He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Psalm 1:3, NIV [Photo © D. Kevin Adams]

I offer my heart to thee, Lord, promptly and sincerely.
John Calvin's motto

On another occasion, before she had completely finished distributing all her belongings, although she had very few left, she told me that one evening, while she was at prayer, it seemed to her that she felt nothing of God and so she prayed and lamented in these terms: "Lord, whatever I am doing, I do only to find You. Will I find You after I've finished what I have undertaken?" And she asked for many other things in that prayer. The response was: "What do you want?"

To this she replied: "I want neither gold nor silver; even if you should offer me the whole universe, I would not be satisfied.

I want only You."

Priest writing about Angela of Foligno, c. 1292
CH/MC 591: Dynamics of Spiritual Life

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Hamilton
Fall, 2011

Course Instructor: Dr. Gwenfair Walters Adams
Class Meeting Time: Tuesdays, 2:00-5:00 p.m.
Contact Information: TBA in class
Office Hours: TBA in class

Course Description and Objectives:
Drawing on the biblical Creation-Redemption narrative, the course presents a comprehensive model of spirituality that can be used in personal renewal, spiritual formation, direction, discipleship, mentoring, and counseling. Combining theological reflection, historical analysis, literary theory, the arts, and practical application, it explores key spiritual dynamics, equipping persons for ministry to those seeking a deeper life with Christ.

Issues of discovering one’s design and calling, equipping for spiritual warfare, pursuit of intimacy with God, worship and obedience, and growing into Christ-likeness by the power of the Holy Spirit, will be dealt with in an integrated model. In explicating these key dynamics, we will explore the rich heritage of the Church in relation to a wide variety of spiritual practices, disciplines, etc.

The course also provides a historical framework for life-long learning and ministry in Christian Spirituality, and the selected readings cover a broad spectrum of Christianity.

The course will incorporate both theory and praxis, integrating head and heart.

For students with a significant amount of life or ministry experience or previous coursework in Spiritual Formation, this course may be substituted for the MC 501 Spiritual Formation requirement for the M.Div., by petition to Dr. Steve Kang. Petition is not required if you are taking the course as an elective.

Class Sessions (subject to change if necessary and/or salutary):

Session #1: A Theology of Spirituality (September 13)

Session #2: The Dynamic of Vocation (September 20)
How do we discern our God-given design and calling? What is the role of gifts in the Christian life? We will look at a history of vocation and the purpose of the Christian life.

Session #3 & 4: Dynamic of Spiritual Warfare (September 27; October 4)
Issues of spiritual warfare, sin, temptation, suffering, theodicy, core lies, and being equipped to respond to life’s challenges. Discussion: Selections from John Owen’s Overcoming Sin and Temptation

READING WEEK (October 11: NO CLASS)

Session #5: The Dynamic of Structure (October 18)
How does the way one structures one’s time relate to the depth of one’s relationship with Jesus Christ? We will use a case study in Benedictine monasticism to explore avoiding burnout, creating space for spiritual growth, incorporating community, keeping on-track in ministry, etc. Text: Selections from Bernard McGinn, *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*

**Sessions #6 & 7: The Dynamic of the Pursuit of Intimacy (October 25 & November 1)**
We will trace the history of how Christians have spent their times alone with God. In doing so, we will examine, analyze, and critique case studies and/or “skill sets” related to mystical contemplation, monastic *lectio divina*, Pseudo-Bonaventuran meditation, icons, the Orthodox Jesus Prayer; discernment in relation to supernatural phenomena such as visions, interpretation of dreams; fasting, devotions, Bible Studies, journaling, and the arts. Text: Selections from Bernard McGinn, *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*

**READING WEEK (November 8: NO CLASS)**

**Session #8: Workshop (November 15)**

**Session #9: Dynamic of the *Imago Christi* (November 22)**
We will explore the roles that asceticism, suffering, spiritual disciplines, spiritual direction, preaching, resolution, and community play(ed) in character formation. Texts: *Imitation of Christ* and *On Social Justice*

**Session #10: The Dynamics of Prayer and Providence (November 29)**
We will trace a brief history of providence and intercessory prayer in the life of the Church, with special attention to nineteenth-century missions. Text: A. W. Tozer, *Pursuit of God*

**Sessions #11 & 12: The Dynamic of Worship (December 6 & 13)**
We will trace the history of how Christians have engaged in corporate worship, with a special focus on the relationship between styles of worship and theologies of the atonement. The goal will be to provide for the possibility of a deeper understanding and practice of worship both as an individual and for effective leading of corporate worship as part of spiritual formation.

