Highlights in Doctor of Ministry Program

- Four students graduated in August 2015, read their reflections on the following pages!

- Two new students Madonna Mathews and Dido Ntontolo launched their doctoral journey!

- Content course work that was engaging, relevant, and formative. Dr. Brown declares, “Worship is our response to everything God is with everything we are. God has invited us into an eternal, redemptive relationship. It is our role, as His people, to proclaim His story in every area of our lives.”

July 2015 Seminar Reflections by Dr. David Brown

“This past summer’s D.Min. Worship Seminar allowed students to develop a plan for worship *renovare* in both their ministry context and personal life. One of the highlights I had during teaching the week was experiencing the diversity of backgrounds. The diversity of the class brought an interesting dynamic to the class discussions. How one individual had grown up experiencing Christianity in their country may have been very different from the person sitting next to them. This unique environment also allowed for each participant to understand how the worship of God is a global purpose with eternal implications. God’s Word is changing lives throughout the world, and Winebrenner is playing a vital part. It was a blessing to have experienced such a rich week of community with other believers.”
Reflections from Four Doctor of Ministry Graduates

Each DMin graduate responded to three questions to share key insights from their doctoral studies journey.

1) **How did the research process impact your current ministry context?**
   “The research project was directly related to my pastoral and para-church ministries. The depth of research into the history of spiritual formation was useful in developing and deepening an integrated approach to spiritual formation. The actual research project helped me to formulate an integrated approach to formation that has had great affect on those to whom I minister and resulted in the creation of an additional ministry tool for spiritual formation.”

2) **What was the biggest challenge you encountered in completing DMin degree program?**
   “The biggest challenge was patience in the writing process in that there were many more steps to follow than in other writing I have done. However, the process slowed me down and made the writing and final result more reflective and holistic. The process of writing on spiritual formation was itself formational.”

3) **What encouragement would you give to current DMin students and "DMin Questors" who are considering enrolling in a DMin degree program?**
   “The harvest in personal and ministerial development was worth the labor of planting and nurturing the seed of the research project. The project and the community formed in the cohort was itself a great dividend of the DMin effort. I would do it again.”

---

1) “The research process improved my general research skills and also provided information that has changed my approach to online theological education. Given my role at WTS this has been essential learning for me and of value to the seminary community.”

2) “The literature review presented the greatest challenge in terms of the time required to adequately review materials and synthesize them into a coherent narrative. The process of coding the data from surveys and interviews was complex but once I grasped the basics became an invaluable source of information.”

3) “The DMin program provided opportunity to delve deeper into a specific area of interest while still maintaining a full work schedule in both academic and church settings. Post DMin I’m aware of growth in my knowledge base, but more importantly in my approach to problem solving. The DMin program helped me reshape my ministry setting to better fit my gifts.”
1) “The DM process and experience deeply impacted my knowledge base. One of my main responsibilities at my church is to train mentees (those preparing to become licensed ministers). I was able to take the knowledge presented and revamp it to fit the Mentee Class. Recently, I taught a six-week series on Fan or Follower (which came from my last class) to the ministerial staff and my Pastor is using this series as a basis for his preaching. The DM process also strengthened my humility and relationship with God.”

2) “My biggest challenges during this four year process were staying focused and time management.”

3) “I encourage all DM students and prospects to not quit or give up. Yes, it is a trying experience but a very rewarding one. God will strengthen you in the areas of your life where you are weakest. When I would get frustrated or my patience wore thin, I would remember Philippians 4:13 (“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”).”

1) “Too often in ministry, we must go with our “gut” on what we think will work or should work. It doesn’t matter if we’re talking about how to worship, where to serve, what “missional” really means, how disciples are made and grown, or how a leader should lead in constantly changing times. Our best guess—informed by resources and advisors—gets bathed in prayer, and we just hope our plan is somewhere close to success. For help, we must dig through copious resources from mega-church marketing gurus, self-help and leadership pundits, motivational experts, and all-too-often self-aggrandizing, puffed-up consultants. We’re faced with mountains of CDs for listening, DVDs for watching, online courses and workshops, conferences, conventions, retreats, and more. It’s easy to get overwhelmed by the eyes-deep “professional” advice, and the ocean-deep free advice. Making a meaningful, helpful, constructive ministry decision is getting to be about as difficult as brain surgery or strategic warfare.

Settling on a single line of thought, setting a theory or idea in place, then carefully exploring, scrutinizing, and observing to see if your theory is on-track or off-base is far more productive and revelatory. Simply stating a theory or set of research questions immediately centers your thinking. Your reading is now more focused; you look for what will prove or disprove your thoughts; you welcome even the learning that shows you where you have gone off the rails or where your thinking is flawed, and you welcome ideas and concepts that take you in wonderfully new directions.

Now, instead of hoping your way through a decision or dilemma, you are putting your ideas under a microscope and working to prove/disprove or advocate/oppose your thinking and planning.
This is what the research process did for me in my doctoral program. Before I started my research, I knew I was facing a problem in ministry, and I thought I had some ideas for solving that problem. Yet every time I set about creating or implementing a solution, I found myself stymied. This was a decades-long struggle. When I decided to use the research approach of my dissertation project to take apart my basic assumptions and find where the depth of research might lead me, details began to fall into place and I found far more help than I had in the preceding decades.

