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## IS 502 Vocation of Ministry

Stuart L. Palmer

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**IS502 Vocation of Ministry**  
**3 hours - 8:00-10:45 am - Wednesday**  
**Royal M 103**  
**Spring 2003**

**Co-faculty:**

Stuart Palmer, Psy.D.

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**Anticipated Enrollment: 50**

**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 conduct;
5. Demonstrate commitment to "the way" of the Christian disciple through immersion in the means of grace;

6. Be able to articulate a coherent narrative of one's own call into God's ministry; and
7. Project a curricular plan consistent with vocational discernment.

### **Mode of Instruction**

1. This course will be co-taught by two professors.
2. The class will be taught using two modes of instruction: (a) We will meet together as one large group for some levels of instruction, interaction and discussion; (b) The class will be organized into covenant discipleship groups that will emphasize "works of piety" and "works of mercy," which are integral to the course. At least part of the covenant group meeting time will overlap with scheduled course time.

### **Means of Student Evaluation**

1. Student Participation - 30%

#### Related to course instruction

- Your attendance at all class sessions is expected. If you are absent [for whatever reasons] for more than three sessions (or the equivalent) you will receive a failing grade.
- By the conclusion of Module 3 you will have attend two services in a church(es) that is(are) ethnically different from for you. This will be the basis for your reflection in your "In-Process" paper for Module 3. If you are currently worshipping in a cross-cultural setting (e.g., international students or other ethnic minority) you should speak with the instructors for ways in which you need to adjust this assignment. (5 points maximum)
- You are expected to attend your covenant discipleship group. These groups are student lead. Meeting time is built into our Wednesday class period. If you miss more than three sessions (for whatever reasons), you will not receive credit for this component of the course. (10 points maximum)
- Participate in the 4-hour social justice project with your covenant discipleship group. (5 points maximum)
- The reading requirement for this course is listed under "Required Texts" and "Required Readings". You will submit a reading report to document the degree of your completion of required course reading. This reading report is due at the end of the semester. (10 points maximum)

### Related to academic advising

- You will select an academic advisor by the end of the semester and have had one documented conversation with your advisor about your call to ministry and your seminary curricular plan. This is due by the end of the semester.

### 2. "In-Process" Papers - 48%

You will prepare four four-page "in-process" papers that integrate course content, your understanding of your vocation of ministry and assessment survey where appropriate. The first paper is due at the end of Module 1 and the second paper is due at the end of Module 2. The third paper is due at the end of Module 3. The fourth paper is due at the end of Module 4. (Each paper is worth a 12 point maximum)

*Module 1 paper is due on March 5, 2003.*

*Module 2 paper is due on March 26, 2003.*

*Module 3 paper is due on April 23, 2003.*

*Module 4 paper is due on May 7, 2003.*

### 3. Creative Project - 22%

Presentations will be made on May 14 and 21. Your covenant discipleship group will choose an artistic mode (painting, sculpture, poetry, creative writing, photo essay, original music composition) in order for your group to give expression to your understanding of "vocation of ministry." Or, you may choose a project that communicates course-related material (devotional guide that focuses on "call" and "vocation"; series of lesson plans that deal with "call" and "vocation" for an age-specific class, etc.). Your work should not only reflect 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 work.

You are to get approval of your idea before proceeding. This idea is due April 30th in written form to the professors. This is to include a clear and succinct statement of the purpose of your project as well as learning objectives for your presentation. Each person in the group is expected to invest a minimum of 8 hours in the preparation of the project. Projects will be shared in class at the end of the semester.

In addition to the presentation, each group will submit:

1. An individual log of your time investment and a brief description of your contribution to the group project.

2. For art based projects: Submit a detailed discussion of the message you are portraying about "vocation" and "call."
3. For text based projects: Submit the text material.
4. For visual based projects (power point or video) submit a detailed interpretation and/or information portrayed about "vocation and call".

#### Creative Project Grading Criteria:

1. 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?)
2. How well did your group present the project to the class? (Did it reflect "one" mind or did it seem pieced together and disjointed?)
3. 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?)
4. How well prepared was the written material your group submitted in conjunction with the project? (Style of writing, spelling, grammar, etc.
5. Time frame. How well did the group presentation stay within the time allotted?

