



**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY  
DEGREE PROGRAM**

**D.MIN. HANDBOOK**

# **DOCTOR OF MINISTRY HANDBOOK**

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# DOCTOR OF MINISTRY HANDBOOK

## I. Program Description

Western Theological Seminary (WTS) offers the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree to those who hold the Master of Divinity degree and who are currently engaged in ministry within the church. WTS has designed the D.Min. program for those who want to deepen their understanding and practice of ministry and who are committed to lifelong learning.

The D.Min. program at Western is distinguished by its emphasis on self-designed learning and consultation. Students have the flexibility to shape their program around their particular needs, while at the same time working in collaboration with their peers and supervisor. The self-designed learning encourages growth at four levels simultaneously: who they are as persons (emotional and psychological formation), who they are as children of God (spiritual and ecclesial formation), what they do (skills), and what they know (intellectual formation). The D.Min. program at WTS is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

## II. History of the Program

Established by the Reformed Church in America in 1866, WTS is an evangelical and ecumenical community of faith and learning in the Reformed tradition. In covenant with the Reformed Church in America, Western equips men and women for Christ-centered, biblically based, theologically integrated, culturally sensitive, mission-oriented Christian leadership.

The D.Min. program began in the fall of 1977 as a response to the growing need of ministers from various backgrounds and denominations for a sustained experience in continuing education. WTS chose to offer a D.Min. degree that was based primarily in a student's ministerial context, rather than in a school. WTS saw

this as an opportunity to revitalize both ministers and the communities that sent them.

### **III. Program Goals**

WTS has designed the D.Min. program to enhance the practice of ministry. The program encourages students: 1) to grow in their understanding of how God has called and formed them; 2) to integrate insights from the various scientific, social scientific, and theological disciplines into their ministry; 3) to discern the religious and cultural traditions of their life and ministry; 4) to increase their skill in ministry; 5) to grow in their capacity to work with others; 6) and to make a significant contribution to the practice of ministry.

### **IV. Program Overview**

The D.Min. program at WTS provides a carefully ordered sequence of supervised, on-campus seminars in which students engage each other around their spiritual formation, design five learning units, and prepare their final project. The D.Min. program focuses on students in their particular ministerial context. Each program is therefore unique and requires careful definition. Students assume responsibility for defining the focus of their program and designing their own learning. They also take the initiative in consulting with their peers, mentors, and supervisor. All the components of an individual program when taken together should demonstrate growth in the six areas specified as the goals of the D.Min. program at WTS. The following is an overview of the sequence and components of the program.

#### **A. Application**

Completion of Application Form [available at WTS website]

Statement of Call [cf. section V. A. below]

Statement of Focus [cf. section V. B. below]

Book Reviews

Letters of Recommendation

Transcripts

### **B. First Year Seminar**

Introducing the D.Min. program

Presenting the Spiritual Autobiography

Presenting a Critical Incident

Refining the Statement of Focus

Drafting Learning Units I and II

### **C. Second Year Seminar**

Presenting the Spiritual Autobiography

Reviewing the Statement of Focus, first year Learning Units

Presenting a Critical Incident

Drafting Learning Units III and IV

### **D. Project Seminar**

Presenting the Spiritual Autobiography

Drafting Learning Unit V

Drafting the Outline for the Project

### **E. Examination**

Submission of the Spiritual Autobiography

Critique of the Supervisor and the Faculty and Outside Readers

Public Presentation of the Project

## **V. Description of Program Components**

### **A. Statement of Call**

In D.Min program at Western Theological Seminary, we take seriously the fact that you are called by God to specific ministry setting. We will encourage you

throughout the program to probe more deeply the nature of this call and to come to a deeper awareness of what God is doing through you in your setting. As part of the application process we ask you to begin this process of reflection on your call. Guidelines for writing a statement of call are found in Appendix A.

### **B. Statement of Focus**

As part of their application to the program, WTS asks students to submit a concise statement of the focus for their program. This statement guides the work done throughout the D.Min. program and is regularly revised as students progress in their learning. The focus for the D.Min program emerges as students reflect on their own call to ministry and the call that has brought them to their particular ministry setting. Students are encouraged to probe the deeper issues in their own Christian formation and the deeper issues in the life of their ministry setting. The focus for the D.Min program is the point of intersection between what God is doing in the life of the student and in the life of the congregation. Guidelines for writing a statement of focus are found in Appendix B.

### **C. Spiritual Autobiography**

The spiritual autobiography is a main component of the D.Min. program at WTS. Before each of the three seminars, students are given instructions for writing a spiritual autobiography on a theme appropriate for that particular seminar. The spiritual autobiography deepens a student's awareness of the work of the Spirit in the world and builds collegiality in the seminar. The students present their spiritual autobiographies to their peers during each seminar and revise them in the light of their critique and that of their supervisor. They submit the final version of each of their spiritual autobiographies along with their project at the end of the program.

### **D. Critical Incident**

In preparation for the first two seminars, students present a critical incident from their ministry. Using analytical tools like a verbatim and a case study, students reflect on a pastoral conversation or encounter and demonstrate their ability to

identify what is emotionally, culturally, theologically, and ecclesially at issue. Sharing a critical incident helps students to enhance their competency as pastoral caregivers, to learn the importance of being vulnerable with their peers, and to integrate theology and the practice of ministry. Guidelines for writing a verbatim and a case study are found in Appendices C and D.

### **E. Seminars**

The D.Min. program at WTS offers three seminars in a three year sequence beginning the third Monday of May: the First Year Seminar (three weeks); the Second Year Seminar (three weeks); and the Project Seminar (two weeks). Each entering group of students supports one another throughout the three seminars. They read and critique each other's spiritual autobiographies and critical incidents; they help each other to devise and revise their learning units and projects. In addition to the work done on individual programs during each seminar, WTS will invite resource persons to engage current issues and developments in theological education.

**First Year Seminar.** In preparation for this seminar, students are assigned readings and asked to prepare a critical incident and spiritual autobiography. The time in this seminar is divided between the following: introducing the D.Min. program; reviewing the assigned readings; reviewing and rewriting the spiritual autobiographies; reviewing critical incidents; refining the focus of individual programs; devising two learning units; and discussion of critical issues.

**Second Year Seminar.** In preparation for this seminar, students are assigned readings and asked to prepare a critical incident and spiritual autobiography. The time in this seminar is divided between the following: reviewing and rewriting spiritual autobiographies; reviewing critical incidents; reviewing the progress on the first two learning units; devising two learning units; and considering in a preliminary way the fifth learning unit and the topic of the project; and discussion of critical issues.

**Project Seminar.** In preparation for this seminar, students prepare a spiritual autobiography. The time in this seminar is divided between the following: reviewing

spiritual autobiographies; devising a final learning unit; preparing together a project proposal; and discussions of critical issues.

