

# Appendix

## Guidelines and Considerations for the Theological Reflection Chapter

### Structural Items

#### Thesis

The chapter on the biblical and theological foundations of your project (generally chapter 2) must have a sustainable and clearly articulated thesis. This thesis is modified from the whole project's thesis and is designed to support the major thesis. Generally, the thesis of this chapter is also formed as a direct answer to a sub-problem identified in the first chapter. This section is NOT to be simply an exploration of the topic, but rather must argue that the biblical and theological disciplines support the thesis' claim. (To put this another way, this section is supposed to be a survey – much like chapter three – of the relevant research that has been done on your topic. Thus, it should have a sub-thesis that supports that claim.)

#### Assumptions

Special care must be made to make sure that the assumptions given in the first chapter of the thesis are not the same as the thesis of chapter two. Doing so would constitute a classic case of “begging the question.” In Logic (as a discipline) when one's premise (in this case your assumptions) are the same as your conclusion (the thesis of the chapter) you commit the “begging the question” fallacy. For example, if you assume in chapter one that, “The Bible has much to say about transformational leadership,” your thesis in chapter two cannot be that, “The Bible has much to say about transformational leadership.” The best practice would be to eliminate the assumption from your thesis and do the work of demonstrating your conclusion in chapter two.

#### Counter-arguments

Major counter-arguments to your thesis should be addressed and refuted. It is especially important to identify other opinions on biblical texts or theological positions that would run counter to your thesis. Remember, this is an academic pursuit and your audience is other experts (and soon to be experts) in the field, not parishioners.

#### Depth vs. Breadth

In biblical and theological surveys there is always a judgment call to be made whether to do in-depth study on a few exemplars or to survey the breadth of the topic. If you use the survey method make sure that you cover the topic thoroughly using a significant portion of the Bible (see section on generalization below) so that you are accurately capturing the Bible's presentation of that topic. If your topic is most related to a specific portion of the Bible (e.g., Old Testament, New Testament, Pentateuch, Paul, etc.), you must provide a rationale for why you are focusing your work on this portion of the Bible. If you are doing an in-depth study, pick a few (e.g., three or four) texts to focus on for your study and avoid making your conclusions broad generalizations. You may also start broad and quickly narrow to relevant biblical examples; again be careful of generalizations. The same is true with the theological tradition.

#### Generalization

Be especially careful in your Bible and theology section not to make generalizations. Make sure that you do not generalize the interpretation of the Bible (for example, do not assume that

because the New Testament presents material in one way, the rest of the Bible does it in the same way). Also, do not generalize theological claims, citing one theologian on a topic does not mean that “all theologians” or even “most theologians” agree with you. Avoid words like “all” and “most” unless you are sure that this is really the case. Phrases like “evangelical view”, “biblical worldview”, etc. may have significance to you, but are too general to be helpful. In short, defend your assertions, provide biblical or theological examples and cite authorities whenever you make a claim.

### **Additional Note**

If you are in need of a “brush up” on biblical exegesis and/or theological method please feel free to contact the seminary library for resources to help you in the process of doing this chapter.

## **Resource Items**

### **References**

As with any other academic discipline, the resources used must be contemporary, scholarly and relevant. As a rule of thumb, no resource more than thirty to forty years old should be used unless justification for that source is given within the text of the thesis.

### **Popular vs. Scholarly Sources**

Scholarly sources should be used. Scholarly sources are simply defined as scholars writing to scholars. Special care should be used in the chapter to use scholars of Bible and theology. Be especially careful of the use of practitioner’s work in this chapter. As a rule of thumb the number of sources that you interact with should be roughly equivalent to the number of pages that you have in the chapter.

### **Sermon vs. Academic**

The Doctor of Ministry thesis is an academic paper and, as such, it must be written in an academic style. Avoid sermonic rhetoric, which can be appropriate in a sermon, but not in an academic paper. Assertions should be supported with sources, definitions must never be assumed and proof-texting must be avoided at all costs.

### **Opinion vs. Statement**

All major (and most minor) claims must be backed up with scholarly support. It is not appropriate in a scholarly paper to simply make a claim; it must be supported by scholarship. Opinions may be included in the paper, but only when stated as opinion within the thesis and kept to a minimum.

## **Miscellaneous**

### **Length**

Remember, you are not getting graded based on the number of pages that you write! A shorter and more concise chapter is much preferable to a long and rambling one. Of course, you need to be thorough, but this does not necessarily mean longer.

### **Style and Formatting**

You must use (as with the rest of your thesis) Turabian formatting. This is not a suggestion, but a requirement. The best practice is to start your writing by using Turabian, this eliminates the arduous task of having to go back to your paper and re-format it once you are done writing.