

BIBM 607  
**INTRODUCTION TO  
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY**

3 Credit Hours

Abilene Christian University

Fall, 2006

Dr. Charles Siburt, Vice President for Church Relations

**August 31-September 2 and September 28-30, 2006**

Room: Onstead-Packer Biblical Studies Building, room 112

*Contact Information for Dr. Siburt:*

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*Office Hours:*

Monday	1:00-3:00 PM
Tuesday	9:00-11:00 AM 1:00-2:00 PM
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The mission of Abilene Christian University is to educate its students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

The mission of the Academic Division of Abilene Christian University is to plan, organize, and implement academic programs that focus on educating students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

The mission of the College of Biblical Studies is to provide leadership, preparation, and resources for effective worldwide ministry in the cause of Christ.

The mission of the Graduate School of Theology is to equip men and women for effective ministerial leadership in a variety of missions and ministry contexts and to provide strong academic foundations for theological inquiry.

The mission of the Master of Divinity degree (78 hours) is to serve as the basic theological degree, including a comprehensive program of studies designed to prepare students for a variety of ministries and to provide the foundation for advanced theological study.

The M.A. in Christian Ministry degree, normally two years in duration (54 hours), is designed to equip individuals for most church ministry roles other than preaching.

*Course Mission:*

The mission of this course is to provide an overview of the theology, tradition, and theory informing the practice of Christian ministry in today's church and to offer personal coaching for wise and healthy ministerial leadership.

*Catalog Description:*

A substantive and practical examination of Christian ministry relating Biblical theology and the ministry in historical perspective to contemporary church needs.

*Course Description:*

This course will provide an overview of the theology, tradition, and theory informing the practice of the Christian ministry in today's church. It will examine the minister's identity in terms of its personal, familial, congregational, and cultural dynamics, and will anchor such reflection in scripture, history, wisdom, and experience. Primary emphasis will be given to the basic tasks of ministry in the context of the local church, and special focus will be placed on the personal formation and maturity of the minister as a pivotal ingredient in effective ministry. Additional attention will be given to the personal and professional struggles that characterize ministers.

*Course Textbooks:*

Allen, Ronald. *Preaching and Practical Ministry*. Indianapolis: Chalice Press, 2001. 149 pages

Gulley, Philip. *Home to Harmony*. San Francisco: Harper, 2004.

Oswald, Roy, *Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2003. 148 pages

Taylor, Barbara Brown, *The Preaching Life*. Boston, MA: Cowley Publications, 1993. 174 pages

Willimon, William H., *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*. Nashville: Abingdon. 2002. 336 pages

Winseman, Albert L., Clifton, Donald O., Liesveld, Curt. *Living Your Strengths: Discover Your God-Given Talents and Inspire Your Community*. Gallup Press, 2004. 246 pages

Course Packet: BIBM 607.

*Pre-Class Assignment:*

A 4-6 page double-spaced reflection paper on William Willimon's book *Pastor* (due **September 1**).

- a. Describe the issues concerning ministry being addressed in the author's reflections.
- b. Discuss how those issues are pertinent to ministry today.
- c. Declare how you plan to respond to these issues in your own ministry.

*Attendance Policy:*

Students who miss any class will be responsible for all the material covered in that class session. Any student who misses two class meetings will forfeit one letter on the semester course grade. Any student who misses more than two class meetings will be dropped from the course.

*Course Policies:*

- a. All work is due no later than the due dates designated in this syllabus. No assignments will be accepted after the due date.
- b. No semester grade of "IP" will be granted for this course. No grade of "I" will be granted except in rare cases of serious illness, death of a family member, or a similar emergency. In such cases, an agreement must be negotiated with Dr. Siburt and documented in a written statement.
- c. Failure to turn in any assignment will automatically result in a grade of at least a "C" for the course.

*Course Goal:*

The goal of this course is to prepare students for effective entry into the practice of ministry after completing their graduate training, for the responsible performance of ministry tasks in their respective ministry settings, and for mature self-management as leaders, particularly in Churches of Christ.

*Personal Objectives:*

My personal objectives are as follows:

- a. To encourage excellence, integrity, and maturity of ministers in Churches of Christ (and any other traditions represented among class participants).
- b. To prepare students for managing the transition from graduate training to service in ministry contexts effectively.
- c. To enhance wise self-management and self-care among ministers.

*Course Learning Objectives:*

The objectives to be accomplished in the course are as follows:

1. To establish biblical, theological, historical, and practical foundations for the nature and practice of ministry in the contemporary church.
2. To expose participants to the rich heritage of thought and practice concerning the ordained ministry.
3. To offer practical reflection on the essential tasks of ministry.
4. To examine the most common struggles experienced by persons engaged in ministry.
5. To suggest the crucial importance of the minister's personal maturity as an indispensable resource for effective and enduring ministry.
6. To build a foundation for participants' further study and formation in ministry.

