

The Viability of the Doctor of Missiology Degree

(The DMiss is dead; Long live the DMiss!)

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About the Author

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Abstract

The Doctor of Missiology degree (DMiss), unlike its more prosperous cousin, the Doctor of Ministry (DMin), has seen a decline in enrollment in some institutions and has been eliminated from the program offerings of others. Its utility and viability are in question.

This paper discusses the DMiss's place in the array of missiological doctoral programs, explores factors contributing to its viability, scope and content, and revisits its name. Data were collected from the seven institutions still offering an accredited DMiss degree in North America. This quasi-professional degree program is compared to both the DMin and the PhD in Intercultural Studies offered at the same institutions.

Two viability factors emerged from the data: 1) program focus and 2) achievability. Program focus impacted admission standards, program relevance, and the program's capstone piece (i.e., dissertation or ministry project). Achievability concerned accessibility, affordability, and program length.

The following suggestions were made for revitalizing an institution's Doctor of Missiology program: 1) sharpen the program's focus by targeting students who are working professionals and by offering specialized tracks that leverage prospective students' areas of interest; and 2) make the program more accessible, less expensive, and shorter in order to differentiate it more from the related PhD degree in Intercultural Studies. The paper concludes with recommendations for further research.

Introduction

The Doctor of Missiology (DMiss) degree came into existence in the 1970s as missiology was establishing itself as a distinct discipline (Martin 1974). The same time period saw the launching of the American Society of Missiology and *Missiology: An International Review* (Milner 2005). While the society and journal continue to prosper, the degree has been in decline in the United States since the mid 1990s as cognate PhD programs have replaced them (Starcher 2003). Is the DMiss degree a relic of a bygone era or does it still have some life in it? If it is useful, what is its function? Who is it for? What should it look like?

Some institutions, like Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Asbury Seminary, phased out their DMiss programs when or after introducing their PhD in Intercultural Studies. However, others, such as Fuller Seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, and Biola University, continue to grant both degrees.

This study sought to discover and describe factors affecting and shaping a viable DMiss program; that is, a program that students find meaningful and attractive enough to keep enrollment numbers at a level justifying the program's continued existence. This study analyzed data collected from archival documents (including institutions' websites and course catalogs) and through semi-structured interviews with leaders from four institutions. It is limited to DMiss programs in North America accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) or by one of the eight regional accreditation bodies.

The DMiss degree shares characteristics of other "professional" doctorates, like the Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) and the Doctor of Education (EdD). The viability of such professional doctorates has been debated, particularly in the case of the EdD (Starcher 2010). This

study contributes to the literature on professional doctorates in general and serves as an example of program evaluation of graduate programs of questionable viability.

DMiss Degree's History and Purpose

The purpose of the DMiss degree is intertwined with its history. From its earliest years, there was tension between the degree's professional and academic orientation. This tension continues to the present day, however, such tension is not limited to degrees in missiology but extends to degrees such as the EdD (cf. Starcher 2003, pp. 98-99).

Professional versus Academic Doctorates

Traits often associated with an academic doctoral program include: stringent admission requirements (e.g., a high GPA and/or GRE score, an acceptable sample of academic writing, multiple foreign languages), program length (e.g., a minimum of four years of fulltime study), comprehensive examinations, approximately 20 percent of the program devoted to research methods and production, and a scholarly dissertation (as opposed to a research project). While not all academic doctoral programs manifest all these traits, the traits provide a basis of comparison (Starcher 2010).

The Evolution of the DMiss Degree

According to Milner (2005), Fuller Seminary's School of World Mission began offering North America's first Doctor of Missiology degree in 1970. It was a rigorous professional degree of 96 quarter-units past the Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree (equivalent to 64 semester-units). Modeled after the Doctor of Education (EdD) degree, it was described

as “a professional degree requiring a great deal of research rather than a research or academic degree” (Milner 2005, p. 63). Milner cited the following excerpt from the school’s January 1972 faculty minutes.

