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PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN ONLINE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF PREPARING PASTORAL PRACTICE THROUGH DISCURSIVE ACTIVITY

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PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN ONLINE CHRISTIAN
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF PREPARING PASTORAL
PRACTICE THROUGH DISCURSIVE ACTIVITY

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DISSERTATION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
College of Education
at the University of Kentucky

By
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Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Joan M. Mazur, Ph.D.,

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Lexington, Kentucky

2012

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN ONLINE CHRISTIAN
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF PREPARING PASTORAL
PRACTICE THROUGH DISCURSIVE ACTIVITY

The purpose of this dissertation study was to explore the professional preparation of students in online classes at a Christian theological seminary. Concerns of theological education involve the capacity or incapacity of community development and somatic or embodied learning in online education. Using a theoretical framework drawn from communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), professional clergical preparation (Foster, Dahill, Golemon, & Tolentino, 2005), and Gee's (2000-2001) dimensions of identity development, the researcher focused the analyses on students' written texts located in the discussion board fora of the online courses. These records were examined for indications of formation of the professional identity of the developing clergy, interpretation skills necessary for the clergy, performance development for activities entailed in the profession, and contextualization proficiencies for the situated enactment of the local church ministry essential in the practice of the professional clergy. The study concludes that students' discussions evince dimensions of the development of professional identity and pastoral imagination as described in Foster, Dahill, Golemon, & Tolentino (2005). In addition, stories shared on the discussion fora, told both by the instructors and the classmates who had a range of experience in first careers or in pastoral ministry, built *a shared repertoire* of professional practice as inherent in a Community of Practice (Wenger,1998). The dissertation study confirms if and then identifies how graduate students in online ministerial preparation use discursive and interactive participation to identify with the professional Community of Practice of the clergy

The structures of the discussion board fora, the roles of the instructor, and implications for instructional designs that may support the development of pastoral professional identity are also included.   Findings demonstrated that less structured discussion prompts as well as more frequent postings stimulated more student-student interaction that built relationships. Courses that focused more on student-content interactions had less relationship building. A non-evaluative facilitation tone of the discussion fora generated a more collaborative environment. In classes that utilized a learn-by-doing approach, collaborative student discursive activity in the discussion fora

supported and enhanced learning. Creative discursive activities such as case studies and role plays provided simulated experiences and spurred narrative development of shared repertoire.

 Rovina L. Hatcher
Student's Signature

 January 23, 2013
Date

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Date

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice model is observed in the business world (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) and is accepted by educators (Putz & Arnold, 2001; Rogers, 2000; Schwen & Hara, 2003; Sorensen & Murchu, 2003; Trentin, 2002) to describe a group of people who are mutually engaged in a joint enterprise developing a shared repertoire that negotiates meaning and furthers communal identity and personal identity within the social context of work. Questions have been raised whether a school environment can be a community of practice (D. Hung & Nichani, 2002) and especially if an online learning environment could function as a community of practice (Jones, 2001). These questions have been prominent in theological education that is the focus of this dissertation study. Delamarter (2004) conducted a survey among forty-three theological seminaries with onsite visits to eleven of the seminaries and found educators asking questions such as "How can community be formed when they can't even see one another?" and "How can people be formed for ministry when they don't even meet face-to-face?" (p. 137). These questions plague educators when faced with computer-mediated instruction such as is found in online classes especially in fields such as theological education that intrinsically value community. Indeed, questions regarding the capacity of online programs to provide a community of learning is a central reason for the hesitant acceptance of online learning in theological education. In this dissertation study I researched the online program of one theological seminary that has undertaken online education for fifteen years to see if and how elements of a community of practice are in evidence in the online classes of those theological students preparing for, or extending membership in, the professional clergy.

Online Education in Academic Institutions

Online education in academic institutions is in its fourth decade of practice and

has experienced tremendous growth in the last decade among academic institutions of

higher education within the United States. Allen and Seaman (2012) report in their

Going the Distance: Online Education in the United States, 2011 report that the number

of tertiary students taking at least one online course from colleges and universities in the

United States has nearly quadrupled from 1,602,970 in 2002 to 6,142,280 in 2010.

Online students accounted for 31.3% of the total higher education enrollment in the Fall

2010. In this study with a usable response from 2,512 higher education institutions,

Allen and Seaman found that 65.5% of these institutions indicated online education was a

strategic element for long-term development of the institution.[1]

In a five-year study produced in 2007, these same authors Allen and Seaman

(2007) found the greatest growth rate is seen in programs that grant associate's degrees,

specialist's, master's, and doctoral degree students. In contrast, baccalaureate program

online enrollment has only seen a compound annual growth rate of 6.9% in the previous

five years as compared to a 21.5% compound annual growth rate for all categories of

higher education online students. As more students, especially non-traditional students,

and more educational institutions participate in online education, it has been increasingly

necessary for educators to investigate what occurs in these virtual classes to facilitate

effective e-learning environments (Baker, 2004; De Bruyn, 2004; Gunawardena, Lowe,

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[1] The Babson Survey Research Group worked in partnership with the College Board, an association of more than 5,000 educational institutions which now collects data concerning online education in its Annual Survey of Colleges. The annual survey is funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

& Anderson, 1997; Hirumi, 2002; Palloff & Pratt, 1999; Rovai, 2001; Swan, 2002; Tu & McIsaac, 2002; R. H. Woods, 2002; R. H. Woods & Baker, 2004).

Online Christian theological education. As I show in this dissertation, the development of community is central to traditional Christian theological education. Historically theological education has taken place within monasteries or residential campuses (see Rowdon, 1971 for an historical overview) and many theological educators have not believed community can occur in a virtual world (Carroll, Wheeler, Aleshire, & Marler, 1997; Delamarter, 2004). Consequently, institutions involved in Christian theological education have been slower to offer online education than those institutions of general education.

Graduate-level Christian theological educational institutions offer academic and professional degrees such as the Master of Divinity, a three-year graduate program in preparation for Christian ministry; Master of Arts degrees in several areas including Christian/Religious Education and its specialties, Biblical Studies, Theological Studies, Spiritual Formation, Christian Leadership; Missions/Intercultural Studies, Counseling; as well as Master of Religious Education; Master of Theology; Master of Sacred Music; Master of Ministry and multiple doctoral degree programs. This list is not an exhaustive list but indicates the content diversity of these degree programs. Moreover, many students enrolled in these graduate programs are non-traditional students (Miller, n.d.)[2].

The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (the Association) includes the Commission on Accrediting, which approves the degree

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[2] SeminaryGradSchool is a website maintained by *Christianity Today* providing free resources of seminary and grad school search tools, information on individual school information, and other helps on preparation for advanced education.

programs, and is an accrediting body of graduate-level theological schools (i.e.,

seminaries, divinity schools, colleges and universities with graduate-level theological

programs). The Association reported a membership of 260 schools including 11

associate members in the "Data Tables 2011-12" (Association of Theological Schools).

These data tables do not provide any data concerning the number of online students or

online classes/programs offered by the member schools. Information is provided on

gender, age, and race/ethnicity of the students. In the administrator salary listings for

"selected" administrators, there is no mention of positions for online programs such as

the Director of Distributed/Distance Learning.

In an optional technology survey conducted among the Association of Theological

Schools members in 1999 with responses from 201 schools, 63 reported distance

education programs with 42 schools reporting they offered one or more programs

completely in distance education format (Amos, 1999). In follow-up phone interviews

with those schools, only 3 schools reported that they offered more than 20 for-credit

courses in distance format and only 2 schools offered portions of a degree program

through distance education. In the distance education offered by these schools 29 of the

schools utilized the Internet and 45 used e-mail for their distance courses a number of

which were independent study courses.

Some of the leading theological graduate educational institutions in online

education have been Bethel Seminary (St. Paul) starting its online offerings in 1995 and

Asbury Theological Seminary that began in 1997 with its program. The number of

theological schools offering distance or online classes has expanded in the subsequent

years. *Christianity Today* (Kennedy, 2010) reported 102 members of the Association

having distance programs. While the Association's annual data tables do not compile

information on distance programs and distance students, the Association's website in

September, 2012 listed 131 member schools with distance programs (Association of

Theological Schools, n.d.).

The Association of Theological Schools requires a one-year residency at a

residential campus of the degree-issuing institution for the three-year Master of Divinity

degree from accredited member schools (Delamarter, 2004). In 2010 the Degree

Program Standard stated,

> A.3.2.1 MDiv education has a complex goal: the personal, vocational, spiritual, and academic formation of the student. Because of the importance of a comprehensive community of learning, the MDiv cannot be viewed simply as an accumulation of courses or of individual independent work. In order to ensure an appropriate educational community, at least one year of full-time academic study or its equivalent shall be completed at the main campus of the school awarding the degree or at an extension site of the institution that has been approved for MDiv degree-granting status. (Association of Theological Schools, 2010, p. 111)

The following paragraph allotted if an institution utilized distance/online learning, it must

"demonstrate" how the distance/online learning met the requirements.

> A.3.2.2 If requirements can be completed in extension centers or by means of distance learning, the institution must be able to demonstrate how the community of learning, education for skills particular to this degree, and formational elements of the program are made available to students. (Association of Theological Schools, 2010, p. 112)

In June 2012 the Association modified the degree program standards increasing the status

for distance/online education to be listed with other instructional delivery options;

however, the one-year residency requirement still appeared in a following paragraph.

> A.3.1.1 MDiv education has a complex goal: the personal, vocational, spiritual, and academic formation of the student. …. The location, or learning environment, can occur in multiple patterns that include, but are not limited to, in-person faculty-student instructional contact on a campus or extension site, online/technologically mediated forms of instruction, supervised ministry practice, and formats that blend instructional modalities. Institutions shall clearly

articulate the manner in which they provide the learning environment or supportive context for effective, comprehensive, theological education. An institution shall demonstrate that its students are engaged in a community of learning whereby faculty and students have significant opportunities for interaction, peer learning, development of pastoral skills, supervised experiences of ministry, and growth in personal, spiritual formation.

A.3.1.3 Because MDiv education expects regular and substantive student-faculty interaction to achieve the stipulated learning outcomes, this interaction requires that at least one year of full-time academic study or its equivalent shall be completed at the main campus of the school awarding the degree or at an extension site of the institution that has been approved for MDiv degree-granting status. An exception may be granted if a school can demonstrate how its educational design and delivery system accomplishes the learning outcomes associated with residential theological study. (Association of Theological Schools, 2012b, p. G41)

The final sentence allows a potential exception to the one-year residence rule but again necessitates the demonstration by the institution of the how the learning outcomes are accomplished through other than face-to-face interactions.

A few Christian universities with graduate theological programs have pioneered fully online Master of Divinity programs; however, the Association of Theological Schools does not accredit these schools to date. In 2006 Northwest Nazarene University (NNU) offered a completely online Master of Divinity program with no residency requirement. NNU did receive associate membership status in the Association of Theological Schools in 2010 (Northwest Nazarene University, July 7, 2010). In 2009 Indiana Wesleyan University (IWU) established Wesley Seminary with a fully online Master of Divinity, which has since received associate membership status in the Association (Indiana Wesleyan University, n.d.). The degree programs of the associate member schools are not approved by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association and thus are not accredited by the Association. These schools and others like them are accredited through regional accrediting bodies such as Northwest Commission on

Colleges and Universities and North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The value of ATS membership and accompanying accreditation of a graduate school for its graduates varies with the graduate's denomination. Some denominations may not accept the degree as qualification for ordination into the clergy while other denominations would.

The Problem

The popularity and growth of online education that provides educational possibilities for the non-traditional student is driving more and more Christian theological schools to provide online courses and programs. Yet, many academics, especially in theological education, continue to be skeptical of these courses (Kemp, 2002). Voices for and against online Christian theological education can be found. From his study of forty-three seminaries in 2003 Delamarter (2005) identifies twenty-six concerns with online education voiced by faculty and administrators in these schools. Arguments against online education voiced by theological educators include financial/stewardship arguments, pedagogical arguments, sociological arguments, and theological arguments (Delamarter, 2004; Kelsey, 2002). However, other voices affirm the value of online learning (Ascough, 2002; Esselman, 2004; Gresham, 2006; Rovai, 2001; Ruth, 2006). Perhaps these conflicting views on the value of online environments for theological education can be summed up in these oppositional remarks by Esselman (2004). Reporting from his personal teaching experiment with web-enhanced distance learning he states, "Web-based teaching and learning and other instructional technologies can effectively promote the curricular goals of students in graduate degree ministry programs" (p. 160). However, Esselman also qualifies "online teaching and learning

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alone is inadequate to foster the kind of transformation needed in ministry formation" (p. 166).

Community. With the introduction of Internet-based classes, a constant concern among educators has been the challenge of community in courses where the instructor and students never meet face to face. Community is an influential issue for constructivist education generally and by extension to the focal case of theological education that is the subject of this study. In regards to theological education Esselman (2004) states,

> The ultimate goal of theological education is wisdom, that deeper kind of learning that takes place through participation…. In the theological setting, wisdom involves the transformation of the person, a dynamic process that unites heart and mind in a holistic movement toward maturity in discipleship. The notion of a wisdom community reflects the age-old experience and conviction that no one prepares for ministry alone, that intellectual, ministerial, and spiritual transformation always takes place in the context of community (p. 164).

Some have held that community can only occur in face-to-face environments where participants have geographical proximity to one another.

Proponents of online education maintain that community is possible but does not necessarily develop in the activities of an online class. Research has been done concerning social presence and immediacy and the sense of community (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Rovai, 2002a; R. H. Woods & Baker, 2004). Wenger et al. (2002) identify three fundamental elements of a community of practice: a *domain* of knowledge, a *community* of people interested in this domain, and a shared *practice* the group of people are developing within the domain. The knowledge is an "integral part of their activities and interactions" (p. 9). Lave and Wenger (1991) summarize that

> A theory of social practice emphasizes the relational interdependency of agent and world, activity, meaning, cognition, learning, and knowing. It emphasizes the inherently socially negotiated character of meaning and the interested, concerned character of the thought and action of persons-in-activity. (pp. 50-51)

Lave and Wenger speak of the interaction of what they later called a Community of

Practice (CoP) in order to produce meaning, and they state,

> Knowledge of the socially constituted world is socially mediated and open ended.
> Its meaning to given actors, its furnishings, and the relations of humans with/in it,
> are produced, reproduced, and changed in the course of activity (which includes
> speech and thought, but cannot be reduced to one or the other). (p. 51)

The activity in which meaning is produced, as they noted, includes speech and thought.

Members of a community of practice develop an identity within the community through

what Wenger (1998) calls Modes of Belonging, which involve engagement, imagination,

and alignment. Online classes have been referred to as Communities of Practice, but

there is doubt as to whether learning communities and especially online learning

communities are truly CoPs (D. Hung & Nichani, 2002).

Barab and Duffy (2000) speak of practice fields and Communities of Practice.

They claim that while both support shared goals, meanings and practices of a group

working together collaboratively, the CoP members have a shared history within the

community, which forms the identity of the individuals within the community as well as

the identity of the community. Barab and Duffy detail how the CoP members pass along

their stories to explain and enrich the codified training of the community. Can a

classroom, especially an online classroom, go beyond a practice field to a CoP?

Identity development. Corresponding to Wenger's (1998) identity within a

community of practice, Gee (2000-2001) identified four means through which people

develop their identities: Natural (N), Institutional (I), Discursive (D), and Affinity group

(A), which interact with one another. An affinity group gathers around an interest and

within their discursive activities, the members develop their identities based upon their

natural characteristics and abilities that are recognized by other group members. The

affinity group and its members may be influenced by an institution and thus also be affected by an institutional identity as well.

  Professional identity development. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching conducted a decade-long study of theological education for numerous professions including the professional clergy. The researchers in that study of theological education found four major categories of pedagogies employed by theological educators: pedagogies of formation, performance, interpretation and contextualization (Foster, Dahill, Golemon, & Tolentino, 2005). (This study is referred to as the Carnegie study.) Through these instructional activities—that is, through these pedagogies—theological students gained the ways of thinking and knowing as well as the skills necessary for their work as pastors in local congregations. Foster et al. referenced the student outcomes of these instructional activities as the development of a *pastoral imagination*. The data analysis in this dissertation focuses on evidence of students' expressions of these ways of thinking and knowing within the development of pastoral imagination.

  The Carnegie study (Foster et al., 2005) provides professional standards for theological education. While it is recognized that professional identity development occurs over time, this study is a snapshot of semester classes to determine if the students give evidence of this process within those online classes. If the students are developing a professional identity through their educational preparation, this study assumes that the students will give evidence that they are interacting with the key issues of the professional identity within individual courses.

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Gender differences. Research has also been done concerning power issues in gender differences in the online environment (Garland & Martin, 2005; C. Gunn, McSporran, Macleod, & French, 2003; Rovai & Baker, 2005). Rovai (2001) found voice differences that he identified as an independent voice, mostly used by male participants, and a connected voice, mostly identified with female participants. As theological education seeks to provide ministerial preparation for male and female students, there is concern to avoid marginalization of participants.

Statement of the Problem

The major question is if theological students can develop identity within a community such as the professional clergy with the requisite mindframe and skills through discursive activity in online education.

Research Questions

As many seminaries, like most educational institutions, turn to online coursework options, it is crucial to explore the relationship between these kinds of online courses and the development (or not) of community formation. Moreover, an investigation of community formation, in a practice profession, such as theological education, needs to explore the extent to which a Community of Practice may develop or otherwise be in evidence. Understanding these relationships has implications for the design of instruction in these online courses and for assessing the development of professional practitioners in ministry. To examine these issues the following research questions are offered:

1. To what extent do the participants exhibit a sense of belonging to the Community of Practice? Wenger (1998) identified alignment, imagination, and engagement

as the components of the Modes of Belonging. To what extent are these apparent in the online discussions?

2. What evidence, if any, is there of the development of professional identity of participants in these online classes?

   a. What evidence, if any, is there of formative learning[3] of the participants, especially practicing the presence of God, practicing holiness, and practicing religious leadership?

   b. What evidence, if any, is there of performance learning[4] employed by the professional clergy in decisions and activities?

   c. What evidence, if any, is there of interpretative learning including methods of interpretation and critical thinking?

   d. What evidence, if any, is there of learning from contextualization involving occasions of contextual consciousness, contextual encounters, and contextual transformation?

3. If community and professional identity development are in evidence in online discussion fora, how does it occur? What are the discursive forms, if any?

4. Are there design implications for online theological education discussion fora?

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[3] Formative learning from the Carnegie study refers to learning involving spiritual formation that is inherent to the professional identity of the clergy. Spiritual formation involves moral development and ethical concerns that are considered in character formation along with behaviors that are specific to the Christian faith encompassed in loving God with one's whole heart, soul, and mind, and loving others as oneself.

[4] Again from the Carnegie study performance learning refers to learning surrounding decisions and actions related to activities of the professional clergy. As will be shown in Chapter 2 the Carnegie study relates performance and formation.

Significance of the Study

The study added to the body of knowledge concerning the appropriateness of online classes to be considered as Communities of Practice given the online structure at one graduate-level theological school. The Barna Group (2005) reported that 47% of American adults in 2005 were likely to attend a church service on any typical weekend and about two-thirds of parents with children under the age of 12 were reported in 2003 to attend religious services at least once a month and to take their children with them (The Barna Group, 2003). Religious activities are led by pastors, priests, and rabbis who have influence upon a large segment of American society through families and children. Thus, an understanding of the preparation of these clerics, like those of educators, should be a focus of inquiry to capture effective methods and productive approaches in theological education. The current study also describes the facilitation of community development within the online class by the faculty member and the students participating in the discussion fora as well as the understanding of professional identity formation as defined within a community of practice in online theological education.

Outline of the Study

In this dissertation study, I begin Chapter Two with the conceptual framework for the study and provide a review of relevant literature. Chapter Three articulates the method for this study. An exploratory pilot study, conducted at the Seminary in 2003-05, identified elements of a CoP in an online class and has informed the current study. I submit the case study design details including the participants and content of the study and the procedures for the data collection and analysis. Limitations of the study are acknowledged along with how these limitations affect the study. Chapter Four presents

an analysis of online discussion fora for thirteen courses across the curriculum of an online program in a graduate theological seminary. In Chapter Five a discussion of the findings and implications for online professional clergy education and the design of discussion fora within professional theological education is presented.

Definitions of Key Terms

Affinity group identity (A-identity). Gee (2000-2001) speaks of an identity that comes from engagement or "sets of distinctive experiences" (p. 105) with a group and its practices.

Alignment. Alignment "coordinat[es] our energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises" (Wenger, 1998, p. 174) and involves *discourses*, *coordinated enterprises*, *complexity*, *styles*, and *compliance*.

Christian education. Sometimes theological education is used synonymously with the phrase Christian education but in this study it is not. This research study uses the term "Christian education" as the (1) activities within the parish or local church among the parishioners or congregants and their interaction in the community beyond or (2) to refer to general education that is based in a private Christian K-12 school, college or university.

Community of Practice (CoP). A group of people who are mutually engaged in a joint enterprise developing a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). A key element of the CoP framework is *participation.*

Contextualization. The Carnegie study identifies contextualization as "the task of making explicit the socially situated nature of all knowledge and practice" (Foster et

al., 2005, p. 132) with three identified pedagogies: *contextual consciousness*, *contextual encounter*, and *contextual transformation*.

Discursive identity (D-identity). Gee's (2000-2001) identity perspective that arises from the discourse or dialog of others.

Discussion forum. The discussion forum is a written textual, asynchronous medium where participants post comments and reply to one another. A discussion forum is different than a chat, which has all participants communicating synchronously. The participants sign in to the discussion forum to write and read comments. Documents can be attached but there are no audio or video conferencing capabilities.

Distance education. Definitions of distance education often include off-site classes that meet face-to-face as well as classes that meet completely online (Cannell, 1999; Kemp, 2002).

Emergent design. Qualitative research tends to be emergent in that "the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and that all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enter the field and begin to collect data" (Creswell, 2012, p. 47).

Engagement. Wenger (1998) describes engagement as "active involvement in mutual processes of negotiation of meaning" (p. 173). Engagement in a Community of Practice involves *shared histories of learning*, *interactions*, *relationships*, and *practices* and three processes: "1) the ongoing negotiation of meaning, 2) the formation of trajectories, and 3) the unfolding of histories of practice" (p. 174).

Formation, professional. Formation as a member of the professional clergy begins foremost with spiritual formation of the individual as a follower of Jesus Christ.

The professional clergy person then leads her or his congregation in spiritual formation of the members through teaching and modeling in relationships with one another. The Carnegie study identified pedagogies that led student clergy in *practicing the presence of God*, *practicing holiness,* and *practicing religious leadership* (Foster et al., 2005).

Identity formation. The negotiation of meanings that define our communities and our participation within the community. Wenger (1998) states, "Identity is a locus of social selfhood and by the same token a locus of social power" (p. 207). This definition builds upon Lave and Wenger's (1991) identification that a person is defined by a system of relations within a community as well as defining those relations. Wenger's use of identity relates to the Carnegie study's professional identity but the Carnegie study's identity is confined to a specific profession, that of the clergy.

Imagination. Imagination as used in the Community of Practice paradigm is "creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from our own experience" (Wenger, 1998, p. 173). Imagination involves *images of possibilities*, *images of the world*, *images of the past and the future*, *images of ourselves*.

Institutional identity (I-identity). Gee (2000-2001) recognizes an identity that is given a person from the authority of an institution.

Interactional communication and transactional communication. Interactional communication is two-way or multi-way communication that provides a give-and-take in communication between persons. Transactional communication refers to one-way communication that is intended to deliver content from one person to another with little or no return communication (R. H. Woods & Baker, 2004).

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Interpretation. Interpretation as identified in the Carnegie study involves critical thinking by an interpreter on a phenomenon to be interpreted with interaction between the interpreter and phenomenon using a method of interpretation (Foster et al., 2005).

Joint enterprise. One of the "dimensions of practice as a property of a community" (Wenger, 1998, p. 73) that involves a negotiated enterprise, mutual accountability, interpretations, rhythms, and local response.

Modes of belonging. Wenger (1998) identifies three modes of belonging within a community of practice: imagination, alignment, and engagement. Each mode is defined separately in this list of definitions.

Mutual engagement. One of the "dimensions of practice as a property of a community" (Wenger, 1998, p. 73) that engages diversity, does things together, and involves relationships, social complexity, and community maintenance.

Natural identity (N-identity). Gee (2000-2001) identifies identities that arise from nature that "are *recognized* … as meaningful in the sense they constitute … [a] kind of person" (p. 102). N-identities "gain their force as identities through the work of institutions, discourse and dialogue, or affinity groups" (p. 102).

Online classes. This term is used for a single section of an online course that is offered over the Internet. Any given course may be taught as one or more class sections by the same or different instructors. While frequently meaning the same as "online course" especially if there is only one section offering during a term, "online class" means a single offering of the course when multiple offerings might be available.

Online courses. The instructional activities are completely carried out over the Internet through computer mediated communication (CMC) often through a course

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management system (CMS) or websites designed by the instructor or the educational institution. The instructor and the students do not meet face to face for any scheduled course activities. The online course in this writing is referring to a course listed in the curriculum that is taught over the Internet.

Online education. Online education meets fully online through mediated communication, frequently the Internet, with no required meeting of the students with the professor in a geophysical space. As noted previously, online education is frequently included in Distance Education. This study focuses on online education.

Participation. Wenger uses participation "to describe the social experience of living in the world in terms of membership in social communities and active involvement in social enterprises" (Wenger, 1998, p. 55). Participation involves acting, interacting, and mutuality within the community.

Pastoral imagination. The pastoral imagination in the Carnegie study involves "ways of thinking [that are] linked constructively with ways of being and doing" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 22).

Performance. The Carnegie study uses performance as "a way of thinking and being revealed in the act of doing, carrying out, or putting into effect.…" In this study performance references the actions and skills of the professional clergy. The Carnegie study continues, "[I]n practicing the performances of preaching, teaching, praying, theological reflection, exegesis, pastoral care, or administrative oversight, clergy take on the habits of thinking and dispositions of the practice" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 158).

Reification. Wenger (1998) uses reification "to refer to the process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into 'thingness"

(p. 58). These reified objects includes forms, points of focus, documents, monuments, instruments, and projection.

Shared history of learning. Wenger (1998) states that "Communities of Practice can be thought of as shared histories of learning" (p. 86) in that they involve "mutual engagement in pursuing an enterprise together to share some significant learning" (p. 86).

Shared repertoire. A shared repertoire is one of the "dimensions of practice as a property of a community" (Wenger, 1998, p. 73) where resources are produced in joint enterprise for meaning negotiation. These resources include "routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted … which have become part of its practices" (Wenger, 1998, p. 83) as well as historical events, styles, artifacts, discourses, among other items.

Theological education. Theological education as it is used in this research refers to the preparation for specialized ministry within the Protestant church context.

Theological schools. Theological schools refer to those schools engaged in professional theological education. This research focuses on theological education as engaged within theological schools for professional pastors or clergy.

Chapter 2:   Conceptual Framework and Review of the Literature

This chapter develops the conceptual framework for the study and presents a survey of the literature relevant to the development of professional identity in the community of practice of the clergy during online theological education. An introduction to Christian theological education orients the reader as to the background of ministerial preparation. The second topic area considers definitions of community and the concern for community in theological education. The broad frames of social learning, Communities of Practice and identity formation are articulated and integrated as a conceptual lens for the work.

The literature review then considers learning communities, including online learning communities, and aspects of Communities of Practice such as situated learning, social learning theory, and constructivism, and identity development. The literature review subsequently provides a discussion of gender issues in online education and methods used to analyze online discussions. In conclusion I provide a summary of how this review of literature relates to the research questions of the study.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework provides the backdrop of theological education for the current study and describes the theoretical background. This study integrates theories from social learning involving Lave and Wenger's (1991) Community of Practice, the discursive identity of Gee's (2000-2001) Identity Development, and professional identity development as articulated through the Carnegie study (Foster et al., 2005) of the preparation of the clergy. From this integration of theory the current study examined the

discursive activity of online theological education for evidence of components of professional identity development in the community of practice of the clergy.

Theological education. Christian theological education is broadly conceived as the preparation of persons for professional ministry in the parish or local church or congregation. While theological education is extant in most faiths, this research focuses on the preparation for ministry in the Christian theological traditions. Traditionally Christian theological education was for males who desired or experienced a spiritual calling to be a priest (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Episcopalian, Orthodox) or pastor (Protestant). Today females are also included in theological education in many schools but not all. This research is limited to Protestant theological education and includes females as well as males, both as faculty and students. Also while Protestant theological education may take different forms in different areas of the world, the review of relevant literature focuses mainly on theological education in the United States.

Theological education is offered at the undergraduate, graduate or non-degree levels. Some denominations, e.g., the United Methodist Church, require a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) for ordination of their clergy. A Master of Divinity study program is professional preparation for pastoral ministry in a local church and is a multi-year study program frequently requiring three or more years with 90+ credit hours of study. This type of graduate program has generally been offered at a residential school usually termed a theological seminary, divinity school, or school of theology; the later two often are affiliated with a university, such as the Harvard Divinity School or Candler School of Theology, Emory University. A theological seminary typically offers only graduate degrees.

Other Protestant denominations, such as the Church of the Nazarene, the Salvation Army, the Wesleyan Church, and others, accept non-degree or undergraduate pastoral preparation programs of study for clergy ordination. Protestant liberal arts colleges and universities and Bible colleges offer other theological education degree programs other than the M.Div. at both the undergraduate and the graduate level.

The Association of Theological Schools (the Association) in the United States and Canada is an accrediting body of graduate-level theological schools (i.e., seminaries, divinity schools, Christian colleges and universities with graduate-level theological programs) with a membership of 260 schools and 221 member schools in the United States (Association of Theological Schools, 2012a). Additionally Christian liberal arts colleges and universities and Bible colleges, which offer undergraduate theological education, are not accredited by the Association but they are accredited by regional educational accrediting bodies, such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and others (U. S. Department of Education, n.d.). Some schools are accredited by multiple accrediting agencies.

Delamarter (2004) identifies the traditional schooling model for theological education as follows:

> The 'classic paradigm of theological education' – believes that the best setting for ministry preparation is (1) full immersion for at least three years in a (2) residential program in which senior members of the community instruct, inspire and form junior members primarily through (3) lecture-based pedagogies and where students learn the art of theological reflection through (4) face-to-face community discourse, (5) library research and (6) writing. (pp. 136-137)

The theological education curriculum is both conceptual and practical—conceptual in that the core of the curriculum revolves around theology and yet practical in the skills necessary for working with people within the local church and the communities beyond.

Curriculum in theological education. The core curriculum for theological education involves courses in three content areas: biblical studies, theological studies including church heritage studies, and practical theology courses. The biblical studies courses include the study of the languages in which the Christian scriptures were originally written, mainly Hebrew and Koiné (common) Greek, and detailed studies of individual books or sections of the Christian scriptures. The theological studies focus on systematic theology, a systematized organization of a certain theological perspective's beliefs about God and one's experience with God. Theological studies include orthodox theology, based on a European-descent male perspective and often referred to as simply systematic theology, liberation theology, feminist theology, black theology, Asian theology, and others. Church Heritage courses include the study of the history of the Christian church and the formation and application of the systematic theology throughout the centuries. The practical theology courses, sometimes referred to as the *practics*, of Christian theological education include a variety of courses that wed theory and practice in the ministerial profession. Richard Osmer (2008) identified four tasks in practical theology showing the integrative nature of practical theology incorporating theories, theology, and praxis in situated learning:

- *The descriptive-empirical task.* Gathering information that helps us discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts.
- *The interpretive task.* Drawing on theories of the arts and sciences to better understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring.

- *The normative task.* Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from 'good practice.'
- *The pragmatic task.* Determining strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into a reflective conversation with the 'talk back' emerging when they are enacted (p. 4).

Osmer's conception of the tasks of the practical theology courses correspond to the four pedagogies identified in the Carnegie study (Foster et al., 2005): the *descriptive-empirical task* is concerned with contextualization, the *interpretative task* involves interpretation of texts, the *normative task* entails formation, and *the pragmatic task* includes aspects of performance.

Practics courses are extensive and include but is not limited to the following:

- preaching/homiletics and communication

- Christian education in the local churches

- pastoral counseling

- missiology (the study of cross-cultural Christian ministry) and evangelism

- church music and worship

- spiritual and personal formation

- church administration and leadership

The communication emphasis alone comprises courses in interpersonal communication, cross-cultural communication, linguistics, and technology and media used in communicating the message of the church. Missiology courses incorporate anthropology, cultural studies, world religions, and strategies for evangelism and church planting. Christian Education courses emphasize teaching-learning events and other spiritual formation activities. The Christian Education curriculum involves educational psychology and life-span development; instructional methods; curriculum; age-

appropriate ministries for children, youth, adults, and intergenerational; and institutional administration. Practical theology courses are often considered to be the application of what students have learned in biblical studies as well as theological and church history studies, but these courses also involve theories from other disciplines, especially from the social sciences.

Generally students are involved in practica and internships during their course of study. These practica involve placement in local churches in ministry roles, church schools such as preschools, elementary schools, and higher, cross-cultural mission work, non-government organizations (NGOs), and others. Some programs may require mentoring experiences with persons already ordained or certified in ministry.

Specialized Ministries. Currently theological schools and Protestant churches in general recognize more specialized ministries than just the senior pastor. These degree programs include other Master's degrees and are usually shorter programs than the M.Div. degree, requiring only one or two years of study. Some of these specialized ministry positions are held by ordained clergy while other positions do not require church ordination. Today's theological schools offer a wide-array of degree programs preparing persons for special ministries in Christian Education, missions, leadership, communications, counseling and the list continues to grow. Degrees for academic research ministries in biblical, theological, and historical studies are also offered. Christian Education graduates serve as Directors of Christian Education, children's pastors, youth pastors, senior adult pastors, private Christian school teachers and administrators, and other ministries. Missions ministries include cross-cultural missionaries and evangelists, Directors of Evangelism, and others. Leadership ministries

involve senior pastors, institutional leaders, business managers, and others. Communication ministries provide for web, multi-media, as well as print, audio, and video design and development.

Wesleyan theology and theological education. Today most Protestant Christian churches trace their roots to the Protestant reformers of the Roman Catholic Church, Martin Luther or John Calvin, or the Church of England reformers, brothers John and Charles Wesley. The Wesleys provided significant changes to the reformed theological positions of Luther and Calvin. Whereas, the Roman Catholic Church had held church tradition to be paramount as to how to interpret Christian scripture, the initial Protestant reformers of the 16th century held Christian scripture itself to be the source of authority for all believers. Wesleys' teachings emphasized a collaboration of Christian scripture, still paramount, with church tradition, reason, and personal spiritual experience while seeking renewal within the Church of England. (See Appendix A: John Wesley and Wesleyanism Historical Overview for background information on the development of Wesleyanism.). The setting of this dissertation study was within the Wesleyan theological tradition.

The Wesleys' theological perspective has important impact upon the education of the professional clergy within the Wesleyan theological tradition. One of the influences is the openness of Wesleyan theological education for women. From the beginning of the Wesleys' organization of Methodist Societies, they provided for the inclusion of men and women. By the end of Wesley's ministry in the late 18th century, John Wesley agreed to women preaching (Grenz & Kjesbo, 1995; Stanley, 2002) at a time when his church, the Church of England, as well as most if not all major Christian religious organizations did

not allow the inclusion of female clergy. Most denominations in a Wesleyan theological

tradition provide for the ordination of women within their clergy. Traditionally

theological education has been the domain of males. However, today theological

education has opened to women in most theological schools of both mainline

Protestantism and Wesleyan theological heritage. The Seminary in the study welcomes

and encourages women in all theological degree programs (The Seminary, 2008, p. 13).

In an online focus group chat with the researcher, four participating women all expressed

that online classes provided the opportunity for them to pursue theological education

when it would not have otherwise been possible for them at that point in time mainly due

to family needs (online chat with researcher, 2003).

Another distinctive of clergy preparation from a Wesleyan theological perspective

is a personal relationship with the Divine in the formation of the clergy as well as the

laity. The Wesley brothers, both fellows at Oxford University, read and incorporated not

only ecclesial historical writings of the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant

Reformers but also the Greek church patriarchs of the Orthodox Church tradition, which

stressed the immanence of the fatherhood of God. The Wesleyan theology emphasizes a

balance between the sovereignty or transcendence of the Divine with the immanence of

the Deity. According to this perspective, this intimate and personal relationship emphasis

arose from the teachings of Jesus, who taught his Jewish disciples to pray addressing the

Deity with the Aramaic, "Abba" (a familial term of endearment for the word, father, for

which a modern equivalent term would be "Daddy"). For example, in the parable of the

lost son (*Holy bible: New international version*, 1984, Luke 15: 11-31) Jesus used the

image of a loving father, representing the Deity, watching for and welcoming his

wayward child home with a bear-hug. These teachings brought reinterpretation in Jesus'

time of the Deity-human relationship in the original Hebrew scriptures, referred to as the

Old Testament in the Christian tradition. The Wesleys preached and taught that this

intimate relationship was only possible through the grace of God which was received by

the believers through the "means of grace" such as prayer, scripture reading and

meditation, and the sacraments of Holy Communion and baptism. The discussion fora

dialogs in the current study bear evidence of this personal, immanent relationship

between the Deity and humanity.

A third distinctive of Wesleyan theology on clergy preparation is the attention to

social holiness. John and Charles Wesley believed Scriptures taught both personal

holiness and social holiness. John Wesley, in particular, preached out-of-doors to the

masses living in poverty, who were not welcomed into the congregations of the Church

of England. He and his followers worked for reforms on child labor and other abuses

and he encouraged the establishment of the then new Sunday Schools (c. 1780), which

were designed to teach children, who worked in the factories six days a week, to read on

Sunday, their only available day. While social holiness is not a focus of the current

study, the discussion fora frequently reflected this interest.

Theological education concerns for online education. The development of

community is central to traditional theological education. Historically theological

education has taken place within monasteries and residential campuses (see Rowdon,

1971 for a brief historical overview of theological education) and many theological

educators do not believe community can occur in the virtual world (Carroll et al., 1997;

Delamarter, 2004). Inherent in community concerns is a concern for somatic or

embodied learning. The desired outcome of theological education is frequently expressed as "transformation." Marie-Claire Weinski (2008) states, "Theological education should have a life changing, transformative effect on students. It should be about coming to new and deeper understandings of Scripture and theological questions, training of ministry skills, spiritual growth, and character development" (p. 108). Delamarter et al. (2007) describe this transformative outcome to encompass "theological systems, notions about God, attitudes towards race and gender, and a host of other issues all undergoing such a profound process of change that, in a real sense, they become different people" (p. 64). Personal and spiritual formation are other terms used to describe the transformation desired in theological education. Graham (2002) identifies the deepening awareness of oneself in relation to God and others in an expanded discernment of God's creative activity in one's life and the life of one's community and "growth in moral sensibility and character" (p. 229) as well as in personal maturity.

Social learning theories. In the twentieth century several social learning theories arose in education literature including but not limited to Dewey, Vygotsky, Bandura, Wenger, and Bruner. Of specific interest to this dissertation were the social learning theories of Vygotsky (1978), which he developed prior to his death in 1934, and Wenger (1998).

Vygotskian social learning theory. Lev Vygotsky (1978), a Soviet psychologist, proposed the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in which a learner has a learning potential that is beyond her/his actual developmental stage. With the assistance of a more developed person, learning precedes development. The learner learns on two levels: an interpsychological plane between persons and then an

intrapsychological plane within oneself. Thus, learning occurs in the social realm before it is internalized, showing the interdependency of learning with the socio-cultural environment. Learning can be stimulated or enhanced through the scaffolding of resources and experiences of the learners to provide an infrastructure for traversing the ZPD.

Wenger's social learning theory. Wenger (1998) provides a social learning theory that places "learning in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world" (p. 3) rather than in a manufactured or simulated experience of traditional schooling to explain the phenomenon of Communities of Practice (CoP). His social learning theory involves four components of learning.

- Community – where learning occurs through belonging to the group
- Identity – learning occurs as we become a participant in the group and in our group identity
- Meaning – negotiating learning as experience
- Practice – learning occurs with doing

According to Wenger, identity learning occurs within the context of the community, where meaning is negotiated and the shared practice is carried out. Thus, belonging to the community is one of the initial steps in joining or forming a CoP.

Based upon the extensive ethnographic studies conducted by Lave and Wenger (1991), Wenger (1998) identified three modes of demonstrating belongingness to a community: (1) engagement that shows active participation in negotiating meaning with others, thus, developing relationships; (2) alignment where the participants' engagement with one another and the practice forms a coordinated enterprise of the larger whole, the

gestalt; and (3) imagination through which the vision of oneself within the group is enlarged so that new images of the world and the member within the world develop. These three elements enable persons to form their identities within a community and be formed by the community identity through belonging. Indicators of alignment include compliance, compatibility, coordinated enterprises, discourses, and styles. Engagement requires interactions, relationships, shared histories of learning, and practices. Imagination contains images of possibilities, images of the past and future, images of the world, and images of ourselves.

Triggs and John (2004) claim that Wenger created a social theory of learning with social participation at the heart of the learning process. The learning process involves negotiating meaning, which is how participants individually and collectively think about their abilities, and practice, which involves a shared way of interacting with the world in sustained engagement.

Communities of Practice: Situated learning, shared repertoires, and identity.
Lave and Wenger (1991) studied Yucatec midwives, Vai and Gola tailors, naval quartermasters, butchers, and nondrinking alcoholics in formal and non-formal apprenticeship-master affiliations to see how knowledge was passed from a master to a novice. The learning of these newcomers occurred in the specific context in which they lived and worked. Much of the information was passed down in the form of narratives of experiences of the master and other members of the community. Lave and Wenger found a space, which they identified as legitimate peripheral participation, where newcomers to the community of masters did not actively participate in the practice. At some point, though, the apprentices began to more fully participate to have full membership in the

31

community. The novices participated in this shared repertoire of knowledge and added

their own stories as they, too, became experienced. The learning occurred with authentic

activities guided by the master within the real-world situation.

Lave and Wenger (1991) labeled these communities as Communities of Practice

(CoP) while doing their ethnographic studies. Most definitions of Communities of

Practice are taken from Etienne Wenger's (1998) model, which he developed around the

concept of situated learning, and include how newcomers learn the practice and how

identity within the community is developed. CoP involve participants in a mutual

engagement of a joint enterprise to develop a shared repertoire of stories, experiences,

and reified products through the negotiation of meanings and the formation of identities

(Wenger, 1998). Wenger et al. (2002) define Communities of Practice as "groups of

people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who

deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (p.

4). Earlier Lave and Wenger (1991) stated that a CoP

> [does not] imply necessarily co-presence, a well-defined identifiable group, or
> socially visible boundaries. It does imply participation in an activity system about
> which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what
> that means in their lives and for their communities. (p. 98)

Wenger (1998) identifies Communities of Practice as a natural state of being human,

saying,

> Being alive as human beings means that we are constantly engaged in the pursuit
> of enterprises…. As we define these enterprises and engage in their pursuit
> together, we interact with each other and with the world and we tune our relations
> with each other and with the world accordingly. In other words, we learn.
>
> Over time, this collective learning results in practices that reflect both the
> pursuit of our enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are
> thus the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained
> pursuit of a shared enterprise (p. 45).

These descriptions place the learning emphasis on the interaction and the practice of the community rather than the physical proximity of the members. From this shared practice, members form an identity related to the practice. Roschelle (1992) summarized "learning is seen as a capability for increased participation in communally experienced situations—a dual affair of constructing identity and constructing understanding" (p. 39).

The corporate world has identified and employed CoPs extensively in recent years. Communities of Practice are also widely referenced in educational circles. Yet D. Hung and Nichani (2002) hold that learning communities are quasi-communities of practice in that full CoP require professional communities in the real world, whereas, learning communities involve those learners in training in schools. This concept of quasi-communities and full CoP seems to the researcher to create an artificial distinction not found in the original concept of CoP. Lave and Wenger's (1991) ethnographic research, as noted, observed midwives, non-drinking alcoholics, and insurance data processors. These initially identified CoPs did not involve professional communities such as mentioned by Hung and Nichani and not all of the CoPs involved formal apprenticeships. It seems that the main point of Hung and Nichani's argument is that a CoP requires situated learning. Traditional school learning communities do frequently entail inauthentic work situations and thus the accusation of being quasi-communities of practice.

Since professional clergy are generally required to complete ministerial preparation courses prior to their ordination as clergy, theological education might be considered part of the shared repertoire of the clergy community of practice. The study investigated ways in which clergy continue development within the community and gain

their identity in the professional clergy community. In Wenger's model this would be a study of the interactions that assist the novice's trajectory from the periphery of the community to the core of the community.

Discursive forms and identity development. Gee (2000-2001) identified four means through which people develop their identities: Natural (N), Institutional (I), Discursive (D), and Affinity group (A). These are not mutually exclusive as each means of identity formation relies upon the others as well. Gee describes the affinity group of the A-identity as a group of people with a common interest but who may be dispersed geographically. Gee states,

> What people in the group share, and must share to constitute an affinity group, is allegiance to, access to, and participation in specific practices that provide each of the group's members the requisite experiences. The process through which this power works, then, is participation or sharing (p. 105).

Affinity groups may either be "institutionally sanctioned" or "not institutionally sanctioned" (p. 107). Classroom learning groups would be an example of institutionally sanctioned or sponsored affinity groups according to Gee, thus an A-identity influenced by an I-identity. Within the affinity group, discursive interactions (D-identity) with other members help individual members negotiate their identities. None-the-less, the primary means of identity formation is the allegiance to common practices. Wenger et al. (2002) also noted that CoP participants "develop personal relationships and established ways of interacting" (p. 5) forming a common sense of identity. Figure 2.1 displays points of contacts between Wenger and Gee. Many questions arise from the assertions of Gee and Wenger.
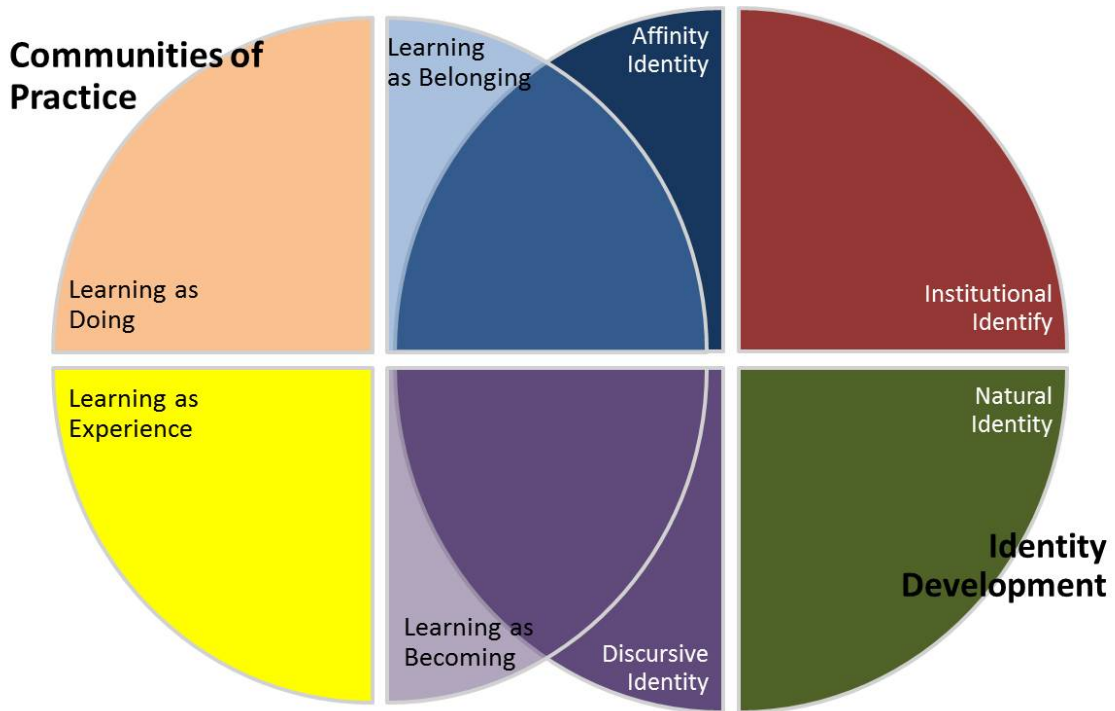
Figure 2.1 *Wenger's Community of Practice and Gee's Identity Development*

Speech acts. Austin (1962) introduced the concept that people perform actions through their speech or words. He speaks of speech has having locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. The act of uttering the words is the *locutionary act*. The *illocutionary act* is what the speaker is doing through the speech, and the *perlocutionary act* is what the speech causes to be done. The illocutionary act, sometimes referred to as the meaning of the utterance, can be interpreted to trigger an occurrence of an action. An example would be if a professor said that an assignment submission was too short, the illocution could be that the student's work was not acceptable, and the perlocution could be an apology by the student with the resubmission of an acceptable assignment. Additionally, Austin wrote that verbs in the first person present indicative active grammatical structure create performative sentences, in which "the issuing of the utterance is the performing of the action" (p. 6). Examples Austin

provides are saying "I do" in a marriage ceremony and "I commission ..." in a commissioning ceremony.

Searle (1970) identified numerous forms of illocutionary acts including making a promise and a condition or intention of a promise. He states, "The essential feature of a promise is that it is the undertaking of an obligation to perform a certain act" (p. 60). He continues that some statements are conditions for a promise, a different type of illocutionary act but would be interpreted as an intention for a promise,

> Notice that in the statement of the condition, we only specify the speaker's intention; further conditions will make clear how that intention is realized. It is clear, however, that having this intention is a necessary condition of making the promise. (p. 60)

Given the example of the marriage ceremony, when a partner asks, "Will you marry me?" and the other partner responds "Yes" there is an intention for the act of marriage, but it is not the marriage vow or promise. Searle continues,

> The speaker intends to produce a certain illocutionary effect by means of getting the hearer to recognize his intention to produce that effect, and he also intends this recognition to be achieved in virtue of the fact that the meaning of the item he utters conventionally associates it with producing that effect. (pp. 60-61)

A social construct of marriage engagement is a socially recognizable intention to make the marriage committal vow or promise. The intention, though, is a predecessor to the committal promise.

Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964) offered the Taxonomy of the Affective Domain to complement Bloom's Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain to assess learning. In the Affective Domain the goal is that students will volitionally act upon values so that they become characterized by those values, or the values are internalized. The initial level is the reception of a message concerning the value through some sensory means, such as the sight of words on a page that introduce the phenomenon to be valued. The

second taxonomic level is a response to the message such as reading and reflecting on the words by the recipient of the message. The third level of the taxonomy is for the recipient to value the phenomenon enough to act upon it. In the context of online education, this valuing level might be to write about the phenomenon in the discussion post. The fourth level is where the recipient values the phenomenon enough to begin to organize her/his life around the phenomenon. At this stage, the students might record conditional illocutionary acts statements such as Searle (1970) described to show volitional intentions and speak about how they are organizing their lives around those phenomenon. The final level of the Affective Domain taxonomy is where the recipient of the message has organized her/his life around the phenomenon to the point that s/he is characterized by that phenomenon or that the meaning making has been internalized where decisions are assumed. An academic class, online or face-to-face, does not continue long enough for this last level to be realized. However, I examined the student texts for evidence of volitional, intentional statements that indicated the third and fourth levels of the taxonomy, valuing the phenomenon and organizing life around the phenomenon.

Professional identity development. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in a decade-long study of theological education found four major categories of pedagogies employed by educators preparing students for the pastoral and similar ministries in local congregations (Foster et al., 2005). These four categories of pedagogies, including pedagogies of formation, performance, interpretation and contextualization, worked toward the creation of a pastoral imagination. Foster et al. noted the integration of these pedagogies or the internalization of learning by the

theological students through "learning together" (p. 348) as dovetailing with Wenger's

Community of Practice.   The authors related how professors "structured their classes to

enhance the contributions of each student to their collective experience" (p. 348). The

study identified pedagogies employed by theological educators that incurred the

participatory learning spoken of by Lave and Wenger, stating "This learning occurs in the

mutuality of pedagogical judgments facilitating cognitive, skill, and identity formation"

(Foster et al., 2005, p. 350). In online classes the discursive activity in the discussion

fora provides an eye into the learning of the students expressed in their own words.

While the online students do not meet together face-to-face, the discussion fora in the

online environment, is the meeting place where they interact even though

asynchronously. It is the discussion arena; thus, the discussion fora are a "meeting" place

for the sharing of ideas and questions for online students. Figure 2.2 incorporates the

Carnegie study with Wenger and Gee's work. When professors utilize pedagogies that

enable formation, provide elements leading to enhanced performance, present

opportunities and methods for interpretation, and afford occasions for contextualization,

we should see evidence of this learning expressed by the students in their discursive

interactions demonstrating membership in a community of practice through aspects of

belonging and becoming.
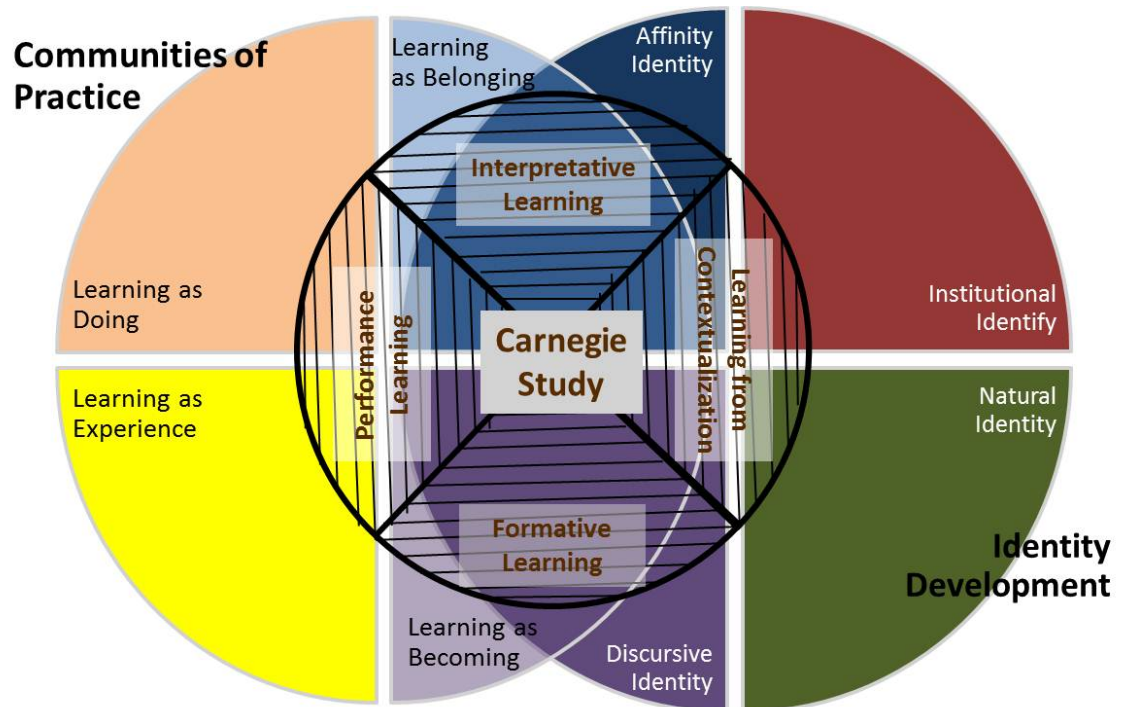
Figure 2.2 *A Framework That Incorporates Pedagogies of the Carnegie Study Categories of Theological Education with Identity Dimensions of Wenger's Community of Practice and Gee's Identity Development Theoretical Perspective*

My research looks for evidence of the development of professional identity of theological students within the Community of Practice of the clergy through the discursive activity of the discussion fora texts in online classes participating in the study.

Review of Relevant Literature

The review of this literature covers research regarding definitions of community, concerns for community in Christian theological education, and learning communities. I then consider research concerning online Communities of Practice and designing learning environments for Communities of Practice. Professional identity development studies are presented with a detailed examination of the Carnegie study for professional identity development in theological education. Next I depict studies involving online discussion

fora and gender issues. Concluding the review of the literature, I examine methods of

analyzing online discussions from methods that informed the current study.

Definitions of community. An anthropological definition states, "a community

is a unit of real or potential interaction in a spatial or residential framework" (van

Willigen, 1993, p. 93). However from a sociological point of view, Wellman and Gulia

(1998) discuss the widespread change in the definition of a community from that of

kinship and village/neighborhoods to one of social networks of family, friends, and

colleagues at work who do not live in the same neighborhood. They claim, "This

conceptual revolution moved from defining community in terms of space—

neighborhoods—to defining it in terms of social networks" (p. 314). In following the

concept of social networks as the definition for community, Wellman and Gulia reviewed

the literature to answer seven sociological questions in regards to relationships on the

"Net" and the development of cyber communities. They concluded

> Pundits worry that virtual community may not truly be community. These
> worriers are confusing the pastoralist myth of community for the reality.
> Community ties are already geographically dispersed, sparsely knit, connected
> heavily by telecommunications (phone and fax), and specialized in content (p.
> 348) .

Rheingold (1993) provides examples of communities that formed in the virtual

world in days preceding the Internet. He refers to Licklider and Taylor who stated as

early as 1968 that computer-linked communities "will consist of geographically separated

members, sometimes grouped in small clusters and sometimes working individually.

They will be communities not of common location, but of common interest. . . ." (as cited

in Rheingold, 1993, Chapter 1, Leukemia section, para. 8). As has been noted, in her

literature review of distance education, Cannell (1999) writes that community is

developed through the interactions of persons who have common interests and values.

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Palloff and Pratt (1999) point out that human attempts to communicate with others concerning our interests and needs are attempts to form communities. Both words, *communicate* and *community,* originate from the same Latin root word, *communis*, meaning "common" (communicate, 2008; community, 2008). Modern communication capabilities allow persons who do not live within the same geographical space to be able to network concerning their common interests. These definitions place the essence of community in the interactions or engagements with others who share interests, values, or needs in common.

Whitehead and Whitehead (1982) identifies community on a sociological continuum between primary groups, such as family and a close circle of friends which emphasizes experience, and a formal association, institutions or organizations that emphasize a structure in which persons have explicit roles to accomplish identified goals. They refer to the community as "intermediate social forms" (pp. 25-26). Social cohesion is important within community as in a primary group but also an external focus towards a goal is also a part of a community. Since this is a continuum, the authors maintain that some communities will develop similarly to the primary group and others will interact more like an association, but in all cases there is some extent that the internal life of the community entails an external expression. "Community is a goal of social life; it points to the possibility of a shared vision that can move us to action in a public sphere, undertaken in a context of mutual concern." (p. 23). Whitehead and Whitehead stipulate that a community does not form around issues of general interest but around matters of importance to the members.

Palmer (2007) identifies three models of community that are common. The therapeutic model emphasizes intimacy similarly to the primary group of Whitehead and Whitehead. The civic and marketing models of community fit the association end of the Whitehead and Whitehead sociological continuum with weaker ties. Palmer proposes a community of truth, which has a subject matter at the center of multi-directional interactions between knowers, which balances the two ends of the sociological continuum.

Community in Christian theological education. The sanctity of the concept of community within Christian frameworks originates from the covenant of the Divine with the chosen people, the nation of the Hebrews (Newman, 2003; see Holy Bible, Exodus 19:3-6ff). For Christians in the New Testament time of Jesus and later, people of the Divine include all Christian believers, joined together as one people in Jesus Christ. The Christian believers are jointly performing the work of the Divine through diverse roles (Longenecker, 2002a; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1982). These are issues of the doctrine of the church (Calvin, 1581; Church of the Nazarene, 2005; Longenecker, 2002b; Roman Catholic Church, 2003; United Methodist Church, 2002; Webster, 2001; Wesley, 1788; see the Holy Bible New Testament letters to the early churches especially Ephesians 3:6; Ephesians 4:2-7,11-16; Ephesians 5:23b-6:10; Colossians 3:15-17, I Corinthians 12:12-31). Within the community of Christian faith, persons interact with one another concerning issues of their faith and daily life.

The concept of community as a people united with a common mission then carries into the purposes of Christian theological education where the clergy or ministers are trained for professional leadership in their individual faith communities. In the

accrediting standards of the Association of Theological Schools for the United States and

Canada Standard 3, The theological curriculum: Learning, teaching, and research

declares, "A theological school is a community of faith and learning that cultivates habits

of theological reflection, nurtures wise and skilled ministerial practice, and contributes to

the formation of spiritual awareness and moral sensitivity" (Association of Theological

Schools, 2012c, p. G5). In this standard there is an emphasis upon two forms of

community that are coupled in theological education: faith community and a community

of inquiry.

From research involving her own classroom Wimberly (2004) asserts that

generally the relationship between the teacher and student within a class is viewed as

primary. However, she maintains that the communal relationship with other students is

not only "pivotal to the teaching and learning process, it is constitutive of the nature of

faith and life in Christian community." (p. 5). Palmer (2007) states that community with

others arises from communion with oneself. He advocates that the inner landscape of the

person and education involves the intellect, emotion, and spiritual. When asked for a

definition of community, a philosophical theologian active in theological education

responded,

> "I have a very relational concept of personhood. I think that each person is
> constituted by the relationships we have one with another. … And, well, for me,
> community is what ought to happen to us, for us to blossom as persons, to engage
> with other people in meaningful dialog, meaningful relational ways." (Dr. Charles
> Gutenson, personal interview, November 4, 2003)

Relationship building or community formation is viewed as vital for Christian theological

education.

