The “Purple Book”

A Guide to Program Requirements and Qualifying Exams for the Practical Theology Track of the PhD in Theological Studies at Boston University School of Theology

Table of Contents

1 Preface .......................................................... 2
2 Course Requirements.............................................. 2
3 General Description of the Examinations................................. 2
4 The Examinations.................................................. 3
5 Core Bibliography .................................................... 5
6 Sample Questions .................................................... 25
Preface

1.1 The following is meant as an expansion of the School of Theology Ph.D. Handbook and a guide for students in the Practical Theology track. It does not supersede the Handbook and if any part of it is in conflict with or different from the Handbook, the Handbook is always the authoritative document. The faculty try to keep the purple book updated and in line with the Handbook.

Course Requirements

2.1 Of the total required credits for the PhD degree program, the Practical Theology track requires that students take the following three required seminars in the first semester of the program in which they are offered:

2.1.1 Proseminar in Practical Theology (TJ910)
2.1.2 Ecclesiology (TJ940) or other doctoral-level theology seminar approved by the student’s advisor
2.1.3 Advanced Research in Practical Theology (TJ976).

2.2 Students should consult the PhD handbook for other requirements regarding coursework such as number of 900-level seminars, BTI courses, directed studies, unsatisfactory grades, etc.

General Description of the Examinations

3.1 The Ph.D. degree program requires three written qualifying examinations and a single oral follow-up examination for all tracks and concentrations.

3.2 Each student will have a full 8 hours to take each of the three written exam, allowing them time to write, rest, eat, take a walk, or whatever helps them organize their thoughts and writing. The ASC program coordinator will send students the exam by e-mail at or slightly before 9:30am on the scheduled date and it must be returned by 5:30pm that evening by electronic attachment. The exam is a closed book exam and students may not consult the internet. Students are on an honor system. The expectations for all written exams are as follows:

3.2.1 The question asked is the question answered. Make sure that you are answering the question. At times students write as if to say, “that’s an interesting question, but I’d like to provide an answer to a related question – one for which I have prepared an answer.” It is appropriate and helpful for you to begin an answer with a brief paragraph that includes (a) a restatement of the question, (b) an indication of the heart of your answer (a thesis), and (c) an introduction to how you will address the thesis (outline of the argument).

3.2.2 The answers reveal advanced competence with the subject matter. Answers should demonstrate: (a) an in-depth fluency with the territory--basic problems, methods, controversies; (b) an accurate discussion of the breadth of relevant literature in the field relevant to the topic at hand. Answers should demonstrate the student's awareness and use of literature relevant to the discussion at hand. That use should expose the critical appropriation of others' ideas. (You are not expected to cite "chapter and verse.")

3.2.3 The answers are well thought through and reasonably well written. Answers must demonstrate a basic, self-evident "logic." They should carry out an argument, not simply fill the page with (supposedly) relevant information.

3.2.4 The answers, individually and as a group, in style as well as substance, express the contributions of one who is emerging as a competent member of the
community of scholars. Answers should be written with force and authority. Students demonstrate competence by the appropriate choice of materials, the accurate analysis of those materials, and ultimately the constructive use of those materials on behalf of one's own claims.

3.3 In preparation for each examination, the advisors and the student should meet to tailor a bibliography (founded upon and including the core coursework of their discipline) to suit the special interests of the student. The core bibliography of the practical theology Ph.D. program (see below) should be consulted as a starting point for preparing this bibliography. A student may not proceed to any written exam without a bibliography agreed upon by the advisors.

4 The Examinations

4.1 Practical Theology “Track” Exam: The first examination bears great similarity from student to student. This examination asks questions about the history and nature of practical theology as a discipline and the primary theoretical and methodological issues that every student of practical theology would be expected to know. It asks about a theology of practice in conversation with philosophical, hermeneutical, ethical, and social-scientific theories of practice. It asks especially about the interdisciplinary nature of practical theology and how theology is to be correlated with or positioned relative to other disciplines of study. It expects the student to be able to articulate his or her own understanding of what practical theology is as informed by and in dialogue with the relevant literature. It asks about how the student’s two chosen theologians (see 4.2 below) inform the student’s own approaches to doing practical theology.

4.1.1 Readers – The core exam is administered and graded on a pass/fail basis by two or more of the Practical Theology doctoral faculty. This includes the student’s primary advisor and any additional faculty member if he or she will end up serving as one of the readers of the student’s dissertation.

