



**For Immediate Release from Emmanuel Bible College  
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**Temporary Shepherds Prepare the Way: EBC to Offer Modular Course on Transitional Church Leadership in January 2010.**

When churches lose a pastor through death, firing, retiring, or leaving for a new ministry, the congregation is usually anxious to find a replacement. Dr. Olu Peters, professor of New Testament and Director of Pastoral Studies at Emmanuel Bible College, in Kitchener, Ontario, says “the last thing most churches need during a time of transition is a new pastor”.

Dr. Peters compares the relationship between a pastor and a church to a marriage. When a pastor is fired or quits it can feel like a divorce; if he or she retires it can be like a death in the family. “Many churches don’t allow themselves to grieve when a pastor leaves. They are operating out of grief and don’t even know it.”

Often congregations are rebounding from this previous relationship pastor when a new pastor is hired. Out of unhealthy needs they look for a new leader to fill the void.

In the 1970’s an American Baptist pastor saw the need for intentional leadership during these transitions in the life of a congregation, and in 1997 the Interim Ministry Network began systematic training of interim leaders. This movement sees the time between lead pastors as an opportunity for a congregation to heal, grow and seek God for refreshed vision.

Dr. Peters is spearheading Intentional Transitional Leadership training in central Canada. Under the umbrella of Emmanuel Bible College, a week-long training program will be held January 4 – 10, 2010 along with other courses.

In Canada an intentional interim pastor is hired for approximately six months to one year, usually on a part-time basis, to help a church through transition. Once hired, the interim pastor meets with the church board, associate pastors, and ministry team leaders to determine where the congregation stands. Then a meeting is called to help members process and bring closure to the former pastor’s departure. Over time, areas of brokenness, conflict, and dysfunctional behaviour are identified in the congregation. Through key sermons, prayer ministry and personal meetings, members are led toward repentance, forgiveness, and healing.

Next, the identity of a church—its uniqueness, gifts and strengths, as well as, clarifying goals and vision—is determined. When a congregation is free from their “baggage”, is clear on their identity, and has a vision for what God is calling them to do, they are ready to consider hiring another leader. The Intentional Interim pastor helps with the hiring process and stay until the new pastor starts.

The January 4-10 modular course, Transitional Leadership Ministry, will prepare leaders to lead through change, brokenness and conflict. Participants may include Pastors already serving in transitional work, pastors considering such a calling, and lay congregational leaders or students heading into ministry. Conversation is sure to be invigorating as students interact with Dr. Olu Peters who has led several congregations through this important transition.

Students may audit the course (\$286.65) or take it for credit (\$819.00). For more information or to register, please contact Sherry in the Admissions office at 519 894 8900 ext 224 or [admissions@ebcollege.on.ca](mailto:admissions@ebcollege.on.ca) or online at:

<http://www.emmanuelbiblecollege.ca/AcademicServices/ClassSchedule.aspx>

Since 1940, Emmanuel Bible College has operated to “equip students to think, live, serve and lead as mature Christians in the Church and the world”. EBC is located in the heart of Kitchener on a beautiful maple grove campus at the corner of Weber St. and Fergus Avenue. Each year nearly 400 people, young and old, from over 40 Christian denominations take courses and participate in workshops related to our mission.

EBC is an undergraduate, degree-granting institution that focuses on ministry professions. Our graduates are grounded in the Scriptures, mature in character, and skilled in people-helping professions. Our 2000+ Alumni serve in every area of the workforce, all over the world.

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