### **F. Learning Units**

Having identified their particular field of learning in their Statement of Focus, students divide it into five units. These learning units are the building blocks of the program. In conjunction with their program supervisor (see section VII. D.) and their peers, students design two learning units during the First Year Seminar to be completed in the first year of the program and two during the Second Year Seminar to be completed in the second year of the program. A fifth unit will normally be designed during the Third Year Seminar and completed in the third year of the program, but may be done earlier at the discretion of the student and the student's Supervisor. Students together with their supervisors identify an appropriate mentor (see section VII. C.) for each learning unit among the faculty of WTS or adjunct faculty approved by the Director of the D.Min. program. They negotiate their learning unit proposals with their supervisor and mentor who both approve the design of the unit with their signature. The mentor approves the completion of the work with his or her signature. A learning unit normally takes three to four months to complete and represents a minimum of 168 hours of effort. WTS requires that one learning unit will focus on the biblical or theological foundation of a student's program. The design of a learning unit may be changed at anytime by mutual consent of the student and faculty mentor, with major changes reported to the supervisor. The guidelines for designing a learning unit are given in Appendix E. The criteria for evaluating the quality of the learning unit are given in Appendix F.

### **G. Project**

The project is the final stage of the D.Min. program. Because the subject of a project is determined by the context of ministry, its particular form will vary greatly. A project may resemble the form of a doctoral dissertation with multiple chapters or it may take other literary forms such as poetry, narrative, drama, handbook, curriculum, or sermons. Whatever form a project takes, its successful design and

completion should demonstrate that a student has met the six goals that WTS has set for the D.Min. program.

The design and completion of a project will proceed according to the following schedule:

- The first Monday of April before the Project Seminar. Students submit a project proposal of approximately five pages to their supervisor. A proposal includes: a working title or designation of the topic; a statement of the reason for doing the project; a description of the area of study (e.g. biblical, theological, ecclesial, environmental, homiletical et al.) and the main subdivisions within that area; the thesis of the project, i.e. a single sentence stating the main claim that will be defended, proven, or illumined; a description of the methods and procedures; a preliminary outline of the project; a preliminary bibliography.
- The week before the Project Seminar. The Supervisory Board that oversees the D.Min. program (see section VII. A.) meets to review the project proposals and gives an evaluation to students before the project seminar.
- The Project Seminar. Students present their project proposals to their peers for review and to their supervisors for approval. Any significant revisions of the project must be approved by the Supervisory Board.
- The first Monday of February in the year graduation is anticipated. Students present a draft of their project to their supervisor. A faculty reader and an outside reader are appointed by the Director on recommendation from the student and supervisor, and the project draft is submitted to them for their review. This draft and all succeeding ones are to conform in matters of style to the specifications given in Appendix G.
- The first Monday of March. The supervisor, faculty reader and outside reader offer a critique of the project in writing to the student.
- The first Monday of April. Having made the necessary additions or corrections, students present a second draft of the project to the supervisor, faculty reader and outside reader for their review. When satisfied with the

quality of the draft, they recommend to the Director that a date be set for the Public Presentation.

- The Public Presentation. The purpose of the public presentation is to share with faculty and other interested parties the contribution the project makes to the practice of ministry and welcome public dialogue about it. Two weeks prior to the public presentation, the student submits two copies of the project to the librarian to be made available for review by the faculty and others. In addition the student writes an abstract of the project that Beardslee Library forwards to the ATLA index to D.Min. theses, Research in Ministry. The librarian reserves the right to edit this abstract before submitting it to the ATLA.
- Based on their evaluations and the conversation at the public presentation, the supervisor, the faculty reader and the outside reader make one of three recommendations to the Supervisory Board: 1) to approve the project as presented and to recommend granting of the D.Min. degree [the degree can be granted with commendation if the project is of superior quality]; 2) to approve the project on the condition that minor corrections be made; 3) not to approve the project and to require specified further work before resubmission [not before six months and with the approval of the supervisor and the outside reader]. When the Supervisory Board has determined that the project is approved, the Director of the D.Min. program reports the completion of the degree to the faculty.
- Submission of Final Project. Three copies of the edited and approved project are presented to the Librarian for binding. The awarding of the degree is contingent on the submission of these copies. Paper must be 8 ½ x 11 inches, not larger or smaller (except for folded charts or maps), and of 20-pound, 100 percent cotton rag content. Both copies to be submitted to the library should be acid-free. Two of these copies will be added to the library collection. The library will bind these copies at student expense. The third unbound copy will be sent to the Theological Research Exchange Network for microfilming. Deposit in Beardslee Library is understood to give the library

- the right to reproduce a thesis. If a student wishes to publish a thesis commercially, special arrangements may be made with the library, so that rights of reproduction are maximized for all parties involved.
- Commencement and diploma. A student may elect to receive their diploma at the normal seminary commencement in mid-May, or special commencement exercises may take place in the student's place of ministry. Local arrangements are made in consultation with the student's supervisor and the Director of the D.Min. Commencement expenses are jointly shared by the seminary and the sponsoring agency of the student. Faculty and administration representatives will make every effort to be present, but the student must give at least three months notice for such commencement plans. A diploma is not given until all fees are paid.

## **VI. Program Admission Policies and Procedures**

### **A. Application**

To apply for admission to the D.Min. program, students supply the following material:

- A statement of focus for the program. Guidelines for writing a statement of focus are found in Appendix B.
- A completed Application Form, including a list of the applicant's experience as a church professional, noting places and dates of service together with information about the primary function or responsibilities for service in those positions.
- A Statement of Call. Guidelines for writing a statement of call are found in Appendix A.
- Review of three significant books.
- Letters of Recommendation, including one letter from the local congregation or appropriate institution/ judicatory and three letters from peers.
- Transcripts from the institutions granting the bachelor's and master's degrees

## **B. Admission**

The WTS faculty grants admission to the program upon the recommendation of the D.Min. Supervisory Board. Minimal requirements are:

- Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent from an accredited seminary.
- A minimum of three years in ministry after receiving the first professional degree (preference being given to persons with more than five years experience), and a minimum of one year in the present ministerial position.

## **C. Credit**

The D.Min. program totals 44 credit hours: three seminars, 12; five learning units, 20; and the project, 12.

WTS does not normally substitute credit for work completed prior to entry into the D.Min. program.

## **D. Tuition**

The tuition is determined each year by the Supervisory Board in light of the costs of the program. Tuition is billed annually with the option of a quarterly payment plan. If a student takes the quarterly plan, the first payment is due during the first week of the First Year Seminar. The entering student is required to consult with the Business Manager during the first week of the First Year Seminar regarding her/his financial plan.

In addition to tuition there is a \$750 continuation fee charged for each additional year in the program beyond four years and for each year in which a leave of absence is granted during earlier stages.

## **E. Termination Guidelines and Suspension**

First-year students must submit one fully completed learning unit by April 15 of the next calendar year, that is, prior to the second-year intensive. Those who fail to do so will be placed on probation. Students on probation must submit one fully completed learning unit by September 1 of the same calendar year.

Second-year students must submit three fully completed learning units by April 15 of the next calendar year, that is, prior to the third-year intensive. Those who fail to do so will be placed on probation. Students on probation must submit three fully completed learning units by September 1 of the same calendar year.

