**SPIRITUAL FORMATION FOR CHURCH LEADERS**
Master of Arts and Master of Divinity 2PT702
January 12-16, 2015, RTS-Orlando
Steve Childers

---

**Course Description**

“My people’s greatest need is my personal holiness.” – Robert Murray McCheyne

Church leaders must lead from character before skill. One of the greatest needs in the church today is for church leaders to recapture the primacy of developing Christian character (holiness) first in their lives, and then in the lives of those they serve. But to do so, without falling prey to the classic errors of legalism, moralism, and/or antinomianism (easy-believism), is very difficult.

Spiritual Formation is a course Steve Childers has taught for many years both in the classroom and on the field, in the USA and abroad, in English and other languages, for credit (masters and doctoral) and just to help church leaders not give up when drowning under the life-crushing load of personal and ministry demands. In this course emerging and seasoned church leaders will be encouraged and equipped to be continually growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ through experiencing a safe place where the riches of the gospel are deeply and refreshingly explored, and applied to real life and ministry.

---

**Course Instructor**

Steve Childers is Associate Professor of Practical Theology (since 1995) at Reformed Theological Seminary, in Orlando, Florida, where he regularly teaches evangelism, spiritual formation, church planting, church renewal, and missions. He has earned masters degrees from Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Chicago, and a doctorate from Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando. Steve has also done doctoral studies in leadership development and global missions at Fuller Theological Seminary’s School of World Mission in Pasadena, California.

Steve is the founder and President of GCA, continuing as Pathway Learning (http://www.PathwayLearning.org), a church leadership training organization that provides innovative educational pathways for church leaders. Steve has planted and pastored two churches. Since then he has written church planting, renewal, and multiplication training curriculum and helped train thousands of church leaders from more than 300 denominations representing over 50 countries in 7 languages on 5 continents. Steve’s book, *All Things New: The Gospel of the Kingdom* and parallel ecourse is scheduled for release in 2015.

Steve and his wife Becky live in Orlando, Florida, and have three adult daughters and one granddaughter. You can learn more about Steve on:

- Twitter: https://twitter.com/stevechilders
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/steve.childers
- His Blog: http://www.stevechilders.org
Course Objectives

A Mind for Truth

- To understand and articulate a biblical theology of personal spiritual growth and renewal, especially as it relates to the centrality of the cross and the gospel
- To understand the biblical imperative for personal holiness and the priority of ongoing spiritual growth and renewal in the life of the church leader today
- To understand the biblical nature of the gospel’s transforming power, especially as it relates to the Kingdom of God and mission of the church
- To understand, evaluate, and appreciate various principles, methods, and models used today to help people grow spiritually
- To be acquainted with the literature relating to personal spiritual growth and renewal (especially English Puritan literature, e.g. John Owen, Richard Baxter, et al.) and be able to think biblically and critically about how it can be used properly and effectively in the student’s life and ministry

A Heart for God

- To experience spiritual growth and renewal through applying the biblical concepts of gospel-driven spiritual formation to the heart
- To diagnose and repent from the core idols (sin beneath the sin) that draw the student’s heart affections away from Christ
- To appropriate the transforming pardon and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ through setting the student’s heart affections on Him by faith
- To show love for God and others by loving God’s Law, obeying it by God's grace, and allowing it to lead the student to Jesus Christ for transformation into His image
- To practice spiritual disciplines (such as meditating on Scripture, prayer, journaling, fasting, witnessing, etc.) as a means of setting the student’s heart affection on Christ
- To be an agent of personal spiritual growth and renewal in the lives of others

A Life for Ministry

- To lay a strong foundation for future studies in the dynamics of how the gospel brings spiritual growth and renewal both personally and corporately
- To lay a strong foundation for the practical development of church–based ministries of spiritual growth and renewal, especially for those planning to be church planters, pastors, and missionaries
- To obtain a set of criteria for evaluating spiritual growth and renewal principles, methods, materials, programs, and trends
Course Requirements

**Reading Assignments & Reports: Due April 24, 2015**
There will be 1500 pages of NEW reading (not having been previously read by the student) assigned for the course from the *Required Reading* list below. If required reading texts cannot be found or all the Required Texts have previously been read, the student may substitute books from the *Recommended Reading* list. All readings for the course must be taken directly from these two lists unless otherwise approved by the professor.

Master of Arts (M.A.) and Master of Divinity (M.Div.) credit students are required to submit a *Reading Report* (RR), giving evidence of their reading and interaction with the concepts in the assigned books/articles. This Word document must begin with a *Summary Sheet* and is followed by a one-page standard report for each book (see *Course Reading Report Forms* below). Please separate the summary and each one-page book report with a page-break.

The *Reading Report* (RR) must be received electronically (by email as an attachment) by April 24, 2015, at midnight. Students will receive a grade reduction for late reading reports. Please submit to schilders@rts.edu and name your *Reading Report* document as Yourlastname.SpiritualFormation.W15.RR. Non-credit (Audit) students do not submit reports.

**Class Attendance and Participation**
This course follows the lecture, discussion and small group sharing methods, requiring attendance and participation at all classes. Tardiness and absences will impact the course grade. Class lectures and group discussions will be based on the assumption that the student has completed most (more than 50%) of the assigned readings by the first class meeting. Individual and small group work sessions and presentations will be conducted during class time.

**Integration Paper: Due April 24, 2015**
Students are required to write a 15-20 page (double–spaced, 12 point font) course integration paper. This paper must reflect new work done by the student as a result of this course. This paper must demonstrate how the course readings, lectures, and discussions can be integrated/applied to the student’s life and ministry. This paper should reflect good scholarship, including accurately quoted credible sources (8 minimum references/footnotes) and a *References Cited* section at the end of the paper. This is good preparation for academic writing in the future.

