

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Practical Suggestions for Reflecting on the Practice in Ministry and Mission

The following guidelines are taken/adapted from Appendix Two of Shared Wisdom: A Guide to Case Study Reflection in Ministry by Jeffrey H. Mahan, Barbara B. Troxell, and Carol J. Allen (Nashville: Abingdon; 1993).

Below are possible questions that focus the theological reflection process:

- How have God's people responded to similar situations in other times and places? What do those responses suggest about the nature of ministry?
- How does your course work and reading speaking to this situation?
- What biblical story, image, or symbol comes to mind that illuminates or is evoked by this situation?
- What doctrine of the church (ecclesiology) is portrayed?
- A Wesleyan approach would test whether our theological reflection is:
 - revealed in Scripture
 - brought alive in personal experience
 - illumined by tradition
 - confirmed by reason
- What image or images of God and humanity are expressed in the case? What is the nature, power and limit of each? Where are these images of God and persons supported or confronted or challenged by scripture or church tradition? Where is (or what kind of) God (is) at work?
- Where (how) is the Holy Spirit at work?
- What is the relationship of God, Christ, and/or Spirit to culture? How do your assumptions about these relationships shape your expectations about what constitutes appropriate ministry in this situation?
- What is the "lived theology" of the situation? What story or stories are being lived out? What assumptions about God and humanity, good and evil, are reflected here?
- Identify the theological concepts operative in the situation, such as:

New Jerusalem/Kingdom	Indwelling	Creation	Conscience
Honesty	Sacrifice	Redemption	Sin
Grace	Faith	Peace	Servant/Service
Revelation	Church	Love	Justice
Covenant	Vocation	Ministry	Compassion
Freedom	Incarnation	Renewal	Discernment
Celebration	Prophecy	Obedience	Authority
Creator	Savior	Spirit	

Choose one of the concepts and pursue. What is it about this concept that energizes, confronts, criticizes, or confirms this situation?

- What does your theological reflection imply for your practice of ministry?