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INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

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The teaching of religious leadership can be an ambiguous endeavor. Is leadership taught or caught? Is one born with the gift of leadership or can it be learned? Is it possible to teach about leadership or must it be learned in praxis? How one teaches leadership can vary as much as who teaches and to what end. In the spring of 2012, The Academy of Religious Leadership (ARL) gathered for their annual conference to engage in conversation on this theme: *The Teaching of Leadership: Equipping, Training, Forming?* Through presentations, papers, directed conversation, and even play, we explored methodologies, theories, and theological education institutional culture to reflect on what it all means for teaching leadership.

The essays in this volume of the *Journal of Religious Leadership* represent the variety of presentations that engaged the academy in reflection and conversation.

Our goals were not to come up with a preferred methodology or list of how-to's, but to participate in mutual learning and broaden our own perspectives around this shared passion.

The four essays included in this volume offer us very different entry points into the conversation. The first paper introduces the teaching of religious leadership, creating a foundation for, and setting parameters to begin, our discussion. It is followed by two essays that introduce specific methodologies and implications thereof in the teaching of leadership. The first explores how provocative play can be employed to take the teaching of leadership beyond strategies and concepts to understanding and reflecting upon attitudes, beliefs and values that shape our students as leaders. The next essay looks at the importance of peer learning groups in the leadership formation process

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post seminary. The volume ends with an extensive report from five seminaries sharing their research into how students of their academic institutions are shaped by an ecology of vocation.

This volume of essays begins with a piece written by Dr. Norma Cook Everist on "The Teaching of Leadership." Dr. Everist sets the stage for a theologically grounded conversation, using ecclesiology to assess the theology of methodology. She proposes that teaching is more than passing on information; the equipping, training and forming of leaders for the church in the Twenty-first Century is about creating trustworthy learning environments where leaders can be challenged, encouraged and gain confidence in their own abilities. As beings created in the Image of God, we are formed for a call to ministry by who we are prior to formal theological education; how we are shaped during our time of study; and beyond, as we live out our vocations day to day. This essay is accompanied by sets of reflection questions for your own study or with groups of learners.

Robert Martin and Russell West offer us an opportunity in their article, "*Insisto Rector:* Provocative Play for Serious Leadership Learning," to explore ways that leadership learning could be "enhanced through pedagogies of play." Play, they argue, allows participants to move beyond the immediate, cognitive understanding of decisions and activities, and brings a deeper level of analysis looking at the values, beliefs, and attitudes that shape decisions and ideas. But play in and of itself is not enough. The role the instructor has in setting the boundaries for play and guiding a thorough debriefing at the end of play is vital to the learning that occurs through play.

The third essay, "Learning Religious Leadership In Situ," written by Willem Houts and David Sawyer, addresses the need for leadership development to continue beyond the days of formal seminary. The authors propose a model for the continued development and formation of leaders in first call settings. Formal education is not enough to develop ministry leaders in today's ever-changing world, they argue. Intentional peer learning groups for continued reflection and accountability are needed for the ongoing formation process.

This paper draws on both personal experience and current research on the effectiveness of peer- learning groups

The final article is a report on a recent comparative study looking at "The Ecology of Vocation" at five different seminaries representing distinctive faith traditions (Fuller Seminary, Harvard Divinity School, Luther Seminary, The King's University, and Methodist Theological Seminary of Ohio). Under the direction of project leader Scott Cormode, each seminary set out to create a map of the relationships and interconnectedness of networks that shape the formation of their respective students. Specifically, the ecology explored included five key parts:

1. Formative faith experiences
2. Faith during college and one's first career (if applicable)
3. Congregation of call
4. Seminary years
5. First steps into ministry

However, through this study, each institution also discovered, unexpectedly, that one's institutional ethos and culture played an important role in the shaping of their faculty and delivery of education. The mental models of their students were shaped not only by each student's ecology of vocation, but by the mental models of their academic institutions, professors, and congregations, which shaped the research methodologies of this project as well.

So I invite you into this ongoing conversation about the teaching of religious leadership, as we continue to be equipped, trained, and formed in our own quests, to understand how best to journey with our students, academic institutions, and organizations in the ongoing process of developing leaders in ministry.

THE TEACHING OF LEADERSHIP

NORMA COOK EVERIST

Abstract:

Images of teaching and of leadership shape the learning community. Through examining our ecclesiology we can discover our theology of methodology. How we teach teaches as powerfully as what we teach. As teachers of leadership become skilled in a wide variety of methods, they gain confidence in their competence to achieve congruence of subject, method, and objective. Key is setting trustworthy learning environments to be different together. The goal: to prepare leaders for challenge now and for a lifetime, within a congregation and in a pluralistic, public world.

Images of Teaching and Leading

What is the teaching of leadership essentially all about? Equipping? Training? Forming? My purpose is not to define but to clarify and expand our images. Whether a seminary or divinity school professor; a graduate student; a judicatory leader at the regional or national level; someone in the congregation engaged in formation and candidacy, or at the boundaries of church and world; we, together, are leaders and teachers of leadership. The Academy of Religious Leadership (ARL) stretches around the world, including all religious faiths. We want to shape and influence one another as a wonderfully pluralistic, global-learning community.

Years ago, while teaching at Yale Divinity School, I proposed a course for graduate school students on teaching methods. Some administrators and, yes, some professors, wondered why anyone would want or need such a course on teaching teachers how to teach.

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So what do we mean by teaching leadership? Do we train? Yes and no. Do we equip? We would hope so, but that's not all. Is formation central? Methods come in and out of fashion: open-classroom, individualized learning, case studies, action/reflection, service-based learning, my story/the biblical story/peer groups. Too often they are pitted against one another: "exciting experiential methods" versus "old-fashioned, sit-and-be-bored methods." Well, experiential learning is powerful—and not new. And sometimes, sitting and listening to a lecture may be totally engaging.

For at least four decades, many scholars and practitioners have studied and engaged methods beyond knowledge acquisition through lecture and readings.[1] Still, not enough attention is being paid to how we teach. Such teaching—and I use that all-inclusive term very broadly—takes place in classrooms of every kind, and before, and beyond. Remember the many places where you were trained for a specific task or vocation. Think of the many people in all sorts of settings who equipped you for ministerial leadership. Ponder the multifaceted ways in which you were formed and are still being transformed. Picture those places and people and methods, and imagine the possibilities for your own teaching.

I like to begin seminary classes and continuing education events with the questions–asked around a speaking-ourselves-present introductory circle–"How do you learn? How do you like to learn? How do you teach? How do you like to teach?" "What languages do you speak?" By that I mean not Swahili, German, or French, but carpentry or computers, farming or pharmacy? And what dialect of music do you speak? Percussion or vocal? Similarly, in courses or formation events on leadership, I ask, "How do you lead? How do you appreciate being led? When were you equipped well? Or not?"

[1]For example, see Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), which became a foundational work in epistemology and shared praxis methodology. See also Thomas Groome's recent *Will There by Faith?* (New York: HarperOne, 2011).

This is not for the purpose, as is too often the case in our consumer-oriented, cafeteria-style culture, of serving up exactly what each person wants at the moment. Rather, it is a way of finding out who each of us is, and how we have been formed. The ways we learn often determine the ways we teach. We need to listen to and learn from people in their own languages. Our experiences of leadership shape decisions, consciously or subconsciously: "I'm going to lead just like that," or "I'm surely not going to do it that way."

Such questions also probe our own methods and motives. To desire to shape you in my image or even in my image of who I think you should be is actually idolatry. However, I, and we collectively in our ecclesial communities, do have responsibility for instructing, training, equipping, inspiring, empowering, forming leaders for service in the world.

How do we measure our teaching of leadership? We have become accustomed to outcomes-based objectives for classroom and institutional measurement. In terms of our own teaching, do we think far enough into the real mission we have?[2] Consider this progression of questions:

(1) How well did I teach? The conscientious teacher of leadership will continuously be asking this question; however, to ask only this question focuses merely on our own performance. Then students, too, will focus only on whether the professor was interesting or amusing, criteria which produces passivity except at the time of teacher-evaluation. The implicit mission: to perform. But this does not go far enough.

(2) Did the participants hear and understand? There are numerous ways to measure this, such as testing for facts remembered or the ability to interpret and critique resources. This focus might give educators assurance that

[2] Letty M. Russell, *Christian Education as Mission* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), 13, 14, 37. In one of her earliest works, Russell, shaped by of her ministerial leadership in the East Harlem Protestant Parish, wrote that education is participation in God's mission in the world and that anything less is mis-education.

they communicated what they intended and that it was received and remembered, at least for a short period of time. The implicit mission: to convey information.

(3) Did the participants incorporate the material and change? Requiring a more sophisticated measuring instrument, this focuses on the learners, taking into account their specific gifts, backgrounds, and potential. The implicit mission: that the student grow and develop.

(4) Are these people now better equipped to be leaders of faith communities? Evaluation carried this far moves beyond the learning setting into the contexts in which each leader is using his or her gifts to serve in the world. It focuses on the participant's action. The mission: to equip people for the discipleship of leadership. Even this does not go far enough.

(5) Are these leaders able to serve people so that they might know and experience God's gracious love and be engaged in ministry in the world themselves? This focus carries evaluation well beyond the professor's performance and the participants' own growth and performance to the people among whom they will lead. The mission: to affect the world with God's justice and love.[3]

What difference does our teaching of leadership make for individuals and for the immediate future of faith communities? And what difference will it make five or ten years from now as these faith communities themselves change and are changed in a pluralistic culture?

Questions for Reflection and Conversation:

1. What are your images of leadership? What are your images of the teaching of leadership?

2. How did you become the leader and the teacher of leadership that you are? When did you recognize your own leadership emerging? Who were your role models?

3. Reflect upon stories from your classrooms and other settings about seeing people grow as leaders.

[3] Norma Cook Everist, *The Church as Learning Community* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 260, adapted.

How have they become the leaders they were meant to be? What opportunities have you had or might you have to see these leaders later in their faith communities?

Ecclesiology

"Ecclesial" comes from the Greek *ekklesia,* which refers to the "gathered people," or the "called out ones." People are leaders of communities of believers and the teaching of leadership takes place within faith communities, whether within Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, or any other global or indigenous group. I write from the perspective of being a Christian leader, a professor in a Lutheran seminary who also has taught in a university divinity school. For the broad readership of ARL, I will often use the term "faith community" as well as the Christian word "church" to discuss how our belief systems inform our concepts of being a community, of leadership, and of the teaching of leadership. I will be thinking inclusively about various types of leaders in faiths communities; within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to which I belong, that would include various forms of diaconal, pastoral, and lay leadership.

Our theology of the called out ones determines how we teach leadership. People are shaped by their leaders and people in turn shape their leaders. Make no mistake; I put high priority on role clarity. There are God-given gifts for leadership; however, leadership can also be learned. I do not believe leadership is ontological. As a Christian holding a body-of-Christ theology, I believe my identity is not in my role as leader but in Christ. With my identity in Christ, I am free to take on and relinquish any number of roles. I need to responsibly fill the leadership role for which I have authority. I may be leader, as professor, in a classroom in the morning and go to a lunch-hour meeting where a student is leading the group. We need to teach when to exercise authority and when to relinquish it. My own personhood need not be diminished when I know my leadership in any variety of

offices and roles is for the sake of the mission of the faith community.

The communities of which students have been a part before coming to seminary or divinity school have shaped them dramatically. This is a psychological and sociological statement as well as a theological one. Speaking from the Christian tradition, I say I belong to the church that was, that is, and that is to come. Individuals carry within them the histories of congregations and their leaders. Some students, who have left the church for a while, may bring wounds of authoritarianism with them.[4] Others, new to the faith, will bring ideas of what they think the church is and what leadership means. Students will bring with them explicit and implicit images of what a leader should, or should not, be. How do we not only acknowledge, but also make use of that diverse information, indeed *formation,* in our teaching?

Who is the person inside the leader? How can we teach so that leaders can productively use both their past and ongoing experience in leadership to continue to grow? Those are theological questions if we believe that God has created people to grow and designed them to develop.

People learn in order to work; people's work also teaches. As we move through ministerial years, we, as adult learners, also are shaped by who we have become, reinforcing or augmenting leadership styles, skills, and concepts of authority. How do we as teachers of leadership help that process be a healthy and productive one for the adults we have taught? How does teaching at the seminary and divinity school impact and empower ongoing growth for a lifetime? I do not particularly appreciate "all that you didn't learn at seminary" approaches. Rather, what if we teach in a way that is seamless with the sending forth, so that students leave and yet "never leave behind" seminary in the best sense

[4] James D. and Evelyn E. Whitehead, *The Promise of Partnership* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), chapter 3.

of that word? Likewise, neither then do graduates lead or teach as just a replication of seminary, but rather build on that learning in context.

Ecclesiology shapes the teaching of leadership. If one holds a theology that the leader is protector of the faith community, one who provides, perhaps singularly and fully, the vision, ideas, and guidance for the faith community, then one might teach in that style, using mostly lecture that informs, fostering what the leader would consider an appropriate dependency. A teacher of leadership would want to model a strong, directive leadership style for the student to emulate.

If one's theology is connectional, one will envision the leader as building relationships. One might minimize lecture and forego direct-response questioning in favor of discussion that fosters creative and interactive thinking. Within this ecclesiology, if the leadership role would be primarily pastoral care of individuals, one would model care-giving. If building strong communities were the goal, one might teach leadership of small groups. In an age when "relational leadership" tops many students' list of choices, one might want to broaden both leadership and teaching styles. Also note that many people teach "connectional leadership" only through lecture, therefore depending unnecessarily on peer learning only beyond the classroom rather than within.

If one's ecclesiology is missional in the sense of being change agents in society, one would want to equip leaders through experiential methods that build skills for active leadership in the public world. This might include confrontation. (There are some teachers, however, whose only or primary style *is* confrontation and the use of power that diminishes students.) A missional theology of the church's role in the world would need to include study of the context, ecumenical and inter-faith partnerships, and ways to help people engage in dialog and to become change agents in the world.

We could carry this list further. Not only do different religious bodies have differing ecclesiologies, but within them, each leader and member has a working theology

and many different views of leadership, as well as a vast range of formative experiences of having been taught leadership and what it means to be led. The point is that it behooves us to pay attention to ecclesiology and to the theologies of teaching leadership with the goal of congruence.

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

1. What theological beliefs of your faith tradition shape your concepts of leadership?

2. How does one's ecclesiology inform the teaching of leadership?

Congruence of Leadership Styles and Teaching Methods

How we teach teaches as powerfully as what we teach. How do our various methods of teaching shape leaders?[5] And in what ways do our leadership styles inform our teaching? Over the years at annual meetings and in the journal there has been much discussion about the nature and styles of leadership. Building on that, let us consider the importance of congruence of subject, method, and objectives in the teaching of leadership. What happens when we plan to teach leadership that engages and empowers others while continuing to use only lecture and teacher-dependent discussion questions (Guess-what-I'm-thinking questions)? What if our objective is to inform people about the tenets of the faith, and we use only inductive styles of reflection and discussion? Gaining skill in a wide range of teaching styles and thereby being able to choose the methods to meet our objectives is crucial.

We begin using the three images of teaching in the theme for the 2012 annual meeting—equipping, training, forming—and then we move on to eight broader categories of methodology.

[5] Sharon Daloz Parks, *Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World,* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2005)

To Equip

We equip religious leaders with skills and tools, church history, bible and biblical interpretation, theology, and with ethics, ethnography, educational ministry, preaching, pastoral care, liturgy, administration, and more. To equip means religious leaders not only have received these gifts—and they are gifts—but are prepared to use them and use them well. To equip is to prepare men and women who, as leaders, equip laity for their ministries in daily life. Some may fear that religious leaders then will be threatened by the emerging skills of the laity they lead; however, in the economy of the Holy Spirit's gifts, the Spirit's power is unlimited. If the person I equip becomes more able and empowered for ministry, I will not be lessened. My power will not be taken away. I will not become ill-equipped. Rather, ministry is multiplied. We continue to equip one another for more and more challenging ministry in the world.

To Train

Some may consider training a narrow image, fraught with directive discipline, leaving little room for creativity and flexibility in leadership. However, on the positive side, we need only listen to surgeons, ice skaters, or military personnel: "My training and countless repetitions of the same task allowed me to develop excellence in precision in using the knife, and now laser technology, as we cut and repair delicate tissue." "When I think about the jumps and rotations on the ice, I fall. But if I rely on my training I do not let myself become distracted." "They call me a hero, but it was simply what I was trained to do; in the face of life and death situations, we depend on all of those training exercises." Religious leaders, well trained, need not be robotic, but, on the contrary, so confident in their skills that they are able to respond to the person or the faith community with confidence, and, yes, with flexibility appropriate to the precise need, in the moment. Training happens early, needs to be precise and experiential, and is perfected over time.

To Form

Each religious tradition will have a different concept of what it is to be formed for leadership. As a Christian, I think in terms of the three articles of the Creeds. The First Article: The Creator God: People are formed in the *Imagio Dei.* That is an awesome concept. The danger, of course, is that I as a pastor may, over time, begin to think that I *am* God, needing to carry the weight of the world on my own shoulders. But when we lack hope, or confidence, to remember we are created in the image of God empowers us. The Second Article: Christ Jesus, being born in human likeness, took the form of a *doulas*, slave or servant (Phil. 2). We strive to provide formative experiences for servant leadership. Third Article: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Church. Before, during and after seminary, beyond, and, yes, within the classroom, we make room for the Spirit. We teach people as though they are people in whom the Spirit dwells—because they are—and we teach always remembering that they, and we, are part of the church universal.

Having said that teaching of leadership is broader than the classroom, we need not dismiss the classroom or continuing education center. I will summarize eight categories which encompass the vast range of methods we can use.

Community includes the range of methods in which people are learning from one another simply by being people of God together, such as through role modeling and mentoring, cross-generation and multi-cultural events, and social media. This would include communal celebration and grief. The community teaches and learns leadership through doing embodied theology. Inclusion is key.

Presentation includes lecture, direct instruction, story, multi-media presentations, art exhibits, concerts, and more—any situation in which participants are primarily audience or recipients. Their silence does not mean absence of activity or uniformity. Each can be engaged when this method is not overly used and when done very well.

Discussion Despite the large role it plays, discussion is often ignored as a method to be honed. It can be merely a competitive bull session where people are bruised and beaten down, or it can be a place where people discover what they already know through using their own voices, learning how to learn from classmates, weaving ideas together. Teacher as midwife helps people give birth to creative new concepts.

Study While some would isolate this methodology as the only true learning style, it is only one among these eight, including reading, exploration, research (including, of course, electronic), and writing. Key is building skills for study that become self-directed for life-long learning. Study includes deductive and also constructive theology. Rigor is welcome.

Individual People learn in groups, but we do not conceptualize, conclude, or create at identically the same moment or in the same way as another person. We are all differently-abled. Even while in community, we can provide for choice in readings, assignments, field work. This goes beyond flexibility to ownership of our own learning.

Confrontation is a powerful method and needs to be used in congruence with our goals; not just automatically, but purposefully. Debate is useful. Certainly "deconstruction" and "disorientation" are appropriate when ideas, biblical interpretations, and world views need to be challenged, even corrected. But is the goal that we might have a blank slate upon which to write? Paulo Freire, years ago, showed us the imperialistic motivation in that approach. The concept that a people need to be conquered before they can be properly led may be more than implied.

Experience includes learning how to be a leader before and after being in the classroom, and also within. Role play, simulation, dramatization, field education, case study all engage participants as actors, as their real selves or vicariously. These are memorable, powerful ways to do

inductive, contextual, relational, constructive, and transformative theology, shaping people for leadership.[6] We can do brief role plays in the midst of lecture and reflectively debrief the most exciting or even the most common experience.

Reflection While some would assign this cluster of methods to "Spirituality," journal-keeping (on a computer, with a trusted friend, or in a leather-bound book), action-reflection, guided meditation, minds-eye-journey are all credible ways of teaching leadership. Certainly they foster formation but also promote insight and wisdom through taking time to reconsider the past, dwell deeply on the present, and envision the future. Key focus: Who am I called to be?[7]

Our goal as teachers of leadership is to gain competence in a whole range of leadership styles and teaching and learning methods so that, with confidence in our competence, we can select and use well the most appropriate one for the people in a particular context so that they can grow to be the people of God in ministry that God is calling them to be. In so doing I believe we find great joy in the teaching/learning engagement.

Questions for Reflection and Conversation:

1. In your arena of service, what are your most prominent teaching styles? What methods are growing edges for you? Ones in which you would like to gain more confidence?

2. As you consider goals for growth in leadership, what images and styles of teaching might you consider congruent with the various objectives you have for your particular students, content, and context?

3. What congruence or incongruence of leadership objectives and teaching methods do you find *among* those

[6] Norma Cook Everist, "Integrative Theological Formation," in *Theological Practices That Matter*, ed. Karen L. Bloomquist (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2009), 170-171.

[7] Everist, *The Church as Learning Community,* 103-148.

with whom you teach and within the preparation for leadership process?

Trustworthy Environments to be Different Together

Whatever teaching methods we use, establishing a safe, healthy, hospitable, trustworthy learning environment is essential. By environment, I mean classroom, congregation, camp, campus, peer group, on-line cohort, continuing education center, church body, community, nation, as far as the globe itself. The essential task for leaders and teachers of leaders is to set the tone and engage the participants, the community itself, in helping sustain a trustworthy environment to be different together.[8]

Is the environment one of intimidation or invitation? At a workshop, in a supervisory relationship, in the classroom, on-line, what kind of environment are we setting for the learning of leadership? That will be the environment these emerging leaders will in turn set as they lead people of faith in becoming actors in the drama of faith in the world, ministers within the faith community and in daily life.

People bring their own insecurities to meetings and to the classroom, not all of which are immediately observable. They may be thinking, "Will I have anything useful to say?" "Will they listen to me?" "Do I even belong here?" All of these, and more, are part of the human propensity to devalue ourselves, mistrusting that God has created us to live in community.

On the other hand, people also have the propensity to fail to believe that others—all kinds of others—are of worth in God's eyes, having gifts to offer. Inside are thoughts such as: "What are *those* people doing here?" "My time is too valuable to waste on this discussion."

[8] See Martin E. Marty, *Building Cultures of Trust* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010). Although writing from a different perspective, Marty's work intersects: "people take risks upon entering the 'universe of discourse' of the 'world' of their conversation partner." 17.

"How can I persuade them to come around to my viewpoint?"

A trustworthy environment is not devoid of different opinions, even disagreement. On the contrary, in an unsafe environment, a wide range of views may never surface. When a leader and teacher of leaders are not trusted, they may never know what people are really thinking. Ideas, creativity, and diversity are lost. But when people are respected as persons, their voices carefully heard, their opinions honored, diversity will enhance community, both within the learning community and in the communities they will eventually lead.

Some people think that a "safe" environment lacks risk. On the contrary, classes and congregations where trust is solid will have the courage to care about and engage in daring learning and courageous ministry in dangerous places in need of justice and love. A healthy environment fosters calm, not chaos; respectful conversation, not disdain; openness, not closed-mindedness. A hospitable environment offers generous welcome, even and especially to strangers.[9]

We could take any learning environment as an example. I will use on-line distributed learning. Learning leadership at a distance presents challenges; however, many of the same principles apply. It is not a matter of just linear learning, simply posting responses back and forth. Rather the environment is a matrix, or a community of learning communities: the on-line cohort and the places people live virtually. People with their past, present, and yes, future experiences are called upon to befriend the distance, hospitably. How do we set that environment? That question needs to precede and permeate consistently the questions of congruence of methods. Who are the participants now? What are they doing there? How do we incorporate field experience, service-learning? Will they be observing leaders?

[9] Norma Cook Everist and Craig L. Nessan, *Transforming Leadership: New Vision for a Church in Mission.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 6-7; Everist, *The Church as Learning Community,* chapter 2.

Be mentored by leaders? Reflect on the qualities and characteristic of that leadership? How do we see them and they see themselves growing as leaders? How do we who are schooled and skilled in religious leadership monitor the mentors, or perhaps we should say, mentor the mentors? All of this is part of tending the learning environment as we choose and use a variety of action-reflection methods, as well as books and on-line conversations.

Whatever the arena, when we set a learning environment of mutual respect, we are ready for independent and interdependent rather than dependent learning. (We are thereby teaching a leadership style of mutual accountability.) The goal is not to "master" the material, finish reading the required number of pages, or write a paper *for* the professor. (The goal of leadership is not to master, or dominate, the parishioners or give them assignments that will be graded, or even merely delegate responsibilities.) Adult learning theory, for more than forty years, has moved from pedagogy to what Malcolm Knowles' coined as andragogy (we might say anthropogogy). Western education for centuries was built on the concept of the learner as dependent, whereas the adult learner is independent. Under pedagogy learning is directed, transmissive, and subjective-centered whereas in andragogy learning is self-directed, mutually oriented, and problem-solving centered. In pedagogy the person's self-concept is student and experience is that which happens to them, whereas in andragogy one's self-concept is adult in society and experience is who we are.[10]

Knowles's work has been criticized for being too centered on the individual rather than the community,[11]

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[10] Malcolm Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy* (Chicago: Follett, 1980). This 1980 edition was already "revised and updated." One finds references to Knowles' work in many books, e.g., Malcolm, S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton III, Richard A. Swanson, *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development,* 6th ed. (London, San Diego: Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann, 2005).

[11] Kent L. Johnson and Nelson T. Strobert, "Principles of Adult Learning," in Rebecca Grothe, *Lifelong Learning* (Minneapolis: 1997), 65.

which is why I stress the importance of not stopping at moving from being a dependent to being an independent learner but of going further to fostering a learning environment of interdependence. Institutional structures by their nature are pedagogical, but leadership and the teaching of leadership need not be. Dependency is habit-forming. Therefore, one needs to teach interdependent leadership consistently. One need not fall back to dependent, competitive learning environments, but build trustworthy places of respect that foster love of learning, scholarship, responsibility for one's own learning, and mutual accountability. Leadership taught in such environments, in all sorts of settings, can form leaders that use appreciative inquiry to discover people's gifts, generate curiosity, use their ideas, help them equip one another, and have high expectations of mutual accountability. Leadership that helps people become actively engaged in ministry further builds community. Jürgen Moltmann wrote, "It is not the Church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill to the world; it is the mission of [God] that includes the Church, creating a church as it goes on its way."[12]

Impossible? No. I have seen it and so have you. Energized by the Spirit, such faith communities themselves become communities of lifelong learners. Our faculty discusses the importance of welcoming students through building on their past experiences, uplifting their gifts, strengthening and utilizing their already-present leadership skills. The Wartburg Seminary community has been doing this well for years.

At a recent regular monthly convocation of the community, almost the entire student body, professors, and some staff gathered around tables at 9:30 to talk deeply about multi-cultural ministry, not just in urban centers, but in rural, small towns and small cities in every place across the land. The model of such convocations is very brief presentations by 2-3 people and then table

[12] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 64.

conversation. Not unusual, except perhaps for the consistency of the commitment to this model for over a quarter century. At one table, the issue was raised to strengthen our Spanish concentration for diaconal ministry students as well as master of divinity students. The words were not only "reported" to the plenary, but immediately following the convocation the academic dean spoke to the student who had raised it, the diaconal ministry students spoke to each other, and, by the time of their l0:40 class, they reported that that addition to the curriculum was well on its way to happening. Likewise, a student at another table had connections with multi-cultural field work sites he had discovered on his own in downtown Dubuque. A professor saw him in the hall immediately after the convocation and called out, "I'd like the names of those sites to add to my list of educational ministry field work possibilities for students for their self-selected field work." By noon the student, not particularly perceived as a leader in the community, had e-mailed his list to the professor and multicultural ministry leadership educational opportunities were expanded.

Simple? Yes. But picture how these things might not have happened. Student initiative might have been interpreted as mere student complaint. Ideas from other than the "usual" campus student leaders might have been disregarded. Layers of institutional oversight might have dampened emerging student leadership. Now, of course, ideas need to be vetted, proper channels traversed, committees consulted. But we sometimes needlessly miss opportunities for people's emerging leadership to be utilized and ministry multiplied. Translate these scenarios to a congregational leadership system.

One more issue needs to be raised: Trustworthy learning environments means learning leadership across boundaries, receiving the leadership of those different from ourselves, those who have historically been considered "beneath," from the underside. This means addressing power inequities and realizing that even with the evidence of much progress we have not yet attained

full partnership across racial, class, and gender lines. We add to those isms, "ablism" where the normates, or non-disabled, have difficulty seeing that people with disabilities are very capable of exercising various forms of leadership.[13] Currently in the United States, there is fear of leadership being open to all. Put "them" back in their place. How far do we yet have to go to attain a global, a national, as well as an ecclesial environment of openness, safety, hospitality, and respect? Trustworthy environments where we can be different together?[14]

For Reflection and Conversation:

1. What do you believe to be characteristics of a trustworthy learning environment?
2. How do we set such environments? How do we together help maintain such environments?

Courage in the Face of Challenge and Conflict

We cannot write about the teaching of leadership without addressing the challenges leaders face in the world and, just as often, within the faith community itself. Pastors turn to judicatory leaders in times of personal and congregational crisis. The church body itself goes through a difficult, potentially church-dividing decision. At these times, not only is our leadership tested, but our faith is as well. How can I lead when they won't be the church? How can we continue when trust has totally broken down?

However, it is not just times of crisis that test one's courage. Just as often, if not more often, I hear the discouraging accounts of appalling apathy. Leaders are disappointed that laity say they are too busy to take on leadership roles, or don't show up for meetings. Leaders' own energy lags; they may become despondent.

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[13] Amos Yong, *The Bible, Disability, and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 108.

[14] See Letty M. Russell, ed. By Shannon Clarkson and Kate M. Ott, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

Surely our teaching has failed these faithful religious leaders. And yet, I pose that it has not, and need not. By the grace of God, we who are called to teach leadership are called to uphold and guide leaders in the most depressing situations, the most critical times and in the midst of the most gruesome events.