4.2 Concentration Exams: The second and third examinations are focused on the student’s particular concentration and area of future dissertation research. The bibliography for both examinations will be formed by the student in consultation with his or her advisor(s). The focus of each exam is determined ahead of time in whatever way the advisor(s) sees fit, and there is no required structure or purpose distinguishing the two. Some advisors have focused the questions of the first concentration exam on the literature of the wider concentration and have focused the questions of the second concentration exam on the narrower literature of the student’s future dissertation research. But that is only one pattern for division among others that an advisor might tailor with the student ahead of time. In these two exams, students will be required to demonstrate proficiency with whatever cognate disciplines are to serve as partners for the student’s research. So, for example, the study of liturgy might require a grounding in ritual studies, musicology, or the visual arts. The study of religious education would almost certainly require a grasp of educational theory but perhaps also of psychological theories of faith formation and personality development. A study of mission or evangelism might find the disciplines of sociology, cultural anthropology, rhetoric, and communication studies more relevant disciplinary partners. The concentration examinations will also afford the student the opportunity to demonstrate a grasp of the historical and social context in which her or his study is to be conducted and to display the ability to carry out theological reflection on practice within this context. This
context includes the historical, social, and institutional structures and patterns of the church as well as the wider socio-cultural environment in which Christian practices are performed. If ecclesiology was one of the student’s track seminars, the student may also be asked to reflect on the relationship of his or her concentration or future research to questions about the nature and mission of the church and the church’s relationship to the world.

4.2.1 **Readers** – The second and third examinations are administered by the student’s primary advisor and read by the core advisor and any additional faculty member if he or she will end up serving as one of the readers of the student’s dissertation. This obviously means that the first and second reader must be identified by the time of exams. In a case where there are only two readers of the exams and they do not agree, the student’s advisor will ask a third faculty member to evaluate the exam.

4.3 **Oral Follow-up Exam:** The oral follow-up examination affords the student the opportunity to further elaborate on questions the core or concentration advisors may have from the written examinations and to articulate their ideas for the prospectus. The exam is administered by the student’s primary advisor and participated in also by any other advisors or readers.
5 Core Bibliography

The bibliography below serves as a core bibliography in Practical Theology and it is on the basis of this bibliography that the first qualifying examination is prepared. For each examination, the candidate will develop with his or her primary advisor a tailored bibliography that works from the following core bibliography and adds additional readings based on the student’s practical, theological, and methodological focus.

Boston University School of Theology construes the discipline of Practical Theology in a way that focuses on the concrete problems and practices of faith communities and persons of faith in the world as well as interpretation of those problems and practices by whatever disciplines and approaches are suggested by the problems and practices themselves. For that reason, the following bibliography should in no way be construed as “the essence” of practical theology. An inherent difficulty in producing a “core bibliography” for practical theology is that many of the texts with which all students in the field should be familiar tend to be more philosophical, historical, and methodological when, in practice, the discipline itself relies on contextual research and the kind of analysis that employs a varied range of research from the natural and social sciences, as well as the arts and humanities, in order to interpret and reflect theologically on a given problem or practice. The following bibliography, therefore, pertains only to those suggested works that will contribute to a practical theologian’s understanding of the more general features of the discipline.

5.1 The Discipline of Practical Theology

Ammer, Heinrich, et al
1978

Andrews, Dale

Ballard, P. H.

Bloth, Peter C., et al
1987

Boff, Clodovis

Browning, Don S.

Browning, Don S. (Ed.)

Browning, Don S., David Polk, and Ian S. Evison

5


Graham, Elaine, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, eds.
2005  *Theological Reflections: Methods, Volume I.* London: SCM.
Graham, Elaine L. and Anna Rowlands, eds

Groome, Thomas


Hanson, Bradley C., Ed.

1990  *Modern Christian Spirituality: Methodological and Historical Essays.* Atlanta: Scholars Press. [See in particular Part One (chapters 1-4)]

Heitink, Gerben


Hough, Joseph C. and Cobb, John B., Jr.

1985  *Christian Identity and Theological Education.* Atlanta: Scholar’s Press.

*International Journal of Practical Theology*

1997-  Berlin/New York: W. de Gruyter. This journal is present in the STH library and online. Practical Theology students should consult this journal regularly.

Jennings, Theodore W.


Klostermann, Ferdinand and Rolf Zerfass


Lartey, Emmanuel


Maddox, Randy L.


Mette, Norbert


Miles, Margaret


Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. and Brita L. Gill-Austern, Eds.


Mudge, Lewis S. and James N. Poling, Eds.


Nieman, James

2002  “Attending Locally: Theologies in Congregations,” in *International Journal of*
Practical Theology (Fall).
Nipkow, K. E., F. Schweitzer, and Dietrich Rössler, Eds.

Ogden, Schubert M.

Osmer, Richard R.

Otto, Gert

Palmer, C. D. F.

Palmer, C. D. F.