If students are not completing work in a timely manner, they must petition the D.Min. Committee for an extension of their program. The D.Min. Committee may request that the student withdraw from the program or recommend alternative action.

Students may complete their programs in not less than thirty months, and not more than five years after the First Year Seminar. A student who does not complete the D.Min. program within the required five years from entrance is automatically terminated. If there are extenuating circumstances, the student may petition the D.Min. Committee for an extension. This petition must be submitted in writing sixty days prior to the five-year deadline.

When the quality of the project does not conform to the guidelines, or the written portion of the project is unacceptable in any way, the supervisor may require a rewrite. If this does not produce adequate quality, the project may be referred to the Supervisory Board with the recommendation that the candidate be terminated.

Students are suspended for failure to pay annual tuition or the annual continuation fee in the fifth year of the program and beyond. A suspended student may not continue work in the program until such fees are paid.

## **F. Accommodations on Campus**

The faculty and staff of WTS will make every effort to accommodate students while they are guests on campus.

- Each student will be assigned a library carrel during the period of the seminars to facilitate concentrated use of resources and the convenient storage of materials. Library hours are scheduled to allow for maximum usage during periods of individual research.
- Computers are available in the library. They can be used for composition and for bibliographic research.

- Hope College housing is generally available for individuals at a reasonable rate. Requests should be made to Hope College Hospitality Services telephone: 616 392 7221. Cooking facilities are included in the on-campus housing. Ample local restaurants are within walking distance.
- Ample parking is available for those who have personal vehicles. Pick-up and departure from and to the Kent County International Airport in Grand Rapids can be arranged for a modest fee.
- A mailbox is provided for every student with a key deposit of \$5 to be refunded when the key is turned back to the receptionist. Address for mail: Western Theological Seminary, 101 East 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Holland, MI 49423.
- The telephone of WTS is (616) 392-8555 and messages for students can be left with the WTS receptionist. A pay phone is available in the commons kitchen.

## **VII. Program Administration and Supervision**

The faculty of WTS exercises policy supervision of the D.Min. program. The faculty delegates responsibility for implementing the program to the D.Min. Committee and the D.Min. Supervisory Board. The Director of the D.Min. Program functions as chairperson of the Committee and Board.

### **A. D.Min. Committee**

The D.Min. Committee's responsibilities include the following:

- recruitment;
- admissions;
- Implementation of policies regarding student status;
- review of all policies and procedures;
- monitoring the quality and standards in the program;
- maintaining relationships with adjunct supervisors, mentors and readers

## **B. D.Min. Supervisory Board**

The D.Min. Supervisory Board includes the members of the D.Min. Committee, other regular faculty serving as supervisors, and adjunct faculty supervisors. Its responsibilities include the following:

- supervision of students from the beginning of the program through its completion;
- approval of project proposals and completed projects;
- monitoring the quality and standards in the program.

## **C. D.Min. Director**

The D.Min. Director oversees the supervision and administration of the program. The Director is responsible for calling meetings, reviewing the work of mentors and supervisors, and maintaining, with the Committee and Supervisory Board, the integrity of the program at a level above the minimum standard set by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). The Director consults with the Dean of Journey: the seminary's Center for the Church's Learning, in developing and maintaining the curriculum for the D.Min. program.

## **D. Faculty**

The faculty support the D.Min. program by leading the seminars, mentoring students with their learning units, evaluating final projects and being available for conversation and consultation with students throughout the seminars.

The leadership of the seminars is the responsibility of the faculty of the seminary. The Academic Dean, in consultation with the Director of the D.Min. program, makes assignments for seminar leadership in the light of total faculty responsibility. Leading a D.Min. seminar is normally seen as the equivalent of teaching one course in the M.Div. program. The Director of the D.Min. program, in consultation with the D.Min. Committee may appoint adjunct faculty for leadership in the program as time and circumstances require.

The Director of the D.Min. program assigns faculty to mentor students in the completion of learning units and to evaluate completed projects. Faculty will be

selected because of their expertise and will be responsible for no more than three individual learning units or two learning units and one project evaluation per year. The assignments are made early in the First Year and Second Year Seminars through consultation with faculty and students. Changes in such assignments can be made only very early in the process and only through the office of the Director of the D.Min.

### **E. Supervisors**

Supervisors normally assume responsibility for one incoming student a year. Supervisors are responsible for guiding students through the program, evaluating their programs in the light of the goals of the D.Min. program, and bringing an update of their students' progress to each meeting of the Supervisory Board. Students assume responsibility for consulting with their supervisor throughout the entire program.

### **F. Adjunct Faculty**

The D.Min. program at WTS uses adjunct faculty in two ways: 1) as teachers and lecturers in the seminars; 2) as supervisors; 3) as mentors of learning units; and 4) as outside readers. The Director of the D.Min. program is responsible to ensure that all adjunct faculty are fully cognizant of the procedures and goals of the D.Min. program and adequately oriented to the purposes, expectations, and standards of the ATS.

Adjunct faculty are kept informed of the general progress of students for whom they have specific responsibilities. They receive any copies of the minutes of meetings of the Committee and Supervisory Board that are circulated to the resident faculty. Their evaluations of the program are welcomed by the Director and the D.Min. Committee. Where possible, they are to be encouraged to visit the campus of the seminary and to participate in its life in appropriate ways, as well as to develop personal contact and acquaintance with the faculty and students.

### **G. Record Keeping**

Every student has a file in the office of the Registrar. This file contains the material submitted with the application to the program. In addition it contains the record of a student's progress in the program. Students assume responsibility for keeping a record of their progress. They give one copy of an approved learning unit to their mentor, one to their supervisor, and one to the office of the Registrar. They give one copy of their revised spiritual autobiographies each year to the office of the Director.

Because of the confidential nature of some of the students' files in the Director's office, they are only open to students' supervisors and the Director of the D.Min.

### **H. Accountability Team**

Students assemble a team in their ministry setting to support their D.Min work. The team consists of anywhere from three to five people. Students choose people who have the knowledge, expertise, and influence to both support and hold them accountable in their doctoral work. Students meet periodically with the team to review the focus of their program, progress on learning units and electives, and the significance of the learning for the ministry setting.

### **I. On-Site Visits**

Supervisors visit their students in their ministry context sometime during the course of the first year in the program. These on-site visits help a supervisor to gain first hand knowledge of a student's place of ministry; to convey to the student's constituents the importance of the program; to review a student's progress in the learning units and electives; to meet with the accountability team; and to make suggestions for enhancing a student's program based on observations made and reactions noted.

A brief written report is given to the D.Min. Director following the visit, who in turn makes an oral report to the Supervisory Board and to the faculty of WTS.

## **J. Worship**

Corporate worship is an important part of the D.Min. program and takes place daily during the time of the seminars. All faculty and staff are encouraged to join with the students for this daily worship. The worship committee coordinates this aspect of the program.

