

# Thesis Project Handbook

Doctor of Worship Studies [DWS] 801

Gerald Borchert, Ph.D.  
Keith Ray II, D.Min.  
Thesis Directors

January 2008

The  
Robert E. Webber  
Institute for Worship Studies

# A Letter to Our Students

**Dear I.W.S. Student:**

**Congratulations on reaching the thesis phase of your educational program. You have been working hard to reach this project and we look forward to working with you as you seek to make a difference in the life of the community of God through your ministry project.**

**This handbook will guide you through the process of formulating a thesis/project proposal, implementing a ministry action, and writing a final document, the thesis itself.**

**The Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies offers you the opportunity to draw upon the biblical, historical, theological, and missiological resources of the Christian faith in the planning and leading of Christian worship. This project is not simply a requirement of your degree program; this project is an opportunity for you to impact the worship of the Church of God using sound theological reflection in your ministry praxis.**

**May the Holy One guide and empower you as you use this time of study to become a servant of our one Lord through a variety of worship-related ministries. This project, while helping you to satisfy the requirements of this educational program, is intended to make an impact in the worship life of the people of God. We are pleased to work with you in this final stage of your doctoral program and we will hold you in the Light of God as you move through this process.**

**Sincerely,**

**Gerald Borchert, Ph.D.  
Thesis Director**

**Keith D. Ray II, D.Min.  
Thesis Co-director**

## SECTION 1

### GENERAL THESIS INFORMATION

#### **Thesis Tuition**

The I.W.S. thesis course is an eight credit hour course. Tuition should be paid at the current credit hour rate for I.W.S. courses.

#### **Thesis/Project Seminar and Workshop**

The Thesis/Project Seminar and Workshop is designed to assist students at the thesis stage of their program to formulate their theses/projects so as to enhance and expedite the conception, formulation, research process, preparation and writing of the thesis/project. Special attention is given to the integration of the theological disciplines into thesis/project writing. The seminar aspect is organized in such a way so that it provides instruction concerning the various segments of the thesis/project. The workshop aspect is to provide a firsthand encounter with the experience of formulating the proposal in a manner so that it deals with the actual suggested theses and projects of students enrolled in the seminar. It is imperative that all students plan to participate fully in the class. The thesis seminar is held during the same week and for the same length of time as the IWS on-campus sessions in January and June. Please plan to be with class for the entire week. It is critically important for all students to participate in the entire course.

#### **Pre-Seminar/Workshop Preparation**

Students attending the seminar/workshop should make an effort to achieve clarity on as many facets of their thesis project as possible during the week. Come to class prepared to discuss your proposed thesis topic in some detail. Clearly name the problem or issue you are hoping to address in the thesis project. Next articulate the ministry action/intervention you will undertake to address this problem/issue. Consider the biblical, historical, and theological resources you will use to ground your project. What makes your proposed ministry action legitimate in light of this biblical, historical and theological reflection? Write down the main goal of your thesis along with any sub-goals you envision. Finally, consider how you will evaluate the project.

You will want to consider the specific biblical texts you will research in light of your project (likely 3 -5 pericopes, drawing from both testaments). Also, come with the names of those theologians who articulate for you the position of your project. Make sure to include persons from within your tradition, though you must not always agree with them. You certainly may dialogue with others from different traditions so long as you clearly articulate the theological viewpoints within your own faith family.

Our course is mainly one of dialogue. You will have several opportunities to share your proposed project with the class for feedback and refinement.

As you come to class remember this: It is very likely that your project will change as the week goes by. Do not let this trouble you! It is better to make adjustments now than after you've done a lot of work.

### **Securing a Supervisor**

In consultation with the faculty, Drs. Borchert, and Ray will give final approval to your supervisor/mentor. You may ask any of the IWS faculty or others pre-approved by the thesis directors. To use someone outside the approved thesis supervisors, you should submit a request to Dr. Borchert and Dr. Ray along with a vitae from the proposed supervisor. He/she should have a Ph.D. or its equivalent, be able to help you in the formulation of your proposal, and be available to supervise your thesis. It is very important that your supervisor understands the I.W.S. process or you may be floundering.

## GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE THESIS PROPOSAL

Once you have completed the thesis course, your next step is to work with your supervisor in developing a thesis proposal. This is a very important step in the thesis process. The proposal will serve as an outline and guide as you move through the actual project. The following outline provides a general overview of a thesis proposal.

### 1. Title.

The project's title should give the reader a clear statement of the project's focus as well as the context of the ministry action. Titles should convey the basic purpose of the project. Some examples of acceptable titles are: *Implementing a Lectionary-Based Bible Study for the Season of Lent at First Church, Cleveland, Ohio* and *Developing a Curriculum to Introduce the Church Year to Children at First Church, Atlanta, Georgia*.

