

ACADEMICUS™

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE PH.D./TH.M. PROGRAM OF SEBTS — VOLUME III, ISSUE 4

FROM RESEARCH TO WRITING: HOW SEBTS PROFESSORS DO THEIR WORK • PART III

On a number of occasions I can recall hearing Southeastern professors say, “Research and writing is a ministry.” But only pastors and deacons are ministers, right?

Students studying in the Ph.D. program at Southeastern are realizing that they, too, are preparing for ministry. Even now, Dr. Black advises, they should begin to write with a purpose and audience in mind. The labors of a researcher/writer can contribute to the spiritual growth of God’s people. But the question remains: How can I learn to write?

If you have had the opportunity to read the two previous editions of the newsletter, then you will know the question at hand: “How would the professors at Southeastern advise Ph.D. students in research and writing?” Having received recommendations from those professors on selecting sources and arranging notes, we have finally arrived at what may be the most difficult but obviously unavoidable task of writing—actually incorporating one’s research with his insights to form a significant piece of writing.

Fortunately, though two articles have already been written, Southeastern’s professors still have a considerable amount of instruc-

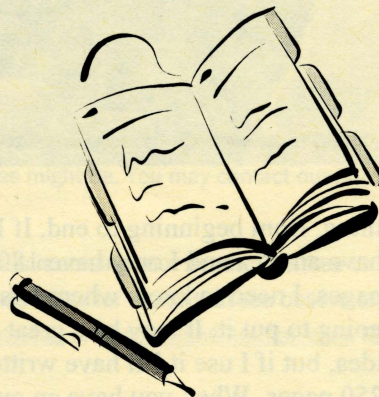
tion and insight for us. As before, a number of our faculty members were asked to respond to questions relating to our topic: How do you utilize outlines and drafts? Can you describe your writing style? Have you used your peers to review your work? etc. Not surprisingly, there were a variety of responses.

Here is a few simple questions a fledgling researcher/writer might ask: When should I begin to write? When is the research done, and when is it time to start putting ideas on paper? Do I need to have a conclusion already developed?

Of course, for some professors, publishing deadlines will play a significant role in their decision to start writing, but what happens ideally? When should the writing begin, deadlines and dates aside? Dr. Hammett answered the question this way: “I begin writing

when I feel like I have a specific direction. Have I already formed a conclusion? Yes. I know where I’m going. Before I actually begin writing, I have an idea of where the whole project is going.”

What, though, if we start without a conclusion in mind? Will that not become obvious as the writing advances? Dr. Schemm “cautions students against beginning to write without a general sense of where they think they’re going to end up. You don’t have a real tight thesis if you don’t have that.” And Dr. Heimbach added this additional reminder: “The worst mistake as an academic writer is to write something that does not have a point.” When you write, do so with a clear purpose. So does that mean that when the writing begins, the research is over? Definitely not. “I like to do most of my research before I start. I probably have 90% of the research done before I begin,” Dr. Rooker said, “but the nice thing about computers is that you can continually update. I may put things down, but I always keep in mind that it is a rough draft, and that I may want to come back to it.” And Dr. Beck responded: “I always have an idea where I am going, but I always allow my research and writing to inform, alter or modify my conclusions.”



Preparing an outline or draft, a sort of pre-writing document if you will, is a basic means of preparation for most of the professors. It is the first step in transferring their knowledge and insights to a paper. So is there an easy strategy to follow, a simple plan?

The professors gave some excellent guidelines. Take Dr. Hammett's approach, for instance: "I begin with an idea. I will make that into some form of an outline, but nothing concrete. Then I do my research and revise that outline into a draft since the research may show that the outline was inadequate." Dr. Little makes a comparable use of outlines: "I usually have a broad outline of how I want to develop or

With writing, there is never one solution, even though there may be some similarities. Each professor had a unique contribution. Dr. Nelson commented: "I always outline first. That's easier for me. I move from notes to scratching out ideas. I even keep a portable tape player in my car and actually do outlines and come up with good ideas while traveling when I have time to think and be quiet. I'll do an outline orally and then go back and work it out on paper. From there I begin organizing the note cards. I then do a more detailed outline, and start writing."

