

Elder Discernment and Training Course

Missio Dei Church | www.mdchurch.us

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Elder Discernment and Training Course was created for all Elder Nominees to go through so that all nominees and Elders of the church will have:

- A discernment process in which they can sense God's calling on their lives (includes their family)
- A thorough understanding of the drama of Scripture
- A clear understanding of what the Gospel is and the power of the Gospel (Romans 1:16)
- An understanding of who the church is, her relationship to Christ, and how it is to be organized so that God is glorified in His Church.
- An understanding of what is the "work" of an elder/pastor who is called to shepherd the church
- A clear trajectory in what is the mission of God on a global (global and local) level and how that missio Dei impacts Missio Dei Church

TEXTBOOKS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

The following list represents important resources for basic course content and assignments. These books, articles, mp3s, etc. will be provided for all Elder Nominees.

The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America. 6th ed. Lawrenceville: Committee for Christian Education & Publications, 2013. Print.

Carson, D.A. "What Is the Gospel?" Lecture. The Gospel Coalition. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield. *The Gospel Coalition*. 4 Oct. 2011. <http://thegospelcoalition.org/resources/entry/what_is_the_gospel>.

Chandler, Matt. "What Are Elders? The Village Church." *The Village Church*. The Village Church, 30 June 2013. <<http://www.thevillagechurch.net/sermon/what-are-elders/>>.

Driscoll, Mark. "Acts 29 Network: Flower Mound, TX." *Acts 29 Network: Flower Mound, TX*. 7 May 2006. <<http://www.acts29network.org/article/who-to-empower-and-who-to-avoid/>>.

Driscoll, Mark. "Ten Curious Questions." *Confessions of a Reformation Rev.: Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006. Print.

Higgins, Craig R. "Spiritual Formation and the Lord's Supper: Remembering, Receiving, Sharing." *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 24.3 (2006). *Spiritual Formation and the Lord's Supper: Remembering, Receiving, Sharing*. Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation. Web. <<http://www.ccef.org/product-download/spiritual-formation-and-lord-s-supperremembering-receiving-sharing>>.

Horton, Michael, prod. "White Horse Inn Blog." *WHI-1175 / God's Story vs. Our Stories*. White Horse Inn, Escondido, CA, 13 Oct. 2013. *White Horse Inn Blog RSS*. 13 Oct. 2013.

<<http://www.whitehorseinn.org/whiarchives/2013whi1175oct13.mp3>>.

Horton, Michael Scott. *Pilgrim Theology: Core Doctrines for Christian Disciples*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.

Keller, Tim. "The Missional Church." *Resources - Redeemer City to City*. Redeemer City to City, 11 Feb. 2011.

<http://redeemercitytocity.com/resources/library.jsp?Library_item_param=17>.

Keller, Tim. "Understanding Sin." *Resources - Redeemer City to City*. Redeemer City to City, 2 Feb. 2011.

<http://redeemercitytocity.com/resources/library.jsp?Library_item_param=550>.

Lane, Timothy S., and Paul David Tripp. *One Church's Story*. Glenside: The Journal of Biblical Counseling, Summer 2006. PDF.

Mahaney, C. J. *Humility: True Greatness*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2005. Print.

Mahaney, CJ. *The Pastor's Priorities: Watch Your Life and Doctrine*. PDF.

http://www.challies.com/sites/all/files/legacy/media/The_Pastors_Priorities.pdf

Martin, Paul W. *Pastors: Mentor Younger Men!* PDF.

Prior, David. "The Bible Speaks Today." *The Message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the Local Church*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1985. 150-64.

One of the Boys: The Sy Rogers Story. Dir. Sy Rogers. Perf. Sy Rogers. Worthy Creations, 2005. DVD.

Smallman, Stephen. *How Our Children Come to Faith*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006. Print.

Strauch, Alexander. *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*. Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 1995. Print.

