

PT 500 Spiritual and Theological Foundations for Pastoral and Public Leadership

Jason Byassee fall 2019, Thursdays 9-12 AM

TA: Sam Andri

Course Description

It is a strange time to do ministry in the church and mission in the world. But it has always been thus. The church built the very western culture that now rails against it, or worse, ignores it. Meanwhile practitioners of “other” faiths are not “other” anymore, in some places like the Lower Mainland, faith is alive and well in forms that the founding denominations of the Vancouver School of Theology would not likely have imagined. Yet Christianity is not gone, it is still present in the secular west, in robust forms in second and third-generation immigrant communities, in sometimes fearful forms and sometimes courageous and imaginative new forms in mainline congregations, in privileged and tired forms still in some surprising quarters. The louder and more confident secularism becomes, the more religious practitioners may find themselves allies with folks they would not have first chosen, and their grandparents would have found unimaginably threatening.

This course is designed for students approaching ministry in pastoral and public contexts. We will attend to contemplative prayer, to the practice of faith in ordinary life, and to the shape of specifically Christian mission. The claim is not that Christian mission is the only appropriate way to do ministry. The goal is rather for each of us to become master practitioners at our own craft, learning from other master practitioners as we watch them practice theirs. To switch the metaphor, it is to speak and write and think beautifully in one language, and perhaps, through painstaking work, another, but not to mash our languages into an unintelligible Esperanto.

The Christian church has shaped the form of our secularism, for better and often worse. We all need to know something about it to minister on the streets, in the hospital, in secular settings, among the religiously wounded, and even in the church. Students will read Phileena Heuertz on contemplative prayer, Tish Harrison Warren on worship in ordinary life, and Sam Wells on the God who is always *with* the other, the outsider, the skeptic, the institution, in Jesus Christ. Students will be encouraged to write from their own nascent and evolving and often troubling and troubled sense of calling toward how they think they might spend their “one wild and precious life” (Mary Oliver).

Guests will speak to us about ministry with indigenous communities, amidst trans-Pacific immigration, and in the arts.

Course Competencies:

-Learn to articulate who you are as a leader, the complexities of the contexts to which you are called, and the ways of praying to help you lead well in those contexts

-Ability to describe the resources available for critical and contextual and churchly analysis of the places to which you are called, their limitations, and what new gifts you can bring to them - Ability to name the centre: what are institutions for? Why do we need them? How do we operate within them, for the advancement of their mission, and without sacrificing our own souls? How do we challenge them fruitfully?

-Ability to name the edges: in what way does the church need the world? In what way does the world need the church? How do non-Christian communities answer their analogous questions?

-To move from not knowing what you don't know, to knowing what you don't know, to knowing what you know, to not knowing what you know.

Required Books to Buy (Available at UBC Bookstore)

Phileena Heuertz *Mindful Silence: The Heart of Christian Contemplation* (Formatio, 2018).
0830846492 \$24.72 176 pp

Tish Harrison Warren *Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2016), \$11.97 0830846239 184 pp.

Samuel Wells, *Incarnational Mission: Being With the World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018).
080287486X. \$28.24 CAD on Amazon. 224 pp.