It fits men [sic] to administer missionary societies, train leaders of younger Churches, solve the crucial problems of modern missions, plan advances, think strategically and biblically about mission, and in short, to be more effective missionaries in the era of great advance now in progress. (Milner 2005, p. 68)

When Trinity Evangelical Divinity School began offering the DMiss degree in 1977, its program closely resembled the professional Doctor of Ministry degree, however, by 1987, in order to receive ATS accreditation, TEDS had “upgraded” its DMiss from 48 to 72 (quarter) credit hours, which made it parallel to its EdD (Milner 2005). Subsequently, “the development went ahead to the Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies, the professional was moved to the D.Min. in Missiology” (Milner 2005, p. 91).

By 1993 [TEDS’s] D.Miss. had become an “academic” degree, incorporating... additional credit hours, three foreign languages, a scholarly dissertation, three times as many research courses, written and oral comprehensive examinations, and more stringent admission standards. The step from the academic D.Miss. of 1993 to the Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies of the following year was small, involving only slightly higher admission requirements. (Starcher, 2010 p. 37)

Meanwhile, Fuller retained both the Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies and the Doctor of Missiology. The most obvious difference between the two degrees at Fuller in the late 1990s was the number of required credit hours:

56 for the Ph.D. but only 48 for the D.Miss. (identical to Fuller’s D.Min.). Other indices of increased academic rigor for the Ph.D. program included more stringent admission standards and one additional comprehensive examination. Perhaps the most important difference between Fuller’s two missiology programs was their respective stated purpose: professional certification for the D.Miss. versus academic certification for the Ph.D. Nevertheless, both

programs comported many of the same “scholarly” traits; namely, evidence of writing competence for admission, comprehensive exams and a scholarly dissertation (as opposed to a ministry project). Both programs also required three years of relevant vocational experience for admission. (Starcher 2003, p. 117)

At this juncture, a review of the existing DMiss program in North America is instructive. The degree has morphed since its earliest days. An interesting recent development involves nomenclature.¹ Since 2012, at least three institutions have changed the name of the degree from Doctor of Missiology to Doctor of Intercultural Studies. A fourth, Fuller, allows graduating students to choose between having Doctor of Missiology and Doctor of Intercultural Studies on their diploma and transcript.

North American Institutions Offering the Doctor of Missiology Degree

I found only seven North American institutions offering a DMiss degree (or equivalent) with Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and/or regional accreditation: 1) Andrews University, 2) Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS), 3) Biola University, 4) Fuller Seminary, 5) Grace Theological Seminary (GTS), 6) Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS), and 7) Western Seminary. Of these insti-

1 The ATS website presently lists two schools accredited to offer the DMiss degree: Asbury Theological Seminary, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Asbury no longer offers the DMiss degree. Fuller is not listed, but the omission appears to be an oversight. Grace Seminary’s and Western Seminary’s degrees (formerly DMiss) are now listed as Doctor of Intercultural Studies. AGTS’s degree is now listed as :Doctor of Applied Intercultural Studies.” Biola University’s DMiss program has regional but not ATS accreditation because it is housed in Biola’s School of Intercultural Studies rather than its School of Theology.

tutions, four also offer the PhD in Intercultural Studies.² Table 1 compares these four schools' programs. Table 2 compares the remaining three. All seven institutions offer the DMin degree.

Required Credit Hours

The number of credit hours required to earn a DMin varied from 32 to 48 (semester) units among the seven schools. Fuller is the only institution with an academic year based on the quarter system. I calculated 48 quarter units as the equivalent of 32 semester units, using the standard rate of 1 quarter unit = $\frac{2}{3}$ semester unit.

2 Andrews University offers a PhD in Religion with an emphasis in Mission and Ministry.

Table 1: Comparison of Four DMiss Degrees

	AGTS	Biola	Fuller	SBTS
Degree name	Doctor of Applied Intercultural Studies (DMiss on institutional website)	Doctor of Missiology	Doctor of Missiology (Doctoral of Intercultural Studies optional)	Doctor of Missiology
Stated purpose	Enhance missionary practice and resources; Prepare participants to teach missiology at any level; Build foundations for training missionaries overseas; Equip leaders for compassion ministries	Enhance people, partnerships and publications advancing the missions enterprise to a higher level of scholarship, spirituality, service, and sacrifice through the critical reflection of cross-disciplines: church history, theology, the social sciences, and missions strategies	Foster and equip communities of learning for in-service leaders from all parts of the world for missiological research and transformational missional practice	Serve missionaries, practitioners, teachers, and administrators by providing advanced formal education, guided reading in pertinent missiological literature, field experience, mentoring, and supervision

