

# DOCTOR OF MINISTRY MANUAL

## Erskine Theological Seminary Due West, South Carolina

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## CHAPTER 1

### DOCTOR OF MINISTRY RESEARCH

#### 1.1 The Goals of the Erskine Seminary D.Min. Program

The D.Min. program carries out the overall mission of the Seminary, which is **to educate persons for service in the Christian Church**. While affirming the mission and general goals of Erskine Theological Seminary, the D.Min. program also aims to:

- a. develop a clear, focused agenda in ministry for each candidate, taking into account a working theology of the Church, the realities of the world in which we live, and a coherent model of ministry.
- b. evaluate and foster a candidate's relational skills.
- c. develop meaningful, interactive relationships with other peers in ministry, including significant dialog with ministers from a wide variety of Christian backgrounds and traditions.
- d. reawaken, deepen, and renew the study of the Church's norms, including the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as well as theology, both the confessional heritage of the Christian Church and contemporary theological discourse.
- e. extend competence in the various functions of ministry, such as preaching the Gospel, leading worship, teaching, pastoral care and counseling, evangelizing, and carrying out the mission of the Church.
- f. explore the contextual dimensions which affect Christian ministry today, notably at the points of culture, congregational and community demographics, ethical issues, and major events of the day.
- g. integrate the norms, functions, and contextual dimensions of ministry into a meaningful, workable, effective whole.
- h. raise and address the question, "What constitutes effectiveness in ministry?"
- i. identify, design, prepare for, conduct, and evaluate an act of ministry that can become a paradigm through which to approach other acts of ministry and view ministry as a whole. **(See 1.3 below for another way of achieving this goal.)**

## 1.2 Questions Ministry Researchers Frequently Ask<sup>1</sup>

Since few candidates in D.Min. programs have ever been required to create multi-dimensional research projects or have experienced the process of authoring books, the following frequently asked questions are presented for guidance.

What are the major differences between the “Prospectus,” “Ministry Project,” and a “Dissertation”?

**Prospectus.** Research is simply the process of finding answers to questions on how to do the ministry project. The nature of the academic process requires students to conduct their work in systematic and structured ways. A prospectus is a structured method of posing and resolving questions about the practice of ministry. More specifically, it is the plan of the ministry project which the student plans to do as the culmination of his/her D.Min. program. Among other things, the student investigates current ministry theory and practice as found in library materials such as books, journals, interviews, and other media reference material. ***This is NOT considered to be original research*** using sociological/scientific methodology that pushes forward the frontiers of human knowledge on the subject. While it may provide a significant contribution to the discipline under study, the beneficiaries of this research are the student and those to whom he/she is ministering. The research design described in the prospectus is the structured reflection about a specific problem in the ministry context for the purpose of improving skill in doing ministry.

**Ministry Project.** The “project” aspect of the D.Min. program accomplishes a structured reflection experience on a practice or act of ministry. This structured reflection process is coupled with the selection of a ministry practice from within your ministry situation which would benefit from an applied theological/theoretical review, refinement, or restructuring of some sort. This process and the act(s) of ministry make up the “ministry project.” The ministry project is what you actually do in the ministry setting.

**Dissertation.** A dissertation is simply a structured, multi-chaptered, written report that explains what the ministry project is about and the theory behind it. It tells how you did it. While the subject and content of the D.Min. dissertation is of an applied and professional nature, its form follows the standard academic apparatus of formal argument. It also is prepared according to standard academic style as in *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Kate Turabian. The Erskine Seminary *Doctor of Ministry Manual* also sets forth the style of the dissertation according to our own specific guidelines that take precedence over Turabian on selected matters of style and form.

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<sup>1</sup>Willis Dowling, “The Doctor of Ministry Manual” (Norfolk, VA: Providence Theological Seminary, n.d.), 2-3, with adaptations.

### Is the D.Min. a Ministry Version of the Ph.D.?

No. The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree, by definition, is an academic degree which shows proof of an original contribution to the subject under study by methodological or conceptual research. While the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree incorporates high academic standards in its writing and research, it is *not* meant to be the professional application of an original thesis which will provide a significant contribution to the theory and practice of ministry. Rather, it is a professional degree which aims to improve the participant's understanding of and competence in ministry through the enhancement of academic research and strategies for doing ministry. While the course of study may be significant in itself to the study of ministry, it must be primarily significant to the participant in his or her overall professional growth and improvement. This, of course, should have its benefit on the ministry context as well.

The Ph.D. explores theory, tests, and proves a hypothesis that pushes the frontiers of knowledge and understanding in a particular area of study. The D.Min. integrates theory and practice to enhance the student's overall understanding of both and provides an opportunity for innovation in ministry.

The Ph.D. is written in a formal style and format expected by the academic community for scholarly use. The D.Min. also is written in a formal style and format, but is addressed primarily to ministry and the church. Therefore, its language is more contextualized to a given situation.

The Ph.D. requires sophisticated, scientific research and methodology that proves its original thesis using all the principles of formal argument applied rigorously to the subject under scrutiny. The D.Min. shows proof that theory has been studied and integrated sufficiently into practice so that the participant emerges as a leader among his/her constituency in ministry. That leadership then is evaluated as to its effectiveness in attaining the original goals of the project.

### How Do I Find a Workable Topic?

Not all problems are researchable or worthy of the intense effort that a doctoral-level study requires. Finding a topic may be one of the most difficult processes in the research assignment. Candidates are urged to cultivate possible project ideas throughout their D.Min. studies. In fact, some course assignments may be developed in such a way as to provide the rudimentary ideas that could be developed into a viable D.Min. project. The following questions may help "prime the pump" for D.Min. project ideas.

- What do *I* want to find out?
- What do I *already* know?
- What *should* I know? (Implies standards of others)
- What is *already* known by others? (Who?)

- What do I want to do?
- What does it take to do it?
- Where do I stand on this issue today?
- Is the topic too narrow or too broad in its scope? Is it an attainable goal for my situation?
- Is it a real need in my ministry context? What is the problem, issue, or need that compels me to do work in this area? Will it be a blessing to my ministry context?
- Is God specifically leading me into this avenue of study for the benefit of the church?
- Who or what group, in my ministry context, will be the primary beneficiaries of my project?
- How will my leadership skills be enhanced as a result of this project?
- Is my idea compatible with the Erskine D.Min. program, my advisor, and my ministry context?
- Are there sufficient resources that address my topic so I can measure my own personal beliefs regarding the theory and practice involved?
- Are there D.Min. projects already done by others which could be compared and contrasted with my idea? How may I examine them?
- If I were to look up the topic under the subject index in the library or conduct a search on the Internet, what would it be under? For example: discipleship, leadership, spirituality, evangelism, missions, administration, conflict resolution, etc.

#### How Long Should My Dissertation Be?

No general answer is possible since the nature of the problem being solved will determine the actual length of the written document. The maximum length is 200 pages, including appendices. Exceptions may be granted by the Post-Graduate Committee. The most critical concern, however, is that sufficient detail be included so that the reader understands exactly what problem was considered, how it was dealt with or solved, and finally, what were the results or contributions. In some cases, this may necessitate a great deal of background and explanation. In others, less will be required. The goal is to be thorough, but concise. The doctoral candidate and the advisor will make the final determination as to what should comprise the content of the project/dissertation.

#### Where Can I Find an Example of a Good Project/Dissertation?

Reviewing D.Min. dissertations completed by former candidates can be helpful to students seeking project ideas, examples of research methods in use, and illustrations of scholarly writing. Copies of D.Min. dissertations can be found through Erskine's McCain Library either on the shelf or through inter-library loan. Faculty members also usually can direct you to examples of good D.Min. research and dissertations. A word of caution: not all dissertations employ good research strategies or follow the correct style and form requirements for writing (these

requirements also may have been amended by faculty action subsequent to a dissertation's publication).

### 1.3 A Concept-Based Dissertation

Doctor of Ministry degree students at Erskine Theological Seminary may choose to fulfill the dissertation requirement with a concept-based dissertation grounded in historical, theoretical, or theological research, as an alternative to the project-based dissertation described in this manual. The concept-based dissertation is intended to allow Doctor of Ministry students whose interests, ministry, and course work do not readily fit the act-and-evaluation structure upon which the project-based dissertation is built.

A concept-based dissertation differs from a project-based dissertation primarily in that the data that are brought to bear on the candidate's ministry derive from the candidate's research into historical, theoretical, or theological sources, rather than from the execution and evaluation of a project constructed around an act of ministry.

Students may wish to prepare a concept-based dissertation for several reasons. While any Erskine Seminary Doctor of Ministry student may propose a concept-based dissertation, it was designed particularly to meet the needs of military chaplains, especially those in the MedCom program at Erskine, and students whose courses have been focused in Erskine's Institute for Reformed Worship.

Such a dissertation may be a good solution for a student whose ministry context is constantly changing, so that it is hard to maintain a group with whom to conduct and evaluate a ministry project, or to remain with such a group though they may stay together. This is the situation of some military unit chaplains, such chaplains to basic training units and hospitals. In addition, some ministry contexts are inherently unsuited to the act-evaluation structure of the basic D.Min. project, such as long-term Clinical Pastoral Education. While many students in this situation may be best served by waiting to undertake Doctor of Ministry studies until other aspects of their training are complete, for some there is a clear benefit in combining these experiences. Such is the case for military chaplains in Erskine's contracted D.Min. program with the United States Army, and there may be others. Finally, some Doctor of Ministry students, such as many of those who have concentrated their studies in the Institute for Reformed Worship, find that the historical, theoretical, or doctrinal roots of projects that best integrate and culminate their studies do not fit readily within the structure of a project, as that term is used in the Doctor of Ministry program. For all these groups of students, and perhaps others as well, the concept-based dissertation provides a way to apply the fruit of advanced study in ministry to the practice of ministry outside the usual framework of project planning, execution, and evaluation.

As students consider the concept-based dissertation as an option for completing the requirements of the Doctor of Ministry degree, at least three provisos should be borne in mind.

First, no Doctor of Ministry dissertation may be composed exclusively of the fruits of conceptual research. Application to the student's practice of ministry is inherent to the Doctor of Ministry degree itself, apart from Erskine Seminary's own requirements. The Association of Theological Schools, an accrediting agency, holds the Seminary

accountable for this dimension of the degree. Students who wish to pursue pure research should consider a research degree program, such as the Th.M. or Ph.D.

Second, it would be a mistake to suppose that, because the concept-based dissertation is built around a smaller set of issues and topics that must be addressed than the project-based dissertation, it must for that reason be simpler to execute. Indeed, the opposite is probably the case. To execute a concept-based dissertation successfully, candidates will develop skills in research, in evaluating and constructing arguments, and in critical application of theory to ministry that many ministers will have had few occasions to develop before undertaking the dissertation. It would therefore be a mistake to choose the concept-based dissertation as a path of lower resistance to graduation than the project-based approach. Such a strategy is unlikely to succeed.

Finally, students whose choice is not made for them by their ministry context are well advised to arrive at some preliminary understanding of their goals for the dissertation before choosing between the concept- and project-based options. In the ideal case, the choice will be grounded in the student's learning goals and the nature of the work he or she proposes to do to meet them, rather than in a personal preference for one or another method of gathering and presenting data.

## REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONCEPT-BASED DISSERTATION

In most respects, the guidelines for writing the dissertation in this *Doctor of Ministry Manual* apply as fully to the concept-based option as to the project-based dissertation. Students who are writing a concept-based dissertation should familiarize themselves with the *Doctor of Ministry Manual*. Among other things, most of its guidelines concerning the proposal, the advising and review process, and the style and form of the dissertation apply as much to concept-based dissertations as to those based on projects.

There are three distinctive requirements for a concept-based dissertation at Erskine Seminary.

1. *A concept-based dissertation must make clear how it fulfills the requirement that the Doctor of Ministry degree relate to the practice of ministry.* It must be clear that the dissertation is not restricted in conception or content to the theoretical, historical, or doctrinal investigations that provide much of the data for it. That data, though curiosity about them may be the motivation for the dissertation, must nevertheless be applied to the candidate's practice of ministry. It is not enough merely to suggest applications for the dissertation's conclusions as an afterthought. Rather, the candidate's practice of ministry must be deeply integrated into the conception and explication. If the writer has a stable ministry in a particular context, this context shall be described with care, showing the relevance of his or her research to that context. If the candidate's ministry context is not stable or constant, the introductory chapter should nevertheless describe the nature of the writer's ministry and the applicability of the dissertation topic to that ministry.

2. *A concept-based dissertation must argue a definite thesis.* In other words, the dissertation must claim that a particular conclusion about the data under consideration is warranted, and that it applies to the writer's ministry in a specified way. The thesis should be original in the sense that it arises from the writer's own effort. It is not

required, as it is with the Ph.D., that the thesis be a demonstrably unique contribution to the body of human knowledge. It is only required that the candidate has come to believe the thesis is true through his or her own study and experience, and has done his or her own work to discover its validity and usefulness in practice. One of the two major tasks of the dissertation is to convince the reader that the thesis adequately accounts for the relevant facts, and that it is not vulnerable to likely objections. The other major task of the dissertation is to show that the conceptual data have been aptly applied and integrated in the writer's practice of ministry, in such a way that the dissertation could be useful as a resource to others in their own ministries.

3. *The dissertation must be of substantial length.* It should involve enough disciplined and focused work, presented with sufficient detail and clarity, to justify the awarding of a doctoral degree. Candidates should think of the dissertation as a short book-length manuscript, rather than as a seminar paper or article. There is no minimum word count, and the maximum page count permitted by the *Doctor of Ministry Manual* is two hundred pages. A dissertation that reaches the full two hundred-page maximum has about 70,000 words in double-spaced 12 point Times New Roman type. Few dissertations of less than half this maximum will meet the standard of quality and thoroughness the Seminary's Post-Graduate Committee envisions for a concept-based dissertation.

## 1.4 An Overview of the Erskine D.Min. Program

### 1.4.1 Introduction

Erskine Theological Seminary began its Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) program in 1984. From the beginning, the focus has been upon moving the practicing minister to a new level of competence, understanding, and proficiency in the various tasks of ministry. The program has undergone numerous changes through the years, but the focus has remained the same. Erskine's program is a generalist program. Hence, no specialization tracks are offered. Nevertheless, through early selection of a possible area for the project/dissertation, careful advising, and the wise choice of electives, the student is able to specialize in a particular area.

### 1.4.2 Program Structure and Requirements

The D.Min. curriculum is built around two foundational courses: DR 501: Models of Ministry and DR 502: Acts of Ministry. Students are strongly encouraged to take these two foundations courses during their first two semesters in the program.

The Erskine curriculum is built around a three-semester year: Fall, Spring, and Summer. The student may enter the program in any one of these semesters, but he/she should take the required course being offered in that semester and should take the other foundations courses in the following semester.

The only other required course is DR 511: Interpersonal Skills for Ministry. This course focuses upon the continued development of interpersonal skills in ministry. Students who have had a basic unit in Clinical Pastoral Education may apply to exempt this course and take an elective in its place.

The only other required course is DR 521: Candidacy. This course carries no semester hours credit and the student pays no tuition for it. Its sole requirement is that the student submit and have approved by his/her project/dissertation advisor a

prospectus of the student's proposed project. The student should register for this course during the semester he/she anticipates writing and submitting his/her prospectus. It is advisable that the student attend the "Writing the Prospectus" seminar which is held twice a year for two days in October and February prior to writing the prospectus.

The D.Min. curriculum consists of thirty-six (36) semester hours. Six of these hours are for the Project/Dissertation. Of the thirty remaining hours, nine are required (six hours for foundations courses, three hours for Interpersonal Skills for Ministry). The remaining 21 hours are for electives. The electives are divided into three areas: Norms, Functions, and Contexts. The only requirement for elective choices is that the student must choose one elective from each of these three areas. The remaining electives are the student's own choices. It is in these "free" electives that the student may develop some area of special interest or focus.

A full-time load in the D.Min. program is six hours (two courses) per semester. The regular semester courses meet four times per semester, roughly one month between class meetings. Prior to the first meeting of each class, the student is expected to have obtained the course syllabus, secured the books, and done the reading and/or writing that is due on the first class meeting. The syllabi for D.Min. courses are available on the Seminary's web site or from the professors who are teaching the respective courses. The classes normally are held from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. D.Min. classes in Due West are taught on Mondays and Tuesdays so that the student may take two courses on consecutive days. D.Min. classes at Fort Jackson meet on Saturdays approximately once per month. The Due West and Fort Jackson classes are identical in content and are taught by the same professors.

In addition to regular semester classes, one-week intensive courses (Monday through Friday) are offered during the months of January, June, and July. Usually, these are electives that specialize in a particular area. Often they are taught by adjunct faculty members. Thus, the student is able to pick up an extra course by taking a one-week intensive during one of these times.

The student often asks: How long will it take me to complete the D.Min. degree at Erskine? The thirty hours of course work can be completed in five semesters if the student takes a full load (two courses) each semester (Fall, Spring, & Summer). If the student takes an occasional one-week intensive, this time can be shortened. Erskine Seminary's D.Min. program has been designed to be completed in three years. If a student stays on track, he/she can complete it in this amount of time.

#### 1.4.3 The Components Of The Erskine D.Min. Program

##### The Advising Process

The student is assigned a project/dissertation advisor during his/her second semester of study. Students have some input into the assignment of an advisor, but factors such as faculty load also are considered in the decision. Normally, the student will be assigned to a faculty member who has some expertise in the area in which the student will do his/her project/dissertation.

The student/advisor relationship is critical for the student's progress at the project/dissertation stage. It is the student's responsibility to take the initiative in the advising relationship. The student should contact his/her advisor regularly during this time. The advisor must give his/her approval to the student's short design proposal, assign and evaluate readiness essays, approve the final design proposal, supervise the project, read and approve rough drafts of the dissertation, and give final approval of the dissertation. The student also should consult with his/her advisor concerning elective choices prior to the project/dissertation stage.

