

SYLLABUS

Description

This course consists of an intensive examination of the Christian leader's spiritual, theological, moral, and professional formation. Students will interact with some major schools of thought as well as discover relevant models for personal and professional growth today. A major aspect of the course will be the student's development of a personal philosophy/theology of ministerial growth.

Objectives

The degree of Doctor in the Church presupposes certain attainments and qualifications. The attainments are those of completing a rigorous course of studies including reflection, interaction and communication. In the Providence Doctor of Ministry program these attainments are achieved and measured in the various modules to this point and in the successful completion of a doctoral project. The qualifications include the ability of the degree holder to take full responsibility for his or her personal and professional growth. The objectives of the Personal Development Module are designed with this particular qualification in view.

1. Students will reflect on the nature of ministry as it has been reflected in past and present practice.
2. Students will think clearly about the future in terms of ministry and how they will adjust their present practices in light of that future.
3. Students will interact with faculty, peers, and other professionals on how to continue to develop personally and professionally.
4. Students will develop a philosophy/theology of personal and professional development.
5. Students will consider study and the care of souls as a summary of a biblically based pastoral theology.

Pre-Module work

Please make sure you read these five books. The usefulness of this module for other students depends on your reading and your reflection, as the usefulness for you depends on their reading and reflection. The course depends a good deal on what students bring. (Texts available at the Providence Bookstore: 433-7110 or 1-800-668-7768; email: bookstore@prov.ca.)

Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, Eerdmans, 1963. A classic on the theology of ministry from a truly "Barthian" perspective.

William Willimon, *Calling and Character*, Abingdon, 1999. Moral development is an area sometimes neglected in pastoral ministry. Willimon addresses this vital topic.

Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine*, Oxford, 1997. A post-modern look at the pre-modern church with the intent of reforming the way we discuss Christian theology and life.

D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God*, Zondervan, 1995. A discussion of pluralism and post-modernism and how it will affect ministry in the future.

J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, Crossway, 1990. A discussion of Puritan spirituality and ministry from an evangelical Anglican.

Writing

Write a five-page essay on each book discussing its strengths and weaknesses, and how the book points to needs in your personal and professional development. This essay will be discussed in class with other members of the module. It should be in a format that can be delivered orally to the class. Note that this is not a full-fledged book review but a personal response to the book and its impact on you, so do not spend too many words on summarizing it. Make a few personal notes as you read through the book, then go back and review the notes and write the essay. These essays should be in proper essay format: title page, double-spaced, #12 Times New Roman font, paragraphs not point form, etc.

Post-Course Paper (composed of three parts):

1. In light of our studies, write a philosophy/theology of personal and professional growth. This should include: A five-page statement of theology and philosophy of church (or parachurch) ministry. This should include two to three pages of *theology of church (or parachurch) ministry*, that is, Biblical teaching that summarizes how you understand the church and purpose of the church. Make sure you cover this. And then, still describing what you understand the Bible to teach, describe your role before God as his servant to your “congregation”. This should be quite specific in how you understand yourself before God, and quite specific in what you understand to be the purpose of the congregation. Biblically, how do you see being a “minister” and being “in ministry”. Do not simply quote a list of verses that all say right things. Within the variety of biblical ways to look at church and at ministry, there is a concept or cluster of concepts that in *your* mind already have priority, based on your understanding of God and the Bible and the church. Describe that focus. There is room in Scripture for different ways of viewing the church and viewing the minister, so there I am not looking for a particular right answer. I am looking for a clear answer with a biblical base. What is the purpose of church? What is the purpose of its minister? That’s a *theology* of ministry.

Also include two to three pages of *philosophy of church (or parachurch) ministry*. How do you yourself put your *theology* into *action*? How do you accomplish the purpose of the minister that you described in your theology of ministry? Every minister is unique. What do *you* actually do, to accomplish your ministry? This needs to reflect that you understand your own style of ministry, and you understand how this style accomplishes the purpose given in your *theology* of ministry.