A graduate of four years calls. There's been a church fire in the middle of the night. "Can I lead them through this disaster, Norma?" "Yes, yes, you can," I reply. And we talk. And she begins to remember who she is, who she has become, the skills she has learned and has been using in building community in that place. It will be hard. I don't pretend to know how she will lead them through it, but I know she will. And she knows she can call again. An intern returns to campus, having been called to emergency leadership because a tornado went through their town. (This has happened a number of times over the years, just again this March.)

And there's more of course, for example, Kim, a pastor on Long Island, a Wartburg graduate, whom I called after the Twin Towers fell. I had made a visit to learn from her leadership at Bethlehem in Baldwin a year and a half earlier. An intelligent woman with a gentle spirit, she questioned her leadership style because other clergy saw her as not directive enough. But I had seen her guide a congregation through church conflict. An Iranian man, an architect had become a deacon and a man of West Indian heritage an assisting minister. Under her quiet, caring leadership, the congregation, wrestling with budgets, hearing, "We need to feed hungry people" from their pastor, would say, "We can't afford…" So she put a jar in the back of the church and little by little it was filled. Finally there was enough money to offer one meal. By the time of my visit they were serving over two hundred meals a month. They didn't need the jar anymore; they had two freezers.

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, I relived my journey on the commuter train out from Manhattan to Bethlehem. I called the pastor. (We talked regularly on the phone thereafter. I was a voice from outside the

disaster area.) She had been calling everyone she knew who might have a family member in lower Manhattan. Then she called the shut-ins and then everyone one else in the congregation. On the third day Bethlehem held a prayer service open to the community. Kamy, from Iran, led the prayers.

The second week was a week of despair; members reported racist rumors about Arab Americans. On Thursday of that week the community held an interfaith prayer service and one thousand people came. This quiet, gentle leader had been chair of Baldwin Interfaith Clergy Fellowship. She said, "The fact that religious leaders here had vibrant relationships before the crisis was so helpful."[15]

How do we teach leadership for times of crisis? Although we cannot presume to know what they will face, we can teach people to claim their own personhood, their own gifts, and their own styles of leadership. We can instill values of justice and eagerness to reach out and network, and equip them with a variety skills to be able to empower people for ministry and to care for one another when the crisis comes.

Challenge may come from the skies or from within. There was the pastor whose trusted church council president was discovered to be a mass murderer, causing this pastor to revisit the very depths of the question of evil. And yet, he led, and he empowered his congregational lay leaders to speak clearly when the media swarmed around. Kim from Long Island and Mike from Kansas called, and in each of these cases, later, at Wartburg Seminary's invitation, returned to campus for rest, reflection and a chance to regain perspective and to teach present students. Our campus is like a mission center, gathering, sending, providing opportunity to return, and sending forth again.

And then there is the diaconal minister serving as campus chaplain at a large university tested to the core by

[15] Norma Cook Everist, *Open the Doors and See All the People: Stories of Church Identity and Vocation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 88-93.

the sexual abuse scandal that rocked the campus in the heart of football season. When the powerful fell, the students were shocked, confused, at a loss to know where to turn, in what to believe. Whom could they trust? The institution and entire town had to deal with legend and power and tragedy and shame and image and mission. What are your experiences? How do you continue to teach leadership when those you have taught are in times of challenge and conflict? These are not relationships of dependency, but transformed interconnections of people who have also become life-long colleagues.

Among the many aspects of leadership, I am convinced we need to teach how to lead in the midst of conflict. Our ecclesiology will shape how we image conflict and the skills we teach. In an argumentative culture that seeks the entertainment of contention, there are theological bases for a collaborative approach to conflict. Conflict is the story of human history. It is important to help students learn skills of discerning when a conflict is over beliefs, or differing interpretations of truth, or values, or mission (goals) or ministry (means). Future leaders need to learn different types of conflict and their own histories with conflict. They need to develop skill in a range of responses to conflict and then consider which role they can play. The issue is not the simplistic advice, "Pick your battle." Rather, we say, "Pick your role."

This is about religious leadership, because there are biblical and theological groundings for various responses: avoidance (Jesus sometimes chose to avoid, because "his time had not yet come."); confrontation (Not just a stand-off, but standing side-by-side to face unhealthy abuse of power); competition (Were we or were we not created to compete? When and when not?); control (The good news is "I am not God" and the bad news is "I am not God." When do we need to take control and when are we merely controlling?); accommodation (Christ came into an inhospitable world. How do we make room for each other's ideas and personhood without relinquishing our own? Mutual accommodation); compromise (What

does it mean to not be compromised but to live together in the promises of God?); collaboration (The work of laboring together through conflict takes time.)[16]

Some of the people we are called to teach go on to become judicatory leaders. A half dozen or more students who have sat in my Church Administration class have become bishops, in the United States and also in Malawi. Of course who is to say that those bishops do not face as much conflict as they receive honor?

We teach people to build up communities of faith; but what if it turns out that a graduate in first call finds the ministry something quite different? The metropolitan Phoenix area continues to grow out into the desert, so it seemed incongruous to me that the Church of Hope was closing. "Psalms and poverty," the pastor said. The congregation had been there for forty-nine years. "I had hoped they would make it to fifty," the pastor said. "We need someone with a lot of energy to turn this church around," she had been told when interviewing. In essence, she had been called to close a dying church. Had she "failed her test?" Had we failed her? Had the church failed its community? As we walked from room to room through the building, she told how she visited youth from the congregation and the neighborhood imprisoned in Tucson. And there were baptisms and weddings of people never before members of a Lutheran church. Was this not still a mission congregation? Until just two weeks before my visit, fifty to sixty children came to Hope for day care. "It's so quiet now," said the pastor. The toys remained, but no children. A little help for financial support had come, but too little, too late. The warm sun was deceiving. This is prime land…or will be again. But redevelopment won't be for the homeless.[17] What are the questions for the teaching of leadership, the questions of ecclesiology, and mission and ministry, not just for Hope, but for all of us?

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[16] Norma Cook Everist, *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004)

[17] Everist, *Open the Doors and See All the People,* 54-56.

A graduate of 15 years ago, now a senior pastor of a 1700 member church, quoted me back to myself this spring: "Love the people," and added, "Love them through it, no matter what that means."

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

1. When you think of leaders whom you have taught or known, what are some of the challenges they have faced? How do the foundations of leadership continue to inform and up-build them during such times?

2. What have you learned from leaders of faith communities you have taught or known that is shaping and will shape your own teaching of leadership?

3. I've mentioned visits. What about Facebook? How do we, should we, should we not, keep "teaching" through social media connections? What are our roles and relationships?

Teaching Leadership for a Pluralistic, Public World

What difference does our teaching of leadership make for the immediate future of faith communities as well as five or ten years from now as these faith communities themselves change and are changed in a pluralistic culture? Religious bodies and theological schools are parts of global religions. The scope of our teaching of leadership is and needs to be global. Likewise, the people whom we teach are—and need to realize they are—embodied in and ministering among global ecclesial communities. How do we prepare people to be global leaders in a local place? H. Richard Niebuhr wrote many years ago that the church is both local and universal. The localized church implies the global and historic Church. But without becoming localized and specific, the Church does not exist.[18]

The teaching of leadership needs to include leadership in the public world. In the United States, in 2012, questions concerning the place of religious

[18] H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 24.

communities in a pluralistic culture are in the news. Is there, as some have said publicly, a "war" on religion? Or a war on some religions by other (segments) of religions? What are the issues of the division of Church, mosque, synagogue, and state? What are the roles of leaders of faith communities in the public world? As individuals? As leaders of their faith communities in the community? As faith leaders among other leaders?

In a pluralistic culture, we are called to teach leadership that connects communities for the common good. There has been a significant change in the President's Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives recently.[19] I was privileged last summer in Dubuque to attend a meeting of about 200 people representing many faith community and non-profit organizations at the Northeast Iowa Community College Town Clock Center. We had an invitation to real partnerships in a religiously plural nation. Dallas Tonsager, Under Secretary, USDA's Office of Rural Development said, "Thank you for your expressions of your faith." The mayor of Dubuque, Roy Buol and the interim president of Northeast Iowa Community College, Dr. Liang Wee, told of how the city and the college have grown to be places where diversity and collaboration for the common good are welcomed and appreciated.

We need to work together to create a trustworthy place for us to be different together. So, why is it that the narrative that receives the most press is one that professes this is and should be a "Christian" nation? Ray Suarez, in his book, *The Holy Vote: The Politics of Faith in America* makes clear that Christianity is not an

[19] J. David Kuo, *Tempting Faith: An Inside Story of Political Seduction* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2006). Kuo, writing in the early 2000's, said he reached the heights of political power, but after three years of being second in command in the President's Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives, he found himself helping to manipulate religious faith for political gain.

American religion and that the American state is not necessarily Christian.[20]

How do we connect people in our communities for conversation and work together for the common good? We teach by modeling. While teaching at The Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia a year ago, the very first week there, I was invited to join with faculty colleagues and some students in silent vigil outside of a gun shop to make a collective, common call for responsible gun sales. At Wartburg Seminary, we worked together with others for years on the cause of the liberation of Namibia from apartheid South African rule. Our Global Concerns Committee and Center for Global Theologies have continued in robust activism through the years and continue today, with faculty and student leadership.

Personally and communally, as congregations and church bodies, how do we lead? What means do we use? What roles can we play? These are significant questions. We have our own blogs and bumper stickers. And we have ecclesial national offices. We need trustworthy places to be different together politically. We need to teach leadership for working together for peace and justice, even while having different means and methods. This includes preparing people for ecumenical and inter-faith leadership locally, nationally, and internationally.

The issue of separation of church and state deserves much more space than can be given here. Suffice it to say in regard to the teaching of leadership that there are various kinds of separation: absolute, functional, institutional, transvaluative, equal. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in its constitution (4.03n), pledges to "work with civil authorities in areas of mutual endeavor, maintaining institutional separation of church and state in a relation of functional interaction."[21] That is another way of saying that we hold to both the

[20] Ray Suarez, *The Holy Vote: The Politics of Faith in America* (New York: Harper, 2007).

[21] See John R. Stumme and Robert W. Tuttle, eds., *Church and State: Lutheran Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

establishment and free exercise clauses of the First amendment; we also believe that all faith communities are called to work together for the common good, yes, carry out our various "vocations" in the public world.

We live in a time when people in the public sphere cry for leadership while disdaining or rejecting leaders. The role of clerical leadership in the community has been redefined. There may be a paradox of leadership. Today, the greatest gift clerical leaders may bring to community leadership is a sense of God's calling to serve our neighbors, working together with leaders of other faith communities, non-profit organizations, and the network of civic and other leaders.[22] The questions revolve around the specific role of the leader, the role of the faith community itself, and the various roles of members of faith communities in their ministries in daily life in the community. How do we teach leaders so that they in turn are able to equip people for leadership in all sorts of arenas in daily life?

How do we make sure children in our communities are well-nourished? How can churches and the government work together so that children do not go hungry when school is out in the summer? How can churches and local community leaders work together to help people create new business opportunities and jobs? How can leaders of faith communities, government, and non-profits coordinate efforts in times of natural disaster? All of these partnerships are welcome and needed. As people of many faiths, we can and need to work together. And we need to tell these stories. We need a new public narrative of what people of faiths (plural!) in America are doing together. This is indeed a broad and significant task for the teaching of leadership in the Academy of Religious Leadership.

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[22] Nelson Granade, *Lending Your Leadership: How Pastors Are Redefining Their Role in Community Life* (Herndon, Virginia: Alban, 2006), 5, 92-93.

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

1. Where, in the world, are you? Your church, synagogue, mosque, school? How does one teach for leadership that is both local and global?

2. From where do students come? And where do they go? How does that affect how you teach and learn while you are together?

3. How do we prepare leaders of faith communities for ecumenical, interfaith, and community partnerships in a pluralistic world?

INSISTO RECTOR: PROVOCATIVE PLAY FOR SERIOUS LEADERSHIP LEARNING

RUSSELL W. WEST AND ROBERT K. MARTIN

Abstract

This article explores how leadership educators can invite provocative play—broadly conceived to include existential struggle—into learning as a provocative resource. Further, this article will explore the pedagogical significance and transformative potential of well-crafted games that surface from the hidden conations and *habitus* frameworks of participants. Once revealed in reflexive action, default patterns of conation and *habitus* can be critically engaged to make room for new learning that goes to the core of identity, disrupts default patterns, and allows leadership reflexes to be reconditioned for more faithful effectiveness. Such an approach will challenge traditional theological education; implications for leadership pedagogy will be suggested.

Introduction

We begin with an episode that is likely familiar. The scene opens with a pastor walking into a church council meeting. It might be called a vestry or a session or a council of elders, but it is a gathering of those authorized to lead a local church. The pastor enters the room, greeting those with whom she feels an alliance and deftly avoiding those who have challenged and opposed her. As she takes her seat at the head of the table, she displays a calculated air of confidence, but within, she is a jumble of conflicting emotions. Calling the meeting to order with a prayer for openness to God's will, the council sets about

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its business predictably, with everyone playing tacitly ascribed roles and reciting lines from invisible scripts.

When the time for "new business" arrives, the pastor shuffles papers in front of her, gathers herself, and launches into a proposal for a new ministry that she believes will revitalize the congregation. She has cultivated support for this presentation by talking individually with supportive members of the council. But right on cue, she is interrupted by her arch nemesis, who has a prescient ability to discern weak links and rend them asunder, shattering every proposal into shards of ill will. All eyes turn slowly toward the pastor, in whom red-hot fury and abject shame vie for expression. Sides are drawn, weapons are chosen; the game morphs into battle. Whatever comes next comes from within.

Leadership is an Inside Job

Leadership is exercised not only at the level of explicit principle and strategy, but also at the deeper levels of consciousness, habit, desire, hope, and fear. In many respects, these deeper levels, the tacit substrata of personhood, determine the exercise of leadership more than we know or want to admit. In the example above, the pastor walked into the council meeting ready to exercise decisive leadership, but along the way her conscious strategies were subverted by her own motivations, habits, and dispositions of which she was little aware. Several instances can be identified: the pastor entered the room in a way that reified persistent divisions. Preparing for the ministry proposal, she talked only to people who would be supportive, and she did not adequately anticipate criticism, even though she knew it would be forthcoming. Not only was the pastor inattentive to determinative traits within herself, but she was also seemingly unaware of the contextual factors—culture, history, relationship patterns, or other structural/systemic constraints—in which the episode took place and gained its meaning. The main determinative factors play out under the surface of

awareness, much like the most consequential part of an iceberg is exactly that which cannot be seen.

In order to teach leadership development, we need to gain access to the tacit substrata of personality and context. But, most of our educational efforts are oriented to the most obvious and superficial levels: the cognitive and volitional. How might we gain access to deeply embedded and hidden attitudes, beliefs, motivations, habits, conventions, and structures? How might we expose them, rendering them explicit, so that persons can become more aware of them and thus have greater choice over them? Because greater awareness yields greater potential for more intentional and effective action, how can leadership education make the implicit explicit? How can we raise the tacit to focal awareness?

Addressing this problem of education directly, such as through pedagogies of didactic instruction, is much like trying to find cockroaches by turning on the light. They want to remain hidden; they like the dark. In the same way, the tacit dimension is repelled by light; it does not like to be confronted directly. It hears our approach from far away and scurries back further into the shadows. In order to "un-conceal" the deepest part of ourselves,[1] we need to resort to a kind of trickery, to expose our truest self through surprise to reveal itself. To get this result, our teaching/learning method needs to be equal to the task: penetrating past cognitive and ego defenses to the heart of the matter.

We propose that leadership learning would be greatly enhanced through pedagogies of play. Why play with something as serious as leadership? Through experimenting with leadership education, we have come to the conclusion that the most effective education is transformational, and transformation is very serious indeed. We are using the word "transformation" in a very specific sense that should be distinguished from the conventional reference to a particularly momentous

[1] Mark Wrathall, "Unconcealment" in *A Companion to Heidegger,* eds. Hubert Dreyfus and Mark Wrathall (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 337-357.

change. Transformational education transforms the primary axioms of consciousness by addressing the tacit substructures of personality and context. The primary objective is greater integration of otherwise disparate and fragmented elements. But that objective is best accomplished playfully, through an indirect method. Thus, we submit that the transformative potential of education is provoked through a playful pedagogy.

Greater integration within consciousness yields the potential for less inner contradiction, less self-subversion, and thereby, much greater effectiveness. For example, in the episode above, we would argue that transformative leadership education would have helped the pastor to unearth and confront self-defeating tendencies, to reinforce relational antagonisms, and to avoid critically examining her proposals. In order to lay bare this view, this essay will explore the main terms—play, provocation, and transformation—and it will describe one particularly successful example of provocative play. Our hope is that this essay will help persons concerned with leadership development (within themselves and others) identify how they might play their way transformatively into a kind of leadership that is congruent with their core values and community leadership opportunity.

Leadership Games: First Impressions, Lasting Impressions

Play is an anthropological universal. Everyone does it. Everyone is formed by it. Dubbing the matter *Homo Ludens*, "Man, The Player," Johan Huizinga explores those universal impulses from which people *must* play games. Masculine reference to all of humanity notwithstanding, Huizinga's foundational assumption in *Homo Ludens* is hardly worth debating: anthropologists find the play ethic in some form or other in every culture on earth.[2] In this discussion, however, we extend the assumption into practical territory that might be a bit

[2] Stephen A. Grunlan and Marvin K. Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979).

more debatable. It is this: leadership can be learned,[3] at least its spiritual seriousness provoked, through play.

Cultural models of "leadershipping" —a made-up word to capture the tendency to "en-role"[4] into leadership acts, scripts, and dramas at least in temporary, but conatively imprinting[5] ways—in play are easily found. Reflecting on children's playground games in different parts of the world,[6] it is easy to see how socialization and cultural values are enacted, mimicked, explored, and reinforced. These kinds of movement games function to provide important social learning information and benefits in societies where they are played.[7] A favorite game of Dinka children in Sudan is played in rivers and lakes. Submersed in the water up to their armpits, they take turns being a "little buffalo" while their friends beat the splashing surface with open palms chanting: *"The diviner of that day, from where did he come? The diviner of the Nyandeeng's Mother, is that why my mother must die? My little buffalo, rest in peace, mankind is passing on."* Not only is the game joyous and active, but it includes the functional aspect of bathing and deals with the socio-cultural questions of life and death.

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[3] We will not rehearse here whether leadership can be learned; whether it is merely "caught rather than taught." See Russell West, "A Reflex Model of Leadership Development: A Concept Paper." *Journal of Religious Leadership*, Spring and Fall, Vols. 3/1 and 3/2 (2004), 173-220.

[4] Erving Goffman, *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Press, 1959).

[5] Thomas Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), 9. Conation refers to the deep substratum of knowledge, affections, and will that together support cognition and give human activity a rational and intentional direction. According to Christian educator and practical theologian, Thomas Groome, conation is "what is realized when the whole ontic being of 'agent-subjects-in-relationship' is actively engaged to consciously know, desire, and do what is more humanizing and life-giving (i.e., "true") for all."

[6] See: http://www.gameskidsplay.com (accessed on August 25, 2012). Geof Nieboer has indexed a ready-to-use compilation of "kids games" that may be representative of U.S. childhood socialization games. He has done so since May 14, 1995. He attributes the collection of an additional 250 games to Darren Gerson. Gerson's list is intentionally inclusive of an international spectrum of childhood gaming experiences.

[7] Grunlan and Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology*, 1979.

Self-concept, self-efficacy, emotional competence, inclusion/exclusion, gendering, and power relations[8] may also be implied in such social movement games.[9] While games exist for the sake of the gamer's own intrinsic enjoyment of playing, learning is a socializing by-product.

A set of games can be identified which illustrate the socializing phenomenon in matters of leadership. While no one game has the capacity to project the full array of culturally-endorsed implicit theories of leadership,[10] any few may grant a glimpse into those values, ethics, and biases which are persistent in cultural enactment. One such game involves forming a single file line to "follow the leader," or *insisto rector*. It shows up in other childhood games, too, such as "Simon Says," in which one person gets on a chair in front of peers and gives benign orders that test quick-following abilities. The commands sort people into those who have listened for the nearly-magical "command of execution" in the form of "Simon Says…, touch your nose," and those who just follow any old commands, such as "Touch your nose!" (without Simon's permission-giving command of execution). "Mother May I," "Red Light/Green Light," and "What Time Is It Mr. Wolf?" are all examples of the simple "leader/follower" role-play game. While it is only "a game," it is easy to surmise the absolutizing effect on the little leader's self and social ordering concepts from these mimicking dances: "There are leaders and there are followers; and somehow (by the fates, by God, by my preening brilliance) I have become part of the leader group, the power class. Other people will do as *I* imagine, design, bid, and command!"

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[8] Jennifer Jenson and Suzanne de Castell, "Gender, Simulation, and Gaming: Research Review and Redirections." *Simulation & Gaming* 41 (December 1, 2010): 898-920.

[9] Anthony Bandura, *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1997).

[10] Den Hartog, Robert House, Paul Hanges, and Peter Dorfman, "Emics and Etics of Culturally-Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theories: Are Attributes of Charismatic/Transformational Leadership Universally Endorsed?" *Knowledge@Wharton,* (January 01, 1999).

The imprints from these seemingly benign games just might suggest to the little learner a ready-for-life model of leadership: who leads (a solo artist whom fate chose to lead the playground conquests), how to lead (power-absolute command and coercion mechanisms), from where to lead (symbolically out in front, with commanding voice and view), and the resources of leadership (command-able people who submissively comply with the rules of the game into which they find themselves being socialized through a capricious system of rewards or delays).

Everyone, leader and follower alike, is conditioned to respond according to the deeply embedded scripts implied by such dyadic roles. Each and all develop and internalize a tacit framework of identity/agency, and a patterned *habitus, or* "way of life,"[11] based on repetitive and indoctrinating scripts. Reflexive thinking/action (called 'reflexes') for role-based, social participation in the leadership process flows from this tacit/implicit framework. It is here, the hidden level of reflexes and the core *habitus*, from which they generate an opportunity for formative, even transformative leadership learning that is considered not only possible, but desirable.[12]

To be sure, the models of leadership implied and advanced by these schoolyard games, and even other more sophisticated gaming modalities,[13] are fraught with

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[11] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice (*Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1977), 214. *Habitus* is characterized by Pierre Bourdieu as the "set of dispositions (habitual ways of being and behaving, with a repertoire of pre-dispositions, tendencies, propensities and inclinations, all shaped by structures and previous actions) which structure and generate practices and representations."

[12] Russell W. West, "A Reflex Model of Leadership Development: a concept paper." *Journal of Religious Leadership,* Vol. 3, No 1 and No. 2, Spring (2004) and Fall (2004).

[13] See: http://www.seriousgames.org (accessed on August 25, 2012). Since 2002, SeriousGames.Org has hosted the "Serious Games Initiative." This group "is focused on uses for games in exploring management and leadership challenges facing the public sector." Key players in this international clearing house for non-entertainment social uses of gaming practice and technologies include: Serious Gaming Institute, Games and Learning Alliance, SimAULA,

serious socio-spiritual implications. The fact of such game, and the persistence of similar games to it in cultures the world-over, renders no validation to the model of leadership it displays. If anything, the game makes explicit what might have been implicit before the game was enacted. This surfacing of internal social constructs, whether they be worthy of acceptance, refinement, critique or rejection, offers to the watchful leadership educator the raw material for leadership learning and debriefing.[14]

Playing at Work

Not a few scholarly writers have latched onto *play* as a topic of scholarly inquiry.[15] Interestingly, from a play perspective, the scholars seem to require making alterations that make clear it is not mere child's play in which they are interested, with words like "adult play,"[16] or "serious play."[17] The dismissive associations with frivolity and these industrial associations with non-productivity are hard to escape.[18] This scholarly practice with the rhetoric of play illustrates one of its qualities as a problematic construct; play is fundamentally intangible when we begin to *work* with it as a subject of inquiry and constructive application. We cease playing, and begin to work. We find that play itself ceases to play by the rules

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Adaptive Learning via Intuitive/Interactive Collaborative and Emotional Systems (ALICE), EduGameLAb and Innovative Networks Supporting People Who Investigate Research Environments and Spaces (INSPIRES).

[14] David Crookall, "Serious Games, Debriefing, and Simulation/Gaming as a Discipline." *Simulation Gaming*, vol. 41 no. 6 (December 2010), 898-92.

[15] Anthony D. Pellegrini, ed. *The Future of Play Theory: A Multidisciplinary Inquiry into the Contributions of Brian Sutton-Smith (*Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995)

[16] John H. Kerr and Michael J. Apter, eds., *Adult Play: A Reversal Theory Approach (*Rockland, MA: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1991).

[17] Lloyd Rieber, "Designing Learning Environments that Excite Serious Play" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education, Melbourne, Australia. December 2001); B. Sutton-Smith (1995).

[18] Anthony D. Pellegrini, "Conclusion: The Persuasive Rhetorics of Play,"in *Future of Play Theory,* 1995.

of cognitive control. In his foundational study of play, *The Ambiguity of Play,* Brian Sutton-Smith makes this very observation fundamental to his treatment of the subject: "We all play occasionally, and we all know what playing feels like. But when it comes to making theoretical statements about what play is, we fall into silliness. There is little agreement among us, and much ambiguity."[19]

Experiences that are deeply imprinting—that form the conative core of *habitus,* such as military field preparation, public safety training, flight procedure and communication training, and even driver education—are characterized by several tendencies. These tendencies have their analogues in a wide array of theoretical interdisciplinary inquiries in fields such as philosophy, anthropology, sociology, education, communication, cognitive psychological development, organizational development, and most notably, game construct design. Some of play's tendencies, from the perspectives of interdisciplinary studies, are offered here:

- Play tends to feature "time out of time" liminality, episodic discontinuities, anti-structure, and an emergent *communitas*, which anthropologists refer to as *ritual process,* observable in "rite of passage" traditional practices.[20]
- Play tends to feature forms of "generative dissonance," an essential suspension with what is known, conventional, technically predictable, and commensurate with former steady states.[21] It anticipates an alternative and thought-to-be more satisfying (subjective) reality. The tension between (objective) "reality" and a hoped-for future generates a sense of urgency and drama.[22] It intensifies passion,

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[19] Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play (*Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 1.

[20] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969).

[21] Jack Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning (*San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991).

[22] J.B. Black, T.J. Turner, and G.H. Bower, "Point of View in Narrative Comprehension, Memory, and Production." *Journal of Verbal Learning and*

focuses attention, and orients behavior to resolve the tension.[23]

- Play tends to imply a profile of the ideal traits and techniques of performance. These may be standards of mastery, standards of mediocrity, and standards of marginality. These standards may imply winners/losers, insiders/outsiders, novices/experts, competition/collaboration, and comparison/cooperation.[24] Play creates its own games, establishes the field of operations with its accompanying conventions, rules, and goals.
- Play tends to expect behavior-based demonstrations of ingenuity, situational awareness,[25] and competence (often after temporary or skilled incompetence or after a period of despair).[26]

Verbal Behavior 18, (1979) 187-198; J.B. Black, "Imaginary Worlds*,"* in M.A. Gluck, J.R. Anderson and S.M. Kosslyn, eds., *Memory and Mind* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2007); Christopher Booker, T*he Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005).

23 Robert Freed Bales, *Personality and Interpersonal Behavior* (NY: Holt, 1980); E.G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58 (1972): 396-407; Barrett, L.F. & Lindquist, K.A., "The Embodiment of Emotion" in Gun R. Semin and Eliot R. Smith, eds., *Embodied Grounding: Social, Cognitive, Affective, and Neuroscientific Approaches* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Gallese V., "Embodied Simulation: From Neurons to Phenomenal Experience." *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 4 (2005): 23–48; C.L. Fadjo, M.P. Lu, J. B. Black., "Instructional Embodiment and Video Game Programming in an after School Program" (Presented at Ed-Media: World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia & Telecommunications in Honolulu, Hawaii, 2009).

24 Russell W. West, *"A Reflex Model of Leadership Development*," (2004), 214; Sharon Johnson and Galen Smith, "Perspectives on Competition - Christian and Otherwise" (unpublished, Cedarville University, 2005); Alfie Kohn, *No Contest: A Case Against Competition* (Boston: Houghton-Miflin, 1986).

25 Mica R. Endsley and Daniel J. Garland, eds., *Situation Awareness Analysis and Measuremen*t (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000)

26 Chris Argrys, "Skilled Incompetence." *Harvard Business Review of Effective Communication* (Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, 1986); A. Williams, L. Hughes and B. Simon, "Propinquinty: Exploring Embodied Gameplay" (Presented at *UbiComp'10,* September 26–29, 2010, Copenhagen, Denmark).

- Play tends to rely on technical layers of tasks; it is performance-driven with measurable and quantifiable results. But it also relies on a reconfiguration of technical scripts in novel and adaptive ways.[27]
- Play tends to generate new and imaginative maze-way solutions to recurrent challenges, threats, situations, or problems that when applied incrementally, allow a new and revitalizing order to emerge from chaos, discontinuity, and perceived powerlessness.[28]
- Play tends toward community. Challenging games increase pressure on the cognitive capacity of a single individual, but distribute pressure when additional human capability is added to the standard-seeking process and outcome.[29]

In short, human play operates by means of its own intrinsic motivation, which is greater than any material interest or extrinsic motivation. Play is existentially constructive and creative: it creates a sense of freedom by suspending space and time to create its own artificial play times and playgrounds. Within that constructed environment, play operates then, by its own principles

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[27] Lloyd Rieber, "Designing Learning Environments that Excite Serious Play" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education, Melbourne, Australia, December, 2001); Greta Fein, "Pretend Play: Creativity and Consciousness," in Deitmar Görlitz, and Joachim Wohlwill, eds., *Curiosity, Imagination and Play* (Hillsdale, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1987).

[28] Anthony F.C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements." *American Anthropologist* 58(2) (1956): 264-281; James E. Loder, *The Transforming Moment: Understanding Convictional Experiences* (Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers & Howard Publishers, 1989) 32, 68. In the transformational theory of Loder, imagination is necessary for transformation. Within his five stage transformational process, the third stage has to do with a "constructive act of the imagination"; "At the center of transformational knowing in science, esthetics, or therapy, the imaginative, constructive insight or vision is an undoing of nothingness; it is a proximate form of the ultimate manifestation of 'the Holy' in revelation."