Poling, James N. and Donald Miller

Reymond, Bernard

Rössler, Dietrich

Scherer-Rath, Michael and Johannes A. van der Ven, Eds.

Schleiermacher, Friedrich

Schweitzer, Friedrich and Johannes A. van der Ven, Eds.

Segundo, Juan Luis

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

van der Ven, Johannes
1990 *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach*. Kok Pharos Publishing House

Viau, Marcel

Volf, Miroslav and Dorothy C. Bass, Eds.

Wheeler, Barbara and Edward Farley, Eds.
1991 *Shifting Boundaries: Contextual Approaches to the Structure of Theological
5.2 Theological Traditions
Students must demonstrate close reading of classical texts of the Western Christian tradition and must be able to dialogue competently with contemporary theological developments, issues, and trends. Students should be able to locate themselves theologically with regard to major doctrinal questions and should also be deeply conversant with two major theologians, one each from two of the following three periods:

- Classical and Medieval (1st through the 16th Centuries CE)
- Modern (17th through the 19th Centuries CE)
- Contemporary (20th and 21st Centuries CE)

Specifically, students should be prepared to analyze the implications of each theologian’s work for practical theology.

5.3 Ecclesiology (if the student took this core seminar)
Althouse, Peter

Andrews, Dale

Augustine

Bass, Dorothy C., ed.

Billingsley, Andrew
1999 Mighty Like a River: The Black Church and Social Reform. Oxford University Press.

Boff, Leonardo


Bujo, Bénézet
Bonhoeffer, Dietrich

Braaten, Carl E. and Robert W. Jenson, Eds.

Cavanaugh, William T.

Clapp, Rodney

Cone, James

Daneel, Marthinus

DeLubac, Henri

Dickey Young, Pamela

Dulles, Avery

Fishburn, Janet F.

Flannery, Austin P. (Ed)

Fowler, James

Fulkerson, Mary McClintock

Gaillardetz, Richard R.

Gibbs, Eddie and Ryan K. Bolger

Gill, Robin
Guder, Darel, Ed.
Gustafson, James M.
Gutiérrez, Gustavo
Haight, Roger
Healey, Joseph and Donald Sybertz
Hauerwas, Stanley
Hauerwas, Stanley and William Willimon

Healy, Nicholas M.  

Hütter, Reinhard  
1993  “Ecclesial Ethics, the Church’s Vocation, and Paraclesis,” Pro Ecclesia 2:4 (Fall), 433-50.  

Johnson, Elizabeth  

Jones, Serene  

Kanyoro, Musimbi  
1997  In Search of a Round Table: Gender, Theology, and Church Leadership. Geneva: World Council of Churches.

Komonchak, Joseph  

Küng, Hans  
The Church.

Kwok, Pui-lan  

Lathrop, Gordon W.  

Lee, Jung Young  

Lincoln, C. Eric and Lawrence H. Mamiya  

Lindbeck, George A.  

Lohfink, Gerhard  

Majawa, Clement  
Moltmann, Jürgen

Moore, Mary Elizabeth


Msafiri, Aidan G.

Oduyoye, Mercy Amba


Prusak, Bernard P.

Radner, Ephraim

Ruether, Rosemary Radford

Russell, Letty M.

Rutba House, The
2005  *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.

Schillebeeckx, Edward.

Schmemann, Alexander
1989  *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*. St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press.

1993  *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*. St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth

Segundo, Juan Luis

Sobrino, Jon
1993  “The Economics of Ecclesia: A Poor Church Is a Church Rich in Compassion.” In


Stone, Bryan 2012 A Reader in Ecclesiology. Ashgate.


5.4 Theological Dialogue with Philosophy, Ethics, and the Social Sciences


Berger, Peter 1967 Sacred Canopy.

5.5 Theology and Context. The following list is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive of contemporary approaches to contextual theology and also includes theological reflection on the relationship between faith and culture. All practical theology majors should read judiciously from the following list in order to gain a solid grasp of the literature.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg  

Habermas, Jurgen  

Hermans, Chris A. M. and Mary Elizabeth Moore, eds.  

Kant, Immanuel  

Marx, Karl  

MacIntyre, Alasdair  

Milbank, John  
1993 *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*. Blackwell.

Moore, Mary Elizabeth  


Ricoeur, Paul  

Tracy, David  

5.5 Theology and Context. The following list is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive of contemporary approaches to contextual theology and also includes theological reflection on the relationship between faith and culture. All practical theology majors should read judiciously from the following list in order to gain a solid grasp of the literature.

Cannon, Katie Geneva  

Chopp, Rebecca  

Comstock, Gary David  
Cone, James

Couture, Pamela

Deck, Allan Figueroa

Fry Brown, Teresa L.
2004  **God Don’t Like Ugly: African American Women Handling on Spiritual Values.**
      Nashville: Abingdon.