Somatic or embodied learning: The issue of presence in learning situations. In

1998 a technology-use survey by the Association of Theological Schools asked the

schools who were engaged in distance education how they were providing for community

and spiritual/personal formation (Amos, 1999). With the loss of face-to-face interactions

in online education the issue of the development of community appeared in several of the

concerns voiced by theological educators interviewed by Delamarter (2005). The

educators' questions raised the issue of whether community can exist if the physical

bodies are not present. This obligates a philosophical and theological discussion of

dualism.

Merriam and Clark (2006) identified the Enlightenment as the change-point that

accepted only reason as the basis for learning and knowledge. From the Enlightenment

embodied or somatic learning was no longer thought adequate for learning about the

world and our relationships in the world and reason was primary.

Kelsey (2002), however, calls for Christian theological education to focus on a

monistic view of "personal bodies" (p. 7), which is inclusive of all the elements of

personhood including the reason and spirituality. In speaking of web-based theological

education, Kelsey raises the concern that "virtual" may be another expression of

"bodiless" (p. 9). If the body is not physically present in the classroom, Kelsey suggests

that there is a presupposition of an anthropological dualism, the separation of body and

mind/soul. Kelsey states,

> If we are best understood as personal organic bodies, then our bodies are
> inherently involved in our efforts to communicate ourselves as persons. In that
> case, learning and teaching inherently involve the organic personal bodies of
> teachers and learners. (pp. 8-9)

Kelsey calls for a holistic approach to teaching and learning that includes the body.

Merriam and Clark (2006) continue, "The notion of somatic knowing has emerged more

recently as something to be acknowledged and valued" (p. 41).

Matthews (1998), reflecting upon his personal educational experiences, defines

somatic learning as

> an experiential knowing that involves sense, precept, and mind/body action and reaction--a knowing, feeling, and acting that includes more of the broad range of human experience than that delimited within the traditionally privileged, distanced, disembodied range of discursive conceptualization (p. 237)

or more simply as "the embodied experience of being and doing" (p. 237). Matthews'

description of somatic learning fits well with A. M. Gunn's (2008) history department

research projects. Matthews claims that somatic learning will likely lead to student

transformation and this is the goal of all education.

Wimberly (2004), writing of her intentionality to promote a relational pedagogy

in theological education, speaks of "the integral role of the whole body in interpersonal

relationships and communication" (p. 8). She tells of classroom experiences and

pedagogical methods she used to provide the relational pedagogy including sitting in a

circle without obstructions such as desks and podiums for whole body sight, bodily

expressions including gestures and whole body movements, and the sharing of personal

narratives, all of which might seem commonplace in some educational circles. She

writes, "Through the narratives, we could readily recognize the divergent trajectories of

our lives as well as the similarities and differences in life's trials and tribulations, our

beliefs, and our hopes" (p. 9). Wimberly also raises the issue of positionality or power or

authority of the teacher within the class and how that can impose a teacher's thinking

upon the learners and, thus, interfere with relational learning. Wimberly provides the

rationale for her commitment to embodied relational instruction:

> Students tend to enter classes with an expectation that their primary relationship in class is between a teacher and herself/himself and that an in class communal relationship that includes other students is of minimal consequence. Yet not only

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is the communal relationship pivotal to the teaching and learning process, it is constitutive of the nature of faith and life in Christian community. (p. 5)

Similarly Han (2000) uses the indwelling knowledge concept of Polanyi, which integrates the knower with the known in the cognitive process or the internalization of knowledge, a holistic epistemology, to express the continuity between body and mind saying "human thought has bodily roots" (p. 287). Han identifies one component of this indwelling knowledge as embodiment. He writes, "Knowing is rooted in experience and human experience is rooted in embodied existence" (p. 289). Han rejects traditional education, arising from Cartesian dualism following Plato, as transmissive, separating the knower from the known. Han then turns to Palmer for a holistic epistemology of participation and accountability. While Han does not address online education in this work, in a personal email correspondence (2008) he wrote "theological education should not be online using broadcast technologies" as is done in some distance education. His reason for this claim is the lack of indwelling knowledge in this transmissive format of technology. However, this leaves open the question to the current researcher if a participative interaction form of online theological education could realize the indwelling knowledge that is desired by Han. Even within the online environment there is a whole person with somatic experiences in the thoughts expressed in the online postings.

Related issues include *social presence* (De Bruyn, 2004; Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Tu & McIsaac, 2002) and *immediacy* (Baker, 2004; Swan, 2002; R. H. Woods & Baker, 2004). Social presence and immediacy are concerned with the instructor's and students' communication that provides the online learner with a sense of interpersonal proximity to the other class members. Social presence is defined by Tu and McIsaac as "the degree of awareness of another person in an interaction and the consequent

appreciation of an interpersonal relationship" (p. 133). Woods and Baker understand

immediacy to be communicative behaviors that enhance physical or psychological

closeness or reduce distance between persons.

Both social presence and immediacy aid a sense of community (Rovai, 2001; R.

Woods & Ebersole, 2003; R. H. Woods, 2002). Gunawardena and Zittle (1997) found

that when a student has a greater sense of social presence, the student perceives that s/he

has learned more. In a literature review Swan and Shea (2005) searched how issues of

intimacy affect actual learning outcomes and report little evidence except for Picciano,

who found a weak positive correlation between social presence and some forms of

learning.

Online Christian theological education. As has been indicated, with the

introduction of Internet-based classes, theological educators have a growing concern with

the challenge of building community in courses where the instructor and students never

meet face to face (Cannell, 1999; Carroll et al., 1997; D. Hung & Nichani, 2002; Kemp,

2002). From their three-year study of two residential seminaries Carrol et al. claim that

without physical residency in an identified locale, without long-term, face-to-face

interaction, students cannot be in a true community. Hung and Nichani argue that

without generally face-to-face interaction and long-term development of trust that

requires space and time, only weak community organization will occur.

Carroll et al. (1997) did ethnographic research at two theological seminaries, one

evangelical (conservative) and one mainline Protestant, over a three-year time period (the

length of the predominant Master of Divinity degree program) involving participant

observations, interviews, and document analysis. Their conclusions maintained that the

formative education desired by both theological schools required prolonged and intensive

exposure with the institution, what these researchers termed "being there." This

formative exposure integrated all the formal and informal experiences of the

seminaries—the lunch room conversations, the chapel services, the dorm interactions,

informal as well as formal gatherings and interactions with faculty members—as

described in their ethnographic work. The physical community experience was

transformative for most students. Carroll et al. expressed skepticism as to whether

distance education, and, especially online education, had any potential at all to transform

the ways of thinking and lifestyle in the same way as the physical, face-to-face seminary

experience, although no study of online classes was included.

However, Cannell (1999) in her literature review of distance education asserted

that the main point in the community experience throughout the literature was interaction

with persons who hold similar interests and that this same interaction could be

encountered in distance education including virtual education. She argues that to form

community the interaction must be more than mere superficial chatting. Community-

forming interaction must involve true engagement among members with the concepts

whether the interaction is face to face or at a distance. Similarly Palloff and Pratt (1999)

claim that technology has "helped to create a new form of social interdependence

enabling 'new communities to form wherever communication links can be made'

(Gergen, 1991, p. 213)" (p. 25). Each of these researchers emphasizes that the priority is

upon *interaction* rather than physical proximity.

As online education is a relatively new phenomenon in education, numerous

studies have examined aspects of community and communication in these classes that

never meet face to face. These studies have informed the current study. Research involving community in the online classes has included aspects of interaction among the participants (Fahy & Ally, 2005; Hirumi, 2002; Lally & Barrett, 1999; LaPointe & Gunawardena, 2004; Sabry & Baldwin, 2003; Swan, 2002; R. H. Woods & Baker, 2004). Thurmond (2003) defined interaction as a "reciprocal exchange of information" that is "intended to enhance knowledge development" (p. 4). Woods and Baker speak of the difference between transactional and interactional communication. They define "transactional" communication as that with limited engagement to accomplish a specific need while "interaction" involves "active engagement" with ongoing communication (Recommendations, para 6). The interactional exchanges seem to fit more appropriately with what has been suggested by Cannell (1999) to be necessary to form community. Wenger's (1998) community of practice model identifies mutual engagement as one of the elements of belonging within the community.

Learning communities. The phrase *learning communities* became popular in education in the early 1990s. "Community" from a sociological or anthropological framework at that time signified "an inherently cooperative, cohesive, and self-reflective group entity whose members work on a regular, *face-to-face* basis toward common goals while respecting a variety of perspectives, values, and life styles" (Graves, 1992, p. 64). As this was also the early years of the widely utilized Internet in the form of the World Wide Web, learning communities mainly referred to face-to-face classrooms.

In speaking of the way in which communities may form around shared documents, Brown and Duguid (2000) cite the new technology of the newspaper in the early 19th century. At that time the intelligentsia frequently held the popular newspapers

in disgust for the gossip provided for the populace. Brown and Duguid maintain that yet those popular newspapers were essential to the binding of a people into the nation of the United States of America across hundreds and even thousands of miles. They claim, "the endless cutting, pasting, forwarding, reading aloud, and discussing" (p. 196) meant that the readers were reading a common story, were involved in a common activity with common rituals (reading the paper at breakfast, on the train, and other common locations), forming a cultural community.

Similar claims to the above social phenomenon of the technology of the newspapers in the early 1900s could be said of higher education. In higher education, especially in graduate-level education, individuals come together to read common literature, reflect and discuss common ideas, and participate in common activities. It is the sharing in these commonalities that generate a learning community. Cannell (1999) states,

> Participation is essential—people must share ideas and values, reflect mutually on experience, form learning partners and cohort groups, even in cyberspace. Attention must be given to the quality of interaction. Facilitation will be required to move the interaction beyond chat to engagement. (p. 19)

Formation of learning community. As has been noted previously, Cannell (1999) in her review of the literature of distance education in graduate theological education confirmed a network view of community. She stated, "It is a mystery as to how community is formed in classrooms. The fact of a classroom does not guarantee community any more than a distance learning chat room will" (p. 19). She discussed a form of online education where community is created in the interactions of persons with common interests and values. Physical proximity was not necessary for learning communities to exist as a sense of community could be formed through different means.

Schwier (2001) addresses various aspects of virtual learning communities. He begins with the theoretical context of community—communities are resilient, are hospitable, have life cycles, and are multifaceted. Schwier states that communication is essential for any community to exist but especially for virtual communities. He makes the claim that people must participate in the community in some way before they have membership. (This notion is important when one extrapolates the idea in regards to lurkers in online fora.) Schwier provides ten elements to discern a virtual learning community: historicity, identity, mutuality, plurality, autonomy, participation, integration, future, technology, and learning.

Online learning communities. From their extensive experience in collaborative learning both in face-to-face and electronic formats, Palloff and Pratt (1999) maintain online learning communities place interaction and the relationships that form from the interaction as the generative basis for knowledge. However, they claim that the power of the community in online learning goes beyond the intellectual growth to personal growth and development of the participants. Palloff and Pratt maintain that this personal transformation is usually unexpected but not unplanned or at least provision should be made for its emergence.

Similarly to Paloff and Pratt, Kemp (2002) maintains that the online environment can provide a rich context for informal learning beyond the planned activities, the personal growth or transformation of the participants. Kemp contrasts the traditional schooling model in theological education with multiple forms of distance education including online classes. He emphasizes that learning communities put the emphasis

upon learning and the learner and says this often occurs with greater intentionality in the online environment.

Conceicao (2002) shares her personal experience that responses to a post create a sense of trust and belonging to the community by affirming the personhood of the teammate. In *Facilitating Online Learning* Collison, Elbaum, Haavind, and Tinker (2000) discuss the "Guide on the Side" concept for the facilitator. According to Collison et al. the facilitator should encourage the students to interact with one another rather than directing the questions/statements to the professor. In addition, Collison et al. state the facilitator should not respond immediately to every student post. In this manner, the facilitator encourages the development of the community rather than modeling a professor-centered approach.

Given the social aspect of online learning communities, R. H. Woods and Baker (2004) state, "there is a need for instructors to distinguish between the mere presence of particular dyadic communication and the presence of genuine interpersonal and contextual interaction as they seek to improve the online educational experience" (Recommendations, last para). Similarly to Woods and Baker, Barbera (2004) suggests that evaluation of quality of the virtual learning community should be made upon the interaction in the virtual classroom: student-material, student-teacher, student-student. With no empirical assessment standards, business quality models such as Total Quality (TQ) and European Foundation Quality Management (EFQM), user satisfaction (student satisfaction), cost, and quantification of quality in multimedia systems that evaluates the quality based upon the number of different paths that allow for user interaction are all bases of assessing quality but are assessing the wrong criteria. Barbera proposes that

evaluation of online learning should focus on the teaching and learning processes rather than the organizational or methodological aspects of the course. She states, "Focusing on this community of virtual practice produced in learning environments, the different relations [interactions] that appear in it seem to determine the dynamic core for a quality education" (p. 16). Barbera offers an instrument designed to assess the quality of the virtual learning community based upon the teaching and learning processes employed.

Similarly, Hirumi (2002) is concerned with the quality of the teaching/learning process in the virtual learning community and especially how the process relates to the interaction/transaction within online courses. He describes the process of e-course design grounded upon learning theories and how the learning components involve interactive and transactive learner engagements. Hirumi identifies the interaction/transaction that could ensue between the learner/learner, learner/instructor, learner/content as well as a listing of potential learning experiences.

Schwen and Hara (2003) overview five case studies researched by doctoral students where technology was provided for online collaboration for CoPs in businesses. They conclude a CoP cannot be designed but naturally emerges as the participants interact. They state, "Creating the conditions for a healthy community would foster 'productive' behaviors in the community. The community could not be expected to follow the blueprint of a social design" (p. 267). Along the same line they say that the CoP theory is descriptive and not prescriptive. However, they also present a general strategy for identifying patterns of learning in the community and then use this for design and evaluation of online CoP. This design would need to "carefully build environments

of trust and caring with ample opportunities for sharing stories, metaphors, and mental models" (p. 267).

As has been noted before, in surveying several Internet community sites D. Hung and Nichani (2002) made a distinction between Communities of Practice formed by professionals meeting face-to-face and what they term "quasi-communities," which they found in the online environment. They raise the concern that online CoPs are actually quasi-communities as they lack the ability to form the roles and responsibilities for the professional identity of the participants. They reason that there are too many nuances of social, face-to-face meeting that cannot be replicated online, that virtual connections are brief and intermittent, serendipity is limited online, and it is difficult to develop trust online. Hung and Nichani maintain that Internet technologies can complement CoP but not replace them. They claim that those quasi-communities in the online arena are not professionals such as legal professionals, medical professionals, and others but are people with questions and needs. The interchanges on the Internet are mostly about acquiring knowledge rather than forming identity as a member of a community with the exception of some programming communities who work collaboratively on a programming project via the Internet.

Again a critique I would offer of Hung and Nichani's definition of a community of practice being limited to professional communities is that this definition may be too restrictive. In relation to Lave and Wenger (1991), D. Hung and Nichani (2002) did identify three useful principles for Communities of Practice: Communities of Practice need to create practice-related problems with which the participants collaborate and engage in discourse, perform tasks using the tools of the practice, and allow identity

formation within the community. For example, Max7 (http://www.max7.org), where the

members create and share biblical curricula/lessons/audio-visuals for children and youth

via the website, rate the materials, translate the materials into other languages and

contexts, and upload the revisions for others to use, may well fit the requirements of an

online community of practice.

A second question concerns the absence of communities involved in practice on

the Internet. Online social networking has exploded in the last few years. Nielsen net-

ratings (Nielsen/NetRatings, 2006) showed that the top ten social networking sites

including MySpace, Blogger, YouTube, and MSN Spaces, collectively grew 47 percent

from 2005 to 2006 to have an unduplicated unique audience of 68.8 million users in

April, 2006, 45 percent of active web users in the USA. This trend continued in

subsequent years with the top ten social networking sites showing over 159 million

unique users in September 2008 in the USA (comScore, 2007; Nielsen Online, 2008) and

in May 2011 Facebook alone had 140 million unique visitors, with 70% of all active

Internet users in the USA (Nielsen, 2011). While much social networking does not

involve a CoP, still this phenomenon shows the social potential of the Internet. In a press

release by comScore, a company that collects statistics on the digital world, Bob Ivins,

executive vice president of international markets said, "It would appear that social

networking is not a fad but rather an activity that is being woven into the very fabric of

the global Internet" (comScore, 2007, Para 3).

Based upon an analysis of activities as set out in community goals and the

strategies to achieve the goals, Henri and Pudelko (2003) distinguish four different virtual

communities—a community of interest, a goal-oriented community of interest, a learners'

community and a community of practice. Henri and Pudelko use two measures: the strength of the social bond and the intentionality of the gathering towards the goal of the community. As a virtual community increases in these two measures, the community progresses from a community of interest towards a community of practice. Of particular interest to this research is the learning community analysis. Henri and Pudelko make the point that the goal in a learning community is learning; whereas, the purpose of a community of practice is the shared enterprise. Also the activity of the learning community is determined by the developmental level of the learners and is guided by an instructor.

Henri and Pudelko (2003) agree with D. Hung and Nichani (2002) that true Communities of Practice are based upon the construction of a professional identity that is related to the learning process. However, this analysis strays from the two measures, strength of the social bond and the intentionality of the gathering towards the goal. I would advocate that at the graduate level, the learners often already have a professional identity. For example in theological education many learners are already professional ministers such as pastors, missionaries, and teachers.

Trentin (2002), similarly to Henri and Pudelko (2003) does not identify a learning community as CoP. Instead he distinguishes between two types of virtual CoP neither of which occurs in a traditional nor online class. One is a community of course alumni who are formed (or form spontaneously) to follow-up on course learning in order to provide continuity between training and transfer of skills for the purposes of self-help. Thus, the community of course alumni forms after the course is completed. The second community is a community of professionals, which he claims is always spontaneous, and is for the

purpose of enriching skills or knowledge sharing and knowledge management through collaborative strategies.

Trentin (2002) provides a taxonomy of collaborative learning that presents how distance education can progress to virtual CoPs. He compares the relationships between network services provided to the learner, learning strategies employed, and the level of interaction. Little interaction, little learning strategy, and a low level of network services providing only access to stored information spawns individualized learning where the participant autonomously downloads material from the Internet. With somewhat increased levels of the three elements, there is assisted learning. Collaborative learning occurs when there is a high level of network services providing interpersonal communication, a high level of interaction, and supportive learning strategies. It is this highest level of network services that advances toward a CoP on Trentin's taxonomy.

Ross (2000) looks at the claims of both the technology enthusiasts and the critics towards e-learning. Some have claimed that traditional schools will become obsolete while others claim that e-learning will diminish much the way correspondence courses of the past have done. Ross's conclusion is that reality is somewhere in the middle of the extremes. The implication of Ross's work is that educators must be aware of the potential benefits but also consider the trade-offs of online education. Educators must ask critical questions of what role we want technology to play in our communities.

Communities of Practice online. Johnson (2001) makes a distinction between virtual communities and Communities of Practice. Johnson reviewed fifteen case studies, many of them multiple cases, in relation to the potential and effectiveness of CoPs where the members are separated in time and space and communicate through networked

technologies to establish collaboration. All of the reviewed studies use Wenger's concept

of Communities of Practice and include a master-to-apprentice interaction, learning-by-

doing, and a social structure. CoPs are task oriented and involve collaborative discourse

that requires safety and trust within the community. The distinction that Johnson makes

is that the virtual communities are designed communities while the CoP emerges from

the designed community. This research examined if and how the CoP emerges from the

designed community. Johnson is not maintaining that CoPs cannot exist online but that

rather they evolve and disband based upon the needs of their members rather than

through the development of a virtual infrastructure by an institution. When applied to

online learning, this seems to distinguish between the hardware and software design that

provide an online course or possibly even the content of the course and the participation

of the class members.

　　　　Designing learning environments for Communities of Practice through

constructivism and situated learning. Johnson (2001) maintains that constructivism—

characterized by ill-structured problems, situated learning involving social

interdependence, shared goals, cognitive tools, and the instructor acting as a facilitator or

coach to the learning process—is the foundation for CoPs. Hobbs (2002) picks up on the

theme of constructivism in his review of literature and identifies several necessary

elements in web course design. He agrees with Johnson that authentic assignments

should require students to apply what they have learned in real-world settings or situated

learning. Interactive, collaborative communication among the students as well as

between the students and instructor was identified by the studies reviewed to enhance

learning. The use of scaffolding through a good study guide or detailed syllabus

identifies the aims and learning objectives of the course expressed in terms of student

learning that are accomplished through guided inquiry. Higher-level thinking processes

that are prompted by teaching strategies such as questioning, planning, and problem

solving should be encouraged rather than computer-controlled information retrieval and

memorization activities. These items should be manifested in the design of online

learning communities.

Huang (2002) examines the impact of constructivism in online learning when

focusing on adult learners, developing a connection between constructivism and adult

learning theory. He looks at constructivism as promoted by Dewey and Vygotsky

especially and overviews adult learning theory proposed by Knowles and also Brookfield.

Huang raises seven issues regarding andragogy and constructivism that online learning

must address—learner isolation, learner determination of the quality and authenticity of

the learning, the instructor's role as facilitator, the dependability of the hypertext to

access information, the difficulty of evaluating the learner's achievements, and a truly

learner-centered curriculum that is yet collaborative in nature. Huang presents

instructional principles derived from constructivism that can guide teaching and learning

online. These principles emphasize learning that is interactive, collaborative, facilitated,

authentic, learner centered, and high quality.[5]

Mercer (2006), a religious education professor, co-developed and team taught a

course at San Francisco Theological Seminary with her colleague, a professor of Hebrew

Bible, employing a community of practice approach to the course. The course involved

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[5]Trentin (2002) discusses course quality making a distinction between "extensive courses" which involve
content mediated communication and "intensive courses" that involve interpersonal communication.
Perhaps this is a distinction of importance for instructional designers of online courses.

situated learning in local congregational contexts where the seminary students were mentored, or involved in a form of apprenticeship, into a community of professional church leaders thus developing skills necessary for the practice. Therefore, their identity is formed "as practical theologians and public leaders in faith communities" (p. 152). The course was a hybrid course and reflection and interaction among the students took place in an online discussion forum. Students affirmed that the integration of learning that occurred in their experiences was much more rewarding than that which occurs through the transmission of content in the context of the seminary classroom alone.

D. W. L. Hung and Chen (2001) discuss the interaction of CoPs with Vygotskian thought within online learning. They first provide the theoretical background to Vygotskian thought, the "genetic law of cultural development." From their synthesis "of situated cognition, Vygotskian thought and Communities of Practice, the principles of learning are categorized into four dimensions—situatedness, commonality, interdependency, and infrastructure. These four factors contribute to a vibrant and sustaining community" (p. 7). The authors then provide design considerations for online learning based upon these four dimensions of Vygotskian thought and situated cognition as shown in Table 2.1. The design considerations emphasize authentic activities in context, reflection on action, identity formation through practice, and construction of meaning from activity enabled by extensive social interaction with peers and teacher wherein novices receive assistance from the diversity of experience among peers. These design emphases in online learning show how the basic features of Wenger's (1998) social learning theory—community, identity. meaning, and practice—might be

accomplished with learners who are geographically dispersed to form a Community of

Practice.

Table 2.1

Design Considerations Based on Situated, Commonality And Interdependency from D. W. L. Hung and Chen (2001, p. 8)

Principles of situated cognition and Vygotskian thought	Design considerations for e-learning
Situatedness	
Learning is embedded in rich cultural and social contexts – acquiring both implicit and explicit knowledge.	E-learning environments should be Internet or web based so that with such a common networked platform, learners can access the learning environment in their embedded and situated contexts – anywhere and anytime.
	E-learning environments should be portable as far as possible so that they can be used in the context.
Learning is reflective and metacognitive, internalizing from social to the individual.	E-learning environments can focus on tasks and projects, thus enabling learning through doing and reflection-in-action.
	E-learning environments can focus on depth over breadth, thus enabling learners to analyse communicative 'speech-acts'.
Commonality	
Learning is an identity formation or act of membership.	E-learning environments should create a situation where there is continual interest and interaction through the tools (e.g. mind-tools) embedded in the environment.
Learning is a social act/construction mediated between social beings through language, signs, genres and tools.	E-learning environments should capitalize the social communicative and collaborative dimensions allowing mediated discourse.
	E-learning environments should have scaffolding structures which contain the genres and common expressions used by the community.

Table 2.2 (cont.)

Design Considerations Based on Situated, Commonality And Interdependency from D. W. L. Hung and Chen (2001, p. 8)

Principles of situated cognition and Vygotskian thought	Design considerations for e-learning
Interdependency	
Learning is socially distributed between persons and tools.	E-learning environments should create interdependencies between individuals where novices need more capable peers capitalizing on the zone of proximal development.
	E-learning environments should be designed to capitalize on the diverse expertise in the community.
Learning is demand driven – dependent on engagement in practice.	E-learning environments should be made personalized to the learner with tasks and projects as embedded in the meaningful activity context.
	E-learning environments can track the learner's history, profile, and progress and tailor personalized strategies and content.
Infrastructure	
Learning is facilitated by an activity – driven by appropriate mechanisms and accountability structures.	E-learning environments should have structures and mechanisms set up to facilitate the activity (project) processes where learners are engaged in.
	E-learning environments have the potential to radically alter traditional rules and processes that were constrained by locality and time.

Rogers (2000) analyzed the asynchronous discussions from a three-week online workshop, which he facilitated for new members of the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Rogers used Wenger's Community of Practice concepts of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire as the basis for his analysis "to explore whether this framework would be valid for describing the interactions within this community" (p. 385). He used a non-equivalent pattern-matching case study plus his

own participant observations for the methodology. Rogers assigned only one coding to

each posting; although, he saw that a single post at times could have multiple codings.

The results of the analysis were that each element of the Community of Practice was

exhibited in the online workshop interactions. From this Rogers proposed several

principles for developing online Communities of Practice:

Mutual engagement

- Structuring activities so that each learner has the possibility to assume an active and central role.

- Structuring activities to tap into the background/experience/knowledge of the participants.

Joint enterprise

- Structuring activities so that the participants are able to negotiate successful completion of goals

- Rather than assuming a more traditional teaching role, assuming the role of mentor providing guidance but not (always) answers.

- Encouraging reflection during the process

- Encouraging development of multiple viewpoints

- Allowing for individual trajectories of participation

Shared enterprise

- Encouraging exploration and evaluation of the artifacts within the community.

- Bringing in knowledgeable members who might be available to help the students understand:

  o How one goes about 'doing things' in this community?

  o What is the shared culture (values, identities, roles)? (p. 390)

Arnold, Smith, and Trayner (2006) considered Lave and Wenger's (1991)

interconnection of the community's social practice and an individual's identity, viewing a

"community of practice as a way of viewing learning and identity as situated social

practice" (p. 204). Arnold et al. observed interactions and especially the narratives that were told in three online situations: a self-organized student's network in a distance education degree program, an online class for credit toward a degree, and an online workshop not offered for credit. Among other findings, Arnold et al. reaffirming Lave and Wenger's research, found that stories are a "kind of social scaffolding that connects newcomers to leaders in the field" (p. 214) and "act as bridges between the actual and possible future identities of participants in the learning setting and the communities to which they may aspire" (p. 214). Narratives and "warning stories" (p. 215) tell how experts have come to know what they know, sharing the domain or knowledge of the community. Thus, the sharing of the practice in narratives provides the newcomer in the professional community with a new professional image. Wenger's (1998) CoP social learning theory identifies practice as learning as doing and identity as learning as becoming in the community. Social practice and identity are tightly intertwined.

Professional identity development. Antony (2002) studied doctoral students for their socialization and professional development. He identified four stages of socialization: anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal. The anticipatory stage of development is where the students first enter their programs with preconceived notions and expectations of the professional role. In the personal stage students internalize or adopt a professional identity and reconcile the differences between their preconceived image of themselves and their new professional image. Antony states that professionalization and socialization share four common elements but socialization requires a fifth stage.

> The processes of professionalization and socialization both require the following
> elements: (1) observation — the identification of a role model(s); (2) imitation—

the 'trying on' of a role model's behavior; (3) feedback — the evaluation of the 'trying on' of behavior; and (4) modification — the alteration or refinement of behavior as a result of evaluation. I believe that socialization distinguishes itself from the process of professionalization by requiring a fifth stage, internalization or adoption — the incorporation of the role model's values and behavior patterns in the individual's self-image (p. 368).

Antony describes professionalization as the transmission of content and information of the norms, ethics, and values of the profession as well as the teaching of technical skills. Socialization requires the newcomer to internalize the profession's way of being to where it defines the newcomer's "own professional identity and self-image" (p. 369). Antony's view allows for an "appreciation of individuality" and "honors students' different personal expectations and orientations" (p. 376). This parallels Wenger's (1998) concept of different trajectories of members of a CoP in negotiating identities in the practice.

Rex and Nelson (2004) studied English teachers in a pilot study concerning professional identities. They found that teachers developed concepts of professionalism that blended "personal values, beliefs, learnings, and dispositions" (p. 1291). This perspective on professionalism did not fit with the institutional standard but was personal to each teacher and yet shared by many teachers. These values included a dedication to the students and helping the students to grow as persons, teaching the students to think and be responsible for themselves as well as a personal agency for the teacher that they felt they were doing what they felt was best. In some ways these findings mirror the key thesis of the CoP—the generative nature of work practices as communal decision making and emergent shared enterprise.

Wortham (2006) studied a high school classroom and teachers using qualitative research observational methods for identity formation in the learning environment.

While noting that traditionally it has been held that social identification and academic learning have been viewed as separate processes, Wortham found that events in the classroom, curricular and informal, facilitate "systematic overlap between social identification and academic learning" (p. 19). This seems similar to the CoP concepts where domain learning or content transmission is directly connected with the identity formation of the members of the CoP: learning by becoming.

As was noted earlier Gee (2000-2001) identified four sources of identity formation: nature, institutions, discourse, and affinity groups. Gee points out that D-identities do not arise just in the mind of the individual as is assumed in Modernism. As Vygotsky and others show D-identities are formed out of "social interactions in which [the learners] engaged as they acquired their 'native' language or later academic languages in school" (p. 114). Again, these findings support the important role of the community in the formation of identity that could be especially significant in professional identity formation and link identity formation to other 'practices' such as a shared repertoire and adoption of common languages/discourses of those practices..

As noted previously Arnold et al. (2006) saw that narratives are a "way of informally negotiating meaning and creating an identity of participation in the group learning process" (p. 214), aiding the socialization process by providing the newcomer with the potential of internalizing the profession's norms, values, and ethics referred to by Antony (2002). These narratives of the communal practice aid the newcomer to understand the context of the practice (Arnold et al., 2006) and provides transformation of the learner's identity. Wenger (1998) states that members of a CoP become invested in what they do and in each other and the shared history. "Our identities become

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anchored in each other and what we do together. …It is not easy to transform oneself without the support of a community" (p. 89).

Clergy professional identity development. Beginning in 1998 the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching conducted a decade-long, intensive study on preparation for the professions, including physicians, lawyers, nurses, engineers, clergy, college and university teachers. The study of the preparation of the clergy, begun in 2001, involved Christian, both Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and mainline and evangelical Protestant seminaries or divinity schools as well as Reform and Conservative Jewish seminaries. Foster et al. (2005) authored the book that is a summary of the analysis of the Carnegie study on the preparation of the clergy and documented four categories of pedagogies in graduate-level seminary education: formation, performance, interpretation, and contextualization. These four pedagogies entailed the three dimensions of professional apprenticeship: cognitive, practical, and normative often referred to as knowing, doing, and being. The authors claimed that professional schools had a distinct role stating,.

> And so professional schools are hybrid institutions. They are part of the tradition of cognitive rationality at which the academy excels. They are also part of the world of practice, emphasizing the craft know-how that marks expert practitioners of the domain. And they operate with the inescapably normative knowledge contained in the identity of being a particular kind of professional. (p. 5, Introduction)

The authors of the clergy preparation study ascertained the four themes of pedagogical practices in the seminaries they visited and summarized them as follows:

> Some of their [professors'] pedagogical practices focus on *forming* in students the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and habits needed for such activities as 'gathering the community in prayer and worship,' and 'facilitating discussion and expression of feelings.' Others seek to prepare students to *interpret* and to *contextualize* texts, situations and relationships when preaching, writing newsletter articles, or talking to children about 'tragedy, suffering, and the place

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of God in this mess.' Still others seek to prepare students to *perform* appropriately and skillfully such leadership roles as leading a community in prayer or worship, preaching or conducting a discussion, or writing a newsletter responsive to standards, rituals, and roles rooted in their specific religious tradition and adapted to local expectations. (Foster et al., 2005, p. 68, italics in original)

Pedagogies of formation. Pedagogies of formation in clergy education

encompassed *practicing the presence of God*, *practicing holiness*, and *practicing*

religious leadership (Foster et al., 2005, pp. 103-104). Methods of *practicing the*

presence of God and *practicing holiness* embraced prayer or meditation both individually

and collectively, singing hymns or guided devotional readings, exegetical exercises, and

modeling. *Practicing religious leadership* involved a "vision or discernment: cultivating

a pastoral imagination" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 121). Students were encouraged to

articulate that vision and then to discern whether the vision is present or not in ministry

events. Here frequently the teacher became a mentor.

The Carnegie study maintained that all professional education characteristically

emphasizes "forming in students the dispositions, habits, knowledge, and skills that

cohere in professional identity and practice, commitments and integrity" (Foster et al.,

2005, p. 100). However, distinctively, Jewish and Christian professional education

afforded "the possibility for the human encounter with that mystery [that] has often been

described as participation in the creative and redemptive activity of God"(p. 100). The

authors continued,

> Cultivating student participation in the creative activity of God expands the attention of clergy educators: to foster the pastoral imagination, they not only advance but also embody religious knowledge; not only develop professional competency in their students but also nurture authenticity and integrity of faith or observance in religious leadership (p. 100).

In summary *pedagogies of formation* focus on *being* while integrating with the *knowing*

and *doing* aspects of professional education. Particularly formation of the professional

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clergy sought authenticity and integrity of religious practice within the clergy leader's life

joining with the work of God.

Pedagogies of performance. Pedagogies of performance interact with pedagogies

of formation. Foster et al. (2005) state,

> In the exercise of these professional practices, the script as religious tradition is constantly being tested, interpreted, recast, and enacted. It is being *per-formed:* through ("per-") the shifting exigencies of time and context constantly being embodied ("-\formed") anew. And this interplay of *per-formance* and *forming* often takes place with transforming intent. (p. 170)

Here the students put into practice the cognitive aspects of their learning sometimes in a

professional apprenticeship or simulated apprenticeship, "demonstrating mastery of

information-in-use" (p. 172). The teacher works for competency in the actions of the

students that culminate in mastery. The ultimate end of the teacher's strategies

"include[s] not only explicit goals related to knowledge and skill, but also expectations

for the pastoral imagination and the professional habits and dispositions originating in the

academic disciplines, religious and academic traditions, and mission and culture of a

school" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 176).

Pedagogies of interpretation. Pedagogies of interpretation are experienced when

students engaged with interpretative interaction between texts—scriptural, the religious

story, and modern-day events—and themselves in "conversation—the comparisons,

critiques, and corrections—that took place between the persons interpreting and the

assumptions and knowledge they bring to their reading of the assigned texts and between

their personal and collective ethical understandings and ethical judgments" (Tracy, 1986,

pp. 119-20 as cited in Foster et al., 2005, p. 74). Classroom observations, surveys, and

interviews in the Carnegie study revealed that instructors identified the key aspect of

interpretation to be critical thinking, which leads to an integration of materials with a goal

of meaning making (Foster et al., 2005). This was frequently accomplished through coaching involving encouragement, questions that prompted additional engagement, and feedback and assessment. Foster et al. (2005), however, found that while "all professional education involves the interplay of reflective skepticism and service or praxis" what is unique for clergy education is that

> for most clergy educators the end of critical thinking is not reflective skepticism; it is to move students through reflective skepticism to service, praxis, or some action *responsive to the influence or claim of the religious horizon on the interpretive practice* (p. 95, italics added).

The pedagogy of interpretation could be summarized to be engaging student clergy in critical thinking with texts, ancient and modern, written and living, in order to promote understanding and meaning making to arrive at some action that is within the practice of the larger interpreting community of the religious faith, thus developing an identity of "clergy being and doing" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 97) with the process being modeled and coached by the instructor.

   Pedagogies of contextualization. Pedagogies of contextualization often mesh with pedagogies of interpretation. Foster et al. (2005) define contextualization by stating, "it commonly refers to the task of making explicit the socially situated nature of all knowledge and practice" (p. 132). The Carnegie study identified three pedagogies of contextualization: *contextual consciousness*, *contextual encounter*, and *contextual transformation*. *Contextual consciousness* and *contextual encounter* facilitated students to become aware of their own basic assumptions and to practice dialog between different perspectives developing respect and understanding, "nurturing the capacity for empathic consciousness" (p. 144). *Contextual transformation* moved into "critical reflection and action" (p. 147).

Foster et al. (2005) detected three steps in the *contextual consciousness* pedagogies. First the students react by identifying the issues, engaging questions, and even acting on concerns. This reacting process "centers on simultaneously expanding student consciousness of their own contexts in dialogue with their deepening consciousness of the contexts of those involved in the case—and later in the ministry situations they encounter" (p. 140). Retrieving is the second step where students retrieve their theological tradition for assessment of the issues. One of the purposes of this step is to deepen the student's identification with those traditions. The authors argue, "this process of retrieval requires critical skills honed through practice with interpretation" (p. 140). The third and final step is reconstruction. This step ascertains the relationships of the current situation with the religious vision. Thus, there is a historical dialog with an analysis of the situation as it pertains to the historical dialog before moving into critical reflection and action through *contextual transformation* pedagogies.

Intregration. Yet these pedagogies are not completely distinct from one another in the instructional process. Interpretation leads to the enhanced formation of the *pastoral imagination* and how the clergy contextualizes the tradition and scriptures for her/his local congregation. Formation leads to transformed performance. Situated performance, or performance in context, informs how one interprets tradition and previous knowledge, leading to formation of a sharpened image of the role of the clergy. Thus, there is an interplay between these aspects of preparation for the professional clergy that is ongoing. These four categories of pedagogies inform the current study as standards as to the forms of learning that should be exhibited by the students.

Online discussion fora: Vehicle for discursive interaction. As many online classes employ discussion fora, researchers have conducted studies to discover how interaction affects issues such as critical thinking, learning outcomes, gender differences, learning styles, and participation in learning communities. Charlotte Gunawardena has been involved in research regarding computer mediated communication including listservs and discussion fora (Duphorne & Gunawardena, 2005; Gunawardena et al., 1997; Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; LaPointe & Gunawardena, 2004). Gunawardena et al. (1997) developed the Interaction Analysis Model (IAM) to analyze the interactions involved in the "collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation" (p. 399) within a global online debate that took place in 1995 among educators and trainers utilizing a listserv, a predecessor to the discussion forum. Gunawardena et al.'s IAM model resulted in five phases: (1) sharing/comparing of information; (2) the discovery and exploration of dissonance or inconsistency among ideas, concepts, or statements; (3) negotiation of meaning/co-construction of knowledge; (4) testing and modification of proposed synthesis or co-construction; and (5) agreement statement(s)/applications of newly-constructed meaning (p. 427).

As has already been noted, Rogers (2000) used Wenger's (1998) community of practice constructs to analyze bulletin board discussions of teachers of English as a second language to explore the generation of learning communities online. In the collaboration of the students' discussions, Rogers stated,

> Participants assumed the roles of helping each other, questioning each other, and applauding each other. … As the instructor, I would assert that the participants learned much more from the information added by other participants than by what I had originally posted as the original course materials. (p. 390)

This collaborative learning is a vital concern in the current research.

Rovai (2001) studied twenty adult learners, who were also professional educators or trainers, in a five-week on-line course that was part of a graduate-level, on-line teaching program. He was interested in the sense of community as perceived by the students and the correlation of the discussion forum postings with that sense of community. An observational case study design employed qualitative and quantitative data from course interactions, the Sense of Classroom Community Index (SCCI) questionnaire, course statistical data, and learner feedback. The SCCI measures the degree of spirit (enthusiasm), trust, interaction (among peers and between the professor and participants), and the participants' perceptions of learning in the course. The measurement used a Likert scale. The author posed three research questions involving (1) promoting a sense of classroom community in an online class (2) gender differences in communication patterns, and (3) the interaction of gender-related communication patterns and a sense of community. For gender differences in communication patterns, "the male voice tended to be impersonal and assertive, that is, it possessed an authoritarian tone. The female voice, on the other hand, was generally supportive and helpful without being assertive" (p. 45). Rovai termed the male voice an independent voice and the female voice a connected voice. Rovai described the interactions as follows:

> Connected voice patterns consisted of text that referenced self or family; made reference to another learner's family, described personal experiences, offered praise and encouragement, or used supporting statements of agreement such as 'your're right' or 'that's true.' Independent voice patterns consisted of text that was arrogant, argumentative, confrontational, defended or asserted self, disagreed, or contained rude or hostile remarks. (p. 41)

Those with the highest sense of community on the SCCI were more likely to use a connected voice in their postings and those with the lowest sense of community tended to

use an independent voice. Rovai has followed this initial exploration with subsequent studies of larger samples across multiple classes exploring a sense of community and voice (Rovai, 2002a, 2002b; Rovai & Baker, 2005). A concern with the voice patterns of the participants is important to the current research to aid a sense of belonging to the community.

Fahy and Ally (2005) compared Kolb Learning Styles to participation in online discussion fora in two courses. In the courses students were to post comments in response to instructor questions or reply to other students' posts. One course was a required course and one course was an optional course in a graduate-level program. Students in master's level courses completed the Kolb Learning Style Inventory voluntarily (12 students did not take part). The computer mediated communication (CMC) transcripts were analyzed using the Transcript Analysis Tool (TAT) with the statistical analysis done in SPSS-PC. Over 5900 sentences were generated by 40 graduate students (27 females and 13 males) in 2 different courses. Converger learning style participants were most engaged (as expected) with a mean of 19.47 postings as compared to Assimilators 14.0, Accommodators 14.0, and Divergers 8.8. The discussions were characterized as high factual and low social engagement with 62% of all statements being classified as expository and only 16% involving scaffolding/ engagement. However, the greatest differences in learning style was displayed in these type 4 (scaffolding, engaging, attending to the social environment) comments. The greatest number of participants were Assimilators (15) followed by Convergers (13). Assimilators enjoy reflection and abstraction and possibly "lurked" without posting but could still be learning. The authors caution that a requirement for online interaction may

become a potential barrier to learning for those whose learning styles do not fit with CMC. In the current study, the researcher needs to be aware that online interaction is not the most appropriate means of learning for all students.

Fauske and Wade (2003-2004) studied an Internet-based course called "Teaching Diverse Students in Inclusive Settings" for prospective teachers at a large public university in the western USA. The course utilized computer-mediated discussions (CMD) for small group and whole-class online discussions about cases and issues related to the inclusion of marginalized students, disabilities, language, culture, and gender. The course required weekly discussions involving 5 newsgroups of 5-6 students, 29 total prospective secondary teachers, each with no instructor participation. Posting at least twice per week was required. CMD transcripts were analyzed via NVivo qualitative analysis software program with 83% inter-rater reliability. The findings emerged from a constant comparative analysis. Issues of democratic exchanges with evidences of critical thinking were the main foci of the research. Codings were made for supporting, perspective-taking, and inquiring discourse. Critical thinking involved self-questioning and challenging. Negative discourse in the forms of flaming and authoritativeness were coded. The students were supportive of one another in their posts. They did not always agree with one another, but softened their challenges with hedges. Perhaps the nature of the course content influenced the participants to be more supportive of one another. As critical thinking is a goal of interpretation in theological education, the capacity of online discussions to afford critical thinking is particularly important for the current research.

From a philosophical approach Scharmer (2001) develops a model of four field-logics of languaging on two perpendicular axes: Primacy of the Whole vs Primacy of the

Parts and Self-reflective Speech Acts vs Non-self-reflective Speech Acts. The four quadrants of the model are also designated as four phases. The first phase, talking nice, is in the quadrant of Non-self-reflective Speech Acts and the Primacy of the Whole where the speaker is concerned with the group and does not say what s/he thinks, reiterating only what has been said. Phase 2, "talking tough," is in the quadrant of Non-self-reflective Speech Acts but with Primacy of the Parts where the speaker says what s/he thinks and engages in "conflict and clash." The third phase, reflective dialogue, is in the quadrant engaged in Self-reflective Speech Acts along with Primacy of the Parts, where the speaker uses an intervention type of "do what you say, say what you think" and focuses on identifying mental models and assumptions. The fourth phase, generative dialogue, is in the quadrant of Self-reflective Speech Acts and Primacy of the Whole where the speaker's intervention type is "see what you do, do what you say, say what you think" and involves self-presencing with emergent reality (p. 147). These levels or phases of conversation can assist facilitators of online discussions to ascertain participant's focus and aid students to progress towards generative dialog, which Gunnlaugson (2007) expands to bring about transformation in the learners.

Wanstreet (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of 125 studies involving interaction in higher education online learning. She found interaction in those studies included learner-learner exchanges, learner-instructor exchanges, learner-content exchange, and learner-interface exchange with some articles specifying computer-mediated communication and social and psychological connection. Northrup (2009) conducted a study of fifty-two students in four graduate courses in an online masters program in instructional design. The quantitative study with a survey instrument of 50 items using a

5 point Likert scale researched student perceptions of important attributes for interaction in the online classes. Interaction was identified in four categories: content interaction, conversation and collaboration, intrapersonal/metacognitive interaction, and support interaction. The students identified peer discussions (M = 4.0, SD = .71) and sharing ideas with peers (M = 3.83, SD = .71) slightly higher than content interaction involving a mixture of individualized and guided activities (M = 3.77, SD = .85) and learning from audio-narrated presentations (M = 3.65, SD = 1.22). However, students rated team interaction marginally lower than narrated presentations (M = 3.62, SD = 1.05). The current study focused on the interaction within the discussion fora of online classes and it was important for the researcher to be cognizant with the forms of interaction discussed in the literature.

Gender issues in online education. Numerous studies have been conducted in regards to gender differences in online education. With a study done with all women (or at least participants identified themselves as female), Ward (1999) observed two websites for women and interacted with the site visitors through traditional ethnographic methods, referenced as cyberethnography, involving focus groups through email discussions, participant observation, and conversational interviews with interpretative research analysis methods. The researcher was interested in issues of connectedness with online "communities." The researcher determined that site users do experience connection with others and crave interaction. These online communities tended to be open rather than closed as users want to broaden their horizons finding that diversity is a plus. A lack of geographical location did not prevent the emergence of community, in fact the ability to interact despite the distance added to the interest and depth of the community. Even

though the community was very fluid, the members viewed it as a community and, consistent with a changing view of community membership in the physical world, the members used the online community to fulfill a specific need in their lives.

In the online learning community studied by Baskin, Barker, and Woods (2005) students were asked to form "virtual" workgroups among their cohort, identify a relevant industry project, and collaboratively (with industry partners and academic supervisors) scope and design a response to each identified problem. This ICT-rich (Information Communication Technology) group work setting featuring "industry-style" team structures involving a final year business subject focusing on professional skills development. While ICT-supported centralized decision-making processes and exchange of ideas for students, these facilities did not seem directly to support convergent group work processes. In gender comparisons, female students carried the "burden" of the ICT group work. Females desired a greater "social presence" to support their needs for interaction and inclusion. Females spent less time at the computer, were twice as likely as male students to produce "collaborative" reports, and reported attending 22 per cent more virtual "group" meetings. Females produced 65 per cent of the discussion forum postings and 83 per cent of the total replies. The researchers write, "Herein lies a caveat: producing social categories this way in an ICT environment may also produce member exclusion, distress and/or resentment."

A study at the University of Cape Town conducted by Carr, Cox, Eden, and Hanslo (2004) looked at the effectiveness of online chats in a blended class. Initially the data suggested marginalization of participants but the study looked at more detailed information to see if this peripheral participation changed over the duration of the course

and continued online interaction. The study utilized Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of peripheral participation of some members that develops into fuller participation over time as the member is drawn more to the core of the community. The course module was a simulation of national trade negotiation for economists. Small groups worked via chats and then met in sub-plenary sessions and finally whole-class plenary sessions to arrive at the bargaining agreement. Tutors facilitated the sub-plenary sessions and the instructor facilitated the plenary session. The small groups were unfacilitated. Qualitative methods involving the Exchange Structure Analysis (based on transactional analysis) of the text chats (online) and the face-to-face (f2f) meetings both in small groups and whole class meetings were triangulated by observation, survey and interview data. Participants included ninety-eight students (54 male and 44 female) in a third-year economics module. Seventy-seven were English first-language speakers and 18 were first-language speakers of an African language. Of the 47 students who completed the end-of-course survey, 35 agreed that the online chat helped them participate and 7 disagreed. The interviews suggested that some of the English as Second Language (ESL) students felt left behind in the fast-moving chat; however, those ESL students sometimes found other avenues for participation. The alternative means of participating were not available in the f2f meetings. The students were on topic during the chats for the most part and the social discourse may have assisted the bargaining process. As for gender differences, the females focused more on collaborative and community-building moves while male strategies were more adversarial. The chats were dominated by about 30% of the participants but there were more opportunities for participation in the chats than in the f2f meetings.

Similarly in Rovai's (2001) study of discussion fora for differences between the male and female participants and their sense of community. As noted earlier Rovai found that the females tended to use a connected voice, which exhibited agreement, encouragement, praise, and personal references. Males tended to use an independent voice that was haughty, defensive, quarrelsome, and even hostile. Those with the highest sense of community on the SCCI were more likely to use a connected voice in their postings and those with the lowest sense of community tended to use an independent voice. When the discussion fora analysis was compared to the sense of community measure, male participants did not show a statistically significant increase in sense of community between the premeasure and the postmeasure, whereas females did show a statistically significant different between the two measures. Females also had a statistically significant higher score than their male colleagues in the overall sense of community. Rovai states,

> The ability of a premeasure to reliability [sic] predict gender suggests that preexisting ways of knowing and reasoning are more important than the effects of the distance education course in discriminating female and male learners. This finding underscores the need for ALN [asynchronous learning network] courses to establish rules to provide equity in communication among learners. (p. 46)

Wang, Sierra, and Folger (2003) studied seven online teams where two or three students collaboratively designed an educational product, developed portions of the product and reported on their prototype results. Researchers used both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze discourse artifacts, survey responses, online profiles and project evaluations. The students included 12 females and 9 males, 17 from USA and 4 international and were all enrolled in a graduate-level introductory instructional design course for education and training. Issues of concern for the research included gender differences involving participation, shared identity, and the establishment of social

networks. Both male and female students were active participants but the content of their

messages differed. Females were more likely to express opinions and ask/answer

questions whereas the males discussed information. Also over two-thirds of the social

interactions came from the females. Social networks were determined among the team

members.

While the above studies showed differences in communication patterns between

males and females, some studies did not find any differences. Fahy and Ally (2005) did

the study of Kolb Learning Styles Inventory in over 5900 sentences written by twenty-

seven female and thirteen male graduate students . Unlike previous studies differences in

learning style were not found to be associated with gender. Similarly Fauske and Wade

(2003-2004) found, in contrast to other studies, both men and women used a mix of

discourse strategies and both genders were supportive and receptive to others. Both

genders were willing to challenge other participants but softened their challenges with

hedges.

While gender issues was not the major focus of this dissertation research,

theological educators of the Wesleyan theological tradition should be concerned with

ways in which chosen instructional strategies might give power to dominant groups,

especially males from European descent or limit non-dominant groups. Wenger (1998)

identifies marginality as non-participation of certain persons or groups of persons that is

maintained by the practice of the CoP. Wenger states, "Women who seek equal

opportunity often find that the practices of certain communities never cease to push them

back into identities of non- participation" (pp. 166-167). For this reason I desired to be

aware of any patterns that might become apparent concerning gender issues, especially if

those patterns indicated marginalization of females or other non-dominant groups within the CoP.

Methods of analyzing online discussions. A number of protocols have been developed for in-depth analysis of online interactions. Wellman (2004) identifies three ages of Internet studies. The first stage of studies involved conjecture and anecdotal evidence—both for the Internet utopians and dystopians. The second age of studies from the late 1990s to the early 2000s aimed at documenting users and uses with basic counting measurements. The third and current age of Internet studies, according to Wellman, involves theoretically-driven analysis projects looking at "the kinds of relationships the Internet does (and does not) foster" (p. 127) among other aspects of specialized social networks.

Kemp (2002) has encouraged theological educators "to base educational judgments on criteria and evaluation," (p. 17) when making judgments concerning online education rather than just comparing the techniques to traditional face-to-face education. The need is for a means of assessing the effectiveness of online classes as true learning communities that interact, reflecting and imagining upon common issues, and thus generate knowledge that is both cognitive and personal (Cannell, 1999). When considering a learning community, the members must engage with one another negotiating meaning through their shared reflections and consequently forging relationships. The members then begin to align themselves within the field of study generating both personal and social knowledge. The perception of oneself is changed as one's world is enlarged. *Belonging* in Wenger's Communities of Practice requires more than a sense of social presence.

Much of the research in theological education has been done by educator-researchers on their own online course experiences (Baker, 2004; Eby, 2008; Graham, 2002; Ruth, 2006; R. H. Woods & Baker, 2004). The question for online educators, especially in theological education, concerns how community belongingness is developed through mostly computer-mediated, text-based communication. The researcher proposes an empirical study to examine the actual speech-acts, where the language interaction is deemed action and results in action (Mazur, 2004), in order to examine the activity of the members of discussions in online classes for potential development of community.

Cyberethnography. Browne (2003) used a case study approach involving cyberethnography as a research methodology with analytical tools of content analysis, interviews, a questionnaire for socio-demographic data, with a thematic grid chart to analyze the data for patterns. The content analysis involved simple word counts for length and frequency of contributions to the discussions and were analyzed by Laurillard's categories for deeper insight. Laurillard (2002) identified four design issues for online conversations: interactivity, adaptivity, discursiveness and reflectivity. Browne's research highlighted that an advantage to the cyberethnography approach is the ability of the researcher to be invisible to the participants. Browne also brought out the need for confidentiality and ethics in the research practices. My study asked permission from the online participants to read their postings in their class for content analysis of community issues.

Content analysis. One method for analyzing the text of online fora is content analysis, which is a method for analyzing the text or transcripts of the online written discussions in fora, emails, or chats (Marra, Moore, & Klimczak, 2004). As noted

earlier, Gunawardena et al. (1997) developed the Interaction Analysis Model (IAM) using a grounded approach on a global online debate among professional educators and trainers after attempting to analyze the debate utilizing other interaction content models, which were found not appropriate for the purpose. They stated, "In order to assess the quality of interactions and the quality of the learning experience in a computer mediated conferencing environment, content analysis or interaction analysis of computer transcripts is essential" (p. 398).

Marra et al. (2004) reviewed multiple approaches for analyzing the content of text transcripts in online classes according to different criteria including interactivity, leanness of task-orientation, critical thinking, cognition and metacognition, and collaborative behaviors. Marra et al. then compared two content analysis protocols, Gunawardena et al.'s interaction analysis model (IAM) focusing on knowledge creation and Newman et al.'s critical-thinking model of analysis. Marra et al. states, "both [analysis methods] are concerned with qualitatively describing meaningful interactions that promote in-depth learning in online discussions" (p. 26). Marra et al.'s (2004) purpose was to compare these two protocols and so applied both protocols to the same discussion forum. The Newman et al. critical-thinking model provides an externally defined, complex analysis with some 46 identified codes while Gunawardena et al.'s IAM is more sensitive to the context of the participants and requires greater internal refinement by the raters of how to apply the protocol. Marra et al. referred to Mazur's (2004) emphasis upon the "criticality of the *discourse content* in the resulting analysis" (Marra et al., 2004, p. 38) and speculated that different discussions analyzed by the same protocol might require changes in the protocol usage as especially what occurred with the IAM protocol analysis

since this protocol was first used with an online debate. Also Marra et al. again referenced Mazur in the need to consider the socio-culture of the participants in the discussion when analyzing the online text. Marra et al. claimed that the IAM protocol forced raters to be more sensitive to the participants' context while the Newman protocol "promoted a more fragmented view of the discussion" (p. 38). This comparative summary provides the need for the researcher to be conscious of the context of both the discourse itself and the context of the participants. Thus, while analyzing discourses in theological education, the researcher was cognizant of the context of the theological discussion as well as the socio-cultural context of the participants.

As noted previously Rovai (2001) did a case study of 20 professional educators and trainers enrolled in a five-week online course. Besides the Sense of Classroom Community Index (SCCI) questionnaire that he and colleagues had developed from previous research, Rovai also employed content analysis of the postings in the discussion forum using Blackboard, a course management system, and graded course components. There were a total of 1,130 postings throughout the course with 52 synchronous chats occurring as well. Rovai performed qualitative content analysis on the text of the messages for communication styles such as connected (supportive, helpful, personal orientation, offering praise), independent (impersonal, assertive, authoritative), or neutral voice patterns. Rovai found gender differences with the communication styles in that 4.82% of the messages written by males as compared to 29.1% of the female messages had a connected communication style while 20.78% of the male messages as compared to 6.63% of the messages from females had an independent voice. The findings made clear

that on-line instructors interested in promoting a sense of community should use interactive teaching methods.

Following the content analysis of the previous study, Rovai (2002b) refined the Classroom Community Scale and tested the instrument with 375 graduate students in 28 different online courses. The instrument was reduced to 20 questions measuring (1) connectedness, which included the elements of spirit, trust, and interdependence of the previous instrument, and (2) learning. Learning was conceived to represent

> the feelings of community members regarding interaction with each other as they pursue the construction of understanding and the degree to which members share values and beliefs concerning the extent to which their educational goals and expectations are being satisfied" (pp. 206-207).

The voice differences are important to the current researcher when examining community development in online theological education so that individual differences are acknowledged and observed in the analysis. Simone Conceicao (2002) spoke from personal experience in which the online course gave her a voice when other students responded to her posts and were interested in her ideas. It was important to observe how interactions occur and whether independent voices dominated and potentially stifled more participants with more connected communication styles and thus deterred the development of community.

Conversation analysis. Conversation Analysis (CA) (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; ten Have, 1999), similarly to Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962), considers the speech itself. CA examines the turn-taking in the conversation and the function of the dialog parts including repair statements that help manage the talk in interaction, allowing the speaker to repair any misunderstandings that the recipient exhibited (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998). This research did not

conduct in-depth CA as unlike CA the goal of the research was to examine other phenomenon, namely the community of practice and the pedagogies for professional identity development, through the discussion texts (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998). However, CA offers some explanations for the meaning of the texts and so it was important for the researcher to be aware of the principles of CA.

Coding process. Curtis (2004) used an open coding process to analyze the content of synchronous chat room discussions in an online class for evidence of social interactions among participants as well as construction of knowledge. Curtis read the 86 discussion group texts generated by the 11 graduate students divided into groups of 3-5 members. Then he randomly selected 4 discussions, one from each month of the semester, to analyze in order to develop a coding structure. This resulted in 579 units or posts in the chat. From this analysis, Curtis developed his coding system that included Getting to Know Each Other interactions, Coordination/Consensus-seeking, various assignment statement codings, Course Content Questions, and others.

Mayring (2000) proposes a model for content analysis of text where the application of deductive categories involve predetermined, theoretically formulated categories and subcategories. Examples, definitions, and coding rules are developed for these categories and subcategories. Then the text is collected and the passage is analyzed and methodologically assigned to a category and subcategory. Mayring provides for a formative check that allows revision of the categories and encoding during the analysis. As the analysis work concludes, a summative check of the encoding according to the definitions of the categories is completed. The formative and summative checks aid the dependability by providing an "inquiry audit" (Hoepfl, 1997).

My study sought to apply theoretically-driven content analysis of the interactions in online classes in theological education such as Mayring (2000) suggests. The purpose of this content analysis is to determine what type of and how community is fostered through online interactions. While this research methodology has been done in many areas, no theoretically-driven content analysis has been done in online theological education.

Summary

Thus far, I have identified theological education especially as it relates to the case involving a graduate institution in the Wesleyan theological tradition for the preparation of professional clergy. I have also discussed the issue of community especially in theological education and the perceived potential difficulties developing community and professional identity in the online educational environment.

I have then looked at some of the elements involved with the formation of a learning community. In particular I have discussed studies concerning interaction compared to transaction in communication, or two-way communication as opposed to a dominant one-way communication and the effect on community formation. Other studies have dealt with *social presence*, the awareness of another person in an interaction, and *immediacy*, a sense of interpersonal proximity to others in communication. These are influences that provide a sense of relationship necessary for community formation and are potentially difficult to provide when persons never see one another face to face as in online education. Hirumi (2002) identifies online course design that is based on learning theories and provides interactive as well as transactive learning engagements.

I suggested Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice as a potential construct for the development of professional clergy based upon Foster et al.'s (2005) pedagogies of formation, performance, interpretation, and contextualization found in the extensive Carnegie study of theological education. Wenger's (1998) social learning theory developed from the CoP concept emphasizes community, identity, meaning, and practice. Within the CoP newcomers learn the professional practice by becoming a member within the community and negotiating meaning for the practice of the community, which also forms the identity of the community as a whole. Wenger identified engagement, alignment, and imagination as components of belonging within the community. Foster et al. acknowledge a *pastoral imagination* that students generated and expanded through their studies. Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory, which includes the process of scaffolding to transverse the zone of proximal development, also involves situated cognition. I consider Hung and Chen's (2001) design issues for online learning, based upon Lave and Wenger's situated cognition and Vygotskian thought, as well as Huang's (2002) online instructional principles, based on constructivism, a foundation for CoPs.