### 2. Statement of the Problem.

By definition and design a thesis/project at I.W.S. is a response to a particular issue, problem or concern in the area of worship. In this section of the thesis proposal the student should seek to state as clearly and precisely as possible the nature of that issue, problem or concern which he or she is trying to address. This statement should include a description of the ministry setting, a definition of any important terms related to the issue and a brief personal statement of the student's own interest or rationale for dealing with this concern. Why is this issue/topic important to your ministry?

### 3. Purpose and Goals of the Thesis/Project.

In this section the student should seek to define the primary purpose of the thesis/project. In defining the purpose the student should state how the thesis/project proposes to provide some solution to or treatment of the specific ministry issue problem or concern which was previously articulated. For example: *The purpose of this project is to develop and evaluate a program of prayer enhancement through five different models of evening prayer at First Church* or *The purpose of this project is to shift the calendrical focus from a secular orientation to a religious orientation through the instruction, use, and evaluation of worship pattern of the Church Year at First Church*.

Following the statement of the main purpose, the student should then define the several supporting goals that enable to main purpose to be accomplished.

It should be obvious that the possibilities for developing a purpose statement for the thesis/project are almost endless. Several factors are important in the defining of the sub-goals for the project. They should be specific to the purpose in terms of the time involved and the size of the group expected to be involved in seminar-type projects. They should spell out the stages which these sub-goals may hope to accomplish. They should also state the personal goal(s) which the student hopes to accomplish as a learning experience through this study and research process.

While not all students will reach clarity on sub-goals early, a significant attempt should be made to begin the process because defining these sub-goals will expedite the proposal process.

#### **4. Statements of Methodologies Involved in the Study**

##### ***a. Biblical, Historical, and Theological Processes to be Employed.***

Students should ask themselves, “What are the biblical, historical, and theological resources which will assist in achieving clarity for dealing with the problem or issue being treated?” More precisely: What are the specific biblical texts that impact most directly the topics being treated? What significant historical and theological concerns and church experiences of the past provide perspective on the concerns and topic being addressed in the thesis/project?

It is crucial in this selection to select the most representative biblical texts (usually not more than five to eight pertinent texts) to be explicated in the thesis with appropriate recent commentaries and biblical scholarship. Historically, it is important to indicate what aspects of your particular church tradition are important for your study. Theologically, it is necessary to choose two or three theologians who represent your perspectives in some way.

##### ***b. Ministry, Social, and Cultural Methodological Concerns.***

Students should consider what are the contextual ministry and social resources that will assist them in reaching adequate conclusions concerning their study. What kind of analysis is being undertaken? To what extent does the study use quantitative or qualitative research patterns? Or a mixture of the two? Is the type of congregation being studied important? The type of neighborhood? The denominational history? The racial mix of the congregation? The age groups involved, such as Generation X-ers or Millennials? The usefulness of patterns such as blended, seeker-sensitive, contemporary or traditional services?

Briefly stated: Does the student understand the ministerial, ecclesiastical, social and cultural contexts involved? Does he or she understand how patterns of worship and social perspectives have an impact on the effectiveness of doing the thesis/project?

## **5. Thesis/Project Design**

In this section of the proposal the student should state point by point what she or he intends to do and how the study will be organized. In this section the student has the opportunity to articulate: “I intend first to... Then I will... Next...”, etc.

## **6. Feedback and Evaluation**

This section of the thesis/project is very important because it enables the student to move beyond mere personal and subjective opinion to begin to focus more systematically on the process of evaluating ministry tasks. While there is no attempt here to turn DWS students into sophisticated social scientists and specialists in evaluation techniques, it is crucial for ministers at the doctoral level to reflect seriously on the necessity of evaluating what they do beyond gaining congregational and individual “pats on the back” or questioning responses and reflections. Accordingly, adequate proposals will address how students receive feedback and evaluate the input received from others.

Among the simple types of feedback and evaluation are carefully constructed pre- and post- tests which provide information concerning participant’s knowledge and understanding of matters pertaining to worship both before and after they have been given new worship information and varied worship experiences. The task of the evaluator will then be to compare those evaluation sheets and seek to collate the before and after results. The feedback documents should contain both qualitative and quantitative type questions. These types of questions will be discussed in the seminar.

It is usually wise to follow such evaluative instruments with personal interviews of a representative group of the participants to be sure that the feedback is reliable. Other types of evaluations will be discussed in the seminar

While the thesis project task is not to be interpreted as a sell-out to modernity’s adoption of program orientation, it is crucial to design and evaluate a thesis in terms of its goals. Reliance on the Holy Spirit is absolutely imperative but planning and orderly conduct is likewise essential.