Goizueta, Roberto
1992  **We are a People! Initiatives in Hispanic American Theology.** Fortress Press.

Goss, Robert

Graham, Elaine L.
1996  **Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty.**
      London: Mowbray (Chapters 4, 5, and 6).

Gutiérrez, Gustavo
      Maryknoll: Orbis.

1996  **The Church Between Gospel and Culture.** Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Isasi-Díaz, Ada Maria
1993  **En La Lucha – In the Struggle: A Hispanic Women’s Liberation Theology.**
      Minneapolis: Fortress.

Kanyoro, Musimbi
2002  **Introduction to Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics: A Key to African Women’s**
      **Liberation Theology.** New York: Continuum.

Mananzan, Mary John, Elsa Tamez, and Mercy Amba Oduyoye, eds.

Mercer, Joyce
2005  **Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood.** St. Louis: Chalice.

Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J.
1994  **Also a Mother: Work and Family as Theological Dilemma.** Nashville: Abingdon.
2003  **Let the Children Come: Reimagining Childhood from a Christian Perspective.**

Moore, Mary Elizabeth and Almeda Wright, Eds.
2008  **Children, Youth, and Spirituality in a Troubling World.** St. Louis: Chalice.

Poling, James N.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford

Schreiter, Robert J.
1985  **Constructing Local Theologies.** Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Tamez, Elsa


Tanner, Kathryn

1997  *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*, Minneapolis: Fortress.

Tillich, Paul

1959  *Theology of Culture*, Oxford University Press.

Townes, Emilie, ed.


Tutu, Desmond


Van der Ven, Johannes A., Jacob S. Dreyer, and Hendrik J. Pieterse


Villa-Vicencio, Charles


Wheeler, Barbara and Edward Farley, Eds.


Williams, Delores


5.6  Works by Practical Theology Faculty at the School of Theology

The following includes a partial list of faculty publications designed to provide doctoral students an introduction to the practical theological thought and method of those with whom they are studying. Some faculty publications are listed in categories above.

Goto, Courtney


Moore, Mary Elizabeth


2006  “Imagine Peace: Knowing the Real, Imagining the Impossible,” in Handbook of Process Theology, eds., Jay McDaniel and Donna Bowman (St. Louis: Chalice, 2006), 201-216.


2004  “Imagine Peace: Knowing the Real, Imagining the Impossible,” Process Papers, 8 (March), 5-25.


2003 “Commissioning the People of God: Called to Be a Community in Mission,” *Quarterly Review,* vol. 23, no. 4 (Winter), 399-411.

2002 *Theology, Ethics and the New War* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2002), 316-325.

2001 “Commissioning the People of God: Called to Be a Community in Mission,” *Quarterly Review,* vol. 23, no. 4 (Winter), 399-411.


1999 “Feminist Practical Theology and the Future of the Church,” in Friedrich Schweitzer and Johannes A. van der Ven, eds., *Erfahrung und Theologie—Schriften zur Praktischen Theologie (Practical Theology—International Perspectives).* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999. 189-209.


1998 “Poetry, Prophecy, and Power,” *Religious Education,* vol. 93, no. 3 (Summer), 268-287. (Presidential Address)


*Ministering with the Earth*. St. Louis: Chalice.


"Synergetic Education: Contexts and Norms in Higher Education," *Process Papers*, vol. II.


"La Theologie Pratique aux Etats-Unis: Une Diversite Options," *Cahiers de l’Institut Romand de Pastorale*, no. 24 (Mars), 3-17.


"Conversation at the Center for Process Studies, *Process Perspectives*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Fall), 1-5.

"To Search and to Witness: Theological Agenda of Georgia Harkness," Quarterly Review, vol. 13, no. 3 (Fall).


1970 (with James L. Fozard) "Age Differences in Judgments of Recency for Short Sequences of Pictures," *Development Psychology*, vol. 3, no. 2, 208-217

Sheppard, Phillis


Stone, Bryan


2012 *A Reader in Ecclesiology*. Ashgate Publishing.


2000  “Theology and Film in Postmodern Culture: A Dialogue with *Forrest Gump* and *Pulp Fiction.*” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 35:1, 149-164.

Wolfteich, Claire
1999  “A Difficult Love: Mother as Spiritual Guide in the Writing of Susanna Wesley.”
Methodist History 38: 1 (October), 53-62.
6 Sample Questions

The following are sample questions from those sections of the practical theology exams that are most likely to bear some resemblance from student to student. Sample questions are not provided for the more customized sections of previous student exams.

