

## **DMin in Biblical Preaching, Core 3**

### **PREACHING AS A CONTEXTUAL WORD**

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#### **Course Description**

*Preaching as a Contextual Word* is an exploration of preaching viewed as the word of God crafted to address a particular audience at a particular time and place. Participants reflect on the way sermons offer a reading or interpretation of the sermon's hearers as much as they offer a reading of a biblical text so that the message preached might be "seriously imaginable" to its hearers. Attention is paid to the relation of text and context at each stage of sermon development.

#### **Learning Goals**

This third and final core course in the Biblical Preaching Doctor of Ministry program challenges students to refine their understanding of and capability for "contextual exegesis;" that is, taking the particular contexts in which they preach with equal seriousness with which they take the particular texts they are preaching. Participants will explore, develop, and articulate the relationship between text and context by engaging the following questions:

- ◆ What in the world is God up to? What is God up to in this congregation and its context? What word does God want to speak, through the biblical text, into this context?
- ◆ What is the relationship between gospel and culture?
- ◆ How do we bridge the biblical context of the text we are preaching and the congregational context into which we are preaching?
- ◆ What are the most effective ways to exegete our context with an eye toward preaching?
- ◆ How does our careful reading of Scripture affect our careful reading of our preaching context and *vis-a-versa*?
- ◆ What theological themes are most important for understanding the condition and needs of our hearers?

By addressing these issues through their pre-residency preparation; their interactions with each other, the instructors, and the ideas presented during residency; and their post-residency work in their distinct context, students will emerge from this course able to articulate a theological, theoretical, and practical understanding of "congregational exegesis" so as to preach a sermon that speaks the Word of God into the concrete realities of their particular context.

#### **Procedure**

The course will unfold over sixteen ninety-minute sessions over five days; the topics governing each day are listed below. Class time will incorporate presentations by the participants on their distinct context and the ways their preaching is affected by their context; presentations by the instructors; discussion of these presentations and the assigned material; and the preparation, delivery, and sympathetic critique of a sermon by each participant (see "Required Work" #5).

*Note that coursework is not completed until the required sermon and accompanying materials have been submitted to the instructor (see “Required Work” #8).*

## **Schedule**

June 12	Exploring Our Contexts 2:00-5:00 p.m.
June 13	Congregational Exegesis 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; 1:30 – 5:00 p.m.
June 14	Gospel & Culture 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; 1:30 – 5:00 p.m.
June 15	Bridging Biblical and Congregational Contexts 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; 1:30 – 5:00 p.m.
June 16	Preaching into Our Contexts 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

## **Required Work**

### *Pre-residency preparation:*

1. Read both “required” books for the course.
2. Choose one book from the “recommended” list and write a one-page critical analysis that summarizes and critically engages the author’s main thesis; share this analysis electronically with co-participants and instructors.
3. In light of the pre-residency reading, prepare a “congregational exegetical report” of your preaching context that includes an analysis of the sociological, economic, theological, historical, and cultural dimensions of your context. (These categories are meant to be suggestive; you can prepare this report as most seems helpful to you, but it should provide a comprehensive, multi-layered, or “thick” description of your context.

### *During the week of residency:*

4. Attend and participate in all class sessions.
5. Prepare a sermon that reflects both sound biblical exegesis and careful contextual analysis to preach to the class. (Texts will be assigned the first day of class.)
6. In light of the contextual exegesis of your preaching context, prepare a biblical exegesis report on the text(s) of your September sermon to present to your class.

### *Post-residency work:*

7. Prepare, preach, and record one sermon for the Sunday of September 17 or 24.
8. Complete and submit 3-5 page reflection paper, your exegetical report, and a summary of the response of your PRG on the sermon mentioned in #7 following the guidelines for such papers to be supplied during class.

## **Bibliography**

### *Required:*

Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*

Nancy Ammerman, *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*

### *Recommended:*

Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*

Stephen Ferris, *Preaching that Matters*

Eddie Gibb, *ChurchNext*

Leslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*

Clemens Sedmak, *Doing Local Theology: A Guide for Artisans of a New Humanity*

Robert Shreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*

Craig van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church*