The student should begin conversations about his/her project with the advisor as early in the program as possible. Since the project/dissertation is the culmination of the D.Min. degree and must be conducted carefully, early planning in conversations with the advisor will enable the student to do a project of high quality in a reasonable period of time. The early choice of a project idea also will enable the student to make wise elective choices that can prepare him/her well for doing the project and writing the dissertation.

#### The Required Courses

DR 501: Models of Ministry, DR 502: Acts of Ministry, and DR 511: Interpersonal Skills for Ministry are the three required courses for the D.Min. degree. They provide the student with the opportunity to examine his/her own model of ministry, develop a more intentional theology of ministry, learn how to think and plan systematically an act of ministry, learn how to examine carefully the contexts in which ministry occurs, and gain additional skills and insights into interpersonal skills which are essential for effective ministry to occur.

The student should note the following requirements concerning the three required courses:

- A student may begin D.Min. work in any semester (Fall, Spring, Summer), but he/she must take the foundations course being offered in that semester and must take the remaining two courses during the following two semesters.
- Work transferred in from other schools cannot replace the foundations courses. All students must complete Erskine's foundations courses successfully to be eligible for the Erskine D.Min. degree.

#### The Elective Courses

Of the thirty semester hours of course work, nine are required and twenty-one are elective. Elective courses arise from and build upon the foundations courses. Although the Erskine D.Min. is a generalist degree, students can specialize in areas of their interest by the careful choice of available electives. While the foundations courses provide the cornerstone of the entire program, electives prepare students more fully to do the project/dissertation.

Electives are offered in each of the three areas of the curriculum: Norms, Functions, and Contexts. Although one area receives primary emphasis in each elective course, the other two areas are dealt with as well so that no elective course deals purely with only one area. Norms electives consist of courses in Bible, theology, and church history. Functions courses deal with the practice or skills of ministry. Contexts electives focus on various aspects of the current

contexts of ministry. In the catalogue, elective courses are separated into these three areas and are identified by DN (Norms), DF (Functions) and DC (Contexts) before the actual course number. The only requirement governing the selection of electives is that the student must have at least one elective from each of the three areas of the curriculum.

### The Project/Dissertation

The project/dissertation is the culmination of the D.Min. program and carries six semester hours of academic credit. The student conducts a well-planned project in his/her ministry setting and writes a dissertation in which the project is presented. See Chapter 4 of this *Manual* for a detailed description of the dissertation. A candidate cannot enter the project/dissertation stage until he/she has completed the thirty hours of course work as outlined above, and has a prospectus that has been approved both by one's advisor and the designated reviewer.

### Conducting the Project

The candidate should consult with his or her advisor as needed throughout the project phase, especially if unexpected problems are encountered. It is imperative that the candidate adopt and maintain a realistic time schedule for completing the project in a timely manner.

### Writing the Dissertation

Adequate time must be allowed for drafting and editing each chapter of the dissertation prior to submission to the advisor. Normally, the advisor is expected to return reviewed chapters to the candidate within two weeks of reception; likewise for reviewers evaluating the completed dissertation. Additional allowances of turn-around time may be necessary when advisors/reviewers are out of town for extended periods of time. Hence, it is important to keep in close communication with one's advisor during the writing of the dissertation.

The dissertation must be written in accordance with the Erskine Seminary standards for style and form. It also is imperative that all work be proofread and diligent effort made to have the dissertation reflect accepted standards of grammar and syntax before submitting the work to the advisor and/or reviewer.

Each chapter should be submitted to the advisor as it is completed. Once all chapters have received initial approval, the entire dissertation should be submitted as a whole to the advisor for final approval. Once the dissertation has met the advisor's approval, he or she will forward a complete copy of the entire dissertation to the reviewer. Once the reviewer approves the dissertation, either as presented or conditionally with corrections and/or changes to be made, the candidate may, after making all changes and corrections required by the advisor and/or reviewer, prepare and submit final copies to be bound.

### Submission of Final, Corrected Copies

Once all corrections and changes required by the advisor and reviewer have been made, the candidate must submit four unbound print copies and one

electronic copy of the entire dissertation, plus any additional print copies desired for personal use (gifts to family members, churches, other libraries, etc.), to the D.Min. Director. The dissertation must conform to the requirements outlined in “Erskine Seminary Specifications for the Dissertation” (see below). The four required print copies must be printed on the appropriate type and quality of paper, and the electronic copy should be submitted in PDF format on a CD or as an email attachment. All binding and copyright fees **MUST** be paid in full when submitting final copies of the dissertation.

D.Min. candidates who submit final copies of their dissertation by 5:00 P.M. on April 20 will have their degree conferred in May. Candidates who submit final copies by August 15 will have a September conferral date. Those who submit final copies by December 15 will have a January conferral date. Although there are 3 different conferral dates possible, graduation ceremonies are held only in May. Candidates who complete their work in August or December will be listed on the next year’s graduation program.

The stated deadlines for submission of final copies should not be taken for granted! Failure to allow adequate time for securing approval from both the advisor and reviewer, or to allow adequate time for necessary editing, does not change the established due dates for the submission of corrected, final copies.

#### Oral Reflection Upon Completed Dissertation

Once the advisor and reviewer have granted approval of the dissertation, the candidate arranges to meet with the advisor/reviewer to discuss the overall experience of the project and dissertation. The advisor is free to invite the reviewer to this oral reflection. Particular focus is devoted to exploring how the goals of the D.Min. program have been met through the project/dissertation process, as well as providing the candidate an opportunity to share what he or she learned or gained in the process. Affirmations as well as challenges are offered to the candidate based upon his or her work in the D.Min. program.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE PROJECT/DISSERTATION APPROVAL PROCESS

#### 2.1 Choosing a Project

Students are encouraged to consider prayerfully from the very beginning of their D.Min. studies potential topics or ideas for development as a viable project or act of ministry. In addition to brainstorming ideas within the context of one's courses, interaction with D.Min. peers, exploration of other successful D.Min. projects, and conversations with one's project/dissertation advisor, the following questions may prove beneficial in choosing a project or topic upon which to focus. What topic or project will enable me:<sup>2</sup>

1. to integrate a Biblical-theological understanding of ministry with actual practice?
2. to improve my competence in the academic study of ministry?
3. to improve the practical application of study by facilitating an opportunity to put theory into practice in a ministry situation?
4. to understand better the larger society and culture which surrounds and affects my ministry context?
5. to discover new approaches to existing problems through the impetus of concentrated study and effort that could be improved upon in the future?
6. to be a catalyst for positive change and spiritual renewal so that a greater discipleship and devotion to our Lord is achieved and the church is healthier?
7. to provide the Body of Christ with a concentrated study that could be of benefit in similar situations?
8. to advance the overall goals of Erskine Theological Seminary as stated in the academic catalog?

#### 2.2 Preparing the Prospectus

The candidate's project/dissertation begins with identifying a particular act of ministry, in a specific context or location, working in the lives of people, to accomplish a definite result. Identifying the candidate's act of ministry entails a careful, sensitive probing of one's ministry setting, one's operative theology of ministry, and what can actually be done (i.e., within the limits of the situation, time, and the minister's capacities). Producing the Prospectus entails a deliberate, extended process of clarifying and refining the candidate's options in, angles toward, and understandings of the act of ministry.

The Prospectus is a carefully detailed "road map" for the D.Min. candidate to follow in doing first the project and then the dissertation. The candidate develops the Prospectus in dialogue with his or her project/dissertation advisor. To help identify the act of ministry, learn research/evaluation methods, and learn about how to plan and write a design proposal, the candidate is encouraged to attend the "Writing the Prospectus Seminar" which is offered on campus each semester (usually in October and February).

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<sup>2</sup>Willis Dowling, "The Doctor of Ministry Manual" (Norfolk, VA: Providence Theological Seminary, n.d.), 1, with adaptations.

In summary, the Prospectus works out the basic elements to be considered in a well-planned act of ministry or project. The elements include describing the project as an act of ministry, the project location/setting/situation, purpose, goals, details, evaluation strategies, literature review, and bibliography. The way these all fit together gives the candidate a great deal of flexibility and creativity in identifying and accomplishing a specific act of ministry.

### 2.2.1 Describing the Project as an Act of Ministry

The act of ministry that the candidate identifies and plans is, quite simply, the project which the candidate undertakes to do for the project/dissertation. The project needs to be transparently an act of ministry by God, the Church, and the minister. At some point the Prospectus should interpret the project as an act of ministry from all three angles of God, the Church Universal, and the Minister.

Several ways exist for the student to get at this element. In effect, this part of the Prospectus shows how this project is a distinctly biblical/theological activity. It provides the biblical/theological foundation of the project. Essentially, the student is asking and answering the question: How is this project consistent with the way God has worked in history? Another way of asking this question is: How is this project a distinctly theological activity?

Often in this part of the Prospectus, the student expounds upon a biblical theme, text(s), or some theme in theology and shows how this particular project is an expression of that theme. The dissertation usually has a major chapter on Biblical/theological foundations of the project. This chapter in the dissertation may indeed be an expansion of this part of the Prospectus.

### 2.2.2 The Project Location/Setting/Situation

The project location is the place, situation, context, or ministry setting of in which the act of ministry is to happen. The focus of this rubric is the ministry setting. The candidate's language here may take the form of a narrative report of events leading up to this moment; a general demographic portrait of the situation or circumstances of the congregation; the statement of a need, a challenge or an issue that calls for leadership; or an artistic sensibility that seeks expression in ministry to others. The project location and the act of ministry always entail a community of Christians at some point.

Essentially, the student here is building a case for why he/she is doing this particular project with this particular group of people at this particular time. Anything from the ministry setting that is relevant to understanding the project should be discussed. This includes aspects of the setting's history, crises/conflicts, changes, etc.

### 2.2.3 The Project Purpose

The purpose of the project needs to be carefully distinguished from the goals, and the goals need to be carefully distinguished from the project details. *Purpose*, together with the location/setting/situation, establishes the overall pertinence or relevance of the project, answering the questions, "Why are we doing this project?" or "Where are we going with this project?" The *goals* are specific and relate closely

to the project, answering the question, "What are we trying to accomplish with this project?" The *project details* deal with the specific activities and arrangements of the project itself, answering the question, "What are we actually doing to accomplish the goals?" The purpose statement needs to be a single, concise sentence which describes the overall intent of the project. Of necessity, it will be somewhat general in nature. For instance, the overall purpose of a project where a student is teaching basic pastoral skills to a group of elders in his/her church could be stated as: "The purpose of this project is to teach Christians how to care for each other."

#### 2.2.4 Goals of the Project

The goals of the project relate closely to the purpose statement, to the project details, and to what will be described as evaluation strategy and instruments. Purpose, goals, and project details often are easily confused. The goals make far more specific the overall purpose, asking specifically "What are we trying to accomplish with this project?" The actual project attempts to accomplish what the goals set for it. Each goal statement needs to be a single, concise, carefully honed statement. An explanation of the primary concerns of each goal usually helps.

The goals divide readily into *goals for the church or setting* and *goals for the minister*. The goals for the church are essential, to view the project in the larger framework of the Church's act of ministry and to keep the minister from focusing narrowly on professional tasks. In every project there are also goals for the minister--a gain in expertise or insight, the exploration of an issue, a growth experience--more than merely bringing off the project or enabling the church to accomplish its goal(s). The minister's goal(s) describes specifically what he/she wants to achieve personally in this project. A legitimate goal is *not* simply to accomplish or enable the project.

Goals should be limited in number, measurable, very carefully refined, and precise in statement. Each goal represents a major focal point of the project/dissertation as a whole. The more goals there are, the more fragmented and unmanageable the project/dissertation becomes. Four goals are a practical maximum, two for the church or setting and two for the minister. Two goals are a practical minimum, one for the church or setting and one for the minister. The goals should be measurable as well, whether one by one and/or as a group, whether by quantitative, qualitative, ethnographic, or other means.

#### 2.2.5 Details of the Project

The project in "project/dissertation" is the act of ministry conceived and carried out in this component of the D.Min. program. The details of the project are related closely to the goals, asking "What are we actually doing to accomplish these goals?" The Prospectus needs to explain clearly how the details of the project will accomplish the stated goals.

The *details* contain the heart of the project, spelling out what actually will be done—times, places, topics, persons, arrangements, choice of passages, and broad notes on the coordination and/or implementation of these details. The project should be detailed enough to plan the project well, with good prospects for accomplishment. Project details also include those crucial junctures that will affect

the direction of the project and determine its outcomes, e.g., a person, a group, a decision, a permission, a meeting, a thought connection, a turn of attitude or event. The candidate needs to have well in hand both a clear, detailed plan for the act of ministry and a keen grasp of its dynamic, what will make it run smoothly or what will disrupt the flow. Some details will be foreseeable and some will not: learning about details will take place before, during, and after the project.

Since the Prospectus is the sole approving document, the details must be carefully worked out.

### 2.2.6 Evaluation Strategies

The evaluation strategies and instruments focus directly on the goals for the project and establish the extent to which they have been accomplished. Evaluation raises the difficult but urgent question of *effectiveness in ministry*. So much of ministry is intangible and the results of ministry often do not appear for a long time after acts of ministry have been performed. Especially since the outcome depends upon an act of God or the work of the Holy Spirit, how can the minister presume to measure or even assess the effectiveness of an act of ministry? On the other hand, what provides the minister some feedback and/or correctives on sincere efforts at ministry? How can the minister develop and improve on past performances? What gives the minister a clear line of accountability for various acts of ministry, or conversely lulls the minister into a lazy or insensitive routine? This part of the project/dissertation answers these questions in a discrete, limited fashion on both sides by correlating evaluation with the stated goals of the project. The question of effectiveness is answered (only!) in part by whether the act of ministry meets its stated goals.

Every goal in the project calls for an evaluation strategy (or strategies) and a set of evaluation instruments. The *evaluation strategy* shows how the candidate proposes to measure one or more goals of the project. *Evaluation instruments* are the vehicles the candidate proposes to use in a given evaluation strategy. The evaluation strategies need to be worked out in close conjunction with the other elements of the project design, because they can show where the project goals and/or details may be unclear or insubstantial. The best evaluation strategies and instruments are built into the project details and contribute directly to the act of ministry. Learning how to design, use, and interpret pertinent evaluation instruments is an important part of the project/dissertation. The candidate and advisor will want to take into account the coherence of evaluation strategies, perhaps developing an overall strategy with several sub-strategies.

Evaluation strategy and instruments can be either quantitative or qualitative, but should be appropriate to the project in any case. They affect directly the decisions about what data to gather and which records to keep in the project, e.g., a journal, study notes, sermons, lesson plans, manuals, orders of service, interviews or verbatims, handouts, minutes of meetings, evaluation instruments turned in, reflective observations or comments, expert opinions, lists of people/events/activities/tasks completed, or theological statements. The activities, records, and evaluation instruments—like the general conduct of the project—need to maintain professional levels of discretion and confidentiality.

This treatment of evaluation raises the further question of how the D.Min. Prospectus relates to "research designs" in other fields, such as education, history, the social sciences, or the empirical sciences. As described so far, the Erskine project/dissertation coincides most nearly with evaluation research in education.<sup>3</sup> However, the focus on *an act of ministry involving God, the Church, and the minister* guarantees a *distinctively theological avenue of research* without precluding by definition any of the other patterns of research design, especially those involving qualitative research. Both candidates and faculty are free to utilize other patterns of research for the D.Min. degree, as long as the Erskine focus on the act of ministry and some form of evaluation are not displaced. The best way to use another research model is to fold the evaluation strategy/instruments into the project itself, so that the details of the project embody a research-and-evaluation angle.

### 2.2.7 The Literature Search

The purpose of this part of the Prospectus is for the student to demonstrate a developing awareness of the literature, both current and past, that is relevant to the project. Erskine's D.Min. program has three course areas: Norms, Functions, and Contexts. In this section, the student should identify and describe briefly books, articles, etc. which inform the planning, execution, and evaluation of the proposed project. The question which should dominate the student's interest here is: What books, articles, etc. will I need to read and understand in order to carry out this project?

Because of space limitations, the student should devote no more than 1 or 2 paragraphs to each item. Probably, the student should limit his/her attention in this section of the Prospectus to no more than 15-20 items. In the student's summary, he/she should show specifically how this particular source relates to and informs the project. The summary should not be simply a summary of the item's content.

The student should cover all three of the above areas but should not attempt to list an equal number of sources for each one. Although a project clearly touches on all three, usually a project will focus more on one area than the other two. For instance, a project which consists of teaching basic pastoral care skills to elders in a church may focus more on literature in the area of Functions rather than the other two. However, a project which centers in leading worship in a postmodern context may make use more of the literature in the area of Contexts than the other two.

Because of the limited number of titles which can be listed in this section of the Prospectus, the student needs to give careful thought to the ones to include and should list those which are most relevant to the project. As the student continues to prepare to conduct the project and even during the project itself, it is likely that other resources will be discovered and perhaps some which are listed here will no longer be seen as being of critical importance to the project.

This section of the Prospectus will be expanded into a major chapter in the dissertation itself. In that chapter, the student may deal more extensively with the resources listed here as well as treat others that have been discovered.

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<sup>3</sup>See Chapter 12, "Evaluation Research," in James H. McMillan and Sally Schumacher, *Research In Education: A Conceptual Introduction* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1984), pp. 335-364.

A project is a personal act of ministry conducted in a specific ministry setting. The literature review, however, forces the student to think about his/her own project in the larger context of ministry and research that others are doing.