Practical Theology as a Discipline

1) (12/09) Compare and contrast two of the following authors’ approaches to practical theology: Browning, Farley, Graham, Heimbrock, Schleiermacher, Van der Ven, Delores Williams. In doing this, be sure to identify prominent issues in method or definition that either characterize the two approaches or that distinguish them from one another. How then do these issues inform or relate to your own developed understanding of practical theology as a discipline? [Note: Do not focus on the interdisciplinary nature of practical theology in this question as you will be given that opportunity in question C below]

2) (12/09) Discuss the way both John Wesley and Letty Russell bring the resources of the Christian tradition and close attention to human experience to bear on the performance of Christians practices. In your answer, be sure to demonstrate a close reading of the two figures and give one or two specific examples of a practice (or set of practices) that illustrate their particular approach.

3) (10/09) John Wesley and liberation theologians have in common a passionate interest in Christian practice and, in particular, the theological dimensions of that practice. In particular, they share a passionate interest in Christian economic practices. Discuss the way John Wesley and liberation theologians bring the resources of the Christian tradition (or any other resources, for that matter) to bear on the performance of Christian economic practices. In answering the question, be sure to point out aspects of their approaches that you think are instructive (either as exemplary or faulty) for how a practical theologian goes about her work. In your answer, be sure to demonstrate a close reading of texts.

4) (12/09) Imagine that you are conducting a practical theological study of pub churches in the United States and the United Kingdom. Discuss the inter-disciplinary nature of a practical theological approach to that study and, in particular, the way you understand the relationship of various disciplines of study to one another. In the course of answering this question, be sure to engage the arguments, approaches, or typologies of one or two authors in your bibliography.

5) (10/09) Imagine that you are conducting a practical theological study of Christian faith communities that engage in alternative or counter-cultural economic practices. Discuss the inter-disciplinary nature of a practical theological approach to that study and, in particular, the way you understand the relationship of the various disciplines to one another. In the course of answering this question, be sure to engage the arguments, approaches, or typologies of one or two authors in your bibliography.

6) (10/09) Imagine that you are conducting a practical theological study of Christian faith communities that engage in practices of hospitality and welcome to immigrants, migrants, or refugees. Discuss the inter-disciplinary nature of a practical theological approach to that study and, in particular, the way you understand the relationship of the various disciplines to one another. In the course of answering this question, be sure to engage the arguments, approaches, or typologies of one or two authors in your bibliography.

7) (9/08) Summarize Poling and Miller’s proposed continuum for thinking about the interdisciplinary nature of practical theology. Where, if at all, do you locate yourself in this
continuum in the context of studying congregational transformation, and why? If you do not find it helpful to locate yourself in their schema, why not?

8) (9/08) What is Practical Theology? In the process of answering this question: briefly trace important developments in the evolution of the discipline; summarize and engage the positions of any two of the following authors: Browning, Farley, Segundo, Stone, Williams, van der Ven; state and argue for your own position.

9) (9/08) Compare and contrast Alexander Campbell and Marjorie Suchocki as regards the practical theological task of interfacing the Christian tradition with human experience in the reconstruction and transformation of Christian practice. In your answer, provide at least one specific example for each theologian that demonstrates how they perform this interface, whether, for example, in regard to a particular social or ecclesial practice or, perhaps, an important social or theological issue that bears on Christian practice. Be sure to demonstrate a close reading of the theologians in your answer.

10) Briefly trace important developments in the evolution of the field of practical theology and, in doing so, select two key issues that have been important to that evolution, and discuss them with reference to the positions of at least two of the following authors, while arguing for your own position (xxx,xxx,xxx,xxx).

11) Compare and contrast two approaches to practical theology, identifying two or three common (substantive or methodological) issues in which they are similar or different. Outline the contours of a third position – your own – paying express attention to common issues you have considered as shared points of reference.

12) Given your understanding of practical theology, how might that discipline both fit into and shape the curriculum of a theological seminary?

13) What was the significance of Friedrich Schleiermacher in the evolution of the discipline of practical theology?

14) Summarize and evaluate Edward Farley’s critique of the historical development of the discipline of practical theology. Does Don Browning’s proposal address Farley’s criticisms and respond favorably to Farley’s own proposal?

15) How do the approaches of Stanley Hauerwas and Juan Luis Segundo compare and contrast with one another regarding the question of normativity in evaluating Christian practices (or praxis)? How do you evaluate these and toward which approach (if either) do you incline when it comes to considering the beauty, goodness, or truth of various practices?

16) Poling and Miller present a continuum on which they locate different ways of coordinating the contributions of confessional sources and extra-confessional sources, thereby illustrating how practical theology is an interdisciplinary project. (a) Summarize the continuum and the respective positions; (b) discuss your own approach to the relationship of theology and the social sciences, indicating where it is located on the continuum, if at all, and if not, why not.