Vandersteldt, Jeff. "Gospel Fluency." Tacoma. *We Are Soma*. 13 Feb. 2013. <<http://wearesoma.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Gospel-Fluency.mp3>>.

The Westminster Confession of Faith. Lawrenceville: Christian Education and Publications, 2013. Print.

COURSE SCHEDULE

UNIT 01 | CHARACTER FOR SERVICE

October 8

Content: Discuss expectations of the Elder Training and Discernment Process. Hand out his books and share how they are all interconnected.

Assignment: Read C.J. Mahaney's book Humility: True Greatness

October 15

Content: Discuss C.J. Mahaney's book Humility: True Greatness

Assignment: Listen to and take notes on D.A. Carson's lecture called "What is the Gospel?" Also read "Understanding Sin" by Tim Keller.

October 22

Content: Discuss D.A. Carson's lecture called "What is the Gospel?" and "Understanding Sin" by Tim Keller

Assignment: Listen to and take notes on Jeff Vandersteldt's "Gospel Fluency." See his additional PDF called "Gospel Fluency."

October 29

Content: Discuss Jeff Vandersteldt's "Gospel Fluency."

Assignment: Listen to and take notes on the 35-minute mp3 called, "God's Story vs. Our Story" from the White Horse Inn. Watch *One of the Boys: The Sy Rogers Story*. Write out your personal testimony

November 5

Content: Be prepared to discuss "God's Story vs. Our Story" from the White Horse Inn. Share your personal testimony and with Paul and then with the church in the upcoming weeks.

Assignment: The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America, chapter 8.

Write a one – two pages paper explaining what the opening statement of this chapter ("This office is one of dignity and usefulness") means. *Send Paul your assignment before the next meeting.

November 12

Content: Discuss chapter 8 of the PCA's BCO and assignment.

Assignment: Read "Why This Books is Needed" and chapter 1, "Pastoral Leadership" from Biblical Eldership. Answer the following questions for the final examination:

1. According to Paul's required qualifications for eldership, a prospective elder must have enough knowledge of the Bible to be able to refute false teachers (see Titus 1:5, 6, 9). Do you think you have enough knowledge of the Bible?

2. The question is posed in *Biblical Eldership*: Some people say, “You can’t expect laymen to raise their families, work all day, and shepherd a local church.” Strauch says, “How do working men shepherd the church yet maintain family life and employment? They do it by self-sacrifice, self-discipline, faith, perseverance, hard work, and the power of the Holy Spirit.”
3. Discuss this with your wife. As you together consider the weight of the ministry ahead, is your wife on board? What is it that needs to change in your household to make this possible? How will your wife be an encouragement to you?

November 19

Content: Discuss “Why This Books is Needed” and chapter 1, “Pastoral Leadership” from Biblical Eldership

Assignment: Read chapter 2, “Shared Leadership” from Biblical Eldership. Answer the following question for the final examination:

1. What is your understanding of *primus inter pares*, meaning “first among equals”?
2. What are the benefits of a plurality of elders? What are the difficulties of a plurality of elders?

November 26

Content: Discuss chapter 2, “Shared Leadership” from Biblical Eldership

Assignment: Read chapter 3, “Male Leadership” from Biblical Eldership. Answer the following questions for the final examination:

1. Someone voiced their objection to complementarianism to you and said that they think it is “unbiblical, prehistoric and just another ploy of men to dominate women.” How would you respond to them as an elder? Please make thorough use of Scripture to back up your answer.
2. Do you endorse a complementarianism position as found in the PCA’s Book of Church Order? Are there any areas that you would not agree to? If so, what are they?

December 3

Content: Discuss chapter 3, “Male Leadership” from Biblical Eldership

Assignment: Read chapter 4, “Qualified Leadership” from Biblical Eldership. Answer the following questions for the final examination:

1. Strauch quoted John MacArthur who said, “Biblical history demonstrates that people will seldom rise above the spiritual level of their leadership.” Assuming this is true and looking at **your** current spiritual level, what could we expect from person who is a part of *Missio Dei* Church?
2. What is it that would disqualify you for spiritual leadership?