#### Required Texts

- Chilcote, P.W. (1986) John Wesley Speaks on Christian Vocation. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Foster, R. (1978) Celebration of Discipline. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Foster, R. (1983) Study Guide for Celebration of Discipline. San Francisco: Harper Collins.
- Grenz, S. & Bell, R. (1995). Betrayal of Trust: Sexual Misconduct in the Pastorate. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Guinness, O. (1998). The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life. Waco, TX: Word.
- Palmer, P. (2000) Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sire, J.W. (2000). Habits of the mind: Intellectual life as a Christian calling. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Smith, G. (1997). Listening to God in Times of Choice, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Willimon, W. (2000). Calling and Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life. Nashville: Abingdon.

## **Required Reading on Reserve ELECTRONICALLY through the BLFisher Library\***

Groothuis, R.M. (1997). Good news for women: A biblical picture of gender equality, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker; 19-63;121-144;189-229. [Chapters 1, 2, 5, 8, 9] \*\*

Mucherera, T.N. (2001). Pastoral care from a third world perspective. New York: Peter Lang.; pg. 1-53 [Chapters 1, 2]\*\*

Piper, J & Grudem, W. (1991). Recovering biblical manhood and womanhood: A response to evangelical feminism. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.; pg. 60-92; 95-112; 154-164; 209-224; 233-247; 358-363; 469-472. [Chapters 2,3,7,11,13, 21, Appendix 2]\*\*

\* "Electronic Reserve" means that you can access these materials through the Electronic Reserve Shelf of the Seminary's Virtual Library.

\*\* We are also listing these as Recommended Texts so that you have a choice between electronic or paper versions.

## **Accessing Electronic Reserves**

Directions for accessing electronic reserves:

- 1) Open First Class ATS Email
- 2) Double Click on "Intranet"
- 3) Double Click on "Resources"
- 4) Double Click on "Online Reserves"
- 5) Double Click on "Professor" wanted [Palmer]
- 6) Double Click on "Course #" [IS 502]
- 7) Double Click on "Article" wanted

## **Grading Policy**

### Papers

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, 1" margin all around, using a 12-point font, such as Times New Roman. Papers must adhere to MLS format according to Slade [available in the ATS bookstore and in the library].

Between them, Dr. Palmer and Instructor Musick will grade all submitted work and will seek to return your papers to you in a timely fashion. A 1/3 deduction in grade will be assessed for every workday that your paper is late. Late papers receive a grade, but no written feedback. If you need to negotiate an alternate due date with us, please see one of us BEFORE the assignment is due.

### 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. See the Asbury Seminary Catalog for further clarification.

### **Covenant Discipleship Group Guidelines**

1. By the second week of class, you will be placed in a Covenant Discipleship Group of 5-6 persons. Because spiritual formation is an important part of this course, we have set aside the final 45 minutes of class time for you to meet. We hope that your schedules will permit you to meet longer than 45 minutes - as that is a bare minimum - and a longer meeting time will facilitate group cohesion and trust building. We have also built this time into our weekly schedule to facilitate your ease of meeting so that no one has to juggle his or her schedule to find a meeting time outside of class.
2. Your group will use Celebration of Discipline and Study Guide for Celebration of Discipline. Each person should have a copy of both.
3. The purpose of this group is to meet together to learn the traditions of the Church, do the related disciplines, hold each other accountable, and encourage each other.
4. The group will meet for one introductory meeting, then for the next eleven weeks it will meet and focus on the inward, outward, and corporate disciplines that facilitate "growth in grace".
5. Each group will be student lead. We anticipate that you will share leadership among all group members. At the conclusion of each session a volunteer will be sought to lead at the next session.
6. The leader guides the group through the questions from the Study Guide for Celebration of Discipline. (See chart below for dates and assignments).
7. Each student is required to come to group with a written response to the questions for each week as well as having completed the reading from Celebration of Discipline prior to group meeting. Each student's responses to questions will be added to the group notebook to be turned in at the end of the semester and reviewed by the professors.
8. One student in each group will take attendance. Please note that if you miss more than three sessions (for whatever reasons), you will not receive credit for this component of the course.