Dr. Schemm, too, makes good use of writing outlines: "During a project, I keep the outline in front of me—I like to see the whole

what ought to go where, 12 pages here, 15 pages there. That's the way I operate; I like to see the project at a glance." Dr. Schemm also pointed out that a good computer-generated outline can be a great way to store references for paper files.

Obviously, the use of outlines and drafts, too, depends on the project. Dr. Rooker made some observations about these tools in his work: "The divisions, which is what you are shooting for in an outline, develop out of what I am doing. I don't set out an outline; it is naturally made from the body of the text. I outline the passage myself, but it emerges from my reading and studying the text. Likewise,

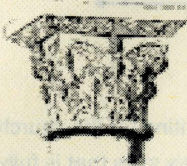


organize the material, but much of that is revised once I start writing. My research continues through the writing process as new ideas come that require further research. Often my writing helps form my thoughts and gives rise to others."

thing, from beginning to end. If I have an idea and I only have 180 pages, I need to know where I'm going to put it. It may be a great idea, but if I use it I'll have written 250 pages. When you have an outline in front of you, you can see

there are no real conclusions to draw per se, other than what emerges from the text."

This answers some questions about outlining and drafting. But what about the professors' writing



CONSIDER

VOLUME III, ISSUE 4

PH.D. SPRING SOCIAL

We had a wonderful time at Magnolia Hill on April 29th enjoying the superb hospitality of the President's home. Students enjoyed mingling with Dr. and Mrs. Köstenberger and numerous other SEBTS faculty members and their classmates. We are thankful as well that Dr. Patterson was able to join us during an extremely busy week. Thanks to all those who were able to attend. Look for more information concerning future Ph.D. socials.

TURABIAN PROOFREADER

Are you interested in being an SEBTS proofreader? If so, see Mrs. Hellard by May 16th. Applicants should have a thorough knowledge of Turabian 6th ed. and the SEBTS Turabian supplement. He or she should be richly gifted with patience, have an eye for detail and have some experience proofreading.

CONGRATULATIONS

Written and Oral Exams Passed: Mark Leeds

Th.M. Thesis Successfully Defended: Bradley Hambrick

Ph.D. Dissertation Successfully Defended: Michael Soud and Larry McDonald

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

During the next two to three years, Northwestern College hopes to hire three new faculty members. They are looking for someone with a doctorate who has expertise in one of the following areas: OT Studies, Systematic Theology, Apologetics, or Philosophy. If you are interested contact Randy Nelson who chairs the search committee for the Bible Department at NWC. Randy Nelson; Northwestern College; 3003 Snelling Ave. N.; St. Paul, MN 55113.

There is an opening at California Baptist University (www.calbaptist.edu) for a professor of church history or historical theology. The successful candidate will have a Ph.D. from an accredited institution. Primary courses to be taught include History of Christianity and History of Baptist Thought. Some teaching outside of church history will be required. Preference will be given to applicants who can teach courses in practical ministry, missions, apologetics/theology, or biblical studies. Contact: Dr. Chris Morgan, Associate Dean; School of Christian Ministries; California Baptist University; 8432 Magnolia Avenue; Riverside, CA 92504. Phone: 909-343-4369; e-mail: cmorgan@calbaptist.edu.

Other job opportunities are listed in Janet Hellard's office.

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep Up to Date: Students, if you suspect that your mailing or e-mail address or phone number may need to be updated please contact Mrs. Hellard, and let her know what those changes might be. You may contact our Administrative Assistant at 761-2491 or jhellard@sebts.edu.