I also contemplated issues of identity development supplied by Gee (2000-2001) involving an affinity group identity that is facilitated by a discursive identity. These may or may not be part of an institutional identity. Regarding professional identity development, Antony (2002) compares professionalization and socialization and concludes that the newcomer internalizes the profession's practice to be her/his own identity. Foster et al. (2005), as noted, found that professional identity for the clergy involved pedagogies of formation including *practicing the presence of God, practicing*

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holiness, and *practicing religious leadership*; pedagogies of performance involving a script, audience and actor, and the means or manner of the performance; pedagogies of interpretation encompassing a phenomenon to be interpreted, an interpreter, and methods of interpretation; and pedagogies of contextualization comprised of *contextual consciousness, contextual encounter,* and *contextual transformation.* Professional identity involves belonging to the community of the profession and being knowledgeable of and contributing to a shared repertoire in the joint enterprise.

I have also introduced gender issues about which online theological education needs to be concerned in the development of community and professional identity of the students preparing for ministry. Again, the need for social presence is a concern especially for women. Women tend to work collaboratively and use a connected voice expressing interaction that is supportive and helpful (Rovai, 2001). Women need to experience the same belongingness through the discursive activities as their male counterparts to be adequately prepared for membership in the professional clergy.

In reviewing the relevant literature I have developed a rationale for the *consideration* of discussion fora in online environments as those in which Communities of Practice can and do occur. What is not clear is how online groups evolve into a professional community of practice and the extent to which this might happen among adults enrolled in graduate online classes in theological education. The literature has shown the need for trust and caring in a learning community (Conceicao, 2002; Johnson, 2001; Rovai, 2002a; Schwen & Hara, 2003). Lave and Wenger (1991) have identified the   importance of a shared history with common stories passed from master to novices in Communities of Practice. Triggs and John (2004) and Roschelle (1992) speak of the

need for a community to construct meaning of their shared practices. Situated learning or learning in context is an important aspect of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Mercer, 2006). Shared goals in a joint enterprise has also been identified as essential for a community of practice (Johnson, 2001; Wenger, 1998). Community of Practice members form a professional identity as well as a personal identity within the CoP (Mercer, 2006; Severe, 2008; Wang et al., 2003; Wenger, 1998). The Carnegie study (Foster et al., 2005) ascertained that education preparing students to be members of the professional clergy, contained pedagogies to nurture formation, and develop skills in performance, interpretation, and contextualization.

This study seeks to find evidence or to identify the lack of evidence in the discussion fora of online classes for ministerial preparation that indicates the development of the professional clergy Community of Practice. Learners and experienced clergy mutually are engaged in a joint enterprise that develops a shared repertoire of stories, experiences, and reified products through the negotiation of meanings providing the formation of identities within and without the community resulting in the transformation of the participants.

Additionally, the study identifies implications for design of discursive activities in online classes in theological education to afford the potential development of professional identity in clergy preparation. Interaction in online classes has been classified as learner-learner, learner-instructor, learner-content, and learner-interface (Northrup, 2009; Wanstreet, 2009).

Chapter 3: Case Design

This research employs an embedded single-case study (Yin, 2009) that seeks to examine community formation and development of professional identity in online theological education. Specifically, I investigated the discussion fora of selected online classes offered in the online curriculum of a theological seminary in the southeast region of the United States to determine the extent to which these professional goals were in evidence, and if so, what implications might follow for the design and use of discussion fora.

Background for the Study: Extending an Exploratory Pilot Study of Online Theological Education to Explore Identity, Narrative, and Community of Practice

I completed an exploratory pilot study (see Appendix B) for this investigation during the fall 2003 and fall and spring 2004-05 semesters as a part of the doctoral course work at the University of Kentucky College of Education. One online course at a graduate theological seminary was observed for the first half of one semester. The researcher read the posts but did not reply to any posts in the discussion fora of the online course and collected the log archives for the discussion fora and a few synchronous chats for later analysis. A content analysis (Marra et al., 2004) was later conducted on the text of a discussion forum of one team group within the online class for a three-week period. Several interviews were conducted with key administrative and faculty personnel as well as with online students. One group interview was conducted with students in the form of an online chat. Two separate analyses were written from this preliminary study. One focused on one key dimension of a CoP—Modes of belonging. Wenger (1998) asserted that participants in a CoP demonstrate modes of belonging as they learn in a community

of practice. Specifically these modes are engagement, imagination, and alignment. The second analysis focused on the experiences of faculty and students within the online courses obtained through interviews and online chats—generally what they did in the courses, why they were involved in online education, and what problems and benefits they found in online education.

The purpose of the pilot was to explore the assumption that ministerial education as a profession can comprise a community of practice. Those data showed that elements of a community of practice identified in the literature were in evidence in the discussion fora. The current research expands beyond the pilot study to examine online classes across the seminary curriculum and examines other dimensions of a CoP in regards to professional identity development. In addition to the modes of belonging **(**Wenger**,** 1998**)** in online conversations, I also examine the formation of professional identity, learning as becoming, another key dimension of a CoP. This study considers evidence of learning from the four pedagogies identified in the Carnegie study, the shared repertoires that are created, how stories are passed from experienced clergy to novice clergy and other interactions that occur. Moreover, I examined the contributions of the participants to the formation of community.

Case Method Design: Exploratory and Descriptive

Yin (2009) recognizes three purposes for case studies: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory or causal based upon the research questions. An exploratory case study has a goal "to develop pertinent hypotheses and propositions for further inquiry" (p. 9) using "what" questions. Research questions #1 and #2 are "what" questions that invite a case study methodology for exploratory purposes. A descriptive case is to "describe an

intervention and the real-life context in which it occurred" or to "illustrate certain topics" (p. 20). Case study research questions that describe a phenomenon are in the form of "Why" questions. Research questions #3, and #4 invite a descriptive approach. Thus, this study is both exploratory and descriptive by asking "how" and exploratory "what" questions for which Yin maintains a case study is an appropriate research strategy. Table 3.1 shows how this current case study meets the criteria of Yin's definition to be an appropriate research method for this research.

The research focus for this case study is how or if theological students exhibit components of a professional identity in a community of practice that is expressed within discussion fora in online classes in theological education and how identified types of interactions help facilitate that development. The researcher observed and analyzed instructor and learner interactions for facilitation of community especially concerning the learners identification with a particular community of practice, the professional clergy. While observing contemporary phenomenon of this real-life, although virtual, context, the research had no control over the actual behavior of the teachers and learners, another element that calls for a case study research method (Yin, 2009).

Table 3.1

Case Study Definition and Research Application to the Definition

Yin's Definition of a Case Study as a Research Method	The Current Case Study's Application of the Definition
"A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context"	Involves the current phenomenon of community with its accompanying professional identity development within the real-life context of the online classroom
"when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident"	The context of the online class with the development of professional identity within a community of practitioners is unknown
"copes with technically distinctive situation" where there are many variables but does so as one result	Multiple variables including the professor, the students from differing backgrounds and experiences, the course materials, and more but the goal of this study is to explore and describe the development of community and professional identity.
relies on multiple sources of evidence through triangulation	Sources of evidence involve online interaction texts in courses from the four schools of the seminary and the two Integrative Studies courses.
benefits from prior theory to guide data collection and analysis	Benefits from the previously developed theory of Communities of Practice, the Carnegie study and Gee's identity development.

Single-case study design. This study concentrated on one institution of

theological education and its approach to online learning—semester-based courses with

the faculty members creating the curriculum either individually or collaboratively, that

constitute a bounded system. Case studies can either be single-case or multiple-case

studies (Yin, 2009). A single case looks at only one situation in one context. The

rationales for single-case studies include a critical case "in testing a well-formulated

theory" (p. 47), an extreme or unique case in which some phenomenon is "so rare that

any single case is worth documenting and analyzing" (p. 47), a representative or typical

case where "the objective is to capture the circumstances... of a commonplace situation"

(p. 48), a revelatory case where a researcher "has an opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible" (p. 48), and a longitudinal case in which the researcher "studies the single same case at two or more different points in time" (p. 49).

This research studied a Christian theological seminary's online program. This study is framed by an established Community of Practice theory in regards to online theological education and the identity formation of the students in the professional ministry CoP. Thus, this study calls upon the critical case rationale for employing a single-case approach. In that several previous studies concerning online education and community development have been conducted, a representative or typical rationale could also be considered. The seminary was one of the first extensive online programs in graduate theological education, and uses semester-length courses rather than the more common modular, cohort model in online theological education. In addition, the researcher had access for analysis to the discussions of online classes that are not normally available to researchers who are not the teachers of the classes, thus involving a revelatory rationale. These three rationales all support the use of a single-case study.

Embedded units of analysis. Thus, far I have described this case study design to be an exploratory and descriptive single-case study of a bounded system. This case study more specifically employed an embedded single-case design. An embedded single-case design contrasts to a holistic single-case design in which the case is studied as one unit globally. Yin (2009) defines embedded single-case design as a study in one context with multiple units of analysis, which are subunit(s) to be studied of a single case. The units of analysis were online classes and the data were the discussion fora texts of the participating students and instructors in order to analyze the potential overall

development of CoP with its accompanying professional identity within the online

theological classes.

Data sources. Yin (2009) identifies six sources of evidence for case studies:

documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations,

and physical artifacts. The embedded single-case study used the discussion fora texts of

multiple observed online courses for content analysis. In this investigation, the

researcher observed by collecting and reading the texts generated by the class and group

discussion fora and other course activities but did not participate in the graduate-level

online classes. As these were closed classes, I requested permission from the

administration and professor for access to the classes in the course management system.

Also due to ethical considerations, the participants were also requested to present

documentation of informed consent for collection of their texts for analysis.

Case study quality. Yin (2009) identifies four tests for judging the quality of

empirical research and provides case study tactics for meeting those tests. The tests

include construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. Internal

validity is only a concern for explanatory research that is seeking a cause and effect

relationship as explanation of an event. Thus internal validity is not a concern with

exploratory and descriptive cases. Table 3.2 provides a description of the tests and how I

met these tests.

Table 3.2

Yin's Empirical Research Tests and Tactics of This Case Study To Meet Those Tests

Tests	Case study tactic	Current case study tactic
Construct validity – identifying correct operational measures	Use multiple sources of evidence	Evidence from text analysis in discussion fora from multiple classes across the four schools and two additional core courses along with observations of course structures and activities
	Establish chain of evidence	Created a database similar to the pilot study to follow the evidence from the case questions to the report
	Have key informants review draft case study report	Also provided the completed thesis to the Seminary and the analysis to those participants who desire to read it.
Internal validity – seeks to establish causal relationships (for explanatory studies)	Do pattern matching	Not applicable for this descriptive and exploratory case study
	Do explanation building	Not applicable for this descriptive and exploratory case study
	Address rival explanations	Not applicable for this descriptive and exploratory case study
	Use logic models	Not applicable for this descriptive and exploratory case study
External validity – defines the domain to which the findings can be generalized	Use theory in single-case studies	Uses Wenger's (1998) Community of Practice theory and the Carnegie study (Foster et al., 2005) on clergy preparation as well as Gee's (2000-2001) identity development.
	Use replication logic in multiple-case studies	Not applicable for single-case study
Reliability	Use case study protocol	Uses Yin (2009) case study protocol
	Develop case study database	Created a database similar to the pilot study for the case study data

Analytical strategies. Yin (2009) provides four analytical strategies to analyze

case studies. These four strategies include relying on theoretical propositions, developing

a case description, using both quantitative and qualitative data, and examining rival

explanations. This research utilized three of the four strategies. A case description of the

online program in graduate, theological education at the Seminary was developed through

examining thirteen courses across the curriculum. This case description relied on

Wenger's (1998) Community of Practice as well as the Carnegie study (Foster et al.,

2005) on theological student preparation for the professional clergy. Identification of

rival explanations prior to collecting the data enabled the researcher to look for evidence

of these alternative explanations and keep an open mind and alert the researcher to biases.

Table 3.3 identifies the research questions and the theoretical propositions and rival

explanations.

Table 3.3

Theoretical Propositions and Rival Explanations

Research Question	Theoretical Proposition	Rival Explanation
1. To what extent do the participants exhibit a sense of belonging to the Community of Practice? To what extent are Wenger's (1998) Modes of Belonging apparent in the online discussions?	Wenger identified alignment, imagination, and engagement as the components of the Modes of Belonging in identity formation within a Community of Practice	1. There is no CoP developed in online theological education. 2. The CoP is developed outside the classroom in the local church and district and the students bring a sense of membership in the CoP to the online classroom.
2. What evidence, if any, is there of the development of professional identity of participants in these online classes?	The Carnegie study identified that clergy educators utilized pedagogies that provided for formation, performance, interpretation, and contextualization in their teaching	1. The instructors are not utilizing instructional methods that abet professional identity development. 2. The learners have already developed a professional identity within the ministerial CoP prior to the theological education.
3. If community and professional identity development are in evidence in online discussion fora, how does it occur? What are the discursive forms, if any?	Within Affinity groups discursive interactions with one another facilitate negotiation of their identities (Gee, 2000-2001)	1. The online class is not concerned with professional identity development within the community. 2. The online interactions do not provide a means of negotiating the professional identity.
4. Are there design implications for online theological education discussion fora?	The design of the online class needs to allow for interaction and sharing of narratives in order to pass the knowledge of the CoP to the neophytes.	1. Shared histories and narratives are not a part of the development of the ministerial CoP. 2. Students do not share this type of personal professional knowledge with one another. 3. Students do not have any stories to share to one another.

Data collection. Yin (2009) identifies three principles for data collection to deal with problems sometimes identified with construct validity and reliability of the case study evidence. These include 1) using multiple sources of evidence, 2) creating a case study database, and 3) maintaining a chain of evidence as shown in Table 3.2. Yin presents convergence of evidence for a single study in which the facts are derived from multiple sources of evidence including interviews (open-ended, group, and structured), observations (direct and participant), documents, and archival records. Design issues for triangulation of data sources or data triangulation sometimes address identified problems of construct validity by providing "multiple measures of the same phenomenon" (p. 117). However, difficulties with data triangulation include the greater burden of collecting data from multiple sources for the researcher and the skills required to collect and analyze data from multiple sources. For this study the researcher provided content analysis of the discussion fora from multiple classes across the four schools and two core courses of the Seminary. The fact that the discussion fora are in text format allows the retrieval and permanent saving of those data easing the burden of data collection. Also the course structures and course materials beyond the discussion fora were observed.

Data were gathered from online course interactions in the discussion fora for the content analysis for the four pedagogies identified in the Carnegie study: formation, performance, interpretation, and contextualization (Foster et al., 2005) and elements of a Community of Practice such as the modes of belonging (shared repertoires, mutual engagement, and joint enterprise) as identified by Wenger (1998). The actual online texts of the discussions, lecture, and assignment posts by the professors and students were collected for analysis.

Qualitative research quality tests. For qualitative research, alternative quality
tests have been advocated (Hoepfl, 1997). Hoepfl identifies these as credibility,
transferability, consistency or dependability, and confirmability. These tests are
important to the research as the research was not causal or generalizable. Table 3.4
explores the tactics provided by Hoepfl and those employed by this research to provide
quality data collection and analysis.

Table 3.4

Hoepfl's Tests for Qualitative Research

Test	Qualitative Research Tactic	Current Case Study Tactic
Credibility – represents multiple realities adequately	Triangulation of data, methods, multiple analysts and theory	Used triangulation of data and triangulation of theory
	Member checks to corroborate findings	Provided the analysis and transcripts for member checking
	Availability of raw data	The database is available for others to analyze
Transferability – potential extrapolation of findings given enough description of the context	Provide sufficient information so reader can determine whether the findings are applicable to the new situation	Provided rich description of the seminary, classes, and online experiences for readers to determine the transferability of the findings
Consistency or dependability -- describe changes that occur in the setting and how they affect the study	Establishes a plausible connection between what is observed and the conclusions	Followed Mayring's (2000) deductive analysis of the text through methodologically controlled application of the categories
Confirmability – *empathetic neutrality*: researcher is empathetic towards people encountered and neutral towards the findings	Provide an audit trail involving (1) raw data; (2) analysis notes; (3) reconstruction and synthesis products; (4) process notes; (5) personal notes; and (6) preliminary developmental information	Provided an audit trail involving the raw data, analysis notes along with initial reporting following Mayring's (2000) deductive categories so that findings are believable from the perspective of the participant

By employing these tactics I sought to ensure the quality of the data analysis and research for this study.

Case Selection

The selection of the educational institution and the participants was purposive and convenient following an emergent design. Initial cooperation for research was received by the researcher from the director of the online program at the Seminary. The Seminary was selected for its extensive and early online theological education that employed a semester-length online program rather than cohort sections for its online program. The Seminary began its virtual campus program in the Fall semester 1997-1998 and was one of the first theological educational institutions in the United States of America to do so. The seminary reports that in the Fall 2009 there were 536 students in the Virtual campus, 34.2% of the entire student enrollment (The Seminary, 2009). The Seminary seeks to offer all of its Master-level courses through its Virtual Campus in semester-length format. The students may select the course(s) they wish to take from among the offerings that semester within their given degree program.

The Seminary's main residential campus is located in southern United States of America (USA). The seminary is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as well as the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. The accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools prohibits ATS to offer full theological programs online (Delamarter, 2004). Most of the students enrolled in the online classes lived at a distance from the main campus of the Seminary and a few students lived outside the USA.

The Seminary is committed to the development of community among its students and faculty. Its ethos statement, a statement that defines the institution according to its characteristic beliefs and activities, refers to the "Seminary community" and reads, "Through their common life together, in classes, in study, in chapel services, at meals, in small-group sharing, in prayer and other scheduled activities, they encourage one another …" (The Seminary, 2008, p. 15).

As the students at the Seminary do not remain together as a block throughout the program as in a cohort, there is less opportunity to develop close relationships. If the formation of community was found within the Seminary's online structure, it would be likely that community formation could occur in the greater contact of the cohort model. Primarily, data in this study were collected via the Internet in Moodle, the online course management system used by the Seminary. Most of the interactions among students and faculty were asynchronous.

Curriculum content areas. Theological educators have commented to the researcher (personal communication with the researcher, various dates) that online education is appropriate for certain content areas but not for others. Delamarter (2005) noted this as one of many concerns of theological educators in his survey of 45 seminaries. In the dissertation study I selected courses to examine from each of the four schools in the seminary: the School of Biblical Interpretation & Proclamation, School of Theology & Formation, School of Practical Theology, the School of World Mission and Evangelism as well as the two Integrative Studies courses. The Integrative Studies courses consist of two core courses required of all master-level students within their first year (21 credit hours) of study. Each school includes classes from multiple content areas.

Table 3.5 displays the number of content areas, online courses offered, and the number of

selected courses for the study during the research period of the Spring semester 2008-

2009 and the Fall 2009-2010 in all four schools in the Seminary.

Table 3.5

Online Classes Offered in Spring Semester 2008-09 at the Seminary

Schools within the Seminary	Spring 2009			Fall 2009		
	Content Areas	Courses Offered*	Selected Courses	Content Areas	Courses Offered*	Selected Courses
School of Biblical Interpretation & Proclamation	6	13	2	4	16	1
School of Practical Theology	3	14	1	6	14	2
School of Theology & Formation	6	17	2	6	16	1
School of World Mission & Evangelism	2	5	1	3	4	1
Integrative Studies	1	2	1	1	2	1
Total 18		**51**	**7**	**20**	**52**	**6**

*Some courses had more than one section offered.

While the course content was not the subject of this study, courses from different

disciplines provided a snapshot of the diversity of content and teaching styles. This

broad selection of courses enabled a better understanding of the development of

community in online classes in a theological educational institution. Just as an

ethnographer observes the many and various activities of a community in order to have

richer understanding of the whole community, so it is important to examine the wide

community in the Seminary virtual campus. The inclusion of the diversity was not for

the purpose of evaluation but to enable a fuller understanding of the development of

community that is not limited to a particular content area in theological education. I

examined online classes across the Seminary curriculum to investigate the phenomenon of the development of professional identity into a community of practice through the diversity of online course offerings as part of the rich inquiry of qualitative research.

Not only were the participating courses spread across the four schools and Integrative Studies, the courses represented multiple departments within the schools at varying levels of study. The thirteen selected courses represented 13 (41.9%) of the 31 content areas listed in the Seminary's Catalog (2009-10, p. 142) (see Table 3.6). Two courses had cross listings involving three distinct content areas. Eight courses (61.5%) were 500-level courses (the beginning level for the graduate seminary) and 5 courses (38.5%) were listed at the 600-level. Two of the 600-level courses were cross-listed as 700-level courses. The Master of Divinity and other master programs require 500- and 600-level courses with 700-level electives possible. While not every department in the seminary had participating courses, the study represented a broad spectrum of the curriculum for clergy preparation.

Table 3.6

Content Areas Covered by Participating Courses

School/Program Content	Areas with Participating Courses
School of Biblical Interpretation and Proclamation	New Testament Inductive Bible Studies Preaching
School of Practical Theology	Christian Leadership Christian Education Youth Ministry
School of Theology and Formation	Theology Church History Worship
School of World Mission and Evangelism	Christian Mission Evangelization and Church Growth Missional Leadership
Integrative Studies	Integrative Studies

Class selection. At the same time, in order to provide for the in-depth analysis of

the courses for the development of community, the number of classes selected for the

study was limited to eight each semester from which thirteen participated over the two

semesters. This limitation was fitting for qualitative research, which is concerned with

deep information gathering and analysis. The classes observed and analyzed were

selected from the online offerings during the research time period. Each semester in the

study two distinct courses with different professors were selected from three schools

across the curriculum. Since there were fewer online offerings in the School of World

Mission & Evangelism (see Table 3.5), only one class was selected from the missions

school. An additional class was selected each semester from the Integrative Studies

program.

The selection of the classes was also purposive as to those classes taught by

professors who have had previous experience teaching online at the Seminary.

Randomization is not considered necessary in qualitative research as the findings are not concerned to be generalizable to other online programs. Since the purpose of the study was to observe the process of the development of professional identity development in a community of practice within the online class, the researcher believed it was best to have experienced online instructors who had experimented with online teaching techniques in previous classes. The researcher contacted the director of the online program of the Seminary prior to the beginning of the Spring 2009 semester to make arrangements and assure his cooperation for the study. The director of the online program recommended classes with experienced professors across the curriculum as described above. The participating classes are listed in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

The Seminary Schools with Participating Courses in the Study

Seminary School	Selected Courses
School of Biblical Interpretation & Proclamation	NT502 – Comprehensive Greek 2 NT(IBS)510 – Gospel of Matthew PR610 – Preaching
School of Practical Theology	CL613 – Recruiting and Equipping the Laity CD511 – Pastor and Christian Discipleship YM510 – Youth Ministry
School of Theology & Formation	CH502 – Church History II DO690 – John Wesley's Theology for Today WO510 – Worship
School of World Mission & Evangelism	MS620/ME745 (cross-listed course) – Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched CL/620/ML700/MS654 – Emerging Leaders
Integrative Studies	IS501 – Christian Formation: Kingdom, Church and World IS 502 – Vocation of Ministry

Data Collection

Duration and extent of data collection. Data from the thirteen online classes shown in Table 3.7 above were collected during the Spring 2009 and Fall 2009 semesters. The researcher examined the activities and interactions by the participants within the classes related to the development of professional identity development with a community of practice. The online classes at the Seminary generally enroll a maximum of 20-25 student participants. The preliminary study showed that a common method of interaction for online classes was discussion fora conducted by either the whole class or by groups of 4-6 students. The researcher collected data from the discussion fora of the thirteen courses observed.

The content analysis did not include discussion fora of the first week of the classes as the initial week of online classes often involved introductory interactions. The course activities and the syllabi were observed for overall analysis to see what course structures were utilized to support the engagement process for the courses.

Participants. Initially the eight courses selected for the Spring semester all had male instructors. I contacted the professors at the beginning of the semester requesting permission to do the research in their online courses. One professor refused to participate and I requested to have a replacement course with a female professor in the same school. The adjustment was made and so there were 7 male and 1 female professors, who agreed to participate in the study. After data collection began, one course with a male professor used a synchronous virtual conferencing tool rather than the written discussion forum and this course was dropped from the research.

For the Fall semester the seminary online program administrator asked me to select the courses for participation. I selected eight courses across the curriculum taught by 3 female professors and 5 male professors; however, I was not knowledgeable as to proficient online instructors. Two male professors did not respond and so their classes were dropped from the study, leaving 3 female professors and 3 male professors for the Fall semester participants.

Upon gaining the permission of the instructor, the administrator provided a list of the students enrolled in each course. I then emailed each student in the course requesting her or his permission to access and read the discussion forum contents according to the Institutional Review Board requirements. Second and third follow-up emails were sent to those who had not responded. Only the discussion forum postings of the students who granted permission were accessed for analysis.

For both semesters 13 professors, 9 males (69.2%) and 4 females (30.8%) compared to 17.2% for the total female faculty, permitted an online class to be included in the study. These 13 participating classes had a total enrollment of 268 students of which 153 (57.1%) participated. Within the participant enrollment males accounted for 99 (64.7%) of the students and female enrollment was 54 (35.3%). Total enrollment in the seven Spring courses was 155 of which 101 (65.2%) agreed to participate in the study. The Spring students included 102 males (65.8%) and 53 females (34.2%) with the total participants including 67 males (66.3%) and 34 females (33.7%). The six Fall courses had an enrolment of 113 with 73 males (64.6%) and 40 females (35.4%). Of that enrollment 52 (46.0%) agreed to participate in the study with 32 males (61.5%) and 20 females (38.5%). See Table 3.8 for the enrolment and participant details for each class.

All professors and students were given pseudonyms (given and surname) to protect the privacy of the participants.

Table 3.8

Research Participants (Courses are listed alphabetically by semester)

Courses	Total Enrollment	Male Enrollment	Male Enrollment %	Female Enrollment	Female Enrollment %	Study Participant Enrollment	Participant Enrollment %	Male Participant Enrollment	Male % of Participant Enrollment	Female Participant Enrollment	Female % Participant Enrollment	Semester	Instructor
CL613 Equipping the Laity	22	17	77.3%	5	22.7%	11	50.0%	8	72.7%	3	27.3%	S	M
CH502 Church History II	20	12	60.0%	8	40.0%	15	75.0%	10	66.7%	5	33.3%	S	F
DO690 Wesley Theology	25	17	68.0%	8	32.0%	15	60.0%	10	66.7%	5	33.3%	S	M
IS501 Kingdom, Church, & World	26	15	57.7%	11	42.3%	20	76.9%	14	70.0%	6	30.0%	S	M
MS620/ ME745 Leadership for the Church	24	15	62.5%	9	37.5%	12	50.0%	6	50.0%	6	50.0%	S	M
NT(IBS)510 Matthew	21	13	61.9%	8	38.1%	14	66.7%	9	64.3%	5	35.7%	S	M
NT502 Greek 2	17	13	76.5%	4	23.5%	14	82.4%	10	71.4%	4	28.6%	S	M
Spring Total	**155 102**		**65.8%**	**53**	**34.2%**	**101**	**65.2%**	**67**	**66.3%**	**34**	**33.7%**		

Table 3.8 (cont.)

Research Participants (Courses are listed alphabetically by semester)

Courses	Total Enrollment	Male Enrollment	Male Enrollment %	Female Enrollment	Female Enrollment %	Study Participant Enrollment	Participant Enrollment %	Male Participant Enrollment	Male % of Participant Enrollment	Female Participant Enrollment	Female % Participant Enrollment	Semester	Instructor
CD511 Pastor and Christian Discipleship	20	13	65.0%	7	35.0%	14	70.0%	8	57.1%	6	42.9%	F	F
CL620/ MS654 Emerging Leaders	21	15	71.4%	6	28.6%	3	14.3%	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	F	M
IS502 Vocation of Ministry	19	10	52.6%	9	47.4%	12	63.2%	7	58.3%	5	41.7%	F	F
PR610 Preaching	15	10	66.7%	5	33.3%	4	26.7%	3	75.0%	1	25.0%	F	M
WO510 Worship	26	20	76.9%	6	23.1%	14	53.8%	9	64.3%	5	35.7%	F	F
YM510 Youth Ministry	12	5	41.7%	7	58.3%	5	41.7%	2	40.0%	3	60.0%	F	M
Fall Total	**113**	**73**	**64.6%**	**40**	**35.4%**	**52**	**46.0%**	**32**	**61.5%**	**20**	**38.5%**		
Grand Total	**268**	**175**	**65.3%**	**93**	**34.7%**	**153**	**57.1%**	**99**	**64.7%**	**54**	**35.3%**		

Thirteen (8.4%) participants, including 10 males (10.1% of male participants) and 3 females (5.5% of female participants), enrolled in multiple courses involved in the study over the two semesters. See Table 3.9 for details for those with multiple enrollments. In the 153 participant enrollment, there were 137 individual participants with 87 (63.5%) males and 50 (36.5%) females. This was congruent with the seminary's student body, which was 69% male and 31% female.

Table 3.9

Single and Multiple Course Enrollments

Participants	Participants with 1 course Enrollment	Participants with 2 courses Enrollment	Participants with 3 courses Enrollment	Total Partici-pants	% of Total Partici-pants
Male	77	8	2	87	63.5%
Female	47	2	1	50	36.5%
Total	**124**	**10**	**3**	**137**	**100.0%**

Students' self-reported ethnicity data. From the self-reported statements in the discussion fora comments, most students participating in the study were Anglo-American. A few students identified other ethnicities or nationalities in their introductions and forum discussions. One student stated he was a Native American, one was from India, one student was from and worked in islands in the Caribbean area, and two students identified themselves as Mexican-Americans. Several students were African-Americans. A number of students had worked abroad in missions or in other work positions. One teaching assistant (TA) was from India. This small diversity provided multiple cultural perspectives in some of the discussions.

Student participation in clergy profession. Unlike other professional preparation programs such as medical or legal, where the student must complete the

schooling and pass the culminating exams prior to beginning their professional practice, ministerial-preparation students may already be involved in ministry preceding and during their seminary education. Denominations and ordaining boards vary as to their requirements with some requiring the Master of Divinity degree prior to ordination as a clergy elder. Other ordaining boards accept partial completion of the graduate degree or alternative means of completing the educational requirements for clergy ordination. From self-disclosed information in course introductions and other discussions, I learned that most of the participating students were already serving as full- or part-time ministers in local churches or para-church organizations. A few participating students, usually older students, were serving as the local pastor of one church or a multi-charge circuit (usually two small rural churches with attendance of less than 100). One participant was the senior pastor of a church with three services averaging 250 persons in attendance. One student identified herself as an intern pastor serving under a senior pastor with specific responsibilities in two churches. Two students identified themselves as working in campus ministries such as the Wesley Foundation on a university campus. A number of the students were assistant pastors on paid staff with specific responsibilities such as worship leaders, adult ministries, youth ministries, director of Christian education, administrative pastor, and other positions. Others served as lay leaders (unpaid) in their local churches. The size of the churches also varied. One older, second-career student was the administrative pastor of a church with 6000 members and six services each weekend while other churches only had 30-50 in attendance. The ministerial background of the participating students in the classes was also diverse and extensive as will be shown in the analysis of the student discussions.

Additionally, I learned that many of the participating students were pursuing a second-career as clergy. (Not all of the courses provided these introduction fora or self-disclosing discussions so this data was not gathered from all participants.) Several first careers included a medical doctor-surgeon; engineers, one of whom worked with NASA; retired military; public school teachers; software developers, one of whom had worked for IBM; social worker; dentist-husband's office manager; and a number of business owners and corporate managers. Other students were young having completed their undergraduate degree a few years prior to enrolling at the seminary and were working at various jobs while taking graduate classes. One younger student was an environmental biologist, who travelled abroad extensively, making the online classes helpful for him to pursue his graduate degree. Another younger student had completed five years in the military as an Arabic translator after completing his undergraduate degree. The backgrounds and experiences of the students were extensive and diverse.

Data Analysis

Online discussion texts were collected and read by the researcher for content analysis similar to other studies involving online discussion fora (Curtis, 2004; Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Marra et al., 2004; Rovai, 2002a). Notes were made and coded as to the activities within the classes and the responses of the participants. Textual data were collected from the discussion fora and coded and analyzed on an on-going basis according to themes concerning professional identity development and community development. A database was maintained as a searchable form of access and to support information sorting by themes found in the data codings. I used Microsoft Excel for the database software.

Content analysis deductive categories. The purpose of the content analysis of

the discussion fora was to affirm through the actual speech acts of the online participants

the phenomenon of the development of professional identity in a community of practice

and the effect of their speech acts upon that development. Mayring's (2000) model of

qualitative content analysis using deductive category application was followed for the

data analysis. Using this model, existing conceptual categories are used as the lens for

data examination and provide the basis from which the analysis proceeds.

The research employed qualitative content analysis of texts collected from

asynchronous discussions fora using categories such as the pedagogies for professional

identity development for the clergy identified by the Carnegie study (Foster et al., 2005)

(see Table 3.10) and concepts of the Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998) including

the Modes of Belonging (engagement, imagination, and alignment), joint enterprise,

shared repertoire, and participation and reification (see Table 3.11 for identification of the

components included). The online texts of discussion fora were examined for indicators

and phrases that exemplify these concepts according to the procedures described earlier.

The coding was formatively checked with the Communities of Practice and the Carnegie

study pedagogies theoretical categories and then a summative check was done with the

final working through the texts to establish reliability. This procedure follows Mayring's

(2000) model of qualitative content analysis using deductive category application. The

frameworks for the coding is shown in Table 3.10 and Table 3.11.

Table 3.10

Carnegie Study (Foster et al., 2005)

Pedagogies	**Skills**	**Instructional Methods**
Interpretation: interpretative interaction between texts and one's self in conversation	• Critical thinking • Integration of materials • Meaning making – moving to "service, praxis, or some action responsive to …the interpretive practice"(p. 95)	• Questions to prompt additional engagement • Modeling and coaching involving encouragement • Feedback • Assessment
Contextualization	• Contextual consciousness	• Becoming aware of one's own assumptions
	• Contextual encounter	• Dialoging with differing perspectives developing respect and understanding
	• Contextual transformation	• Critical reflection and action
Formation	• Practicing the presence of God	• Prayer or meditation both individually and collectively • Singing hymns or guided devotional readings
	• Practicing holiness	• Reflecting "the relationship and interplay of religious commitment and professional integrity" (p. 113); "fostering the character of the habitus of religious tradition" (p. 115)
	• Practicing religious leadership: "Vision or discernment: cultivating a pastoral imagination" (p. 121)	• Articulation of the vision and discernment as to whether the vision is present
Performance	• Put into practice the cognitive aspects of their learning • Professional habits and dispositions	• Professional apprenticeship • Simulated apprenticeship • "Demonstrating mastery of information-in-use" (p. 172)

Table 3.11

Communities of Practice

Identity in practice: Learning as becoming (Wenger, 1998, pp. 149-187)

Negotiated experience (shared repertoires)	- Participation - Reification
Community membership: modes of belonging	- Engagement: interactions, relationships, practices, shared histories of learning - Imagination: images of the past and the future, images of ourselves, images of the world, images of possibilities - Alignment: discourses, coordinated enterprises, complexity, styles, compliance
Learning trajectory (involves participation and non-participation	- Learning as identity: simultaneously involved with specific situations, histories of specific practices, and becoming certain persons - Paradigmatic trajectories: possible pasts with possible futures in the present - Generational encounters: negotiation of continuity and discontinuity
Nexus of multi-membership	- Identity as membership in multiple Communities of Practice - Reconciliation "to maintain one identity across boundaries" (p. 158) - One identity with potential to create social bridges between communities
Interplay between the local and the global	- Local energy, local community, local practice - Broader issues, broader constellations

Beyond the database analysis of the content analysis deductive categories, I wrote

vignettes for each course as a part of the analysis¸ which included excerpts of the

students' discussion texts. In the process of this analysis, I pinpointed phrases within the

students' dialogs that expressed the points of analysis or supplied the main points of their

conversations that informed the analysis. The principal focus of this analysis was on

phrases or statements within their arguments that depicted components of Communities

of Practice and/or learning related to the Carnegie study pedagogies. I emboldened those

phrases within the conversations. (A sample of the analysis with the emboldened text is included in Appendix C.) The bold formatting has been removed from the analysis in Chapter 4 for readability.

Discussion board language use. The discussion forum dialogs of the students and instructors have been copied and pasted verbatim from the class discussion boards for analysis in this study. Frequently their discussion posts and replies included typos, misspellings, grammatical errors, punctuation oversights, and incorrect word choices. For a few students English is not their mother language and their sentence structure may be unusual to the native English reader. The focus of this research is not a linguistic analysis but a content analysis of what the students and instructors say related to the development of professional identity of the professional clergy as a community of practice.

As was noted in Chapter 2, the reader should be aware that the language of the seminary and most of the students reflected their Protestant evangelical, but non-fundamentalist, theology, specifically the Wesleyan theological heritage. Some readers may have an uncomfortable response to the frequent and familiar way to which the students and instructors refer to the Deity. An intimate, personal relationship with the Deity is an essential characteristic of this theological tradition. As TA Banks summarized in the DO690 Wesley's Theology for Today discussion forum,

> Wesley was greatly influenced by his reading of the early church fathers, particularly those from the Eastern Roman Empire who emphasized the fatherhood of God. It is this relational concept of God from which flowed Wesley's ideas that God desires a personal relationship with humanity, centered in holiness.

The speech of the discussions also used male pronouns to refer to the Deity. Christian theology does not identify a gendered deity—the Christian scripture creation

story states that the Deity created humankind "in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (*Holy bible: New international version*, 1984, Gen 1:27). However, the Christian Deity Being, Jesus, who took human form, referred to with names such as *Immanuel* ("God with us") and the "Son of God," lived in the patriarchal cultures of the Roman and Jewish worlds. Christian tradition has followed the patriarchal tradition referring to the Deity with male pronouns. As was indicated previously, the image of the Deity as a "father" or "male" for many of the students and instructors does not embrace the more traditional characteristics of tyrannical or indifferent patriarchs. Since a personal relationship between the Deity and humanity is at the core of Christian Wesleyanism, the use of the neuter neutral pronoun, "it," would be inappropriate. The Christian Deity is beyond gender distinctions, but the students and instructors follow the language tradition with the use of male pronouns while infusing their own understanding of father.

Triangulation

The participating classes represented the four schools and two core courses in the Seminary providing multiple sources of data. The online discussion forum interactions between 137 students and the instructors within the individual classes participating in the study were the basis for the content analysis. Also observations of the course structures and required activities beyond the discussion fora were utilized in the analysis to determine evidence of the four pedagogies of professional identity development of the community of practice of the clergy in theological education.

Member Checking

To provide member checking by the participants, all of the course analyses were sent to the director of online education at the Seminary for his feedback. Additionally the appropriate course analysis was provided to each faculty member requesting their feedback. From the eight faculty who have responded, there have not been any major concerns expressed.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher had not been personally involved with the Seminary for five years at the time of the data collection and so was an outside observer. In this way, the research had no direct effect upon the students or their potential grades in the participating online courses. However, the researcher is familiar with theological education, having taught in two theological schools, and thus approached the research from an emic perspective. Furthermore, the researcher was familiar with the ethos of the Seminary as my late husband was both a doctoral student from 1995-2004 and later a teaching fellow and adjunct professor at the Seminary from 1999-2004. The researcher personally was also enrolled in four courses at the Seminary during that time frame as well as conducting the pilot study of the current research during my doctoral program at the University of Kentucky. My direct affiliation with the Seminary ended in January, 2004 with the death of my husband, although I am known by some faculty and staff still at the institution. In the five intervening years since my late husband's death, there had been a complete turnover of the student body. Also since the pilot study was conducted in 2002-2003, the administration at the Seminary underwent a change and while some

remained as professors at the Seminary, a few top administrators were no longer at the Seminary. The Director of the online program remained the same.

Limitations

There are some limitations of the research. As this is a qualitative study, the findings cannot be generalized to other schools and online programs or necessarily to other disciplines. If there are similar situations, some of the findings might be extrapolated as possible considerations. In order to abet the extrapolation, I have described the case study in great detail. As quantitative studies emphasize validity and reliability, readers may evaluate the study in these terms. However, qualitative research does not use these measures. Validity is concerned with generalizability for external validity and causality for internal validity. Qualitative research does not claim generalizability of the findings nor causality. Reliability deals with replicability, which also is not an issue for qualitative research as each situation is different. Yin (2009) (see Table 3.2) and Hoepfl (1997) (see Table 3.4) provide ways in which to overcome these perceived limitations. Among other tactics to provide research quality, I have maintained a database of the raw data and codings to provide a chain of evidence as advocated by both Yin and Hoepfl.

Summary

This qualitative research employed a single, embedded case study protocol to collect and analyze data from the Seminary's online classes. Observations of the class structures and discussion fora content analysis across the schools of the Seminary provided triangulation of data sources. Analysis involved the deductive categories of the four categories of pedagogies involved in professional identity development for the

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clergy (Foster et al., 2005) and Modes of Belonging from Wenger's (1998) Community of Practice. A rich description of the case study concerning the development of a CoP and the professional identity development of the neophyte ministers in the class is then developed.

Chapter 4:   Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the analysis of the students' and professors' texts in the discursive activities of thirteen online classes at the participating seminary. For each class I identified a primary professional identity development pedagogical focus: formation, performance, interpretation, and contextualization (Foster et al., 2005). (See Table 4.1 for an overview of the classes that were analyzed for this study and their corresponding pedagogical focus.) I analyzed the discursive activity texts in this online education environment to determine whether, within the learning process, the online students exhibited the four categories of professional identity development of the clergy as identified by the Carnegie study in residential theological education. While it is recognized that professional identity occurs over time, this study is a snapshot of several semester-length courses in the education of these student-clergy. Additionally I looked for evidence of Community of Practice characteristics such as the modes of belonging, the development of a shared repertoire, and stories of practice of the clergy. I examined the discursive activities in the classes that abetted the evidentiary expressions of professional identity development and Community of Practice characteristics. As this is a descriptive and exploratory qualitative case study, no causal explanations are established. Rather detailed descriptions and content analysis are offered.

Five courses of the thirteen in the study were selected as exemplars for presentation in this dissertation. These five courses were selected on the basis of their rich participation in a variety of discursive activities within the classes and how the students gave evidence of components of professional identity development and community of practice. The five courses selected for presentation included one course in

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each of the four schools and one of the integrated studies course (see Table 4.2). As well,

the presented courses included at least one course from each of the primary pedagogical

foci.

Table 4.1

Courses Analyzed According to Pedagogical Focus

Pedagogical Focus	Classes in the Study
Formation	IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World IS502 Vocation of Ministry CL613 Equipping the Laity
Performance	WO510 Worship PR 610 Preaching CD511 The Pastor and Christian Discipleship YM510 Youth Ministry
Interpretation	NT502 Greek 2 NT(IBS)510 Matthew CH502 Church History DO690 Wesley's Theology for Today
Contextualization	MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders

Table 4.2

Classes Selected for Presentation with Their Pedagogical Focus and Seminary School

Classes Selected for Presentation	Pedagogical Focus	Seminary Schools
IS 502 – Vocation of Ministry	Formation	Integrative Studies
CD511 – Pastor and Christian Discipleship	Performance	School of Practical Theology
WO510 – Worship	Performance	School of Theology & Formation
NT(IBS)510 – Gospel of Matthew	Interpretation	School of Biblical Interpretation & Proclamation
CL/620/ML700/MS654 – Emerging Leaders	Contextualization	School of World Mission & Evangelism

A summary of the analysis findings for all the courses identified within a

pedagogical focus is provided in each section of this chapter along with a detailed

analysis of the selected exemplar course(s) for that section. Detailed analyses of each of the eight remaining courses are included in Appendices D-K.

The discursive activities varied prominently from course to course. I did tally the descriptive statistics for one segment of the discursive activity for most of the classes, but these statistics are meant only to provide a perspective on the participation of the students and instructor(s) in the discursive activity within the class. While the descriptive statistics are not meant for comparison between classes, they do show the range and variation of discursive activity. One of the classes did not utilize a content discussion forum but utilized two general discussion fora throughout the semester. Seven classes employed group discussions, three classes included all-class discussion fora, and two classes used a combination of group and whole-class discussions over the progression of the semester. The duration of the fora varied from one week to multiple weeks; the frequency of the postings within the fora also differed from course to course with the most extensive being IS502 Vocation of Ministry, which required eleven entries weekly. The professors designed the discussion fora for varying purposes within the courses. NT510 Matthew and PR610 Preaching designed discursive activities to facilitate social collaboration to augment learning by doing. WO510 Worship, IS502 Vocation of Ministry, CH502 Church History II and other courses promoted discussions where students shared experiences and stories that developed a shared repertoire among the students. Most courses used discursive activities to stimulate critical thinking. Five professors developed creative discursive activities including discussions of or collaborative creation of case studies. CD511 The Pastor and Christian Discipleship required the students to participate in a role play within a synchronous discussion.

Each class is a unit of analysis for the case study. For presentation I have selected excerpts from the discussion fora to demonstrate the analysis according to several criteria: 1) demonstration of evidence of the learning process in the discursive activity, 2) demonstration of aspects of belonging and becoming members of the professional community of practice, and 3) interest for the readers. The presentation of the textual analysis for each class is organized according to the themes for that class; thus, the structure of the analysis presentation is not consistent from class to class. The presentation format allows the data to speak for itself rather than imposing a similar structure upon each class.

Pedagogies of Formation: Analysis Comparison

Pedagogies of *formation* focus on the student's on-going encounter with God and how one's life authentically portrays that relationship (Foster et al., 2005). Frequently in the courses in this section, the Christian seminary student's relationship with the Divine involves a *call* from God to ministry or service to others that is associated with the role of professional clergy in the Christian community. These pedagogies guide and remind the students to maintain their relationship with the Divine from which their religious practice emanates and is the foundation of their leadership within the Christian community and the world beyond. Formational pedagogies integrate the *knowing* (cognitive) and *doing* (practical) with the *being* (normative). The three pedagogies of *formation* identified in the Carnegie study are *practicing the presence of God, practicing holiness*, and *practicing religious leadership. Practicing the presence of God* involves personal spiritual disciplines such as prayer, scripture reading, hymn and praising singing, fasting, and others in order to focus on God. *Practicing holiness* necessitates living a life that

portrays God's presence to others. *Practicing religious leadership* entails developing a *pastoral imagination*, a vision that determines "a course of action in clergy practice" (p. 121) and the ability to discern if the vision is present. Formational issues were found in many of the courses as expected as, again, clergy member's authenticity and integrity are vital for the religious knowledge and practice.

The three courses discussed in this section, Integrative Studies (IS) 501 Kingdom, Church, and World, Integrative Studies (IS)502 Vocation of Ministry, and Christian Leadership (CL)613 Equipping the Laity, all had a major focus on formation of a *pastoral imagination* in the professional identity development of the students preparing for the clergy. The seminary curriculum required two courses of all students regardless of their degree programs: IS501 Christian Formation: Kingdom, Church, and World and IS502 Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry. The Master of Divinity degree listed these two courses as the core formational courses and both courses were to be enrolled within the student's first 21 credit hours of study (The Seminary, 2009a, pp. 56-57). One online session for each of these courses was included in the current research. Additionally, a Christian leadership course entitled CL613 Equipping the Laity had a core focus on formational issues. IS502 Vocation of Ministry, one of the integrative studies courses was selected as the exemplar for the Pedagogy of Formation section due to its extensive participation in the discursive activities. The detailed analysis of this course follows the summary analysis comparison of the three courses below. The detailed analyses of the other two courses, IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World and CL613 Equipping the Laity, are contained in and Appendix E respectively.

Evidence for professional identity development of the students. Students in all three courses demonstrated aspects of *formation* in the professional identity development with discussions of *practicing the presence of God* and *practicing holiness* through the spiritual disciplines of devotional and scripture reading and prayer as identified by Foster et al. (2005) in their study of students preparing for the professional clergy in face-to-face classrooms. Students also expressed developing a *pastoral imagination* through examining *images of the possibilities* (Wenger, 1998), which is a part of *practicing religious leadership* (Foster et al., 2005). Students shared stories especially in the IS502 Vocation of Ministry and CL613 Equipping the Laity courses when asked to relate the content to their own experiences. These stories helped to engage *images of the past and future* as well as *images of ourselves* (Wenger, 1998) aiding their formation of a *pastoral imagination*.

Performance. The imaginative work and stories led the students to issues of performance (Foster et al., 2005 as discussed in Chapter 2) in the IS502 Vocation of Ministry and CL613 Equipping the Laity courses. Students spoke of what these images would imply in the performance of their roles as professional clergy and a few students made volitional speech acts declaring intentions for performance. As many of the students have served as ministers previously, they related stories from their experiences. These stories, as well as the textbooks and other course content, serve as a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998) for their actions and decisions as clergy.

Interpretation and contextualization. The focus on course readings in IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World as well as the CL613 Equipping the Laity course afforded students the opportunity to interpret historical and current writings. As identified in the

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Carnegie study interpretation of scripture and theological texts is a crucial role of the professional clergy (Foster et al., 2005). Additionally Equipping the Laity provided the students the occasion to bring their interpretations into their current or future ministry contexts, aiding the development of contextualization.

Summary. Students in all three courses gave evidence of the formation of a *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005). The courses that encouraged the students to reflect upon their experiences and share their stories in the discussion fora also allowed the students to progress to per-formance (Foster et al., 2005) where students considered the images in action. The courses that emphasized reading and discussing historical and current texts encouraged critical thinking in the interpretation of the texts. When interpretative work was linked with experiential learning, as notably seen in CL613 Equipping the Laity, contextual learning also occurred in the discussions.

Structure and facilitation of interaction. The students in all three of the courses engaged in the discussion fora. Both the students and the professor in the IS502 Vocation of Ministry course contributed to lengthier conversations. The Vocation of Ministry students' mean response was 14.4 for the 19 threads for a total of 293 entries during the one-week forum reported in the exemplar detailed analysis (see Table 4.3). In IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World students wrote 308 entries in 26 threads throughout the four-week selected forum (see Table A.4). The students and instructors in CL613 Equipping the Laity authored 238 entries in 37 threads over a two-week discussion (see Table A.5).

Additionally Dr. Eadens in IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World required the students to visit another church and to do a "Kingdom" project in their local communities

consisting of 12 hours of group ministry outside the church functions and culminating in a written paper to integrate the experience with their cognitive learning. Reports of these activities were submitted in the final module's discussion fora, but the main focus of the discussions throughout the semester was the six textbooks and other electronic readings for the course. The reading reports generated 20% of the final grade, discussions on the readings counted 10% , and two exams furnished an additional 50% of the grade.

Dr. Haddington in IS502 Vocation of Ministry placed high priority on the student interactions in the discussion fora making participation in the discussions 25% of the final grade. Also she required the students to participate in a local (outside the class) spiritual formation small group for 9 weeks, which counted for 10% of the final grade. Further, the students individually participated in a social service project and attended a church service conducted by an ethnic group, whose reports accounted for 20% of the final grade. Then three integrative papers for the three modules contributed 45% of the grade. The course also required six textbooks and additional web documents. The students integrated their understanding of and insights from these texts into their group and individual work, sometimes using the texts as the basis for the group work. For example, the local spiritual formation small group used one of the texts for the discussions.

Dr. Morgan in CL613 Equipping the Laity also required extensive reading with 7 required textbooks, for which a single reading report at the end of the semester counted 15% of the final grade. The members of the discussion forum small group evaluated one another's interaction for 15% of their final grade. Collaboratively each group created a

case study on an identified church for another 15% of the grade. Additionally the students individually wrote two papers, a foundational paper and a ministry action plan.

Professor participation. All three professors participated in the discussion fora for their classes, but Dr. Haddington was the most active, contributing 25 discussion entries in the sample Week 2 forum of the IS502 Vocation of Ministry course, 13.4% of the 187 entries in the participants' posts for one weekly discussion forum reported in the Formation Exemplar detailed analysis. In the IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World course Dr. Eadens contributed 15 entries for the four-week Module 1 discussion forum, 4.9% of the 307 discussion entries. In the CL613 Equipping the Laity course Dr. Morgan contributed 20 entries for the two-week Module 2 forum, 8.3% of the 240 entries.

Groups. All three courses divided the students into groups for the discursive activities. IS502 Vocation of Ministry divided the 19 students into 2 groups with 9-10 members per group. Dr. Eadens divided the 26 students in IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World into 3 groups with 8-9 persons per group. CL613 Equipping the Laity had smaller group sizes of 4-6 in each of the 5 groups for the 22 students. In Module 2 the all-female group generated 108 responses as compared to 28, 34, and 33 for the male groups. The female group shared more of their personal lives with one another as compared to the males.

Types of interaction and scaffolding. IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World was structured mostly around student-content interaction with responses concerning the reading. Within the discussion fora, Dr. Eadens required only one or two students to post each week and did not require the students to respond to one another; however, the students generated a moderate amount of interaction with a mean of 76.8 entries per week

in the reported Module 2. Other course requirements also focused primarily on reading and research.

The other two courses utilized group discussions and projects more extensively. The IS502 Vocation of Ministry course required the students to extensively engage in the discussion fora to complete collaborative assignments, weekly posting and writing 10 responses to their groupmates' posts, which accounted for 25% of their final grade. All entries were to be 50-150 words. Dr. Haddington encouraged the students to share their experiences relating to the course content, encouraging student-student interaction.

The discussion fora in CL613 Equipping the Laity involved student-student interaction particularly regarding the accountability aspects of clergical ministry: prayer and scripture reading, moral behavior, and reflection on and attendance to the sacraments and means of grace such as Holy Communion, baptism, fasting, and others. Other discussion fora prompted discussions on the content of the course. As has been noted, each group also collaborated for a case study project.

Summary. As shown the students were required to post in the discussion fora for all three courses; however, Dr. Eadens in Kingdom, Church, and World promoted student interaction with the content in the discussion fora and did not require student responses to one another's postings. The other two courses organized the students for student-to-student interaction. Dr. Haddington's Vocation of Ministry course requested students to share their personal stories and experiences with one another. Dr. Morgan's Equipping the Laity entreated the students to be accountable to one another in their spiritual disciplines of devotional reading and prayer. Discussion prompts such as these abetted

students to engage with one another as well as the professor to negotiate meaning with the course content.

Prominent discursive activities. Each of the three courses utilized small- to medium-sized groups in discussion fora. Even though not required to respond to one another, IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World students substantially engaged in the discussion fora with discussion prompts on the interpretation of historical and current texts. In the process of interpretation of the course content, students disagreed with one another. Most students maintained connected, non-authoritarian language in the midst of the disputes. Unlike Rovai (2001), males as well as females used connected language and females as well as males used more direct, authoritarian language. Students did not always come to agreement as Melinda ended, "I am still thinking on this, thanks…"

Stories. Dr. Haddington in IS502 Vocation of Ministry invited the students to share their ministry as well as personal stories and to relate those to the reading. Their responses were to encourage critical reflection on the answers to the weekly questions. The Vocation of Ministry course design generated substantial student-student interaction while integrating the course content with their experiences resulting in the development of a shared repertoire.

In CL613 Equipping the Laity the students especially interacted in the accountability discussions considering their readings for their daily lives in *practicing the presence of God* and *practicing holiness* sharing personal stories. Other assignments focused the students' discussions on personal meaning making of the content with their current and future ministries, which also resulted in volitional speech acts by a few in regards to their ministries, providing contextualization of the course content.

Summary. The participation of the students within in the discussion fora varied between the classes. IS502 Vocation of Ministry required extensive interaction engaging the students with the course content and their ministries resulting in shared personal narratives. CL613 Equipping the Laity also entailed student-student interaction where students made volitional speech acts. IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World focused on student-content interaction and engaged students in critical reflection essential for interpretative skills.

The main discursive form for these three courses were group discussions. However, the foci of the discussions varied. IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World focused the interaction on the interpretation of the reading content, with negotiation of the meaning. This focus enhanced the critical thinking of the students that is vital for the skill of interpretation (Foster et al., 2005). IS502 Vocation of Ministry encouraged the students to share stories of their personal experiences that related to the content of the course and to interact with a high frequency. In this process the students created shared repertoires of learning (Wenger, 1998). The CL613 Equipping the Laity course asked the students to integrate interpretation of the texts with contextualization for their ministries.

Formation exemplar: IS502 Vocation of Ministry. The Vocation of Ministry course was one of the two integrative studies courses, in which all students were to enroll within their first year (21 credit hours) of study at the seminary. The course description stated,

> This course seeks to ask and address the question, "How is our vocation as those called to Christian ministry discerned, shaped, and sustained?" The purpose of this course is to explore from a Wesleyan perspective the biblical and theological foundations of Christian personhood and vocation by examining the nexus between call to ministry and formation of persons in ministry (The Seminary, 2009a, p. 169).

Thus, the course description identified the primary focus of the course to be formation of the recently enrolled students to professional Christian clergy. The students were exposed to the concept of "vocation" not so much as what the clergy member does, but more of who the clergy member is and how she or he was *called* to that ministry. The "Matrix of a Vocation of Ministry," provided in the syllabus, related how one's values and one's *call* help shape one's mission and ultimately one's ministry. One course requirement was to write an in-process paper for each module based upon the assigned segment of the matrix: values-calling-mission, virtues-character-morals, vision-commitment-ministry.

However, as an integrative studies course examining the "vocation" of Christian ministry I found other elements of clergy preparation also within the course. The students read books and the Christian scriptures, listened to video lectures and interviews, and reflected upon (interpreted) what meanings these writings and speeches have for the clergy students' personal lives and understanding of their roles as Christian clergy. The students were also required to participate in a social justice project as well as a spiritual formation group in their locales.

While the students were not required within the course to preach, teach, conduct funerals, weddings, or other activities often performed by the professional clergy, many of the students were filling full- or part-time ministry positions while enrolled in the seminary. These students often reflected upon their performances and the performances of senior leadership in the course discussion fora. One course objective stated, "Demonstrate commitment to 'the way' of the Christian disciple through immersion in the means of grace." These "means of grace" include Christian scripture reading, prayer,

fasting, participation in worship services, and others, strategies in the formation pedagogy *practicing the presence of God* (Foster et al., 2005). The students were asked to perform these means of grace as a means of their formation as disciples of Jesus, a first requirement for these Christian clergy. The discussion fora also encouraged students to engage one another in student-student interaction concerning their development. Their collaboration resulted in the largest number of discussion entries of all the courses studied (see Table 4.3). Students were divided into two groups and so the groups consisted of 9 or 10 members plus the professor and they were to reply to all. Each student created his or her own thread for each forum.

Table 4.3

IS502 Week 2 Egroup Forum – Ministry Call

Authors of thread entries	Posts Responses		Mean responses per post	Participants (including professor)
Non-participants, study participants, and professor	19 (one per student)	274	14.4	20
Study participants' posts with participants', nonparticipants', and instructor's responses	12 (one per student)	175	14.6	20

Another course objective expressed the contextual aspect of the vocation of ministry: "Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry." Professor Dr. Tina Haddington exemplified this contextual aspect in her Netiquette [6] statement,

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[6] Mazur defines netiquette as "standardized norms for communicating in text-based communication environments" (Mazur, 2004, p. 1082).

> E-conferencing calls for good "e-manners." Remember that your group members do not benefit from hearing your tone of voice or seeing your body language, SO BE CAREFUL HOW YOU PUT THINGS IN WRITING!!!!! You may be perceived as shouting, when you only meant to add an emphasis. ☺

In so doing, she was instructing the students to be aware of the context of e-learning in their collaborations. Additionally, one requirement of the course to meet the course objective was for all students to attend a worship service with a congregation that was culturally or ethnically different from the student. The students were to reflect and report on questions such as "How aware were you of being culturally different? What fears or stereotypes or biases did you confront within yourself?"

Stories of formation and performance. In the second week of the course, the students reflected upon the course readings and multimedia for the week in relation to their decisions to attend seminary in preparation for their vocation. Dr. Haddington identified her perspective on the interrelation between the clergy's formation and mission. She introduced the assignment with the following:

> Seminary is a formative experience.
> Part of the seminary experience is gaining a bigger picture of the work of God in God's world…. Our vision for our place in God's work in God's world gets us to apply to seminary; our experience of an expanded vision of our place in God's work in God's world helps us to shape or reshape it.
> You can see this in the faculty testimonies and Dr.Muto's presenation, and in Guinness...

She emphasized the formative experience and its effect upon an "expanded vision." The students were to start with a vision of their "place in God's work in God's world," which might also be referred to as their *call.* In Wenger's (1998) community of practice terms, this involved *images of ourselves*—who one is, especially in relation to the community of practice. Dr. Haddington expressed that the seminary experience, a formative experience, should aid the student clergy to gain a "bigger picture of the work of God in

God's world." Again, in the community of practice language, the student now has

images of the possibilities (Wenger, 1998). Similarly, Foster et al. (2005) discussed

"cultivating a pastoral imagination" which they described as shaping the clergy students'

"expectations as religious leaders, initially by facilitating their participation in the shared

task of religious communities of living toward or into the vision embedded in those

stories [of God]" (p. 121).