December 10

Content: Discuss chapter 4, “Qualified Leadership” from Biblical Eldership.

Assignment: Read chapter 5, “Servant Leadership” from Biblical Eldership. Answer the following questions for the final examination:

1. “Conflict among elders is a serious, all-too-common problem. It is appalling how little regard some Christian leaders have for *the sacredness of the unity of the body of Christ* and how *quickly they will divide the body in order to get their own way.*” What does this have to do with servant leadership?

December 17

Content: Discuss chapter 5, “Servant Leadership” from Biblical Eldership

Assignment: Read chapter 6, “Bible-Based Leadership Structure” from Biblical Eldership. Answer the following questions for the final examination:

1. Why should church government matter to the average member of a church? What is a Bible-based leadership structure?
2. Strauch wrote, “Since the eldership represents a microcosm of the whole church, it provides a living model of loving relationships and servanthood for the whole body.” Practically speaking, what does it look like for elders to lead by being a “living model” for Missio Dei Church?

BREAK: CHRISTMAS BREAK (DECEMBER 17 – JANUARY 6)

January 7

Content: Discuss chapter 6, “Bible-Based Leadership Structure” from Biblical Eldership

Assignment: Read chapter 9, “Paul’s Instruction to Timothy” from Biblical Eldership, 1 Timothy (especially focus on 3:1-7, 3:10, 4:14, 5:17-25)

January 14

Content: Discuss chapter 9, “Paul’s Instruction to Timothy” from Biblical Eldership, 1 Timothy (especially focus on 3:1-7, 3:10, 4:14, 5:17-25)

Assignment: Read chapter 10, “Paul’s Instruction to Titus” from Biblical Eldership, Titus (especially focus on 1:5-9)

January 21

Content: Discuss chapter 10, “Paul’s Instruction to Titus” from Biblical Eldership, Titus (especially focus on 1:5-9)

Assignment: Read chapter 11, “Paul’s Instruction to the Asian Elders” from Biblical Eldership, 1 Peter (especially focus on 5:13-15)

January 28

Content: Discuss chapter 11, “Paul’s Instruction to the Asian Elders” from Biblical Eldership, 1 Peter (especially focus on 5:13-15)

Assignment: Read “Ten Curious Questions” (Chapter 0) from Mark Driscoll’s book Confessions of a Reformation Rev.: Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church. (2/11)

UNIT 02 | CONTEXT FOR SERVICE

February 11

Content: Discuss “Ten Curious Questions” (Chapter 0) from Mark Driscoll’s book Confessions of a Reformation Rev.: Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church. (2/11)

Assignment: Read Tim Keller’s article called “The Missional Church”

February 18

Content: Discuss Tim Keller’s article called “The Missional Church”

Assignment: Read David Prior’s commentary on 1 Corinthians 9 (*The message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the local church*) and be prepared to have a discussion on the value and importance of contextualization in ministry.

February 25

Content: Discuss David Prior’s commentary on 1 Corinthians 9 (*The message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the local church*) about the value and importance of contextualization in ministry.

Assignment: Begin memorizing the order of all the books of the Bible as you will need to know these to pass your Bible examination. You can recite them whenever you are ready.

Using The Westminster Confession of Faith, read Chapter 1, *Of the Holy Scripture*.

UNIT 03: COMPETENCY FOR SERVICE I: REFORMED THEOLOGY A

March 4

Content: Discussion of Chapter 1, *Of the Holy Scripture* from WFC.

Assignment: Continue memorizing the order of all the books of the Bible. You can recite them whenever you are ready. Using the WCF, read Chapter 2 and 3, *Of God, and the Holy Trinity* and *Of God’s Eternal Decree*.

March 11

Content: Discussion of Chapters 2 and 3 from the WCF, *Of God, and the Holy Trinity* and *Of God’s Eternal Decree*

Assignment: Continue memorizing the order of all the books of the Bible. You can recite them whenever you are ready. Using the WCF, read Chapter 4 and 5, *Of Creation* and *Of Providence*.