**Required Textbooks:**
6. A. W. Tozer, *Pursuit of God – (available at Project Gutenberg as HTML. Plain text, or kindle).* – available second hand or in POD format
Recommended Textbook:

Course Requirements: Students who are taking the course for credit are expected to attend all the class sessions, to complete the 1300 pages of required reading, to participate in and write an analysis of the Spiritual Life Log OR Zone exercise; to spend a retreat alone with God and write an analysis paper about it; write a Mallon history research paper (historical analysis of your own autobiography); and write a Design & Mission paper. (If you are doing the course for only CH credit and would prefer to substitute a 12-15 page church history research paper on some aspect of spirituality for the Mallon paper, please contact the professor).

If you want to do work before the class begins, you are encouraged to start the reading. The written assignments will require knowledge that you will gain during the class sessions, so please wait until the class begins before embarking on them.

1. Reading Report: Students need to submit a bibliography with brief annotations, listing all reading done for the class. Please total the pages and write the total at the end of the list. 1300 pages minimum.

Building on the work you have done for and during the class sessions, describe and analyze your design, purpose, vision, and mission. More instructions will be given during the course.

3. Mallon history research paper (Life Narrative Analysis). Building on the work you have done for and during class sessions, write a history paper analyzing the key themes or core spiritual dynamics of your life up to the present. Analyze major themes, defining moments, lessons learned, etc. The paper should be 15-20 pages long, double-spaced, 12 pt. font. It will be graded on the basis of the quality of thought, insight, analysis, excellence of writing, and clarity of structure and expression. Include as an appendix your Life Narrative Analysis Diagram. More instructions will be given during the course.

4. Retreat: Spend a full day (at least 10 hours) alone with the Lord, putting into practice what you are learning in the course that fits with your theological framework and conscience. The assignment will be assessed on the percentage of hours completed and the attainment of a satisfactory level of thoughtfulness in the analysis involved in the written report. Please indicate the number of hours completed. (2-3 pages). More instructions will be given in class.

5. 21-Scenes chart or Spiritual Disciplines Log: For at least six consecutive weeks, each student will be required to do one of the following:
   a. Each week, fill in a 21-Scenes chart that organizes the week to come. More directions will be given during the class.
   OR
   b. Keep a log recording elements of his/her spiritual life. One intention of the exercise is to help provide accountability in order to assist students in developing healthy habits in maintaining spiritual disciplines. More directions will be given in class.
With either assignment, at the end of the time, students will write an analysis of their experience. The 2-3 page analysis should be submitted on the Final Due Date. The log and/or zone charts do not need to be submitted.

6. Class attendance - may be taken into account, with one point per missed, unexcused session being taken off of the final grade.

Final Due Date for all assignments:
All work will be due on the final day for written work. (This is the date in the academic calendar assigned by the Registrar). If, due to an emergency, you need an extension, please contact the Registrars' office before the deadline.

If mailing your work, please mail it to:
Dr. Gwenfair Walters Adams
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
130 Essex St.
S. Hamilton, MA  01982.
Please enclose a large self-addressed stamped envelope if you would like your papers returned to you somewhere other than your campus mailbox.

Grading Percentages:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Design &amp; Mission</th>
<th>Mallon Research Paper</th>
<th>Log /Zone Analysis</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</table>

The grades of the Mallon paper and Design & Mission assignments will be averaged, with the Mallon paper weighted twice as heavily as the Design & Mission paper. If all other work is done completely, the two-paper (Mallon and D&M) grade will stand. If other assignments are incomplete, the final grade will be reduced proportionately.

Estimated Hours:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class sessions</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Mallon Paper</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Design Paper</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retreat &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>56 (allows for slower reading)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log/Zone Analysis</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>135</td>
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</tbody>
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Grading Scale (from Catalog)
"Grade A is given for meeting with conspicuous excellence the demands which can fairly be made in relation to the requirements of the course. These demands would normally include unusual accuracy in fact, completeness in detail, perfection in form of work, independence of method, grasp of the subject as a whole and constructive imagination."
Grade B is given for exceeding the minimum of satisfactory attainment and for meeting certain aspects of the course with excellence. Grade C is given for attaining satisfactory familiarity with the course and for demonstrating at least some ability to use this knowledge in a satisfactory manner. Grade D is a passing mark but indicates unsatisfactory control over the material. Grade F declares that the course has been failed.

- **Plagiarism** is considered a serious academic offense at GCTS. Please follow guidelines at http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html.
- **Internet Usage:** Students are asked to refrain from accessing the internet or playing computer/cell phone games, etc. at any point during class sessions, unless otherwise instructed by the professor. “Surfing the web,” checking email, and other internet-based activities are distracting to other students and to the professor, and prevent the student from fully participating in the class sessions.
- **Intellectual Property / Privacy Rights:** To protect the professor’s intellectual property rights with regard to classroom content and to protect the privacy of the professor and other students, students are asked to refrain from audio, photographic, and video recording of classes, as well as audio, video, photographic, and written publication (including internet posting and broadcasting) or live transmission of classroom proceedings.