Dr. Haddington added, "our experience of an expanded vision … helps us to

shape or reshape it." The pronoun "it" was vague. Grammatically "it" referred to

"world" the noun referent preceding the pronoun. Thus, the meaning would be *shape or*

reshape the world. While one's vision could work to shape or reshape one's surrounding

world experience, another option was that "it" refers to one's "expanded vision." The

"expanded vision" was constantly changing, growing with continued experience. New

experience brought about a greater vision, which brought about more experience, which

brought about an even expanded vision, and the cycle continued. This suggested the

formation–performance interaction recognized by Foster et al. (2005). The authors

wrote,

> In the exercise of these professional practices, the script as religious tradition is
> constantly being tested, interpreted, recast, and enacted. It is being *per-formed:*
> through ("per-") the shifting exigencies of time and context constantly being
> embodied ("-\formed") anew. And this interplay of *per-formance* and *forming*
> often takes place with transforming intent." (p. 170)

The discussion assignment for the second week's forum stated,

> How have this week's media [faculty video and document testimonies] and
> reading enriched your understanding of Christian Vocation? Which methods were
> most important as you sought God's guidance about coming to [seminary]? How
> do your gifts reflect your calling?

The forum had extensive response participation as can be seen in Table 4.3.

Formation stories. One hundred thirty-nine posts and responses of study

participants were analyzed and numerous stories of formation as well as stories of

performance were identified. Lengthy passages printed here show the student exchanges

in the second week's forum. Often the students' stories were shared bit by bit as they

responded to their classmates. Classmates affirmed one another in the process of their

discernment of their call and vision.

Andre: When I engaged in the discernment process to become a pastor I began to
discover other areas in which I could serve God. I am not 100% certain of what I
am called to do, I am 100% certain I need to prepare my self for this.

Dr. Arnold mentions in his interview that although he knew since his teen
years he was called to serve, his calling has been in constant change. I found this
to be a relieve as for a moment I thought, if I were to choose option A, I would
have to commit to it for the rest of my life. Other than accepting the call this
thought was a scary one to.

Dr. Collins, also mentions you are one the right path because you feel you
are born to do this, and people respond to what you do. I feel strongly about this,
because although Seminary is hard work, I feel I belong here. I feel that this is
where I belong.

Dr. Muto mentions over and over about the mystery of the call, for me this
simply means that you never know where God wants to take you next. […]

Once I confirmed my calling, now I needed to decided how to start
working with it. I know I want to get ordained, because I want to be actively
involved in a church.

Well to make a long story short, it seems God has it ways to take us to
where he wants us, because here I am. And I am grateful for this.

Miles: I appreciate your comment "I am not 100% certain what I am called to do,
I am 100% certain that I need to prepare myself for this.

I think that I spend the majority of my time in the discernment
process. M-Div is one route of ordination in our denomination, and to my
surprise, probably not one of the most popular by my peers. I spent 3 years
in alternative studies and was within 8 classes of ordination, but felt the
calling to seminary so strong that I simply walked away from the classes
and have never looked back.

Andre: Responding to what you said about your classes and not looking
back, I spent serveral years trying to complete a Bachelors of
Science in Biology. Towards the end I was feeling the calling so
strong that I needed to make a decision.

I stopped, less than 5 courses were remaining to finish the
bachelors, and I left the program.

The following weeks I seeked guidence, and enrolloed in a christitan university, in a Christians studies bachelor. I did this to get a strong foundation for Seminary.

In the passage preceding, we learned the story of Andre's coming to seminary after an affirmation of a fellow classmate. Andre's processing of his call fit with the formation-performance interaction Dr. Haddington described in her introduction. Andre stated, "When I engaged in the discernment process to become a pastor I began to discover other areas in which I could serve God." This caused a dilemma for Andre that is still not completely resolved, but it led him to change his educational pursuits and nearly start over. In Andre's formation experience, as he gained more experience, his vision expanded. He ended his initial post with "here I am." Miles also reflected a similar story, "I simply walked away from the classes and have never looked back."

An interaction with another classmate's response revealed more of Andre's continuing formation story.

Dana: Isn't it great how we can think we know exactly what we're to do and where we're to go and suddenly God enlarges our perspective and it actually becomes a wait and see as to what He's going to reveal next. It sounds like you are definitely on the right track as far as being in seminary. As Muto said, "Obedience is primarily about listening." Sounds like you're doing that. Well done.

Andre: My wife asks me sporadically, other than a pastor what else would you like to be? she then answers, you would be a good speaker for conferences, a consultant for churches, I don't see you just as a pastor.
At first I thought she was crazy, now I see she understand service to God better than what I thought. Watching the testimonies gave me peace, knowing the call is one and it evolves.
I like change, and the thought of being only a pastor even after 30 years from now, gave me goose bumps. Now I see there are endless possibilities.

Responding to Dana's "God enlarges our perspective" and her affirmation of his journey, Andre reflected on his spouse's affirmation of who he is. This reflection and the stories of the professors in their interviews and the book reading, provided an expanded vision,

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images of the possibilities, for the future and cultivated *a pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005).

In the third week's forum on A Wesleyan Perspective on Personal and Social Holiness, a lengthy exchange between a student and Dr. Haddington also demonstrated the interplay between the formation process and performance of their vision of a clergy member, the leader of a local church.

Dora: Wesley stresses the importance of balancing personal piety with social justice with the understanding that the Bible is the plumb line. He says, [….]

I could relate well to what Samson and Samson have pointed out in Justice in the Burbs about living in my comfy, cozy little corner of suburban Houston. They are right in saying that the word, "justice" has been so "infused with cultural and political implications" that the word "automatically raises hackles" and words like "liberal" and "conservative" begin to be used in place of words like "Christian responsibility." Fortunately, with a definition of justice like that at the bottom of pg. 26 we realize that justice is basically putting that which we believe into action.

Samson and Samson point out very correctly that "if we do not intentionally strive to raise people to value the stranger and the needy in the ways God does, everyday activities will crowd out God's call on our lives." For those of us rushing to and fro, living with blinders and earplugs on to the cries from all parts of society, comes the need for an "interruption" which will force us to ask the important questions about our faith and what we are truly doing to live it out in the world.

Dr. Haddington: I wonder how God will interrupt your life and my life during the weeks that we focus on social holiness? Will we see these interruptions and be annoyed [my first emotional reaction, true confession!] or be relieved that we are seeing life in a new way.

I saw part of the Matrix [for the umpteenth time on TV], and it makes me think that this is what sanctification may be like. We can see life differently and we know where the real battle is, we have a different sense of reality and are not so easily deceived.

We are not fooled by labels such as "liberal" or "conservative". Instead we see where God's heart for the poor, the widow, the orphan, the alien, the stranger is, and we go where God has already gone before us and is just waiting to meet us there.

Dora: Honestly, Dr. H, I am so "attention deficit" sometimes that an "interruption" often just seems like "business as usual" for me...however, when the interruption is truly from God and an opportunity to minister in the name of Jesus, I pray that I recognize it as such and don't race past it distracted by the next interruption!

What an assurance that "God has already gone before us" in caring for the "poor, the widow, the orphan, the alien, the stranger..." and that He WILL meet us there. Why do we sometimes shirk from these opportunities even though we KNOW God will meet us there?? This makes me think of an inward struggle I've been having lately. Our church sits on 5 acres of land and we are pretty much "land-locked." So, we recently purchased 20 acres on which to build a new facility. The land sits right off the main freeway in our area and is just north of an area with some great need...but it sits right in the middle of a rather affluent part of town. The property would be the PERFECT place to provide a soup kitchen or a temporary shelter for people...basically the perfect opportunity to be the church...but I can't imagine the controversy that would erupt if someone (could it be me??) even suggested that we do such things in that neighborhood.

Dr. Haddington: Why not test the waters and find out how much kickback you would get. Or be more subversive and have people read the Samson and Samson book along with A PLAIN ACCOUNT.... hmmm....

Dora: I love the Samson and Samson book and I really do think I could get some people around here to read it and respond with much fervor....it's the subdivision over there that I don't think would respond very well to having the homeless in their neighborhood.

In this interchange Dr. Haddington pushed the student to go beyond the initial reflection to see what this would look like in real life. Dora wrote "comes the need for an 'interruption' which will force us to ask the important questions about our faith and what we are truly doing to live it out in the world." The professor responded, "I wonder how…?" The professor prefaced the questions with "I wonder…" She also included herself in the questions. This approach could be to soften the pressure of the questions to the students. It may also be implied that the professor did not see herself as a perfect model, which was enforced by her admission to her own response in the next question, "Will we see these interruptions and be annoyed [my first emotional reaction, true confession!]…." (bracketed material in original quote). Dora thought of a personal issue

in her performance as a clergy person and stated, "This makes me think of an inward struggle I've been having lately."   After describing the situation, she identified the vision and the dilemma, "basically the perfect opportunity to be the church...but I can't imagine the controversy that would erupt if someone (could it be me??)" Her parenthetical question "(could it be me??)" raised the formation question: Is this who I am to be as a clergy person? Dr. Haddington did not let the issue rest even then and suggested two options, "Why not test the waters and find out how much kickback you would get. Or be more subversive [….]"

Performance stories. A lengthy exchange of stories and reflections on pride by students and the professor started with the performance of duties of the clergy, such as preaching, and the continued formation of who one is as a clergy person, images of ourselves. Some students expressed the struggle they experienced and how they dealt with the perceived pride and its impact upon future performance.

Dana: I also really appreciated the perspective of both Guinness (pg 116-117) and Susan Muto on pride/arrogance in ministry and the dangers of it. I love to preach, but I'll be honest, I have a really hard time listening to people tell me how much they appreciate my sermons, because I can feel how pride begins to twist my head and I'll start to think I had something to do with touching people's hearts instead of the Holy Spirit - let it never be. It's something I really guard against.
> **Dr. Haddington:** I think that pride is a form of "believing our own publicity." Perhaps you can help those who listen to your sermon know how to give feedback to you in a form that would be respectful of their desire to let you know that your words touched them and respectful of your desire to not confuse God's job with your sermon delivery.
>> **Dana:** My husband often says something similar to me. And it's not that I'm some phenomenal preacher. People are just kind, but It helps to bring attention back to God right away with simple words like "Praise God it spoke to you."

June: These words, "...because I can feel how pride begins to twist my head and I'll start to think I had something to do with touching people's hearts instead of the Holy Spirit." I feel this a lot even when I am typing some responses to some of these post. I want to downplay any degree of pride or boasting and I am not always sure how to do that. How have you

kept pride in check and still been able to tell the stories and share both failures and successes? I would love the practical.

I know exactly what you're saying. I think a lot of times what I do is double check with God before I speak or post, especially when I'm questioning - OK, is this to make me sound cool or is this because you want someone to hear it Lord. And conversely I'll also be like, I feel really stupid writing this, is this what I'm supposed to be writing... And then I do my best to discern what His answer is. I'm constantly trying to figure out my motivation and checking with God to make sure my intention is pure and not to puff myself up or that I'm too afraid to say what He wants. Then I try to leave the results with God. Does that make sense?

Dr. Haddington: We will study pride in Module 2. I think that we also want to make room for enjoying the experience of when we are in God's zone. Healthy self-concept [i.e., love of self as a child of God and a person of worth] means that we will gain a sense of satisfaction when we do a job well. This isn't the kind of pride that takes us away from God. It is the kind of pride that God modeled when he looked at his creation and said "It is good!"

June: Thank you for the clarification and in some ways I am looking forward to this discussion and other ways not. I had some folks from AA today talking about the issue of pride as they understand it and this balance of saying I have made it but only with the help of God(Higher Power). The one lady who has been dry for 4 years said that she has to always recognize the power of God to do what she could not do.

Dana: I would certainly like a healthier way to deal with it. Because I do so much love to feel God working through me, and it's never more so then when I'm speaking to a group of people about Him. I look forward to hearing more in Module 2.

Randy: The issue with pride can be pretty difficult to deal with sometimes. It hit me once in a strange way. I participate in a ministry in which we go to an emergency homeless shelter and facilitate a class for health awareness. One morning on my way, seeing a homeless man on the street with a sign asking for money, I thought to myself that I was already heading to help out with my time and... Fortunately, I quickly realized the path that thought was taking me down. I rolled down the windw and offered the man a few dollars. It was the best thing I could have done. The man told me his name with tears in his eyes and shook my hand. He asked my name and told me "God bless you so much... Randy, you will be in my prayers." The tears and sincerity really touched my heart. If I would have let the original prideful thought run its course, I would not have received such an unexpected blessing.

Dora: Thank you so much for your honesty concerning the pride issue...I have learned so much about pride over the last few years and have definitely

been humbled several times when I was tempted to think that, as you say, "I had something to do with touching people's hearts instead of the Holy Spirit." When I was going through a particularly humbling time, "I came across" (I believe God wanted me to find it!!) a book by Andrew Murray called, Humility: The Journey Toward Holiness. It's a tiny little book packed with a whole LOT of truth. One of the things that Donna Partow, who wrote the Forward says talks toward your point. She says, "Humility is not the same as low self-esteem and it's not the opposite of confidence. In fact, the truly humble person walks with absolute confidence, knowing that we are simply empty vessels through whom God wants to accomplish his work. When we understand true humility, we understand that it's not about us at all. It's about God. That's a tremendously freeing realization." […] So, as we all push ourselves aside and allow God to occupy the pulpit, or whatever "pulpit" we find ourselves in, may we continue to remember that we are blessed to be a blessing through Him.

Zeb: God has gifted us for specific reasons, but I understand the danger in allowing our head to swell with pride and arrogance even. I had a friend, Cameron, who played in the band with me for a few years and is now leading worship at his home church in Kokomo, IN. He was doing a small show at his church with some originals he had written and a few songs of worship. After the concert, an elderly gentleman approached him and said how God really spoke to him through Cameron's music and how God was definitely blessing Cameron to do something great. As you can imagine, Cam felt a bit awkward and quite humbled and responded by saying, "Thank you, sir...but it was all God through me. I didn't do anything. God did it all." The man gave him a half-smile, patted him on the shoulder, and said, "Well, it wasn't THAT good."

Hilarious! However, it was a point well-taken. While it is dangerous to become prideful, I do think we should be confident in our gifts being utilized for kingdom purposes.

Dana: LOLOLOL! Well there it is right? Thanks for sharing Zeb!

This interchange on pride involved more than five students (five are shown in the printed dialog but others also participated) and the professor. Each one identified the struggle with pride in performance in the ministry. Some had come to terms with how to deal with the struggle, even through a humorous story that helped to keep the issue in perspective, but nonetheless admitted to the struggle. The struggle with their performance results and their formation as a person, especially as a clergy person, was a mutual problem, which the course addressed.

The Module 2 coverage on pride, to which Dr. Haddington referred in the previous discussions, contained materials dealing with moral formation and misconduct among clergy within their professional ministries. The discussion forum instructions stated the following:

> Drawing upon all the material for this week, identify how failure to attend to moral formation opens the door for betrayals of trust. Consider how the virtues and vices enter into this dilemma. Conclude with one question that you would like to discuss with your Group mates.

Within the progression of these discussions, pride specifically was discussed at length in several threads as a source for much clergy misconduct. Zeb spoke to the issue,

Zeb: Guinness adds, "The reverse side of calling is the temptation of conceit" (112). When it comes to areas of holiness and personal integrity, we must not mistake the privilege of equipping others in these areas as exemption from dealing with deep emotional, mental, or sexual temptations. We can be objectively passionate about Christian principles such as purity, humility, and accountability. When push comes to shove, though, we can resort to selfish rationalization and complacency. I heard a quote one time (paraphrased) that said the biggest key to living above reproach is having a few people in your life who are completely unimpressed by you. The reason this issue is so rampant in the Church today is due to a lack of vulnerability, honesty, and transparency by those in leadership. Inauthentic living might be the most tragic deterrent to the growth of the church. I hope that as we all pursue our careers in vocational ministry, we would pursue holiness in humility and have unimpressed, loving people at our disposal...ready to rebuke, show grace, or both.

From the readings Zeb identified the difficulty with a special *calling* that led to conceit. He ended with a pastoral imagination statement, "I hope … we would pursue holiness in humility and have unimpressed, loving people at our disposal...ready to rebuke, show grace, or both." Dr. Haddington responded humorously, "Everyone should own a cat -- they are completely unimpressed by credentials, titles, or sermons." Several students agreed with "LOL"s (laughing out loud) netspeak. Another student responded, "I don't need a cat, I have a few people sitting on the fourth pew...." Even those responses were rather lighthearted, the students were dealing with this struggle as clergy.

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In one thread June raised similar issues in her introductory question

June: Recognizing that any of us could fall prey to the sin of pride I would wonder what practical steps have any of you seen to help us steer clear of the temptation? What has worked in terms of accountability? How do we get to the core of this with ourselves and with others?

The discussion continued with the following excerpts,

June: Grentz and Bell would say that yes there are pastors who are ill equipped to handle certain counseling situations and their pride keeps them from being honest about it. I think in fact a lot of us are ill equipped for a lot of the things we do and yet we do them. I mean some pastors should not handle money and they do it and for others they are not good at organizing volunteers around an idea but they attempt it. We must be reminded that we are the church made up of many members who have different strengths and gifts. As clergy we need to allow people to serve and not do what we are ill-equipped to do.

(I am sorry if that sounds a little preachy. I just get worked up a little thinking about how we get ourselves in trouble with our pride and control issues.)

Jacob: The apostles delegated (Acts 6) and so should we. Jesus is the biggest delegator of all. He has delegated everything to us, gave us everything we need to do the work He sent us to do, and is around in case we have questions. He is the perfect model of how to do ministry; we should be no different"

Zeb: The "Savior" complex is a huge downfall for pastoral leadership. Many feel the pressure of "having a hand" in everyone's personal growth. They may have good intentions or feel responsibility over their flock, but at what cost? In reality, if boundaries are compromised and temptation is introduced, how much help can really be offered when the unhealthy, needy pastor is the one offering? Christ is the ultimate source of life, compassion, and grace.

Jacob: I think the best way to avoid the "savior" complex is to create an environment where the real Savior can work in the lives of His people. As I see what God does, I am reminded in a very powerful way that Jesus is God and I am not. It is also imperative that we point out His work to others and give all glory and honor to Him. This gets their eyes off of us and onto Him. I realize this is very basic stuff, but I wonder how many of these problems originate when people take credit for the work of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Haddington: You are making a good point Jeff -- as has everyone in this discussion. The "savior complex" is prevalent -- and often it is fed by the church members too. Pride keeps pastors from saying "I don't know what to do in this situation". Fear of the other's disappointment might keep them from saying: "I need to refer you to a counselor b/c my training isn't enough in this area."

Truly loving the other means that pastors [and professional counselors] work within their area of training.

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Zeb: Setting boundaries before the temptation even occurs is a very practical first step. Most of the time, sexual failure starts with a breakdown in adhering to boundaries, whether they be physical or emotional. As staff members at our youth ministry, we not only have every leader do a background check, but we also have them read, agree to, and sign a relationship covenant. Many of the items on the relationship covenant deal with interactions with students of the opposite sex. It is an issue that everyone is on the same page about...especially our college student leaders. If a guy leader gets cornered by a young girl who needs talked to, a female leader takes note and saves the day. While all of this is practical in nature, it presents boundaries that are honorable to God.

Miles: Just wondering; can pride and ego be determined as the same? I know many ministers who have a very large ego. As a matter of fact, I have found this step to help me. If you begin to swell with pride because of something you have accomplished in the church, go talk to a preacher (they already have a tee shirt for that). If you think that you just hit a home run with that Sunday sermon, just ask the preacher sitting in the congregation (they could have done a much better job). If you find these two methods ineffective, just look at the cross

Danny: I know there are some people I can confide in, and those are the people I maintain accountability with. I find that those true friends give me a perspective and grounding and allow me to confront my failings and shortcomings without allowing me to wallow in them alone.

This group of students identified ways to guard themselves and others from the identified weaknesses of the clergy that stem from pride. June stated, "I just get worked up a little thinking about how we get ourselves in trouble with our pride and control issues." A solution was for the clergy person to be willing to involve others and delegate rather than taking all responsibility upon herself or himself. June stated, "As clergy we need to allow people to serve and not do what we are ill-equipped to do" The pride issue was identified as the "'Savior' complex" by Zeb and Jacob, as well as responded to by Dr. Haddington. Jacob pinpointed a way of avoiding the "Savior complex" by "creat[ing] an environment where the real Savior can work in the lives of His people" and giving credit to God for positive accomplishments stating, "It is also imperative that we point out His work to others and give all glory and honor to Him." In relation to the "Savior complex" this discussion group identified another strategy: to set a higher

standard by focusing on Jesus. Zeb stated, "Christ is the ultimate source of life, compassion, and grace" and Jacob added, "He is the perfect model of how to do ministry; we should be no different."

A humorous suggestion was given by Miles, "If you begin to swell with pride because of something you have accomplished in the church, go talk to a preacher…." The examples indicated that other pastors will tell you how they are or have done better than you. On the more serious side, accountability with others was also a strategy pinpointed by Danny, who shared his own personal practice of accountability with a small group, stating, "I know there are some people I can confide in, and those are the people I maintain accountability with…."

Zeb provided yet another strategy, "Setting boundaries before the temptation even occurs." Zeb continued giving specific examples dealing with sexual misconduct but this was in the context of the discussion on pride. In another posting, Dr. Haddington related pride with sexual misconduct,

Dr. Haddington: "I think we have two problems: one is believing our own publicity [yes we are as great as that poor parishioner thinks we are. Yes, we are his/her only refuge and strength. Yes, we are the only one who REALLY understands their loneliness]. This is one side of pride."

In other threads Dr. Haddington spoke frequently of her research with clergy who had experienced infidelity in their marriages.

In another thread Dana asked the discussion question, "Of the three sins that we studied this week - Pride, Anger, Gluttony - if you had to choose one, which do you feel is the single worst that you see within the church right now and why?" A portion of the discussion is printed here in a threaded format.

Dana: *An Introduction to the Cardinal Virtues and the Deadly Sins (pg 3)* states, "We have power from God through the Holy Spirit to live a virtuous life of integrity and holiness, but we will not be successful unless we commit ourselves to exercising these virtues on such a regular basis that they become a wonderful habit that is woven into the fiber of our very being." After reading all of the information this week, I just want to commit out loud to a desire to live a life that is holy and pleasing to the Lord. I want these virtues knit into me. Because the fact is that if it can happen to these people that we are reading about, it can happen to us. I don't want to be afraid of that. I just want to recognize the danger and give God permission to ferret out the things in my life that may cause me to stumble.

> **Angela:** I see pride as being a very dangerous (and prevalent) sin in the church today. Religious pride is often hard to identify and very easy to allow into your heart, actions, and motivations. It is often a subtle sin that rears its ugly head in overt but often brutal ways.

>> **Dana:** I've noticed religious pride can be very sneaky too. I've seen really good people running excellent outreaches and programs that start looking at other churches who aren't doing these things and start to get puffed up thinking "we're doing pretty good because we're better than them." But I don't think we can look at other churches unless we're looking at the book of Acts. Our bar needs to be set at Christ's likeness.

> **Dr. Haddington:** The readings are chilling, and emotionally upsetting. But I love your response. Not fear but dedication. That is the point of this unit. It presents the stark reality not to scare students into moral integrity [that won't last anyway], but to encourage everyone to cleave to God. To care more about the well-being of the congregation, than one's own sexual gratification or hurting a parishioner's feelings who says "you are the only one who understands me" and you know that a slippery slope is under your feet or believing your own lies

> **Dora:** WOW Dana!! AMEN!!! I want to commit WITH YOU, OUT LOUD the "desire to live a life that is holy and pleasing to the Lord." I want to be so filled with the Holy Spirit each day that my natural responses are always in line with what He would have for me. You are SO right in pointing out that we would be completely naive' not to realize that as people in ministry, we have huge targets on our backs and the enemy would love to trip us up. I think that of the three sins that we studied this week, pride is the single worst that I see in church right now. Pride is sneaky. It can cloak itself as humility when in reality it is really just self-absorption. It can also cloak itself as competence when in reality all reliance on God has been pushed to the side. Pride can also cloak itself as immunity (to sexual impropriety, etc.) when in reality it is arrogance. There were two other interesting points made in the paper on the Deadly Sins that mentions Guinness' notes on how pride twists calling, "People who are called are especially vulnerable to pride because pride twists us into thinking we have a shortcut to realizing the very highest at which we aim." and

"'People who are called are vulnerable to a special form of pride because of our desire to wean ourselves from human audiences and live before the Audience of One.' This leads to a lack of accountability."

Dana: Maybe it really comes down to a willingness to be aware and on your guard. To acknowledge pride as we recognize it in ourselves, humble ourselves under God's mighty hand and ask Him to remove it. I know that I battle pride. I can even feel the physical manifestation in my body when my thoughts are turning prideful. My blood pressure goes up, my muscles start to tighten and my thoughts go along the lines of, "Why are you questioning me." or something like that. And then God steps in, taps me on the shoulder and says, "Feel familiar? Think about your response..."

That's when that breath prayer from the Sacred Rhythms book comes in handy.

This discussion indicated that these students identified the vulnerability of pride and accompanying misconduct of those in ministry, also recognizing that the vulnerability can arise from the special *call* to the ministry. Similarly to the previous discussion, the students named several ways to combat the weakness such as

1) to be diligently watchful in one's life ("Maybe it really comes down to a willingness to be aware and on your guard. To acknowledge pride as we recognize it in ourselves, humble ourselves under God's mighty hand...." and "recognize the danger and give God the permission to ferret out...,")

2) making a public commitment ("I just want to commit out loud" with Dora's screaming rejoinder, "WOW Dana!! AMEN!!! I want to commit WITH YOU, OUT LOUD")

3) a reliance upon God ("That's when that breath prayer from the Sacred Rhythms book comes in handy.").

Similarly to the first group, Dana mentioned setting a higher standard with "Our bar needs to be set at Christ's likeness". Also reiterated by this group was a need for accountability for the clergy, which was stated in the negative by Dora, "People who are

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called are vulnerable to a special form of pride…' This leads to a lack of accountability."). Through these speech acts (Austin, 1962) students discerned means to guard their conduct as professional clergy. The students were formulating a mindset of their habits, a habitus for their identity as clergy.

Through the emphasis on moral formation in Module 2 the students dealt with issues of per-(through) formance (Foster et al., 2005). Dr. Haddington affirmed the students' response of commitment rather than despair. She stated, "But I love your response. Not fear but dedication. That is the point of this unit. It presents the stark reality not to scare students into moral integrity [that won't last anyway], but to encourage everyone to cleave to God." Case studies and readings provided material for reflection by the students upon moral issues within their own lives and ministry. The student discussion on the course content and the intention of the unit stated by Dr. Haddington indicated that the course presented the students with issues and even vulnerabilities of the ministerial profession as a vital part of their professional formation to guide their performance through per-formance.

Summary. Students articulated elements of formation in the images expressed in their stories. However, these images did not remain static; the students discerned what this character would entail in the practices of the clergy. Thus, the formation of the students as clergy would chaperon their performance. The students read textbooks and other course content, but they did not dialog on the specifics of the texts. Instead, the course materials triggered stories from the students of their own experiences and reflections on those experiences. These stories provided personal meaning making for the students culminating in speech acts of commitment for their performance.

Pedagogies of Performance: Analysis Comparison

Foster et al. (2005) listed the elements of the pedagogies of performance to include the script to be performed, the performer and the audience viewing and hearing the performance, the means and manner of the performance, and the desired end of the performance. They stated, "In the exercise of these professional practices, the script as religious tradition is constantly being tested, interpreted, recast, and enacted" (p. 167). Whether one is a student preparing for clergy ordination or an ordained clergy, this testing, interpretation, recasting, and enactment of the script, frequently done with other members of one's context, abets one's formation as a professional clergy member, which informs one's future performance. One's performance occurs through one's formation constantly being lived out afresh in "the shifting exigencies of time and context" (p. 170) or *per*-(through) *formance*.

Concerning the third element, the means and manner of the performance, the authors stated that the pedagogies of performance "focus attention on how clergy educators pedagogically facilitate in students a growing awareness of a confidence in their proficiency as performers of religious tradition" (p. 173). The means of this performance pedagogy focused on "developing proficiency and competency" (p. 173). The manner of the performance pedagogy necessitates "helping students move beyond a consciousness of 'knowing how' to the 'smooth, unreflective mastery' identified with expertise or virtuosity in professional performance" (p. 174). The fourth element, the desired end of the performance, encompassed the intentions of the instructor, "they include not only explicit goals related to knowledge and skill, but also expectations for the pastoral imagination and the professional habits and dispositions originating in the

academic disciplines, religious and academic traditions, and mission and culture of a school" (p. 176). Students should, thus, be developing a sense of efficacy in the performance of their activities as the professional clergy. Their performances in the learning environment should enhance their *pastoral imagination*.

Courses in a seminary curriculum that deal with performance in the practical application of one's understanding of and belief in God and the interpretation of the Christian scriptures to everyday life is referred to as *practical theology*. Practical theology encompassed what was sometimes referred to by the seminary as the practics courses or the practice of ministry. While many courses involved practical application, for example, a biblical exegesis course involves an application of one's Greek or Hebrew language skills in interpreting a biblical passage, practical theology courses have the primary focus on the performance or application of theory in a real-life situation.

Richard Osmer (2008) identified four tasks in practical theology.

- *The descriptive-empirical task.* Gathering information that helps us discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts.
- *The interpretive task.* Drawing on theories of the arts and sciences to better understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring.
- *The normative task.* Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from 'good practice.'
- *The pragmatic task.* Determining strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into a reflective conversation with the 'talk back' emerging when they are enacted (p. 4).

Based upon the nature of practical theology as discussed above, I would also expect to find elements of interpretation, contextualization, and formation in the courses. However, while involving and informed by interpretation, the end result of practical theology is the pragmatic task, what is done or the performance. Since a performance

involves an identified situation or environment, practical theology also entails contextualization of the performance for that specific situation. This integration of the pedagogies in the education of students preparing for the professional clergy, was identified by the Carnegie study as well (Foster et al., 2005). The integrative praxis is central to practical theology.

In the current research the courses of worship, preaching, Christian discipleship, youth ministry, and pastoral care, and the missions courses fit within practical theology. However, the missions courses will be presented under the topic of contextualization for reasons that will be discussed later. The CL613 Equipping the Laity course discussed previously would also be classified as practical theology due to its categorization of a leadership course, but owing to the focus of the course on the formation of the clergy and the laity, the course was presented under the topic of formation. The four courses analyzed in the Performance pedagogies section included WO510 Worship, PR610 Preaching, CD511 The Pastor and Christian Discipleship, and YM510 Youth Ministry. The analyses of WO510 Worship from the School of Theology and Formation and CD511 The Pastor and Christian Discipleship from the School Practical Theology were selected for presentation in the dissertation. Appendix F contains the analysis for the PR610 Preaching course and Appendix G is the analysis for the YM510 Youth Ministry course. All four courses were listed in the Academic Catalog as options for the practice of ministry core electives in the Master of Divinity program. Issues of performance were addressed by course activities and assignments in all the syllabi.

Evidence for professional identity development of the students. In all the courses with a focus on performance, students expressed volitional speech acts in the

discursive activities as to their intended performances as current or future clergy. They identified intentions and behaviors that would define their practices. Only in the PR610 Preaching course did the students have the opportunity to actually perform the pastoral practice and "learn by doing" as Dr. Knight stated, discussing their performance with their peers and an expert preacher, the professor. However, the other courses did provide authentic planning and preparation activities for the course assignments and CD511 Pastor and Discipleship had an optional assignment to teach in a local church setting, but these assignments were not appraised by peers in the discussion fora. Through the discursive activities the students engaged the other aspects of professional identity development: formation of the pastoral identity or the normative aspect of the identity, interpretation of theory and scripture as it informed the pastoral performance entailed in the identity, and the context especially as it pertained to the performance.

Formation. Students in all the classes expressed images of themselves and *images of the possibilities* that enhanced their *pastoral imagination* or vision for their pastoral ministry. The YM510 Youth Ministry students acknowledged the necessity for the pastor working with youth to be authentic, "walking the walk," to model the Christian life in relationship with the youth, *practicing the presence of God* and *practicing holiness* within those relationships (Foster et al., 2005). Formation issues were critical.

Interpretation. All four of the courses involved the students in interpretation of current and sometimes historical texts in crafting their pastoral practice. Scriptural and theological texts were used in all the courses, though, not conversed in-depth in the discussion fora in all classes. The WO510 Worship course recurrently afforded the students the occasion to read texts concerning historic tradition as well as current

practices relating to the elements of worship in the local congregation including scripture reading, prayers, Holy Communion, and others.

Contextualization. All the courses offered occasions for students to consider contextual issues including generational contexts such as with the YM510 Youth Ministry and CD511 Pastor and Discipleship courses; theological contexts as discussed in the PR610 Preaching and WO510 Worship courses; and cultural issues as when the Worship students discussed multicultural elements of worship. In the Youth Ministry class a student from outside the USA detected a lack of cultural awareness expressed by at least one textbook and assumed by his classmates and even the professor. Little conversation was addressed to gender perspectives in the discussions in the courses.

Summary. The elements of professional identity development—performance, formation, interpretation, and contextualization—for the professional clergy have been exhibited in the texts of the students in the discussion fora in these four classes. The main emphasis has been on performance in these practical theology courses, but professors and students have also integrated the other constructs in their learning as well.

Structure and facilitation of interaction. All four courses utilized discussion fora throughout the course. The WO510 Worship course and the CD511 Pastor and Discipleship course organized over 20 fora throughout the course addressing various topics related to the content. The PR610 Preaching course and the YM510 Youth Ministry course offered far fewer fora. The Preaching course organized the fora around the seven assignments for the course and the Youth Ministry held twelve weekly fora. All courses except Youth Ministry divided the students into groups of five or six students

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for the discussions. The Youth Ministry course had the smallest number of students (12) and held class-wide discussions.

Three of the practical theology courses emphasized group work accounting for 25-35% of the final grade. WO510 Worship gave 25% of the final grade to the discussions and another 10% for a group paper. Additional assignments included a worship journal, reflection paper, and a final paper. CD511 Christian Discipleship allotted 26% of the final grade for the discussions with a reading report, three integrative papers, a ministry plan, a basic beliefs creative presentation, and an optional project for an "A" grade. Discussion fora in the YM510 Youth Ministry counted 24% of the final grade with an additional 6% for other group work. Other assignments included a media presentation, a theology paper, a ministry portfolio, and a reflective essay. However, students in PR610 Preaching wrote and delivered 2 sermons and wrote a theology of preaching paper along with the course reading. The discussion fora were included in the class participation, which also included the theology paper, for 25% of the grade. Social interaction within the class was not a primary aspect of the Preaching course.

Professor participation. The professors were active in the discussions in all the courses, but Dr. Knight in the Preaching course engaged in mainly evaluative responses to the students' assignments. In CD511 Pastor and Discipleship Dr. Smythe responded to most of the students' initial posts but often did so after the student-student discussions were completed. Perhaps she posted later so as not to stifle the student engagement. However, few students replied to the professor's late entries.

Dr. Burns in WO510 Worship interacted extensively with the students and stated that she was "committed to a transformational, relational approach" (Syllabus, Fall 2009,

p. 5). She interacted in a timely manner and in an incredibly relational and encouraging

manner with lots of emoticons, exclamation marks, and affirmation of the students' work

("Well done!" and "I appreciate […]"). Her expressed attitude fostered student sharing;

though, she did not respond to every thread in the fora.

In YM510 Youth Ministry Dr. Baker interacted with the students frequently

responding to most students in the fora and so there was substantial student-instructor

interaction. However, at times there was an edge to some of the student-instructor

interactions particularly at the beginning of the semester. One student expressed on

multiple occasions that the questions did not apply to her ministry as she was not in a

local church community. In the second week's forum, Practical Theology Forum, Dr.

Baker prodded the students for deeper meaning in their reflections. Megan responded to

Dr. Baker's question, but did not use the language he had used. His reply back to her

explains that he is prompting her to "relate the reading." In the third week's forum,

Ecclesial and Pastoral Theology Discussion Forum, when a misunderstanding occurred,

Dr. Baker replied to dissipate Megan's angst rather than urging her to think deeper.

Dr. Baker: Megan, with your emphasis on co-sojurner and share leadership I wonder if
your metaphor of the body of Christ might also include a complementary
understanding of the church as a "pilgrim people." Do you think this might invite
more shared leadership?
    Megan: Dr Baker.....I'm not sure where the "Co-leadership" came from....I had
said co-sojouner and shepard so I'm not quite sure how to answer this? But
I do see the church as a "pilgram people" [….] I don't know if this makes
any sense at all to you....maybe I don't understand the question??????
      Dr. Baker: Perhaps I misunderstood. When I read your comment on
tensions

Megan ended with "maybe I don't understand the question??????" Six question marks

implied her confusion with Dr. Baker's question as she echoed twice "I'm not quite sure

how to answer this?" and "I don't know if this makes any sense at all to you." Dr.

Baker's reply assumed the responsibility for the misunderstanding and then started a sentence he did not complete, as if the sentence trailed off. Dr. Baker tempered his critical thinking questions as the semester progressed. Perhaps the students met his expectations to a great extent as the semester progressed or perhaps he felt the critical thinking questions might hinder the interaction. Megan used a more informal interaction with fellow students than she did with Dr. Baker throughout the semester.

Types of interaction and scaffolding. Dr. Smythe in CD511 Pastor and Discipleship scaffolded the students' reading and viewing of videos with questions to ponder and then asked the students to respond to questions that related the course content to the students' experience entailing student-content interaction. The student-student engagement was likely adequate to meet the course expectations, but little of the engagement outside of the role play was exceptionally notable.

PR610 Preaching, similarly to YM510 Youth Ministry, had a small number of students participating in the study (four [26.7%] and five [41.7%] respectively) and so the data from these courses were limited. Participants in the Preaching class presented a lesser quality of engagement in the student-student interaction. Perhaps the non-participants in the study interacted at a higher level than the participants and so the data does not adequately reflect the course, though the mean averages of responses in the discussion fora between the study participants and non-participants are similar (see Table A.6 in Appendix F for details). Possibly the lower level of interaction was due to the less structured nature of the discussion fora in that the students were to post their assignments and then to respond to one another but with little scaffolding as to the nature of the responses. Another potential factor was that Dr. Knight mainly engaged in evaluative

comments, though extensive, affirmative, and instructive, which may have lessened

student motivation for interaction. Another likely explanation is that the nature of the

course, development and delivery of sermons, did not motivate as much interaction.

Beyond the second discussion forum discussing the textbooks, students were not

interpreting and contextualizing course content. So the lack of course materials

distributed throughout the semester potentially disafforded student-student interaction.

Still, those students who did interact with one another's sermons, offered helpful insights

and encouragement.

The YM510 Youth Ministry students engaged the course content deeply perhaps

due to the multiple, detailed questions provided for each forum by Dr. Baker along with

his thorough instructions guiding their posting and responses to one another. His

questions prompted the students to relate the reading content to their ministries and asked

for their perceptions. Still the student-student engagement among the study participants

was not extensive, though likely adequate according to his guidelines. Dr. Baker had

instructed that he was not as interested in the quantity of responses as to the quality.

Perhaps for that reason some students only responded once to their classmates in any

given forum.

WO510 Worship mixed the discursive activities between student-content and

student-student interaction. Similarly to the Youth Ministry discussion prompts, Dr.

Burns asked four to seven questions concerning the course content and how it related to

the students' experiences and local ministries for some of the fora. Dr. Burns stated in

the syllabus that some of the discussion prompts were simply for the students to answer

affording a means to consolidate their learning while other prompts required the students

to interact with one another, thus, providing both student-content and student-student interaction. However, frequently the students responded to one another in the fora that did not require student-student interaction although not in lengthy conversations for the most part. As I have considered various potential reasons for the additional interaction and the personal story sharing that resulted, there are many similarities with the other courses. As has already been stated, the professor asked questions that engaged the students with the content as well as provided for student-student interaction similarly to the Christian Discipleship and Youth Ministry courses. Also the topic of the course encompassed many elements as was noted previously, affording variety in the discussions. Some of the subtopics discussed are considered "hot topics" in the current day, sometimes referred to as the "worship wars." Students would likely have had numerous stories of personal experience to share on these topics. The atmosphere of the discussion fora promoted sharing.

Summary. WO510 Worship and CD511 Pastor and Discipleship required a high frequency of interaction in the discursive activities. The Worship course was designed to foster both student-content and student-student interaction and students shared ministry stories and engaged deeply in the fora. Dr. Burns in WO510 actively and positively engaged the students in the discussions. YM510 Youth Ministry and CD511 Pastor and Discipleship emphasized student-content interaction. Dr. Knight in PR610 Preaching did not emphasize social interaction within the class, though discussion fora was provided for students to facilitate learning by doing with their peers.

Prominent discursive activities. The four courses utilized discussion fora throughout the semester, but again there was variety in the purpose of the discussions

even within the same course as described in WO510 Worship. The Worship course, YM510 Youth Ministry, and CD511 focused heavily on the import of the content for the students' ministries. PR610 Preaching, in its limited engagement, focused more on the facilitation of the students' skills in sermon creation and preaching.

Role play. The CD511 Pastor and Discipleship course had similar levels of student-student engagement in most fora except the role-play discussion, where two of the groups in the study had substantially greater volumes of interactions. The role play presented an observation of the function of the students in the discussions also. Two groups in the role play with four and five contributors wrote over 100 discussion entries in a two-hour time period. A third group had minimal participation and the fourth group did not participate in the research. The role play discussion allowed students to interpret differing perspectives and dialog with those perspectives in a type of *contextual consciousness* (Foster et al., 2005) detecting assumptions and expectations as the basis of understanding. Multiple students labeled the exercise a rewarding experience, providing training as pastors to lead congregants, many who may have philosophical values dissimilar to the pastor.

Case study. CD511 Pastor and Discipleship also utilized a case study for discussion. The case study was a personal ministry story by Dr. Smythe. The students were asked what might have been done differently for a more effective result.

Learning by doing. PR610 Preaching used the student assignments for sermon creation and delivery as the basis of the discussions. The students were to respond to one another's work with suggestions and critiques. Again, the students only minimally engaged in the discussions, but there was also limited participation in the research study.

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Stories. Students in the WO510 Worship class shared stories to a much greater degree than did students in the other courses. The Worship class students built rich *shared repertoires* from these stories of pastor performances including how pastors led congregations in difficult situations and through differences of expectations, personal meaning making from worship rituals such as baptism and Holy Communion, as well as creative use of the arts and technology in worship. Sometimes the stories were shared as common struggles in ministry and as Jackson shared what he had learned in the struggle, the story became a *shared history of learning* as well. As was noted the unique aspect of the WO510 Worship class was that the students conveyed personal stories to a much greater extent than the other classes, creating a *shared repertoire* for the community of practice of the professional clergy.

Summary. The professors employed creative discursive activities in these courses with a role play, case study, learning by doing activities, and the prompts to share meaningful stories. Sometimes discussion fora are less than desired due to the lack of commitment of the students as in the one group in the role play. The tone of the professor and students may also affect the level of engagement.

Summary. Though there were many similarities in the structure of the discussion fora, there were distinctive differences in structure and professor roles. The PR610 Preaching course presented limited interaction through a small number of discussion fora. Dr. Knight employed an evaluative role to the student work in the discussion fora. While he provided affirmation to the students, he did not inspire other forms of interaction. Dr. Baker in the YM510 Youth Ministry course structured weekly fora with high engagement between the students and the content, but also required some student-student interaction

mostly concerning the content. Dr. Smythe in CD511 The Pastor and Christian

Discipleship like Dr. Burns in the WO510 Worship course structured extensive

discussion fora interaction through more than 20 fora over the semester and both

professors interacted with the students, though Dr. Smythe mostly responded to the

students' entries after the time frame for the discussions was past. The role play

discussion in the Pastor and Christian Discipleship course resulted in extensive

contributions by two groups who participated in the study. Students in the Worship

course shared stories from their experiences creating *a shared repertoire* for the

community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

The more extensive interaction in WO510 Worship course resulted in greater

participation, which is essential in a community of practice, and the discursive activities

invited student-student interaction. However, as has been noted, students in all four

classes integrated issues of formation, interpretation, and contextualization as they

considered issues of performance in their ministries.

Performance exemplar: WO510 Worship. The Worship course was in a set of

three course categories: Preaching, Worship, or Music, from which the Master of

Divinity students must choose two courses from two of the categories (The Seminary,

2009a). This set of courses was in the broader area of "The practice of ministry." From

this Catalog categorization I would expect to find an emphasis on performance in the

course structure and the course description identified two items involved in the

performance aspect of the course: "the design of services" and attention to "interpreting,

planning, and presiding at the church's principal worship services, sacraments, weddings,

and funerals." These are functions generally designated for the clergy of the local church.

Dr. Kris Burns structured the course discussions so that the students identified practices within their local worshipping communities as well as interpreting the course texts for implications for worship design, planning, and presiding. Topics addressed in the discussion fora included the Call to Worship, prayer, use of Scripture, the sacraments of the Eucharist (Holy Communion) and baptism, pastoral care in worship, worship music, the arts in worship, multicultural elements of worship, and weddings. Through this format Dr. Burns established that the students reflect upon their worship practice and its relationship within their worshipping community's theology. Most of the participating students in the course identified themselves as practicing in the ministry of their local worshipping community as either senior or assistant pastors, worship leaders, or directors of various ministries within the church.

The course was divided into 6 modules with a total of 27 required discussion fora throughout the semester, 3-6 fora per module. The 26 enrolled students were divided into 5 groups but starting with Module 3, the students responded across the groups. Each discussion prompt usually asked 2-7 questions for the students to answer with one of the prompts requiring a 500-word summary of the reading. The groups also collaborated for one paper, a summary of one of the textbooks. Dr. Burns distinguished between fora where the students were to respond to questions concerning content, but to which they were not required to reply to their classmates' answers and fora with student-student interaction. However, students frequently did reply to their classmates' answers to the content questions. It appeared that the professor may have dropped this requirement as

the semester progressed as the students were discussing with one another in all fora. Four

fora were a true discussion forum in which the students were required to interact with one

another. See Table 4.4 for an overview of the interaction in one of the interactive

discussion fora.

Table 4.4

WO510 Discussion Forum

Authors of thread entries	Posts Responses		Mean responses per post	Median responses per post	Contributors (including teaching assistants)
Non-participants, study participants, and teaching assistants	24	74	3.1	2.5	25
Study participants and teaching assistants	13	50	3.8	3.0	25

Dr. Burns stated her teaching philosophy in the syllabus, "I am passionate about teaching,

and am committed to a transformational, relational approach rather than a simple

transaction of information" (Syllabus, Fall 2009, p. 5).

   Learning performance from interpretation and reflection. An interesting

process took shape as the course progressed. The students identified areas of learning

that spoke to their practices (or lack of practices) in relation to their reflections on the

course texts, began sharing stories of meaningful (or sometimes non-meaningful)

experiences, and in the final module ended in debates regarding the contextual nature of

worship when discussing multicultural elements in worship.

   In the third week of the course students reflected upon the church community's

practices. Jarrod identified his struggle with the *image of his world* (Wenger, 1998) and

what he interpreted to be the identified meaning of the practice of the larger Christian

community from the course texts. Rita shared her own struggle with meaning making

from the course readings and its implications in practice. Jackson joined the conversation

identifying his own personal story and how that helped him make meaning.

Jarrod: As I go through this module I am wondering how to make the congregation
aware of why we do things in a specific way. Do you think it could come best
through a sermon or just stop and make teachable moments in the service?
I sure see a need in my congregation to work on this area.
> **Rita:** I'm not sure. I'm been thinking very hard about this. Our texts, Ancient-
> Future worship has been an eye-opener. P. 48-49: "Preaching throughout
> Scripture, is always about God and how he has entered into the history of
> the world to rescue and save it. There is a great need today to rediscover
> biblical preaching-the recitation of God's mighty acts of salvation."
>> But that's not exactly an answer to your question. I wonder if we
>> should not just take time somewhere [….] I get this wild picture in my
>> head of someone signing while the baptism is going on!! Sort of like those
>> Jan Brett kids books that have a story around the edges of the main story
>> you are reading. The Baptism is going on (the main story we are reading)
>> and the explanation going on around it to the [ignorant and oblivious]
>> congregation. Of course, some do "get" it. But the majority....I think not.
>> It's just one more ritual the church does for some reason; mostly for the
>> baby to wear the long white gown of great-grandmothers, maybe.
>> What do you think? Do you have a Big Idea?
> **Rita:** I do know this: Being a pastor or minister in a church is a constant
> struggle to awaken people to God, to His Son and to the Holy
> Spirit. It is exhausting to plan worship, to give of yourself to
> people hurting and in need, to keep your own life connected to
> God and his plan and to find ways to teach the religiously illiterate!
> **Jackson:** When I began pastoring I made it a point to take time to explain
> what we were doing and why, using both the sermon and
> commentary from the pulpit to make the point. I continue to try to
> emphasize the basics of faith that are present in liturgical acts. I
> think it helps. It certainly helped me understand what God was
> trying to do through my efforts, and why

Jarrod started, "I am wondering how [….]," indicating his contemplation on the

course readings. He concluded that he felt his congregation needed to more adequately

understand the purpose behind the liturgy and practices of the church. The core issue

involved the dynamic tension between the *reification* and *participation* of the practice of

the church community (Wenger, 1998). The church practice had become ritualized with little meaning for the congregants. Jarrod, as the pastor, expressed the need to engage the church community members in meaning making concerning the reified practice of worship and faith. Jarrod proposed two options: sermon and creating teachable moments. The "stop and make […]" language implied an interruption to the normal worship practice in order to provide "teachable moments in the service," which would allow the congregants to consider the meaning of the worship practice in which they were engaged in order to facilitate understanding. Jarrod deliberated between one reified or established practice of the clergy community of practice, the sermon, and another less common practice of the clergy but a more dynamically participative method for meaning making by the congregants, "[…] stop and make teachable moments in the service."

Rita continued with Jarrod's struggle. "I'm not sure. I'm been thinking very hard about this" indicated a lack of resolution to a plan of action. Her improper grammar, "I'm been thinking" was a combination of "I'm thinking" and "I've been thinking" inferring the on-going reflection which had started and was still continuing. The origin of this reflection for Rita came from the course reading, "Our texts, Ancient-Future worship has been an eye-opener." Like Jarrod, Rita considered options, "I wonder if we should not just take time somewhere[….] Maybe we could start small,[….];" however, Rita elaborated the options more than Jarrod did. Rita ended by reposing the question for Jarrod and others to participate: "What do you think? Do you have a Big Idea?"

Rita appended her first discussion entry just three minutes later with her personal negotiation of identity as professional clergy,

> I do know this: Being a pastor or minister in a church is a constant struggle to awaken people to God, to His Son and to the Holy Spirit. It is exhausting to plan

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worship, to give of yourself to people hurting and in need, to keep your own life connected to God and his plan and to find ways to teach the religiously illiterate!

Rita categorized five functions of the Christian minister: 1) prophet "awaken people to God[…], 2) priest "plan worship," 3) servant "give of yourself to people hurting and in need," 4) authentic model "keep your own life connected to God and his plan" and 5) teacher "teach the religiously illiterate!" Rita classified this as "a constant struggle" and "exhausting" implying a negative experience. Jackson joined the dialog illustrating his personal story, "When I began pastoring [….]" By sharing his enacted methods, Jackson enriched the contemplation of Jarrod and Rita with his actualized experience of the options they were considering. Jackson's ending, "I think it helps. It certainly helped me [….]" provided a non-directive but positive evaluation of these methods. This was Jackson's experience; he shared it with his colleagues for their consideration. This struggle was part of their *shared history of learning* (Wenger, 1998). Foster et al. (2005) noted that the Pedagogies of Formation included *practicing religious leadership*, which involved cultivating the *pastoral imagination* (p. 121). From the interpretation of the texts and reflection upon their own experiences, these students were developing a *pastoral imagination,* a vision of what the pastor is and does.

In the seventh week of the course Dr. Burns provided space for the students to reflect upon their learning to date, asking, "Has anything surprised you or made you feel a bit unsettled?" With this specific prompt for reflection, students identified various areas of meaning making. Jeremy and Melanie in their individual posts confirmed increased understanding of the purpose and role of worship. Again, this indicated *images of possibilities* (Wenger, 1998) of the practice of the community or the increased vision of a *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005).

Jeremy: I am blessed with the wonderful books that I have read in this class. [….]
I am coming to a deeper understanding of just how important Worship is in every aspect of the life of the Church, even Evangelism. If we will get people to our Worship services that are God inspired, He will do the rest. Jesus said, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men to me." Hmmm....Does that mean that I could have let the Holy Spirit do it all these years? Worship is that important!

Melanie: The readings have helped to increase the vision I bring in leading worship; not only vision but a greater understanding of the journey toward our wholeness. I am grateful for the challenges, as well as the reminders. My prayer is that [….]

Rita reiterated what she stated in week three that her local community did not understand the meaning of their practices. From the perspective of a community of practice, her community accepts the reified practice of worship with little individual participation that provides meaning to the practice (Wenger, 1998).

Rita: I'm taking this class and theology and polity all at the same time. It is hectic, but I'm amazed at how it all goes together. I have learned one basic, fundamental thing: that my church, as a whole, does not know what worship is, nor why we do the things we do in the order we do them. I've suggested a church wide study on Worship, using Long's book. [….]

In another vein of thought, Ellis revealed an *image of himself* (Wenger, 1998) in an affirmation of what he has already been doing in his ministry practice even though he was not consciously aware of the depth of the meaning of the practices. He stated, "…the services I've planned in the past were probably the outcome of pure dumb luck or by process of osmosis I've learned through experience and the example of others a pretty solid thought process for putting worship services together." Similarly to Rita's thought, Ellis identified the community of practice, which had passed the reification of the practice of worship to him, resulting at least in part in his ability to design effective worship for his local worshiping community.

Ellis: This has been a very interesting journey as we read and discuss in this on-line classroom while at the same time I get to worship in chapel with other students who are taking the class in residence and planning chapel services. I've become

very aware of how important preparation and organization for services is and that the services I've planned in the past were probably the outcome of pure dumb luck or by process of osmosis I've learned through experience and the example of others a pretty solid thought process for putting worship services together.

However, the course learning had helped him be more conscious of the purposeful design and preparation necessary for meaningful worship.

Grady, as a novice, had found increased efficacy stating, "I can actually do these assignments…."

Grady: The most significant thing I think I have learned is that I can actually do these assignments with some degree of efficiency. Creating worship opportunities is not something I have been involved with or trained in, nor does it come naturally. I have actually developed some confidence in the last 6 weeks. Long's book was a real eye opener. I enjoyed it. There have been several ah ha moments which is always fun.

He had discovered that through the learning process, he can perform the practice of designing worship that had been asked of him thus far in the course.

A lengthy dialog, which is provided below, was triggered by Doyle's post identifying an *image of himself* (Wenger, 1998) that was a surprise to Doyle. Foster et al. (2005) acknowledged the need for students to be aware of their own assumptions and to be able to dialog with perspectives and develop respect and understanding, "nurturing the capacity for empathic consciousness" (p. 144) in the interaction of the pedagogies of interpretation and contextualization. Doyle stated, "I thought that I would be much more open to criticism about my worship preference, since that is what I expect from others." Realizing that he did not express an empathic consciousness in his reaction to the reading would perhaps sensitize him to this need when interacting with peers and local congregants. Melanie articulated a similar response, "The book made me think and I realized I, too, was using my preference to assess the service…."

Doyle: For me, the most surprising and unsettling thing was how I reacted to Thomas Long's[7] critique of "contemporary" worship. [....]

What was unsettling to me, and perhaps my most significant learning, was my own reaction. I did not take the criticism reasonably. I stormed around my room rebutting him out loud before I was able to compose a reasonable written response. I thought that I would be much more open to criticism about my worship preference, since that is what I expect from others. [....] I hope to continue to reflect on this and my reaction to the rest of the class, as I know that worship planning and style can be some of the toughest challenges in the local church/campus ministry/parachurch organization setting. I need to be able to hold my own opinion yet also be open to reasonable criticism.

Melanie: I totally understand your reaction to Long's book, Dan. I lead a contemporary worship service. 😄 [...] Bottom line, I love God and people...how we worship isn't near as important as I once thought. I will never fit, however, in a dry, lifeless service that struggles to get excited about God.

Jeremy: You wrote: *I will never fit, however, in a dry, lifeless [....]*

I once "challenged" a somewhat older group of worshipers about their apparent lack of enthusiasm. Their response to be was: "We get excited about God on the inside, but not on the outside." I sort of believe them as I have known them individually for over 20 years, but it does concern me because my belief system tells me in stereo: "What's on the inside should be manifested on the outside." Does their faithful service and giving demonstrate their excitement on the inside? I am not sure because they could be out of duty "just going through the motions" because in Sunday School they seem to struggle as if not one of them seems to have a clue as to God's work in their lives as they seem to grope through life as if in the dark. Have you seen this phenomenon?

Melanie: I **try** [bold in original] to be careful and avoid judging the spiritual temperature of others, James. Candidly, however, I look for the manifestation of "vibrant fruit" to make a loving observation!ha! 😄

[....]

Jeremy: I like your word of "vibrant fruit" because sometimes there is only the "fruit" of busy-ness as people "go through the motions" of worship and really of being a Christian. Guess I am making a loving observation.😄

This article came from a group called "Building Church Leaders":

I remember sitting through one church service where the worship leader was a distraction.

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[7] Thomas Long's book, *Beyond the Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship*, was one of the required textbooks.

It wasn't that his voice was off key or the
instruments out of tune. It was because he seemed
more interested in showcasing his ability than
pointing others to God.
    [....]
What's the test of a good worship leader?
    A good worship leader is like a lens, and
"lenses aren't meant to be looked at; they're meant
to be looked through." and there is a necessity
to "polish the lens" by keeping their egos in check
and not letting worship become a performance.
What are your thougths on this guy's take?
Melanie: *A good worship leader is like a lens,*
    [....]
        I like this descriptive very much,
James. With it in mind, it becomes [….]
            Adjusting the lens would bring the
proper focus, right? 😎

Ellis: *What's the test of a good worship leader?*
        A good worship leader is like a lens,
    [....]
        This resonates with me! I've worked
with one guy in particular who struggles
with this. He knows this, and has caught
himself in the middle of a service
performing instead of worshiping. He stops,
prays, asks for forgiveness and anointing
then begins to worship again. The result was
amazing, his transparency helped others
confess their sins publicly. If we could all
"polish the junk off the lens"

Jeremy: I guess we have all known music
            leaders or choir directors who have
            been "one man performances", and
            yet, as you mentioned, all of a
            sudden they realize what has
            happened and they repent and things
            are much better. My question would
            be: "Why go through the self-
            serving in the first place?"

From the self-disclosures the dialog above turned to stories of practice and

experience involving two other class members that reiterated the struggle of empathic

consciousness expressed by Doyle and Melanie. Melanie and Jeremy used smiley-face

emoticons five times in their dialog—four times by Melanie and once by Jeremy. Each

use followed a statement of their own opinions, to which they seemed to be sensitized

ensuing from the self-disclosures of a lack of empathic consciousness earlier in the

dialog. The dialog concluded when Jeremy, Melanie, and Ellis identified the true issue to

be that of the character and attitude of the one performing leadership in worship. Yet

again, the students expressed a forming and transforming *pastoral imagination* (Foster et

al., 2005) of who and what the clergy should be.

In week nine of the course the discussion prompt asked, "Is it important to have a

theology of worship? Why or why not? If you were asked to articulate your own

theology of worship, what are the key elements that would be included?" Jarrod, a senior

pastor with twenty years of ministry experience, spoke of his heightened understanding

of the worship practice and then provided a carefully considered concept of worship.

Jarrod displayed a broadened *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005) for what worship

should be about in his congregation.

Jarrod: This class has brought to my attention how important it is to plan, pray, and
work towards our worship each week. Without a theology worship is just empty
ritual, just going through the motions. [….]
Worship is a spiritual journey collectively and individually:
Gathering: [….]
Word: [….]
Table: [….]
Dismissal and going forth: [….]
Worship helps us with two of our greatest needs. It helps to quench our
hunger for God and it helps us feel that our life counts as we are given the
opportunity to offer ourselves in service to Him.

In the dialog shown below Jarrod responded to his classmate, Milton, who was

also a second-career, senior pastor, by recognizing a weakness in his worship practice

that was clarified by Milton's post. Josh, an assistant pastor whose responsibilities did

not include worship leadership, identified a similar weakness in his own local community's worship practice.

Milton: Having a well thought out theology of worship is essential in pastoral ministry. Without it the best a pastor can do is bump around in the dark, occassionly running into the Triune God we worship. For me the key elements of a theology of worship are: the Trinity, praise, adoration, Word, and Sacrament.
Jarrod: I have to be honest....I have not lifted the Trinity as much as I should have in the past. I am realizing more and more, through classes like this, that we must bring out the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit every opportunity. This gives the fullness to the theology of God.
Josh: I hear you Jarrod. Our church does not lift up the triune God enough either.

Foster et al. (2005) noted that the *pastoral imagination* included the ability to discern whether a vision is present in ministry events. Jarrod and Josh exhibited discernment of a deficiency in the *pastoral imagination* in their local worshipping communities. Even with extensive ministerial experience, reflection upon a classmate's concept of worship afforded new insights .

