

# THE EFM PROGRAM CONSISTS OF FOUR YEARS OF STUDY:

## Year One - Hebrew Scriptures

The Hebrew Scriptures are also known as the Old Testament. Year One of EfM focuses on the text of the Hebrew Scriptures as well as foundational concepts such as Creation, Sin, Judgment and Redemption. The Four-source Documentary Hypothesis is discussed and the four sources traced through the Hebrew Scriptures. Readers are introduced to "moral autonomy" and the idea of "corporate guilt". With the story of Abraham, the idea of what it means to be faithful is explored. Different types of Hebrew Law are explored. We listen to the prophetic voice and look at the messianic vision, a picture of hope. The year ends with a look at wisdom and apocalyptic literature. More detail is included in the Year One resource

## Year Two - Christian Scriptures

Christian Scriptures, the New Testament, are perhaps more familiar to Christians, as they contain the books of the bible that define what it means to be Christian. Included in Christian Scriptures are the four Gospels, the Book of Acts and the letters attributed to Paul and other disciples. Prior to examining the actual text of the Christian Scriptures, a great deal of time is spent introducing the student to the world in which Jesus lived. The concept of "Biblical Criticism" is also examined.

## Year Three - Church History

Year Three of EfM begins with the early church and traces the history of the Church up to the American Revolution. The student examines early Christian Documents, reads samplings of the writings of the early Church Fathers, and follows the opposing interpretations that result in the division between the East and the West in spite of the efforts of the Church Councils. The student is introduced to

Augustine, Medieval monasticism, mysticism and scholasticism. The climate leading to the Great Reformation is examined as well as the way in which the Reformation progressed throughout Europe, including Germany, Sweden and England. The Roman Catholic Church's response is explored. The texts continue through the 16th and 17th Centuries with a focus on the Anglican Church. The religious climate in Europe prior to the colonization of the American Colonies is studied, with Year Three ending with American Independence.

## Year Four - Theological Choices

Year Four begins where Year Three left off - with the American Revolution - and leads the student through the theology of modern times to the current time. The text is closest to the experience of the participants and therefore have the greatest impact on their ministries.

"Since God's word is something both heard and done, the theology presented in these readings is one of both reflection and action. As reflection, the readings attempt to clarify the issues facing the church and the meaning of Christian faith in a religiously pluralistic world. At the same time, they intend to elicit a response in action based on the implications of theology."

"Two questions have guided the authors of these readings: In what directions might and inquirer look to be reasonable informed about the Christian church today? And, what are the implications of this knowledge for one's life and ministry in the twenty-first century?" (*Ross Mackenzie, General Editor, 1987 Preface to Theological Choices*)

## THE SEMINAR GROUP

The seminar group is the nucleus of the Education for Ministry program. A group consists of six to eleven students and a trained mentor meeting weekly over the course of a nine-month academic year. These

meetings are usually from two-and-a-half to three hours in length.

Through study, prayer, and reflection, EfM groups move toward a new understanding of the fullness of God's kingdom. This process can be illustrated by a two-rail fence. One rail is the Christian tradition. The other is the collective experience of the group's members. The rails are linked by fence posts that represent the seminar sessions where life and study meet. The fence is grounded in the soil of regular worship, which is vital to the life of the group.

## STUDY

Students are given weekly lesson assignments to study with the help of resource guides. Students are responsible for setting their own learning goals. They spend between two and four hours in study and preparation each week. In the seminars students have an opportunity to share their insights and discoveries as well as to discuss questions that the study materials raise for them.

## REFLECTION

Through discussion and guided reflection, the seminars furnish an opportunity for students to deepen

their understanding of the reading materials. More important is the development of skills in theological reflection. The goal is that students learn to think theologically. By examining their own beliefs and their relationship to our culture and the tradition of our Christian faith, students can learn what it means to be effective ministers in the world.

In coming to terms with the notion that everything we do has the potential for manifesting the love of Christ, we discover that our ministry is at hand wherever we turn.

## WORSHIP

The seminar is supported by a life of prayer and regular worship. EfM groups are encouraged to develop a pattern of worship appropriate to their situations. Liturgical materials are furnished with the course materials.

## EFM GROUP LOCATIONS:

Episcopal Church in Parker County  
St. Christopher's Episcopal Church  
St. Luke's-in-the-Meadow  
St. Stephens  
Trinity

*To register for one of these Seminar Groups, contact the Diocese of Fort Worth's EfM Coordinator at: [mfagley@aol.com](mailto:mfagley@aol.com) or 817-637-1820.*