

# A RATIONALE FOR PARTICIPATION IN A DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM

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## Background

I became interested in the Doctor of Ministry program while involved in the Master of Divinity program at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort. Worth, Texas. I was unable to engage in the program, however, until six years after completing the Master of Divinity degree..

After some extensive research into the various programs available, I chose to enter the one at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. The primary factor was that the program offered a specific track or "functional major" in campus ministry.

The program was divided into three sections: class work, field supervision and practical project. The class work consisted of three "J" terms on campus in conjunction with all other functional majors. Thus the class members were pastors, teachers, chaplains, counselors, etc., as well as campus ministers. I found the interchange of ideas, backgrounds and personalities to be very enriching.

The field supervision consisted of three semesters of supervised assignments specifically related to campus ministers. These assignments included writing the history of the university, interviewing persons in administration, evaluating my administration / organizational skills, writing verbatim from counseling sessions and many other practical projects. These were evaluated by my local supervisor and discussed with him at length in conjunction with two other D.Min. students. The relationship with the

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supervisor and other students over a period of almost two years proved to be a highlight of the program.

The project was developed and carried out over a period of almost two years under the guidance of the faculty supervisor, overlapping with both other sections of the program. It consisted of a week at the seminary designing the project, carrying out the project, writing the project paper and defending the project. This was highly demanding aspect of the program with the result of sharpening my skills at stating a problem and designing a means for solving it.

### Benefits

To elaborate on the benefits of the Doctor of ministry program would go beyond the scope and length of this brief paper. However, I would like to list several benefits that I have experienced as a result of participation.

#### A. Personal

1. Increased knowledge in the areas of administration, theology and Scripture. This resulted from reading in preparation for the classes and dialogue in the courses themselves.
2. Relational skills were sharpened in classes and in the supervised field experience.
3. Satisfaction of tackling a new academic experience and succeeding.
4. Increased awareness of personal needs, resulting in counseling and resolution of unresolved grief.

#### B. Professional

1. Increased awareness of the academic community in which I served. Through study and interviews, I "took off the blinders" of only ministering to students and realized the needs of the whole community.
2. Identification with and from students, since I too was formally involved in the educational process.
3. Recognition by peers and those in academia for having attained a doctoral degree.

4. Opportunity of promotion because of advanced degree.

### Conclusion

I desire to stress that a Doctor of Ministry is neither necessary nor desired by every Southern Baptist campus minister. I have shared these concepts and evaluative thoughts as encouragement to those who would consider such a program.

I do state unequivocally that the Doctor of Ministry program was the most practical and meaningful educational endeavor I have experienced. I recommend it highly for those who are interested and motivated for further personal and professional development.