### 2.2.8 Time-Table for the Project

The *Time-Table* component asks the candidate to work out a realistic time frame for completing each stage of the project/dissertation. Adequate time needs to be allowed for careful preparation of the Prospectus, conducting the project, and writing the dissertation.<sup>4</sup> Candidates frequently make the mistake of not allowing adequate time (up to two weeks) for the advisor and reviewer to evaluate the Prospectus and the dissertation chapters, and by not allowing for significant time to edit the drafts and to make necessary corrections.

Three approximate dates should be stated in this time-table. The first date should be the proposed time for the submission and approval of the Prospectus. Second, the student should indicate the date(s) when the project will be conducted. Third, the student needs to indicate when the dissertation will be written and submitted for final approval.

Several observations can be made regarding what is realistic and what is not. In almost all cases, the D.Min. student is fully employed by a church, agency, etc. and is doing his/her D.Min. work on the side. It is realistic for the student to expect to spend one full year from the time he/she has the Prospectus approved until he/she finishes the D.Min. program.

If the student will be doing significant work on the Prospectus or dissertation during the summer months, he/she needs to have a clear understanding

### 2.2.9 Preliminary Bibliography

The *bibliography* contains books, articles, videos, or other research materials that the candidate uses to prepare for the project. The bibliography should contain the important books, articles, etc., for a given topic, but not attempt to be exhaustive. The purpose of the bibliography is to demonstrate the existence of adequate resources upon which study for the project may be undertaken. To that end, the bibliography should include sources from each of the 3 areas of the D.Min. curriculum: norms, functions, and contexts. The bibliography will doubtless grow as the candidate studies: one item will lead to another, or lead to other ways of viewing or doing things.

### 2.2.10 Assigning a Title to the Project/Dissertation

The Prospectus should be given a title that captures the essence of the project's focus and also serves as the title of the dissertation.

## 2.3 Criteria for Evaluating the Prospectus

The Prospectus (ca. 30-50 pages long, properly documented) states in detail what the student is planning to do for his/her project. These elements include basic statements of the location/setting/situation for the project, the purpose and goals, the project

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<sup>4</sup>For additional assistance in establishing a timetable, see Appendix C.

interpreted as an act of ministry, evaluation strategies and instruments, and a basic search of the relevant literature.

The criteria used by the advisor for approving the Prospectus are:

#### Credibility

- Is the project an authentic act of ministry of the Church, taking into account the candidate's tradition and working theology of the Church?
- Is the project worth doing, and will the dissertation make a genuine contribution to literature on the practice of ministry?
- Is the project viable, workable in details and in the setting where placed?
- Is the project original? Are there any distinctive features that set it apart from other project/dissertations on the same topic/act of ministry? If using previously developed materials, does it use them creatively?

#### Components

- Does the prospectus contain an essential statement of each component, namely,
  - ❖ location/setting/situation
  - ❖ purpose
  - ❖ project goals, for the church setting and for the minister
  - ❖ project details
  - ❖ the project as an act of ministry, by God, the Church, and the minister
  - ❖ the literature search
  - ❖ evaluation strategy(ies) and instruments
  - ❖ bibliography
  - ❖ time table

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE PROJECT**

#### 3.1 Executing the Project

Once both the project/dissertation advisor and reviewer have approved the Prospectus, the candidate may proceed with conducting the project. The candidate is expected to keep the advisor informed about the overall progress of the project; in particular, the candidate should consult with the advisor if major problems emerge in carrying out the project.

Careful notes and records should be maintained throughout the course of the project to assure that necessary data for evaluation of goals are collected or available. During the course of the project, the candidate may begin working on an outline for the dissertation chapters, preparation of front matter pages (title page, acceptance page, copyright page, etc.), bibliography, etc.

When the project has been completed or during its latter stages, the candidate meets with the advisor to review the outcome of the project, sift the documents and data in hand, and plan appropriate ways to organize the dissertation. The reviewer normally is not involved in this stage although the advisor is at liberty to consult with the reviewer regarding the project and dissertation.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE DISSERTATION

Writing the dissertation is the last stage of the process. The dissertation focuses on the project as planned, prepared for, and done, and reflects upon the effectiveness of this act of ministry. In writing the dissertation, the candidate writes and submits a series of drafts--usually three or more--to the advisor for discussion and critical reflection. When the dissertation reaches the semi-final draft, the advisor sends it to the appointed reviewer for reading. This stage draws to a close when (a) both the advisor and the reviewer approve the dissertation, (b) the candidate submits at least four copies of the final draft to the seminary for binding/microfilming, and (c) the candidate meets with the advisor to discuss what the candidate learned about ministry from the entire project/dissertation. There is no standard structure for the dissertation, but the following sections address the elements that must be present in the dissertation. The candidate and the advisor are encouraged to be creative in the actual structure of the dissertation as long as the items below are considered.

#### 4.1 Organization of Chapters

A typical dissertation will have at least five chapters. While the order of some chapters may vary depending upon the best means of presenting the project, the usual order is presented below. Every candidate, in consultation with the advisor, should develop a chapter-by-chapter outline of the dissertation, as well as an outline of each chapter, checking to ensure that the appropriate focus is maintained throughout.

##### Chapter 1 – Introduction

Essentially this chapter is a re-casting of the Prospectus in that it “introduces” the reader to the project and serves as a “road map” for what the reader may expect to find in the chapters following. The Prospectus cannot simply be copied but will have to be edited and modified since the Prospectus is usually much longer than the introductory chapter. The student should strive to keep the introduction to 20 pages or less. The guiding question in writing this chapter is: What does the reader need to know in order to understand this project?

##### Chapter 2 – Biblical/Theological Foundation(s) for the Project

This is an important chapter in that every act of ministry must have its foundation in the Scriptures and one’s theological doctrines and commitments. In this chapter, the student will expound upon a Biblical passage, book, theme, theological truth, etc. which serves as the Biblical basis of the project. This chapter often takes the form of a detailed exegetical study of a Biblical passage, theme, or a detailed analysis of a theological theme or issue. Abundant use should be made of primary and secondary sources. This is the chapter of the dissertation that is probably most like a Th. M. thesis. Often, the Biblical or theological theme described

in the Prospectus under “The Project Described as an Act of Ministry” becomes the basis for this chapter. This is a chapter of major importance in the dissertation. The student should seek to keep it within 40 pages.

### Chapter 3 – A Detailed Description of the Project

Here the candidate simply describes what he or she did in executing the project, answering the questions of who, what, when, where, and how the project was conducted, evaluation strategies employed, important observations and analyses made, adjustments made to the original plan, etc. The reader should have sufficient information about what was done so that the project could be replicated or important changes made if conducted in another ministry setting. The length of this chapter will vary according to the nature of the project, but the student should seek to confine it to no more than 25 pages. Handout materials, etc. that were used in the project do not need to be reproduced in this chapter. They should be included in the Appendices at the end of the dissertation and referred to as needed in the discussion of the project parenthetically (See Appendix A of this *Manual*). It is important for the sake of clarity to order these items consistently (usually letters or numbers) and to order them in the order in which they were used in the project. The item in Appendix A should be used in the project before the item in Appendix B.

### Chapter 4 – Results and Evaluation<sup>5</sup>

This chapter summarizes the results of the research and how you performed the ministry project. Included here should also be a plan for the evaluation of the ministry project. *The criteria you will use to evaluate your project will be to show how well you accomplished the original stated goals of the project.* You should restate the goals and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project based on those goals. How well did you fulfill those goals?

Often, it is necessary to explain the results so that the reader is able to appreciate their meaning fully. In addition, certain contributions were made in the course of performing the research. These must be clearly stated. You might structure the chapter as overall Strengths, then overall Weaknesses/Challenges and changes you would make if you “knew then what you know now.” Then include a personal objective evaluation of different aspects of the project, i.e., how each aspect was effective or ineffective and why. Finally, as the research has been performed, certain questions, improvements, extensions, etc. will, no doubt, become obvious to the candidate. A good problem always leads to further investigative possibilities; these are stated in the “Future Directions” section. These should be clearly stated, with any necessary explanations, so that students who continue the work will have the benefit of this thinking. Survey results

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<sup>5</sup>Description of Chapter 4 content from Willis Dowling, “The Doctor of Ministry Manual” (Norfolk, VA: Providence Theological Seminary, n.d.), 30.

that are not succinct (succinct being a one page table showing totals or percentages) should be placed in the Appendices. The student should attempt to limit the evaluation chapter to no more than 20 pages.

#### Chapter 5 -- A Review of Relevant Literature

In this chapter, the student expands the portion of the Prospectus “The Literature Search.” It is likely that in the dissertation, the student will add other sources that he/she has discovered which have shaped the project in some way. Furthermore, the analysis of how this particular work has informed the project or how the project challenges or is in dialogue with it will be more comprehensive and detailed in the dissertation than it was in the Prospectus. This chapter usually takes the form of a kind of bibliographical essay. Each book, article, should be named at the beginning of the discussion and a footnote can be used at that point to give the full bibliographic information. The student should limit this chapter to 30-40 pages.

#### Appendices – Reference Matter

An appendix is a supplementary section that contains material related to the text but not suitable for inclusion in it. Materials of different categories should be placed in separate appendices, with each one designated by a number or letter (e.g., APPENDIX A, APPENDIX ONE, or APPENDIX 1, etc.) and an appropriate title to indicate its contents or focus. Common appendices include copies of questionnaires, evaluation survey results, flyers or advertisements, class handouts, etc. Placing material in an appendix to reduce the length of the text is not permitted.

#### Bibliography – Reference Matter

An alphabetical listing of all sources used in the dissertation makes up the final section of the written dissertation. In consultation with the dissertation advisor, the decision must be made as to the best way to present the sources used in the dissertation. Some dissertations lend themselves more readily to a single, alphabetical listing of works cited, whereas another dissertation may dictate providing separate listings of sources according the categories of norms, functions, and data. The format chosen should be driven by consideration for needs of the reader who may wish to use the dissertation in related studies. The student needs to consult with the advisor on the issue of whether or not the bibliography should consist only of works cited in the dissertation. If needed or desirable, a separate section included at the end of the bibliography entitled, “Other Works Consulted” may be appended.

#### 4.2 Erskine Seminary Specifications for the Dissertation

The dissertation must conform to the following Erskine Theological Seminary D.Min. specifications.

1. **Style.** The Seminary standard for publication conventions shall be *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) or later.
2. **Documentation.** Documentation standards shall follow *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian, 7th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), except where noted in these specifications. Footnotes shall be placed at the bottom of the page.
3. **Page Numbering and Layout.** The pages of the dissertation should be numbered and arranged as shown in the “Specifications and Examples of Page Numbering and Page Layouts for the Erskine D.Min. Dissertation” (see Appendix A).
4. **Margins.** Margins should appear as follows:
  - Left margin = 1.5”
  - Top, Right, and Bottom margins = 1”
5. **Spacing.** Double spacing should be used except in those places where appropriate conventional usage calls for single spacing or triple spacing. Do not use 1.5 or 2.5 spaces.
6. **Fonts.** The dissertation should use 12-point type in a standard or executive style font (i.e. Times New Roman or Arial) except where a special font may be necessary (i.e. original Greek, Hebrew, or Latin words).
7. **Length.** The page limit for the length of dissertations is 200 pages, including appendices. Exceptions may be granted by the Postgraduate Committee.
8. **Paper Type.** All final print copies shall be printed on white bond paper which meets the following standards:
  - 20 lb. or 24 lb. weight
  - Acid free
  - 25% or more cotton content
  - 8.5” x 11” size
  - 86 or higher brightness
 Such paper is typically available at office supply stores, stationary shops, and copy centers.
9. **Print Copies.** The student shall submit four (4) unbound print copies of the final dissertation, distributed as follows: the McCain Library, the advisor, the candidate,

- and the Seminary Archives (after subsequent binding). If the student desires more than one personal copy, he/she should submit the extra copies and pay the extra fee for binding.
10. **Electronic Copy.** The electronic copy should be submitted as a single PDF file on a CD or as an email attachment.
  11. **Submission Deadline.** The deadline for submitting the required copies of the dissertation to be bound is April 20 for a May graduation. For a September conferral, the deadline is August 15. For a January conferral, the deadline is December 15.
  12. **Copyright Registration.** Copyright registration is handled through the Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN) in Portland, Oregon. The candidate shall pay all copyright fees for this service (currently \$60) and complete the distribution agreement and copyright registration forms (see Appendix B).
  13. **Binding and Bindery Instruction Sheets.** All print copies will be bound by a professional binding company. Binding arrangements shall be made through Erskine, currently at \$20.00 a bound copy. Students must submit the following bindery instruction sheets with their print copies.

**Please note: The sheets of instructions you are to prepare (see below) are for the use of the binding company only and are NOT bound with the thesis copies.**

The following two pages show an example of the "Binder's Title Sheet" and "Binder's Spine Sheet." One set of each of these sheets must accompany each copy of the dissertation submitted for binding. In addition, one (1) extra set of these sheets must be submitted. Therefore, if four (4) copies of the dissertation are submitted, five (5) copies each of the "Binder's Title Sheet" and "Binder's Spine Sheet" must be submitted. **The instructions shown in brackets [] must be included as shown.** These are necessary placement instructions for the bindery company.

Note that six hyphens (-----), with no spaces before or after, are placed between the title and the author's last name. A one-half inch space is placed between the author's last name and the year of publication.

[Binder's Title Sheet]

[center all text vertically and horizontally]

FOSTERING COVENANT IDENTITY IN HISTORIC  
GREENVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[1/2 inch]



[1/2 inch]

JOHN MCABEE CRAIG

[1 1/4 inch]

1848

[Binder Spine Sheet]

FOSTERING COVENTANT IDENTITY IN HISTORIC GREENVILLE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-----MCABEE 1848

### 4.3 Submitting Chapters to the Advisor

Each chapter, as it is completed, should be submitted to the advisor for review. Ordinarily, the advisor will return the reviewed chapter to the candidate within two weeks. In order to avoid losing valuable time, candidates should continue to work on additional chapters, front matter pages, appendices, bibliography, etc. while the submitted chapter is being reviewed. In no case should a candidate submit the entire dissertation as a first draft; each chapter must be reviewed individually before the final draft is completed and submitted. Once each chapter, appendix, bibliography, etc. is approved, then the entire dissertation is submitted to the advisor for final approval before being sent to the reviewer.

It is expected that each chapter, appendix, or bibliography submitted for review will be complete, properly documented, and formatted according to the norms of ETS dissertation standards. In no case should an incomplete final draft be submitted for review by the advisor or reviewer.

### 4.4 Editing the Dissertation

The production of a well-written dissertation is nearly always the result of a number of revisions, corrections, and careful editing. Candidates may spare themselves and their advisors much unnecessary grief and frustration if they approach the writing of the dissertation as a work in progress that will entail a number of revisions. It is quite unrealistic to expect that a first, or even second, draft will exhibit the clarity and polish needed for an acceptable and quality dissertation.

All suggestions, comments, and corrections pointed out by the dissertation advisor and reviewer should be taken seriously. Ignoring corrections will only slow down, or even halt, the process. Even if you disagree with the advisor's or reviewer's suggestions, you at least need to demonstrate that you have wrestled with those suggestions and can support adequately your conclusions.

While the "cut-n-paste" feature of word processors is a great tool to have, there are times when a candidate would be better off to "start from scratch" rather than trying to salvage a poorly constructed or vaguely written section. One potentially negative outcome of "cutting and pasting" is redundancy in one's work. Candidates likewise are urged to make frequent use of an outline to guide their writing.

Candidates should set aside ample time to edit the dissertation! Even the final draft that is approved by both the advisor and reviewer will nearly always have minor corrections that must be made. It is recommended that candidates allow two weeks for editing and copying the final copy of the dissertation to be submitted for binding, once the dissertation is approved by the advisor and reviewer.

### 4.5 Dissertation Writers' Checklist<sup>6</sup>

\_\_\_ Have you understood how the dissertation is structured? Do you have a clear picture in your mind of what goes where?

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<sup>6</sup>Willis Dowling, "The Doctor of Ministry Manual" (Norfolk, VA: Providence Theological Seminary, n.d.), 31-32, with minor revisions.

\_\_\_Have you actually examined and read through the most relevant dissertations you could find that related to your project?

\_\_\_Have you understood the difference between the style of footnoting at the bottom of the page and the bibliography?

\_\_\_When you write, do you just start typing whatever comes to your head? Or do you first outline your points separately with main points and subpoints, quotes, references, etc.?

\_\_\_Are you writing distinctly, succinctly, and concisely? Or are you rambling?

\_\_\_While it is impossible to read everything in your bibliography from cover to cover, are there books or articles that you have neglected that could be helpful, even at the writing stage? By now you will be thoroughly familiar with what you are trying to say and will be able to quickly discriminate between what relates to your points and what is irrelevant. There is a balance here between “not leaving any stone unturned” and “getting bogged down in minutiae.”

\_\_\_When you finish writing a section, do you scribble down a brief note to yourself of where you left off in your thought, and where you should pick up when you get back to it? What are the next things you would write about if you had the energy and time to keep going right now? This keeps you from having to go back and review and figure out what you were thinking days ago since you last wrote. It also helps you strategize while you are sharp on the subject rather than after you have gotten away from it.

\_\_\_When you write, do you give yourself adequate time, space, and freedom from interruptions to do so? Have you yet discovered how long and drawn out the writing process can be? *Momentum* is the key word. You can climb that hill with a running start, but it is slower and harder otherwise.

\_\_\_Sometimes you come to a stopping point in writing and it is hard to get going again. This is known as writer’s block. It could be based on a fear of failure, the lack of direction of where to go next on the topic, mental stress, stress from other things in your life, physical exhaustion, etc. There are times when we need to keep our “nose to the grindstone” and other times we need to “break away.” Have you found that balance? Do you know your own personal limitations? You will write much better with a spiritually renewed mind and physically balanced body. Rely upon God to instruct you and teach you in the way in which you should go (Ps. 32:8) as you write.