## **7. Proposed Outline of the Thesis**

Students will attempt to formulate the suggested outline for the thesis in the thesis proposal. The thesis will normally be structured in a five-chapter format outlined as follows:

*Chapter 1* Introduction including the statements of the problem or issue, the context of ministry and the purpose of the thesis/project. Also included in this chapter will be any definitions necessary and limitations of the study.

*Chapter 2* will normally include the biblical, historical and theological foundations for the study. This is not to be a reduction of God's work to formula.

*Chapter 3* will normally include the contextual analysis and the social and ministerial dimensions involved in the study. In this chapter or the next students may outline the process chosen to be followed in the project.

*Chapter 4* may include the above process to be followed but it should also report on the way the study was conducted and how the feedback from the study has been gathered.

*Chapter 5* will ultimately include the results of the evaluation and the suggestions for further study or development of the project and its importance for the ongoing field of worship studies.

While there may be variations to this suggested outline, depending on the nature of the thesis, most of these elements should be included in the outline of the thesis/project.

## **8. Timeline of Project**

Provide a working calendar for your thesis/project, including the expected dates of the ministry intervention as well as a timeline for completion of the written thesis itself.

## **9. Working Bibliography**

The student should submit a preliminary working bibliography to be sure that their resources are adequate for the research phase of the thesis/project. There typically should be approximately 30 to 40 references in this bibliography.

## **10. Suggested Length of Proposal**

The normal length of an adequate proposal will be approximately 8-10 single-spaced pages and should not exceed 20 pages including the suggested bibliographical and appropriate appendices when completed. *Suggested lengths for each chapter should be noted in brackets following each chapter title in the outline of the thesis proposal. Also include a suggested calendar for the completion of each stage of your thesis.*

## **11. Submission of the Proposal**

Please refer to the section below on submission procedures.

## **12. Page Limits for the Final Draft**

The normal page range for the final thesis/project presentations will be between 70-100 double-spaced pages excluding the bibliography and appendices. In the case of some creative projects where the submitted work involves media presentations, the page range may be lowered to 50 pages in consultation with the supervisor and the thesis/project instructor. In the case of a research thesis, page limits will be negotiated, but will not exceed a total of 250 pages.

## **13. Writing Guide**

Students are advised that the written thesis/project should conform to the standards of Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) Any deviation from the Turabian standards should be approved by the student's supervisor and the thesis/project instructor prior to submission of the written draft.

The thesis report itself *should be written mostly in the past tense* in view of the fact that the basic study by that time will have been completed. (This has been a problem for some who have not noticed the transition that takes place between the writing of the proposal and the thesis.)

## **14. Plagiarism**

Students are reminded that *plagiarism is a serious academic concern* and that borrowed material must be set in quotation marks or in a blocked indented format and must be properly acknowledged. Failure to acknowledge borrowed material correctly can lead to serious disciplinary action and failure of the work.

## **15. Abstract**

After the draft of the thesis/project has been finished an abstract (or summary) of *not more than 100 words* in length shall be written and submitted along with the completed draft of the thesis/project to the supervisor and the thesis/project instructor for approval. The abstract should be placed at the end of the front matter, as recommended by Turabian, 1.13. IWS will register the abstract and copyright the thesis for you.

## **16. Biographical Sketch**

It is not inappropriate for a one-page biographical sketch on outline form to be included at the very end of the thesis/project for readers to familiarize themselves with the writer. Such a sketch is not required but is a helpful addition to any thesis/project and is usual for many academic institutions.

## **17. Final Copies of the Written Thesis/Project**

Before the thesis/project is submitted in final form the student should receive the final approval of the draft from the supervisor and the thesis/project instructor. Following approval of your supervisor and your thesis/project instructor and your revisions for content and methodology, you must send a copy of the thesis to the stylistic reader to ensure that the thesis conforms to instructions and Turabian. After the draft is approved, then *two typographically and stylistically corrected and approved copies* of the final draft must be submitted to the office of the Institute of Worship Studies, Florida Campus as indicated in the section below on submission procedures. Additional copies may be sent for binding at an additional cost to the student. Please contact the I.W.S. office for current charges.

## **18. Copyright**

It is advisable that all doctoral theses/projects should be protected by the student's personal copyright. The copyright sign and statement should be placed on the second page immediately after the title page of the thesis/project as follows:

Copyright © 200x by Justin Wesley Smyth  
All rights reserved

The expense for the registration of the copyright is covered in the graduation fee and is the federal guarantee of protection. For further information, students may contact the I.W.S. office.