[29] Linda Moerschell, "The Intersection of Punctuated Equilibrium and Leadership Emergence within the Framework of Naturalistic Decision Making" (Ph.D. Dissertation Manuscript. Applied Management and Decision Sciences, Walden University, November, 2008).

and rules, thereby challenging assumed conventions. The deeper into the tacit substructure a challenge penetrates, the greater the transformative potential for learners. As the tacit axioms of ideology and behavior surface in consciousness, the more available they are to self-conscious acceptance, interrogation, revision, and rejection.

These principles can be identified within education and learning's most thorough taxonomical explorations: Jack Mezirow's, "Transformational Learning," Martin Fishbein's "Theory of Reasoned Action" (or alternatively named "Theory of Behaviorial Intention"), Icek Ajzen's "Theory of Planned Behavior," Lev Vgotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development," or James Loder's "Transformational Moment." These tendencies accord well with experiential practices in learning, which are seldom associated with a particular theorist, but rather arise from an amalgamation of face validity theories and best practices, such as "Situated Learning," "Problem-Based Learning," and "Action-Reflection Learning" (or "Action Learning"). These tendencies map well on a theory-building project in which co-author Russell West is engaged and has dubbed "Leadership Reflex Theory."[30] These tendencies can be observed routinely in the ordinary acts of play. It is here that *provocative play* may offer an assist to theological leadership formation processes, whether the formation is hosted in a church, in the community, or at the seminary.

Provocative Play for Leadership Learning

What is "provocative play?" Without a doubt, the concept of "provocation" can be problematic. The semantic range of this word extends from the coercive use of power and reward on one end of a continuum, to a socially benign or even sacred use of the concept, derived from its Latin roots, *pro vocation*, "to call forth, call out." As designers of learning, we cannot afford to be naïve

[30] Russell W. West, "A Reflex Model of Leadership Development: A Concept Paper," *Journal of Religious Leadership* (2004): 173-220.

about the power dynamics involved in the teaching-learning relationship. It is far too easy to inadvertently sponsor person-denying, even psychologically violent, learning contexts in the name of teacher privilege and responsibility. Merely calling learning "play" is not enough. Designers must be self-consciously and intentionally serious about preserving and recognizing the intrinsic power of play participants before, during, and after play.[31] The players must be truly free to play, not become playthings. Play must not devolve into work in disguise. Teacher-designers are at their best when they are exerting their power to design conditions that emancipate players to be themselves, let delight rise, promote spaces safe enough for appropriate self-unconsciousness/self-forgetfulness to emerge.[32] Often, however, the classroom, by its very nature, has ceased long ago to be a playground for many participants. Through no fault of their own, participants stopped playing at school when they could no longer exert control, figure out the scoring system, stop the threats, or combat the "fouls." The boundary-keeping rules were ignored. In this respect, play is an ethically serious business in and beyond the educational context.

On the other end of the provocation spectrum, we have the imagery of calling forth. It is here that the spiritual seriousness of play becomes our focus. With a theologically cultivated vision of the person's *habitus* (which is not merely cognitive resource development), as

[31] A literature is coalescing around "debriefing" as the critical ingredient that separates trivial play from "serious play." Although scholars require the element of video technology as an essential of their view of "serious play," given the guild's particular focus on the legitimization on the social value of video gaming, David Cockrall insists the critical ingredient that qualifies gaming as "serious" is the presence of debriefing that facilitates the generalizing of knowledge and learning beyond the immediate experience of the game itself. This insistence finds broad support in the mounting literature among experiential educators around the under-utilized use of debriefing in learning contexts.

[32] Matthew Galliott and Brandon Schmeichel, "Is Implicit Self-esteem Really Unconscious?" *Journal of the Null Hypothesis*. JASNH. Vol 3, No. 3 (2006).

the locus of educational and spiritual formation, we can imagine a very different use of the classroom opportunity. Most subjects are pursued with a cognitive resource development vision. Under this modality, the learning of information—facts, concepts, dates, names, lists, propositions, procedures, for example—or cognitive recall is the locus of the educational strategy. This strategy assumes that cognition is uniformly productive in the context of occupational and situational performance. It assumes, for example, that the mastery of propositional theological schemes disposes a learner to producing apt and theologically congruent ethical behavior when a social situation demands. And for some learners this may be the case. However, it is not necessarily so.

A reliable principle of design that asserts: 'people will retain the habits that have served them in the past until something more satisfying displaces these,' is so broadly experienced as to be axiomatic. Anaïis Nin is attributed with the observation: "And the day came when the pain it took to remain a tight bud became greater than the pain it took to blossom."[33] In other words, when persons are confronted with the workability of their present perceptions, propositions, and practices, and are offered a more effectual way of being true to—or realizing themselves—conditions for learning are made possible. In this way, something from deep within a person's *habitus* may be revealed and the person is thus able to become aware of and more intentional about developing healthy, life-giving habits. This is what it means to provoke in a way that is worthy of both the educational enterprise and the latent power for self-transcendence that serious leadership learning can provide. We are proposing that the intentional sponsoring of those play conditions, in the leadership learning context, is a legitimate and even responsible use of a leadership

[33] Although the reference's source is obscured by translation, and at times the attribution is debated, Nin observed poetically in *Cities of the Interior*, p. 180, in *Children of the albatross* (1947), the phenomenon of the right time for blossoming.

educator's power and opportunity. This is provocative play for serious leadership learning.

With the above tendencies serving as a concept cloud for inquiry, and learning theories as a warrant for scholarly sense-making, we theorize that *play,* particularly *provocative* play, is a fitting context, process, and practice within durable leadership education which aims for transformation within participants. Rather than offer a conclusive treatment of provocative play as a transformative leadership education strategy, we propose another way. In the following section, we recount one of the many games developed by a member of the authoring team for teaching leadership. This is not the only game, nor the best of its type. A burgeoning industry and sub-culture of pervasive, location-based, augmented reality, technology-assisted, simulated, serious gaming is emerging and remains quite accessible through simple web searching.[34] Rather, it is offered so readers' imaginations will be stimulated to see through the model, and hopefully be inspired for their own provocative play-making.

Case Study in Provocative Play - Get the King

"Get the King" is a technology-assisted,[35] location-based,[36] augmented-reality game.[37] While each of these terms requires technical definitions to be useful, in short,

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[34] Examples include: Ronald Azuma, "A Survey of Augmented Reality." *Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments* 6, 4 (August, 1997): 355-385; Markus Montola, Jaakko Stenros, and Annika Waern, *Pervasive Games: Theory and Design: Experiences on the Boundary Between Life and Play.* (Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufman Press, 2009); Paul Baron, "Location-based Mobile Phone Games." *Aka.me* (blog) http://blog.aka.me/location-based-mobile-phone-games (accessed on August 25, 2012).

[35] Nikolaos Avouris, Nikoleta Yiannoutsou, "A Review of Mobile Location-Based Games for Learning Across Physical and Virtual Spaces." *Journal of Universal Computer Science* 18 (2012).

[36] Sonke Bullerdiek, "Design and Evaluation of Pervasive Games" (Thesis, University of Lubek, 2006).

[37] Adriana de Souza e Silva and Girlie Delacruz, "Hybrid Reality Games Reframed Potential Uses in Educational Contexts." *Games and Culture* 1 (3), (July 2006): 231–251.

it is a scavenger hunt game. The game has been played experimentally as a learning resource more than ten times in various settings.[38] Using a card deck scoring system—for example Aces, Kings, Queens, and Jacks are all royals and are equal to ten points each—participants explore a location with instructions to complete a series of point-based interviews. Teams are formed, no more than four, according to the four card suits, e.g., clubs, diamonds, hearts, and spades. Each team is tasked with achieving as many interviews as possible, in four prescribed point-gaining levels. The four levels are *Tops* (Aces, Kings, Queens, Jacks cards), *Middles* (10-8 cards), *Bottoms* (7-5 cards), and *Clients* (5-2 cards).[39] After participants have been gathered, given instructions, and then sent to their respective "playgrounds" to begin interviews, a series of sequenced broadcast messages are sent to them via texting. Cell numbers, with texting capability, are collected prior to game play. Game play is based around the team-based effort of collecting as many video interviews from as many of the four category levels as possible in the time allotted for game play. Game play may last an hour, for the period of a class session, or it

[38] The game has been "played" with mid-career executive doctoral students in Colorado Springs (August 2010), twice in Southern California (October 2010; October 2011), as a city-wide experiment (March 2012, Nicholasville, Kentucky), as a four-team experiment spread across the four time zones of the United States (*Academy of Religious Leadership*, April 2012), and as a campus-wide experiment using the Arisgame.com iPhone application as a technology-assisted version of the game (Asbury Seminary, Wilmore, KY, May 2012). In the last iteration, game participants formed a legacy team to stabilize the web/iPhone application for usability by leadership education adopters on campuses beyond their own. Feedback has been enthusiastic.

[39] The four-level vocabulary is derived from Barry Oshry's work on power within organizational systems. For leadership education purposes, Oshry's system's thinking model carries a face validity that is immediately useful in offering a mental model for rapid introduction of complex social constructs pertaining to leadership, power, community, and social orders as well as ethical attributions of human value and worth. When time is limited, participants are invited to pre-read "Total System Power," an article by Oshry. In a semester-length course, consider: Barry Oshry, *Seeing Systems: Unlocking the Systems of Organizational Life* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1996).

may be designed to last over several days, throughout a retreat or field trip.

It is possible to fold into the gameplay "wildcards," e.g., the jokers. Use of the joker allows the game master to challenge each team to additional team-building/team-testing feats, to force a reckoning with unforeseeable ambiguities, or to challenge the cognitive load of participants already burdened with a complex array of team-based tasks. These interjections are introduced through use of text instructions to designated team members, making use of cell phones. In the "Joker's Round," participants are given opportunity to score additional points, or to have existing points multiplied. In most cases, these feats are timed and require the group that finishes first to post the evidence of their completion to the game master's text number, to call a supplied phone number, or to arrive at a specific designation in a point-scoring timed fashion. In all cases, the tasks have a timed and embodied quality requiring participants to divide their attention from the primary task as a team and to deliver a coordinated achievement with embodied demonstration. Some tasks include recruiting strangers to sing a chorus of the national anthem or happy birthday song or to provide food or services to an observed and underserved person they might (be caused to) encounter through their location-based gaming enterprise.

When the declared time for the game elapses, all teams are notified. Usually they are instructed to converge at a pre-arranged rallying point before leaving for their various locations or a broadcast text message notifies them of a near and convenient meeting place. A winner is declared at the point that the game play is concluded, and all scores are tallied. In one variation of the game, the group must produce a video of the interviews and present their efforts to peers, who then are offered an opportunity to vote on which team best achieved the interview-based learning objectives of the game.

This is the game. Its rules are clear. Its point-scoring process is transparent. The path to progress is objective

and measurable: get enough of the right kind of interviews on video to lead the scoreboard. The playmates, playground, and playtime are all supplied to remove enough ambiguity so that a shared structural game construct coheres. But this *game* is not *the* game, or at least it is not the only game in play.

This game "Get the King" is actually designed to surface observable leadership reflexes from team members immersed in the task group. Within these observables, one can detect the inner workings of the tacit dimension. Tacit motivations, reasonings, proclivities, and other elements are always already at work within our behavior. The conative dimension of *habitus* always operates just under the surface of ego operations.

The primary aim is to create a context in which leadership capacities of participants surface and are available for conversational group learning. Since the leadership behaviors occurred in response to triggers within the game construct, then these behaviors may become the subject of observation, evaluation, assessment, and learning (or unlearning).

The light of reflection in this respect is retrospective, illumining the stage after the scene's action has transpired, as it were. Guiding students through reflective debriefing during and after the game proceeds by way of giving them mental flashlights to illumine and detect hidden aspects within their own leadership. They are led through reflective observation, affirmation, description, evaluation, critique, and reconstruction within the leadership-needy episodes that have surfaced during the gaming sequence. Reflection best occurs with a clear profile of leadership traits, techniques, talents, and timing features in mind. The game lets the participants experience their leadership acts in the framework of affirmative evaluation, with an eye toward helping participants engage adaptive learning in view of the leadership profile.[40]

[40] Russell W. West, "A Reflex Theory of Leadership Development" (2004).

The debrief, not the perfect execution of the game, the rewarding of winners, or reproaching of whiners, is the game's primary objective. Guided reflection on the shared experience of participants lifts up leadership learning elements made obvious by the game-invited action. Leadership educators may raise inquiries about the aptness of a leadership script that emerged within a particular episode of the game. Team decisions can become the subject of "rewind" debriefing sessions in which the assumptive systems that informed the collection is made explicit, and alternative courses of action can be imagined and invited by participants (who might not have expressed their best ideas at a particular course of group decision-making). The process and values that fostered the leadership configuration that emerged can be made discernible at the level of pattern and mental model. Depending on the learning objectives of the course experience, the structured engagement of the game's design honors the experiential learning axiom: "Everything is an excuse to debrief."

The Transformative Potential of Leadership Games

The ultimate purpose of leadership education is to develop leadership. But as we have said, the exercise of leadership occurs on multiple levels of consciousness, and the deeper the level, the more invisible and profound its influence upon the other levels and upon the whole. Developing leadership involves, therefore, a process by which contradictory dynamics between levels can be addressed, and that process has to be largely indirect. Playful games are precisely an indirect means by which to catch reflexes as they emerge within the operations of the game. It remains for us to make the case why the indirection of play is transformational. First, we need to lay out a theory of transformation in human development.

James E. Loder describes the process of

transformation in developmental psychology,[41] and it is very useful to our purposes here. "Transformation," in his model, refers to a process of structural change that alters its axioms and reorders its elements accordingly. It is primarily oriented to axiomatic change, or the reconstitution of something in terms of its foundational structures. Transformation is a universal and generic process of structural change that occurs in every context of nature and human life.[42] Transformational change should be distinguished from incremental change whereby things are added to or subtracted from a system without the system itself being structurally reordered.

Loder's description of the process of transformation comprises five interrelated stages that are for all intents and purposes sequentially ordered. In the fittingly dubbed work, *The Knight's Move*, Loder frames the stages succinctly:

(1) Incoherence or Conflict (temporary puzzlement brought on by the situation);
(2) Resolution-Seeking (trying and searching for codes, keys and solutions);
(3) Constructive Imagination (emergence of insight from the psyche's reservoir of tacit knowing);
(4) Energy Release (deep and immediate satisfaction from experiencing resolution);
(5) Verification (generalizing value of the present

[41] James E. Loder, *The Transforming Moment,* (1989); James E. Loder and W. Jim Neidhardt, *The Knight's Move: The Relational Logic of the Spirit in Theology and Science* (Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1992).

[42] Loder, *The Knight's Move*, 1992. According to Loder, transformation occurs whenever "within a given frame of reference or experience, hidden orders of coherence and meaning emerge to replace or alter the axioms of the given frame and reorder its elements accordingly." *The Knight's Move*, 316. From Loder's many examples of transformation, we offer here only two to demonstrate the fact that transformation is indeed transposed across the entire range of natural and human existence: the change in form as a caterpillar changes into a butterfly; the redirection of entropy in open systems. Cf., James E. Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, 42; and James E. Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit: Human Development in Theological Perspective* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 248.

solution for its future implications).[43] The process is explained and illustrated to make clear how provocative play invites conditions for "transformative moments" to emerge.

If the apex of transformation seems to be the resolution of a problem, the "aha!" moment of insight in which a new vision breaks through conventional order, then it makes sense to locate the first stage of the process in the initial sense of disequilibrium when the status quo has been disrupted. Granted, for most students, such a game as we have illustrated above will itself thrust them into a sense of disequilibrium because the regular conventions of the educational environment have been radically altered. The rules of the classroom game, the one in which they know the rules, the players, their position and how to score, have been usurped by a new game, one which they cannot control. An immersive system is initiated which is unfamiliar. The rules are new. The scoring apparatus is beyond manipulation. Their status and role is now ambiguous, even vulnerable to new labels. No longer is the comfort and control of individual performance readily available to them; they are thrust into social and political relations not necessarily of their own choosing. Their individual performance is observable, contributory, and measured by a small scale society. They—their enacted behavior in real time—become objective to themselves, and to (and through) others. Here, not what they say they value, believe, or think, matters; their doing matters. However, as we have offered, gaming pedagogy operates on two levels simultaneously: the game's activities and reflection on it. Both of these levels begin to constitute the new classroom, teacher, lesson, test, and grades.

When students play the game, they are put through any number of difficult scenarios to solve. They need to work together. They are competing against others in a scavenger hunt of sorts. They have to derive clues from ambiguous circumstances. They must reckon with multi-

[43] Loder and Neidhardt, *The Knight's Move*, 230-232.

layered technical and adaptive problems in order to make headway. In those activities, students' default internal categories emerge. Their habitual conventions—those derived from sources such as temperamental, familial, spiritual, cultural, economic, and social—surface. Shadows embedded within their personalities are illumined. Play provides the diversion that allows the implicit to become explicit. What would otherwise remain tacit is exposed while their attention is diverted and trained on the activities. As the hidden slips out, then attention can be focused on it, and reflection engaged. Often reflection reveals contradictions between the implicit and explicit aspects of personality, or between an idealized sense of self and the reality, or between the situation and one's ability to deal with it. When these kinds of contradictions or puzzles or questions emerge, they can disrupt the status quo of one's worldview, one's identity, and one's relations with others, etc. The more significant the disequilibrium, the more existentially weighty the contradictions, the more transformative potential abounds.

To illustrate, let us consider a hypothetical. In one iteration of "Get the King," Hector, a fictional class participant, finds himself getting more and more anxious and frustrated with his group. They are not making as much progress in the game as he wants, so unwittingly he exercises greater directive leadership, trying to force his ideas and strategies upon the group. Others in the group resist his efforts, and their movement grinds to a halt. Another group surges ahead and "wins." Hector's group comes in dead last. His frustrations and disappointment erupt. He replays the game, point-by-point, reproachfully hinting how the outcome might have been different if only they had taken his lead. He says things he later wishes he could take back. Now, he is ashamed of himself. In the debriefing session after the game, he identifies these dynamics within himself, and he is shocked how his behaviors contradict his self-image. What is that all about, he wonders.

For Hector, reflection on his behavior disrupted the mental image he has of himself. Unveiling a contradiction within fosters a sense of disequilibrium. Is he really who he thinks he is? Disequilibrium marks the transition from the initial stage of sameness and continuity to the second stage in which persons seek to resolve disturbing questions or problems. Thus, the second stage is one of scanning for ways to work out a resolution. It is a stage of "waiting, wondering, following hunches, and exhausting possibilities."[44] The human ego tries its best to scan among readily available options that fit within its existing framework. When Hector reflects on these matters in and beyond his class, it occurs to him that his anxiety and frustrations seem to be rooted in a competitive drive. On further reflection, it seems that when he is in a situation of stress, he resorts to a default mode of exercising a rather commanding style of leadership over people who are equally capable. When he talked about this with his group, he heard from them that his leadership seemed to put them down; they felt he was acting superior to them, and so they reacted negatively (which is fodder for their own reflection). But Hector seemed to be stuck at a conceptual impasse: his understanding of leadership is indeed that of a command and control style, but he really did not want to act that way with his friends and colleagues. And theologically, his utilitarian command and control leadership style appears to contradict his deeply held convictions about equality and dignity of all persons. This incongruence bothered him intensely, but the only other alternative he knew was a leaderless and "unproductive" egalitarianism, against which he recoiled passionately.

When no resolution can be found, the possibility opens for answers to emerge from beyond the existing

[44] Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, 38. Michael Polanyi calls this a period of "Incubation that curious persistence of heuristic tension through long periods of time, during which the problem is not consciously entertained." Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958, 1962), 121-122.

framework. One begins to think "outside the box," allowing insight to come from beyond the known constructions of self and world. But the ego cannot search beyond what it knows; it wants to stay in the light of its own making. It is afraid of the dark, as it were. In fact, the ego's defensive, repressive strategies are precisely employed to keep the darkness of consciousness—the tacit and implicit and repressed—at bay. So how does a new framework emerge? Ego constructions are only the tip of the iceberg of consciousness. In the scanning phase, not all of the mind's effort to resolve the problem is intentional or explicit. In fact, much of the exploratory process is tacit, happening in the back of one's mind while one's attention is focused elsewhere. For example, when we are late for work and frantically searching for a lost set of keys, we are often diverted by a phone call or a child's request. During the diversion, the location of the keys suddenly pops into our mind. The tacit dimension's role in the scanning phase is all the more important when faced with existentially significant problems, and its work is performed in the shadows, behind the scene. All acts of discovery, when new order emerges and displaces an older order, are founded upon and arise within the tacit workings of the imagination.[45] Distraction, therefore, is an essential component in the transformational process, for it allows the ego to focus on something manageable while the subconscious does its work in the background.

Hector's breakthrough discovery came during another reflective exercise when the other teams were presenting their interviews for the game. The winning team seemed to be having a great time in their presentation; it was creative and impassioned. The team members played off one another, lifting up the gifts and expertise of each. Their collegiality contrasted sharply with Hector's team, who were competitively pitted against each other. It was in the closing recitation of the winning team, that Hector had a flash of insight. He had a clarifying vision of a

[45] Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, 24.

communal leadership that reframed his view of leadership and its function spiritually.

The transformational pattern moves into the third stage with a "constructive act of the imagination" in which an insight or vision conveys the essence of a resolution. When the new insight is felt deeply with conviction (we are convicted by it), the conflict or disequilibrium we once felt is replaced by a feeling of congruence, of fit, of integration, of resolution. Loder summarizes, "It is this third step, the construction of insight sensed with convincing force, that constitutes the turning point of the knowing event. It is by this central act that the elements of the ruptured situation are *transformed*, and a new perception, perspective, or world view is bestowed on the knower."[46]

Hector raised his hand. One of the winning team members called on him, and Hector groped for the language with which to pose his question. He knew the answer intuitively, but he needed to hear it from the team themselves. In fact, while he was posing the question, he realized he was trying out the very style of leadership about which he was asking. He finally asked, "From your presentation, it seems that you all were equally involved, and that your individual skills and best ideas were utilized. That's great. But where was leadership in your group? Was there a leader?" The winning team smiled sheepishly and looking to one another, they answered in turn, saying in summary: early in the process, they struggled with each other. But then after getting to know each other, they gradually morphed from telling each other what to do, to asking each other about their best ideas. They organized themselves around their strengths. Leadership? The best leader, they said, was the one who asked the best questions that evoked the best answers. Smiling broadly, with tears brimming and his vision confirmed, Hector remembered suddenly when he had experienced exactly this type of evocative leadership. His pastoral mentor asked spiritually discerning questions

[46] Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, 39.

that helped Hector hear and commit to his call to ministry.

One might be tempted to associate transformation primarily with stage three, but that would cut the process short, and thus abort the transformation that requires all five stages for the transformative resolution to stick. Because of the generative insight, the psychic energy that was dedicated to repressing and solving the problem is released with a sense of liberation and relief. All of the work that was dedicated to holding contradictions together is translated in stage four into positive energy focused on working out the solution in other aspects of one's life and context.

This brings us to the fifth stage: interpretation and congruence. One needs to make sense of one's new insight and one's discovery, as one seeks to harmonize other aspects of one's self and world in light of the newly emergent order. Typically, people seek out other people who see the world in the same way in order to work out implications for months and years to come. In transformational education, gaming pedagogy is fundamentally heuristic, thrusting us further and more deeply into the great mystery of our life in God. The heuristic trajectory should not be an afterthought, but our classrooms should provide opportunities and tools for students to make the kinds of integrative connections for even more profound discoveries.

Conclusion

Provocative play is promoted here with an interest in realizing the highest ideals in adult experiential learning, especially for leadership formation. Leadership educators, whose classroom management capacities can match the orchestrative demands of the model may foster rich experiences for the learners entrusted to them, as well as themselves. This article seeks to commend the model for exploration to such educators. However, provocative play as we have described it must also be commended with some caveats and critiques. We raise here a few questions educators might engage before tossing their lecture notes

in the rubbish bin. Only a learning model that has been deeply appropriated by its hosts is likely to have the desired and lasting effects intended. Before provocative play is seriously engaged, educators might ask:

- **Why would you sponsor a gaming approach to achieve your learning objectives?** Not every lesson can, nor should, be taught through a gaming modality. Consideration of learning goals precedes selection of a provocative construct. When learning content is informational, fact-based, normative for a discipline, monological models of communication are most suitable. Behavioral awareness, habit change, values and ethics-related themes might be most suitable for immersive communication experiences implied by provocative gaming models.
- **What is necessary to manage the concentric realities that make up the provocative gaming construct?** At once, facilitators must be observant of distinct persons, their performance, and safety; how gameplay is progressing, the after-action management of the debriefing, evaluation and closure; the inculcation into master learning objectives of the course or program or institution. Intentional alignment with learning objective, advance planning, and thorough training of assistants (if required) is likely to precede the successful implementation of the model. Facilitators are encouraged to pilot the game on a small scale. Inviting feedback from participants about the game's design and execution should be included during each use of the gaming construct.
- **What is the tolerance for ambiguity, democratic control, co-construction of learning, and unpredictability for you, your learners, and institution?** When people play, they usually don't enjoy being told "how to play." They have known themselves as players their entire lives, and tend to presume their relative ability to embody the rules, the aim and the gameplay. The game must be designed to

engage attention deeply, with relative non-interruption of the playground space.

- **What is your capacity for fostering, supporting (or even restoring) emotional and ethical safety for all participants?** No game, with its easily connoted imagery of "frivolous," is an excuse for an inattentive use of the facilitator's power to preserve a safe emotional and ethical space for participants (including themselves). Facilitators must keep the proverbial "referee's yellow flag" that is tossed on to the field to call a "foul!" out into the open. Gameplay can be stopped to preserve safety. Facilitators must have deliberated beforehand and communicated the boundaries of the game and the ethical/emotional safety values. Offering participants a "challenge by choice" or right to take a "time out" may be sufficient to make emotions, safety, and self-care mentionable.
- **What theory of competition, control, power, disclosure, politics, and justice are implied by the games design, selection, and facilitation?** By association, games are often about winning and losing, comparison between individuals and teams, striving for scarce resources, inclusion and reward, endurance and performance. These constructs are fundamental to how "the real world" functions, and need not be framed out of gameplay merely because they create discomfort or uneven outcomes. The disequilibrium and dissonance, generated in the would-be safe relationship of play, can generate real world analogies for organizational, community and leadership life. However, facilitators are encouraged to give forethought to theology and philosophy of power before instituting gaming-structured learning. Activating explicit power relations in educational systems that may have a tendency toward naiveté, without a clear assumptive system to manage the debriefing conversations that follow in these matters, invites a kind of unproductivity in learning that detracts from gains.

- **How will you manage observation, evaluation, measurement, feedback, and debriefing? How are these accountably linked to teaching and learning aims?** Since all aspects of observable gameplay provide an excuse for debriefing, facilitators must give advance thought to behaviors and development that advance the learning objectives to which the game is in service. Gaming in a learning context that is merely provocative, but not constructive in service to learning aims, undercuts learning that might be achieved through other means.
- **What institutional priorities, policies, and resources most serve and constrain your ability to execute a provocative play model?** When words like "play" and "provocative" are thrown around in some institutions, (without the benefit of context, or conversation about the scholarly underpinnings of such terms), facilitators may invite needless scrutiny, resistance, or disruption. In addition, failing to include relevant institutional members may result in needlessly gaining access to institutional resources that might have otherwise accelerated the learning experience. The introduction of play ethic in learning, as a teaching and learning philosophy, can stimulate critical collegial engagement about the nature of teaching and learning, constructivism in education, and other adult learning priorities. Colleagues might benefit from hearing updates, being invited as observers, and collaborating on interdisciplinary dimension of extended learning strategies that these methods tend to foster.
- **What costs to your learners, your institution, and yourself are already being incurred educationally if you do *not* appropriate a provocative play model of teaching and learning strategy?** All of the caveats are not on the restraint side of the implementation concerns: failing to adopt such a model might already be costing learning gains. Co-constructed learning models such as provocative play

> for serious leadership learning may serve as correctives to learning experiences that are so conventionally predictable, conceptual, scholastic, and abstract as to be in the wrong direction for contemporary learners, especially for those who are socialized in media-saturated societies, experience economy values, and democratic social communities. A gaming ethic may bring balance and variety to the educational experience at precisely those intersections that most generatively advance and achieve learning objectives of the individual participant, facilitator, and institution.

Provocative play for serious leadership learning, while proving to be as deeply imprinting as it is satisfying to facilitators and learners, requires deliberate design. The opportunity for theological and spiritual reflection on the model, by all involved, constitutes one of its lasting and generative features. Its adoption as an unconventional pedagogical method is not without initial difficulty. But for those who patiently wade into this playground, adapting the principles to their own contexts and constraints, the rewards become self-evident within a short span of time.

This article explores how leadership educators can invite play—broadly conceived to include existential struggle—into learning as a provocative resource. It explores the pedagogical significance and transformative potential of well-crafted games that surface hidden conation and *habitus* frameworks of participants. It raises positive possibilities and asks important implementation questions with which adopters must concern themselves.

We suggest that education and leadership pedagogy, in particular, should address with all seriousness the hidden, tacit aspects of human personhood as foundational to cognition and volition. The classroom can be redesigned as a site in which default patterns of conation and *habitus* expression can emerge. Once revealed in reflexive action, they can be critically engaged through self-reflection by practitioners, but also in learning conversations with community members. The

debriefing of such serious play refers to the core of one's identity, disrupts default patterns, and allows leadership reflexes to be reconditioned for a more intended realization, a "next faithful step"[47] of leadership fidelity and effectiveness.

[47] Scott Cormode, "The Next Faithful Step: Forming Christian Leaders for the Future" (Inaugural Lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary. April 7, 2010).

LEARNING RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP *IN SITU*

WILLEM HOUTS AND DAVID R. SAWYER

Abstract:

The art of religious leadership is not something that is easily taught in a classroom or even field education setting. The unique combination of the person, gifts, and personality of the leader, and the context, relationships, and history of the congregational setting dictate the particular form of leadership at that place and time. We suggest that one of the best ways to foster religious leadership in a congregational setting is through intentional peer learning groups. These groups have certain characteristics which allow for personal growth and discovery, allowing individuals to lead with integrity and imagination in new and unique ways.