7. To expose participants to valuable resources for ministry.
8. To offer encouragement to participants as they prepare for future service in the ministry.

***EVALUATION CRITERIA AND METHODS:***

The competencies which learners must master and the criteria by which mastery will be assessed are as follows:

<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Assessments</b>
Learners must demonstrate the ability to	Learners' performance will be measured by
1. Know the major biblical basis for ministry in the Christian community, especially as modeled in the ministries of Jesus and Paul	1. In class Bible study and discussion; individual and group reflection in class and written assignments
2. Articulate a rationale for ordination as the church's recognition of those who are called to lead in ministry.	2. Written reflection as demonstrated on the mid-term exam.
3. Recognize the most common and intense expectations of ministers in today's churches.	3. Reflections in book synopsis, mid-term essay exam, and "My Dream for My Ministry" paper.
4. Employ the case study method as a tool for theological reflection.	4. Participation in reflection upon teaching case studies in class.
5. Show basic understanding of the purpose and objectives governing select pastoral tasks, including preaching, weddings, funerals, and ministry to the ill and grieving.	5. Reflection on case studies in class and in the mid-term exam simulation questions.
6. Know the basic principles for mature professional conduct and self-management in the areas of legal liability, financial management, sexual ethics, and self-care.	6. Written personal and professional self-management strategy.
7. Demonstrate mastery of basic job search skills, including networking, resume writing, interviewing, and salary negotiation.	7. Written letter of application, resume, and interview guide.
8. Exhibit awareness and strategic judgment concerning the issues involved in managing ministerial transitions.	8. Reflection in the written final project, a "Ministry Start-Up Plan."

### *Classroom Virtues*

The GST invites students to participate in a process of theological and spiritual formation. Knowing how to think theologically comes by habit and by imitation, not simply by acquiring isolated facts. The assumption here is that books alone are insufficient for addressing difficulties of life and forming people into the image and likeness of God. Ultimately, we strive to form communities of inquiry, inviting you to inhabit a shared world of learning. Within such an environment, the goal is to cultivate critical skills of reflection, spiritual disciplines, interact authentically with one another, and learn to function as a community of inquiry. A large part of this involves connecting areas of life rather than pitting them against one another. Prayer, study, and other dimensions of life are all integral to the process of formation. Consequently, we invite you to participate in a set of practices; nurtured within this context, you pursue “intellectual, moral, spiritual excellence” the result of which is the formation of the whole person.

- I. Desire for truth in the context of love**—the aptitude to discern whether belief-forming processes, practices, and people yield true beliefs over false ones. People motivated by this desire will be more likely to conduct thorough inquiries, scrutinize evidence carefully, investigate numerous fields of study, consider alternative explanations, while respecting and caring for others.
- II. Humility**—the capacity to recognize reliable sources of informed judgment while recognizing the limits of our knowledge and the fallibility of our judgments. This is not created in isolation but takes into account feedback and correction from other sources of informed judgment.
- III. Honesty**—the capacity to tackle difficult questions without seeking simple answers. Ignoring complex and difficult questions only solidifies vices such as intellectual dishonesty, close-mindedness, and rash judgments. These vices preclude the possibility of refining our thinking and of participating in conversations with others.
- IV. Openness**—the desire to engage in an open-ended search for knowledge of God, including receptivity to different ideas, experiences, and people. Listening becomes a discipline that acknowledges the other and respects diversity. The art of being a student and a teacher is an ongoing process that necessitates hospitality, patience, and love.
- V. Courage**—the ability to articulate one’s position while considering other perspectives. The aptitude to express convictions involves risk yet fosters opportunities for meaningful dialog. Responding to objections entails tenacity but should not be confused with close-mindedness.
- VI. Wisdom**—the capacity to offer a synthetic discernment of knowledge on behalf of the community. The aim is not merely the dissemination of information but a pastoral implementation of faith for the building up of the community. It solidifies various pieces of data, practices, and experiences and aptly applies knowledge and faith to particular situations.
- VII. Stewardship**—the commitment to one’s accountability to the gifts and responsibilities that one brings to the classroom. Classroom engagement includes proactively participating in the course goals, seeking mastery of course competencies, and collaborating with faculty and fellow students in the developing of a learning environment. Committing oneself to spiritual and intellectual well-being and growth is a faithful response to the opportunities graduate education affords.

**VIII. Hopefulness**—the receptivity to the future possibilities of God. The cultivation of thankfulness for our heritages and expectation for our future ministries engenders a guard against cynicism and a spirit of perseverance during times of stress and disorientation.

**IX. Prayerfulness**—the making of space to commune with God. The task of learning and teaching so that we are formed into the image of Christ through the Spirit involves our consistent reliance on God’s sanctifying work.

