THE BOOK OF JOSHUA
Reformed Seminary - Orlando
(2OT715/01)

Course Description:

This course will examine the book of Joshua with an eye to understanding its major themes and using them in exposition in a Christian ministry context. After considering various introductory matters, the course will proceed in a verse-by-verse and paragraph-by-paragraph manner. Special attention will be given to (1) distinctive themes in Joshua, (2) their links with other Old Testament themes, and (3) their relevance in the modern world. Special attention also will be given to proper methods of exegesis and ways of reading a text.

Course Objectives

Cognitive Goals: Upon successful completion of this course, each student will have demonstrated a proper grasp of

1. The overall structure and content of the book of Joshua.
2. The major theological and critical issues in the book.
3. Proper ways of interpreting and using the book of Joshua in the present day.
4. Good research, exegetical, and reading skills.

Affective Goals: Beyond the cognitive (measurable) goals above, several affective goals are integral to this course:

1. That each student will hear God speaking today through the study of this portion of the Old Testament and be transformed in significant ways.
2. That each student will develop a love and appreciation for these Old Testament books and gain confidence for using them in Christian ministry.

Required Textbooks:

1. *The Bible*. A dynamic-equivalence version is recommended for one-sitting readings of the book, and a formal-equivalence version is recommended for in-depth study, including use in class.
Use of a Hebrew Bible is encouraged for those who have studied the language, but not required.

2. One of the following:*  
   
   
   OR  
   

*You are encouraged to purchase both commentaries as basic building blocks of a personal library on the book of Joshua, although only one—of your choice—is required.

Course Requirements:

1. Reading, Class Preparation, and Discussion (10%)

Daily discussion will be based upon the readings for each class; you are to do all readings prior to coming to class. You will be reading the book of Joshua two times in its entirety, as well as the entire commentary by Hess or 300 pages of Howard’s. You will account for this reading by the forms attached to the syllabus. Your grade here will be determined by degree of completion of the reading assignments, and class attendance, participation, and interaction.

You are to read through the book of Joshua at one sitting before the course begins. A dynamic equivalence translation (e.g. NIV, NLT) is recommended for such reading. The second reading will come in the day-to-day schedule, where you must give a slow, careful reading of the assigned passages for each day prior to class. A formal-equivalence translation is recommended for this (e.g., NASB, ESV). In this manner, you should acquire a broad acquaintance with the narrative sweep of the book and also be prepared to discuss each passage in some depth on a day-to-day basis. You must also read the relevant portions of Hess or Howard each day prior to class time.

2. Original Outline (10%)

The process for producing this outline is to proceed in three steps:

First, you must read the book through at least once in one sitting. (You should have already done this before the course began.) You may want to review the overall book again prior to beginning work on the outline.

Second, you are to outline the entire book in detail. The outline must consist of three levels, the highest dealing with the book’s main sections (no larger than nine or ten chapters in length), the middle level dealing usually—but not necessarily always—with
the chapter level, and the lowest level dealing with the main chapter subsections. You may not consult a commentary or other outside source for this. Please resist automatically following any outlines included in your Bible itself, as well. This outline should reflect your own careful interaction with the flow and logic of the text itself—its broad contours and the details of its terrain.

As you create your outline, you must use Israel’s inheritance as the basis for each portion of your outline at the first and second levels. That is, the word inheritance [or inherit, inherits, etc.] must appear in every point in your outline at the highest and middle levels. Be sure to incorporate inclusive chapter and verse numbers for every entry (e.g., “Caleb’s Inheritance [14:6-15]”).

Please make your outline fairly detailed, and use the following convention of outlining:


For an example of how to do this, see the Book of Judges outline at the end of the syllabus, which uses some form of the word apostasy in all first- and second-level headings. Note also the method of including chapter and verse numbers in every heading.

**Third**, you are to produce an original, one-sentence statement of the book’s primary theme. That is, you are to compose your own complete, well-worded sentence that encapsulates the entire message of the book. This statement is to be based on the work you have done in the outlining, i.e., it is to arise organically from the outline, not “imposed” from the outside.

Then, you are to write a 50-100 word paragraph justifying from the text of Joshua your statement of theme.

**3. Worksheets (50%)**

Five worksheets are due on the dates indicated below. These will explore specific issues of exegesis, interpretation, theology, etc. Students should expect to spend 2-4 hours on each worksheet. The worksheets may be found at the end of the syllabus.