9. Each group should covenant to keep group conversations confidential among group members.

#### ASSIGNED CHAPTERS AND QUESTIONS:

Date	Chapters	Study Guide Readings and Questions
2/12	Divide and establish group membership	
2/19	Introduction and Chapter 1	Pages 1-15, questions page 12, #3,7,8
2/26	Chapter 2 and 3	Pages 19-27, page 21, questions #1, 2. Page 26, questions #4, 7.
3/ 5	Chapters 4 and 5	Pages 28-35, page 30, questions #1 and 6; page 34 question #2 and 5.
3/12	Chapter 6	Pages 39-43; questions page 41, questions #1,5,7
3/19	Chapter 7	Pages 44-47; questions page 46, #1, 5, 8.
3/26	Chapter 8	Pages 48-51; questions page 50; #1, 6, 8.
4/ 2	Chapter 9	Pages 52-55; questions page 54; #2, 4, 6.
4/16	Chapter 10	Pages 59-62; questions page 61; #1, 5, 7.
4/ 23	Chapter 11	Pages 63-67; questions page 65,66; questions #2, 4, 6.
4/30	Chapter 12	Pages 68-71; questions page 70; #3, 4, 9.
5/7	Chapter 13	Pages 72-75; questions page 74; #1, 3, 6.

A commitment to social justice is one of the emphases of our Wesleyan tradition. Each group will select a service/mission project. The project is to be completed



AS A GROUP and must involve at least 2-3 hours of service outside the Asbury Seminary community. For example, your group can serve dinner at the Ronald McDonald House in Lexington, work for a soup kitchen, help out at God's Pantry, provide housekeeping or lawn care for a home bound person (Instructor Musick is open to having person volunteer at her home☺), etc. Please clear your project with either Dr. Palmer or Instructor Musick. A form included in the course/group notebook is to be completed by the group describing one thing about the experience that stands out for them. This is due at the end of the semester.

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## **MODULES:**

### **Module 1: Understanding the Nature of Christian Call and Vocation from a Wesleyan Perspective**

February 12,19,26

#### **Goals:**

At the completion of module 1, you should:

1. Integrate your sense of what God desires with your personal giftedness;
2. Discuss the relationship between personal responsibility and choice in how you respond or may respond to a perceived call of God;
3. Articulate how God is moving in your life regarding your vocation by using the aspects of vocation based on the Wesleyan quadrilateral.

#### **February 12: The Nature of Vocation and Call.**

This session provides an introduction to the concept of "call." We will also get organized!

**Reading List:** Guinness, Ch. 1-7,  
Palmer, Introduction, Chapter 1,2,3  
Willimon, Chapter 1

**In Class Organization:** Organize class into small covenant groups.

#### **February 19: A Wesleyan Perspective on Vocation and Call**

This week focuses on Wesley's understanding of vocation and call

**Reading List:** Chilcote, entire book;  
Palmer, chapters 4,5,6  
Guinness, chapters 8-14

**Covenant Group Focus:** Begin Celebration Group.

**February 26: Vocation, Call, and Me**

This session introduces you to the idea of personal vocational strengths, spiritual gifts, and their relationship to vocation and call

**Reading List:** Guinness, Ch. 15-22;  
Smith, Ch. 1-3;

**Means of Evaluation for Module 1- First "In-Process" Position Paper - DUE  
March 5, 2003**

Using the material from weeks 1, 2, & 3, develop a vocational position paper that reflects your current understanding of your call to the vocation of ministry your sense of your spiritual gifts and limitations. Be sure that you clearly integrate information from the required readings and lecture information. This information is to be referenced. (Either endnotes or footnotes) Typed-double space, 1" margins, 12 cpi font 4-page limit.

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**Module 2: Grasp the relationship between critical reasoning and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the vocation and practice of ministry**

March 5,12,19

**Module Goals**

At the completion of this module, you should

1. Articulate your own decision making process and the relative weight of critical thinking, spirituality, and theological reflection in class discussion and in writing.
2. Demonstrate your understanding of the roles of critical reasoning, theological reflection, and spirituality on your call to ministry through "in process" paper.

**March 5 Introduction to Critical thinking & vocation**

Today we will introduce the skill of critical thinking.

