

The Ailbe Seminary

The Fellowship of Ailbe

Realizing the Presence, Promise, and Power of the Kingdom of God

Ladders 3.5.3 The Writing Pastor
Syllabus and Resources

T. M. Moore

2017

Ladders 3.5.3 The Writing Pastor
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The Laddership Curriculum: Introduction

*She was a marvelous ladder whereby the tribes
could reach the kingdom of the Son of Mary.*

- Broccán, *Hymn to Saint Brigit* (Irish, 7th century)

*You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard
from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

- 2 Timothy 2.1, 2

The image of Christian leaders as ladders occurs twice in the literature of the Celtic Christian period. It is a powerful way of thinking about those who are charged with seeking the Kingdom of God and leading others to seek and attain to it as well.

Dallán Forgaill was the first to use this image; late in the 6th century he employed it to describe the men trained by Colum Cille, the founder of the Iona monastic community. Under his tutelage many young men became ladders laid against the heavenly city (in Gaelic, *frí arthu ar chathír*). It's a simple but beautiful image, at once poetic and profound, and it should inspire each of us in our calling to make disciples.

Brigit is one of the three great early saints of Ireland, along with Patrick and Colum Cille. She flourished near the beginning of the sixth century and was renowned for her exemplary life of piety and compassion.

Many from the pagan tribes of Ireland found their way to the Kingdom of God through her ministrations, as she served as a ladder to the Kingdom. Consider what this requires.

First, she had to have her own life and vision – the top of the ladder – *firmly fixed in the Kingdom of Christ*. Brigit was described by a later biographer as disciplined in meditation and prayer, so much so



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that, even while driving her chariot on some mission of witness or mercy she could “practice the life of heaven on earth through meditation and prayer.”

If we would be ladders to the City of God we must have our own vision parked above the walls of the Kingdom, so that we are ever gazing within that unseen, sacred landscape.

Second, Brigit had to have the foot of her ladder *firmly set among the people* she sought to serve. She had to be among them, understanding their struggles, earthy and real and caring. Brigid maintained her own community of the followers of Christ, caring for them and instructing them continuously, and she served regularly among believers throughout her district. Moreover, like Peter, following Jesus’s instruction to push out into the deep water for a catch (Lk. 5), Brigit traveled frequently among the pagan peoples for whose sakes she ministered the grace of the Lord. She went to them, knew them, and cared for them, and she sought to meet their needs as best she could, whether by words or deeds.

We who are called to make disciples must likewise go among the people who need to know the grace of Jesus, discovering their needs and seeking ways of giving them a “leg up” toward a fuller experience of the Kingdom of God.

Finally, for Brigid and other Celtic Christian leaders to be ladders to the Kingdom, they had to *lay down their own lives for others*, setting a good example, showing the right way, creating opportunities for growth and progress in the Kingdom, and being willing to be spent for others that they might find their way through them to the grace of the Lord.

Through their teaching and other ministries, Brigit and Colum Cille offered many “rungs” whereby the people they served could rise above their mundane circumstances and lives and make steady progress toward the Kingdom of God.

Every believer is called to the task of making disciples. This calling is especially incumbent upon those who, serving as leaders in the communities of faith, are called to lead the way into the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit which abound in the Kingdom of God (Rom. 14.17, 18).

Late in the Celtic period, as the Norsemen began to savage the ancient monasteries, Celtic leaders built high towers as places of refuge against the wrath of an unbelieving age. When the enemies of God attacked, the leaders would send their flocks up the ladder, through the elevated door, and into the safety of the high tower, where they would pull up the ladder behind them, join in prayer and singing, waiting on the Lord and growing stronger together through their trials, better equipped to serve their King. The leaders would remain on the ground, securing the ladder as others climbed to safety, and then return to the chapel to sing and pray for their community. Many did not survive the savage attacks of the enemies of God.

In our day, as the enemies of the Gospel are becoming bolder, and both more subtle and more determined, the Kingdom of God remains a fortress of safety, sheltering the people of God against the ravages of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and fortifying them for revival, renewal, and awakening. But like the high tower at Glendalough, the Kingdom of God, the Holy City of our Lord, needs ladders – men and women like Brigid and Colum Cille who will shepherd the flocks of God into His Kingdom and lead them forth from it into greater strength and service in the Lord.

The Church today has many leaders, and the effect of their leadership, over the past generation, has been to position the Church squarely on the margin of society, where it is having minimum effect for the

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Kingdom of God. If more of our contemporary Church *leaders* were like those *ladders* of the Celtic Revival, we might find the Church more powerful and effective in advancing the rule of King Jesus on earth as it is in heaven.

Of course, the metaphor of the ladder as God's way into the Kingdom predates the Celtic period. Our Lord Jesus referred to Himself as the ladder seen by Jacob in his dream (Gen. 28; cf. Jn. 1.51). Jesus is the only true Ladder into the Kingdom. All our ladders – both we ourselves and our teaching – depend on Him, lean on His strength, and seek to participate with Him in His work, so that we might become His ladders to help others know the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Kingdom of God.

Our “Laddership” curriculum is committed to helping you become precisely that.

Our prayer is that you might become just such a ladder, laid against the parapets and towers of God's City, offering passage to all who seek the Kingdom with you. To that end, we offer our courses as ladders for you, in the hope that these “rungs” might strengthen your own vision, discipleship, and witness for the Lord, and prove a resource for helping you become a ladder for others against the sacred walls of the City of God.

T. M. Moore
Principal



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Introduction to The Writing Pastor

Welcome

Welcome to *The Writing Pastor*, an introductory course on writing designed to help you discover ways to make writing a consistent, integral, fruitful, and enjoyable component of your ministry.

This course has developed out of my own experience of writing and teaching writing over the past four decades. My own calling to a ministry of writing came more than 40 years ago, shortly after Susie and I had begun our ministry together. On August 10, 1972, I was meditating on the story of Christ's triumphal entry to Jerusalem, focusing on the donkey as a central, but overlooked, figure in the story. Here's what I wrote in my journal:

Probably the most outstanding character next to Jesus in this scene is the donkey, which, in a real sense, is a picture of our service to the Lord. He never once, although never ridden before, bucked or halted at the thought of Jesus riding him. He merely obeyed the Master's wishes and did his thing as best he knew how. The result of his simple availability was much glory and honor brought to the Lord. That donkey did nothing inconsistent with his nature, but he did all that he did for the Lord.

You have certain gifts and abilities which the Lord wants to use. If you make yourself available to Him and are faithful and obedient, much glory will be brought to Jesus. For example – you have a gift of writing certain things. Get going and employ it as He directs.

I had been a Christian just a few years at that time, and was eagerly seeking the Lord's direction for my life. I decided that I would only be able to discern His leading through a series of small steps of daily obedience, coupled with seeking Him in His Word and prayer. I'd always had a knack for writing, and on this day the Lord laid it on my heart to make this ability a working part of whatever He might want to do with my life. I made a covenant with the Lord on that day to seek, by every means, and as much as possible, to use the gift of writing for His Kingdom and glory in whatever ministry context He might be pleased to set me.

Now, more than forty years later, and after publishing thousands of essays, articles, reviews, radio scripts, and daily devotional writings; dozens of scholarly articles and poems; scores of workbooks and curricula; and more than three dozen books, I have come to appreciate the faithfulness of God, Who uses us as His stewards and servants, according to His pleasure and plan.

Preliminary Questionnaire

In our first tutorial, we will review the Preliminary Questionnaire provided on page 11. Be as thorough as you can in your answers. During this introductory tutorial, we will also review the course overview, format, objectives, and outcomes, as outlined in what follows.

Course overview

The materials in this course summarize what I have learned about writing for ministry, both from my experience, as well as from the insights and counsel of other writers. Over the course of our time together we will consider the following topics related to becoming a writing pastor:

- The motives for writing:** What should and should not move us to write?
- Writing and ministry:** How can writing serve as a tool for ministry?
- Forms of writing:** What kinds of writing are available to us?

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- Requirements for writing:** What must we do to incorporate writing into our ministry?
- The writing life:** How can writing become a consistent and enjoyable part of life in the Lord?

Format

This course unfolds around the following activities:

- Presentation:** Each lesson includes a brief online video, which we will review and discuss during the tutorials.
- Exercises in reading for writing:** The more you read, the better you will write. And by reading good writers, with a view to learning *about* writing, your writing will improve even more.
- Writing exercises:** For each tutorial you will be asked to submit a sample of your writing. Your Mentor will review and return this to you, and you will discuss the exercises at the tutorial.
- Writing projects:** At various points during the course you will be asked to complete a specific writing project. These are designed to increase your familiarity with various forms of writing that can be useful in ministry.
- Meditations on writing:** Each lesson includes a meditation on writing related to the theme of the lesson. We will discuss your response to the meditations, following the questions provided.
- Lesson takeaway:** For each lesson, you will be asked to summarize the most important aspect of the lesson to you, and how you are working to incorporate that lesson into your walk with and work for the Lord.

Objectives

In the Kingdom of God, we seek ever to improve our walk with and work for the Lord by growing in love for Him and our neighbors. Accordingly, the following objectives have been identified for this course:

1. Love for God:
 - 1.1 To enlarge your vision of God and to rejoice in His calling and gifts
 - 1.2 To establish and improve your writing skills for loving God and serving His purposes
2. Love for Neighbor:
 - 2.1 To help you direct your writing more specifically to the edification of God's people
 - 2.2 To improve your productivity and effectiveness as a writer, for building-up the Body of Christ and advancing His Kingdom in the world

By the end of this course you will:

1. Understand various ways writing can be used to solidify, improve, and extend the ministry to which God has called you;
2. Have begun to gather resources and develop disciplines and skills for a lifetime of writing as ministry;
3. Have identified various writing styles and forms agreeable to your calling, interests, and skills;



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4. Have developed and begun following a short-term and long-term plan to include writing in your ministry;
5. Understand how to write toward specific near- and long-term outcomes;
6. See improvement in your disciplines, skills, enjoyment, and effectiveness as a writer.

Course materials

All the materials required for this course are included in this syllabus, and in the brief online videos introducing each lesson. Additional resources will be cited from time to time, which you may secure through your preferred bookseller.

Getting started

Our goal is not simply to help you decide *whether* God wants you to use writing as part of your ministry in His Name, or merely to *point you in some directions* such a calling might take. I'm assuming you wouldn't be here if you weren't already thinking about and perhaps desiring to engage in writing as part of your calling from the Lord. Rather, I hope to provide you with an *overall framework* for understanding how much a consistent ministry of writing can add to your ministry, together with the *foundational disciplines* essential for developing and maintaining a consistent and fruitful ministry of writing in your walk with and work for the Lord.

During our time together, you will begin to take up certain *disciplines* and *practices* that will allow you to bring your desire to write to consistent expression. This, in turn, will help you to discern the best *forms* and *uses* of writing for your calling in the Lord. We'll be considering a wide variety of ways to use writing to enhance your ministry, and you'll be given the opportunity to submit numerous examples of your writing for review and assessment.

We'll work not only on the *forms* of writing for ministry but also on *how to become a better writer* – to improve your use of language, understand the needs of readers, work on identifying and developing a writing style, and write with a view to bringing real transformation into their lives.

Our course consists of 10-14 sessions interspersed with assignments designed to help you carve out a permanent niche for writing in your busy ministry.

To begin our course, complete the questionnaire that follows. Be prepared to discuss this questionnaire with your Mentor at the introductory tutorial.

Following the introductory tutorial, proceed to Lesson 1. Read through the entire lesson, then complete the work as indicated, in the order it appears in the lesson outline.

Now go, write it before them on a tablet,

And note it on a scroll,

That it may be for time to come,

Forever and ever...

- Isaiah 30.8

The Writing Pastor Preliminary Questionnaire

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Your candid answers to the following questions will help us better understand your background, motives, and aspirations for this course. We will review these together during the first tutorial.

1. Why do you want to incorporate writing into your work of ministry? What would you say are the primary driving forces in your wanting to write?
2. What kinds of things do you want to write? That is, what sorts of writing – essays, poetry, training materials, blogs, books – are you thinking about?
3. Do you have any particular subjects that you hope to focus on in your writing?
4. What sorts of readers do you have in mind (age group, professional, casual, other)?
5. What do you hope to accomplish through your writing? How will you be able to determine, over time, that your writing is contributing to your ministry?
6. What do you think will be required of you to have writing as a consistent and effective part of your ministry?
7. What kind of investment, and what sacrifices, are you prepared to make to have an effective writing component in your ministry?
8. Can you identify two writers who have influenced your walk with the Lord? How have they affected you?
9. What experience in using writing as part of your ministry have you had to this point? How would you assess the effectiveness or importance of those efforts to your ministry?
10. Complete the following: “I’ll know that this course has been helpful to me when...”

Lesson 1: Motives for Writing

Write for the Glory of God

Overview and Objective

Why would we want to take up writing as part of our ministry? Several reasons might come to mind, but not all of them will be the kind of motive for writing in ministry that might realize God’s blessing.



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During this session, we will consider the motives for writing that we might reasonably expect the Lord to approve as we take up the work of writing as part of our ministry in His Kingdom.

Assignments

1. View Presentation 1 online. Be prepared to discuss the questions in the Questions for Reflection or Discussion section at the end of the Presentation outline.
2. Read the *Writing Meditation*, and be prepared to discuss the questions in the *Reflect* section at the end.
3. Summarize what was most important for you from this lesson in the *Lesson Takeaway* on p. 17.
4. Read the Lesson Preparation Assignments for Lesson 2.

Presentation 1

View Presentation 1 for this course. Use the outline below to follow along. Be prepared to discuss the questions included at the end of the outline.