Additional resources for WCF Chapter 5, *Of Providence* by Dr. Phil Ryken:

- Chapter 5.1: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/02/chapter-51.php>
- Chapter 5.2-3: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/02/chapter-52-53.php>
- Chapter 5.4: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/02/chapter-54.php>
- Chapter 5.5: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/02/chapter-55.php>
- Chapter 5.6-7: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/02/chapter-56-7.php>

March 25

Content: Discussion of Chapter 4 and 5, *Of Creation* and *Of Providence*.

Assignment: Continue memorizing the order of all the books of the Bible. You can recite them whenever you are ready. Using the WCF, read the following chapters:

- Chapter 6: Of the Fall of Man, Of Sin and Of the Punishment Thereof
- Chapter 7: Of God's Covenant with Man
- Chapter 8: Of Christ the Mediator
- Chapter 9: Of Free Will
- Chapter 10: Of Effectual Calling

- Chapter 14: Of Saving Faith
- Chapter 15: Of Repentance Unto Life

Additional recommended resources for WCF Chapter 9, *Of Free Will* by Dr. Derek Thomas and Chapter 10.3, *Of Effectual Calling*:

- Chapter 9.1: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/03/chapter-91.php>
- Chapter 9.2: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/03/chapter-92.php>
- Chapter 9.3: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/03/chapter-93.php>
- Chapter 9.4: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/03/chapter-94.php>
- Chapter 9.5: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/03/chapter-95.php>
- Chapter 10.3: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/03/chapter-103.php>

NOTE: Paul will be out of town March 29 – April 6 for a family vacation and then will be in Louisville, KY for the Together for the Gospel Conference April 8 – 10.

April 15

Content: Discuss Chapters 6 – 10 and 14 and 15 of the WCF

Assignment: Continue memorizing the order of all the books of the Bible. You can recite them whenever you are ready. Using the WCF, read the following chapters:

- Chapter 11: Of Justification
- Chapter 12: Of Adoption
- Chapter 13: Of Sanctification

- Chapter 16: Of Good Works
- Chapter 17: Of the Perseverance of the Saints
- Chapter 18: Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation
- Chapter 19: Of the Law of God
- Chapter 20: Of Christian Liberty and of Liberty of Conscience

Additional recommended resources for WCF Chapter 19, *Of the Law of God* and Chapter 20, *Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience*:

- Chapter 19: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/05/chapter-19.php>
- Chapter 20.1: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/05/chapter-201.php>
- Chapter 20.2-4: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/05/chapter-202-3-4.php>

April 22

Content: Discuss Chapters 11 – 13, and 16 – 20 of the WCF

Assignment: Using the WCF, read the following chapters:

- Chapter 21: Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day
- Chapter 22: Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

- Chapter 24: Of Marriage and Divorce
- Chapter 25: Of the Church
- Chapter 26: Of the Communion of the Saints
- Chapter 27: Of the Sacraments

Additional recommended resources for WCF Chapter 21, *Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day* and Chapter 20, *Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience*:

- Chapter 21.1-2: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/06/chapter-211-2.php>
- Chapter 21.3-5: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/06/chapter-213-4-5.php>
- Chapter 21.6: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/06/chapter-216.php>
- Chapter 21.7: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/06/chapter-217.php>
- Chapter 21.8: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/06/chapter-218.php>
- Chapter 27.1: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-271.php>
- Chapter 27.2: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-272.php>
- Chapter 27.3: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-273.php>
- Chapter 27.4: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-274.php>
- Chapter 27.5: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-275.php>

April 29

Content: Discuss Chapters 21 – 22 and 24 – 27 of the WCF

Assignment: Using the WCF, read the following chapters:

- Chapter 28: Of Baptism
- Chapter 29: Of the Lord's Supper
- Chapter 30: Of Church Censures

