



# **Bonhoeffer for the Contemporary Church: Living Wisdom for Faith & Ministry Today**

## **Doctor of Ministry Cohort**

**Faculty Mentor:** Rev. Sam Hamstra, Jr., PhD

**Length:** A 36-credit degree comprised of six in-person seminars over three years, plus completion and defense of the Doctor of Ministry project.

**Locations:** Western Theological Seminary, Holland, MI  
Carmelite Spiritual Center, Darien, IL (Chicagoland)  
Berlin, Germany

**Seminar Schedule:** January 26-30, 2026  
July 11-19, 2026 (give or take a day or two)  
Subsequent years will follow a similar pattern.

**Guest Instructors:** During our week-long seminars and virtually between seminars, we will engage with authors, scholars, and pastors who have contributed to the conversation about the contemporary significance of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The current roster of guest instructors includes:

- Rev. Dr. Mark Brocker, Lead Pastor of St. Andrews Lutheran Church (Beaverton, OR)
- Dr. Lori Brandt Hale, Professor of Religion for Augsburg University (Minneapolis, MN)
- Dr. Matthew D. Kirkpatrick, Lecturer in Christian Ethics and Doctrine, Wycliffe Hall, University of Oxford
- Dr. Michael Mawson, Maclaurin Goodfellow Chair of Theological and Religious Studies, University of Auckland (Auckland, New Zealand)
- Rev. Dr. Jennifer McBride, Associate Rector of Formation of All Saints' Episcopal Church (Atlanta, GA)
- Rev. Dr. Roger J. Newell, Professor Emeritus of Religion for George Fox University (Newberg, OR)

## **DMin Outcomes (generally)**

The DMin program at WTS is invested in helping students:

- grow in self-knowledge and a deeper understanding of how God has called and formed them.
- integrate insights from social sciences and theological disciplines into ministry leadership.
- discern the religious and cultural traditions of ministry contexts.
- increase skill in ministry leadership.
- expand capacity for working with others.
- contribute a pastorally sensitive and intellectually disciplined artifact to the church to enliven the practice of ministry.

## **Purpose of this Cohort**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one of the most significant Protestant theologians of the twentieth century and, in the twenty-first century North American context, one of the most popular among Protestant pastors and their congregations. His story and publications provide a critical lens for evaluating faith and ministry today while encouraging personal and congregational transformation for vibrant and sustained ministry.

This cohort encourages its members to engage with the life, sermons, writings, and ministry of Bonhoeffer, as well as with the growing community of Bonhoeffer scholars and Bonhoeffer-related ministries.

This cohort will ask two questions: Who is Dietrich Bonhoeffer? What message does this twentieth-century German Lutheran pastor-theologian have for 21st-century North American pastors?

Students will engage with the following primary documents:

*Discipleship: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 4*

*Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 5*

*Ethics: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 6*

*Letters and Papers from Prison: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 8*

*The Bonhoeffer Reader*, edited by Clifford J. Green and Michael P. DeJonge

Students will also read two biographies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, beginning with that of Christiane Tietz (*Theologian of Resistance: The Life and Thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*), followed by that of Eberhard Bethge (*Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*).

## **Framework:**

### Year One

The focus of our first year together will be the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. We will read two biographies and take a field trip to Berlin, Germany. We will also explore potential areas of study by engaging with *Bonhoeffer for the Church: An Introduction* by Matthew D. Kirkpatrick.

### Year Two

The focus of our second year together will be the ministry of Dietrich Bonhoeffer as an academic, pastor, and seminary director. We will read three primary documents: *Discipleship*, *Life Together*, and *Prayerbook of the Bible*. Simultaneously, cohort members will begin work on their thesis projects.

### Year Three

The focus of our third year together will be the writings produced during the latter years of Bonhoeffer's life: *Ethics* and *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Simultaneously, cohort members will continue working on their thesis projects.

## **The DMin Thesis Project**

The mentor and student will identify a project to be implemented within a student's context, allowing the student to pursue his/her research focus and questions. Projects are utilized to address key questions and research hypotheses. While many projects will employ qualitative research pathways, DMin research allows for a wide array of project possibilities.

A project typically takes the form of a doctoral thesis with multiple chapters, but it may resemble other literary forms such as poetry, drama, artwork, a handbook, a curriculum, or sermons. Whatever form the project takes, it should be done in consultation with the cohort mentor, and successful design and completion should demonstrate that a student has met the defined goals of the program.

Possible Areas of Research for Bonhoeffer Cohort Thesis Projects:

- Forming Pastors for a Church in Crisis Through the Wisdom and Practices of Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- Out of the Depths: Wisdom from One Person's Journey Through Tragedy
- With Courage and Humility: Bonhoeffer's Ethical Approach for Us Today
- The Work of the Pastor in Tumultuous Times
- The Ecumenical Movement Then and Now
- The Local Church as a Visible Community
- Discipleship: Then and Now

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## **Tuition, Costs, and Fees:**

Tuition rates remain fixed for the duration of the three-year program, with an additional cost if students need further time to complete their final projects.

This cohort will be subject to the 2025/2026 tuition rate, which will be set in February 2025. For current DMin tuition and fees please see the [WTS website](#).

Students are responsible for all travel, food, and lodging costs associated with attending the six required seminars.

**Projected Schedule:**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Location</b>
Launch <i>DM850</i>	Jan 26-30 2026	WTS
2 <sup>nd</sup> Seminar <i>DM851</i>	July 2026	Berlin, Germany
3 <sup>rd</sup> Seminar <i>DM860</i>	January 2027	WTS
4 <sup>th</sup> Seminar <i>DM861</i>	July 2027	Carmelite Spiritual Center Darien, IL
5 <sup>th</sup> Seminar <i>DM870</i>	January 2028	WTS
Final Seminar <i>DM871</i>	July 2028	Carmelite Spiritual Center Darien, IL
Commencement	April 2029	WTS

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More information on the Doctor of Ministry at WTS is available on our [website](#).

**Questions? Please contact the following:**

*Cohort information*

Rev. Dr. Sam Hamstra, Jr. – sam.hamstra.jr@gmail.com

*Application & Admission*

Drew Brown, Director of Admissions [drew.brown@westernsem.edu](mailto:drew.brown@westernsem.edu)

*DMin Program*

Kathy Ehmann, Program Administrator - [kathy.ehmann@westernsem.edu](mailto:kathy.ehmann@westernsem.edu)

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