

CMWL-8301  
**REVITALIZING CORPORATE WORSHIP**  
Professional Doctoral Seminar  
Session One: Feb 5-6, 2009  
Session Two: Feb 26-27, 2009  
8 AM-4 PM (CST)

Offered via CIV New Orleans, Atlanta, Birmingham, Orlando  
Division of Church Music Ministries  
Dr. Michael Sharp, Professor of Worship Studies  
With Dr. Jon Duncan, Guest Seminar Leader  
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**NOBTS Mission Statement**

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

**NOBTS Core Purpose, Core Values, and Curriculum Competencies Addressed**

The purpose of this course is to carry out the mission of NOBTS as is reflected through the following core values and core competencies:

**Core Values**

1. Doctrinal Integrity- The course content will emanate from Biblical teachings regarding worship and the church.
2. Spiritual Vitality-The course will focus on Spirit-led revitalization in the local church.
3. Characteristic Excellence-The course will promote the truth that God is worthy of our best efforts in worship.
5. Servant Leadership-The course will encourage worship planners to see their role as servant leaders of the church in promoting the discipleship of worship ministry among God's people.

**Core Competencies**

1. Christian Theological Heritage-Students will be exposed to the process of revitalization in corporate worship at different points throughout the history of Christianity.
2. Disciple Making- Students will consider the importance of helping members of the congregation to grow spiritually in the process of engaging in private and corporate worship.
3. Servant Leadership-Students will reflect on their role as servant leaders, particularly as potential change agents and as corporate worship leaders.
4. Spiritual and Character Formation-Students will be challenged to examine their own understanding of worship and their personal commitment to Christ, the centerpiece of Christian worship.
5. Worship Leadership-Most obviously, students will be challenged in learning to assess and facilitate worship leadership within their local congregation in ways that fit their

particular congregation's cultural identity.

### **Seminar Description**

This seminar is *not* a seminar about musical style; nor will it focus on how to improve the music used in congregational worship. Although the seminar will touch on issues of style as anthropocentric realities, the seminar is principally designed to investigate the opportunities and challenges of a leader's role in assessing areas of *spirit and truth* worship revitalization, where needed, in the local church. Specific attention will be given to the principles and processes by which leadership can promote a deepening understanding of what signifies authentic and vibrant corporate worship. Leaders will be challenged to discover how the congregation may be stimulated to more meaningful worship engagement, both at individual and corporate levels. Seminar participants will examine the role of worship in the life of their congregation from perspectives of theology, spiritual formation, historical heritage, engagement, and change.

### **Seminar Objectives**

At the conclusion of this seminar, students will be able to:

1. Identify biblically-affirmed characteristics of corporate worship practice in evangelical churches as well as possible barriers to authentic worship in the local church setting.
2. Assess the dynamics of their own congregation with a goal of identifying specific practical needs related to corporate worship, as well as identifying strategies for meeting those needs in their particular context.
3. Reflect theologically on developing biblical responses to leadership issues that affect worship renewal in the church.
4. Discuss practical strategies for the promotion of discipleship through the discipline of authentic, Christ-centered worship within the church body.

### **Teaching Methodology**

Through assigned reading, group discussion, and seminar presentations on selected topics, students will be encouraged to think critically about the seminar topic. Students will be required to engage in interviews and other research methods and will report their findings to the group in individual presentations. Seminar lectures, discussion and integrated subject papers will provide platforms for learning and practical application of course materials to the student's ministry context.

### **Required Textbooks**

Best, Harold. *Unceasing Worship: Biblical Perspectives on Worship and the Arts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.

MacDonald, Gordon. *Who Stole My Church? What to Do When the Church You Love Tries to Enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007.

Plantinga, Cornelius and Sue Rozeboom. *Discerning the Spirits: A Guide to Thinking about Christian Worship Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003.

Rognlien, Bob. *Experiential Worship: Encountering God with Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2005.

York, Terry W. and C. David Bolin. *The Voice of Our Congregation: Seeking and*

*Celebrating God's Song for Us*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005.

**Pre-Seminar Assignments (Note: This assignment is due December 15, 2008—prior to the seminar. It should be posted in the Digital Drop Box under Blackboard.)**

1. Please enroll in Blackboard for the course. You may do a search for the course by course number (CMWL8301) and then go through the enrollment process. You will need a password which will be emailed to you.