- Chapter 23: Of the Civil Magistrate

- Chapter 31: Of Synods and Councils
- Chapter 32: Of the State of Men After Death and of the Resurrection of the Dead
- Chapter 33: Of the Last Judgment

Additional recommended resources for WCF Chapter 28, *Of Baptism* and Chapter 20, *Of Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience*:

- Chapter 28.1: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-281.php>
- Chapter 28.1: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-281-part-two.php>
- Chapter 28.2-3: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-282-3.php>
- Chapter 28.4: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-284.php>
- Chapter 29.1: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-291.php>

- Chapter 29.2: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-292.php>
- Chapter 29.3-4: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/07/chapter-293-4.php>
- Chapter 29.5-6: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/08/chapter-295-6.php>
- Chapter 29.7-8: <http://www.reformation21.org/confession/2013/08/chapter-297-8.php>

UNIT 04 | COMPETENCY FOR SERVICE II: REFORMED THEOLOGY B

May 6

Content: Discuss Chapters 28 – 30, 23, and 31 – 32 of the WCF.

Assignment: In the book Putting Amazing Back Into Grace by Michael Horton, read the following: Two Keys to Spiritual Growth (ch. 11) and Stephan Smallman’s booklet, “How Our Children Come to Faith”

Answer these questions:

1. What is a sacrament, historically and biblically defined?
2. Define infant baptism, and explain the arguments in favor of it. Are these arguments valid? Using Scripture, argue for or against the position.

May 13

Content: Discuss “Two Keys to Spiritual Growth” and Smallman’s booklet along with the two assigned questions

Assignment: Read Craig R. Higgins “Spiritual Formation and the Lord’s Supper: Remembering, Receiving, Sharing”

Answer these questions:

1. Explain the meaning of communion. Is it (a) just a symbolic memorial of Christ’s death; (b) a change of the substance of bread and wine into the physical body and blood of Christ; or (c) a spiritual feeding on Christ in which he is truly, but not physically, present in the bread and wine?
2. What does the Bible say about the importance of communion? What does 1 Corinthians 10: 16 mean when it calls communion “a participation” or “sharing” in Christ’s body and blood? Is this how we usually think of it?

May 20

Content: Discuss “Spiritual Formation and the Lord’s Supper: Remembering, Receiving, Sharing” along with the two assigned questions.

Assignment: Take the next two weeks to read the PCA BCO. Each elder should read the PCA’s Book of Church Order. Parts 1 and 2 and chapters 56-58 of Part 3 have binding authority for all PCA churches. The vows required for ruling elders are found in chapter 24. Please use Post-It Notes ® to take notes as you read along!

UNIT 05: COMPETENCY FOR SERVICE III: POLITY

May 27

Content: Continue your work at reading through the BCO

Assignment: Continue reading through the BCO

June 3

Content: Continue your work at reading through the BCO

Assignment: Finish reading through the BCO

June 10

Content: Discussion on the BCO

Assignment: Read “Who to Empower and Who to Avoid” by Mark Driscoll and “Pastor: Mentor the Young Men!” by Paul W. Martin

UNIT 06: CHALLENGES FOR SERVICE

June 17

Content: Discuss “Who to Empower and Who to Avoid” and “Pastor: Mentor the Young Men!” We will also be talking about the need and importance of creating a personal devotional

Assignment: Read Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp’s article called “One Church’s Story.” Start working on your personal devotional plan.

Additionally, listen to Matt Chandler’s sermon called “What Are Elders?” (52 minutes) from their sermon series called The Dearest Place On Earth. Give special attention to the “shifts” section of the sermon when considering your personal devotional plan.

June 24

Content: Discuss “One Church’s Story”

Assignment: Read C. J. Mahaney “The Pastor’s Priorities: Watch Your Life and Doctrine”

July 1

Content: Discuss “The Pastor’s Priorities: Watch Your Life and Doctrine

Assignment: Begin implementing your devotional plan and preparing for you final examination.