

The Spirituality of Leadership in Historical Perspective

Dr. Wendy Fletcher (wfletcher@vst.edu)

January 07- January 18, 2008

9:30am-12:30pm

Course Description

The problematic of leadership is not a new challenge in the narrative of Christian traditions. Throughout its history, Christianity has struggled to find its way navigating complex paths through the myriad of opportunities and dilemmas which human fragility and the drama of gospel engaging culture surface in each generation. Through much of this journey, the dominant form of leadership expressed in the Western church has been of a particular form- hierarchical, singular, androcentric and structurally bound. This course seeks to interpret

leadership as a spiritual practice which is grounded in values, virtues, norms and forms in contradistinction to those named above. Through an exploration both of contemporary leadership theory and historical illustrations unveiling models of leadership which embrace and reflect a different ethic, this course invites participants to formulate their own understanding of leadership as an intentional spiritual discipline, grounded in the spiritual rhythms and practices of faith communities.

Sub themes to be addressed include: church/state relationships; authority/power; deconstruction of classic normativities- eg. progress and church growth theory; self care; implications of gender; impact of development of psychology; strategic planning; contextual analysis; transitions; management; vision, imagination; spiritual disciplines; ethics of accountability and trust.

Course Format

The class will meet once each day for 10 sessions over 2 weeks. Each session will convene for three hours and will be comprised of lectures; small group work; reading discussions. Historical materials and contemporary leadership theory will be interspersed throughout the course. Participants will be required both to come to class with pre-assigned readings completed, and a journal entry for each reading as a basis for classroom discussion. The class will be divided into two small groups which will work every other day on the development of historical case study from assigned primary text readings. On the last day of the course the seminar will conclude with the sharing by each participant of their theory of leadership as reflected in the construction of a mandala.

Texts

Selections will be read from the following texts:

****Leadership Can Be Taught*** by Sharon Daloz Park;

****The 8th Habit*** by Stephen Covey

****Mysticism and Resistance*** by Dorothy Soelle

****From Good to Great (in the Social Sector)*** by Jim Collins

- * *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* by Henri Nouwen
- * *The Art of Possibility*, by Benjamin and Rosamund Zander
- * *The Power of the Positive No*, by William Ury.

Primary Text Readings for Historical Cases: as noted in the syllabus below;

Course Requirements for Credit Students

- *Daily Readings;
- *Participation in classroom learning process including preparation of a reading journal to be submitted on Day 9, and participation in a case study development 4 times over the 10 course sessions;
- *One research paper due after the completion of the course (length determined by degree expectations);
- *Mandala: expressing personal theory of leadership to be shared in class on day 10;

***Daily Readings and Reading Journal:**

Each day there are assigned readings. Beginning on Day 01 there is secondary source reading assigned for discussion. On day 2 there are primary text readings and so on. Although two primary texts are noted on alternate days the class will be divided into two groups and members of each group will be responsible for only one primary text for each case study session. Participants, in theory can read each night ahead of class, but reading ahead of class weeks is preferable. All books are available through the VST library and inter-library loan library service or for purchase through the UBC bookstore. Primary source texts are on reserve in the VST library; all can be found on-line. Participants should write a 400 word journal reflection on five of the secondary source readings to be submitted on the second Thursday of the course. These reflections will serve as a catalyst for class discussion and should identify: the key theses of the readings; supporting arguments; your critical engagement with/reflection on the text.

***Case Studies:** Every other session, the class will divide into two small groups for 45 minutes; each group will be responsible for the development of a 'case' which presents the leadership commitments/issues of an assigned historical figure. A primary text writing by the historical figure under consideration is on reserve in the VST library. There are two primary texts for each case study session; each course participant is only required to read a total of four- or one for each session. Students should do some basic biographical research on the figures under consideration, as a context for interpreting the texts and formulating the brief—which will be presented by the small groups to the larger class for discussion.

***Research Paper:** Degree students shall prepare a research paper on a topic related to the course approved by the instructor during the course week. Guidelines for the paper are elaborated by the basic degree expectations of VST.

***Mandala:** As a final integrating exercise, course participants are asked to create a mandala which reflects the theory of leadership as they are able to articulate it at the end of the course week. These will be shared on the second Friday of the course. Some art materials will be available in the classroom for those who may need them.

Topics and Readings Schedule:

***Day 1: Getting Started; Patristic Era**

Theme: Leadership and Governance

Reading: Sharon Daloz Parks, **Leadership Can be Taught**, Ch.1; Ch. 5;

***Day 2: Patristic Era (Case Study Day)**

Theme: Leadership as Protest and Accomodation

Readings: Ambrose “On Duties” Book 1; Ignatius “On Ephesians”

***Day 3: Medieval Era**

Theme: Leadership as Management and Proclamation

Reading: Stephen Covey, **The Eighth Habit**, Chapter 1 to 5;

***Day 4: Medieval Era (Case Study Day)**

Theme: Leaders as Scholars and Mystics

Readings: Bonaventure, “On Christian Leadership”; Julian of Norwich, “Revelations of Divine Love, Shorter Text”;

***Day 5: Reformation Era**

Theme:Leaders Changing Systems

Reading: Dorothy Soelle, **Mysticism and Resistance**, Ch.11 to 15;

***Day 06: Reformation Era (Case Study Day)**

Theme:Leaders Creating New Worlds

Readings: Jean Calvin, **Institutes of Religion**, Chapter III, “Doctors and Ministers of the Church”; George Fox (Quaker) **The Journal of George Fox**, Chapters 2;3;14;

***Day 7: Modern Era**

Theme: Leadership as Revival and Mission

Reading: John Allin, **Good to Great in the Social Sector** (whole text—it is a quick read); and **Art of Possibility** by R and B Zander Chapters 1;3;5.

***Day 8: Modern Era (Case Study Day)**

Theme: Leadership for Social Change

Readings: Dorothy Day, “On Pilgrimage”, May 1948 ;Dietrich Bonhoeffer, **Cost of Discipleship**, Chapters 2-4,;

***Day 9: The 21st Century Church**

Theme: Dilemmas of contemporary Leadership; Power

Reading: Henri Nouwen, **In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership** (whole text—it is a quick read!); **The Power of the Positive No** by William Ury, p.7-50.

***Day 10: Wrapping Up**

Integrating Exercise; Sharing Mandalas

**If you have questions ahead of the start of the course please email me at wfletcher@vst.edu