\_\_\_Are you thoroughly familiar with your computer and its functions? Or are you learning critical things along the way? While we may not know all there is to know about a writing program, we should know the basics. Do you know how to cut and paste, set up separate files for separate chapters and sections, copy your work at the end of every writing section to a separate disk or CD. Some of the greatest setbacks in scholarly

writing are when there are computer failures and months (even years) of work is completely *lost and irretrievable*.

\_\_\_Have you invested in a tape backup system that will back up your whole hard drive as often as you would like? The cost is like buying insurance for your computer. The same could be said for a uninterrupted power source (UPS) that will protect your computer from spikes, surges, line variations, and electricity blackouts that easily could crash your whole hard drive and shut you down.

\_\_\_Are you prepared for multiple drafts and revisions of your work based on suggestions by the dissertation advisor and reviewer? Or like Pilate, do you say, “What I have written, I have written”? The latter mentality will be of great frustration to you.

#### Effectively Using Style Manuals

\_\_\_Do you own a current copy of the Turabian manual, and is it at your ready disposal? Do you have a basic grasp of how to use it? Do you know where to find information in it?

\_\_\_If you find a discrepancy between what you think the school wants you to do and what Turabian says, have you settled the question with your dissertation advisor or the D.Min. Director?

\_\_\_Once an issue of format is settled in your mind, are you using that form consistently throughout your work?

\_\_\_Have you noted or recorded style manual decisions that will affect writing? Are you using the Erskine Theological Seminary standards that take precedent over Turabian in specified places? Have you negotiated with the Director any changes from the manual that will affect your writing?

#### 4.6 Cautions and Caveats<sup>7</sup>

##### Most Common Mistakes:

- a) Confusing the form of the footnotes with the form of bibliographical entries.
- b) Not doing a spell check on the revised draft. Even when you run a “spell check,” it will not catch words that are correctly spelled but are wrong for the particular context, e.g. *our* when you mean *out*; *form/from*; *planing/planning*; *through/thorough*, etc.
- c) Letting the typist take charge of form and structure instead of doing it yourself. Or else, not paying attention to how the document is set up in terms of headings, footnotes, etc. If it is possible, do your own typing.

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<sup>7</sup>Willis Dowling, “The Doctor of Ministry Manual” (Norfolk, VA: Providence Theological Seminary, n.d.), 53-55, with revisions.

- d) Do not turn the dissertation into a huge book review. Rather, simply make certain that the important things are mentioned.
- e) Reproducing large sections of your own material verbatim from chapter to chapter. Don't just repeat the same material. If it is necessary to repeat previous data of your own, change it, upgrade, elaborate, revamp, revise it! Try not to be redundant.
- f) Not following the D. Min. manual and Turabian, or even reading them, until you are well into the research and writing. Read them first. Use them consistently.
- g) Not doing a final scan of the whole document before printing. When your whole dissertation is in one file, any revisions will alter the rest of the document accordingly. The next chapter may start at the bottom of the page instead of where it is supposed to be (2 inches from the top of the page).
- h) Writing like you preach. Writing style should conform to academic standards. Don't use incomplete sentences, as is sometimes done in preaching or normal conversation. Stop and read what you have written. Get someone else to read it. It has to make good academic sense. Don't write "run-on" sentences or ones that are too long.
- i) Many students will start out saying: "Here are seven strategies for growth:" Then they mention only five.
- j) A common mistake is mixing up *its* and *it's*. "It think *it's* most important in *its* own place and time." When you say *it's*, it is a contraction for *it is*. Some people confuse this with the use of an apostrophe to denote ownership or possession, e.g., this is John's. Normally an apostrophe would denote possession. Then they apply this ownership aspect to "*its* own place and time" so that it becomes "*it's* own place and time." The former is correct; the latter is incorrect. But no wonder non-English speaking people pull their hair out trying to learn English.  
To reiterate: **it's = it is (not possessive)**  
**its = possession**
- k) Many times students do not use the same style throughout the paper. Some form issues are not always addressed and it is easy to be inconsistent.

Always:

- a) Single space after periods and colons (not double or triple-space). Single space after semi-colons. Don't clog up Scripture references without proper spacing, e.g. Lk.10:1 or Jn10:3. It should be: Lk. 10:1 and Jn. 10:3. Don't put a period inside a parenthesis with a quotation outside of the parenthesis, e.g. "and this is the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20.)" Rather, "and this is the Great Commission" (Matt. 28:19-20).

- b) Be consistent in your style throughout the document. There is some leeway in style and form within the bounds of Turabian. What is not tolerated is mixing up styles and forms in the same document.
- c) When you do a revision of your document, you may cut out whole sections of material. If you are outlining your headings and you cut out section B., then you will go from A. to C. So revamp the outline so that the outline will be in order.
- d) In block quotes, don't use quotation marks for the main quote as was done here:

“sdjfl;aksdjfal;skdjfal;skdjfasl;kdjfs;lkdjfasl;kdjfsl;akdjfal;skdjfls;kdjfsl;dkfjsdl;kfjsal;dkfjsdl;kfjlkdsdjfal;ksdjfsl;kdjfsla;kdjfl;askdjfsl;dkjfs;lkdjfal;ksdjfsl;kdjfsl;kdjfls;kdjfls;kdjfl;skdjfasl;kdjfl;ksadjfl;skdjfls;kadjfsal;kdfj;laksdfj;lsakdjfs;ldkjfas;lkdjfs;lkdjfs;lkdjfs;lkdjfs;lkdjfl;skdjfl;ksdjfl;kdsjflkdfkjdflkjdflkjsdlfkjdlfkjdlfkj.”

The fact that it is indented means that it is a quote, so you don't need quotation marks. You may use quotation marks within the block quote if it is needed though. Your normal paragraph indentation could be 5 to 8 spaces. Your block indentation should be 4 spaces for the main body of the paragraph and 4 more if you indent the first line of the quote (see Turabian). Don't use a block quote unless you have two or more sentences with 8 or more lines. It should also be single spaced according to Turabian.

Another point needs to be made on block quoting. Your dissertation will have greater validity if it is not a string of quotes from other people—especially when you are describing your own ministry project. We want to hear from you. But in order not to plagiarize and still include valuable material, you may block quote from authors. If it turns out to be lengthy sections, it would be better to set up an appendix to cover that material. Otherwise, just quote the most important data. But do not “pad” the dissertation with quotes to lengthen it.

- e) Use an “em dash” (—) or a double hyphen (--) on extended phrases, not a single hyphen. For example: Instead of, “this was the man they were looking **for-all** along!” It should be: “this was the man they were looking **for--all** along!” Do you see how “for-all” can look like a hyphenated word?
- f) When the dissertation advisor or reviewer sends back a document with suggestions and marked up with ink, take them seriously. You need to at least show that you have wrestled with the suggestions and come to a conclusion, even if you may disagree. Don't just ignore the corrections. They have to be dealt with.
- g) Greek, Hebrew and Latin words may be italicized or underlined. But don't capitalize the whole word. Don't: LOGOS. Rather, Logos or *Logos* or “𐤠𐤋𐤃𐤇”. If you are using the original alphabet in Greek or Hebrew, don't italicize or underline.
- i) Don't “right justify” the text of the document or anything in it. To right justify means that you line up all your words neatly on the right margin as well as the left. Although

this looks neat from a distance, the reader is thrown off by the spacing between words and it hinders the flow of the text. Use left justification only.

- j) Students generally don't forget the Title Page and the Table of Contents. But many forget to do the following on the final draft: the abstract, acknowledgment, signature page, copyright page, List of Tables/Illustrations, etc. Review the manual before you turn in your final draft.

Further suggestions:

- a) Don't use *op. cit.* which is confusing since the reader doesn't know which book is being referred to if there is more than one by the same author being cited. Instead, if you are quoting a previous source, just put the author's last name and the page number, e.g., Smith, 24. Or, if you are citing more than one of an author's works: Smith, *Essays*, 23.
- b) Don't make sweeping, airtight statements like, "This proves that my theory is true." Be just as forthright, but don't create room for criticism.

#### 4.7 Submission of Dissertation to Reviewer

Erskine Theological Seminary uses a "hidden" or "blind" reviewer system which means that the candidate does not know, and is not to know, the identity of the reviewer. The candidate is not to have contact with the reviewer. Only the advisor is to submit a Prospectus or dissertation to the reviewer. Neither should candidates attach a "letter of explanation" to their Prospectus or dissertation, nor in any other way seek to influence the activity of the reviewer.

Adequate time also must be allowed for the reviewer to complete his or her review of Prospectus or dissertation submissions. For example, after the advisor has approved the final draft of the dissertation and submits a clean copy to the reviewer, the reviewer ordinarily needs up to two weeks to review the dissertation. If approved by the reviewer, the candidate would then need to make final corrections and print final copies of the corrected dissertation. Needless to say, this means that the dissertation needs to be in the hands of the reviewer by late March if one is to have adequate time to make corrections and print final copies prior to the April 20<sup>th</sup> deadline.

#### 4.8 Submitting Final Copies

Once the dissertation advisor and reviewer have approved the dissertation and the candidate has made all necessary corrections, four (4) copies of the dissertation should be copied onto the specified type and quality of acid-free paper and left unbound. Most professional copy centers (such as Kinkos, Office Depot, Minuteman Press, etc.) are equipped and accustomed to printing dissertations for academic students. It is recommended strongly that the candidate use such a printer service rather than trying to duplicate the dissertation on a non-commercial use copier as is often found in churches and offices.

Care should be taken to see that all pages are present and in their proper order, including all required blank pages. Each copy of the dissertation submitted for binding must be accompanied by a set of the “binder’s instructions” (see instructions above).

One copy of the dissertation is sent to Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN) for the purpose of (1) copyrighting the dissertation in the student’s name and (2) making it available online so that it is accessible to others.

An electronic copy of the dissertation should also be prepared and submitted in the PDF format. While it is the responsibility of the student to prepare all of their own materials for submission, McCain Library can provide assistance with the task of electronic conversion if necessary.

#### 4.9 Submitting the Copyright Registration and Distribution Agreement Forms

The current forms for copyright registration and distribution agreement must be submitted at the time that copies for binding are submitted. Copies of these forms are included in Appendix B.

#### 4.10 Dissertation Binding and Copyright Fees

A nominal fee is charged for each copy of the dissertation submitted for binding. Four (4) unbound print copies are required for submission (see “Specifications” above); the candidate may submit additional copies for binding as desired. Binding normally takes 3 to 6 months to complete and is handled by McCain Library who contracts the job to a reputable bindery.

A fee is also charged to the student for copyright registration services. All fees must be submitted along with the final copies of the dissertation submitted for binding. None of these fees may be charged to one’s student account.

## CHAPTER 5

### D.MIN. PROGRAM POLICIES

The following policies, adopted by the faculty, serve as a guide for various aspects of the D.Min. program. Additional policies may be found in the *ETS Catalog*.

#### 5.1 Academic Regalia & Colors

The official colors for the Erskine Theological Seminary D.Min. academic hood are: scarlet velvet facing; black on the outside of the hood; and, the Erskine College colors of garnet and gold on the satin inside. The gown is black with three black stripes on the sleeves; the cap is the standard, black “mortar board” style with a gold tassel.

#### 5.2 Admission

Candidates admitted to the Erskine D.Min. program are expected to have attained:

- A baccalaureate degree from an accredited college;
- A Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent from an accredited seminary or graduate school.
- A “B” (3.0) Grade Point Average for the M.Div. degree (Applicants whose GPA is less than 3.0 but 2.75 (B) or higher will be considered, but more carefully reviewed. They may be required to take additional M.Div. courses at Erskine to make up for any obvious gaps in their education and/or to demonstrate that they can handle the work at the level required by the Erskine program.);
- At least three years of full-time ministerial experience (The Association of Theological Schools, our national accrediting agency, allows a limited number of students to be admitted to D.Min. programs who have completed their M.Div. less than 3 years before admission. The stipulations for admitting such students, however, are: (1) the student must document extensive ministry experience and this documentation must be in the student’s file and (2) no more than 10% of any entering class can be admitted without the required three-year wait beyond the completion of the M.Div.); and,
- A TOEFL score of 550 for applicants from abroad whose first language is not English. The TOEFL may be taken in paper-based, computer-based, or internet-based formats, which are scored differently. We strongly recommend the internet-based format, which measures speaking ability as well as reading, writing, or listening ability. In general, Erskine expects students to score 20(out of 30) or higher on each of the four sections of the internet-based test (thus a total score of 80 or higher out of 120). Erskine expects a score of 550(out of 677) or higher on the paper-based test.

Persons interested in the program are encouraged to discuss their particular situations with Erskine, to see what can be done for them. All applications receive

careful consideration on a case-by-case basis. Only in exceptional circumstances will the stated requirements be waived.

Persons who seek re-admittance into the program must send a request for re-admittance in writing. Only those who have withdrawn from the program in good standing will be considered for re-admittance.

### 5.3 Appeal Process

An appeal process is available in the rare cases when serious disagreements or problems arise between candidates and their advisors, and between advisors and reviewers.

- (1) Either the D.Min. Director or the Dean can serve as a trouble-shooter to resolve minor disputes, help get fruitful conversations started between a candidate and advisor, or give additional help in situations where the candidate needs it.
- (2) Where the advisor and candidate cannot work together, the D.Min. Director can recommend and the Dean appoint, another advisor for the candidate.
- (3) When the advisor and reviewer disagree on the approval of a Prospectus or a Dissertation, the line of appeal is as follows: first the D.Min. Director, then the Post-Graduate Committee, then the Dean. Careful records of this process shall be kept in the Post-Graduate Committee's minutes and the candidate's permanent file.

### 5.4 Course Incompletes

At the course professor's discretion, provided a substantial portion of course work has been completed, a D.Min. student may be assigned the grade of "incomplete." Such a grade must be removed by March 1 after the Fall Semester, April 1 after the January term, August 1 after the Spring Semester, and November 1 after the Summer Semester. A grade of "incomplete" that is not removed by satisfactory completion of the prescribed course assignments by these dates shall be assigned a grade of I/F and zero hours credit on the student's transcript. Exceptional or extraordinary cases may be brought to the Post Graduate Committee for further consideration and appropriate actions. Students not now enrolled, seeking re-admittance to the program, may petition the Post Graduate Committee for handling previous "incomplete" grades according to this policy.

### 5.5 Cross-Registration

With the Atlanta Theological Association: The essential features of the program were designed in the early 1970s by the Atlanta Theological Association (ATA), a consortium of seminaries which includes:

- Candler School of Theology (Emory University, Atlanta, GA)
- Columbia Theological Seminary (Decatur, GA)
- Erskine Theological Seminary
- Interdenominational Theological Center (Atlanta, GA) and
- Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (Columbia, SC)
- Cooperation among the schools includes cross-registration for courses and use of one another's library facilities. Among these schools, Columbia, Erskine, and ITC currently have D.Min. programs in place.

•With the Charlotte Area Seminaries: A similar, but separate agreement has been reached among the Charlotte Area Theological Seminaries, which currently includes Reformed Theological Seminary, and Columbia International University

### 5.6 Faculty Advisor Responsibilities

Advisors and reviewers are residential faculty members appointed by the Dean, acting upon recommendations from the D.Min. Director. Candidates are notified of the advisors with whom they are to work, but reviewers remain "hidden," to keep the reviewer from direct involvement with the Candidate and to keep the conversation about prospecti and dissertations located primarily between the candidate and the advisor. In some situations two-member committees may be appointed where it seems important to do so (by the situation, field, or student). The D.Min. Director remains the permanent program advisor for all D.Min. candidates for the duration of their program. Listed below are the responsibilities of the project/dissertation advisor and reviewer (see next section).

The role of the advisor is:

- to work closely with the appointed candidates, from beginning to end of the project/dissertation;
- to work through the approval process working in cooperation with the reviewer; and,
- to notify the D.Min. Director of the candidate's progress through the various stages of the project/dissertation and to place completed approval forms in the candidate's permanent file.

### 5.7 Faculty Reviewer Responsibilities

The role of the Reviewer is:

- to read the Prospectus and the dissertation of the appointed candidates and carry out the scheduled approvals, recording the outcomes in writing (see criteria check lists and forms);
- to make considered suggestions wherever appropriate for strengthening or improving the documents under consideration;
- to respond to these approval points promptly, ordinarily within one week for the Prospectus, two weeks for the dissertation; and,
- to work in cooperation with the advisor in each case.

### 5.10 Honor Code (Plagiarism, Cheating, Etc.) *See also 5.17 Community Life Statement*

Every student at Erskine Theological Seminary has the responsibility to uphold the honor of the Seminary by maintaining the highest Christian standards of personal honor and integrity. The primary purpose of this code is to aid in the maintaining of a scholarly environment and to emphasize the necessity for such standards, not only for the

good of the institution, but for the individual students themselves in all facets of Seminary.

#### Section A.

The Honor Code will be applicable to all cases of cheating, stealing, and lying. Anyone, including members of the faculty or administration discovering a violation of the Honor Code or other Student Body Association (SBA) regulations, should report violations as soon as possible after discovering and/or authentication of a violation to a member of the SBA government or to faculty members and administration.

#### 1. Cheating:

- a. Definition: The use of information not allowed by the instructor, receiving credit for work that is not one's own or any dishonest procedures concerning elections.
- b. Punishment: The punishment will be determined by the Dean of the Seminary in consultation with any faculty members he wishes to include.