**4. Exegetical Paper (30%)**

An exegetical paper on Joshua 24:14-28 is required. Instructions are found at the end of the syllabus.
Grading Summary

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<td>Reading</td>
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<td>Outline</td>
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<td>Worksheets</td>
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<td>Exegetical Paper</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Grading Scale

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<th>Score</th>
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Note on attendance: Because of the obvious educational benefits, as well as common courtesy to others, regular and on-time class attendance is expected. Persistent lateness or unexcused absences beyond two class periods (segments) will result in a grade reduction.

Note on cell phones: Please turn these off—or set to “vibrate” or “silent ring”—during class.

Note on submitting work: All written work must be submitted electronically by the due date, in an attached Word document, to dhoward@bethel.edu. Late work will be penalized proportionally.

Please include your name in two places:

(1) on the document itself, and
(2) in the subject line of the e-mail, clearly indicating the course and which assignment(s) is/are attached, as well.

So, if Martin Luther were taking the class, the subject line for submitting Worksheet 1 would read as follows: Luther, M. – Joshua class – WS 1
COURSE SCHEDULE

After introductions, the class will proceed through the book of Joshua in its natural order throughout the week. You are expected to come prepared each day with all assigned homework completed, and the next several chapters of Joshua read. The corresponding sections of the commentary (Hess or Howard) should be read each day, as well.

The class format will be lecture-discussion. Several break-out sessions will also be scheduled during the week.

Assignment Schedule

All homework during the class week is due at the beginning of the day. The assignments due on January 27 and February 10 are due by 11:55 pm. Worksheet 1 is due on the first day of class (along with the other work indicated below), but you are strongly encouraged to complete Worksheets 2, 3, and 4 by that time, as well, in order to reduce stress during the week of class.

Late work will be penalized proportionally.

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Homework Due</th>
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| Jan 16   | **Read:** One-sitting reading of Joshua  
**Read:** Introductory section of Hess or Howard  
**Read:** David Howard, “Evaluating Commentaries on Joshua.” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 2.3 (Fall 1998): 4-10.  
**Due:** Outline of Joshua  
**Due:** Worksheet 1: Names in Joshua |
| Jan 17   | **Due:** Worksheet 2: Leadership in Joshua                                   |
| Jan 18   | **Read:** “The Student, the Fish, and Agassiz”                               |
| Jan 19   | **Due:** Worksheet 3: Land Distribution in Joshua                           |
| Jan 20   | **Due:** Worksheet 4: Spiritual Formation in Joshua                         |
| Jan 27   | **Due:** Worksheet 5: Integrative Essay and Teaching Outline                |
| Feb 10   | **Due:** Exegetical Paper on Joshua 24:14-28                                 |
Guidelines for Exegetical Paper (Joshua 24:14-28)

You are to write an 8-9 page exegetical paper, following the steps below. Note especially the instructions about (not) using commentaries or other outside resources in several parts of the paper. Use of outside resources in those sections where they are not to be used will result in a reduced grade. Please refer to the essay by Howard on evaluating Joshua commentaries for more on the philosophy behind this.

a. **Text.** Write out the text of the passage, including verse numbers and indications of your own paragraph divisions, from a formal-equivalence translation. **(1 page)** NO COMMENTARY NEEDED.

b. **Historical background.** Focus here is on information not directly gathered from the text itself or its literary contexts (i.e., things such as dates, international situation, etc.). Outside sources (such as Bible commentaries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, or histories) **should** be used here. **(½–1 page)**

c. **Literary Context.** (1) Discuss the placement of the passage in its immediate and larger contexts within the book, and (2) justify the paragraph divisions you have provided above. That is, how does it flow logically from the preceding verses in chapter 24, as well as from the larger context of chapters 22 and 23? Be as specific and thorough as you can here. **NO COMMENTARY NEEDED. (1 page)**

d. **Paragraph Analysis.** Identify the theme of each paragraph in one sentence per paragraph. This may be a key sentence taken directly from the text or a statement in your own words of the paragraph’s theme. Give the reasons (in detail) for your judgment in each case. **NO COMMENTARY NEEDED. (1 page)**

e. **Verse Analysis.** Comment here on important features of individual verses. Do not merely summarize each verse or re-state the obvious. Do comment on the flow of the argument or story-line from verse to verse, including commenting upon why certain things may be stated in the particular way that they are, why certain statements are included where they are, why there may be omissions of expected materials, etc. Comment as needed on important theological words or ideas. Notice where else in the book or in other Biblical books certain words or ideas are found. You may use concordances or theological wordbooks here, including any cross-referencing guide you like (such as that found within most Bibles themselves), but, you may **not** use a commentary here. Do your own work here. **NO COMMENTARY NEEDED. (2–3 pages)**

f. **Theme.** Provide a one-sentence statement of the theme of the entire text (i.e., what is the author’s main point in this section?). This should be based upon the various stages of your detailed analysis above, especially building upon your statements of
theme for each paragraph. Please explain the basis for your decision in detail. NO COMMENTARY NEEDED. (1/2 page)

g. **Outline.** An “exegetical” (“historical”) outline of the text, reflecting the theme. This is to be similar to the type of outline you produced for the entire book of Joshua. NO COMMENTARY NEEDED. (1/2 page)

h. **Homiletical (sermon) outline.** This should derive from the exegetical outline. See the sample at the end of the syllabus for an example of such an outline. Please also include a one-sentence re-statement of the theme (point “f.” above), a desired audience response, and a concluding challenge. NO COMMENTARY NEEDED. (1/2 page)

**Note:** Page numbers here are suggested guides only. They may be adjusted as needed, provided the asked-for material is covered adequately within the confines of 8–9 pages. Exegetical papers must be no longer than 9 pages (excluding title page, endnotes, bibliography, etc.).

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**C. Style and Formatting Guidelines for Exegetical Paper**

The paper is to be neatly typed, doubled-spaced, using no larger than a 12-point font. Please number the pages and use a “ragged right” margin (i.e., not justified right). You may use any standard scheme of footnotes, end notes, or text notes found in Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers*, but you must use it consistently, and you must provide full and proper documentation for any sources you use, including a separate bibliography appended to the paper.

When citing a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia, be sure to list the author of the individual article you are consulting, the title of the article, and the rest of the pertinent information following (dictionary name and editor, and publication information, including page numbers).

You must follow standard academic writing procedures, including writing in your own words, giving proper credit when quoting or referring to material from another work, and writing in good English. If you have trouble with writing of English, you are expected to have your papers proofread by someone conversant in English writing skills prior to turning in your papers.

Failure to pay attention to matters in this section will result in a reduction in the paper’s grade.
OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES

I. THE ROOTS OF ISRAEL’S APOSTASY (1:1 – 3:6)
   A. Prelude to Apostasy: Incomplete Conquests (1:1-2:5)
      1. Initial Battles and the Seeds of Apostasy (1:1-21)
      2. Incomplete Conquests Portending Apostasy (1:22-36)
      3. The Angel of the Lord and Israel’s Apostasy (2:1-5)
   B. Unfolding and Consequences of Apostasy (2:6-3:6)
      1. Joshua’s Death and the Coming Apostasy (2:6-10)
      2. The Recurring Pattern of Israel’s Apostasy (2:11-15)
      3. The Recurring Pattern of God’s Grace amidst Israel’s Apostasy
         (2:16-19)
      4. The Recurring Pattern of God’s Anger at Israel’s Apostasy
         (2:20-23)
      5. The Testing of Israel for its Apostasy(3:1-5)

II. THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF ISRAEL’S APOSTASY (3:7-16:31)
   A. Othniel: Military Deliverer Out of Apostasy (3:7-11)
   B. Ehud: Military Deliverer Out of Apostasy (3:12-30)
   C. Shamgar: Military Deliverer Out of Apostasy (3:31)
   D. Deborah: Judge and Deliverer Rising above Israel’s Apostasy (4:1 - 5:31)
      1. Victory Over the Canaanites (4:1-24)
      2. Deborah’s and Barak’s Victory Song. (5:1-31)
   E. Gideon: Conflicted Hero amidst Apostasy (6:1-8:35)
      1. Continuing Apostasy (6:1-10)
      2. Gideon's Call (6:11-40)
      3. Gideon's First Battle (7:1-8:3)
      4. Gideon's Second Battle (8:4-21)
      5. Gideon’s Apostasy (8:22-28)
      6. Gideon, Father of Abimelech (8:29-32)
      7. Continuing Apostasy (8:33-35)
   F. Abimelech: Apostate “King” (9:1-57)
      1. Abimelech's Sordid Rise (9:1-6)
      2. Indictment of Abimelech: Jotham's Fable (9:7-21)
      3. Abimelech's Violent Reign and End (9:22-55)
      4. Final Verdict on Abimelech (9:56-57)
   G. Tola: “Minor” Judge amidst Apostasy (10:1-2)
   H. Jair: “Minor” Judge amidst Apostasy (10:3-5)
   I. Jephthah: Conflicted Hero amidst Apostasy (10:6-12:7)
      1. Apostasy and Distress (10:6-18)
      2. Introduction to Jephthah (11:1-3)
      3. Jephthah's Commissioning (11:4-11)
4. Diplomatic Discussions (11:12-28)
5. Victory and Jephthah's Foolish Vow (11:29-40)
I. Ibzan: “Minor” Judge amidst Apostasy (12:8-10)
J. Elon: “Minor” Judge amidst Apostasy (12:11-12)

III. THE DEPTHS OF ISRAEL’S APOSTASY (17:1-21:25)
   A. Religious Apostasy (17:1-18:31)
      1. A Household’s Apostasy (17:1-6)
      2. A Levite’s Apostasy (17:6-13)
      3. A Tribe’s Apostasy (18:1-31)
   B. Moral and Social Apostasy (19:1-21:24)
      2. Civil War (20:1-48)
   C. Final Verdict on Israel’s Apostasy (21:25)
WORKSHEET # 1: Names in Joshua

You will need to use an exhaustive Bible concordance, or a searchable electronic Bible version (e.g., at www.biblegateway.com), in order to do this worksheet.

(1) A. List all the references to Joshua in the Pentateuch.

B. Write a 400-word “biography” of Joshua, using only the Pentateuch as your source. Include biblical references in your essay. (10 pts.)

(2) A. List all the references to Joshua in the book of Joshua where his name is accompanied by a label of some type (e.g., “son of Nun”).

B. List all the references to Moses and Eleazar in the book of Joshua, sorting them according to the use (or non-use) of labels accompanying their names.

C. What can be learned about the author’s intentions in his portrayal of these three characters, strictly from how he uses their names? (10 pts.)
This assignment is to be an exercise in interdisciplinary integration, using the book of Joshua and the Four-R Model of Transformational Leadership developed by Dr. Mark McCloskey of Bethel Seminary. The document you need is entitled “The 4R Model of Leadership: A Virtue-Based Curricular Model for Business Education in a Global Context,” and it appeared in the Fall 2010 issue of the *Journal of Business and Educational Leadership*.

The assignment is to write an 800-1000 word essay integrating and applying the 4R model to one or more leadership situations in the book of Joshua. (20 pts.)
WORKSHEET # 3: Land Distribution in Joshua

For this worksheet, choose one of the following two sets of questions to answer.

(1) **Tribal Inheritance Lists**

Joshua 13-21 are largely devoted to giving the tribal inheritance lists for the Israelite tribes. Scholars have distinguished between *boundary lists* (i.e., those detailing the boundaries of a given tribe) and *city lists* (i.e., those enumerating the cities within a given tribe’s boundaries). For most tribes—but not all—both boundary and city lists are found.

A. Lay out—in chart form—the boundary and city lists for each of the 14 tribal lists in Joshua 13-21. Be sure to include inclusive verse numbers for each part, and please do your own work here (i.e., no commentaries needed here). (10 pts.)

B. Discuss why there are 14 tribal lists (not 12). In your answer, consult Genesis 48-49 and Deuteronomy 33, among other things. (5 pts.)

C. Discuss briefly the cities of refuge in Joshua 20. Include in your discussion reference to the Pentateuchal passages referring to these cities, and also the significance of the death of the high priest in Josh. 20:6. (5 pts.)

(2) **Land Grant Narratives**

Richard Nelson, in his commentary on Joshua (*Joshua*, OT Library; Westminster John Knox, 1996, pp. 177-78), identifies what he calls “land grant narratives,” which include the following elements: First, there is a confrontation that establishes the setting and the characters. Second, the would-be grantees present their case and make a request for land. Third, the land is granted. Fourth and finally, a summary of the episode’s resolution is given. The five stories he identifies as such narratives are as follows: Caleb (14:6–15); Caleb’s daughter, Acsah (15:18–19); the daughters of Zelophehad (17:3–6); Joseph (17:14–18); and the Levites (21:1–3).

A. Lay out and identify, in chart form, the four elements in each of the five narratives. (10 pts.)

B. Choose two of these narratives, and discuss their literary context in detail (2-3 paragraphs for each one). In each discussion, take into account such things as why the author of Joshua would have given special attention (1) to this particular episode (2) at this particular place in the narrative. That is, what made each episode worthy of inclusion at all? (You should refer back to passages earlier in Joshua and/or the Pentateuch for help here.) And, why is mention made of each episode at the particular place in the book of Joshua in which it is found? (10 pts.)
Worksheet # 4: Spiritual Formation in Joshua

This assignment is to be an exercise in interdisciplinary integration, using the book of Joshua as the starting point. You may choose any spiritual-formation model or resource you like, and integrate it with whatever insights from the book of Joshua that you’d like to highlight, integrating and applying these to one or more real-life situations that you encounter, whether in your personal life or your ministry context.

The essay is to be 800-1000 words in length. (20 pts.)

NOTE: This case study is intentionally less structured than the one on leadership in Joshua, and it is not tied to any specific model of spiritual formation. I expect you to use insights from any spiritual-formation classes you might have had. You may use a specific model that you've learned, whether in class or elsewhere. If you have not had any formal exposure to “spiritual formation” as a discipline, you should simply reflect on what “spiritual” insights you've gained as a result of reading and studying the book of Joshua in depth. This exercise is more akin to a "devotional" approach than an "academic" exercise.
WORKSHEET # 5: Integrative Essay and Teaching Outline

This assignment has two parts.

(1) The first part consists of a 1000-1200 word essay, introducing the major themes and message of the book of Joshua, with an adult or college-age Sunday School class as the target audience. The essay should be capable of being used as the basis for one of the opening sessions of a Sunday School series on the book, and it should be written with the purpose of convincing people of the importance of this book and its relevance to Christians. It should make people want to attend the entire series and to study the book.

The essay must include the following elements:

(1) A statement of the book’s primary overarching theme, with detailed support.
(2) Development of 3–4 subsidiary themes or important issues, with detailed support.
(3) A statement of why a Christian should study the book of Joshua, with detailed support.

You may use your Bible and any notes you choose. This is not to be a research paper: no footnotes and no references to secondary literature. But, you must include supporting references from the Bible whenever possible. You are to do your own work, without consulting any outside resources except for your own notes and Bible, and it is to be based upon the text of Joshua itself. (12 pts.)

(2) The second part consists of a practically-oriented teaching outline for the book. That is, How might you handle the book of Joshua in a 12-week series? Target it to one of the following contexts: Sunday School class, Bible study group, preaching series, youth group, or some other one. Indicate your target group, and include a tentative outline, with themes for each lesson. Be sure to include the Scriptural passage(s) for each one. (8 pts.)
READING REPORT

By affixing my name below, I affirm that I have read all of the assigned reading for this class period, which consists of the following:

This was done

- Completely and on time 
- Completely, but late 
- Partially and on time 
- Partially, and late 

NAME (printed) ___________________________ DATE: __________________

READING REPORT

By affixing my name below, I affirm that I have read all of the assigned reading for this class period, which consists of the following:

This was done

- Completely and on time 
- Completely, but late 
- Partially and on time 
- Partially, and late 

NAME (printed) ___________________________ DATE: __________________

READING REPORT

By affixing my name below, I affirm that I have read all of the assigned reading for this class period, which consists of the following:

This was done

- Completely and on time 
- Completely, but late 
- Partially and on time 
- Partially, and late 

NAME (printed) ___________________________ DATE: __________________
Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

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<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tr>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical,</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Class discussions, break-out sessions, and written assignments</td>
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<td>theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and</td>
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<td>frameworks.</td>
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<td>Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Readings, lectures, discussion all rooted in the text of Scripture</td>
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<td>skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture</td>
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<td>to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and</td>
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<td>hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
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<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster</td>
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<td>Standards.</td>
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<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Class discussions and spiritual-formation assignment</td>
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<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>The total class experience and all coursework</td>
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<td>Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Opposing views will be considered and treated fairly</td>
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<td>Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring</td>
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<td>manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)</td>
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<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td>enthusiasm.</td>
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<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and</td>
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<td>lead a worship service.</td>
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<td>Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in</td>
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<td>Spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Church/World</strong></td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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