



NORTHWEST NEWS

NORTHWEST BAPTIST SEMINARY@ACTS

PREPARING EFFECTIVE LEADERS FOR EVANGELICAL BAPTIST MINISTRY AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

WHY A DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM?

DR. LARRY PERKINS

Listen to some Christian leaders today and you would believe that seminaries are not just obsolete, but in fact dangerous to your spiritual health! We can agree that intellectual arrogance is not Christian and sometimes people do encounter spiritual difficulties while attending seminary. However, the same things happen to people who attend church!

Does good theological education make much difference when it comes to being an effective ministry leader? Recently Thom Rainer, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, published a book entitled *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*. It incorporates the results of two years of credible research during which he and his team interviewed over 350 "formerly unchurched". He also interviewed more than 100 pastors of effective evangelistic churches.

He discovered some surprising results. When it comes to factors related to pastors that attracted the unchurched and kept them coming, the top two were "preaching that teaches" and "preaching that applies to my life". Further, within churches that were successfully reaching the unchurched, 40% of the pastors had doctorates and 47% had masters degrees.¹ Finally, when he asked the unchurched what led them to associate with a church, 90% said it was the pastor and his preaching and 88% said it was doctrine. The next highest response was friendliness (49%), while only 11% said worship style was significant.

Perhaps these results don't surprise you. However, given the negative rhetoric I sometimes hear or read about seminary education, it initially caught me off guard. But the more I reflected upon it, the more I realized that it made absolute sense. People searching for convincing answers to life's most serious questions will seek out those who thoughtfully

and passionately share God's truth. While theological education does not guarantee effectiveness in ministry, the results that Rainer has documented indicate it can be very helpful in evangelism and discipleship.

The Vancouver Sun (August 25, 2006, page A5) recently published an article entitled "Quite at home in the House of God", documenting the rise in house-churches. The reporter quotes from a participant as saying that "preaching, or teaching, has nothing to do with church life." Can you believe it? I wonder where the Great Commission fits here? I wonder how this perspective squares with Rainer's findings? What about Paul's affirmation that God has gifted the church with "pastor/teachers" for the very purpose of equipping believers?

Seeking to equip effective ministry leaders in our contemporary social context is becoming more and more difficult. We must focus on the basic elements for effective ministry that God has defined. As we read the Scriptures this requires ministry leaders who possess excellence in Gospel proclamation, who understand and are committed to a morally-productive spirituality, who have deep and intimate relationships with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, who have competency to develop community and team ministry, and who have passionate engagement with Kingdom purposes, especially the local church. In our experience, effective ministry leaders will be educated leaders committed to Jesus, loving people and engaged in lifelong vocational development.



DR. LARRY PERKINS,
PRESIDENT OF NORTHWEST
BAPTIST SEMINARY

¹Some pastors responded that their seminary education did not equip them for the leadership challenges they have faced. **Northwest Baptist Seminary and ACTS Seminaries** have focused in the pastoral curriculum upon equipping pastoral leaders specifically in these ministry leadership areas for the past ten years.



BRYAN REAGH IS A SECOND YEAR MASTER OF DIVINITY STUDENT CURRENTLY PREPARING AT NORTHWEST@ACTS

Bryan, share with me a little bit about your background and your family.

I was born in the British Columbia lower mainland and have lived in Surrey for the past twenty-five years. I have one younger sister whose name is Jennifer. During my childhood our family cabin at Pitt Lake was a place that generated wonderful memories. My parents, whom I love, divorced when I was fifteen. Mom resides in Berlin, Germany and dad lives in Burnaby.

Melanie and I have been married for five years. She works for North American Indigenous Ministries (Ladner). We both serve God together at Parkland Fellowship Baptist Church. Her gifting and interests are different than mine but we find creative ways to link our ministries.

Who were the important influences in your life that led you to follow Jesus?

My family background is not specifically Christian. Melanie, however, was raised in a Christian home. Cloverdale Baptist Church was an important part of her Christian experience.

