



TYNDALE

• SEMINARY •

Course Syllabus

**SPRING SUMMER 2020
DYNAMICS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE:
THE LEGACY OF HENRI NOUWEN
SPIR 0615**

MAY 4 – JULY 26, 2020

ONLINE

THERE ARE NO SPECIFIED CLASS TIMES

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The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course revolves around the dynamics of our spiritual life utilizing the insights of Henri Nouwen set against the background theme of spiritual journey. The main focus will be threefold: the nature of our integrated *journey*, the reality of our tensional and imperfect *spirituality*, and the essence of our communally integrated *ministry*.

First, the course provides a synthesis of Nouwen's holistic approach to the nature of the *inward, outward, and upward* spiritual journey—one that integrates *spirituality, psychology, ministry, and theology* together in a seamless fashion. Second, it is an exploration of Nouwen's *spirituality of imperfection* which he embodied throughout his lived experience—where the journey toward perfection is through the realities of tension and imperfection. Finally, it is a demonstrated example of Nouwen's well-integrated ministry of soul care based upon his integrated yet imperfect spirituality.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the inward, the outward, and the upward nature of the Christian spiritual journey and appropriate its reality within one's own experience.
2. Explain the integrated dynamics of the journeying experience that incorporates the coinherent realities of spirituality, psychology, ministry, and theology.
3. Analyze the true essence of a spirituality of imperfection and the tension-filled journey that Nouwen embodied and exemplified throughout his lived experience in both theological and practical ways.
4. Articulate Nouwen's integrative approach to the ministry of soul care and spiritual formation—one that goes against the expert-driven, individualistic, and overly specialized approach that is often one-dimensional, hierarchical, and highly institutionalized in focus.
5. Synthesize one's own understanding of the dynamics of our spiritual life according to the example of Nouwen's integrated journey, his tensional and imperfect spirituality, and his holistic ministry.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Primary Texts:

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*.

New York: Image Books, 1975/1986. ISBN: 038523682. **RO**

_____. *The Living Reminder: Service and Prayer in Memory of Jesus Christ*.

New York: HarperCollins, 2009. ISBN: 0866839151. **LR**

_____. *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. New York:

Crossroad, 1989/1992. ISBN: 9780824512590. **INJ**

Articles written by Nouwen (To be posted on the course page)

"Theology as Doxology" **TD**

"What Do You Know By Heart? Learning Spirituality" **LS** (Optional)

Choose **one journal text** of Henri Nouwen: (**Optional** – to be explained via online posted announcement)*

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *The Genesee Diary: Report from a Trappist Monastery*.

New York: Image Books, 1989. ISBN: 038174462.

_____. *¡Gracias!: A Latin American Journal*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992. ISBN: 0883448513.

_____. *The Road to Daybreak: A Spiritual Journey*. New York: Image Books, 1988/1990. ISBN: 9780385245531.

_____. *Sabbatical Journey: The Diary of His Final Year*. New York: Crossroad, 1998/2000. ISBN: 0824518780.

Secondary Texts:

- Hernandez, Wil. *Henri Nouwen: A Spirituality of Imperfection*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2006. ISBN: 9780809144341. **SOI**
- _____. *Henri Nouwen and Soul Care: A Ministry of Integration*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2008. ISBN: 9780809145461. **MOI**
- _____. *Henri Nouwen and Spiritual Polarities: A Life Tension*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2012. ISBN: 9780809147410. **LOT**
- O’Laughlin, Michael. *God’s Beloved: A Spiritual Biography of Henri Nouwen*. New York: Orbis, 2004. ISBN: 1570755612. **GB**

Read **one short article** written about Nouwen **WAF** (To be posted on the course page)
“What A Friend We Have in Henri: Reflections on the Influence of Henri Nouwen on Protestant Evangelicals” by Paul Johansen.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