Interpretation effect upon performance. In week seven after reading the positions of several theological Protestant reformers concerning the sacraments of the Protestant faith, the students were to consider the practice of the Eucharist (Holy Communion) within their local worshipping community. Ellis, a second-career, assistant pastor of a large church, provided a lengthy post showing serious interpretation from the reformers and what this meant in his performance as a clergy person administering the sacrament of Communion. He stated,

Ellis: What I'm more and more realizing is that in serving communion, the preparation to receive by individuals is huge. How we (those who lead the sacrament) introduce the practice, how we offer the invitation, the words we use (formal liturgy or more relaxed expression of the meaning and story) and the earnestness of the need for each person to confess and repent in order to receive is all so very important. All of the preceding assists our congregants to understand this and in practice draw closer to God.

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Joanne agreed stating that her understanding had been enhanced by her classmates'
reflections. She summarized her thought with

Joanne: The more posts that I read in this forum, the more I believe what you say is
true. It is the responsibility of the clergy to instruct the laity on the history,
tradition and meaning of the sacraments and then to lead them "in the way they
should go."

Ellis affirmed Joanne's declaration of clergy responsibility and added, "When one takes

seriously the requirement to confess and repent before coming to the [Communion] Table

transformation takes place. … This becomes more and more clear…." Once more, the

pastoral imagination was enhanced and affirmed in these students' reflections. The

students' point was that it was not enough for the clergy to perform the ritual as reified,

but that the clergy assist the participants to make meaning of the ritual to bring about

transformation: participation (Wenger, 1998). Understanding this by the student clergy

would shape their manner of performance of the ritual.

A similar process involved the sacrament of baptism. In that discussion, a

lengthy dialog came about among three of the older, more experienced students, all of the

same denomination.

Jeremy: [2 paragraphs omitted]
I am entrenched in the centrality of our UM beliefs on Baptism and its
place in our sacramental tradition, and know and understand with specificity.
However, for a point of discussion, there is a school of thought that the
sacrament of Baptism has been misinterpreted by religious scholars in that Jesus,
in reality, did not begin baptism and insisted that it be done by every convert, but
rather ended its necessity once and for all. [….] Do you think Baptism is "man-
made" in light of all that we have been taught and assumed over the years? [….] I
have heard of this theory before. However, I am UM and hold firm to our
tradition. What are your thoughts? Is there any validity here?
Jackson: [paragraph omitted]
I wouldn't totally disagree with the theory you relate, but I have to
say that my interpretation is that we observe the sacraments of baptism

and eucharist because they are the ones that Jesus observed during his time on earth. [….]

Ellis: Jeremy, We baptize because Jesus was baptized once at the start of His ministry then told us to go make disciples baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as he ascended to heaven. So my thought is we are to baptize it is not a man made requirement. Having said that there are differing schools of thought concerning baptism and many of the rules written by different denominations are certainly man made. [gave the example of infant baptism]

Jeremy: Ellis, Thanks for the Scripture on the Great Commission. I suppose that if we, as Methodist, are going to invoke Prevenient grace, they seem to have started in the life of a child when the child was very young. There may have been a great fear that a child might die during the epidemics of the Middle Ages and may have also been propagated by the Catholic church for money.

Ellis: Jeremy, The fear of infant death coupled with a declaration of faith in God's Prevenient grace may be another reason for infant Baptism. I hadn't thought of the money angle in the Catholic church [….]

Jeremy brought up another theory separate from their reading "for a point of discussion," as he stated but concluded by reiterated his denominational identity and commitment to and compliance with the denominational beliefs and practices, "I am UM and hold firm to our tradition." His repetition of this identity and commitment suggested that he was concerned that in considering another viewpoint, he might be considered to be disloyal to the denomination.

Ellis joined the discussion reaffirming the theological basis of baptism from the life of Jesus but asserting that the rules governing the performance of the ritual were of human origin, stating, "So my thought is we are to baptize it is not a man made requirement. Having said that there are differing schools of thought concerning baptism and many of the rules written by different denominations are certainly man made." Jeremy stated, "Thanks for the Scripture on the Great Commission," a reminder of the origin of the practice of baptism, and continued to develop the theological discussion.

Ellis later stated, "I hadn't thought of […]" indicating a new insight from his colleague. The discussion, not all of which is printed, continued with a specific instance of baptism, infant baptism, which is controversial among Protestant denominations, bringing in historical aspects to the practice. In this discussion I observed the interaction between interpretation of the course texts, scriptural texts, and historical texts and the rules that govern the performance of the ritual of baptism by the clergy in a particular denomination.

Well-conceived articulations of faith and practice were not limited to the older, more experienced students. Following the reflections and discussions on the course texts and church practices, the professor asked the students to "Make a statement about the relation and meaning of baptism in your worshiping community using each of these headings [identified previously]." Doyle, one of the younger students, posted a lengthy, well-articulated response

Doyle: We here at <insert church/ministry name> view the sacraments as outward signs of the inward reality of God's grace. Sacraments are both a remembrance of God's covenantal relationship and interaction with humanity, particularly in the life of Christ, but they are also actions through which we interact with and are open to God's present and active Spirit. In the sacrament of baptism, we are celebrating the work of grace that has occurred in the life of the candidate for baptism, and in performing the ceremony, we welcome them into the family of God, accepting a pledge from either the candidate or their guardian to a life of faith and a desire to know and follow Christ. The narrative of baptism can be understood through the following six headings:
[50-100+ word paragraphs for each of the six identified headings: creation, chaos, covenant, Christ, church, coming kingdom]

Doyle exemplified personal meaning making showing purpose for the sacrament ritual and his responsibility as clergy to assist the laity to have meaning in their practice of baptism.

By requiring the students to exhibit this personal meaning making, Dr. Burns allowed the students to participate in the reification of the practice anew (Wenger, 1998). The meaning of the practice became not just a ritual to be performed, but one with meaning. In a follow-up discussion forum Dr. Burns provided three scenarios involving baptism for the students to identify how they would handle each situation. The interpretation and performance of the practice were interwoven through these learning activities. The students were aided in their professional identity development knowing not only what they are to do, but why they do the practice.

Stories shared in learning. Wenger (1998) described how members of the community share stories that articulate and confirm the practice especially for novices thus building a shared repertoire of the practice of the community. In week ten the topic of pastoral care in worship evoked numerous stories of practice, many of which abetted the formation of practice in classmates. One dialog stemmed from a pastoral experience of Jeremy.

Jeremy: There is a fine line on which issues to address as some happen concurrently. I believe in community within the family of God especially in the local church. When one hurts. we all hurt and we share the pain together. There are sometimes very delicate issues, and there is a need to handle with kid gloves, but I had still rather err on the side of "community" and fellowship. I remember an instance a few years ago, where a member of the congregation was arrested for a very serious offense. In a Council Meeting one night, some were whispering about the incident. I interrupted their conversation to say that we were not going to deal with this "behind closed doors" so to speak, but rather address it openly and as a matter of fact. As a result, (the Lord was in it) there was healing that took place as the church ministered to the man as he did his time in prison and welcomed him home when he came back. [....] I think if we had kept it in our whispers there would have been no healing and too much embarrassment for the man to have ever come back home.

    Ellis: Thanks for the witness; I hope I remember it and act as you did next time I hear people whispering about others.

        Grady: Jeremy, Gotta ask. What about his wife? How did she respond?

> **Jeremy:** The wife was delighted, especially with the fact that after 12 years, he had abstained from that kind of behavior continually. The wife knew that everyone in the church knew about it and had brought no shame upon herself with retalitatory behavior.

Ellis thanked Jeremy and said he hoped to emulate this behavior in the future. This story added to the *shared repertoire of learning* (Wenger, 1998) as a heuristic procedure for Ellis and Grady and possibly others who read it without comment

An extensive dialog involving several stories stemmed from the discussion of music in worship in the last module of the course. In this case the stories engaged problem-solving, sometimes comical, ending with other stories suggesting an approach to the initial dilemma. Excerpts from the dialog follow.

> **Jackson:** I consider music to be at least the second most important part of worship, if not the most important. [….] Music must be performed well enough that the congregation can participate.
>
> I have one congregation that always sings enthusiastically, regardless of their familiarity with the music. The other seldom, if ever sings well, again regardless of content. The worship experience is directly proportional to the level and enthusiasm of musical participation. I have offered to restrict my hymn selections to those with which they are familiar. The response is silence, as in, you figure it out, hot shot.
>
> Much of the problem is that the accompianist is often poorly prepared and plays like she is in the funeral home, way, way, way, too slow. She is volunteer, the chairperson of the church council, and there is no alternative that I can identify. So we soldier on. This situation is high on my list of things to convince the congregation it needs to fix.
>
> **Dr. Burns:** Tacks in the pews?!? That would just raise the pitch! …
>
> **Doyle:** One of my favorite C.S. Lewis quotes goes like this:
>
> > "Let the choirs sing well or not at all. Otherwise we merely confirm the majority in their conviction that the world of business, which does with such efficiency so much that never really needed doing, is the real, the adult, and the practical world; and that all this culture and religion (horrid words both) are essentially marginal, amateurish, and rather effeminate activities."
> >
> > While I might never be that harsh, I think he has a point. John Wesley also included rules for singing at the front of the hymnal including not to "sing as if dead." …

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Jeremy: I wonder what Wesley really meant when he put in the rule not to "sing as if dead?" Can a person be "half dead" or "half alive?" Sounds like he wanted gusto in the Worship service.

Audrey: This post prompts me to think about the approach being taken by one of the pastors I'm working with.

Worship at Englewood needs a lot of work, not just musically. But the pastor there is a strong leader with a sound vision. This church was in serious conflict when she asked to be appointed to it, believing that God was calling her to bring some very specific gifts and graces to the situation. She has thus spent the past six months focusing entirely on a mediation process designed to bring healing to some very deep wounds. Now that mediation is complete, she's ready to put together a comprehensive leadership team and move forward with the changes she envisions for this community.

This brings me to my point... One of the committees she's setting up is a worship committee. Because she believes the worship life of this congregation needs so much work and attention right now, this is actually going to be the largest leadership sub-committee of all. Most importantly, as she is recruiting the people she has identified as potential leaders in this area, she is being very forthright in telling them that she expects this committee to do some difficult evaluative work and make some hard decisions about worship in the coming months. So they know what they're getting into! Her style is not to force her own ideas of how everything should be done on these leaders, but I know that she will hold them accountable to bring about serious reform.

So, the reason I shared all this is because I was struck by your remark: "I have offered to restrict my hymn selections to those with which they are familiar. The response is silence, as in, you figure it out, hot shot." Perhaps it would help for you to prayerfully identify a few people to partner with you in this area. People who wouldn't respond with silence, but would be willing to actively engage in what might prove to be a very difficult, but worthwhile, process.

Jeremy: *Perhaps it would help for you to prayerfully identify a few people to partner with you in this area.*

Good advice here. I went to serve a "difficult church" once who offered silence. I told them that this was no time to be modest out of kindness to me or to remain quiet on the delimma(The Conference was about to close the church if there was not improvement). One of the ladies who was the treasurer of the church replied, "We always tell it like it is and we are never kind." That sounds rude, but that was just the way they were. She became my biggest supporter and the church grew larger than it ever did in its entire history and it still going well today. Getting people involved as much as possible is essential.

The initial story displayed elements of adversarial conflict as shown in the use of the term "hot shot" in the teller's assessment of the people's response to his efforts to provide a solution. Jackson, a second-career student- pastor, summarized the impasse with "This situation is high on my list of things to convince the congregation it needs to fix." The statement showed this was a priority for the student-pastor, but the congregation appeared not to see the urgency or possibly even the problem. Jackson understood his task was to "convince the congregation" of their need to solve the problem. However, Jackson referred to the congregation with the pronoun "it." He could have used "they," a more personal pronoun, but his choice of the pronoun "it" exposed an objectification of the congregation. Another option would have been an inclusive, cooperative "we" identifying the pastor and congregation together solving the problem. The use of "it" separated the pastor from the congregation.

Humor might have been used by the responders, including the professor, to diffuse the tension felt in the post. The two final stories afforded gentle suggestions for a participatory, cooperative approach to the problem: "Perhaps it would help for you to prayerfully identify a few people to partner with you in this area" and "Getting people involved as much as possible is essential." These stories of dilemmas and solutions became part of the *shared repertoire* (Wenger, 1998) of the learners, serving as ways pastors, a professional community of practice, resolve difficult situations within the worshiping community.

Not all stories concerned negative or problem situations. A proliferation of stories and descriptions were shared when discussing the arts in worship in the last module of the course. The students used the first person, both singular and plural

(referring to their worship communities), as in the previous stories as well as exclamatory

sentences throughout the discussions indicating the personal ownership of these stories

and the enthusiasm in the sharing. Excerpts from these stories concerning arts in worship

are provided.

Rita: Oh I love this topic!
> Just today, the hanging of the greens was a powerful story told by the congregation.
> We have an annual Early Christian Meal on Good Friday which is served by Joseph of Armathea to the followers of Jesus who suffered through the crucifixion of Jesus. [….]
> We have banners in the church which change periodically. Never forget that the paraments are hung for a reason.
> The Horn of Plenty was enormous on our alter last Sunday.
> The Chrismons are big-time stories in themselves!
> If all your churches use is the screen, then you may be missing a great wealth of involvement of "theater" that can be utilized by congregates. They remember what they act out.
> We have liturgical dancers and drama folks, great readers, and instrumentalists... They are in your churches too, waiting to be asked!
> I'm telling you imagination is a powerful thing....

Joanne: We have been very blessed to have a family who is artistically talented who have taken it on themselves, up until recently, to build and paoint the backdrops for our contemporary worship service. The "set" would be designed around the sermon series and would be added on to every week during the series. [….]
> I visited a church that had huge quilts that they used in the front of the sanctuary that depicted the various seasons of the church year. [….]
> When my kids were young and I taught Sunday School in my little hometown rural church, I wrote plays for them to perform at least once a year besides Christmas.

The arts were an area where the female students had numerous stories and

descriptions to share. In addition to Rita and Joanne above, Melanie shared the items in

the script below and provided a basic outline for the activity.

Melanie: I enjoy the arts in worship; therefore, I spend a lot of time getting them ready to share. We have something special each week. We have banners, beautifully adorned altars, intriguing video clips, the use of lighting in special ways, the use of color is a big thing with me, scriptures that are acted out, dance, drama,

testimonies, sermon props, themed stage backdrops, etc. I have experienced no problem with sharing the arts in contemporary worship.

   This year for Advent, I have arranged to have the Reading/Wreath Lighting partnered with a testimony time; [….] I will paste the outline for you below so you can get an idea. The ornament is a visual way to engage.

Jeremy: You go girl! Can I borrow some of this? This is wonderful. You have made all the guys envious because we just don't have this "touch" and it may not be teachable to some of us who don't have the touch, but at least we can try! Thanks for sharing.

   Melanie: Borrow away, Jeremy !ha! 😄 You know the other thing we did was to set up a store in our multipurpose room. We named it The ACTS (The Action of Christian Thanksgiving Store). [….] Here's a picture of the store we created.

Jeremy recognized a stereotypical gender difference, but with appreciation asked if he could borrow some of the ideas. Melanie replied and additionally shared another activity with pictures. Melanie also offered a suggestion to Milton from her wealth of experience, which was well received.

Milton: We recently had a projector put into the sanctuary and while people are gathering our IT folks show different artistic pictures and sayings to help get the people into a more worshipful mood. We also do short plays for our Lenten evening services every year. The church uses a lot of colorful banners throughout the year that also enhance the worship experience.

   Melanie: Perhaps someone could build a creative announcement slide show (pictures from past events and invitations to new ones) to play pre-service. [….] Using the arts that way helps develop community. It has been very effective at our church. Just a thought...

   Milton: That is a wonderful idea. I am going to try that!

In closing she added a justification, "Using the arts that way helps develop community," and evaluation of the activity, "It has been very effective at our church." The end comment "Just a thought…" softened the recommendation so that she does not give the impression of the know-it-all expert.

Some men did offer stories of experiences with creative arts, some they had facilitated themselves. In his initial post, Doyle used the first person plural in his descriptions indicating cooperative ventures.

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Doyle: The biggest way we use arts is through self-expression and reflective activities after the sermon/communion… … I have listed some of our more memorable ones below.

> We bought big panels used to finish showers as Lowe's and they act as large whiteboards. We frequently use these for response activities when we want everyone to see what the community is writing. The most creative thing we have done recently is building a wooden frame, stretching a sheet over it, and putting out buckets of mud which our students used to respond to a message on Lamentations. It was about turning something muddy into something beautiful. You can see a photo of the end result here: [the URL was provided]

> Two years ago, for Lent, we also built a mini desert in front of the altar. We have different ways of interacting with it- like writing in the sand and wiping it away, or 'planting' seeds in it on Good Friday and replacing it with a sea of poinsettias on Easter. While this may not be traditional "art", it provided a striking visual image.

In response to another person's post, Doyle shared another event he had performed and, when asked, followed up the post with more details. This time he uses the first person singular pronoun describing something he himself had done.

Doyle: One Sunday, I made cookie dough and then cooked them on a griddle while preaching a sermon. While it was well received, the smell of fresh cookies may have taken some minds off of what I was trying to communicate.
[Non-participant]
> **Doyle:** It was a message that was really a different way of presenting the Gospel. I talked about how all of these ingredients, like in any food (except twinkies) were once living things. Yet, they had to die in order to give life. It also is an image of the church, combining different things together to make one unified thing that is really good. Something like that...

Doyle's closing, "Something like that…" indicated a descriptive rather than prescriptive recitation.

In contrast, Ellis shared stories of creative arts he had witnessed but in which he had not been actively involved. Ellis added a commentary or coda at the end of each story.

Ellis: We occasionally use drama and art in worship. One of the most profound and dramatic uses of art I've ever seen happened a few years ago. In our 11:00 service the sister in law of our then associate pastor painted a very large painting of Jesus'

face while he preached. That picture hang in the back of what is now our children's ministry worship space. The combination of the spoken word and the painting coming to life was very powerful.

        We did have a Christian dance troupe perform once, they used blacklights and glow sticks; this was not well received by many of our older members but was enthusiastically received by young adults and youth.

        Another very powerful use of drama occurred one Sunday when our Senior Pastor preached on hospitality using the story of the good Samaritan. Before the service one of the ladies from our church was outside dressed/made up as a homeless "bag lady," she tried to talk with many as they approached the doors of the church, asked for help, tried to explain her situation etc. At only one of three services did anyone invite her to come in and offer to help. At the end of each service she shared her feelings in front of the congregation. The outcome was a dramatic increase in support of local missions.

His second commentary revealed a generational divide with the congregation concerning the event. Sharing this information provided a caveat for some use of the arts in worship with some audiences.

Wenger (1998) listed the sharing of stories, explanations, and descriptions as part of the *work of imagination*. The numerous stories and personal experiences shared by the students with detailed descriptions and pictures by some, afforded *images of possibilities*, again building a *shared repertoire*.

Contextualization. As was noted in Chapter 2, the Carnegie study defined contextualization as "the task of making explicit the socially situated nature of all knowledge and practice" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 132). The study further identified *contextual consciousness* and *contextual encounter* as pedagogies that sensitize students to their own assumptions and develop respect and understanding of other perspectives. *Contextual consciousness* occurred when students became cognizant of "the unexamined assumptions of their religious tradition and practice" (p. 136). *Contextual encounters* foster "an appreciation of the other on the other's terms" (p. 144), facilitate mutual understanding, and "foster the dialogical reciprocity of appreciative and critical inquiry"

(p. 145). *Contextual transformation*, a third pedagogy of contextualization, involved

"critical reflection and action" (p. 147). In the last module one discussion forum supplied

the following prompt:

> How often do you utilize multicultural elements in your worshiping community?
> Do you feel it important to include multicultural practices in your worship
> services? Why or why not? Please use this forum to post any questions,
> experiences, comments, resources, etc. that have to do with the issue of
> MULTICULTURAL ELEMENTS IN WORSHIP.

In this module students considered their own communities and what was needed in their

worshipping communities regarding multicultural elements of worship. This contextual

aspect of worship had relevancy to the students in differing ways. The discussion in this

forum spanned more than three weeks towards the end of the semester. The students self-

reported that the ethnic contexts of their communities ranged broadly from mono-ethnic

communities to half the population of the community being Hispanic to a student, who

lived near two Native American reservations with large Hispanic-American and African-

American populations mixed with the European-descent Americans.

Some students felt that since their communities were largely monoethnic, there

was no reason to include multiethnic elements of worship. Jackson stated, "In many

areas multi-culturalism is simply irrelevant. Anyone new who comes into town is

suspect, regardless of background. If you aren't related to someone known locally, you

aren't a real person." Jackson implied that since this was the perspective of the town, and

thus, the local church(es), there would be no reason or value to utilize multicultural

worship.

Rita shared a monocultural view of worship from a different perspective, saying,

"When I went to Paris, I excepted to worship in the Roman Catholic French service. I

would have been very puzzled to be singing an Appalachian Hymn or reading a prayer

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from the African church." She raised the question, "What does multi-cultural elements do to the service?" and ended with "Immersion, not elements." Immersion would imply complete cultural interaction rather than just specific multicultural elements in worship. Jeremy shared his story from a reverse experience within the USA,

Jeremy: There have been occasions when, at other churches where I have served, people from other backgrounds have commented that it looked as though we were trying to patronize them when they were really looking for typical Bible Belt worship. It was almost as if they did not appreciate our attempts at accommodation, but they really wanted to be like us as the homeland was sometimes a painful experience.

A common understanding among the students was that the church should provide multicultural worship as fitting the ethnic make-up of the larger community or the local church. Grady's church was in a 50% Hispanic area but the church was "primarily Anglo." They have "Hispanic services" a couple times a year with other cultures emphasized once or more a year. Grady did not delineate what a "Hispanic service" would entail. Outside of a special emphasis on another culture, the services were Euro-American based. However, Grady's viewpoint was somewhat complicated; he wrote,

Grady: I think it is good to be multicutural in the right way. If your congrgation is primarily white or hispanic I see no reason to rock the boat. Let your congregation know that all are in need of grace. But I do think we all have the call to help us all get along and see each other as God's children.

Grady did not identify what is the "right way" to be multicultural. His purport was that a monoethnic worshipping community should not be disturbed, but yet different ethnicities should "all get along."

Milton, a Native American pastoring a mostly Caucasian congregation, the only student-pastor identified from an ethnic minority in the USA, stated his practice in multicultural worship,

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Milton: Every now and then I do like to throw something into the service that is multicultural. The makeup of our church is almost all caucasian. I am the only Native American and we have two African American ladies, so that is where our multicultural makeup ends. There is a Dakota Sioux prayer in the Book of Worship that I use from time to time as an Opening Prayer and once in a while I have us sing an African American spiritual. Other than that there isn't too much. I do think it is important to use multicultural elements as a way to highlight the idea that we are a multicultural world.

Even as a pastor from an ethnic minority in the USA, he limited his use of multicultural worship elements to those from cultures represented in the congregation but felt multicultural worship elements were important "as a way to highlight the idea that we are a multicultural world." For all other student-pastors the use of non-Western worship elements would have been outside their personal cultural backgrounds.

A contrasting perspective was voiced by Joanne, "When we talk about our congregations being a large percentage of any one culture, all that tells me is that is the culture that you worship in." She continued,

Joanne: Of course people are going to be puzzled unless we intentionally try to become more multi-cultural in our worship and that must be a decision that is communicated to the congregation. We are very different from each other but the only way we will get to know each others' cultures is to be exposed to them.

Doyle provided a similar view stating, "We aren't hugely diverse in our own community, but perhaps our diversity would increase if we showed a commitment to honoring and respecting other cultures." Both Joanne and Doyle implied that worship communities were not diverse because they were not welcoming to diversity. Audrey expressed her concerns along this view,

Audrey: It seems to be human nature to think of our own precise cultural location as the center to which all the rest of the world is (or should be) gravitating. Incorporating multicultural elements into worship can remind us that we are in fact *not* the forming center of the universe [italics in original], but are part of something far greater and grander than our limited experience can reflect.

I'm concerned by the idea that if we serve ethnically/racially homogenous communities, that gives us a legitimate reason not to incorporate multicultural elements. Having lived all of my life in these types of communities, I suspect the real issue is that we know these communities will not welcome our efforts - may even aggressively oppose them! - in this regard. But I am convinced that it is precisely our comfort with homogeneity that needs to be prophetically challenged through the worship life of the church!

Audrey went on to share that her child had encountered discrimination of a bi-racial friend at school just the day previous to her posting and so this was a real, personal issue for her. She apologized if she came across "unduly critical." Her apology could be interpreted that she believed her classmates might have been offended by her viewpoint or possibly by her emotion and that such offense was not acceptable. Another meaning might have been that she herself felt she had been overly critical of monocultural worship—in her personal emotion of recent experience, she had overreacted. A third basis for her apology could be that her cultural context as a Christian woman from the southern USA should not be so overtly critical but should couch one's criticism in more deft language similarly to her own and Jeremy's stories previously discussed, which gently suggested a critique of Jackson's attitude to his congregation's musical problems. Given that students did present different perspectives such as viewpoints on baptism already discussed but did so without emotive language, I believe the third explanation was more likely. Joanne affirmed Audrey's viewpoint stating,

Joanne: I do not think you are being overly critical. We may think that we are living in a homogeneous neighborhood but I will bet that if we look around us, we are not! My tiny hometown of 350 people in Kansas had, in the late 90's when my youngest son was in grade school, white, black, Hispanic and Asian children attending school there. And that is not to mention that we are in community and connection with God's children all over the world. We need to be culturally sensitive and encourage cross-cultural

If other students felt differently than Joanne, they did not respond.

Ellis, whose church was almost completely Caucasian but with Hispanic migrant workers in the community, affirmed the value of multicultural worship, stating, "I think God intends for multicultural worship to be a reality. Revelation 7:9 is a description of the great multitude worshiping God in heaven from every, nation, all tribes and peoples and languages." He ended his posting with the practical "The difficulty is bringing people together in unity when language and culture are so vastly different." Doyle offers some suggestions for sensitizing the congregation to their ethnic neighbors.

Doyle: While I think it is vitally important for you to experience specifically Hispanic forms of cross cultural ministry since they are your neighbors, perhaps you can broaden their horizon with practices from cultures they don't encounter. Perhaps you can start with India, China, or an African nation. If you start to open their minds and hearts to people not like them that they don't have to interact with, perhaps it will trickle over into their relationships with their actual neighbors.

Ellis articulated his view from a biblical basis but identified a pragmatic difficulty, which Doyle addressed.

Another way of categorizing the viewpoints was that multicultural elements of worship targeted those outside the majority group or was for the benefit of all persons, especially the majority. From the first perspective where the purpose of multicultural worship was to include or target those outside the majority group, students expressed that worship should reflect the makeup of the congregation or the larger community—only cultures identified in the community should be considered for the potential cultural worship attention. If there was no one outside the majority group, then multicultural worship was not relevant. The other perspective, where multicultural worship enriched all persons, both majority and minority, students held that it would sensitize all persons to others different from themselves and assist them in building relationships with other cultures.

While the discussions focused on providing multicultural experiences of worship in the local congregations, the students were also examining their beliefs that would affect their socially situated practices as clergy concerning multicultural representation in worship. Despite little diversity among the participating students and most of their worshipping communities being predominantly European-descent Americans, these discussions helped students to consider the assumptions of their local church practices (and their own) regarding other cultural forms of worship (*contextual consciousness)* (Foster et al., 2005)*.* The discussions proffered the opportunity to become aware of other perspectives, at least to a point of potential empathic consciousness.

Contextual transformation (Foster et al., 2005) required critical reflection and action. Several of the discussions already noted expressed critical reflection, such as the exploration of the question: Are multicultural worship elements appreciated by other ethnicities? Jarrod revealed an intention to change his practice, stating, "We do not use any multicultural elements at present. I know, now more than ever, that this is something I will have to develop. … I can see the advantage of including multiculturalism in the worship experience." The volitional speech act expressed by Jarrod was a statement of *contextual transformation*.

Summary. Discussion interaction among the students and the instructor was a major element of this course with twenty-seven required discussion fora throughout the fourteen weeks of the semester. In these discussion postings and responses, the students have exhibited elements of interpretation of and reflection on course texts, integrated the interpretations with their performance and practice, shared stories creating a shared repertoire to guide their future performance, enhanced the pastoral imagination, and have

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related their learning to their socially situated worship practices. The Worship course

discussions engaged the pedagogies of interpretation and contextualization as well as

performance.

Performance exemplar: CD511 The Pastor and Christian Discipleship. The

Pastor and Christian Discipleship course was also one of the practice of ministry core

electives. The Servant Ministry core elective required students to select a course from

lower level courses in four content areas including Christian Discipleship. The course

was a prerequisite option for other Christian Discipleship courses. The course

description articulated the pastor's role as religious leader shepherding the formation and

transformation within the local church community stating,

> This course explores the foundations of Christian discipleship in Scripture,
> theology (including Wesleyan distinctives), and educational and human
> development theories. It examines the pastor's role in guiding the forming and
> transforming of disciples across the lifespan, discerning and communicating a
> vision for Christian discipleship, and empowering laity to fulfill that vision (The
> Seminary, 2009a, p. 147).

Dr. Cynthia Smythe organized the course content into five modules. These five

modules contained twenty-three discussion fora not including the four course

introductory fora. The twenty students were divided into four groups. Besides the

discussions on the readings, the groups also collaborated on age group summaries with

members representing children, youth, and adults. Another collaborative activity within a

group discussion involved group members representing different learning theories within

the discussion. One of the groups had only one member participating in the study and

two of the groups had all five members participating in the study. The groups varied as

to how they organized their discussion fora sometimes having one thread for all

members' posts and responses and at other times group members began individual

threads. One Module 2 discussion forum designed as a role play had extensive

interaction with 290 posts and responses in 23 threads. The groups met synchronously

for 1-2 hours in that discussion. The four discussion fora in Module 3 are combined to

show the amount of engagement in Table 4.5. In Module 3 Dr. Smythe wrote 14 entries

or 15.1% of the interaction for that module.

Table 4.5

CD511 Module 3 Discussion Fora Interaction

Authors of thread entries	Posts	Responses	Mean responses per post	Median responses per post	Contributors (including professor)
Posts with participants' and instructor's responses	23	93	4.0	4.0	15

Performance. The Pastor and Christian Discipleship course emphasized

performance of the pastor or Christian educator concerning Christian discipleship of the

laity. The professor defined Christian discipleship as "the eventful process of coming to

know God, committing oneself to be an apprentice of Jesus, and learning to walk

'routinely and easily in the character and power of Christ.'" This definition contained

aspects of the formation pedagogies of practicing the presence of God ("coming to know

God") and practicing holiness ("walk 'routinely and easily in the character and power of

Christ'"). As identified in the course description, the pastor's performance involved

guiding the laity in the formation process. The performance aspect was expressed in the

course objectives listed on the syllabus including "Design teaching plans[….]", "Recruit

and equip God's people for ministries[….]" and "Lead the laity to implement and

evaluate new ways of doing ministry[….]" The course assignments included developing

a Discipling Plan for a church and creating a Basic Beliefs presentation for delivery to the

local church or leadership team. Optional projects to receive a grade of "A" in the course

included teaching at least three lessons in the local church setting and having at least

three persons evaluate the performance or researching and evaluating resources for

Christian Education,. These activities would typically be practiced by a Christian

Education pastor in a local church and led the students to consider issues of performance

in the role of a Christian Education pastor or senior pastor.

When discussing Christian discipleship across the lifespan, Dr. Smythe required

the students to read texts and view video lectures concerning major age groups. When

addressing ministry with youth, the students responded to the following questions.

> 1. Name one principle and one practice for the effective discipling of youth that your congregation implements well and briefly describe what is being done.

> 2. Name one principle and one practice for effective discipleship not being implemented adequately.

> 3. If you were the pastor, how would you implement the principle and practice mentioned in #2 to enhance your church's ministry with youth?

The third question focused the students' reflection on the performance of the pastor and

what they intended to do to meet the identified inadequacies. Several students rejoined

that they did not know what to do as they had already tried unsuccessfully to solve the

problem. One group did propose some approaches.

Myron: The church that I am a part of right now is a very small congregation of about 30-40 regular attenders. The "teens" in the congregation are basically 5th and 6th grade girls. There were a few more, but those families have moved on since then. At the moment, there really is no youth group of any structure, so I would say the strength that this church provides is that these "teens" are participating in every aspect of church that the adults are. They participate in [....] If I were the pastor of the church, especially a church as small as the one I attend right now, I would make it a priority to visit each of the teens individually periodically and mentor/disciple them myself. I have always thought that the Senior pastor showing interest in the teens lives has a lasting impact on the teens, and on the

congregation. It sets the tone in the church, for how the teens are to be viewed. If the pastor takes time to spend with them and get to know them, then other people will feel the same way.

Pearl: I definitely agree that the pastor should be the one that sets the precedent by making it a priority himself when possible. In a small church that could definitely happen. In a large church I am not sure how possible this might be. However, when the pastor is behind something it happens with a lot more ease than when he doesn't support or show support.

Pearl: One of the 6 factors that help youth to retain or stick with their faith that my church is doing well is apprenticeship. [….] Mentoring is really lacking in our church. There is a huge lack of communication between generations and very few are mentored by one adult much less by three different adults. [….] Therefore, I would be intentional about service activities that we planned in the community, apprentice opportunities in the church, etc. These are great opportunities to get the door open for communication.

Myron, who is not a pastor while doing his studies, projected himself into the

professional role and avowed, "If I were the pastor, […] I would make it a priority to visit

each of the teens individually periodically and mentor/disciple them myself." Myron

stated that he would solve the problem himself, and in so doing identified a practice for

the pastor. Pearl picked up the concept ascertaining that the pastor should be an exemplar

in mentoring for the congregation or at least support mentoring with the youth. In her

personal reply to the questions, Pearl indicated that she was uncertain how to implement

mentoring with the youth by the adults. However, she redeveloped her thought toward

the root issue as she saw it, "lack of communication," into approaches to generate

communication between the generations using a volitional speech act, "Therefore, I

would be intentional about [….]" Through the use of these speech acts, the students

declared a performance to be enacted as pastors. They were writing the scripts of the

undertakings of the pastor to be enacted with an audience of the current and/or future

congregations. In this instance they stated how they would go about establishing

mentoring relationships between the generations, "visit each of the teens individually"

and "be intentional about service activities." These volitional speech acts established the goals of the performance, setting up "expectations for the pastoral imagination and the professional habits and dispositions originating in the academic disciplines, religious and academic traditions, and mission and culture of a school" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 176).

Formation. Formation of the pastoral identity, especially a formation of the vision of religious leadership, was also evident in the activities and assignments of the course. The syllabus stated course objectives towards the goals of forming this vision including

> #1. "Articulate biblical and theological principles for the church's
>   educational/discipling ministry,"
> #2. "Evaluate educational perspectives from the social sciences and the field of
>   religious education,"
> #6. "Develop your theology or philosophy of Christian education and
>   discipleship,"
> #7. "Articulate your excitement for Christian education's role in helping the
>   people of God grow in Christ and fulfill the Great Commission."

Along with the Discipleship Plan and the Basic Beliefs presentation, the students were to write three integrative papers each with a specific focus to articulate the formation of their vision. Another optional project was to observe and interview persons leading discipling ministries in local churches and report the insights gleaned in relationship to the topics of the course. The students would be discerning the vision of these ministry leaders, which would aid in the development of their own personal leadership vision.

Discussion activities frequently asked the students to reflect on the readings and lectures and interviews on the DVD. The students also reflected upon their personal experiences providing images of themselves. In one reflection Martin wrote,

Martin: I think I struggle with the use of story telling, [….] I recognize that I won't
       spend my entire ministry teaching adults in heavy reading courses, and that

eventually I'll be responsible for the equipping of laity who teach various age groups, and so story telling is an area that I need to work harder on developing.

Martin revealed that he recognized weaknesses or at least limitations in his current practices and how that would not suffice in a broader role. He had been challenged to develop a broader vision, to be intentional in his practices and his own development. These reflections assisted the students in the formation of their visions of the pastor/Christian Education leader in the local churches in teaching and discipleship ministries. Here the student contrasted the images of his past performance to the *images of the possibilities* (Wenger, 1998), articulating the formation of a new pastoral vision.

In the Wrap-up discussion forum for each module Dr. Smythe asked the students to reflect upon their learning and to identify the "most valuable" concepts and insights they gained from the readings, discussions, and activities. Generally she asked the students to identify five "key ideas" for various activities. Sherry stated, "[T]he idea of Pastor as Educator for transformation is so important. I know very few pastors who view this as their role; most see their job as Carr said, manager or overseer of the church activities, and preacher." These reflection questions afforded the potential for an expanded *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005).

Contextualization. Along with the performance and formation aspects of the course, evidence of contextualization appeared. For one discussion activity the students were to role play a discussion among representative learning theories (Mr./Ms. Traditionalist, Mr./Ms. Behaviorist, Mr./Ms. Developmentalist) and representatives of the views of contemporary and recent Christian educators, Thomas Groome and Henri Nouwen. The students discussed four of the following topics: the a) aim of education, b) how students learn, c) the teacher's role, d) the content of Christian education, e) the

influence of the environment, and f) the role and methods of evaluation in Christian education from these various perspectives. Foster et al. (2005) spoke of the contextual consciousness and contextual encounter where students become aware of their own assumptions and dialog with differing perspectives. Here in this discursive activity students were assigned a perspective and were to dialog according to that perspective's stance on the issues.

The students in each group arranged either a two-hour block or two one-hour blocks of time where they could be online simultaneously for this discussion activity. Two of the groups engaged in extensive interaction. Group 1 started six separate discussion threads in a span of an hour and ten minutes, 10:56 am, 11:06 am, 11:18 am, 11:47 am, 11:53 am, and12:07 pm with 20, 17, 17, 16, 10, and 21 entries in the respective threads to discuss the issues. (See Table 4.6 for detailed information on the flow of the discussions.) Four students (the fifth member of the group did not participate) dialoged back and forth on these issues concurrently writing 32, 31, 26, and 12 posts within two hours across the threads showing substantial levels of engagement by the students. Group 1 conducted the four discussion threads during the first hour and the last two discussion threads during the second hour; all students posted in each thread. Group 4 had five participants and dialogued more consecutively starting their threads at 9:01 pm, 9:32 pm, 10:30 pm and 10:31 pm containing 40, 19, 27, and 39 entries. Due to their previously announced schedules, the two female participants in Group 4 joined one-half hour late posting initial comments at 9:28 pm and 9:29pm. Both of the late participants joined into the first discussion topic and all three of the original three participants continued to interact while at the same time beginning the second topic. Group 4

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members wrote 31, 27, 26, 26, and 14 posts for the entire discussion over the four topics, again showing similar engagement as Group 1.

Group 2 chose to meet at two separate times for one hour each time and had less interactive engagement among the members with 15, 12, 6, and 4 posts over the four topics. The first meeting discussed two topics and included three participants with a fourth participant posting comments the next day; a fifth member did not participate in the discussions. For the second meeting, the only female participating in the discussions, Pearl, was online with one other groupmate, Martin, but they agreed to postpone until the next evening in the hope that the others would join. However, the next evening (Thursday) only Pearl and another groupmate, Myron, were online so they continued the discussion for the last two topics. Group 2 had less engagement throughout the course than the other participating groups. Group 3 did not participate in this research study.

Table 4.6

Role-Play Discussions

Group and Participants	Topic	Starting thread time	Ending thread time	Number of posts
Group 1 – 4 participants	Aim	10:56 am	11:54 am	20
	Student's Role	11:06 am	12:02 pm	17
	Teacher's Role	11:18 am	11:59 am	17
	Content	11:47 am	12:09 pm with a late post at 1:30 pm	10
	Environment	11:53 am	12:44 pm with 3 late posts after 1:15 pm	21
	Evaluation	12:07 am	12:54 pm	16
Group 4 – 5 participants	Aim	9:01 PM	10:00 PM	39
	Learner	9:32 PM	10:39 PM	40
	Teacher	10:30 PM	11:19 PM	19
	Environment	10:31 PM	11:09 PM	27
Group 2 – Tuesday session: 4 participants (1 of whom responded at a later time)	Aim	Tuesday, 10:19 PM	10:47 PM (4th participant posted once the next day)	9
	Teacher's role	Tuesday, 10:29 PM	11:06 PM (4th participant made 3 posts the next day)	17
	Environment	Thursday, 10:10 PM	10:43 PM	4
Thursday session: 2 participants	Evaluation	Thursday, 10:12 PM	10:58 PM	7

One student, Blake, assigned to Mr. Traditionalist, stated "I promise it doesn't come easy. I am about as opposite Tom Traditionalist as it comes, though I can think of people in the churches I have served that are definetly traditionalist, not named Tom though." While other students signed their role speaker's name as a signature at the end of their posts, in eight of his twelve posts in the activity, Blake specifically identified Mr. Traditionalist or the traditionalist perspective to introduce his postings as in this example,

"Tom Traditionalist says that the aim of CE is teach children, youth, and adults how to be better Christians by studying the traditional tools of learning: the Bible. TT does not like new creative ideas about the aim of CE." This indicates a struggle to identify with a perspective with which one does not agree. Blake acknowledged that he knew persons in his churches who did accept this approach, attesting to the value for the pastor to be aware of other perspectives. In another group Mr. Traditionalist also acknowledged that he had a difficult time with this perspective stating, "This is difficult since I don't buy into the traditionalist view at all, but definitely a good exercise."

Ms. Traditionalist in Group 4, however, embraced the role completely taking on the persona of a traditional Southern USA church-attending lady bringing humor to the group and regional contextualization to the role play. Examples of her statements include the following when discussing how the students learn.

> I think people learn mostly by listening to their preachers and teachers in church, and by doing what the people around them do. … As far as their role, its to be a good student...mind your manners and obey those in authority. That will get you far in life!

And in another post, Ms. Traditionalist wrote,

> Bucky [Behaviorist] my man, I don't know about peer pressure now. I can hardly imagine the negative effect this could have on the young people in our church, what with all the hanky-panky taking place these days in their school environments. Is peer pressure really something helpful? I beg you to reconsider.

On the topic of the Teacher's Role, though, Ms. Traditionalist, still in character, expressed discomfort with the traditionalist perspective where the teacher is the knowledgeable one and the students are empty vessels to be filled. She wrote,

> I'd be glad to give you Pastor Brown's phone number so you could call his wife Sally Mae! Since she is my Sunday school teacher, perhaps you might be able to

say somethin' to her so she'd stop makin' us feel like we don't know anything most Sundays.

(Sherry did ask the group if they found her Southern lady role-playing unpleasant and if so, she would stop, but her groupmates responded they enjoyed it.)

The Traditionalist perspective seemed to be the most difficult for the students to role play in all three groups. Students did not express struggles with any of the other perspectives. Yet all three students assigned to role play the Traditionalist perspective acknowledged that the exercise was worthwhile for pastors to consider this perspective even if they felt uncomfortable with it as Ms. Traditionalist stated, "I know LOTS of women in the church like this." The instructor required students to understand and positively present a perspective that might be different from the students' personal perspective raising the students' contextual consciousness and creating a contextual encounter by dialoging with different perspectives. In the wrap-up to the module, Jeremy acknowledged the value of working with different perspectives, "Needless to say I have learned a great deal from my assigned expert through a wide range of thoughts and ideas of the difference between violent and redemptive processes of teaching, blind spots, and emptying of one's self." The students acknowledged the value of the exercise as they already knew or were likely to encounter laity in their churches that would hold similarly differing perspectives from their own, perhaps the ethos of a local church would be dissimilar to their own values. They would need to understand the assumptions in order to lead the congregation.

Interpretation. The instructor, Dr. Smythe, added comments and questions to the

discussions after the students had completed their work. One set of questions regarding

the Content topic in the role play activity illustrated her prompts for deeper engagement.

> I'm wondering what forms of content are important to us.
>
> And how should content be engaged?
>
> Is some presentation of content more effective than others?
>
> What about the content in story form, biblical story, and is there a place for our stories in the content? Can content be experienced? How do such possibilities compare with the straight delivery of facts and propositions?

At other points Dr. Smythe responded to an individual student with her own insight to

engage the student in a more positive approach. One student stated, "While I understand

the need to offer something for everyone, this approach does seem dangerously close

to trying to be all things to all people, a sure recipie for disaster in most situations." And

Dr. Smythe responded,

> I hear your concern about trying to offer something for everyone. It reminded me, however, of Paul's statement that he was willing to be all things to all persons, to win some. What is the healthy balance here? Can we find a meaningful way of meeting many, if not all people where they are? Do we benefit when we experience something that we would not naturally seek out?

To another student, Dr. Smythe wrote an additional insight that the student had not

included in her response, "Significant insights, Sherry**.** And also, the pastor teacher, along

with those with the other leadership gifts are called to equip the [Christians] for doing the

work of ministry." In the clergy professional identity study Foster et al. (2005) noted that

professors used questions to prompt further engagement and feedback to the students to

promote critical thinking and meaning making in the interpretation pedagogy. Here Dr.

Smythe was assisting the students in the interpretation of the educational perspectives to

deepen their thinking on what this would mean in their ministry practice.

Dr. Smythe generally posted these questions and comments at the end of the discussion. Similarly to a professor in a face-to-face class leaving questions to ponder just as the bell rings at the end of a session, Dr. Smythe attempted to stimulate the students' continued thinking on the issues. However, only two students responded to her questions in three entries throughout the entire course, regardless of whether she addressed the questions to the group or to individuals. It is possible that the students never read these questions or comments as they assumed the discussion was completed.[8] Another possibility was that the students read the questions and thought about them but did not respond as the discussion had ended. Still another possibility was that since students rarely responded to Dr. Smythe's comments and questions in any of the discussion fora, the interaction of the professor somewhat closed the discussion in the students' minds. Given the timing of the questions and comments after the discussion ended, it is most likely that the students did not read the questions and/or had moved on to the next activity.

In other discussions Dr. Smythe offered coaching through encouragement in statements such as

Dr. Smythe: I appreciated the themes that came through.
Your definitions capture many facets of each phrase. I appreciated the emphasis of discipleship being life long, conforming us to the likeness of Christ, flowing forth in the making of disciples and a life of love.
I appreciate the interplay between Christian Discipleship and Christian Education that you all identify. And the continuing process of transformation in the life of the disciple is such an important awareness. Also, that beliefs are to become a part of the disciple and be reflected in the way we live.

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[8] The course management system allowed the students to be subscribed to the discussion forum, which means they would receive an email for each posting increasing the chances that they would see the comments and questions. By default the students were not subscribed. The fora allowed each student to select whether or not he or she was subscribed; however, no one subscribed to the fora through email.

We also see Dr. Smythe fostering the formation of a vision in these statements of encouragement, cultivating a pastoral imagination that enhances the practice of leadership among the students. Pastors and Christian Education leaders are responsible for the discipleship and "the continuing process of transformation in the life of the disciple." The course description on the syllabus (Fall 2009) stated "[The course] examines the pastor's role in forming and transforming disciples across the lifespan, collectively discerning and communicating a vision for Christian discipleship, and empowering laity to navigate change and live into that vision" (p. 1). The focus of the course was reiterated in the professor's comments of encouragement. Since these comments came after the discussions ended and the students did not respond to Dr. Smythe, the students did not present evidence of deeper thinking as a result of her prompts.

Summary. While the focus of the Pastor and Christian Discipleship syllabus was on performance and formation of a vision of the student pastors, the study has shown elements of the other two pedagogies, contextualization and interpretation in the student discussions. Volitional speech acts made by the students in the discussion fora suggested activities and values of their concept of the pastor—to be identified as the pastor entailed these comportments. Images of one's self, the images of the past, and images of the possibilities were instrumental in the formation of the vision of the clergy or a pastoral imagination. The role play discussion activity especially proffered opportunities for students to engage with other perspectives, some of which they disagreed providing a philosophical contextual encounter.

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Pedagogies of Interpretation: Analysis Comparison

While the professional clergy are generally not considered to be biblical scholars, scholarly theologians, or historians, the clergy are viewed as interpreters of the Christian scriptures and theology as well as the church tradition and messengers of appropriate application of those interpretations within their local Christian communities. Seminaries vary to the extent their students are to master the skills of interpretation or hermeneutics, but most denominations require clergy to have some level of knowledge and skill in the interpretative arena. The interpretative work manifests itself in Bible Studies and sermons preached to the local congregation. The identity of the professional clergy exudes an interpreter of the Christian scriptures and church tradition. The central emphasis of interpretative work in clergy education is cognitive but it speaks to the normative and practical.

The Carnegie study (Foster et al., 2005) recognized pedagogies of interpretation that engaged students in conversation with texts, which included the Christian scriptures and historical writings along with current-day texts. The current research analyzed the online biblical courses of New Testament (NT)502 Greek and NT (Inductive Bible Study) 510 Matthew, in which students acquired skills interpreting the biblical language, Greek, and methods of interpretation for use in addressing particularly the Christian scriptures. The distinctive hermeneutic method of this seminary was inductive Bible study, which fostered the dialog between reader and text. The historical documents courses in this research were CH502 Church History II and Doctrine (DO)690 John Wesley's Theology Today, in which students interpreted historical texts especially

concerning the formation of the church beliefs and tradition. Interpretation pedagogies promoted meaning making that informed the practice of the church.

The analysis of NT(IBS)510 Matthew was selected for presentation in this section due to its learning by doing instructional design and the active discursive activity of the students. The detailed analyses of the other courses are provided in the appendix. Appendix H contains the analysis of NT502 Greek 2. Appendix I is the analysis of CH502 Church History II and Appendix J is the analysis of DO690 Wesley's Theology for Today. Summary findings of these analyses are provided below.

Evidence for professional identity development of the students. Students in all the courses except NT502 Greek 2 presented evidence of interpretation within the discursive activities. While students did not actively interpret Greek passages of scripture in NT502 Greek 2, that was the goal of the course. Due to the lack of discussion fora in the Greek course, explicit evidence of interpretation was not available. However, in the optional Open and Course Questions fora in NT502 Greek, students exhibited their learning and development of a spirit of community. The students' entries expressed identity with the professional clergy, who know and use the original biblical language for sermon and Bible study creation.

Students in NT(IBS)510 Matthew demonstrated extensive work of interpretation as expected and learned an identifiable method for the interpretation of the scriptures as specified by the Carnegie study (Foster et al., 2005). The students spoke of the struggle to learn the method but also the rewards of a deeper understanding of the scripture passage from their detailed interpretative work. Dr. Ward required the students in CH502 Church History to read historic documents to understand the development of the church

tradition. However, no method of interpretation was delineated in the discussion fora or course materials. Students observed the process of participation and reification in the construction of the tradition through councils and creed development and similarly perceived the necessity of the dynamic in their present ministries. Similarly, students in DO690 Wesley's Theology read Wesley's sermons and negotiated meaning-making for their current m inistries.

Formation. NT(IBS)510 Matthew students recognized that the technical work of interpretation did not supplant the need to practice the presence of God. They confessed the need of God's presence as they studied the scripture. Although there was divergence among the CH502 Church History students on how the participation-reification dynamic should be done, the students gained an expanded *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005) of who and what the pastor should be. DO690 Wesley's Theology students ascertained what it meant to be clergy in the Wesleyan tradition, especially *practicing the presence of God* and *practicing holiness,* and detailed new insights.

Performance. NT(IBS)510 Matthew students' interpretative efforts also gave insights into the performance of the practices of the professional clergy. The obvious practice was the apt scriptural interpretation when developing sermons and Bible studies. Carla also acknowledged new learning from her interpretative work for her practice of relating to the wider community in her role as pastor. A short case study in CH502 Church History concerning a current day issue resulted in a lengthy discussion in which students connected the controversies of the past to the current controversy, and one student declared an intentional volitional speech act to deal with similar issues in his

ministry. Students grasped how the controversies of the past should inform the practice of the church and clergy today.

The DO610 Wesley's Theology for Today course promoted meaning making for the students today and consideration for what historic sermons from the shared repertoire of their tradition signified for the practice of the clergy today similarly to the Church History course. Stories of personal experiences proffered meaning making relating the church tradition of the 18th century to current experiences. Students also expressed volitional speech acts that indicated performance scripts they intended to enact in their local congregations.

Summary. In three courses the students integrated their learning and manifested elements of formation, performance, and to a lesser extent contextualization in their discursive interchanges. Interpreting scripture in NT502 Matthew and reading the historic sermons and writings in CH502 Church History and DO690 Wesley's Theology shaped the identity and practice of the students preparing for the professional clergy in the Wesleyan tradition. The normative and practical aspects of the pastoral identity formed a cohesive whole with the cognitive interpretation skills. Again, the interpretative work led to formation and performance decisions within the current contexts.

Structure and facilitation of interaction. As observed in the discussion of NT502 Greek, the course design did not include content discussion fora. Students did interact informally through the general course discussion fora providing community and evidence of the facilitation of learning. The other three courses required discussion fora contributions but varied as to the requirements and facilitation. Only NT(IBS)510 Matthew employed groups within the discursive activities.

Professor participation. The courses differed in the roles of the professors in the discussion fora and the construction of *a shared repertoire* (Wenger, 1998). Dr. Ward in CH502 Church History interacted informally with the students, affirming the students and creating a positive environment for sharing, but also maintained an expert status. However, students frequently expressed disagreements and a one student was abrasive in her comments, though most of the students interacted with a connected voice. When there were relational difficulties, students and Dr. Ward worked to repair the speech relations.

In DO690 Wesley's Theology Dr. Wagner required formal, lengthy, academic responses rather than the conversational responses of most of the classes. The two TAs, one male and one female, interacted extensively with the students but their speech was more authoritarian. Only one student exhibited frustration at their remarks; students mostly accepted the corrections and either did not respond or expressed appreciation for the assistance. The TAs did commend good work, but were more demanding for the presentation of the thought as per the requirement of the professor. However, in the interactions the students shared personal stories generating *a shared repertoire* of current practice and meaning. Rovai (2001) identified that a trust in the online environment preceded a sense of community. The students in DO690 Wesley's Theology had sufficient trust with one another to share private experiences regardless of the authoritarian voices of the TAs. Another possible explanation for the student responses is that students at this seminary were particularly interested in the topic of the course, the theology of John Wesley as found in his writings of his life and ministry.

Types of interaction and scaffolding. NT(IBS)510 Matthew advocated learning by doing where the students posted questions and drafts of their interpretative work to receive assistance and feedback from their peers. The professor generally posted his responses after the students had interacted unless there was a need that was not being met by other students. Students demonstrated evolving skill in interpretation and greater confidence through their interactions. The course accentuated student-student interaction.

CH502 Church History and DO690 Wesley's Theology also used the discussion fora but with a attention on student-content interactions. Students were required to respond to one another in both courses and both courses included discussion questions, which prompted engagement of the historic writings with current day practices and beliefs. Students spoke of the meaning of those beliefs and traditions in their contexts and their practices.

Prominent discursive activities. The two classes utilizing content discussion fora, CH502 Church History II and DO690 Wesley's Theology, mostly involved discussions concerned with the course readings. Students occasionally related stories from their experience to the course readings.

Learning by doing. NT(IBS)510 Matthew used the discursive activities to facilitate learning by doing. The students could ask questions of one another as well as share their work for feedback by their peers. In this process the students were actively engaged is assisting one another. This discursive activity exemplified Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development where more expert peers supply guidance for others.

Community development. In the two general fora NT502 Greek 2 students shared and commented on personal information and accomplishments. They also expressed frustrations in their learning as well as delight over their learning accomplishments. Professor Jensen interacted with the students posting encouragements and congratulatory personal remarks.

Case Study. CH502 Church History used a brief case study, which generated a lengthy discussion. The case study facilitated students to relate the controversies of the past to the current issues they face in ministry.

Summary. Three of the courses, NT(IBS)510 Matthew, CH502 Church History II, and DO690 Wesley's Theology for Today, engaged the students in discussion where they demonstrated evidence of interpretation, the main emphasis of these courses. The professors designed the discussion fora differently in each course. Dr. Murphy created a learning by doing that promoted social learning among the students. Dr. Ward encouraged and affirmed student interaction and assumed both the roles of expert and colleague with the students. In DO690 Dr. Wagner designed a highly academic environment in the discussion fora with students presenting their arguments with attention to writing styles and grammar. The TAs maintained an evaluative role within the fora. Students volunteered personal stories that enriched meaning making for church and clergy practices.

Interpretation exemplar: NT(IBS)510 Matthew. NT(IBS)510 Matthew was an introductory course to teach the students a methodological approach to Bible study leading to in-depth interpretation of the Christian scriptures for use in their pastoral work of preaching, leading Bible studies, and more. The course description clarified its

purpose, "A basic course in Inductive Bible Studies. The primary purpose is to enable the student to begin developing an inductive approach to Bible study, especially in the areas of observation and interpretation. […]" (The Seminary, 2008, p. 122). The course was one of two Inductive Bible Study courses that could complete the core elective requirement for Inductive Bible Studies One, and did not require the students to know Greek. They would interpret from an English translation of the Bible with minimal use of the original language. As indicated by the title of the course, the text for interpretation was the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament.

The course design divided the inductive Bible study interpretative method into step-by-step processes presented to the students in offline format through textbooks and lecture presentations. Each week the students were assigned a task in the Gospel of Matthew to accomplish that week's step of the method. The course required weekly group interaction as the students progressed through the interpretative method and course. The instructions for ten of the group assignments read,

> I want each of you to do the assignment as completely as you can and then and only then engage the ideas of your colleagues. There is no substitute for delving into the assignment first-hand and completing it as best you can from start to finish. Once you have given it your best first attempt, [...]

The students did individual work but then shared their work with their groupmates. This process allowed the students to operate similarly to the clergy, who do their interpretative work and prepare sermons individually, but yet had the benefit of collaboration to enhance the learning process.

The students offered input and corrections and asked questions of one another's drafts. Dr. Melvin Murphy responded to the students also answering their questions, but mostly after the group discussions had occurred. In this way the professor allowed the

students to learn by doing with support from their groupmates, but also provided

guidance and correction as needed for the process. Twenty-one students enrolled in the

course and twenty students contributed to the group forum for Lesson 2 as can be seen in

Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Lesson 2 Group Work for the Survey of Matthew's Gospel

Authors of thread entries	Posts	Responses	Mean responses per post	Median responses per post	Contributors (including professor)
Non-participants, study participants, and professor	31	143	4.6	5.0	21
Study participants and professor	23	100	4.3	5.0	21

  Interpretation. At the beginning of the course students voiced a desire to learn

the inductive Bible study method. In Lesson 1 after reading the two textbooks, Sharon

identified specific concepts she desired to learn stating, "I welcome an opportunity to

master the following things within Traina's observation methodology: [listed 3 concepts].

Scott implied that this was one of the purposes of his seminary education stating,

Scott: I agree that a great deal of information that relates to interpretation is gleaned from knowledge of the history and culture contained in a particular passage , however …. I know that is one reason I am here, to gain the knowledge to understand the Bible on a far deeper level!

Dick and Scott had an interchange where they recognized a lack of Bible study

methodology in their previous training.

Dick: I have always wanted to be able to study the Bible. I never found Bible studies very useful to this end because I was never taught how to sit down and study the Bible on my own. I believe that this process present by Thompson will allow me to accomplish that task.

Scott: I know what you're talking about Dick. My past "studies" usually were studying what others thought of the passages or books, not my own thinking. I'm looking forward to learning this process with you!

Towards the end of the course in Lesson 11 Amy exclaimed, "I wonder how much other info and insights I miss because I just breeze through the Scriptures trying to write a sermon or prepare a Bible Study!" She had come to see the value of the Bible study method for her practices as a pastor. These students' recognized the importance and need of doing Biblical interpretation in the work of the clergy.

Early work of interpretation: Lesson 2. Frequently the students expressed questions and uncertainty for their understanding. Early in the semester in Lesson 2: Group Work for the Survey of Matthew's Gospel the following interchanges occurred.

Carla: Hi Wayne & teammates:
    Good work. I have a lot of questions about this assignment, and this place seemed as good as any to pose them. (I am not directing them specifically at Wayne)
    Did you have trouble not getting too specific? […]
    I am having difficulty understanding exactly what I am doing --and how to do it. Also, I am not a detail-oriented person, so when forced to do it, I tend to go too far in the extreme and examine every iota. Do you feel comfortable with this assignment? Did you use other sources? Are we supposed to at this point? (I think I would feel more comfortable if someone could walk me through this exercise.)
    I just am trying to get a better understanding of all of this--does anyone have suggestions?
Wayne: Hey Carla,
    YES this is very confusing and YES it would be easier if this were done IN a class. No I personally haven't used any other resources outside of examining posts and trying to be faithful.
    Your concerns on getting too personal and how much detail are valid. I'm assuming since this is our opportunity to actually do personal methodical study that we would and should be able to get personal and deep, using detail as we attempt to be faithful to the text. Remember, the study we do is NEVER strictly for ourselves being that we live and minister in community. SO what we do in private reflects in community/public. Be detailed, DEAL with the scripture and allow it to mold you as you remain willingly to the Holy Spirit in the process. Wayne
Dick: Here is what I have so far:

I am having trouble with picking up and dissecting all of the structural relationships.

Scott: Hey Dick,

I found that if I started by looking for repetition I could recognize some of the structure easier. For me that was the easiest structure to identify. That might help you get started.

Scott: This is my survey so far. I am having difficulty with the critical data, for example how to establish the writer and his audience. He (Matthew) seems very critical of the establishment. Could he be writing to other persecuted Christians? Any thoughts?

Dick: It seems that the large amount of references to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies could suggest that Matthew was writing to Jews or Jewish Christians.

