



Bricks & Mortals

Doctor of Ministry Focus Outline

Sacred Space, Practical Faith: Reimagining Church Property for Mission and Ministry

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I. Focus Area Statement

This Doctor of Ministry focus explores how sacred space, as a theological and ethical construct, shapes ministry formation and liberation praxis. It examines the stewardship of church property not as technical management but as embodied theology—a tangible reflection of God’s covenantal care, hospitality, and justice. Through biblical, historical, and practical inquiry, students discern how to lead communities toward faithful, sustainable, and liberative uses of their physical and spiritual resources.

II. Learning Goals

- Theologically articulate the relationship between sacred space, liberation, and ministry identity.
- Develop frameworks for congregational discernment in property stewardship rooted in mission, justice, and sustainability.
- Integrate financial, legal, and ecological realities into ministerial ethics without displacing theological primacy.
- Engage contextual research within ministry settings to explore sacred space as a site of divine-human encounter and social transformation.
- Create a final integrative project embodying a theology of sacred stewardship.

III. Theological Frame

Core Texts and Thinkers:

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*. 2nd ed., Fortress Press, 2002.

Cone, James H. *God of the Oppressed*. Revised ed., Orbis Books, 1997.

Eck, Diana L. *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras*. Beacon Press, 1993.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*. Orbis Books, 1984.

Torgerson, Mark. *Greening Spaces for Worship and Ministry: An Ecological Approach to Christian Architecture*. Liturgical Press, 2012.

IV. Core Seminars (D.Min. Cohort Structure)

Seminar 1: Theology of Sacred Space and the Ministerial Body

- *Scripture*: Exodus 25; Luke 4; John 1:14
- *Themes*: Incarnation, indwelling, and land as divine pedagogy.
- *Reflection*: 'Where is your ministry's tabernacle?'
- *Outcome*: Theological reflection paper connecting sacred space to incarnational ministry.

Seminar 2: Hospitality as Formation — Welcoming the Stranger

- *Theological Base*: Clemont, Cone, Gutiérrez.
- *Practice*: Designing ministry rituals and policies that embody radical hospitality.
- *Case Study*: Congregations reimagining space for the unhoused, artists, and interfaith neighbors.
- *Outcome*: Ministry case reflection with theological critique.

Seminar 3: Sacred Space in Public Witness — Justice, Property, and Power

- *Focus*: Theology meets civic law and economics.
- *Readings*: Labate, Elsdon, and Brunzema's frameworks on law, finance, and the commons.
- *Reflection*: The prophet's call in zoning meetings—reclaiming moral imagination in civic process.
- *Outcome*: Practical ethics brief integrating biblical and financial stewardship.

Seminar 4: The Earth as Sanctuary — Ecological and Indigenous Theologies of Place

- *Theological Source:* Kujawa-Holbrook, Buggeln, and indigenous eco-theologians.
- *Practice:* Earth-care as liturgical and institutional renewal.
- *Outcome:* Creation Care Praxis Plan or contextual liturgical action.

Seminar 5: Ministerial Leadership Project

- Integration of theology, ethics, and praxis in student's ministry context.
- *Examples:* 'A Theology of Shared Sacred Space for Urban Congregations', 'Redeeming the Church Basement', 'Liberating the Land'.
- *Deliverable:* Final D.Min. Project (80–100 pages or equivalent praxis design).

V. Evaluation and Formation

- *Peer Colloquia:* Students present ministry-based discernment reflections.
- *Spiritual Direction:* Ongoing focus on how space and vocation intersect.
- *Applied Research:* Congregational interviews, property archives, or site analysis framed by theological questions.
- *Final Oral Defense:* Presentation and theological articulation before a faculty/practitioner panel.

VI. Distinctive Contribution

This D.Min. focus situates property stewardship within liberation theology and ministerial identity, reclaiming the church's physical presence as both sacred sign and public responsibility. It balances the rigor of real estate fundamentals with the depth of theological formation—not training property managers, but raising ministers who discern and proclaim sacred stewardship as Gospel witness.

Full Texts as contained in all Seminars:

Brueggemann, Walter. *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*. 2nd ed., Fortress Press, 2002.

Buggeln, Gretchen. *Temples of Grace: The Material Transformation of Connecticut's Churches, 1790–1840*. Wesleyan University Press, 2003.

Cone, James H. *God of the Oppressed*. Revised ed., Orbis Books, 1997.

Elsdon, Mark. *We Aren't Broke: Uncovering Hidden Resources for Mission and Ministry*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2021.

Eck, Diana L. *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras*. Beacon Press, 1993.

Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*. Orbis Books, 1984.

Kujawa-Holbrook, Sheryl A. *God Beyond Borders: Interreligious Learning among Women as Faithful Citizens*. Pickwick Publications, 2014.

Labate, Rachel. Selected writings on civic law, zoning, and sacred space. Course readings.

Torgerson, Mark. *Greening Spaces for Worship and Ministry: An Ecological Approach to Christian Architecture*. Liturgical Press, 2012.

Brunzema, Ryan. Selected writings on finance, commons theory, and institutional ethics. Course readings.

The Holy Bible. Exodus 25; Luke 4; John 1:14.

Additional Resources from Bricks & Mortals

[How-To Guides on Property Management, Maintenance, Funding, and Grants](#)