## **Appendix A**

### **Guidelines for Writing a Statement of Call**

In the D.Min. program at Western Theological Seminary, we take seriously the fact that you are called by God to a specific ministry setting. We will encourage you throughout the program to probe more deeply the nature of this call and to come to a deeper awareness of what God is doing through you in your setting. As part of the application process we ask you to begin this process of reflection on your call. Please read the following questions, take time to reflect on them, and put your reflections together in an essay to be submitted with your application.

- How have you experienced the presence of God in your life and ministry?
- What specifically do you feel God has called you to do and to be?
- What have been the most fulfilling aspects of your ministry?
- What have been the disappointments, frustrations, and difficult passages of your ministry?
- What do you hope to learn from this D.Min. program and what do you anticipate will be your contribution to the church at large?
- Name three mentors and explain how they have influenced you and shaped your ministry.

## Appendix B

### Guidelines for Writing a Statement of Focus

As part of their application to the program, WTS asks students to submit a concise statement of the focus for their program. This statement guides the work done throughout the D.Min. program and is regularly revised as students progress in their learning. The D.Min program at WTS is student-centered. With supervision, students determine the focus of their programs. The focus for the D.Min program emerges as students reflect on their own call to ministry and the call that has brought them to their particular ministry setting. Students are encouraged to probe the deeper issues in their own Christian formation and the deeper issues in the life of their ministry setting. The focus for the D.Min program is the point of intersection between what God is doing in the life of the student and in the life of the congregation. The statement of focus begins: In my D.Min. program, I want to.... In this statement, a student should:

- reflect on the issues that have marked their spiritual formation. All of us have been formed in particular contexts (family, church, and culture) and in particular ways. What gifts, themes, concerns, joys, or hurts are hallmarks of a student's life?
- reflect on the issues that have marked the ministry to which they have been called. Like an individual, a particular ministry has a history. A ministry has been formed in particular ways. What gifts, themes, concerns, joys, or hurts are hallmarks of a student's ministry?
- identify the point of intersection between what God is doing in the life of the student and in the life of the congregation.
- identify the field of study. This field might be one of the traditional fields of theological learning, but more often in a D.Min. program the field is interdisciplinary.

## **Appendix C**

### **Guidelines for Writing a Verbatim**

#### **Introduction**

Anton Boisen is generally considered to be the founder of clinical pastoral education in North America. From the early 1950's, his primary concern was safeguarding theology (and theological language) in the counseling that pastors do. Boisen feared that theological language never touched the lives of people who were struggling with spiritual issues. He suggested that a person was a "living human document" and that pastors were exegetes. His metaphor provided a new paradigm for pastoral education. Boisen believed that one's exegetical skills could be used to "interpret" people. Exegeting the lives and relationships of people through practical engagement, became a way of integrating the theological, religious, and spiritual with the emotional and the psychological in the lives of people.

The verbatim, first used by Cabot and Dicks (a psychiatrist-pastor team) in New England in the 1950's, draws upon Boisen's metaphor of "the living human document" and is the primary tool in the education of pastoral caregivers, whether in a hospital setting or in a congregational context.

#### **Verbatim Outline**

A verbatim has three parts: 1) a selected portion of a pastoral conversation; 2) background of the conversation; 3) analysis of the conversation. Students should read through these instructions carefully in order to gain an impression of the procedure and the kinds of questions that they should ask themselves. The questions should be taken together to help students gain a critical mindset regarding the pastoral conversation. Not all the questions have to be answered point by point, and not all the questions apply to every pastoral conversations.

#### **Pastoral Conversation**

- Choose a conversation that was understood by you and the counselee to be a pastoral conversation. Take down a few notes about the

conversation shortly after it has occurred. While not a tape recording, your account of the conversation should be as accurate as possible. You should focus upon a portion of the conversation that felt awkward or that puzzled you in one way or another.

- If you choose to present a part of a conversation, provide a brief account of what happened before and after it.
- Take special notice of beginnings and endings of conversations, since people often give directional “hints” or offer important material at these times.
- Present no more than one page of dialogue and at least three pages of analysis (or as many pages as you need to process the conversation effectively).
- State why you chose this part of the conversation to be discussed and give it a title.
- Assign initials to yourself and to the counselee, for example, P = Pastor and C = Counselee and number the conversation sequentially.
- Leave a 3-inch margin to the left side of the page for notes.

### **Example**

C is a twenty-something female. Her husband decided to go back to school, which “forces” C to remain with her current employer, since they need the income. C and the pastor are well-known to one another. This verbatim, offered by Jay Adams, is entitled “Empathy.”

C I My situation is so different. I feel obligated to David to keep working, since I want him to be able to concentrate on school. I would never forgive myself if I quit my job, because he would have to reduce his class load in order to work, and I know he wouldn't get much out of school. But pastor I tell you, my job is impossible! [C continues to tell the pastor how she will never advance at her current employer due to her temporary status. She sees how other males are promoted around

her].....And to top it off, I get no encouragement in the work I am doing. I am losing my self-confidence; what shall I do?"

P 1 C, as you spoke, 1 Corinthians 10:13 came to mind: "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man." You are not the first one who grapples with this difficulty and you will not be tested beyond your abilities. God will be with you as you go to work. Your hope is in the Lord. Secondly, 1 Peter 3 speaks to you as well: You need to be careful that this difficulty does not lead to marital discord between you and David. You should have talked with David first and not prejudice how he may react. That way you would have given him a chance to act responsibly towards you. Lastly, you are working for the Lord, not your boss, even if he is unfair. Colossians 3:17 states: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

C 2 I too thought that I may be sinning with these thoughts. God has been good for us and maybe I need to learn to be thankful.

P 2 You have the promise of God that he will be with you. I remember well when I was at school and D, my wife, found herself in a similar position you are in. God taught us much during those years. Shall we pray that God's Spirit give you not only inner peace, but also peace at work?  
[Adapted from Jay Adams's *The Use of the Scriptures in Counseling*, (Eerdmans, 1975)].

### **Background**

- Identify the counselee(s) in a manner that protects his/her/their confidentiality.
- Provide basic demographic information, including: gender, age, ethnicity, a brief relational history (married, single, divorced, blended family, etc.), and role in the congregation.
- Describe the person/family with whom you had the conversation, including physical, emotional, and spiritual attributes.
- Describe the setting in which the conversation occurred, for example, a

living room, an office, a hospital bed, etc?

- Explain who initiated the pastoral conversation and the reasons that were offered for initiating it.
- Describe the nature of your relationship with this person or family and describe how you think they see you: friend, pastor, or a family member, etc.
- Describe how well you know this person or family and what is the level of trust that you have with them.
- Did you have prior knowledge of the person or family and how did you prepare yourself for the conversation?
- How did you feel (your affective process) prior to the conversation, during the conversation, and after the conversation?

