

Syllabus: Theology of Ministry
July 15-19, 2024 RTS Charlotte
Dr. Gerrit Dawson

Course Description:

Refresh in *theology*, renew in *ministry*! Passion for Christ ignites passion for pastoring. Delving deep into the events of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ revives our own work in ministry more surely than any strategy or technique of practice. Readings and class discussion will concentrate on historic Christology expressed freshly through contemporary authors, each of which draws deeply from the ancient faith of the Church. From this Christological foundation, we will also consider how to a) articulate a renewed personal theology for ministry, b) resolve challenging issues in present ministry contexts, and c) develop practices that foster healthy ministers.

Course Content: The goal of the course is to refresh pastors in their personal ministry situations through engaging the ministry of Jesus. This engagement will occur through

- The rich reading and focused writing done prior to class.
- A lively, interactive week of deeply considering:
 - a) the person, prayer practice, ministry, and events of the life of Jesus Christ,
 - b) our Reformed theology of ministry and
 - c) how our personal theology of ministry grows faithfully from these roots.
- Student presentations and subsequent discussion which yield practical applications from the Gospel accounts of the prayers, ministry and events of Jesus Christ for specific ministry situations.
- The integrative paper after class that enables students to reflect on how their deepened theological understanding of ministry has resulted in improved practice.

Course Requirements:

Before Class:

1) **Complete the Assigned Reading.** The list is below. You will be asked to bring a statement of your reading to the first day of class. Note: Contact Dr. Dawson (gerrit@fpcbr.org) for a copy of *Lyrics for His Life: Praying the Psalms with Jesus* (available 2/18/24) and read it one day at a time, beginning at least 40 days before class.

2) Focus on the person and ministry of Jesus.

A) Choose three Gospel accounts of Jesus as he engaged in ministry and

B) Choose four to six Biblical passages related to each of your Gospel stories, such as names or titles for Jesus, OT prophecies, psalms, or verses from the epistles. You will be working with these stories and related passages in class and your paper.

3) Choose a challenging *ministry situation* which you would like to explore more deeply via this course. Write a paragraph describing what's involved. This could be a situation with a congregant, a ministry need in the congregation or community, an issue related to church direction, an analysis of a program, a conflict, or even the way weekly worship works. You choose!

4) *Integrate.* Consider how the Gospel stories you chose, with the related passages, might interact with your personal ministry situation. Jot down as many connections as possible, including questions you may not yet be able to answer. In so doing, *prepare to lead a 30-minute session in our class time* on your ministry situation and the ministry of Jesus.

Condensed Example of #'s 2-4

Gospel Story: Luke 7: 11-17 Jesus' Raises a Widow's Son.

Related Passages.

Isaiah 40: 31 They shall mount up with wings like eagles

John 11: 25 I am the Resurrection and the Life.

Ephesians 2: 5 He made us alive together with Christ

I Peter 1: 3 caused us to be born again...through the resurrection

Ministry Situation: A description of the challenges related to increasing numbers of single parent homes in the congregation and community.

Preliminary Integration: Ideas for how the church can foster the restoration of the relationship between children and parents. How does the body of Christ work as a family? How does the worshipping life of the congregation bind people together, refreshing not only individuals but families? How does Jesus return families to one another?

5) *Email* your Scripture selections, your ministry situation and your bullet-point list of possible connections to Dr. Dawson (gerrit@fpcbr.org) by June 24, 2024.

In Class:

In addition to presentation by the professor, students will engage discussion of readings and ministry situations. Also, each student will have opportunity to do further reflection and research on his Gospel stories, related passages and ministry situation *before leading a 30-minute presentation/discussion with the class*. If class size is large, these presentations may be done in pairs or groups.

Daily Schedule –

Monday, July 15, 2024 1:00PM – 6:00PM

Tuesday July 16 to Thursday, July 18 9:00AM – 5:00PM

Friday, July 19 9:00AM – 1:00PM

After Class:

Using the work you already did in preparation for class and the work you did during the class week, write a 5000-7000 word paper expressing your personal theology of ministry as it flows from the ministry of Jesus. Show how this theology is rooted in the ministry of Jesus as expressed through the Gospel stories and related passages you chose, as well as in the Christology from our readings. Show how your theology of ministry applies to specific ministry situations and what it leads you to do in the future. Integrate course reading and class discussion into your work. **Due by Reformation Day (October 31), 2024. Submit through Canvas.**

Reading List:

Allender, Dan *Leading with a Limp* (WaterBrook, 2008), 224pp

Burns, Bob, Tasha Chapman, Donald Guthrie. *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* (IVP: 2012). 313pp.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book Two, Chp XII—Bk. 3, chp I. 80pp. Any translation.

Cantalamessa, Raniero *Shepherds and Fishermen: Spiritual Exercises for Bishops, Priests and Religious* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2020), 280

Dawson, Gerrit. *Lyrics for His Life: Praying the Psalms with Jesus* (First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge, 2024). 220 pp. [Read daily for 42 days].

Contact gerrit@fpcbr.org for a copy. Or access online via print or podcast after 2/18/24 www.fpcbr.org.

Hansen, Collin and Jonathan Leeman, *Rediscover Church: Why the Body of Christ is Essential* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021), 120pp.

Mathis, David, *Workers for Your Joy: The Call of Christ on Christian Leaders* (Crossway, 2022), 352pp.

Reeves, Michael. *Authentic Ministry: Serving from the Heart* (Bridgend: Union Publishing, 2022), 122pp.

Root, Andrew. *The Pastor in a Secular Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019), 320pp.

Professor: The Rev. Dr Gerrit S. Dawson has served for 20 years as senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge, LA (EPC). He pursues the vision of pastor/theologian and is the author of *Jesus Ascended*, *The Blessing Life*, and *Raising Adam: Why Jesus Descended into Hell*. He writes frequently for *Desiringgod.org*. Dawson is married and the father of four children and six grandchildren.

Course Objectives Related to DMin* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Theology of Ministry

Professor: Gerrit Dawson

Campus: Charlotte

Date: July 15-19, 2024

DMin* Student Learning Outcomes <i>In order to measure the success of the DMin curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the DMin outcomes.</i>		Rubric ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	Mini-Justification
Biblical/Theological Foundations:	Significant knowledge of biblical and theological foundations for pastoral ministry. (This includes interaction with Biblical texts, as well as awareness of Reformed Theology.)	Strong	This course explores the very basis for ministry in and through the church, exploring Biblical models, as well as historic Reformed understanding of the ministry of Word and Sacrament.
Historical/Contemporary Practices:	Significant knowledge of historical and contemporary practices of pastoral ministry.	Strong	We will delve deep into Calvin and other historic sources, even as we interact with the best practices of Reformed ministry in post-Christian America.
Integration:	Ability to reflect upon and integrate theology and practice, as well as implementation in a contemporary pastoral setting.	Strong	Students will be exploring passages from Jesus' ministry and connecting Jesus' person and ministry practices to their own real, practical church situations.
Sanctification:	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids in the student's sanctification.	Strong	The course creates a community of loving interaction and authentic sharing while challenging us to consecrate ourselves more fully to the call of ministry.