How Can We Minister to You? We hope *Academicus* is serving your needs. Feel free to send an e-mail concerning the news and issues you would like to hear more of in the future. Include ideas for topics that you believe should be addressed or material that you want to contribute. Send those message to jhellard@sebts.edu or buschbrian@hotmail.com. Please type "Academicus" in the subject heading.

ESSAY ANNOUNCEMENT

Word & World (Theology for Christian Ministry) is designating a prize of \$1000 to encourage scholarship and writing for the church. Essays should be devoted to topics that promote "theology for Christian ministry" and should be written in a lively style that is fully accessible to those engaged in the practice of Christian ministry. Essays, which must be accompanied by an official submission form, must be received by October 1, 2003, and should be 3500 words in length. Applications can obtain a submission form at www.luthersem.edu/word&world. All essays, not only the winner, will be considered for publication in Word & World. Address essays or requests for further information to Dr. Fredrick J. Gaiser, Editor, 2481 Como Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108. Phone: 651-641-3210; e-mail: fgaiser@luthersem.edu. See the announcement posted in Mrs. Hellard's office.

PLAN AHEAD

If you have not yet completed your language requirements, please note these details in the 2003-04 schedule.

Summer 2003	No research languages offered
Fall 2003	Introduction to Theological German (Williams)
J-Term 2004	Theological Readings in German (Köstenberger)
Spring 2004	Introduction to Theological Latin (Williams)
Summer 2004	Introduction to Theological French (Williams)

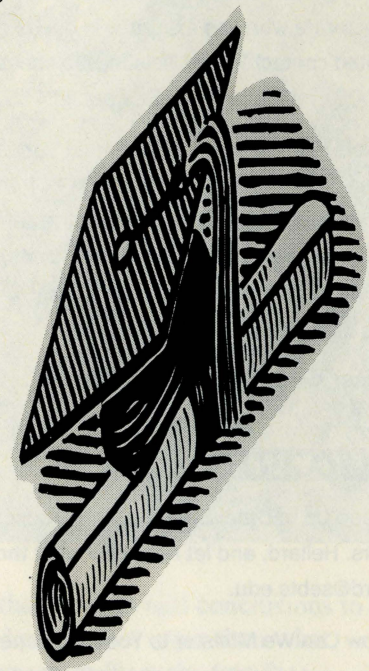
ETS MEETING

Plan now to attend the Annual ETS Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in November 19-21, 2003, at the Hilton Atlanta. This year's meeting promises to be especially important, since the Society will be dealing with the question of open theism.

WELCOME NEW PH.D. STUDENTS!

Dr. Köstenberger and the entire faculty at Southeastern would like to welcome the new students to the Ph.D. program. They will begin their studies in the summer of 2003.

New Ph.D. Students:	Concentration:	Major Professor:
Shane Arnold	Systematic Theology	Dr. Hammett
John Bohannon	Preaching	Dr. Rummage
Paul Brewster	Systematic Theology	Dr. Patterson
Marc Carpenter	Ethics	Dr. Heimbach
Daniel Dockery	Preaching	Dr. McDill
Jason Hiles	Systematic Theology	Dr. Hammett
Rich Holland	Philosophy	Dr. Little
J.J. Lesley	Old Testament	Dr. Sailhamer
Bernard Maurer	Old Testament	Dr. Sailhamer
Raymond Meyer	Philosophy	Dr. Little
Corin Mihaila	New Testament	Dr. Köstenberger
Wil Owens	Systematic Theology	Dr. Patterson
Scott Pace	Preaching	Dr. Rummage
Matt Rummage	Evangelism	Dr. Reid
Daniel Streett	New Testament	Dr. Köstenberger
Bill Youngmark	Philosophy	Dr. Bush