Just a thought, Dick

Scott: Yes, I agree Dick. Matthew seems to be making the case that this man, Jesus, is Messiah. With that in mind it would make sense that the readers would know what the signs for Messiah would be. Thanks for the input! Scott

Craig: Scott, good work. I really like how you laid out the path to the climax you, but I don't see what the climax is.

Scott: Thanks Craig

The climax for some reason is what I am struggling with. I feel like it should be centered around the cross, but I am having trouble getting it there. I don't want to force something that may not be there. Your other post about the climax being the revelation that Jesus is the Son of God is a good argument. I hope I haven't gone too far down a wrong path!

Craig: I was afraid that was what was going on. I also wonder if there can be more than one climax (as there are other plots might there likewise be more than one climax). […] (as you rightly point out, I don't want to try to force something).

Scott: I'm curious to know where ya'll think the climax of Matthew is. Until this study and reading the book with structure in mind I had always assumed the climax to be the crucifixion and resurrection. Now it seems to me that the book actually climaxes in chapter 23 with the rebuke of the Pharisees. Any thoughts on this? Am I out in left field??

Discussion with non-participant – 2 interchanges

Craig: Please realize I am trying to learn this at the same time you are but I think the climax is the revelation of Jesus as the son of God, which comes out textually in chapter 27. There are 7 instances of "son of God" and 2 of "God's Son". [….]

I could also put forth the idea that the crucifixion is the climax since Jesus foretells

> his death three times and implies it several
> other times. [….]
>
> **Mark:** My view of the climax is the point where Jesus tells the High Priest where
> you will see the Son of Man in Matt 26:64. The die is cast and God's plan
> will be fulfilled.
>
> Anyway just my thought. Although there a number of potential
> candidates. could it be the Great Commission where Jeus has completed
> his work and now he hands off to the disciples and the church.

The process for mastering the inductive Bible study method involved learning by doing with social learning to support the process. Some of the students had more expertise in one aspect or another of the method and offered advice and suggestions to groupmates. Students were being stretched to develop their interpretative skills but Dr. Murphy and groupmates assisted one another's development as described by Vygotsky's (1978) *zone of proximal development*. Statements such as "I have a lot of questions about this assignment," "I am having difficulty understanding exactly what I am doing --and how to do it," "I am having trouble with…," "I am having difficulty with the critical data," "I hope I haven't gone too far down a wrong path!" and questions like, "Any thoughts on this? Am I out in left field??" and "does anyone have suggestions?" displayed the uncertainty of a number of the students. Carla especially expressed frustration repeatedly in her post, and Wayne's use of capitalization to express emotion, "YES this is very confusing and YES it would be easier if this were done IN a class" affirmed similar feelings. Wayne tied his exasperation to the online environment, noting a sense of isolation.

Responses of groupmates in these threads affirmed the concern for the work, but subsequently offered insights and assistance. Craig identified himself as a novice as well when responding to Scott's plea, stating, "Please realize I am trying to learn this at the same time you are but I think the climax is […]" Mark proffered, "Anyway just my

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thought." This tone provided a collaborative peer relationship rather than an expert-novice relationship. Scott offered aid to Dick writing, "I found that if I started by looking for repetition I could […]" and then followed with "That might help you get started." Craig pinpointed a problem with Scott's work but prefaced it with encouragement, "I really like how you laid out the path to the climax you," and then continued, "but I don't see what the climax is." The grammar in the sentences was often incorrect and suggested that the students might have been reworking the sentences in order to proffer the best tone.

After interacting, the students revised their individual work taking into account the collaborative input of their groups. The final assignments were then submitted to the instructor. Chad reposted his final draft in the group discussion the day prior to the assignment due date with the following comments,

Chad: Thank you all for your comments. This has been an interesting exercise. I may have some time tomorrow, but this may be it for me. For what it may be worth, I have attached my revised draft. Please do not feel compelled to spend any additional time making suggestions for me. I offer the revision just FYI if you are interested.

While Chad did not reveal the specifics in his revisions, he expressed appreciation to his groupmates, who were non-participants in this research, for their input. While no one made additional responses, Chad had exposed his work once again for shared learning.

Wayne, when responding to Carla's pleas, directed attention back to the larger picture, "Remember, the study we do is NEVER strictly for ourselves being that we live and minister in community. SO what we do in private reflects in community/public." The student's individual interpretive work was not for their own purposes—the clergy were members of a larger community.

Facilitation of the interpretive process. Dr. Murphy likewise participated in the

discussion by providing suggestions and corrections to the student work. Most frequently

his comments were directed to one student; at other times he gave general direction for a

whole group. In Lesson 2 on the Survey of Matthew's Gospel, Dr. Murphy directed the

following statements to Sharon,

Dr. Murphy: A brief comment regarding survey mode of IBS.
>   Your interpretive questions should be directly linked to the structures you observe and always ask all three types (definitional, rationale, and implicational) for each structure observed. Blessings, MM

And to Joel,

Dr. Murphy: Just a quick question on your section #4 Scripture verses. What is the point of this section in your survey? If you are trying to indicate key verse(s)/strategic areas, please note that each one should be tied directly to a structural relationship. Please see my other posts on this topic in the discussion threads for this forum.

And to Cynthia,

Dr. Murphy: A couple of comments re. your survey. For main units (as with sub-units), need to provide scriptural references to indicate boundaries of the unit. Then your sub-units should fall directly under the boundaries of each main unit.
>   As for a structure such as comparison, what you have identified are a recurrence of unrelated comparisons. There is such a structure of recurrence of comparison but the comparison must have some kind of commonality. For example, [….]

The above statements and questions were not responses to questions the students asked,

but gave guidance to their posted drafts in the group discussions. Dr. Murphy offered

detailed feedback to guide the students in their work.

The students posted their assignment draft for Lesson 2 on February 17. They

were to respond to their groupmates' drafts in the next 2 days and then submit their final

assignment on February 20. Generally Dr. Murphy offered his comments in the

discussion fora a week or more after the student discussions, allowing the group to

collaborate first, and possibly his comments were in response to the final assignment.

As the purpose of the inductive Bible study method was to promote individual

interpretative skills, Dr. Murphy promoted independent thinking by the students in their

interpretive efforts. Still he guided the students as needed. Perhaps if the professor had

given his comments too quickly, the collaborative work amongst the students would have

diminished.

Dr. Murphy did respond to student questions, albeit following the student

discussions, especially if no one else had responded. In Lesson 2 the following exchange

took place.

Joel: Amy, Great job on the Chapter themes! I could never figure out how to make the
chart. Did you find that there could have been multiple themes for each chapter
depending upon the emphases the Holy Spirit gave to the reader? The more I
looked at it, the more I wanted to change my themes depending upon how caught
up I became in the reading.
Murphy: Dear Joel,
Chapter Titles are meant to be descriptive (not interpretive) [….]
Just jot down 2 to 4 words and do not get too caught up in having
the right title because then you may begin to be too interpretive in titling.
Pointers for chapter titles: [….]

While Joel's initial question and comments were directed to Amy's post, no one

responded to Joel's discussion entry. Joel's question indicated he was moving into

interpretation but the point of this exercise was at the beginning stage of observation. Dr.

Murphy corrected and provided guidance to Joel within Amy's post. His comment in

another student's post afforded more particulars on this issue,

Dr. Murphy: I am know the temptation is great, but in the survey and observation mode
please do not move your discussion into either interpretation (i.e. who is the Son
of Man? or that the genealogy 'proves' OT prophecy) or application (i.e. belief and
action as they apply today). I know you are getting your feet wet in the inductive

method so I will try to consistently keep our discussion on the part of the method on which we are concentrating.

Dr. Murphy's directive was tempered by his introductory, "I … know the temptation is great" and also his use of "please" gave a sense of request rather than a directive. His concluding statement provided a rationale for his comments, the students were neophytes in the inductive Bible study method and so "I will try to consistently keep our discussion on the part of the method on which we are concentrating" Dr. Murphy kept a congenial tone but at the same time was definitely the expert in the hermeneutic method.

On the day the final assignment for Lesson 2 was due, Dr. Murphy entered a lengthy post of his own with a summary of the task.

Dr. Murphy: Things to consider as you continue discussing book survey (instructions)
    1. Please remember to describe the structure of the material in terms of major units and subunits.
    2. Make your units as broad as the material will allow, yet not broader than the material allows. […]
    3. When observing structural relationships, please be sure that the structure you have noted governs at least 50% of the text under observation. In completing your survey, […]
    4. After each major structure has been identified, please substantiate by explaining the structure with a description. […]
    5. Recurrence is a common structure, so it's always helpful and somewhat easier to begin by looking for recurring terms and themes, especially if you feel paralyzed in observing structure.
    6. Regarding interpretive questions which you ask in conjunction with the structures you identify, note the following guidelines. These questions are the bridge between observation/survey and interpretation.

- [Dr. Murphy continued with seven sets of instructions for questions and then instructions for interpretative questions]

Two students responded to this post and Sharon asked for more clarification and examples.

Sharon: Dr. Murphy: Can you provide additional examples of what rational structural questions are?
My understanding of definitional questions are to define what the structure is. Rational questions are why Matthew would create structure "x"? [….]
Are implication questions only for the implications of Matthew's gospel for today? Or do we examine the implication of Matthew's gospel for the reader in the first century?
I am struggling with exactly what your instructions imply. My understanding is that [….]
I'd appreciate any additional insight you can give me.   Sharon

Dr. Murphy responded with another lengthy post directly to Sharon's question referring her back to the PowerPoint presentation that accompanied the course materials but was not included online. However, this response was also made after the assignment was due.

Dr. Murphy: Dear Sharon,
Rationale questions typically begin with "why" or "what is the reason . . ." or "what is the purpose . . . ."
Implicational questions are not applicational questions and so [….]
You are directing your questions at both the biblical material and the structure that binds them together, not at first-century or twenty first-century readers. Those are applicational kinds of tasks.
[continued with information from the PowerPoint]

Dr. Murphy softened his corrections with the use of "Dear Sharon," as he commonly did when addressing an individual student, keeping the tone respectful.

One exception to the professor's late responses was at the beginning of Lesson 2. On February 13, Carla posted questions on how to approach the assignment. Dr. Murphy responded on February 15, two days prior to the draft assignment posting due date for the group.

Carla: Ok. I guess I am just someone who has to have things spelled out, but this is all so new to me. First, I see […,] We are looking more at structure of each parable.
I am unfamiliar with apologetic and paraenetic purposes. Could you explain the difference between these? I notice that the last three parables do not have these two purposes listed under the Meaning/purpose. Does that mean we do not give them for these parables? Why not?
So, verse 52 is not classified as a parable. Why? Is it just an analogy? Does it not have spiritual truth?
The example from Luke given does not give a statement of meaning, but we are to do that for each parable, right?
[continues with three more sets of questions]
This assignment is just so different from the other interpretation assignment. I appreciate your patience with my many questions.
Blessings~Carla

Dr. Murphy: No apology needed, Carla. With new interpretive work comes many new questions. I have responded to your questions in red. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask.   Blessings, MM
First, I see that this interpretation will not be two columned, as the last was. We are looking more at structure of each parable. This is correct.

The entire response is not printed but Dr. Murphy answered each of Carla's questions in depth. Since this was in the discussion forum, it was public for all students to read and from which to learn. Again the tone was accepting and respectful, "No apology needed […]" and "please do not hesitate to ask."

Later work of interpretation: Lesson 11. Lesson 10 required the students to do a detailed analysis of a short passage, five verses, in Matthew. Lesson 11 asked for an interpretation of one verse, Matthew 16:24, within the passage. Lesson 11's group discussions occurred at the end of April, towards the end of the course. Students declared their new learning when they finally reached the interpretation stage in the inductive Bible study process,

Amy: I know now why we do all this . . . . I do catch things I have never seen before.
Over my years in ministry I have preached this passage MORE than once but never caught some of the meanings, especially in the context.
I never thought about the fact that the man from Cyrene, Simon, was "forced to carry the cross of Christ."

That is a powerful illustration but even moreso in the context of the fact that Jesus commanded and directed that his followers were to "Take up" their cross and deny selves, etc. but we are never "forced." It is our choice to make . . .

I just thought that was an interesting word usage that could draw some parallels to the meaning of the text.

I wonder how much other info and insights I miss because I just breeze through the Scriptures trying to write a sermon or prepare a Bible Study!

Joel: Hi All,   I am learning something new in this assignment. Matthew 16:24 for me is a spiritual endeavor in taking on the mind of Christ that it may seem so difficult as to be a burden to do it, but in doing so when we put our own thoughts down and take up those of Jesus, we may lose our old life, but actually take on a new life in Him.

The students' entries communicated more confidence in Lesson 11 than in Lesson 2. At times they still had questions and were collaborating to refine their work, but their development was apparent.

Wayne: It's not much, but more will come tonight and tomorrow as I work through it. I've enjoyed the issues this week (Joel, thank you so much for the dialogue, it's made a huge difference).

Somebody help me get going on 'inflection', i'm at a loss here (sorry for being a 'space cadet!')

More to come… Wayne

Eric: Hey Wayne, check out Dick's post for info on inflection.

Eric: As I wrestle with another iteration of interpretation the following is stirring around in my mind:

To follow Jesus first and foremost requires recognition of Him as the Christ, for which he patted Peter on the back. [….]

I hope this makes sense!

Now to figure out yet another way to go about interpretation.

In His grip, Eric

Amy: Eric, it makes perfect sense. When you write, "Taking up my cross causes me to do what God wants, not necessarily what I would choose. [….]

Thoughful posting . . . . thanks for writing! Amy

Eric: Amy, Thanks for the response, I needed a pat on the back. This stuff still makes my head hurt!

In His grip, Eric

An hour later Amy made a new post, which was printed earlier, detailing her epiphany on the meaning of the verse under study. Wayne expressed confidence in his abilities and the process when he stated, "more will come tonight and tomorrow as I work

through it." Eric conveyed similar confidence, "Now to figure out yet another way to go about interpretation." Wayne did apologize for "being a 'space cadet!'" which did not exude confidence, but Eric pointed him to Dick's post for assistance on the topic of "inflection." Collaboration was evident in numerous entries. Appreciation for one another's thoughts and assistance was communicated. Eric's "This stuff still makes my head hurt!" indicated the interpretative work required deep thought, but his insertion of the word "still" indicated he was progressing.

Cynthia's thread afforded the process of collaboration that occurred in the discussions.

Cynthia: Hey Guys, This is what I have thus far. I still have to do the inflection, the interpretation of others and more work on each determinant. There may also be grammatical errors as well.

        Any questions, comments etc. welcomed. -Cynthia

Dick: It looks like you have gotten off to a great start. I found a lot of similar things while doing my work. Have you considered whether there might also be a literal interpretation for the command to "take up a cross" especially since it is found so close to Jesus' own prediction of His death?

        Cynthia: Hey Dick,

            Thanks for your kind remarks.....you know I have not given any thought to taking up your cross being a literal command..

            I do, however, believe that it is not strictly a literal command.

            I am not sure but I think [….]

            I do think that for the 12 disciples this was literal...in terms of dying for Christ.... -Cynthia

        Non-participant:

            Cynthia: thanks....I believe you are right! I made a mistake thanks for the correction. -Cynthia

        Non-participant:

            Cynthia: Thanks. Yes ....I think there is alot in this Scripture that can help us in challenging times. The cross is difficult, but after death there is resurrection!

Dick prompts Cynthia with "Have you considered whether…?" Cynthia thanked him and added "you know I have not given any thought to […]" Her use of "you know I have not

given any thought to…" was an interesting response. She might have omitted the "you know" and just stated a matter-of-fact response, "I have not given any thought to […]," but the addition of "you know" emphasized the new stimulus. The particle "you know" gave an exclamatory meaning; the words were an Interjection. She also elongated the verb, "have not" rather than using a contraction. This could be taken to be a more formal response, but given the context, the use of the full verb without the contraction, again brings emphasis. Cynthia then began to wrestle with the idea as if she was writing her thoughts. Again showing emphasis with the elongated verbs, she writes "I do, however, believe [….]" I am not sure but I think [.…]" "I do think [.…]" (underscores added). At first she said that "it is not strictly a literal command" (underscore added) and then her last thought was that "for the 12 disciples this was literal …" Dick had asked a question that Cynthia was considering. Two other groupmates gave responses to Cynthia's draft. From one, Cynthia accepted a correction, "I believe you are right! I made a mistake thanks for the correction." Following the next entry, Cynthia again turns to the "cross" concept that had been mentioned by Dick. The collaborative efforts of the groups offered new ideas and stimulated students to consider additional interpretations.

   Interpretation to performance. The integration of the interpretation of scriptures to the pastoral performance has been noted in several of the students' interactions previously. Wayne noted in Lesson 2, "I will forever be aware of the work that 'I' need to put into my preparation and study." In Lesson 11 Carla identified the relationship yet again.

Carla: Hello all, I am attaching what I have so far.
      One big observation I made [.…]

That was a recent revelation for my own ministry--Jesus didn't seem to chase down or insist upon others following him--he offered it, but if they rejected him, he was ok with that!

(BTW, I realize that I need more work in several areas ex: another definition--and I, too, am hoping to gain a better understanding of inflection before filling in that area.) and miles to go before we sleep...

While it was common to see the relationship of interpretation to sermon performance as others had noted, Carla related her insight from her interpretation to her actions as a pastor towards those who might reject the Christian faith. This performance would also relate to her image of herself and the world, formational issues that affect the *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005).

Interpretation and context. In Lesson 11 Carla started a new thread dealing with her struggle with context. This struggle involved the context of the scripture verse in comparison to other scripture passages but then how that context affected the interpretation for today's context.

Carla: OK ya'll, these are some thoughts that I'm trying to process. How are you working through them?

Context is supposed to be the main determinant in interpretation. [….]

Instintively, I know it is figurative, but how does the information show that?

Furthermore only John speaks of Jesus carrying his own cross. Other citations speak of Simon of Cyrene carrying Jesus' cross. What do you do with that info?

just thinking out loud, ~Carla

Sharon: Carla:

I'm struggling with this as well. Jesus spoke to his disciples, and I do not think the 12-50 disciples when to the woods and made crosses. I do not think they picked up these crosses and carried them to Jerusalem.

[7 additional paragraphs]

You asked really great questions. I hoped I helped. Sharon

Dr. Murphy: Hi Carla,

Excellent question concerning the use of contextual evidence ... it is the most important piece of evidence all things being equal. You are right that [….] As you indicate, the figurative clues in the immediate context should give some very helpful evidence in answering your interpretive question-what does in mean to lift up his/her cross?

Blessings, MM

In the thread Carla identified the issues of the dilemma in her interpretation in relation to the context and twice asked her confounding questions. Sharon agreed and provided a lengthy response that explained how she dealt with the issues. The contextual work of interpretation is twofold: the context of the scripture and the context for the interpreter.

This was the only entry Dr. Murphy made in the group discussions for Lesson 11. While Dr. Murphy did not specify the interpretation, but left Carla to answer her own interpretive question, he commended her for her consideration of the contextual issues and guided her consideration, "As you indicate, the figurative clues in the immediate context should give some very helpful evidence…." The students have needed less of Dr. Murphy's guidance by this point in the course, but he was following their progress.

Interpretation and formation. Even though the course concentrated on interpretation, the students grasped that formation was significant in Bible study methodology. In Lesson 1 the following interaction occurred.

Carla: I liked that in the biblical principles on page 73, Thompson reminded us that God's love and mercy are the most important. Our relationship with God is more important than mechanical, academic study.
    Chad: That resonated with me too, not only with respect to academic study but also with respect to anything routine. Reminds me of Messy Spirituality by Michael Yaconelli. Good news for imperfectionists.
    Mark: Greetings Carla: Undoubtedly, all the study in the world pales in comparison to the grace and love of God. But I am reminded [….]

In the interaction above Carla identified that *practicing the presence of God* (Foster et al., 2005) was the highest priority yet Mark pointed out that Bible study among other things is a means of *practicing holiness*, which are habits that enliven their relationship with God and follow from that relationship.

Some students started their group work with a written prayer in their posts. In Lesson 2 both Carla and Cynthia wrote prayers for their groups again *practicing the presence of God* (Foster et al., 2005) in the midst of their interpretive work.

Carla: I am attaching my work. I am sorry for the delay and look forward to interaction. Oh-and a prayer for our work: Lord, help us to focus on you. Give us your strength and insight. Help us to understand how to best fulfill this assignment and to glorify you. In Jesus name, Amen

Cynthia: Heavenly Father,
As we embrak upon studying and discussing your Word please illumine our minds and hearts so that we can hear from your Spirit, receive your Truth and do your will.

In Lesson 1 while discussing the textbooks for the course, Scott's group disclosed the interaction between interpretation, formation and practice in the discussion printed below. Wayne focused on the formative aspect of Bible study and then talked about his own struggle in his pastoral practice of preparing sermons.

Scott: At what point in the process do you think it is appropriate to turn to "other interpreters" (pg. 59-63)? In particular the commentaries? It has always been a temptation with me to start there.
Wayne: From a spiritual formation perspective, there is the importance of 'spending time' with scripture and getting to know what you're reading [....]
The real struggle (in my own life) lies in preaching or preparing a text that is influenced by other pastors, preachers of different persuasions. A lot of the work that an individual spends in preparation is a reflection of what the Holy Spirit has done in their own life. Should we feed off that person's hard work and personal relationship with Christ? This was the question posed to me in my undergraduate studies in Bible at [Name] College. I mention this because being a pastor, I read old sermons of those long past, listen to podcasts and recordings of different individuals ministering around the world. I have fallen victim to 'borrowing' and I will forever be aware of the work that 'I' need to put into my preparation and study.
Craig: I think the answer to that is the reason we are in this class. I know that I hope to gain some of the skills to do a better job at interpretation for myself, not because I think other interpretations are flawed but because I can do my job of pastoral interpretation more efficiently if I can do at least some of it without hitting the books. I further hope that with continued

practice I will come to rely less on other interpreters for the core the meaning and use them more to either check my work or expand it.

Chad: What do you do if one commentary says "A," and another commentary says "not A?" (I encountered that last semester with a couple Dictionary articles.) [….]

Wayne: Chad, I have had the same thing happen. I can remember one case where [….] Actually, it was borderline disheartening for a young, impressionable Seminarian as myself. Great point! I hope we get more answers to this question!!!!

Dr. Murphy: Precisely, Chad. We want to engage the Scriptures first-hand as much as possible not because we do not want to dialogue with other interpreters (be it commentaries in print, preachers who have dealt with the passage, etc. etc.) but because we need to be shaped by the Word first so that we can evaluate what the other interpreter has to say the meaning(s) of a passage are. The key word is "evaluation;" if you are purchasing a house, then the presumption is that we want to see the house ourselves to determine whether or not the realtor assessment of the house matches our own. Anyone want to purchase and live in a house you have never accessed?

Craig expressed an expectation for a course outcome again, "I hope to gain some of the skills to do a better job at interpretation for myself" and then continued with the practice aspect, "I can do my job of pastoral interpretation more efficiently." Chad and Wayne added their own struggles and Dr. Murphy brought the issue back once more to formation, "but because we need to be shaped by the Word first so that we can evaluate what the other interpreter has to say," as the starting point of the interpretative habit.

Summary. *Pedagogies of interpretation* required a text to be interpreted, an interpreter, and a method to facilitate the interpretation process (Foster et al., 2005). Students in NT(IBS)510 Matthew gained expertise in the inductive Bible study as a method of interpretation using the Gospel of Matthew. While mostly this work entailed a cognitive effort, as has been shown, there was also a practical and normative aspect to the process. As the students gained more mastery in their interpretative skills, the *images of themselves* (Wenger, 1998) included confidence in their ability to provide interpretation

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of the scriptures for their local congregations and progress their identity in the community of practice of the professional clergy.

Students in this class had numerous integrative posts across the four pedagogies as has been shown. The discussion fora provided the space for students to not only ask questions and offer feedback to one another on the specific course content, the Inductive Bible Study method for this course, but also to reflect on meaning making for themselves as members of the professional clergy. As they reflected on the interpretive skills they were learning and what those skills and the interpretations themselves sometimes meant for their ministries, this integration of who they were and what they were doing or to do collectively abetted their identities as professional clergy

Pedagogies of Contextualization: Analysis Comparison

Contextualization promotes meaning making in situated happenings or milieus. The three pedagogies of contextualization identified by the Carnegie study were *contextual consciousness*, *contextual encounter*, and *contextual transformation* (Foster et al., 2005). In *contextual consciousness* the students become aware of theoretical frameworks and their basic assumptions. Through dialogical exercises the students engaged the assumptions from challenging perspectives. *Contextual encounters* involved three steps in which students *react,* where the facts were identified; *retrieve*, where the theological tradition was used to assess the facts; and *reconstruct*, where the student interact the facts with the Christian vision. The purposes of contextual encounters are to generate "empathic consciousness," "facilitating mutual understanding," and promote "dialogical reciprocity" that encourages appreciation and critical inquiry (pp. 144-145). *Contextual transformation* moves from critical inquiry into "processes of social and

systemic change" (p. 132). This process involves critical reflection and action (p. 147).Courses in the curriculum that specifically focused on contextualization were mission courses. The courses selected for this study were both cross listed: (1) Christian Mission(MS)620/Evangelism and Church Growth(ME)745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched and (2) Christian Leadership(CL)620/Christian Mission (MS)654 Emerging Leaders. As previous course analytic vignettes have already shown, other courses also conveyed aspects of contextualization. CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders was selected for presentation in the dissertation due to the interaction with the case study discursive activity. The detailed analysis of MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched is located in Appendix K.

Evidence for professional identity development of the students. As both the MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched and the CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders courses were in the missions and evangelism curriculum, they were discussed in the contextualization segment of the analysis. In general, courses in the missions and evangelism curriculum would have a common value to contextualize or to socially situate the Christian tradition, its knowledge and practices, in different times and cultures. However, these two courses also emphasized developing leadership for the church.

Contextualization. Dr. Wright in CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders asked the students to complete and share experiential activities within their own contexts such as the mentor-mentee meetings and individual case studies. While these activities incorporated the course content, the students actively engaged the concepts into their own experience and dialogued from personal experience. This sharing provided a more

profound contextual understanding where students could assess how the course concepts played out in their own or nearby situations.

Only two teaching assistants (TA) in MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched participated in the study. TA Vaughn in Group 3 did proffer a contextual encounter for the students from his own dissimilar cultural perspective. TA Vaughn's voice in Leadership of the Church was similar to Dr. Wright's voice (Emerging Leaders) when Dr. Wright was talking to Jack, who was skeptical about the professor's proposed strategy. Dr. Wright passionately told about the research he had carried on for multiple years where the strategy was employed and effective. TA Vaughn was also passionate when discussing issues of privilege and poverty in the church. These voices, presenting alternative perceptions from the students' common perspectives, proffered the students an opportunity to reflect critically upon the Christian tradition as lived in their local situations. Some students actively engaged the dialog and others peripherally participated, which Lave and Wenger (1991) recognized as legitimate learning as well.

Formation. Within the discussions in the MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched course, some students voiced an integration of the elements of *formation* of the religious leadership. The pastor should first be *practicing the presence of God* (Foster et al., 2005) in his or her life in order to re-center and live out *practicing holiness* as a model to bring about transformation of the local congregation. Milton in the CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders course also implied similar concepts when speaking of his desire to "more Christ-like." However, in the Emerging Leaders discussions students conversed more concerning an enhanced or transformed *pastoral imagination,* which provides a vision the pastor to lead the local congregation.

Performance. This *pastoral imagination* occasioned some students, like Milton, in CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders to declare volitional speech acts, "I will work more as a team [….] I will lead being assertive but also ready to change… I will seek to know my people [….]" These statements were in response to discussion question prompts that pointedly asked the students to consider the practical implications of their learning and "What Learnings are You taking With You?" The volitional speech was not apparent in the MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched but students did engage in the negotiation of meaning as was expressed between Alvin and Peter in the discussion of the metaphors for transforming work of the Christian tradition.

Summary. Student voices in both classes engaged in issues of contextualization and formation for the clergy, but confirmation of students making volitional statements that would lead to transformation in performance occurred more openly in the CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders course.

Structure and facilitation of interaction. Both courses divided the students into small groups and required group collaboration on other projects beyond the discussion fora on the content. Both courses were semi-structured in their discussion fora with the CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders course providing variability in the discussion assignments from module to module. For the first module the students were to write a 5--7 page essay and then respond to one another with 100-200 word responses. Modules 3 and 4 were much more free-ranging in that the students were to post their thoughts along with their mentor-mentee meeting reports and case studies. Module 5 required interaction on their final papers and the case study. Emerging Leaders students completed individual projects and then submitted them to their group members for

feedback. These projects included a case study completed individually rather than collaboratively and mentor-mentee meeting reports. In this way the students benefitted from the research of the others. Milton remarked that he had downloaded all the case studies for future use in his ministry. The lengthy case study discussion in the last module became an all-class discussion. Dr. Wright asked the students to respond to three questions for each segment of the case study.

Dr. Moser's MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched required each group to collaboratively write a case story on a church of the group's choice. In response to the course readings the students wrote 1 or 2 paragraphs answering 2 discussion prompt questions and then responded to 2 other students' posts. Additionally the students were to write 2-page book reviews on each of the 7 textbooks.

Professor participation. In CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders Dr. Wright posted 25 times in the research participants' threads; however 12 of the professor's entries occurred in the last module with the case study discussion. Dr. Moser did not participate in the discussion fora for the MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched class reportedly due to a technical problem. However, Dr. Moser assigned teaching assistants (TA), who were doctoral students taking the class, for four of the five groups in the course. TA Vaughn actively participated in his group delivering 41.6% of the group's collected 89 discussion entries. Only one other TA participated in the study and he wrote 5 entries as compared to TA Vaughn's 37 entries for the collected discussions. Overall there were fewer discussion entries in the other groups. Both Dr. Wright in Emerging Leaders and TA Vaughn in Leadership for the Church prompted the students for deeper thinking and shared their own experiences and insights. However,

Bobby, who was a member of TA Vaughn's group, wrote that for him the lack of the actual professor's engagement in the discussion fora made the course one of the most challenging online experiences he had experienced at the seminary (Personal email communication, May 27, 2009).

Types of interaction and scaffolding. Dr. Moser's MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched focused the discussions mostly on the course readings, thus, a student-content interaction. However, as has already been noted, TA Vaughn provided substantial instructor-student interaction in Group 3. The students engaged with one another in a limited degree but mostly the students responded to TA Vaughn.

Dr. Wright's CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders engaged the students in the discussion fora with experiential content such as the mentor-mentee meeting reports and the student case studies. The students also interacted with course readings and especially the case study presented to the whole class by Dr. Wright in Module 5. As only three (14.3%) students participated in the study and each were in different groups, it was difficult to ascertain the amount of interaction or the quality of the interaction except for the case study, which was an open discussion for the entire class. In the case study discussion two of the three participants interacted with the content extensively.

Summary. These two courses, which had similar topics, structured the discussions differently. CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders provided experiential learning from which the students engaged the course content in their own contexts, whereas MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched engaged the students with reflection upon current day writings. Students in both classes gave evidence of reflection

on contextual encounters though some students peripherally participated in the engagement.

Prominent discursive activities. Both classes employed discussion fora for discussions of the course readings. Students in MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched also used the discussion fora to organize and share information when collaboratively creating the group case study. CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders required the students to share reports on individual projects. Additionally, the case study was presented and extensively discussed in the discussion fora.

Summary. Students in the two courses, CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders and MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched, demonstrated evidentiary statements of contextualization, formation, and performance in their discursive activities. The professors used creative discursive activities engaging the students in case studies— collaborative development of a case study or lengthy discussions on a real-life case study provided by the instructor.

Contextualization exemplar: CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders. The Emerging Leaders course was a missions and evangelism course that was also cross-listed in the Christian Leadership program. The course is one of more than forty Intercultural Studies elective courses from which the students earning a Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies chose five and could fulfill the Leadership requirement of the Practice of Ministry core electives in the Master of Divinity program. The course was also one of the Leadership electives for the Master of Arts (MA) in Christian Leadership degree and it could also be an elective for many other MA and certificate programs. The class also included doctoral students pursuing a major in Leadership in the Doctor of

Missiology or the Doctor of Philosophy in Intercultural Studies degrees. However, none of the participants in the study were registered in the doctoral program. The course descriptions for all three courses stated that Emerging Leaders is an "advanced perspective and skill enhancement course which provides a theoretical and practical orientation" It continued that the students were to develop "culturally appropriate strategies, perspectives, and principles…" (The Seminary, 2009a, pp. 154, 177). In the above categorizations and statements I found that the Emerging Leaders course was categorized within practical theology and also had an emphasis on contextualization with the outcome to "help participants develop culturally appropriate strategies, perspectives, principles that help them train leaders in their current or anticipated ministry settings."

Dr. Roger Wright, the professor for the course, divided the course into five modules with the main content covered in Modules 2 - 5. Each module had a major project to integrate or experience the module's readings. For example, in Module 3 the students experienced the mentor-mentee relationships that were discussed in the module readings. In one meeting the student mentored other leaders less experienced than himself or herself. In the other meeting the student was the mentee. Both groups were to meet at least twice. Thus, they would engage in the actual practice of mentoring and being mentored and then analyze their experiences and discuss with their classmates. In Module 4 the students were to conduct a case study of a "Leadership Church" in their context and write a 10-12 page report for the class where they assessed the case according to the course readings and their learning. The case study construction provided elements of a contextual encounter (Foster et al., 2005) from which to assess the course materials.

In the syllabus Dr. Wright designed the course around interaction with the content and then interaction with fellow students and the professor. In the first half of the week for each week, the students were to read a book or article and write a short essay addressing questions provided for each module. Then on Thursday through Saturday the students read one another's essays and responded in dialog. However, after the first introductory module, he changed the discussion forum process so that the weekly reading was melded into one post for all readings in a module. This lessened the student-to-student interaction on the readings compared to the initial design, but perhaps could provide for deeper engagement.

The discussion fora participation varied greatly from module to module whereas in other classes, participation followed a general pattern from module to module or week to week. Module 2 had 24 initial posts, Module 3 had 74 posts, Module 4 had 40 posts and Module 5 had 64 posts. This variation was due to the fact that the students were required to share their module projects with one another in some modules. In Module 3 some students wrote four separate posts for the four mentor-mentee meetings described above; others wrote two posts, one for each mentor-mentee group. In Module 5 the students shared a draft of their final integrative paper for comments and then the final paper was again posted. Also the readings for Module 5 included a case study divided into three segments for the whole class to read and discuss. Students generated individual initial posts for the first two segments of the case study; however, Dr. Wright wrote the initial post for the third segment, which then had 26 responses. In Modules 2,

3, and 4 the students were divided into 3 groups for discussions, but Module 5 discussions were class-wide. The course did not have a consistent pattern for the discussion fora even within a given module.

Total class enrollment was 21 persons, but only 17 students posted in Module 2 and by Module 5 only 15 students were active. For this research study, only 3 students agreed to participate, but all 3 remained active throughout the course. For Modules 2, 3, and 4 the each participant was assigned to a different groups. Table 4.8 provides an overview of the participation in Module 2. The posts occurred from Friday through Wednesday of one week of the module.

Table 4.8

CL620/MS654 Contribution to Forum: Module 2 Tasks and Discussions

Authors of thread entries	Posts	Responses	Mean responses per post	Median responses per post	Contributors (including professor)
Non-participants, study participants, and professor	24	142	5.9	6.5	18
Study participants' posts with nonparticipants' and professor's responses	3	21	7.0	9.0	18

Learning from formation. In the syllabus, the first three modules of the course use the words "shaping processes" in their titles, "Calling: God's destiny-shaping processes from Above You," "Constitution: God's shaping processes in the leadership core Within You," and "Connection: Community shaping processes to cultivate leaders Around You." The fourth module is entitled "Context: Organizational efforts that find

and form leaders Among You" (Syllabus, Fall 2009, p. 2). In this use of shaping and

forming language, Dr. Wright discloses his emphasis upon formation: formation of

leaders that will nurture formation in current and future leaders in their ministries. Foster

et al. (2005) identified strategies that "contribute to the formation of the pastoral, priestly,

and rabbinic imagination" to be pedagogies of *practicing the presence of God,*

practicing holiness, and pedagogies for *practicing religious leadership* (p. 103).

Specifically for this course on Christian leadership, the authors state,

> Pedagogies for practicing religious leadership enact those dispositions of habits in
> specific responsibilities and roles associated with clergy practice. They are
> directed to forming skills, but even more to forming patterns of leadership in
> which the theories clergy espouse are congruent with the theories embedded in the
> dispositions and habits that shape how they negotiate the interplay between
> institutional processes and the people who participate in them. (p. 104)

We will see the negotiation of the patterns of leadership in institutional processes

exhibited in the analysis of one course forum discussion presented later in the section.

The introductory Module 1, "Calling: God's destiny-shaping processes from

Above You," was taken down by the time I was able to access the course for some

reason. From the description of the module in the syllabus and title, we would have

expected formation issues to have been discussed, specifically *practicing the presence of*

God (Foster et al., 2005). Whatever occurred in this discussion forum resulted in a

change in the approach to the discussions as mentioned earlier.

For Module 2 the discussion forum instructions stated,

> In module two, we look at how a leader is formed, from within. Not only is the
> calling of God critical, but all manner of traits, donated characteristics from
> family and nation, personality, gender, and of course character, character,
> character (the cumulative affective of our responses to the world one leadership
> and life episode at a time).

Dr. Wright summarized Modules 1 and 2 in a post in Module 3 by stating, "It begins with God, and He is the one who at work in the formation of the life (Leader from Above You), and we are the subjects of His shaping experiences (Within You)."

Due to the limited student participation in the research, results were limited, but Milton responded to a groupmate's question to his initial post with the following:

Milton: I seek to improve my "reactions" to new and complex situations. I seek to become more Christ-like in my "reflex"—how I respond to challenges. "
You ask a good question, "How do you seek to do this?"
I want to have quicker disciple-making reflexes….
I am also seeking out how to be strong in a challenging word (like Jesus) without having a strong personality (I've always wondered what Jesus' personality type was)

Milton's response portrayed suggestions of *practicing holiness*, which build on becoming aware of the presence of God (Foster et al., 2005). Milton expressed his desire to be "more Christ-like" in his being, his "reflex" implying habits that would exemplify the presence of God in his life. Milton repeated similar phrases such as "I seek," "I want," "I am […] seeking" reflecting *images of possibilities* (Wenger, 1998) as he had set his focus on who he sought to be, a leader who reflects the Divine. Wenger wrote, "imagination refers to a process of expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves" (p. 176). In preparing students for the professional clergy, these images of possibilities help to form a *pastoral imagination*, which the Carnegie study acknowledged to be a

> way of knowing [that] originates in and has been renewed through the ages in the responses of people to the stories of God. It shapes their expectations as religious leaders, initially by facilitating their participation in the shared task of religious communities of living toward or into the vision embedded in those stories. Through their participation, they may increasingly identify with its significant events. They begin to bear its burdens and hopes. They begin to view themselves as agents of its future. (Foster et al., 2005, p. 121)

Milton's desire to be "more Christ-like" exhibited a shaping of his expectations and a viewing of himself as an agent of the stories.

In Module 3, Jack shared a lengthy story of his mentoring experience where he was the mentee.

Jack: I determined that I want to learn from Mike about conflict in relationships, about developing relationships that are sturdy enough to endure difficulty and about how to engage in those conflicts when they occur. At the beginning of our first meeting, and without knowing that conflict was what I wanted to learn about from him, Mike dove right into that subject (perhaps he knows that I need to learn about that?). He brought up a recent situation in which he had challenging conflict. He and his wife had noticed that the pastor of their church had begun to preach a doctrine with which they disagree. They felt that the doctrine would compromise peoples' desire for holiness and purity, and they also felt that the doctrine could leave people without hope. So, they scheduled an appointment to meet with the pastor. Mike shared with me that when they first sat down to meet with the pastor and explain why they came to meet with him, his immediate response went something like this: "Before we get into this, let me tell you that I do not want to debate you because you are not going to change my mind and I'm not going to change your mind about this." Mike explained to me that in that moment what he had originally come to the meeting for, though important, now took a secondary role to the clear barrier that existed within the relationship between he and the pastor.

       Collins says, "Sometimes the greatest gift in coaching is demonstrating that you can be trusted. Betray that trust and relationships are severely damaged, often irreparably" (Collins 48). The pastor had betrayed that relational trust by immediately communicating to Mike that he was not going to listen to what they really had to say. He essentially told them that he did not value their opinions and that their reason for meeting with him was pointless. My immediate response to hearing this was: "this is wrong in so many ways that I don't know where to start." However, as I listened to Mike share that his reaction was to set everything but the relationship at hand aside, I recognized that his response to the pastor was what made him a safe person to mentor me even though the permanence of our relationship may at first seem daunting. His astute awareness and priority on relationships with people are what make him an expert in handling conflicts well. These qualities are the reason why he maintains so many healthy relationships despite sometimes trying circumstances and why he is trusted in leadership positions.

Jack again saw *images of possibilities* (Wenger, 1998) in the life of his mentor. Jack

recognized how his mentor practiced holiness in his response to his pastor and Jack

wanted to emulate that type of leader. In the discussion that ensued, Jack wrote,

Jack: When I think about what Krallman says on page 50 about how Jesus allowed
people to follow him as a person, I am reminded of the type of integrity that we
must constantly live out ("character, character, character" says the prof). … So,
your point is well taken: we have a responsibility to live up to who we say we are,
consistently demonstrating it visibly.

Milton reflected on his mentor expressing similar possibility thinking, "Honza mentored

me in a gentle way that left me wanting to grow, study, and prepare myself for bigger and

bigger responsibilities in the future!" These *images of possibilities* were creating a

pastoral imagination for who they would be as pastors.

Karl, when reflecting on his meeting with his mentee in the third module,

responded to a groupmate,

Karl: Good point John re: challenging our mentees to reach higher. It's a tough one with
her, but we've been focusing on how she can be a better leader, how she can focus
on facets of leadership rather than just "doing ministry."

In this experience Karl as a leader is passing along the *images of the possibilities* to

someone else. Jack in the Module 4 discussion forum mirrored this concept, "The

prerequisite to becoming a developer of leaders is putting on a new set of glasses, what I

call "the eyeglasses of potential" (Forman 32)." Jack continued with a discussion of both

positive and negative instances of leadership. Dr. Wright picked up the discussion and

promoted the *images of the possibilities*,

Dr. Wright: Now, take the reverse. Imagine a church, were seven men and women are
deeply shaped for maturity and mission. After five years of apprenticeship, the
pastoral team looks them in the eye and ask: "What are you doing still here? Go
ye and plant a new community! AND THEY GO...because they are competent,
confident, credible, etc.!!!

Idealism? Friends: I have spent the last two sabbatical among these communities. It is not theory. This movement I am studying is more than 100,000 strong. In the last few months of my sabbatical I turned up four more major networks mission bent in similar ways

The students were developing the pastoral imagination for themselves and then Dr. Wright turned their attention to the institution of the church and how the possibility is becoming reality. The formation of these student-leaders is the beginning and then expanding that vision outward to others as a part of their Christian leadership practice follows. Foster et al. (2005) acknowledge this vision expansion as a dimension of the seminary instructor.

> "[Seminary educators] are also concerned with developing students' capacity for religious leadership to extend these practices of formation beyond the seminary into the communities where they will be the agents of the religious dimensions of life." (p. 116)

Learning from interpretation. The entire course necessitated interpretation of the multiple texts used in the course. Instructions required students to reference multiple works in their projects and postings. Students interacted with the readings and throughout the course Dr. Wright pressed the students to reread and critically consider the course content for deeper understanding. The case study discussion forum that is discussed later will demonstrated one detailed example of these interpretations and critical thinking.

Learning from context. Dr. Wright's syllabus did not emphasize contextualization; however, it was assumed in that the students, after reading a book or article each week, interviewed someone in their context regarding some issue in the book or article. In this way the students would be gaining a contextual perspective for the issues discussed. However, with the adjustment of the discussion fora after the first module, the learning from those contextual interactions was not covered. The issue of

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context was raised in several questions that were to be addressed in the weekly essays and discussion forum postings and responses. Likewise the assignments for the course that required the students to engage the content within a local context, such as the mentor-mentee assignments and the case study of a local church, provided an opportunity for the students to socially situate their understandings.

In Module 5 Dr. Wright provided a lengthy case study for the entire class to read, critically discuss, and reflect on in the discussion forum. (See

Figure 4.1 for the setting and instructions for the case study.) As was noted earlier, this was presented and discussed in three segments. The discussions were lengthy and sometimes intense. In the pages that follow major excerpts of those discussions from the students participating in the research and the professor are presented. Subsequent to the excerpts is an analysis of the discussion.

> In the fifth and final module, we take seriously the legacy anyone of us may have when we invest in the lives of others. [….] Are you preparing yourself for legacy level leadership development contributions?
>
> To be sure, legacies don't come easy. They are hard-won. A value system oriented toward durable impact must undergird our souls and our effort. [….]
>
> In this module, this is our focus. We invoke the mission of God as the context of our leadership development efforts. [….]
>
> In this last module, we shift from our individuals groups, and come together as an entire class. We begin to make connections between the module conversations which have gone before, and the challenge implied in this one: "Developing the Leaders Beyond You." I will seed these discussions by posing several case studies and thread-leading discussions through the remaining weeks together.
>
> The first case and discussion focuses primarily on the circumstances of "Pastor Jeff Griggs" … and secondarily on a consultant, "Colin Belcher." Read through the case. Read through the materials for this session. Then begin to engage one another around the following questions:
>
> 1. Respond: Pastor Jeff is exerting a serious, even respectable, amount of energy and effort in building a church. Using the materials from the the last four modules, characterize these efforts, their motives, their progress, especially as they pertain to Jeff's core identity as a called and formed person. Consider: The Leader Above, Leader Within You.

2. Respond: Do Pastor Jeff's actions and ministry objectives resonate as representative of any ministry experiences you have witnessed or experienced? How would you characterize the ministry philosophy you see in Pastor Jeff? What are the interpersonal implications for such a core philosophy? What would it be like to be on a ministry team with Jeff, given these reflexes he seems to evince? Consider: Developing the Leaders Around You.

3. What role do cultural paradigms have in the ministry expression we see in Pastor Jeff's situation? Is he generating culture (intrapersonally), a participant within a cultural matrix of peers (interpersonaly), a by-stander in culture (a-cultural), a victim in culture (systemic issues)? How does his ministry relate to biblical norms, ecclesiology and mission? All of these, several of these, none of these? Consider: The Leaders Among You, The Leaders Beyond You.

Note: "Vision Fatigue" is a multi-part case and I have uploaded only part one, background to the case. More from this church and its people to come over the next remaining weeks together.

Note: This is a TRUE CASE STORY. Need not be merely criticizing of Jeff, but seek to penetrate the personal and social context in a way that allows you to connect this (and the course) to real ministry contexts in which you are entrusted.

Figure 4.1 *CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders Module 5 Discussion Forum Instruction*

Milton: Jeff Reed [author] has convinced me in "Church-Based Christian education: Creating a New Paradigm" "The Problem Defined "section (by quoting Edward Farley in the Fragility of Knowledge, Page 9) of the need for church based education: [provided answer responses for 3 main areas of questions]

Dr. Wright: Thanks for getting us started. Whew! You REALLY jumped into it the heart of the matter.

let me offer you some perspective (as I sense a little "skepticism" about Reed as being a mere arm-chair idealist).

I have spent the last two sabbaticals studying the church-based theological education movement. My research has tracked BILD's version of CBTE to seven (7) different nations: US, Canada, Honduras, France, Nigeria, Cambodia, Japan. I have conducted more than 105 video-taped interviews (perhaps I should upload a few). I have looks at this process is the inner city, the burbs, the countryside of these countries. I have interviewed main players who have been with the movement for more than 30 years.

My estimation: you are looking a no arm-chair idealists. His August newsletter indicated that in November (now), more than 100,000 people in 47 nations will have been through the BILD Process, resulting in untold church plants. I have come to know the leadership of this movement personally, even affectionately. I have critiques to offer, too, but not in a dismissive way, rather ones which might be philosophically derived (from my arm chair). I would invite you to reflect again on your first questions to assess what is driving you philosphically, and to respond

(not react) to Reed. Fill in what you deem may be missing, what may be errant, what may be idealistic.

Is their process without flaws? No, none are, but I can assert to you, it is not easily dismissed as idealistic. Reed has maintain the role of senior pastor of Oakroad Bible Church for these alst 30 years, believing only churches birth churches, by preparing leaders.

Let me ask, what exactly is the nature of your critique? Let me ask you to look back at your first draft and ask is it your own relative exposure to the material that makes it seem idealistic or is there something about matching the virulence of this movement, one which is very Wesley-like in its organizational patterning, that may be demanded of ministry structures around us? Remember, rare is not wrong, its just rare. Consider taking a look at: www.BILD.org to see whether this movement may have something, not everything, but something to teach may churches which want to impact their world.

What do you say? Willing to give us a little more philosophically?

Jack: I am still working through the reading right now, but some of my experience makes me somewhat skeptical regarding church-based training. I am not sure whether this is simply my personal bias or a real critique, but I am connected with [….]

    Dr. Wright: As you work through the reading, call to memory our starting place: Scripture. Are you preapred to look at biases, in light of Scripture, to be theologically reflective about what has become accepted, perhaps false essentialisms? ….

        No, I do not want to defend the specific case you have in mind which may have disposed you to an allergy for church-ordered learning for many of these institutes are merely poorly cobbled together Enlightenment-aimed classrooms without Enlightenment standards of rigorous rationalism. Nor do I want to defend seminaries who have better versions of the same. I am advocating a strategy I have researched for the last seven years which is producing 16-, 22-, 44-, 67-year olds who exceed readiness for graduate-level conversational grasp of theology and ministry, and who are preparing to deepen new church planting networks. The people I have interviewed in 9 nations, 105 in all, have used many of the books you have used here as well as reproductions of great Western classics. Non-literate men and women are coached into sense-making until they can participate in the conversations and their authority from practice can be made accessible to others in these hermeneutical circles. Many are doing local theologizing around issues in culture for which no theology book is written. This reminds me of the organization of

someone who is really liked around this place...what was his name again? Oh yes, John Wesley.

I guess, we may not yet be talking about the same thing (such is that case with paradigms), so let me turn this into a question that might get us on a generative path which may allow us to turn our biases in to the authorities: what metrics matter in the formation of a person? What source to we derive our norms from? How does Scripture interact with cultural norms in the equipping of he saints? Why might the professor (me) have crafted a five-part model which included a "Beyond You" dimension? Any biblical rationale for it? Do we have a deficit if ANY model of formation fails to result in missionally productive people in increasing numbers? To whom was this equipping comission given, individuals, churches, denominations, seminaries?

Let's give these questions a whirl in the next line of discussion. I think they can help ferret out the paradigmstic issues that help surface biases.

Note: Jack's post raises important cultural concerns, so I offer this extended response for all to participate in on his thread, not justhim. Let these probes direct your reading and re-reading. Consult again the first module and what each of you offered as biblical rationale and norms. Test whether you are being consistent with what you wrote, or whether it is time to revise what you wrote in light of another revistation of Scriptural norms. Selah.

Dr. Wright: Seems a serious ordered reflection process that functions as a community in theological reflection together is extremely reminensent of the orality-centered modality of traditional cultures. In fact, the model and movement seems to thrive most naturally in such settings. My work in Cambodia seems most resembling of the learning huddles in the NT, book of Acts, where all learn togehther and each one teaches one.

What are the contextual implementation issues in your context as you see them?

Milton: Dr Wright poses this question in the post above: "To whom was this equipping comission given, individuals, churches, denominations, seminaries?"

My answer, the Local Church (Eph 5:25-32)! That's why I've very challenged by Reed's writings. I'm convinced of the content. I'm still trying to set realistic goals for the next 6 months, year, 5, 10, 25, 50 years as I serve as head elder in our Czech church and leader of the only full-time youth leader training program in the country.

"I think they can help ferret out the paradigmstic issues that help surface biases."- West

I want to see my biases. I may have some Eastern European skepticism going on as to implementation...Reed writes pretty fundamentally.

Let's keep interacting! I'm willing to learn and learn. Thank's for interacting with my skepticism. I wish to equip believers not just show them an inspiring plan but give them no way of fulfilling it.

Following the above discussion, Milton added another new post.

Milton: Dr. J. Robert Clinton in The Emerging Leader Three Umbrella Concepts speaks to this:

"Spiritual formation essentially refers to the development of leadership character. Ministerial formation has as its essence the development of influence and ministry skills. Strategic formation focuses on development of leadership values which culminate in a ministry philosophy, developed over a lifetime and compels the leader to an ultimate contribution in accordance with the purposes of God." (Clinton 2)

Pastor Jeff is investing into institutions and not into people.   John 10 talks about the Good Shepherd knowing the sheep and taking care of them by name not just building bigger and bigger sheepfolds (in sheep and in physical size).

West says in "The Mentor Within You", [….]

Case Study Pt. 2 Questions

1. Question: Ministry Leadership Development Philosophy. Engage in integrative conversations -- use of the multiple texts of the course -- around the ministry philosophy (philosophies?) that are present within this case, this community. How do you characterize it, from a leadership development perspective?
2. Question: The Leadership Emergence Pivot. Cases like these pivot on just a few elements. What are they in this case? Analyze the case, and make your argument for what you think to be causing and effecting what, especially as it relates to leadership development?
3. Mediating the Emergence. In an organization, some things substitute for other things, e.g., philosophies, policies, practice, procedures, personnel. These "proxies" stand in the stead of a manager giving directives on the spot. These "proxies" mediate a leadership team's will. In this case, how does the pastor mediate leadership and laborer-ship development? What "proxies" are at work in this case? Do the proxies -- philosophies, policies, practices, procedures, personnel -- mediate the will of the pastor adequately, in what way? Do the proxies critique the will of the pastor, in what way? Note: Can you see that Phil, the program to be implemented, the Board practices, etc. are proxies? Discuss.

Karl: Wow, what an interesting case... [in original] Here are my thoughts and reflections...

[Questions 1 and 2 are answered in length]

3. Mediating the Emergence. Discuss.

This was a harder one for me to answer. It seems that the proxies in the case woud be [….].

It seems that these proxies do very little to mediate Jeff's will, as he does what he wants. However, I would see that the Board is finally waking up to the fact that Jeff needs to be accountable to them, and as such, should keep them in the loop for anything significant occurring or being initiated in the church.

Dr. Wright: A very thorough engagement of the issues in the case. from your replies, I can see in your reflexes a commitment to development for all involved. You, repeatedly, prescribe coaching, mentoring, accountability as ways to implement and assist. Valuable insight!

[1 paragraph omitted]

You are on your way. A great exercise: think over the case, and list as many proxies as you can, and ask whether they can be tapped to become assets in mission in this case. Chances are: these elements are within OUR context during transitions times as well, and we do not want to be naive about their capacity to intervene in change strategies.

Milton: […] Program is killing this situation again. […]

I'm curious how this continues!

Dr. Wright: [re: Program is killing this situation again]

Let me play "Jeff's [case study persona] advocate" here. Is he not doing a new thing? Creating a quietly incubated process, not laying it out in front of everyone one? Has he not learned his lesson? After al, he has approved Phil's list already. Skim it again. What do you think?

Further, look over the intro questions, and get into the proxy issues pertaining to the problem and possibilities of mediating influence toward mission. What do you think?

Milton: Jeff wants new things but I question his direction, his "Achiever" leadership style, and his timeline. [7 paragraphs omitted]

He wanted to sell the new way rather than co-create the new paradigm with his church. His leadership level remains at the "Catalyst level" which is a "Visionary, facilitative orientation. Believes that leaders articulate an innovative, inspiring vision and bring together the right people to transform the vision into realtiy. Leaders empower others adn actively facilitate their development." (Joiner, 8).

[3 more paragraphs omitted]

Dr. Wright: Read with interest the final installment of the case, keeping these insights you have here from pages 8 and 9, before you. Then, tell me what you think. Nice selections from Joiner!

Milton: Jeff did it! He adjusted! He's showing leadership agility!

See my installment 3 for specifics.

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Case study Part 3

Dr. Wright: Vision Fatigue ~ The Mission (Part Three) is now uploaded; I have attached it again here (but go to course area for the Appendix Mentioned). Take a look. This is the final episode of the three-part case. More than six years has passed now. We join the church at this stage.

We now turn toward closure of our course. The final episode offers a conversation about the practicality of our learning together this semester.

Probes for Our Final Conversation:

1. What is Your Judgment Regarding What Happened In and After "The Big Meeting?" Consider: Jeff's Appraisal, Phil's Work, that of Others.

2. What Practical Insights Does the Case Stimulate for You? Consider: This Community -- First Community Church -- Has Its Own Story. What Do You Gain for Yours?

3. What Are the Practical Implications of this Course for You? Consider: What Learnings are You taking With You? What Do You Want to Impress Upon Your Peers?

Milton: [Question 1 regarding the case study answered]

2. What Practical Insights Does the Case Stimulate for You?

I will work more as a team for ownership sake as head elder and principal of the youth pastor training Internship. "As this new capacity developed, David [at the Catalyst level] was quick to recognize opportunities for joint problem solving. He also developed the ability to shift, on the spot, from unilateral to collaborative intent, pausing after key advocacy statements to inquire about others' views." (Joiner, 101)

I will lead being assertive but also ready to change…without leaving my leadership responsibilities behind.

I will seek to know my people especially my leaders and not just value them for their output. Specifically I'll spend time listening actively and not practice recommending unread books to them.

I will not give up when trouble comes.

3. What Are the Practical Implications of this Course for You?

I'll list my points of application and change!: team leadership for co-ownership, the whole leadership agility compass, CBTE!, wisdom-based curriculum, people-focused ministry, God-led vision and direction, building leaders around and beyond me, mentoring, evaluating and replacing dry program with life-on-life, train my coaches in the Internship, grow and change as a leader (every 4 years at least!), know my context, not follow fads, practice biblical theology, practice a post-heroic style of leadership, and pour into others just to name a few.

Dr. Wright: I like your posting work here. it is obvious the CBTE materials made an impact. Note: If you think Reed missed ministry outreach, you may not have read him deeply enough. The paradigm paper entitled "Church as Mission" is indeed a paradigm breaker. Remember, BILD has seen more than 100,000 people engage in church-planting focused ministry development processes

through CBTE. His critique is the same as yours: most theological education fails to initiate mission.

Karl: [Question 1 concerning case study answered]

2. Practical Insights

I'm impressed with two of Phil's propositions. First, he was correct in his view that the book/approach "... needed to be less programmatic, and a lot more organic, able to flex and adapt to a community that was tired of "out of the box" programs. " This was very insightful and exactly the approach that Jeff should have taken originally. [….]

Second, his critique was insightful that "... unless the senior pastoral leader is centrally involved in the development of leadership – it can be delegated to no one else – the process would always be hampered at the most important points." The senior leader sets the tone for leadership development and it is crucial for him to be a centerpiece for the process.

I'm curious about the senior leadership's "Plumbline" small group process. That sounds like a great idea, especially because even senior leaders need to continue growing and developing in their skills and abilities. I wonder what type of curricula or topics they cover, and think that this is an excellent idea for use in many of our local churches. I'd like to learn more about this, if possible...

3. Practical Implications

This course has helped me in several ways. First, the leadership training aspect was great, especially the ways in which we develop programs, set up training processes, and approach the overall idea of building leaders. I've done this sort of thing before, but have it focused on the local church (rather than a secular business) was really helpful. (See the Coaching book and Building Leaders book, as well as the BILD material)

Second, [….]

Third, I'm intrigued by the idea of training 3 or 4 people as leaders/apprentices in my local church. As a pastor of a small church, we aren't always able to do big programs, but starting with a few people and investing our energy, wisdom and time with them to help them become great leaders is where we should invest our resources.

Finally, I liked [….] I'm going to review those again, since I think we gain some good insights on how we do our own development, as well as train those in our own churches.

Jack: [Question 1 about case study answered]

2. What Practical Insights Does the Case Stimulate for You?

It seems like pastors often see themselves as opposed to the Board, and that is a self-defeating starting point because the end goal is to create unity there. As challenging as it might be and as frustrating as it might be to work with a board, it seems critical that we begin with the end in mind (for a board, unity about the leading of God for our organization). Phil's blueprint for building a church references Ephesians 4, and I agree that

that is a foundational text for ecclesiology. Eph. 4:13 says that we are built up "until we all reach unity in the faith."

3. What Are the Practical Implications of this Course for You?

This course has really pushed me to view leadership development from a more comprehensive perspective, considering more carefully both the personal aspects such as mentoring and coaching as well as the organizational planning that is involved. More on this in my final integration paper, though.

Case study discussion forum analysis. During this lengthy set of interactions, Dr. Wright coached the students to reflect critically on their readings as they applied to the case study. He pressed them as he questioned Milton in the first segment discussion, "Willing to give us a little more philosophically?" This case study reading and reflection began with Dr. Wright focusing the students on the purpose of the course: developing leaders with the following statement, "In the fifth and final module, we take seriously the legacy anyone of us may have when we invest in the lives of others." Concerning the case study, Dr. Wright instructed the students to "seek to penetrate the personal and social context in a way that allows you to connect this (and the course) to real ministry contexts in which you are entrusted." He reminded the students to integrate the learnings of the "suprapersonal (Leader from above you)" (Module 1), "the intrapersonal (within you)" (Module 2), "the interpersonal (around you)" (Module 3), and "the organizational community level (among you)" (Module 4) as he had identified in the previous modules. The case study was designed for the students to amalgamate their learning from the previous four modules and to relate that learning to their own ministries as they reflected on this one real-life instance.

