

The Quest for a Practical Theological Approach to Teaching Transformative Pastoral Leadership

Reverend Jeffery L. Tribble, Sr., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Ministry, Columbia Theological Seminary

Introduction

In the book, *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, Cahalan and Nieman claim that practical theology brings a special wisdom to teaching and formation. Cahalan and Nieman state the following:

A specific ministry practice may itself be closely scrutinized to tease apart the underlying moves, standards, wisdom, and aims that suggest how it can be taught or enacted. Environments for mutual participation and performance may be created to enable a fully embodied knowledge of a form of ministry. Difficult tasks may be stripped down to basic components that are first repeated and internalized, then gradually more complex. Roles and routines may be inductively studied to discern rules of thumbs or tricks of the trade that contribute over time to intuitive, natural performance. When informed by the wisdom of practical theology, none of these options are mere techniques but instead reflect in their strategies a serious awareness of the complicated layers in learning what it means to be in ministry.¹

Further, in this same volume, Miller-McLemore says that teaching a ministerial practice will involve the litany of practitioners: "experience the practice, practice it, tell about it, ask questions about it, read about it, write about it, practice it, do it, empower others to do it."²

This paper describes and explicates the multi-faceted nature of educating and forming ministry practitioners to *practice* the grounded theory of transformative pastoral leadership. In my book, *Transformative Pastoral Leadership in the Black Church*, I write: "By transformative pastoral leadership, I mean spiritual leaders who are intentionally engaged in

¹ Kathleen A Cahalan and James R. Nieman, "Mapping the Field of Practical Theology" in *For Life Abundant* ed. by Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 75.

² Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, "Practical Theology and Pedagogy: Embodying Theological Know-How" in *For Life Abundant*, 178.

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the work of transforming persons, churches, and communities.”³ From teaching various workshops on the topic, I have been humbled by feedback from pastors who said: “this was a great workshop, but I couldn’t actually do this in my local church.” Because of my question of how to empower others to be transformative pastoral leaders, I have developed a Doctor of Ministry course, “Transformative Pastoral Leadership.” The methods and wisdom of practical theology have been guides in this quest.

My thinking about the multi-faceted challenge of educating and forming ministry leaders was enhanced by my participation in The Collegetown Institute Seminar on Integration in Theological Education and Ministry. In the book that harvests the insights of our multi-year collaborative research process, Cahalan writes:

As much of this work shows, integrating is not easily defined or described but in general, refers to making things that are apart into something whole, complete, or entire. *Integration* is often used as a noun, in which integrating appears as an achievable end point, something that is attainable. We decided to replace the noun with more dynamic language, either the verb *integrate* or a modifier *integrating* or *integrative*. Shifting the language more closely captures integrating as a process with a trajectory that fluctuates and modifies over time, and is not static. Integrating work is dynamic rather than linear and, as discussed throughout the book, includes disintegrating and reorienting experiences.⁴

This paper describes my experience of teaching the January 2018 term Doctor of Ministry Course, Transformative Pastoral Leadership, in which I required students to explicitly integrate the subject matter of the course with their practice of ministry. At the same time, I was attentive to my role as a faculty member in this integrating work which is crucial for understanding the multi-faceted work of the formation. I will organize my thinking, considering four of the five interlocking elements of an integrative course design explicated by Mikoski: 1) aims, goals, and objectives, 2)

³ Jeffery L. Tribble, Sr., *Transformative Pastoral Leadership in the Black Church*, First paperback edition (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 9.

⁴ Kathleen A. Cahalan, “Introducing Integrating Work” in *Integrating Work in Theological Education*, ed. Kathleen A. Cahalan, Edward Foley, and Gordon S. Mikoski (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 7-8.