- Ford, Michael. *Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J. M. Nouwen*. New York: Doubleday, 1999.
- Hernandez, Wil. *Mere Spirituality: The Spiritual Life According to Henri Nouwen*. Nashville: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2015. * Highly Recommended **HR**
- Higgins, Michael W. *Genius Born of Anguish: The Life & Legacy of Henri Nouwen*. Toronto, ON: Novalis, 2012.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith*. Michael J. Christensen and Rebecca Laird, eds. New York: HarperOne, 2006.
- _____. *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit*. Michael Christensen & Rebecca Laird, eds. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2010.
- _____. *The Return of The Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- _____. *The Way of The Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*. New York: Seabury Press, 1981.
- _____. *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. New York: Doubleday, 1972.

Articles written by Nouwen (Optional Reading to be posted on the course page)
“Intimacy, Fecundity, Ecstasy” **IFE**
“Moving From Solitude to Community to Ministry” **SCM**

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Attendance in this course is demonstrated by regular log-ins and up-to-date participation in forums.

General Overview of the Weekly Format

- 1. Text Reading /Audio/Video Listening/Viewing**
- 2. Response to Discussion Question (s) – DQ and Threaded Interactions**

3. Weekly **Integration Essays** due every Friday
4. Triweekly **Formational Exercises** (a) and Personal **BLOG** (b)
(based upon the Formational Exercises)

[1. & 2.] Reading/Listening/Viewing and Threaded Discussion/Interaction (45 total points: 2.5 pts. each for Weeks 1 & 12; 4 pts. for Weeks 2-11).

Every week there will be reading of various texts, audio listening, video or powerpoint (PPT) slides viewing assignments out of which the **DQ** or discussion question(s) will be based. Initial response(s) to the discussion question(s) are expected to be posted starting every Tues. and no later than 11:59 pm EST on Wed. (*unless otherwise specified*) in order to allow adequate time for interaction with the class (refer to the suggested guidelines below). This means you will have to have some measure of discipline in your reading schedule. Pay close and regular attention to the reading schedule outlined in the **Chartered Schedule**. To stay on top of all the daily requirements, be sure to check time and again the Chartered Schedule (I can't overemphasize this habit!). Do take note that certain discussion questions and interactions will be narrowed down to respective assigned small groupings.

You are expected to respond to at least 2-3 of your classmates' posts (unless otherwise specifically noted) no later than Fri. 11:59 pm EST (around 150-200 words).

For the posts that you will make in response to the assigned discussion questions (DQ), try your best to follow these suggested guidelines:

- a. Make sure you have done your homework of doing most, if not all, of the pre-assigned readings (including the audio/video listening/viewing) before tackling the assigned discussion question (s).
- b. Read the discussion question over and over again until you are clear on how to go about responding to it.
- c. Write an entry that is more or less in accordance to the suggested word limit specified per discussion question (usually around 200 words).
- d. Your response to the discussion question(s) should reflect your familiarity with the readings and thoughtful engagement with the texts. Do not merely repeat what you've read or quote from the texts without some effort at doing synthesis and integration. This entails mulling over and considering deeply the stuff you have been exposed to. Enter into some basic theological reflection process.

Remember, in addition to your initial response, I will expect you to be interacting thoughtfully with your fellow students' responses. Do not be overzealous, thinking that you have to read all of your fellow students' responses. Feeling like you have to read everybody's posts can have a paralyzing effect. Read a few of your classmates' responses and have a fruitful

dialog (at the very least, 2-3 responses are fine). Your grade will be based on the quality of these responses and interactions – **not** the number.

