MTS FINAL REFLECTION PAPER AND EXIT INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

General Description of Exercise

At the end their final semester, all MTS students will write a ten-page Final Reflection Paper. The Final Reflection Paper will be read by one faculty member selected by the student and will form the basis of a 30 minute Exit Interview with the student. The faculty member will then provide the MTS director with some feedback based on the Exit Interview.

The student’s paper and performance are not graded in any way, although the MTS program director requires evidence that the process has been completed and must record this with the registrar in time for graduation.

Goals

(1) Provide a venue for students to reflect on and evaluate their experience of their theological education at STM
(2) Facilitate program assessment

Registration

While registering for your final semester, register for the non-credit TM 629-01 (“MTS Reflection”). You must complete this registration before the end of the add-drop period.

Guidelines for Reflection Paper

Students will schedule a 30 minute Exit Interview with a STM faculty member to take place before the end of finals week. Students will then submit their Final Reflection Paper (ten-pages, double-spaced, normal margins and font size) to the faculty member in advance of their Exit Interview (exact timeline to be decided in consultation with the faculty member).

Papers should address these five questions:

1. How has the BC/STM experience affected my understanding of the Christian life? What has it affirmed? What has it challenged? What has it changed?
2. How do I interpret theologically my experience at STM?
3. What has the experience at STM contributed to my profession/ministry/career in terms of specific content and concrete skills?
4. What areas for my further growth and education do I see as I come to the end of the program?
5. In your experience, what are the strengths of the program and how might it be improved?
As you can see, this reflection paper is not just another academic paper. It represents an opportunity to conclude your MTS program by assessing the significance of your studies and the wider vocational questions that may get overlooked at times, and to do so with some faculty oversight and feedback. It may be hard to answer all five questions equally or adequately, but try to make an effort in the limited space to touch on all five topics in a substantial if not exhaustive way. A mix of experiential description and theological analysis is desirable. Students often devote some paragraphs to favorite courses or topics and particular moments of enlightenment or even disappointment in their studies. The goal is to grow in self-understanding. You need not restrict your coverage to activities in the school building or the BC campus, but the focus throughout should be on your learning and growth during your years of study at BC. It may be hard to produce a work of great literary merit, but the faculty members reading the paper will surely appreciate any effort to bring unity and coherence to your reflections.

Exit Interview

In the Exit Interview, the faculty member will ask you questions about your ten-page paper. Some questions may request clarification on what you have written, or perhaps invite you to expand upon your claims and observations. The tone will be collegial and respectful. Take the exercise seriously, as the privileged moment of synthesis and retrospect that it is, but do not expect an ordinary academic examination of any sort. Nor is it a session of spiritual direction, although the sharing of personal religious experience may play a role in the discussion. There are no wrong answers, and you will not receive a grade. Students uniformly find this a pleasant and profitable conversation.

What Happens Next?

At the end of the 30-minute conversation, the faculty member will fill out a form to indicate that you have completed the exercise in a satisfactory fashion and will provide feedback to the MTS Director for program assessment purposes. Up to now, you have had to take the initiative in writing the paper and arranging a time for the conversation. Now the faculty members do the last bit of work. They will fill out the form and submit it to the director right after the conversation. The MTS director will record the completion of this non-credit exercise with the BC registrar, and you will be cleared for graduation. Take a deep bow!