When I was 8 years old, I attended the Awana program at the local Evangelical Free Church. That's where, in a dark little pool room in the lower recesses of the church I asked Jesus into my heart. I still remember experiencing a flood of warmth in my heart after praying with the children's worker. The Awana program ended within a short time and my spiritual life atrophied until grade 12. That's when Melanie entered my life. I asked her to go out with me and she said no, because she only dated Christians. I thought I could fix that and so started to attend church.

We were married three years later. Two months after our wedding I entered the Fish and Wildlife Management pro-

gram at BCIT. Then two months later I quit that program knowing it was not for me. It took me six more months to work through what was going on. Finally, my father-in-law helped me get a job at the steel foundry where he worked. During that time I became sure God wanted me to go to Bible College, although we were not going to church anywhere at that time. We began attending Parkland and Pastor David Horita invited us to join his small group. In July 2002 I was baptized at Parkland. Then in September I went to Columbia Bible College. My pastor, whom I greatly respect, challenged me to get involved with the youth program.

What do you sense your calling in Jesus to be and how did you discern this?

While at Bible College I spent two summers interning at Parkland. Then in 2005 I had the opportunity to spend a summer doing chaplaincy with Baptist Housing. I worked with Teresa Leung and Frank Dyck. They really helped and encouraged me, giving me a lot of opportunity.

Currently I lead the "Extreme Life" program at Parkland. It is a group of kids grades 5-7 with whom I meet one night a week. I enjoy working with the team who lead it – it is exciting because of the relationships we have with each other. I love playing with the kids. Many of the children have made the transition into youth group.

This fall Melanie and I are starting a married couples small group.

I am not sure what the future holds for us. One of the things that has been confirmed by those I have served with is that I have some pastoral gifts. While my mentors encouraged me, I knew I needed more training.

What challenges did you face as you worked through the decision to come to Seminary?

One of the struggles for me has been to accept being supported by Melanie as I have pursued my education.

I am now in my second year. Still I am in the process of discerning God's direction. My approach to the question is to wait for a very clear sense of direction. I believe God will direct others to recognize the Spirit's gifting in me and seek my involvement. Some kind of pastoral ministry seems to be the emerging outcome.

Who have been significant mentors for you? How have they helped you?

Pastor Dave Horita has been a strong encouragement and mentor. He dared to challenge me about my spiritual relationship and the way I perceived myself. He has given me a lot of responsibility and trusted me, allowing me to take risks.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

Kent, you have now written three books on preaching, *Preaching with Conviction*, Kregel, 2001; *Preaching with Integrity*, Kregel, 2003; and most recently *Choosing to Preach*, Zondervan, 2006. How would you briefly describe the distinctives of each book?



The first two books are written in the form of novels. I used the mystery story form to talk about the practice of preaching in a real life situation. For example, in *Preaching with Conviction*, I tell the story of Pastor Jack Newman, a man who is a little beaten down and worn out. Against the backdrop of some dramatic events that happen in his church and community, Pastor Jack learns

how to preach all over again. The story culminates in the preaching of a sermon at the end of the book. *Preaching with Integrity* picks up the story a year later. My new book, *Choosing to Preach*, is quite a bit different, reading more like a textbook. It is an attempt to speak comprehensively about the subject of preaching. I still hope, however, that it is entertaining in the sense that it holds the readers attention – like good preaching ought to do.

From your website (www.preaching.org) I drew the following quote. It comes from your most recent book:

Preaching today is at a crossroads. Changes in church and culture have undone the prior consensus about the importance of biblical exposition as a staple of church life. Currently local church leaders are hearing from an array of influencers, some of whom would abandon the sermon, others who would retain the traditional sermon, and others yet who would preserve the sermon but with a much different form.

Tell me a little about the particular challenges (crossroads) that today's preachers face as they present the "old fashioned" Gospel in a post modern world.