Discussion Board Etiquette:

- a. You may want to use 14-16 point font (with serif like Times New Roman) for your posts (especially for the longer ones), since that is easier for everyone to read (You will need to change the font each time you post in the dialog box, or copy and paste your work; it's always a good idea to save copies of your posts somewhere in case they accidentally get deleted— something which occasionally happens even to the best of us). For short comments (a sentence or less), 12 points should be fine.
- b. Be really “present” during the discussion process. By that I mean for you to exhibit true engagement not just with the material, but with your classmates (versus just merely going through the motion, mindlessly checking off tasks from your “to do list”). This does disservice to the others who are truly invested in the process, who are clearly putting forth real effort in each module.
- c. Exercise respect with and for one another, treating others in the class appropriately, communicating with courtesy, politeness, and genuine concern and sensitivity.
- c. Let me emphasize: During the course of our discussion and interaction, “chatty” comments are not necessarily forbidden. However, while these types of comments may enhance the congeniality of the online atmosphere, they will not count for the Reading/Discussion/Interaction portion of your grade. The Reading/Discussion/Interaction points come from comments directly related to the reading and the subject under discussion.

NOTE: You are allowed to skip **two weeks** of threaded discussion engagement of your own choosing except **Questions # 1a & 1b, # 4a & 4b, # 7, and # 12**. All you need to do for the two weeks you have chosen not to engage is to post SKIP in response to the discussion prompt question so I know which particular weeks you are not participating in the discussion.

This does not mean, however, that you are entirely skipping the two weeks by not reading the assigned texts, viewing the videos, and reading people’s posts. You are only excused when it comes to your response post to the discussion prompt and threaded discussion engagement.

This assignment is related to Outcome # 1-5.

[3] Weekly Integration Essays (35 points: 3.15points each for Essays # 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10; 4.8 points for Essay # 7; 5 points for Essay # 10).

This course requires a series of Reflective Exercises submitted via short blog entries (300-400 words unless otherwise specified) designed to help you synthesize and integrate the course content on a weekly basis. Weekly Integration Essays begin on Week # 2 (Essay # 1) and end on Week # 11 (Essay # 10) for a total of ten essay entries. You are expected to think through the issues raised in the readings, presentations, and threaded discussions/interactions. Critical analysis is important in all assignments. Work submitted should be the result of careful thought and preparation. Your posts should at least reference certain highlights of the readings, videos, and discussion threads accordingly.

NOTE: You are allowed to skip **three essays** except **Essays # 5, #7 and #10**. On the corresponding weeks you have chosen to skip, you still have to post by writing the word SKIP so I am alerted (you still get 3.15 pts. for each essay you skip).

This assignment is related to Outcome # 1-5.

[4.a] Formational Exercises (20 points: 5 points for each of the four assigned exercises).

This course is never meant to be theoretical in its approach. It is deliberately designed to be praxis-driven and as such, the students are given actual opportunities to engage actively in certain spiritual practices in order to enhance their whole learning experience as well as their own personal formation.

There will be four formational exercises assigned more or less every three weeks. After completion of each exercise, you are to blog about it and post it by the designated date (on a Friday). Follow the guideline questions when composing your blog (around 400-500 words unless otherwise specified).

[4.b] Personal BLOG

Important Note: The points for the blogs represent one and the same points for the formational exercises. In a way, the blog postings confirm your execution of the prescribed exercises. Since it's impossible to objectively grade the actual exercises, earned points largely depend upon the quality and comprehensiveness of the blog posts as they pertain to the assigned exercises.

Try not to write a commentary of sorts, but personalize your entry. Strive to be very specific. Your personal blog posts are always due on a Friday no later than 11:59 EST. Your Blog is to be shared with your designated small group. Responses to each other's Blogs are entirely optional but highly encouraged. Limit responses to 1-2 posts total.

• **Week # 2: *Contemplative Prayer***

Read and study the PDF document on "Centering Prayer" and follow the summary guidelines on how to practice it, at least two times (for a twenty-

minute sitting each time within a span of one or two weeks). You may wish to meditate on Psalm 131 to set the stage for you before beginning the actual exercise.

How can this form of meditative/contemplative prayer assist you (or not) in promoting a sense of quiet, stillness, and inner rest in you? Are you able to focus and center yourself at all? Reflect on your level of distraction or concentration (or the lack thereof). Post your Blog on Friday of Week # 2 (400-500 words).