*Course Format:*

The course format will be varied, including lecture, discussion, case studies, guest resource speakers, video and audiotapes, Bible study, and written reflection activities.

*Course Requirements:*

Participants in the class will be required to complete the following requirements:

1. Attend all class meetings.
2. Read all required readings.
3. A 4-6 page double-spaced reflection paper on William Willimon’s book *Pastor* (**due September 1**).
  - a. Describe the issues concerning ministry being addressed in the author’s reflections.
  - b. Discuss how those issues are pertinent to ministry today.
  - c. Declare how you plan to respond to these issues in your own ministry.
4. Write a 10-12 page typed paper (double-spaced) entitled *My Dream for My Ministry* (**due September 29**). The paper is to be a self-reflection essay intended to articulate in honest, concrete terms your personal, perhaps even unarticulated “dream” for your life and work as a Christian minister. The paper should include the following ingredients:
  - a. A statement of how you would describe and understand your “call” to ministry.
  - b. A statement of your vision, values, and goals for your ministry, and a rationale for them.
  - c. An evaluation of your ministry gifts, strengths, and weaknesses.
  - d. What the ideal role you would foresee for yourself would look like.
  - e. What your stance towards the Church of Christ fellowship (or your own fellowship if it is different than Church of Christ) will be.
  - f. What you expect from the churches you will serve, including financial compensation, benefits, working conditions, handling of criticism, growth, etc.
  - g. How your education and family will fit into the dream.
  - h. What arrangements/plans you will make for your continuing education after finishing your degree here.
  - i. How you intend to respond if/when your dream does or does not come true in the way that you would expect.
  - j. How you intend to manage conflict in your ministry.
  - k. In what way(s) you will discern God’s will in decisions pertaining to your ministry.
  1. What disappointments or frustrations it would take for you to decide to quit ministry and to do something else.

5. A ***Job Search Packet***, consisting of a Personal Resume (1-2 pages), a Cover Letter (1 page), and an Interview Strategy Guide—what steps you will take to prepare for the interview and what questions you will be prepared to answer and to ask in the interview (1-2 pages)--a total of 4 to 5 pages (double spaced)--**(due October 23)**.
  - a. The resume and letter of application should be written according to the guidelines presented in class should be prepared for your use in applying for opportunities in ministry.
  - b. Your plan for managing the steps or stages in the search process: learning of openings, application, study, interview, and negotiation.
  - c. Your planned strategy for preparing for the actual interview, including specific questions you will prepare to answer and to ask.
  - d. Your guidelines for addressing the issues of job description, necessary skills for the position, responsibilities, team relationships, compensation, moving schedule, moving expenses, vacation, continuing education time and expenses, etc.
  - e. What criteria you will use in making your decisions.
6. A ***Final Exam*** (due December 4).
  - a. This exam will be a take-at-home essay exam.
  - b. You will receive it on the last day of class and will be due on the date indicated above.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Because of Dr. Siburt's vision handicap, your special assistance is requested. (1) Please submit both a hard copy and (2) then email attach a copy of your paper to [siburt@bible.acu.edu](mailto:siburt@bible.acu.edu) in Microsoft Word format.

*Food and Drink in the Classroom:*

The recently revised policy concerning bringing food or drink into the classroom *does* permit drinking hot or cold beverages in the classroom but *does not* permit eating any food in the classroom at any time. Your responsible and mature cooperation with this policy will be expected and appreciated.

*Grade Values:*

Willimon Book Reflection	25%
<i>My Dream for My Ministry</i> Paper	25%
<i>Job Search Packet</i>	15%
Final Exam	35%

*Grading Scale:*

A=92-100
B=83-91
C=74-82
D=65-73
E=64-

*Course Schedule:*

The class will meet on two weekends as follows:

**Weekend 1****Thursday, August 31**

1:00 p.m.

2:00

3:00

3:15

5:00

6:30

8:00

8:15

9:30

**Friday, September 1**

8:00 a.m.

10:00

10:15

**Session 1: A Survival Course for Ministers**

1. Introduction to the Course
2. Case Study: “*Flat On His Face*”
3. The Hazard of Crossing the Boundary
- Packet: Session 1

Break

**Session 2: Expectations of Ministers**

1. Christianity Today Survey Results
2. Images of Ministry in America
3. Readiness for Ministry
4. Pulpit & Pew Research
5. ATS (Association of Theological Schools) Standards
- Packet, Section 2

Dinner

**Session 3: Biblical Perspectives on Ministry**

1. Reflections from Paul’s ministry
2. Reflections from 1 and 2 Timothy
3. The Meaning of Ordination
- Willimon, *Pastor*, chapters 1, 2, 9, 10
- Nouwen, *The Living Reminder*, all
- Taylor, *the Preaching Life*, Chapters 1, 2, 3
- Willimon, *Pastor*, chapters 9, 10
- Packet, Section 3