Delivery system	Two courses taken during each two-week session; with the project phase, degree completed in approximately 4 years	Four semesters of modular courses on campus or six semesters in-service comprising 2-week modules at extension sites	Four annual, 37-week, cohort-based modules that each include one annual, 2-week on-campus intensive	Two weeks twice per year during summer and winter terms
Matriculation degree	Masters in an appropriate theological or missiological discipline. Deficiencies may add 15-30 credits of foundational courses	Masters with 9 units Bible/theology (missing prerequisites may increase units needed to earn the degree)	Masters with 27 (semester) combined units of theology & missiology; minimum of 9 of theology and 9 of missiology	Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Missiology, or its equivalent from a regionally accredited or ATS accredited seminary
Credit hours	<i>48 semester units</i> : 11 courses for 44 units + 4 units final project/dissertation	<i>40 semester units</i> : 12 courses for 36 units + 4-unit capstone project	<i>32 semester units</i> : 48 quarter-units (7 courses of 4 or 8 units + 8-unit dissertation)	<i>48 credit hours</i> including 6 for guided mentorship, 6 for dissertation writing & defense
Research tools	One 4-unit course	Two courses for 6 units	Spread throughout the program	6 hours
Final project	Project worth 4 semester units	Capstone project: 4 sem. units	Dissertation: 8 qtr (5.3 sem.) units	Dissertation worth 6 credit hours
Comps	Written	None	None mentioned	Written
Tuition	\$23,400 for the entire program	\$20,920 (40 semester units)	\$25,440 for 48 qtr units (cf. 32 sem. units)	\$36,338 for entire program
Discounts	\$18,400 for AG missionaries	None mentioned	None mentioned	\$20,725 for So. Bapts & IMB

Accreditation	ATS & regional	Regional (WASC)	ATS & regional	ATS & regional
Language req.	2 nd language proficiency	2 nd modern language	None	2 nd modern language required
Req. exper.	2 years	3 years	5 years	2 years

Table 2: Comparison of Three DMiss Degrees

	Grace	Western	Andrews
Degree name	Doctor of Intercultural Studies	Doctor of Intercultural Studies	Doctor of Intercultural Studies
Stated purpose	Prepare individuals for positive and influential leadership, relationships of trust, and biblical ministry in intercultural contexts either in denominational or interdenominational structures through study and applied learning in the socio-cultural and theological disciplines of missiology	Introduce students to the literature and resources of missiology, with special emphasis in the area relevant to the student's on-going ministry	Equip practitioners, leaders, and trainers who minister in cross-cultural mission situations through focused study and research in social-science and theological fields of study
Delivery system	One-week seminars and fully online courses	Annual cycle with each class including a week-long intensive seminar	Four cohort-based modules that includes a 4 week, on campus, residential period
Matriculation degree	MDiv degree or equivalent (i.e., 60 credit hours of graduate theological training)	Masters with 15 units Bible, 15 units theology & 15 units missiology (45 total)	MDiv degree or equivalent, or other adv. masters-level degree with 15 units mission-related
Credit hours	48 semester units: eleven 4-unit courses + 4 unit research project	36 semester units: 10 courses for 30 semester units + 6-unit dissertation	48 semester units, 11 courses for 42 units + 6 unit dissertation

Research tools	One 4-unit course	Two courses for 6 units	Two courses for 6 units
Final project	Research project worth 4 credits	Dissertation worth 6 units	Dissertation worth 6 units
Comps	None mentioned	Written	None mentioned
Tuition	\$19,560 (\$1,630/ seminar; 12 seminars)	\$16,200 (for 36 units)	\$55,488* (for 48 credits)
Discounts	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Accreditation	ATS & regional	ATS & regional	Regional & SDA
Language req.	None mentioned	Field research language	2 nd language for certain concentrations
Req. exper.	4 years	2 years	3 years