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context, 3) roles of the teacher and learner, and 4) curricular content. The fifth element, methods of instruction, will be interwoven in the discussion.⁵

Course Aims, Goals, and Objectives

This past January term in 2018 was my third time of teaching and tweaking this course. The course was taught in a hybrid format organized into three sections: 1) a five-week pre-residential discussion board of required readings while serving as ministry practitioners in their contexts, 2) a one-week residential study session focusing on case study peer learning, and 3) a two-week post-residential session for continued study, further reading, reflection, and practice with ministry partners in context. My pedagogical purpose in this three-section eight-week format was cultivating a space for conversation and practice, an essential discipline of a learning church.⁶ This format is not typical of Doctor Ministry courses at Columbia Theological Seminary, which are normally designed as two-week intensive courses on campus. The pre-residential online section of the course was designed for thorough reading of the primary theoretical framing material of the course and engagement with the instructor and other students on the discussion board while in the ministry context. The face-to-face residential section of the course continued the community building process, reviewing big ideas from the reading and guiding students in writing and sharing their teaching case studies while on campus. The post-residential section required students to take the risk of working with trusted ministry partners to revisit their case studies and design an actual ministry intervention addressing an adaptive challenge.

Consistent with the course description in the academic catalogue, the syllabus described the course as follows:

Explores the role of the pastor as spiritual leader embracing key adaptive issues for personal, congregational, and communal transformation. Acknowledging that leading a congregation through processes of deep change may be risky and costly, we explore current interdisciplinary ministry approaches for pastors leading congregations through processes of transition involving time and learning where identity, mission, culture, and operating procedures are fundamentally altered. This class is a seminar for students to work on actual case studies from their church and ministry contexts.

⁵ Gordon S. Mikoski, "Integrating Work at the Course Level" in *Integrating Work in Theological Education*, ed. Kathleen A. Cahalan, Edward Foley, and Gordon S. Mikoski (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 126-127,

⁶ Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Agile Church: Spirit Led Innovation in an Uncertain Age* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2014), 89-92.

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The course learning objectives were named as follows:

1. The student will develop an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry by demonstrating a working knowledge of theories of leadership and rules of art that contribute to transformative pastoral leadership.
2. The student will develop skills in pastoral research by demonstrating competence in writing and leading discussion of a case study of a challenging, unresolved, problematic situation at a particular point in time from their church and ministry context.
3. The student will utilize the opportunities in the ministry context and the resources of the course to develop deeper spiritual awareness and practice reflective leadership. The student will demonstrate their work towards integration of the knowing, being, and doing of transformative pastoral leadership amid a situation of leading change with one's partners in ministry through a planned intervention, assessment, and reflection exercise.

The third learning objective highlights the challenges in the professional model of integration articulated in the Carnegie study, *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*. Foster and his colleagues write: "At the heart of clergy education is a still more complex integrative challenge—one that embraces, to some extent, all of these expectations [theological thinking, vertical integration from introductory to advanced courses, and horizontal integration across disciplines]. This integrative challenge emphasizes linking, in student learning, the knowledge, skills, and priestly, rabbinic, or pastoral identity typically associated with the educational tasks of the cognitive, practical, and normative apprenticeships."⁷

My quest to teach the practice of transformative pastoral leadership embraced this complex integrative challenge of linking in student learning the knowledge, skills, and pastoral identity to design an adaptive intervention and to anticipate how to respond to the resistance which the intervention would likely cause.

Context of the Theological School and Student Contexts

Columbia Theological Seminary is an educational institution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) which exists as a community of theological inquiry and formation for ministry in the service of the Church of Jesus Christ. Located in Decatur, Georgia, just east of the city of Atlanta, Columbia offers six graduate degree programs and dozens of lifelong learning courses and events. Sixteen countries are represented by the students and faculty. Thirty-seven

⁷ Charles R. Foster, Lisa E. Dahill, Lawrence A. Golemon, and Barbara Wang Tolentino, *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2006)

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denominations and religious traditions are represented by a racially and ecumenically diverse faculty and 350 students which come from twenty-seven states in the U.S. ⁸

The practice of worship is an integral part of the learning environment at Columbia. Our class attended a Tuesday worship service and worked with me to design and share in the worship leadership of the Service of Word and Table on Friday.

I gathered some information about student contexts as a part of our introductions during the pre-residential discussion board. As Mikoski says, “They [faculty] must also gather information—through activities such as personal sharing, pretests, or a brief in class writing assignment—about individual learners at the beginning of a course that will help establish a baseline of existing knowledge, learning interests, and vocational trajectory, which provide clues for adapting the subject matter and instructional methods of the course in order to maximize meaningful connections.”⁹

Four Doctor of Ministry students enrolled in the course. I gave permission from one Master of Divinity senior to enroll in the course based on his 10+ years of youth pastor experience and his performance in my introductory Christian leadership course. A brief description of the students and the contexts which they brought into dialogue with the class follows.