Rosetta's Story

A pastor in her first call has encountered serious difficulties and left the congregation with no severance package. What began as relatively minor skirmishes with church leadership led to resistance and entrenchment so that Rosetta's sense of herself as pastor was increasingly called into question in her own mind and in that of the leaders of her congregation. Instinctively she dug in her heels and insisted that her position was the right one and that key members of her church who opposed her position were wrong. When denominational leaders were called in, the situation was highly polarized and anger was mounting. Neither congregational members, nor Rosetta, nor the denominational leaders had the perspective or

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ability to restore a sense of calm and reconciliation in the congregation. Rosetta had been one of the bright and promising graduates of her Seminary.

For five years she has labored without support, without mentoring or coaching, without anyone to give her feedback on her practices of leadership. Subsequently she left ministry altogether. This pastor's experience has been repeated many times and provides the backdrop and motivation for this paper.

Seminary Preparation for Leadership is Insufficient

The teaching of religious leadership is an art that has grown and developed over the past half century at an amazing rate, showing a greater depth and breadth in preparing women and men to tackle the challenges that they will find in congregational settings as they engage in professional ministry. The intentionality of providing learning experiences for leadership in the curricula at seminaries and divinity schools, both in classroom and field education settings has exploded as well. Even so, the learning that is provided in these academic settings is, by definition, inadequate in preparing leaders for the challenges and opportunities that they will face in their particular ministry settings.[1] Religious leadership is an art form, not a science, because it cannot be reproduced with exacting standards and bring about the same results every time.

The Need for Organic Learning that is Current, Contextual, and Continual

The fact that each person who is called to ministry has a unique and particular set of gifts, skills, and life experiences is enough to justify this assertion. While one person may approach a particular leadership situation using similar tools and paradigms as another, the underlying experience and tenor of the action will be different simply because the person is unique.

[1] Charles Foster et al., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass a Wiley Imprint, 2006), 151.

Additionally, one cannot simply copy the actions of another person and be authentic to the call from God that the leader has received because God does indeed work in the particular and idiosyncratic rather than in universals and archetypes.

The individual leader is not the only reason that leadership is an art form that cannot be fully learned in an academic setting. The particular context of the ministry also has direct bearing on the way that leadership is exercised and the effects which that leadership will cause. The history of the particular religious community has a great deal of influence in what is expected from the leader(s) and also the parameters in which the leader is expected to operate. The broader cultural context in which the congregation is situated also influences the methods of providing leadership, recognizing that intentions and actions are mediated by the vernacular understanding of the people who are interacting with the leader and the decisions made by the community of faith. This means than no action at one location, even if implemented by the same individual, will have the same outcome at another location even if the context is similar. Further, in the past two decades, the knowledge base of ministry has exploded beyond the ability of most ministry professionals to keep up on a regular basis with individual reading and reflection. And the church situation continues to change in exponential ways. The gleanings from a seminary education no longer suffice for the new and emerging concerns of church and society.[2]

Finally, human systems are not static. The dynamism of congregational systems means that no opportunity or challenge will ever be encountered the same way twice. The leader, even if it is the same person, the faith community, and the context are in a constant state of

[2] Christopher Hammon, "Connected Learning for Ministry in a Technological Age," in Robert Reber and Bruce Roberts, eds., *A Lifelong Call to Learn Continuing Education for Religious Leaders* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2010), 279.

growth and change. A successful decision made at one time will not have the exact same results when executed at a later time, because change has occurred and the actors are not the same.

Continuing Ministry Education Needs to be Particular Not General

These factors, when taken together, show that teaching a particular form or method of religious leadership in an academic setting will not suffice. Instead, tools that can be used in multiple situations and adapted to multiple contexts are needed. Even so, it is incumbent upon the leader, in consultation with the community of faith, to figure out what methods, tools, and practices are needful in addressing a particular opportunity or challenge.

Because there is the need for continual improvisation and innovation in providing leadership for a community of faith, there is a need for continual learning on the part of the leader. The simple fact that there is such a demand to provide new ways of thinking about the current situation requires consultation and moving outside of the ways that the community has always thought about its situation. This is particularly the case for individuals experiencing their first call in ministry.

Those engaging in professional ministry for the first time are in particular need of continual learning. The information imparted within formalized theological education can never be enough to get the leader through their first call. The material presented in a seminary or divinity school setting cannot be mastered without practicing it in a real ministry. The way that one implements the material, as mentioned earlier, also depends upon the context of the ministry setting and will have to be learned through trial and error. Additionally, all of the possible tools that may be needed in a particular context, and the permutations of those tools' implementation, cannot be anticipated or taught without making the course of academic study prohibitively long.

Even if one could predict all of the tools and resources needed at a particular ministry location based on initial interactions with the individuals at that congregation, it does not mean that one would have what one needed later on. The complexity of human systems means that one cannot predict all of what will be needed, especially when one considers that often times the presented strengths and issues of a congregation do not line up with the realities of the situation. Changes in context also mean that continual learning will be needed. As opportunities and challenges are met, new situations requiring new leadership will arise out of those interactions, necessitating new tools and learning on the part of the leader and faith community.

These new opportunities and challenges will also defy the abilities of outside experts to make pronouncements about the course a particular leader and congregation should take. While the outside expert can provide vital insights and tools, it will always fall to the faith community and the leader to develop and implement a strategy to work with their context, their gifts and skills, and their sense of call.[3] This means that responses to issues and opportunities necessarily need to be both local and organic, and not a generic one-size-fits-all strategy or pre-packaged set of tools and exercises to reach a foregone conclusion.

The Particularity of God's Presence in Ministry

This conviction arises out of both theological understandings and practical considerations. Theologically, the scandal of particularity in the person of Jesus, the Christ, points to this view of an organic local response to issues. Practically, the wisdom of the people engaging in ministry within their own context and their

[3] Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Granshow, and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2009), 20. The authors specifically point to the need to move beyond the use of authoritative knowledge to the full participative work of stakeholders in facing adaptive challenges.

sense of ownership in the response will almost always bring forward better solutions and more sustained effort in implementation.

When one looks at the person of Jesus of Nazareth, one sees a man born in a particular time and place, learning particular ways of speaking, thinking, arguing, teaching, and being. He responded to the particularities of the social milieu around him and the actions of people who were part of the same cultural situation in which he lived. Being born in the first century CE in Judea also limited his scope of interactions and ways of seeing the world. As the Christ, Jesus is also seen as universal, being able to relate to diverse cultures and time periods, transcending languages, gender, and life experiences.[4] This seeming contradiction is often referred to as the scandal of particularity since the finite nature of Jesus' human existence seems unpalatable when one tries to affirm Christ's universality. However, in this particularity, we do see how God works within the scope of history. God chooses to work in small, intimate situations, engaging individuals in all of their peculiarities and context, addressing their particular needs and working for the revelation of the realm of God in ways that do not always seem congruent with what has occurred in other places and times. In fact, the entirety of the Biblical witness seems to indicate that God will not work otherwise. God shuns the broad universal, unilateral actions that may, to human viewpoints, be more efficient in bringing God's chosen end to fruition.

This insight indicates that we, as disciples of Jesus the Christ, should expect nothing different than working in the particular. In fact, we need to embrace the power of the particular, recognizing that ministry and leadership need to be practiced in ways that conform to the contours of the local context and people. To do otherwise could be seen as contrary to God's way, as well as missing the important work of engaging with other

[4] William C. Placher, *Jesus the Savior: The Meaning of Jesus Christ for Christian Faith*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 36-37

human beings in all of their giftedness and flaws, seeing them as creations of God imbued with something of the divine.

Practically, those living within a certain context and set of circumstances often will have a greater "ownership" of a program, solution, or process if they are actively engaged in its formulation and implementation. These actions will also have a greater chance of reaching others within the same context since they will hopefully be expressed in the vernacular of that locale, allowing for easier transmission and permutation as the interventions unfold. Those interventions from outside the situation may have the challenge of getting lost in translation since the local culture may not easily absorb the ideas because of different experiences or modes of being.

Additionally, the wisdom of individuals and leaders within a system typically surpass that of an outside expert who brings their assumptions from their external contexts and experiences. Not only do those within a healthy system understand the context within which they exist, but they also have a healthy esteem of their own gifts and skills as well as their limitations. These particularities, when taken together, indicate that the leader and congregation within the system should be able to craft responses to issues and opportunities that will be more effective in their implementation and success.

This emphasis on organic local solution to problems, however, does not negate the need for outside learning and even observation from those not participating within the system. No leader or faith community can know all that is needed for any given project. Likewise, the leader and congregation will not always have knowledge of the full range of options available to them. Consultation with experts in a variety of fields will be needed for effective leadership and ministry. Additionally, the very fact that the leader and faith community exist within its context may make it difficult to see things that they have long taken as givens. An outside observer may assist them in gaining a greater view of their situation simply by asking

insightful questions that push the group to examine their biases and predispositions.

Peer Learning Groups as an Organic and Particular Learning Tool

All of these factors, taken together, indicate that religious leaders need to have tools that help them to continually learn more about themselves, their faith communities, their context, and ways of intervening in a variety of situations. These tools also need to emphasize the wisdom of the leader and the faith community regarding the context in which they minister while encouraging perspective taking and examination of closely held beliefs. One tool that addresses all of these needs is the peer learning group.

Ministers have found ways to get together in many formations over the years. Perhaps the most common among protestant pastors is the lectionary study group, which provides participants opportunities to reflect on the scripture readings for sermon preparation for upcoming worship experiences. A second common type is the support group, which forms for the emotional and spiritual nurture and undergirding of the members. And the third common model is the book study group, which focuses on a single book commonly read by the group members for each meeting time. The peer learning group carries some of the elements of these three models, but it has a more precise purpose and expected outcome.

A peer learning group is designed for the growth and adaptive learning of its participants. It is based on adult-learning theory and knowledge and is built on the findings of educational research that indicates that people learn best when they are in charge of their own learning goals and processes. Furthermore, the learning needed is not simply the acquisition of new knowledge, but requires attention to new and uncharted problems in particular congregations and denominations. Ministers who acknowledge their need for new kinds of learning are prime candidates for participation in a peer learning group. Denominational leaders and seminary

administrators are also in a good position to encourage seminary graduates to continue their lifelong learning using the peer learning group model.

The Organic Process of the Peer Learning Group

A peer learning group ordinarily identifies its individual and group objectives before launching the group experience.[5] These then form the background of an early task of the group. After time for members to get-acquainted with each other and begin to build a level of trust, the group forms its agenda for its early life together. First on the agenda should be a covenant agreement that integrates the group objectives, clarifies the leadership roles in the group, identifies ground rules for group participation including accountability standards by which the members will hold each other to their covenants. Also early in the group's life, rituals of prayer and common worship are identified or created for the life of the group. Many peer learning groups also include in their agendas and covenants times for play, recreation, travel, and relaxation.

Leadership of the peer learning group has continued to be an area of conversation among those practicing the model. Those who have used grant money to organize and research these groups have run groups with a strong leader/teacher who helps to structure the time, groups with a mentor or guide who stands by to assist but does not directly lead, and groups that share leadership among themselves without a designated outside leader. The primary researcher for these projects, J. Bruce Roberts, reports that the results of effectiveness of the groups are equal among the several models of leadership. This suggests that an important element of the peer learning process is for the groups themselves to decide what kinds of leadership model they prefer.

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[5] Richard Hester and Kelli Walker-Jones, *Know Your Story and Lead with It,* (Herndon VA: The Alban Institute, 2009). See their outline of the development of a peer learning group for another example of the process.

Group norms are part of the group formation time. Many group norm models are available for groups to adapt to their individual group needs and preferences. Here is the one we used in peer learning groups in classes at Louisville Seminary:

Responsibility of each member of the peer learning community:

- To speak one's own truth as one feels safe to do so, by telling one's own story.
- To feel free to speak or not speak without any pressure to participate.
- To listen for one's own "inner teacher" in responding to the dilemmas of ministerial formation.

Responsibility of the Faculty Facilitator:

- To encourage good ministerial formation through creating and protecting a safe and appreciative space in the group by leading and by example.

Rules for holding a safe space in relating to others in a peer learning community:

- Ask only questions that you don't know the answer to, that arise from your curiosity about the story of the other, that do not presume a right answer.
- No fixing
- No advising
- No saving
- No trying to convert

Groups proceed as their covenant and agendas decide. The best learning in the groups arises from real and particular situations of concern or ministerial dilemmas presented to the group for discussion and learning. Hester and Walker-Jones suggest a most intriguing approach to learning reflection that is organic

and particular—the use of narrative[6]. Members prompt each other to reflect on their own personal stories, including early childhood, call stories, and then stories of what is happening in their present ministry situations. Groups can become adept at listening to the stories respectfully and with open curiosity, and helping the story-teller recognize the character of each story, and also to recognize elements of the story that did not get included in the original telling. These are elements that Hester and Walker-Jones call stories that were "left on the cutting room floor"[7] in the editing and telling and retelling of stories. Often stories are focused on problems and become saturated with negative feelings and discouragement. The ability to get the stories out in front of the group also allows some perspective on them so that the teller is encouraged to find ways to construct the story in more hopeful ways and become the writer of preferred outcomes of the stories.

As the group deepens in organic trust and ability to work together, the quality of the particular stories improve and the amount of transformative learning that happens grows. We offer here a simple set of criteria for whether creative growth or transformation has happened:

- Has there been an increase in knowledge and expanded awareness of truth?
- Has there been an increase in respect for the dignity of difference among members?
- Has there been a growth in a sense of community in the group?
- Has the group seen an increase in the ability to take positive mutual action in response to events?[8]

[6] Ibid.

[7] Richard Hester, conversation with David Sawyer, October 2011, Louisville, KY.

[8] David Sawyer, *Hope in Conflict* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2007), 103.

Peer Learning Groups for First Call and for Later Career Ministers

Most of the peer learning groups studied by Bruce Roberts in *A Lifelong Call to Learn*[9] were aimed at mid-career ministers, although not exclusively. Recently the Wayne E. Oates Institute in Kentucky has begun exploring the possibility of offering peer learning groups as a launchpad for new seminary graduates. Many studies have focused on the first call experience and providing assistance for that transition, and a few denominations have offered limited opportunities for learning groups for seminary graduates, but no other program has yet been initiated to set graduates off into their ministry with the help and learning guide of their peers. A lifelong learning launchpad makes good on the statement that "you can't learn everything you need to know for ministry in seminary." Seminary now provides the initial education for ministry, and the launchpad program provides the first steps in lifelong learning. It can also prepare seminary graduates for the reality that they will need to be involved in peer learning experiences in their first calls and it will attune them to the need for group process skills and abilities in praxis reflection on ministry. The launchpad model would utilize ministers' own continuing education funding plus funding from grant sources for at least one face-to-face meeting per year and then support and encouragement for online group process in between for a period of two years. Each group would also be afforded a mentor who could help train the group in process and educational issues at the face-to-face events and who could be on call for assistance as the group life emerges.

Mid- and late-career ministers are also in need of continuing learning for the same reasons given above. The books one used in seminary are out of date, and many of the professors who taught mid-career pastors have retired from the seminaries. But the knowledge base

[9] Reber and Roberts, *A Lifelong Call to Learn Continuing Education for Religious Leaders,* 2010.

and the systemic changes for ministry are even more acute for these practitioners.

David's Story of a Late-Career Peer Learning Group

When the seminary's administrative support for the position of Director of Lifelong Learning and Advanced Degrees was dramatically decreased in 2009, David faced a vocational and educational crossroads. He knew he had to find ways to retool his approach and refresh his spirit for the new reality. He helped gather a group of six ministers who were also in late stages of various careers in church leader development. The group applied for and received a grant from the Austin Seminary College of Pastoral Leaders[10] for a two year leaderless peer learning group to focus on the issues of systemic and organizational change using the Theory U model of Peter Senge and Otto Scharmer.[11] The group covenanted to meet together for two years to engage in a series of retreats and at least one long "road trip together." Each member gained many new insights about his ministry over the period of two years, and the group served an important function of fun and support. The fascinating downside of this group, however, was that apparently because all six were highly capable small group leaders, they skipped time to work on group norms and expectations for leadership. Each of them, holding back for fear of dominating or being inappropriately designated as "the" leader, withheld valuable group process knowledge and declined to make needed interventions when the group's process stalled. The group made this realization at their last, summarizing meeting at the end of the two year process. Each of the participants would probably support the conclusions of this article about the importance and usefulness of peer-support groups, but their own experience taught

[10] http://www.austinseminary.edu/page.cfm?p=278, accessed March 2012.

[11] Otto Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2009)

them and the peer learning group process an important lesson.

Will's Story of a First Call Peer Learning Group

At the beginning of his first call, Will was approached by a member of the judicatory asking if he would be interested in joining with a group of other first call pastors who had recently come into the area as well. The judicatory had seen an unusual influx of seven first call pastors in the last year and decided with the critical mass, it was appropriate to use resources to support these people in what has often been seen as the hardest part of ministry. The judicatory decided that it would be appropriate to have an experienced pastor and small group facilitator hired to guide the group as it met.

The group was composed of seven pastors from a variety of different backgrounds serving in very different ministry settings. All of the members had had some employment experience prior to attending seminary, with some being definitively second-career and others having just a couple years in the work force before attending seminary. Two of the group members were engaged as Associate Pastors working in larger, multi-staff congregations; two other group members were full-time pastors of smaller, family- or pastoral-sized congregations; hospital chaplaincy was the calling of another two members; one member served as a half-time tentmaker in a family-sized congregation. The group had more females than males and also favored married individuals over single. The original facilitator was a male member of the judicatory who had extensive training in small group process and had served in a number of different calls.

The group started meeting on a monthly basis, sharing the joys and struggles of ministry, asking questions to help each other clarify their situations and responses to the challenges that they faced. Originally, the design of the program included a time of didactic, but after several sessions, it was decided that the act of sharing narratives and having responses from the

members of the group and the facilitator was most helpful in working through the challenges that each person was facing and the didactic portion was discontinued.

Over the course of the first five years of this program, all but one member of the group continued in their original calls. The one member who left her call had been serving in her position for eighteen months prior to the beginning of the group; she attended only two gatherings before her resignation was announced. It has been speculated that the length of time that she was in her call without support meant that the issues were already too far advanced to salvage her call in that position.

Today, almost eight years after the beginning of the peer learning group, five members still remain in their original calls. Every member has also served in some leadership role within the judicatory, some as chairs of committees, one being elected as vice moderator of the judicatory, another serving as chief parliamentary officer. At this point, the group continues to meet for support and challenge on a regular, but less frequent, basis.

In a denomination where the average first call is less than two and a half years, this program has shown the power of peer learning groups to allow members to learn more about themselves, their leadership style, their congregations and ministry context, and also to adjust their ways of leading to fit the current circumstances. There has also been a great sense of camaraderie formed in this group, allowing for a sense of support in a field where support is often not forthcoming for those in leadership positions. The fact that all members of this group have also served in leadership roles outside of their particular call indicates that leadership has been cultivated for more than just the local congregation or healthcare setting, but rather for the broader church.

Conclusion

This paper has provided an argument for the development and expansion of peer learning groups as an

organic and particular tool of lifelong learning for ministry. The research on the growing use of peer groups in American ministry education is sound and continues to proliferate, and the authors' personal experiences have borne out the value and need of such a tool. We have not addressed the implications of this argument on seminary education itself, but the implications need to be explored. Peer learning groups will not save every Rosetta or David or Will from serious vocational disruption, but we cannot support the continuing conventional expectation that ministers should be able to negotiate the infinitely expanding changes in the life of the world, the church, and the practice of ministry with only an academic master's degree.

THE ECOLOGY OF VOCATION

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Abstract

Those who care about the future of the church have a vested interest in both the quantity and the quality of candidates preparing for ministry in this generation and into the next. And it is easy to see those pastors as the product of a series of independent and individualized decisions. A college student, for example, meets with her pastor to discuss her future. Or an engineer sits at the kitchen table with his wife asking if they have the money for him to quit his job and head off to seminary. The future of ministry does indeed depend on these decisions. But those decisions depend on something else. They depend on a system, a system of formal organizations and informal relationships. They depend on the system in just the same way that a flowering bush depends on the ecosystem of the meadow in which it grows.

Article Purpose

The purpose of this article is to study the inter-dependent ecosystem of organizations and entities that nurture the next generation of Christian leaders. We will call this system the ecology of vocation. This project's original goal was to map the ecology of vocation that surrounds theological schools. Scott Cormode initially pursued this goal by mapping the ecology of vocation that surrounds his school (Fuller Seminary). But it seemed wise to compare that experience to the study of other schools' ecologies. To that end, scholars from four other schools studied the ecology of vocation that forms their students. The original purpose of this paper was to report the findings of that comparative study with the hope that reporting these findings would inspire other schools to map the ecologies that nurture their students.

A second purpose arose, however, as we put this paper together—a purpose that cannot be separated from the first purpose. We found that each school reinvented the very process of mapping the ecology in order to fit the needs of that school's particular culture. In other words, we set out to understand how ecology shapes students (and we will discuss that), but along the way we also discovered the important ways that a seminary's culture shapes the school, its faculty, and its very notion of education.

Before this paper describes the specifics of how the study pursued its goals, it will be important to explain what we mean by the ecology of vocation. Perhaps the best way to begin is with an analogy to show what we mean by ecology. Then we can tell the story of a particular leader's vocational journey in order to show how the concept of an ecology helps us to understand the development of vocation.

The best metaphor for understanding the development of a minister may be to think of a river flowing from the hills to the sea. Think of the life course of a pastor's development as the flow of that river. The river passes through a number of different environments on its way to the sea. A confluence of streams may come together to form the river. The river may pool at some point to create a lake. There may be rapids or deep, still segments. The river may pass through a forest or create a meadow. The point is that the river itself is an ecosystem even as it passes through and is shaped by a network of ecosystems. Together these various ecosystems create the ecology of the river. In the same way, a minister's development over time has a logic of its own. That makes her development like a river in that it has its own ecosystem. But, at the same time, her development is influenced by a number of other organizations and entities as well. These are like the lakes, forests, and hillsides that shape a river. We cannot understand the river or the minister until we look at the entire system together. That is why we need to understand the ecology of vocation.

But what does that look like in the life of a leader? Let us focus on one example. Even before John K. arrived at Fuller Seminary, he felt sure he was called to plant new churches. Soon after he graduated from the school in the 1990s, he and his wife began hosting a Bible study in their living room. It eventually grew into a congregation of over 200 members, almost all of whom had no faith commitment before encountering his church. The church recently purchased land near a freeway and is getting ready to build a new sanctuary and gymnasium.[1] In short, Rev. K has become the kind of minister that Fuller Seminary wants its graduates to be. He is pastoral with his parishioners, preaches solid Biblical sermons, and has a commitment to evangelism. The question is, how did he become such a minister?

Although it is true that Rev. K learned a great deal about ministry in the seminary classroom, many of the key moments that formed him for ministry came outside the school. He came to faith as a child in an independent Bible church. Then, when he was in high school, his parents moved the family to a Presbyterian congregation, where the youth minister (freshly graduated from Fuller) had a profound effect on John. During college, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship gave him valuable experience not only in leading groups but also in starting new ministries. After he graduated from college, he worked as a youth minister under the tutelage of an old, wise Presbyterian pastor. But, when that pastor retired, John K. had a very frustrating experience working with an interim pastor who did not value innovation or evangelism. The frustration continued when, during seminary, the denominational credentialing body informed him that they believed only older, more

[1] The information from John K. was verified in a day-long interview on August 31, 2006, when the grant project began. Much has obviously happened in his life and ministry since that time. But for the purposes of this paper, we will narrate his circumstances as of the grant's beginning in 2007 rather than attempting to complicate it by adding new twists and turns – especially the ways that the economic crisis of 2008 shifted his church's ministry.

experienced pastors should be planting churches. Conversely, after he founded his congregation, he encountered a wise denominational leader who mentored him. And all along the way, a network of friends confirmed his gifts and discussed the questions that were closest to his heart. These experiences shaped his understanding of ministry and his assumptions about his gifts for church planting. It is clear, then, that many of the lessons that made him such a strong graduate came outside the seminary classroom. Some even happened after he had earned his degree. In other words, much of the success of a theological school's ability to form students for ministry depends on external entities. It depends on the ecology of vocation.

But how do these entities form an ecology? Each of these entities creates an environment for learning and formation. Learning and formation are not mechanistic processes; they grow in the same way that a plant grows out an ecology. And, when we examine the range of leaders being formed for ministry, we find that the organizations and entities that shape them fit together in a system of mutual dependence in just the same way that an upstream ecosystem affects what happens downstream. This interdependence makes the learning environment into an ecology. Anything that affects one part of the system affects everything else in the system.

There is a diversity of organizations in any ecology. In Rev. K.'s ecology, we find not only Fuller Seminary, but also a nondenominational church that provided his initial faith formation, a number of Presbyterian congregations that gave him the opportunity to experiment with his gifts, a couple of judicatories (one that helped and one that hurt his development), an Inter-Varsity chapter that thrust him into a creative leadership position, and many mentors and friends. The weakness in the wide literature on leadership formation is that it neglects all these ecological influences because it proceeds as if seminaries stand alone. There has been very little discussion of how theological schools fit into an ecology of vocation.

There are at least five key parts to the ecology of vocation. Each of these parts is really a cluster of organizations and experiences—in the same way that the rapids of a river or the place where it pools into a lake is both an ecology unto itself and part of the overall ecology of the river.

The first part of any leader's ecology of vocation is her formative faith experience, which often takes place in the congregation that first nurtured her to faith. If the leader first came to faith at a young age, this first component may include an experience of youth ministry. If so, that experience may make a lasting impression. In Rev. K.'s case, much of the work he does as a church planter harkens back to his high school experience of youth ministry. The camps and mission trips, the music and the mentors that went with youth ministry each shaped his *mental model of Christian ministry*. If that formative faith experience happens in adulthood, it influences a leader in a different way. But the important point is that most leaders engage in an implicit dialogue through the course of their development with their formative faith experiences.

The second key component of the ecology is one's experience of faith during college (and, if present, one's first career). Even those ministers who look back on the college years as barren spiritually have nonetheless been shaped by that experience. At this stage, campus ministries or para-church organizations can be important influences, as can camps, books, and web sites. They provide future leaders with a safe training ground to nurture their skills. Indeed, it may be that a significant portion of future leaders first discovers their gifts for ministry in these college contexts. On the other hand, there are those future leaders who graduate from college with no plan to be a minister. They prepare for some other occupation and then discover their call later in life. It would be interesting to compare the college experiences of first career and second career ministers to see if there is something distinctive about the college experience of either group (and we found that, in each

theological school we studied, what one school called "pipeliners"—those who came straight from college—had a different experience compared to those who experienced careers before matriculating).

Work experiences can be as important as college experiences in shaping the *mental models of ministry*. For those who perceive a call after the age of thirty, there is usually some kind of first career. And it is important to investigate the influences that different careers have on their mental models about ministry. For example, Rev. K. talked about working in his family's restaurant. Being a part of a small business taught him a sense of responsibility and it taught him how to deal with the ambiguous boundaries that both small business owners and pastors experience. Rev. K.'s reflection came up as he was describing the difficulty he has had hiring youth ministers. He observed that fledgling ministers who have only known nine-to-five jobs are not prepared for the intrusive nature of youth ministry. He wants a youth minister to know instinctively that it is important to show up at high school basketball games, winter concerts, and Fourth of July parades. So he asks potential youth ministers about their job experience in order to gauge their ability to manage the elastic hours that ministry demands. There is much to learn from tracking the work experience of candidates for ministry.

The third key component is the congregation of call. At some point, every minister perceives some kind of call. Usually this happens in the context of some community of faith. This congregation of call may be a community that has already been important in a candidate's development (e.g., it could be the same as the congregation that originally formed a candidate or it may be a college ministry) or it may be a community that she encounters after leaving college. But the context in which the potential minister receives the call has a large influence on what the candidate believes she is being called to be and do.

The fourth key component of the ecology of vocation is the nexus of organizations that shape a student during

her seminary years. For the purpose of this study, we are interested especially in those influences that take place *outside* the classroom. These include: (1) the internship or field education context (this may include the ministries students do for academic credit and those that they pursue simply to pay the bills or to continue their calling), (2) relationships with a credentialing body such as a presbytery, a Methodist annual conference, or a Lutheran synod, (3) Clinical Pastoral Education (particularly in a hospital setting), and (4) extra-curricular student activities within the seminary.[2] Each of these learning environments shapes a student during their seminary years, but no one is directly related to what happens in the classroom.

Finally, the fifth key component of the ecology centers around the initial experiences that a pastor encounters as she steps into ministry. Particularly important are the first summer after graduating from seminary and the first five years in ministry. As new ministers make sense of these new experiences, they either internalize or shed lessons that they learned in seminary. They also become attuned to questions that they could not ask until they took up the mantle of pastoral leadership. Each of these five key components is a nexus of organizations and influences surrounding a developing minister. Each provides an environment for learning. And each is in some way shaped by the others. Together they form the ecology of vocation.

The difficulty in putting together a study such as this is to determine the parameters of investigation. For the purpose of this study, the principal investigator

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[2] Carroll, Jackson, et. al., *Being There: Culture and Formation in Two Theological Schools* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). We were particularly interested, here, in extending the notion of "seminary culture" that Carroll et al. describe in *Being There*. Experiences such as campus chapel or influences such as on-campus speakers or especially small Bible study groups composed of other students can provide important environments for students to explore new ways of imagining what it means to be in ministry. Ironically, we found that the seminary culture shaped the very idea that each school had for what they were doing by participating in this study.

(Cormode) proposed to the other scholars a set of parameters to follow in doing this study. They were asked to study the five key components that we described above. That is, we will study: (1) Formative Faith Experiences, (2) College Experiences and First Careers, (3) Congregation of Call, (4) Experiences During Seminary, and (5) Ministry in Context. Each of these five is its own cluster of organizations and influences—just as a mountain lake is its own ecosystem.

None of these schools followed exactly the process that Cormode outlined. In some studies, that would be problematic and call into question the results of the study, but the opposite is true here. A significant finding of this study is that each school reinvented the process in order to meet the needs of and to embody the mental models inherent to that school's seminary culture.