### **Analysis of the Conversation**

- Describe the nature of the interaction: what you were trying to say to the person or family and they to you; what were the explicit and implicit messages given back and forth; and what was the interplay between your role and theirs in conversation?
- Describe how you might have responded differently.
- Identify the emotional and psychological themes or issues in this encounter and list five of the emotional and psychological elements of one theme you have identified.
- Identify the spiritual and religious issues that are either explicit or implicit in this encounter and list five of the spiritual or religious elements of one theme you have identified.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of your use of Scripture and suggest other Scriptural narratives, images, or themes that might shed light upon this encounter.

### **Analysis of the Counselee**

- Evaluate the emotional needs of the counselee. How does this

conversation relate to the crisis, trauma, or essential life issues faced by this person or family? What kind of help or new understanding was the counselee/family seeking? What kind of emotional “work” does this person or family need to do?

- Evaluate the spiritual needs of the counselee. What kind of spiritual “work” does this person or family need to do?
  - Awareness of the Holy
    - What is sacred to the individual/family?
    - How does this person/family relate to mystery?
  - Providence
    - Is there divine purpose to his/her/their life?
    - Is the person/family suspicious of Divine promises?
    - For this person/family, does reliance upon God imply loss of personal competence and independence?
  - Faith
    - Is the person’s/family’s attitude towards life affirming or negating?
    - Does the person/family experience his/her/their faith as enlarging or binding and restricting?
  - Grace or gratefulness
    - Can the counselee/family accept kindness, generosity, and acceptance?
  - Repentance
    - Does the person/family have an awareness of being an agent of the problems he/she/the family is facing?
    - Does counselee/family shoulder appropriate responsibility?
    - Is counselee/family able to experience remorse, regret, and sorrow?
  - Communion/Community
    - Does the counselee/family experience a sense of belonging?
    - Is the person/family embedded in a group or groups?

- Has the person/family met a personal Savior?
- Sense of vocation
  - Does the counselee/family have a sense of purpose and dedication and of personal competence? [Taken from Paul Pruyser's *The Minister as Diagnostician: Personal problems in pastoral perspective* (Westminster Press: Philadelphia, 1976)].
- Describe how the person's/family's emotional process interacts with their spiritual or religious experience.
- How does this person's or family's faith assist or obstruct them in doing the emotional work they have to do?
- How does this person's or family's emotional state assist or obstruct them in doing the spiritual work they have to do?
- Does additional information about this person or family (relational, psycho-social, medical, religious) add to the insight that can be gained from this verbatim?
- Regarding follow-up: Have you acted upon this assessment? What referral sources have you identified in your community that may be of assistance to this person or family?
- What was left unspoken by the counselee?

### **Analysis of the pastor**

- Discuss your view of yourself in this encounter first in terms of your role, your agenda, and the dynamics as they unfolded.
- What were your goals in this conversation, and how did you meet them?
- Regarding your responses: How did they open-up or shut down the patient/parishioner's self-disclosure or self-exploration? Did you impose your agenda on the patient/parishioner, or did you "follow" them in the direction that their agenda led? Did your response minister to the needs of this person or family (i.e. the needs identified in the section above)?

- Were their transference or countertransference issues that were important?
- Regarding your feelings: Where do you think your own affective process became part of the counseling? How well did you monitor your own feelings towards this person/family? Name some of the feelings you had towards this person/family. Can you trace the origins of the feelings you experienced?
- Was the use of Scripture, prayer, or other resources appropriate?
- How did this pastoral conversation help you grow as a caregiver? What did you learn in it about a person's being, a family's system, or the counseling process? What challenged you theologically? What challenged you in the affective realm, that is, realm of language or feelings?
- How would you evaluate your presence in this pastoral encounter?

## Appendix D

### Guidelines for Writing a Case Study

James D. Glasse was president of Lancaster Seminary. He originally developed the case conference method, and it has proven to be a very useful tool for developing more effective ministerial practice. The following is taken from his manual "Getting Down to Cases."

The purpose of this brief manual is to prepare you to participate in a case conference. The case conference is based on case material prepared by the pastors who participate. The structure provides a method for getting hold of issues in practice. The cases provide both the content and context of the discussion. We do not discuss "subjects" or "issues" or "problems" in the abstract. We deal with "cases" - - accounts of events in ministerial practice.

An event is, by definition, an occasion in which the professional acts as a responsible agent. The professional is not an observer at some event, but a participant in the event. A report of this event, then, will reveal the character of the professional's involvement, commitment, and competence.

When we meet for the case conference we will "get down to cases." But first we must have the cases. It is your job to write one and bring it with you to the case conference.

#### 1. How to Prepare a Case for the Conference

- A. THE CASE MUST BE WRITTEN: A "case" is a written report of an event in which you were involved as a minister with some responsibility for the outcome. The purpose of writing the case is to produce a record of the event.
- B. THE WRITTEN CASE MUST BE BRIEF: The case report is to be written on *one side* of a single sheet of paper - - no longer. Part of the discipline is to learn what can be condensed into this limited space. Limitations of space require you to identify critical information. Number the lines for easier reference. (See sample cases.)

- C. THE CASE MUST HAVE FOUR PARTS: The four parts are to be clearly distinguished. They need not be equal in length. But each of the parts must be included or the case cannot be discussed at the conference.
1. background: enough information to set the event in context. What you had in mind, what you hoped/feared would happen, when and how you became aware of/involved in the event, what pressures and person's precipitated and shaped the event.
  2. description: what happened and what you did. Report the event, including as much detail as possible in the limited space.
  3. analysis: identify issues and relationship, with special attention to changes and resistance to change. Try to answer the question: What's going on here?
  4. evaluation: your estimate of your own effectiveness in the event. Did you do what you set out to do? Did you function effectively? If so, why so? If not, why not? What factors or forces emerged which you did not anticipate? What questions might the group discuss that would be most helpful to you?
- D. CLARIFY THE QUESTION OF CONFIDENTIALITY: If you do not want to reveal the identity of persons and institution, use fictitious names and addresses (Mrs. A., Mr. B., X Church, Y Town). If you reveal identity, but wish the information to be confidential in the group, write at the top: "CONFIDENTIAL: For seminar use only."

## 2. The Case Conference

Cases become the subject matter for tightly structured seminar sessions in which a) a *group* of ministers or seminary students assume clearly defined, b) *roles* for the discussion of a specific case according to a strict, c) *docket*.

- A. THE GROUP may vary in size from 3 to 12 persons. We prefer a group of 6 to 10, because of the strict limits of time. The objectives in using a group are: to help them discover the resources for professional self-education that exist in the group, to help them learn that they can learn from each other, and to help them grow in their ability to trust their colleagues to assist them in improving their

professional competence. Members of the group may vary widely in age, experience and ability. It does not seem to matter much whether they are similar in denomination, training, or professional status. In fact, one of the discoveries in every group is the “variety of gifts” in the group.

- B. Three clearly distinguished roles are played by members of the group. The “presenter” has written the case and has distributed it to members of the group in advance of the seminar. The “discussants” have received their codes in advance and are required to spend at least one hour in studying the case. The “leader” has consulted with the presenter, helped the presenter to write the case, and is responsible for the conduct of the case conference.
- C. The case conference follows a strict docket, which controls the time allowed for each part of the discussion, and allows for the assumption of appropriate roles by members of the group. The following description shows the time docketed, the roles played and the tasks of the group at each point in the discussion.