**Reading List:** Sire, Ch. 1 - 4  
Smith, Ch. 4-6

**Distribute DISC inventory - to be completed by March 19**

### **March 12 Critical thinking, vocation, & spirituality**

Now we will add the influence of spirituality to our thinking about critical thinking and vocation.

**Reading List:** Sire, Ch. 5-7  
Smith, Ch. 7, 8;

### **March 19 Critical reasoning, spirituality, and me**

Finally, you will discover more about yourself through the DISC survey and combine this practical information with the previous lectures and discussions to reflect upon your call to ministry.

**Reading List:** Sire, Ch. 8-10  
Smith, Ch. 9, 10;

### **Means of Evaluation for Module 2 - Second "In-Process" Position Paper - Due March 26, 2003**

Using the material from Module 1 AND Module 2, develop a vocational position paper that reflects your current understanding of your call to the vocation of ministry and your use of critical thinking, reflection and spirituality in discerning your calling. Also include your understanding of the relationship of critical thinking, reflection and spirituality in the practice of ministry. Be sure that you integrate required readings and lectures from both modules. This information is to be referenced. (Either endnotes or footnotes) Typed-double space, 1" margins, 12 cpi font. 4-page limit.

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**Module 3: Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry.**

**March 26, April 2, 16**

**Module Goals:**

At the completion of this module, you should

1. Describe key issues and problems, which affect ethnic minorities and their leadership;
2. Explain the reality of racism and gender issues, their origins and the negative impact they have on building the Kingdom of God;
3. Discuss how racism affects inter-ethnic and inter-church relations and how to effectively minister in such contexts.

During this module [or before] you will attend two worship services in church(es) that is culturally different from you.

**March 26: Ministry in the Worldwide Kingdom of God**

Vocation of ministry in a multi-ethnic, global Kingdom of God

**Reading List:** Mucherera (on electronic reserve)

**April 2: Ethnic realities in America**

Ethnic nature of America and the sober realities needing to be faced

**April 16: Gender and the Vocation of Ministry**

Men and women working together in the Kingdom of God. Biblical foundations for women in ministry

**Reading List:** Groothius (on electronic reserve)

Piper & Grudem (on electronic reserve)

**Means of Evaluation for Module 3 - Third "In-Process" Position Paper - Due April 23, 2003**

During this module you will attend twice the worship services of a church where the church is ethnically different from yourself. Your paper is to focus on the experience of being a minority in this congregation, your awareness of your own prejudicial beliefs or myths, and how you plan to address them. Also, in this paper you are to reflect on your relative ease or discomfort of working with women in ministry. Be sure that you integrate readings and lectures from this module. This information is to be referenced. (Either endnotes or footnotes) Typed-double space, 1" margins, 12cpi font 4-page limit.

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**Module 4: Understand the importance of moral formation and integrity for Christian ministry, with a clear understanding of boundary issues related to ethical conduct**

April 23, 30, May 7

**Goals for Module 4:**

By the completion of the module, you should

1. Discuss the importance of the character of and the maintenance of a sense of wholeness by a Christian minister;
2. Identify ways to maintain emotional and physical boundaries with people;

3. Identify ways in which boundary violations occur;
4. Explain the relationship between moral formation, individual integrity, and the vocation of ministry.

**April 23: Moral formation & integrity**

**Reading List:** Grenz & Bell, Ch. 1, 2  
Willimon, Ch. 2-5 and appendix

**April 30: Morality & Boundaries, Part I**

**Reading List:** Grenz & Bell, Ch. 3, 4, & 6

**May 7: Boundary issues, Part II**

**Reading List:** Grenz & Bell, Ch. 5 & 7

**Means of Evaluation for Module 4 – Fourth “In-Process” Position Paper – Due May 7, 2003**

Using the material from Module 3 AND Module 4, develop a vocational position paper that reflects your current understanding of your call to the vocation of ministry in light of multi-ethnic and gender issues and the place of moral character, integrity and appropriate boundaries in ministry. Be sure that you integrate required reading and lectures from both modules. This information is to be referenced. (Either endnotes or footnotes) Typed-double space, 1" margins, 12 cpi font. 4-page limit.

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**Module 5: Articulating a coherent narrative of one's own call into God's ministry**

**May 14 and 21(finals week)**

Each Covenant Discipleship group will work together to develop a creative presentation of their understanding of their vocation of ministry.