DOCTORAL SEMINARS

Fall 2003

0580	Introduction to Research	Köstenberger	1	9-4 (R, F)
	Dates: August 14 and 15			
0581	Intro to Teaching in Higher Education	Buchanan	1	9-4 (R, F)
	Dates: August 14 and 15			
0116	Introduction to Theological German	Williams	2	1-5 (F)
	First meeting August 18, then meets every Friday except Integrative Seminar dates			
0575	Integrative Seminar	Köstenberger	3	1-5 (F)
	Dates: Aug. 22, Sept. 12, Oct. 17, Nov. 7			
1375	Seminar in Old Testament Theology	Sailhamer	3	12:30-3 (W)
1777	New Testament Theology: Hebrews	Lanier	3	9-11:30 (F)
3097	Seminar on a Selected Doctrine: Ecclesiology	Hammett	3	7:30-10 (W)
3190	Seminar in Selected Theologians: Cyril of Alexandria	McKinion	3	1-3:30 (T)
3281	Seminar in Western Thought	Bush	3	2-4:30 (R)
3390	Seminar on the History of Moral Theology	Heimbach	3	7:30-10 (T)
2476	History & Theology of Spiritual Awakenings	Reid	3	7:30-10 (R)

Spring 2004

0114	Introduction to Theological French	Williams	2	1-5 (F)
	Class begins Jan. 23, then meets every Friday except Integrative Seminar dates			
0587	Integrative Seminar	Köstenberger	3	1-5 (F)
	Dates: Feb. 20, Mar. 19, Apr. 16; Student Conference: April 30 and May 7			
1380	Seminar in Contemporary Old Testament Research	Rooker	3	12:30-3 (W)
1775	New Testament Themes: Evangelism in the N.T.	Beck	3	1-3:30 (T)
3077	Seminar on Contemporary Theology	Patterson	3	7-9:30 (R eve.)
2177	Seminar in American Theological History	Harper	3	1-3:30 (R)
3283	Current Topics in Philosophy of Religion: Coherence of Theism	Little	3	7:30-10 (T)
2381	Seminar in Contemp. Southern Baptist Missiology	Eitel	3	7:30-10 (W)
4179	The Preaching Tradition	McDill	3	9-11:30 (F)

Ph.D. Student Luncheons

Everyone who has attended the Ph.D. Student Luncheons this semester will probably agree that the quality of the presentations has been exceptional. To each of our speakers, we wish to express a sincere thank-you. If you want to listen to a tape of an entire session, please see Janet Hellard. Here is a small portion of those talks.

Dr. Bill Brown: Scholarship and Bi-vocational Ministry

Earning a Ph.D. isn't for career advancement or getting a better-paying job. Paul probably had the equivalent of a Ph.D., but he supported himself through bi-vocational ministry. You need to examine your motives as to why you are getting the degree. If God has given you this opportunity, you need to take advantage of it, but it is only to make you a more useful tool in his hand.

God has the right to send us wherever he chooses, and that may be to a place that requires bi-vocational ministry. Bi-vocational may mean you are teaching in a secular school, and part of your ministry may be to those students. Or it may mean you're doing something else to support yourself while you work in the ministry.

Dr. Andreas Köstenberger: Preparing Your Prospectus and Writing a Dissertation

Writing the Prospectus: Here are the key ingredients the committee is looking for.

1. Is it a viable topic? Or has it been covered by others?
2. Is the method sound? Or are there major concerns or even fatal flaws?
3. Is your plan workable? Or are you biting off more than you can chew?
4. Are resources available for research adequate?
5. And above all, is the hypothesis sound? Does it seem defensible?

Dr. Frank Catanzaro: Biblical Stress Management for Ph.D. Students

One of the things I am concerned about is our propensity to be influenced by the culture. One of the things that culture has emphasized so strongly, at least in my lifetime, is the idea of pleasure and comfort. Everything our culture promotes is designed to bring us pleasure or make us more comfortable. Anything that doesn't do that is considered to be bad. . . . I don't think we need to spend our lives trying to avoid the stress that God allows to come into our lives. If you believe that God has led you to work on a degree like this then the stress is probably a very good thing. The great thing is that the things that press on you now (doctoral studies, the ministry, whatever), may be these are the things that are going to bring you great joy when you see the Lord working in the midst of your stressful situation.