## **19. A Final Word of Advice**

Students should work in a very determined manner with their supervisors, submitting their work chapter by chapter. It is the student's responsibility to maintain contact with the supervisor and not the reverse. Students and supervisors may contact the Thesis/Project Instructor for additional advice concerning the thesis/project but this arrangement is not meant to minimize the close relationship which should exist between the student and his or her supervisor. The thesis/project instructor must, however, sign off on each thesis/project as a means of guaranteeing quality control over the process. Finally, students are reminded to pursue their work with due diligence since some students in every institution unfortunately fail to complete the degree requirement because of unforeseen circumstances and end up ABD/ABT ("All But Dissertation/Thesis"). The Institute for Worship Studies is desirous of keeping this category to a negligible number and therefore advises due diligence in the work.

### **The Faculty Prayer**

May God bless you as you work towards the completion of your thesis or project. May you find the experience to be both a rewarding enterprise and significant contribution to the work of Christ and may the Holy Spirit encourage you and grant you soon to realize the finalization of your program in an approved thesis or project.

## SECTION 2

### GUIDELINES FOR FORMATTING

1. Computer software. There are different understandings with respect to which word processing system is best for thesis work. One of the most important features to examine is footnoting. At the very least a program should be able to place subscript numbers on the page as well as single-space and double-space on the same page. Students have successfully completed formatting using WordPerfect and Microsoft Word software. Dr. Chris Alford will assist you in ensuring that your work is formatted properly, though the responsibility for this work (including proper management of computer software) is up to the student.
2. If you haven't done so, obtain a copy of Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, University of Chicago Press, 1996. This is our standard guide for formatting with some exceptions described below.
3. Parts of the Paper - Read all of chapter one. See page 1 for a list of parts of the paper—you won't have all of these, but the ones you do have go in this order.
4. Before you begin writing, read pages 252-255, "Laying Out the Text." Other stylistic matters to note:
  - a) Give special attention to the formatting of footnotes in your software program.
  - b) A 12 point scaleable font is the one most commonly used (it looks like this). I.W.S. theses are to be done in the Times New Roman font. Chapter titles, title page, etc. should be the same size font as the text. (See Turabian p. 247, 13.27.) The footnote font should be 12 point.<sup>1</sup>
  - c) Don't bold anything except certain levels of sub-headings.
  - d) Don't italicize anything except titles in footnotes, sources consulted, and foreign words, unless you can find where Turabian says it is okay to do so.
5. Margins - (including all charts, graphs, appendixes, etc.) 1 ½ on the left; 1 inch on top, right, and bottom. Page numbers will fall outside of these margins (i.e. they will appear at one half-inch from the edge of the page). See sample pages at website described below. Some pages will have a 2 inch top margin, per Turabian.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is an example of a 12 point font footnote!

6. Page Numbering - see page 253, pagination.
  - a) The title page, approval form, and blank sheet are counted in the pagination, but are not numbered.
  - b) The front matter is numbered with small Roman numerals, starting with “iv”.
  - c) The rest of the document is numbered consecutively, including appendixes and Sources Consulted.
  - d) Page numbering is at top center, except the first page of each chapter, sources consulted, and appendixes which are more than one page long. These page numbers are at the bottom center.
  
7. Table of Contents - (Turabian simply says CONTENTS). Read pages 4-5. See pages 257-258 for examples. Note what is capitalized, how to space chapter titles that are more than one line, punctuation, etc. See the example on Dr. Chris Alford’s website.
  
8. Chapter Headings - read 14.10 on page 254. See p. 272 for example.
  - a) 2 inch top margin. Chapter number (Arabic numeral) and title in caps.
  - b) 1 blank line between chapter number and title; i.e. on single line return
  - c) 2 blank lines between title and text (or sub-heading), i.e. two single line returns.
  - d) If a sub-heading immediately follows the title, there should be one single return line between the sub-heading and the text.
  
9. Sub-Headings - read pages 11-12 for different levels, p. 254 (14.11 and 14.12) for layout and spacing. Read carefully—this is the most common error everyone makes. There should be 2 single-space returns before a sub-heading of any kind (unless it is preceded by another sub-heading). There should be 1 double-space return after a sub-heading and before the text that follows.

A page should not end with a dangling sub-head.

You will find an example on Chris Alford’s formatting website described below.
  
