guidelines**

1. During the first week of class, students will be placed in Covenant Discipleship Groups of 4-6 persons. Teamwork and spiritual formation are important parts of this course.
2. The groups will focus on the nine dimensions that tie this course together. Each weekly

small group discussion should be explicitly focused upon holiness of heart and life (personally and socially), both as a gift from God, and as a personal responsibility. Group members are expected to contribute biblical references, resources from reading and personal experiences that are directly related to the topic of discussion for that week.

3. Each group will be student led and leadership will be shared among all group members. At the beginning of each week the next group member in line on the small group list will be expected to lead in the coming week. **If for some reason the designated leader for the week does not begin the discussion promptly, then the next person in line for group leadership should begin. No group should wait until mid-week to begin discussion. It is the responsibility of each group member to keep his or her small group moving forward.**
4. In order to effectively participate in group discussions each group member should read in advance the material to be discussed and complete all written group assignments.
5. Each group should covenant to keep group conversations confidential among group members.

### **Class Schedule**

**Module 1: Understanding the Nature of Christian Values and Vocation in the context of God's Mission to the World (February 7 - March 4).**

Goals:

At the completion of module 1, you should:

1. Have a clear understanding of core Christian values.
2. Articulate your personal core values and how they influenced your call to ministry.

3. Discuss how your values influenced your call to ministry and share how you responded to a perceived call of God.
4. Relate your calling to your understanding of a personal mission in life and how this connects to the mission of God.

**February 7: Personal Values That Sustain a Life of Christian Ministry.**

This session provides an introduction to the class, organization of small groups and a forum for articulating values and their influences on the call to ministry.

Reading List: Guinness, Chapters 1-7  
Muto/van Kaam Chapters 1-3

Covenant Group Focus: Please introduce yourself by sharing your spiritual journey and the shift in values that influenced your call to ministry. Be prepared to share with your covenant group your key values. Answer the question: "How do my values relate to how I got to seminary and how will my values guide my future ministry?"

**February 14: Calling (The Discernment Process in a Call to Ministry)**

Reading List: Guinness, Chapters 1-14  
Muto/van Kaam Chapters 4-8

Covenant Group Focus: Please share your discernment of God's call upon your life. How has the reading influenced your understanding of your call? Are you primarily interested in a career or in dedicating yourself to a life of holiness?

**February 21: A Wesleyan Perspective on Vocation and Call (Personal Vocational Strengths, Spiritual**

**Gifts, and their Relationship to Vocation and Call).**

Reading: Wesley (as much of the book as you can cover)

Guinness, Chapters 15-22

Muto/van Kaam Chapters 9-11

Project Assessment: "DISC" (Please take the DISC instrument before next week's class)

Covenant Group Focus: Please discuss how your initial ideas of a call to ministry have changed from your reading and class discussions. Share your perceived gifts and graces for ministry, and limitations that could hinder effectiveness in ministry.

**February 28: Mission (The Importance of Calling for All of God's People)**

Reading: Guinness Chapters 23-26

Muto/van Kaam Chapters 12-13

Covenant Group Focus: First of all please share how Wesleyan discipleship & vocational principles are impacting your life. Then, please share with your covenant group your heart for including all of God's people within the scope of your ministry. Are you still facing some personal prejudicial issues? What are the prejudicial issues you anticipate facing in your ministry setting?

**"In Process" position paper #1 due March 11 (15% of grade).**

**Module 2: The Call to Integrity: Christian Virtues, Character, Morals, and a Life of Holiness (March 7, 14, and 28). Please note that Reading Week is March 21-25.**

## Module 2 Goals

At the completion of this module, you should:

1. Understand the relationship between virtue, ethics and the fruit of the Spirit;
2. Develop a list of personal Christian virtues for prayer and practice;
3. Distinguish the difference between personality development and character transformation;
4. Understand the importance of moral behavior that leads to a life of integrity;
5. Formulate a theological understanding of temptation;
6. Be receptive to the gift of the Holy Spirit and develop a plan for the process of growth in a life of personal and social holiness.

## **March 7: Christian Virtues (Formation of the Heart)**

This week will be an introduction to the influence of virtues on Christian integrity.

Reading: Foster Chapters 1-5

Grenz and Bell Chapters (first 1/3 of text)

Galatians 5.16-26; 2 Peter 1; 1 Timothy 3.1-7;

Titus 1.5-10

Covenant Group Focus: Please thoroughly discuss Foster's "Inward Disciplines" and how you are specifically doing with each one of them. In addition, please study the suggested scripture lessons and discuss the relationship between

virtue, ethics and the fruit of the Spirit. Do you have a plan for growth for personal virtues?

