

**\*\*REVISED\*\***

**Syllabus for DM 6462**  
**Doctor of Ministry Seminar II: The Minister as Biblical Interpreter**  
**Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary**  
**June 9-13, 2014**

“Beliefs about Death and Afterlife”

**Instructors:** Dr. Sue Garrett ([sgarrett@lpts.edu](mailto:sgarrett@lpts.edu))  
Rev. Dr. Jonathan E. Carroll ([pastor@firstpresbyterianowensboro.com](mailto:pastor@firstpresbyterianowensboro.com))

**DESCRIPTION:**

Seminar II challenges D.Min. students to increase their ability to bring interpretation of the Bible creatively to bear on their own pastoral identities and contexts as these have been further clarified and articulated in Seminar I. The focus of Seminar II in 2010 will be on beliefs about death and afterlife, in the biblical period and in the present. As a result of participation in this seminar, students should be able to:

1. Identify and summarize biblical passages pertinent to the topic of death and afterlife, and explain how views on these topics changed over the course of the biblical era and beyond;
2. Offer informed analysis of popular cultural phenomena related to death and afterlife (including, for example, near-death experiences; portrayals of “angels of death”; the entertainment media’s preoccupation with the “undead”);
3. Articulate personal beliefs about death and afterlife; and
4. Reflect on pastoral questions, issues, or crises related to death and afterlife in a manner that integrates practical reflection from Seminar One and biblical and theological reflection from the assigned readings.

**TEXTBOOKS:**

Read the works listed for each session with a critical eye, taking notes about interesting points or questions to aid our seminar discussions. Allot sufficient preparation time so that you may also carefully read the various biblical passages that are discussed in the course of the readings. You should be prepared to discuss all of the readings during the seminar. You and two or three other participants will be asked to lead a discussion during one of our sessions. The goal of your leadership will be to help others engage what you and they have learned from reading views of death and afterlife, including the origin or derivation of classic beliefs, and how such beliefs affect the shape of lives today.

Some of the readings will be available on CAMS or on the Internet. Books highly recommended for purchase:

1. Cone, James M. *The Spirituals and the Blues*. Orbis Books, 1992. We will focus on chapter 4, “God and Black Suffering,” and chapter 5, “The Meaning of Heaven in the Black Spirituals.”
2. Garrett, Susan R. *No Ordinary Angel: Celestial Spirits and Christian Claims about Jesus*. Yale University Press, 2008. Sections assigned for class will be available on CAMS. Parts of this book not covered in class may also be highly relevant to your work in ministry.
3. Long, Thomas G. *Accompany Them with Singing: The Christian Funeral*. Westminster John Knox, 2009.
4. Stringfellow, William. *Instead of Death*. Wipf & Stock, 2004. (Be sure to purchase the “new and expanded edition”: [http://www.amazon.com/Instead-Death-Expanded-William-Stringfellow/dp/1592448739/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1263262928&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Instead-Death-Expanded-William-Stringfellow/dp/1592448739/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1263262928&sr=8-1)). The author of this short book will amaze you with his insight and prescience (the book was first published in pamphlet form in 1963).
5. Thurman, Howard. *Deep River and The Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death*. Friends United Press, 1975. We will focus especially on the second essay. *\*\*Note: To find this book, search on the ISBN: 0913408204. If you search only on “Howard Thurman Deep River” you will come up with some very expensive out-of-print copies. But the book is in fact in print and you should be able to find it for \$12.00 or less.*
6. Zaleski, Carol. *The Life of the World to Come*. Oxford University Press, 1996. This book is out of print but used copies are available through Amazon. We have to use this book even though it is somewhat difficult to procure because there is nothing else like it. If you are unable to obtain a used copy let Dr. Garrett know and she will lend you one of her personal copies.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00	Worship
9:30	Plenary
12:00	Lunch Break
1:30 – 4:00	Plenary or Presentations (T-W-Th)

## ASSIGNMENTS:

1. All reading assignments listed in the schedule. Students should come to class with ample notes and questions for each reading so that they may actively contribute to discussion.
2. A 4-page paper on one of the readings (Cone chaps. 4-5 together with Thurman’s second essay; or Long; or Stringfellow; or Zaleski), jointly authored with one or more other students as assigned. The paper should summarize the main themes of the book or readings (2 pp.), and discuss a theme or chapter that the students found especially compelling (2 pp.). (The instructors will contact the students to inform them of which book they will be reviewing.) Students should be prepared to facilitate the discussion of the book on the assigned day.