Introduction

It is important, in anything we do, but especially in what we purpose to do in the service of the Lord, that we should be clear about *the motives* that are moving us to act. Why do we want to do this? And are our motives of the sort that we might reasonably expect God to honor?

- I. Improper motives for writing in ministry
 - A. To _____ others, 1 Thessalonians 2.4
 - B. Merely to _____ our passions or _____ our views, 1 Corinthians 14.26
 - C. As a way to make _____, Matthew 6.24; Philippians 3.18, 19
 - D. As a substitute for _____, Matthew 28.18-20
- II. Proper motives for writing in ministry

“Other pleasures fail us, or wound us while they charm; but the pen we take up with rejoicing and lay down with satisfaction, for it has the power to advantage not only is lord and master, but many others as well, even though they be far away – sometimes, indeed, even though they be not born for thousands of years to come.” Petrarch

- A. To know the _____ of writing in ministry, 1 John 1.4

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B. To gain the _____ of writing in ministry, 1 Timothy 3.14, 15

1. To the _____:

2. To _____:

C. To _____ one's ministry, Colossians 4.16

D. To bring _____ to God, 1 Corinthians 10.31

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. Writing can enhance our practice of spiritual disciplines. Can you think of any ways this might be so?



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2. As you take up writing as an aspect of your ministry, what can you do to help ensure that your motives are what they should be?

Writing Meditation

For Goodness' Sake, Write!

One of my favorite prayers in all of Scripture is found in Psalm 27.13, 14, and it has a direct bearing on the work of writing:

I would have lost heart, unless I had believed
That I would see the goodness of the LORD
In the land of the living.
Wait on the LORD;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the LORD!

I'll make four observations about this excerpt from David's prayer.

Writing is hard work

First, writing is hard work, harder than preaching, harder than counseling, harder than moderating a committee meeting or putting together a budget. All these important aspects of a minister's work come with some immediate feedback. It's not always the *best* feedback, but at least we get some sense of whether and to what extent that particular labor in the Lord was not in vain.

One reason writing is harder than these because the feedback, for most of us who write as part of our ministry, is almost never immediate, and very often, nonexistent. Given how much time and thought goes into writing something, the paucity of encouraging feedback can be discouraging. One might even despair of ever realizing *any* meaningful feedback, or at least, feedback suggesting that his purpose in writing has been achieved.

This is where we need to focus on the goodness of the Lord, and to craft our writing toward *specific outcomes* which express that goodness. The pleasure and satisfaction to be gained from writing can be realized *apart* from any feedback if we know in our own souls that we have invested this effort with all our skills and strength toward specific good outcomes in our readers. We won't mind the hard work of writing so much if we experience the pleasure of knowing that we've *crafted* something good, *aimed* at good outcomes, and *communicated* by as many viable means as possible.

We can see the goodness of Lord in the land of the living, when this purpose guides our writing.

Savor the discipline of waiting

David counsels us to wait on the Lord as an antidote or suppressant for despair. This is especially good advice for writers, because we understand that the Lord's timing and our timing do not necessarily

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coincide. It may take some time for something we write to finally accomplish some good result, and if we will wait on the Lord, trusting Him in prayer to use our work for His purposes, we will find peace and grow in patience thereby.

Back in the mid-80s I was working on a church staff in Pennsylvania, and part of my responsibilities included helping to plan and conduct an annual preaching seminar. Pastors came to our church from around the country to learn preaching from well-known and widely-respected expositors.

One of the activities of the seminar was to learn how to analyze a sermon, and then to use that analysis to reflect on and, hopefully, improve their own preaching. To help in this part of the workshop, I developed an assessment tool which the pastors used during every preaching session, then gathered in groups to discuss what they'd learned from the sermon about preaching.

In the spring of 2014, I received a phone call from a pastor in Atlanta, asking if I was the T. M. Moore who had developed *The Expositor's Grid* assessment tool for improving preaching. I confirmed that I was. He then proceeded to ask if I had any additional copies of the tool, or, if not, would I mind if he reproduced it for his use in training teachers and preachers. Then he confessed that, in fact, he'd been using the tool for over 20 years, but had never thought to ask my permission, and so finally, chagrined, he tracked me down. I of course granted him permission, and, after we hung up, I rejoiced in the Lord for letting me see this bit of goodness from something I'd written 20 years earlier.

I continue to pray for the Lord to use the things I write, waiting on Him day by day to bring forth His good-ness in the land of the living.

Renew your heart for writing

Three times in these two verses, David refers to his heart: “*I would have lost heart*” (this is implied by what follows), “be of good *courage*” (*cour* being French for “heart”), and “He shall strengthen your heart.” Obviously, having his heart right in the Lord was important for David's calling as ruler of his people. It's important for those who write as well.

Writing should not be burdensome. Hard, to be sure, but not burdensome. We ought not dread sitting down to write, or wish we could find something else to do. For those who are *called* to write, for whom writing for ministry is just what we've been created to do, writing is a true pleasure and a source of much satisfaction.

But we need to keep our heart right. We must not allow ourselves to fall into despair about our writing, or to allow any other sins of the heart to get in the way of this work. Rather, we commit our heart – our hopes, desires, longings, and other affections – to the Lord for this business, asking Him to strengthen our heart and embolden us in the work of writing.

As in all other areas of life, we need to guard our heart when it comes to the work of writing. Out of the heart flow the issues of life (Prov. 4.23), and we want to make sure our heart is beating with the heart of God as we take up this aspect of our ministry.

Bathe your writing in prayer



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The more we pray about our writing, the more our writing will become an integral part of our relationship with the Lord, and will touch base with everything else we review in our times of prayer.

Pray before you write. Pray as you're writing. Pray as you edit and revise. Pray as often during the day as the Lord brings some writing project to mind. Pray as you submit or publish something you have written. Pray for the people who will read it. Pray for the long-term, far-reaching possibilities of what you have written. Pray for the Lord to use your writing as a way of firming up and enlarging your commitment to and relationship with Him.

Above all, as you continue working on your writing, pray for the vision and faithfulness of John Chapman.

John Chapman could see a day when the land would be full of good apple trees, like the ones he enjoyed in the orchards of Mr. Crawford, where he worked. He believed people should be able to share in this goodness, and so he set out across Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana with his bag of seeds in hand.

Johnny Appleseed, as he has come to be known, planted his seeds in groups, and fenced them in to protect the young trees against animals. He died in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, in 1845, and his legacy of faithfulness and fruitfulness is celebrated in a wide variety of ways to this day.

Pray for a vision like Johnny Appleseed's, that your "seeds" of writing, sown here and there, arranged in groups of this or that, might take root, grow, and bear fruit in many souls, bringing the goodness of the Lord to light in the land of the living, through the varied personalities, gifts, and ministries of those who bite into and are nourished by your good work.

Reflect

1. What would be some examples of the goodness of the Lord you might like to encourage through your writing?
2. Scottish missionary Eric Liddel remarked on the pleasure he felt in doing the Lord's work as a runner. Do you think it's possible to enter the Lord's pleasure while doing the work of writing? How might that happen?
3. Why is it important that we have a *heart for writing* if we intend to make this work part of our ministry?
4. Are you beginning to develop a vision for your writing? What components of that vision are already in place for you?
5. What are the greatest obstacles presently standing in the way of your beginning to include writing in your work of ministry? How are you planning to overcome these?

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First Principle for The Writing Pastor

Writing can be an important part of your ministry if you pursue it with the right motives and to the right ends.

Lesson Takeaway

Summarize in writing the most important idea or lesson you have gained from Lesson 1, and explain how you are beginning to incorporate that lesson in your daily walk with and work for the Lord.

Lesson 2: Preparation Assignments

Prepare for Lesson 2 by completing the following assignments. Your Mentor will preview these with you at the Lesson 1 tutorial.

Writing discipline: Journaling

Begin keeping a journal in conjunction with your daily time reading and meditating on God's Word. Keeping a journal can:

1. Enhance your meditation in God's Word;
2. Develop your use of the analogy of Scripture;



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3. Provide an outlet to work on writing skills;
4. Develop a reservoir of ideas and insights for future use in writing for ministry.

Some guidelines:

1. Don't expect to journal every day. Two or three times a week to begin with should be enough. You can grow your journaling from there.
2. Keep your notes brief – no more than 250-300 words. Date all your notes.
3. Develop a format for your journaling.
4. Use a page size that will allow you to journal one note per page with ring-bound paper (if you journal by hand). This will make for more efficient filing.
5. File your journal notes by book, chapter, and verse. Create an index to track journal themes.
6. Establish a way to review your journal notes from time to time.

Writing assignment

Prior to the second session, submit a sample of your journaling to your instructor for review. Send it to your instructor via email as a Word document, so that he can comment on your writing.

Reading for writing

You cannot become a good writer without reading widely and with an eye to what makes for good writing. For this exercise, focus on some aspect of your regular reading, other than Scripture. We're going to analyze something that you're reading to try and understand whether and how this writing works.

Choose a selection of no more than 1,000 words to focus on for this exercise. As you read, pay attention to the following. Make some notes in the space below:

- The writer's purpose: Clear? Relevant? Worthwhile?

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- The writer's use of language: Clear? Appealing? Easy to understand?
- The writer's logic: Clear? Sensible? Compelling?
- The writer's contribution to you:

For each of the four areas indicated above, render an assessment, 1 to 10 (10 is the best rating) of your reading. Be prepared to discuss this exercise at the beginning of the next class session.

Presentation 2

Watch the video for Lesson 2 at the resource page online. Use the outline for Lesson 2 to follow along.

Lesson 2: Writing and Ministry

Writing in Ministry and as Ministry

Overview and Objective

Writing can become an important tool in our ministry kit, but only as we understand how to use it to deepen and extend our ministry. During this session, we will:

- Review your work in preparation for Lesson 2 (see pp. 17, 18)
- Consider some advice to writing pastors from Basil the Great (ca. 330-379 AD);



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- Discuss some attitudes toward writing that can keep us from pursuing this aspect of our calling;
- Look at ways that writing can become an integral part of our ministry.

We begin by discussing the Preparation Assignments for this session. Use the space that follows to make any notes or jot down your thoughts, questions, or ideas:

Assignments

1. Watch **Presentation 2** online (the link is provided on page 8). Be prepared to discuss the Questions for Reflection and Discussion at the end of the presentation outline.
2. Make sure you have completed all the preparation assignments for this lesson, including that which must be sent to the Mentor (page 18).
3. Read the *Writing Meditation*, and be prepared to discuss the questions in the *Reflect* section at the end.
4. Summarize what was most important for you from this lesson in the *Lesson Takeaway* on p. 25.
5. Read the Lesson Preparation Assignments for Lesson 3.

Presentation Outline

Introduction

Church history is replete with excellent examples of writing pastors, and we shall be considering a few of these for what we may learn from them about this aspect of the work of ministry.

We look first at Basil of Caesarea (ca. 330-379 AD), one of the “Cappadocian Fathers” and the greatest theologian of the early Eastern Church.

Let’s see what we can mine from this quotation from Basil to guide our work of writing:

So long then as the word of truth is on our side, never be in any wise distressed at the calumny of a lie...let sound reason do battle, invoking the championship and succour of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Teacher of true religion, for whom to suffer is sweet, and ‘to die is gain.’”

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Letter xvii, to Macarius and John

Let us note the following:

1. Writing, like all our lives, must be grounded in _____.
2. As we write we must be conscious of the _____.
3. Against all threats and opposition, we must live and write with _____.
4. We must make sure that our writing is crafted with _____.
5. We must never lose sight of _____ and His victory and presence as we write.
6. We must not hold back in our lives or writing for fear of _____.
7. We must _____ our _____ in whatever we write.

III. Writing and Ministry: Getting past excuses

There are at least three excuses that might keep us from pursuing this aspect of our calling, and one very good reason why we must.

A. Excuses for not writing as part of our ministry:

1. “Writing is _____!”
2. “Writing is _____!”
3. “Writing is _____!”

B. There is one very good reason why we should press on to develop this aspect of our ministry:

Writing can be _____! 1 Corinthians 10.31



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IV. Writing and Ministry: Seeing writing in a proper light

We will be more likely to pursue writing as an aspect of our ministry when we understand it as consistent with and contributing to the work of ministry as a whole.

A. Ministry: Mark 10.42-45

Ministry is comprised of four critical components:

1. Specific, intentional _____
2. Motivated by _____ and _____
3. To convey the _____ and _____ of Christ
4. Unto _____ for God's glory

B. Can writing be a form of ministry?

1. Yes, when we pursue it according to a _____
2. Yes, when it flows from our _____ through _____

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3. Yes, when it is crafted with _____ and _____
4. Yes, when it focuses on achieving _____

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Are you beginning to see some ways that writing can be fruitfully used in your ministry? Explain.
2. What does writing need to accomplish to qualify as a valid form of ministry?

Writing Meditation

Writing for Ministry

“Literature can lead to activism and can feed into policy making.” So argues Robert MacFarlane in an article in the 2 September 2015 edition of *New Statesman* (“[Why We Need Nature Writing](#)”).

Mr. MacFarlane provides an overview of the recent proliferation of writing about nature, and the ways this has become tied to ethics, activism, and public policy. While some people may discount the importance of writing about nature, Mr. MacFarlane insists that *the continuous sowing* of this kind of writing into the public square affects the *imaginations* of people and, very often, their *desires* and *priorities*: “Literature has the ability to change us for good, in both senses of the phrase.”

He explains that writing can make us more sensitive to our surroundings (“place”) and to the obligations and responsibilities that entails: “Powerful writing can revise our ethical relations with the natural world, shaping our place consciousness and place conscience.” Absolutely correct. This is true about nature writing in all its forms, including poetry and fiction. It can also be true about writing for ministry, which intends to inform, equip, and motivate readers to live out their Kingdom citizenship in their own [Personal Mission Fields](#).



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A sense of place

Our Personal Mission Field indicates that collection of cultural spaces, together with the people in them, which make up what Paul referred to as a sphere of influence. (2 Cor. 10.13-18) As citizens and ambassadors of a Kingdom not of this world, we bring a particular *presence* and *power* into every place we go, and into the lives of the people we meet there. The more *conscious* we are of our Personal Mission Field, the more likely we will be to seek the Lord for grace to help us be obedient to Him at every opportunity.

The Apostle Peter wrote to the churches in northern Asia Minor to help them remember and bring to mind their callings and duties as followers of Christ: “For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.” (2 Pet. 1.12-15) He understood the value of writing to help the followers of Christ be *ever mindful* about their mission, and *ever ready to serve* the Lord as the opportunity allows.

The more *conscious* believers are of being called to follow Jesus, and to serve Him in particular *places* and with particular *people*, the greater will be the likelihood of their actually taking the next steps of faith to live as witnesses for the Lord, serving others with His grace and truth at every opportunity. Just as nature writing can help people be more mindful concerning the environment in which they exist, so various kinds of writing can serve to glorify God by helping to develop “mission-field-mindedness” in those we are called to serve.

We can use a wide variety of writing resources to help people identify and remain mindful of their callings to follow and serve Christ in the various “as-you-are-goings” of their lives. The more consistent we are, in all aspects of our ministry, in focusing people on their Personal Mission Fields, the more this idea will become “sticky” in them, and they will be increasingly mindful of ministry opportunities cropping up around them.

A conscience to serve

Writing that focuses on the *place* of people’s calling can also affect the *priorities* and *values* which they express within their Personal Mission Field. It’s one thing to be able to *identify* that place where the Lord has sent us as His witnesses – the cultural arenas and people God intends us to affect with His grace and truth. It’s quite another thing for us to be *so convinced* of our calling there that we begin to *make plans*, *get the equipping we need*, and take the *next steps* appropriate for serving Christ at every opportunity.

Writing can be used to reinforce preaching and teaching to help people *embrace* their callings, *prepare* for them, and *do the work of ministry* in their Personal Mission Fields. The more we reinforce and enlarge this idea, and provide specific instructions for how to carry out the responsibilities of their calling, the more the people of God will be reminded of, established in, and equipped with the truth of God, so that they are ready and eager to serve as agents of His grace to the people around them.

Writing that focuses on the work of ministry can, indeed, lead to the kind of “activism” that finds those we serve by our writing, living and serving more consistently as Kingdom citizens and ambassadors. The more we can reinforce our preaching and teaching with timely and effective writing, sowing words of instruction and encouragement into the minds, hearts, and consciences of readers, the more we may expect to see their *imaginations* become infused with a consciousness of mission, and their lives bending

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more *conscientiously* to the work of ministry that builds up the Body of Christ and brings glory and honor to God. (Eph. 4.11-16; 1 Cor. 10.31).

Reflect

1. Can you think of an example of something you've read which created in you more a conscious and continuous awareness of your calling as a follower of Christ?
2. How about a piece of writing that *convicted* you in your conscience to be more diligent in a particular area of your calling?
3. What do we mean by writing that is "sticky"? What makes a piece of writing "sticky" for you?
4. What are some actions which, if you observed them in the people you served, would indicate to you that they were demonstrating faithful "place consciousness and place conscience"? Can you think of a form of writing that might help to keep them mindful of their callings?
5. Have you identified your own [Personal Mission Field](#)? Do you think that doing so might help you be more mindful of the Personal Mission Fields of those you are called to serve? Why or why not?



Second Principle for The Writing Pastor

Writing can be an important part of your ministry when you allow the definition and purposes of ministry to define the work you do as a writing pastor.

Lesson Takeaway

Summarize in writing the most important idea or lesson you have gained from Lesson 2, and explain how you are beginning to incorporate that lesson in your daily walk with and work for the Lord.



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Lesson 3: Preparation Assignments

Writing discipline: Journaling

Continue keeping a journal as part of your weekly time with the Lord. Take your journaling seriously. Keep in mind that what you journal can not only help you to internalize the Word of God more effectively, but can also enhance your use of the analogy of Scripture; develop a reservoir of ideas for future preaching, teaching, and writing; and enable you to practice your skills and set in place the discipline you will need to become a writing pastor.

Writing assignment

Send your instructor *two samples* of your devotional writing via email as a Word document.

Reading for writing

Basil the Great was the leading theologian of his day, focusing especially on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. His book on the Spirit was definitive for the Church in His day, showing the way through the treacherous waters of ignorance and misunderstanding to a clear and compelling view of the Spirit as a member of the Trinity.

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The excerpts that follow are from the opening, the peroration, and the conclusion of Basil's book on the Holy Spirit. As you read these, reflect on the matters discussed in this session and ask yourself: In what ways does this writing qualify as "ministry"? Make some notes to discuss at our next session:

On the Holy Spirit

Your desire for information, my right well-beloved and most deeply respected Amphilochius, I highly commend, and not less your industrious energy. I have been exceedingly delighted at the care and watchfulness shewn in the expression of your opinion that of all the terms concerning God in every mode of speech, not one ought to be left without exact investigation. You have turned to good account your reading of the exhortation of the Lord, "Every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth," and by your diligence in asking might, I ween, stir even the most reluctant to give you a share of what they possess. And this in you yet further moves my admiration, that you do not, according to the manners of the most part of the men of our time, propose your questions by way of mere test, but with the honest desire to arrive at the actual truth. There is no lack in these days of captious listeners and questioners; but to find a character desirous of information, and seeking the truth as a remedy for ignorance, is very difficult. Just as in the hunter's snare, or in the soldier's ambush, the trick is generally ingeniously concealed, so it is with the inquiries of the majority of the questioners who advance arguments, not so much with the view of getting any good out of them, as in order that, in the event of their failing to elicit answers which chime in with their own desires, they may seem to have fair ground for controversy...Lately when praying with the people, and using the full doxology to God the Father in both forms, at one time, "*with the Son together with the Holy Ghost,*" and at another, "*through the Son in the Holy Ghost,*" I was attacked by some of those present on the ground that I was introducing novel and at the same time mutually contradictory terms. You, however, chiefly with the view of benefiting them, or, if they are wholly incurable, for the security of such as may fall in with them, have expressed the opinion that some clear instruction ought to be published concerning the force underlying the syllables employed. I will therefore write as concisely as possible, in the endeavour to lay down some admitted principle for the discussion....

We are compelled to advance in our conceptions to the highest, and to think of an intelligent essence, in power infinite, in magnitude unlimited, unmeasured by times or ages, generous of His good gifts, to whom turn all things needing sanctification, after whom reach all things that live in virtue, as being watered by His inspiration and helped on toward their natural and proper end; perfecting all other things, but Himself in nothing lacking; living not as needing restoration, but as Supplier of life; not growing by additions, but straightway full, self-established, omnipresent, origin of sanctification, light perceptible to the mind, supplying, as it were, through Himself, illumination to every faculty in the search of truth; by nature unapproachable, apprehended by reason of goodness, filling all things with His power, but communicated only to the worthy; not shared in one measure, but distributing His energy, according to "the proportion of faith;" in essence simple, in powers various, wholly present in each and being wholly everywhere; impassively divided, shared without loss of ceasing to be entire, after the likeness of the sunbeam, whose kindly light falls on him who enjoys it as though it shone for him along, yet illumines land



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and sea and mingles with the air. So, too, is the Spirit to everyone who receives Him, as though given to him alone, and yet He sends forth grace sufficient and full for all mankind, and is enjoyed by all who share Him, according to the capacity, not of His power, but of their nature...

Wherefore we too are undismayed at the cloud of our enemies, and, resting our hope on the aid of the Spirit, have, with all boldness, proclaimed the truth. Had I not done so, it would truly have been terrible that the blasphemers of the Spirit should so easily be emboldened in their attack upon true religion, and that we, with so mighty an ally and supporter at our side, should shrink from the service of that doctrine, which by the tradition of the Fathers has been preserved by an unbroken sequence of memory to our own day. A further powerful incentive to my undertaking was the warm fervour of your "love unfeigned," and the seriousness and taciturnity of your disposition; a guarantee that you would not publish what I was about to say to all the world – not because it would not be worth making known, but to avoid casting pearls before swine. My task is now done.

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Lesson 3: Writing and Ministry

Focus on Outcomes (1)

Overview and Objective

This is the first of three sessions on writing for outcomes. In this session we will consider both long-range and short-term outcomes, and focus specifically on writing to encourage readers to grow in love for God. During this lesson we will:

- Review your work in preparation for Lesson 3 (see pp. 23-25)
- Consider some advice to writing pastors from Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD);
- Discuss the two “horizons” of writing outcomes (presentation 3);
- Consider more specifically what is involved in writing to promote love for God.

We begin by discussing the Preparation Assignments for this session. Use the space that follows to make any notes or jot down your thoughts, questions, or ideas:

Assignments

1. Watch **Presentation 3** online (the link is provided on page 8). Be prepared to discuss the Questions for Reflection and Discussion at the end of the presentation outline.
2. Make sure you have completed all the preparation assignments for this lesson, including that which must be sent to the Mentor (pages 23-25).
3. Read the *Writing Meditation*, and be prepared to discuss the questions in the *Reflect* section at the end.
4. Summarize what was most important for you from this lesson in the *Lesson Takeaway* on p. 31.
5. Read the Lesson Preparation Assignments for Lesson 4.



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Presentation Outline

Introduction

One of the greatest writing pastors of Church history is Augustine, who became the Bishop of Hippo in North Africa. He was arguably the greatest of the Church Fathers, and we have much to learn from his work as a writing pastor.

Here are the opening words of *City of God*:

That most glorious society and celestial city of God's faithful...have I undertaken to defend in this work...The work is great and difficult, but God is our helper. For I know well what strong arguments are required to make the proud know the virtue of humility...For the King, the builder of this city, whereof we are now to discourse, hath revealed a maxim of the divine law to His people: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

City of God I.i

Let's note the following:

1. A writing pastor must always seek to _____ the _____.
2. We must not be daunted by the _____ or _____ of the task.
3. In all our writing we must look to _____ for help.
4. We must learn the art of employing strong _____ in our writing.
5. We must practice _____ in all our efforts.

V. Writing and Ministry: Focus on Outcomes

In writing as part of the work of ministry, we must always keep in mind the particular outcomes we're trying to achieve.

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A. Two _____

1. Long-term outcomes: Acts 17.6

The world turned “rightside-up” for Jesus Christ!

a. Sanctification

b. Church growth

c. Moral reform

d. Cultural transformation

e. Exposing the Lie

f. Defending the Faith

2. Near-term outcomes: 1 Timothy 1.5

a. Love for _____

b. Love for _____

B. Love for God, Matthew 22.37, 38

We love God when we love...



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1. His _____, Psalm 16.11
2. His _____, Psalm 119.97
3. His _____, Psalm 119.81
4. His _____, John 3.16
5. His _____, Psalm 40.8
6. His _____, 2 Timothy 4.8
7. His _____ to the generations, Psalm 45.17
8. Love God and _____ Him as well

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What are some of the differences between the “long-term” and “near-term” horizons of ministry?

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2. Why should all our ministry be directed at improving love for God in those we serve?

Writing Meditation

Writing with Outcomes in Mind

I can't stress enough the importance of writing with specific outcomes in mind. Writing for outcomes gives vision, energy, and integrity to our writing, and makes it possible that our readers will gain more specific and lasting advantages (Petrarch) from reading us.

It's not enough just to get our thoughts on paper in as clear, concise, and interesting a manner as possible. All that matters of course. But the purpose of writing *for ministry* is not accomplished merely in the writing. We want to see something *happen* in those who read what we write. We want to see lives changed, churches impacted, even the world disturbed or blessed in some way.

Our writing will be more effective and fruitful if we approach each writing task with specific outcomes in mind. We will write better, and be clearer and more pointed in our writing. And those who *read* what we have written will be clearer about what should happen from reading our work.

A casual reading of John's first epistle should convince us, both that we should write for specific outcomes, and that we should make those outcomes clear to those who read what we have written. Let's have a closer look.

Writing for outcomes: 1 John

In his first epistle John is motivated by the prospect of joy – for his readers and himself – to take up his pen and prepare this brief missive (1.4, following the variant reading). His guiding outcome, therefore, is to enhance the joy of salvation in himself and his readers.



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But *getting to that joy* is a matter of *accomplishing certain other outcomes*. John's joy, and that of his readers, will be made more complete as he pursues and they achieve certain identifiable outcomes. Here's a brief list of what John hoped to see happen in us from reading his first epistle:

2.1 – That we should *turn from sin*

2.7, 8 – That we might be *reminded* of what we have learned

2.12-14 – That we might see the life of faith as a life *in process*, and that we might *press on* in our faith

2.21 – That our foundation of truth might be enlarged, both as to what we should believe and how we should live

2.26 – That we should *exercise discernment* and not be susceptible to being deceived about the truth

5.13 – That we might be *sure of our salvation* and *encouraged in faith*

Let's see if we can sort these outcomes a little more specifically.

Types of outcomes First, John had certain *cognitive outcomes* in mind as he wrote. He intended to affect the thinking and worldview of his readers by *reminding* them of previous instruction, seeking to *build on their store of truth*, and exercising their *ability to discern* truth from error. These are all cognitive or intellectual tasks. John aimed his first epistle directly at *what* and *how* we think, because he knew that we must be always seeking to grow in the mind of Christ, which is our privileged possession as His people (1 Cor. 2.16).