Rev. S. B. is the Associate Pastor of Outreach, Evangelism, and Learning/Faith Formation at St. Michael’s Lutheran Church (pseudonym), a leading Evangelical Lutheran Christian Assembly (ELCA) Church in a major city. The parish is progressive in its ministry to the marginalized while striving for diversity and in need of deep change. The adaptive challenge involves congregational learning about transforming practices of mission and evangelism.

Rev. C. C. is in her 19th year as a PC (USA) minister. In those years, she has served as an associate minister, pastor of small church, and now solo pastor of a 400-member suburban church with an average of 200 in worship between the two services. With a strong business background this pastor and head of staff has implemented several technical changes with congregational leaders; yet, conflict is up, pledges are down, worship attendance is down, and Wednesday night small group attendance is down. Further, the church is in the process of merging with a small congregation with \$1.2 million in assets. The adaptive challenge involves transforming attitudes about the power of money to control member behavior.

Prior to becoming a PC (USA) minister, Rev. G.J. served as teacher, liturgist, and elder in her home church in a small city of the South. When the class began its pre-residential session,

⁸www.ctsnet.edu (accessed 3/31/18)

⁹ Mikoski, 130.

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Rev. G.J. was pastor of a small rural church and a finalist for the open pulpit at her home church, a much larger urban church. The expected transition from the small rural church to the much larger urban church was the immediate experiential context for her study in this course. During the interviews with the search committee, a committee member articulated a desire for this predominantly white congregation to be more welcoming and inclusive of people of other races. The adaptive challenge involves how to transition into a new parish setting well, cultivating a trustworthy environment which makes transformative pastoral leadership possible.

Rev. B.J., a transplant from the Northeast, is solo pastor of a downtown First Presbyterian Church in a small city of the South with usual 100 members in attendance. A doctrinally heavy Easter Sunday sermon challenged traditional local theology about heaven upset many members. Subsequent discernment revealed the pastor's disconnection from the context and the lack of trust between the pastor and between groups of members in the congregation. The adaptive challenge requires building trust while launching a new strategic vision framework.

S.M. has been a youth minister in three different settings for more than a decade. In his present church context, leaders are struggling with the youth disengagement with worship, conflicts about the use of youth cell phones in worship, and youth dropping out of worship because of feeling "judged" by adults. S.M. initially sees the problem as a technical fix of "keeping the youth on task" (engaging the worship service in front of them) and a symptom of a generational divide. The adaptive challenges involve a congregation's denial of their failure to engage its youth who are in danger of joining the rising numbers of the religiously disaffiliated.

Roles of Teacher and Learner

In my introduction to students, I summarized my learning ministry over time and how my intellectual journey brings me to the teaching of this course. I stated: "The subject of transformative pastoral leadership remains a primary research interest of mine. Having researched and written about the concept of transformative pastoral leadership, I am interested in a) actual cases where ministers are working on messy situations of transition and transformation and b) developing pedagogical and coaching resources to assist ministers working with problematic situations of transition and change. "

My self-disclosure of my commitment to learning ministry over time as well as my mirrored interests of researching and teaching transformative pastoral leadership set a tone for

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“backward design” teaching roles.¹⁰ This included course designer of learning experiences to meet course objectives as well as designer of the primary assessments of the course (rubric for the discussion board, case study instructional materials, and final assignment instructions) to guide the teaching of the course as well as to determine if learning objectives have been achieved. Mikoski describes the importance of instructor self-disclosure for setting the dynamic teacher and student relationship in the course as follows:

By sharing appropriately from the instructor’s own life experience and intellectual journey, the learners have such work modeled for them, and the instructor begins to establish a learning climate characterized by reflection, personal engagement, and dialogue. Because integrating depends heavily on the initiative and work of the learner, the instructor functions best as coach or catalyst rather than dispenser of all wisdom, emphasizing more the “guide on the side” than the “sage on the stage.” The instructor also promotes this work on the part of learners when she poses generative questions for reflection or suggests possible connections that students do not see or might see only dimly. It cannot be stressed enough that integrating takes place most effectively in a constructivist orientation¹¹ in which the learner does the heavy lifting of making connections with the support and guidance of the teacher.¹²

