

Andrews University

## Digital Commons @ Andrews University

---

Faculty Publications

---

8-1-1982

### Theological Seminary Plans New Master of Divinity Curriculum for 1982

Gerhard F. Hasel  
*Andrews University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Hasel, Gerhard F., "Theological Seminary Plans New Master of Divinity Curriculum for 1982" (1982).  
*Faculty Publications*. 3625.  
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs/3625>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact [repository@andrews.edu](mailto:repository@andrews.edu).

# Theological Seminary plans new Master of Divinity curriculum for 1982

*Seminary dean Gerhard F. Hasel unfolds to J. R. Spangler sweeping changes in the M.Div. program designed to integrate as never before a student's Seminary experience with the needs he will face in the field.*

**Q.** *At our recent Ministerial Training Advisory Committee I was intrigued with the presentation you made regarding a new approach the Seminary is developing to train ministers. What is the thinking behind this new curriculum?*

**A.** The overall purpose of the new Master of Divinity program is to prepare a genuine Seventh-day Adventist ministry. The Theological Seminary here at Andrews University has the responsibility of training not just a ministry, but a Seventh-day Adventist ministry. We are not just a divinity school or a seminary; we are the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. So our goals and purposes are linked to our rationale for existence.

We have to have a Master of Divinity program that prepares a ministry that has a clear understanding of Adventist history, the background of this movement. We must have a ministry that is thoroughly evangelistic in its orientation with a strong sense of urgency to proclaim the good news that God has given the remnant church for these last days. This is the heritage of the Adventist Church.

The reasons for a new curriculum for the Master of Divinity program here at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary have a long history. The Seminary has developed over a period of time from a school that addressed itself to special issues in the denomination to a professional seminary that has to take into account the various settings of pastors and their differing tasks and responsibilities as it trains ministers.

From time to time over the past decade the faculty has worked on improving the curriculum. But in the past two and a half years we have taken steps in various subcommittees to develop a new curriculum, and in the past six months things have jelled to the degree that we set up an enlarged curriculum planning committee consisting of approximately one third of the Seminary faculty. This planning subcommittee has met many, many times since February and then reported back to the faculty in session and received further instructions.

**Q.** *In other words, you're planning to emphasize more fully than before the training of a minister as a soul winner and as one who leads his people to be soul winners. How do you intend to do this? What are some of the major features that make this new curriculum different from others in the past? Are you going to have the same number of credit hours in the M.Div. course? Is the distribution of these hours different than before? Is there to be more of the practical and less of the philosophical and theological?*

**A.** The new curriculum has 135 credit hours distributed over nine quarters with each quarter having fifteen credit hours—just one hour less than the present curriculum has. But though the hours remain virtually the same, the distribution is much different and more in line with the kind of minister we want to produce.

We're trying in the new curriculum not only to combine but also to integrate the classroom-oriented subjects with practical experience more fully than has ever been done before. We believe we can integrate these first of all by teaching all our courses more and more from the perspective of the needs of the pastoral ministry rather than, for example, those of a professional Bible teacher. Teaching a course from the point of view of the needs that a minister will face in the field will require a particular approach that may be different from just communicating information that might be needed for other kinds of settings. As a faculty, we have committed ourselves to this perspective.

**Q.** *What specifically are you planning to do to integrate this idea in your regular classwork?*

**A.** There are several significant fresh elements that we have incorporated into the new M.Div. program. Number one, we are planning for each ministerial student who is enrolled in the Master of Divinity program to be engaged in what we call "pastoral formation" every quarter for six of the eight quarters that the student is present in the Seminary. This means that the student will be intimately involved in

one of the twenty-three churches within a radius of forty miles of the university. We will divide our whole student body into groups of eight to twelve, which will then be assigned to one of these twenty-three churches. The students will be there each Sabbath, and also for four additional hours during the week.

**Q.** *Will these students be in this same church during the entire Seminary experience, or will this involvement last only perhaps for a quarter or two before there will be a switch?*

**A.** As I just indicated, this assignment will be for six of the eight quarters that the student is normally at the Seminary. In other words, it will be two stretches of nine months each. The summer quarter is taken off because of camp meeting and other assignments that pastors have. However, we are encouraging the students to continue on a voluntary basis the same involvement in ministry during the summer quarter as well. So we are talking of the same group in the same church for two nine-month periods. This provides continuity. The students actually can engage with the pastor in evangelistic outreach, in preaching assignments, and, we hope very quickly and very strongly, in giving Bible studies, in visitation programs, and in everything that pertains to the life of the pastor and the congregation in that church.

**Q.** *What role will the teachers have in this type of program?*

**A.** We have, as a faculty, committed ourselves to join our students in this enterprise by becoming permanent members of the area churches in which the students will work. We will attend these churches with our students every Sabbath morning. And then on Monday we will, here in the Theological Seminary building, have a meeting of each group with the faculty member that has been in that church and the pastor of that particular church for discussion, reflection, further planning, and spiritual growth.