I had breakfast this morning with a friend of mine who pastors a very significant church in the Vancouver area. He described a conversation with Jim Houston, formerly of Regent College, who told him ten or fifteen years ago that the day of the sermon was dead. Houston is a marvelous writer and thinker on the subject of spiritual formation, but as a homiletic prognosticator he leaves something to be desired. The truth is, preaching is not going to go away. Yet, how we do our preaching is very much in question. My editor at Zondervan asked me to write a book that could point the future of preaching for the next ten or fifteen years. The problem I had with that was that there is no longer any consensus about what makes for good preaching. Should we preach like John MacArthur or like Rick Warren? What about Rob Bell and the "young bucks" of the "emergent" movement? My answer is that we need

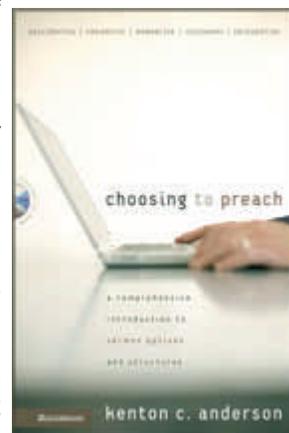
to be integrative, working with the best of all of these.

Another quote from your new book, *Choosing to Preach*, reads:

...There are numerous paths a sermon could take, each leading to different regions of the human heart and soul. Some sermons appeal to the head and others to the heart. Some emphasize the text of Scripture and others focus on the text of life. Most are somewhere in between, herking and jerking about the homiletic territory, enticing certain listeners and aggravating others. Unfortunately, the territory is not well mapped and many a preacher feels lost along the way. Many have given up the journey altogether. The truth is, there has been change in every age and the changes that are to come are likely beyond anything we have so far been able to imagine.

How do you see this text on preaching helping today's preachers be better prepared for their preaching "journey" and for the changes they will face along the way?

We all have our preferred ways of preaching and teaching, often developed by watching the example of people we respect. I grew up listening to Arthur Haynes, Joe Wylie, and Ian Bowie at Maple Ridge Baptist. I took my first preaching courses from Don Hills. These men influenced me greatly and I thank God for them. At the same time, I understand that preaching can be much more than what these men were modeling. I'm hoping that someone committed to one of the four dominant forms of preaching ("declarative," "pragmatic," "narrative," and "visionary") might see that there is more than what they had so-far understood and that there is value in all of these approaches when they are done well and when they help us hear from God through his Word. My deep desire is that the book will inspire us to go back to the Bible and to see all of the possibilities for proclaiming it.



For whom is this book designed? Would experienced preachers benefit from reading it?

The book is for everyone involved in preaching or teaching the Bible. That includes small group leaders, youth leaders, and yes, experienced pastors. My guess is that the experienced preachers will get a lot out of this because it will encourage them to think about things in a different way. Much of the book has grown out of my work with students here at Northwest. Experience tells me that these ideas will help everyone who is willing to invest some time and thought in them.

Lyle, every day I see you in your office (directly behind me) feverishly working to develop the Diploma in Christian Ministry Program here at Northwest — but what ever is it?



While I'm feverishly working on a lot of things, there are three initiatives I am creating to help raise the level of leadership qualities in Fellowship Churches. While both the **Best Practices for Church Boards** and **Best Practices for Church Leadership Culture** are focused on the groups of church leaders who are responsible for leadership and leadership development, the **Diploma in Christian Ministry** is

focused on those individuals who are seeking to raise their ministry to another level. You might call them "emerging leaders" who sense that God is calling to a more mature ministry.

Who do you expect will be interested in taking this program? Is it for anyone? Are there any special requirements?

Our Churches already have three types of people who have shown great interest in this program. There are some who have grown in ministry skills and value personal training but are simply unable to uproot their lives and "go to school." There are others who sense that God may be leading them to a vocation in ministry but need to explore the consequences of this growing passion. And, there are a few who have been affirmed by their church and are engaged in "staff" ministry, who need to develop deeper dimensions of spiritual maturity. All of these share similar needs. They are rooted into a community, they have a life, and must find a way to include training into their setting. They need to explore core skills that establish a foundation for further training. They need training that will open the door to further opportunities so that they can go as far as God wants to lead them. The only special requirements that they need are an open heart, a meaningful relationship with a church that will support them, a mentor who will encourage them to grow.

Listening to the conversation around the office I gather that this Diploma in Christian Ministry Program can be entered at several levels. Can you explain that to me?

