

DM 6461 Seminar I
Theology of Ministry—the Minister

Dates: January 8-12; 16-19

Location: Schlegel 120

Instructors: Dr. Dianne Reistroffer and Dr. Kilen Gray

Seminar Description

At the heart of our work together will be discussions of ministry situations—that is, your context for ministry as well as your sense of who you are in ministry, including your pastoral imagination and decision-making.

Seminar I addresses the following D.Min. Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO1: Students will demonstrate an advanced (comprehensive, appreciative, and critical) understanding and integration of ministry in relationship to several theological disciplines, including practical theology.

SLO3: Students will be able to identify areas of personal and vocational growth in spiritual awareness by the development of a personal-professional plan for self-care, spiritual nurture, and lifelong learning.

Electronic Technology Policy (in class)

This is a low-to-no technology course during class time. There will rarely, if ever, be a need for using laptops, tablets, phones, or any other technology that takes attention away from the classroom. Please turn off and stow phones so they are neither visible nor accessible.

For more information and research regarding the ways even the visible presence of a phone inhibits learning, see Sherry Turkle's *Reclaiming Conversation* (Penguin, 2015). You may bring an electronic book version of required reading and or use PowerPoint to present your ministry context.

For note taking, a paper notebook will be sufficient, if not better. See the research by Mueller, P. and Oppenheimer, D., "The Pen Is Mightier than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand over Laptop Note Taking," *Psychological Science*, vol. 25 no. 6 (June 2014): 1159-1168.

Assignments for Seminar I Preparation:

There are three types of assignments for preparation:

- 1) *Story in Ministry* (1 page, due December 29th)
We will distribute these to everyone soon after and ask you read one another's stories before January 8.
- 2) *Reading and Preparing to Lead a Discussion* (discussion questions)
- 3) *Reflection on Context* (brief presentation, artifact/props)

Story in Ministry

"Tell me about a time when..." That's how we often are invited to tell another person about what matters most to us.

For the seminar we want you to tell a story to the group. We want to hear a true story about a time in ministry, at your present location, when you were faced with a difficult challenge, when your expertise made a difference, when something unexpected happened. **We want to learn from your experience and expertise.**

Write the story down. Make it concise (under 600 words).

The experience can span months or be a particular pastoral conversation.

Include a description of those involved.

Be clear about the timeline; movement in time forwards and backwards.

Describe the tension related to a quest or a goal. What was at stake?

Identify a key moment or key moments.

Mark decision points.

Note whether there was resolution or partial resolution of the tension.

Tell whether there was some change in the characters as a result of the experience.

You will present your story to the seminar. Together, we will dig deeper to get a richer story that will add to our reflection on the practice of ministry. We will use a very particular method of interviewing, one based upon studies of professional expertise. (See also the description under Gladwell's *Blink* below for more information.) *The idea is not to critique your story or way of handling a situation, but instead, to learn from it!*

Please send the story to both Drs. Reistroffer and Gray by Dec. 29th at:

dreistroffer@lpts.edu

kgray@lpts.edu

Reading and Preparing to Lead a Discussion

Below are the required readings/viewings/listening for our seminar and we ask you to read/view them before Jan. 8th. (All are available for purchase online.) We have chosen a variety of works to support our seminar conversations and to feed and challenge our theological imaginations, especially in relation to practice.

Books:

Bass, Dorothy, Editor. *Practicing our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010. **Read Bass and then watch the film *Weapons of the Spirit* (if you can get access to it. If not we'll have it available in January). The hope is to identify where we see the practices illustrated or at work in the film? Keep notes for discussion.**

Bernadin, Cardinal Joseph. *The Gift of Peace: Personal Reflections*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 1997. **In his own words, Cardinal Bernadin's book was "an important part of [his] preparation for dying." With deep honesty, Bernadin recounts the traumatic events and emotions of his last three years. How does his account compare with Amy Plantinga Pauw's essay on the practice of "dying well" (in the Bass/Dykstra book)? Identify the spiritual disciplines that sustained him. How did Bernadin view suffering and how did he use suffering in his own ministry?**

Peterson, Eugene H. *The Pastor: A Memoir*. New York: HarperOne, 2011.
Questions to consider: How does Peterson's experience help clarify your own sense of who you are in ministry and the context in which you serve? What disciplines and practices sustain or energize your faith and vocation? What beliefs and convictions? How do the answers to these questions and your experiences affect your intuition and decision-making?

Gladwell, Malcolm. *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2005.
Gladwell's description of the role of experience in shaping intuition and judgment will be crucial to the seminar. We are assuming that all participants are coming to the seminar with expertise born of ministry experience. We believe we will all learn from your "stories in ministry" and we will explore these, assuming that you are the expert—somewhat like John Gottman is described in chapter one. [If you would like to read more on this, see Klein, Gary. *The Power of Intuition: How to Use Your Gut Feelings to Make Better Decisions at Work*. New York, Currency/Doubleday, 2003. (The Klein book is not required reading.)]

Howard Thurman: Essential Writings (Selected and Introduced by Luther E. Smith). Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2006.
Questions to consider: What differences and similarities do you see between Thurman "disciplines" and Bass/Dykstra "practices"? How do Thurman's understanding of "religious experience," "self," and "community" help you better understand your vocation and context for ministry?

Maathai, Wangari. *Replenishing the Earth: Spiritual Values for Healing Ourselves and the World*. New York: Doubleday, 2010.

