GB 5603: Theology of Ministry
Hazelip School of Theology, Lipscomb University
Fall 2014
September 5-6, October 3-4, November 7-8
Friday 5:00-9:00 pm, Saturday 8:00 am-5:00 pm
Classroom: TBA
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Office: Ezell Center 202
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Course Description
Christian ministry is service offered to God through the church, on behalf of its members and the world, in the name of Jesus Christ, guided by Scripture and empowered by the Holy Spirit. In this course we will consider the dynamics and challenges of full-time Christian ministry within the local church.

As we consider the Biblical/theological foundations for Christian ministry, we will engage in a process of discerning one’s ministerial vocation/calling, as well as several practical functions and roles of ministry (such as the performing of weddings and funerals), leadership and authority, and ministerial ethics.

Required Texts
• William H. Willimon, Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry (Abingdon, 2002).
• Joe Trull and James Carter, Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation For Church Leaders. 2nd Ed (Baker Academic, 2004).
• Helmut Thielicke, A Little Exercise for Young Theologians (Eerdmans, 1962).
• Materials on weddings and funerals, which will be provided.
• Please bring a Bible (NIV or NRSV preferred) to every class period.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>How Delivered</th>
<th>How Assessed</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. To develop a Biblical theology of ministry in light of the Scriptural witness and contemporary needs.</td>
<td>Readings, class lecture, class discussion</td>
<td>Exam, written assignments, class discussion</td>
<td>Graduate-level proficiency</td>
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<td>2. To understand the nature and implications of Christian calling and vocation. To explore one's identity and unique gifts for ministry.</td>
<td>Readings, class lecture, class discussion</td>
<td>Exam, written assignments, class discussion</td>
<td>Graduate-level proficiency</td>
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<td>3. To identify and comprehend some of the particular competencies required in contemporary Christian ministry.</td>
<td>Readings, class lecture, class discussion</td>
<td>Exam, written assignments, class discussion</td>
<td>Graduate-level proficiency</td>
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<td>4. To enhance skills in particular roles and functions of ministry, such as the performing of weddings and funerals.</td>
<td>Readings, class lecture, class discussion</td>
<td>Exam, written assignments, class discussion</td>
<td>Graduate-level proficiency</td>
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<td>5. Ethics. To explore and understand the many particular ethical challenges and issues of the work of ministry.</td>
<td>Readings, class lecture, class discussion</td>
<td>Exam, written assignments, class discussion</td>
<td>Graduate-level proficiency</td>
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Course assignments will include:

1. **A brief personal history**: In 500-750 words (typed), tell me about your educational and work background, especially any church-related experience, up to the current time. (Please include your best email address and cell phone number.)
   
   Due September 5—Bring to our first class.

2. **“Calling” paper**: Write a 3-4 page paper (typed, double-spaced; about 1000 words) describing your understanding of calling or vocation as it applies to a life of ministry.
   
   Address these questions: (1) What do I believe the Bible to teach regarding a calling to ministry? (2) Why have I chosen to be—or, am giving consideration to being—a minister (that is, a minister in specific service to a congregation or ministry, as opposed to simply an active member of a church)? (3) How have I discerned my calling thus far? (4) What kind of minister does God seem to be calling me to be?

3. **Book review**: Write an in-depth review of a book on ministry, to be selected from a book list that I will provide you.
   
   The book review should be 10-12 pages in length (typed, double-spaced; about 3000 words), broken down as follows: 5-6 pages summarizing the overall scope and subject matter covered in the book; 5-6 pages giving your critical evaluation of the book and its relevance to the work of ministry, with special attention given to your particular interests and strategies for personal growth and improvement.

4. **Reflection papers**: You will be asked to write brief (half- to one-page) reflections on subjects to prepare your thinking for engagement in class discussion.

5. **Research summaries**: Identify a specific area of ministry which you would like to learn more about, and/or in which you like to see personal improvement, then research at least 5 articles (and/or book chapters) relating to the ministry area you have chosen.
   