This assignment is related to Outcome # 1.

• **Week # 5: *Personal Solitude Retreat***

You are to arrange and conduct at least a three-hour silent retreat in a nearby retreat center or any other suitable place (i.e., quiet and free from distractions) other than one's place of residence anytime before Friday of Week # 5. The purpose of this assignment is to "withdraw" from one's familiar surroundings to "hang out" with God and waste time with and for Him in silence and stillness. You may choose to utilize the Personal Retreat Guidelines provided (although you are not obligated to do so). It is highly suggested that you incorporate at least one 20-minute sitting of Centering Prayer into your retreat experience.

Upon completion of the retreat, write your reflection on your experience and post your Blog on Friday of Week # 5 (500-600 words). How exactly did you spend the three hours alone? What did you learn about yourself, about God? What did you experience? What place will such retreats have in your ministry? This assignment is related to Outcome # 1.

• **Week # 8: *Spiritual Reading (Lectio Divina)***

To prepare for this particular exercise of doing private Lectio, you need to view the PPT slide on Contemplative Bible Reading and read and study the essay titled "Accepting the Embrace of God" (printable and downloadable at the Saint Andrew's Abbey site: www.valyermo.com). Note: On the home page of the Valyermo site, scroll down until you see "An Introduction to the Practice of Lectio Divina." Click on this link and it will take you to Fr. Luke Dysinger's essay.

Practice Private Lectio for about 15-20 minutes using the Lectio template provided at least twice within the three-week time frame (Weeks # 6-8). You may wish to use the template to journal the process. Finally, post your blog entry on Friday of Week # 8, no later than 11:59 pm EST.

Your 400-500-word blog entry will focus on your actual experience of the Private Lectio exercises. How did you do with the exercises (that is, how did you sense God speaking to you through the Word)? Share any highlights (or "lowlights") of your experience (both struggles and triumphs). Please indicate

whether you have been able to fulfill at least two of them according to schedule and time frame allotted.

This assignment is related to Outcome # 1 & # 5.

• **Week # 11:** *Contemplated Action/Activated Contemplation Exercise*

Before we bring the course to a close, you are to devise a "project" that will enable you to put either social justice or compassion within the context of community into concrete ministry practice. You have Weeks # 11-12 to execute this exercise (although you're free to start earlier, as early as Week # 9 if certain opportunity presents itself). The goal is to consciously combine contemplation and action in this endeavor. There are two parts to this assignment:

Part I: In devising your ministry project, plan to engage others face-to-face (instead of merely sending a check in the mail or a series of encouragement cards). Review Chapter 4 of LOT ("Solitude and Community") as background for this assignment. The project might include volunteer work at a local shelter for the homeless or organizing a food drive; helping a needy neighbor roof their house or babysitting for a stressed-out friend. It can be undertaken alone or with friends but seek to do it within a communal setting, as much as possible. There are really no limits to this project. I encourage you to be creative in choosing your project even as you ask God for direction and listen to his leadings. Do something that animates you.

Allot at least two to three hours for the venture itself. Make sure to spend time before, during, and after in prayer (Centering, Interceding, etc.) - asking God to bless your work, so that your hands become Christ's hands to those you serve: "Lord, what would you have me do and say today? Bless my attitude and anoint my words." Throughout the "doing of the project," consciously incorporate practicing the presence of God in your experience.

Part II: Do a personal debriefing and inventory of what transpired (sort of an "Examen" exercise). Then post a blog report of what you learned from the project (about 600-700 words). I don't want to inhibit you by prescribing a precise format. I know that each report will be unique because each context of Spirit-guided ministry is in itself unique. Each report, however, should include the following in some way:

1. A brief description of the gist of the project (what, where, when, who, etc.);
2. Concise explanation of why you chose this specific project;
3. A narrative description of the main spiritual lessons you learned. This last element could include: ways you were able to apply ideas from our course texts and/or discussions to your actual ministry situation; problems or questions that arose during your time of ministry; or joys or successes that you experienced. Where did you sense God's presence in the endeavor?

