

Ministry Leadership Certificate

Program Syllabus
2025-26

A partnership with:



A TRAINING AND EQUIPPING **PARTNERSHIP** WITH **VENTURE CHURCH NETWORK** N. CALIFORNIA/NEVADA & **WESTERN SEMINARY**

From Western Seminary:

We are delighted to offer the Ministry Leadership Certificate (MLC), which is a set of high-impact courses offered through Western Seminary's Center for Leadership Development. This unique program is curated by the leaders of VCN with a specific view toward "equipping the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:12).

Together with our partners at VCN, we pray that this course of study proves to be a catalyst and resource for spiritual transformation in your life personally, and through your life as you love others and extend the good news of Jesus Christ in both word and action.



Dr. Charles J. Conniry, Jr.
President
Western Seminary



From VCN NCal/NV:

There is power in the Word of God! As a pastor my desire is to be faithful to the biblical charge to equip the saints for the work of ministry. The Ministry Leadership Program is an amazing tool that helps pastors train their people for the work of ministry. Over the years, I have sent several people from my church through this program and I have seen how it helps to deepen their knowledge of God's word and strengthen their confidence in sharing God's truth. I am thrilled to be leading this program!



Dr. Andy Flowers
Director of Leadership Education



Program Overview

*“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,”
~ Ephesians 4:11–12 (ESV)*

The Ministry Leadership Certificate program is designed to help pastors and churches prepare their saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the body of Christ.

1. Bible Overview

In the first semester the reading and video courses will provide a clear understanding of the scope and structure of the whole Bible. The goal is that every student has a better grasp of the genres, themes, and historical development of the Bible.

2. Bible Study Methods

Also in the first semester, there will be an emphasis on learning the basic steps required in a responsible study of a passage of scripture. Including word studies, contextual analysis, literary analysis, and application.

3. Theological Formation

During the second semester, the video courses and the reading will focus on understanding the core doctrines of the Christian faith. The goal is for students to understand the theological themes found in the Bible.

4. Sharing the Word

Finally, students will learn to create Bible study lessons or sermons. They will apply their understanding of the overview of scripture, Bible study methods, and theological knowledge to develop lesson plans that can be used to help communicate the word of God to others.

5. **Western Seminary Credit**

Students who complete the MLC and later enroll in a Western Seminary graduate certificate or degree program will receive up to two elective credits applied toward their selected program. This student benefit applies only to enrollment in Western graduate programs. MLC graduates desiring to utilize this benefit should contact the Center for Leadership Development at cld@westernseminary.edu.

6. **What else do I need to know?**

- **Cost:** \$300, plus the cost of books
- **Start Date:** Monday, August 25, 2025
- **End Date:** Friday, June 5, 2026
- **Orientation Meeting:**
Monday, August 25, 2025
Calvary Baptist Church | 506 Cottonwood Street, Woodland, CA 95695
10AM - 1PM (lunch will be provided)
- **Register Online:** <https://www.venturechurches-ncnv.com/mlc/>
- **Questions?** Email Andy Flowers, Director of Leadership Education
andy@venturechurches-ncnv.com

Class Overview

1. **Online Classes:**

Each semester, you will watch about 40 hours of class instruction; 31 hours in core classes and nine hours of elective classes. A viewing log will be handed out during the orientation.

2. **Reading:**

You will be responsible for reading the assigned textbooks each semester. A reading log will be handed out during the orientation.

3. **Written Assignments:**

Each semester, two written assignments are due. These assignments will be an application of the reading and the classes.

4. **Mentor:**

Because this is largely a self-guided course of study, you are asked to select a mentor. Your mentor should be someone on the pastoral staff or in a ministry leadership role at your church. Online classes, reading, and written assignments are all good, but the best ministry training comes from those currently serving in ministry.

First Semester

August 25 - November 21, 2025

Course	Instructor
MLC Orientation	Andy Flowers
The Bible: Connecting the Pieces	Bert Downs
Biblical Theology	Todd Miles
Old Testament Survey	Carl Laney
How to Study Your Bible	Todd Miles
VCN Seminar	TBD

Track Courses (pick one track)	Instructor
Staff Track	
Training Future Leaders	John Johnson
Elder Basics	Bert Downs
Paul's Letter to Leaders	Bert Downs
Women's Track	
Women in Leadership	Beverly Hislop
Shepherding Women in Pain	Beverly Hislop
Shepherding Women: Biblical Perspectives	Beverly Hislop
Lay Leader Track	
Theology of Work	Gerry Breshears
Implementing a Theology of Work	Kent Humphries

Books	Author(s)
30 Days to Understand the Bible (Pages 1 - 180)	Max Anders
Journey Into God's Word	Duvall & Hays

Projects	Due Date
<p>First Assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the information from the classes and the book "30 Days to Understand the Bible", explain how you would describe the big picture and broad themes of the Bible to someone who was unfamiliar with Scripture. Feel free to use drawings, bullet points, pictures, or anything else that will help make it memorable. (Use the "Arc of Bible History" found on page 384 of the 30 Days book as an example). 	10/17/25
<p>Second Assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select a passage of Scripture from the New Testament and apply the Bible study steps found in "Journey into God's Word." Make sure to use study tools and commentaries and cite your sources. 	11/22/25

Second Semester

January 10 - June 6, 2025

Course	Instructor
What is the Gospel?	Gerry Breshears
Theology 1	Gerry Breshears
Theology 2	Gerry Breshears
Theology 3	Gerry Breshears

Track Courses (pick one track)	Instructor
Staff Track	
Ministering for Maturity	Bert Downs
12 Marks of a Healthy Board	Panel Discussion
Biblical Theology of Leadership	Reid Kisling
Women's Track	
Shepherding Women 2	Beverly Hislop
Shepherding Women 3	Beverly Hislop
Calling, Complexity, and Constraint	Kate Harris
Lay Leader Track	
Navigating the Marketplace with Grace	Gerry Breshears
Work Matters	Gerry Breshears

Books	Author(s)
Why Believe?: A Reasoned Approach to Christianity	Neil Shenvi
30 Days to Understanding the Bible (Pages 183-381)	Max Anders

Projects	Due Date
<p>First Assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the book "Why Believe" as a guide, select one area of apologetics to write about. Supplement your research with at least three other sources. 	04/10/26
<p>Second Assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the book "30 Days to Understanding the Bible" (Pages 181-269) select one doctrinal area and create a 4-week lesson plan or sermon series. The lesson plans can be in bullet point or outline format, they don't have to be full manuscripts. Make sure that your lessons clearly explain the orthodox doctrinal position and include a clear gospel message. 	06/05/26