As a first assignment, from your personal perspective, please write an honest reflection of approximately 500 words (each) covering the following three questions:

- a. What does healthy, “spirit and truth” worship of a local congregation look like?
- b. What are some barriers to healthy, “spirit and truth” worship of a local congregation (in general)?
- c. Are there areas in the worship life of your specific congregation which you feel may be in need of some sort of revitalization? Describe. **(Due December 15, 2008 -prior to the start of the seminar).**

2. Each student will read *Who Stole My Church?* by Gordon MacDonald and prepare a number of questions for discussion stemming from any of the worship/change issues arising in this story. One copy of this assignment is due to be turned in at the beginning of the seminar. One copy should be kept for reference by the student. **(Due: Feb 5, 2009)**

3. Each student will read each of the following texts and identify several principles which the student believes could be usefully applied in his/her ministry context. These ideas should be reported in a 1000-word ministry application reflection (for each source). The paper should be based on selected ideas and concepts presented in the texts which have potential impact for ministry in the student's particular church context. Use Turabian guidelines for all papers.

1. Plantinga, Cornelius and Sue Rozeboom. *Discerning the Spirits: A Guide to Thinking about Christian Worship Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003.
2. Best, Harold. *Unceasing Worship: Biblical Perspectives on Worship and the Arts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
3. Rognien, Bob. *Experiential Worship: Encountering God with Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2005.
4. York, Terry W. and C. David Bolin. *The Voice of Our Congregation: Seeking and Celebrating God's Song for Us*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2005.

4. Each student will research and prepare a 1200-word (minimum) written overview of his/her church's heritage as regards worship practice (describing both practice and significant influences) in the life of the congregation over time. Research may include personal interviews with long-time (or past) members of the congregation, written documents, and/or other relevant sources (please cite these sources in footnotes or endnotes). The breadth of this assignment may vary, depending upon the age of the

church. The student will present this historical overview to the seminar. **(Due: Feb 5, 2009)**

5. After research and study, each student should select two evangelical churches (one with an active membership less than 500 and one with an active membership greater than 500) which, in the student's opinion, exhibit prominent traits related to healthy *spirit and truth* worship of its fellowship. Using investigative resources (may include articles, videos, documents, personal interviews, etc.) the student is to prepare a report of 1500 words which describes the strategy/practice of these churches in discipling Christ-followers in worship. This paper will be presented to the seminar (20 min). **(Due: Feb 21, 2008)**

### **During Seminar Assignments**

1. Each student will attend all seminar sessions.
2. Each student will be prepared to participate in all seminar discussion.
3. Each student will make the following presentations to the seminar:
  - a. Lead the seminar in a discussion of principal ideas in an assigned chapter in one of the following texts: Plantinga, York, or Best. **Feb 5-6 session**
  - b. Church heritage assignment report (see Pre-seminar Assignment 4) (20 min) **Feb 5-6 session**
  - c. Lead the seminar in a discussion of an assigned chapter in Rognlien (everyone will have an assignment in this text). **Feb 21-22 session**
  - d. Church models assignment (see Pre-seminar Assignment 5) (20 min) **Feb 21-22 session**

### **Post-Seminar Assignments**

1. The student will write an 1500 to 2000-word individualized action plan in regard to some of the issues of worship and leadership, as discussed in the seminar materials, which affect "spirit and truth" worship. *This assignment should be targeted toward the student's home church context.* The plan format will include goals, a rationale for each goal, specific objectives for each goal, and a time frame to implement each specific objective. **Due date: March 27, 2009**

<b>Course Evaluation</b>	<b>%</b>
Participation and leadership in all aspects of seminar	10
Pre-seminar paper on "Spirit and Truth Worship	5
Discussion Questions: <i>Who Stole My Church?</i>	5
Ministry reflection paper: <i>Discerning the Spirits</i>	10
Ministry reflection paper: <i>The Voice of the Congregation</i>	10
Ministry reflection paper: <i>Unceasing Worship</i>	10
Ministry reflection paper: <i>Experiential Worship</i>	10
Overview Paper and presentation: <i>Church Heritage/Worship Practice</i>	10
Report on Model Church/healthy worship: strategy/practice	10
Post-seminar action plan paper	20
<b>Bibliography (see attached)</b>	