17) Discuss the interdisciplinary nature of practical theology by describing the relationship between theology and [the social sciences, history, ethics, literary criticism (customized)] in carrying out practical theological research. As a way of giving your answer concreteness, demonstrate how you imagine this relationship or interface actually playing out if you were undertaking a practical theological study of [a multi-cultural congregation, some aspect of the work and experience of Korean Methodist clergymen, the intersections of theology and popular culture (customized)]. In your answer, be sure to engage representative works by authors in your bibliography.

18) Analyze and illustrate the role of description in practical theology. Be sure that in the course
Practical Theology and Theologians
1) As a practical theologian, you will draw upon key theologians in the Christian tradition as you interpret contemporary questions, issues, and contexts and as you seek to guide contemporary practices of faith. Regarding xxx and xxx, write an essay that outlines key theological insights, ideas, or methods of these theologians that will be important to your work as a practical theologian (or the work of any practical theologian). Be sure to demonstrate breadth and depth in your answer and back up your points with detailed references to specific writings. Keep in mind that the point of this question is to show your understanding of the theologian and to demonstrate how you will draw upon him in your work as a practical theologian.

2) Discuss the relevance and contribution of xxx and xxx to how one might understand the nature of practical theology and how one might actually go about the tasks of practical theology. In answering this question, be sure to address specifically how both theologians address the question of (a) the relationship between theology and practice or (b) the relationship of normativity and context, or (c) the relationship between scripture/tradition and experience/reason in doing practical theology (choose only one of these questions). Be sure to demonstrate breadth and depth in your reading of the theologians and back up your points with references to their writing. Keep focused on the theologians’ relevance to practical theology.

3) In what sense is Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza a “practical theologian” and what contribution does she make to how we go about the tasks of practical theology? Explain and illustrate your answer and relate it explicitly to answer #1 above.

4) In what sense might Karl Barth and John Wesley be considered “practical theologians,” or if such a label would be anachronistic or misleading as applied to either of them, what contribution do you think they make to how a present-day practical theologian is to conceive of the tasks, method, and focus of practical theology? Be sure to engage their work with as much depth and specificity in the time allotted. You may certainly approach the question by comparing and contrasting the two theologians, though that is not necessary.

Ecclesiology, Context, and Practice
1) The church is not the world. With this “humble fact,” says James McClendon, the struggle called “theology” begins. Is McClendon correct? Discuss the relationship between the church and the world, paying special attention to the identity and mission of the church in your answer. Answer this question with reference to the thought of any two of the following thinkers (Augustine, Cavanaugh, Gutiérrez, Russell, Vatican II, or Yoder) but also answer it in such a way as to make clear your own position and the reasons for holding the position you do. Note: Do not work closely with authors here if you will be working with them closely in answers below.

2) Both John Howard Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas have spoken of the church as a distinctive and alternative “politics” in the world. Indeed, Hauerwas goes on to characterize the church as a “counter-politics” and as a colony of “resident aliens.” Do you agree with that characterization? Why or why not? What is at stake here when thinking about the nature and mission of the church and its relationship to the world? In answering these questions and
while arguing for your own position, bring into the conversation one other theologian in addition to Yoder and/or Hauerwas from among the authors in your bibliography.

3) Discuss the contours of what could reasonably be called a “liberationist” approach to ecclesiology. What are the convictions held in common or methodological approaches held in common by liberation theologians that together shape or constitute their ecclesiology/ies?

4) What is the ecclesiology (or the most important ecclesiological implications) of the movement called “New Monasticism” and what are the most important ways of assessing it? How do you assess it?

5) Given your understanding of the nature and mission of the church as developed in #1 above, discuss how this ecclesiology is implied in or presupposed by your understanding of Christian economic practices. What difference ought one’s ecclesiology make to one’s theology of economics? In your answer, demonstrate a close reading of at least two authors.

6) You have been asked to teach a course entitled “The Missional Church.” What would be the central aims of such a course and how would you organize and teach it? What would you want your students to know and with what theologians, philosophers, or social theorists would you want them to become familiar? In answering this question, give attention also to pedagogy, texts or other resources, and any contextualization considerations to which you think it is important to attend.

7) Discuss the nature of the church as a “pilgrim people” of God in relationship (i) to a “theology of place/place theory, (ii) to Augustine’s City of God, and (iii) to any other author or authors you find helpful.

8) Discuss how the context of empire shapes or has shaped the church in history and how postcolonial theory is or is not a helpful resource in your thinking about the nature and mission of the church. In answering this question, be sure to demonstrate a close reading of particular theologians, cultural theorists, or other experts whose work is important as a resource in this area.