*Unconfirmed amount

Professional/Academic DMiss Degree

All seven programs have components associated with a professional degree program (e.g., professional experience required for admission). Nevertheless, all also comport certain attributes normally associated with an academic doctorate. Perhaps the most telling difference is the nature of a program's capstone project. While academic doctoral programs regularly require original research advancing theoretical understanding in their discipline, professional doctorates tend toward applied research projects. For example, Fuller describes its DMiss' research component as follows:

While the main priority of traditional research is to expand knowledge, applied research seeks to utilize research in order to solve a practical problem. Students enter the DMiss aiming at a particular area in their contexts where they want to see change. (<http://www.fuller.edu/academics/school-of-intercultural-studies/advanced-degree-programs/doctor-of-missiology/program-structure.aspx>)

Western's DMiss capstone is similar to Fuller's. "The dissertation serves as a capstone project which is immediately related to the ministry of the writer" (<http://www.westernseminary.edu/Admissions/Programs-Degrees/Portland/doctor-of-missiology-dmiss.htm>).

AGTS calls its DMiss capstone a "project," but the director considers it more rigorous than the seminary's DMin projects. SBTS calls its capstone a "field research dissertation" and appears to strike a middle ground between its DMin "ministry project" and its PhD dissertation, which entails conducting and reporting on original research. SBTS' DMiss field research dissertation "addresses a missiological issue in [the student's] missionary context and ... demonstrates a high level of research skill" (Southern Seminary 2010-2011 catalog, p. 128). Biola's DMiss recently replaced its academic dissertation with an action-reflection research project.

A comparison of various doctoral programs revealed the relative position of each doctorate on the professional-academic continuum. Assuming the DMin is universally viewed as a professional degree and the PhD is universally classed an academic degree, tables 3 through 9 (found in Appendix A) clearly demonstrate that contemporary DMiss programs occupy a position between the professional DMin and the academic PhD, however, at some institutions the DMiss has a greater affinity to the professional degree program than at others. For example, Grace Seminary's DMiss and DMin programs are closely aligned. Also, Western Seminary, which does not offer a PhD in Intercultural Studies, presents its DMiss as parallel to its DMin. The school's 2010-2011 academic catalog stated,

The Doctor of Ministry and Doctor of Missiology programs at Western Seminary are two professional degrees with significant compatibility: a non-residence module format, field research, and the dissertation. Students enrolled in one program may cross-register for up to two electives (six credit hours) in the other. The module format of both programs is designed to make doctoral level training programs accessible to active practitioners in ministry. (p. 68)

However, the seminary's DMiss director explained that in recent years he has sought to distance the DMiss from the DMin, especially in regard to its research emphasis (personal communication).

The main “academic” distinguishing marks of Western’s DMiss are its comprehensive exams, six more units of coursework, and greater emphasis on research. While Biola’s DMiss formerly differed from the PhD primarily in the number of required courses, it recently lowered its DMiss admission requirements, eliminated comprehensive exams, and substituted an applied research project for its scholarly dissertation. With the exception of Grace, the remaining schools’ DMiss programs have admissions requirements more rigorous than for the DMin. All require more coursework for the PhD than the DMiss but, with the exception of Fuller, slightly more for the DMiss than for the DMin. (See Appendix A for a comparison of each school’s doctoral programs.)

The Vitality of Today’s DMiss Programs

From 2006 (when the institution launched its PhD in Intercultural Studies) to 2012, Biola saw very few new students enter its DMiss program. During the same period DMiss enrollment at SBTS, AGST, and Western remained relatively stable, despite the presence of a PhD program in Intercultural Studies at the first two institutions. Western admits about five new DMiss students per year. SBTS has ten to twelve DMiss students at any given time; AGST has about 20.³ At the same time, Fuller’s DMiss is remarkably well subscribed. While as recently as 2007 Fuller’s program was in decline, in 2012 it boasted twelve active cohorts averaging six or more students (interview data). Since revamping its DMiss program in 2012, Biola, also, has experienced a substantial influx of new students.⁴

3 Schools with relatively small total enrollment in their DMiss program can afford to continue offering them because DMiss students regularly take courses also offered in other programs (e.g., the PhD in Intercultural Studies). Hence, the institution’s cost to run the program is negligible.

4 While only seven DMiss students matriculated between 2006 and 2011, 18 have matriculated since 2012.

Two factors emerged from the data as clearly contributing to program viability: 1) program focus and 2) achievability. Three aspects of a program's focus and three aspects of its achievability emerged as important. (See Figure 1).

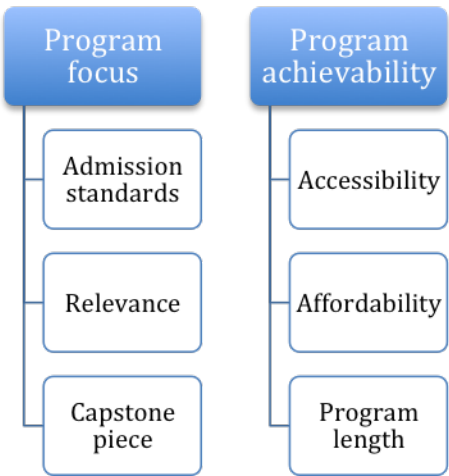
Program Focus

As early as 2002, Doug McConnell, then Dean of Fuller's School of Intercultural Studies, was talking about revitalizing Fuller's DMiss.

I asked the doctoral committee if I could have a go at rewriting the D.Miss. ... I feel like we've done such a great disservice that we need to revitalize the D.Miss... Right now Biola's got a great program and they're leading us all. (Milner, 2005, p. 135)

He added, "For a mission director, the problem with a PhD program is you send, in a sense, your best and brightest and then you lose them" (Milner, 2005, p. 135). McConnell wanted a practical DMiss program designed for students involved in fulltime mission ministry that would encourage them to stay in ministry while completing their degree. Delivery system, of course, is important to allowing students to remain in ministry. (See below, under "Accessibility.") However, program focus is equally important.

Figure 1: Important Viability Factors



If the DMiss program’s rigor resembles too closely that of the PhD in Missiology (or Intercultural Studies), it loses its unique focus. While all the schools in this study deemed the DMiss to be more rigorous than the DMin and less rigorous than the PhD, the “distance” between the DMiss and the PhD must be great enough to make the DMiss attractive to practitioners. Three aspects of doctoral program design seem particularly import to identifying a DMiss program’s place on the continuum between “purely” professional and “purely” academic: 1) admission standards, 2) program relevance, and 3) the capstone piece.

Admission standards.

Admission standards reveal whom a program targets. A program targeting scholars demands a high GPA, high GRE scores, competence in multiple languages, and proof of scholarly writing capacity. A program targeting practitioners might relax the above requirements while simultaneously increasing the experience requirement. As mentioned above, ATS’s published statement on admission allows matriculation with an MDiv degree or a theological master’s degree, with no mention of the number of missiology courses. (Many seminaries’ MDiv degree requires only one “missions” course.) Hence, it appears conceivable for a “standard” MDiv holder to enter an ATS-accredited DMiss program without missiology deficiencies to make up. At the same time, relevant field

experience or self-directed learning might be counted as compensating for missiological coursework. Schools could administer “qualifying” exams at the outset or early in a DMiss program to assess students’ readiness to undertake doctoral studies in missiology.

Relevance.

This theme is inferred largely from examining Fuller’s revitalized DMiss program, which grew rapidly after the introduction of affinity cohorts.

In 2006 Fuller... introduced a new approach to study for the doctor of missiology degree. Incoming students form nonresidential cohorts built on a significant commonality, and they work together throughout their four years in the program. Often students come from a common region or share a common research interest. In some instances they may come from the same mission or denomination, enhancing solidarity among the students as they work through the program. (Shaw 2010, p. 178)

Fuller’s DMiss administrator explained the seminary is finding the affinity cohort approach unsustainable due to the length of time needed to gather one and the unwieldiness of running both specialized and generalized cohorts at the same time. Further, student attrition demands gathering a larger group of students before forming a cohort in the first place. Nevertheless, the affinity cohorts undoubtedly helped jump-start the revitalization of Fuller’s DMiss. Further, the idea of leveraging commonality to attract and bring together students who all are engaged professionals still has merit. Perhaps offering different tracks within a DMiss program might, in part, accomplish the same goal without the problems associated with forming affinity cohorts.

Capstone piece.

Given the advent of PhD-ICS programs with delivery systems that no longer require students to abandon their ministry to pursue a degree, the capstone piece is more than ever important to the viability of the

DMiss. The nature of the capstone piece also touches on the fundamental distinction between a researcher's and a practitioner's doctorate. EdD (Anderson, 1983) and PsyD (Murray, 2000) degrees generally require a less rigorous dissertation than their PhD counterparts precisely because they are designed for practicing professionals rather than researchers. Murray (2000) quoted Peterson, former dean of Rutgers' PsyD program:

PsyD students, he says, are trained as "local scientists" who apply the scientific method to problems in the field. Most programs require a dissertation or dissertation-like project, but students cover a wider range of topics than those allowed in PhD programs.

The designation "local scientists" also captures the spirit of a vibrant DMiss degree, whose holders also conduct local research in order to address problems in the field. While the distinction between PhD and DMiss research remains somewhat fuzzy in practice, it is important for distinguishing between those equipped for careers as informed, professional practitioners and those equipped for careers as erudite academics and researchers.

Achievability

Achievability, as addressed here, primarily concerns program length, accessibility, and affordability. While the importance of these three factors is uneven, all affect perceptions of achievability.

Program length. By length, I have in mind specifically the number of units required to earn a DMiss, including prerequisites (or co-requisites). Again, if the gap between the DMiss and the PhD is too small, students will opt for the more prestigious PhD even though a more practically oriented program might better fit their felt needs.

The ATS DMiss standard is, "the equivalent of two years of full-time study plus sufficient time to complete the culminating dissertation research project or field research project."⁵ Fulltime study at the doctoral

5 By way of comparison, ATS' statement on the DMin degree reads, "The DMin program shall require the equivalent of one full year of academic study and, in addition, the completion of the project." The standard for the EdD

level is commonly calculated at nine units per term (rather than twelve units as is the case at the undergrad level). Hence, two years constitutes 36 semester units or 54 quarter units (excluding the program's capstone piece). Fuller's program has 40 quarter units (i.e., 27 semester units) of coursework; Western's has 30 semester units; Biola's has 36; SBTS' and Andrews' have 42; AGTS' and Grace's have 44. Given programs' various delivery systems (see Table 1), completing the coursework takes more than two academic years. Nevertheless, in terms of semester units required, the programs range from 27 to 44 semester units.

Students matriculating with deficiencies at the master's level generally are allowed to satisfy those requirements by taking additional courses in their DMiss program. Hence, program length can vary greatly depending not only on the number of units in the actual program but, also, the number of prerequisite units needed.

Among programs for which the matriculation degree is the MDiv or a master's degree in a theological discipline, the variation concerns primarily the prerequisite missiology units. Two specifically require 15 units of both theology and missiology for matriculation. The language on Western's website mirrors that of ATS:

Doctor of Missiology program applicants shall hold either a Master of Divinity degree or a two-year master's degree in appropriate theological and missiological disciplines from an institution accredited regionally and/or by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States and Canada.

However, when asked how many prerequisite units his program required, Western's program director told me, "According to ATS rule and according to our own MA program, at least 15 credits, semester credits, in Bible, 15 in theology, and 15 in mission."

degree reads, "... the equivalent of at least two full years (four semesters or six quarters) of academic course work and, in addition, the completion of the doctoral project." The PhD standard reads, "... the equivalent of two years of full-time coursework and sufficient time to prepare for comprehension examinations, to acquire teaching skills, and to conduct the research for and writing of a doctoral dissertation."

All programs require theological prerequisites, but only three programs specifically require prior graduate studies in missiology. The total number of prerequisite units varies from 9 (Biola) to 60 semester units (Grace). Those holding an MDiv or equivalent could enter four of the seven DMiss programs without deficiencies.

Accessibility.

Undoubtedly, Biola's early adoption of a modular delivery system was what prompted Doug McConnell to remark, "Biola's got a great program and they're leading us all" (Milner, 2005, p. 135). Moving from a residential to a modular format was crucial to the revitalization of Fuller's DMiss program.

A strength of the nonresidential-cohort approach to doctoral study is that it enables students to remain within their ministry context while completing their studies. They can both continue in ministry and obtain a doctoral degree. Each cohort meets yearly for an intensive two-week seminar facilitated by School of Intercultural Studies faculty. Twice during the program the students travel to Fuller's campus in Pasadena; the seminars during the other two years may be held at predetermined sites germane to the purpose and goals of the cohort. (Personal communication)

Fuller's requirement of only two campus visits during the whole of the DMiss program while tailoring the remaining two seminars to the various cohorts is an example of a creative delivery system that addresses issues of community and collegiality. Other approaches might combine face-to-face meeting and intentional efforts to build community online.

Affordability.

If the DMiss program is to attract working professionals who plan to continue their relatively low-paying work, affordability seems an essential aspect of program viability. Tuition costs for doctoral education at the seven

schools in the study varied greatly both from school to school and from program to program within the same school. (See Appendix A.) Across the board, total tuition for the DMiss was higher than for the DMin and far lower than for the (longer) PhD. Further, AGTS and SBTS offered substantial tuition discounts to missionaries serving under the mission boards of their respective churches, however, tuition costs are only one aspect of affordability (Starcher, 2006). Equally important is a delivery system (see above) that allows students to continue earning while they are learning. Also, for non-denominational schools, partnerships with mission organizations willing to help fund their workers' doctoral education can benefit everyone.

Revitalizing a Doctor of Missiology Program

In this section, I attempt to apply the findings documented above to the viability and vitality of the Doctor of Missiology degree in North America. At the outset of this paper, I questioned the degree's viability, usefulness, function, clientele, and nature. I believe two initiatives are required to ensure the degree's viability and vitality: 1) sharpening the program's focus, and 2) increasing the program's achievability.

Sharpening the Program's Focus

Sharpening program focus involves: 1) equipping working professionals (as opposed to academic researchers) by formulating admission requirements less stringent than for the PhD and modifying the capstone piece so that it equips "local scientists," and 2) offering specialized tracks

that leverage prospective students' areas of interest combined with faculty members' strengths.

Increasing the Program's Achievability

Achievability concerns include access, cost, and program length. First, an accessible program will require a minimal residency. Ideally, students would visit campus or an extension site once per year for one to three weeks. The use of a judicious number of online courses would facilitate this delivery system. Second, the DMiss should cost no more than half of an institution's cognate PhD program and no more than 25% more than its DMin program. Third, the program coursework portion of the program likely should be around 36 semester units (excluding the capstone project), making it more rigorous than most DMin programs but substantially shorter than cognate PhD programs.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study focused wholly on North American Doctor of Missiology degree programs from an institutional perspective. It ignored several potentially helpful research topics: 1) Doctor of Missiology students' perception of their degree program, 2) the utility of the Doctor of Ministry degree in Missiology or Intercultural Studies (including a comparison to the contemporary DMiss degree), 3) the state and status of the Doctor of Missiology at educational institutions outside the USA, 4) issues surrounding international students pursuing a DMiss degree in the US, and 5) factors contributing to the recent trend toward renaming the Doctor of Missiology degree (e.g., Doctor of Intercultural Studies).

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APPENDIX A

Table 3: Comparison of Two Doctoral Programs at Western

	DMin	DMiss
Min. GPA at admit	3.0 out of 4	3.0 out of 4
Experience req.	3 years	2 years
Other admit req.	Ministerial vocation & writing sample	Admission essay
Language req.	None mentioned	None mentioned
Research methods	One 3-unit course	Two 3-unit courses
Units to graduate	30 semester units	36 semester units
Comps	None mentioned	Written
Capstone	Field research worth 6 units	Fieldwork dissertation worth 6 units
Research emphasis	9 units total	12 units total
Program tuition cost	\$13,500	\$16,200

Table 4: Comparison of Two Doctoral Programs at Grace

	DMin	DMiss
Min. GPA at admit	3.0 out of 4	3.0 out of 4
Experience req.	3 years	4 years
Other admit req.	Ministerial vocation & writing sample	Admission essay
Language req.	None mentioned	None mentioned
Research methods	One 4-unit course	One 4-unit course
Units to graduate	36 semester units	48 semester units
Comps	None mentioned	None mentioned
Capstone	Field research worth 4 units	Final project worth 4 units

