

Ligonier Academy
Lake Mary, Florida

The Doctor of Ministry Degree Program

Course Syllabus

DM 808 Pastoral Care

July 2012

Mark E. Ross, Ph.D.
Professor of Systematic Theology
Erskine Theological Seminary
Columbia, South Carolina

Catalog Description: An in-depth examination of the minister's role as a shepherd and servant and the many facets of pastoral care involved in this calling. This examination will include discussion of topics such as counseling, home and hospital visitation, dealing with death and grief, and many others. Particular focus will be placed on problems and pitfalls such as counseling of members of the opposite sex. The purpose of this course is to provide the student with practical knowledge and wisdom in order that he may more effectively care for the flock God has entrusted to him.

Course Overview: This course will involve an exegetical, historical, and systematic-theological study of the pastoral office in the Christian church, especially as it concerns the pastoral care of the people of God. While preaching is a very important part of that care-giving, another course in the Ligonier Academy curriculum focuses entirely on that work. Emphasis will be placed first on seeing the work of pastoral care in connection with the nature of God, the condition of his people, the work of Christ in bringing us to God, and the work of the Holy Spirit in applying the work of Christ to us. A theology of the pastoral office in relation to the offices of Christ as prophet, priest, and king will be developed, and then applied to the common duties of pastors in caring for the people of God.

Required Reading:

1. David Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring: Ministry Without All the Answers*. IVP Books, 1994.

2. David Powlison, "Cure of Souls (and the Modern Psychotherapies)." Appendix 4, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context*. New Growth Press, 2010.
3. Andrew Purves, *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
4. Andrew Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.
5. David Wiersbe, *The Dynamics of Pastoral Care*. Baker Books, 2000.
6. Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church*. P&R Publishing, 2010.

Assignments

1. **Two short papers for classroom presentation.** Each of these papers will be worth 10 points of your final grade. They will be assessed simply on the degree of completion. It is expected that both of these papers will be incorporated into the final term paper of the course. These papers are due at the beginning of class on the first day, and may be submitted to prior to class.
 - a. Ten important Biblical passages on the pastor's calling and service shall be presented. For each passage chosen, prepare a single-spaced paragraph of six to 10 sentences on what this passage teaches us about a pastor's calling in caring for the people of God. This paper can be done without any prior reading of the assigned texts. Its purpose is to provide the baseline for our examination of the topic of pastoral care in historical and theological perspective. Be prepared to read from the paper in class.
 - b. A response paper to one of the five chapters in Purves' *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition* in which he examines a classical source on the pastoral office. The student and professor will agree on one of these sources for the student's presentation. Contact the professor by email as soon as possible to get your assigned classical source. In addition to reading and responding to Purves, it is expected that the student will consult the original source discussed in the chapter by Purves. You will then discuss this classical source in connection with the contemporary readings from Hansen, Wiersbe, and Zwieter. This paper should be 6-8 pages, with about half presenting the classical source and half discussing it in light of Scripture and the assigned readings in Hansen, Wiersbe, and Zwieter. Be prepared to read from this paper in class.
2. **A Term Paper.** This paper is to develop and present a theology of pastoral care (about 2/3 of the paper) and a plan for providing pastoral care in the ministry setting where the student serves. The theology portion of the paper should be developed

from the Scriptures and in dialogue with the assigned readings and the five classical sources identified by Purves. The paper should be exegetically grounded, historically and theologically informed, and locally applied. Generous support for the paper's argument should be provided from Scripture and the assigned readings and additional research. Scripture references should be given inline, not in footnotes. Quotations and references to the readings and other sources should be done by footnotes. The paper should be 15-20 pages in length, neither more nor less. Each paper should provide an annotated bibliography, including two or three sentences of comment on each of the sources cited that would provide a reader with a snapshot of the content and value of the source.

The due date for the term paper is December 1, 2012