Your own unique *philosophy* of ministry should fit your *theology* of ministry. For example, if your *theology* of ministry indicates that you think ministers should have considerable contact with the congregation, but your *philosophy* of ministry says you spend a lot of time in the private spiritual disciplines, there is a contradiction. For example, if your *theology* indicates that you believe the Holy Spirit leads the people, but your *philosophy* describes a carefully regulated church life, you probably have a contradiction. Philosophy should flow from theology.

The point here is not to find **the** right answer, even less to list **all** the right answers. A collection of nice answers means you don't yet know your own philosophy of ministry. Describe *your* answer. Both the *theology* and *philosophy* sections should end in brief to-the-point summary statements that give the core of your two to three pages. These core statements of 25 words or so should be able to function as compasses, as a real help on the days when you are quite confused and discouraged and cannot easily find your way.

2. A three-page self-analysis detailing personal strengths and weaknesses. Try to devote roughly equal space to both strengths and weaknesses. A detailed set of objectives for the next five years. This includes books to read, research to accomplish and any other items that will advance the student's personal and professional formation. Enhance your strengths rather than prop up your weaknesses. (Many students become unrealistic in these objectives, proposing much more than they can or should do - perhaps the main objective could be to have modest realistic objectives). Note, these objectives have to do with "personal development," not your future accomplishments in the next five years of ministry, but how you will see to your own formation and development.

3. A one-page summary of how the Doctor of Ministry modules as a whole have impacted your life and ministry.

Page limits are suggestive. Submit this all as one single paper, or as one document file if you are submitting it electronically, not four or five separate document files. Use Times New Roman 12 font, double-spaced. Use headings and subheadings as will be required in your dissertation. I can send you this as an email attachment, if you do not have other access to it. This assignment is due on June 30th.

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Tentative Course Schedule

Monday, May 2nd

Where Are We Today?

9 to Noon: Orientation to the course. Discussion of the previous D Min modules and their impact on the students. A discussion of pluralism and postmodernism and their impact on ministry using student reviews of Carson's *The Gagging of God* as a starting point. (Daryl Climenhaga)

The Ministry of Study

1 to 4 p.m.: A discussion of the minister and the study and of theological formation using Karl Barth's *Evangelical Theology* and the morning seminar as a basis for discussion. Reflections on ministry and growth: what is your greatest challenge or temptation? How do you combat this? What works? (Daryl Climenhaga)

Tuesday, May 3rd

9 to Noon: *The Future of Theology: A Discussion of the Future of Biblical and Systematic Theology*: A panel of resident faculty who will each present a short "view of the future" in their respective disciplines. (Daryl Climenhaga)

1 to 4 p.m.: Ellen Charry's *By the Renewing of Your Minds* will lead us into a discussion of the role of theology in past, present, and future ministry. (Daryl Climenhaga)

Wednesday, May 4th

The Minister and People

9 to Noon: *The Family and the Future: A Discussion with David Johnson (biblical perspectives, guests T.B.A. will offer present and future perspectives)*. (Al Thiessen.)

1 to 4 p.m.: Pastoral Wellness (physical, social, emotional, spiritual), stress and managing stress. How to say "no" – a Biblical warrant for leaving "ministry" undone. (Al Thiessen.)

Thursday, May 5th

The Ministry of Practice

9 to Noon: *The Future of Praxis: A Discussion of the Future of Missions, Counselling, and Christian Education*. Come with questions in these areas for a panel of resident faculty who will each present a short "view of the future" in their respective disciplines. (Al Thiessen)**

1 to 4 p.m.: Bringing the Bible to people and people to the Bible is the essence of pastoral ministry. This can also entail ethical dilemmas. William Willimon's *Calling and Character* brings these dilemmas into the open. Student papers and the morning seminar will form the basis of class discussion. A free-wheeling class discussion on ministry formation: what does and does not work? (Daryl Climenhaga)

Friday, May 7th

The Minister and Spirituality

9 to Noon: The Puritans had a strong sense of spirituality that has influenced most Protestant North American denominations. What can or should we recover from their views? Student papers will lead to a discussion of Packer's *A Quest for Godliness* and the theology of spirituality. (Daryl Climenhaga)

** Because of the schedule of the participants, this session will actually be held Tuesday afternoon, and we will pick up Tuesday afternoon's reflection on Charry's book on Thursday.