#### 2. Plagiarism:

- a. Definition: Plagiarism is the use in writing or wording or of ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. Occurrences of plagiarism shall be considered "documented" when the instructor is able to produce documentary evidence that plagiarism has occurred. Occurrences of plagiarism shall be considered "flagrant" when the instructor has reason to believe that the plagiarism is motivated by a deliberate attempt to receive credit for ideas or work not the student's own.
- b. Punishment: The instructor involved in consultation with the Dean may recommend measures deemed appropriate. This may be failure of a course, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the severity of the case. In cases of flagrant plagiarism, the offending student will receive the following penalties: failure of the course(s) in which plagiarized or stolen work is submitted; dismissal from the seminary for a minimum of one semester; and forfeiture of the right to tuition refunds during the semester(s) affected. Before such penalties are imposed, a committee comprised of the Chairs of the three seminary Departments must agree that they are appropriate to the case; appeals in such cases may only be addressed to the President of Erskine College and Theological Seminary.

#### 3. Stealing:

- a. Definition: The unauthorized taking of property of another and/or the knowledgeable possession of stolen or illegal property.
- b. Punishment: Recommendation of suspension or expulsion, and/or other suitable measures administered according to the circumstances of the situation.

#### 4. Lying:

- a. Definition: Knowingly and willfully giving false information, written or oral, to student government councils, Seminary officials, or faculty members.
- b. Punishment: Recommendation of suspension or expulsion, and/or other suitable measures administered according to the circumstances of the situation.

Note: A faculty member may choose to deal with instances of cheating and plagiarism directly. If so, the student or students involved must be kept fully informed of the process and the outcome. If a student feels he or she has been treated unfairly, he or she may appeal to the Dean of the Seminary.

#### Section B. Responsibility of the Student.

1. If a student chooses to ignore an Honor Code violation, he/she proves by those actions that he/she condones the violation.
2. If the situation renders it possible, an additional witness to the infraction of the Honor Code is always desirable.
3. Every student registered at Erskine Seminary is a member of the SBA and is, therefore, under the Honor Code and must abide by the above stated Honor Code.

#### Section C. Responsibility of the Faculty.

1. It is important that the teacher be specific and realistic in making clear exactly how much collaboration is allowable in the assignment of themes, library work, and any other outside requirements.
2. Before the test, it is best that the teachers be completely frank about their plans and intentions in regard to legitimate questions during quizzes and examinations. The teacher should remind the students that the test is being given under the Honor Code. The advisability of remaining in or leaving the testing room is left to the discretion of the teacher.
3. Faculty members should understand that conversation outside the classroom about the questions that students may be able to recall is expected. Such conversations are not infringements of the Honor Code.

#### 5.11 Minimum TOEFL Score

For applicants from abroad whose native or first language is not English, a minimum TOEFL score of 550 is required. **See the explanation of this above.**

#### 5.12 Revising Course Grades

A required course will have to be re-taken for credit in any case. If the course is an elective, the student may re-take the same course or another elective course, so long as the elective distribution requirement is met for that student's program. The grade and credit hours for the re-take are then computed in the student's Grade Point Average instead of the I/F and zero credit hours of the earlier course. Full tuition is charged for a repeated course, and the student is expected to re-take the entire course.

To improve a grade or Grade Point Average, a student may re-take a course at any time, if and when it is offered. The credit hours, if earned, and the higher of the two grades are calculated in the GPA, but all grades remain on the transcript and the same course cannot be computed twice to satisfy graduation requirements. Full tuition is charged for a repeated course, and the student is expected to re-take the entire course.

### 5.13 Taking a D.Min. Course for M.Div. Academic Credit

The faculty will keep the D.Min. and M.Div. programs separate but consider exceptions in rare cases, using the following criteria:

- a) the potential effects of the M.Div. student on the dynamics of the D.Min. class;
- b) the potential effects of a D.Min. class upon the M.Div. student (e.g., intimidation, being overwhelmed, etc.);
- c) the likelihood of the D.Min. course being offered soon at the M.Div. level;
- d) the student's need for professional development in the course area; and,
- e) the permission of the course professor.

Cases regarding M.Div. students wishing to take a D.Min. course for M.Div. credit are to be referred to both the Graduate and Post Graduate Committees.

### 5.14 Taking an M.Div. Course for D.Min. Academic Credit

The faculty will keep the D.Min. and M.Div. programs separate but consider exceptions in rare cases, these to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, using the following criteria:

- a) suitable extensions to the requirements of the M.Div. course can be added to satisfy the norms, functions, and data rubrics of the D.Min. program;
- b) the M.Div. course naturally lends itself to expansion to satisfy the rubrics of the D.Min. program;
- c) the student's urgent need for a course on a particular subject;
- d) the likelihood of the M.Div. course being offered soon at the D.Min. level; and,
- e) the permission of the course professor.

Cases regarding D.Min. students wishing to take a M.Div. course for D.Min. credit are to be referred to both the Graduate and Post Graduate Committees.

### 5.15 Transfer Credit

1. The Seminary will accept up to eighteen (18) hours of transfer credit for prior work done in an accredited Th.M., D.Min., or Ph.D. program. Only courses which contribute to the student's D.Min. program and in which the student earned a "B" grade, or better, will be considered. Exceptions may be requested in writing to the Post Graduate Committee. Working with the registrar, the D.Min. Director will identify the rubrics (norms, functions, contexts, supervised clinical experience) to which such transfer credit applies.
2. Students may take up to half of their D.Min. program on a cross-registration basis at sister schools of the Atlanta Theological Association and the Charlotte Area Theological Schools, with which Erskine has cooperative agreements.
3. In any case, to earn the Erskine D.Min. degree, students will take at least eighteen (18) hours at Erskine, including the two foundations courses, at least one elective, and the project/dissertation.

### 5.16 Withdrawal From & Re-Admittance Into the D.Min. Program

#### Policy on withdrawals:

1. A student may temporarily withdraw from the program for a period of up to one year per request, and not more than two years total.
2. The period of temporary withdrawal shall not count toward the four-year time limit set for completion of the degree.
3. The period of temporary withdrawal shall require no tuition payments by the student.
4. The student does not need to register during the period of temporary withdrawal.
5. The temporary withdrawal becomes a permanent withdrawal if the student does not register for further work in the program at the end of the period of temporary withdrawal.
6. To request a temporary withdrawal, the student sends a letter of request and explanation to the D.Min. Director, who is authorized to grant the request if it seems warranted. The letter of request will be placed in the student's file, the action reported to the Post Graduate Committee, and a notation made of it in the Committee's minutes.
7. The School may place a student into a period of temporary withdrawal if the administration perceives the student has become inactive in the program for as many as three semesters in a row. The time limit for temporary withdrawal in such cases shall not exceed one year. Otherwise the previous policy items shall apply as well, including the time factors, the lapse into permanent withdrawal, and appropriate records of the action taken.

#### Policy on re-admission:

Persons who seek re-admittance into the D.Min. program must send a written request for re-admittance to the Post Graduate Committee. Only those who have withdrawn from the program in good standing will be considered for re-admittance. All applicable fees must be paid in full.

### 5.17 Erskine Theological Seminary Community Life Statement

Erskine Theological Seminary is not a local church, and as such, it does not assume direct responsibility for the spiritual nurture and discipline of believers. Rather, all members of the Seminary community (students, faculty members, and staff members) are expected to be active participants in the life of their respective local churches and/or denominations and to submit themselves to those churches/denominations, under the ultimate authority of Christ and the Scriptures. At the same time, however, Erskine is a community of believers who come together regularly for worship, fellowship, service, and the spiritual and academic preparation of ministers of the gospel. Therefore, Erskine

expects all members of the community to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:27), and to live lives worthy of the calling they have received (Eph. 4:1).

The Christian life cannot be reduced to a handful of rules, for Christian maturity involves growing in knowledge of and adherence to the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:28). Members of the Erskine community are expected to rely upon the Holy Spirit in cultivating the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16), and to be growing in the characteristics which Paul prescribes for Christian leaders in 1 Timothy 3. Nevertheless, certain aspects of Christian life deserve special mention in this statement, since these are some of the areas where the gospel differs radically from the values of our society, and thus they are among the ways in which believers are called to be distinct from the world. *We expect all members of our community to share the following convictions and to uphold the following standards of Christian community life:*

- I. *We believe* that the ultimate goal of human life, and thus especially of Christian life, is the glory of God (Rom. 11:36, 1 Cor. 10:31). *We believe* that God has created all human beings in his image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-7), and thus that all people are of value and significance. *We believe* further that all Christians are fellow members of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5), and thus are of special value to God. In light of these truths, *we believe* that Christian life is characterized by humility with respect to both God (because God is the ultimate end of Christian life) and other believers (because they are sharers in the grace of life which God has given us).
  - A. *Therefore, we expect* members of the Erskine community to be growing in Christian humility as they grow in awareness of the vastness of God's majesty and grace, and of their own unworthiness before God. *We expect* such humility to manifest itself in a spirit of openness to areas where God wants to teach, reprove, or transform, both in individual and in corporate life.
  - B. *We expect* this humility to manifest itself in relationships with other members of the community. *We expect* community members to respect and value those people with whom they come into contact on campus. They refuse to use other people simply as means to their own ends. They are willing to recognize the presence of Christ with and in other believers. They attempt to encourage, love, and console others as needed. They respect those with whom they disagree, and they treat others charitably and fairly in the midst of theological debate/discussion.
  - C. *We expect* members of the community to conduct themselves with integrity and respect for the persons, the property, and the work of others. Community members speak the truth to one another in love, refrain from the theft or misuse of others' property, and conduct their academic work honestly, without cheating or plagiarizing. (Cheating and plagiarizing are defined in the Student Handbook's discussion of the Honor Code. Standards of integrity for faculty members in their conduct toward students and in their own academic research are enumerated throughout the Faculty Handbook)

II. *We believe* that the Church universal is the body of Christ, which includes people of both sexes and all races, economic classes, and ethnic groups (Gal. 3:28). *We believe* further that Christians are called to celebrate the universality and unity of Christ's body in their relationships with one another (Eph. 4:2-6).

- A. *Therefore, we expect* community members to be active in seeking reconciliation and unity among races, classes, and sexes, both in the Church and in the broader society.
- B. *We expect* members of the community to be willing to value and learn from the positive contributions which Christians of other groups can make to the universal body of Christ. This involves a respect for the insights and customs of other cultures and a desire to bring all cultures (one's own and others') under the judgment of Scripture.
- C. *We expect* community members to abstain from discrimination, deliberate divisiveness, malicious humor, and gossip.

III. *We believe* that God created humanity male and female and that appropriate sexual expression is a gift from God. *We believe* further that God has ordained monogamous, heterosexual marriage (a life-long commitment of a man and a woman to each other) as the only proper context in which intimate sexual expression is to take place. *We believe* that sexual purity involves more than simply abstinence from physical acts, that it is also a matter of honoring God through one's thoughts and desires (Matt. 5:27-30). We also believe that relationships between men and women (both between spouses and outside of marriage) are grounded in a respect for other people and a willingness to put others first.

- A. *Therefore, we expect* all members of the community to abstain from all intimate sexual expression either prior to or outside of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.
- B. *We expect* all community members to treat members of the opposite sex with respect, to abstain from sexual harassment and sexual exploitation in any form.
- C. *We expect* all members of the Erskine community to abstain from the use of pornographic material and to exercise discretion in choosing forms of entertainment which can easily incite lust.

IV. *We believe* that Christians are called to be filled with and controlled by the Spirit and to avoid enslavement to physical masters such as food and alcohol (1 Cor. 6:12-13, Eph. 5:18).

*Therefore, we expect* members of the Erskine community to avoid enslavement to physical substances which God has given by using them in moderation. Among other things, this involves refraining from the illegal (non-medical) use of drugs and moderation in (or abstinence from) the use of alcohol. (All members of the Erskine Seminary community are reminded that Erskine College is a dry campus

and are asked to respect the College's position by not consuming any alcohol on campus.)

The Seminary urges its members to exercise humility, forbearance, and, if necessary, loving confrontation in upholding these convictions and expectations. The Seminary encourages individuals always to follow the principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-22. Specific applications of these principles may be found in the Seminary catalog, p. 30, "Grievance Procedures," and p. 113, "Student Conduct," as well as in the Student Handbook's discussion of the Honor Code. The use of Seminary disciplinary procedures is always viewed as a last resort. The Seminary reserves the right to request at any time the withdrawal of those whose conduct is detrimental to his or her health or whose

## CHAPTER 6

### STYLE AND FORM IN WRITING

A dissertation is a formal, scholarly, literary project that must conform to accepted standards of writing in terms of both style and form. This chapter seeks to highlight problems that arise frequently in the writing of a dissertation, thesis, or research paper.<sup>8</sup> Except where noted herein, written work should conform to William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, *Elements of Style*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., NY: MacMillan, 1979, Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, and *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003. Students should familiarize themselves thoroughly with these standards, and apply them consistently. For a Turabian software program, one may wish to consider StyleEase at <http://www.styleease.com/ChiMain.htm>.

#### General Guidelines

1. Avoid verbosity and thesaurus abuse. Write with an economy of words in a clear, succinct, smooth, prose manner.
2. Consistency is always the norm in formal writing. Use only one form of style throughout the dissertation.
3. Use of the personal pronoun "I" should normally be avoided but is preferable to such constructions as "this writer," "this author," and "the student." When references to oneself are necessary, as in sections where the background of a dissertation or personal conclusions are stated, limited use of the personal pronoun "I" is permissible.
4. Racism, sexism, and ageism in both language and attitude are not permitted.
5. Use active voice and the present tense for verbs, when possible. For example:
 

"John Calvin writes" *rather than* "John Calvin wrote (or has written)"  
 "Luther states" *rather than* "Luther stated (or has stated)"  
 "Scholars contend" *rather than* "It has been contended by scholars that . . ."  
 "The pastor called the boy" *rather than* "The boy was called by the pastor"
6. Avoid beginning many sentences in the same manner as well as the repetition of a word or phrase in the same sentence.

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<sup>8</sup>Some portions adapted from R. Alan Culpepper and Jacquelyn Culpepper, *Manual of Procedure, Form, and Style* (Louisville, KY: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989).

7. Be certain that antecedents are identified easily. Constructions such as "It is" and "This is" often are ambiguous. Avoid, too, split infinitives, dangling participles, and ending a sentence or phrase with a preposition.

Split infinitive (verb): placing an adverb between "to" and the verb or infinitive it governs. For example: "To diligently research" should be written as "to research diligently" in order not to split the infinitive.

Dangling modifier: a word or phrase which has no definite focus or in which the focus is misplaced. Consider the following example: "Sitting among the teachers of the law, Jesus' mother called him." Corrected: "Sitting among the teachers of the law, Jesus heard his mother call him."

Ending with a preposition: a preposition is used to show the relationship between its object and another word in the sentence. It is incorrect to end a sentence or phrase with a preposition. Note the following incorrect examples: "Those seeking to murder Paul demanded to know where he was at." "The soldiers wanted to know what the stone was rolled away with." Correct: "Those seeking to murder Paul demanded to know where he was being hidden." "The soldiers wanted to know with what the stone was rolled away."

8. A basic rule in writing is: be both accurate and consistent.

### Punctuation

One should strive to use the fewest punctuation marks necessary to provide clarity of expression. The following notes provide direction in some of the more commonly encountered problems in punctuation. More detailed guidance is available in Turabian, Strunk and White, or *The Chicago Manual of Style*. References to applicable sections of Turabian are included below.

1. Terminal punctuation. One space should follow terminal punctuation in running text. For ease of readability, however, two spaces following terminal punctuation may be used, as is the case in this document. In any event, only one style of spacing should be used in a document. Never use double punctuation. For example, a question mark takes precedence over a comma as a footnote entry ("Is Jesus God?" *Review and Expositor*, etc.). T 3.54-3.62
2. Comma. Use commas judiciously for clarity of meaning and smoothness of expression. A series of three or more words, phrases, or clauses takes a comma between each of the elements and before a conjunction separating the last two. T 3.65-3.83; especially 3.68

3. Colon. A colon should be followed by two spaces. An exception is in the citation of Biblical references; here, no spaces precede or follow a colon used to separate chapter and verse divisions. Example: John 3:16. T 2.46
4. Virgule or slash. Avoid using the virgule (/) whenever possible. It is acceptable, however, to make infrequent use of "and/or" and "his/her."
5. Quotation Marks. Full quotation marks (") are used to enclose direct quotations and unusual terms. Single quotation marks (') are used to enclose a quotation within a quotation that is run into the body of the text. Example: Addressing the necessity of editing one's own written work, Donald M. Murray states, "Peter F. Drucker, the prolific business writer, calls his first draft 'the zero draft'—after that he can start counting." T 5.11, 5.16, 5.17

Single quotation marks also are used when a foreign term or phrase is translated into English, e.g., Geschichte, 'history' and to set off special terms such as 'death of God.' Note that the closing period (comma or semi-colon) is placed within the closing quotation mark. T 3.107 b

6. Dash. The dash or em dash, an elongated hyphen consists of two hyphens with no space between or on either side of them. Most word processors now offer the option of a solid em dash (—) as opposed to the use of two dashes (--). T 3.91-3.95
7. Underlining and *Italics*. Titles of works either may be underlined or italicized. Only one of these options, however, should be used in a document. T 8.38, 4.14 Punctuation immediately following italicized words (except parentheses, brackets, or quotation marks) must be in italics also. T 4.15
8. **Boldface type**. Boldface type should not be used.

### Typeface and Lines Per Page

Not too small; and **not too large**. Ornamental typefaces are not permitted for papers or dissertations. Courier (i.e., Courier) is not acceptable either. Times Roman or Times New Roman (typeface used in this manual) are perhaps the best choices. Twelve-point type (ten characters per inch), as is used in this manual, is standard for text. It is permissible to use ten-point type (twelve characters per inch) for footnotes. The key is that, as Turabian states, "All type, including superscript numbers and letters, must be large enough and dark enough to be clearly legible even on microfilm" (T 13.27).

Double-spaced pages should have between twenty-five and twenty-seven lines of text per page. Of course, pages with footnotes will have fewer lines of text. Text should be printed on one side of the paper only.