My personal engagement with the students, initiated in the discussion board and e-mail exchanges during the pre-residential section of the course, continued as I employed my customary practice of opening a course with a scripture reflection to frame the course theologically and to ground it spiritually. My opening scripture reflection was from the familiar “faith passage” in Hebrews 11:1-6. I had decided to reflect on the importance of faith in transformative pastoral leadership taking my cue from one of the models of leadership in the course, reflective leadership as explicated by Jackson Carroll:

To lead reflectively involves a kind of hermeneutic of practice. It entails the ability, in collaboration with one’s partners in ministry to read situations, identify the adaptive challenge(s) that an individual or congregation is facing, and during the situation, draw on the *resources of faith, knowledge,*

¹⁰ Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design*. 2nd ed. (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005)

¹¹ Constructivism refers to an orientation to learning in which the learner actively makes meaning out of the interplay of her or his prior knowledge and new information or experiences.

¹² Mikoski, 135

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experiences, and skills [my italics for emphasis] to construct faithful and appropriate responses.¹³

One student, Rev. B.J, remarked how encouraging it was to begin the course with *a faith perspective*. He confessed that the pre-residential course readings, though good, had left him wondering if the essence of the course was trying to figure out which model to “pull out of the toolkit.” In my preparation of my sermon for chapel service, I deliberately included a quote that I thought would connect with this student’s case study. Rev. B.J. apparently was listening closely to my sermon as I stated the following:

In many churches, there are secrets that must be told. In her book, *Ethnography a Pastoral Practice*, Mary Clark Moschella says, “When a community does not sufficiently grieve the loss of a beloved leader, the general level of energy and enthusiasm for engagement with a new leader is diminished. Similarly, if there has been an ethics violation by clergy in the past, and particularly if the matter was not publicly disclosed or openly addressed, the community’s level of trust in subsequent leaders will be compromised.”

¹⁴The secrets of faith communities—the good, the bad, and the ugly must be told for the people to heal and free them to move on with strength and joy. Only then is health, hope, and the miracle of transformation possible.

My role with another student, Rev. C.C., included taking time in my one-on-one consultation for planning for her D.Min. project research with the working title of “Transformative Pastoral Leadership in the PC (USA) Church: The Role of Preaching and Organizational Leadership in Developing Thriving Churches in the 21st Century.” Readings for this course contributed to her literature review and informed her research methodology.

My role in my one-on-one consultation with another student, Rev. S.B. included my generous sharing of perspectives and resources on the theology and practice of evangelism. Encouraged by these new perspectives of her ministry area, she drew upon this consultation for her post-residential conversations with her ministry team.

¹³ Jackson W. Carroll, *As One with Authority: Reflective Leadership in Ministry*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011), 118

¹⁴ Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2008), 35
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The MDiv student, S.M., admitted his lack of authority to enact the transformative changes needed and his fear to talk about his case study with the pastor and “to actually do this stuff.” The class had a role in helping this student to take the small step of talking with his pastor to determine what was the best possible intervention under the circumstances.

The students played a tremendous role during the discussion of each case study as we had generous blocks of time for seeking shared wisdom. Bringing their collective experiences and wisdom to bear on each case, they helped to deepen students’ interpretation of the problematic situation seen through the eye of the protagonist faced with a decision of what to do next. They were also generous in proposing possible faithful next steps.

Curricular Content: Exploring a Practical Theological Approach

I began the course (the first module of the pre-residential discussion board) employing the practical wisdom of Osmer’s chapter on “The Pragmatic Task” of “Servant Leadership” in his book, *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. As I introduce the complexity of the concept of transformative pastoral leadership, I assert that it is a skillful interplay of three interrelated forms of leadership needed in congregations: task competence informed by humility, transactional leadership as meeting “deepest needs”, and transforming leadership as leading deep change.¹⁵