The original goals of the comparative project were to determine if other schools would find it useful to replicate the original study done at Fuller Seminary and to see if those other schools reached the same conclusions. The result has been profound. We found that each school found the process exceedingly useful, but that each school re-invented the process (or made the process its own) in order to maximize that usefulness. Very early in the comparative project, it became clear that achieving comparative results (by following replicated methods) was going to be secondary. Taking seriously the ecology of vocation required each school to reinvent the process to that school's culture.

The other important decision has to do with the methods that the investigation employed. Our first method was to conduct surveys with graduates in their first years of ministry. That gave us a baseline of data. But after that, it was extremely important to follow up with interviews. The stories that graduates tell are an important window into their experience.

The Quantity and the Quality of Leaders

One last point needs to be made. Most scholarly discussions of ecology focus on quantity but not quality.[3] Using the ecology metaphor suggests an intuitive connection between quantity and ecology because it is like saying that the amount of rain affects the yield of the wheat harvest. This is why the effectiveness of youth ministry today shapes the quantity of ministers tomorrow. And it explains why intervening in the vocational discernment of college students makes good sense. The ecology of vocation is an environment that bears fruit. Without it, we will indeed run out of ministers. But there are deeper reasons why the ecology of vocation is crucial to the future of religious leadership.

The ecology of vocation affects the quality and not just the quantity of religious leaders. Let us explain how this works in greater detail because this insight provides a guide for what data we collected. The most respected scholars on leadership have shown us that every leader acts out of a *mental model* of what leadership should be. Each leader carries within his or her mind an image of leadership. For example, Peter Drucker talks about "the theory of the business," by which he means a mental image every leader and corporation has of what the organization exists to do, why it matters, and how that endeavor will help the organization thrive.[4] Every decision that the organization makes (or that a leader makes on the organization's behalf), he argues, depends on the "theory of the business." That is why "the primary

[3] See, for example, the use of the term "ecology" in organization theory. It is almost solely concerned with what it calls "births" and "deaths," which in this context would translate into the quantity of new candidates for ministry. The seminal work is Michael T. Hannan and John Freeman, "The Population Ecology of Organizations," *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (March 1977): 929-966; on the place of ecological discussions in organization theory, see Charles Perrow, *Complex Organizations* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986), 208-218; and Richard Scott, *Organizations* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1992), 126-132, 215-218.

[4] Peter F. Drucker, "The Theory of the Business." *Harvard Business Review,* September/October 1994 95-104, esp. p. 100.

focus of executive leadership is formatting and implementing an organization's theory of the business."[5]

Likewise, Peter Senge describes how the best leaders are constantly aware of the "mental models" they carry in their heads. These models describe the purpose of the organization, the role of the leader, and the characteristics of the environment. The strongest leaders, he argues, are the ones who have enough self-awareness to change their unspoken assumptions when the circumstances of their world change.[6] For example, in our earlier discussion of John K., we mentioned that he had a difficult relationship with an interim pastor who supervised him when he was a youth minister. The difficulty turned on a clash of mental models. John believed that his primary calling as a youth minister was to evangelize teens who were not yet part of the church. The pastor, on the other hand, believed that the primary role of a youth minister was to teach confirmation classes for the (admittedly few) children of current church members. Thus she chided him for neglecting his duties because he hung out with local teens at the pizza parlor on a Friday night talking about Jesus. Her mental model said that it was a waste of time (and perhaps set a bad example) for a pastor to be out with kids, even as his mental model of a youth minister said that it was among the most important things he could do. Senge and many others[7] have shown that every leader makes decisions based on the mental models they carry around in their heads.[8]

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[5] The quotation comes from Drucker's principal co-author, Joseph A. Maciarello, "Peter F. Drucker on Executive Leadership and Effectiveness," *The Leader of the Future 2* (*forthcoming*), 6.

[6] Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 174ff.

[7] See, for example, Donald Schon, *The Reflective Practitioner* (New York: Basic Books, 1993) 321-323 and Chris Argyris, *Overcoming Organizational Defenses* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1990).

[8] Peter Senge, *Fifth Discipline*, 204. Indeed, Senge argued further that the best leaders will need to learn to shift "from mental models dominated by events to mental models that recognize longer-term patterns of change and the underlying structures producing these patterns."

The question, then, for those who care about Christian leadership is this: Who forms the mental models that shape a pastor's view of ministry? The answer, of course, is complicated. One purpose of a seminary education is to instill a healthy model for ministry. Indeed, many of the theology and ministry courses that a student takes focus on shaping the student's view of ministry. Yet the school does not stand alone. Many of these mental models grow out of the ecology of vocation that formed the minister.

Let us look back at the John K example. By the time he arrived in seminary, he carried in his head a number of models both for what constitutes good ministry and for what it means to be a congregation. At the nondenominational Bible church that formed his faith, the picture of good ministry was a pastor standing informally in front of the congregation with an open Bible in his hand expounding on the scriptures verse by verse. Such a congregation does not need to have denominational authority structures. At the large Presbyterian church of his youth, John saw a model of preaching that had well-crafted, thematic sermons delivered from an elevated pulpit. There he saw a congregation that was embedded within a denominational authority structure. Thus he carried at least two models of ministry in his head: an informal, nondenominational model and a structured, denominational one.

When he discerned a call to ministry, he pursued the denominational path. He approached the presbytery and put himself under their care. He did not, however, abandon the other model. Thus, when the presbytery told him that he was too young to plant a church, the alternative mental model blazed for him an alternative path to ministry. He decided to forego denominational ordination and to start a congregation in his living room with neither denominational support nor sanction. The resistance of the presbytery inspired him to shift from one ecclesiological model to another. If, however, he had grown up in a denominational congregation and had never experienced a different model, it likely would have

been much more difficult for him to plant a nondenominational church. His ecology of vocation included a mental model of the church that allowed him to make that move.

Experience with seminarians and newly-ordained pastors suggests that a significant part of their formation as ministers involves sorting out which mental models from their ecology are legitimate and which they will leave behind.[9] When Cormode first constructed the project, the most important question in his mind was this: How does the ecology of vocation form a minister's mental models about the church and the ministry? And when Cormode commissioned the four other studies, he assumed that the mental model's question would be the foremost question.

It did not happen that way. The needs of each school reshaped the purpose of the study for each school. Or, to use the language of this study, the mental model each school held for useful and legitimate research re-shaped the purpose and form of this project at each of the schools. It would be easy for Cormode to complain that the other scholars did not do work that conformed to his mental model of what the study should be. But that would be hypocritical. A premise of this project is that every student comes to our seminaries and reinvents the purpose of theological education for herself. That is why theological education is so powerful. It prepares John K. for church planting, while also preparing, say, Soo-Mi for chaplaincy. The same principle applies to this project. Each school re-invented the ecology of vocation project to fit its own purposes. The project would not have been

[9] Robert Kegan's work on development – and particularly the development that allows leaders to work in particularly complicated environments – has shown that graduate school is often the time that students are confronted with just this question. The reason most graduate programs are so emotionally taxing, he believes, is that most schools do not have any intention of facilitating this move. See, for example, his *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), esp. pp. 270 and 293. Pag 313ff show how these transitions are related to leadership.

as useful if we expected each school to pursue the goals of the principal investigator. Let us then see how each school re-invented the project and how each school found that the project addressed key questions in that seminary's culture. We will look at the schools in alphabetical order and then comment, at the end, on the common themes.

Harvard Divinity School (HDS) (Emily Click)

This report begins with an excerpt from a draft of our accreditation self-study process, in order to provide the reader with some interpretive context. This section summarizes our nearly unique approach to theological education, which embraces ministry in Christianity as well as other faith traditions. Here is that excerpt:

> "Over the past six years, the faculty of divinity and the M.Div. committee have crafted an entirely new M.Div. curriculum. Our M.Div. goals are that M.Div. graduates will…
>
> 1. Demonstrate a deep commitment to social justice, as well as the capacity and tools to critically confront structured forms of violence in our society.
> 2. Critically and compassionately engage the histories, theologies, and practices of their traditions, as well as multi-religious and multi-cultural contexts in which they practice their ministries.
> 3. Integrate diverse academic, spiritual, and social-cultural resources in their ministerial work, understanding "ministry" as a practice that emerges out of a rich intellectual life brought to bear upon the whole world.
> 4. Lead and cultivate communities that are characterized by deep spiritual, intellectual, and ethical bonds.
> 5. Stretch the horizons for the vision and practice of ministry, demonstrating in surprising and yet-unexpected ways creative ingenuity in their ministries."

Upon revising our M.Div. in 2005, our faculty embraced a significant evolution of the understanding of ministry to include not only Christian and Unitarian-Universalist ministry, as has long been our focus, but to intentionally extend to Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist faith traditions as well. We require each student to begin their program by identifying a religious tradition upon which they will focus their program. The student must then develop extensive knowledge of the religion which is the focus for his or her M.Div., as well develop significant knowledge of another religion.

An overarching purpose for the M.Div. is to enable students to form comprehensive, respectful engagement across traditions, while also developing deep roots within their own religious traditions. Students from diverse religious traditions form a single cohort in the M.Div., enabling comprehensive preparation for engaging ministry within a multi-religious context. However, students also have many opportunities for deep formation and experience within their own tradition, as they learn in community with students, faculty, and staff who share their religious perspective. Thus students develop depth of knowledge and formation within their tradition while also cultivating deep respect for practices, beliefs, and persons from traditions other than their own. We have found (through extensive interviews with alumni) that our Christian students report significant growth in knowledge and practice of Christianity not just in spite of but rather because of this richly diverse engagement with religious traditions.

Our M.Div. curriculum encourages students to imagine creative interpretations of meanings for "ministry." The de-familiarization created by our students' engagement with the diversity of our curriculum, including language study, fosters their capacity to stretch ministerial horizons in unpredictable ways. The creative surprises our students experience in engaging the curriculum build capacity to create and engage unpredictable surprises in their ministries. *(Excerpts from HDS Self-Study document, 2011).*

This "Ecology of Vocation" study focused on graduates who had been formed in this new and different ethos. The multi-religious focus of the new M.Div. is significant; however, it remains true that the majority of students in the M.Div. program are in Christian or UU traditions.

Methodology for This Study

Our Ecology of Vocation project has unfolded so far in four stages. First, we developed and administered a survey monkey to alumni from four recent M.Div. classes. We wanted to focus on 2006-09 graduates in order to capture those who had experienced at least some of the new curriculum, rolled out in 2005, and yet had also been out of school long enough to have something to report about post-Harvard Divinity School (HDS) experiences. The inclusion of 2006 graduates helped us meet the target numbers requested by the study coordinator, but may have skewed results because most of them had 2/3 of their HDS experience under the "old" M.Div. curriculum. Over the summer of 2011, I hosted two informal interview lunches with several of our field education supervisors who had supervised the largest numbers of our M.Div. students in recent years. While the data from those lunches was not part of the project, I will quote from those interviews later in this report.

Our project's next stage involved interviewing respondents by phone. We followed up with everyone who indicated in the survey that they were willing for us to follow up, and then we pursued some others as well. We then analyzed the data in several ways, looking for trends and patterns. Finally, at this stage, I have completed this draft report summarizing analysis and results to date. We have yet not correlated this data with other sources, such as field education final evaluations, nor with admissions materials. Neither have we made any extensive report to the faculty. This will be done in two forms: one will be a lengthy report to the M.Div. committee, and on another occasion I plan to lead a

discussion with a large group of faculty who meet once a month for lunch, ordinarily to discuss one person's scholarly project.

Survey and Interview Information

We received contact information (from our alumni office) for 215 M.Div. graduates from 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. We developed a survey monkey with 31 questions, based on the survey developed by Scott Cormode for Fuller Seminary, but with some questions re-worded to better suit our alumni. We focused some questions on how students engaged with ordination processes, since we had very little information about how ordination has gone for our M.Div. graduates. Then we followed up with 22 interviews which were all by phone, and took 45 minutes to one and a half hours. Emily conducted three of the interviews, and staff conducted the rest. Most of the interviews were entirely recorded and transcribed, while a few were recorded in detailed note format. The interviews focused on the HDS experience and the after-graduation experience, with less attention on their faith formation prior to coming to HDS. However, late in the process, we began asking what were their undergraduate majors, and we also asked how well prepared they felt they were to engage in critical reading of texts by that undergraduate experience.

General Descriptions of Respondents:

87 responded to the survey monkey (we eliminated one duplicate response, as well as one with nothing filled in, but included two with no name but some categories filled in). We interviewed one person who did not return a survey, but the rest (21) had already turned in a survey.

50 were female, 35 male, 1 no response to the gender question, and one transgender.

Forty-five were aged 26-30, twenty-seven were aged 30-40, fifteen were aged 41-65, (one had no age given).

13 graduated in 2006, 18 graduated in 2007, 21 graduated in 2008, and 35 graduated in 2009 (one did not give a year of graduation).

Overview of Findings and Analysis:

As a result of the survey we now have far more detailed data about how many graduates attempt and enter into ordination processes, but we also better grasp the reality that for our graduates, ministerial service cannot usefully be considered identical to ordained ministry. We understood before that this was true for those entering many non-traditional forms of ministry, such as leadership of NGO's, teaching, or other professions. We now understand it is also complicated to summarize the ways in which students enter into traditional forms of ministry, as they tend to continue to follow complicated, non-traditional paths even into ordained, denominationally oriented pastoral leadership.

Formative Faith Experiences

Our students can be described as being "denominationally challenged" before, during and after HDS. We might even say a high number of HDS graduates develop, somewhere during their journey, multiple roots within distinct religious traditions. While we might have expected this to stem from our requirement that each student take at least three courses outside their own religious tradition, a surprising finding was how many students had already traveled a path within multiple traditions before entering HDS. In describing their formative faith experiences, students described the complicated journeys they traveled before they ever found HDS. Their mother was Roman Catholic, their father agnostic, and they attended a local Baptist youth group on their own initiative. Such apparently diverse roots did not equate to a shallow or cynical understanding of religious affiliation, but nurtured a desire for deeper understanding within and across traditions. They found their home at HDS, where an M.Div. program had been shaped for just such learning.

We would have liked to have listened to more stories, and to have gathered more data about how they found their ways to youth groups, college chaplaincies, to dharma talks, that held them in a spiritual space and

convinced them they could find a way to dedicate their lives to learned service. We need to better understand the role of college chaplains, of congregational rabbis, of youth group leaders, of NGO founders, in nurturing our students to service before they reach our doors. We know that many professors recognize outstanding students of religion and send those to HDS. Our initial findings suggest that other equally valuable partners go unrecognized, and might be fruitfully cultivated as dialog partners to better understand the journey toward service our graduates begin before they ever encounter our curriculum and participate in our life of worship and study.

College and First Career Experiences

We asked fifteen of those we interviewed what were their undergraduate majors. These included 13 in the humanities, one in business/finance, and another in political science. Seven majored in some area of religious studies. We asked students how their undergraduate or previous graduate programs prepared them for HDS. We heard from most of the students that their previous educations prepared them to read texts critically, and if they had been required to do a thesis prior to HDS, they mentioned that was valuable.

Many students point to the influence of an undergraduate professor in developing an interest in religious studies, and in ministry. One notable interview was with a graduate who came from an under-represented minority, and who had been encouraged to imagine coming to Harvard. She vividly described how this opened up new horizons for her, and how she felt supported in her efforts to succeed at HDS, even though her undergraduate education had not adequately prepared her for the writing challenges. In fact, she shared that she won the Billings Competition, which is a highly competitive preaching contest for M.Div. students. She shared that she now brings groups of students to visit on campus so that they too can imagine they could go to a school like Harvard if that is right for them.

The next steps for expanding the ecology of vocation might be to correlate the undergraduate majors of each of the study participants with their current occupations. Another significant avenue of exploration would be to correlate GRE scores and other relevant admission information such as essays or references with the descriptions of experiences after graduation. It is also probably appropriate to separately track those who enter with prior graduate degrees, and develop a longitudinal description of how those prior graduate studies shape their post-HDS vocations.

It would be useful to contrast the experience of students who enter HDS still in their twenties, but after a break from educational study, versus those who do not interrupt their educational sequence prior to entering HDS. Similarly, it would be important to study the effects of particular types of pre-HDS experiences, such as Teach for America, or other service in church and para-church organizations.

Congregation of Call

We gathered only anecdotal data about student experiences in congregations prior to HDS. Since HDS matriculates students from around the world, it is not uncommon for students to have left their geographic home for undergraduate study, and then to have moved somewhere else to work for a few years, and then to make another geographic shift in coming to HDS. For practical purposes, this often means that relatively few students can tie their present sense of calling for learned service to one specific congregation in a "home" or family-based setting. It is not unheard of for students to receive a call that can be traced from high school through to their present experience of ministry, but such patterns are unusual enough to suggest we must study the influence of congregational life in other ways.

Experiences of Divinity School

Students had positive things to say about their HDS experiences. Many named professors or staff who had been especially helpful, and gave rich descriptions of this mentoring while at HDS. Students reported high values for the academic rigor of the program, for the relevance of field education in helping them discern the shape for their ministry, and in general they praised the quality of the relationships they formed with the peers within the HDS community.

Here are some quotes in response to our question of how well they feel HDS prepared them for their present work: "My work as a leader and manager are completely transformed and strengthened by the work I did at HDS—it was definitely worth the time and investment." "Every aspect of my time there prepared me for what I am doing now." "HDS changed my experience of myself and the world in a way that is inextricably part of every engagement." "In addition to the faculty support and training, it provided me with a community of peers that I still value today." "HDS provided me a space in which to explore the various nuances of what ministry meant to me, and could mean to me, in my day to day life. It helped me to discern a call to ministry that was outside of traditional parish ministry." "I think it gave me a well-rounded ministry education. Classes on preaching and leadership were excellent preparations, while classes on theology and history grounded my ministry." "I cannot say enough about HDS. Nothing can fully prepare you for ordained ministry, but HDS deepened my faith life, transformed the way I looked at the church and the world, made me a better leader, and a more thoughtful and informed Christian." "I got a quality theological education that was meaningful and inspiring to me and which taught me to think about pastoral issues and tasks in critical and innovative ways." "Surprisingly well, given the number of unpredictable situations that arise in parish ministry." "I felt very well prepared to begin my doctoral studies."

Among the concerns expressed were some negative experiences with faculty who were "aloof," some classes that were not valuable, and their lack of preparation for specific ministerial tasks. Many alumni volunteered that they struggled with choosing between a rich array of highly esoteric, academic courses and ministerial practice courses. One said something like, "I probably shouldn't have taken that third semester Sanskrit poetry class, and instead should have taken the course on Administration," and that captured the spirit many expressed. However, they also pointed to the reality that their rich intellectual work actually did inform how they engaged in preparation for the specific tasks/skills needed for their present positions. One student put it this way: "The courses that keep coming back to me are the ones that helped me become a pastor, but I appreciate that wasn't the main focus, but I loved the openness of thought and the push to think through why we were there, and what our sense of call was, and that has continued to feed me all the way through." Many alumni wish they had taken more advantage of administration, pastoral counseling, and other courses specific to fundraising.

Another significant finding was how many of our respondents reported being active in HDS-sponsored worship services while they were students. The vast majority were heavily involved in one or more of our on-campus worship opportunities, as well as off campus worship experiences. There were many students who had formed some kind of intentionally Christian group, such as a Christian fellowship, or a study group, to reinforce their Christian identity in the midst of the multi-faith context. They expressed how important these groups were to their experience, especially in times of difficulty. Here is one quote illustrating this: "I was really involved in Thursday morning Eucharist, and that was an awesome thing—that we could have a place for a sort of Christian ecumenical kind of thing." At HDS presently, at least eight student groups organize weekly or bi-weekly worship opportunities within their own faith tradition.

Many pointed to the value of HDS' multi-faith engagements in their present work. One graduate, for example, reports: "Another part of my time at HDS that is very much in play here is denominational goings-on, current PCUSA and the shift that's happening toward ordination of GLBT folks. That is a slow and difficult process and one that's coming to a head right now. I would hope that in my own way some of the things that I learned at HDS about working with folks who think differently from me, and advocating for progressive change in a way that is genuine for my community rather than cavalier and unmindfully defensive, are evident in what I'm doing here."

HDS claims that its multi-faith focus serves to enhance students' involvement in their own faith, and does not decenter students from their own faith and beliefs. We heard many stories confirming this. One graduate put it this way: "I didn't experience becoming disconnected from my faith. You hear these stories…I really didn't feel that. I thought it was interesting learning those things. I never really had a crisis of faith; I certainly was challenged, but I felt I benefited from having the rigorous intellectual experience. I could hold that in tandem with the field ed context, or the real world context. I found it a supportive community."

Field Education and CPE

Many respondents described field education as the best part of their education. Many students pointed to their field education as being strongly influential in their decisions about long term calling into or away from ordination or academic careers. Some who intended to become academics experienced such profound ministerial calling within the context of field education that they moved toward ordination. One quote illustrates a typical response: "I realized the tradition I was raised in was not the tradition that I was called to. I didn't know what it felt like to be so present with God until I started worshipping in a sacramental context."

Ministries Post-graduation

Among those surveyed, those who had completed or were enrolled in graduate programs included these degrees: diploma in Anglican Studies, MBA (2), STM (2), post M.Div. Lutheran Year (2), MEd, EdM, Master of Social Work, Master of Theology, Doctor of Ecclesiastical Sciences, PhD (6), unspecified (5), sociology, counseling psychology, theology, ThD (3), and New Testament.

Ordination

It is not unusual for HDS graduates to find, in contrast to their original intentions, that they pursue ordained ministerial service. Here is one quote by way of explanation: (In response to being asked whether they had planned on becoming ordained upon matriculation): "No. I had thought about going into ministry, but don't know that I had equated ordination with ministry yet. But I had really thought at the time that I wanted to be a Hebrew professor. It was through my experiences at Memorial Church for field ed, and the chaplaincy at Dana Farber Cancer Institute, that really helped me formulate my ministerial gifts. I just started using them before I knew that they were there. With morning prayers at Memorial Church, it was an every single day kind of thing…I was just doing my thing and people were saying, have you ever thought about ministry…At that point I did go to (ordained faculty members) and have conversations with them about how they chose-'You are ordained and yet here you are teaching at Harvard. How did you come to this decision?'"

Another graduate links his journey of denominational wandering to his decision to come to HDS, which eventually has led him to enter the ordination process in the PCUSA, where he presently serves on the pastoral staff of a local congregation: "My denominational background is varied. I grew up Southern Baptist, but in a very ecumenical and moderate family. I left the Baptist church when I was in high school and did a lot of denominational and some interfaith wandering. My wife

grew up Episcopalian. One of the reasons I was interested in HDS was because it is not denominationally affiliated…It was not my intention to be ordained; I thought I was moving into academic study and did not want to work in a church, but during my time at HDS and afterward, while seeking my field education position and then a job, I felt a clear call to serve in a church and in PCUSA churches particularly. I resisted it, but it was definitely the call."

Of those who responded to the question, 47 intended to seek ordination when they entered HDS, and 38 did not. (Others did not answer the question.) Thirty-three are presently ordained (many are recent graduates who are in the process). The traditions include: Universal Life, Unitarian Universalist, Orthodox, Anglican, UCC, UMC, American Baptist, Baptist, NACCC, ELCA, Cooperative Baptist, Episcopalian, PCUSA, Quaker, Disciples of Christ, Sufi Order International, and Zen Buddhist. Of those who attempted required ordination exams, all passed, with two having required a second round to fully pass. (One of these describes an arduous three year process to finally pass.) Of those presently ordained, 7 indicated they did not intend to become ordained at entrance (many did not answer this question, while others gave extended answers indicating they are now in an ordination process but did not expect to upon matriculation). Fifty-seven indicated they are not ordained. Many of these pointed out they are active in traditions in which they cannot be ordained (due to gender), or are currently somewhere in the process of ordination.

While a significant number of HDS graduates work in "pastoral" positions leading congregations, or in chaplaincy positions, others have defined ministry in very creative settings. One graduate who works for the US Institute of Peace is still recognized as doing ordained ministry by her denomination (UCC). She "works in the religion and peacemaking program…strengthening the role of constructive religion in conflict zones to support religious leaders and the role of the community as they

support justice and public health. We're working in places where religion is maybe the cause of the conflict or making resolution of conflict more difficult. I did a dual degree program at the Fletcher School of Diplomacy. Harvard gave me a lot of theoretical background and the tools to work essentially as a religious actor alongside other religious actors and use theological language. Fletcher gave me the language of international law and diplomacy so it was really the combination of these two that set me up for this position." She explains her journey toward ordination this way: "I chose the M.Div. because I felt like I couldn't just study religion in a classroom but I wasn't necessarily planning on becoming ordained. But as I continued in the program, I realized that the work that I wanted to do was as a minister. I wanted to ground myself in my faith and in my tradition and in my understanding of peace and justice in the religious sense rather than as a secular diplomat. I was led to recognize that this was a call to ministry rather than a call to diplomacy."

A graduate who is not ordained but works as a missionary explains, "I hadn't planned on (being ordained) and I didn't get ordained. Between my undergraduate study and HDS, I took four years off to work as a missionary in southern Africa, and after HDS I went right back to Africa to work as a missionary, so my real focus was on international missions." This graduate links his present work to the "fantastic" financial aid which, he explains, is "the only thing that made it possible for me to come back out working here as a missionary." He also names the significance of his field ed for his present work, especially because he learned about fundraising in field ed, and also in working with the HDS Annual fund.

In conclusion, the many diversities of learned service in pastoral arenas give rise to the question of what we mean by "traditional" or "ordained" ministry.

General Post-HDS Academic or Work Experience

Many of our graduates attend some form of graduate school after leaving HDS. Other than graduate school, titles for present positions include: Teacher, Counselor, Grassroots Coordinator, CPE residency, HR Systems Consultant, Minister or Rector or Curate or Pastor (including Assistants), Youth Coordinator, Lay assistant, Multi-faith chaplain, Director of Development, Vice President of Operations, Special Assistant to the Vice President for Mission and Ministry, Director of Volunteer Resources, Campaign Manager, Senior Program Officer in the Religion and Peacemaking Program, Director of Justice Campaigns.

Many graduates described the ongoing value they place on integrating an academically critical perspective with "on the ground" forms of ministry. An Episcopalian priest who also has earned a PhD from Boston College puts it this way: "the focus of my work has always been making sure that what I am doing is communicable to the congregation, the people on the ground…I guess the idea I have is that I can bring what I'm learning in the academy to people in a ministry setting."

Another graduate now working in international financial development described a difficult process of finding a job after leaving HDS: "It was...a nightmare!...It took me a long time to find a job. I went to Africa, working for peanuts, because I wanted to do international development. My (field education) summers in Guatemala and then the Philippines gave me a lot of experience … and really helped me get a job after school. If I hadn't done that I don't know what I would have done, but I got a job in Africa…then, from that I eventually got the job I have now which I really love. I also thought it was a little tough for me to tell people that I went to Harvard Divinity. In international development, there are a lot of people who are terrified of religion. I tried to be fair to both them and to HDS when I explained my whole reasoning; it took me three years to come up with that language. I think it was

particularly tough for me, but I landed on my feet, as I suspect most HDS graduates do—it just takes awhile!"

Conclusions

We have learned a great deal about our students' experiences before, during, and after their time at HDS. We would have benefitted from asking more about their formational faith experiences before coming to HDS. Many expressed a real desire to deepen their ongoing relationship with HDS, and the development office will find this study to be of fulsome value as they build even stronger relationships with alumni. The data here suggests that more of our students are entering work with strong pastoral identities than is the general impression and also at a much higher rate than was quantified by a recent alumni survey. We surveyed some doctoral candidates, but retrieved much less information about what they valued from their HDS experience. We did not survey graduates from long enough ago to determine the value of an M.Div. to academic work.

The King's University (Susan Maros)

The King's University (formerly, The King's College and Seminary) is a non-denominational, Spirit-filled institution of higher education, founded by Dr. Jack Hayford. Dr. Hayford is probably best known as "Pastor Jack," founder of The Church On The Way, Van Nuys, CA, where he was senior pastor for more than three decades. The King's (TK) was founded in 1997 and currently has an enrollment of approximately 450 students in college and seminary degree programs through onground, online, and modular delivery systems.

In summer 2011, we contacted all 87 M.Div. alumni by email and telephone who graduated between 2004 and 2009. From this population, 35 completed surveys (40%). We conducted follow-up interviews with nineteen of the survey respondents. The interviews focused on listening to people's stories. Two main topics were explored: 1) Alumni journeys to The King's and onward, including how they processed their sense of call to vocational

ministry, and 2) reflections on what was useful and what would have been more helpful in their M.Div. studies. The interviews paid attention to how people framed their understanding of ministry and their process of becoming engaged in a ministry role (vocational or otherwise). A summary of the findings from the surveys and interviews was presented to the faculty for discussion.

Most TK alumni began their seminary education in their thirties.[10] Most had a career before prior to their seminary studies; for 40% of the survey respondents, this career was in pastoral ministry. A small but significant group of alumni are serving as hospital and military chaplains; for this group alone, the M.Div. was a part of their credentialing process. Finally, while all the graduates are part of the Pentecostal/charismatic community, only 17% were raised in this theological environment.

In the following, I will first outline the map of the ecology of vocation for The King's alumni. I will then discuss two particular points regarding our collective mental models that were highlighted during the course of this research. This summary reflects on the findings from the surveys and interviews as well as the discussion that took place as the faculty considered those findings.

Mapping the Ecology of Vocation

1. Formative Faith Experiences

All TK alumni are currently part of the Pentecostal/charismatic community.[11] A percentage of survey respondents (87%) indicated they had attended church as a child. However, this was a Pentecostal/charismatic church for only 17% of the alumni. The largest denomination represented by

[10] The age range was 21 to 59; women tended to be older (median age: 38) than men (median age: 33).