3. Leadership of class discussion on the book summarized (see preceding). To be done in cooperation with the other students who summarized that book.
4. A 10-12 pp paper on a particular ministry situation or issue of practice in the student's ministerial context that is related to the topic of the seminar. Analysis of this situation or issue should draw on both practical reflection from Seminar One and biblical and theological reflection from the assigned readings. It should also include suggestions for a redemptive response or approach to the situation or issue at hand, and discuss briefly any ideas the student may have for possible project study questions prompted by this exercise. The topic for this paper should be cleared with the instructors **no later than May 2**; the completed paper should be submitted to the instructors (for posting on CAMS) **no later than May 30**. You should be prepared to make a 10-15 minute presentation, with handout (or other aid), and with discussion to follow.

### **ASSESSMENT:**

The four principal learning goals identified above in the description of the seminar are intended to guide all of our work. Contributions to classroom discussion, the two written assignments, and effectiveness in leadership of assigned sessions will provide evidence by which you and the instructors will assess your achievement of these goals. The course will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

### **SEMINARY POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY;**

All work you submit is expected to be yours. Any quotation of the words of others must be clearly indicated, and all direct indebtedness must be acknowledged by citation of author and source. To fail to do so constitutes plagiarism and will be grounds for failing the course.

### **SEMINARY POLICY ON INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:**

In speech and writing, avoid language that reinforces gender, racial, or ethnic stereotypes; that is pejorative; or that excludes part of the population. For example, avoid using male pronouns or such terms as “man” or “men” to refer to a group that includes females.

*The Academic Support Center can provide additional guidance on these policies if it is needed.*

### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

#### **Monday, June 9**

*Morning plenary session (9:30–12:00): “From Sheol to Resurrection: A Brief History of OT Belief (and Non-Belief) in the Afterlife”*

- Susan R. Garrett, *No Ordinary Angel*, pp. 186-96
- Susan R. Garrett, session #1 (Participants’ Handout and Leaders’ Guide), “Death and Afterlife” (published at ThePresbyterianLeader.com; available on CAMS)

*Afternoon plenary session (1:30–4:00): “New Testament Perspectives on Death, Afterlife, and the Coming Redemption”*

- 1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15; Luke 16:13-31; 20:27-39; John 5:28-29; Revelation 20
- Garrett, *No Ordinary Angel*, pp. 196-236
- Susan R. Garrett, session #2 and session #3 (Participants’ Handouts and Leaders’ Guides), “Death and Afterlife
- “Resurrection (Early Judaism and Christianity),” by George W. E. Nickelsburg, in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (available on CAMS)

*From 3:15-4:00, librarian Angela Morris will come in to give a presentation on new resources available through the library.*

## **Tuesday, June 10**

*Morning plenary session (9:30–12:00): “The Power of Death and the Christian Response”*

- William Stringfellow, *Instead of Death*. Be sure to read the Forward and Preface.
- James M. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues*. Read chapters 4 and 5.
- Howard Thurman, *Deep River and The Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death*. Read the second essay.

*Afternoon session (1:30–4:00): Student papers*

1. Jenny Schiller – Counseling clients who are facing death
2. Liz Peterson – Institutional Death (principalities & powers)

## **Wednesday, June 11**

*Morning plenary session (9:30–12:00): “Obsession with Death (and Denial of Death) in American Culture”*

- Excerpt from James Moorhead, *World Without End: American Mainstream Protestant Visions of the Last Things, 1880–1925* (on changing views of death, heaven, and hell in American society; available CAMS)
- “Spiritualism,” online: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritualism>
- Dale Allison, *Resurrecting Jesus: The Earliest Christian Tradition and Its Interpreters* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2005), 56-110. Available CAMS.

*Afternoon plenary session (1:30–4:00): Student papers*

3. Martin Han – Denial of death in a Korean congregation
4. Pete Jones – Death as Liberation (to/from what?)

## **Thursday, June 12**

*Morning plenary session (9:30–12:00): “Intimations of Immortality: Near-Death Experiences”*

- Visit the Web site [www.near-death.com](http://www.near-death.com). Spend at least an hour perusing; be sure to read some specific accounts of near-death experiences. If you are interested, you may also read one of the many near-death accounts published in book form, such as *Embraced by the Light*, by Betty J. Eadie (a classic in the genre); *90 Minutes in Heaven*, by Don Piper; or *My Descent into Death*, by Howard Storm. All are available used on Amazon for a low price.
- Carol Zaleski, *The Life of the World to Come*.

*Afternoon session (1:30–4:00): Student papers*

5. Wes Jamison – Sinners in the Hands of a Merciful God
6. Sophia Wong – Chinese Perspectives on Death and Funerals

**Friday, June 13**

*Morning plenary session (9:00–12:30): The Christian Funeral*

- Thomas G. Long, *Accompany Them with Singing: The Christian Funeral*
- *Student papers*
- 7. John Kalz – funerals and liturgy
- 8. Nicole McDonald – a good funeral sermon
- 9. Nancy Wood – Funeral for a non-believer