As I mentioned the three types of people who are showing interest, you can imagine that there are few who are determined to enroll in the Diploma as a student, and are eager to complete the Diploma so that it will open future

doors. The way it's designed, a person who receives the diploma and has two years of undergraduate study can apply for further Master's study at ACTS. In my mind, they are "good to go." But, some people either need a bit more time to find their passion, or simply want to take their learning deeper. These people would be able to audit the courses, and enjoy the process with other students. If we work it right, Loren, and they decide to enroll for full credit, we will be able to fill in the added work that will get them up to speed.

Would you describe for me the potential benefits for the local church in this program? Why would a church be interested in involving one or more of their members?

I can't list all the benefits for the church – or for the students – in one paragraph! For one thing, it empowers the local church to become the most effective incubator for mature ministry servants. The fact is, Churches are already hiring "from within." But, ministry requires more than mechanics – people able to run programs. It calls for people of great soul and godly character. This Diploma addresses those dimensions of development. My prayer is that as a few discover how this unlocks their passion, the spirit will become contagious and our churches will find that more than a few of their members will be aggressively following God as far as He cares to lead them.

Lyle, you mentioned the "Best Practices" initiative and I know that you and Larry just returned from a session in Vernon, BC. What kind of response have you received from church leaders? What are people saying about this initiative?

Since it's inception in October, 2005, 19 churches have participated in our one-day workshop for church boards. The latest was held on September 30, 2006 in Vernon. When Churches register, their group includes both Pastoral staff and Board leaders. During the day, there are two plenary sessions that address the roles, responsibilities, and practices of effective boards. This is followed by a time where trained facilitators meet with the specific church group to assess the health of their Board, and address key issues faced by their Board. The evaluations and comments from all the workshops have been extremely positive: *"we have just had our second church board meeting since attending the Best Board Practices workshop ... thank you, thank you, thank you ... for the huge impact that this has already had on our Board ... this is a wonderful example of church leadership development from our Seminary ... keep up the good work!"* While we continue to refine this workshop, we know that it is making a positive impact.

(BRYAN REAGH—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)



BRIAN AND MELANIE REAGH

What program are you completing and what do you want do after graduation?

I am completing the three year Master of Divinity Program. I learn best from teachers who demonstrate humility and grace, who respect me, and I have discovered such teachers at ACTS. This goes a

long way to help me. People do not brush me off, but spend time with me. They have given me latitude to explore things in which I have interest. This has enabled me to give some personal shape to my educational experience.

As you have come to Seminary, what vision has God given to you? What do you want to accomplish for Him?

Right now I have two focuses – complete my Seminary program well and to keep growing at Parkland. The willingness

of the church and Northwest to invest in me and provide financial aid has been a strong encouragement.

I want to apply what I am learning because these things have the ability to transform lives.

Given your own journey, what advice would you give to people thinking about preparing for a ministry vocation?

Marriage in the context of seminary requires special attention. When I am focused on my studies in the evening, and Melanie comes home from work, I need to make time for us. We have made the decision to take my studies a little more slowly and enjoy our life together. This decision has gone a long way to removing some of the stress. For me to help Melanie in the home is really important. In some sense seminary life will be harder on the spouse who is not a student.

So if anyone is thinking about ministry education, they must be prepared to pace themselves.

I regard my Seminary education as my job and I need to apply myself and develop a good work ethic now so that when I am in ministry these disciplines will be well in place.

Please pray that God will continue to encourage Melanie and me as we pursue God’s calling together.



On September 22nd — 14 students in the ministry development program met with the FEBBC/Y ministry centre personnel and Northwest faculty for a supper of Chinese food and a time of camaraderie and information about the Fellowship.

(COLIN VAN DER KUR—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

It’s a doctoral program after all!” What the faculty member lacked in compassion, he did make up for in truth. A Doctor of Ministry degree is not just given away. I have finished my coursework with “only” my dissertation to complete. I know I have come this far because of the understanding of my family and the support of my church.

Although you have not completed your program, would you encourage other vocational leaders to consider seriously engaging in such intensive personal and ministry development? Why?