[11] The largest denominational representation was Foursquare (35%). Approximately 20% of the alumni came from mainline and evangelical denominations but are personally charismatic (e.g., charismatic Presbyterian). Of the remainder, about half are from classic Pentecostal groups and denominations; half are from churches and denominations that are neo-charismatic.

childhood church attendance was Roman Catholic (27%).[12]

The interviews did not explicitly explore conversion or early faith experiences; nevertheless, a number of participants made reference to their faith journey, often describing their childhood religious experience as "nominal." The narrative arc of nominal church exposure as a child followed by vibrant, personal experience in a Pentecostal/charismatic context as a teen or young adult is a common theme among TK alumni. This narrative carries with it an implicit—sometimes explicit—negative critique of early religious context and an affirmation of a Pentecostal/charismatic ethos as experientially and theologically "superior" along with, at times, a caution about theological education.

David's story is somewhat typical in this regard. David said his parents would have described themselves as Christian but they did not attend church. David visited a Pentecostal church in his senior year of High School at the invitation of a friend and found it different to anything he had ever experienced prior. David was attracted to the passion for God displayed by the pastor and youth, and continued to attend. It was at a church camp that David "felt a call to ministry." Upon hearing he wanted to pursue Bible college and seminary, David's parents were reluctant because they wanted him to get a "real education" and his pastor was reluctant because "if you get too much education, you can't love God with your whole heart." David chose TK because he thought "it would be a good balance between academic intellect and spiritual passion."

Based on early formative experience, students bring with them to The King's some very specific expectations about the purpose of theological education. Some, like David, are warned specifically by their pastoral leadership that seminary is "dangerous to your faith." Others come

[12] Baptist was the childhood theological environment for 17% of the alumni. Other childhood denominational contexts included Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Methodist, and Nazarene.

with an expectation to be taught "the truth"—specifically, "truth" as defined by agreement with what they had been taught in the church context in which they came to faith. Still others come with an expectation of seminary as a powerful, dynamic spiritual experience. For many, their graduate study is the first time they are exposed to church history, theology, and systematic study of Scripture.

2. College and First Career Experiences

For the constituency served by The King's, a master's degree is generally not a requirement for ordination. The one exception to this general rule is those students who are seeking to become hospital or military chaplains. Those pursing military chaplaincy in particular already had years in the armed services prior to their seminary studies. In an interview, one man spoke about his experience in the military and how the absence of a chaplain motivated him to "be there for" those in service. Another spoke about how his informal ministry of counseling and prayer during one tour of service was especially influential in this decision to become a chaplain. He described that season as one in which he felt especially alive and useful.

As previously noted, 40% of M.Div. alumni were already in pastoral ministry when they began their studies. A further 6% were in other vocational ministry positions.[13] For this group, seminary education was not about entry into vocational ministry; it was about further development, both personal and vocational. For example, Jason was a youth pastor when he began his M.Div.. Jason had not grown up in church and felt a need for a stronger foundation and so pursued the M.Div. at his wife's encouragement. He described himself as content in

[13] Of those who were already in pastoral ministry, 64% were men. All of those who were in vocational ministry in other contexts were women. These statistics reflect formal roles, usually paid, rather than informal or lay ministry roles. The impact of engagement in lay ministry roles will be discussed in the following section.

his role of youth pastor—"I was consumed by my call," he said. A year into his studies, however, Jason began to sense that he would transition to a senior pastor role and this strongly impacted how he approached his education. Jason did make this transition subsequent to his graduation and had served as a senior pastor for four years at the time of the interview.

The largest group of survey respondents (51%) had various roles in the marketplace prior to their seminary studies. Those who were in their twenties and early thirties had jobs that "paid the bills" but were viewed as temporary roles while they were in the process of discovering what they should really do with their lives. One finding of this research is that those alumni who were in their forties and above before their M.Div. studies, and thus had a long history in their careers, were much less likely to transition into formal vocational ministry roles (e.g., pastor) than those who were younger or who already had vocational ministry experience. One example is Sarah, who came to The King's in her forties. She had been a vice-president in her real estate firm and came, originally, believing she would complete her degree and go on to plant a church among business people. Post-graduation, Sarah is back in the marketplace, again in a senior role, and has reframed her understanding of her vocational call, even to the extent of completely down-playing her original vocational goals.

3. Congregation of Call

TK alumni generally did not make reference to the role of the congregation in their vocational discernment process. The congregational contexts clearly played a significant role in shaping their understanding of faith and their mental models of ministry, as noted in the discussion of formative faith experiences. Alumni seemed to be unaware of this impact, however, or perhaps viewed the role of the community as not being a legitimate part of their call narrative. Instead, the interview participants would emphasize their personal "knowing" of call and the decisions they made as a result. Confirmation by and

encouragement from pastoral leadership was referenced as being meaningful, but generally secondary to the individual's personal discernment of call.[14]

The role of the congregation of call seemed more often related to a person's ministry engagement. The pattern appeared to be that if a student was actively involved in a congregation and had significant ministry and/or leadership roles before and during their M.Div. studies, they were far more likely to transition to formal vocational ministry roles following the completion of their degree. An example of this is Lyle, whose active engagement in his church began two years prior to the start of his studies and continued throughout. Two months following graduation, an associate pastor relocated to another state and Lyle was asked to step into his position.

4. Seminary Experiences

TK alumni spoke about significant ways in which they were shaped during their seminary experience, most often mentioning the impact of specific faculty or exposure to particular conceptual frames. For one person who was a pastor when she began seminary, exposure to the idea of "pastor as coach" eventually resulted in a role transition into a coaching ministry. For another person, exposure to Messianic Jewish thinking and the opportunity to study in Israel resulted in ministry positions in organizations involved in Jewish-Christian dialog and in ministry roles that involve Messianic believers as well as outreach to Israel.

What surfaced in the interviews was a sense of the complexity of alumni mental models of ministry and what role they expected seminary to play in ministry

[14] This was an even stronger dynamic in my dissertation research. TK students expect that people will personally know that they are called by God to a ministry role. They *then* expect that that personal knowledge will be confirmed by leaders or other significant people, but the personal knowledge was the necessary first step without which the affirmation of a leader was deemed without value.

development. Carol's story is an example of the complexity of this dynamic. Carol is among those who grew up nominally Catholic and came to personal faith in a Pentecostal/charismatic context. She was heavily engaged for many years in lay ministry in her small Pentecostal church as well as involved a national ministry based in a larger church in the same denomination. As she was asked to take on a larger role in the national organization, she saw the need for equipping herself with a stronger theological basis for ministry. Her expectation was that if she had experienced profound growth in her church and in the ministry environment, then "when I come to seminary, I'm going to *really* escalate in spiritual growth." While deeply appreciative of the broader theological formation she experienced in completing her M.Div., Carol expressed her grief and pain that the faculty did not do more to help her learn more of the "things of the Spirit" and about spiritual authority. Her mission post-M.Div. is "speaking into lives of people who have book knowledge but are hungry for practical experience of the things of the Spirit."

5. Ministry

The pattern of ministry engagement before and during M.Div. studies being a predictor of vocational ministry role following degree completion has significant implications for The King's. The faculty discussion of this data included a lively interchange regarding student expectations. One faculty member commented, "[The students] think they are just going to come here and then somebody is going to [say], 'Oh! You went to The King's? I want you!'" We recognize that students come with an expectation that a degree from TK will result in a paid ministry position. What is more difficult to determine is how to challenge this expectation and, furthermore, how to help students be engaged in ministry during the course of their studies in a way that will enhance their development.

Having summarized something of the map of the ecology of vocation for The King's students and

alumni, I turn now to reflecting on two points where the experience of this research and the discussion of the faculty highlighted some of our institutional mental models.

Mental Models—Defining "Ministry" as "Pastor"

As a faculty we are aware that within the Pentecostal/charismatic community there is a tendency to equate "ministry" with "man in the pulpit."[15] To varying degrees, members of the faculty deliberately seek to expand this paradigm, both in terms of gender and in terms of defining ministry more broadly. The findings of this research suggested where we are not as effective in this area as we might hope. Furthermore, it suggests that there is a gap between the theology we espouse and the theology we live.[16]

As a faculty, we espouse a theology of ministry that is broader than just the pulpit. Furthermore, we profess to value the work of the pastor irrespective of the size of the church. On the other hand, our behavior suggests that we esteem the role of pastor above all others. One comment from an alumnus was particularly telling in this regard. He commented how he heard from professors that "the size of the church doesn't matter; people matter" yet pastors were typically introduced with reference to the size of their church. His point was that the contradiction between what we professed in the classroom and what we demonstrated in our behavior communicated was, at best, a mixed message.

Sociologically and organizationally, there are dynamics that support equating "ministry" with "pastor"

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[15] The use of the male term here is deliberate. While The King's mission statement affirms preparing women as well as men for ministry, both among the faculty and among the student body, there is a tendency to view the male pastor as the "standard."

[16] I am adapting here Chris Argyris' idea of "espoused theory" and "theory-in-use" from Chris Argyris, "Teaching Smart People How to Learn." *Harvard Business Review* (1991) 69:99-109 and Chris Argyris & Donald A. Schon, *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1974)

in our institution. Dr. Hayford served for decades as a senior pastor of a flagship church and has a personal passion for mentoring and equipping pastors for the local congregation. Within the faculty at large, many have served or are currently serving as pastors of local congregations. A significant percentage of students coming to The King's are already in pastoral ministry roles.

The lively faculty discussion of this topic raised the suggestion that we have not explicitly considered what it is that we believe about ministry and whether or not this is reflected in our structures, curriculum, and behavior. In the midst of the conversation, the tendency previously noted of students expecting a degree to lead automatically to a job was discussed. A faculty member said, "My fear is that we'll graduate students who think they're going to get their degree, walk through the doors of a church, and start pastoring full-time on a $50,000 salary. I'm telling them it's not going to happen." The focus of the conversation, however, was about shifting the students' expectations for how they would support themselves, not shifting their understanding of ministry. Faculty wanted students to realize that ministry positions do not pay well and they would either need the support of a spouse or need to be bi-vocational. The tacit assumption was that "ministry" would still be the role of "pastor" whether in that role in a church or in that role in a different context (e.g., teacher as "minister").

This led to an animated conversation about marketplace ministry—the extent to which our graduates are bi-vocational, and what we are doing to prepare people for the inherent challenges. Two interesting points arose. First, the default "solution" to a perceived problem is to create a new course. Second, because a course on marketplace ministry has been offered several times without drawing sufficient enrollments, the default is to throw up our collective hands over the obtuseness of our students.

We have not considered how we define "ministry" and how what we model in that regard impacts our

students. We have not grappled with what the realities of the marketplace mean for our graduates and what that, in turn, means for our curriculum. The image of "ministry" as "pastor in the pulpit" is strongly engrained, in the larger community, in our students, and, recognized or not, in the faculty and administration of The King's.

Role of the Founder in Attracting Students

A second area where our mental models as faculty are engaged relates to the role of our founder. Dr. Hayford has been a profoundly impactful person on shaping the mental models of ministry for individuals who serve on the administration and faculty of The King's. He is the founder of the institution; it is his ministry ethos that we seek to embody and live out. There is an assumption among the administration and faculty that he has a similarly significant impact for students.

Senior faculty regard Dr. Hayford's ministry philosophy and style as central to the work of The King's. One faculty member specifically asked how many of the alumni came to The King's because of Jack Hayford. Another senior faculty member, in the course of the discussion, stated "Jack Hayford *is* our story."

The alumni interviewed, on the other hand, did not view Dr. Hayford as a primary model for their own ministries.[17] When asked to tell how and why they came to The King's, alumni would narrate their life story, generally prefacing the tale with comments such as, "Well, I was called to ministry at fourteen" or "I was

[17] I first noted this trend in a leadership class I teach in the undergraduate program where I ask people to talk about a leader they admire. Fifteen years ago, I had to explicitly ask them *not* to talk about Dr. Hayford. Today, most people in the room would mention other leaders in even without this restriction. Fifteen years ago, half or more of my class would be made up of people who had attended The Church On The Way. Dr. Hayford resigned as senior pastor of TCOTW in 1999; few students now attending The King's have experienced him in this role. Furthermore, he no longer has a daily radio show in Southern California. Jack Hayford is simply less visible as a ministry model to students coming to The King's today than he was fifteen years ago when The King's was founded.

pursuing a master's in public administration when God interrupted my career path." The specifics of the story of how they came to work on an M.Div. at The King's were framed within the context of a sense of direction from God toward a vocational ministry role. Alumni do reference Dr. Hayford in telling their stories, particularly those alumni who moved to Southern California to complete their degree or who completed the degree from a distance. However, Dr. Hayford's role had more to do with the reason why people *knew about* The King's rather than the reason people chose to attend this specific institution.

This finding is very significant as we face the day when, like every other young institution, we must transition into the second generation of leadership. Dr. Hayford's role in the founding of the institution will always be a part of our story. It may not, however, be a useful part of our future recruitment efforts. If it is the case that students do not come to The King's because of Jack Hayford, then we are in danger of misdirecting our resources when we make him the focus of our recruitment.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial for us to consider further the ramifications of the reasons alumni give for attending The King's. The stated reasons were evenly divided between personal development and vocational development (42% each), with a significant minority completing the M.Div. as part of their chaplaincy certification process (16%). Two interesting dynamics were seen when looking at the interview data concerning motivations. Almost all of the people who gave personal development as a motivation for completing the M.Div. were in Southern California already, and *all* of the people who were at The Church On The Way—where they had experienced Dr. Hayford's leadership and preaching—when they began their degree (including two on pastoral staff) gave this as their reason. Secondly, women (71%) were more likely than men (25%) to give personal development as a motive for pursuing the degree. *All* of the women who gave vocational development as a motive

are currently in vocational ministry roles. This begs the question of whether this is a case of retrospective rationality—with people framing their motive based on the actual outcome—rather than a reflection of their initial ministry focus.

Conclusion

This research represents an ongoing effort to hear our students' stories and understand our impact, as faculty and as an institution, in the shaping of those stories. This experience highlighted some ways in which our tacit assumptions about who we are and what we are doing do not match our students' experiences. The challenge going forward is to listen to the voices of our students and alumni, especially where they are telling us a story that is different than the one we tell ourselves.

Luther Seminary (Terri Elton and Theresa Latini)

The opportunity to participate in the Ecology of Vocation research project came at an opportune time for Luther Seminary. Cognizant of changes occurring within the mainline church, the ELCA in particular, anticipating changes in accreditation standards, and discerning the need for a new curricular design, Luther's faculty, staff, and student body had just engaged in a year of communal listening and conversation. While exploring the challenges facing theological education today, issues around vocational formation, leadership competencies, and contextual learning continually surfaced. Luther Seminary's lead researchers for this project—Terri Martinson Elton, associate professor of children, youth, and family ministry, and Theresa F. Latini, associate professor of congregational and community care leadership—folded these issues into this research project. In short, Elton and Latini sought to learn how Luther M.Div. alumni have been formed as public Christian leaders in various dimensions of the ecology of vocation.

In Fall 2011, forty-seven alumni who were five, six, and seven years out of seminary responded to a fifty-question electronic survey, an adaptation of a survey

developed by Scott Cormode of Fuller Seminary. This survey provided a base record of the kinds of leadership experiences, including but not limited to congregational and parachurch involvement, of Luther M.Div. alumni and the leadership competencies developed in various settings prior to seminary, during seminary, and after seminary. Follow-up phone interviews were conducted with eleven alumni, inviting them to expand on the top three leadership competencies needed in their current ministry position. Data from the survey and interviews was analyzed, noting demographics, themes, and trends. The results were shared with key faculty, staff, and students at Luther Seminary, with the alumni who participated in the research project, and with other participants in the Ecology of Vocation project.

Demographics of Alumni

The basic demographics of the M.Div. alumni participating in the survey, presented in Table A, were not surprising. While Luther's student body has changed slightly in recent years—for example, becoming more ecumenical—this sample remains fairly representative of the current makeup of the M.Div. program. This data also confirmed a central commitment of Luther Seminary—i.e., that it exists in an interdependent relationship with congregations to prepare M.Div. students for ministry in the church. The high percentage of M.Div. alumni who sought ordination (95.7%) and served in a ministry position after graduation (91%) is evidence of this commitment. It also points toward the strong mental model of congregational leadership that shapes Luther's faculty, staff, and students. One noteworthy demographic is that all of those who were single (8 respondents) were women, meaning all of the men were married. As the findings unfolded, this called for more attention around gender differences. While the range of ages between men and women was similar, the men were, as a whole, younger in age.

Table A: Ecology of Vocation – Demographics of Luther Seminary Alumni

Gender	44.7% men	55.3% women
Average age starting seminary	32 years old	Range: 19-54 years old
Grew up in church	97.7%	
Denomination	89% Lutheran (primarily ELCA)	
Ordained	95.7%	
In ministry after graduation	91%	Currently in pastoral/ordained positions – 64%
Current marital status	83% married	17% single

Formation of Leadership Competencies in the Ecology of Vocation

One of the most significant findings from our data analysis had to do with where, within the ecology of vocation, alumni developed particular leadership capacities and competencies.[18] M.Div. alumni reported the top ten leadership capacities and competencies needed in their *current setting*. Nine categories emerged from our analysis of the survey and interview data: personal formation and self-care; working with and developing leaders; communication and listening skills; setting mission and vision and leading change; administration and management; preaching and worship leadership; pastoral care; Christian education; and conflict

[18] It is important to note that we are assuming a slight difference between leadership capacities and leadership competencies. The latter refers to actual skills, while the former refers to internal resources and dispositions—or, the spiritual, emotional, relational well from which competencies emerge. In the surveys and interviews, however, we did not define these explicitly. Likewise, the questions were intentionally left open-ended, letting respondents both define leadership capacities and competencies and articulate them in their own words. While this made coding a bit more difficult, it enabled us to not impose or prescribe any particular leadership categories, but rather to let the respondents use their own voices. Nevertheless, clusters or themes did emerge, and if this survey were to be repeated, it would be possible to use this data for creating such categories.

mediation.[19] While these findings were not surprising, alumni also noted that they developed similar categories of leadership capacities and competencies in ecclesial, educational, and occupational settings *prior to and during seminary*. Those settings included: the congregation in which they grew up and the one involved in when coming to seminary (ecclesial); the congregation they attended during seminary (ecclesial); college and graduate school, including involvement in parachurch ministries at that time (other educational settings); previous work experiences (occupational); and contextual educational experiences while in seminary, i.e., field education, internship, and Clinical Pastoral Education (seminary education). One additional theme surfaced in response to questions about these settings: pastoral identity formation.[20] Hence, in mapping M.Div. alumni leadership roles, capacities, and competencies across the lifespan, it became clear that (1) leadership competencies and capacities are similar across the lifespan, and (2) certain

[19] Note the following expanded definitions of the themes. *Personal formation and self-care*: development of virtues (e.g., patience, humility, integrity, boldness, fortitude); setting boundaries, practicing Sabbath, managing time, maintaining health and well-being; and ongoing practice of the Christian faith and cultivating one's connection to God. *Working with and developing leaders*: motivating teams, facilitating committees, recruiting and training volunteers, supervising staff, and assessing others' gifts and capacities. *Setting mission and vision and leading change*: strategic planning, visioning, creative discernment, understanding overall mission, and implementing change. *Administration and management*: office management and organizational skills; financial knowledge, competence, management, and budget oversight. *Pastoral care*: visitation, responding to and intervening in crises, dealing with grief and loss, caring for the sick, understanding family systems, and being a pastoral presence. *Worship leadership and preaching:* identified simply as preaching and worship leadership. *Christian education*: passing on the faith, teaching confirmation, creating an educational program, and empowering others to teach the faith. *Mediating conflict*: getting along with others, being calm and non-anxious, having difficult conversations yet staying in dialogue, dealing with bullies, negotiation, mediating between persons and groups in conflict.

[20] Pastoral identity formation could be considered a sub-category of personal formation. We have included it here as a new theme, because it was named with such clarity and precision when alumni discussed the significance of their internships and CPE placements.

dimensions of the ecology of vocation were more conducive to the formation of particular leadership competencies and capacities than others, as indicated in Table B below. The following narrative highlights some of these discoveries.

Table B: Ecology of Vocation – Leadership Capacities and Competencies Formed in the Ecology of Vocation

Personal formation – 28%	Communication – 30%	Working w/leaders – 38%	Christian education – 38%	Administration or management – 46%	**Congregation – grew up** *(97.7% grew up in church)*
Administration / management - 22%	Working w/leaders- 26%	Preaching/worship - 30%	Communication/listening - 30%	Christian education - 30%	**Congregation - college** *(70.5% attended)*
Communication/listening - 24%	Mission/vision/leading change - 29%	Personal formation/self-care - 47%	Administration or management 76%	Working w/leaders - 76%	**Previous work experience** *(65% worked before seminary)*
Mission/vision /leading change - 13%	Communication/ listening - 26%	Preaching/worship – 39%	Administration or management 57%	Working w/leaders - 70%	**Congregation – seminary** *(93% attended)*
Pastoral care - 14%	Communication/ listening - 14%	Working w/leaders - 21%	Preaching/worship - 43%	No competencies – 50%	**Contextual education** *(26% participated in contextual education, other than CPE and internship)*
Christian education - 21%	Personal formation - 21%	Pastoral care - 24%	Pastoral identity - 31%	Preaching/worship - 38%	**Internship** *(7.2% participated in internship)*
Working w/leaders - 9%	No competencies -16%	Communication/listening - 31%	Personal formation 41%	Pastoral care - 59%	**CPE** *(92% completed CPE)*

Preaching/ worship – 14%	Pastoral care – 3%	Mediating conflict – 3%				
Mediating conflict - 17%	Personal formation - 13%	Mission/vision/ leading change - 4%				
Pastoral care – 24%	Christian education - 18%	Mediating conflict - 18%	Preaching - 6%			
Pastoral care - 13%	Christian education - 13%	Personal formation - 9%				
Mediating conflict – 14%						
Working with leaders - 17%	Communication /listening - 17%	Mission/vision/ leading change - 10%	Administration or management - 10%			
Pastoral identity - 6%	Mission/vision/ leading change - 3%	Administration or management - 3%	Preaching/ worship - 3%	Mediating conflict – 3%		

Formative Faith Experiences

Almost all (97.7%) M.Div. alumni surveyed grew up within the life of the church, as noted above. While the experiences and denominations varied, the majority (88%) engaged in some leadership role. These roles were centered on traditional congregational engagement, i.e., leading ministry with children and youth, serving on council and committees, and leading worship. While men and women equally noted leading worship and serving on leadership teams, women listed being involved in more leadership roles and were more involved in leading in ministry with children and youth. For example, twelve women taught Sunday School and ten led in the area of youth ministry, compared to only two men teaching Sunday School and five being involved in youth ministry.

During this period, the top three leadership capacities and competencies named were administration and management (46%), Christian education (38%), and leadership (38%). Teaching was by far the highest competency learned in these early church experiences, but was closely followed by discovering the inner workings of a congregation, ministry planning, and working with people. The significance of these early years was noted by one alum, "I think a couple of things that have been helpful and encouraging are opportunities where I was invited to be a leader when I was still a student, whether it was in high school youth group or in college." Clearly leadership formation was taking place in these early experiences, shaping alumni's view of church and ministry, but also impacting their mental models of leadership.

College and First Career Experiences

Church attendance continued to stay high in college, as M.Div. alumni reported that 70.5 percent were active in a congregation, with 74 percent having leadership roles. Again, the leadership roles were fairly traditional. The top leadership capacities and competencies developed were Christian education (30%), leadership (30%), worship leadership/preaching (30%), and communication (26%). Just over one-fourth (27.9%) were involved in some parachurch ministry and just over one-third (37%) were involved in leadership within the college/university itself. One alum noted that he "worked a number of summers at a summer camp during college, those summers and the skills learned there were positive." He goes on to say that by "simply working with kids and teaching to kids and teens [then] they [pastors] can do it with anybody." Another alum noted that teaching competencies and capacities were developed in these kinds of settings rather than at Luther Seminary: "I love to teach and I know how to teach, but I didn't learn any of that at Luther."

Two-thirds (65%) of M.Div. alumni did not come to seminary directly from college. On the one hand,

previous work experiences are a rich asset for developing leadership capacities and competencies. One woman said, "I think coming to seminary in late life, as I did, was good. I worked in a variety of settings, everything from door-to-door sales to being an administrator in a large congregation. I developed skills that served me well." Another woman echoed her sentiments saying, "I think the experience of having a long running marriage and raising children and all that comes and goes with that helps develop a sense of resiliency and boundaries. Life experience is important." On the other hand, this reality poses particular challenges within Luther Seminary. The seminary's culture and implicit curricular assumptions focus on "pipeliners," or students coming directly from college with little or no work experience. This mental model does not invite (or perhaps value) lived experience adequately.[21] One woman named it this way, "I walked in with an elementary [degree] and special ed. experience for ten years, and I still had to take two teaching classes. Not that I didn't learn anything, but I sure wish that I didn't have to take those classes and could have used something else... I am [a] lifelong learner and a lifelong educator, but it is very frustrating to not have had my past experiences taken into account."

Interestingly, administration and management and working with and developing leaders were overwhelmingly the capacities most highly developed in previous work experience settings (both at 76%). These two competencies and capabilities ranked the highest of any, at any time in the lifespan. (The next closest was working with leaders at 70 percent during their time in a congregation while in seminary.) This raises important concerns. For not only do these experiences of second-career students go unrecognized and untapped during their seminary education, but also how (or where)

[21] One key exception to this is the Distributed Learning M.Div. program. This has only been in existence for the past six years, or after the time when these alumni were students.

pipeliners will gain these leadership competencies and capabilities goes unaddressed.

When deciding to attend Luther, 93 percent of M.Div. alumni were active in a congregation, with most having leadership roles. The leadership competencies and capacities were similar to those named before, but one surprising finding was that one third held staff positions. One alum noted, "When I came out of college I was a youth director in California and when I look back on that I see how fortunate I was." And he was not alone. Many of those that held staff positions worked in children or youth ministry, gaining valuable practical ministry experience. With this reality, it was not surprising that leadership (66%) and administration/management (33%) were the highest competencies and capacities.

Experiences During Seminary

Luther M.Div. students participate in several "non-classroom" experiences that inform and shape them as leaders. Congregations continue to play a significant formative role, and 92 percent of alumni reported being active in a congregation during seminary. Interestingly they don't report much difference in the leadership roles they had in these congregations, though they did indicate that they developed more competence in preaching during these congregational experiences. The top leadership competencies and capacities developed were leadership (70%), administration (57%), and preaching and worship (39%).

With the majority of M.Div. students being Lutheran, and intending on being ordained (97.7%), most students were active in a candidacy process. The primary focus of ELCA candidacy is the formation of candidates as spiritual leaders, which fits within the primary mental model of Luther Seminary. As part of this formation, students participate in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), contextual education, and a year-long internship. It is important to note, however, that there is not a shared understanding of how contextual education, internship, and CPE contribute to the formation of Luther students.

As indicated below, the data reflects these institutional tensions.

CPE had the highest participation rate (92%) and was significant for exercising one's pastoral care competencies (59%), for personal formation (41%), and for gaining the capacity for listening (31%). Seventy-two percent of alumni participated in an internship experience. Preaching and worship leadership (38%), pastoral identity formation (31%), and pastoral care (24%) were the top leadership competencies and capabilities developed during this time. One alum who did not have a meaningful contextual education experience said, "Internship helped a little, and in some ways more from some than others. I got sent to a week-long leadership training, which not too many interns have the opportunity to do so. That did more to prepare me for the tasks of leading than any other class I took in seminary." As this alum notes, internship has operated more from the mental model of pastor as shepherd and/or chaplain than pastor as public Christian leader. Here it's important to note that internship supervisors seem to be the primary drivers of this model.

Contextual education (26%) had the lowest participation rate among alum, and their responses to this experience varied greatly. It was important for some, especially if it was accompanied by actually leading. One alum, involved in community organizing during his contextual education experience, recognized how important that experience had been for him. "Community and labor organizing shaped me (in addition, to being a youth director). But the organizing was most helpful because I was forced out of my comfort zone regularly. Having doors slammed in your face is 'real' conflict, not passive aggressive. Leaders get in a rut—community organizing sees it very differently." Overall, the leadership competencies and capabilities developed in contextual education were low, though preaching and worship leadership (43%) was rated similar to internship.

Several alumni noted that their overall time at seminary challenged their mental models of ministry and leadership. One woman alum said, "I went to an Assemblies of God church. This was a different experience...Not all grew up Lutheran…I always thought there was only one way to worship, and that that was what I saw. There are people who worship differently, and some people I would talk to at Luther or in our congregations thought there was only one way to worship. I was thinking to myself, what about this other person who doesn't use instruments, or a choir, or whatever. What about the people who don't have a clue about how you worship. Would they know what you were doing without getting lost…That made me think if my own worship service would be inclusive enough to help others fit into what is happening." Another alum put it this way, "When I was fifteen, I announced to my whole church that I was going to be a pastor [and had a particular idea of what that meant]. And now, everything has changed and we are having conversations about what it means to be a missional church. It's not me as pastor doing everything, it me as pastor empowering people to see their giftedness and use it."

Current Ministry

While most M.Div. alumni are ordained (95.7%) and have received a call to ministry within the first year of graduation (86.4%), we were surprised to discover that only two-thirds (64%) are currently serving in pastoral positions.[22] This raises questions about the need to develop a wider set of mental modes for ministry leadership at Luther Seminary. Likewise, while the top leadership capacities and competencies that alumni identified as needed in their current roles points toward the enduring mental model of pastoral leadership,

[22] Eleven alumni that answered this question were not serving in a pastoral role. Of those eleven, four were in non-ministry jobs, two were in graduate school, two were on leave, two were in other ministry leadership positions, and one was in mission work.

it points toward the need to expand what is meant by pastoral. Table C shows the percentage of alumni who referred to leadership capacities and competencies that fall into each of the nine identified categories. It also shows the percentage of alumni who identified these categories as the top three capacities and competencies needed in their current ministry positions. Because Luther has the opportunity to rethink its M.Div. curriculum, listening to these alumni and understanding their current leadership experiences was critical, and hence, why this area became the focus of our phone interviews.