Dr. Bruce Little: Pastoral Perspective for Academic Study

I would never want to be separated from doing ministry. There is something about that which keeps the proper integration and balance between academics and ministering to people. . . . Being in the ministry forces your theories, your inferences, your claims to be worked out in a real world.

Speaking with precision is vital to the Christian message. So, as Solomon says, "Words of the scholar are like well-driven nails" (Ecc1 12:11). Do we think about the words we want to use or do we just say whatever comes into our head at the time? When we declare the Truth, we are after all representing God.

Dr. Gerald Cowen: Preparing to Teach in College or Seminary

You never know when opportunities for teaching will come your way. If you are serious about teaching, start preparing now. Prepare classroom notes. Know what classes you will be most likely to teach, because you may not have a lot of time to prepare when you are first asked to take a position.

You need to get all the experience you can, ahead of time. How? Work as a grader. You'll begin to learn how things work. Teach classes as much as possible. Present papers. Get to know other people at other schools.

A final issue concerns your own spiritual life, your walk with God. If you don't have that, why would anyone want you to teach? If you just have the academic side, that's going to leave a big gap as far as your ability to help people.

style? When they sit down to work, do they write quickly or slowly? Do they revise later or proceed only after making corrections? Do they pen their thoughts throughout the day whenever there is a spare moment, or do they set aside hours to work?

Again, there was some general agreement as to matters of style. Most professors prefer to set aside a day or half a day to work. They tend to write quickly but continue to revise their work throughout the length of the project. Doctor Hammett described his writing style this way: "I need a large block of time to write. I gather all the material, all the research. I review it all, which may take half an hour or an hour. Once I have all that in my mind, then I can write pretty rapidly." And Dr. Nelson said, "Because of the way I work, I need big blocks of time. I can't spend an hour here and then go do something else. I don't work effectively that way. . . . When I do, I will write and write. It doesn't matter to me how bad it is. I get it on paper. That's how I start."

And then there is Dr. Reid who expresses his own method in vintage, Reid-like fashion: "I suppose my writing is somewhat like my pet tastes. I am like a snake. I may mull over something for some lengths of time, like a snake slowly on the prowl. But then an idea comes, and I cannot write or type fast enough. That can go for some time, like the capture, kill, and devouring of a snake's prey. . . . Once I get the essential idea, and an annotated outline, I simply fill in as much material as I can in each chapter, with no thought on style, flow, etc., but simply to get information in a big-picture, generalized format."

Fortunately, Dr. Schemm, having finished his own disserta-

tion a year ago, thought to give us a realistic bit of perspective concerning the pace of scholarly, academic writing, a perspective that may cause a few of us Ph.D. students to reconsider what we have come to expect of ourselves: "My writing pace isn't slow and it's not fast. Sometimes you crank out three or four pages a day and sometimes you feel like you hit a brick wall. Three or four pages a day of academic writing is huge. If you're writing on the Ph.D. level and you are trying to produce a journal article, a monograph, a dissertation, you'd be thrilled if you wrote three or four pages a day." So much for those last-minute writing binges.

Still, what good are words on a page if the whole project is lacking coherence and persuasiveness? Doctor Heimbach spoke for everyone when he said: "It is easy to get words on paper." The challenge and achievement comes by revising and rewriting. Doctor Nelson commented: "I spend more time rewriting than writing—that's where I spend my more careful writing time. . . . In the latest thing I published, I knew precisely what I was going to argue . . . but in a couple of sections of the essay I ended up rethinking some of my ideas just because I had to put it down on paper. That is part of the value of writing."