Lastly, the posting of the blog report is due the last Friday of Week # 12 (no later than 11:59 pm EST).

This assignment is related to Outcome # 1, # 2, & # 4.

NOTE: You are allowed to skip **two formational exercises and blog posts** except for **Week # 11** (Contemplated Action/Activated Contemplation) exercise/**Blog Post # 4**. For the two weeks you've chosen to skip, you need to post SKIP on your blog post.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

There will be a **synchronous web conference** (via Zoom [www.zoom.us]) for about **an hour and a half** scheduled sometime during the **6th week**. Details regarding the specific agenda and logistical mechanics of this web connect will be posted under **Class Announcements** by the 5th week so watch out for it. We aim for 100% attendance for this special "LIVE" session together as a class. This is a very important part of the course that no one should miss out on so please do the best you can to be present for this one-time session.

D. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following:

Reading / Forum Discussion / Interaction	45 pts.
Weekly Integration Essays	35 pts.
Formational Exercises / Personal Blog	20 pts.
Total Grade	100 pts.

F. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.44 to 10.48](#) and [14.238 to 14.241](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Office (Room B302; aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

G. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Typically each week's module starts on Monday with class preparation which includes reading the required texts and other supplementary materials, listening to an audio or power point presentation on a particular spiritual tradition and attending to the DQ or discussion question(s) for the week; a threaded discussion/interaction follows immediately after each student's initial posting by Tuesday; doing synthesis/integration work for the week and posting the Blog by Friday; attending to the assigned formational exercises as scheduled and blogging about them four times every three weeks during the course of 12 weeks. For a visual overview of the course including all the scheduled assignments (due dates), consult the **Charted Schedule**.

CLASS CALENDAR

WEEK ONE An Integrated Spirituality

(May 4-8)

Reading Assignments # 1

Nouwen, RO: Foreword, Intro, (n.p.)

Hernandez, SOI: Foreword, Intro (pp. vii-xvi; 1-5)

O’Laughlin, GB: Introduction, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-56)

HR: Hernandez, MS: Intro (pp. xv-xxvii)/Chronology (pp. 109-114)

Johansen, WAF article

Video # 1

Henri Nouwen and the Reality of Our Journey
The Trilogy of Integration

Threaded Discussion Question # 1a

For starters, briefly introduce yourself to the class (where you’re originally from, where you are currently based, where you are in the program, what ministry work you’re involved in at the moment, if any). If you can, attach a close-up photo of yourself. Share the level of familiarity you have with Nouwen and your uppermost expectation for this class and its thrust.

Threaded Discussion Question # 1b (Small Group)

Reflect upon the current reality of your own journey. In about 300 words, describe its present “shape” and “texture” (i.e., are you flourishing, struggling, stuck, highly aware of what’s going on with you or clueless about what’s happening, etc.?). Would you say you’re experiencing certain fragmentation or do you see yourself moving toward greater sense of integration? How so?

WEEK TWO The INWARD Movement

(May 11-15)

Reading Assignments # 2

Nouwen, RO: Chapters 1-3 (pp. 23-62)

Nouwen, LR: Prologue, Part I (pp. 11-36)

Hernandez, SOI: Chapter 1 (pp. 9-25)

Hernandez, LOT: Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 11-31)

HR: Hernandez, MS: Part I (pp. 1-35)

O’Laughlin, GB: Chapter 2 (pp. 57-85)

Video Lecturettes # 2

Reaching INWARD
Psychology and Spirituality: *Knowing Self/Knowing God*
Journey Inward via *Solitude of the Heart*

Threaded Discussion Question # 2

As you move interiorly to know yourself in terms of your true identity in God, how do you envision converting your so-called deserts of loneliness into gardens of solitude in practical ways?