### Capitalization

Capitalization follows general conventions. Note the following guidelines:

1. Full caps, i.e., UPPERCASE, are used for all major divisions including titles of theses, dissertations, chapters, tables of content, preface, indexes, list of tables, list of abbreviations, abstracts, bibliographies, and appendixes. T 1.16, 1.36
2. Capitalize only the first letter of each main word in the heading or subheading of the Table of Contents. T 1.16
3. Terms referring to the Holy Bible are capitalized as in: Bible, Biblical, Scripture, Scriptural, and Word of God. Likewise, "Christian" is capitalized. "Gospel" is capitalized only when referring to a specific book of the Bible. "Church" is capitalized when referring to a specific congregation or body as in the Due West ARP Church and the Church universal, but "church" in reference to a local congregation when its proper name is not cited (for example, "They attend church faithfully" versus "They attend Riverside Presbyterian Church regularly.>").
4. References to particular centuries should be spelled out, in lowercase. T 2.53

### Abbreviations

1. Do not use titles such as 'Dr.' or 'Prof.' when referring to authors, scholars, or professors in text, footnotes, or the bibliography. In the first citation in text, give the person's complete name; then use only the last name in subsequent references unless the first or other name is necessary for clarity and distinction (e.g., Franklin Graham vs. Billy Graham). Cf. T 8.34
2. 'Saint' may be abbreviated when it stands before the name of a Christian saint (St. Thomas Aquinas), but is omitted before the names of apostles, evangelists, and church fathers (Matthew, Mark, Luke, Paul, Augustine, Jerome, etc.). T 2.9
3. Dates and page numbers are never spelled out. Do not begin a sentence with a numeral; either spell out the number or rewrite the sentence so that the number does not begin the sentence (e.g., "Two hundred years ago . . ."). T 2.29, 2.30
4. References to particular centuries should be spelled out, in lower case. T 2.53

5. Spell out numbers of less than three digits in the body of the text. Use numerals for all numbers 100 or more. For example: "Only twenty-nine percent of church-goers can recite more than 150 verses of Scripture from memory."
6. Use the abbreviation "no." instead of the number or pound sign (#).
7. A period and a space are used after the initials of personal names (e.g., W. H. F. Kuykendall), but there is no space after an internal period of standard abbreviations typically used for scholarly degrees and professional and honorary designations (e.g., D.Min., M.Div., Ph.D., B.A., M.D., S.T.B., etc.). T 2.2, 2.5
8. Spell out a civil, military, professional, or religious title when it precedes the family name alone (e.g., Senator Thurmond, Reverend Jones, etc.), but use the appropriate abbreviation before a full name (e.g., Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.). T 2.8
9. In the citation of Scripture, the following forms are preferred:
 

In text: 2 Samuel 12:7, or, if beginning a sentence: Second Samuel 12:7  
In footnotes and parentheses: 2 Sam. 12:7
10. In formal writing, references to the year should not be abbreviated (e.g., '95). T 2.52
11. The ampersand (&) may be used in footnotes and bibliographies when applicable but must be spelled out in text. For example: Harper & Row (footnote); Harper and Row (text). T 8.59
12. The following abbreviations for Scriptural references may be used in footnotes and parentheses (based upon *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14<sup>th</sup> edition):

#### Old Testament

Genesis	Gen.
Exodus	Exod.
Leviticus	Lev.
Numbers	Num.
Deuteronomy	Deut.
Joshua	Josh.
Judges	Judg.
Ruth	Ruth
1 Samuel	1 Sam.
2 Samuel	2 Sam.
1 Kings	1 Kings
2 Kings	2 Kings
1 Chronicles	1 Chron.

2 Chronicles	2 Chron.
Ezra	Ezra
Nehemiah	Neh.
Esther	Esther
Job	Job
Psalms	Ps. ( <i>pl.</i> Pss.)
Proverbs	Prov.
Ecclesiastes	Eccles.
Song of Solomon	Song of Sol.
Isaiah	Isa.
Jeremiah	Jer.
Lamentations	Lam.
Ezekiel	Ezek.
Daniel	Dan.
Hosea	Hos.
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obadiah	Obad.
Jonah	Jon.
Micah	Mic.
Nahum	Nah.
Habakkuk	Hab.
Haggai	Hag.
Zechariah	Zech.
Malachi	Mal.

### New Testament

Matthew	Matt.
Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke
John	John
Acts of the Apostles	Acts
Romans	Rom.
1 Corinthians	1 Cor.
2 Corinthians	2 Cor.
Galatians	Gal.
Ephesians	Eph.
Philippians	Phil.
Colossians	Col.
1 Thessalonians	1 Thess.
2 Thessalonians	2 Thess.
1 Timothy	1 Tim.
2 Timothy	2 Tim.
Titus	Titus
Philemon	Philem.

Hebrews	Heb.
James	James
1 Peter	1 Pet.
2 Peter	2 Pet.
1 John	1 John
2 John	2 John
3 John	3 John
Jude	Jude
Revelation or Apocalypse	Rev. Apoc.

Consult *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14<sup>th</sup> edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 475 for abbreviations for apocryphal documents.

### Margins and Indentations

1. A one and one-half inch margin is required on the left (so that the text will remain centered on the page after binding) with a one inch margin at the top, bottom, and right. Nothing should intrude into the margins except the page numbers which should appear between one-half inch and three-quarters inch from the top and right margins. The page number for numbered first pages appears centered three-quarters to one inch from the bottom of the page.
2. Paragraphs should be indented one tab stop of one-half inch. Footnotes are indented the same as paragraphs. T 14.4, 14.13
3. Block quotations are set in an additional four spaces from the left margin but never from the right; the normal right margin is maintained. If the block quotation has a paragraph opening (indentation), that paragraph opening is indented an additional four spaces from the left. Observe correct usage in the following italicized example that incorporates a block quote within a normal paragraph setting (T 5.4, 5.30–5.34):

*This example demonstrates the proper use of margins and indentations to be used when preparing one's dissertation. These standards, adopted by the faculty of Erskine Theological Seminary, should be adhered to consistently. In fact, Turabian states that:*

*The critical rule for paragraph indentation is consistency. Whether the amount is five or eight spaces or some other measure, it must always be the same. Word processing programs generally have a standard indentation key. Block quotations (extracts) of prose all should be indented the same distance from the left margin of the text, and paragraph openings within them should have a consistent additional indentation.<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup>Turabian 5.30-33.

*Hence, Erskine Theological Seminary's standards are consistent with those of current practice. Style and form standards are necessary for ease of reading and for the clear presentation of one's research in ministry.*

4. Text should be written using left-hand justification only; do not use full justification. The right-hand edge of text should have a "ragged" edge as is used in this manual.

### Word Division

When it is necessary to hyphenate a word, it is always best to consult a dictionary for proper division (hyphenation) of the word. See Turabian 3.35-53 for basic guidelines.

### Headings

Headings and subheadings are used to clarify the organization that should be inherent in a paper or dissertation; they are not a substitute for clear organization. A chapter's organization and flow should be clear even without the marking of its subdivisions. One should strive to present the material in such a manner as to not require extensive and complex subdivisions.

The first or higher level headings should have greater attention value than lower headings. Attention value customarily is ascribed through the use of position (centered, side), the type of text (italic, bold, underline), and spacing (blank space above and below). Note that the generic heading "CHAPTER" together with the chapter's title, also rendered in all caps, stand apart from the text headings and are not to be considered as a heading "level." The following heading divisions may be used in the text following chapter and title names.

1. Centered heading, underlined, with capitalized headline style; triple space above and below the heading. For headings over four inches long, divide the heading using a single-spaced, inverted-pyramid format:

The Resurrection and the Controversy between  
the Sadducees and Pharisees

2. Centered heading in text type, capitalized headline style; triple space above and below the heading. For headings over four inches long, divide the heading using a single-spaced, inverted-pyramid format:

The Wounded Healer in Contemporary Theology

3. Side heading placed flush left, underlined, capitalized headline style. Triple space above with double space below. Side headings more than two and a half inches long should be divided with the shorter portion placed a single space below, indented two spaces:

The Relationship of the Fourth Gospel  
to the Synoptic Gospels

4. Side heading placed flush left, capitalized headline style. Triple space above and double space below. Side headings more than two and a half inches long should be divided with the shorter portion placed a single space below, indented two spaces:

Reformation Theology in the Next Century

5. Run in heading at beginning of paragraph, underlined, capitalized sentence style with a period at the end. Begin the text of the paragraph on the same line. Triple space to paragraph headings and indent six to eight spaces.

Preaching the Parables. The parables of Jesus contained in the gospels provide fertile ground for sermons that are rich in both content and color.

The following example shows the arrangement of the five levels of heading together for comparison:

The Resurrection and the Controversy between  
the Sadducees and Pharisees

The Wounded Healer in Contemporary Society

The Relationship of the Fourth Gospel  
To the Synoptic Gospels

Reformation Theology in the Next Century

Preaching the Parables. The parables of Jesus contained in the gospels provide fertile ground for sermons that are rich in both content and color.

If fewer than five levels are required, the style of these levels may be selected in any suitable *descending order*. A page should never end with a subheading. T 1.38

### Pagination

See "Erskine Seminary Specifications for the D.Min. Dissertation." Note that front matter uses small Roman numerals (i.e., *i, ii, iii, iv*, etc.) while numbering with Arabic numerals (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) begins with the first page of the first chapter and continues without interruption throughout the body, appendixes, and bibliography. No page number is required on the first page of a chapter or other major division. If a page number is used on the first page for each major division (chapter, appendix, bibliography), the number is centered three-quarters to one inch from the bottom of the page. All subsequent page numbers for that division are placed between one-half inch and three-quarters inch from the top, right corner of the page. T 1.4, 14.6–14.8

### Some Commonly Misspelled or Misused Words

Care should be taken to ensure that correct spelling and proper usage of words is maintained. Careful proofreading is a necessity. Even the best computer spellchecker will not catch a correctly spelled but misused word (e.g., "there" vs. "their").

The following are some of the more commonly encountered misspelled, misused, or confused words. For a more complete discussion and examples, see Strunk & White, chapter four, "Words and Expressions Commonly Misused."

affective	effective
affects	effects
its	it's (its = possessive pronoun; it's = verbal contraction: it is)
lose	loose loss
quite	quiet
their	there
to	too, two
weather	whether
your	you're (contractions should not be used in formal writing)

### Quotations

The purpose of quotations in a dissertation is to cite specific or unique information, acknowledge the original source of ideas or material, or establish the authority for statements made. Failure to give proper credit for material used, whether quoted directly or paraphrased, is plagiarism and is unacceptable. For a good discussion of plagiarism, see Walter S. Achtert & Joseph Gibaldi, *The MLA Style Manual* (NY: The Modern Language Association of America, 1985), 4-5. See also, Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (NY: The Modern Language

Association of America, 1998), 151-152. As Achtert and Gibaldi summarize: "In short, to plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from someone else, and to do so is considered a violation of the professional responsibility to acknowledge 'academic debts' . . ."

Proper consideration must be given also to the limits of "fair use" as defined by the Copyright Act of 1976. Given these standards, one should make judicious and selective use of quotations. The dissertation should be written so as not to be simply a stringing together of a vast array of quotations. The following guidelines should be adhered to when dealing with quotations:

1. All quotations must be introduced. They should not be left as freestanding entities. Example: As Calvin asserts: "True and substantial wisdom consists principally of two parts: the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves."
2. A prose quotation that runs to four or more lines of text in the dissertation should be set off using the "block quotation" format (See "Margins and Indentations," No. 3, above). **Note that this ETS standard differs from and takes precedence over the Turabian rule.**
3. Direct quotes must be accurate in every detail. There are times, however, when it is necessary to show corrections. Corrections may be shown in two ways:
  - a. the use of the Latin word *sic* ("so," always in italics, within non-italicized brackets, and without a period) to indicate that the quotation is cited accurately from the original, even though the correct data is not supplied. For example: Thou shalt shew [*sic*] unto me the path of life. T 5.36
  - b. the use of brackets around the correct data or interpolations. Parentheses may not be used for this purpose. For example: Luke 12:13 states that "Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus], "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." The original quote says "him;" here, the name of Jesus has been substituted for the sake of clarity. In the following example, the wrong date was given in the original; the correct date is supplied in brackets: "C. S. Lewis' book, *Christian Behaviour*, was first published by the Macmillan Company in 1945 [1943]." T 5.35, 5.37
4. If a portion of the quote is altered in any way (e.g., italics or underscoring added), the note [italics added] or [emphasis added] should be inserted after the quote or indicated in the footnote.

### Footnotes

Footnotes are used both for reference and for content. Reference notes cite the authority for statements made in the text and make cross-references. Content notes offer acknowledgements and make incidental remarks on, amplify, or qualify textual

discussion. T 8.3 Every original idea borrowed from another person must be acknowledged, but not information that may be regarded as common knowledge.

The Erskine Seminary standard requires footnotes (notes placed at the bottom of the page on which referenced material occurs) rather than endnotes or parenthetical references. Additionally, footnotes are preferred for works such as dissertations that will be microfilmed in order to allow the document to be read on microfilm without having to search for a reference in the back matter.

The following rules should guide one's placement and form of footnotes:

1. The footnote number should be a superscript numeral placed at the end of the sentence, following the concluding punctuation.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes greater clarity may be had by placing the superscript number immediately following the key word<sup>2</sup> of an idea.
2. Footnotes are numbered consecutively throughout each chapter. The first footnote of each chapter will be numbered one.<sup>1</sup>
3. A footnote separator line of one and one-half to two inches, placed flush with the left margin, must be used to separate text from footnotes. If a footnote runs over onto the following page, a footnote continuation separator (solid line running from margin to margin) should be inserted on that page. A double-space should appear above and below the separator line (double-space from last line of text to separator line, then double-space to first line of footnote). On pages that lack a full page of text, the footnote may be placed at the bottom of the page rather than immediately (double-space) beneath the last line of text.
4. Foot notes are indented the same amount as text paragraphs (six to eight spaces). The footnote number should be a superscript here as well and is placed at the opening of the required indentation. No space should occur between the number and the first letter or word of the footnote (e.g., <sup>1</sup>Wayne E. Oates). Footnotes are single-spaced internally with a blank line between footnotes as demonstrated here:

<sup>1</sup>Wayne E. Oates, *The Christian Pastor*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., revised (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), 219-220.

<sup>2</sup>Claus Westermann, *The Structure of the Book of Job: A Form-Critical Analysis*, trans. Charles A. Muenchow (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 31.

5. A full citation of each reference should be given the first time it is used in each chapter. Subsequent references within a chapter should include the author's family name, a short title, and the page number(s). For example: <sup>3</sup>Oates, *Christian Pastor*, 227.

6. When references to the same work follow one another with no intervening references and no more than two pages since the last citation of the author's name and title, the designation "Ibid." (abbreviation of Latin word "ibidem" meaning "the same") may be used. Ibid. refers only to the immediately preceding footnote. The following guidelines govern the use of "Ibid.":
  - a. If all information, including page reference, is the same, use Ibid. alone. Ibid. must be capitalized in every instance. For example: <sup>4</sup>Ibid.
  - b. If all information is the same except for the page number(s), use Ibid. followed by a comma and the page number(s) of the citation: <sup>5</sup>Ibid., 192.
7. *Idem* (abbreviated *id.*), *op. cit.*, and *loc. cit.* are not to be used.
8. Note that the form for footnotes is different from that for bibliographical entries. See Turabian, sections 9.7–9.13, "Bibliography Entries Compared with Notes," and chapter eleven, "Comparing the Two Documentation Systems" (use forms N and B: "N" designates footnote form, "B" indicates bibliography form). *Note that the reference system described in Turabian chapter 10 is NOT to be used.*

### Bibliography

The bibliography includes much the same material as a full footnote, though with some differences in the form in which that information is presented. The form varies due to the differences in purpose of each. A bibliographical entry provides full bibliographical detail: name(s) of author(s), full title (including subtitle), and place, publisher, and date of publication. The footnote pinpoints the specific location (page, section, etc.) of referenced material within the source cited. In other words, the bibliography identifies which books, journals, etc. were used in the dissertation, while the footnote tells the reader the exact location of the material within the books, journals, etc.

T 9.7 The following general rules provide guidance for constructing a bibliography.

1. Only works that are cited in footnotes should be included in the bibliography. A separate section, "Sources Consulted", may be appended to the bibliography if the listing of such sources is deemed instructive.
2. Arrange works in alphabetical order according to the last name of the authors. Where there are two or more authors, only the first author's name is inverted for the purposes of alphabetizing the list. The names following the first inverted name are given in their normal order of first then last name.

Where the bibliography contains two or more works by the same author, the works are arranged in alphabetical order according to the first major word in the

title (not "A" or "The"). Also, instead of typing the author's name for each entry, use a solid underline of eight spaces (one inch) followed by a period.

Do not intersperse works authored individually with those written in collaboration with others or where the author serves as an editor (T 9.28). Coauthored works follow edited, translated, and compiled works, but the author's name must be repeated (T 9.29). Coauthored works are alphabetized according to the last name of the second author. Examples:

Brueggemann, Walter. "The Formfulness of Grief." *Interpretation*, 31 (1977), 263–275.

\_\_\_\_\_. "From Hurt to Joy, from Death to Life." *Interpretation*, 28 (1974), 3–19.

Gaultiere, William J. "A Biblical Perspective on Therapeutic Treatment of Client Anger at God." *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 8 (1989), 38-46.

Gaultiere, William J. & K. S. Gaultiere. *Mistaken Identity: Clear Up Your Image of God and Enjoy His Love*. Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell, 1989.