Second, John also focused on certain *affective outcomes*. He wrote to the *hearts* of his readers, to ground their affections in the truth, so that they might *experience assurance of salvation* and *know the joy and encouragement* that come from being children of God. The heart is the heart of the matter in the life of faith. Writers must understand affections, how they work together with thought and values to express faith in words and deeds, and what we may do to *strengthen* right affections and *focus* them properly.

Finally, John addressed certain specific *actions*, which come down to loving God and loving one another (1 Jn. 4). If we love God we will *turn from sin* and *work to make progress* in our relationship with Him. We must not be distracted by events or situations from our calling to follow Christ as His disciples, walking the path of obedience and love which He walked (1 Jn. 2.1-6). Others may fall away from the faith, but we must stay firm, our hearts fully resolved, our minds grounded in truth, and our daily lives increasing in love for God and the brethren.

Write for results

John clearly could see how his readers should respond to his letter. Undoubtedly, they could see it as well. Writing with specific outcomes in mind helps us to create a vision for learning, growing, and more effectively following the Lord – both in ourselves and in our readers. It keeps our writing from being dry and abstract, since it focuses on *images* people can see with their minds, *affections* they can feel in their hearts, and *actions* they can envision in their lives.

Write for outcomes whenever you write. Plan the outcomes you seek. Spell them out clearly to yourself, then sprinkle them throughout your writing so that your readers receive what you write and make clear

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decisions concerning how they ought to respond. Your joy in writing, and theirs in *reading* what you write, will be greatly enhanced by your doing so.

Reflect

1. Can you think of a piece of writing that effected some specific change of behavior in your life? How did it do that? What changed in you from reading this piece?
2. What kind of outcomes would you especially like to see happen in others because of your writing?
3. Read quickly through the book of Jude. Does he seem to have had outcomes in mind? Which?
4. What kinds of outcomes do you associate with loving God? What does loving God “look like” in those who love Him? Where do you hope to increase in love for God?
5. What outcomes do you think I’m trying to nurture in you as you read through this meditation?



Third Principle for The Writing Pastor

We are writing as a work of ministry when we write to nurture love for God in our readers.

Lesson Takeaway

Summarize in writing the most important idea or lesson you have gained from Lesson 3, and explain how you are beginning to incorporate that lesson in your daily walk with and work for the Lord.



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Lesson 4: Preparation Assignments

Writing discipline: Journaling

Continue writing in your weekly journal. Submit one entry for review.

Writing assignment

From the selections you have entered in your journal thus far, chose one to develop as an exercise in **writing to nurture love for God** in your readers. Follow these instructions as you write:

- Choose one of the outcomes expressive of love for God that we discussed in Session 3 (you might like to review the Loving God Taxonomy which is included with this syllabus). Let the theme of your selection guide you in determining which of these outcomes should be the focus of your piece.
- Determine how you might use such a piece. Outlets might include a letter to a friend or to the congregation at large, entry on the church website, a brochure to be placed on the information table at your church, and so forth. Mention **at the beginning** of your exercise what specific use you intend your piece to fulfill.
- Write a piece of 300-500 words, based on your journal selection, toward the particular outcome you have selected, and for the use you intend.
- Submit this exercise to your instructor as a Word doc for his review.

Reading for writing

It's important to remember that careful reading will help to make you a better writer. You can't go wrong reading Augustine. All his writings, even the most theological of them, were from the pen of a pastor. We have much to learn from him.

Here are three excerpts from his *On Christian Doctrine*, the first great hermeneutical handbook of the Christian Church. In Book I, he writes about the need to preach and teach – and, thus, presumably, to write – with a view to encouraging love for God and neighbor. As you read these selections, reflect on the matters discussed in Session 3 and ask yourself: What can I learn from Augustine about writing to encourage love for God and neighbor? Make some notes to discuss at our next session:

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On Christian Doctrine: Book One

For he is the best man who turns his whole life toward the immutable life and adheres to it with all his affection. But if he loves himself on his own account he does not turn himself toward God, but, being turned toward himself, he does not care for anything immutable. Therefore his enjoyment of himself is imperfect, for he is better when he adheres to and is bound completely to the immutable good than when he lapses away from it, even toward himself. If, therefore, you should love yourself not on your own account but on account of Him who is most justly the object of your love, no other man should feel angry with you if you love him on account of God. This is the divinely instituted rule of love: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” He said, and “Thou shalt love God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.” Thus all your thoughts and all your life and all your understanding should be turned toward Him from whom you receive these powers. For when He said, “With thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind,” He did not leave any party of life which should be free and find itself room to desire the enjoyment of something else. But whatever else appeals to the mind as being lovable should be directed into that channel into which the whole current of love flows. Whoever, therefore, justly loves his neighbor should so act toward him that he also loves God with his whole heart, with his whole soul, and with his whole mind. Thus, loving his neighbor as himself, he refers the love of both to that love of God which suffers no stream to be led away from it by which it might be diminished...

Whoever, therefore, thinks that he understands the divine Scriptures or any part of them so that it does not build the double love of God and of our neighbor does not understand it at all. Whoever finds a lesson there useful to the building of charity, even though he has not said what the author may be shown to have intended in that place, has not been deceived, nor is he lying in any way...But anyone who understands in the Scriptures something other than that intended by them is deceived, although they do not lie. However, as I began to explain, if he is deceived in an interpretation which builds up charity, which is the end of the commandments, he is deceived in the same way as a man who leaves a road by mistake but passes through a field to the same place toward which the road itself leads. But he is to be corrected and shown that it is more useful not to leave the road, lest the habit of deviating force him to a crossroad or a perverse way...

Therefore, when anyone knows the end of the commandments to be charity “from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith,” and has related all of his understanding of the Divine Scriptures to these three, he may approach the treatments of these books with security. For when he says “charity” he adds “from a pure heart,” so that nothing else would be loved except that which should be loved. And he joins with this “a good conscience” for the sake of hope, for he in whom there is the smallest taint of bad conscience despairs of attaining that which he believes in and loves. Third, he says “an unfeigned faith.” If our faith involves no lie, then we do not love that which is not to be loved, and living justly, we hope for that which will in no way deceive our hope.

Lesson 4: Writing and Ministry

Focus on Outcomes (2)



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Overview and Objective

This is the second of three sessions on writing for outcomes. In this session, we will think about outcomes that can help our readers grow in love for their neighbors. During this lesson we will:

- Review your work in preparation for this lesson;
- Consider some advice for writing pastors from Gregory the Great (ca. 540-604 AD);
- Review our thinking about writing to improve love for God;
- Consider what is involved in writing to promote love for neighbors;
- Consider a way of focusing on *inward* and *outward* outcomes for writing

We begin by discussing the Preparation Assignments for this session. Use the space that follows to make any notes or jot down your thoughts, questions, or ideas:

Assignments

1. Watch **Presentation 4** online (the link is provided on page 8). Be prepared to discuss the Questions for Reflection and Discussion at the end of the presentation outline.
2. Make sure you have completed all the preparation assignments for this lesson, including that which must be sent to the Mentor (pages 32, 33).
3. Read the *Writing Meditation*, and be prepared to discuss the questions in the *Reflect* section at the end.
4. Summarize what was most important for you from this lesson in the *Lesson Takeaway* on p. 31.
5. Read the Lesson Preparation Assignments for Lesson 5.

During this, the second of three sessions on writing outcomes, we will:

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- Review your work in preparation for this lesson;
- Consider some advice for writing pastors from Gregory the Great (ca. 540-604 AD);
- Review our thinking about writing to improve love for God;
- Consider what is involved in writing to promote love for neighbors;
- Consider a way of focusing on *inward* and *outward* outcomes for writing

We begin by discussing the Preparation Assignments for this session. Use the space that follows to make any notes or jot down your thoughts, questions, or ideas:

Presentation Outline

Introduction

Gregory the Great was perhaps the most effective leader of the Western Church during the early Middle Ages. He was a skilled administrator, a missions visionary, and a prolific writer. He was also known for his efforts to standardized singing for corporate worship by encouraging the development of “plainsong” singing – what came to be known as “Gregorian Chant.” The dove in this early icon of Gregory represents his being inspired of God to write.

Here is an early excerpt from Gregory’s *Pastoral Rule*, a handbook for ministers:

“For who could so blamelessly have had principality over men as He who would in in fact have reigned over those whom He had Himself created...He fled from the offered glory of pre-eminence but desired the pain of an ignominious death; that so His members might learn to fly from the favours of the world, to be afraid of no terrors, to love adversity for the truth’s sake, and to shrink in fear from prosperity; because this often defiles the heart through vain glory, while that purges it through sorrow; in this the mind exalts, itself, but in that...it brings itself low; in this man forgets himself, but in that, even perforce and against his will, he is recalled...”

Pastoral Rule

Let’s note the following as relevant to the work of a writing pastor:



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1. A pastor must follow Christ in seeking _____ for himself.
2. A pastor's concern must be that those in his care should _____ truth.
3. Our writing must aim to affect the _____ of our readers (heart, mind, values).
4. We must write to _____ our readers to the life of faith.

VI. Writing and Ministry: Focus on Outcomes

We began talking about outcomes during our last session, and we saw how it is possible to write to encourage specific outcomes of love for God.

The same is true in seeking to nurture outcomes of love for our neighbors (Matt. 22.39, 30)

We love our neighbor when:

- A. We _____ him and his good, Lk. 19.10; 1 Cor. 10.24
- B. We _____ him as Jesus would, Jn. 13.1-15
- C. We _____ our neighbor like a _____, Gal. 6.2, 9
- D. We _____ to him in love, Eph. 4.15
- E. We make the most of every _____ to love our neighbor as ourselves, Eph. 5.15-17

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VII. Focus on Outcomes: Love for God and neighbor

Such love must be nourished from the inside-out:

““Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”” John. 7.38

Outcome Triggers

A. In our writing, we must pay attention to the _____ of our readers:

What and how they _____.

B. In our writing, we must pay attention to the _____ of our readers:

What and how they _____.

C. In our writing, we must pay attention to the _____ of our readers:

What and how they _____.

D. In our writing we can expect to effect growth and transformation in our readers in the areas of:

1. Preparation: What they do to strengthen and ready themselves for loving God and neighbor



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2. Conversation: The content and conduct of their communications with God and neighbor
3. Demonstration: The specific ways in which they show their love for God and neighbor
4. Transformation: Nurturing a mindset of transformation toward ourselves, others, and our world

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What are some ways you might begin to think more in terms of equipping people for loving their neighbors? How can you keep these outcomes in mind during planning and review of your work?
2. Jot down some things that come to mind as you think about writing toward “outcome triggers” in the soul of your readers? Thought? Affections? Values? Priorities?

Writing Meditation

Every Next Step

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These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Timothy 3.14, 15

The work of pastoral ministry is *proved* by the impact it has on the lives of those who are served. Paul insisted on this: “You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly *you are* an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, *that is*, of the heart” (2 Cor. 3.2, 3). What did “all men” know and read in the Corinthians, if not the active grace of God, manifested in witness, community, worship, and all the various ways spiritual life and gifts come to expression in human lives (cf. Acts 11.23)?

Thus, if we intend to include writing as part of our ministry, we will want to make sure our writing, no less than all the other aspects of our ministry, is focused on *outcomes* in people’s lives – evidence of increasing love for God and neighbors. The currency of the Kingdom of God, the *medium* by which we make our way in the world, is *grace*, manifested as *love for God and neighbors*. Thus, our writing needs to focus on *enriching* the people we serve with an increasing abundance of this coin of the realm, so that they might spend the grace of God lavishly on the people around them.

This involves two foci in our writing, or two horizons toward which our writing should lead.

The long view

First is the long view – the *far* horizon – of life in and unto the Kingdom of God. We can use our writing to project an image of the *destination* and *benchmarks* of our journey – the City to Come, the unfolding Kingdom of God, a healthy and growing church, improving our walk with and work for the Lord, fulfilling our calling. We all agree that these are the ends we seek, and crucial signposts of our journey, benchmarks, standards, and goals to be pursued and realized increasingly.

But these can be hard for people to envision. What does the Kingdom of God *look like*? How can we *recognize* a church that is growing in unity and maturity? What about *my own life* – the life of each one of God’s people – as we grow from glory to glory into the image of Jesus Christ? What does *my calling* look like, as I carry it out in my Personal Mission Field? Our task, as ministers of the Word, is to “flesh out” or “paint out” a brighter, clearer, more attractive and appealing picture of what God has in store for us in the Kingdom. Jesus used parables and images from creation (lilies, sparrows, coins) to help fix in people’s imagination what God desired for them. We do the people we serve no favor if all we give them is definitions, syllogisms, or con-vincing arguments for this, that, or the other. We need to help them *see* where they are going, what to *antici-pate*, how to recognize arriving at some goal in the Christian life, their membership in His Body, or their calling in the Kingdom. We need to inflame their imaginations with vibrant visions of the far horizon of their lives.

Write *vividly* about such matters. Learn the best metaphors and images that will communicate with the people for whom you’re writing. Use and reinforce these in various ways. Challenge their imaginations with repeated colorations of the journey of faith and where the Lord is leading us in this life and beyond. Everyone has some image or set of mind pictures that stimulate their thinking, strum their affections, establish their priorities, and guide their words and deeds. Our task, as ministers of God’s Word, is to strive to help those images and pictures come into line with the believer’s calling to God’s Kingdom and glory (1 Thess. 2.12).

The next step



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So we need to aim far and high as we paint out grand scenarios of our “manifest destiny” as believers.

But we do not reach such goals in quantum leaps. We reach them little by little, day by day, one situation to the next, glory experienced to glory expressed.

We like to think we might be able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. But that is not the way we make progress in the Kingdom. God leads us line upon line, precept upon precept, here a littler, there a little – every next step. This is why “walking” is the most common way of speaking about the life of faith in the Word of God. Miss Manners was once asked by a young girl who was preparing for her first prom, how to walk in high heels. She replied, “Left foot, right foot. Left foot, right foot.”

So it is in the life of faith. We trace the trajectory of Kingdom progress one step, one day, one opportunity at a time. We need to learn how to make the most of each opportunity, so that our progress in Christlikeness and our Kingdom-and-glory calling will be steady and increasing.

We need to keep this in mind as we write. To get to the *far horizon*, we’ll need to know the appropriate next steps to take in the *near horizon*. Again, we need to remember that we are sheep, and sheep cannot find their way to the green pastures and still waters without someone to lead them. Shepherds lead their sheep along the paths that will lead to their flourishing one step at a time. Sheep follow by watching the shepherd. We learn by observing and being instructed by those who know the way, and can guide us in it, step by step.

Both/and

So in your writing, make sure you keep both horizons in view. Write *big*, to inspire hope, joy, and commitment in the journey. But write *small*, to direct your readers to the safe and appropriate next steps that will see them making steady progress in their walk with and work for the Lord.

Reflect

1. What are some images, metaphors, or visions of the life of faith that encourage *you* in your walk with and work for the Lord? How do you envision your Kingdom-and-glory calling?
2. How do you prepare for the *next steps* of your daily walk with the Lord? How do you teach others to do this?
3. What kinds of indicators tell you that you’re making progress in your walk with the Lord? How about in your calling in His Kingdom?
4. Do you think prayer is a good place to be thinking about the far and near horizons of life in the Kingdom? Explain.
5. If *grace* is the currency of the Kingdom of God, you are one of the Lord’s *bursars*, equipping His servants with what they will need to make their way in the Kingdom. Apply this idea to your work of writing.

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Fourth Principle for The Writing Pastor

We are writing as a work of ministry when we write to nurture love for our neighbors in our readers.

Lesson Takeaway

Summarize in writing the most important idea or lesson you have gained from Lesson 4, and explain how you are beginning to incorporate that lesson in your daily walk with and work for the Lord.

Lesson 5: Preparation Assignments

Writing discipline: Journaling

Continue writing in your weekly journal. **Submit one entry** for review.

I would like for you to **begin a second journal**, for recording insights that come to you at different periods through the day. This journal should be small enough to carry around with you at all times – pocket-size, perhaps. Here I want you to begin recording thoughts, ideas, observations, brief meditations, etc., that might, at some point, be developed into topics for writing or activities for your ministry. Here is an example of such an excerpt from my own “Insights Journal”:

Nicholson’s Syndrome



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A malady afflicting certain evangelical church leaders – men bold, skilled, and able to inspire – which causes them to employ their skills and influence in the service of the enemies of Christ, unwittingly. The name comes from Colonel Nicholson (“Old Nick” as one of his men called him – a traditional English name for the devil) in the film, *Bridge Over the River Kwai*.

I mulled this brief insight for a number of weeks, after which it became a seven-part series of essays published on a Christian website.

Begin entering insights into your journal. This is a place for brainstorming. Do not evaluate your insights, just record them, regardless of how random or ridiculous they may sound. It’s a good idea to review your Insights Journal every so often, just to keep these ideas fresh and to see if they’ve begun to simmer or mature in any ways.

Writing assignment

From the selections you have entered in your devotional journal thus far, select one to develop as an exercise in **writing to nurture love for neighbors** in your readers. Follow these instructions as you write:

- Choose one of the outcomes expressive of love for neighbors that we discussed in Session 4. Let the theme of your selection guide you in determining which of these outcomes should be the focus of your piece.
- Determine how you might use such a piece. Outlets might include a letter to a friend or to the congregation at large, entry on the church website, a brochure to be placed on the information table at your church, an introduction to a Bible study lesson, and so forth. Mention **at the beginning** of your exercise what specific use you intend your piece to fulfill.
- Write a piece of 300-500 words, based on your journal selection, toward the particular outcome you have selected, and for the use you intend.
- Submit this exercise to your instructor as a Word doc for his review.

Reading for writing

Writing pastors – such as those we have been considering – bring to the task of writing the skills they use in their ministry. By reading excerpts from their work we can become more effective at seeing our own writing as an extension of our ministry, and, thus, of needing to embody and include the kinds of ministry principles we use in conducting all aspects of our ministries.

Here is a bit longer section from Gregory the Great’s *Pastoral Rule*. This valuable work, written to a colleague, is full of practical advice for “rulers” (priests and pastors) concerning how to deal with specific

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kinds of people and situations. In Part I he addresses the awesome responsibility of pastoral ministry – “the government of souls is the art of arts! – and offers a concise summary of the kinds of men who ought to be led to this work. Here is a section of chapter X in Part I. What was Gregory trying to get John to “see” in terms of what a true pastor should be like and be able to do? Circle every word which you can *see in your mind* as expressing a visible outcome:

Pastoral Rule, Part I, Chapter X

That man, therefore, ought by all means to be drawn with cords to be an example of good living who already lives spiritually, dying to all passions of the flesh; who disregards worldly prosperity; who is afraid of no adversity; who desires only inward wealth; whose intention the body, in good accord with it, thwarts not at all by its frailness, nor the spirit greatly by its disdain: one who is not led to covet the things of others, but gives freely of his own; who through the bowels of compassion is quickly moved to pardon, yet is never bent down from the fortress of rectitude, by pardoning more than is meet; who perpetrates no unlawful deeds, yet deplores those perpetrated by others as though they were his own; who out of affection of heart sympathizes with another’s infirmity, and so rejoices in the good of his neighbour as though it were his own advantage; who so insinuates himself as an example to others in all he does that among them he has nothing, at any rate of his own past deeds, to blush for; who studies so to live that he may be able to water even dry hearts with the streams of doctrine; who has already learnt by the use and trial of prayer that he can obtain what he has requested from the Lord, having had already said to him, as it were, through the voice of experience, *While thou art yet speaking, I will say, Here am I...*

Lesson 5: Writing and Ministry

Focus on Outcomes (3)

Overview and Objective

OK, so how do we bring together our focus on far horizons, near horizons, loving God, and loving neighbors? The more forethought we give to these matters *before* we write, the greater will be the likelihood that *whenever* we write, *whatever* we write, we’ll be aiming to get people moving toward the Kingdom and glory of God (1 Thess. 2.12).

During this final session on writing outcomes, we will consider an approach to bringing together and focusing our thoughts on writing outcomes, so that the outcomes we seek will be present to us throughout our work of writing.

Assignments



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1. View Presentation 5 online (the link is provided on page 8). Be prepared to discuss the questions in the Questions for Reflection or Discussion section at the end of the Presentation outline.
2. Read the *Writing Meditation*, and be prepared to discuss the questions in the *Reflect* section at the end.
3. Summarize what was most important for you from this lesson in the *Lesson Takeaway* on p. 17.
4. Read the Lesson Preparation Assignments for Lesson 6.

Presentation 5

View Presentation 5 on the resource page for this course. Use the outline below to follow along. Be prepared to discuss the questions included at the end of the outline.

Introduction

Columbanus sailed from Bangor to Gaul at the age of 50 to begin the work he had been preparing for all his life. In Gaul he evangelized the lost, founded monasteries, trained monks and missionaries, advised rulers, and worked to encourage reform among the moribund Roman Catholic churches in the land. He was the greatest of the Irish *peregrine* and has left more of a written legacy than any other person from the period of the Celtic Revival.

Here is an excerpt from one of his sermons to his monks:

If any man, to whom God has granted it, understands what life he ought to live to become eternal in place of mortal, wise in place of stupid, heavenly in place of earthly, let him first keep his discernment pure that he may employ it for living well, and look not on what is but on what shall be. For that which is not shall be, and he should consider what he sees not, by means of what he sees, and attempt to be what he was created, and call God's grace to help his striving.

- *Sermon III*

Let's note the following as relevant to the work of a writing pastor:

1. Write toward _____.
2. Write for the _____.
3. Write to strengthen _____.

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4. Write to encourage _____.
5. Wrote to promote _____ of faith.
6. Write to encourage _____ on God.

VIII. Writing and Ministry: Focus on Outcomes

Let's review briefly what we have said about writing for outcomes. As we write, we want to encourage our readers to move toward two horizons, one near and one far.

The far horizon – sanctification, cultural renewal, church growth, etc. – must always be in our minds as an ultimate destination to guide our efforts in ministry, including our writing.

The near horizon is that of growing in love for God and neighbor.

A. We have said that we can know that we are growing in love for _____ when love:

1. His presence
2. His Word
3. His salvation
4. His creation
5. His work
6. His appearing



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7. His praise to the generations
 8. The fear of God
- B. We have said that we can know that we are growing in love for our _____ when:
1. We seek him and his good
 2. We serve him as Jesus would
 3. We watch over him like a shepherd
 4. We speak truth to him in love
 5. We make the most of our opportunities for good
- C. We further observed that love for God and neighbor can be triggered when we write to affect:
1. Our readers' minds: What and how they think
 2. Our readers' hearts: What and how they feel
 3. Our readers' consciences: What and how they value
- D. Finally, we can write to trigger specific outcomes in four general areas of practice:

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1. How our readers prepare for loving God and neighbors
2. How our readers converse with God and neighbors
3. How our readers demonstrate love for God and neighbors in their lives
4. How our readers think about and work for transformation in themselves, others, and their world

IX. Focus on Outcomes: Striking a balance

In our writing, as in all aspects of our ministry, it is important that we work to strike a balance between encouraging love for God and love for our neighbors.

Let me suggest an approach to thinking about writing projects that can help you work toward such a balance.

- A. First, decide on the _____ of your writing.

By the way, it's a good idea to keep track of the topics you write about. Why?

- B. Next, determine which writing _____ you intend to use.

The more familiar you become with various formats, the more varied, interesting, and effective your writing will be.

- C. Third, summarize the purpose of this piece in a single _____.



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- D. Fourth, given your topic and proposition, which of the two loves seems to be most in focus? What particular _____ of love do you hope to encourage?

It is, of course, quite possible that what you intend to write will speak to both of the great commandments. If so, the more specific you can be in terms of the particular outcome your piece intends to promote, the greater will be the likelihood that your writing will accomplish its purpose.

- E. Finally, work through each of the following in order to “put your finger” on the particular outcome triggers you intend to “pull”:

1. Key _____:

2. Key _____:

3. Key _____:

4. Remember that people make progress in small steps. Try to get in mind at least two possible practices which you hope to “trigger” in specific readers as expressions of love for God and/or neighbor:

a. Next Step 1:

b. Next Step 2:

Can you see how this approach to thinking through a writing project can help to focus your writing more on the kinds of outcomes God is seeking for His people?

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

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1. What might be some alternatives to writing for outcomes? Why are these not satisfactory?
2. How are these discussions about outcomes beginning to affect your writing? What about other aspects of your ministry?

Writing Meditation

By All Means – or at Least, Many

I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 1 Corinthians 9.22

Writing and ministry

The work of ministry involves equipping the people of God to live for Him and His Kingdom. Jesus Christ has sent us into the world in the same way He was sent, to embody, proclaim, and otherwise *bring near* the Kingdom of God to the people around us (Jn. 20.21). Such a calling can be daunting, and that probably explains why most Christians never quite get around to the *ministry* component of their calling to follow Jesus.

But those who are called to the work of equipping cannot give up on their *own* calling simply because those who are to be equipped can be a little slow of learning (1 Cor. 3.1-4; Eph. 4.11, 12; Heb. 5.12-14). We keep coming at them week after week, sermon after sermon, course after course, program upon program, counseling or discipleship session after counseling or discipleship session, hoping that something at some point will break through to their souls and trigger a greater love for God and their neighbors. We use all kinds of means to encourage and assist the people entrusted to our care to make progress in their Kingdom-and-glory calling from the Lord.

Writing can be a useful tool for those who are called to equip God's people for ministry. Nearly everybody we serve can read, and they just might be more inclined to read something we've written, if only because they know us and have something of a vested interest in whatever we might have to say.

So we should expect to use writing as an effective tool in our kit for equipping the saints for ministry.

But not everybody reads, or will read, the same kinds of things. If we want our writing to play a strong supporting role in our work of equipping, we'll need to experiment with a variety of writing resources, at different times and for different purposes. Just as we use many contexts and approaches to *teaching* the Word of God, so we should be open to employing a *variety of writing resources* in our ministry.

Paul's approach



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Paul's approach to reaching people with the Gospel is instructive here. He insisted that he would adjust his approach to people – his message, and how his message was “packaged” – depending on their background, interests, and level of maturity. We need only compare Acts 14 with Acts 17 to see the truth of this. His message was consistently the same – Christ and His Kingdom. But his approach to people varied, depending on the situation, opportunity, or other qualifying criteria that might affect the communication process.

Paul sought to be all things to all people, so that by *all means*, he might break through to the souls of some, and they would believe the Gospel.

His approach to Kingdom proclamation contains sound advice for using writing as a tool for equipping the saints to love God and their neighbors.

Our application

We expect to use writing as a strong buttress and support of our work of equipping the saints. Equipping the saints requires pointed communication of various kinds, together with skilled pastoral work to massage the truth *into the souls* of God's people, where it can take root and grow *into ministry* of one kind or another.

No one form of writing lends itself to every purpose or need. We may end up *not* making the best use of our ability as writers if all we ever do is write sermons for people. “Leadership development?” Here, read these sermons. “New members class?” This sermon might help. “Information about our church?” Try reading these sermons, and maybe this one, too. “Help with marital counseling?” I've got a sermon that might help.

Sound ridiculous? Well, it is. But in each of those scenarios, and many more, writing could provide a useful aid. But *not all the same kind* of writing. Certain *forms* of writing are better suited than others, depending on the *need* we're addressing and the *outcomes* we seek in equipping the saints. A trifold *brochure* will do more to help introduce a neighbor to your church than your best sermon on 1 Corinthians 12. The work of equipping church leaders may require that you write certain kinds of *assessment tools* or *study materials*, both to discover where potential leaders are in their walk with and work for the Lord, and to engage them with one another in the preparation process.

Similarly, a concise *letter to the editor* or *brief article* for your neighborhood paper or web letter will attract more readers than an offer to mail a sermon to anyone interested. A *brief card* or *email* affirming or appreciating someone, or advising them you've been praying for them, will accomplish more than encouraging them to listen to a sermon. The point should be easy enough to grasp: *Many* kinds of writing are available to us for equipping the saints. The challenge and opportunity before us is that of learning how to create a variety of writing resources and to use them effectively in our calling.

In addition, certain kinds of writing resources can be *more easily reproduced* than others. A one-page *opinion broadside* will be more readily circulated than a sermon on some local or contemporary issue, especially if you email it to your members as a PDF attachment, and invite them make copies and hand them out to their neighbors. *Email devotionals* can be forwarded or posted on social media.

In short, if we intend to use writing as a strong and effective resource for equipping the saints, then it's a good idea to follow Paul's lead, and learn to write by all means – or at least, by *many*.

Reflect

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1. Look around your church – sanctuary, information table, library. How many different *kinds* of writing can you identify around your church?
2. Can you think of two or three different *kinds* of writing that have impacted your walk with and work for the Lord?
3. What do you think will be the biggest challenges in deciding *which kind* of writing to use in your ministry?
4. What local outlets – newspaper, web letters, etc. – exist in your community as possible outlets for you to use in your ministry?
5. To this point, how many different kinds of writing have I used to communicate the content of this course? What value can you identify in each of these?



Fifth Principle for The Writing Pastor

We are writing as a work of ministry when we write to strike a balance between fostering love for God and love for neighbors in our readers.

Lesson Takeaway

Summarize in writing the most important idea or lesson you have gained from Lesson 5, and explain how you are beginning to incorporate that lesson in your daily walk with and work for the Lord.



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Lesson 6: Preparation Assignments

Writing discipline: Journaling

Continue writing in your weekly journal. Submit one entry for review.

Be prepared to share something from your “Insights Journal,” which you were asked to begin as preparation for Session 5.

Writing assignment

Use the Writing Project Planning Worksheet that follows and plan your way through three writing projects. Choose one of them to write. Then, submit the writing sample to your instructor for review. We will also review your Writing Project Planning Worksheet for this sample at the next session.

Reading for writing

Even in personal communications pastors need to write in such a way as to pursue specific outcomes, such as we have been discussing. We must make the most of every writing opportunity to seek and advance the Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5.15-17; Matt. 6.33; Rom. 14.17-19). The more we read other writing pastors, particularly those whose works have endured for centuries, the better able we will be to use our writing effectively for Christ and His Kingdom.

Here is a letter (number VI) from Columbanus to one of his monks. As you read this, try to determine the *proposition* or main idea Columbanus wanted to convey. Then, identify the particular outcomes of love he seems to have been targeting, and the outcome triggers he pulled in order to achieve his objective. And can you identify any “next steps” in what he wants his reader to do? We’ll discuss this at the beginning of Session 6.

Letter VI

1. Though I have already spoken for a long time about character and moral training, again, my son that needs instruction, you ask to be taught. You have heard that it is written: the man to whom little is not enough will not benefit from more. I wrote to you before on the subject of seriousness and modesty, and indeed, as someone says, I fear the effect on you even of what is safe; but since

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a warning may turn into guidance for some, comfort for others, and fulfillment for others again, for those, that is who carry out what they understand, for that reason my dearest sons must be often taught and instructed, so that by some of the delights of literature they may be able to conquer their own griefs arising out of inner conflict.

2. Then conquer the battle and the brutal, I mean the lusts and the taint of pride. Be helpful in humbleness and most lowly in authority, simple in faith, trained in character, exacting in your own affairs, unconcerned in those of others, pure in friendship, shrewd in cunning, hard in times of ease, easy in times of hardness, versatile in even circumstances, even in versatile ones, joyful in sorrow, sorrowful in joy, a dissenter where necessary, agreeing about truth, serious in pleasures, kindly in griefs, strong in trials, weak in quarrelings; slow to anger, swift to learn, slow also to speak, as St. James says, equally swift to hear; efficient in your progress, tardy in your revenge, careful in word, ready in work; friendly to the upright, rough to the dishonourable, gentle to the weak, firm to the stubborn, correct to the proud, humble to the low; ever sober, ever chaste, ever modest, patient to the point of enthusiasm, never covetousness, ever generous, if not in money, then in spirit; timely in fasting, timely in watching, discreet in duty, purposeful in study, unmoved in turmoil, glad in suffering, valiant in the cause of truth, timorous in time and strife; submissive to the good, unconquerable by evil, agreeable in almsgiving, unwearied in love, just in all things; respectful to the worthy, merciful to the poor; mindful of benefits, unmindful of wrongs; a lover of moderate men, undesirous of riches, a leveler of high spirits, ready to confess your thoughts; obedient to your seniors, setting the pace for your juniors, equaling your equals, striving together with the perfect, not envying your betters, not grieving at those who outstrip you, not censorious of those who linger, ready to agree with those who call you on; though weary, yet unfailing; at once weeping and rejoicing for zeal and hope; ever fearing for the end, though making a sure advance.
3. Let this be your model, beloved boy and secretary; if you be such, you shall be most blessed; for you will be the same through good times and through bad, ready for all things, coping with each, restraining your conduct, nourishing qualities that should grow, destroying those that should wither, smoothing the rough places, rough-hewing the defective ones; ever concerned, ever growing, ever making increase; every aiming at the lofty, ever running to the mark; ever longing for heavenly things, every thirsting for the things divine. There is my teaching; do you provide the disposition to follow, if you can, that you may enjoy happiness and strength, when by fleeing youthful lusts you have thus brought the body under the power of the spirit, and have made yourself surety for your sins, serving a brief period for the wages of eternity. Happy, blessed, admirable boy, if you fulfill all this. For if you are busily occupied with mind and hand in all these things, you will have no leisure for vain, wandering, or wicked thoughts; but, as though ever at a new beginning, you will gather for yourself those fruits which you shall enjoy for ever, and you will deserve the name of a single-minded man, a seeker after the one reward, an outstanding merchant of an eternal kingdom. Then turn yourself entirely to these things, since you have opportunities on which to exercise your youth, virtue, competence and strength, lest these good qualities which seize the Kingdom of heaven by force should perish, if they are put to the opposite use



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Writing Project Planning Worksheet

Topic: _____

Format: _____

Proposition: _____

Love	...for God	...for neighbor
Key Thought		
Key Affection		
Key Value		
Next Step 1		
Next Step 2		

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Lesson 6: Writing and Ministry

Types of Writing

Overview and Objectives

A wide range of possibilities exists for us to use the written word in making disciples. We should employ as many different means of writing as will meet the needs of those we are called to serve.

In this lesson we'll look at some of types of writing available for us as we begin thinking about a plan for writing and ministry.

Assignments

1. Complete the assignments preparing for this Lesson. View Presentation 6 online. Be prepared to discuss the questions in the Questions for Reflection or Discussion section at the end of the Presentation outline.
2. Read the *Writing Meditation*, and be prepared to discuss the questions in the *Reflect* section at the end.
3. Summarize what was most important for you from this lesson in the *Lesson Takeaway*.
4. Read the Lesson Preparation Assignments for Lesson 7.

Presentation 6

View Presentation 6 on the resource page. Use the outline below to follow along.



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Introduction

Hildegard of Bingen was a remarkable woman. Though born into a noble family, she grew up in a monastery and took vows at an early age. She began writing – particularly narratives of visions – even before she founded her first community near Bingen. *Scivias* is a collection of Hildegard's visions, covering a wide range of subjects. She also wrote hagiography, musical compositions, books on natural healing, hymns, homilies, and letters. She was perhaps the most prolific writing pastor of her day.

Here is an excerpt from a section of *Scivias*:

A human being contains three paths, namely, soul, body and senses. On these three paths, human life runs its course. The soul fills the body with life and brings forth the senses; for its part the body attracts the soul to it and opens the senses; in turn the senses touch the body and draw the soul to them. The soul provides the body with life like fire flooding the darkness with light; it has two major powers like two arms: the understanding and the will."

- *Scivias* I, 4

Let's note the following as relevant to the work of a writing pastor:

1. An eye to the _____ of _____.
2. Keep in mind the _____ of the _____.
3. Seek to engage the _____.
4. Write to promote _____ and _____.
5. Make the most of the various _____ of writing.

XI. Writing and Ministry: Types of Writing

Introduction and Overview

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Just as in other aspects of our ministry we employ a variety of approaches to equipping the saints – teaching, discipleship, preaching, counseling, one-on-one, etc. – so also with writing a variety of forms or types of writing are available to help extend our ministry to others.

In this lesson, we want to consider a few of these. We will discuss them from the perspective of their likely reach, beginning with those types of writing which are most narrowly targeted to those which can expect to have a wider, and perhaps more lasting, impact.

A. Types of writing for ministry:

1. Correspondence (snail, email):
2. Sermons:
3. Brochures and Pamphlets:
4. Newsletters:
5. Devotional materials (including hymns, poems, prayers, liturgies):
6. Training materials:



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7. Web writing:
 8. Articles, papers:
 9. Books:
- B. The more narrowly-targeted writings can provide substance for more widely-targeted pieces.
- C. Developing a writing plan: Some questions:
1. What opportunities are presently available to me?
 2. To what types of writing do I naturally incline?
 3. To what types of writing do I aspire?
 4. With what types of writing are the people I presently serve most familiar?
 5. What readers do I hope to reach at some point in the future, and what types of writing do they read?
 6. How can I keep track of what I write, in order to maximize the reach of my ideas?
 7. What reading or study do I need to do in order to improve my skills as a writer?

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XII. Aspects of an Initial Writing Plan

A writing plan can help to begin moving your desire to involve writing as part of your ministry into a working component of your calling. A few simple guidelines can get us started in developing an initial writing plan.

- A. Determine a _____ for your initial writing plan.

- B. Identify the _____ for your initial writing plan.

- C. Decide on the particular _____ of writing that will be most effective for these audiences.

- D. Establish a _____ for your writing:
 - 1. When you will _____
 - 2. When you will _____

- E. Begin a _____ journal.

- F. Get started!



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Having a writing plan will help you to see just how important writing can be to enhancing and extending your ministry. Put your plan in writing and keep it some place where you can review it frequently and revise it as needed.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Why is it important to use as many types of writing as possible in your work of ministry? As you think about the people you are called to serve, which types of writing are likely to be most effective with them? Why?
2. Meditate on Psalm 90.12, 16, 17. Why is it important to develop a plan to use writing in your ministry?

Writing Meditation

The Starting-point for Style

The meaning of style

Style refers to the way we make our mark in the world. In the ancient Roman world, to declare to guests and neighbors that they were literate and, therefore, sophisticated, wealthy elites would have a mosaic or other portrait of themselves created, in which one or the other of the members of the household would be holding a *stylus*. That writing implement meant they could *make a meaningful mark* in the world. They could express themselves in a manner that marked them out as of a certain class or level of society. They had *style*.

These days, when we think of *style*, we may have in mind a certain kind of automobile, *couture*, swagger, hair-cut, cuisine, or music. We talk of people being *stylish* or *stylin'* and understand by this the affecting of a certain *persona* or manner of being-in-the-world. The trappings of culture with which we surround, clothe, and convey ourselves make a statement about the kind of persons we are, how we want to be regarded, or what impression we intend to make in the world. They give us *style*.

The same is true when it comes to a writing style. Steven Pinker refers to style in writing as the way we “visualize ourselves in some kind of conversation, or correspondence, or oration, or soliloquy, and put words into the mouth of the little avatar who represents us in this simulated world.” He continues, “The key to good style, far more than obeying any list of commandments, is to have a clear conception of the make-believe world in which you’re pretending to communicate” (*The Sense of Style*). More pointedly, he says, “The writer can see something that the reader has not yet noticed, and he orients the reader’s gaze so she can see it for herself.” And the writer does this in a way uniquely his own, in his own *style*.

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Style refers to the peculiar way we *observe* the world and *communicate* it to readers. An effective writing style, one that communicates what the writer intends, begins in a clear vision of the world, of the readers one hopes to influence, and of the writer's task.

Begin here

In his book, *Christ and Culture*, Klaas Schilder wrote, "'Style' is always first a matter of the whole building, and only then of its respective parts." No architect, of whatever school (or *style*), would construct a building by just piling up individual bricks. He begins with a design, and that design is specific as to the *appearance* of the building, as well as to its *function* and *the people* who will use it.

Our writing style will be haphazard and ineffectual unless we take a similar approach to this aspect of our calling from the Lord. We want our writing to *express how we understand* the world, to *orient our readers* accordingly, and to *move them* by specific means along certain paths. If our writing is to do this, we must be clear about the larger picture we are trying to interpret, the people to whom we are interpreting it, and the means we employ and the ends we seek in writing. All the writing we do should unfold within a clear and consistent worldview, with as precise as possible an understanding of the people we hope to move, and of the individual pieces by which we hope to move them.

Let's look briefly at each of these.

Three determinants of style

A worldview describes how we understand the world and our place in it. Every worldview is comprised of a *vision* of the world – how it is, and how it should be; the *disciplines* by which we fill our time in pursuit of our vision; and those *outcomes* by which we measure progress. The Christian worldview is rooted in our *vision* of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, and includes such related matters as the Church, our great salvation, and our individual callings. The *disciplines* by which we *seek* this Kingdom are of various kinds, and, diligently and faithfully employed, allow us to make the most of our time in seeking our Kingdom vision. Making the most of time yields *outcomes* of love for God and neighbors, increasingly realized. This Christian worldview, in some form, provides the large backdrop against which, and the environment within which, we undertake our calling to write.

Throughout our lives we engage with many people. We cannot engage with all people, so we must be selective. Many people will *influence* our lives; and some we will be *able to influence* for our Christian worldview. We want to engage with people who can help us refine, enlarge, and realize our Christian worldview; as well as with people we can influence toward our view of life (cf. 2 Cor. 10.13-18). The better we know the people to whom God sends us as agents of grace, the better we will be able to communicate with them, and the more effective we may expect to be in influencing them for the Christian worldview. And we must be able to envision something of their place within that worldview. Our style of writing will thus be as large and polychromatic as our worldview, but as personal and practical as the people we hope to influence for the Kingdom of God.

Thus, with every piece we write, we will think big, but aim small. We will point to the *far horizon* of the world to come, the divine economy of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit (Heb. 2.5; Rom. 14.17, 18); but we will also direct our readers to the *near horizon* of the next steps they might take in their Kingdom-and-glory calling from the Lord (1 Thess. 2.12). Every individual piece of writing must glow with the grandeur of Christ and His Kingdom, even as it unfolds like a common roadmap, pointing out the next turns and important landmarks along the way.



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Work hard at articulating your Christian worldview. Get to know your readers. And think carefully about the outcomes to be achieved by the forms of writing you employ. From this combined focus on worldview, readership, and next steps, a style will emerge that is crafted by the demands and details of good writing, the burdens and choices of you, the writer, and the various forms which writing for ministry can take.

Reflect

1. How clear is your Christian worldview is at this time? Could you outline it briefly? Or express it succinctly in a diagram?
2. How would you describe the readers you are seeking to influence? What else do they read? What roles do they play in their church? What opportunities are available to them as witnesses for Christ?
3. What kinds of writing or written materials do the people you hope to reach typically read?
4. Do you see anything like a *style* in your writing at this point? What about in your life? How would others describe your style?
5. Give an example of thinking big and aiming small in your ministry at present. Can you see why it is important to work this way?



Sixth Principle for The Writing Pastor

Writing can become an important part of our ministry when we understand the various types of writing available to us and when we approach this part of our ministry according to a definite plan.

Lesson Takeaway

Summarize in writing the most important idea or lesson you have gained from Lesson 6, and explain how you are beginning to incorporate that lesson in your daily walk with and work for the Lord.

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Lesson 7: Preparation Assignments

Writing discipline: Journaling

Continue writing in your weekly journal. Submit one entry for review.

Be prepared to share something from your “Insights Journal,” which you were asked to begin as preparation for Session 5.

Start your Projects Journal and begin developing a list of topics, ideas, etc. that you will want to write about at some point.

Writing assignment

Following the guidelines provided in Session 6, develop and submit an initial writing plan. At the next class session you will be asked to explain your writing plan in detail.

Reading for writing

Hildegard demonstrated a wide variety of types of writing, and this, more than her specific content, makes her of interest to me as a writing pastor.

Here are a few samples of use of different types of writing. As you read these, try to determine (1) how each one speaks to the concerns outlined in the quote that begins this lesson; (2) what kinds of people might have been reached by each of these; (3) how they stimulate you to think about different types of writing for ministry.



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We'll discuss your responses to these pieces at our next class session.

Scivias I, 4, 19

Human understanding is connected to the soul like the arms to the body. For just as the arm is joined to the hand and the hand to the fingers, so also there is no doubt that understanding proceeds from the soul and activates the other powers of the soul, by which it knows and recognizes human actions. For over all the other powers of the soul it is understanding which distinguishes what is good from what is bad in human actions. Understanding is therefore a teacher through whom all things are known, for in this way he shakes out all things just as the wheat is separated from the stalks and husks; he examines what things are useful and what are useless, what things are lovable and what are hateful, what things belong to life and what to death.

Just as food without salt is bland, so also the other powers of the soul are weak and unknowing without it. Understanding is in the soul like the shoulders in the body, acting as the moving force behind the other powers of the soul, giving them strength like the shoulders give strength to the body. It is flexible, like the bend of the arm, discerning both the divine and the human in God. Thus human understanding works with true faith, for like the articulation of the fingers of the hand it can distinguish between many diverse actions. It therefore operates differently from the other forces of the soul.

Letter to Henry, Bishop of Liège

The living light says: the paths of the scriptures lead directly to the high mountain, where the flowers grow and the costly aromatic herbs; where a pleasant wind blows, bringing forth their powerful fragrance; where the roses and lilies reveal their shining faces. But because of the shadows of dark living air, that mountain did not appear until the Son of the most High had enlightened the world. On that day, the sun rose from the dawn, illuminating this world so that all the people could see its aromatic herbs. That day was very beautiful, and sweet tidings came forth.

But O shepherds, now is the time for mourning and weeping, because in our time the mountain has been covered with a very black cloud so that it no longer sends forth its gentle fragrance. You, Henry, must be a good shepherd, of noble character. And just as the eagle gazes at the sun, ponder and consider how you can call back the wanderers and exiles and bring some light to this mountain, so that you will live, and so that you will hear the most loving voice of the Judge on high: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

O virgo ecclesia

(Song for the dedication of a church)

O virgin church, you must lament

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that the most savage wolf
has seized your children from your side.
Woe to the cunning serpent!
But how precious is the blood of the Saviour!
In the banner of the king
he has pledged the Church to himself
so that she now seeks her children.

From Causes and Cures: The Cosmos

Winds

The four cardinal winds support the firmament below and above the level of the sun. They hold together the whole cosmos from the lower to the upper part of the firmament and cover it like a cloak. The east wind embraces the air and dispenses gentle moisture to the dry regions. The west wind mingles with the floating clouds, to sustain the waters and prevent them from bursting forth. The south wind keeps the fire under its control and prevents it from burning up everything. The north wind controls the outer areas of darkness, so that they do not exceed their measure. These four winds are the wings of the power of God. If they were all set in motion at the same time they would confuse the elements and break apart; they would agitate the sea and dry up all the waters.

Lesson 7: Sharpening Your Style (1)

Elements of Style

Overview and Objectives

Style relates to the way your writing presents you and your ideas to the reader. It has to do with character, persona, and above all, worldview. The more conscious we are of the elements of style, the more we can work in a style that fits our message and represents our intentions.

This will be the first of three lessons on style, and will provide us an opportunity for understanding what goes into creating and maintaining the style of writing appropriate for you.

Assignments



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1. Complete the assignments in preparation for this Lesson. We will be especially interested in reviewing your progress in contributing to your Insights Journal and your Projects Journal.
2. Watch Presentation 7 for this Lesson. Be prepared to discuss the Questions for Reflection or Discussion at the end of the Presentation outline.
3. Read the *Writing Meditation*, and be prepared to discuss the questions in the *Reflect* section at the end.
4. Summarize what was most important for you from this lesson in the *Lesson Takeaway*.
5. Read the Lesson Preparation Assignments for Lesson 8.

Presentation 7

View Presentation 7 on the resource page. Use the outline below to follow along:

Introduction

Isaac Watts served as pastor of the nonconformist church at Mark Lane, where he maintained association, in spite of failing health, for 46 years. He is best known, of course, for his many hymns, some of them among the most beloved in the tradition of English hymnody. These include, “O God, our help in ages past,” “Jesus shall reign,” and “When I survey the wondrous cross.” Watts seems to have expressed sympathy with Unitarian beliefs in his later years, although his hymns, and his *An Exhortation to Ministers*, reflect the orthodoxy of his more vibrant years.

Here is an excerpt from a section of *An Exhortation to Ministers*:

...take heed that you do not make your hearers bigots and uncharitable, while you endeavor to make them knowing Christians. Establish them in all the chief and most important articles of the gospel of Christ, without endeavoring to render those who differ from you odious in the sight of your hearers. Whensoever you are constrained to declare your disapprobation of particular opinions, keep up and manifest your love to the persons of those who espouse them, and especially if they are persons of virtue and piety.

Let’s note the following as relevant to the work of a writing pastor:

1. A mind toward the _____ of what we write.

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2. The importance of always writing the _____ in _____.
3. The need to _____ when necessary.
4. Respect for the _____ of those we must criticize.
5. Guard against writing out of _____.

XIII. Sharpening Your Style

Every writer develops a unique style, or, more likely, a variety of styles, all of which remain unique because they are the fruit of one person's pen. A writer's style reflects his interests, passions, vision, hopes, and personality, regardless of the form of writing he is employing or the readership he hopes to reach. It is important that, as writing pastors, the style we communicate is the style we want to express.

Three components go into sharpening a writer's style:

The _____ of Style

_____ a Style

_____ a Style

In this lesson we will concentrate on the first of these components. What are the primary components to keep in mind as we work to sharpen our style as writing pastors?

A. Readership: What are some ways that readership can affect a writer's style?



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B. Message: Four aspects of a writer's message will affect the shape of his writing style:

1. _____, _____ in his writing:

2. _____ of his writing:

3. _____ of his writing:

4. _____ of his writing:

C. Objectives: The importance of focusing sharply

D. Voice

1. Voice expresses the _____ of the writer.

2. Voice conveys the _____ of piece.

E. Craft: Three components

1. _____;

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2. _____:

3. _____:

F. Requirements of Scripture: Some examples:

1. Colossians 4.6

2. Ephesians 4.29

3. 1 Peter 3.15

4. Philemon 7

5. Acts 26.25

A writer must be concerned about developing his own unique style. The place to begin that effort is by a brief evaluation of the present state on your writing style. As part of your preparation for the next session, you will complete a brief inventory of your writing style as you understand it at present.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What do we mean by *style*, and what difference does it make in our writing? Why should those who write be conscious of and conscientious about developing an appropriate style?
2. How would you compare the writing style of the apostle Paul to that of the apostle John?



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Writing Meditation

On the Way to Style: Write Badly

A work in progress

“Style” defines the way your writing comes across, the tone, mood, or manner in which it represents you and your burdens to your readers. As we’ve seen, we may engage a variety of styles at different times in our writing, depending on what we want to say, how we want to say it, and to whom we are writing.

We shouldn’t think of style as a finished product, but as a work in progress. We’re always developing the style that will carry our writing, and we should be doing this consciously and conscientiously. Whenever we write, we should be mindful of the particular style we are affecting, and try to be as consistent as we can throughout the work.

The more we work at our writing, beginning with the entries we make in our journals, and the more we sit on our writing – reviewing, revising, and improving or enlarging it as needed – the more consistent we will become in choosing the style best suited to accomplish the purposes of each individual piece.

One further bit of encouragement I’d like to pass along, not only with a view to improving your style, but your writing in general, and that is never be afraid of writing badly. Let me explain.

The problem of self-censorship

One tendency that can kill your writing in the incubator is the inclination to censor everything you write, as you are writing it. You write a sentence. Well, that’s not quite what you want to say. So you go back. Change the passive voice to active. Select a different verb. Lighten up the tone. Cross the whole thing out and begin with a different approach. Is that the right pronoun? Do I need that adverb?

And so on. Forever, it can seem, until frustration kicks in and that project goes the way of so many others, because your editor – that fellow in your brain who wants everything to be just right every time – has come to the table prematurely, and condemned the project before it could come to light.

Here’s an excellent bit of advice from Craig Morgan Teicher on the necessity of writing badly: “Writing is a habit like anything else, and it comes with certain reflexes, one of which is self-censorship, which can prevent you from getting your words down, from generating your material. The ego wants to be the best at everything, but in my experience at least, the best writing comes much less frequently than the desire to write. Like athletes, we need to keep our writing muscles in shape. If we can allow ourselves to write badly, to keep our pens moving, the chances are high that they’ll be moving when our great writing is ready to come out” (“Writing Badly,” *Poets & Writers*, Jan/Feb 2017).

After all, if you have lots of *bad* writing to work with, you might develop some *good* writing out of those shards and fragments. If you have no shards and fragments to begin with, because they’ve all been aborted early in gestation, then you’ll always be starting over again, and no matter how clear your intended writing style may be in your mind, you’re likely never to achieve it, much less develop it. Use

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your notebooks to record your worst thoughts and most incomplete writing. Let your editor have a look at them from time to time, but do not allow any revising or suggesting at this level. Keep your bad writing in its original form, so that you have plenty of raw material to plunder when it comes time to craft a gem.

Anything worth doing...

I'm a firm believer in the dictum which says that, when it comes to your calling, anything worth doing is worth doing badly. If we have to be "the best" ("The best of the best of the best, yes sir!") each time we undertake a sermon, a leadership training session, or any other aspect of ministry, we'll never begin. We can always see ways to improve what we're doing, many times even as we're doing it. And we should strive for improvement, working to increase our understanding, hone our skills, and become more effective and efficient overall. This is why pastors take up continuing studies projects.

What's true in life and ministry is true in writing as well. Of course, you want every writing project to be the best it can be, to encourage your readers to grow in love for God and their neighbors. But if you don't feel some measure of dissatisfaction with each piece you write, no matter how many times your editor has tried to improve it, then you're discouraging growth and improvement. We should be content to write badly, and not just as we're making notes or journal entries, but even as we're working on a particular piece. We can always revise it, and improve it, but not if we're trying to do all these things and *write* at the same time.

And even when you put something before your readers, you'll have that lingering sense that this could be improved, this doesn't quite get it, this is not my best writing. But don't hesitate to put it out, once you've done the best you can do, even though your best may seem not quite good enough, at least, not to you.

There is a place for writing badly at every stage and phase of the writing process. We should welcome it, and not try to keep it out of sight. Only by writing badly, and doing so as often as we can, will we learn to write well, and be ready to write well, when the opportunity to do so arises.

Train and develop your editing skills. Find someone to read and edit your work, and to offer suggestions for improvement. But don't let these "editors" do the initial writing, or be the final judges on when a piece of writing is "good enough" – content, style, length, and all the rest – to offer to the Lord as a tool for serving His purposes.

Reflect

1. As you understand it, what's the difference between *writing* and *editing*? Why is each important for good writing?
2. The danger in writing badly, of course, is that it's easy to get used to it, and to think that this, as bad as it is, is the best you can do. How can you combat that tendency toward complacency about your writing?
3. How do you see the work of *writing* and the work of *editing* working out in your writing? Do you have someone who could help you at the editing stage of your writing?



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4. How can writing badly help to improve your writing style? How can editing help to improve your writing style?
5. Suppose you've taken an idea from a notebook, written about it, developed it, let it sit and simmer, then done some editing. What would you be looking for to determine whether this piece, though not quite good enough in your mind, is good enough to publish?



Seventh Principle for The Writing Pastor

Our writing can be more effective as we determine and develop our own unique writing style.

Lesson Takeaway

Summarize in writing the most important idea or lesson you have gained from Lesson 7, and explain how you are beginning to incorporate that lesson in your daily walk with and work for the Lord.

Lesson 8: Preparation Assignments

Writing discipline: Journaling

Continue writing in your weekly journal. Submit one entry for review. Beginning with this entry your instructor will begin to make comments about your craft as a writer – grammar, vocabulary, and composition.

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Be prepared to share something from your “Insights Journal,” which you were asked to begin as preparation for Session 5.

Share anything you have entered in your Projects Journal, and be prepared to talk about your initial thoughts as to the form this project might take and how it might develop.

Writing assignment

Complete the following questions as an inventory of your writing style at present:

Readership

I have identified the primary readership to which my writing will be addressed:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Still not sure

Very definitely

Who will be your primary readership?

Message

I have a clear sense of the message I want to communicate in my writing and what is necessary to make my message coherent and consistent:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Still not sure

Very definitely

How do you anticipate that your message will affect your writing style?



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Objectives

I understand the importance of focusing clearly on particular objectives for all my writing:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Still not sure

Very definitely

Do you need any additional clarity on identifying the key elements of love for God and neighbors?

Craft

I am confident in my ability to engage the various elements of the writer's craft:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Still not sure

Very definitely

What would you consider to be your strongest and weakest areas in the craft of writing?

Requirements of Scripture

I continuously think about the requirements of Scripture in the way I approach my ministry of writing:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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Still not sure

Very definitely

What are some additional requirements of Scripture that you think will shape your writing style?

Reading for writing

Let's look at a later excerpt from Isaac Watts' *An Exhortation for Ministers* to see what we can discern from it that might be of help to us in sharpening our writing style:

Apply yourself to your work with pious delight; not as a toil and task, which you wish were done and ended, but as a matter of inward pleasure to your own soul: Enter the pulpit with the solemnity of holy joy, that you have an opportunity to speak for the honor of God, and the salvation of men. Then you will not preach or pray with sloth or laziness, with coldness or indifference: We do not use to be slothful and indifferent in the pursuit of our joys, or the relish of our chosen pleasures. Stir up yourself to the work with sacred vigor, that the assembly may feel what you speak. But if you deliver the most solemn and lively composures like a man that is half asleep, it will be no wonder if your hearers slumber. A dull preacher makes a drowsy church.

Endeavor to get your heart into a temper of divine love, zealous for the laws of God, affected with the grace of Christ, and compassionate for the souls of men. With this temper engage in public work. Let your frame of spirit be holy with regard to your own inward devotion, near to God, and delighting in him; and let it be zealous for the name of Christ, and the increase of his kingdom.

Lesson 8: Sharpening Your Style (2)

Determining a Style

Overview and Objectives

Determining a style can be difficult, primarily because we don't normally think about style that much while we're writing. Our focus tends to be on content and grammar, and style is mainly an afterthought. But style is an important part both of the writing process and the communication process. So we need to



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decide what kind of style is appropriate for the writing we're doing, as well as for the people to whom we're writing

This is the second of three lessons on style.

Assignments

- Review your answers to the questionnaire provided in the Preparation for this Lesson (Lesson 7, p. 66). This conversation should help you to begin thinking more clearly about the kind of writing style you hope to develop.
- Complete the writing assignments for this Lesson.
- Watch Presentation 8 for this Lesson. Be prepared to discuss the Questions for Reflection or Discussion at the end of the Presentation outline.
- Summarize what was most important for you from this lesson in the *Lesson Takeaway*.
- Read the Lesson Preparation Assignments for Lesson 9.

Questionnaire Review

XIV. Questionnaire Review

Use this space to make any additional notes that come to mind as we talk through your answers to the questionnaire provided in the Preparation materials for this Lesson:

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Presentation 8

View Presentation 8 on the resource page. Use the outline below to follow along:

XV. “Types” of Writing Styles

A. Anecdotal: Central use of stories, illustrations

B. Reportage: Information without comment

C. Critical: Analysis, critique

D. Instructional: Detailed exposition with applications

E. Conversational: One-to-one

F. Pastoral: Advisor, shepherd, comforter

G. Scholarly: Documentation

H. Devotional: Scriptural and reflective

I. Eclectic

J. Developing Your Style

1. Read widely



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2. Read widely in your preferred themes and forms
3. Write every day!
4. Work your notebooks
5. Seek feedback
6. Sit on your writing
7. Envision various uses for each piece
8. Remain open to growth and change

Various writing styles are available to us, depending on the audience we're trying to reach, the topic and goals we have set for our writing, and the format and length of any particular piece. A good writer, it seems to me, will make use of various "types" of writing styles to develop his own unique approach to fulfilling this part of his ministry.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Which of the writing styles discussed in this presentation appeal to you? What kinds of readers do you have in mind as you consider adopting this (these) style(s)?
2. Can you see why it is important to think about the style of writing before you get too far into a piece? Explain.



Eighth Principle for The Writing Pastor

Choosing a style appropriate to the readers, content, and purpose of your writing will help you to communicate your ideas more effectively.

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Lesson Takeaway

Summarize in writing the most important idea or lesson you have gained from Lesson 8, and explain how you are beginning to incorporate that lesson in your daily walk with and work for the Lord.

Lesson 9: Preparation Assignments

Writing discipline: Journaling

Continue writing in your weekly journal. Submit one entry for review. Your instructor will continue making comments about your craft as a writer – grammar, vocabulary, and composition. In addition, he will be noting aspects of any particular “type” of writing style you may employ. This should help you in beginning to identify the writing style that seems most to be in line with your purposes and abilities.

Be prepared to share something from your “Insights Journal,” which you were asked to begin as preparation for Session 5. Share anything additional you have entered in your Projects Journal, and be prepared to talk about any projects that are beginning to take better shape in your thinking.

Begin your fourth and final journal, a Quotations Journal. From your reading, begin to collect brief quotes that resonate with you for any reason – subject, tone, insight, etc. Your Quotations Journal will become a valuable resource for future writing projects, and it will help to make you more alert to different writing styles as you encounter them in your reading. At our next session, share one quote you have written down.

Writing assignment

From the various writing styles summarized in this lesson, select three, and write one paragraph on a topic of your choice using each different writing style. Use the same topic for each paragraph. The paragraphs do not need to be related as one writing piece; rather, they should stand alone as samples of how you might write in each style. Be prepared to share and discuss these at our next class session.

Lesson 9: Blueprint for a Ministry of Writing



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Overview and Objectives

We bring our study of *The Writing Pastor* to a conclusion in this Lesson by reviewing those disciplines and practices that will allow you to incorporate writing as a more consistent and effective resource in your ministry. During this session we will:

Assignments

- Complete the writing assignments for this Lesson.
- Watch Presentation 9 for this Lesson. Be prepared to discuss the Questions for Reflection or Discussion at the end of the Presentation outline.
- Summarize what was most important for you from this lesson in the *Lesson Takeaway*.

Presentation 9

View Presentation 9 on the resource page. Use the outline below to follow along:

XVI. Blueprint for a Ministry of Writing

A blueprint for a ministry of writing is larger than a plan. Whereas your writing plan focuses on particular projects, a blueprint includes those ongoing elements that will be necessary for you to bring your plans to fruition in serving the people of God with your writing.

There are eight critical components to a blueprint for a ministry of writing:

- A. Make writing a _____ part of your ministry tool kit

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B. Pursue _____-range and _____-range projects

C. Work at the elements, aspects, and development of your writing _____

D. Keep up your _____!

E. Write as a _____, not as a _____

F. Take your writing seriously:

1. Write every day
2. Use what you write
3. Read about writing



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4. Look for ways to improve your writing

G. Update your writing plan _____

1. Make plans 1 to 3 years out

2. Revise your plans as needed

3. Review your plans annually

H. Pray _____ about your writing

Your writing blueprint should become established as an integral part of your ministry of writing. Let the blueprint be your guide, and you will find that writing can make an increasingly important contribution to the work God has called you to do.

XVII. Some Final Thoughts on Writing for Ministry:

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Questions for Reflection of Discussion

1. Are you ready to begin incorporating writing as an important tool for your ministry? Describe the present state of your readiness.
2. Be prepared to talk through the rudiments of a 1-3 year writing plan. Be as specific as possible.



Ninth Principle for The Writing Pastor

Writing will become an important tool for your ministry as you continually prepare, plan, and produce for the glory of God.

Lesson Takeaway

Summarize in writing the most important idea or lesson you have gained from Lesson 9 and explain how you are beginning to incorporate that lesson in your daily walk with and work for the Lord.

Final Assignment

Flesh out a three-year writing plan, following the guidelines in previous Lessons, and submit this to your Course Guide. Include in your plan both how you will develop your skills as a writer and what kinds of writing and writing projects you will pursue.



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Taxonomies

Loving God

A Partial Taxonomy

Evaluate overall your practice of loving God in your personal life and your ministry, using a 1 to 10 scale for each of the eight rows. Evaluate only the major headings; allow the secondary headings to guide your thinking and evaluation. Then, briefly explain why you chose the number you did. Finally, summarize your plan for improving in each of these areas.

How we love God	My Personal Life	My Ministry	My Ministry Plan
1 His presence 1.1 Longing Ps. 42.1, 2 1.2 Waiting Ps. 25.1-5 1.3 Enjoying Ps. 16.11 1.4 Abiding 1 Jn. 2.24-27 1.5 Celebrating			
2 His Word 2.1 Reading Acts 17.11 2.2 Meditating Ps. 1 2.3 Studying 1 Cor. 2.13			

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2.4 Memorizing Ps. 119.11 2.5 Sharing Col. 3.16			
3 His salvation 3.1 Enjoying Ps. 116.13 3.2 Working out Phil. 2.12 3.3 Studying Ps. 111.2 3.4 Proclaiming Acts 1.8 3.5 Celebrating Rev. 5.9, 10			
4 His creation 4.1 Enjoying Ps. 115.16 4.2 Studying Ps. 111.2 4.3 Cultivating Ps. 8.6 4.4 Conserving Dt. 22.6, 7 4.5 Sharing Hab. 2.14			
5 His work 5.1 Enjoying Ps. 111.2 5.2 Studying Ps. 111.2 5.3 Resting in Eph. 1.11 5.4 Celebrating Ps. 104 5.5 Sharing Ps. 71.15, 16			
6 His appearing 6.1 Study 2 Pet. 3.11-13 6.2 Prepare 1 Jn. 3.2, 3 6.3 Encourage 1 Th. 4.18 6.4 Celebrate Ps. 96.11-13 6.5 Warn Eze. 33.1-9			
7 His praise to the generations 7.1 Worship Jn. 4.24 7.2 Teach Ps. 78.1-8 7.3 Evangelize Acts 1.8 7.4 Missions 3 Jn. 5-8 7.5 Legacy Ps. 45.17			
8 The fear of God 8.1 Obedience, Dt. 10.12-16 8.2 His power, Dt. 11.1-5 8.3 His discipline Heb. 12.3-11; Matt. 10.28 8.4 His displeasure Dt. 9.19 8.5 His presence and glory, Matt. 17.1-6; Rev. 1.17			

Loving Neighbors A Partial Taxonomy



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Evaluate overall your practice of loving your neighbor in your personal life and your ministry, using a 1 to 10 scale for each of the five rows. Evaluate only the major headings (for example, “Seeking”); allow the secondary headings to guide your evaluation. Then, briefly explain why you chose the number you did. Finally, summarize your plan for improving in each of these areas.

How we love our neighbor	My Personal Life	My Ministry	My Ministry Plan
1 Seeking Lk. 19.1-10 1.6 Learning names 1.7 Initiating contacts 1.8 Starting conversations 1.9 Listening well 1.10 Praying often			
2 Serving Jn. 13.1-15 2.1 Alert to needs 2.2 Available to help 2.3 Equipped 2.4 Persisting 2.5 Pointing to Jesus			
3 Shepherding, Jn. 10 3.1 Relationship 3.2 Example and instruction 3.3 Sacrifice 3.4 Defend 3.5 Give eternal life			
4 Sowing, Mk. 4.1-20 4.1 Prepare the soil 4.2 Personal testimony 4.3 Word in season 4.4 Cultivate and fertilize 4.5 Nurture and prune			
5 Stewarding, Eph. 5.15-17 5.1 Praying 5.2 Planning 5.3 Keeping alert 5.4 Seeking the Kingdom 5.5 Self-watch			

Notes, ideas, plans, questions:

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our mission is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.