Of course, Southeastern professors have the vantage point not just of writers, but as our evaluators as well. Doctor Rooker spoke of the process and need for rewriting with those particular concerns in mind: "The research always has to be the main part of your work, but you are always revising and reading over something to improve it. And no matter how good you think you've done, read it; you'll find mistakes. One of the most frustrating things is reading through dissertations. You're trying to see if the content is there, and if you have to reread every other sentence to follow the thought or if there are many grammatical errors, it

is disheartening to continue. It is the same way with preachers. For some, when they hear the preacher make a grammatical error, then he has lost his credibility. This is a problem from a professor's standpoint. Students should continue to try to improve the style. It is a never-ending thing. It is difficult to convey just how much these professors devote themselves to revising and rewriting their work and how seriously they emphasize the need for students to do the same. Good papers (perhaps with a rare exception) are not completed hours or even a day before the paper is due. Good papers need to be mulled over for days in the hands and mind of their authors, giving them the opportunity not just to eliminate simple grammatical errors but to form and reform ideas for the sake of accuracy, clarity and creativity. With this in mind, we can appreciate Dr. Bush's advice and instructions. See how he approaches the entire project: "For an essay based on research, I make a draft (or maybe an outline) and gather relevant books. I revise the draft and add things from the books. Then I prepare a new draft and get other relevant books, revise the draft more, and continue this process. At some point, I do a final revision and work on consistency and unity of the final draft. This usually requires three or more extensive revisions. Finally, I set it aside and later revise it twice more, then it is ready for peer review and/or publication.

So once we've rewritten and revised the paper, the task of writing is complete . . . right? One last step remains that may not receive the attention it deserves: peer review. This involves one scholar reviewing, critiquing and appraising the work of another. On the one hand, almost all our professors readily admit the usefulness of reviews. Doctor Schemm said: "I

would be ill-advised not to have peer reviews, at least in my stage of the game. I just want to make sure I said it right. I find that I need the peer review to tighten my argument and to cut out the excess. My peers see that very clearly. I really want my writing to be tight and clean. I wouldn't think of sending an article off that hasn't had at least two other sets of eyes on it. Maybe that will change in ten years."

Doctor Reid added his insights here as well: "I never publish anything without having many eyes on it, particularly with books. My colleagues and my Ph.D. students have been of invaluable help." Doctor Little concurs: "I have often used colleagues . . . I have them read for clarity of thought, organization, proper exegesis (where applicable) or historical accuracy, and cogency of argument. This is especially needed when I am working on a new idea." Doctor Nelson added: "I always have had at least two colleagues read any of these things that I plan to publish, and that is very helpful to have other sets of eyes on it. And not just for proof reading, but for criticizing my ideas, how I've argued something. I would never send something to a publisher if I hadn't had

"Learning how to write is a life-long process. You never stop learning how to improve your writing."

— Dr. Daniel Heimbach

at least a couple of people read through it."

Even professors who do not utilize the peer reviews regularly spoke highly of it. "It is always needed but not always practical," said Dr. Bush. "We should do more to help one another but a lack of time and focus is the main problem." And Dr. Hammett described his experience with reviews this way: "I rarely ask someone to look at something as a whole. If it is an area I am not familiar with, then I may consult someone, but I ask them to look at particular points."


Admittedly, Ph.D. students may have some problems with peer reviews of their work, namely be-

cause their studies have become so specialized. In this case, the student prays for an insightful mentor and perhaps a willing and knowledgeable outside reader. As for SEBTS professors, ultimately their work is reviewed by the scholarly community—the professional societies become the source of critical review.

It will come as no surprise that even among our seminary professors there is a variety of opinions about writing. No doubt, they all are qualified, yet some take to the task with a bit more eagerness than do others. One professor said: "I enjoy writing. I'd rather do that than just about anything else. For me that's not labor—I wish I had more time to do it." Yet another professor confided in me: "I not the best writer, so I need to do a lot of reworking and revising." Regardless, I think they would all humbly say, as Dr. Heimbach did: "Learning how to write is a life-long process. You never stop learning how to improve your writing." So whether it is a love or a duty, continue with the ministry of writing to which God has called you, and see how he allows this ability that he has given to be used as the medium for spreading the truth.



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