For me, the doctoral program at Winebrenner did not simply teach me how to write a dissertation, so that once it was accomplished; I could be finished with study. Quite the contrary: the doctoral program taught me how to subject my ministry thinking and planning to constructive research methodologies for improving my service in Christ’s Church. As a Doctor of Ministry, I have become a practical theologian, and will spend my remaining days in ministry researching—proving and disproving, advocating and opposing, supporting and challenging—how the church should work, how Christ-followers should be formed, and how I must minister.”

2) “For me, the illusion of time was a large problem in my DMin program of study. Having six months in which to write a chapter of my dissertation made me feel like I had all the time in the world. However, six months (24 weeks or 180 days) tends to fly by. Between my Prospectus and my Chapter One, I discovered that I should already have been finding the right books and journals to read for Chapters Two and Three. By the time I was finalizing Chapter One, I was already behind on doing my in-depth reading and research. I quickly shifted gears and began to think in terms of doing the reading and research for writing that was still at least 6 to 18 month out.

I also found the need for keeping my resources nearby became an issue. About the time I thought I was finished with a book and returned it to the library, I would find that I needed to do further reading, and would have to make the hour-long drive to the library to find the resource again. Another plan was needed. While I know this is not the optimal or ideal or cost-effective plan for all students, my decision was to purchase every resource I used. Using the ability to buy many used books for a penny plus $3.99 shipping and handling through Amazon.com allowed me to collect, mark up, and save on my dissertation bookshelf every resource I used in my research. Journal articles were all printed through Shafer’s virtual library and collected in a notebook, allowing me to have immediately on hand every resource I used or needed. This helped immensely with re-reading, citation work, and added study, and will be helpful for future research or teaching I may do on the subject of my dissertation.

My health was also an issue. My first DMin course was in January, and I was suffering from one of the worst colds of my life. Hacking and coughing through a week-long intensive was not pleasant. One July class also had me suffering from a similar summer-cold bug. Runny noses and class discussions do not complement each other very well. Vitamin C and vitamin D for boosting immunity are a must when classes are six months apart, vitally important, and all day for a full week.”

3) “This program will change your life. Becoming a “doctor of the church” is not only a high calling and a high honor, it is a sobering and vital office. As doctors of the church, it should be our goal and obligation to continue the work of growing in ministry leadership, because we share in some ways in the auspicious ranks of the early church fathers and mothers who have deliberated, defended, and instructed the church as she has moved through her many crises throughout history. The doctors of the church must continue to live up to the vocation to which God has called us: leading, supporting, teaching, challenging, and with God’s leading, mapping out strategic plans to grow Christ’s Church in this world.”
Pastor Linda Davison

Transitions to Chaplaincy!

In August 2015, Pastor Davison resigned as the Research Project Coordinator for the WTS Doctor of Ministry degree program. She had served in this role for 8 years that involved a significant amount of change in the Doctor of Ministry program. Linda was instrumental in helping to design and develop the writing resources and rubrics that guide doctoral students in writing their research project. These projects are copyrighted and published by ProQuest, which maintains a database for researchers to access dissertations and theses on diverse topics of interest for inquirers from around the globe. The D.Min. Newsletter was also launched in 2010 with Linda as the editor.

Beginning as a Graduate Research Assistant in 2008, Linda quickly proved that she was gifted and skilled in assisting the Program Director to refine the research and writing process for this emerging degree program at WTS!

Following God’s call for further training after completing her M.Div at WTS, Linda pursued and completed the required four units of CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) to eventually pass her CPE Board Examination to become a Board Certified Chaplain (BCC) in the fall of 2015. Currently, Linda serves as a fulltime Spiritual Care Coordinator (chaplain) for Bridge Hospice, which is part of the Blanchard Valley Health System, Findlay, Ohio. Her focus is providing spiritual care for clients from Hancock County who are in the Hospice Care Unit. Her attention to detail and compassionate care continues with her new chaplaincy ministry. She also continues to serve as the Pastor of the Pathway Community.

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” (Revelation 5:12b, NRSV)
Doctor of Ministry Program Overview

Program Foundations:
- Program is designed for persons holding the Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree or its equivalent and are engaged in Christian ministry.
- Practical focus is intentionally formatted to increase professional ministry competency.
- Ministry practitioners are equipped for advanced levels of theological reflection and praxis of leadership, missiology, biblical theology, and worship.
- Spiritual formation emphasis fosters personal development to become more like Christ, which impacts all dimensions of one’s journey and service to others.
- Four-year in-service degree, the DMin permits students to complete the program while remaining in full-time ministry.
- Professional and personal development (16 credits) plus research and writing the doctoral project (16 credits) comprise the curriculum.

Program Distinctive: Doctoral students launch their research project from the very beginning of the program in order to integrate new insights from seminars and cohort class sessions during the entire 4-year study process.

Program Components:
1) Intensive One-Week Seminars—January & July
2) Individual Self-directed Learning—Before and after each intensive seminar
3) Community Peer Learning—Cohort learning experience
4) Doctoral Research Project—Research focus is determined by the doctoral student’s ministry context.

Program Purpose: “To enhance the praxis of ministry and formation of Christian leaders!”

follow his call

Winebrenner Theological Seminary
950 North Main Street Findlay, OH 45840 | 419-434-4200 / 1-800-992-4987 (toll free) / 419-434-4267 (fax)
E-mail: business@winebrenner.edu Web: http://www.winebrenner.edu

Interact with WTS online: