



Ecclesial Theologian Fellowship Prospectus

The Center for Pastor Theologians (CPT) is a Protestant evangelical organization committed to equipping pastors to be theologians for today's complex world. The CPT believes that theology will remain ecclesially anemic, and the church theologically enfeebled, unless and until pastor theologians reclaim the mantle for the theological leadership of the church.

For far too long both the church and the academy have contented themselves with the bifurcation of ecclesial concerns on the one hand, and theological reflection on the other. This, unfortunately, has led to a weakening of theology and the church. The CPT draws attention to this regrettable and consequential divorce of ecclesial and theological concerns and advocates that pastor theologians stand in the breach, for the renewal of theology and of the church.

Central to the CPT's mission is a kind of pastor theologian we call the Ecclesial Theologian. The Ecclesial Theologian is a local church pastor who provides theological leadership, not only to a local congregation, but to God's ecclesia. Ecclesial Theologians are called not only to shepherd their own flock, but, through their own substantive thought-leadership, to serve the church more broadly.

The church needs more Ecclesial Theologians, and we believe that the CPT has a role to play in recruiting, encouraging, and resourcing them. For over a decade, our Ecclesial Theologian Fellowships have been a rallying point for emerging Ecclesial Theologians. The expansive network of Ecclesial Theologians that has developed has, in turn, served as the engine of the CPT's ministry. This network, and the annual gatherings that support and sustain it, serve to equip and encourage local church pastors to embrace their calling as Ecclesial Theologians.

Ecclesial Theologian Fellowship Overview

Ecclesial Theologian Fellowships are annual gatherings of established and emerging Ecclesial Theologians for substantive dialogue and reflection. The vast majority of Fellows have completed (or, in some cases, are completing) a doctoral degree in biblical or theological studies. Fellows hold degrees from some of the leading academic institutions in the world and are committed to leveraging their academic gifting for the good of the church. They also represent many different denominations and bring the strengths of their ecclesial traditions into conversation with one another and with the Great Tradition—all with a view to being shaped by and, in turn, shaping the theological reflection of the broader ecclesial community.

The CPT is committed to resourcing and platforming the Ecclesial Theologian Fellows; indeed, their success is integral to the success of the CPT in its mission to help effect the theological renewal of the church and the ecclesial renewal of theology. The annual Symposium gathering is the primary way in which the CPT accomplishes this goal. Members of Ecclesial Theologian

Fellowships also have additional opportunities to exercise theological leadership, such as leading local CPT fellowships in their area, including Local Theologian Fellowships or a Student Theologian Fellowship at a nearby college or seminary.

Fellowship Symposia

Each Ecclesial Theologian Fellowship meets annually for a three-day working symposium (Monday evening through Wednesday lunch) at Calvary Memorial Church in Oak Park, Illinois, just west of Chicago, or other locations in the U.S. Each CPT fellow is expected to regularly attend and meaningfully participate in his or her annual symposium. The symposia bring together a diverse body of both pastor theologians and ecclesially sensitive academic theologians, with a view to establishing collegial relationships and collaborating on theological projects relevant to the life of the church. Meals and lodging are covered by the CPT. Travel assistance is also available.

From 2020-2023, the symposia are focused on the theme of Virtue Formation, in partnership with the John Templeton Foundation, which has given us a grant of \$1,000,000 to pursue pastoral engagement with the virtues of love (2020-2021), hope (2021-2022), and humility (2022-2023). The symposia during this period will have readings built around the integration of insights from social science with theology and will include expert consultants from various institutions who will engage us with their research in virtue formation.

Overview of Fellowship Benefits

Fellowship benefits include:

- The opportunity for Fellows to have their work peer-reviewed by a diverse group of ecclesial and academic theologians
- The opportunity to publish papers and book reviews in the *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology (BET)*
- Yearly invitation to a three-day theological symposium with noted academic and ecclesial theologians (includes lodging and meals, and travel as needed)
- A robust network of scholarly, ecclesially diverse relationships
- Opportunities for publication, with financial compensation in some cases
- Access to the www.pastortheologians.com platform for publication of articles, videos, and interviews
- Free attendance of the annual CPT Theology Conference
- The opportunity to lead a Local Theologian Fellowship or Student Theologian Fellowship
- Opportunities to present papers and research at CPT events, including the annual CPT Theology Conference
- Access to the ATLA database
- Financial assistance for participation in conferences to grow as a pastor theologian

Overview of Fellowship Responsibilities

The Ecclesial Theologian Fellowship strives to balance the demands of parish ministry and the theological calling. Fellowship responsibilities include:

- Submission of one chapter-length essay for review and critique every three years (approx.) at a Fellowship Symposium
- Careful reading and critiquing of Fellowship papers and other assigned readings prior to symposium
- Regular attendance at an annual three-day Fellowship Symposium
- Occasional participation in other CPT programming/publications during the year (writing a book review, publishing an article, participating in the podcast, presenting a personal project, leading a student fellowship, etc.)
- Yearly \$350 Fellows Fee

Ideal Candidates

Candidates for an Ecclesial Theologian Fellowship are assessed using the following criteria:

- *Vocational Calling*: The extent to which the candidate is presently engaged in pastoral/local church ministry, and plans to continue in the same.
- *Theological Calling*: The extent to which the candidate views the writing/publication of theological scholarship as a significant ministry calling.
- *Education*: The terminal degree of the candidate, and any ongoing degree program.
- *Publishing CV*: The extent to which the candidate has an established publishing record in theological scholarship (monographs, chapter contributions, journal articles, etc).
- *Age*: The extent to which the candidate is still becoming established in his or her career, and the CPT's capacity to meaningfully invest in the candidate's future as an ecclesial theologian.
- *Social Location*: The extent to which the candidate is able to engage as an ecclesial theologian from within minority and underserved communities.
- *Availability*: The extent to which the candidate has regular availability to attend annual fellowship symposia, as well as year-round vocational space to meaningfully engage in the task of ecclesial theology.

While none of these criteria is required to be admitted to an Ecclesial Theologian Fellowship, successful applications often present strongly on all of these metrics. However, there are exceptions. For instance, while the vast majority of Ecclesial Theologian Fellows have completed a PhD, there are some members who have been accepted without having completed a terminal degree due to the strength of their application in other categories.

Please email Rae Paul (rpaul@pastortheolgians.com) with any questions.