9) Given your understanding of the nature and mission of the church as developed in #1 above, discuss how this ecclesiology is implied in or presupposed by your understanding of the practice of Christian hospitality, especially in the context of migration and refugees. What difference does one’s ecclesiology make to that practice? In your answer, demonstrate a close reading of at least two authors.

10) You have been asked to teach a course entitled “The Church and Borderlands” to a class of seminarians. You have been asked to teach this course as a course within a “practical theology” curriculum and as an exercise in “practical theology.” What would be the central elements of such a course and how would you organize and teach it? In answering this question, give attention to pedagogy, course aims, texts or other resources, and any contextualization considerations to which you think it is important to attend.

11) In Torture and Eucharist, William Cavanaugh argues against an ecclesiology in which the church is a “mystical body.” What is at stake for Cavanaugh in terms of the nature and mission of the church in the world, and how does he try to counter this conception? Do you agree with him? Why or why not? In answering these questions and while arguing for your own position, bring into the conversation one other theologian in addition to Cavanaugh from among the authors in your bibliography.

12) What difference does one’s ecclesiology make to the actual practice of congregational transformation/church renewal? Be as specific as you can, and in your answer, engage the
contributions of at least two authors from your bibliography in the fields of ecclesiology, congregational transformation, or congregational studies.

13) What is postmodernity and what difference does it make for those who are trying to facilitate congregational health/congregational transformation? Are postmodern currents something that should be feared or embraced by congregational leaders?

14) You have been asked to teach a course entitled “Church Renewal” to a class of seminarians, most of whom have never had a class in ecclesiology, evangelism, or mission. You have been asked to teach this course as a course within a “practical theology” curriculum and as an exercise in “practical theology.” What would be the central elements of such a course and how would you organize and teach it? In answering this question, give attention to pedagogy, course aims, texts or other resources, and any contextualization considerations to which you think it is important to attend.

15) How do you understand the nature and mission of the church and, in particular, the relation of the church to the world? Discuss your answer in dialogue with the views of any two of the following authors (Augustine, Boff, Dulles, Zizioulas, and either Yoder or Hauerwas [do not choose both Yoder and Hauerwas]).

16) What is the “emerging church”? Why do its proponents consider it to be “emerging”? What makes them consider it “church”? Is the emerging church “church”? Compare and contrast your own understanding of the nature and mission of the church with that of at least two important representatives of the emerging church conversation and, in doing so, demonstrate a close reading of their positions.

17) If you were to teach a course entitled “Introduction to Preaching” to a class of inexperienced seminarians, what would be the central elements of the “theology of preaching” that you would hold to be essential in such a course? In answering this question, give some attention to the key ecclesiological questions that need to be asked and answered. In other words, how does your understanding of the church outlined in question #1 above relate to your understanding of the nature and purpose of preaching? In the process of answering this question, be sure to include some discussion of what authors in the bibliography you would draw upon most in constructing a theology of preaching and the reasons why.

18) Discuss how your understanding of the church is implied in or presupposed by the practice of Christian religious education. So, for example, if you were part of a congregation attempting to think carefully about and undertake a review of its religious education programs, what are the key ecclesiological questions that would need to be asked and answered by that congregation in doing so? What difference might an ecclesiological approach make other than the one for which you advocate? In your answer, engage with depth the thought of at least two authors from your bibliography that you did not choose on question #1.

19) Discuss how your understanding of the church is implied in or presupposed by the practice of evangelism. So, for example, if you were attempting to start a new church, revitalize an existing church, or begin a campus ministry among undergraduate students at a major university (choose one), what are the key ecclesiological questions that would need to be asked and answered in doing so? What difference might an ecclesiological approach make other than the one for which you advocate?

20) You have been asked to teach a course entitled “Christian Formation of Young Adults” to a class of seminarians, many of whom have never been introduced to educational theory, developmental psychology, or young adult ministry studies. You have been asked to teach this course as a course within a “practical theology” curriculum and as an exercise in
“practical theology.” What would be the central elements of such a course and how would you organize and teach it? In answering this question, give attention to pedagogy, course aims, texts or other resources, and any contextualization considerations to which you think it is important to attend.

21) If you were to teach a course entitled "Pastoral Care" to a class of seminarians, what would be the central elements of the "theology of pastoral care" and/or the “ecclesiology of pastoral care” that you would hold to be essential in such a course? How would these elements relate to your approach to the practice of pastoral care in a way that is oriented toward practical theological transformation? In the process of answering this question, be sure to include some discussion of what authors in the bibliography you would most draw upon and the reasons why.