First of all, I don’t think that the Doctor of Ministry program is for everyone and I don’t think the degree provides anything “magical” to the ministry leader who completes it. But, for those who want to discuss and learn about contemporary ministry issues from some of the leading evangelical thinkers and practitioners in North America, for those who desire to be challenged and refreshed in their relationship with Christ and their purpose in ministry, and for those who need “refitting” to develop a more mature world view and philosophy of ministry that will likely shape them for the next 10-15 years of ministry – this program will meet those desires and needs.

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM BEGINS ITS 4TH YEAR

BY DR. LARRY PERKINS

Northwest@ACTS introduced its Doctor of Ministry program with a focus in Leadership and Spiritual Formation in 2003. Our fourth cohort started this summer. Over all this collaborative ACTS program has enrolled more than thirty students. One of the them is **Colin van der Kuur**, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Castlegar, BC. He joined the first cohort and is now working on his dissertation project.

Recently I asked Colin to share some of his experience in the Doctor of Ministry program:

What motivated you to begin the Doctor of Ministry Degree program?

A few reasons. First of all, I enrolled for support. Castlegar is remote and is not the hotbed of Christianity in BC. The Doctor of Ministry program was a way to connect with other ministry leaders in a way that provided consistent involvement with a cohort. Through this program I met good friends to journey with together. Secondly, I believe that all followers of Jesus need to be life-learners. This program enabled me to model this value in my life in practical ways.

How has your involvement in this learning process helped your ministry in practical terms?

FALL 2006 ENROLMENT STATISTICS

The Fall 2006 semester is well underway and sees Northwest with an enrolment of 47 students across the various programs. The numbers in our programs break out as follows:

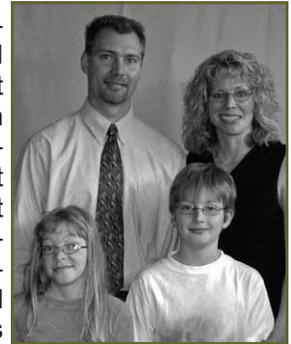
- ◆ Master of Divinity 13
- ◆ Master of Theological Studies 5
- ◆ Master of Arts in Christian Studies 14
- ◆ Master of Arts in Cross-cultural Ministries 2
- ◆ Master of Applied Linguistics & Exegesis 3
- ◆ Master of Counselling 2

NORTHWEST'S FINANCIAL HEALTH

Annual Fund By the end of 2006 our operational fund, which includes financial aid, needs to receive \$104,000 in gifts. By the end of September friends of Northwest have provided \$46,500 (45%) towards this goal. Thank you for your help. If you have not yet given this year, we would ask you to consider your response as we seek to conclude our year in a balanced position.

"Making a Difference Campaign" In faith our Board approved (October 2005) this campaign to raise \$515,000 to substantially increase our financial aid endowment and to provide resources for the Northwest Centre for Leadership Development. I am pleased to report that we have re-

Over 13 years ago, I entered seminary fresh out of University. I had some definite ideas about what ministry was all about. Although my time at ACTS, taking the Master of Divinity program, was a great experience, I didn't fully connect the dots between ministry and reality. The Doctor of Ministry program has given me an intentional grid to think through over ten years of ministry experience and to refresh and refocus my ministry vision.



COLIN AND WENDY VAN DER KUIR AND FAMILY

What for you was a significant challenge you had to overcome in order to pursue this training? How did you accomplish it?

The greatest challenge to complete the Doctor of Ministry program is simply time. I remember once when I was bogged down in due dates and duties and grumbled about trying to balance my life. I received this 'compassionate', wise advice from a member of the Northwest faculty. "What did you expect?"

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

- ◆ Diploma and Non-program3
- ◆ Youth Leadership Training Program1

We also still have four students continuing on in our Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation program.

Within ACTS Seminaries overall we have a total of 338 students enrolled this semester.

God continues to direct our way, men and women who are called to prepare themselves to serve Him more effectively.

ceived approximately \$345,000 (67%) in pledges, gifts and gifts in kind towards this project. Over the next two years we believe God will provide the remaining \$160,000. If you would like to know more about what these funds will enable us to accomplish, please contact Dr. Larry Perkins, President.

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NORTHWEST DEPENDS ON THE
GRACIOUS GIFTS OF ITS FRIENDS,
BOTH CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUALS