PC128-512/612/812 Pastoral Ministry in Reformed Churches

About this Unit Outline

This unit outline contains information essential to finding your way around the unit **Pastoral Care.** It provides a structure for your learning, outlining lesson topics, assessment requirements, and key resources. Units taught at the RTC are accredited through the **Australian College of Theology.**

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1. Welcome

Unit Coordinator

This unit will be coordinated by Dr. Murray Capill. Murray is originally from New Zealand where he pastored a church in Auckland for 10 years. He came to Australia in 2001 to teach part-time at the RTC and continue in pastoral ministry in the CRCA. Since 2006, he has taught pastoral and church-focussed ministry units full-time and in 2008 he became RTC Principal, before his appointment as Dean of Ministry Development in 2019. He is the author of *Preaching with Spiritual Vigour* (2004) and *The Heart is the Target* (2014). Murray is married to Wendy and they have five children and several grandchildren.

Murray will be joined in teaching this unit by a team of lecturers, each bringing particular areas of expertise:

- In the online weeks, Dr Martin Williams presents lectures on ordination and "being reformed", with Dr Stephen Lewis assisting in forum feedback.
- In the intensive, Dr Phillip Scheepers will consider reformed churches "down under"; Dr Grant Bickerton, a Christian psychologist, will address issues of burnout and healthy ministry; and Fiona Bligh, who coordinates the Safe Church Unit for the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, will speak about safe ministry.

The Unit

This unit is designed for students who are preparing for ordained ministry in a Reformed church. It gives opportunity to think, talk and write about the issues, convictions and values that are essential to reformed, biblical ministry. We'll be interacting on such things as:

- The call to ministry, gifts for ministry and the theology of ordination
- The spiritual life of pastors, the realities of pastoral ministry, and the causes of burnout and stress
- The history of Reformed churches 'down under', along with current trends, trajectories and challenges
- Leadership paradigms in Reformed churches
- Key emphases in reformed theology, reasons for holding to reformed confessions, and some theological hot potatoes
- Classic practices of Reformed churches

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The course comprises three online weeks beginning on 25 July, followed by a one-week Intensive from 22-26 August.

I'll be coordinating the unit and marking your assessments. Please get in touch with me about any questions you have. But first, please familiarize yourself with this Unit Guide as it contains the core information you need for this Unit.

Dr Murray Capill

2. Unit Description

LEVEL 5 LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this unit, students will

A. Know and understand

Demonstrate Foundational knowledge and understanding of Reformed churches and pastoral ministry in the Reformed tradition.

B. Be able to

1. Articulate key distinctives of pastoral ministry in the Reformed tradition.
2. Identify, with reference to the students' own congregation, contemporary issues and opportunities in pastoral ministry.
3. Present Organised evidence-based perspectives on historic and contemporary Reformed church ministry.
4. Articulate their own experience and theology of call to pastoral ministry.

C. Be in a position to

1. Relate perspectives and skills from 'Pastoral Ministry in Reformed Churches' to contemporary pastoral ministry.

LEVEL 6 LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this unit, students will

A. Know and understand

Demonstrate Developing knowledge and understanding of Reformed churches and pastoral ministry in the Reformed tradition.

B. Be able to

1. Assess key distinctives of pastoral ministry in the Reformed tradition.
2. Analyse, with reference to the student's own congregation, contemporary issues and opportunities in pastoral ministry.

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3. Critically Reflect on current scholarship regarding historic and contemporary Reformed church ministry.

4. Articulate their own experience and theology of call to pastoral ministry.

C. Be in a position to

1. Apply perspectives from current scholarship regarding 'Pastoral Ministry in Reformed Churches' to contemporary pastoral ministry.

LEVEL 8 LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this unit, students will

A. Know and understand

Demonstrate Developing knowledge and understanding of Reformed churches and pastoral ministry in the Reformed tradition.

B. Be able to

1. Assess key distinctives of pastoral ministry in the Reformed tradition.

2. Analyse, with reference to the student's own congregation, contemporary issues and opportunities in pastoral ministry.

3. Critically Reflect on current scholarship regarding historic and contemporary Reformed church ministry.

4. Articulate their own experience and theology of call to pastoral ministry.

C. Be in a position to

1. Apply perspectives from current scholarship regarding 'Pastoral Ministry in Reformed Churches' to contemporary pastoral ministry.

UNIT CONTENT

SECTION A: Foundations (four weeks online)

1. Introduction to pastoral ministry. A consideration of what is meant by pastoral ministry, calling to ministry and ministry gifts.
2. Being Reformed. Key emphases and streams of Reformed Theology; experiential Calvinism; the Confessions and reasons for a confessional church; confessional subscription.
3. Ordination. Biblical, theological and historic understandings of ordination; the practice of ordination in Reformed churches.

SECTION B: Ministry Practice (one week intensive)

4. Life as a Pastor. The pastoral task and priorities in pastoral ministry; realities of pastoral ministry; the spiritual life of the pastor; burnout and causes of pastoral failure; stress, anxiety, depression, boundaries.

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5. The History of Reformed Churches in Aust/NZ. Immigration and immigrant churches; trends, emphases and issues; growth and decline; the life-cycle of churches; the place of Reformed churches in the spiritual landscape of Australia/NZ; current trajectories, mission and future opportunities.
6. Leadership in Reformed Churches. Past and present leadership paradigms; the role of pastor in different paradigms; team ministry; leadership structures; the relationship of pastors and elders.
7. Denominational commitments. Reformed Church polity and Church Order; church discipline; traditional practices of Reformed churches.
8. Passing on the Faith. The practices of catechism and confessional preaching; Church membership and profession of faith.
9. Theological issues. Key issues arising concerning from the Confessions; a consideration of controversial theological issues in the churches.

3. Class Schedule

Date	Date	Lecturer
Week 1 (25 Jul)	**Introduction to Pastoral Ministry:** A consideration of what is meant by pastoral ministry, calling to ministry and ministry gifts.	Murray Capill
Week 2 (1 Aug)	**Ordination:** Biblical, theological and historic understandings of ordination; the practice of ordination in Reformed churches	Martin Williams Online tutor: Stephen Lewis
Week 3 (8 Aug)	**Being Reformed:** Key emphases and streams of Reformed Theology; the Confessions and reasons for a confessional church; subscription; Reformed experiential theology.	TBA

Intensive	Topic	Lecturer
Mon 22 Aug 1pm – 5pm	**Life as a Pastor:** The pastoral task and priorities in pastoral ministry; realities of pastoral ministry; the spiritual life of the pastor.	Murray Capill
Tue 23 Aug 9am – 12.30pm	**Reformed Churches Down Under:** Immigrant churches; trends, emphases and issues; the place of Reformed churches in the spiritual landscape of Australia/NZ; current trajectories; mission and future opportunities.	Phillip Scheepers

Tue 23 Aug 1.30pm – 4.30pm	**Leadership in Reformed Churches.** Past and present leadership paradigms; the role of pastor in different paradigms; the relationship of pastors and elders; team ministry.	Murray Capill
Wed 24 Aug 9am – 12.30pm	**Safe Ministry.** Integrity, boundaries, dual relationships, misconduct, sexual abuse, child safe, government compliance.	TBA
Wed 24 Aug 1.30pm – 4.30pm	**Being on Fire without Burning Out:** Burnout and causes of pastoral failure; stress, anxiety, depression, boundaries.	TBA
Thur 25 Aug 9am – 12.30pm	**Theological Issues:** Key issues concerning the Confessions; a consideration of some controversial theological issues in Reformed churches; questions about Subscription Shared lunch and further discussion	Panel: Phillip Scheepers Stephen Lewis Andrew Stewart Chair: Murray Capill
Thur 25 Aug 2.00pm – 5.00pm	**Denominational Commitments:** Reformed Church polity and Church Order; church discipline; traditional practices of Reformed churches.	Murray Capill
Fri 26 Aug 9am – 12.30	**Passing on the Faith:** The practices of catechism and confessional preaching; church membership and profession of faith.	Murray Capill

4. Online Weeks

The Unit begins with three online lectures, accompanied by an online forum.

Lecture material will be available on the Monday morning of each scheduled week: 25 July, 1 August, 8 August. You will need to watch the lectures, do the readings and then respond on the forum that week. Your forum posts need to include both your own responses to the forum questions and brief interaction with one other student's answers. The lecturer will respond and wrap up each forum at the start of the next week.

A Forum Guide is available on eCampus. Please read this before beginning to interact on the forum. The forum is really the equivalent of class interaction. It is compulsory and will be graded, accounting for 10% of your total mark.

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5. Assessments

There are three assessments at each level.

Assessments should be submitted as PDFs, on Turnitin on the RTC eCampus site, with an RTC Assignment Cover Sheet. They are due by midnight on the due date and after that will incur a late penalty of 3% per day. If you need an extension it is essential to apply to the Registrar (not the lecturer) for this on the prescribed form before the due date.

Marking rubrics for the assessments will be posted on eCampus.

LEVEL 5 ASSESSMENTS

1. Forum interaction – 10%; weeks beginning 25 July, 1 August, 8 August

Interact with questions on the weekly forum for the first three online weeks. For details, see the Forum Guide on RTC eCampus.

2. Review of Confessional Standards; 40%; 1800 words; due 23 September

This assessment is in two parts:

Part A: 20%; 1000 words (nominal)

Choose one of the Confessional Standards of your denomination (either The Westminster Confession of Faith, the Belgic Confession or The Canons of Dort, or another by negotiation with myself) and for each article/section of the Confession identify:

- areas where you are in complete agreement
- areas where you agree but would prefer different wording; suggest alternative wordings
- areas where you have difficulty with the substance of the Confession.

This may be done in a table format, listing articles of the Confession and having columns for agreement, wording concerns and alternate suggestions, and more substantial difficulties.

Where you have concerns about the substance, choose your foremost concern and in approx. 800 words, outline the nature of your concern and briefly articulate your own view of the doctrine with appropriate biblical argumentation.

If you have no areas of significant concern, choose one key doctrine and in approx. 800 words discuss the significance of the way the Confession articulates it.

Part B: 20%; 800 words

Articulate, with appropriate secondary references, your view of the appropriate use of the Confessions today.

3. Philosophy of Pastoral Ministry; 50%; 2200 words; due 28 October

Interacting with the Scriptures and with both historic and contemporary Reformed perspectives, articulate your own philosophy of pastoral ministry. You should identify:

- key priorities of pastoral ministry
- key emphases in your own gospel (or theological), vision for ministry and core values your would want to cultivate as a pastor
- the role of the pastor in the life of the church
- key practices you want to commit to in order to ensure fruitful, faithful and healthy ministry practice

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LEVEL 6 ASSESSMENTS

1. Forum interaction – 10%; weeks beginning 25 July, 1 August, 8 August

Interact with questions on the weekly forum for the first three online weeks. For details, see the Forum Guide on RTC eCampus.

2. Review of Confessional Standards; 40%; 2000 words; due 23 September

This assessment is in two parts:

Part A: 20%; 1000 words (nominal)

Choose one of the Confessional Standards of your denomination (either The Westminster Confession of Faith, the Belgic Confession or The Canons of Dort) and for each article/section of the Confession analyse:

- areas where you are in complete agreement
- areas where you agree but would prefer different wording; suggest alternative wordings
- areas where you have difficulty with the substance of the Confession.

This may be done in a table format, listing articles of the Confession and having columns for agreement, wording concerns and alternate suggestions, and more substantial difficulties.

Where you have concerns about the substance, choose your foremost concern and in approx. 800 words, outline the nature of your concern and articulate your own view of the doctrine with appropriate biblical argumentation.

If you have no areas of significant concern, chose one key doctrine and in approx. 800 words discuss the significance of the way the Confession articulates it.

Part B: 20%; 1000 words

Assess, with appropriate secondary references, the appropriate use of the Confessions today.

3. Philosophy of Pastoral Ministry; 50%; 2500 words; due 28 October

Interacting with the Scriptures and with both historic and contemporary Reformed perspectives, articulate your own philosophy of pastoral ministry. You should:

- analyse key priorities of pastoral ministry
- identify key emphases in your own gospel (or theological), vision for ministry and core values your would want to cultivate as a pastor
- assess the role of the pastor in the life of the church
- identify key practices you want to commit to in order to ensure fruitful, faithful and healthy ministry practice
- assess distinct opportunities you see in contemporary Reformed ministry

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LEVEL 8 ASSESSMENTS

1. Forum interaction – 10%; weeks beginning 25 July, 1 August, 8 August

Interact with questions on the weekly forum for the first three online weeks. For details, see the Forum Guide on RTC eCampus.

2. Review of Confessional Standards; 40%; 2800 words; due 23 September

This assessment is in two parts:

Part A: 20%; 1400 words (nominal)

Choose one of the Confessional Standards of your denomination (either The Westminster Confession of Faith, the Belgic Confession or The Canons of Dort) and for each article/section of the Confession assess:

- areas where you are in complete agreement
- areas where you agree but would prefer different wording; suggest alternative wordings
- areas where you have difficulty with the substance of the Confession.

This may be done in a table format, listing articles of the Confession and having columns for agreement, wording concerns and alternate suggestions, and more substantial difficulties.

Where you have concerns about the substance, choose your foremost concern and in approx. 1000 words, outline the nature of your concern and discuss your own view of the doctrine with appropriate biblical argumentation.

If you have no areas of significant concern, chose one key doctrine and in approx. 1000 words evaluate the significance of the way the Confession articulates it.

Part B: 20%; 1400 words

Evaluate, with appropriate secondary references, the appropriate use of the Confessions today. You should include analysis of the historic Reformed practices of catechism teaching and preaching..

3. Philosophy of Pastoral Ministry; 50%; 3500 words; due 28 October

Interacting with the Scriptures and with both historic and contemporary Reformed perspectives, articulate your own philosophy of pastoral ministry. You should include:

- analysis of key priorities of pastoral ministry
- discussion of key emphases in your own gospel (or theological), vision for ministry and core values your would want to cultivate as a pastor
- discussion of the role of the pastor in the life of the church
- discussion of key practices you want to commit to in order to ensure fruitful, faithful and healthy ministry practice
- analysis of distinct opportunities you see in contemporary Reformed ministry

Compare and contrast your own view of pastoral ministry with a different approach found within Reformed or Presbyterian churches.

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6. Bibliography

Advice will be given by the lecturers on required readings and books worth buying. It will be necessary to own a copy of your denomination's Confessional Standards.

Great advance preparation would be to read through your church's Confessions.

Below you will find a list of books by category to guide your reading and research. Additional readings and resources will be provided on eCampus.

PRESCRIBED TEXTS

Either:

Reformed Churches of Australia. *Book of Forms* (Geelong, Victoria: Reformed Churches Publishing House, 1991)

Or:

Reformed Churches of New Zealand. *Forms and Confessions of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand* (New Zealand: National Publishing Committee of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, 1994)

CLASSICS

Bannerman, J., *The Church of Christ: A Treatise on the Nature, Powers, Ordinances, Disciplines, and Government of the Christian Church 2 Volumes* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1960)

Baxter, R., *The Reformed Pastor: A Pattern for Personal Growth and Ministry.* (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah, 1982)

Bridges, C., *The Christian Ministry, with an Inquiry into the Causes of its Inefficiency* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2006)

Hodge, C., *The Church and Its Polity* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1879)

PASTORAL LIFE

Ash, Christopher, *Zeal Without Burnout* (Good Book Company, 2016)

Brain, P., *Going the Distance: How to Stay Fit for a Lifetime of Ministry* (2nd ed.; Kingsford: Matthias Media, 2006)

Burns, Bob, et al. *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Tell Us About Survigin and Thriving.* (IVP, 2013).

Clowney, E., *Called to the Ministry* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing Company, 1976)

Eswine, Zack, *The Imperfect Pastor* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015)

Harvey, David T. *Am I Called?: The Summons To Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, Crossway, 2012)

Hegg, David W. *Appointed to Preach: Assessing a Call to Ministry* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 1999).

Murray, David, *Reset: Living a Grace-Paced Life in a Burnout Culture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017)

Tripp, P., *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2012)

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CHURCH LIFE AND GOSPEL MINISTRY

Coekin, Richard, *Gospel DNA* (Good Book Company, 2017)

Dever, M., *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (3rd Ed.; Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2013)

Keller, Timothy, *Centre Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012)

Marshall, C. And T. Payne, *The Vine Project* (Kingsford: Matthias Media, 2016)

Marshall, C. and T. Payne, *Trellis and Vine: The Ministry mind-shift that changes everything* (Kingsford: Matthias Media, 2009)

Strauch, A., *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Rev. and expanded ed.; Littleton, Colorado: Lewis and Roth, 1995)

Willimon, W., Pastor: *The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 2002)

Wilson, Jared. *Gospel Driven Ministry: an Introduction to the Calling and Work of a Pastor* (Zondervan 2021).

REFORMED CONFESSIONS, THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

Beeke, J. R., *Puritan Reformed Spirituality: A Practical Theological Study From Our Reformed And Puritan Heritage* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 2006)

Bierma, L. D. et al, *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology : with a Translation of the Smaller and Larger Catechisms of Zacharias Ursinus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 2005)

Hamilton, I., *What Is Experiential Calvinism?* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015)

Trueman, Carl, *The Creedal Imperative* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2012)

Gerrish, B. A. *The Faith of Christendom: A Source Book of Creeds and Confessions* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1985)

Gootjes, N. H., *The Belgic Confession: Its History and Sources* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 2007)

Horton, M. S., *Calvin on the Christian Life: Glorifying and Enjoying God Forever* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2014)

Leith, J. H., *Creeds of the Churches* (3rd Rev. ed., Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1983)

Noll, M. A. (ed.), *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation* (Leicester: IVP, 1991)

Reinke, Tony, *Newton on The Christian Life: To Live Is Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015)

Routley, E., *Creeds and Confessions: The Reformation and Its Modern Ecumenical Implications* (London: Duckworth, 1962)

Skilton, J. H., *Scripture and Confession: A Book about Confessions Old and New* (Nutley: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973)

Strobel, K., *Formed for the Glory of God: Learning from the Spiritual Practices of Jonathan Edwards* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2013)

SAMPLE

Ward, R. S. *The Westminster Confession of Faith: A Study Guide* (3rd ed.; Wantirna, Victoria: New Melbourne Press, 2004)

Williamson, G. I., *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes* (2nd ed.; Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing Company, 2004)

Vanderpyl, D. G., *Church order commentary: A commentary on the Church Order of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand* (Auckland: National Publishing Committee Reformed Churches of New Zealand, 1992)

CHURCH HISTORY

Adeney, M., *Kingdom without Borders: The Untold Story of Global Christianity* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2009)

Breward, I., *A History of the Churches in Australasia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Deenick, J. W. (ed.), *A Church En Route: 40 Years Reformed Churches of Australia* (Geelong: Reformed Churches Publishing House, 1991)

Johnstone, P., *The Future of The Global Church: History, Trends And Possibilities* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2011)

Lange, S. M., *A Rising Tide: Evangelical Christianity in New Zealand 1930-1965* (Dunedin, New Zealand: Otago University Press, 2013)

Murray, I. H., *Australian Christian Life from 1788: An Introduction and an Anthology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1988)

Piggin, S., Spirit, *Word and World: Evangelical Christianity in Australia* (3rd Ed.; Sydney: Acorn Press, 2012)

Piggin, S. and Linder D., *The Fountain of Public Prosperity: Evangelical Christians in Australian History 1740-1914* (Melbourne: Monash University Press, 2018)

Piggin, S. and Linder D., *Attending to the National Soul: Evangelical Christians in Australian History 1914-2014* (Melbourne: Monash University Press, 2019)

Vanderpyl, D. G., *Trust and Obey: A Forty Year History of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand 1953-1993* (Auckland: National Publishing Committee Reformed Churches of New Zealand, 1994)

Williams, W., *Christianity Among the New Zealanders* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1989)

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