10. Footnotes - read chapter 8. See Chapter 11, pages 187-213 for examples. See pp. 254-255 for layout (use the second form shown on p. 255.)
  - a) First line indented in same manner as text in the body of the paper.
  - b) Footnotes are single spaced.
  - c) Blank single line between footnotes—see p. 255 (14.13)

- d) Standard Encyclopedias and Dictionaries—see p. 132 (8.51) and pp. 146-147 (8.112).
- e) Other Dictionaries and Encyclopedias (such as Bible dictionaries) use Turabian 11.26 on page 196.
- f) When citing one of the books from Bob Webber’s *Complete Library of Christian Worship* use the following format:

When footnoting:

Thomas H. Schattauer, “Sacred Actions in the Reformation Churches” in *Sacred Actions of Christian Worship*, ed. Robert E. Webber, vol. 6, *Complete Library of Christian Worship* (Nashville: Star Song, 1994), 91-94.

For the bibliography:

Schattauer, Thomas H. “Sacred Actions in the Reformation Churches.” In *Sacred Actions of Christian Worship*, ed. Robert E. Webber, 91-94. Vol. 6, *Complete Library of Christian Worship*. Nashville: Star Song, 1994.

Remember, **do not list the entire library**, but only those sources you actually used and/or consulted.

- g) Titles should be in italics. This style should match in Sources Consulted.
  - h) Numbering starts at 1 at the beginning of each chapter. You must give full bibliographic information for a source in each chapter, even though you may have it in a previous chapter.
  - i) The footnotes also have a 1 ½ inch left-hand margin.
11. Second references - read pages 137-141 (8.84-8.96), and p. 146 (8.111).
- a) Be consistent.
  - b) Op.cit. no longer used—see Ibid on p. 138.
  - c) IWS prefers the use of **Method A** for subsequent references as described in Turabian, pp. 139-140 (8.88f.)
12. Biblical References - read the suggested use of biblical abbreviations from the Society of Biblical Literature, distributed in class. The first time you quote scripture, make a footnote saying something like, “All biblical references are taken from (name or version of the Bible)”. Then put the remaining scripture reference in parentheses in the text, using the approved abbreviation; e.g., “...were not ashamed” (Gen 3:12). The words “Scripture” and “Bible” are to be capitalized in the thesis.

13. Block Quotations - read p. 74 (5.4).
14. Tables - read chapter 6. See examples on pages 261-269.
  - a) For position in text, see p. 94 (6.18-6.19).
  - b) If you use a lot of tables you should make a List of Tables which goes in the front of the report (see p. 260 for example).
15. Illustrations or Figures (Charts, graphs, maps, etc.) - read chapter 7. If you use a lot of these you should make a list of Illustrations which goes in the front of the report (see page 259 for example).
16. Appendixes - read 12-13 (1.39-1.45). **Each appendix needs a number (Arabic numeral) and a title.**
  - a) Margins are the same as the rest of the report.
  - b) Page numbering is consecutive with the rest of the report.
  - c) If appendix is more than one page long, number the first page bottom center; the rest of the pages top center unless the appendix itself is numbered, in which case you put the page number in brackets on the right margin.
  - d) Appendix number and title should be centered and capitalized. There should be a blank line between the number and title, and enough space to set it off from the text of the appendix (if you are typing the appendix, there should be 2 blank lines between the title and text—like the first page of a chapter).
17. Works Cited or Sources Consulted - (use one of these terms instead of bibliography) - read chapter 9 and see pages 187-212 for examples.
  - a) For how to arrange, see Turabian p. 166 (9.3)—generally, one list in alphabetical order of the sources you actually consulted.
  - b) See page 281 for format—put the date at the end.
  - c) Note that dictionaries and encyclopedias are not listed.
  - d) 2” top margin, page number at bottom of first page only.
18. Title Page - 2” top and bottom margins. Everything is capitalized—if the title is more than one line long it should be double spaced. You should have six spaces between the various sections of the title page and approval form.
19. Approval Form - not needed until final copies. The margins should be the same as the title page. The approval form should be the third page of your thesis following the title and copyright pages. The approval form will be signed by your supervisor, Drs. Borchert and Ray, and Dr. Hart when they are on campus in June. If your supervisor is not an IWS course faculty member, you need to send them

copies of the approval form on the 100% cotton paper. When they have signed it, have them return it to you to include with your final drafts to be sent to Florida.

20. Final copies of the thesis should be on 24 lb. 100% cotton acid-free pure white paper. Final copies are not submitted until the student has received final approval from the thesis directors and Chris Alford.
21. Printers: Final copies can be printed on any good quality printer. Professional printing is not necessary.

A final word: you are strongly encouraged to submit your first draft of the report in the proper format. Take care to assemble all material in the correct order and format. It will save you and the final reader a lot of time, because the report will not be acceptable until it is in the correct format. This is doctoral work—you don't want someone looking at the thesis in the library and saying "This report is a mess—how did this person ever graduate?"

It takes a lot of time reading through Turabian. The end result, however, will look great!

