

# **THEOLOGY AND PASTORAL MINISTRY**

## **Abstract**

Doing theology pastorally is about the interaction of practice in ministry with Scripture and the contemporary context, itself partly shaped by our Christian traditions. The course will set out a methodology in which basic 'givens' are weighted and specific examples (the concept of family and the experience of loss) explored in practice. The integrity and development of the pastor as a growing person of God in relation to the church and the world will be examined. With the focus on his/her role as an agent, with others, of the Kingdom in a broken world and a human church, the relationship of the pastor, as a reflective practitioner, to the local church will occupy the latter part of the course.

While there will be input from the tutor the approach in the classroom will be generally interactive and sometimes more 'workshop' in nature. The experience and prior learning of the students will be essential to the process so that an experience of the model offered is achieved. The attached outline of the course suggests helpful reading but this will dominate neither the class-work nor the assignment.

## **Theology and pastoral Ministry**

### **Outline of the course**

- 1. Doing theology pastorally**  
The inter-action of reflective practice with text and context  
**Reading: “Handbook of Pastoral Studies”, part 2**
- 2. Weighting reflection theologically**  
The hierarchy of givens in forming concepts and practice  
(Scripture and interpretation, Biblical concepts of person, ethics, culture and society)
- 3. Methodology in Action**  
Testing the ideas in practice in relation to the concept of Family  
(Group work with text, theology and pastoral scenario)  
**Reading : “The Family in Theological Perspective”, part 1**
- 4. Emerging issues for further reflection**  
Is there a biblical model for human families?  
Cultural challenges to the biblical marriage relationship  
Personal boundary issues within families and pastoral relationships
- 5. The integrity of the pastor**  
A model for humanness in the Jesus of the Gospels  
Living in accountable structures with God, with peers and the congregation
- 6. Owning and working with brokenness**  
Knowing ourselves and experiencing Gospel  
Offering and applying Gospel in practise  
Regeneration and wise restoration
- 7. Exploring our own losses**  
An exercise to help with facing and understanding loss personally and by inference for others
- 8. Emerging issues for further reflection**  
The reality of grief with hope – eschatology in experience  
The examination of funeral practice with biblical concepts  
**Reading: “Surprised by Hope” part 2**

- 9. Shaping the programme theologically**  
Building the Church and extending the Kingdom  
The impact of theology on cultural norms  
“Surprised by Hope”, part 3
- 10. Corporate Spirituality**  
Core values as a critique of the programme. Tools for the pastor’s overseeing influence on the Church’s ministry.  
Theology of the ‘gathered church’ and the congregation’s structures.
- 11. Servant Community and servant leaders**  
Relational theology inside the church including a case study of the agreements between pastor and church.  
Working for Kingdom wholeness beyond the membership  
Reading: “Handbook of Pastoral Studies”, part 3
- 12. Gospel at the margins**  
The Calvary spirit in the community – the sinner friendly church  
Serving with integrity among the broken and outcasts

## **Theology and Pastoral Ministry**

### **Paper to be written**

**Consider and discuss how the real humanness of Jesus the Christ impacts upon pastoral practice with particular reference to:**

- a) the pastor's own experience and**
- b) His/her involvement in a situation when a twenty year old daughter of a member comes to the pastor to seek support and help because she is proposing to move into her boyfriend's apartment and prepare for the birth of their baby in six month's time. She has been 'engaged' to the fellow student for three years, says she (and her parents) cannot afford the expected marriage ceremonies and intends to complete her master's degree after the birth**

**Comment on patterns of thought rejected in the process of forming your positive views in both (a) and (b).**

**Design a marriage service that addresses the real experience of the couple in ((b) above) and proclaims the Christian ideal of marriage. Include a broad outline (in bullet points) of an address bearing in mind that the whole service needs to be contained within an hour time slot.**

### **Course bibliography**

**These are background reading and will not be used directly as textbooks.**

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| <b>"Handbook of Pastoral Studies"<br/>(New edition 2002)</b> | <b>by Wesley Carr<br/>Pub: SPCK in 1997<br/>ISBN 0-281-04977-7</b>                     |
| <b>"Integrity of Pastoral Care"</b>                          | <b>by David Lyall<br/>Pub: SPCK in 2001<br/>ISBN 0-281-05026-0</b>                     |
| <b>"Surprised by Hope"</b>                                   | <b>by Tom Wright<br/>Pub: SPCK in 2007<br/>ISBN 978-0-281-05617-0</b>                  |
| <b>"The Family in Theological Perspective"</b>               | <b>Edited by Stephen C Barton<br/>Pub: T &amp; T Clark 1996<br/>ISBN 0 567 08522 8</b> |

## **Tutor's notes of expectations in the written assignment**

### **Part (a)**

**In this part I am looking for some reflection on the owning of our own humanity. This includes our brokenness, real feelings and vulnerability and the dangers of denying these in words that separate us from others. The importance of distinguishing between our feelings and those of our pastoral contacts.**

**Some theological reflection on the impact of the denial of Jesus' humanness would enrich the discussion.**

### **Part (b)**

**How do we apply our theology in practise? Evidence of reflection on biblical images of marriage, current cultural norms, and the various options open to the pastor – and the couple - and of attempting to let theology guide practice.**

**An outline of a pastoral strategy in relation to the couple and the family**

### **The service**

**Saying what you believe about marriage and family. Expressing God's commitment to people who make serious promises**

**Careful words about those who have not walked the Christian way.**

**Prayers that hold the real feelings, hopes and fears of those present.**

**A positive setting out of the Christian values in marriage and family life.**

**The essence is in the depth of commitment, not the spectacular or showy ceremony.**