**Q.** *Are these twenty-three pastors committed to this? Are the conferences and the union behind this involvement?*

**A.** We have already had three meetings with a number of the twenty-three pastors. We have the full support of the conference leadership in those conferences that will be involved—Indiana, Lake Region, and Michigan. We have the full support of the union conference leadership, and we have the full and enthusiastic support of the pastors. We are excited about their interest in this.

**Q.** *What about the financial implications of this new program?*

**A.** The financial implications are significant, because if we expect our students to travel twice a week to their territories—once on Sabbath and also once during the week—then we will have to give them assistance in terms of travel expenses. We are planning to have our students travel in twos, just like the disciples—both in order to afford a better kind of learning and ministerial experience and also to cut down expenses. We anticipate that as much as \$100,000 may be necessary just in traveling expenses on mileage remuneration.

**Q.** *Now, you mentioned fieldwork being integrated with classes. Can you be more specific? For instance, what about a fellow that's taking a class in Old Testament exegesis or archeology? How will this be integrated with his church assignment, and will these professors also be involved in the church-assignment program—"pastoral formation"?*

**A.** The pastoral-formation segment of the curriculum consists of two credits per quarter for the six quarters that we talked about. In order to accomplish the task of this segment, we have reduced the teaching load by two credits for each faculty member who participates in this program. (And we understand that the whole faculty is interested in participating.) That means that the faculty member will not have an overload in meeting two hours each week with those students and church pastors. We can do only so much as a faculty in terms of time.

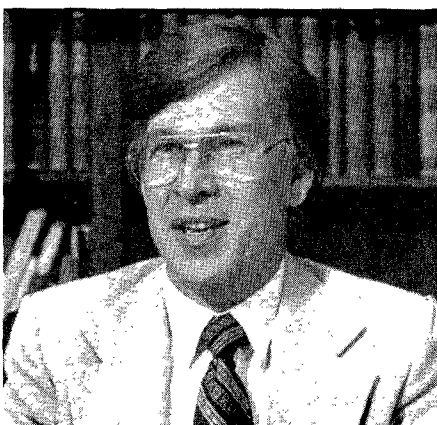
Now you were also asking what will happen in the academic courses—Old Testament exegesis or New Testament exegesis, or whatever it might be. We have committed ourselves as a faculty to teach these courses with the needs of the minister in mind. This may mean that we will no longer assign as many term papers, but require instead the preparation of sermons, Bible studies, and presentations for Weeks of Prayer or prayer meetings as part of the curricula assignment, and the teaching will be geared to accomplish that.

**Q.** *I want to be clear on the "pastoral formation" idea you have talked about. Is it a separate class composed of a particular number of hours that the student must work in the field with the teacher and/or the pastor? Or is it merely an integral part of all of the classes?*

**A.** On the one hand, pastoral formation is a separate class. The student will sign up for that particular class under the title "Pastoral Formation" for two credits for every quarter. In addition to this, we, as a faculty, have committed ourselves to teach in such a way that every class will gear itself toward training for pastoral ministry.

We have discussed among the faculty a number of times how we can effectively require our students to engage in study and in class sessions that will develop them as practical ministers out in the field. We continue on that basis with our study in the faculty. We have not yet worked out all the details, but the consensus already exists and is firmly fixed in the minds of our faculty that we want to have each individual class taught in such a way that it contributes constructively to the making of the Seventh-day Adventist ministry by combining and integrating the content aspects with the needs of practical ministry.

Our plan is that every student that leaves here will have been deeply engaged in giving Bible studies over extended periods of time, and we hope he will have results in terms of baptisms. We also anticipate that each student who leaves here will have prepared at least one set of Bible studies, if not more, geared toward different needs of different people in different cultural settings.



PHOTOS BY JEFFREY JOHNSTON

**Q.** *Does this new curriculum affect the ninth quarter at all? Are you going to take this function away from the field?*

**A.** No, this does not affect the ninth quarter. The ninth quarter will continue to be an additional in-field experience. But it will make the ninth quarter much more meaningful. The student who comes to us following an internship year in the field will find that his studies here actually continue his internship. He will still be involved in a field experience during his entire Seminary program, which will then climax in the ninth quarter. That student can really hit the field running.

We have found that in several conferences in North America the ninth quarter has been confronted with a number of challenges. And we have attempted to address ourselves to these challenges by proposing in the new curriculum to teach an intensive of three weeks after the eight quarters are finished at Andrews. This three-week intensive will pull together the best men in the field to teach the various subjects pertaining to the ninth quarter. Let me just give you the three major headings that we have presently. First, Church Growth, with its Spiritual Gifts Seminar; second, Training and Motivating Laity for Ministry; and third, Special Issues in Personal Evangelism. This three-week intensive is planned to climax the student's experience at the Seminary in a strong way, and then he can go to his field and engage both in personal evangelism and in public evangelism on a large scale over an extended period of time.

**Q.** *How will this plan affect the Lake Union Soul-Winning Institute, where you currently have the eighth and ninth quarters? Will this still remain as it is, or will there be changes in that program?*

**A.** We are not planning on any changes there. The Lake Union Soul-Winning Institute will continue with its eighth and ninth quarters, and the students who go there will not, of course, need to take the three-week intensive that we are offering for the fields where this institute is not utilized.