*[Section 2 revised and used by permission of Barbara Wixon.]*

## **WHERE CAN I FIND FORMATTING EXAMPLES?**

Our reader for style is Dr. Chris Alford, graduate of the Alpha class of the Institute for Worship Studies. He has sample pages posted on his website which will answer many of the questions you may have. All students are encouraged to become familiar with this website as soon as possible. Simply go to [www.chris-alford.com](http://www.chris-alford.com). Click the IWS link and you will find many helpful hints as well as examples. In addition, you will receive a “Turabian Sampler” in class that condenses many of the most used formatting issues on a few pages.

Visit this website soon:

**[www.chris-alford.com](http://www.chris-alford.com)**

## SECTION 3

### IMPORTANT DATES

#### IWS YEARLY THESIS CALENDAR

**Note:** These are not suggested dates but deadlines. We encourage you to complete the initial steps as soon as possible.

##### January Thesis Course

<b>December 1</b>	Payment for thesis course tuition and meal service due
<b>January</b>	Thesis class meets
<b>February 1</b>	Thesis topic approved
<b>February 15</b>	Thesis mentor/supervisor finalized
<b>June 1</b>	Thesis proposal approved by Dr. Borchert
<b>October 1</b>	First draft of thesis due to supervisor/mentor
<b>November 1</b>	Final draft of thesis due to Dr. Borchert or Dr. Ray
<b>January 1</b>	Final copies due to the IWS office for binding

##### June Thesis Course

<b>May 1</b>	Payment for thesis course tuition and meal service due
<b>June</b>	Thesis class meets
<b>July 1</b>	Thesis topic approved
<b>July 15</b>	Thesis mentor/supervisor finalized
<b>November 1</b>	Thesis proposal approved by Dr. Borchert
<b>March 1</b>	First draft of thesis due to supervisor/mentor
<b>April 1</b>	Final draft of thesis due to Dr. Borchert or Dr. Ray
<b>June 1</b>	Final copies due to the IWS office for binding

## SECTION 4

### SUBMISSION PROCEDURES FOR THESIS PROPOSAL, ROUGH DRAFT, AND FINAL THESIS

#### **Thesis Proposal**

The student's supervisor must first give final approval to the thesis proposal. The proposal is only then to be sent to Dr. Borchert for his approval. Thesis proposals can be e-mailed to him at [gdborchert@aol.com](mailto:gdborchert@aol.com). A copy of the submitted proposal should also be sent to Keith Ray at [keith.ray@furman.edu](mailto:keith.ray@furman.edu). Remember, **Dr. Borchert approves all thesis proposals.**

#### **Rough Draft**

When your supervisor has approved the rough draft of your thesis, a hard copy (no e-mail copies, please!) should be sent either to Dr. Borchert or Dr. Ray for final approval. Specific assignments will be made in class. If you are instructed to send your material to Dr. Borchert you **are asked to first send an e-mail message to [gdborchert@aol.com](mailto:gdborchert@aol.com)** indicating you are ready to send the hard copy of your work. Normally you would send it to the address below, but since he is teaching in various places, be sure to check first for his instructions. His usual permanent address is:

Gerald L. Borchert  
486 Lochmere Drive  
Morristown, TN 37814

If you are instructed to send your material to Dr. Ray you **are asked to first send an e-mail message to [keith.ray@furman.edu](mailto:keith.ray@furman.edu)** indicating you are ready to send the hard copy of your work. His address is:

Keith D. Ray II  
Office of the Chaplains  
Furman University  
3300 Poinsett Highway  
Greenville, SC 29613

Please note: before you send the finalized rough draft, your supervisor MUST send a note via e-mail to Dr. Borchert and Dr. Ray stating his or her approval of your rough draft. The draft you send to Dr. Borchert or Dr. Ray does not need to be on the required cotton paper. We prefer receiving your thesis in a loose leaf three-ring binder. Further, it is suggested that the student send the thesis by Priority Mail, or a delivery service such as UPS or FedEx in order that the package can be traced, if necessary. Overnight shipping is not necessary.

IWS allows page extensions of 15 to 25 percent at the discretion of the individual supervisors. Please note: page limits only apply to the body of the thesis—not the appendices or front material.

### **Stylistic and Formatting Approval**

Once Dr. Borchert or Dr. Ray approves your paper, you must then send a revised copy to Dr. Chris Alford who reads our theses for formatting issues. Once you have made all corrections and/or changes as requested by Drs. Borchert and Ray, you may send a hard copy to Dr. Alford at his address found on the website.

Please note that this copy does not need to be on the premium cotton bond. Send also your current contact information (including email). Chris will contact you to make arrangements for formatting.

### **Final Copies**

Two final copies of your thesis must be printed on 24 lb.100% cotton paper and be sent to the Florida campus to be kept in the campus library **once your thesis has been approved by Chris Alford**. Your thesis copies should be mailed to the Florida address (151 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park, FL 32073) along with the \$300 graduation fee. This fee covers the binding of two copies which will be kept here in Florida. The fee also covers graduation expenses, copyright expenses, abstract registration, microfilming of your thesis, and putting your thesis on-line. If you want additional copies of your thesis bound for your personal use, they will cost about \$20 each. Please include this fee with your graduation fee payment if you want personal bound copies of your thesis. All copies should be sent together in one mailing to the campus address. Please remember, if your supervisor is not a regular faculty member, you must get your approval forms signed by him or her before mailing your thesis to us. All other signatures will be added to the approval forms during the June session. These final copies are to be received by the IWS office no later than January 1 (if you took the thesis class in January) or June 1 (if you took the thesis class in June).

## **Extensions**

No due date exceptions or extensions can be made. If you can submit your work sooner than the deadlines, it will be to your great advantage. We need at least a month to six weeks to process all the theses. If they all come in at the end, we will have to take the final copies in order of their arrival. If they do not get processed in time by your supervisor and the thesis director, then we will have to postpone your graduation until the following year. Any students who extend their thesis work beyond the allotted time will be asked to pay a continuation fee of \$300 per term.

Please understand that it takes time for your supervisor and thesis director to read the thesis, to be in contact with each other and you, and for you to make all the corrections. You cannot rush the process.

## **Doctoral Thesis Limitations**

The DWS degree is designed to be completed normally in three years of study. Students typically complete the five segments of their coursework, including DWS 801, in just over two years. Students then complete their thesis proposal and thesis during the third year.

The stated limitation for the completion of the entire thesis, however, is three years after the completion of the thesis course, DWS 801. A student must complete and receive approval for the thesis proposal within two years of taking the thesis course. The thesis itself must then be completed within the third year following the thesis course.

If the thesis proposal is not completed within the first two years following the thesis course, a student may petition the faculty and receive permission to retake the thesis course and begin again the process of writing the thesis proposal. The two year limit for completion of the proposal is again in effect. A student may be granted only one opportunity to retake the thesis course and begin again the thesis process. Students failing to meet this deadline will receive the Advanced Graduate Certificate in Worship Studies.

Students who are enrolled half-time, i.e., taking only one doctoral course per year, must meet the same time requirements for writing the thesis proposal and the thesis. Like full-time students, upon petition they may be allowed to repeat the thesis course only once.

In summary, keep these limits in mind:

- 1) You must have an approved proposal within 2 years following the taking of the Thesis Course. (For example: if you took the Thesis Course in January 2005, you must have an approved proposal no later than January 1, 2007).
- 2) You must complete your thesis within 3 years following taking the Thesis Course. (For example: if you took the Thesis Course in January 2005, you must have your Thesis completed and approved by January 1, 2008).

3) If because of some unforeseen circumstance in your life you were granted a Leave of Absence during this period, then your clock on the time limit stopped for a semester and you would be granted an additional semester for the completion of your work.

4) Failure to meet these deadlines means:

a) You will run out of time for the completion of your program and if you have successfully completed all the other requirements for the degree you may be eligible to be granted an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Worship Studies; or:

b) You may, however, petition prior to the expiration of your time limit to retake ONCE the Thesis Course. You will have to pay the tuition and have your proposal reconfirmed (if you have one approved) and indicate at what stage you have reached. If approved for retaking the Thesis Course, your time limit will be extended. But you will NOT be given the opportunity again to retake the Thesis Course (a third time).

### **Commencement**

Commencement will take place on an evening during the June session at 6 PM with a mandatory rehearsal at 4 PM. Commencement is a full Eucharistic service. A reception will follow Commencement for graduates, family members, and faculty. There is child care through age 5 at the church for Commencement only.

Students who finish their work in January may request from IWS a letter certifying that they have completed all the work for graduation.