Weekly Integration Essay # 1

Nouwen reckons solitude as a place of transformative tension—a venue for great encounter and great struggle, a head-on confrontation with both our sense of dignity and depravity, with our true self and our false self. As you yourself enter into silence and solitude, try to articulate how you personally experience the said tension and what do you to navigate your way through it (300-400 words).

Formational Exercise # 1 – Contemplative Prayer

Personal Blog # 1: 400-500 words

WEEK THREE The OUTWARD Movement (Part I)

(May 18-22)

Reading Assignments # 3

Nouwen, RO: Chapters 4-6 (pp. 63-109)

Nouwen, LR: Part II (pp. 37-56)

Hernandez, SOI: Chapter 2 (pp. 26-53)

Hernandez, LOT: Chapters 4 & 5 (pp. 47-69)

HR: Hernandez, MS: Part II (pp. 37-66)

O’Laughlin, GB: Chapter 3 (pp. 86-109)

Video # 3

Reaching OUTWARD

Spirituality and Ministry: *Loving God/Loving Others*

Journey Outward via *Service of Hospitality*

Threaded Discussion Question # 3

According to your own understanding of the inseparability of the first and the second commandment (i.e., love of God and neighbor), what are some tangible ways you can concretize this insofar as your relationship with God and others is concerned?

Weekly Integration Essay # 2

In *Reaching Out*, Nouwen speaks of three forms of hospitality. Choose one relation (e.g., student/teacher, parent/child, or healer/patient) and reflect on an instance when hospitality was extended to you in such context of relationship and/or you yourself have extended it to others. Identify the dynamics of hospitality involved and their impact upon you/or others (300-400 words).

WEEK FOUR The OUTWARD Movement (Part II)

(May 25-29)

Reading Assignments # 4

Nouwen, LR: Part III (pp. 57-80)
Nouwen, INJ: Prologue, Intro, Part I (pp. 1-32)
Hernandez, LOT: Chapter 6 (pp. 70-80)
Hernandez, MOI: pp. 56-60
HR: Hernandez, MS: Part III (pp. 67-100)
O’Laughlin, GB: Chapter 4 (pp. 110-126)
Nouwen, SCM article via web link (Optional)

Threaded Discussion Question # 4a (Small Group)

As you engage in spiritual reading of *The Living Reminder*, what word, phrase, sentence or quote (or concept) spoke to you personally and why? How does it relate directly to your present ministry setting or context?

Threaded Discussion Question # 4b (Optional – Extra Points – to be explained via online posted announcement)

In your ministry, where do you find yourself struggling more—in being present or being absent or in both? Discuss what accounts for such tension, if any? How do you think you can be creatively present with, to, or for someone while being physically absent from him/her?

Weekly Integration Essay # 3

Drawing from your reflective spiritual reading of *The Living Reminder*, how would you articulate your synthesized understanding and application of the intersection between spirituality and ministry and the correlation between prayer and service (300-400 words)?

WEEK FIVE The UPWARD Movement (Part I)

(June 1-5)

Reading Assignments # 5

Nouwen, RO: Chapters 7-9 (pp. 110-162)
Nouwen, INJ: Part II (pp. 33-51)
Hernandez, SOI: Chapter 3 (pp. 54-71)
O’Laughlin, GB: Chapter 6, Conclusion (pp. 161-187)
Nouwen, TD article

Video # 4

Reaching GODWARD
Theology and Spirituality: *Knowing God/Experiencing God*
Journey Upward via *Prayer of Communion*

Threaded Discussion Question # 5

Nouwen focuses our attention on the fact that our theological education must be a form of worship and prayer—one in which we allow the Word to master and form us versus simply trying to master it. Reflect and inventory your current theological experience as a seminary student. How have you been able to integrate your seminary education with prayer, ministry, and proclamation and what would it take for you to reinforce such attempts at integration?