A key idea in my thinking is what David Bosch calls a “transformational hermeneutics”--a “theological response which transforms us first before we involve ourselves in mission to the world.”¹⁶ In my grounded theory research, I struggled with whether to just name this as “discernment;” however, at the time I was not acquainted with a method for describing this more precisely. Osmer’s core tasks of practical theological interpretation informed by his “spirituality of congregational leaders” offered me a method of articulating “transformational hermeneutics” for spiritual leaders. I adopted this framework and said in my concept review portion of the one week residential phase of the course that the “underlying moves” of “transformational hermeneutics” include : 1) “priestly listening” in the descriptive-empirical task, (“what is going on?”) 2 “sagely wisdom” in the interpretive task (“why is this going on?”), 3) prophetic discernment in the normative task (“what ought to be going on”) and 4) the pragmatic-strategic task (“how to respond?”) which is aimed toward “servant leadership.” However, the guidance in the epilogue of *Practical Theology* is that “Often, particular courses focus primarily on only one or two of these tasks. ... In course planning, it is important to be

¹⁵ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 193.

¹⁶ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 189.

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clear about the tasks of practical theological interpretation that are primary." This elective course builds on the Doctor of Ministry Church and Ministry Introductory Seminar¹⁷ and selectively focused primarily on the pragmatic strategic task. However, I wanted students to appreciate the distinct but interrelated nature of the four tasks¹⁸, or 4 "underlying moves" of transformational hermeneutics.

In addition, Osmer's notions of a "*model of practice*" and "rules of art" were used as building blocks for the course. A model of practice is "a general picture of the field in which they (the leaders) are acting and ways they might shape this field toward desired goals."¹⁹ I served as interpretive course guide, wondering in this course, "what is the general picture of the field of transforming persons, congregations, and communities toward desired theological and ethical goals?"

One model of practice that we examined was Robert Quinn's four-stage model of organizational change, which he calls the transformational cycle (initiation, uncertainty, transformation, routinization).²⁰ Rules of art are "specific guidelines about how to carry out particular actions or practices."²¹ This notion of "rules of art" is similar to "rules of thumb" proposed by Cahalan and Nieman and Everist and Nesson's "top ten insights a transforming leader should consider in honoring God's people in the congregation."²² Though rigid rules cannot be applied, there are prescriptive guidelines which will help pastors amidst the

¹⁷ For the last several years, my Doctor of Ministry Introductory Seminar has used the 4 tasks of practical theology as a conceptual organizing scheme for the course. This introductory seminar is not a prerequisite for this course. I summarize the 4 tasks of practical theological interpretation and spirituality of leadership above.

¹⁸ Osmer, 1-18

¹⁹ Osmer, 176

²⁰ Ibid., 206.

²¹ Ibid.

²² These insights include "the congregation was there before you were;" "there's a reason why things are the way they are;" "it is the congregation's job not to want to change;" "the congregation is roughly divided into thirds: one third will be 'inactive,' one third attend worship as primary or only activity, and one third are active beyond worship;" "your parents will be members of the congregation," "some people will know how to push your buttons;" "the congregation and leader will identify other people to blame for their problems;" "Christ is God, you are not;" "people will tell you what you need to know, if you are ready to listen to them;" and "the congregation will abide after you leave." Norma Cook Everist and Craig L. Nesson, *Transforming Leadership: New Vision for a Church in Mission* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2008), 16-27.

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complexity, confusion, setbacks, and failures of transformative pastoral leadership. I proposed that three "rules of art" provide a "map" for the transformational journey: 1) you will find your way only by getting lost, 2) you will gain power by empowering others, and 3) the less attached you are to a congregation, the deeper your relationships.²³ Further, Osmer was helpful in his assertion that leaders of congregations must deal with both the *external challenges* of a changing social context but also *internal challenges* of reworking identity and mission in a Post-Christendom era where the Church is no longer at the center of cultural influence and power.²⁴ Osmer says that the internal work should be aimed at building the congregation as "a contrast society"²⁵ that is faithful to its mission as God's people. The external work should be aimed towards the church's role as "a catalyst of social transformation."²⁶

After introducing the forms of leadership, four tasks of practical theology as underlying moves of transformational hermeneutics, a transformational cycle as a model of practice, and specific guidelines as "rules of art" or "rules of thumb," the second module of the pre-residential discussion board engaged my book on transformative pastoral leadership in the black church. At the heart of the book are two "tales of transformation" which have been constructed to advance "theories in process" of transformative pastoral leadership. These stories are ethnographic thick descriptions of pastors working with congregational leaders to transform issues in their context at a time and place.

