



WHY SEMINARY?

10 REASONS FOR CONSIDERING SEMINARY





SEMINARY.EDU

Some say that seminary will only hold them back or that it is unnecessary. Perhaps. But there are also many reasons for attending seminary beyond the fact that the Mdiv (Masters of Divinity) or an equivalent degree still functions as the union card for pastoral ministry at churches. So here are 10 reasons to attend.

NORTHERN
Seminary



01

GIFT ENHANCEMENT

Seminaries will not “gift” a person, but seminaries can almost always enhance the gifts God has given you. Seminaries are at their best when they are populated by people called and gifted for ministry. And seminary will do is enhance those gifts. This is one of the most important activities of a seminary—to enhance the gifts of our students.

- What gifts you would like see to grow?
- Do you have a call to ministry?

02

BIBLICAL & THEOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

Seminary students always come with some knowledge of the Bible and theology. But at seminary you will study the whole Bible—from the front to the back. And seminary will enhance a student’s theology, both by way of subtraction and addition—getting rid of some careless ideas and adding better ones. You will have the opportunity to study the great theologians of the church—like Athanasius and Augustine, Aquinas and Anselm, Luther and Calvin, and into the modern era with Barth and Moltmann. Enhancing your knowledge of the Bible and theology will allow you to creatively and faithfully engage your culture with the gospel.

- Do you feel you could learn more about the Bible?
- Are there aspects of your faith you would like to understand better?

If so, check out these two podcasts: “[Kingdom Roots](#)” on the Bible and “[Theology on Mission](#)” on, well, theology.

03

PERSONAL ENHANCEMENT

There was a day when seminaries would just focus on transferring information without paying attention to spiritual formation. But now you will find seminaries are making spiritual formation—or personal enhancement—a part of each and every course.

- What parts of your faith journey would you like to develop?
- Would you like to grow in different spiritual practices?

04

DEDICATED TIME

To develop theologically you need time, and that's what seminary does. In seminary you set aside dedicated time for classes and for studying. Many people (whether already pastors or those in the work force) can't afforded the luxury of studying in big chunks of time. But going to seminary, even if it is as a part-time or live-streaming student, offers a dedicated time for study.

- Are you structuring time to study the faith and grow in your gifts?
- Would you go to seminary full-time or part-time?

Northern have designed two masters degrees that fit into any schedule and that you can take from any place.

05

ACCESS TO SPECIALISTS

One of the problems with seminaries is that they can take on the flavor of a research institution where professors want to be left alone to do research and write books. But seminary at its best should provide you with access to professors who are both respected in their fields and competent in pastoral ministry. At seminary you can sit down with respected thought leaders and talk about the things that are the most important to you.

- What questions do you have about faith, life, and culture?
- Do you have access to people who can help you answer those questions?

06

FELLOWSHIP WITH PEERS

In my years of speaking and writing and teaching, I have observed that many pastors made their closest ‘ministry peers’ in seminary. Adult friends, especially those who are ministry peers, remain friends for a long time. At seminary you will find a collection of peers who will form a ministry fellowship for life.

- Do you have friends that will walk with you through ministry?
- Do you have a context where you can find these friendship?

07

THEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Some seminaries prefer to have faculty who all think alike, and want their students to fall into line. But theological diversity amid orthodoxy will prepared you best for ministry. No two people think alike. And that is OK. Being exposed to different perspectives will equip you to understand yourself and others better within God’s great plan of salvation. Taking classes from professors who don’t agree with you, or who think differently, will make you a better minister in the long run.

- Are you regularly exposed to diverse theological perspectives within an orthodox framework?
- Do you need help finding that broader perspective?

08

LANGUAGES

Not all seminaries require Greek and Hebrew and Aramaic. But the professors will know those languages and will show you why it matters for sermons, for devotion, and for ministry. At seminary you have the opportunity to study the original languages.

- Have you ever wondered why there are some many translations?
- Have you ever longed to pull back the curtain and read the Bible in its original language?

09

THE BLAZING ISSUES OF THE DAY

It is extremely hard to stay up to date on all the important, and yet controversial, issues of the day: universalism, open theism, racism, the New Perspective on Paul, views of the atonement, etc. You simply don't have the time to read and understand all the different arguments. What if you could raise your hand in class or walk into a professor's office and talk about those issues with someone who can boil the debate into a manageable size? You can do that in seminary. And you can be guided through extended reflection on a topic that is important to you and your ministry?

- What topic have you been too afraid or overwhelmed to press into?
- What issue would you love to press into for an extended time of study?

10

WHO, NOT JUST WHAT

When you are done with seminary you will be a different person. The biggest enhancement you will get from seminary is not information or credentials. The benefit of seminary will be Who you became.

- Do you think seminary is for you?

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