Time: 5 minutes                      Task: Clarification of Information

The group may ask the “presenter” questions of information. The “leader” firmly resists attempts of the group to begin analysis or evaluation. The point is to provide an occasion for members of the group, on the basis of their study of the case, to ask for additional information and clarification. One of the critical questions for the professional is to learn what needs to be known in order to do what has to be done. The part of the docket forces the group to discriminate between information that is interesting and information that is critical. The “leader” stops the questioning after five minutes and turns the group to its next task.

Time: 25 minutes                      Task: Analysis of Dynamics in Event

The “presenter” becomes time keepers for the group and cannot participate actively in the discussion. This is, of course, frustrating for the “presenter.” The “presenter” thinks of all sorts of things that should have been put in the case. The group wants to ask further questions. This is ruled out by the “leader” as the group concentrates on analysis. The main function of the “leader” is to guide the discussion, keeping the

group from jumping too quickly to evaluation, and forcing them to clarify their understanding of the dynamics of the event. A helpful technique we call “unfolding the event”: a quick recapitulation of the “description” after clarifying the important background factors. The task of the “discussants” at this point is to clarify the issues, identify turning points and critical factors, and to lay the foundation for serious evaluation. At the end of 25 minutes it is the task of the “presenter” to call “time” and the “leader” turns the group to evaluation.

Time: 10 minutes                      Task: Evaluation of Performance

The “leader” now presses the “discussants” to make professional evaluation of the practice of the “presenter.” The evaluation has two parts. The first task is to evaluate professional competence. The basic questions are: Did the “presenter” do what she set out to do? How well was it done? What, if anything, could have been done that would have made any difference? If the “presenter” offered any self-evaluation in the written case, we begin with this self-evaluation. This forces a person to clarify her objectives, and in writing future cases, to state them. If the “presenter” doesn’t know what she set out to do, she will never know what has been accomplished! The second task is to assess theological adequacy. The critical questions are: Was this worth doing, or was it worth all the time and effort it took to do it? At this point theological norms, historical traditions, social needs, etc., become critical. What is at stake is the adequacy of the action in relation to the nature of the church, the meaning of ministry, the hierarchy of needs and values of persons and society. The group might decide that the “presenter” did a beautiful job, accomplishing the intended goal, but that the task was not necessary, or valid, or worth the time and effort it took. Here the conflicting demands on the clergyperson are sorted out, a person’s priorities are called into question or confirmed and the group seeks to help the “presenter” clarify the nature of her professional commitment. The “presenter” again performs her task as a timekeeper and calls the group to the next item on the docket.

Time: 10 minutes                      Task: Reflection and Reaction by Presenter

The “presenter” now has opportunity to feedback to the group and to respond to their discussion. I suggest the following questions: At what points was the analysis and evaluation of the group most helpful? What has the group still failed to see and understand? What questions would he like the group to address if it had more time?

Time: 10 Minute Break Before the Next Class

The “leader” declares the session adjourned. If the group is discussing several cases at the case conference, the “leader” will call them back together at the end of the break, introduce the next “presenter,” and begin the discussion of another case according to the docket. Thus, in a one-hour period, concentrating on a one-page case, a group of them 3 to 12 ministers address an event in professional practice under this form of the case method.

### **3. What Makes a Good Case?**

Writing a good case is not easy. Very few pastors can do it the first time they try, but almost all can learn quickly. The following elements tend to make a good case for a group of pastors to discuss in a case conference.

- A. Clearly stated objectives. If a person does not know what he was trying to do, he will never know whether or not it was accomplished. And if some performance goals are not projected, there is not basis for evaluating effectiveness. Some pastors find it hard to state their goals and objectives, partly because they sound so puny. But the alternative is to go with global goals, which are no help at all. The case forces the writer to identify professional objectives. The person must either state them, or admit that there were not any objectives in this case.
- B. A point of decision between alternatives. Decision-making is the heart of professional practice. A case in which there is no “turning point” is not very useful. We are trying to get at the dynamics of parish practice, using professional models as a guide. The characteristic of a “professional event” is one in which a decision is required. A case which does not focus on a decision-action-event may be an interesting account of an occasion, but it is not a description of an event - - and therefore is not a good case.

- C. Sufficient critical information. Many cases include irrelevant or unimportant data - - even when the pastor is allowed only one page on which to write the case! Part of the discipline in case-writing is to distinguish the important from the merely interesting. A case may neglect to report that the woman was crying when she came into the study, or that the pastor was scared to death, or that the vote in the official board, reported as a “crushing defeat” for the pastor, was really 5 to 4! By compressing the case into one page, the pastor is encouraged to separate out irrelevant data. This , in itself, is a useful discipline - - another way in which case-writing is its own record.
- D. An event in which several options were presented. The purpose of a case is not to prove a point or illustrate an ideal solution to a problem. The purpose is to picture the event “in motion,” as it happened, complete with the perceptions and reactions of the pastor. Seldom does a case conference agree on the right solution, but in a fruitful discussion of a well-written case the alternatives can be identified and the nature of the decision clarified. Only when this can be done is significant analysis and evaluation possible.

#### **4. What Makes a Good Case Conference Group?**

It is hard to have a good case conference discussion without a good case, but a good group can get a lot out of a bad case if they are skillful. I will report some things I have discovered about the nature of case groups, and some of the analytical devices which seem to facilitate productive discussion.

We have already commented on the size of the group. We prefer a group of about 8, although from 3 to 15 is permissible. Using the strict docket as a point of departure, a group of more than 10 is often frustrated by the shortness of time. If only 25 minutes is allowed for analysis and there are 12 in the group, that means only about 2 minutes per person. And what preacher can say much in 2 minutes!

The composition of the group is relatively unimportant. The case method is a great leveler. What counts in the group is professional competence. It doesn't matter what the pastor's education, denomination, size of church. If the “presenter” can function well in the group. We have worked with groups that spanned the

generation gap, embraced the theological spectrum, run the denominational gamut, and included the whole range of geographical locations from ghetto to mountain outpost. After the first two cases, these differences disappear and the professional expertise begins to appear. The semi-literate country preacher points out to the pastor with the Ph.D. some things that are helpful. The young minister instructs the older minister and the high steeple pastor contributes helpful perspectives on rural realities. This is one reason why we are so enthusiastic about the case method as a strategy for building the Academy of Parish Clergy. It provides a truly professional basis upon which to establish collegial relationships, and it can support and develop these relationships.

It makes a difference to have the “presenter” present. Some pastors feel that the group can be more “objective” about a case written by someone who is not a member of the group. It is often necessary to use a “sample case” to get the group started, as you will see in the description of the workshop model that follows. In this way the group has an opportunity to experience the difference it makes to have the “presenter” present. The first thing they realize is that their basic source of information is mission. They cannot ask the “presenter” for additional information. And, at the end, they get no feedback from the person whose case they have been discussing.

