

INTR 514: Spiritual Formation and Witness

Intercultural Studies Wheaton College Graduate School

Robert L. Gallagher

Pre-course Assignments

Students will do **three** 2.5-3-page book reviews:

1. Foster, Richard J. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992.

or

Foster, Richard J. *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.

2. Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. Rev. ed. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, [1978], 1988.

or

Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, [1988], 1991.

3. Bosch, David J. *A Spirituality of the Road*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1979.

or

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*. New York: Seabury Press, 1981.

Book Review Guidelines

A book review is not the same thing as a book report that simply summarizes the content of a book. When writing a book review, you not only report on the content of the book, but also assess its strengths and weaknesses. In writing a review you do not just relate whether or not you liked the book; you also tell your readers why you liked or disliked it. You must explain your reaction. As a critical observer you are not passive; you should ask questions of the book and note your reactions. Your review then discusses those questions and reactions.

For your book review answer the following questions:

a. What are the publication details concerning the book? (1 point)

That is, author, title, place of publication, publisher and date, as well as the background of the author that would indicate his/her biases.

b. What is the thesis and major message of the book? (4 points)

In other words, state clearly the thesis (see below) and indicate how the author supports his/her thesis in each chapter of the book. Show evidence that you read and understood the book.

c. What did you learn from the book? (3 points)

What sections of the book meant most to you and why? In simpler terms, what did you like and/or dislike and why?

d. How could you apply what you learned from the book to your mission context? (3 points)

So what? How does what you learned apply in your mission/ministry context (past or present or future mission context)?

What is a Thesis?

A thesis statement is a one-sentence claim made in the paper (or the appropriate section of a book review). This claim is the underlying theme that you wish to support throughout a paper or observe in a book. It is what you wish to demonstrate in the paper. You should be blunt and clearly state the thesis. For example—“*The thesis of this book is that Western worldview assumptions have reduced Scripture to a book of propositional truths rather than relational redemption through the mission of God.*” Write out “The thesis of this book is . . .” or credit will be lost.

Writing a thesis statement is a requirement for your book reviews. Do not use words like “understand, explore, investigate, examine, look into” in the thesis statement. Those generally deal with purpose. Therefore do not write: “The thesis of this book is to investigate American culture.” This is not a thesis statement. This is the purpose of the book. “The thesis of this book is that American culture has caused increasing individualism and separatism in the U.S.A.” Ultimately, an author's thesis will make a claim that he/she will support throughout their book.

All book reviews and papers are to be typed and double-spaced in Times New Roman using a 12-point font with 1-inch margins.