The case study interactions demonstrated the critical thinking interpretive passion of the course with probing and energizing questions like "Are you preparing yourself for legacy level leadership development contributions?" and suggestions such as "Skim it

again. What do you think?" "look over the intro questions, and get into the proxy issues,"

"Let me ask, what exactly is the nature of your critique? Let me ask you to look back at your first draft and ask …" and "Read with interest the final installment of the case, keeping these insights you have here from pages 8 and 9, before you. Then, tell me what you think." Two of the research participants particularly engaged in the case study as shown with exclamations after the second part from Karl, "Wow what an interesting case study!" and Milton,: "I'm curious how this continues!…" and finally after the final part Milton's exclamation, "Jeff did it! He adjusted! He's showing leadership agility!"

After the first segment of the case study, Jack was uncertain, "I am still working through the reading right now, but some of my experience makes me somewhat skeptical regarding church-based training." Dr. Wright became directive stating, "As you work through the reading, call to memory our starting place: Scripture. Are you preapred to look at biases, in light of Scripture, to be theologically reflective about what has become accepted, perhaps false essentialisms?" As noted in the introduction to this course analysis, Foster et al. (2005) stated that pedagogies for practicing religious leadership aim "to [form] patterns of leadership in which the theories clergy espouse are congruent with the theories embedded in the dispositions and habits that shape how they negotiate the interplay between institutional processes and the people who participate in them" (p. 104). Dr. Wright challenged Jack to be formed by Scripture and to evaluate what he accepts in his practice. Dr. Wright expressed his passion for the practice, writing, "I am advocating a strategy I have researched for the last seven years," which practice Jack was having a difficult time accepting. Dr. Wright continued and demonstrated how the practice fit with the seminary's theology. Then he acknowledged,

Dr. Wright: I guess, we may not yet be talking about the same thing (such is that case with paradigms), so let me turn this into a question that might get us on a generative path which may allow us to turn our biases in to the authorities: what metrics matter in the formation of a person?

Dr. Wright identified numerous questions (see the full post) and encouraged the students to address these questions, "Let's give these questions a whirl in the next line of discussion. I think they can help ferret out the paradigmstic issues that help surface biases." He then refocused them especially on cultural or contextual issues stating,

Dr. Wright: Note: Jack's post raises important cultural concerns, so I offer this extended response for all to participate in on his thread, not justhim. Let these probes direct your reading and re-reading. Consult again the first module and what each of you offered as biblical rationale and norms. Test whether you ate being consistent with what you wrote, or whether it is time to revise what you wrote in light of another revistation of Scriptural norms. Selah.

It is interesting, though, that Jack did not participate in the remaining interactions concerning the case study. Jack might not have participated because he persisted in his disagreement with the practice advocated in the case study and by the professor. Another possibility might be that the strong response by the professor was uncomfortable for Jack and he remained a passive participant, or in the terms of a community of practice, periphery participation (Wenger, 1998). Observing Dr. Wright's passion could also have attributed to the positive response of Milton and Karl that was noted earlier.

Dr. Wright also cheered the students' accomplishments, making statements to Milton like "Whew! You REALLY jumped into it the heart of the matter," after his initial response to the first segment of the case study and later "Nice selections from Joiner!" and "I like your posting work here. it is obvious the CBTE materials made an impact." When Karl indicated uncertainty stating, "This was a harder one for me to answer," Dr. Wright first acknowledged the difficulty of the task and then stated, "A very thorough

engagement of the issues in the case. … You, repeatedly, prescribe coaching, mentoring, accountability as ways to implement and assist. Valuable insight!" In this last comment, Dr. Wright summarized the student's responses disclosing what the Karl had accomplished, providing reassurance. He added "You are on your way" and then proposed another exercise to reconsider the issues,

Dr. Wright: A great exercise: think over the case, and list as many proxies as you can….. Chances are: these elements are within OUR context during transitions times as well, and we do not want to be naive about their capacity to intervene in change strategies.

The significance of this learning, "we do not want to be naïve …," stressed the need to master this aspect of leadership development.

Foster et al. (2005) stated, "The most explicit moments of the coaching of individual progress in the practice occurred through words of encouragement, questions that requested further engagement with a given text or thought, and the feedback on and assessment…" (p. 95). Through his questions and critical thinking prompts, Dr. Wright coached the students in the interpretation of the case study so that they could gain the skill to interpret their own contexts. In doing so, he also modeled for the students the coaching process as they interacted with their mentor-mentee relationships outside of class.

Formation leads to performance changes. After the first section of the case study, Milton's first response was one of enthusiasm, "Jeff Reed [author] has convinced me in 'Church-Based Christian education.'" However, Dr. Wright challenged him and noted that he sensed "skeptism" in his responses. Following the discussion that ensued by several classmates, Milton maintained, "… That's why I've [I'm] very challenged by Reed's writings. I'm convinced of the content. I'm still trying to set realistic goals for the

next 6 months, year, 5, 10, 25, 50 years as I serve…." He continues on with the

following:

Milton: I think they [Reed's writings] can help ferret out the paradigmstic issues that help surface biases."- Wright
I want to see my biases. I may have some Eastern European skepticism going on as to implementation...Reed writes pretty fundamentally.
Let's keep interacting! I'm willing to learn and learn. Thank's for interacting with my skepticism.

Foster et al. (2005) identified that "all teaching is some way formative—or deformative"

(p. 115). Milton avowed that he was willing for his biases to be revealed in order to

refine his practice. However, he did not identify those biases in the discussion forum.

Then in the final questions for the last segment of the case study, Dr. Wright

asked the students to reflect upon their learning and determine what was applicable to

them, "What Practical Insights Does the Case Stimulate for You?" and "What Are the

Practical Implications of this Course for You?" Milton stated emphatically, "I will work

more as a team [….] I will lead being assertive but also ready to change… I will seek to

know my people [….] I will not give up." The repeated use of "I will" by Milton

indicated volitional speech acts, which are part of the process of performance, that were

discussed in the performance section, but also show resolution in formation. One of the

volitional statements reflected on contextualization, "I will seek to know my people

especially my leaders[….]" as this is the essence of understanding a social situation.

Milton continued in the next question, "I'll list my points of application and change!:"

and proceeded to list twelve items. Karl, a first-career engineer manager, identified areas

of insights stating, "especially the ways in which we develop programs, set up training

processes, and approach the overall idea of building leaders." He identified items that he

still wished to pursue, stating, "I wonder what type of curricula or topics they cover, [….]

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I'd like to learn more about this, if possible [....]" and "I'm intrigued by the idea of

training 3 or 4 people as leaders/apprentices in my local church. [….] I'm going to review

those again." Jack responded at the end of the case study exchanges, "This course has

really pushed me to view leadership development from a more comprehensive

perspective." The student participants reported deep learning and decisions for change.

The formation of leaders through critical reflection produced projected changes in

performance by the students.

Online structure. Fall 2009 was the first time this course was offered in the

online format. In the opening instructions "Regarding 'Weekly Leader's Chat'" Dr.

Wright expressed his concern with the online format for the course. He stated,

> Here's the deal. This course is USUALLY taught on campus, in a face to face
> environment. It is one of the most relationally-intensive courses that I teach.
> Teaching it online stretches me. I would rather do this all face to face, but its not
> going to happen. So, I need to know you are getting face to face with some
> leaders in your life. I need to know that I have not committed "leadership
> development malpractice" by contributing to an experience of isolation, where
> you and your books grow in deeper relationship with one another for a semester.

In Module 3 Milton responded to another groupmate and came to a new realization about

online learning.

Milton: I hesitate to say that an online course is more effective than a face-to-face course
    with teacher and student...
             But you are right. I am in the middle of exactly what we are talking
    about. My coaching, mentoring, discipleship and teaching muscles are being
    stretched and being worked out hard these days.
             I'm needing to be mentored myself because I'm pouring into many people.
             This makes this online class so powerful. We have interaction with each
    other...we touch base online...and have LOTS of practice. This may be better than
    being on campus!
             I'm enjoying the reading and everyone's thoughts.

In the Closure discussion forum at the end of the course, Dr. Wright was not as convinced

as Milton, but had had a learning experience. He stated,

Dr. Wright: As for me: I enjoyed working with you each of you, as much as You can through a faceless medium like online learning. I have done my best to create a responsive process that honored limitations and possibilities of the online forum. I have gathered lots of great lessons from those of you who risked offering these gifts to me. Others will benefit from what I gained.

Milton's response in particular identified one of the major advantages of the online environment, that students can remain in context, in practice while interacting with theory and new perspectives.

Summary. The Emerging Leaders course purposed the formation of leaders who will practice Christian leadership that begets the formation of more leaders. Thus, there was a focus on formation of the student leaders and the students were given the opportunity to experience being mentored by others and practice mentoring in that process. Dr. Wright coached the students in their interpretative skills causing them to critically reflect on their understanding and its application in their own context of ministry, generating meaning making for each student. Meaning making brought about transformation in actual and potential performance. The final case study resulted in an integration of theory and practice. Thus, the four aspects of the practice of the professional clergy, formation, interpretation, contextualization, and performance, were addressed (Foster et al., 2005).

Students engaged with the professor, other leaders through their texts, individual case studies, and mentoring experiences as well as with one another. The discussion fora allowed students to participate in a joint enterprise involving interpretation and negotiate meaning for themselves. Even when there were disagreements, students could participate peripherally (Wenger, 1998) by reading but not responding. Shared stories and assignments added to a repertoire of shared learning; Milton stated that he had

downloaded his group member's case studies for future reference. The final case study

and other experiences created *images of possibilities*, which led to volitional changes in

performance for some of the students. Engagement and imagination are two of the

modes of belong for identity development in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

The course underwent significant design changes during the semester. After the

first module, the discussion forum requirements changed from weekly reading

interactions to interactions on the projects along with the readings throughout the module

but not necessarily on a weekly basis. Additionally, the group structure changed for the

final module. Perhaps these structural changes stemmed from Dr. Wright's concern to

have an effective and interactive environment as possible in the more unknown online

delivery platform. Still the discussion fora, especially the final module's discussion of

the case study, provided a venue for Dr. Wright to coach the students for deeper

reflection. The students deliberated on the readings and provided their interpretations

and implications for their ministries.

Analysis Summary

The research questions with the summary conclusions follow.

1. To what extent do the participants exhibit a sense of belonging to the community

    of practice? Wenger (1998) identified alignment, imagination, and engagement as

    the components of the Modes of Belonging. To what extent are these apparent in

    the online discussions?

    In the discussion fora students aligned themselves with particular theological

beliefs and church practices. In these discussions students sometimes identified

themselves as unaligned with practices of a particular denominational, which aligned

themselves with other denominations or nondenominational congregations and affirmed their professional identity. While this alignment likely was already partially established before entering the seminary, the experience of the students to reflect upon their beliefs and practices within the discursive activities, affirmed and confirmed their alignment and thus, their identity. The researcher attended a seminary with differing theological beliefs from her own denomination. During the process of those learning experiences, face-to-face, I reflected on why I believed what I did and confirmed my identity as a minister in my chosen denomination. Similarly, the online discussions afforded the same opportunity, perhaps enhanced as it was shared, for the distance students. Either way, the students were engaging with the critical beliefs and practices from historical and current writings of the traditions as well as one another, who expressed differing perspectives and experiences, in order to reflect upon the issues and align themselves with particular beliefs and practices, establishing their professional identity as religious leaders within their particular denominations. With the exposure to new and old insights of beliefs and practices and the discursive activity of the fora, students identified images of themselves, images of the world, images of the past and images of the possibilities. These images also expressed trajectories of learning sometimes identifying generational encounters, identifying local situations with histories of practices establishing who they needed to be as religious leaders and what they needed to do in those local practices. Through this discursive work, students expressed a new and expanding *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005), which involves the interplay between the local and global where students ascertained the local practice with the broader issues and possibilities within the constellation of the community.

Additionally, as regards to the community of practice, students developed a shared repertoire of the beliefs and practices of the professional clergy. As Dr. Ward in CH502 Church History II indicated the historical readings were part of the shared experience of the professional clergy. Through these theological classes the students gained access to this already developed shared repertoire. However, the discussion fora afforded the students to engage the existing shared repertoire and to augment the repertoire through sharing their own stories of experience with one another, current day experiences of clergy practice. Thus, the shared repertoire was not only the reified documents and practices of the church, but the students participated within the shared repertoire allowing the dynamic of participation and reification, negotiating their experience in the community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

These discussion fora became a shared history of learning for the students. As the class fora were archived, the students could return to these discussions if desired. Stories of experiences and examples in ministry could be used in future ministerial practices. The online discussion fora expanded the coffee shop discussions of face-to-face students asynchronously through time and dispersedly in geophysical space, yet the discursive activity afforded a segment of the shared history of learning.

2.   What evidence, if any, is there of the development of professional identity of participants in these online classes?

    a.   What evidence, if any, is there of formative learning of the participants, especially practicing the presence of God, practicing holiness, and practicing religious leadership?

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b.   What evidence, if any, is there of performance learning employed by the professional clergy in decisions and activities?

c.   What evidence, if any, is there of interpretative learning including methods of interpretation and critical thinking?

d.   What evidence, if any, is there of learning from contextualization involving occasions of contextual consciousness, contextual encounters, and contextual transformation?

As formation of the professional clergy involves integrity of faith with identity (Foster et al., 2005), students expressed aspects of formation of their faith through *practicing the presence of God* in scripture or other devotional reading, prayer, and mediation or devotions; *practicing holiness* implementing the presence of God in one's daily life in relationships and through expressions of loving service; and *practicing religious leadership* by identifying a vision of the *pastoral imagination* and discerning if that vision is present in a given situation. These aspects of formation were especially found in the courses focusing on formation, but were also in evidence in other courses, particularly the practics courses.

As authentic performance is always difficult within the classroom, even the face-to-face classroom, the online students remained involved in their current churches and ministries and thus sometimes had opportunities to perform the practices of the clergy within their situatedness. Some students recognized that they were able to do the practice and then benefit from the discussion about their performances. Classes such as PR610 Preaching required the students to develop and deliver sermons, while recording them for evaluation and discussion, thus providing performance of a prominent practice of the

clergy. Beyond the authentic performances, the students created and discussed the scripts

of performance simulating performance. Case studies discussed in the discussion fora

permitted students to reflect on information in use, benefitting from multiple

perspectives. Students at times made volitional speech acts declaring, "I will …" and

similar statements for their future performance. These shared speech acts expressed

intention for commitment to identified practices (Searle, 1970).

The discussion fora prompts generally provided questions to prompt the students

for critical thinking concerning their textual readings and/or multimedia presentations of

course content. Thus, the discussions forced the students to reflect and select points of

issue with which to negotiate their understanding and experience in learning. Frequently

other students as well as the instructors provided additional questions for deeper

reflection. Through these discussions students integrated reading from multiple texts,

their personal experiences, and often amalgamated learning from other classes as well.

Some students responded to these interpretative experiences with statements of meaning

making for what their understanding means in praxis. Without the discussion fora

opportunities, students may not have progressed to the personal meaning making for

praxis. While this is the goal of most instructors, the discussion fora provided evidence

of that meaning making. Additionally some classes, such as NT(IBS)510 Matthew,

directly focused on interpretation. The Matthew course furthermore provided a method

of interpretation for the students. The discussion fora for this course gave space for the

students to collaboratively learn by doing, exhibiting learning by Vygotsky's (1978) zone

of proximal development. The course scaffolded methodical learning through step-by-

step exercises, and the students interacted with one another to facilitate their learning,

showing evidence of developing capability as the course progressed. These interpretative

skills are essential for the professional clergy. By gaining a greater sense of efficacy in

interpreting the scriptures in the original language in NT502 Greek 2 as well as a method

for interpretation in NT(IBS)510 along with understanding from theology such as in

DO690 Wesley's Theology and church history as in CH502 Church History II that was

facilitated by the discussion fora, students have skills necessary for their work as

professional clergy.

Discussion fora focused less on facilitation of contextualization in the selected

classes participating in the study. Some professors did intentionally create events to raise

contextual consciousness for the students and provided the discussion fora as avenues for

contextual encounters where the students discussed differing perspectives. Some events

in the discussion fora occurred serendipitously through students and instructors sharing

personal experiences form diverse perspectives. As in the Carnegie study (Foster et al.,

2005), the students in the classes did not display contextual transformation in their

discussion texts for the most part. However, there were occasional contemplations of

contextual transformation in the discussions. The discussion fora provided an avenue

especially for contextual encounters which also raised contextual consciousness and

could lead to the consideration of contextual transformation for the students.

3.   If community and professional identity development are in evidence in online

         discussion fora, how does it occur? What are the discursive forms, if any?

         Many of the instructors provided questions to which the students responded

concerning the course readings or other required student activities. Several classes

provided comprehensive question sets and required lengthy responses. These discussion

fora generally concentrated on student-content interaction. The student-student interaction still revolved around the content so it was more a student-content-student interaction style. Discussion fora in other courses, for example, IS502 Vocation in Ministry, asked for shorter, more general responses. In this way the interaction, while still initiated by the content, involved student-student interaction providing encouragement and personal sharing. One course in particular, WO510 Worship, varied the discussion fora with what the professor labeled as response, student-content interaction, and discussions, student-student interaction. While the Worship course did not have as extensive discussion as IS502 Vocation of Ministry, which had the lengthiest threads for individual student posts of the courses studied, the discussions prompted students to share personal experience narratives. Also the students interacted in the response (student-content) threads similarly to the discussions (student-student) threads. Thus, question-answer interactions were a prominent discursive form. The more structured question-answers prompted more student-content interaction and less structured questions prompted more student-student interactions. The unique mix of structured and less structured questions in WO510 Worship stimulated student-student interaction while also involving student-content interaction.

One particular type of question entreated the students to envision the meaning of the content for their ministry contexts. These questions engaged the students to envision a *pastoral imagination* in their situation or to negotiate meaning within their situation. Dr. Morgan in CL613 Equipping the Laity engaged these questions predominantly. Some students identified themselves in that vision and rejoined with volitional speech acts while others countered the vision generating their own *pastoral imagination*.

Some discussion fora revolved around required activities. The two most prominent were the NT(IBS)510 Matthew and PR610 Preaching, where the instructors used a learn-by-doing approach. The Matthew course saw extensive student-student interaction to facilitate the learning, while PR610 Preaching had fewer interactions. In both classes the students posted their individual work for comments and feedback from their classmates.

Another discursive form that evolved in the discussion fora were the student stories that abetted a shared repertoire. Some of these stories were divulged in order to share a means of solving problems as in WO510 Worship when one student shared the problem with the congregational music and others shared stories of how to engage the congregation in means of solving the problem. Other stories were shared for personal meaning-making and negotiation of meaning within discussions of practices and beliefs as the multiple discussions concerning infant baptism in DO690 Wesley's Theology. Professors also shared stories as personal experiences, informally or formally as the case study of Dr. Smythe in CD511 Pastor and Discipleship, or real-life experiences of others and congregations, as Dr. Ward in CH502 Church History 2. Dr. Wright in CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders used the three-part case study of a factual experience of a pastor and congregation to encompass the concepts of the course and expedite student discussions of the concept. These case studies provided simulated experiences for the students through discursive activities in developing a *pastoral imagination* for religious leadership (Foster et al., 2005). Additionally three classes required the students to create case studies with two of those case studies prepared collaboratively.

A more unique discursive form was the role play done in CD511 Pastor and Discipleship where students were given different roles to play and were to discuss an issue from that role's perspective. Two of the three groups with study participants enacted their roles with zest. Several students identified that while they personally did not agree with the perspective of their role, the exercise had been especially meaningful as they realized that as professional clergy they would encounter or had already faced similar perspectives and it was important for them to be conscious of the issues from differing perspectives.

Design implications for discursive activity. The final research question addresses the area of design of the discussion fora in online classes.

4.   Are there design implications for online theological education discussion fora?

Essentialness of discursive activity in online theological education. The preeminent design implication is the discursive activity itself. As has been shown, the discussion fora across the curriculum provided an avenue for students to reflect on the content and mutually engage one another concerning the content on beliefs and practices of the professional clergy within their theological framework. Students had to select the issues and points that provided meaning to them from the course readings and multimedia presentations for the course. This process in itself was a volitional response toward valuing those issues and points of learning. Students and professors engaged in questions and reactions to one another on those points, offering encouragement, acknowledgment, and agreement as well as challenges, thus, creating a shared history of learning. Students integrated learning from multiple sources within the course as well as across courses. They shared experiential stories as well as reflections on historical documents generating

a shared repertoire and negotiating experience through participation and reification. Through sharing their thoughts, perspectives, and experiences with others, students were afforded the opportunity to articulate not only learning but volitional intentions for performance as professional clergy. While students may have developed a *pastoral imagination* without the discussion fora, the discussion fora provided a means to exhibit that imagination, in a sense to play with it, try it on and see what it would look like in an arena where others were doing similarly so the socialness of the activity delivered an expanded *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005). Without this social space, the students would have been much more limited in their understanding and imagining.

> *Trust and acceptance.* Comparable to Rovai (2002a) and Conceicao (2002), the discussion fora necessitate a safe environment for reflections and questions in the process of alignment with the community, affording space for students to raise issues and concerns, to play with images of possibilities. When student-professor interactions were evaluative in tone, the students tended to interact less or to safe-guard their interactions. As was presented earlier, both NT(IBS)510 Matthew and PR610 Preaching used a learn-by-doing model. Both professors interacted less frequently with the students in the discussion fora than in some other classes. Both classes had students who were more expert and others were less proficient. NT(IBS)510 Matthew required students to use an interpretative method that was less known while PR610 Preaching required students to do an activity, preaching, which some of the students had done regularly for a number of years. Dr. Knight in PR610 used an evaluative tone, though offering encouragement, in his interactions, desiring to enhance the student capabilities. The student interaction was limited in the discussion fora, and students did not express increased self-efficacy. Dr.

Murphy in NT(IBS)510 used a more cooperative, though expert, tone in his interactions. The students in NT(IBS)510 expressed growing confidence. In most classes students used supportive and connected language in their engagements with one another, which invited further interaction. A sense of trust and acceptance while also being able to challenge and express one's own thoughts were essential.

Discussion prompts with types of interaction. Discussion prompts were also critical and the purpose of the discussion forum prescribes distinctive prompts. Student-student interaction was generally stimulated by less structured prompts while student-content interaction focus occurred in the more structured prompts. As has been noted one course successfully mingled structured and less structured prompts in separate fora. The mixture provides student-student interaction for those students for whom this is instrumental to learning and experiencing a sense of community while also providing the student-content interaction for those students focused on more factual information and less social engagement.

Variety in discussion focus. Other activities such as case studies and less common role plays and possibly debates (no instructor utilized this method in the study) provide variety and allow simulated experience for the students to engage in discursive activity. These afforded contextual learning in which the students consider different perspectives and/or a situated locale. These activities frequently resulted in volitional intentional speech acts where students identified future performance in decisions and actions as professional clergy.

Relationship building. Small groups, 4-6 students, tended to engage in greater student-student interaction, although IS502 Vocation of Ministry organized groups of 9-

10 students requiring 10 responses in each weekly discussion, and produced extensive interaction. Dr. Ward in CH502 Church History II utilized full class discussions by dividing the fora with multiple threads each generated with a separate prompt. Student-student interaction in Church History was substantially less than in courses such as Vocation of Ministry and somewhat less than most of the other courses, but student-content interaction was again the focus with goal of interpretation of historical documents for the clergy. Student-student interaction in Church History II centered on the interpretation of those historical traditions. However, the Church History students had a greater degree of conflict within the discussions and perhaps the students felt less community and were sharper in their interactions with one another. One possible explanation is that when students come to know one another more personally, their relationships develop within the forum. When the students have less relationship with their classmates, the facts take priority over the relationships with fellow students.

Frequency of the discursive activity. The discursive activity ranged from multiple fora each week to one forum for one module over three to five weeks of the course. A few classes held one weekly forum with multiple questions within the discussion prompt. One class held one forum for the module, but with the prompts divided into separate threads. The most common was one forum for a module but weekly postings required throughout the module—sometimes multiple postings within the week. When there were multiple questions in the prompts, the students focused on one or a limited set of the questions, especially in their responses to classmates. While this limited the discussion on some topics, it did allow the students to focus on the issues that were most important to them. The more frequent postings resulted in more student-

student interaction, but this also depended upon the focus of the discussion prompts. For example, YM510 Youth Ministry held weekly fora but the prompts focused on the content requesting the students to evaluate their practices according to the content. The interactions were mixed in that the students focused on the content, but shared some personal experiences with one another.

 Structure of the fora threads. Discussion fora varied as to who created the threads and how many threads were created. As has already been mentioned, Dr. Ward in CH502 Church History II generated the threads in the discussion forum, each with a separate discussion question to which the students responded. Several classes assigned a leader in the small groups for each week; these leaders were to initiate the discussion thread for the group. Sometimes individual students posted separately from the group thread. A few classes left the structure up to the group and consequently some groups used one thread and some groups had multiple threads. Some classes had each student to create their own threads and the groupmates or classmates responded to one another's threads. Dr. Baker in YM510 Youth Ministry started a single thread and the students were all to respond to that thread. One week he did not get the thread started and the students created their own threads and responded to one another's threads. Dr. Baker apologized for failing to initiate the thread and one student replied with a preference for individual student threads. Perhaps this was perceived by the students as control of the class by the instructor as there were a number of tensions expressed by the students with the professor. While different structures are possible, in fitting with adult education it may be preferable to allow the students to work out their own structures.

Quantity vs. quality. In regards to the purpose of the course, the design may

focus on generating community in which quantity of interaction may be preferred. As

has been noted Dr. Haddington in IS502 Vocation of Ministry required the students to

respond 10 times each week and resulted in extensive relationship building. Other

courses focused on content and promoted quality of discussions. Dr. Wagner in DOC690

Wesley's Theology required lengthy posts and responses with a focus on the content of

the course. He instructed the teaching assistants to evaluate the posts and responses

according to an extensive matrix. Student-student interaction developing relationships

was limited. Other instructors also emphasized that they were focused on quality of the

discussions rather than the quantity of the posts. This design issue likely follows the

focus of the course.

Professor interaction. As has already been noted, some professors maintained a

more congenial tone in the discussion fora with the students; others maintained an expert

tone. Dr. Morgan in NT(IBS)510 Matthew especially maintained an expert tone but was

also very congenial offering a sense of social presence. Some professors interacted

frequently with the students and others interacted sparingly or for evaluation purposes.

The fora where evaluation was emphasized, had less student-student interaction. As was

noted some of the professors responded after the student discussions were completed.

Few if any students responded to those instructor posts. While the professors may have

refrained from the student discussions in order to allow the students freedom to respond

and collaborate, students may not have benefitted from the professor input. Dr. Wright in

CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders did not engage frequently with the students in the

beginning of the course, but engaged more in the discussion fora as the course progressed

rather vehemently asserting his purpose in the course. One student, who was not in

agreement, withdrew from the discussions. It is important for professors to interact with

the students to exhibit a social presence (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997), but an evaluative

tone or asserting one's agenda may decrease the student interaction.

Chapter 5: Summary Conclusions and Design Recommendations

In the online theological education that was the subject of this case study, the online discursive activities were essential for the development of professional identity in the community of clergical practice. In some online offerings, discussion fora are being replaced by newer communication options in online educational technologies (web-based digital video conferencing, blogging, etc). However, it was remarkable how powerful a tool the discussion fora turned out to be in these online classes across the curriculum. Advantages of the written discursive activity is that students could go back to it and add comments later—a few conversations trailed on for two or more weeks after the initial assignment. Students could also read and re-read the comments before composing their responses. Additionally students could edit the responses—at times it appeared that students had edited their responses, perhaps in order to give the tone they desired.

Rogers' (2000) principles for the development of a community of practice in online interactions suggested that shared enterprise is accomplished by "encouraging exploration and evaluation of the artifacts with the community" (p. 390). Students in these online classes examined writings, both historic and current, of the larger community of the Christian church. Through the discursive activities in the online classes, the students exhibited elements of both Wenger's (1998) community of practice, explicitly developing shared repertoires and the modes of belonging: engagement, imagination, and alignment. Additionally they demonstrated evidence of learning that incorporated the four categories of the Carnegie study (Foster et al., 2005): formation, performance, interpretation, and contextualization. Without the discursive activities—the arena for students to reflect on the course materials, share personal meaning making and stories,

question and challenge one another as well as the professor, and affirm their learning—it is not overstating to assert that we would not have evidence of this learning.

The learning could possibly have occurred within the minds and lives of the students, but the discursive activities afforded the students to articulate the learning through speech acts. The act of selecting points or issues from the course materials about which to write, encompassed an affective response and valuing that, according to the affective domain taxonomy (Krathwohl et al., 1964), afford the potential for internalization of and characterization of the practitioner by those items valued. Some students named volitional and transformational statements as clergy for their ministries. Many theological courses require students to write reflection papers in the face-to-face classes, which function in much the same way as the initial posts in the online classes. However, the capacity of the students in the online classes to share their reflections and discuss them with their classmates, enriched the learning activity. The students profited not only from the transaction of the course materials including lectures, but also through interaction (two-way or back and forth communication) with one another and the instructors. Through this process the students exhibited a *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005) that developed and expanded through these discursive activities.

Most of the student clergy had extensive backgrounds and/or were currently engaged in Christian ministry within local churches or para-church organizations. A number of the graduate students had first careers in other fields and had been members of and active in local churches for extensive time periods; others had more limited relationships with local congregations for a variety of reasons. Given this broad background and experience, the discussion fora provided an avenue for the students to

share their expertise, often through stories, developing and self-identifying a shared repertoire and learning from one another as members of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

Frequently the students had opportunities to enact their learning in their ministries and then reflected upon their experiences. Additionally the discussion fora prompts or assignments, specifically those using creative narrative forms such as the role play and case studies provided a form of simulated experience for the students. These learning activities as well as the active engagement within the discussion fora indicate somatic learning and thus refutes the claims that cyberlearning is dualistic and unable to support crucial elements of community formation in theological education (as asserted by Carroll et al. (1997)).

Discursive Activity

The theological students exhibited an integration of learning through the discussions in the classes. Even though the discursive activities varied in structure and purpose from class to class, the students not only demonstrated the primary focus of the course in their interactions, but also presented other aspects of professional identity as detailed by Foster et al. (2005). This integration of the learning across the four pedagogies implies that the students appropriated these into their professional identities through their learning experiences in the discussion fora.

Additionally the students applied their understanding to their current ministries and ascertained instances from their experience that applied to the course content and discussions; thus, integrating the cognitive with the practical. The discussion fora afforded the space for students to articulate that integration. Through those speech acts

the students also experienced normative learning, which affected who they were as clergy, their professional identity. This integration of learning and practice implies how integral the discussions were to online Communities of Practice and professional identity development.

One interesting discovery was the creative uses of the discussion fora such as a role play, the discussion of case studies, as well as the development of case studies by the students. Many students actively engaged in these discussions with frequent use of "I" statements, indicating ownership of the learning. The role play was done synchronously but used the discussion forum rather than a chat. One group of students interacted in three threads simultaneously discussing (reading and responding to) various perspectives of the topic—like conducting three conversations at the same time. This type of interaction would not be possible in a face-to-face conversation.

Recommendations for Design and Integration of Discursive Activities in Online Theological Education

My findings emphasize strategies that might be employed to design online Communities of Practice to develop professional identity. Based on these findings, I propose the following recommendations for online professional education.

1. Use discursive activities to promote learning from and reflection for interpretation, formation, performance, and contextual activities allowing students space for mutual engagement, to express elements of imagination, and alignment towards development of professional identity. Use creative discursive activities such as role plays, case studies, and debates to simulate the professional practice.

2. Consider the instructional objective of the discussion fora for the course. Among other possible purposes, a principal use of the discursive activities in evidence in this study was to foster relational engagement in student-student interaction and promote personal meaning making of the course content for the theological students. Additionally discussions were used for reflections on content materials, feedback and peer assistance in learning by doing environments, and narrative sharing of experiences related to the course purposes. Structures that promote the instructional purpose should be utilized.

3. Design the structure, frequency, and type of interaction of the discussion fora to reflect the purpose of the discursive activity. Direct the discursive interaction between students (student-student) to facilitate the development of community. Design more frequent and conversational interaction to promote story telling of personal experience and meaning making and foster the development of a shared repertoire for the community. Create questions that direct the students to reflect on the course content and their experiences to promote student-content interaction for critical thinking. Use a combination of interpretative critical thinking on course content and experiential learning to assist students in practical application.

4. Instructors should contemplate the tone of their interactions with the students. Dominant instructor interactions and/or an evaluative tone tends to lessen student-student interaction. Instructors can provide a social presence that helps to lessen the emotional distance for students in online classes and yet assist them to critically reflect and engage issues for the community of practice of the profession by maintaining a congenial yet expert tone.

Directions for Future Research

This qualitative research study has raised multiple questions for future research.

1. The study has not focused on a progressive development of professional identity in the theological students but rather a snapshot of selected classes. Now that it has been established that students in courses across the curriculum do evidence learning that is recognized as necessary for a professional identity of the clergy, a longitudinal study of students progressing through their studies at the seminary could demonstrate how that professional identity development occurs or does not occur in the course of study.

2. The study considered the discussion fora of a class as the unit of analysis using deductive categories for coding. Multiple classes across the curriculum were included. A more in-depth, grounded study with open-ended coding of the discourse in the fora for a given class could reveal insights not included in this study.

3. Triangulation for the study encompassed multiple classes within the four seminary schools and in two integrative studies courses across schools. However, additional triangulation of methods using interviews and questionnaires such as the Sense of Classroom Community Index (SCCI) as developed and utilized by Rovai (2002b) with the students could benefit the findings to see if the students perceived learning and identity development similarly to the findings of this study. Additionally triangulation with the faculty through interviews could also be useful to identify their purposes and concerns in the online classes.

4. This study was a case study of one Christian theological seminary. Additional studies of other theological educational institutions, and cross-case comparisons, could be helpful to see if similar results are found in other settings. Specifically this seminary has semester-length courses without the use of cohort sections. Studies of schools using cohorts with condensed courses in the program of study, would be a beneficial comparison.

5. As technology moves on, exploration of other interactive forms of communication for discursive activity should be considered. This study examined asynchronous, written texts. Are similar results for community and professional identity development found in synchronous communication such as chats or audio/video conferencing? Does written communication afford more or less potential than oral communication?

6. This study cursorily considered gender and voice issues within the discussion fora dialogs. More extensive analysis on these issues is warranted to determine if the initial perceptions that there were no predominant differences in the voice used by males and females or if other gender issues surface that might marginalize some participants.

   As was identified in Chapter 2, Wenger (1998) identified that some persons or groups may be marginalized by the community and not allowed equal participation. Others may select limited participation, which Lave and Wenger (1991) identified as legitimate peripheral participation. As gender-related analysis was not the primary focus of my research, an initial perception of the data has been reported with the caveat that further study with a deeper look is in

order. Some classes had a larger amount of interaction from the females similarly to Baskin et al. (2005) and Wang et al. (2003). The small group consisting of the female students in CL613 Equipping the Laity generally had a greater number of posts and responses than the groups consisting of male students. In Module 2 reported in the CL613 analysis, the all-female group had 18 posts with 108 responses as compared to the next highest by two male groups each with 7 posts and 34 and 33 responses. The women tended to share more of their family concerns in their posts than did the male participants. This was the only course in which the groups were separated by sex. In IS502 Vocation of Ministry in the second week's discussion forum reported in the IS502 analysis, women wrote the two posts with the highest number of responses (26 and 22). Moreover, these two participants commonly replied to each classmate's response, thus generating the large number of responses. However, the mean response per post for the posts started by females was 9.2 and the mean average of responses for posts created by males was 8. Not all of the women followed up to each classmate's response in their posts. One of the professors for these courses was male (CL613) and one was female (IS502) and so the influence of the gender of the professor does not initially seem to affect the increased female involvement.

Similarly to the findings of Fahy and Ally (2005), many women and many men used a connected voice (Rovai, 2001) softening their challenges and questions to their classmates with hedges. Some women and some men used an independent voice as identified by Rovai with the main focus on the information or task of the discussion forum. In DOC609 Wesley's Theology for Today where

there were two teaching assistants, one female and one male, both TAs used an independent, authoritarian voice predominantly although they both offered praise and encouragement at times. Men and women in the classes shared stories that worked toward building a shared narrative repertoire. This initial analysis seems dissimilar to the findings of Rovai (2001) and Carr et al. (2004) as differences in voice and participation between men and women were not apparent. A more thorough, focused analysis on the voice and participation of the discussion entries perhaps would reveal if this initial perception would be adjusted.

Summary

This qualitative, single-case study encompassing thirteen courses across the curriculum of a Christian theological seminary, has shown the capacity for students through discursive activity in written, asynchronous discussion fora to exhibit learning involving formation, performance, interpretation, and contextualization that is recognized as necessary for the professional identity of the clergy. Additionally, students' discussion texts displayed components of Wenger's (1998) modes of belonging especially including engagement and imagination. Through content-interaction along with student-student interaction, students interpreted historical and current texts gaining access to and meaning making from the historical shared repertoire of the professional clergy community of practice. Students and instructors shared personal stories from experience and personal meaning making that provided the furthered the growth of a shared repertoire. Through these discursive activities, theological students developed and expanded their *pastoral imagination* that would guide their conceptions of who they are as professional clergy

and the decisions and professional performances they will encompass in their situated contexts.

Appendix A

Historical Overview of Wesleyanism

Appendix A John Wesley was a clergyperson in the Church of England (today the Anglican Church) in the 18th century, living two centuries after the separation of the Church of England from the mother Roman Catholic Church based in Rome and the century following the final great battles in England between Catholicism and Protestantism. By Wesley's time the Church of England was a mixture of these two western European Christian theological ideologies emphasizing a triad of Scripture, tradition, and reason (Wright, 1990). For Wesley Scripture was primary authority but he highly appreciated church tradition. Wesley attended and was a life-long fellow at Oxford University, reading the Christian church theologians and interacting with both Eastern Orthodox and Western Christian theological thought (Outler, 1964). Wesley followed after Jacobus Arminius, the Dutch reformer-theologian, who opposed John Calvin, in that although spiritual salvation is not accomplished by church membership, obedience, or good works (agreement with Calvin), one's acts of obedience are required for continued spiritual salvation (opposing Calvinism) (Methodist Preacher, 1903, Chapter XI: Two Sorts of Methodists). In his young adult years Wesley encountered a group of Protestant German Moravians, mystics, who emphasized personal spiritual experience. Their life style and faith had a profound effect upon Wesley (Outler, 1964; Parker, n.d.). As a result of these multiple influences, Wesley sought after a life-style that he saw portrayed in the Christian scriptures that emphasized loving God and loving others with one's whole being. Wesley preached and taught a theological perspective

that emphasized personal transformation but was also concerned with social practices (Outler, 1964).

While studying at Oxford in the late 1720s, he and his brother, Charles, led a group of students, who met for Bible study and a methodical, thus the name Methodists, accountability to Christian living among the members of the group. Later after his encounter with the Moravians and his own personal spiritual experience, Wesley began forming his own Societies after the system of the Moravians. According to a pamphlet published in 1743, the General Rules for these groups included 1) doing no harm by avoiding evil of every kind, 2) doing good as far as is possible to all and 3) attending the ordinances of God "such as public worship, the ministry of the word, the Lord's Supper [sacrament of communion], family and private prayer, searching the Scriptures, and fasting and abstinence" (Methodist Preacher, 1903, Chapter IX - Society and Class, Para 15). The Methodist church, formed by Wesley's preachers and followers, and other denominations that trace their roots to Wesley, teach a lifestyle that attests to these guidelines still.

> Wesley and the early Methodists were particularly concerned about inviting people to experience God's grace and to grow in their knowledge and love of God through disciplined Christian living. They placed primary emphasis on Christian living, on putting faith and love into action. This emphasis on what Wesley referred to as 'practical divinity' has continued to be a hallmark of United Methodism today. (United Methodist Church, 2004)

Thus, the practices of the communities of these denominations for both pastor-clergy and non-clergy involve this disciplined living. The clergy, for Wesley (1756, 1872) among many other requirements, were "to be an example to the [congregation], in his [sic] private as well as public character" (p. 487) and "to be endued with an eminent measure

of love to God, and love to all his [sic] brethren [sic], a love the same in kind, but in degree far beyond that of ordinary Christians" (p. 486).

Appendix B

Exploratory Pilot Study

The researcher completed an exploratory pilot study for this investigation during the fall 2003 and fall and spring 2004-05 semesters as a part of the doctoral course work at the University of Kentucky College of Education for EPE 663 Field Studies in Educational Institutions, EPE 763 Advanced Field Studies, and EDC 709 Social Design of Interactive Systems. The purpose of the pilot study was to explore the potential of the development of community in an online class where the professors and students might never meet face to face.

One online course at a graduate theological seminary was observed for the first half of one semester. The researcher read the posts generated by the students and instructors but did not reply to any posts in the discussion fora of the online course and collected the log archives for the discussion fora for later analysis. A content analysis (Marra et al., 2004) was later conducted on the text of a discussion forum of one team group within the online class for a three-week period. Several interviews were conducted with key administrative and faculty personnel as well as with online students. One group interview was conducted with students in the form of an online chat. Two separate analyses were written from this preliminary study. One focused on one key dimension of a CoP—learning as belonging. Wenger (1998) asserted that participants in a CoP demonstrate modes of belonging as they learn in a community of practice. Specifically these modes are engagement, imagination, and alignment. The second analysis focused on the experiences of faculty and students within the online courses obtained through interviews and online chats—generally what they did in the courses, why they were

involved in online education, and what problems and benefits they found in online

education.

Analysis of Text Logs from the Online Discussion Forum for the Graduate Course

The textual documents produced by the online discussion forum were analyzed by

the elements of the Modes of Belonging according to the protocol developed by the

researcher and displayed in Table A.1. A Microsoft Excel database of 991 lines of text

from the three-week module discussion forum was created to hold the raw data and

facilitate the analysis and citing of examples from the data in the reports. This database

has been kept by the researcher. Individual posts in the discussion forum were coded to

have multiple Modes of Belonging identified within the text if appropriate.

Table A.1

Deductive Categories from Wenger's (1998) Modes of Belonging

Belonging Mode	Definition	Sample statement indicators	Coding Rules
Engagement:			
Shared histories of learning	Personal narratives	I am involved in … Last Sunday, I had …	Speaks of personal experience, not of someone else
Relationships	Statements of affirmation Appreciation	Those were awesome stories. Hi, … sounds like a great... Thanks for your …	Statements designed to encourage others or to show appreciation for others' input
Interactions	Addressed question to someone; Answered questions	How did this event…? One thing I was able to do …	Asks a substance question or responds to a substance question

Table A.1 (cont.)

Deductive Categories from Wenger's (1998) Modes of Belonging

Belonging Mode	Definition	Sample statement indicators	Coding Rules
Practices	Procedural things done or to be done	One person gave several procedures she uses for coping with the stress of her work/ministry	Procedures are from one's experience or knowledge related to the course "How to" statements

Alignment:

Discourses	Statements of facts	One of the major benefits, …	Declarative statement that is not procedural Lengthier statements than most
Coordinated enterprises	Back and forth dialog for purpose not part of assignment	Student involved in hospice ministry and another person whose wife is interested in this work have four interactions	Two or more participants exchange 2 or more times following topics not specifically for the course
Complexity	Complex social issues	Homeless veterans Stand Down Hospice ministry	Provides extensive comment of thought or experience
Styles	Exclamations and emoticons	☺ ALL CAPS Exclamations!	Shows individual personality style
Compliance	Compliance to pro-cedures of group	Apology for improper posting	Shows desire to fol-low practice guides

Imagination:

Images of possibilities	Identifies what the speaker wants	I would like, etc.,	First person Not definite
Images of the world	Situations experienced outside oneself that give view of world	Through their sharing, I have … Person was of Hindu faith and their culture is much different than ours	Incongruence New insight from experience of the "other"

Table A.1 (cont.)

Deductive Categories from Wenger's (1998) Modes of Belonging

Belonging Mode	Definition	Sample statement indicators	Coding Rules
Images of past & future	Descriptions of what has been and where going in future	…the writings of John Wesley and Jimmy Carter… I think it is important for me to help others…	Both past and future are not necessary in single post
Images of ourselves	Descriptions of how view oneself	I was able ... I felt I was being…	Personal pronouns but can be collective

Interview Data Analysis

Face-to-face interviews with faculty and administrators were recorded and then transcribed word for word. Online chat interview logs with students were saved for analysis. The transcripts and logs were encoded for patterns of common experiences and similar ideas expressed by the participants that emerged from the experiences of the faculty and students. Discrepant cases were also noted as qualitative research considers the voice of the one as important as the voice of the many (Galvan, 2003). The codings were then organized by identifying assertions that were being made in the interview transcripts and logs along with the narrative evidence for those assertions. Themes that emerged from the assertions were identified.

Findings

The exploratory preliminary study's content analysis identified over 200 instances of the Modes of Belonging from Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice model in the 67 posts of five students of the team during a three-week module. A frequency count of the Modes of Belonging statements is shown in Table A.2. The posts were identified by

the purpose of the post in the discussion forum—initial post of a student, a post raising a critical thinking question as per the assignment, responses to those questions, and miscellaneous comments. The frequency of the Modes of Belonging were calculated accordingly. The professor in the preliminary study course structured the assignments in such a way that the natural result was student interaction with one another. This facilitation approach appeared to foster the engagement mode of belonging in the development of the community in line with a community of practice as identified by Wenger (1998). All teammates posting in the group discussion forum during the field test were involved in the interactions and received relational responses from teammates.

Table A.2

Count of Statements for Wenger's Modes of Belonging Coded in the Postings of the Team Discussion Forum Folder

Type of Post	Engagement				Alignment					Imagination			
	Shared Histories of Learning	Relationships	Interactions	Practices	Discourses	Coordinated Enterprises	Complexity	Styles	Compliance	Images of Ourselves	Images of Possibilities	Images of Past & Future	Images of the World
Initial Posts (5 posts)	5						1	1		3		1	2
CT Questions (18 posts)		13	21		1					1	3		
Responses (15 posts)	1	2	12	24	1		1			10	8	6	9
Misc. (29 posts)	2	11	13	8	7	3	1	1	2	16	4	5	6
Grand Total	8	26	46	32	9	3	3	2	2	30	15	12	17

The preliminary study also revealed that rich data were collected from one-hour chats among participants. The participants in those chats, sometimes having never met one another before, shared personal information, reflections, and formed relational bonds from their mutual engagement that assisted their co-participants in the joint enterprises of online learning and spiritual formation. Themes expressed in the interview transcripts and logs analysis included community concerns of engagement, interaction and collaboration as well as faculty issues with online education, tensions between traditional and online teaching/learning, and issues of assessment and evaluation. Table A.3 displays the identified themes, assertions, and evidence for those found in the pilot study. These preliminary findings echo research by others (Palloff & Pratt, 1999; Rovai, 2001; Schwen & Hara, 2003; Schwier, 2001; Sorensen & Murchu, 2004; Swan, 2002; Wang et al., 2003; Yeung & Ferry, 2002) that found that community in online environments is possible and extend these findings to include the practices and development of community in pastoral (ministerial) education.

Table A.3

Online Communities: Themes and Assertions

Theme Assertion		Evidence
Faculty issues	Satisfied faculty in online classes have positive can-do attitude towards online teaching environment	No computer phobias
		Interest in online education
		Training
		Requires discipline for interactions -- even though do not have set class time, discipline to maintain interaction with online students
	Faculty in online classes have found a variety of teaching methods useful	Written or videotaped lectures
		Reading guide/discussion questions
		Website/CD for supplemental material
		Real audio—bridges gap of traditional classroom
		Scaffolding in the form of reading guides promotes discovery learning

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Table A.3 (cont.)

Online Communities: Themes and Assertions

Theme Assertion		Evidence
		Dialogical approach uses discussion prodding questions and then follow-up prodding questions by professor and classmates to stimulate deeper thought
		Teams do practice work together to enhance learning
Faculty issues (continued)	Faculty in online classes have some concerns	Student access to materials—Internet access speeds, accessible hardware/software
		Student access to library materials
		Video production too time consuming for professor
		Student disappearances
		Outbursts of students in discussions
		Some professors have reservations because they cannot see how they can use their strengths in the online environment - professor preferences
		Providing for different learning styles of students
		Asynchronous nature of communication requires flexibility and time lags
Community	Engagement through relational interaction and shared stories creates a sense of belonging with the community	Classmate camaraderie—don't feel awkward in sharing within course because warm and caring responses, encouragers
		Online chat assistive interaction
		Relational language within team discussion
		Professors nurturing—love and caring
Community (continued)	Engagement through relational interaction (continued)	After course on-going communication w/prof
		Relational personhood requires community; how facilitate interaction to form relationships
	Structure of class: Collaborative teams were useful to enhance interaction and feeling of community	Teams were used for student projects—research and presentation, discussions
		Quiet person "says" more
		Get to know people more within team/small groups more
		Interaction with small groups helps overcome isolation

Table A.3 (cont.)

Online Communities: Themes and Assertions

Theme	Assertion	Evidence
		Level playing field, people leave stuff behind, selective how present self
		Open team to other teams for read-only— silent collaboration, not an island benefit
	Professor sets the tone or direction of the interaction	Leadership of professor/moderator is essential
		Detached—little interaction with professor equates to poor experience by students
		Good feedback from professor -- challenging, transforming (Ellen)
Community (continued)	Expression of prayer/life concerns promotes community	Express more life concerns online in context of life
		Devotional by professor or students
		Virtual prayer chapel is more conducive, promotes more openness to expression of concerns
		Student response to one another -- engagement announcements
Traditional vs. online	Online teaching/learning involves a paradigm shift.	Sage on the stage/talking head vs. guide
		Traditional learning is a "conveyor belt' image
		Online usually involves less lecture, more interaction/collaboration
		Online -- More discovery: basic to professor, new and cool to students
		Challenge to professor how to translate course into online environment; how to utilize professor strengths online
Traditional vs. online (continued)	The inability of the professor to immediately answer each online student's questions encourages collaborative learning among the students.	Time tension. In the traditional setting, the professor answers a question from one student by addressing all the students, thus answering at once the same or similar questions from multiple students. Online the professor may need to repeat the same answer multiple times for different students at different times.
		In the traditional classroom, when a question is asked, professor steps in; due to asynchronous nature of online, other students often respond very capably

Table A.3 (cont.)

Online Communities: Themes and Assertions

Theme	Assertion	Evidence
	The collaborative learning aspect, while good, is a source of tension with traditional teaching-learning.	Tension for professor. Online professor feels less responsible for learning because of collaboration -- cheater
		Ph.D.s have ability for judgment
		Capitalist -- Student expectation of "money's worth"
	Isolation vs. flexibility	Online -- Isolation: don't participate in campus activities
Traditional vs. online (continued)	Isolation vs. flexibility (continued)	Online Institutional how-tos are more difficult to learn
		Online provides flexibility for lifestyle and career changes
Assessment and Evaluation	Faculty utilized various means of assessment	Quizzes
		Microsoft Word tests -- fill in form fields
		Email message tests
		Analytical papers
		Peer reviews of group work
		Final test that doesn't count enough to encourage cheating but gives a final review of content
	Several issues involved with assessment arise in the online environment	Student apprehension -- involves student self-doubt, what's the professor requiring
		Collaborative work difficult to grade
		Rubrics are helpful for assessing work -- aids students and faculty
		Automated, computerized assessments lack grading "grace"
		Integrity of students with test assessments
Assessment and Evaluation (continued)	Faculty comments	For content intensive courses, students like weekly quizzes, which provide them with acquisition growth
		No different in scores between traditional and online classes
	Student evaluation of online courses	Sometimes difficult to navigate
		Positive comments
		Suggestions

CL620/MS654 Emerging Leaders with Bold Text for Analysis

Module 5 discussion forum instructions:

In the fifth and final module, we take seriously the legacy anyone of us may have when we invest in the lives of others. Even as some have used the metaphor of "ripples on water" as an image of the impact of our lives, we can be sure that an increment of investment moves far beyond us to touch people who we may never some to know. When these increments on investment have been conducted with an entrusted few, the numbers multiply pretty quickly. Isn't this the story of Jesus and the twelve? Isn't this our story? **Are you preparing yourself for legacy level leadership development contributions?**

To be sure, legacies don't come easy. They are hard-won. A value system oriented toward durable impact must undergird our souls and our effort. In human society, cultural and social pressures can often work against durability, depth and distance. So, we now begin to piece together themes from the preceding module conversation with an eye toward impact beyond ourselves. As we discussed in the third module: The greater the intensiveness of what we hope to acheive, the greater degree of intentionality required to achieve it.

In this module, this is our focus. **We invoke the mission of God as the context of our leadership development efforts.** We accept our place in His divine economy and method for reaching the world around us. As Douglas Hyde urged "His Method was Men [sic, People]. We gather our learning to ask, about what must we be intentional (personally, interpersonally, organizationally) to ensure impact within, through and beyond ourselves.

In this last module, we shift from our individuals groups, and come together as an entire class. We begin to make connections between the module conversations which have gone before, and the challenge implied in this one: "Developing the Leaders Beyond You." I will seed these discussions by posing several case studies and thread-leading discussions through the remaining weeks together.

The first case and discussion focuses primarily on the circumstances of "Pastor Jeff Griggs" … and secondarily on a consultant, "Colin Belcher." Read through the case. Read through the materials for this session. Then begin to engage one another around the following questions:

1. Respond: Pastor Jeff is exerting a serious, even respectable, amount of energy and effort in building a church. Using the materials from the the last four modules, characterize these efforts, their motives, their progress, especially as they pertain to Jeff's core identity as a called and formed person. **Consider: The Leader Above, Leader Within You**.

2. Respond: Do Pastor Jeff's actions and ministry objectives resonate as representative of any ministry experiences you have witnessed or experienced? How would you characterize the ministry philosophy you see in Pastor Jeff? What are the interpersonal implications for such a core philosophy? What would it be like to be on a ministry team with Jeff, given these reflexes he seems to evince? **Consider: Developing**

the Leaders Around You.

3. What role do cultural paradigms have in the ministry expression we see in Pastor Jeff's situation? Is he generating culture (intrapersonally), a participant within a cultural matrix of peers (interpersonaly), a by-stander in culture (a-cultural), a victim in culture (systemic issues)? How does his ministry relate to biblical norms, ecclesiology and mission? All of these, several of these, none of these? **Consider: The Leaders Among You, The Leaders Beyond You.**

Note: "Vision Fatigue" is a multi-part case and I have uploaded only part one, background to the case. More from this church and its people to come over the next remaining weeks together.

Note: This is a TRUE CASE STORY. Need not be merely criticizing of Jeff, **but seek to penetrate the personal and social context in a way that allows you to connect this (and the course) to real ministry contexts in which you are entrusted.**

Milton: **Jeff Reed** [author] **has convinced me** in "Church-Based Christian education: Creating a New Paradigm" "The Problem Defined "section (by quoting Edward Farley in the Fragility of Knowledge, Page 9) of the need for church based education: [provided answer responses for 3 main areas of questions]

Dr. Wright: Thanks for getting us started. Whew! **You REALLY jumped into it the heart of the matter**.

let me offer you some perspective (as I sense a little "skepticism" about Reed as being a mere arm-chair idealist).

I have spent the last two sabbaticals studying the church-based theological education movement. My research has tracked BILD's version of CBTE to seven (7) different nations: US, Canada, Honduras, France, Nigeria, Cambodia, Japan. I have conducted more than 105 video-taped interviews (perhaps I should upload a few). I have looks at this process is the inner city, the burbs, the countryside of these countries. I have interviewed main players who have been with the movement for more than 30 years.

My estimation: you are looking a no arm-chair idealists. His August newsletter indicated that in November (now), more than 100,000 people in 47 nations will have been through the BILD Process, resulting in untold church plants. I have come to know the leadership of this movement personally, even affectionately. I have critiques to offer, too, but not in a dismissive way, rather ones which might be philosophically derived (from my arm chair). I would invite you to reflect again on your first questions to assess what is driving you philosphically, and to respond (not react) to Reed. Fill in what you deem may be missing, what may be errant, what may be idealistic.

Is their process without flaws? No, none are, but I can assert to you, it is not easily dismissed as idealistic. Reed has maintain the role of senior pastor of Oakroad Bible Church for these alst 30 years, believing only churches birth churches, by preparing leaders.

Let me ask, what exactly is the nature of your critique? Let me ask you to look back at your first draft and ask is it your own relative exposure to the material that makes it seem idealistic or is there something about matching the virulence of this movement, one which is very Wesley-like in its organizational patterning, that may be demanded of ministry structures around us? Remember,

rare is not wrong, its just rare. Consider taking a look at: www.BILD.org to see whether this movement may have something, not everything, but something to teach may churches which want to impact their world.

What do you say? Willing to give us a little more philosophically?

Jack: I am still working through the reading right now, **but some of my experience makes me somewhat skeptical** regarding church-based training. I am not sure whether this is simply my personal bias or a real critique, but I am connected with several Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, and these circles tend to prefer experience-based training rather than formal seminaries. In fact, almost none of the pentecostal pastors that I know have seminary educations and very few of them even have an undergraduate level of education. Rather, they follow in-service training models, engaging in a 1 or 2 year internship.

Dr. Wright: As you work through the reading, call to memory our starting place: Scripture. Are you preapred to look at biases, in light of Scripture, to be theologically reflective about what has become accepted, perhaps false essentialisms? ….

No, I do not want to defend the specific case you have in mind which may have disposed you to an allergy for church-ordered learning for many of these institutes are merely poorly cobbled together Enlightenment-aimed classrooms without Enlightenment standards of rigorous rationalism. Nor do I want to defend seminaries who have better versions of the same. **I am advocating a strategy I have researched for the last seven years** which is producing 16-, 22-, 44-, 67-year olds who exceed readiness for graduate-level conversational grasp of theology and ministry, and who are preparing to deepen new church planting networks. The people I have interviewed in 9 nations, 105 in all, have used many of the books you have used here as well as reproductions of great Western classics. Non-literate men and women are coached into sense-making until they can participate in the conversations and their authority from practice can be made accessible to others in these hermeneutical circles. Many are doing local theologizing around issues in culture for which no theology book is written. **This reminds me of the organization of someone who is really liked around this place...what was his name again? Oh yes, John Wesley.**

I guess, we may not yet be talking about the same thing (such is that case with paradigms), **so let me turn this into a question that might get us on a generative path** which may allow us to turn our biases in to the authorities: **what metrics matter in the formation of a**

person? What source to we derive our norms from? How does Scripture interact with cultural norms in the equipping of he saints? Why might the professor (me) have crafted a five-part model which included a "Beyond You" dimension? Any biblical rationale for it? Do we have a deficit if ANY model of formation fails to result in missionally productive people in increasing numbers? To whom was this equipping comission given, individuals, churches, denominations, seminaries?

Let's give these questions a whirl in the next line of discussion. I think they can help ferret out the paradigmstic issues that help surface biases.

Note: Jack's post raises important cultural concerns, so I offer this extended response for all to participate in on his thread, not justhim. **Let these probes direct your reading and re-reading.** Consult again the first module and what each of you offered as biblical rationale and norms. Test whether you are being consistent with what you wrote, or whether it is time to revise what you wrote in light of another revistation of Scriptural norms. Selah.

Dr. Wright: Seems a serious ordered reflection process that functions as a community in theological reflection together is extremely reminensent of the orality-centered modality of traditional cultures. In fact, the model and movement seems to thrive most naturally in such settings. My work in Cambodia seems most resembling of the learning huddles in the NT, book of Acts, where all learn togehther and each one teaches one.

What are the contextual implementation issues in your context as you see them?

Milton: Dr Wright poses this question in the post above: "To whom was this equipping comission given, individuals, churches, denominations, seminaries?"

My answer, the Local Church (Eph 5:25-32)! **That's why I've very challenged by Reed's writings. I'm convinced of the content. I'm still trying to set realistic goals for the next 6 months, year, 5, 10, 25, 50 years** as I serve as head elder in our Czech church and leader of the only full-time youth leader training program in the country.

"I think they can help ferret out the paradigmstic issues that help surface biases."- West

I want to see my biases. I may have some Eastern European skepticism going on as to implementation...Reed writes pretty fundamentally.

Let's keep interacting! I'm willing to learn and learn. Thank's for interacting with my skepticism. I wish to equip believers not just show them an inspiring plan but give them no way of fulfilling it.

Following the above discussion, Milton add another new post.

Milton: Dr. J. Robert Clinton in The Emerging Leader Three Umbrella Concepts speaks to this:

> "**Spiritual formation essentially refers to the development of leadership character. Ministerial formation has as its essence the development of influence and ministry skills. Strategic formation focuses on development of leadership values which culminate in a ministry philosophy, developed over a lifetime and compels the leader to an ultimate contribution in accordance with the purposes of God.**" (Clinton 2)

> Pastor Jeff is investing into institutions and not into people.   John 10 talks about the Good Shepherd knowing the sheep and taking care of them by name not just building bigger and bigger sheepfolds (in sheep and in physical size).