### **March 14: Calling and Character**

This session will focus on the similarities and differences between personality development and character formation for Christian leaders. Please develop a personal list of key moral, intellectual and physical virtues to share with group members. The relationship between virtues and the fruit of the Spirit should be addressed in your group discussions. Answer the question: how do Christian virtues relate to a life of holiness?

Reading: Foster Chapters 6-9

Grenz and Bell (second 1/3 of text)

Covenant Group Focus: In addition to sharing your list of moral, intellectual and physical virtues and answering the above questions, please discuss how you are doing with Foster's "Outward Disciplines." Also, please share with your group what you perceive to be your character traits.

### **March 28: Morality in Christian Leadership**

This important class session will focus on the dynamics of temptation and the dangers of the misuse of power. The role of physical, mental, relational and spiritual health to issues of integrity will be discussed.

Reading: Foster Chapters 10-13

Grenz and Bell (last 1/3 of text)

Martyn article on C.D.

Covenant Group Focus: Please discuss the Rediger book and how it relates to you. Include in your discussion your answer to this key question: "If



*Satan were to get me down right now, how would he do it?"* Bring Foster into your covenant group by tying in "Confession" to your discussion.

**"In Process" position Paper #2 due April 8 (20% of final grade).**

**Module 3: Commitment To God's Vision For Ministry (April 4, 11, 18, & 25).**

The purpose of this module is to help you receive God's vision for future ministry and understand the commitments necessary to realize God's vision.

**Module Goals:**

At the completion of this module, you should

1. Understand the relationship between the kind of person you want to be and the work you are being called to.
2. Decide on the commitments you are making to the Lord, others, yourself, and institutions.
3. Formulate an understanding of ministry from a theology of mission.
4. Develop a curricular plan that will help prepare you for the kind of ministry you are called to.
5. Integrate all ten points of the matrix for a vocation of ministry.

**April 4: Discernment and Critical Thinking In Ministry**

This class will be a discussion of the importance of discernment in receiving a vision for the kind of person you are being called to be and the specific form of ministry you are being called to fulfill. Critical thinking is major component of our Wesleyan heritage.

Reading: Collins Article on C.D.

## Sire Chapters 1-5

Covenant Group Focus: What is your understanding of God's vision for your ministry? What kind of person do you envision that God wants you to end up being? And what kind of vision does God have for you in terms of impacting the world for the sake of Christ? It would be wonderful if you could post a one-paragraph statement answering the above questions. Group members will assist each other in refining their vision of ministry.

### **April 11: Commitment and Vocational Fidelity**

This class will examine personal, social and institutional commitments you are willing to make in order to live a life of vocational fidelity. Please bring to class a copy of personal commitments you are making to God, others, self, and institutions.

Reading: Sire Chapters 6-10

Covenant Group Focus: Please share your list of commitments and ask for feedback from your colleagues. Include a discussion of Sire's book, especially his understanding of the connection between intellectual virtues and holiness.

### **April 18: Ministry**

This class will incorporate all previous sessions to bring us to the purpose of our call, the creation of personal integrity and a life of personal holiness so that we may participate in God's mission to the world. Specifically ask one another how you can be in prayer for each individual in the group and then pray (verbal prayers and written prayers).

Readings: Groothuis Chapters 1, 2, 5

[NOTE: You may substitute Women In Ministry: Four Views edited by Clouse & Clouse for the Groothuis book]

### **April 25: Cross Cultural and Gender Issues**

Readings: Groothuis Chapters 8 and 9 (or Clouse & Clouse)

Covenant Group Focus: Please share some of the real issues you may be facing personally or that you anticipate facing within your ministry setting regarding cultural and gender issues. In addition covenant groups will need to finalize plans for their creative presentation project.

"In Process" position paper #3 Due May 6

Please write an 8-10 page major position paper on your vocation of ministry. This paper will integrate all class material to date, including the DISC assessment instrument. Integrate readings and insights from all modules into your final integrative paper. Use the matrix to conceptualize the subjects of this class that need to be integrated. This paper counts for 25% of your final grade.

**May 2                      Small Group Presentations**

**May 9                      Small Group Presentations**

**May 16                      Wrap It All Up!**

### **Assignments**

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	LENGTH	% OF GRADE
Mod. 1 Paper	March 11	4-5 pages	15%
Church Visit	March 11	1 page	5%
Mod. 2 Paper	April 8	5-6 pages	20%
Justice Project	April 8	4 hours minimum	5%
Mod. 3 Paper	May 6	8-10	25%

Group Project, Log, Description, Evaluation	May 13		15%
Reading Report	May 13		10%
Group Participation	May 13		5%