**Thesis Process Checklist**  
**Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare for the thesis class by developing initial thoughts/plans for a project. Complete the class and clarify your direction.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit Thesis Proposal Worksheet to Dr. Borchert at the conclusion of the thesis course.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Secure a supervisor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Work with supervisor in developing your Thesis Proposal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Receive approval of Thesis Proposal from your supervisor via email. Make sure the supervisor copies Drs. Borchert and Ray when approving the proposal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send Thesis Proposal to Drs. Borchert and Ray via email.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Revise proposal if required by Dr. Borchert.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Receive approval of Thesis Proposal from Dr. Borchert.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Implement project and write thesis in consultation with your supervisor. Remember, **DO NOT IMPLEMENT YOUR PROJECT** until you have received approval of your Thesis Proposal from Dr. Borchert!
- \_\_\_\_\_ Receive approval of your entire Thesis from your supervisor via email. Make sure the supervisor copies Drs. Borchert and Ray when approving the Thesis.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send entire Thesis (hardcopy) to Dr. Borchert or Dr. Ray [circle one, as instructed in class].
- \_\_\_\_\_ Revise thesis as required by Drs. Borchert or Ray.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Receive approval of thesis by Drs. Borchert or Ray.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read notices regarding thesis formatting from Dr. Chris Alford at his website.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Work with Dr. Alford to ensure your thesis conforms to our style requirements.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Receive approval from Dr. Alford related to style.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send at least two perfect copies of your thesis on the special paper described in this handbook to the Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies campus office.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare for our graduation celebration!

## IWS THESIS ALERT CONCERNING FORM, STYLE AND ENGLISH ISSUES

Because we have noted certain patterns present in the writing of student theses, it is imperative that we issue this important advisory to students and advisors in the thesis stage of their programs. We regard the thesis as a formal, technical document and it should follow the correct patterns and be written in good English style.

Therefore be advised that:

1) We will ask you to remove the proper names of all participants in the project from the written thesis. It is crucial that you observe this rule of simply identifying persons involved by letters or numbers for the protection of both the school and the participants. The thesis is a public document and this rule must be observed.

2) Change future references of what you "will do" in the proposal to past references of what you "have done" in the thesis. It seems that students continually forget this change.

3) Since Turabian is a little confusing in the matter of commentaries, observe the following pattern from the Society of Biblical Literature for referring to a commentary in a series:

Footnote example: Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11* in *The New American Commentary* [or NAC] (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 121-122.

For Works Consulted or Used follow the example: Borchert, Gerald L. *John 1-11*. in *The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996. For our purposes in writing theses: the series is important but the editor is not significant. In your writing cite the author of the commentary and not the editor! For other matters consult Turabian or particularly the Turabian Sampler.

4) Be sure your Abstract is NOT MORE than 100 words in length! It will be shortened by your final reader.

5) The use of the vague "this" should be avoided in thesis writing. "This" should always be followed by a noun otherwise the reference can be misunderstood. Common speech tends to be a little sloppy and the result is that the vague "this" has crept into written communication. Be sure to check your thesis before submitting it to the final reader and eliminate all uses of the vague "this" except where it appears in a quote from another writer or in a quote from a participant in your project.

6) In proper grammar the adversative "however" should be used post-positively (not at the beginning of a sentence or a clause) and enclosed within commas. It should not be used at the beginning of a sentence to counter what was written in a previous sentence. In contrast, however, "but" or "yet" may be used at the beginning of a sentence. You may use "nevertheless" at the beginning of a sentence but it should be followed by a comma. On the other hand, "however" may be used at the beginning of a sentence when the sentence itself

details an alternative within it, such as: "However strong the boy was, he was no match for his father."

7) Please bear in mind that, although many people use split infinitives in speech and some writing, using split infinitives in technical writing is in fact an evidence of poor English style.

8) While formerly it was considered essential in writing theses to refer to oneself by the third person, it is no longer necessary to do so. It is quite appropriate to refer to oneself as "I." Moreover, it is no longer necessary to use such stilted expressions as "it is submitted" when giving your opinion. Simply say something like "I found," or "the results are." You can use the protective "it seems" if you are not sure what the implications are.

In reading theses we have noted as many as seventy or more uses of the vague "this," "that" and "these" and multitudes of the improper uses of "however" in a single thesis which need to be corrected. So we advise you to check your documents before you submit them to your final readers. Why not make the corrections before you send them to your supervisors and need to be told to do so?

Cordially in Christ,

Gerald Borchert  
Thesis Director

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Borchert, Gerald L. *Worship in the New Testament: Divine Mystery and Human Response*. Atlanta: Chalice Press, 2008.

This is a required book for the thesis course.

Patton, Michael Quinn. *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, 3d ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2002.

This is a good but expensive reference book for qualitative research projects. IWS has a copy in the library.

Quigley, B. Allan and Gary W. Kuhne, eds. *Creating Practical Knowledge Through Action Research: Posing Problems, Solving Problems, and Improving Daily Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, No. 73, Spring 1997.

This text is now out of print; however, we will use one chapter from the book in class.

Saliers, Don E. *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.

This is a good example of theological reflection in the area of worship studies.

Stone, Howard W. And James O. Duke. *How to Think Theologically*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

This is a required book for the thesis course.