Research emphasis	8 units total	8 units total
Program tuition cost	\$14,670	\$19,560

Table 5: Comparison of Three Doctoral Programs at Andrews

	DMin	Doctor of Intercultural Studies	PhD in Religion: Mission & Ministry
Min. GPA to admit	3.0 out of 4	3.0 out of 4	3.5 out of 4
Experience req.	3 years	2 years intercultural	2 years intercultural
Other admit req.	Ministerial vocation	Writing sample	Writing sample
Language req.	None mentioned	2 nd language	2 nd language
Research methods	One 3-unit course	One 4-unit course	Three 4-unit courses
Comps	None mentioned	Written qualifying exams	Written
Units to graduate	30 semester units	48 semester units	60 semester units
Capstone	Ministry project worth 3 units	Final project worth 4 units	Dissertation worth 4 units
Research emphasis	6 units total	8 units total	16 units total
Program tuition cost	\$15,900	\$18,725	\$35,000

Table 6: Comparison of Three Doctoral Programs at AGTS

	DMin	DMiss	PhD in ICS
Min. GPA to admit	3.0 out of 4	3.0 out of 4	3.5 out of 4
Experience req.	3 years	2 years intercultural	2 years intercultural

Other admit req.	Ministerial vocation	Writing sample	Writing sample
Language req.	None mentioned	2 nd language	2 nd language
Research methods	One 3-unit course	One 4-unit course	Three 4-unit courses
Comps	None mentioned	Written qualifying exams	Written
Units to graduate	30 semester units	48 semester units	60 semester units
Capstone	Ministry project worth 3 units	Final project worth 4 units	Dissertation worth 4 units
Research emphasis	6 units total	8 units total	16 units total
Program tuition cost	\$15,900	\$18,725	\$35,000

Table 7: Comparison of Three Doctoral Programs at Biola University

	DMin (Talbot)	DMiss (Cook)	PhD in ICS (Cook)
Min. GPA to admit	3.0 out of 4	3.0 out of 4	3.3 out of 4
Experience req.	3 years ministerial	3 years cross-cultural	3 years cross-cultural
Other admit req.	2-page statement	None mentioned	Writing sample
Language req.	None mentioned	2 nd language	2 nd language
Research methods	None mentioned	Two 3-unit courses	Four 3-unit courses
Comps	Oral	None	Written
Units to graduate	36	40	60
Capstone	Thesis-Project	Action research project worth 4 units	Scholarly dissertation worth 6 units

Research emphasis	Varies	10 units total	18 units total
Program tuition cost	\$12,000	\$20,920	\$56,760

Table 8: Comparison of Three Doctoral Programs at Fuller

Fuller	DMin (SOT)	DMiss (SIS)	PhD in ICS (SIS)
Min. GPA to admit	3.0	3.4	3.7
Experience req.	3 years	5 years “missional”	Not specified
Language req.	Hebrew or Greek	None mentioned	None mentioned
Other admit req.	None mentioned	None mention	Qualifying exam
Research methods	One 2-unit course	One 4-unit course	Four courses
Units to graduate	48 (quarter units)	48 (quarter units)	64 (quarter units)
Capstone	Ministry paper worth 6 units	Applied field research worth 8 units	Scholarly dissertation
Research emphasis	8 units total	12 units total	Unclear
Program tuition cost	\$18,000	\$23,250	\$45,760

Table 9: Comparison of Three Doctoral Programs at SBTS’ Billy Graham School

	DMin	DMiss	PhD in ICS
Min. GPA at admit	3.0	3.2	3.5
Experience req.	3 years	2 years	None mentioned
Language req.	None mentioned	None mentioned	2 research languages

Other admit req.	None mentioned	Qualifying exam	GRE
Research methods	One 2-unit course	6 units	One 2-unit seminar
Units to graduate	32 semester units	48 semester units	66 semester units
Comps	None mentioned	Written exam	Written exams
Capstone	Ministry project worth 6 units	Field research worth 6 units	Scholarly dissertation worth 16 units
Research emphasis	8 units total	12 units total	18 units total
Program cost	\$13,800	\$32,000	\$44,400