Weekly Integration Essay # 4

In Luke 6:12, we are told that Jesus spent the entire night communing with God in prayer. One would be hard-pressed to imagine Jesus spending the whole evening endlessly chatting his way through to His Father. Most of us are generally familiar with petitionary prayer, intercessory prayer and prayer of supplication but the idea of communing prayer (what Bro. Lawrence dubbed as “the practice of the presence of God”) seems like an alien concept to many. How do you personally understand this kind of prayer (which Nouwen refers to also as the “prayer of the heart”) and what are some concrete ways you can put it into practice yourself (300-400 words)?

Formational Exercise # 2 – Personal Solitude Retreat

Personal Blog # 2: 500-600 words

WEEK SIX The UPWARD Movement (Part II)

(June 8-12)

Reading Assignments # 6

Nouwen, INJ: Part III, Conclusion, Epilogue (pp. 55-81)

O’Laughlin, GB: Chapter 5 (pp. 127-160)

Threaded Discussion Question # 6 (Small Group)

As a minister, which of the three spiritual disciplines Nouwen mentioned in the book (INJ) that you find hardest to engage in and why?

Weekly Integration Essay # 5

Select one temptation out of the three which Nouwen discussed that connects with you the most and focus on two major aspects: **the nature of the temptation and Nouwen's proposed solution** to counteract such temptation. Discuss the temptation and then summarize what you think is its primary essence and how it particularly manifests itself in the church in general and your context and/or setting in particular (give concrete examples; avoid theorizing). When it comes to the "antidote" portion, make sure you explain clearly the direct relationship between the temptation and the proposed solution. Illustrate how it might work and how it might look like when applied. In short, how might you minister radically differently if you were to seriously take to heart Nouwen’s “prescription”? (500-600 words).

WEEK SEVEN An Imperfect and Tension-filled Spirituality

(June 15-19)

Reading Assignments # 7

Hernandez, SOI: Chapters 4 & 5 (pp. 75-129)

Hernandez, LOT: Chapter 3 (pp. 32-43); Chapters 7 & 8 (pp. 83-97)

Video # 5

Psychology of Imperfection: *Wholeness through Brokenness*

Ministry of Imperfection: *Power through Weakness*

Theology of Imperfection: *Communion through Suffering*

Video # 6

Nouwen as a Restless Seeker
Nouwen as a Wounded Healer
Nouwen as a Faithful Struggler

Threaded Discussion Question # 7

Identify some adverse consequences of subscribing to an overly triumphalistic view of the spiritual life. How can a healthy and sound understanding of a spirituality of imperfection and tension aid us in our movement toward greater wholeness and integration?

Weekly Integration Essay # 6

Which of the three examples of tension and imperfection in the life of Nouwen (i.e., restlessness, woundedness, struggle) can you identify with the most and why? What does it look like in your experience and what sacramental blessings can you derive from the experience of it? Write reflectively a personalized essay describing your own version of “imperfection” (either focusing on its psychological [brokenness], ministerial [weakness], or theological [suffering] manifestations. Do not philosophize nor theorize but personalize the concept in your own life (500-600 words).

WEEK EIGHT Embracing Polarities and Tension

(June 22-26)

Reading Assignments # 8

Hernandez, SOI: Conclusion (pp. 130-134)
Hernandez, LOT: Intro (pp. 1-7)
Nouwen, LS article (Optional)

Video 7

Overview of Spiritual Polarities
Overview of Our Tension-filled Life

Threaded Discussion Question # 8

Which of the three tensional polarities (inward/psychological, outward/ministerial, upward/theological) do you wrestle with the most and why? To narrow it down even more, which specific set of polarities (from any of the 3 sets) do you find yourself most in tension? Describe the nature of tension and your struggle (300-400 words).