   Summarize each article or chapter in one page (typed, single-spaced; about 500 words each), including one particular thing you found most helpful for the practice of ministry. (These summaries will be shared with other class members.)

6. **Wedding ceremony**: First, write a brief reflection (less than one page) on your understanding of what a wedding is “for” (What should it accomplish?). Then, provide the full text of a wedding ceremony (typed, double-spaced) from processional to recessional. Imagining a fictitious bride and groom, build a ceremony, including: the welcome, wedding sermon (this section should compose the main body of the ceremony, about 750-1000 words in length), Scripture readings, vows, prayers, pronouncement, closing, and any other elements you choose.

7. **Funeral sermon outlines**: First, write a brief reflection (less than one page) on your understanding of what a funeral is “for” (What should it accomplish?). Then, provide outlines for 3 funeral sermons, for the following situations:
   
   (a) an infant under 6 months;
   (b) a 40 year-old Christian woman (married, with children);
   (c) a person you never met and know little about.

   Each funeral outline should be about one page (typed, single-spaced; about 500 words) in length, and should include a “strategy statement,” a theme statement, two appropriate Scripture readings, and three suggested hymns.
8. **Final Exam.** The Final Exam will consist of several “reflection” questions allowing you to “pull it all together”—i.e., summarize, synthesize and demonstrate your grasp of many of the major themes and concerns of this course.

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<th>Grading</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Calling” paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research (articles) paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book review</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wedding and Funeral assignments (10% each)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions to class discussion, personal history, brief reflection papers, any additional assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Grading Scale:

- A = 93-100
- B = 82-92
- C = 70-81
- D = 60-71
- F = below

**Course Outline**

1. **Calling and Vocation**  
   Willimon, ch 1; Palmer (all).

2. **Identity: 21st Century Images of the Minister**  
   Willimon, ch 2; Thielicke (all).

3. **The Minister as Priest: Leading Worship (including Weddings)**  
   Willimon, ch 3.

4. **The Minister as Pastor: Caring for Souls (including Funerals)**  
   Willimon, chs 4,7.

5. **The Minister as Preacher and Teacher: Ministry of the Word**  
   Willimon, chs 5-6,8.

6. **The Minister as Prophet and Evangelist: Spiritual and social change**  
   Willimon, chs 9-10.

7. **The Minister as Leader and Administrator: Pastoral oversight**  
   Willimon, ch 11; Nouwen (all).

8. **The Minister as Person: Ethics, Personal Renewal, Self-Care**  
   Willimon, chs 12-13; Trull and Carter (all).

**Attendance and Expectations**

One important aim of our class will be to embody a caring, pastoral spirit as befits a course in Christian ministry. Not only will we be engaging in honest, critical thinking and discussion together, we will do so with a respectful spirit toward fellow class members. We will include in our interchanges times for the sharing of concerns and prayer for each other.

Given the intensive nature of our class schedule, attendance is expected at every meeting, for the entire session. You should not miss any part of the class except for extraordinary conflicts or emergencies; please be on time for the beginning of each class.
Please take care to turn all your work in on time. The penalty for assignments turned in late will be: 5 points deducted per calendar day from the due date. (So, for instance, a paper turned in one week late will have a maximum grade of 65 before it is graded.) Any assignment not turned in will receive a grade of zero.

**Academic Integrity**

I expect you to do your own work, and do it with integrity. In keeping with our identity as a Christian university and our goal to help shape disciples of Christ, academic integrity will be taken very seriously in this class. Unless specific permission is given to collaborate on assignments with other students, each student’s work must be his or her own. Cheating on exams or assignments and plagiarizing on written assignments will, depending on the severity of the case, result in penalties ranging from failure on the assignment in question, to failing the course. Instances of cheating or plagiarism may also be reported to appropriate members of the administration, depending on the situation. Decisions in these matters rest with the instructor. For clarification, refer to the University’s *Code of Conduct* and *Academic Integrity Policy* on Lipscomb’s website.