Table C: Ecology of Vocation – Top Leadership Capacities and Competencies Needed in Current Ministry

Leadership Categories	Respondents identifying this category in their top ten (10) leadership competencies	Respondents identifying this category in their top three (3) leadership competencies
Personal formation, self-care	65%	35%
Working with and developing leaders	58%	13%
Administration and management	48%	23%
Preaching and worship leadership	42%	26%
Communication and listening skills	42%	19%
Pastoral care	42%	16%
Setting mission, vision, leading change	39%	16%
Mediating conflict	35%	19%
Christian education	32%	13%

Looking at the leadership capacities and competencies, note that personal formation and self-care (65%) was consistently the most highly identified category. This reality carried through in the interviews. For example, one alum discussed at length the importance of balance, wellness, navigating unhealthy systemic dynamics in congregations, and discerning when power dynamics are influencing people's reactions to church leaders. She shared a story. "It's a lesson I learned almost too late. It turned out that the chair of the call committee turned out to be—and I have a professional assessment on this—one with a toxic personality. She has a major personality issue going on. With a better sense of boundaries and self-care, I would not have been sucked into her drama. This is not me, and it was her, and I needed to create space for me." Others shared the struggle of developing confidence. One directly linked his work as a church planter with his need for ongoing practice of discipleship. He shared, "The most necessary leadership competency for me is living a life of faith, being a disciple first, having a faith life and nurturing that. I think as a church planter people do not know what it is to be a disciple. Doing the work of ministry and having a faith life or personal relationship is number one. I can talk the talk without really walking the walk."

When counting the top three responses, certain categories move toward the top (following personal formation and self-care): preaching and worship leadership; administration and management; communication and listening skills; and, mediating conflict. One alum summed it up well: "They throw you out there and say, 'Go, be pastor.' They don't tell you what to do." And he goes on to say, "Some of what I feel like I have needed is some of that practical leadership stuff. So much was focused on theology and Bible, which is all good stuff. But, it doesn't help you when there is a staff meeting or when the council is fighting about the budget." This tension, between providing M.Div.'s with a solid biblical and theological foundation and empowering them to develop a wide range of needed leadership

capacities and competencies, is not only a theme in this research, but also it is present within competing mental models held by Luther's faculty, students, and alumni more broadly.

The Findings

Some of the findings we expected. For instance, we were not surprised that pastoral care was the highest identified set of leadership competencies and capacities developed during CPE (followed by personal formation and self-care). Similarly, the development of preaching and worship leadership skills during students' year-long internships is expected in our curriculum (and coincides with previous research). It was also not surprising to see the majority of leadership capacities and competencies being nurtured in the congregation in which they grew up. Not only does this data confirm our expectations, but it also fits within the mental model within which many faculty and students operate.

This data, however, did enable us to identify where and to what degree these capacities and competencies were nurtured over the lifespan. For example, 32% of interviewees identified Christian education as a leadership competency needed in their current setting. The highest percentage of alumni developed this competency in the congregation where they grew up (38%) and in college (30%). After this, the development of Christian education competencies drops off, with the exception of 21% of alumni developing this during their internships. This reality alone is startling, but in addition, there is a significant disparity between men's and women's development of this competency. Sixty percent of women and 12% of men developed Christian education competencies in the congregations in which they grew up. This raises questions about the way vocational formation is gendered, about the differing educational needs of men and women during their seminary careers, and calls into question the difference between operative mental models of ministry for men and women.

Some findings surprised us. Administration and management and working with and developing leaders were overwhelmingly the capacities most highly developed in previous work experiences, in the congregation where one grew up, and in the congregation of call. As noted before, for pipeliners, this leaves a significant gap in their vocational formation, since these were identified as the second- and third-highest sets of leadership capacities and competencies needed in their current ministry positions. But it also invites the seminary to be in dialogue with second-career students around these competencies and capacities. One second-career alum, in talking about the need for listening, said, "There is a whole different kind of listening needed in congregational life. In the corporate world you know who is in charge and who makes decisions. In a congregation you are leading, but they often are the ones who make the decisions—at least I think so."

Another somewhat surprising finding was that 50 percent of interviewees who answered the question about contextual education indicated that they learned nothing positive and failed to develop leadership competencies during their contextual education placement; 16% said the same about CPE. One alum simply said, "My contextual education was meaningless. They wouldn't let me do anything…They were great at talking to me if I had questions and they would use me to lead small groups. [But] they didn't let me preach or step into the pastoral role as much as I would like."[23] Another noted, "It (congregational leadership) is one of the weak points in seminary curriculum—they do not teach the nuts and bolts of congregational leadership." Her suggestion? "Give contextual ed[ucation] a purpose—how to lead and move a congregation." Concerning CPE, one interviewee identified her concerns as having to do with a lack of

[23] By way of historical context, in terms of the former, the contextual education office and program were in the midst of significant transition during the time period in which these interviewees were students at Luther Seminary.

theological integration. She stated, "The overall experience [of CPE] in my opinion was negative because there were people in my group who seemed to always focus on the negative side of life. I couldn't see the gospel in their speech." Yet, CPE is highest for pipeliners (41%) and second-highest for second-career students in developing leadership capacities and competencies related to personal formation and self-care.

Going forward: tending the ecology of vocation at Luther Seminary

As part of the interview process, we asked alumni how, if at all, Luther Seminary contributed to the formation of the top three leadership capacities and competencies that they need in their current ministry context. They most frequently identified internship, followed by CPE, pastoral care classes, congregational mission and leadership classes, Bible classes, preaching classes, and spiritual direction groups. Though neither the survey nor interview asked about seminary courses, alumni repeatedly teased out the importance of such courses, especially those most relevant to their contextual education and congregational experiences. One alum said, "I think Luther is doing a good job for preparing pastors for what the church should/could be, but the congregations want to be the church that was. What is the church that will be viable for the future and how can we change it so pastors are prepared for it?"

We also asked them how, if at all, Luther Seminary could have better helped them to develop these particular leadership capacities and competencies. Five themes emerged in their responses to this question:

(1) place greater emphasis on the practice of ministry, with more practical courses and overall attention to the development of concrete ministry skills;

(2) place greater emphasis on formation (e.g., developing confidence, managing time, living in greater balance, learning boundaries, and nurturing their own life of faith);

(3) teach students how to deal with conflict;

(4) honestly explore the multiple challenges of ministry in and out of classroom settings; and

(5) accept the limitations of a seminary education.

In regard to (1), we have recommended that, in the current curricular review, Luther Seminary consider the importance of addressing students' needs to develop capacities and competencies in administration and management. The issue of interdisciplinarity is critical here as elsewhere in seminary education. That is, students need support in integrating ideas and practices from business into a theological framework and within a ministry setting. One interviewee put it this way: "I'm trying to replicate what I've learned in the software world…being an agile leader. This might look like anarchy, but it's really a focus on values." This second-career alum then went on to explain how he is translating to the church world administrative and managerial skills that he practiced in the business world. In doing so, he didn't simply translate; rather, he placed these competencies in a larger theological framework, conceiving of his leadership as a kind of kenosis. Another alum referred to a similar kind of dynamic. As mentioned earlier, she developed the capacity to listen in her first career before coming to seminary. But as pastor, she had to learn to critically adapt her skills to the congregational context.

In regard to (2), "living one's calling," or vocational formation, is one of four emphases in Luther's current curricular structure. It is widely recognized among many administrators, faculty, and students that Luther needs to address how and in what ways the curriculum can support formation for ministry for M.Div. (as well as other masters' level) students. We have recommended a careful consideration of the importance of Clinical Pastoral Education, one of multiple non-credit requirements that may be modified in our curricular revision. And embedded in this tension is a collision of mental models. One mental model views the congregation as not only the primary catalyst for formation *before seminary*, but the primary catalyst period.

Yet at least four of the eleven alumni interviewed mentioned a particular spiritual discipline group led by a faculty that was formative in their time at Luther. And this formation is not just about the leaders themselves, it is also about those they serve. One alum said it this way, "My setting needs spiritual direction of a congregation and small group, not one-on-one. I am trying to help people learn to pray. So, for example, we have evening events during Lent where I introduce people to various prayer styles—like I used praying in color. It was an emotional thing …[I] gave people new ideas about prayer and spiritual practices."

Theme (4) is related to vocational formation as well. During the interviews, alumni expressed a desire for more opportunities to discuss honestly and openly challenges in ministry, particularly those challenges that they did not anticipate, such as ageism and sexism. One pipeliner alum said, "I was surprised to find that at the congregation, I was the first woman, the first single person, and the first person under age thirty in sixty years. I left Luther Seminary thinking that these were issues from the past. It never dawned on me that I was single and that would be suspect. I almost dropped out of the call process because of this." The pedagogical task force in the curricular review process is discussing how these issues might be addressed throughout the ecology of vocation.

Theme (3) raises this question: how can Luther Seminary prepare students to constructively encounter the conflict that exists in and among congregations, denominations, and the larger culture? Respondents suggested that this might involve courses in conflict mediation, mentoring in contextual education and internship, and public modeling among faculty and administrators. In regard to the latter, two out of eleven interviewees referred to long-standing, underlying tensions among faculty. A pipeliner female alum reported, "There were times when faculty talked about one another in a veiled manner in classes. I learned to listen to [what wasn't being said]. This led me to develop

the skill of listening. [But] I came out of seminary not knowing how to disagree with someone publicly in a way that could be constructive." A second-career, male alum passionately shared: "If we can't [have respectful dialogue] at the seminary, then we can't do it in the open in the church." He then went on to share that he didn't experience a safe learning place in a particular course focused on a Lutheran theology because he didn't experience openness to a variety of theological perspectives.

In regard to (5), alumni repeatedly expressed appreciation for what they learned through M.Div. education at Luther Seminary. They noted the importance of their involvement in congregations as well as the formative significance of previous work experiences. Yet none of this fully prepared them for all the challenges and opportunities of pastoral ministry. One alum drove home this point: "My experience is that there is nothing that prepares you for the reality of parish life fully until you are in it. Part of this is unavoidable because every context is so different. Even the ins and outs of church government are different, and then when you throw in history, systems, and personalities…I'm not sure there is something that can ever fully prepare someone for that."

In conclusion, all of this poses critical issues that will need to be taken up by particular task forces and the faculty as a whole as Luther Seminary continues its curricular review and program redesign over the next two years. Some of these issues are meta-theoretical concerns about theological education in the twenty-first century; some function at the level of program/curricular design; and others have to do with distribution of courses and individual course design. Some of the meta-theoretical issues include the *telos* of and theological rationale for Luther's M.Div. program: is it formation? How is formation understood theologically in a Lutheran school that is also ecumenical? What understandings of God's work in congregations, students, and culture must shape our curriculum as a whole? What impact, if any, does the changing population have on mental models that have

been longstanding? Questions about curricular design include how to more deeply integrate classroom learning with contextual education, internship, CPE, previous work, and congregational experiences. How can a program attend to the lived, embodied wisdom of students, while also taking into account the need for significant differences in their leadership formation? Does attention need to be given to the experience of second-career students? Do gender differences need to be addressed? In terms of actual course distribution, we are considering how (and to what degree) particular courses can shape competencies in educational leadership, conflict mediation, and administration.

As a particular exercise at a particular time in the life of a seminary, this research has been helpful; helpful as an exercise in listening, as a feedback loop around leadership competencies and capacities in our changing church landscape, and helpful in beginning to tease out the various mental models that coexist at Luther Seminary. For all of those reasons, this research has been worthwhile. Yet as Luther lives into its new future, it is the hope of these researchers that these findings do not mark the end of a project, but become part of a new curiosity and ongoing learning.

Methodist Theological School of Ohio (MTSO)
(Lisa Withrow)

How does the ecology of vocation form a minister's mental models about the church and the ministry? Scott Cormode posed this question as the basis of his study at Fuller and the subsequent study conducted at Methodist Theological School in Ohio (MTSO) among other seminaries. To ascertain formative faith influences on MTSO alumni (M.Div. degrees, serving in six denominations) throughout their lives, this survey drew response from fifty-four persons, most of whom were targeted as graduates from 2000-2010, and also a random sample of graduates who earned their degrees prior to this timeframe. Additional interviews (fourteen) followed the survey to deepen the data with alumni illustrations

about formative experiences leading to their ministerial calls and ongoing formative events affecting their ministries today. Analysis of the gathered information is based on assessment rubrics defined by Cormode's chart, in the method established for faculty at MTSO during self-study in 2007-2008.

1. Formative Faith Experiences

The vast majority of the survey participants grew up in the church (85%), but only half remained in the same denomination of their childhood church. Follow-up interviews with fourteen alumni who had grown up in the church indicated that major influences on faith formation included parental or extended family participation, clergy and lay pastoral leadership, youth group participation, recognition of interviewees' leadership abilities, and opportunities to use such leadership skills. In eight cases, females indicated that they might not have pursued professional ministry as a vocation without lay and clergy prompting.

Specific influences on faith formation based on church life itself varied significantly in interviews. The main foci for pre-college formation named by alumni included participation in youth group, bible study, and Sunday School. Rev. F. illustrates by telling her story: She attended a Presbyterian church as teenager, where she was active in youth group activities. She claims that the primary influence in her life at that time was the youth minister, who taught "theological ways of thinking." The group itself also became her circle of friends at school and they "hung out together at other times" too. In addition, using leadership skills to create new worship experiences mattered to the majority of the interviewees, although several indicated that worship had little meaning for them at all. For Rev. H. (United Methodist), who grew up in the Roman Catholic Church, worship was the most important element of her faith formation. She claims that she "loved being in the church, wanting to pray," and found the rituals and practices to be highly meaningful for her faith journey. She started playing the

organ as a teen, and contributed significantly to the musical life of the Mass and funerals.

Application to theological school occurred after college and in most cases, after first—sometimes even second—career work. Two interviewees knew that they were called to some form of ministry in their teen years, having been greatly influenced by church leaders. Other interviewees understood their call internally later in life, while others were invited to consider theological school by laity or peers (mostly females in the latter case). The most important factor in pursuing the call to theological school was encouragement by pastoral leadership, followed by lay encouragement. Family support was named next, followed by college professors or advisors.

Hopes for theological school included desire for an affirmation of call through discernment process, gaining skill sets for ministry, and delving into academics as its own joyful practice. One interviewee desired to enter school as an attempt to sort out the gaps between what the church calls people to do and the church's own praxis. Rev. B. says it this way: "I applied to seminary to have a place to wrestle with the fissure I experienced between my work in the domestic violence and sexual assault prevention movement and the faith 'resources' the churches claimed to provide my clients. I was deeply angry and worked on that anger throughout seminary." Rev. B. stated clearly in the interview that she wanted to reconcile the church's claims about itself and its practice.

2. College and First Career Experiences

Humanities, religion/theology, and the helping professions constitute the vast majority of studies in college or university embraced by participants. The next highest category includes the sciences, followed by majors and minors in several other professional degrees.

Attractive components of faith-based and/or musical organizations in the college or university setting repeatedly surfaced, demonstrating a relationship orientation that was supportive and gave the interviewee the chance to use leadership skills. Pastor J. lifts her own

home church youth pastor as her major influence throughout college; this youth pastor encouraged Pastor J. to continue faith-based conversations as well as develop leadership in a College Ministry Team (CMT) that initiated youth ministry events for local churches. This kind of response to college-age formation reinforces findings from interviews that similarly identify "support and developing leadership roles" in participants' early years in the church as crucial for pursuing a ministerial vocation, even if they pursued other careers first. At the same time, a little over one-third of the participants had little or no activity in faith-based organizations in college/university. For these participants, influencers were more personalized or came later. For example, Rev. A. tells his story: "I wouldn't describe my college church experience part of my faith journey…I joined a fraternity while in college and I think that experience and people in leadership of the chapter were a greater influence. Our chapter advisor was a local attorney who, during that time, was also elected to the state legislature and later to the United States Congress. He was a very strong ethical influence on all of us and remains a friend to this day. He was a man of faith, but he didn't 'preach' to us—he never required us to go to church, although many in the chapter did. He just modeled his faith in his life and in his call to service. He was a father figure and role model for me in many ways."

Second- or third-career participants had varied careers prior to theological school. Thirty-one percent of survey participants were already involved in some form of ministry or helping profession prior to enrolling in theological education.

3. Congregation of Call

Descriptors for congregations that supported interviewees' calls indicate that most were highly supportive communities that encouraged leadership in the interviewee. One response indicated that the congregation was multicultural; all the rest were primarily white, though in different economic echelons and

geographic locations, including white churches in neighborhoods populated primarily by people of color. Two participants named their churches as progressive and one as theologically diverse.

Congregational input for those thinking about theological school was generally described in positive terms. However, five interviewees identified no real discernment process present in their congregation as they considered their call. Formal procedures required for those pursuing ordination candidacies were identified as supportive in five cases. Those in leadership positions cited working with pastors or lay leaders in the church before entering theological school. Rev. A. is a good example. He "grew up in faith" in a mid-sized congregation (150 average worship attendance, diverse ages and theological viewpoints, mostly Caucasian), where he claims that the formative parts of his faith development occurred through bible study, youth leadership, and teaching adult Sunday School. He "served in just about every capacity that one can serve as a lay person at one time or another. That is to say, I was a known quantity to them and they helped shape me into a person who was able to discern a call into ministry. When I approached the pastor at the church, a new pastor, about beginning the ministry inquiry process, it was a formality really, because the SPRC Chair and members were totally in support, as were the lay leader and the former pastor."

4. Experiences of Theological School

The data indicate that the largest number of students in the sample entered theological school during the ages of 36-40 and all of these students were female. Most males entered in their twenties immediately after college, with another group entering in their forties.

The survey included an inquiry about CPE. The majority of participants in the survey was United Methodist and not required to take CPE by denominational standards. Two interviewees found their professional call through CPE and continued to work in

chaplaincy as a result. Rev. S. valued CPE: "I learned that I have a particular gift for crisis work and for work with staff who work in crisis, and that my call is outside the institutional church." The remaining interviewees were grateful to learn pastoral care skills, particularly in times of crisis and especially at times of patients' deaths.

Field experience proved important to interviewees, both in terms of ministry setting and in the classroom. In the ministry setting, interviewees learned about their gifts for ministry, time management, integration of academic work with practice of ministry, and leadership. In the classroom, interviewees found support, accountability for self-care, theological reflection time, and discernment about the future. Rev. F. said that her Field Education instructor made her want to be a Field Education instructor too. Rev. T. indicated that his field placement integrated his degree work with his call, helping him realize how well-prepared in Christian education he was, and gifted in pastoral care as well.

With one exception, interviewees were pursuing or considering pursuing the ordination track during theological training, so were also spending time meeting credentialing requirements. United Methodist credentialing bodies received mixed reviews in terms of helpfulness; the process seemed cumbersome for most interviewees and the theological stance requirements were deemed rigid. United Church of Christ interviewees also gave mixed reviews, with the majority finding the credentialing process reasonable. The vast majority of interviewees appreciated having assigned mentors when they were available.

More than half of the interviewees indicated that, as commuters, they had limited or no connection to student life at MTSO. Student relationships were cited as very important for those who were not commuters or who were commuters with flexible schedules. These informal relationships provided support, discernment help, peer affinity groups and/or conversations, and provided an alternative forum for sharing practical skills for ministry. Rev. T. tells how student life afforded him the

opportunity, for the first time in his life, to develop deep personal friendships with people in similar circumstances and who could discuss theological issues with him. Further, connection with faculty and discussions in the classroom were equally important to him. Rev. C. stated that student life at seminary made the experience "the most blessed three years of my life."

5. Ministries Post-Graduation

Data about ordination and employment yield interesting results in terms of gender differentials. Ordination demographics indicate that slightly less than three-fourths of the females surveyed are ordained, and less than half of the ordained are serving in childhood denominations. Pastor J. indicated that she chose not to pursue ordination, while valuing her M.Div. degree. Two others are in the ordination process. All males are ordained and the majority is serving in childhood denominations.

Over three-quarters of the participants (only one male), were employed immediately after graduation or were employed before graduation in a ministry setting. Two females have not been employed fulltime in ministry at this point despite efforts to find work: one in a ministerial call system and one pursuing music ministry. The majority of males are pastors, with one campus minister in the mix. Less than three-quarters of the females are pastors, while the roles of youth minister, church musician, and chaplaincy are majority female.

Vocational development post-graduation included interviewees citing a significant maturing process both personally and in their understandings of leadership roles in church and community ministry. Rev. B., an urban community minister, describes how her concept of ministry has developed since seminary: "Ministry is much more difficult. I often joke that I have no job description other than to tell the truth. I do a thousand new things before breakfast and make everything up as I go…Ministry is so much more about trust, truth, and finding the right resources than anything. Everything is

theology on the fly and life balance." Rev. B2 says, "Ministry is the hardest job you will ever love."

Personal maturation descriptions included balancing time and self-expectations, learning new skill sets, finding resources, and doing ministry with people rather than to or for them. Professional maturation included learning from experience, reading expectations that are unstated, understanding conflict and politics in the church, and resourcing ministry in creative ways. Some of this maturation process resulted from life-transitions, including divorce, death of a loved one, job loss due to church financial hardship, ill health, conflict with authorities, significant geographical moves, or shift in call. Rev. B2 claims that learning is a balance between the personal and the various roles in the church. She describes having seventy-five "bosses" with varying expectations about the future; therefore, surprises and demands are the elements of the balancing act.

Initial Conclusions

To explore conclusions from this study, we return to the question, "How does the ecology of vocation form a minister's mental models about the church and the ministry?"

Ecology of Vocation includes several phases of action-reflection, as shown by this study. The significance of participation in faith community or support community early in life or as late as college is the primary starting-point for most participants in the survey and interviews. Formative experiences were varied, though the majority of participants had some church background, so there is implicit connection to church as formational space. More relied on personal relationships with church leaders for discernment. Discernment continued through seminary, shaped by peers and professors into possibilities for praxis. Ecology of vocation continued informally after interviewees graduated from MTSO. Several persons indicated that they matured regarding human relationships and expectations in their ministries. Others gained skill sets

through practice and by tapping resource programs or people who could help them. Still others look forward to continuing education and life-long learning with MTSO and other organizations.

One important answer to the question posed by Cormode is the importance of relationships influencing people in discernment. Mental models develop through observation and leadership practices in church, college, seminary, and in professional settings. No mental model is identical with another. Much like the development of personal character, the development of mental models issues from vocational influencers based on praxis and the wisdom of mentors. Action-reflection throughout maturation in ministry creates a cumulative, dynamic mental model, which in turn influences others who may pursue ministry.

Mapping the ecologies from first call through professional ministry helps MTSO determine our own mental models for education. Faculty and staff assumptions about ministry can shape the possibilities for students in ways that we may not understand fully. This study challenges us to describe our own explicit and implicit curricula in the midst of the full ecology of vocation. Such work begins in the description below, outlining faculty response to this study.

Ecology of Vocation Table: MTSO

	Mapping the Ecology: Goals	Mapping the Ecology: Methods	Using the Ecology to Prepare Seminarians	Nurturing the Ecology of Vocation
1. Formative Faith Experiences	Demographics in chart below. Experiences in churches and especially campus ministries or college/university mentoring – mission trips and conversations.	Application to seminary includes call statement and recommendations, informal exploratory conversations with MTSO personnel. Certification in pastoral mentoring program is optional and perhaps not concurrent.	Educated Spirit introductory course for theological education. 20% student body – persons of color. Lower percentage in M.Div. degree Diversity addressed in most courses.	Connect with ministry settings through CPE and FE. Cross cultural immersions. Partnerships with urban churches working with poor.

2. College and First Career Experiences	Parachurch organizations, campus ministries, occasional campus-connected church fostered most students.	Exploration of seminary possibilities with campus chaplains. Continue seeking mentoring in call process.	Call stories encouraged in intro course. Affinity groups formed.	Partnerships with campus ministries and departments of religion.
3. Congregation of Call	Congregations have few if any mentoring programs. Participate in formal procedures for candidacy when asked. Congregations supported calls and provided pastoral mentoring in many cases.	Building partnerships with training congregations. Congregational visitation by various school instructors.	Mission trips in some cases. Majority congregations foster leadership roles and allow participation in worship creation.	Connecting with congregations through events and visits. Special invitations to congregations for seminary events.
4. Experiences during Seminary **Field Education**	Ministry placements often in new contexts for student. FE raises questions about ability and authority. Also about competency and willingness to deal with ongoing conflict. Issues of resilience. Understanding of staff dynamics.	Site visits Ongoing theological reflection Support and challenge in small groups Case studies Supervisory feedback (committees and supervisor in field)	Dialogue with previous conceptions of ministry. Practical Theological Method (action-reflection) Leadership and conflict courses/family systems work. Psychological Counseling as needed	Curriculum revision 2010, including adding new degree in practical theology New courses designed yearly for non-parish ministry including practicum/FE component
Relationship with Credential Bodies	Student-initiated, not necessarily concurrent with seminary Expectations include good articulation of call story, sense of ministerial vocation, theological stance, relational competency, and biblical competency	Denominational leadership in conversation with seminary on a yearly basis, minimum. Faculty connects with denominational leadership regularly. A number of ordained faculty aid students in writing process for judicatory requirements.	Feedback opportunities tell us that expectations include good communication skills, including preaching (for churches), good pastoral skills, ability to manage conflict, resilience and growing churches.	Guidebook for Credentialing Bodies -with articles by pastors, judicators, and seminary professors (including references to credentialing bodies' own source books) Publish as special issue of the *Journal of Religious Leadership* and as on the Web
CPE	Traditional action-reflection models in hospitals, prisons, hospice care	CPE Day occurs every year on campus with representatives from all area accredited CPE	Denominational expectations outlined for students regarding CPE – students also required to	Keep up with denominational changes

		programs	check with credentialing bodies	
Student Life	Mostly informal Director of Student Services sponsors events	Student feedback ongoing through informal channels and exit interviews. Occasional surveys.	Working on anti-racism training Developing new student groups based on academic specializations and resulting social action.	Foster student participation in creation of knowledge for our time. Social network use.
5. Ministry Tracking the Life course	In process of new survey for summer	Good data base in Alum office – staff person dedicated to this work.	Survey regarding education feedback in process for summer.	Online communities in process through life-long learning initiative
Five Years Out	Survey will cover formation and development of ministerial life.	a. Goal: interview each graduate from the Class of 2002 b. Focus Groups	Seminary developing life-long learning goal and process this year. Two pilots complete.	Annual evaluation of life-long learning pilots in play.
Graduating Students	Graduates wonder about positions, appointments, call and worry about debt. Some wish to create their own jobs.	ATS Graduating Student Survey (focuses on education but not on formation) – can enhance Exit interviews in play.	Create a bookend to orientation that is a day-long event preparing students to leave the school.	Match with Mentors who live in their new locale – often the church does this work.

Demographic Table: MTSO

Gender	Female: 35		Male: 19	
Age Entering Theological School	21-25: 12	26-30: 5	31-35: 1	36-40: 14
	41-45: 9	46-50: 10	51- 55: 3	
Denomination	UMC : 33	UCC: 11	UM/UCC: 1	Disciples: 2
	ELCA: 2	PCUSA: 3	UU: 2	
Ordained	Yes or on track: 46		No: 8, All persons not ordained are female	
Churched	Yes: 46		No: 8, 6 females and 2 males	
Ministry Position	Yes: 51		No: 3, All persons not in ministry roles are female.	
Marital Status	Married/Partnered: 41		Single: 13, All single persons are female.	

Part Three - How Mapping Helps a School: MTSO

1. Celebrated Findings

Life-long learning seems to be a priority for many professional ministers in this study. Theological school requirements initially may have been simply goals to

accomplish on the way toward credentialing, but participants in this study found that school itself became a crucial aspect of formation and ongoing desire to evolve as person and as minister. To that end, MTSO has been developing innovative ways to invite cohorts of persons together for entrepreneurial learning. Data and narratives here indicate that we are moving along a path that will address vocational formation for ministers more effectively.

Informal formational work occurs all the time at MTSO. Interviewees and survey participants indicated that personal support and mentoring relationships were the most important aspects of their formation up to and including theological school. Our advising procedures, one-on-one mid-program review between faculty advisor and student, and development of student support structures continue to strengthen this work in the areas of formation. We notice that increasing numbers of students are drawn to faculty who are addressing social justice issues more publicly than ever; these students wish to explore non parish-based ministry in many cases.

2. Suggestions or Critiques

One lesson from this research is that life-long learning can be provided in a much more interesting and in-depth way than lectures at the seminary. A whole network of learners can connect with faculty in new ways with new technologies to continue the educational and spiritual formation, begun early in the local church and subsequently through college/university and theological school. MTSO is developing a new model for life-long learning at present. The ecology of vocation includes retaining relationships post-graduation, and making explicit the conversation about mental models graduates and faculty have for ministerial work.

It is additionally clear that we need to pay more attention to women's work and family loads than we do at this point. Women in general carry heavier loads than men when attending theological school, despite some men also working full time. Even single women are

usually in some caring ministry that takes much time while they attend school and work another job; fewer single men claim the same level of workload.

3. Correcting Misinformation/Interrupting Assumptions

Despite emphasis on the role of churches providing formational experiences and support prior to persons answering calls to ministry, there seems to be a greater emphasis on college or university campus ministry as primarily influential. Denominations are cutting funding to campus ministries while calling for "younger generations" to follow calls to parish work. Campus ministries seem peripheral to denominations, but we see here that they are crucial for young people (and in many cases, second-career persons who do not forget their campus experience) furthering their own paths into ministry.

Formational focus has changed from those who entered seminary in the 1970s (right out of college) and those who have enrolled recently (right out of college). The significance of local church influence has waned for younger generations; some of their faith experiences occurred through campus ministry or on their own rather than in the church setting. Seminary is a place where some students are doing their first formative work in terms of faith. With this phenomenon in mind, faculty are encouraged to be more intentional about the work of formation and the outcomes: what mental models do we encourage, what do we discourage, and what is our motivation? How much of our own vocations are set in certain beliefs and practices and why? How much influence do our students have on our own mental models of education and ministry? These questions have been on the table since MTSO's last self-study, but we have not pursued them as deeply as could be helpful.

4. Reception with the Faculty

Several faculty members, an admissions officer, and a retired bishop-in-residence responded to the invitation to look at the study results. The Dean has the results in his

hands as well. They added their observations to the study about students in classes. First, faculty members noticed that more students had less certainty about their calls to ministry in the last five years compared to earlier student bodies. One faculty person indicated that through taking classes and discussing the call with peers and faculty members, students often chose the M.Div. degree several courses into their studies. It seems as if increasing numbers of students choose to attend seminary *to be formed* spiritually and in terms of leadership. If that is the case, then educational and vocational ecology become even more important factors of the seminary discussion regarding mental models.