22) Imagine that you have been assigned to teach an elective course called “women in ministry” at a United Methodist seminary to students who had little or no prior theological or ministerial education but who are in a Masters of Divinity program. If you were to teach a course such as this as a practical theologian, what might be the central elements of that course, and why? What would be the pedagogy, content, resources, texts, aims, or ecclesiological underpinnings of such a course, and why? Other questions to consider as you have time are:
   a) Would your approach to women in ministry be contextualized in terms of questions related to culture and ethnicity and, if so, how?
   b) Would the course be oriented toward practical theological transformation and, if so, how?
   c) How might such a course be different from other “ministry” courses taught in another way?
   d) Here again it is appropriate to draw upon your bibliography demonstrating a close reading of a few selected authors.

23) Consider preaching in the African-American context. How, on the one hand, does that context shape ‘good’ preaching, if at all, and how, on the other hand, does ‘good’ preaching transcend the particularities of context, if at all? Remember to interact with authors you take to be important in thinking about preaching (even if you disagree with them) either in general or in the African-American context.

24) What are the most pressing and important features of early childhood faith formation and personality development that shape the practice of Christian education? How might Christian educational practice respond to these features in faithful, theologically sound, and contextually appropriate ways? In your answer, be sure to demonstrate a close reading of the work of those scholars in your bibliography who have likewise focused on the question you are here addressing.

25) What difference does the African-American context make in how one goes about the practice of Christian education? Are there particular challenges or resources that present themselves to the Christian educator in this context? Are there particular features of the African-American church or resources of particular African-American thinkers that are especially important for how you come to think about and envision Christian education in the African-American context? In your answer, be sure to demonstrate a close reading of the work of those scholars in your bibliography who have likewise focused on the question you are here addressing.

26) Can the church be the church on the internet? In answering this question, you will need to integrate what you mean by ‘church’ with an analysis and assessment of various forms of
internet media and how they distort, liberate, or otherwise shape the life and practice of Christian churches today. Should a church that wishes to engage contemporary culture with the gospel be wary of becoming a ‘virtual’ church or is there something to be gained thereby? In answering your question, be sure to discuss and engage relevant authors in your bibliography.

27) You have been asked to teach a course entitled “The Postmodern Church” to a class of seminarians, many of whom have only a cursory knowledge of postmodern philosophy and theories. What would be the central aims of such a course and how would you organize and teach it? What would you want your students to know and with what theologians, philosophers, or social theorists would you want them to become familiar? In answering this question, give attention also to pedagogy, texts or other resources, and any contextualization considerations to which you think it is important to attend.

28) Discuss how your understanding of the church is contextualized relative to questions of gender, ethnicity, and denominational identity in thinking about United Methodist Korean clergywomen. Be specific. Choose a particular dimension or aspect of the experience of Korean clergywomen in the United Methodist church (for example, the appointment process, the structure and appropriateness of United Methodist theological education, ordination, representation on boards, etc. [these are only examples, you may choose another]) and discuss both how your ecclesiology is implied in or presupposed by how a practical theologian approaches or interprets such questions, on the one hand, and how the dimensions of gender, ethnicity, and denominational identity inherent to this topic/question contextualize your ecclesiology, on the other hand. In the process of answering this question, demonstrate a close reading of at least 2 authors from the agreed upon bibliography.

29) Secularization, a scientific worldview, and religious pluralism have all been taken as providing challenges to the shape and, indeed, to the very possibility of Christian evangelistic practice in our time. Choose one of these and discuss it, being sure (a) to describe the most pressing and important features of that challenge for evangelism and (b) how evangelistic practice might respond in faithful but contextually appropriate ways to that challenge. In your answer, be sure to demonstrate a close reading of the work of those scholars in your bibliography who have likewise focused on the question you are here addressing.

30) Discuss the role of popular culture in a church that seeks both to reach young adults and to invite them on the Christian journey and form them into that journey. Should the church be wary of popular culture as a rival set of cultural formations or should it fully embrace popular culture as the contemporary idiom in which the gospel can be recognized by young adults and in which they can be formed dynamically into the Christian story?

31) Consider any two prominent forms of popular culture (film, television, literature, music, sports, internet, etc.) and discuss their relevance for the Christian practice of young adult formation. In your answer, be sure to demonstrate a close reading of the literature surrounding those two forms of popular culture.

32) If you were to teach an elective course on feminist liturgy at a United Methodist seminary to students who had already had an introductory course in worship, and if you were to do so as a practical theologian and as a feminist, what might be the central elements of that course? What would be the pedagogy, content, resources, aims, or ecclesiological underpinnings of such a course? How would your approach to liturgy be oriented toward practical theological transformation? How might such a course be different from other courses in worship you can think of?