Then, when they turn to cases written by members of the group, they begin to see the difference. The person who has written the case is present during the discussion. What they are saying is being heard by the “presenter” so she can profit from their professional judgment. The group begins to feel that they are contributing something to her. It gives a sense of reality and importance to the proceedings. And the docket gives the “presenter” the last word. The “presenter” will evaluate the evaluators!

Evidently some pastors remember those practice-preaching sessions in seminary on which the poor student-preacher is cut to ribbons by both professor and students. They fear the repetition of that kind of experience. What they discover in the case conference is that they have become pastors. They can deal professionally with their peers. There are no outside experts present, no professor to grade them.

There is no competition, no need to “pass.” A kind of “pastoral care” is present. And they tend to lose their concern to be “objective” as they see they are dealing with each other.

Since we are trying to help pastors toward autonomy, the most important characteristic of the group is their willingness to assume responsibility for themselves. We will not normally work with a group that does not intend to become self-sustaining. Therefore, we move a group into leadership roles as quickly as possible. After leading the group myself, through from 3 to 6 cases, the group can run itself. In fact, we have developed a concentrated 24-hour workshop in which I can train a group to start their own case conference groups.

### **5. What Methods Help the Group Develop Skill in Discussion?**

Five general patterns emerge as the group becomes more skillful in discussing cases.

- A. The resources in the group begin to emerge. One pastor becomes the “resident expert” on money matters, another on youth problems, another on liturgical forms, and another on organization and management. Personal styles also emerge. One person communicates by asking sharp questions, another provides the humor that keeps the discussion moving, another has theories about things and can conceptualize helpfully.
- B. Categories and concepts emerge that help the group in analyzing and evaluating the case. Each group must attack this problem for itself. Pastors have not learned a common language to use in professional discussion. For instance, it takes awhile for the denominational lingo to surface and submerge again, and we have a need in the profession for functional concepts that illuminate pastoral events. We have discovered some in our work with case conference and will report them in the next section.
- C. Strategies for getting into cases and the issues begin to emerge. We have mentioned “unfolding the event.” This is a simple move by which a member of the group tries to restate the event in his own words. The purpose is to open up the dynamics of the event, to show the turning points.

Another device is to measure the degree of freedom the pastor has in the situation. Did she choose to participate in this event? Was she free not to get involved? Was she caught, trapped, or otherwise surprised by the event? Cases can be categorized on a scale from active to passive at this point. It makes a difference whether the event was a crisis in which the pastor is caught or a program which the pastor had planned.

It is also helpful to make explicit the “projective” quality of the case method. Pastors will identify with participants in the event. They will tend to “take sides” for or against the pastor in the case. This is a factor which the discussion leader will use to help members of the group see themselves more clearly. If a member of the group keeps referring to a particular person or action in the case it is often an indication that he is “seeing himself” in the case at that point.

Revealing language in the written case provides a clue to the issues and dynamics. When the pastor reports that she was “surprised” to “angry” her feelings are showing. When the language of polarization appears, (I-them, we-they) there is another clue to follow.

As the group become experienced in the method, and familiar with the special resources and skills in the group, methods begin to be used self-consciously by the group. A member of the group may say: “let’s unfold the event.” This is a sign that she has learned to use that method self-consciously.

D. Theological method begins to develop. This is, of course, a primary interest. We want to develop the case method as a discipline for “doing theology” in the parish. We find pastors begin first to use the “doctrine of the ministry” as a theological category. “Who does this fellow think he is, doing a thing like that,” becomes “What concept of ministry does he have?” Next, notions of the church become functional. “She has a curious idea of what the church is,” becomes “She seems to be saying she believes in the priesthood of believers, but she doesn’t act like it.”

In the evaluation of the case, after trying to measure professional competence, we press for questions of theological adequacy. At this point the

leader has the hardest job. The leader must press, finally, the question: how is God at work in this case? Pastors who were at first embarrassed by this question, begin to address it. After all, the purpose of the case method is not just to analyze psychologically and sociologically, but also theologically. In the end we must ask: what does this say about people before God?

- E. The group begins to develop its own style of work. One of the first signs that the group has begun to function professionally is when they decide to change the docket. We begin with a very strict discipline of the docket, stopping each period abruptly and moving decisively to the next. But once the group has been through a number of cases they begin to sense when they have about completed the analysis, and someone suggests that we move to evaluation. Or, on the other hand, when the analysis is not really completed in the allotted time, the group may decide to extend the docket and take some more time for analysis before moving to evaluation.

Pastors respond very readily to a direct and disciplined approach. Usually before the second case has been discussed some member will intervene during the analysis with the comment: "I guess this is not really analysis, but evaluation." Our strategy is to say: "go ahead and try, I'll let you know if it is appropriate." In this way the group becomes aware of the differences between analysis and evaluation. And within the evaluation, to distinguish between professional and theological norms.

Most ministers respond readily to the opportunity to relate professionally to their colleagues. They catch on quickly to the disciplines of the method, and begin to develop their own. By the time members of the group begin to assume the "leader" role, they are well on their way to professional autonomy. They are also beginning to believe in themselves and to respect their work.

## **6. Some Other Uses for the Method**

Pastors who have been introduced to the case method in groups of ministers report that they find the method useful in a variety of ways in their local parishes. One pastor has used it with study groups wrestling with ethical issues. Members of

the group are asked to write up events in which they faced moral decision. These cases are used as a basis for group discussions. Another pastor has used the method to train teachers for the church school. One pastor has used it in marriage counseling. She asks a couple having trouble to write up an event in which they both participated. They each write their own case and then compare cases. She finds the method helps them to see some of the sources of their differences.

These kinds of reports encourage us about the possibility of new and different uses of the method. They also illustrate the essentially “neutral” quality of the method. No one is asked to report anything he does not want to reveal. In writing the case, the writer evaluates himself according to his own criteria. There is no right or wrong thing to report, no good or bad way to act. The method, therefore, provides a useful medium of communication for a group which wonders about the degree of trust and acceptance between the members, and puts levels of personal trust or high levels of professional competence. It is, therefore, a good method for making experimental moves into new situations and establishing new relationships.

The case method will not solve all the problems of parish pastors. But we do believe it is a method by which they can design their parish practice for professional self-development.

1. Background: At the time of my installation as pastor of a large congregation, one of the unfinished items of business was the decision about whether to build a new parish hall. My predecessor, who was energetic, popular and informal in his decision-making process, had raised a small amount of money for the new structure and in a moment of enthusiasm had laid a foundation stone. At his request a retired civil engineer had prepared a set of plans for the construction of the parish hall. Neither the Church Board nor the congregation had actually made the decision to build a new parish hall, however. By the time of my arrival, the foundation stone, situated in a prominent location near the church building, was beginning to show signs of neglect and deterioration. Shortly after my arrival, the civil engineer proudly showed me the plans for what appeared to me to be a non-descript, inadequate facility.