3. Articles in reference works should be listed instead of the reference work itself. For example, if several articles are cited in footnotes from the *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, each article should be listed separately according to author in the bibliography rather than a single entry for the dictionary itself.
4. The bibliography should be single-spaced with a blank line between entries. The first line of each entry is flush left, and any runover lines are indented five spaces. T 9.8
5. The bibliography of the dissertation may be presented either without divisions or may be divided into Norms, Functions, and Data sections depending upon which form will best serve the reader.

### Appendixes

Appendixes should be referred to by a simple content footnote rather than an in text citation. T 8.4 Also, see Turabian 1.39-1.45 for guidelines governing the placement and form of appendixes.

### Inclusive Language

The seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. It is the mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary Catalog stands as an example of recommended usage.

As students seek to use inclusive language, they should first think of avoiding phrases and constructions that require gender specific language. Use of plurals (“they” rather than “he,” etc.) may often be appropriate. Use of “one” or “a person” rather than “he” may be appropriate in many instances. When students are forced to use gender specific language, they should use “he/she” or “him/her” as appropriate.

Students may include a footnote indicating commitment to the use of inclusive writing in original work at the first citation of material by others that does not incorporate inclusive language. The following statements serve as examples of such a footnote:

While inclusive language with reference to humans is used in the original work of this dissertation, the masculine pronouns and gender-biased terms used by persons quoted in the study have not been altered nor has the designation, [sic], been employed repetitiously to note their occurrence.

Masculine pronouns have been used for ease of expression and are not intended to indicate gender exclusion.

### Proofreading and Editing

A necessary part of producing a scholarly paper or dissertation involves the student's careful and repeated proofreading and editing of the text before submission to the professor. The text should be as free as possible from errors in content, style, form, grammar, and spelling. Footnote references should be checked for accuracy both of content (especially page numbers) and correspondence (footnotes matched to text references). A common mistake in the writing of a paper with footnotes is the insertion of a new footnote prior to where the designation 'Ibid.' has been employed. This error leaves one with inaccurate footnotes and can be a nightmare to untangle since "Ibid." now erroneously refers to the newly inserted footnote reference rather than to the original.

One suggestion to aid in avoiding such a problem is the following: whenever using the designation 'Ibid.', do so, and then tab over on that same line and write the author's name, short title, and page number(s). Then, when a new footnote is inserted prior to the 'Ibid.' entry, it will be easy to see which 'Ibid.' entries now need to be changed to include the author's name, short title, and page number(s). Once the document is finished, the

extra bibliographical data can be deleted, leaving an 'Ibid.' that accurately reflects what it should. Alternately, one could adopt the practice of always using the author's name, short title, and page number(s) for each footnote entry after the first full reference in each chapter, and then go back and replace these entries with 'Ibid.' as appropriate once the chapter is completed.

While proofreading is used to catch and correct errors, editing is used to refine and polish a document. Extraneous material, cumbersome sentences, awkward formatting, etc. need to be eliminated. Since editing often is tedious, time-consuming work, students need to be sure to allow plenty of time to work through the document a number of times.

If a dissertation is too long, editing can bring the document into the page limits in a couple of ways. First, nearly every dissertation contains material that is not truly germane to the topic. Such material can either be eliminated entirely or simply referenced in a footnote. Second, valuable line spacing can be recovered through the use of 'line editing' where paragraphs that end with only a word or two on a line are rewritten (shortened) so that the last line of a paragraph is a full one and the line once occupied by a word or two is removed.

Editing also will require careful, consistent, and informed use of the style and form standards adopted by the faculty of the seminary. The following index, drawn from Turabian, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, identifies some of the more commonly needed areas of attention.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Section Number(s)</u>
Appendix(es)	1.39–1.45; 8.4
Bibliographical Entries Compared with Footnotes	9.7–9.13
Bibliography, form for	Chapters 9–12; 14.42
Bibliography, successive works by same author	9.27–9.34; esp. 9.27-29
Chapters; Capitalization of	1.16; 1.36
Citations Taken from Secondary Sources	8.148
Dictionaries, Encyclopedias; References to	8.51; 8.112; 11.42–11.43
Division of words	3.35–53
Electronic Documents; Documentation of	8.141; esp. examples 10 & 11
	<i>See additional information below</i>
Footnote Forms	Chapters 8, 11–12 (examples designated as 'N').
	<i>Note that the reference system described in chapter 10 is NOT to be used.</i>
Footnote Reference to Appendix Required	8.4
Footnote References for Subsequent Citations	8.88–8.96 (Method B); 8.111
Headings & Subheadings	1.37–1.38, 14.10–12
Line Spacing	14.5
Margins	See ETS Standards above
Page References in Bibliography	9.12
Page References in Footnotes	8.70–8.72
Pagination	1.4–1.5; 14.6–14.9
Paragraph Indentation	14.4

Possessives, forming	3.7–3.11
Punctuation:	
Comma	3.65–83; esp. 3.68
Dash	3.91–97
Final Punctuation & Quotation Marks	3.106–3.110; 5.17
Period	2.2; 3.55–3.59; 3.106
Question Mark	3.60–62; 3.104
Quotations and Block Quotes	5.4; 5.30–34; see ETS Std.
Scriptural Citations	2.20–2.21; 2.46; 4.21; 8.51; 8.129
Spelling out of numbers	2.29–2.39
Spelling out/abbreviating geographical names	2.13–2.14
Titles, underlining/italicizing	4.14–15
Typeface (Font)	13.27

#### Additional Resources for the Documentation of Electronic Documents

While Turabian offers basic guidelines for documentation of electronic resources in section 8.141, additional examples of the proper documentation of other forms of media may be found in Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (NY: The Modern Language Association of America, 1998), section 6.9, page 209 and following. An on-line resource for the MLA style of citing electronic information may be found at: <http://www.mla.org/>.

#### Writing the Dissertation: Some Tips

The following list and discussion, drawn from the experiences of faculty supervising D.Min. candidates, seeks to identify some of the problems typically encountered in the dissertation process. Suggestions for addressing the problems are offered as well.

1. The project must be a manageable one with a specific, and rather narrowly defined, focus. During the course of writing the proposal or even while engaged in doing the project, it is not unusual for a student to identify several areas of research worthy of consideration. Such ideas generated in the project/dissertation stage can be flagged for possible future research, but should not become an obstacle to or distraction from progress on one's current project.
2. Choose a project for which your interest will be maintained over the long haul. Losing one's excitement about a project mid-way through will make it quite difficult to complete.

3. Each chapter of the dissertation, following the title, needs a paragraph that clearly identifies the purpose and direction of the chapter as well as gives an indication of the content to be presented. This introductory paragraph should serve as a 'roadmap' to keep the writer on course as the chapter is written. It is further strongly suggested that a detailed outline of each chapter, including the chapter's structure and divisions, be prepared prior to attempting to write any chapter.
4. Material placed in a chapter or section needs to demonstrate clearly its coherence and relevancy for the topic being addressed. Extraneous material should be removed.
5. The material in a chapter and in the dissertation as a whole needs to flow well. Significant attention should be given to developing clear transitions between topics.
6. There are always corrections to be made after a dissertation has met the approval of the advisor and the reviewer. Students should allow at least a week to make corrections before submitting the final copies for binding.
7. Take into account that your advisor and the reviewer need adequate time to read your chapters or dissertation before returning them to you. Be sure to schedule this 'turn-around-time' into your timetable.
8. Recognize that there likely will be frustrations along the way while doing the project and writing the dissertation. Maintaining good communication with your advisor is a necessity in order to see the dissertation to completion.
9. Read, study, know, and apply consistently the standards for papers, projects, and dissertations as set forth in Turabian, Strunk and White, and this *Manual*.
10. When possible, avoid changing computers, word-processing programs, etc. once you have begun to write your dissertation. Know how to use your computer; for example, be able to change default settings to meet expected standards.
11. It may be helpful to peruse recent copies of D.Min. dissertations at the library to get some ideas about writing a dissertation. One should note carefully, however, that some dissertation standards have been changed or not followed in some formerly completed dissertations. In other words, do not replicate the mistakes of others in one's own dissertation; know and follow current dissertation standards.

In Other Words

The following two selections (author and source unknown) are included as humorous reminders of some of the more commonly encountered problems and rules for writers.

*Eye Halve A Spelling Chequer*

Eye halve a spelling chequer  
It came with my pea sea  
It plainly marques four my revue  
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word  
And weight four it two say  
Weather eye am wrong oar write  
It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid  
It nose bee fore two long  
And eye can put the error rite  
Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it  
I am shore your pleased two no  
Its letter perfect awl the weigh  
My chequer tolled me sew.

"Rules for Writeres"

1. Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
4. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
5. Avoid clichés like the plague. (They're old hat)
6. Also, always avoid annoying alliteration.
7. Be more or less specific.
8. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
9. Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
10. No sentence fragments.
11. Contractions aren't necessary and shouldn't be used.
12. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
13. Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
14. One should NEVER generalize.

15. Comparisons are as bad as clichés.
16. Don't use no double negatives.
17. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
18. One-word sentences? Eliminate.
19. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
20. The passive voice is to be ignored.
21. Eliminate commas, that are, not necessary. Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas.
22. Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.
23. Kill all exclamation points!!!
24. Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.
25. Understatement is always the absolute best way to put forth earth-shaking ideas.
26. Use the apostrophe in it's proper place and omit it when its not needed.
27. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
28. If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it correctly.
29. Puns are for children, not groan readers.
30. Go around the barn at high noon to avoid colloquialisms.
31. Even IF a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.
32. Who needs rhetorical questions?
33. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.  
*And finally...*
34. Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.

## APPENDIX A

### Specifications and Examples of Page Numbering and Page Layouts for the Erskine D.Min. Dissertation

The following pages provide specifications and examples of page layouts for the Erskine dissertation. The *order for assembling pages is:*

first page	[blank on both sides, counted but without printed page number]
second page	Title Page (see example), counted but no printed page number
third page	Acceptance Page (see example), counted/printed page iii
fourth page	Copying Agreement (see example), counted/printed page iv
fifth page	Abstract (see specifications), counted/printed page v
next page(s)	Dedication Page (optional), counted but no printed page number
next page(s)	Acknowledgements Page (optional), with correct page number(s)
next page	[blank on both sides, counted but without printed page number]
next page(s)	Table of Contents (see Turabian), with correct page number(s)
next page(s)	List of Illustrations, if any, with correct page number(s)
next page(s)	List of Tables, if any, with correct page number(s)
next page(s)	Preface, if any, with correct page number(s)

*Prior to the Text all page numbers are small Roman numerals (e.g., i, ii, iii, iv, v). From the first page of the Text itself all page numbers are Arabic (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The page number for the first page of each chapter, appendixes, or bibliography is centered one inch from the bottom of the page.*

closing pages	Appendix(ces) Bibliography additional reference material, etc. (cf. Turabian)
---------------	---

[top margin, 1"]  
[left margin, 1.5"]  
[right margin, 1"]  
[bottom margin, 1"]

[TITLE PAGE]

[line 14, 2.32"] FOSTERING COVENANT IDENTITY IN HISTORIC  
GREENVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[line 26, 4.29"]

BY

[line 28, 4.73"]

JOHN MCABEE CRAIG

[line 29ff, 4.95"] BACHELOR OF ARTS, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, 1836

MASTER OF DIVINITY, ERSKINE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, 1840

[line 41, 6.70"]

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

[line 42, 6.92"] THE FACULTY OF ERSKINE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

[line 43, 7.14"]

FOR THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE

[line 52, 8.67"]

MAY 1, 1848

[ACCEPTANCE PAGE]

[line 14, 2.32"] FOSTERING COVENANT IDENTITY IN HISTORIC  
GREENVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[line 27, 4.51"]

Approved for the Examining Committee

[line 31, 5.38"]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor

[line 36, 6.04"]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Accepted:

[line 43, 7.14"]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Doctor of Ministry Program

[line 47, 7.79"]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

[line 51, 8.67"]

## [COPYING AGREEMENT]

[2.0"]

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---

[signature of student]

[ABSTRACT, DEDICATION, AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS PAGES]

[line 10, 1.66"]

ABSTRACT

FOSTERING COVENANT IDENTITY IN HISTORIC  
GREENVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

by  
John McAbee Craig  
May 1848  
183 pages

The dissertation describes and evaluates identity formation among current members of an historic Presbyterian congregation founded in 1763. As an act of ministry . . .

[maximum one page in length for the abstract]

v

-----

[line 10, 1.66"]

DEDICATION

[. . . text]

[vi, or the correct page number, centered at bottom of page]

-----

[line 10, 1.66"]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[. . . text]

[vii, or the correct page number, centered at bottom of page]

-----

See Turabian for:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF TABLES

PREFACE

[Page numbers for these items are small Roman numerals at the bottom of the page]

[top margin 1"]  
[left margin 1.5"]  
[right margin 1"]  
[bottom margin 1"]

[TEXT]

[line 12, 2.0"]

## CHAPTER ONE

### IDENTITY FORMATION AS AN ACT OF MINISTRY

[line 19, 3.19"] Founded in 1763, the Greenville Presbyterian Church retains the vigor of its youthful spirit. The question is, how can that spirit of joy and graciousness be celebrated without becoming artificial and transmitted without dampening the changes that belong to every new moment of providence? . . .

[Page numbers for the first page of a chapter should be Arabic numbers (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), centered, three-quarters to one inch from the bottom of the page. Text page numbers thereafter should be placed between one-half inch and three-quarters inch from the top right hand corner of each page.]

[Typing of the body of the text should be double-spaced throughout the document. Footnotes are to be at the bottom of the page, single-spaced with a blank line between each note.]

**APPENDIX B****REPORT FORMS FOR THE D.MIN. PROGRAM**

The following forms are to be used in the normal course of the D.Min. program.  
The forms include:

Prospectus Faculty/Reviewer Evaluation Form  
Reviewer's Dissertation Evaluation Report Form  
Advisor's Candidate Progress Report Form  
TREN (Theological Research Exchange Network) Copyright Form  
Distribution Agreement for TREN

**PROSPECTUS FACULTY/REVIEWER EVALUATION FORM**  
Erskine Theological Seminary

**Candidate** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Title** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**1. CREDIBILITY** (answer Yes or No, with comments below as appropriate)

- a. \_\_\_\_ Is the project an authentic act of ministry of the Church, taking into account the Candidate's tradition and working theology of the Church?
- b. \_\_\_\_ Is the project worth doing, and will the dissertation make a genuine contribution to literature on the practice of ministry?
- c. \_\_\_\_ Is the project viable, workable in details and in the setting where placed?
- d. \_\_\_\_ Is the project original? Are there any distinctive features that set it apart from other project/dissertations on the same topic/act of ministry? If using previously developed materials, does it use them creatively?

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. COMPONENTS** (answer Yes or No, with comments below as appropriate)

Does the proposal contain an essential statement of each of the elements specified in “*Erskine Theological Seminary Standards for the D.Min. Project/Dissertation Prospectus*,” namely,

- a. \_\_\_\_ location/setting/situation
- b. \_\_\_\_ purpose
- c. \_\_\_\_ project goals, for the church setting and for the minister
- d. \_\_\_\_ project details
- e. \_\_\_\_ literature review
- f. \_\_\_\_ evaluation strategy(ies)
- g. \_\_\_\_ bibliography
- h. \_\_\_\_ time table
- i. \_\_\_\_ description of the project as an act of ministry by God, the Church, and the minister

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**3. CLARITY**

\_\_\_\_\_ Has each element been treated and articulated clearly?

**4. COHERENCE**

\_\_\_\_\_ Are all elements coherent with one another? Do they reinforce, build upon, and extend one another?

**5. COMPLETENESS**

\_\_\_\_\_ Has each element received sufficient attention to details?

**6. DOCUMENTATION**

\_\_\_\_\_ Has proper academic documentation been used in the Prospectus?

Comments (## 3-5): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This evaluation completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

who is the (circle one):            Faculty Advisor            Faculty Reviewer

Decision rendered:    Approved            Conditional Approval            Not Approved

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Once approved, the advisor should send this form to the D.Min. Director for the candidate's file)*

Additional Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEWER'S DISSERTATION EVALUATION FORM**  
Erskine Theological Seminary

This form serves as documentation of the Reviewer's evaluation of the candidate's project dissertation. A form should be completed each time a reviewer evaluates a candidate's dissertation. The dissertation advisor is to forward each completed form to the D.Min. Director for inclusion in the candidate's file.

**Candidate** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Title** \_\_\_\_\_

Every dissertation must be able to stand on its own without supplemental instruction or interpretation either from the faculty advisor or the candidate. The dissertation should be evaluated in terms of the following basic criteria: credibility, clarity, coherence, acceptable style, proper form, correct grammatical usage, accurate documentation, and completeness (the presence of all necessary components including front matter, bibliography, and appendices).

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*(Attach additional comments as needed)*

This evaluation completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Reviewer

Decision rendered:    Approved                      Conditional Approval\*                      Not Approved

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\* I (*circle one*):    WILL                      WILL NOT                      need to review the dissertation again after  
corrections, as noted, have been made.

**ADVISOR'S CANDIDATE PROGRESS REPORT FORM**  
Erskine Theological Seminary

This form serves as documentation of the candidate's design proposal, project, and dissertation progress. The dissertation advisor should update this form through out the supervision of the candidate, and submit the completed form to the D.Min. Director for inclusion in the candidate's file once the candidate graduates.