²³ Osmer, 196-198.

²⁴ Ibid., 176

²⁵ Ibid., 191

²⁶ Ibid.

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Recognizing the particularity of field research of a limited number of cases, I discuss the issue of “generalizability”²⁷ that is peculiar to qualitative research. I say on my course learning site:

Depending on your own situation, context, and culture, you may or may not resonate with these thick descriptions. This is to be expected as field research does not lend itself towards prescriptive generalized “cookie-cutter” approaches to doing ministry. Rather, we are searching for useful concepts, principles, theories, models, and insights for your toolkit as clergy who guide and shape congregational life. It is my hope that, through this book, “The Black Church,” historically an “invisible institution,” will be made more visible as a resource for renewing the flourishing of American congregational and communal life in a 21st century context which is decidedly not “post-racial.”

After this expression of humility regarding this ethnographic research, I invite students to explore my bold proposal of my eleven convictions about the essential features of “transformative pastoral leadership.” The epilogue names these convictions.

1. Transformative Pastoral Leadership is cooperation with God's transforming work in the world.

²⁷ In the Doctor of Ministry program and Columbia, most students utilize some form of qualitative research. Though the Transformative Pastoral Leadership course is not a research methods course, I had a “sidebar” discussion with D. Min. students who may have similar projects of practical theological research though on a smaller scale. I reflected with the students on “the problem of generalization” in qualitative research. This broadens the discussion from the implicit question of “Can students in a historically Presbyterian seminary learn anything from research in the Black Church” to the question, “Can qualitative research be of use if it’s findings cannot be transferred from one context to another?” Swinton and Mowat, offer this insightful response: “...it is true that aspects of human experience are unique and unrepeatable. Nevertheless, there remains a degree of shared experience which we believe can, to an extent, transfer from one context to another. Perhaps the doubts over generalizability can be alleviated if we think in terms of *identification* and *resonance*. While the findings of qualitative research studies may not be immediately transferrable to other contexts, there is a sense in which qualitative research should resonate with the experiences of others in similar circumstances. This resonance should invoke a sense of identification with those who share something of the experience.” John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 47.

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2. Transformative Pastoral Leadership involves commitment to both priestly and prophetic functions of Christian ministry.
3. Transformative Pastoral Leadership engages creative thinking of ideological entrepreneurs.
4. Transformative Pastoral Leadership is intentional spiritual leadership.
5. Transformative Pastoral Leadership fosters continuity with valued traditions of the church as well as changing traditions which are outmoded.
6. Transformative Pastoral Leadership is centered in a shared pastoral vocation to care for persons, for congregations, and for communities.
7. Transformative Pastoral Leadership requires the active, creative, and reflective work of congregational adaptation.
8. Transformative Pastoral Leadership is servant leadership.
9. Transformative Pastoral Leadership is visionary leadership.
10. Transformative Pastoral Leadership requires transformation of attitudes and behaviors.
11. Transformative Pastoral Leadership requires the ongoing transformation/ growth and development of the pastoral leader.

The third module of the course engaged the cross-disciplinary insights of the book, *Passionate Visionary* by Ascough and Cotton.²⁸ It offers an opportunity to be inspired and guided in an understanding of transformational leadership by an exemplary leader of the early church, the Apostle Paul. The authors (a New Testament scholar and a Leadership scholar) create a dialogue between critical understanding of Paul in his context and exploration of contemporary leadership theories in our 21st century contexts. Their discussion presents Paul as an exemplar for leaders who are passionate visionaries, as a model for those who seek to inspire others, as one with practical wisdom for nurturing communities, and one with compassionate concern. In my discussion board, I select questions to focus our discussion around concepts that recur in the course.

²⁸ Richard S. Ascough and Charles A. Cotton, *Passionate Visionary: Leadership Lessons from the Apostle Paul*. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006)

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The fourth and final module of the pre-residential section engages the theories and practices of adaptive leadership explicated by Heifitz, Grashow, and Linsky.²⁹ Using insights from evolutionary biology as a metaphor, the authors provide 7 statements to describe adaptive leadership:

1. Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive.
2. Adaptive leadership is specifically about change that enables the capacity to thrive. Leadership must wrestle with normative questions of value, purpose, and process that contributes to the thriving of the organization in challenging circumstances.
3. Successful adaptive changes build on the past rather than jettison it.
4. Organizational adaptation occurs through experimentation.
5. Adaption relies on diversity.
6. New adaptations significantly displace, reregulate, and rearrange some old DNA.
7. Adaptation takes time.