The integration paper is due (attached electronic copy) on April 24, 2015. Please include a cover sheet with the name and number of the course, professor, your name and email address. Save your electronic document as Yourlastname.SpiritualFormation.W15.IP and submit it electronically to schilders@rts.edu. Non-credit (Audit) students do not submit papers.
Course Registration & Schedule

- Students may register for the course beginning November 1, 2014 to December 1, 2014.
- Enrolled credit students may register online at https://selfservice.rts.edu/Home.aspx.
- Audit students may register by emailing the RTS-Orlando registrar, Lanny Conley at lconley@rts.edu.
- Class meetings will be held on the campus of RTS-Orlando and will begin promptly at 8:30 AM Monday – Friday, January 12-16, 2015.

Course Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following:

1. Reading Reports (20%)
2. Personal Class Participation (20%)
3. Class Group Presentation (20%)
4. Integration Paper (40%)
Course Readings

Required Reading: Choose 1500 pages of NEW reading from this list.

Baxter, Richard
    ISBN: 9780851511917

Bridges, Jerry
    ISBN: 978576839898

Keller, Tim.
  2008 The Prodigal God. E.P. Dutton, (176 pp)
    ISBN: 9780525950790

Lovelace, Richard
  1979 Dynamics of Spiritual Life, An Evangelical Theology of Renewal. IVP Academic.

Miller, Jack
  2004 The Heart of a Servant Leader. P & R Publishing (319 pp)
    ISBN: 9780875527154

Miller, Paul. A Praying Life, NavPress (260 pp)
  2009 ISBN: 9781600063008

Packer, J.I.
  1993 Knowing God. InterVarsity Press. [Chapters 15, 18, 19] (55 pp).
    ISBN: 9780830816507

Prior, Kenneth
    ISBN: 9781857921090

Smith, Scotty
  2005 Objects of His Affection: Coming Alive to the Compelling Love of God. (260 pp)
    Simon and Shuster ISBN: 9781582295954

Wright, N. Thomas
  2008 Surprised by Hope. Harper Collins (356 pp)
    ISBN: 9780061551826
Recommended Reading: To Meet Requirement of 1500 Pages

Alexander, Archibald

Baxter, Richard


Berkouwer, G.C.


Bonar, Horatius


Bridges, Jerry


Brooks, Thomas


Bunyan, John


Calvin, John

Chalmers, Thomas  

Chappell, Bryan  
1994  Christ Centered Preaching. Book House. (Read chapters 10, 11)

Charnock, Stephen  

Childers, Steven L.  

Curtis, Brent, and John Eldredge  
1997  The Sacred Romance. Thomas Nelson.

Demarest, Bruce  
1999  Satisfy Your Soul. NavPress.

Edwards, Jonathan  


Eldredge, John,  

Ferguson, Sinclair B.  


Fisher, Edward  
The Marrow of Modern Divinity. Presbyterian Board of Pub. n.d.

Flavel, John  
1963  The Mystery of Providence

Foster, Richard  
1978  Celebration of Discipline

Foster, Richard, and Emilie Griffin  

Gurnall, William  

Hoekema, Anthony A.  

Hughes, R. Kent  
Keller, Timothy J.  

Lewis, Peter  

Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn  

Londgaard, Kris  

Luther, Martin  
The Preface to Martin Luther’s Commentary on Galatians.  

MacDonald, Gordon  

Marshall, Walter  

McGrath, Alister E.  

Miller, John C. (Jack)  
(Read especially The Ingrown Leader, The Pastor as Pacesetter, and Preaching by Faith)

Miller, Rose Marie  

Morris, Leon  
1983  The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance.  IVP.

Murray, John  

Newton, John  
Owen, John

Packer, J.I.

Piper, John

Powlison, David

Ryken, Leland

Ryle, J.C.

Schaeffer, Francis A.

Stott, John R.W.
1986 The Cross of Christ. Downers Grove: IL, InterVarsity. (Especially chapter 7—The Salvation of Sinners and the Conclusion—The Pervasive Influence of the Cross.)

Toon, Peter
1990 Spiritual Companions: An Introduction to the Christian Classics, Baker.

Wallace, Ronald
1957 Calvin’s Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament. Eerdmans.

Watson, Thomas

Welch, Edward T.
1997 When People are Big and God is Small. Presbyterian & Reformed.

Whitney, Donald S.

Willard, Dallas

Winslow, Octavius
# Course Reading Report Forms

## Summary Sheet Guide

**READING REPORTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Title &amp; Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List books read

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th># Pages Read</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Total Number Pages Read:** ________

*Insert page break and follow with one-page report per book.*

---

## Guide for one-page reading reports

**Title of Book**

**Complete Bibliographic Reference**

**Overview**—Give a brief overview of the book, including its theme, perspective and approach.

**Critique**—Offer a brief critique of the book, including elements of strength and weakness.

**Application**—Offer some specific application to your own ministry—demonstrating the value and relevance of the material in this book.

**Best Quote**—Be sure to include the page number where the quote can be found.

*Insert page break and follow with each report.*
# Course Objectives Related to Student Learning Outcomes

**Course:** 2PT702 Spiritual Formation For Church Leaders  
**Professor:** Dr. Steven L. Childers  
**Campus:** RTS-Orlando

In order to measure the success of the DMin curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the DMin outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></td>
<td>Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preach</td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/Word</td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>