Break

**Book Synopsis Due****Session 4: The Minister as Theologian**

1. What Is Good Ministry?
2. Theological Reflection in Ministry (Whitehead and Whitehead)
3. The Case Method
4. Reflecting on Select Case Studies
- Willimon, *Pastor*, chapter 5
- Winseman, Clifton, and Liesveld, *Living Your Strengths*, Chapters 1 and 2
- Packet: Session 4

Dismiss

**Session 5: The Ministry of Care**

1. Hospital Ministry (Dr. Mike Patrick, Hendrick Hospital)

Break

2. Ministry with Senior Adults (Dr. C. D. Pruett, ACU)
- Allen, *Preaching and Practical Ministry*, chapter 3 and 6
- Willimon, *Pastor*, chapter 7
- Winseman, Clifton, and Liesveld, *Living Your Strengths*, Chapters 3 and 4

- 11:45 Lunch - Packet, Section 5
- 1:15 p.m. **Session 6: Spiritual Resources for Ministry**
1. The Minister's Spiritual Life (Randy Harris)
  2. Lectures on Ministry (Landon Saunders)
    - Taylor, *The Preaching Life*, Chapters 4 & 5
    - Willimon, *Pastor*, chapter 11
    - Packet, Section 6
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 **Session 7: The Minister as Worship Leader**
1. The Minister as Worship Leader
  2. Weddings
  3. Funerals
    - Taylor, *The Preaching Life*, Chapter 6
    - Willimon, *Pastor*, chapters 3 and 4
    - Packet, Section 7
- Book Synopsis Due**
- 5:00 Dismiss

## Saturday, September 2

- 8:00 a.m. **Session 8: The Minister as Preacher and Teacher**
1. Preaching as Orientation, Disorientation, and Reorientation (Dr. Fred Craddock taped lectures)
    - Allen, *Preaching and Practical Ministry*, chapters 1 and 2
    - Taylor, *The Preaching Life*, Chapter 7
    - Willimon, *Pastor*, chapters 6 and 8
    - Winseman, Clifton, and Liesveld, *Living Your Strengths*, Chapters 5 and 6
    - Packet, Section 8
  2. Craddock continued
- 10:00 Break
- 10:15 Dismiss
- 12:00 p.m. Dismiss

## Weekend 2

### Thursday, September 28

- 1:00 p.m. **Session 11: The Minister's Financial Management**
1. Mr. Mitch Monroe, *Assist Financial Services*
    - Gulley, *Home to Harmony*, Part 3: Fall
    - Packet, Section 11
- 3:30 Break
- 3:45 **Session 9: Ministry Job Search**
1. The Minister Search Process
  2. Resumes and References
  3. Preparing for Interviews
- 5:00 Dinner
- 6:30

- 8:00 Break
- 8:15 4. Suggestions for Negotiating with Churches  
 - Gulley, *Home to Harmony*, Part 1: Spring  
 - Oswald, *Beginning Ministry Together*, All Parts  
 - Packet, Section 9
- 9:30 Dismiss

### Friday, September 29

- 8:00 a.m. **Session 10: Legal Liability in Ministry**  
 1. Jane Varner Beard, Attorney at Law  
 - Allen, *Preaching and Practical Ministry*, chapter 4 and 5  
 - Gulley, *Home to Harmony*, Part 2: Summer  
 - Packet: Section 10
- 10:30 Break
- 10:45 2. Sexual Conduct in Pastoral Situations  
 (Dr. Jackie Halstead, ACU)
- 11:45 **My Dream for My Ministry Paper Due**  
 Lunch
- 1:15 p.m. **Session 12: Survival in Ministry:** Robert Oglesby, Sr.  
 1. Survival in Ministry  
 - Packet: Section 12
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 **Session 13: Transitions in Ministry**  
 1. Managing Transitions in Ministry
- 5:00 Dismiss

### Saturday, September 30

- 8:00 a.m. 2. Ministry in Different Size Churches  
 3. Minister Evaluation: The *Minister Growth Review* Process  
 - Gulley, *Home to Harmony*, Part 4: Winter  
 - Packet, Section 13
- Session 14: Self-Management in Ministry**  
 1. Sexual Ethics in Ministry  
 - Willimon, *Pastor*, chapters 12 and 13  
 - Packet, Section 14
- 10:00 Break
- 10:15 2. Self-Care in Ministry  
 3. The *Ministers Support Network*  
 - Packet, Section 14
- 11:15 **Session 15: Conclusion**  
 1. Course Evaluations  
 2. Sermon: "Buried By Baptism"
- 12:00 p.m. Dismiss