I would also like to mention another issue that we have not yet discussed—the colloquia. This is also a new element of the

---

*We must have a ministry that is thoroughly evangelistic in its orientation, with a strong sense of urgency to proclaim the good news that God has given the remnant church for these last days.*

curriculum. We are planning for six of the eight quarters to have a regular colloquium at the beginning of each quarter for each student. The colloquia consist of fifteen hours of intensive teaching during the first three days of the new quarter each fall, winter, and spring. They will deal with special subjects suggested to us by various committees and sources. For the first-year students, "Building Community in Church Life" will be the topic for the fall quarter. For the winter quarter it will be "Youth Ministry," because we have tremendous needs in this area. We have not adequately addressed ourselves to youth ministry. Then the spring quarter follows with a consultation on preaching, which is supplemented by preaching classes in that quarter, so that there's a real strong sequence. For second-year students, in the fall there is the "Caring Church Seminar" that has been held in the past by Elders Phil Follett and Ralph Martin, of the Northern California Conference. We plan to invite them to repeat this. Then we follow this in the winter quarter with "Ministering to the Small Church and Multi-Church District," including urban ministries. The spring quarter's topic is "Church and Society."

These colloquia are followed up each quarter with nine to ten assemblies—one assembly per week during the complete quarter—on special topics related to the particular colloquium that has been held or to other issues related to ministry, so that the student will be enriched in a broad range of subjects pertaining to the Adventist ministry.

**Q.** *What do you mean by "assemblies"? Do you mean chapel?*

**A.** Right now we have a weekly Wednesday chapel for our students, and we plan to continue that general requirement. We feel this chapel service each week is a spiritual formation exercise. But the Monday assembly will consist of lectures that will be given by experts in various fields, by departments and people on the staff as well as people from the field, in order to foster aspects of the training of ministry that are not normally covered under particular courses. We have a broad range of items in mind here, such as health evangelism, ministering across life's stages, case study conferences on special problems, multistaff ministries, Biblical archeology and its usefulness for evangelism, the problem of death and dying, couples in ministry. These could all become part of the colloquia settings, but could also be expanded in these assemblies.

**Q.** *You've mentioned several new features of the revised M.Div. curriculum. Is there anything else you have planned?*

**A.** Yes. In order to emphasize the heritage of Adventist faith to our students, we have included three major modules of six credits each that we start teaching, beginning with the incoming student in the fall quarter followed by the winter and the spring quarters. The first such module is titled "Salvation" and consists of the doctrine of salvation, including the aspect of sanctification that is so important for Seventh-day Adventists. The subject will be approached both from a point of view of doctrine and from a point of view of studying selected passages on salvation, in the Old and New Testaments. This is followed in the next quarter by an emphasis on law, covenant and Sabbath, which is inherent even in our name, Seventh-day Adventists. This will be a joint approach between three departments in which we look at this issue first in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, and follow through church history in terms of the history of the Sabbath. The third module is on eschatology—a subject that is also integral in the name Seventh-day Adventist and our Adventist heritage. We have two departments involved in teaching this in terms of Biblical eschatology, last-day events, and our whole understanding as Seventh-day Adventists of the end of time and beyond. This will be supplemented, enlarged, and expanded, with selected passages on this topic from both the Old and New Testaments.

We are thus forming some classwork into six credit modules that the student will take each quarter. In addition to that, we have now made a general course, "Doctrine of the Sanctuary," mandatory for every student. Every student, of course, receives instruction on the doctrine of revelation and inspiration, and the writ-



*We have committed ourselves to teach these courses with the needs of the minister in mind. This may mean that we will no longer assign as many term papers, but require instead the preparation of sermons and Bible studies.*

ings of Ellen White, in addition to the respective requirements from each department.

**Q.** *When do you plan to implement this new program?*

**A.** The Seminary faculty has taken a formal vote to implement this program in the fall of 1982, and we are looking forward to it with great anticipation indeed. We have called some new faculty members, one of whom is to lead out especially in regard to the pastoral-formation segment. I think this is going to be a great experience.

**Q.** *How would you sum up the aspirations and goals that you and the rest of the Seminary faculty have for this new curriculum?*

**A.** What we have in mind are courses and practical experiences in the new M.Div. program that contribute most effectively to the preparation of students for Seventh-day Adventist ministry. We are not looking in the M.Div. program to train people for teaching or other professions. We are here to train ministers that can minister effectively to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and by the grace of God fulfill His purpose for this movement.

We are hoping also that this new curriculum will provide the kind of models that will make for effective ministry. We are looking for such modeling on the part of faculty members who will be involved with the students on a weekly basis in the area churches. We are looking for such modeling from the pastors of these churches and from visiting ministers and church leaders across North America who will be leading out in aspects of the new M.Div. program. We know that learning is best carried on in the right kind of modeling situations.

Then we want to teach all courses in the M.Div. program from the pastoral-evangelistic perspective. We have already talked about that. In other words, we want to try to help our students to see what will be of special value for them as future ministers. As teachers, we have committed ourselves to this.

And finally, we have a great interest in the spiritual and professional growth of our students. To provide that kind of setting for spiritual and professional growth under experienced leadership is one top priority.