Maathai won the 2004 Noble Peace Prize for her work in Kenya. Reflect on the role of “practice” and spirituality in the movement. What practice could make a difference in your context? (Hint: this is a way to begin to think about a DMin project you will eventually create.) For more on the movement:

<http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/wangari-maathai/biography>

Osmer, Richard R. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

During the second week of the seminar, we will review Osmer’s model of practical theological interpretation. The professors will present this model and discuss various research methods common to Doctor of Ministry projects in ministry (in practical theology). On the second to last day, we will work together in developing two hypothetical projects – one for a congregational context, another for a counseling context – based on the second half of the film, “Lion.”

Raboteau, Albert J. *A Sorrowful Joy*. Wipf & Stock reprint, 2012.

Reflect upon Raboteau’s story of the life of faith and Christian identity in light of your own. What does his experience of chrismation say about the role of rites and liturgy in ministry? In faith? [If you are curious, look at the Book of Tobit, in light of Patton’s Forward.]

Townsend, Loren. *Introduction to Pastoral Counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2009.

Those in the Pastoral Care and Counseling Track should read the entire book—you will be meeting with Dr. Townsend for a discussion of his ideas and the Track. Those in the other tracks can focus on Chapters 3 and 4 as they focus upon pastoral identity, critical not only for counseling situations but for more general ministry situations. For all, the discussion about the relationship between science and theology will be relevant to your D.Min. projects—they typically involve working with biblical/theological material as well as material from the human arts and sciences (e.g., psychology, education, sociology, literature, philosophy).

Article:

Dykstra, Craig. “A Way of Seeing,” *Christian Century* (April 8, 2008). Sent previously.

Films:

Weapons of the Spirit. DVD. Written and Directed by Pierre Sauvage. Chambon Foundation & Greenvalley Productions, 1990.

See comments under Bass. You may not be able to find this as it is currently out of print and they are about to issue a 25th anniversary edition. Your local library may have a copy. If you cannot see it before the Seminar, we will have it here to watch.

Lion. Netflix. Directed by Garth Davis and written screenplay by Luke Davies, based on Saroo Brierley's non-fiction book, *A Long Way Home*. The Weinstein Company, Screen Australia, See-Saw Films, Aquarius Films, and Sunstar, 2016.

This award-winning film chronicles the true story of Saroo Brierley whose life changed in 1986 after being separated from his adored elder brother, Guddu, and ending up more than a thousand miles from his home and family. As a five year old living for weeks on the streets of Calcutta (now Kolkata), Saroo was eventually brought to an orphanage where he was placed with an adoptive couple from Australia. When the film shifts to Saroo as a young adult, the story focuses on his unfolding quest to find his birth family. We will explore themes of identity, family, culture, and context and use the film's story to demonstrate the interviewing process we will use during the seminar. Additionally, we will build a model for a Doctor of Ministry project focusing on one of the themes of the film: the challenge of raising adopted children from another culture and ways the church can assist them and their parents as the children experience new identities, new families, and new contexts. We selected this topic because it would be applicable to all tracks in the Doctor of Ministry program.

Specific instructions to all participants. Please come prepared not only to participate in, but also to lead, a discussion with the group concerning any/all these readings. We will determine who leads which discussions when you arrive; and depending upon the final count of seminar participants, we may pair you up as discussion leaders. Keep preparation simple: we suggest creating a handful of good questions—possibly including the ones we raise above—for each work that will lead us to the heart of their core ideas.

Reflection on Context

We would like you to reflect upon your context for ministry, either your congregation or other institution or community in which your ministry takes place.

Reflect upon strengths and changes in your setting.

Strengths. What are the strengths of your situation? What practices of the community are particularly revealing: its uses of power and ways of making decisions, its rituals/patterns of inclusion and belonging, and/or its care for boundaries.

Change. Are there any significant changes in the *surrounding community* of the ministry setting (e.g., shifts in demographics, culture, economy, political structures)? Are there changes in the *life of the congregation* in such things as:

- 1) Changes in lives of the leaders of the organization, either clergy or others, such as family changes—birth, death, illness, marriages or divorces, changes in parents or children of key leaders,
- 2) Changes in personnel (hiring/firing/resignation of key leaders)
- 3) Rise or resolution of conflict
- 4) Restructuring in the organization or governance

(These examples are drawn from Friedman, *Generation to Generation*, Guilford, 1985, pp. 204-205)

In light of these reflections, be prepared to introduce and summarize your context to the seminar in 15-20 minutes. You may want to prepare a brief handout of key issues (no more than a page). Consider using other aids, such as photos, artwork, short video/audio clip of a story told, or a map of the neighborhood, to help us understand your situation more vividly. Practice your presentation—anything over 20 minutes will cut into your time to explore your ministry story.

Final Assignment

In two pages (600 words) address the following and send them to your advisor by February 1st (and copy your Seminar I and II professors and the DMin Office). This is designed, in part, to introduce yourself to your advisor. Ask your advisor for a meeting (in person or by phone) if you have not done so already.

- 1) Provide name, contact information, and identify which DMin track you are in.
- 2) What is your ministry context and role in it? How long have you been in it? (short paragraph)
- 3) What did you learn about your pastoral identity and/or pastoral wisdom through Seminar I? If not something new, was there a deepening or solidifying of what you knew? (paragraph or two)
- 4) What situation or issue in your context do you dream of addressing through your DMin program and project? If not sure, what are some general areas of interest or concern? (a page or so)
- 5) Are there other areas of professional development, education, or formation you hope to engage through the program or project? If so what are they?