All persons in the conversation noted that those who did not find jobs right away after theological school were women, with one exception. They also discovered that all the single people in the study were female. Finally, they wondered if particular life-stressors were gender-specific. Acknowledgment of shifting gender roles and public cultural models contributed to the conversation regarding women in ministry.

One faculty person noted that, based on her own observations, students "pushed to come to seminary by a church" tended to be the weaker students, while students coming of their own exploratory volition tended to fare better in academic studies. The bishop-in-residence added that theological schools needed to spend more time with college and university chaplaincies. Her book about thirteen female bishops indicated that ten found their calls to ministry through such chaplaincies.

Additional topics the faculty would like to entertain:

- Whether more women than men fill out surveys because women have been marketed TO via survey since they were young girls, especially in areas of beauty and self-image.
- Further exploration of the differences in formation for graduates from the 1970s and 1980s versus the 2010s and beyond—pre-/during/post-theological school.

- Why no men were single in the survey group and what proportion of men in ministry is single as compared to women.
- How social media contributes to life-long learning and ministerial support.
- How mission trips inform vocational choices and further, how cross-cultural programs in theological schools, like many mission trips, seem to be formative or transformative, perhaps changing or enhancing vocational choices.
- What mental models faculty carry about theological education in seminary versus study of religions in a graduate school.

5. Final Thoughts

This Ecology of Vocation study has revealed that we have further work to do in terms of understanding the changing context of ministry and from whence students of ministry come. Our mental models (connections between intuition, perception, action, and consequence) have already led MTSO to curricular self-assessment on an ongoing basis with formal rubrics and regular discussions about the correlations among academics, contexts for ministry, and effective leadership. What we continue to work on is life-long learning through connections between faculty and the outside world, as well as among various publics connecting with MTSO, for the purpose of contributing to public theologies. So, for MTSO, Ecology of Vocation is striving to move beyond privatized learning to public forums and public knowledge creation. We are living into our second year of significant curricular revision, new programs for student and faculty enrichment, and are developing a new life-long learning model that we have not seen in other theological schools to date. Our technological updates are ahead of the curve at the moment, so we have the tools to expand our understandings of vocational formation far beyond traditional methods; we simply need to learn how to do so effectively and fully as a faculty. Another alumni

survey is in the works to aid us in our endeavor and to keep the discussion alive.

Conclusion

Each of the schools in this project focused on the Ecology of Vocation. And each of the schools reinvented the process for themselves. It seems wise to make a few concluding remarks about what we can learn by looking at the schools as a unit.

1. Reinventing the Process

Each school interpreted the project in light of its own agendas. For Harvard, this project was influenced by their accreditation self-study process. For King's, this project was part of a larger project studying the sense of call. For Luther, this project was a first step toward re-accreditation and curriculum redesign. And, for MTSO, this project was interpreted using the self-assessment procedures established during the 2007-2008 self study.

It is not surprising to organizational scholars that each school reinvented the process. Cohen & March taught us a generation ago about what became known as "garbage can theory."[24] Their idea explains many of the debates in academia that would not otherwise make sense. They argue that we should see each person as "a solution in search of a problem." Each person carries with them a series of agendas that matter greatly to them. And each person is constantly looking for opportunities to interpret situations in light of those agendas. For example, the debates within theological faculty often get carried out along disciplinary lines. A New Testament scholar sees an issue being about the interpretation of a particular text. Meanwhile, an ethicist might see the same

[24] Michael Cohen, James March and Johan Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice," *Administrative Science Quarterly* (March 1972): 1-25. Within higher education, Cohen and March found, any decision point acts "as a garbage can into which various problems and solutions are dumped by participants." Cohen and March, *Leadership and Ambiguity* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1974), 81.

issue as an ethics question, and a leadership professor sees it as a question about her discipline.

In this project's case, each school's faculty already had a set of agendas it was pursuing. It only makes sense that they would bend the project to fit their agendas. This "bending" is not the same, however, as distorting; think of it more as focusing in the ways that an eyeglass bends light so that its particular owner can see things in focus. The project was originally constructed to pursue the agendas that matter most to the principal investigator. It only makes sense that each subsequent investigator would focus the project on her school's agendas.

2. Retrospective Rationality

One caution that should be made to each of the schools—or to anyone who pursues such a project—is Karl Weick's warning about "retrospective rationality."[25] He warned that people often do not know in the moment why they are taking a particular action. But if you ask them later for a rational explanation, they will create, in retrospect, a plausible reason for their action.

This project often asks graduates to think back on a time in the past and asks them to describe what they did, why they did it, and what would have been helpful to them. Weick warns that their current agendas will likely influence their description of the past. For example, say a school interviewed a graduate named Consuela when she was a children's minister at a large, multi-ethnic church. And imagine that a year later Consuela left that church to found a house church in a poor neighborhood. Weick's work would suggest that a school's interviews with Consuela about her experience in and before seminary would likely be quite different if they interviewed her when she was in the first job as opposed to the second. It is important to note that the past did not change. The

[25] Weick, Karl, *Making Sense of the Organization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001); cf. Karl Weick, "Enactment Processes in Organizations," *New Directions in Organizational Behavior*, ed. by B. Shaw and G. Salancik (Chicago: St. Clair, 1977)

events that happened during her seminary years did not change. But the meaning of those events changed greatly. We have to be careful to acknowledge that a graduate's description of their past experiences is strongly shaped by their social location and their agendas as they tell the story of their past.

3. Mental Models

The project's intent was to show how the ecology of vocation formed the mental models of students. But this project ended up showing how important it is to pay attention not only to the mental models of students, but also to notice how students are shaped by the mental models of professors, congregations, and seminaries. For example, students at the King's University describe an individualized experience of calling ("God told me…"). But they use very similar language to describe it. That means that students appropriate the mental models they hear in their Pentecostal congregations (a communal act) and then use that language to describe something that they think of as deeply individual. In other words, they use communally-constructed language to describe their individualized experience. The mental models of the churches become the mental models of our students.

There is another term that we should introduce to help us understand how the idea of mental models goes much deeper. At various points, each of the schools discussed students' expectations. Expectations depend on mental models. Students have expectations about how seminary should work, about how their seminary education will prepare them for a particular kind of ministry, and indeed what it means to be prepared. These are all based on mental models. But seminaries and their faculty work out of mental models as well. And those mental models often differ from those that students bring. Let us continue the King's example from the last paragraph. Students come to King's expecting that a seminary degree will set them up to be hired by a larger (and therefore, more important) congregation. The faculty, on the other hand, knows that there are many

factors that go into a hiring (and a degree is only one of them) and the faculty espouses a theory that says that larger churches are not more important than smaller churches. That disparity of expectations means that faculty are hoping to accomplish something quite different from what the students thought they were getting.

Faculty themselves carry all sorts of mental models. For example, at Luther Seminary the system seems to be constructed around a mental model that says that "pipeliners" are the standard for students. The school could thus benefit from reflecting on how non-pipelined students experience the school. The mental models of faculty are as important as the mental models of students in understanding how seminaries form graduates for ministry.

Each of the schools in this project came with an agenda. And each of the schools found a way to meet that agenda by studying the ecology of vocation that shapes its students. We would invite other schools to engage a similar study and see how it allows them to meet its agendas.

BOOK REVIEW
TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP:
NEW VISION FOR A CHURCH IN MISSION
BY: NORMA COOK EVERIST AND CRAIG L. NESSAN
MINNEAPOLIS, MN: FORTRESS PRESS, 2008
235 PP. PAPERBACK
ISBN: 978-0-8006-2048-6

Norma Cook Everist and Craig L. Nessan give us a practical and incisive guide to leading the transforming process of the local church in their 2008 work, *Transforming Leadership: New Vision for a Church in Mission.* In a traumatic time for mainline Protestantism in the United States, Everist and Nessan offer rich resources to tackle difficult problems and move the congregation into a transforming and transformed future. The authors' primary emphasis is on the process and systemic change that is necessary to reach the ends, or *telos,* that are responsive to the mission of the church. They recognize that God's life-giving power undergirds transformation in both process and purpose.

Everist and Nessan begin the transformative process in chapters titled "Community Formed" and "Identity Claimed." They discuss the creative resistance that develops in the process of change in the third section "Integrity Tested." Built upon the foundation of the first three sections is the culmination in "Opportunities Unleashed." The opening comments in the latter section acknowledge that the methodology focuses on the gifts God has already provided within the congregation, not an assessment of the deficiencies. This is a hopeful approach that brings together the activity of God and the response of the congregation, and aligns congregational systems to create missional opportunities for the church as a congregation and for daily living in vocation.

Everist and Nessan begin with the essential work of establishing trust and then they move to the importance of honor. It is refreshing to find authors who will deal directly with the wounds of the church and identify the

spiritual practices that will re-connect the congregation and wider church within the bonds of trust in God and each other. In developing the aspects of leadership that encompass authority, servant leadership, powerful partnerships, and leading theologically, the importance of these virtues is abundantly evident. Trust and honor are established as essential virtues that promote ethical practices and the integrity of the church's witness and community.

In my own experience of pastoral ministry, there have been many struggles about the purpose and mission of the congregation and the wider church. Everist and Nessan remind me that within each of these there was always an issue of the use of time and the sense that our time is not our own. The authors reflect on the essential nature of time that is reflected in the opening of Genesis, and they discuss the place of Sabbath. Often discarded as outdated and a threat to the gods of productivity, in the authors' view Sabbath practice is focused on the Word of God and a re-centering and refreshment in that Word. As I read this section (beginning p. 152), I was a bit amazed that the authors focused on Sunday as Sabbath; for many pastors and laity Sunday is a day of worship and spiritual commitment, but it is also a day of work. In pushing the essence of this chapter, it seems that developing a Sabbath that renews the spirit and essential relationships may not be best exercised and aligned with the church life that is now the Sunday pattern. Perhaps this is the challenge offered in this section. Perhaps it will require us to revisit the habits of the early Christians who maintained the Sabbath as well as celebrating the resurrection on Sundays.

Everist and Nessan write for a practicing church audience. They integrate theological, academic, and popular approaches. Each chapter has "helps" that focus the learning gleaned in the spirit and practice of the congregation. The authors provide questions to guide personal reflection, group conversation, spiritual practice, and transforming action.

Transforming Leadership helps us to understand the dynamics of congregational ministry and the essential foundations and practices for change. These are key aspects of congregational life which need to be the constant attention of its leaders. The subtitle of the book, *New Vision for a Church in Mission,* begs a companion piece that explores more fully the alignment of the foundations and practices with the mission, vision, values, and narratives of a transforming church. Everist and Nessan draw together the resources in the field in this excellent guide to foundation and process. A similar volume will deepen and quicken the church's capacity to fulfill the transforming *missio dei* as envisioned by the prophets and the ministry of Jesus Christ.

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BOOK REVIEW
PERSPECTIVES ON CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP: APPLYING SYSTEMS THINKING FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP
BY: ISRAEL GALINDO
RICHMOND, VA: EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS, 2009
210 PP. PAPERBACK
ISBN: 978-09715765-7-5

Casting his book as "a collection of 'deviant perspectives' on congregational leadership based on concepts in Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST)," Dr. Galindo encourages pastoral leaders to move away from "tricks, techniques, and pragmatic quick fix[es]" and engage a perspective that brings insight for the complexity of human systems (3-4). Becoming learners of and applying the BFST perspective requires leaders to first understand and address their own family of origin dynamics and be vigilant about how these dynamics play out in leaders' current relationships and emotional environments. In other words, pastoral leaders inherit the generations of the past—their own and the organization or congregation's—and BFST enables leaders to identify these unseen or below-the-surface forces in order to lead more effectively.

The book is divided into three sections. The first presents the basics of the theory, the second offers insights for leadership from BFST, and the third applies BFST to congregations and organizations. Since much of the writing originated in Dr. Galindo's blog, all the sections contain pithy, eye-catching topics.

After an introduction that inspires pastoral leaders to become "a positive deviant in the system, a person whose capacity to think and function differently than others in the system brings about healthy change," Galindo explains that BFST starts with one's self and a continual quest to become self-differentiated (1). This enables leaders to be free of over-functioning—becoming fused with and adopting others' anxieties and responsibilities as

their own, which potentially leads to burnout. Effective leaders deal with their own anxiety, but do not rescue the system. Self-differentiation also occurs when leaders understand their own role in their family of origin, discern how that role plays out in their leadership, and behave according to their own values and principles rather than their feelings. Lack of self-differentiation causes leaders to react without reflection and intention, which may temporarily address symptoms, but in the long run does not deal with the root issues of the problem.

The first section also discusses homeostasis. According to BSFT, a system's energy is directed toward staying at or returning to homeostasis. Therefore, change introduced to the system is resisted or even sabotaged. Leaders who understand this principle are more likely to remain tenacious in the midst of change.

The second section integrates BFST with leadership by conveying lists of leadership axioms based on Galindo's many years of experience in education, leadership, and consulting. Examples include: "Four Goals of the Organizational Leader," "Five Personal Resources for Leadership," "Five Concepts of Leadership," and "Back to the Basics: Leadership Rules 101." Again, the themes of family of origin, self-differentiation, and non-reactivity are present, along with exhortations to understand one's context and operate within one's own principles. Galindo particularly urges leaders to understand "pastoral triangles." In BFST, triangles are used to identify how relationship dynamics manifest anxiety or how relationships get patterned. Pastors are continually drawn into triangles with persons (pastor plus two others) or one person and an issue. It is important for them to recognize the triangle, avoid reactivity, and only function on their side of the triangle, what they can address or control, which is only themselves and their responses.

The third section applies BFST to congregational and organizational leadership by offering insights from short, case-specific scenarios previously discussed on Galindo's blog. Most of the forty-seven scenarios are one or two

pages, with the longest being ten pages in length. Although it is impossible to summarize these varied sections briefly, the themes of discerning one's context and taking responsibility for one's actions and interactions, and in like manner encouraging others to take responsibility, stand out. In general, however, this section is a compilation of Galindo's ministry philosophy.

Perspectives on Congregational Leadership dances between theory, experience, and reflection, with the sharing of experiences and reflection being more dominant. It is insightful in offering the reality of systems theory in organizations and therefore why leadership is messy and sometimes does not work. The book provides a theoretical backdrop for self-awareness, self-management, and self-discipline, along with self-reflection tools such as "Traits of a Well-Defined Leader" and "The Imaginative Leader." Finally, the descriptive Table of Contents enables one to use the book for situations we all face, such as "How to Handle a Dysfunctional Staff Colleague" and "How Could They Act That Way?"

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BOOK REVIEW

THE BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH: THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH THAT FAITHFUL MINISTRY REQUIRES EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

BY: JOHN W. WIMBERLY, JR.
HERNDON, VA: THE ALBAN INSTITUTE, 2010
164 PP. PAPERBACK
ISBN: 978-56699-404-0

John Wimberly furthers a necessary and specific conversation in *The Business of the Church*. Drawing on four decades of pastoral and public ministry experience, executive MBA training, and popular management literature, he describes and promotes effective management for faithful congregational ministry.

Wimberly distinguishes between leaders and managers in order to further his argument that the business of the church is most efficiently navigated under managerial priorities. He notes that while leaders are concerned with outputs such as establishing visions through long-range strategic planning, managers attend more closely to the inputs that determine envisioned ends.

Chapter One identifies three elements needed for effective church management. The first, systems theory, derives from the theoretical framework of congregational systems, borrowed from Edwin Friedman's *Generation to Generation*, which attends to the relationships between the parts and the whole of organizations. These parts are a balance of inputs, including personnel, facilities, and finances that produce effective outputs such as proclamation, programs, pastoral care, and mission. The second managing element is a coherent strategic plan, which creates the clarity managers and congregational systems need to make decisions toward determined goals. The third element of effective management is the role of the pastor, the "head of staff" as Wimberly calls it, serving as the lead manager for the congregational system.

Wimberly argues that attention to these three elements will produce effective management of the congregation's culture and successful outcomes by reducing anxiety and offering clarity about congregational priorities and authority. The core anxieties of congregational life that need effective management include church finances, deferred facility maintenance, and personnel costs. Wimberly recognizes that the congregational system is also connected to societal anxieties, although he gives primary attention to economic concerns.

Chapters Two through Four further detail a systems framework for effectively managing personnel, facilities, and finances. Chapter Two addresses personnel management; here Wimberly calls for the clarification of roles and responsibilities, staff alignment toward church goals, and responsible personnel policies and practices. Chapter Three attends to the managing of property and technology. Wimberly points to the importance of having a lay board of trustees who help guide key staff managers. In addition to discussing the managing of funds and personnel for the tasks of facility management, he adds practical suggestions for managing facilities in tight fiscal times for small churches, wise and responsible attention to utilities and insurance that help maximize costs, and how to address legal matters. Chapter Four offers practical and wise suggestions for managing congregational finances. Here Wimberly describes how transactions relate to assets, liabilities, expenses and revenues, and encourages readers to consider important details regarding balance sheet accounts, income statements, cash journal, and cash reports.

Each chapter ends with a "manager's checklist" including questions and guided exercises that summarize the preceding chapter and draw the reader into further engagement the topic. Three appendices, supporting the chapter on finances, offer concrete examples of a congregation's balance sheet, an income statement, and accounting exercises.

This book would serve well as an interactive resource for pastors serving congregations as well as for seminary courses in congregational management. One has to wonder, however, if Wimberly's concept of management is too narrow for the complexities involved in a local church's engagement in this post-Christian twenty-first century world. Can an organizational business approach found in the marketplace transfer ad-hoc to organizing ecclesial identity without recognizing larger societal influences challenging ecclesial identity? That is, is the gospel reduced to a product "output" and people to its managing catalyst of the Spirit's work? The world, under this business model, can often be conceived as a target the church enacts on, rather than creating managing discernment conversations that attend to what God is already doing in the world. Mission, for Wimberly, is a Newtonian category, one output dimension among others. Recent ecclesial organization literature, however, suggest that a missional focus is equally concerned about how to manage ecclesial identity and not merely its functional purpose value. Is not the gospel itself equally an "input" the Spirit uses to manage the church's own trust in God for the life of the world? If this is so, how can congregations also find ways to manage or partner with the creative power of the Spirit? These questions are but a few that open up the discussion that Wimberly convenes, a necessary and specific conversation for the *Business of the Church*, but this business equally includes a managing conversation of God's Spirit and the place of the world.

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BOOK REVIEW
JUST HOSPITALITY:
GOD'S WELCOME IN A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE
BY: LETTY M. RUSSELL
EDITED BY: J. SHANNON CLARKSON AND KATE M. OTT
LOUISVILLE: WESTMINSTER/JOHN KNOX, 2009
124 PP. PAPERBACK
ISBN 978-0-664-23315-0

Letty Mandeville Russell (1929-2007), one of the world's foremost feminist theologians and longtime member of the Yale Divinity School faculty, started writing notes for her last book a few years before she died. Her partner, J. Shannon Clarkson, and former research assistant, Kate M. Ott, compiled and organized Russell's work into the volume *Just Hospitality*. In her final scholarly contribution to the academy and the church, Russell introduces an argument for moving from essentializing difference (stranger as permanent "other"), to partnering (stranger as connection with God) as opportunity for creating hospitable justice and healing a world in crisis.

Russell begins by asking the question, "Why hospitality?" Drawing on her personal narrative and biblical stories to illustrate her understanding of hospitality, Russell points to the mandate for the church to be in solidarity with strangers, particularly those who live permanently on the margins, and, further, to *love* the stranger (*philoxenia*). She also conveys this perspective through examples of her work with the World Council of Churches and her practice of hospitality with women around the globe.

The next two chapters critique normative understandings of hospitality through the lenses of postcolonial theology and feminist hermeneutics. In this section, Russell challenges the codified knowledge developed by dominant white, Western groups about "other" cultures, geography, and roles (24-26). Citing New Testament lecturer, Musa Dube, of the University of

Botswana, Russell agrees that imperialism imposes universal standards on the "other," who is assumed to be a blank slate, and who is rendered dependent, colonized, on those who create and maintain said standards (27-28). Russell equates such assumptions and cooption to a misuse of the doctrine of election. To move forward with just hospitality, both scholars urge colonizers and colonized to sit at table together to examine the impact of colonialism and imperialism on human social locations and global interdependence. Russell focuses further on power quotients that are particularly ascribed against women of color and women of the global South. Her work with women's experiences of familial slavery and/or HIV/AIDS throughout the world galvanized her focus on constructing tools to analyze, resist, and reconstruct how we share in God's creation (50).

From initial analysis flows formative process. In the remainder of the book, Russell examines hospitality in biblical story and from story, reframes a theology of hospitality focused on justice. She focuses on the blessing of "riotous" difference created by God. Her contention is that in the beginning, God gave humanity the gift of difference and in time, the gift of understanding such difference at Pentecost. Often, our response to this gift is to try to limit diversity by pursuing sameness or essentializing difference, rendering it a weapon of destruction. For Russell, difference is a function of relationships in a group rather than a set of attributes, so forming coalitions across difference is the essence of God's message. Appropriately, Russell calls for acknowledging violently inhospitable behavior of dominant groups against indigenous persons, and with Rebecca Todd Peters, challenges the imperialist use of the Great Commission (Matthew 28) to colonize peoples, as well as dominant groups' own minds.

A theology of just hospitality requires reading the biblical text with understanding that "textual terror" is used easily against those who are already marginalized. Russell calls for a hermeneutic of suspicion that looks for varieties of meaning based on social location, with a

desire to confront patriarchy and a commitment to find God's safe space in the midst of the story. Russell sees Christ as the metaphor of God's welcome, creating safe space so that Christ's community, the church, can work for healing and justice. By challenging our own personal limits, social structural limits, and theological constructs that limit hospitality, we invite creation to flourish without requiring the "other" to become like us. Ultimately, Russell's goal for just hospitality includes actions of genuine solidarity modeled on God's welcome. "The sort of hospitality…that sees the struggle for justice as part and parcel of welcoming the stranger" (xv).

In her final work, Letty Russell interweaves personal experience with theological reflection. Some of the explanatory narrative is repetitive. However, Russell's passion for just hospitality leaps off the pages; this theological engagement is not an academic exercise alone for her. The editors enhance Russell's work by concluding each chapter with thought-questions to stimulate engagement with Russell's assertions, opening opportunity for partnering toward just hospitality in the classroom itself. I will likely adopt portions of this text for an advanced leadership class in womanist/feminist ethics of leadership because I find Russell's work compelling.

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BOOK REVIEW

THE COLOR OF CHURCH: A BIBLICAL AND PRACTICAL PARADIGM FOR MULTIRACIAL CHURCHES

BY: RODNEY M. WOO
NASHVILLE, TN: B & H ACADEMIC, 2009
304 PP. PAPERBACK
ISBN: 978-08054-4839-9

Less than seven percent of congregations in the United States are multiracial, and Rodney Woo, pastor of Wilcrest Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, wants this to change. He contends that *all* churches should be reaching across racial and ethnic lines, and *The Color of Church* encourages congregations to move in this direction.

The Color of Church is a companion volume to *People of the Dream* by Michael Emerson. While the two books address the same general topic of multiracial congregations, they differ dramatically. In contrast to the sociological focus of Emerson's book, *The Color of Church* offers a biblical argument for multiracial congregations and gives extended attention to Woo's personal narrative and the story of Wilcrest. Woo's goal is not just to inform, but to persuade. Woo writes with a strong Southern Baptist accent, and this book will resonate best with an evangelical audience.

Woo's racial background and experience give him credibility in addressing his topic. He describes himself as a Chinese-American married to a woman of Mexican descent and has lived in a range of ethnic settings. The heart of his story is tied to his leadership of Wilcrest Baptist Church, which went from being ninety-nine percent Anglo when Woo began as its pastor to becoming a congregation in which forty-four nations are represented and in which no one racial group comprises a majority.

Woo develops a biblical and theological basis for multiracial ministry. Almost every page of this book includes scriptural citations and exposition. Woo engages

much more biblical material than the standard diversity texts like the stories of Babel and Pentecost, the tearing down of walls in Ephesians 2, the call for unity in Ephesians 4, or the equality of Galatians 3. Woven into the biblical sections are stories of Woo's journey with Wilcrest over a fifteen-year period and advice on addressing issues unique to multiracial congregations.

One strength of this book is Woo's development of a "theology of discomfort" as essential for fostering a multiracial congregation. Woo is so committed to this that he once announced to his congregation that the theme for the coming year would be the "Year of Discomfort." In Woo's words, "A multiracial congregation is by nature and definition a place of contrast; this moves us out of our comfort zones and forces us to trust in the God of all peoples" (49). While he is aware that he cannot ask people to move too quickly, he wants people in congregations to expect a certain level of discomfort; he is not interested in making comfort a primary goal of the congregation.

Another strength is Woo's discussion of the two key issues related to becoming multiracial: leadership and worship. Woo argues that multiracial leadership is required in order to validate a congregation's claim that it wants to be multiracial. Diverse leadership is not optional, it is crucial. In relation to worship, Woo discusses the dynamics of music styles, preaching styles, expressive versus quiet worship, language, and time perspectives in multiracial contexts.

Woo's understanding of cultural lenses is limited. Woo argues that because a multiracial setting challenges one's own cultural blinders, a multiracial setting makes it possible to have "a more pure preaching of Scripture" (164). While I indeed hope that each of us will become more aware of our cultural biases, I contend that there is no supra-cultural position we can attain from which to read and preach scripture purely—humans are *always* embedded in culture(s), and thus Woo's desire to "help protect Scripture from cultural bias" (164) needs to be more nuanced.

Woo uses the term "nonwhites" throughout his book. This term makes the racial category of "white" normative, and all other categories are defined in relation to that norm. All distinguishing terms or phrases have their limitations, but terms such as "people of color" avoid the problem of making Anglos the normative set.

Woo frames Wilcrest's journey as a battle and uses the military idea of rules of engagement to describe aspects of that battle. At one point he talks about "how to use force effectively to accomplish the mission objectives" (164). Given the suffering incurred by people of color in this country as a result of the use of force, as well as Jesus' model of non-coercive engagement, I find Woo's language here highly problematic.

These quibbles aside, the stories in *The Color of Church* inspire hope for what can be. The implementation strategies and biblical work provide rich material for congregations to discuss as they seek to reflect the diversity of God's kingdom.

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BOOK REVIEW

A LIFELONG CALL TO LEARN: CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS

BY: ROBERT ELDRED REBER AND D. BRUCE ROBERTS (EDS)
HERNDON, VA: THE ALBAN INSTITUTE, 2010,
REVISED AND EXPANDED
397 PP. PAPERBACK
ISBN: 978-1-56699-399-9

Development of religious leaders is a challenge in the context of rapid social change. No longer is it possible to think of training as a one-time, pre-service experience that equips the person for a life-time of effective ministry. Simultaneously, continuing education programs are experiencing the challenges that come with economic down-turn; when churches, denominations, and individuals have limited resources, continuing education is one of the items that is often cut. In this context, how can educators and organizations engaged in the continuing education enterprise be effective in their mission to equip men and women for a lifetime of fruitful service? Written by and for practitioners of continuing education, particularly those with academic and judiciary affiliations in mainline denominational contexts, *A Lifelong Call to Learn* explores a variety of perspectives and issues related to programs of continuing theological education for church leaders.

Part One explores historical perspectives looking at continuing education in light of organizational, cultural, and professional trends in the past century. Rouch begins the conversation by discussing continuing education movements of the 1960's and 70's in the United States. Reber surveys issues in continuing education looking into the future with challenges such as lack of organizational commitment and focus on "quick fix" type content. Of particular value is Reber's attention to the subversive role of continuing education: to subvert our inaccurate or inadequate thinking. Cervero addresses continuing

education for professionals in the church—what it is for, who will provide it, and who will benefit. Cornett frames continuing education as engagement between the church and world, envisioning the purpose as to "provide a forum for the church's ongoing engagement of these concerns as well as gather the scholars, community leaders, and political figures that have some say about how the decisions that will determine the future well being of much of the humanity will be made" (63).

Part Two focuses on theory and research in continuing education, looking at perspectives in adult education, considering basal literature, and examining one major continuing education research project. Roberts explores facilitating innovation in leadership by creating a community of truth as a context to motivate learning through the exploration of mental models, experimentation in ministry, and evaluation of that experimentation. Marler presents an analysis of survey data of pastoral peer groups looking at the impact of group leadership, member diversity, and group funding. Roberts then considers two factors involved in effective teaching with adults: shared control and support for development of critical thinking.

Part Three presents innovations in continuing education, focusing on various programs and institutions. While not particularly innovative in the broader field of education, these chapters explore modalities that are not yet common in the arena of continuing education programs. Chapters in this section address peer group learning, coaching, education for laity and professionals, multi-faith education and education for leadership in a multi-religious society, and online education. The editors' high value for ecumenical and inter-faith dialog is particularly reflected in this section.

Part Four focuses on administrative issues, addressing implications for continuing education programs in a larger context, whether institutional or cultural. Guthrie and Cervero address learning to read the political system of an organization to know how to negotiate toward continuing education outcomes. Maykus

gives pithy and practical advice on basic program planning, design, and evaluation. Davis proposes a strategy for planning and marketing under the rubric of learning. Oehler suggests that a program that pays attention to the whole person will be more successful both in terms of results and attendance. Macholl overviews risk assessment and mitigation. Reber and Roberts conclude with seven key questions for the future of continuing education.

The title of this text, *A Lifelong Call to Learn*, suggests a broad agenda related to the challenges and possibilities of lifelong learning. The focus of the book, however, is on the educator and the continuing education programs he/she facilitates. Touched on, but not fully addressed, is the challenge of an educational culture that assumes "the experts know what needs to be taught, have a structured and systematic way to teach it, and have a way to document and measure its achievement" (327). To what extent does the specific cultural and theological perspective of the contributors and their commitment to programs of continuing educating hinder them—and those they represent—from considering the subject of lifelong learning for religious leaders more broadly and, potentially, more effectively? Nevertheless, this text offers a spectrum of ideas and useful conversation starters for the continuing education practitioner in mainline denominational and academic contexts.

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