These four discussion modules were the basis for face-to-face concept review on the opening day of the residential session. I scheduled one-on-one consultations with each student who desired it (4 of 5) to discuss their ideas for writing their case studies.

Curricular Content Explored in the Post-Residential Period

The purpose of the two-week post-residential period was to create space for further reflection, reading or re-reading, research, and formulation of the intervention strategy. My intention was that the intervention strategy (focusing on the pragmatic strategic task of practical theology) grow out of students' diagnosis of system and self. Further, I instructed the students to write their final paper in consultation with trusted ministry partners in context: "In your final paper, you will revisit the case that you presented and the wisdom received from your presentation from your peers and instructor to devise a "frame experiment" which may succeed or fail."

In his book, *As One with Authority*, Carroll describes this reflection in action as follows:

"As they reflect-in-action on what they are doing and attend to reflexive talk-back from the situation, reflective practitioners may make one of several responses. They may continue with the course they have chosen. It seems to be working. They may try other solutions and assess their implications for the problem. Or, they may reassess their original understanding of the problem, reframe the problem and test it with another on-the-spot experiment. The framing- experimentation-reframing sequence continues until some resolution is found or one decides that she is facing a presently intractable problem. The

²⁹ Ronald A. Heifitz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and World* (Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Press, 2009)

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successes and failures of the process become part of the practitioner's experience. They become a part of a repertoire of examples for future situations of practice."³⁰

Following Carroll's method of reflective leadership, the paper was a final performance demonstrating students' multi-faceted formation and capacities for transformative pastoral leadership fostered **before and during the course**. This required students to demonstrate the integration of knowledge and skills to read a situation; to distinguish technical and adaptive challenges that the congregation and/ or individual is facing; to critically interpret from their congregation's heritage and religious traditions elements that must be preserved and those that must be "discarded" or "rearranged"; their appropriate use of the knowledge from class resources; their prior personal and professional experience; and (not least of all) their *faith* to construct and enact a faithful response. The post-residential study was designed to create a learning trajectory for embodied learning of a practice (the focal "practice" of transformative pastoral leadership). I revisited Bonnie Miller Mc-Lemore's litany for teaching ministry practices: "experience the practice, practice it, tell about it, ask questions about it, read about it, write about it, practice it, do it, and empower others to do it."

The final curricular resource offered was selected chapters from *Transforming Leadership: New Vision for a Church in Mission* by Everitt and Nesson.³¹ I have mused that this book is the prescriptive text on transformative pastoral leadership that I wish that I had written. It was highly useful to anchor some of the themes/ threads of the course.

1. Transformative Pastoral Leadership is cooperating with God's transforming work in the world.
2. Transformative Pastoral Leadership is a communal activity of the people of God.
3. Transformative Pastoral Leadership involves leaders themselves being transformed.
4. Transformative Pastoral Leadership attends to contextual realities, honoring the past while creating a different future.
5. Transformative Pastoral Leadership is adaptive leadership in the sense of mobilizing people to face their most difficult problems—often related to congregational identity and congregational mission.

Conclusion

In this paper, I explore the multi-faceted nature of the formation of religious leaders by describing instructor contribution to formation in a recently taught Doctor of Ministry Course, Transformative Pastoral Leadership. I employ content, methods, models, and rules of art of practical theologians as an approach to teaching the practice of transformative pastoral leadership to competent ministers in a course of study aimed toward advanced understanding of the practice of ministry. This complex work requires attention to the integrating work of theological education of ministers. This includes course design which integrates subject

³⁰ Carroll, 122

³¹ Everitt and Nesson, 1-28, 40-51.

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matter with contexts of the classroom as well as student congregational and communal contexts. This formation of reflective leaders in theological school classrooms engages student learning trajectories prior to our courses enabling the integration of faith, knowledge, experiences and skills.

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