EM 751 Spirituality for Christian Ministry.

PC751

MST Postgraduate Institute Intensive Unit

Jan 28-30, Feb 2-3

Lecturer: Dr Stuart Devenish

Please Note:
Enrolments for this unit (PC751) must occur by Jan 12.

Format:
The delivery of lectures, classroom discussion, pre-reading, assessments, in-class tutorials & case studies, video-presentations, & a qualified and experienced guest lecturer.

Course Description:
This course offers three things to students who choose to enrol in it:

(1) An opportunity to explore Christian spirituality as an academic discipline by engaging with the theological, historical, textual and hagiographical explorations which inform and underwrite the substance of Christian spirituality;

(2) An opportunity to resource Christian ministry in the form of preaching, teaching, worship leading, disciple-making and community-building ... through renewing the spirituality of those who offer ministry in our churches;

(3) An opportunity to ‘touch’ those moments in your life when you heard Christ say to you, “Come and follow me!”; and to be reminded of why you set out on the adventurous journey are following Jesus into unknown places.

Course Presenter:
Stuart Devenish is Director of Postgraduate Studies (School of Ministry, Theology and Culture) at Tabor Adelaide. He comes to this course with 30+ years of ministry experience as local church pastor, church planting missionary, mission director, and theological educator; in such places as Perth, Manila/Philippines, Melbourne, Canberra, and Sydney. He holds degrees in theology (BTh, Murdoch University/Vose
Seminary, 1992); missiology (MA Theol, ACT/BCV-MST, 1994); & Christian conversion (PhD, ECU, 2002).

Stuart has publications in the areas of Christian theology, ministry, spirituality, mission, the psychology of religion, and philosophy. He is the author of several books; Religion and Spirituality (joint editor) (2010), Knowing Otherwise (2011), Beyond Well-Being (joint editor) (2012), and Seeing and Believing (2012). Stuart has presented academic papers in Durban, South Africa; Prague, the Czech Republic; Madrid, Spain; and elsewhere. He is a member of the Australasian Centre for Studies in Spirituality; is an Editor for Crucible e-Journal; a Fellow of the Australasian Centre for Wesleyan Studies; and a Fellow at Springdale College, Birmingham UK.

Scope of the Course:

This course proposes that all expressions of Christian ministry arise out of and are informed by a transformative encounter with Jesus Christ. The daily round of activities in which ministry leaders engage (i.e., prayer, teaching/preaching, leadership, pastoral care and mission), all take their cue from the "renovation of the heart" that results from being in the presence of God. Similarly, those men and women who hear Christ's call to, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"; are sustained in their ministry by a lifelong conversation with God, in which their own faith-journeys are renewed on a daily basis.

In order to grow in our understanding of the Christian spiritual life, we will ground ourselves in the Judeo-Christian scriptures; remind ourselves of the lives of those saints and martyrs who have "fought the good fight"; immerse ourselves in the literatures of spirituality in the various Christian traditions (i.e. Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox); and engage personally in the depths of our own souls with what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Ministry is meant to be a life-giving activity where the superabundance of God's Spirit is transmitted from person to person, and life to life. Each of us needs feel ourselves "embraced by God," and to discover that on the other side of duty, obligation and demand; there are "eternal pleasures at [God's] right-hand" (Psalm 16:11). And for those to whom we seek to minister, we need to know how to feed distracted, tired and hungry people, leading them from desert places into God's extravagant presence.

Methodology:

A range of methodologies will be incorporated into this course, all of which will be renewable, transferable and life-giving. The intention is to enable students to understand the centrality of the spiritual life to an effective Christian ministry, so they can (a) articulate the substance of Christian spirituality as an academic discipline; (b) experience spiritual renewal in their own lives; (c) implement processes that lead to spiritual maturity in themselves, their ministry colleagues and their congregations; & (d) activate spiritual seekers in their ministry contexts to become authentic disciples of Christ, who themselves become effective disciplers of others.
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**Outcomes for the Course:**

On completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Recognise the extent to which their own spirituality represents the "engine room" for their ministries.
2. Articulate key themes in Christian spirituality, from their biblical, theological, historical and hagiographical sources.
3. Engage with the central ideas of Christian spirituality, identifying the overlap between spirituality, discipleship and sainthood.
4. Identify and diagnose causes of spiritual dysfunction in the lives of Christian believers; and as spiritual directors for their congregations, dispense pathways to health and wholeness.
5. Express ways they intend to make spiritual formation that produces spiritual maturity, key concerns for their faith-communities.

**Textbook:**

### Assessment Task 1: Course Pre-Reading

**CONTEXT:**

The substance of every discipline is contained in its literature. Students are required to immerse themselves in reading the literature to understand its language, substance and practice. A core part of the learning process is to become absorbed in the texts that embody the discipline—hence the requirement for this pre-intensive reading.

**TASK:**

Read any two (2) books from the list of readings given below. Generate 1000 words (nominal) of written response. Record your observations, questions, and insights from what you have read. This will form the starting-point for your learning for this course.

**FORMAT:**

a) Record the bibliographical details of each reading
b) *(Briefly)* summarise the key points of the written piece.
c) Record your response to what you read.
d) Reflect on your questions, observations and insights from what you read.

**NB:** Be sure that you do more than simply re-state the content of your reading. Critical analysis is required.
Set Readings:


Assessment Task 2: **Practical Essay**: 3000 words, 30%.

**ESSAY TOPIC:**

As a ministry leader, identify what constitutes a "real world" spirituality capable of enabling you to thrive in the rough-and-tumble world of the competing demands of (1) conducting your own personal life; (2) building into the lives of your immediate family/relational networks; (3) contributing to your professional and vocational calling; & (4) being a citizen of your community and your world.

**Instructions:** this practical essay is an opportunity for you to intentionally reflect on what spiritual strategies you need to integrate into your lifestyle in order to make your spirituality sustainable and effectual in your personal, relational and ministerial life.

**NB:** Be sure to include the spiritual habits and practices applied by previous generations of saints in your reflections.

Assessment Task 3: **Theoretical Essay**: 4000 words, 50%.

**ESSAY TOPIC:**

Write a formal academic essay that discusses the following:

- What is spiritual maturity?
- How does one obtain it?
- How do leaders minister out of its resources?
- And how is it best reproduced in communal/congregational settings?

**NB:** Be sure to make use of biblical, historical, hagiographical and experiential sources in preparing your essay.
Learning Portfolio 4:

Non-Assessable: discretionary (but advisable); not assessable; not for submission.

Prepare a learning portfolio that records your learning journey throughout the semester:

- As a written "log" in a discrete location.
- What have you learned about Christian spirituality?
- What have you learned about Christian ministry?
- What have you learned about Christian discipleship?
- What have you learned about yourself?

Record your questions, struggles, discoveries and serendipities.