2. Description: At my second meeting the Church Board, I raised the questions about the status of the proposed parish hall. My intention had been to ask those present to study the issue until the next meeting, but to my surprise the leading member of the Church Board moved to go forward, and the Church Board without real discussion voted to do so. I and most members present assumed that the motion included acceptance of the previously prepared plans. (At that time in that locality many churches were built without the services of an architect.)

The following day, the leading member phoned me to indicate that an important architectural firm was ready to serve our congregation free of charge because of his friendship with its manager. Although my sentiments lay on the side of the excellent architecture one could expect from the offer, I reminded him of the previous evening's decision. He replied that his motion had not included accepting the previously prepared plans.

When the offer of the architectural firm was broached with the civil engineer, it was clear that he was offended at the action of the Church Board. He saw the plans he had prepared at considerable effort to be a means of serving God and the church;

he also indicated some doubt concerning the structural soundness of some of the architectural firm's buildings.

3. Analysis: I was not able to fathom all the dynamics of the situation. Although the two leading persons were good friends, it was clear that each had personal reasons for his actions. It was also difficult to learn whether the Church Board was really in favor of the civil engineer's plans or of utilizing the services of the architect. They preferred to wait upon my leadership for making the decision.

4. Evaluation: I felt it was important to move past the potential conflicts inherent in the situation when I arrived, but would it have been better to wait longer before raising the issue at the Church Board meeting? Could I have learned more about differences of opinion concerning the utilization of an architectural firm's services? I was also not clear about whether my role was to allow the Church Board to accept my leadership or to help them work through their need to assert themselves in the presence of two strong leaders.

## Appendix E

### Guidelines for Designing Learning Units

In writing the statement of focus, students identify the field of learning. In doing so, they become aware of how the field is subdivided. These subdivisions are possible units for their program. These are the learning units. They consist of five parts:

- 1) Field of Learning. Students identify a specific area of learning and how it fits within larger field of learning of their program. This area of learning could correspond to a traditional discipline such as biblical studies or pastoral care, to a particular practice of ministry, to a cross-cultural experience, to an exercise in the spiritual disciplines, et al.
- 2) Goal. Students identify the specific goal of their learning. Students can use language such as: “I want to discover...; I want to know more about...; or I want to test an assumption concerning....
- 3) Strategy. Students identify the steps that they will follow in order to accomplish this learning.
- 4) Resources. Students identify what resources are available to complete successfully a learning unit. These resources may include “experts” or “consultants” or “learned societies” who are knowledgeable in the area of learning; written material; oral traditions; or travel to specific locations.
- 5) Evidence. Students identify what they will present to their supervisor to demonstrate that they have completed the learning unit? Evidence could be an essay, a series of sermons, a course design, poetry, graphic art et al. Whatever the form of evidence, it should include a reflection paper on what the student has learned in bringing the learning unit to completion.

## **Appendix F**

### **Criteria for Evaluation**

According to our Handbook, the D.Min. program has these goals: 1) to grow in their understanding of how God has called and formed them; 2) to integrate insights from the various scientific, social scientific, and theological disciplines into their ministry; 3) to discern the religious and cultural traditions of their life and ministry; 4) to increase their skill in ministry; 5) to grow in their capacity to work with others; 6) and to make a significant contribution to the practice of ministry.

The verbs used in these goals are significant: to grow; to integrate; to discern, to increase in skill; to make significant contributions. These verbs indicate that we expect learning to take place on many levels and that we expect learning to transform the student.

Transformation learning is a high calling, so high, in fact, that it can only be achieved in part. Given these goals and this high calling how do we evaluate the effectiveness of learning in our D.Min. program? How do we evaluate the quality of the learning units, electives, and project? I would like to offer these guidelines.

A transformational learning experience is at root personal and relational, and its success or failure depends on the quality of the relationships that are formed in the process of learning. Meaningful relationships involve self-awareness, openness, commitment, and expertise. In short they involve careful speaking and listening on the part of all. Our students enter into a number of different relationships in the course of our program: relationships with supervisors, mentors, peers, and experts with whom conversations take place mostly in the reading of their books. To evaluate their learning, we have to evaluate how meaningful these relationships are, that is to say, how carefully our students are speaking and listening.

Careful speaking and listening involves at least two things, and I would propose that we make these two things the main criteria in evaluating learning units, electives, and projects.

**First Criterion:** The quality of the experts with whom the student chooses to engage in conversation and the depth at which these experts are engaged.

Has the student chosen a representative number of the seminal thinkers in their field of study and do they understand what these people have to say?

**The Second Criterion:** Evidence that the student has integrated the learning into his or her life and ministry.

A student will demonstrate this in a number of ways:

a) integrated learning demonstrates itself in the energy that the student brings to the ministry setting. This energy demonstrates itself in a number of ways: a renewed sense of call; playfulness; self-confidence; and imaginative engagement with people and issues; forming new friendships; and hopefulness. Many students will attest that the D.Min program saved their ministry. They came to new knowledge and new relationships that revitalized them and helped them to continue on when they were contemplating leaving ministry.

b) integrated learning demonstrates itself in the originality or insightfulness of the student. The student does not just parrot information but applies it to his or her situation in such a way that something new is added.

c) integrated learning demonstrates itself in the student's capacity to discern the familial, cultural, and spiritual forces that are at play in his or her own life and in the life of the ministry setting. The student thus shows the ability to discern: his or her own process of formation; his or her own longings in any given situation; the roots of conflicts in the church; the integrity of those around him or her; the cogency of arguments that people make; and the resources of his or her theological tradition.

Of these two criteria, the first is the most tangible and thus perhaps the easiest to judge. Most fields have recognized experts and established methodologies. Supervisors, mentors, and outside readers can judge how significantly students have engaged these through conversations and papers. However, the second is not as intangible as it might seem. Peers, supervisors, mentors, outside readers, and on-site support committees all work with students

throughout the program. They can evaluate growth as students write and rewrite their spiritual autobiographies, learning units, and projects.

In the D.Min. program, supervisors and mentors sign off on a learning unit, elective, or project when both of the above criteria are met.

## Appendix G

### Guidelines for Style and Format

Students are required to follow the latest edition of Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* for all written submissions. In addition to the general guidelines found in Turabian, the written project shall comply with these specifics:

- A title page.
- Font: Times New Roman 12 on a letter quality printer.
- Margins: left, 1 ½ inches; right, 1 inch; top and bottom, 1 inch each.
- Spacing: Manuscripts must be double-spaced. Extended quotations, bibliographies, footnotes, etc., are to be single spaced with double-spacing between items.
- Pagination: All pages in the manuscript should be assigned numbers except the blank sheets at the front and rear. Preliminary pagination may be numbered with Roman numerals.
- Notes: Notes may be placed at the bottom of the page, at the end of chapters, or at the end of the entire manuscript.
- Proper paging order: Pages should appear in the following order: title page, abstract, table of contents, body, appendixes, footnotes, bibliography, curriculum vitae.
- The librarian is available for consultation on all matters related to the style of a project/thesis.