**Candidate** \_\_\_\_\_

**Advisor** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please enter the following dates:*

Initial Contact by Candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Approval of Prospectus \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer's Approval of Prospectus \_\_\_\_\_

Approval of Dissertation Components:

Front Matter \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter One \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Two \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Three \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Four \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Five \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Six \_\_\_\_\_

Appendices \_\_\_\_\_

Bibliography \_\_\_\_\_

Abstract \_\_\_\_\_

Approval of Dissertation as a Whole \_\_\_\_\_

Approval of Dissertation by Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Completion of Oral Reflective Session \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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(last name)\_\_\_\_\_  
(first name) (middle name)

2. Year of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

3. Country of Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

4. Present Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_5. Future Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_Effective on \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

6. Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Degree Information**

1. Degree Nomenclature \_\_\_\_\_ (Abbreviation for Degree)

2. Degree Date \_\_\_\_\_ (As Authorized by Institution)

3. Full Name of School Granting Degree  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**Title Information**1. Exact Title of Thesis/Dissertation as it Appears on Your Title Page  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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I hereby represent that (a) my thesis/dissertation has not been previously published, and (b) I am eligible to copyright my thesis/dissertation in the United States.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Author's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## APPENDIX C

### STANDARDS FOR THE D.MIN. PROJECT/DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS (Revised 9-04)

#### **Preamble: The Act of Ministry**

The project/dissertation is the culmination of the student's D. Min. program. It is often the case that the project idea begins with questions like: "What do I want to do?" or "What needs to be done?" It is important, however, to move from seeing the project just as a task to be done to conceiving of it as an act of ministry described below. Disciplining oneself to do this may be one of the most important results of the project/dissertation.

An act of ministry involves three primary agents—God, the Church, and the minister—all acting at the same time. The prospectus takes all three into account by considering for the project not only what the minister is doing but also what is going on in the church or ministry setting and what God is doing in all of this. The act of ministry in this sense cuts across the usual distinctions of theory and practice and requires a practicing awareness of all three agents, how they interact, and how they affect one another. Talking about ministry in terms of an "act of ministry" offers an incisive, imaginative, and distinctly theological way to talk about ministry. This rubric provides a way to talk about Christian ministry not just in terms of functions but as an intentional theological endeavor. For instance, preaching is a function but also a mysterious experience in which both God and the Church are working as well as the minister.

From one angle, the act of ministry is simply what a minister does to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bear upon a person, group, or situation. Such an act unites the minister's person, capacities, and routine functions such as preaching and worship, pastoral care, teaching, church administration, or evangelism. An act of ministry in these terms is an application of certain ministerial skills at a particular point of interest or need. That is one of the three angles of vision on the act of ministry.

Ministry possibilities open up dramatically, however, if one considers the act of ministry from the other two angles. The pertinent question that should be raised is: "Whose ministry is it?" Is it the laity's? the clergy's, the institution's, the Church's in some larger sense; God's? The answer is: "All of these." By recognizing that the ministry is the Church's, the minister does not, indeed cannot, act alone. By recognizing that it is "God's," the theological dimension of ministry – God – must be central. The act of ministry as an act of the Church requires considerations of the mission of the Church and what the Church does. An act of ministry as an act of God requires consideration of what God does in the way of saving grace and providential care.

The act of ministry as "bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bear upon a person, group, or situation" requires further comment. While ministry is well understood in terms of serving or meeting the needs of sinful people in specific situations, ministry is more than meeting needs or solving problems. The Gospel may indeed create or cause problems and needs of its own. The worship and service of God entails "glorifying God and enjoying Him forever," as well as meeting human needs. The Gospel can also focus

on the actions of others, stirring them up or responding to them, or direct itself to a relationship, a structure, or an issue that invites leadership. The act of ministry itself can be an experience, a work of art, an adventure, an exploration, an achievement, or a similar effort. All this opens up marvelous possibilities for imaginative thinking about Christian leadership and ministry.

Finally, the act of ministry always occurs in a specific place or context. The place may be a local community with clear demographic outlines and factors, or a set of people and their relationships, or a time of transition from one situation to another. The act of ministry can never be blind to the place or context where it happens. Specific information about place and context is central to an act of ministry. References to society, relationships, congregation, world, and universe affect our sense of place or context as Christians. Considerations of place and context force us to deal with God in the commonplace areas of human life and with the relationship between the Church and the world.

Taken together, the act of ministry is at once the most difficult, the most far reaching, and the most creative component to articulate. At the center of the project/dissertation, however, the act of ministry and the corresponding vision of Christian ministry are distinctive and faithful to a strong, Biblical heritage. They weave the tasks of ministry into a holistic framework, allow for an incisive and creative understanding of each act of ministry, and open up possibilities for a wide variety of acts or projects that can actually be done. The exciting challenge is to identify particular acts of ministry and then bring all the resources for ministry to bear upon them.

A candidate's project/dissertation begins with identifying a particular act of ministry, in a specific context or location, working in the lives of people, to accomplish a definite result. Identifying the student's act of ministry entails a careful, sensitive probing of one's ministry setting, one's operative theology of ministry, and what can actually be done within the limits of the situation, time, and the minister's capacities. Producing the prospectus entails a deliberate, extended process of clarifying the refining the candidate's options in, angles toward, and understandings of the act of ministry.

## **THE PROSPECTUS**

### **Definition**

The prospectus is a carefully detailed "road map" of the student's project. Developing the prospectus is done in dialogue with his/her advisor. The project/dissertation advisor is normally assigned after the first semester of the student's program. The standards below should be followed closely. The components below should form the sections of the prospectus. They have been developed over many years based on the experience of the Faculty with Erskine's D. Min. program since its beginning.

Writing and submitting the prospectus constitute the approval process for the project/dissertation. This single submission must be complete and detailed and well-written. Although impossible to say ahead of time, this document will probably be fairly lengthy (probably 35-50 pages). Once it has been approved by the student's advisor, it is

submitted to a reviewer whose identity is not known to the student. Both the advisor and the reviewer must approve the prospectus before the student can proceed with the project.

### **Contents of the Prospectus**

The prospectus explains carefully the basic elements to be considered in a well-planned project. The prospectus contains the following components:

1. The Project Described as an Act of Ministry
2. The Project Location/Setting/Situation
3. The Project Purpose
4. The Project Goals
5. The Details of the Project
6. The Evaluation Strategy and Instruments of the Project
7. The Literature Search
8. The Time-Table for the Project
9. A Proposed Structure of the Dissertation (Optional)
10. The Bibliography

Each of these components is now described below.

#### **1. The Project Described as an Act of Ministry**

The first question which the candidate may ask and answer in this process is: “What do I want to do?” Or, perhaps the student may ask: “What needs to be done in my ministry setting?” One answer that might be given to either question is: “I want to teach basic pastoral care skills to my deacons/elders.” This is the project itself. However, the candidate in this section of the prospectus needs to move beyond simply describing what he/she will do and reflect upon it as an act of ministry of God, the Church, and the minister (candidate). The prospectus here should interpret the project as an act of ministry for all three of these angles (God, the Church, the minister). Here, the candidate is showing the distinctly Biblical and theological nature of the project. What makes this project different from other non-church groups which teach people basic caring skills? In what ways are God, the Church, and the minister mysteriously connecting in this particular project? In this project, what is the minister doing? What is God doing? What is the Church doing?

There are many different ways to articulate the distinctly Biblical/theological nature of the project. In the above example, the candidate could connect this project to the Biblical picture of a God who is constantly caring for human beings and seeking to make them whole. Such a project could be connected to a great theme in theology such as God’s grace, His Sovereignty, etc. The central question here is: How is this project an expression of what God has always been doing within human history?

As noted above, looking at some ministerial activity in this light is difficult but extremely important. In describing the project as an act of ministry, the candidate should draw heavily from the two Foundations courses (SD 01: Models of Ministry and SD 02: Acts of Ministry).

## **2. The Project Location/Setting/Situation**

The project location is the place, situation, context, or ministry setting in which the act of ministry is to occur. This setting includes the geographical location, pertinent information about the makeup of the church (or institution) and the community, and an assessment of the “internal life” of the group. The candidate needs to describe everything about the context that makes the project understandable. One way of getting at this is to ask and answer the question: Why am I doing this particular project at this particular place with this particular group of people? Any events, persons, etc. from the church or community’s history that help to understand the project should be described here.

## **3. The Project Purpose**

The purpose of the project needs to be carefully distinguished from the goals, and the goals need to be carefully distinguished from the project details. Purpose, together with the location/setting/situation establishes the overall pertinence or relevance of the project for the life of the whole congregation (institution). Stated simply, the purpose is the answer to this question: Why am I doing this project? Of necessity, the purpose statement will be broad. In the above example, the purpose of the project of teaching basic pastoral skills to elders/deacons could be to teach Christians how to care for one another. The purpose statement shows the overall result that is desired from the project long after the project is over. The purpose statement should be one concise sentence.

Goal statements are specific and relate closely to the project answer the question: What am I trying to accomplish with this project? The project details deal with the specific activities and arrangements of the project itself, answering the question: What will I do to accomplish the goals?

A good purpose statement might be: “The purpose of this project is to engage the community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

A poor purpose statement might be: “The purpose of this project is to teach a method of one-on-one evangelism.”

## **4. The Project Goals**

The goals of the project relate closely to the purpose statement, to the project details, and to what will be described as evaluation strategy and instruments. The goals make far more specific the overall purpose, asking specifically: “What am I trying to accomplish in this project?” The actual project attempts to accomplish what the goals set for it. Each goal statement needs to be a single, concise, carefully honed statement.

The goals divide naturally into two groups: (1) goals for the church or setting and (2) goals for the minister. The goals for the church are essential for viewing the project within the larger framework of the act of ministry and keeping the minister from focusing narrowly on professional tasks. In every project, there are also goals for the minister: a gain in expertise or insight, the exploration of an issue, a growth experience.

The goal for the minister is more than merely bringing off the project or enabling the church or group to accomplish its goal(s). The minister's goal(s) often gives direction to the preparation which he/she must make in order to do the project well.

Goals should be limited in number, measurable, carefully refined, and precisely stated. Each goal represents a major focal point of the project/dissertation as a whole. Four goals are a practical maximum, two for the church or setting and two for the minister. Two goals are a practical minimum, one for the church or setting and one for the minister. The goals should be measurable and will determine exactly what forms of evaluation will be used. The rule is: Every goal must be measured in at least one way in the project.

A good goal for the minister might be: "To develop my own theology of pastoral care based on the Biblical image of God as the Shepherd."

A poor goal for the minister might be: "To teach basic pastoral care skills."

A good goal for the church might be: "To practice basic pastoral skills in the lives of the members of the church."

A poor goal for the church might be: "To show concern for members of the church who are in trouble."

The candidate should be careful to link the goals to the project's evaluation. Every goal must be evaluated in some fashion. For instance, the first good goal for the minister (see above) could be evaluated by the minister's writing an exegetical essay on God as the Shepherd and have it read and evaluated by a professor, another minister, a group of ministers, etc. The good goal for the church (see above) could be evaluated in several ways. One way might be for the members of the group to be observed and evaluated as they actually practice pastoral care in a hospital, a person's home, etc. This observation/evaluation could be done by the minister or by other members of the group.

## **5. The Details of the Project**

The project is the act of ministry conceived and carried out. The details of the project are closely related to the goals. In thinking about the details of the project, the candidate should ask and answer this question: "What am I actually going to do to accomplish these goals?" The prospectus should explain clearly what the details are and how they will accomplish the goals.

The details contain the heart of the project, spelling out what will actually be done: times, places, topics, persons involved, arrangements, choice of Bible passages, and broad notes on the coordination and/or implementation of these details. This part of the prospectus should also deal with any permissions necessary to do the project and any projected problems or difficulties.

The project details in the prospectus should be detailed enough so that the advisor and reviewer have a clear picture of what the candidate is going to do. There should be a session-by-session plan of exactly what is going to be done and who is to be involved in it.

In the above example, the project details might include the initial conversations with the deacon/elders about the project, detailed lesson plans for each session of the training, plans for actual visitation that would be done in the hospital, etc. The emphasis in this section of the prospectus is on precision in detail.

## 6. The Evaluation of the Project

The evaluation strategy and instruments focus directly on the goals for the project and the extent to which they have been accomplished. Evaluation raises the difficult but urgent question of effectiveness in ministry. So much of ministry is intangible and results of ministry often do not appear for a long time after acts of ministry have been performed. Especially since the outcome depends on an act of God or the work of the Holy Spirit, how can the minister presume to measure or even assess the effectiveness of an act of ministry? On the other hand, what provides the minister some feedback and/or correctives on sincere efforts at ministry? How can the minister develop and improve on past performances? What gives the minister a clear line of accountability for various acts of ministry, or conversely, lulls the minister into a lazy or insensitive routine? This part of the project/dissertation answers these questions in a discrete, limited fashion on both sides by correlating evaluation with the stated goals of the project. The question of effectiveness is answered by whether or not the act of ministry meets its stated goals. Here, the candidate should draw heavily on the Foundations II (SD 02: Acts of Ministry) course.

An evaluation strategy is a way of measuring the goals. Evaluation instruments are the actual tools used to measure the goals. Every goal in the project calls for a strategy and a set of evaluation instruments. The evaluation strategy shows how the candidate proposes to measure one or more of the project goals. For instance, deciding to use a survey is a strategy. Evaluation instruments are the vehicles used to measure the goals. An instrument would be an actual description of what kind of survey will be used in the project. The candidate must also state when and how each instrument will be used.

The best evaluation strategies and instruments are built into the project details and contribute directly to the act of ministry. Learning how to design, use, and interpret pertinent evaluation instruments is an important part of the project/dissertation. The candidate and advisor will want to take into account the coherence of evaluation strategies, perhaps developing an overall strategy with several sub-categories. It is not desirable to over-evaluate, but the goals should probably be evaluated by more than one instrument. It is also important to consider constructing evaluation instruments which can measure more than one goal.

Evaluation strategy and instruments can be either quantitative or qualitative, but should be appropriate to the project in any case. They affect directly the decisions about what data to gather and which records to keep in the project (a journal, study notes, sermons, lesson plans, manuals, orders of service, interviews, verbatims, handouts, minutes of meetings, etc.). Important records may also include reflective observations or comments, expert opinions, lists of people/events/activities/tasks completed, or theological statements. The activities, records, and evaluation instruments—like the general conduct of the project—need to maintain professional levels of discretion and confidentiality.

In devising evaluation strategies and instruments, the candidate should feel free to use research designs from other fields, especially the fields of education and sociology.

Yet, in doing so, he/she must recognize how unique is the task of measuring the effectiveness of an act of ministry which is a curious interplay of God, the Church, and the minister working together.

The goals for the above project could be measured in several ways. The candidate's understanding of the pastoral implications of the Biblical image of God as the Shepherd could be evaluated by his/her producing an exegetical/reflective essay and having it read by a local Supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education. The group's ability to practice basic pastoral care skills could be measured by direct observation from the minister, role-playing situations evaluated by the group, a personal journal in which each participant evaluated him/herself.

## **7. The Literature Search**

It is important that the candidate read widely in the subject areas related to the project. In a project which centers in teaching basic pastoral care skills to deacons/elders, the student needs to be knowledgeable about the whole area of pastoral care and especially in the area of how pastoral care skills can be taught to lay people in the church. In this part of the prospectus, the student demonstrates that he/she is acquainted with relevant literature, classical and modern, in the areas which relate to the project.

The Erskine D. Min. curriculum is divided into three areas: (1) Norms, (2) Functions, and (3) Context. Each student is required to take at least one elective from each of these three areas. Norms courses consist of work in the areas of Bible, theology, and church history. Functions courses deal with the skills needed to practice ministry such as preaching, teaching, church administration, and pastoral care and counseling. Context courses focus on understanding the current context of ministry.

This part of the prospectus will consist of a bibliographical essay in which the candidate identifies and summarizes major works in each of the 3 areas of the curriculum which inform this project. These works (books, journal articles, etc.) of necessity must be selective, but they should be representative of both relevant classical and modern works. The primary purpose of this part of the prospectus is for the candidate to demonstrate that he/she has read widely enough and is in dialogue with relevant works in the various areas involved in the project.

For the above project, the works to be read and summarized might include: basic works on pastoral care; works on how to teach lay people basic caring skills; works on small-group dynamics; commentaries on relevant Biblical passages to be used in the teaching.

## **8. The Time-Table for the Project**

The student needs to describe a projected time-table for conducting the project and writing the dissertation. This time-table needs to be realistic. The major mistake made by many candidates at this point is underestimating the amount of time required to plan and implement the project and to write the dissertation. Most D. Min. students are involved in ministry on a full-time basis, and working on the degree is extra. The student should be careful to allow him/herself enough time to do all that is required in the planning and implementation of the project and the writing of the dissertation.

This part of the prospectus should contain a schedule like this:

- A. Approval of prospectus – August 1
- B. Conducting the project – September-October
- C. Writing the dissertation – November – March
- D. Approval of dissertation by advisor and reviewer – April 1
- E. Submission of final copies of dissertation – April 20

What is important to recognize about this time-table is not the dates but the space between them. For spring graduation, the April 20 date is firm. Students may have the degree conferred at two other times during the year (September, January). The deadlines for submission of final copies of the dissertation for a September conferral is August 15 and for a January conferral is December 1.

### **9. A Proposed Structure of the Dissertation (Optional)**

This part of the prospectus is optional. The student is encouraged to envision what he/she might want to include in the dissertation. The dissertation is a detailed description of the project, its setting, and an evaluation of how effective it was. While candidates are encouraged to be creative in the structure and writing of the dissertation, the document should include at least the following elements:

- A. A detailed introduction to the project and to the setting
- B. The Biblical-theological foundations of the project
- C. A detailed description of the project
- D. An evaluation of the project

### **10. The Bibliography**

The bibliography contains books, articles, videos, and other research materials that the candidate sees as relevant to the project. It is normal for the bibliography to grow as the candidate studies. One item will often lead to another. It is especially important that a significant part of the bibliography be from the journal literature since journal articles will typically be more current than books. Books and articles should be listed together in alphabetical order in proper form. Electronic materials may be listed at the end in a section by themselves.

The bibliography should be as complete as possible and should be balanced in terms of the three areas of the D.Min. curriculum (Norms, Functions, Context). The student should list anything he/she has found that may be of relevance for the conducting of the project and the writing of the dissertation.