Weekly Integration Essay # 7

For this week’s essay, the focus will be on your reading of O’Laughin’s book. Outline the general flow and main thrust of the book and then highlight the outstanding insights you have gained about the person of Nouwen as they relate to the key dynamics of the spiritual life, including the integrated/imperfect nature of our journey and the spiritual nature of our ministry. Finally, try to sum up your own understanding of how Nouwen has been particularly portrayed in the book and end with a brief personal response from you about such portrayal of Nouwen. Do not use direct quotes from the book at all. Try to use your own paraphrase of the book’s content and salient points. Do not stray from the primary thrust of the exercise: to

present a clear portrait of Nouwen as gleaned from the author's unique perspective. Be concise and direct to the point in your writing. Aim for brevity without sacrificing depth (600-700 words).

Formational Exercise # 3 – Spiritual Reading (*Lectio Divina*)

Personal Blog # 3: 400-500 words

WEEK NINE Befriending Tension in Our Journey

(June 29-July 3)

Reading Assignments # 9

Hernandez, LOT: Conclusion (pp. 109-117)

Video # 8

Befriending Tension

Threaded Discussion Question # 9

Which of the three prescribed ways of dealing with tension appeals to you the most and why?

Weekly Integration Essay # 8

How do you personally plan to navigate your way through the tensional realities in your journey such that they work for you rather than against you and ultimately redound to your own personal transformation (300-400 words)?

WEEK TEN An Integrated Ministry (Part I)

(July 6-10)

Reading Assignment # 10

Hernandez, MOI: Introduction (pp. 1-6); Chapter 1 (pp. 7-19); Chapter 2-3 (pp. 20-47)

Video # 9

Soul Care and Companionship
Soul Companionship Approaches

Threaded Discussion # 10 (Small Group)

Share with your own small group the kind of spiritual companion you need the most given your current journey reality (friend, guide, mentor, spiritual director) and explain why.

Weekly Integration Essay # 9

Identify some of the overlapping dynamics of the four companionship approaches as well as one or two key distinctive characteristics of each that distinguish them from one another. Briefly discuss the implications of both their similarities and differences (300-400 words).

WEEK ELEVEN An Integrated Ministry (Part II)

(July 13-17)

Reading Assignment # 11

Hernandez, MOI: Chapter 4 (pp. 48-68); Conclusion (pp. 69-72)

Video # 10

A Ministry of Integration

Threaded Discussion Question # 11

In terms of ministry, Nouwen can be said to be more of a “generalist” than a “specialist.” What are the practical advantages of employing a more generalist stance toward companioning others on their journey? Why is a decidedly integrated approach critical to greater effectiveness in ministry?

Weekly Integration Essay # 10

For this final essay, the focus will be on the one journal of Nouwen which you have chosen to read and analyze (out of Nouwen’s four spiritual journals). Provide a broad sketch of the overall theme of the journal. What is the journal specifically all about? Be able to highlight it in such a way that a person who has not read the journal will have a basic grasp of its thrust. Interact personally and directly with the general contents of the journal and analyze “WHY and HOW Nouwen wrote WHAT” in his journal. Be very interactive with the journal as much as you can. Include the rationale as to why you personally chose this particular journal. What does the journal reveal to you about certain key dynamics of the spiritual life and journey (i.e., integration, imperfection, tension, etc.) that we have tackled thus far? How do the journal entries grab you personally? Are there any specific elements that relate with your own journeying experience (700-800 words)?

Formational Exercise # 4 – Contemplated Action/Activated Contemplation

WEEK TWELVE Dynamics of Our Spiritual Life

(July 20-24)

Reading Assignment # 12

Nouwen, IFE article

Threaded Discussion Question # 12 (Small Group)

What is the one thing you are coming away with from your integrated understanding of the dynamics of our spiritual life according to Nouwen and how are you envisioning to move forward based on where you have been and where you think you are now in your own journey?

Personal Blog # 4: 600-700 words

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