> West says in "The Mentor Within You", "**Cultivating others is fundamental to who you are called to be.** It is fundamental to your core orientation to others. From the very first chapter of Scripture, until the very last, we are urged to fulfill our capacity to be fruitful and useful in the economy of the garden." (West, 1)

Case Study Pt. 2 Questions

4. Question: Ministry Leadership Development Philosophy. Engage in integrative conversations -- use of the multiple texts of the course -- around the ministry philosophy (philosophies?) that are present within this case, this community. How do you characterize it, from a leadership development perspective?
5. Question: The Leadership Emergence Pivot. Cases like these pivot on just a few elements. What are they in this case? Analyze the case, and make your argument for what you think to be causing and effecting what, especially as it relates to leadership development?
6. Mediating the Emergence. In an organization, some things substitute for other things, e.g., philosophies, policies, practice, procedures, personnel. These "proxies" stand in the stead of a manager giving directives on the spot. These "proxies" mediate a leadership team's will. In this case, how does the pastor mediate leadership and laborer-ship development? What "proxies" are at work in this case? Do the proxies -- philosophies, policies, practices, procedures, personnel -- mediate the will of the pastor adequately, in what way? Do the proxies critique the will of the pastor, in what way? Note: Can you see that Phil, the program to be implemented, the Board practices, etc. are proxies? Discuss.

Karl **Wow, what an interesting case..**. [in original] Here are my thoughts and reflections...
[Questions 1 and 2 are answered in length]
3. Mediating the Emergence. In an organization, some things substitute for other things, e.g., philosophies, policies, practice, procedures, personnel. These "proxies" stand in the stead of a manager giving directives on the spot. These "proxies" mediate a leadership team's will. In this case, how

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does the pastor mediate leadership and laborer-ship development? What "proxies" are at work in this case? Do the proxies -- philosophies, policies, practices, procedures, personnel -- mediate the will of the pastor adequately, in what way? Do the proxies critique the will of the pastor, in what way? Note: Can you see that Phil, the program to be implemented, the Board practices, etc. are proxies? Discuss.

This was a harder one for me to answer. It seems that the proxies in the case woud be church practices (who is responsible for setting up new groups, who releases funds...), **influential personnel and their authority** (the board of elders, pastors, interns), **yearly planning** (who sets the vision for the church, do they meet quarterly or monthly to review the mission/vision and progress towards it?), **organizational charts** (who is accountable to whom), **job requirements and descriptions** (what do we have interns do, what are the requirements for our group leaders, do we even train group leaders and if so, how...) and finally, **ways that information is disseminated through the church.**

It seems that these proxies do very little to mediate Jeff's will, as he does what he wants. However, I would see that the Board is finally waking up to the fact that Jeff needs to be accountable to them, and as such, should keep them in the loop for anything significant occurring or being initiated in the church.

Dr. Wright: A very thorough engagement of the issues in the case. from your replies, I can see in your reflexes a commitment to development for all involved. You, repeatedly, prescribe coaching, mentoring, accountability as ways to implement and assist. Valuable insight!

The proxies part, can be hard to see indeed. However, these substitutes, enhancers and neutralizers are everywhere in our ministry contexts. One of the key elements I am driving at in this part of the course is heightening the capacity of course participants to see, and name, these proxies that help and hinder the mediation of leadership development, that aggravate change strategies, than affect mission.

You are on your way. **A great exercise: think over the case, and list as many proxies as you can**, and ask whether they can be tapped to become assets in mission in this case. Chances are: **these elements are within OUR context** during transitions times as well, and **we do not want to be naive about their capacity to intervene in change strategies**.

Milton: […] **Program is killing this situation again.** […]

I'm curious how this continues!

Dr. Wright: [re: Program is killing this situation again]

Let me play "Jeff's [case study persona] advocate" here. Is he not doing a new thing? Creating a quietly incubated process, not laying it out in front of everyone one? Has he not learned his lesson? After al, he has approved Phil's list already. **Skim it again. What do you think?**

Further, **look over the intro questions, and get into the proxy issues** pertaining to the problem and possibilities of mediating influence toward mission. What do you think?

Milton: **Jeff wants new things but I question his direction**, his "Achiever" leadership style, and his timeline. [7 paragraphs omitted]

He wanted to sell the new way rather than co-create the new paradigm with his church. His leadership level remains at the "Catalyst level" which is a "Visionary, facilitative orientation. Believes that leaders articulate an innovative, inspiring vision and bring together the right people to transform the vision into realtiy. **Leaders empower others adn actively facilitate their development.**" (Joiner, 8).

[3 more paragraphs were omitted]

Dr. Wright: **Read with interest the final installment of the case,** keeping these insights you have here from pages 8 and 9, before you. Then, tell me what you think. **Nice selections from Joiner!**

Milton: **Jeff did it! He adjusted! He's showing leadership agility!**

See my installment 3 for specifics.

Case study Part 3

Dr. Wright: Vision Fatigue ~ The Mission (Part Three) is now uploaded; I have attached it again here (but go to course area for the Appendix Mentioned). Take a look. This is the final episode of the three-part case. More than six years has passed now. We join the church at this stage.

We now turn toward closure of our course. The final episode offers a conversation about the practicality of our learning together this semester.

Probes for Our Final Conversation:

1. What is Your Judgment Regarding What Happened In and After "The Big Meeting?" Consider: Jeff's Appraisal, Phil's Work, that of Others.
2. **What Practical Insights Does the Case Stimulate for You?** Consider: This Community -- First Community Church -- Has Its Own Story. What Do You Gain for Yours?
3. **What Are the Practical Implications of this Course for You? Consider: What Learnings are You taking With You? What Do You Want to Impress Upon Your Peers?**

Milton: [Question 1 regarding the case study answered]

2. What Practical Insights Does the Case Stimulate for You? Consider: This Community -- First Community Church -- Has Its Own Story. What Do You Gain for Yours?

I will work more as a team for ownership sake as head elder and principal of the youth pastor training Internship. "As this new capacity developed, David [at the Catalyst level] was quick to recognize opportunities for joint problem solving. He also developed the ability to shift, on the spot, from unilateral to collaborative intent, pausing after key advocacy statements to inquire about others' views." (Joiner, 101)

I will lead being assertive but also ready to change…without leaving my leadership responsibilities behind.

I will seek to know my people especially my leaders and not just value them for their output. Specifically I'll spend time listening actively and not practice recommending unread books to them.

I will not give up when trouble comes.

3. What Are the Practical Implications of this Course for You? Consider: What Learnings are You taking With You? What Do You Want to Impress Upon Your Peers?

I'll list my points of application and change!: team leadership for co-ownership, the whole leadership agility compass, CBTE!, wisdom-based curriculum, people-focused ministry, God-led vision and direction, building leaders around and beyond me, mentoring, evaluating and replacing dry program with life-on-life, train my coaches in the Internship, grow and change as a leader (every 4 years at least!), know my context, not follow fads, practice biblical theology, practice a post-heroic style of leadership, and pour into others just to name a few.

Dr. Wright: **I like your posting work here. it is obvious the CBTE materials made an impact.** Note: If you think Reed missed ministry outreach, you may not have read him deeply enough. The paradigm paper entitled "Church as Mission" is indeed a paradigm breaker. Remember, BILD has seen more than 100,000 people engage in church-planting focused ministry development processes through CBTE. His critique is the same as yours: most theological education fails to initiate mission.

Karl: [Question 1 concerning case study answered]

2. Practical Insights

I'm impressed with two of Phil's propositions. First, he was correct in his view that the book/approach "... needed to be less programmatic, **and a lot more organic, able to flex and adapt to a community** that was tired of "out of the box" programs. " **This was very insightful** and exactly the approach that Jeff should have taken originally. There is no program that you can take out of a box and simply apply to every church in every context**. Rather, they need to be modified to fit that church's unique situation and needs**. I admit that I've been guilty of trying to implement a foreign system without adapting it to a certain situation, and it doesn't always work. That doesn't mean that you can't take programs "out of the box," but you need to use them with some discretion, taking the good things, **and modifying the rest to fit your needs.**

Second, his critique was insightful that "... unless the senior pastoral leader is centrally involved in the development of leadership – it can be delegated to no one else – the process would always be hampered at the most important points." The senior leader sets the tone for leadership development and it is crucial for him to be a centerpiece for the process.

I'm curious about the senior leadership's "Plumbline" small group process. That sounds like a great idea, especially because even senior leaders need to continue growing and developing in their skills and abilities**. I wonder what type of curricula or topics they cover**, and think that this is an excellent idea for use in many of our local churches. **I'd like to learn more about this, if possible...**

3. Practical Implications

This course has helped me in several ways. First, the leadership training aspect was great, especially the ways in which we develop programs, set up training processes, and approach the overall idea of building leaders. I've done this sort of thing before, but have it focused on the local church (rather than a secular business) was really helpful. (See the Coaching book and Building Leaders book, as well as the BILD material)

Second, ….

Third, I'm intrigued by the idea of training 3 or 4 people as leaders/apprentices in my local church. As a pastor of a small church, we aren't always able to do big programs, but starting with a few people and investing our energy, wisdom and time with them to help them become great leaders is where we should invest our resources.

Finally, I liked …. I'm going to review those again, since I think we gain some good insights on how we do our own development, as well as train those in our own churches.

Jack: [Question 1 about case study answered]

2. What Practical Insights Does the Case Stimulate for You?

It seems like pastors often see themselves as opposed to the Board, and that is a self-defeating starting point because the end goal is to create unity there. As challenging as it might be and as frustrating as it might be to work with a board**, it seems critical that we begin with the end in mind** (for a board, unity about the leading of God for our organization). Phil's blueprint for building a church references Ephesians 4, and I agree that that is a foundational text for ecclesiology. Eph. 4:13 says that we are built up "until we all reach unity in the faith."

3. What Are the Practical Implications of this Course for You?

This course has really pushed me to view leadership development from a more comprehensive perspective, considering more carefully both the personal aspects such as mentoring and coaching as well as the organizational planning that is involved. More on this in my final integration paper, though.

Case Study Discussion Forum Analysis

During this lengthy set of interactions, Dr. Wright coached the students to reflect critically on their readings as they applied to the case study. He pressed them as he

questioned Milton in the first segment discussion, "Willing to give us a little more philosophically?" This case study reading and reflection began with Dr. Wright focusing the students on the purpose of the course: developing leaders with the following statement, "In the fifth and final module, we take seriously the legacy anyone of us may have when we invest in the lives of others." Concerning the case study, Dr. Wright instructed the students to "seek to penetrate the personal and social context in a way that allows you to connect this (and the course) to real ministry contexts in which you are entrusted." He reminded the students to integrate the learnings of the "suprapersonal (Leader from above you)" (Module 1), "the intrapersonal (within you)" (Module 2), "the interpersonal (around you)" (Module 3), and "the organizational community level (among you)" (Module 4) as he had identified in the previous modules. The case study was designed for the students to amalgamate their learning from the previous four modules and to relate that learning to their own ministries as they reflected on this one real-life instance.

The case study interactions demonstrated the critical thinking interpretive passion of the course with probing and energizing questions like "Are you preparing yourself for legacy level leadership development contributions?" and suggestions such as "Skim it again. What do you think?" "look over the intro questions, and get into the proxy issues," Let me ask, what exactly is the nature of your critique? Let me ask you to look back at your first draft and ask …" and "Read with interest the final installment of the case, keeping these insights you have here from pages 8 and 9, before you. Then, tell me what you think." Two of the research participants particularly engaged in the case study as shown with exclamations after the second part from Karl, "Wow what an interesting case

study!" and Milton,: "I'm curious how this continues!…" and finally after the final part

Milton's exclamation, "Jeff did it! He adjusted! He's showing leadership agility!"

After the first segment of the case study, Jack was uncertain, "I am still working

through the reading right now, but some of my experience makes me somewhat skeptical

regarding church-based training." Dr. Wright became directive stating, "As you work

through the reading, call to memory our starting place: Scripture. Are you preapred to

look at biases, in light of Scripture, to be theologically reflective about what has become

accepted, perhaps false essentialisms?" As noted in the introduction to this course

analysis, Foster, Dahill, Goleman, & Telentino (2005) stated that pedagogies for

practicing religious leadership aim "to [form] patterns of leadership in which the theories

clergy espouse are congruent with the theories embedded in the dispositions and habits

that shape how they negotiate the interplay between institutional processes and the people

who participate in them (p. 104). Dr. Wright challenged Jack to be formed by Scripture

and to evaluate what he accepts in his practice. Dr. Wright expressed his passion for the

practice, writing, "I am advocating a strategy I have researched for the last seven years,"

which practice Jack was having a difficult time accepting. Dr. Wright continued and

demonstrated how the practice fit with the seminary's theology. Then he acknowledged,

> Dr. Wright: I guess, we may not yet be talking about the same thing (such is that
> case with paradigms), so let me turn this into a question that might get us
> on a generative path which may allow us to turn our biases in to the
> authorities: what metrics matter in the formation of a person?

Dr. Wright identified numerous questions (see the full post) and encouraged the students

to address these questions, "Let's give these questions a whirl in the next line of

discussion. I think they can help ferret out the paradigmstic issues that help surface

biases." He then refocused them especially on cultural or contextual issues stating,

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Dr. Wright: Note: Jack's post raises important cultural concerns, so I offer this extended response for all to participate in on his thread, not justhim. Let these probes direct your reading and re-reading. Consult again the first module and what each of you offered as biblical rationale and norms. Test whether you ate being consistent with what you wrote, or whether it is time to revise what you wrote in light of another revistation of Scriptural norms. Selah.

It is interesting, though, that Jack did not participate in the remaining interactions concerning the case study. Jack might not have participated because he persisted in his disagreement with the practice advocated in the case study and by the professor. Another possibility might be that the strong response by the professor was uncomfortable for Jack and he remained a passive participant, or in the terms of a community of practice, periphery participation (Wenger, 1998). Observing Dr. Wright's passion could also have attributed to the positive response of Milton and Karl that was noted earlier.

Dr. Wright also cheered the students' accomplishments, making statements to Milton like "Whew! You REALLY jumped into it the heart of the matter," after his initial response to the first segment of the case study and later "Nice selections from Joiner!" and "I like your posting work here. it is obvious the CBTE materials made an impact." When Karl indicated uncertainty stating, "This was a harder one for me to answer," Dr. Wright first acknowledged the difficulty of the task and then stated, "A very thorough engagement of the issues in the case. … You, repeatedly, prescribe coaching, mentoring, accountability as ways to implement and assist. Valuable insight!" In this last comment, Dr. Wright summarized the student's responses disclosing what the Karl had accomplished, providing reassurance. He added ""You are on your way" and then proposed another exercise to reconsider the issues,

Dr. Wright: A great exercise: think over the case, and list as many proxies as you can….. Chances are: these elements are within OUR context during

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transitions times as well, and we do not want to be naive about their capacity to intervene in change strategies.

The significance of this learning, "we do not want to be naïve …," stressed the need to master this aspect of leadership development.

Foster, Dahill, Goleman, & Telentino (2005) stated, "The most explicit moments of the coaching of individual progress in the practice occurred through words of encouragement, questions that requested further engagement with a given text or thought, and the feedback on and assessment…" (p. 95). Through his questions and critical thinking prompts, Dr. Wright coached the students in the interpretation of the case study so that they could gain the skill to interpret their own contexts. In doing so, he also modeled for the students the coaching process as they interacted with their mentor-mentee relationships outside of class.

Formation Leads to Performance Changes

After the first section of the case study, Milton' first response was one of enthusiasm, "Jeff Reed [author] has convinced me in "Church-Based Christian education." However, Dr. Wright challenged him and noted that he sensed "skepticism" in his responses. Following the discussion that ensued by several classmates, Milton maintained, "… That's why I've [I'm] very challenged by Reed's writings. I'm convinced of the content. I'm still trying to set realistic goals for the next 6 months, year, 5, 10, 25, 50 years as I serve…." He continues on with the following:

Milton: I think they [Reed's writings] can help ferret out the paradigmstic issues that help surface biases."- Wright
I want to see my biases. I may have some Eastern European skepticism going on as to implementation...Reed writes pretty fundamentally.
Let's keep interacting! I'm willing to learn and learn. Thank's for interacting with my skepticism.

Foster, Dahill, Golemon, and Tolentino (2005) identified that "all teaching is some way formative—or deformative" (p. 115). Milton avowed that he was willing for his biases to be revealed in order to refine his practice. However, he did not identify those biases in the discussion forum.

Then in the final questions for the last segment of the case study, Dr. Wright asked the students to reflect upon their learning and determine what was applicable to them, "What Practical Insights Does the Case Stimulate for You?" and "What Are the Practical Implications of this Course for You?" Milton stated emphatically, "I will work more as a team [….] I will lead being assertive but also ready to change… I will seek to know my people [….] I will not give up." The repeated use of "I will" by Milton indicated volitional speech acts, which are part of the process of performance, that were discussed in the performance section, but also show resolution in formation. One of the volitional statements reflected on cotextualization, "I will seek to know my people especially my leaders[….]" as this is the essence of understanding a social situation. Milton continued in the next question, "I'll list my points of application and change!:" and proceeded to list twelve items. Karl, a first-career engineer manager, identified areas of insights stating, "especially the ways in which we develop programs, set up training processes, and approach the overall idea of building leaders." He identified items that he still wished to pursue, stating, "I wonder what type of curricula or topics they cover, [….] I'd like to learn more about this, if possible [....]" and "I'm intrigued by the idea of training 3 or 4 people as leaders/apprentices in my local church. [….] I'm going to review those again." Jack responded at the end of the case study exchanges, "This course has really pushed me to view leadership development from a more comprehensive

perspective." The student participants reported deep learning and decisions for change. The formation of leaders through critical reflection produced projected changes in performance by the students.

Appendix D

IS501 Kingdom, Church, and World

As was noted in Chapter 3, the Kingdom, Church, and World course was one of two core formational courses required within the first 21 credit hours of the seminary student's program of study. The Course description read,

> What is the mission of the church? Behind this question is a cluster of related questions, the most important focused on the nature of God's creative and redemptive purpose (as this is expressed in the biblical story), its ongoing expression in the world, and its consummation in the eschaton. Participants in this course will explore how the church might discern, embrace, and participate in God's own mission. (The Seminary, 2009a, p. 169)

Similarly to the course description, the syllabus stated, "The course places a high priority on the integration of thinking, feeling, and action – on the interweaving of theory and practice. So let's begin to ask together what it means to be the people of God?" (Syllabus, Spring 2009, p. 1). Foster et al.'s (2005) identified the pedagogy of *practicing religious leadership* to involve a vision or *pastoral imagination* with the ability to discern when the vision was present. The course description and the syllabus convey this ability for the formation of the clergy.

The course rationale recognizes six questions involving interpretation of scripture, theology, and culture in regards to the kingdom of God including "What role does the kingdom of God play in the scriptural story?" and "How does the biblical narrative subvert our familiar ways of being, thinking, and acting in the world?" (Syllabus, Spring 2009, p. 2). Course outcome #5 includes activities of discernment and contextualization by stating, "Students will be able to exercise criticism with respect to one's own cultural context and discernment with respect to the context of others ..." (p. 3). Thus, I

anticipated the students' learning should demonstrate interpretation and contextualization in their formation process.

The design of the course emphasized student interaction mostly with the content and with the professor Dr. Bill Eadens, who lived in Australia but made himself available to the students. The course assessments included interactions with the course readings through written responses and group discussions, a project preferably with a group of Christians serving the marginalized in the student's local area, and visiting a church other than their own.

The course structure did not highlight student-to-student interaction. The discussion forum for each module covered four weeks. Each week one or two persons from each group were assigned to post their thoughts from the reading. Others were encouraged to respond but not required. The professor wrote in the Assessment Overview in the course management system,

> A discussion forum will be established for your group and group members will be allocated questions relating to these themes to which they must respond briefly by particular dates so that there is some specific input from one or two people each week of the module. Of course, the idea is that others engage as well by responding to those inputs and also introducing other issues and questions. It will, hopefully, be a dynamic discussion.

The participation varied from module to module with 27 postings for the first module, 26 for the second, and 51 for the last module although there were only 80 responses to the 51 initial postings. The last module required postings for the course project and the visit to another church as well as the weekly interactions with the course readings; again, responses to the postings was encouraged but not required. An overview of the Module 2 Discussion Forum is provided in Table A.4. Twenty-six students

enrolled in the course but only 18 participated in the discussions covering four weeks in

Module 2.

Table A.4

IS501 Contributions to Forum: Module 2 Church of Jesus Christ (4 weeks)

Authors of thread entries	Posts	Responses	Mean responses per post	Median responses per post	Contributors (including professor)
Non-participants, study participants, and professor	26	282	10.8	10.0	19
Study participants' posts with participants', nonparticipants', and instructor's responses	21	216	10.3	10.0	19

Dr. Eadens divided the 26 students into three groups. In the four-week Module 1

discussion forum the students created 25 threads and the professor created 1. However,

during the four weeks, the three groups generated 11, 6, and 8 threads. So the first group

had a mean of 2.75 threads per week, and the second group had a mean of 1.5 threads per

week, and the third group had a mean of 2 threads per week. However, across the threads

the groups had 93, 89, and 74 total responses respectively for the module. Group 1 had a

response rate of 8.5 per thread, the second group had 14.8 responses per thread, and the

third group wrote 9.25 responses per thread. Some groups started fewer threads but

shared their thoughts within the larger conversation of the group. Adding the professor's

thread with 25 responses the module included 307 entries during the four weeks or a

mean of 76.75 entries per week or a mean of 2.8 entries per enrolled student per week of

the module.

Learning from Formation

As was stated in the introduction, the pedagogies of formation incorporate *practicing the presence of God*, *practicing holiness*, and *practicing religious leadership* and integrate the cognitive (knowing), practical (doing), and normative (being). *Practicing religious leadership* enables the novice to develop a *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005). The *pastoral imagination* not only abets the professional identity development of the seminary student, but similarly involves the identity of the church community. Two main themes appeared in the student interactions: imagination and community. The students expressed *images of themselves* and *images of the possibilities* from their readings and reflections. These images effected an enhanced *pastoral imagination* articulated in the vision they began to see to which their practices and the practice of the church should adhere. Discussants also identified the impact of the readings for the church community.

Imagination. In the first week's discussions for Module 2, the students wrestled with the historical writings of John Wesley written in the 18th century. Though the conversation focused on small groups in the church practice, Jackie reflected on her need to practice the presence of God. Responding to a critical thinking question asked by Melinda, "How can we, in our individualistic society reap the benefits of life in community while maintaining our one true center 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'" Jackie stated,

Jackie: Our society praises independence and lifts up those who can do things on their own ... who don't need help. The best way I know to teach dependence is to live dependently ... depending on our Lord, depending on others and allowing others to depend on me.
  Small groups are one way to live this but for me, it is a challenge that I experience everyday. There are so many times that I can and should be asking for

help from God, from family and/or from friends that I don't and I simply continue in my addiction to control and independence and do 'it' myself.

   So, for me, one day at a time, one hour at a time, one task at a time. One request at a time, one prayer at a time.

Foster et al. (2005) affirmed that the task of *practicing the presence of God* "does not end with an awareness of God, the holy, or mystery. It culminates in a transformation of consciousness—of seeing and making sense of things from the perspective of the wholly other symbolized as God, the holy, or mystery" (p. 103). For Jackie *practicing the presence of God* was not limited to meetings of the church, even small groups, but "a challenge that I experience everyday." Wenger (1998) categorizes *imagination,* which consists of "images of ourselves," "images of the world," "images of the past and future," and "images of possibilities" (p. 174), as one of the modes of belonging in a community of practice. Jackie expressed an image of herself: "I simply continue in my addiction to control and …" and contrasted it with an image of possibilities, "one day…one hour…one task…one request…one prayer…." The result is *practicing holiness*, which Foster et al. (2005) claimed is "more concerned with fostering the character of the habitus of the religious tradition than in replicating its rules" (p. 115), which Melinda professed to be "maintaining our one true center."

   In response to a post made by Dr. Eadens at the end of the first week's discussions, Lyle related a story that revealed an image of himself.

Dr. Eadens: It is often the case that the heroes of the faith are held out as examples for us all and while I understand that this can bring many benefits, and I've appreciated being inspired by other people myself, we nonetheless have to be careful not to judge ourselves by the standards of other people. [related personal example]

   Obviously, what is needed is some discernment. let Wesley be our inspiration but a slavish imitation or a deep concern that we are not able to do all that he did is inappropriate.

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Lyle: I once told a wise friend about all the books I was reading and quoting alot of famous pastors about how we should "do church." His response to me was simple, "Their inspiration comes from reading the Bible." It helped me to realize I get caught in chasing the next coolest value-meal theology/church-growth technique... because I'm so outcome addicted. I'm not patient.

Dr. Eadens modeled *practicing holiness* by his concern for balance in perspective. While Lyle's story did not occur within the context of the course, the instruction brought his experience to mind. In sharing his story with which two classmates interacted, Lyle had added to their repertoire of learning (Wenger, 1998).

Referencing the topic of small groups, Jess revealed the beginning of a *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005) that would concentrate on those elements of ministry that would be positive for his congregation.

Jess: Regarding this question: What new insights have you gleaned from this reading? I had an overwhelming sense that we are just too busy these days to make small groups work. Why have we allowed the things of the world to so overwhelm our lives that we don't have time for ourselves and each other? I pray that I find the strength to put away the things that would hold me back from such an endeavor.

Jess gained an image of possibilities from his reading and expressed openness to transformation, "I pray that I find …."

Community. The topic of small groups and the issues of formation raised the topic of community in a number of conversations. Dr. Eadens asked the class to discuss the question, "How has this reading helped you understand the role of small groups in the Kingdom, Church, and World class?"

Jackie: To add to your response to the question on what the role of the discussion groups in the KCW class is, I would say that it can play the role of keeping us on track by holding us accountable and that in it's most basic sense, it is the formation of a community. If utilized with the same intentions that those groups operated out of in the society formed by the Wesleys, it will be a place for us to share our hearts with one another, come to love one another, pray for one another, edify one

another and reprove one another. In short, it will be a group that intentionally chooses to love one another into the Kingdom. (Module 1, Week 1)

Jackie saw the connection between what was done by John Wesley in the 18th century and the class activity.

Two days later, Jackie posted her own questions to her groupmates after it had been noted how John Wesley in his day saw the needs of people and addressed those needs in his practices. She identified herself as a newcomer to the faith. A lengthy conversation developed with five groupmates responding to her questions and the ensuing discussion.

Jackie: What are some of the needs of the church today that are not being met? And how might we meet those needs?

Outside of prayer, making invitations and living it ourselves, what are some of the concrete ways that you have found to get more people involved in small groups?

I am looking to find out some of your experiences. I have been a Christian for just over two years and so much of this is new to me. Much of the past two years has been about God cleaning the house within me that my focus outward has not been as extensive. […] Thus, I do not feel like I have as much of a grip on the needs of the church as I would like.

Zeke: I think that a common misconception about attracting people to small groups and church in general is that we need to make it acsthetically pleasing. I mean, like being seeker-oriented instead of truth oriented. […]. I know this sounds confusing and I'm probably only opening a can of worms, but I think that we need a centrality of Christ again and from that centrality will spring those things we desire.

Melinda: Zeke - I agree, with your comment "we need a centrality of Christ again and from that centrality will spring those things we desire".

Jackie- My husband is also a new believer (just since summer '07). I literally grew up in the church, but after taking an Anthropology of Religion course in college, suddenly realized how much of my faith was based upon tradition and church teaching as opposed to scripture, prayer, and personal experience.

In the long, painful (and ongoing) process of becoming a disciple of Christ, I learned that whatever fun, academically challenging, and socially beneficial acitivites the church might offer, they matter none if Christ is not the center. Relationships built on anything other than Christ will not permanently flourish.

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So, what needs aren't being met? In my opinion, the need for Christ as the only center. Frequently, in churches we offer activities to meet social needs, for building relationships, for serving, etc. But these do not always characterize the arms and feet of Christ that his body should be.

An example, at our home church in Tallahassee, FL, our mission centers on being the "church with the heart for the city", which sounds great to me. I believe that Jesus would have a heart for the city. But, we do not carry it out with his love. We provide and serve meals at the homeless shelter, but we serve through a window without coming into contact with the homeless. While we scoop out the food, we discuss making sure that our kids are enrolled in honors classes so that they can be exposed only to the best of kids. I do not believe that this activity is/was Christ-centered. With his love, we would embrace those whom we served. We would pray with and for them. We would hear their needs. We would love them. We would want our children to love them to.

Paul: I concur. We need church teaching and the traditional understanding. But our small groups really need to be focused on scriptural based, Spirit lead spiritual formation, and discipleship. As believers we need to know Gods charter and standards to be able to discern his will. We need to understand that Grace does say that we are no longer under the law but that while all things are accessible. Not all are profitable. [….] Who do we act toward each other. how do we act toward nonbelievers? How in all the areas of our lives are we reflecting Christ into the world.

[…]

If we are to "sell" small groups then we need to do so from the vantage that these are truly the closest to the early church that we can get. this is where we can have intimate knowledge of our fellow believers. engage in meaningfully fellowship. Guard each other from temptation and folly. Grow in our faith and understanding of God and his will, and Disciple each other into a fully deducted [dedicated] follower of Jesus.

Anyway, that's my two cents.

Merle: "We developed Christianity into a consumerism model verses [versus] a maturing and equipping lifestyle which trains new believers in their faith, matures that faith and equips them to go out and do battle with the current social norms."

I think you are right on with this observation. I think this is a classic example of a case where the church lost it's identity in a quest for relevance. There is an constant struggle between identity and relevance and consumerism is one place where the church

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caved. Relevance is obviously important but worthless if you lose your identity in the process.
>   […]
>   Our churches need to be less consumer-driven and more Christ-driven.

Paul: One note that I have seen that concerns me. As we try to reverse the seeker/consumer mindset and become externally focused on those outside out church walls. We need to remember that the nurturing, teaching and equipping still needs to take place. […]

> **Christine:** Paul and Merle, I agree that churches are more consumer driven. It seems the focus is on the numbers and work, work, work and if you can't work, just give us your money! There is little nurturing and the teaching and equipping only has to do with the outreach--like was mentioned earlier- feed the hungry but don't touch them. [personal experience story] I agree that we need to get back to the basics-Bible based, Christ centered and trust the Holy Spirit to teach us and give us the hunger to know Jesus better and to minister to each other and in the community.

Jackie's groupmates joined the conversation offering evaluation of church concerns and practices from their experiences and perspectives. This student-to-student interaction resounded that the church needed to be Christocentric. Jackie was forming a *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005) from her classmates as well as the reading and the professor. One observation is that the students were voicing their own opinions and not responding from what they had learned in the class. While this is true, those students with more experience within the church and sometimes in ministry shared their personal stories with the novice. Their evaluations of the "needs of the church today" and how those needs should be addressed facilitated the novice and one another to build a repertoire of shared learning (Wenger, 1998).

Learning from Interpretation

As has already been attested the students worked with historical documents as well as current textbooks. The historical documents especially required interpretation leading to meaning making creating an enhanced pastoral imagination for the student and the community. Similarly the discussion prompts pinpointed Christian scripture passages in both the Old and New Testaments for the students to read and engage in their reflections. These interpretative activities and discussions served to augment the students' professional identity development.

Questions in the second week of Module 2 focused the students on the Christian scriptures as narrative. Excerpts from one conversation are given below.

Paul: What would it mean for you to locate yourself within the history of God starting with Creation and going on through the advent of the church?
·For me, if I were to locate myself with in the narrative of Gods people, it would solidify my calling and why it has come when it has. Yet, actually, I am located in the narrative. I am active in God's kingdom today. Seeking to grow in Christ and act more like him each day. I am a part of the narrative proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. Then making disciples of all who accept him as Lord and Savior, and teaching them to be fully devoted followers of his teachings and full citizens of his kingdom.
James: Lastly, I'd say that like it or not (or rather, comprehend it or not), we are all located within the history of God. Our story is only in a very limited way, our own. […]
Christine: I think you are right on, James! When we were children, we were told the stories of Noah and the ark, Daniel and the lions, David and his sling shot, etc. but they were told as individual stories with no link from one to the other. Over the past few years, God has been showing me how they are all linked and how beginning in Genesis He is unveiling His story of redemption and working circumstances so He is glorified. I have often felt like an actress in a play going through my part but not seeing the whole picture. Looking back, history shows us God's redemptive plan and how He wove each player into His play at just the right times, in just the right parts. We don't always understand, but God is still weaving us in His play using us as we play our parts to bring about His glory.

I think I saw it most in the death of my son in 1999. Wow, it's been almost 10 years now--but it still seems like yesterday! My son was 18 1/2 yrs. old when God took him home. The Holy Spirit opened my eyes to see how God used my son in his life AND in his death, to change the hearts of children, his friends, their parents, and others who knew him. What God showed me brought much comfort and peace but it opened my eyes as to what God was doing in and through my son in this world. It was amazing! My son didn't do it, God did! He changed a part of the world and I praise Him for that.

The students all located themselves within the narrative of the Christian scriptures, but that had different meanings to each. Paul said, "it would solidify my calling and why it has come when it has." The use of "it would solidify…" rather than the declarative "it solidifies" implied that he did not see himself in the narrative. Then he went on to affirm that he was in the narrative proclaiming, "I am a part of the narrative proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world." Perhaps this was a new realization to Paul. If so, this awareness would afford more confidence, a greater sense of efficacy, in his identity in the professional clergy. He saw himself within the larger Christian community.

Christine related the story of the death of her son. Her perception of her concept of the Christian narrative has been on-going for several years. She stated, "Over the past few years, God has been showing me how they [stories in the Old Testament] are all linked and how beginning in Genesis He is unveiling His story of redemption and working circumstances so He is glorified." Christine used the metaphor of being an actress who could not see the "whole picture" but afterwards, when looking back, one could see God's activity. Christine did not locate herself within the narrative specifically but implied that she was incorporated into the story without knowing the whole story. The focus of the story for Christine was God and God worked in her life, "What God showed me…God did! He changed a part of the world…." Thus, Christine found

engagement within the community. Christine's as well as Paul's realizations of

belonging in the Christian community that belonged to history formed their identity both

as Christians and would influence their professional identity, their pastoral imagination,

and how would lead their congregations.

Learning from Interpretation to Contextualization

As has been noted, the students were to read numerous historical writings of John

Wesley from the 18th century, which some students attested was difficult to comprehend.

The discussion questions asked them to interpret what they read and contextualize it for

their experience today. Several lengthy conversation within the groups took place

concerning these readings. In Module 2 Week 1 Michael started one of these

conversations by expressing his reservations for the current church, yet affirming what he

viewed as beneficial.

Michael: I read (and re-read) Wesley's *Account of the People Called Methodists* with
mixed feelings. On the one hand, I recognize that there is much we can learn from
Wesley as the church today, particularly in areas of true Christian fellowship and
accountability. But there was another side for me that had a hard time relating to
Wesley's system of Societies, Bands, Rules, Stewards, etc. My reluctance (or
apprehension?) comes mostly from the fact that I cannot comprehend how it
would be possible to be fully engaged in Wesley's system (let's just say you were
in a Society and a Band) AND also participates in the church, AND ministered to
the poor, and so on (not to mention kept a job and raised a family!). I just don't
see how one could be a part of all these options and levels and still have a
life. But…my reservations not withstanding, here are a few things I took away
from this account.

> Some of the objections that Wesley countered entailed things like: *"Your
groups are going to cause a schism in the church,"* or, *"Let not 'much religion
make thee mad"* (i.e., tone it down a little!). I don't know how much the *schism*
critique would apply to the church today, but I can certainly imagine people
objecting to this level of spiritual intensity/accountability. At one point, Wesley
says, "Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had
not so much as an idea before. They began to 'bear one another's burdens,' and
naturally to 'care for each other.'" This would be a really positive outcome that
the church (or this class?) might expect if we were to emphasize more intentional
community and open accountability with one another.

Lyle: I think the fully engaged model isn't as complicated as you might think; especially since there is likely to be much overlap. Also, the late 18th century didn't have TiVo, 24 movies to choose from at the theater, 15 different restaraunts, etc.; so they had alot of unobligated time from our perspective. Wesley's model seems like an aggressive expression of social interactive opportunities relevant for the culture of his day.

A Society could be compared to the function of a Sunday School class (except Societies met on Fridays), since Sunday school didn't exist as we practice it today. A Band is comparative to today's popular home-based small groups. Rules were the construct by which the Bands operated, just like Mars Hill's "house churches" have guidelines for formation and function, yet still operate as part of the larger church. Stewards would correlate to Stephen's Ministers. It is quite possible for one person to manage all these in their daily life, have a job, take the kids to soccer practice and have family time. It seems like Wesley was trying to encourage people to radically change their social patterns.

The thing is, Wesley doesn't seem to be establishing any function that wasn't already introduced in the book of Acts, from gathering daily to caring for the sick and widows and less fortunate. He simply applied the culture of the Bible to the times in which he lived, regardless of whether that application was rigid and "methodical."

Mildred: Lyle and Mathew – you both brought out some good points, many of which I echo. As I first read this essay, I was blow away by the amount of time required to be a "Methodist" in the early days. While it's true they did not have TV, soccer games, and Jones' to keep up with, their lives did require a lot of time to do the every day stuff – no washing machine and dryer, no car to take them on the 5 minute drive that would be a 20 minute walk, no microwave, etc. The interesting thing about that to me is that today's society claims, "I just don't have enough time for church, worship, or small group." It's funny that we've been plagued with there not being enough hours in the day for ages. That means it all boils down to priorities – what's important to you.

Donald: I could be entirely incorrect in my observation, but I think you are correct in weighing the culture of the time with Wesley's statements. John Wesley was not intending to create a new denomination named Methodists, but to improve on the Anglican Church. John and Charles Wesley were both feisty in personality and I believe that shows in our reading. […] times are different today but the basics are still the same. The mission was to strengthen each other in his or her faith.

Alan: Your comments about more intentional community and open accountability are excellent. Our culture is individualistic and self-centered to the extreme, and churches have a tendency to become that way

as well. Wesley's methods did a lot to emphasize community - from that we should take notes.

The students repeatedly referenced the historical writings, with Lyle stating that Wesley "simply applied the culture of the Bible to the times in which he lived," and now the students interpreted what that would mean today. One common refrain was the time commitment required by Wesley's methods for the Christians active in the groups that he led, but the students came to similar points that the purpose was spiritual formation for the Christians, *practicing the presence of God* and *practicing holiness*. *Practicing religious leadership* would require that the clergy model these first two elements within their local communities, especially within their churches. The students agreed with one another yet adjusted one another's perspective. Mildred tweaked Lyle's understanding of what life would have been like in the 18th century—from a concept of "so they had alot of unobligated time from our perspective" (Lyle) to "their lives did require a lot of time to do the every day stuff" (Mildred). Still their conclusions were similar: Lyle stated, "It seems like Wesley was trying to encourage people to radically change their social patterns." And Mildred claimed, "That means it all boils down to priorities – what's important to you." Donald concluded, "times are different today but the basics are still the same. The mission was to strengthen each other in his or her faith." Through this process of interpretation of the past to contextualization for today, the students were forming a concept, a vision, of what it might mean to be a pastor within this theological framework, although several expressed reservations.

Alan picked up Michael's concluding thought of community formation. Michael quoted Wesley and then added a critical thinking reflection,

Michael: "They [Wesley's groups] began to 'bear one another's burdens,' and naturally to 'care for each other.'" This would be a really positive outcome that the church (or this class?) might expect if we were to emphasize more intentional community and open accountability with one another.

Again, an *image of the possibilities* (Wenger, 1998) was presented. The other students did not respond to the accountability aspect of the Wesley's methods in this conversation. Alan offered the individualism critique of the current cultural and ended simply, "Wesley's methods did a lot to emphasize community - from that we should take notes." Alan continued (not included in the printed conversation) by referring to the time issue again and another lengthy conversation ensued concerning how many options a church should offer their constituency. In this discussion thread the students missed the essence of *practicing religious leadership*, "fostering the character of the habitus of the religious tradition than in replicating its rules" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 115) by focusing on the rules of how much time one should give or how many church activities one should expect rather than the heart of community formation.

Dr. Eadens did not join in the conversation, but he did offer some comments concerning time commitment issue in a posting to all groups at the end of the week. He shared a story from his own experience and then made the statement that was quoted previously, "Obviously, what is needed is some discernment. let Wesley be our inspiration but a slavish imitation or a deep concern that we are not able to do all that he did is inappropriate." Dr. Eadens did not offer critiques to the student discussions directly. Generally Dr. Eadens offered positive statements and stories from his own experience as he did in this case. Had he offered corrections, the students might have lessened their involvement in the discussions. He modeled acceptance and gentle nudging, demonstrating trust and caring.

In the fourth week of Module 1, Lyle engaged in a critical evaluation of one of the foremost activities of the professional clergy, preaching the sermon.

Lyle: I wonder about the effectiveness of preaching. Wesley lived in a very modern era, where preaching and debate were prized and respected. But we live in a world of mass media, where everyone is competing for people's attention. Talk is cheap. Think about it, if we weren't the ones preaching the messages, how much of last week's sermon would we remember? I don't mean to be offensive, just straight forward.

I understand the importance of preaching (Romans 10:14-15), but it seems the church has developed tunnel-vision about it. Sharing the gospel is much more than preaching. I think preaching is a monologue that is losing relevance. It is just a tool. Where else is such a form of communication used? Teachers in classrooms even use a discussion-based approach. We have so trained our congregations that "church" is, for all practical purposes, listening to preaching, that we wonder why congregations are so docile. Working with both adults and students, I've seen how a service project can "preach" a more powerful sermon than a 3-point message.

No one responded to Lyle's post, but he nonetheless had the freedom to express himself in the forum, to come to his own meaning making. Lyle contrasted Wesley's setting to the culture of Lyle's community. Lyle proffered an alternative but as has been noted earlier the students in Week 1 had stated how Wesley saw the needs of his community and worked to meet those needs. Perhaps Lyle was enacting that same attitude. His *pastoral imagination* would not necessarily be held to a tradition but would see the needs and strive to meet the needs of his community.

These interpretative discussions urged the students to reflect on their cultural context in relation to their interpretations of their readings. Perhaps their interpretations were not always mature as in the extreme focus on the time commitment, but they were permitted to participate in the discussions at their own level of understanding. While they were not asked to put these reflections into practice, the critical thinking involved helped them to advance their *pastoral imagination.*

Reification and participation. A community of practice needs to maintain a

balance between participation of its members and reification of its practice.

Modifications to the practice are brought about through participation but some aspects of

the practice become solidified to maintain stability. However, if there is no participation,

the practice becomes stagnant and the community may cease to exist. In the first week of

Module 1 several students engaged in a rather heated and extensive debate concerning the

reification of the church practice that involves various denominations.

Justin: In his account about Methodists, Wesley mentioned the phrase "miserable
bigotry," referencing the notion or mindset that one certain portion of the body of
Christ is the only group who has Christianity "down pat," and others of a different
mindset/denomination are incapable of being used by God.
　　Wesley suggests in that same section that he proactively tried to safeguard
his flock against such a mentality by making it a regular habit to mention the hand
of God at work in various forms and amongst various people groups at their
normal meetings.
　　Personally, I have seen this "miserable bigotry" more than I have cared to.
I lived most of my life in Louisville, KY before moving down to the small town
of Russell Springs, KY 8 years ago. Regardless of the city or rural setting, this
mindset seems to be quite prevalent, even if unspoken, in both demographics. In
Louisville, the bigotry pitted smaller congregations against megachurches. In the
smaller community in which I live now, the bigotry moves more along the lines of
Methodists v. Baptists or Fundamentalists v. Charismatics. I have heard
conversations between church people where they will literally bash other churches
that belong to a different denomination in front of folks who have no interest in
church whatsoever. No wonder.
　　It almost seems that a lot Christians identify themselves more with their
denominational affiliation than they do with Jesus and/or the Kingdom of God.
This is an issue that I feel needs to be addressed more and more as it seems to be
extremely destructive.
　　　[…]
　　But are we now too entrenched in our divisions to ever see a common
people of God? Is that even remotely possible to practice here on Earth what God
sees from heaven: one Body of Christ?
Kyle: I concur with your experience of "miserable bigotry" throughout the one's
who call themselves Christians, and I think that it is safe to say that
anyone who has spent even a little time among Christians has seen this.
This is a sad SAD sad part of the Body of Christ. All the work, passion,
and love that God and His children have shown and we lack to give Him
the glory by participating in this "miserable bigotry." […] John Wesley

got around such sin by taking a stance and educating Christians on the Works of the Lord. We need to educate ourselves to what God is doing all around us and in ways which we may not ever be able to comprehend or participate in.

[2 paragraphs omitted]

Dr. Eadens: Hi Justin, let me pick up on your assessment of people that have a go at people of other denominations.

I am in the midst of writing this following piece for another place, but I will include it here….

IT refers to our situation here and provides a counterpoint to your observations about what is happening in your part of the world.

"The third factor which leads to an enhanced theological focus on the life of the local church is the way that the Christian community as a whole has moved towards a new ecumenical understanding of the nature of the church. The energy for this shift has not come from denominational leaders, theologians or missiologists, but from ordinary members of the church who have led the way towards a new form of ecumenism which is shown clearly in the way that they choose to move so easily between churches. So much so that it might be said that the old denominationalism is dead and that we are moving into a new era of local church life and relationships. One which gives the church a new opportunity to re-structure for mission. [5 additional paragraphs omitted]

What do you think of that? Ben

Justin: Dr. Eadens, I think that is exactly what I yearn for, a sense of unity that supersedes denominational breakdown for the purpose of glorifying God. […]

    Kyle: I agree. It seems as though we are finally once again becomeing Christians, not denominations. I'm sure we will always have our differences and I do think that is a good thing because it holds us accountable. Isn't it amazing that it took nearly 1900 years for Christianity as the Body of Christ to turn back to the community it once started as? Praise God for the unity! I rejoice in the day that people introduce and claim themselves as Followers of Jesus and not "I'm a Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, ... etc."

    Gerry: Ben and Justin, Being united as a church is a wonderful goal, but why is this de-reformation happening? I would argue that Christians today don't have the theological underpinnings that we once had. Do Baptists know what Baptists should believe? Do Methodists? I don't think so. Could Methodists be united with Lutherans and be comfortable with their understanding of God's sovereignty and election? Remember, the early church wanted everybody to be circumcised. We have different theological outlooks, if we don't we are not thinking. Hmmm...unthinking Christians.   Let me be clear, I

think churches working together is a wonderful thing, and there should be more of it. I just don't see true unity unless we ingnore why we believe what we believe.

I could write more, but it's time to go to work.
Gerry

Justin: I don't believe anyone suggested the notion of "unthinking Christians." On the contrary, I believe if Christians did more thinking, they would begin to understand the vast majority of what keeps us divided is downright silly.

[…]

I'm just saying that Jesus Himself prayed for our unity, the Apostle Paul urged it, and for these reasons, I believe it to be important to strive for it.
Grace and peace, Justin

Gerry: Jason, I agree with all of that. My point is that I don't think most Christians can tell you what they believe. Ask a Methodist what the core beliefs of Methodism are and let me know what they tell you. Gerry

Danielle: Actually, Gerry...denominations are not Biblical that I'm aware of, so I'm not sure that using the word, "should" in reference to what Baptists or Methodists "should" believe really matters. Now if you are referring to our heritage, where we come from, our doctrine, etc., an awareness of this is good and healthy discussion about this Scriptures helps us to grow spiritually....but I think over the years the church has spent way too many hours DECIDING what Baptists will believe and what Methodists will believe, etc. when really, it's not up to us....Salvation comes from the Lord....and it's one denomination deciding their beliefs are superior to another's that causes conflict and tears us apart....Jesus wants us to be unified under Him...not under some banner with our denomination's name on it

Gerry: Danielle: Denominations are not Biblical? Some could make an argument that the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 had the effect of separating the church to some extent. That could be considered quasi denominationalism.

However, the Baptist Church does have theological beliefs that differ from the Lutherans, etc. I would not become a

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Lutheran because of their beliefs, e.g. election, and the absence of free will. So, I disagree. At some level we should know what we believe and what the church we belong to believes. If one is counter to the other then what are you doing in that church. So, people who are Methodists should have the same basic theological beliefs and other Methodists. The same goes for Baptists, and Lutherans. IMHO. That doesn't make any denomination superior to an other, we just have a different view of how God operates.

I'll repeat, I do believe that all Christians belong to the body of Christ and we should work together for the common good (even if those Lutherans are going to hell--and that is joke). Gerry

Dr. Eadens: I don't think that 'organization' is un-biblical. And I think that the NT principles of church are such that there can be significant variation (I don't think either episcopacy or congregationalism are 'un-biblical - but nor is either particular form required).

So denominations per se are not necessarily unbiblical.

But I reckon that 'denominationalism' is an attitude which can be found around which is contrary to biblical principles of Christian unity. When we feel less responsible for anothe group because they are another brand; when we refuse to work in minstry together because they are not the same; when we don't know our Christian neigbours because they believe something differnt about church structure then something is going wrong.

Danielle: Jason, Thanks for your post! I agree whole-heartedly with you! I have longed for the destruction of our denominational walls for quite some time now...they are so restrictive and cause us to focus on building up our own kingdoms instead of building the Kingdom of God. Different denominational expressions are healthy and provide us with opportunities

to grow in our relationship with Christ in varied ways, but the notion and attitude of one denomination being superior to another or "party zeal" as Wesley put it....and the communion table being closed to "non-members" I'm sure makes Christ very sad.

I have experienced first-hand the Kingdom of God at work through people of all denominations working together for a common purpose. After Hurricane Ike hit our area in September, teams of people from all denominations were at work together to help people clean, repair and rebuild. Specifically at our little church 20 miles from the coast, we have a little house behind the church building which is our former parsonage. We currently have two families living there....one Baptist and one United Methodist both working through UMCOR to coordinate work teams to help those who are still in need of help fixing their homes. It is this cooperation across denominational lines that speaks the Gospel most clearly and effectively to those who would seek to know Jesus and the way He would have us live together.

Denominations are a reification of the Protestant Christian church with each denomination having a set of interpretations of the Christian scriptures and rules of governance that distinguish them from other denominations. All engaged in the discussion, except Gerry, viewed these denominations to be too rigid resulting in the segmentation of Christians. The denominations had become too reified disallowing fluid participation in the faith by followers. Gerry, however, sharply disagreed with his groupmates' perspective and argued for the necessity of the denominations and that the members of the churches just needed to be taught more of the reified beliefs of their particular church. For Gerry Christians were "unthinking" if they fluidly moved between denominations. The implication is that they should consider their understanding of the Christian scriptures and find a denomination that fits with their beliefs. The other students expressed that Gerry's position itself was too reified. The students negotiated their understanding of the practice of the church that has identified distinctive denominations versus the recent practice of fluidity among church members to move between denominations. They were negotiating participation and reification in the

church communities. The group did not come to agreement in their negotiation, but each person was able to voice personal perspectives negotiating their own meaning making.

Conflict and resolution. The previous printed conversation revealed disagreements among the members that was rather sharp between Danielle and Gerry. Danielle stated, "Actually, Gerry...denominations are not Biblical that I'm aware of [….]" and Gerry responded, "Denominations are not Biblical? Some could make an argument that [….]" Neither one used ALL CAPS, which in Netiquette is the same as shouting so we did not have a shouting match here, but perhaps Gerry's tone rose a little. Gerry softened in the second response by returning to a more factual tone that used the impersonal, "Some could make an argument…" Danielle's use of "Actually" to preface her comment had a tone of condescension. Justin responded to one of Gerry's comments, with "I don't believe anyone suggested the notion of "unthinking Christians." On the contrary [….]" Justin vented offense at Gerry's declaration. Gerry's tone overall was authoritative and his groupmates responded similarly.

Conflicts during discussions were also experienced in another group. Paul and Melinda emerged as a peacemakers, but yet both were also able to express their own thoughts even when disagreeing with others. The excerpts below started at the end of the first week of Module 1 and went into the next week, even when the course was proceeding to new topics, showing continued engagement among the group member. Merle starts by attempting a summary of the earlier discussions.

Merle: I appreciate everyone's insights in this discussion. It seems that everyone agrees that the individualistic society is a constant source of resistance to real Christian community that helps fuel transformation.
　　　　I think another symptom of this individualism is the way we compartmentalize our lives (especially in our Western culture). We tend to see our spiritual life as only one aspect of our lives. I have my work life, my family

life, my church life, my hobby life, etc. In our culture there is not a lot of blurring between the multiple facets of life. Instead of seeing the spiritual aspect of life as the all-encompassing life that links all we do, we just add it to the list of compartments we live out of. This is the breading ground for "Sunday Christians" and people that view life as "life plus God" rather "life with God."

This is a significant way I think the early church differed from our church today. At some point Christians stopped thinking of the Church as a body to be a part of and instead a building to attend. Early Christians literally lived life together...they ate together, worshipped in homes together. It wasn't life plus a side order of the church...their lives were the Church.

I think this is why Wesley insisted on small groups. Small groups and consistent follow up with individuals was a way to make life more consistently Christ-focused. That is why I think the Church today has to implement a strategic way of keeping people connected with other Christians. […]

Paul: I agree with you. the compartmentalization of my life without Christ and the Church as the central theme has resulted in a life that straddled the fence way too much and resulted in many painful splinters. Again, the Church, the community of faith, and in my humble opinion, small groups are essential to living and maintaining a Christ centered life.

Christine: Small groups are great as long as there is communication and we hold each other accountable. However, I disagree that they are "essential." They are important and it would be difficult for me to give up the small groups in which I am currently participating. However, I think that what is essential is that we individually and in small group stay in the Word of God and keep our focus on Christ--"maintaining a Christ centered life."

Paul: Perhaps I misspoke, by saying "small groups" are essential. It would be more accurate to say that regular connection to a community of faith is essential. The practice of out faith depends greatly on connection with fellow believers. [….] Small groups are easier for most people to maintain connection with. Particularly in today's world of large and Mega Churches.
Respectfully Paul

Christine: I agree that the "practice of our faith depends greatly on connection with fellow believers" but, I'm not sure I agree with "the regular connection to a community of faith is essential." I agree it is important, but I think I have found my biggest challenges and most difficult battles and attacks being involved with a community of faith. […]

[Non-participant response]

Jess: I've really enjoyed reading everyone's posts about small groups. If you don't mind, I'd like to play the other side of things for a moment - and get your

opinions as well. Two things kept coming to mind as I was going through these mostly positive opinions of small groups.

First, I have experienced some pretty clique-ish small groups. I think this is something to be careful of avoiding when implementing/using small groups. Your thoughts?

Christine: Jess, I like your questions. I agree some small groups can be clique-ish. Some can be downright mean/nasty. […]

Paul: Jess, "First, I have experienced some pretty clique-ish small groups. […]"

Wesley was apparently concerned about this same problem when he introduced the recounting of events from other Christian groups once a month. It is true that small groups can become turned inward and lose focus. However, this is what the group leaders were for and they were/are accountable to the pastor. […]

Jess: Paul, I think we're in agreement. I think small groups are an excellent way to encourage and promote Christian growth. Accountability is the key both within the group as well as the group being accountable to the leader. Good points. Jess

In the first thread of the discussion above Paul and Christine disagreed. Paul used connected, non-authoritarian language (Rovai, 2001) such as "in my humble opinion" and "Perhaps I misspoke … It would be more accurate to say that…," along with relational signature closure, **"Respectfully Paul"** when readdressing Christine after her disagreement with him. Christine used much more direct language, though not harsh. Her first response was the most direct saying, "However, I disagree that…." The second time she softened her language somewhat, saying, "but, I'm not sure I agree with…." In the second thread Jess gently broached his concern by introducing his negative critique, "If you don't mind, I'd like to play the other side of things for a moment…." Both Christine and Paul responded with affirmation of his concerns and there is no disagreement. In this group students expressed disagreements or raised issues that they thought may cause dispute, but did so in a manner that communicated trust and caring.

In this group, Paul and Melinda were quite soft spoken and in one response gave a rationale for the purpose for each person to state their personal understandings. Paul gave a rationale for students stating their understandings in the discussion groups.

Paul: Much as in John Wesley's small bands or classes these discussion groups are a place for free exchange of ideas. Through the sharing of our ideas we sharpen our understanding of the material, weed out misunderstanding and bad assumptions, there by developing a greater command of the subject material.
> **Melinda:** I agree with your statement: "Through the sharing of our ideas we sharpen our understanding of the material, weed out misunderstanding and bad assumptions, there by developing a greater command of the subject material. "Very well said.
> > **Paul:** Thank you. This is part of what iron shapens iron means to me.

In Week 2 Paul acknowledged other members' contributions to a discussion he began, "James, et al, Thank you. I think you have very eloquently stated what I missed in my answers."

At other times Melinda also communicated agreement and connection with other members of the group with comments such as, "Zeke - I agree, with your comment "we need a centrality of […]" and "Jackie- My husband is also a new believer …." And in week 2, she wrote, "Wanted to stand, clap, and march to victory with your 3rd paragraph!" However, Melinda could state own thoughts.   In the third week of Module 1 she offered,

Melinda: Regarding question 6, I am hesitant to agree that the entirity of Is 61 has been fulfilled at Jesus' reading in Luke 4. My interpretation is that in Luke 4 there is a "telescoping" fulfilment. Jesus immediately ushers in the kindgdom of God, with the Is 61:11 salvation portion being fulfilled with his death and resurrection, and some of the center (v. 4-10) being ultimately fulfilled in his 2nd coming. I agree that there are many instances where Jesus uttering of a single verse declares the entire chapter (e.g. Psalm 22), however, in this case, I am not confident that the entire of Is 61 is fulfilled when he is seated. I believe that this passage is one of the many "both/and" type passages where the kingdom of God is both here/now and coming. However, you may be able to argue that his announcement will bring an ultimate fulfillment in that it starts the road leading to the cross, etc. I am still thinking on this, thanks...

Melinda sensitively stated her disagreement, gave her interpretation, but left the discussion open for others to interact, end with "I am still thinking on this, thanks…" indicating she was keeping an open mind. No one responded to her comment, however.

Summary

Throughout these discussions the students interacted, shared histories of learning in the form of their own personal stories, evaluated practices, and developed relationships, all of which in Communities of Practice are the attributes of engagement, a mode of belonging in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998, p. 174). These discussions in themselves provided a model, enriching the pastoral imagination. For the most part the students used connected language (Rovai, 2001) but were willing to present differing points of view, allowing negotiation of meaning for each person. As Jackie commented, the role of the discussion groups "is the formation of a community."

Appendix E

CL613 Equipping the Laity

Equipping the Laity was a leadership course with the focus on formation but with elements of performance and interpretation, albeit a mental performance for many of the future clergy. Within the Master of Divinity program according to the *2008-2009 Academic Catalog*, the course was listed within the Practice of Ministry core electives. Within the Practice of Ministry electives, the course was one of ten Christian Leadership courses that could fulfill the Leadership course requirement. Several certificates in Christian Discipleship and Christian Leadership curricula as well as the MA in Christian Leadership degree program classified the course as a requirement or within the core electives.

The course introduced a potential transformation in the way many Christian churches go about their mission and drew attention to the way in which the clergy see their role and purpose. The clergy role changes from being a priestly figure, the central point of church or at least the pivotal point of the church, to one of the priesthood of all believers, a major theological tenet of Protestantism, but one that has not been well practiced. Dr. Sam Morgan, the professor, wrote in the syllabus (Spring 2009), "The Reformation tenet of 'The Priesthood of All Believers' is still very much unfolding!" (p. 1). On page 2 of the syllabus under the Competencies To Be Developed by the Student in the course, Dr. Morgan wrote,

> Students should first have a clear understanding of the Biblical role of the pastor to equip the saints for ministry. A huge conceptual shift must take place here of moving away from a world view that sees laity as the *object* of ministry to a more Biblical view that trains laity to understand themselves and to live as ministers of the Gospel of Christ.

Thus, the professor desired to transform the concept of the role of the clergy with these student clergy and future clergy. The course work used testimonies and readings that introduced and described the approach, a case study research assignment where the students found and explored examples, and reflection upon their past/current practices or concepts and how those fit or did not fit with the promoted view.

Dr. Morgan separated the course content into seven modules each proceeding for two weeks and divided the class members into five small groups with four or five members per group. Within each module there was one or two small group discussion forum(s). One group member each week was responsible for starting the threads for the group. There were various assignments to discuss within the threads involving accountability for spiritual disciplines as well as course readings and exercises. All the female students were in one small group, likely done in order to provide more freedom for the weekly accountability discussions than mixed gender groups might have afforded. Students other than the assigned leaders for the week sometimes also started threads for various purposes. Table A.5 provides an overview of the second module's two discussion fora. Due to the structure of the discussion fora with weekly assigned leaders, some of whom did not participate in the study, separation of the participant posts from the non-participant posts was not practical. One of the groups did not participate in the research and so their posts were not collected and their posts and responses are not included in the table.

Table A.5

CL613 Module 2 Discussion Forum Analysis (two weeks)

Authors of thread entries	Posts Responses		Mean responses per post	Contributors (including professor)
Non-participants, study participants, and professor	39	201	5.2	18

Formation of the Religious Leadership

Foster et al. (2005) distinguished pedagogies of *practicing the presence of God* and *practicing holiness* as well as *practicing religious leadership* within the pedagogies of *formation.* Students were to read devotional writings daily and were to help keep one another accountable for daily prayer and meditation time. These activities were methods of *practicing the presence of God*. In response to the daily readings in Module 5 Seymour wrote,

Seymour: I helped officiate my first funeral on Monday. It really hit me hard. I experienced eternity in a way I never had before. All my masks were stripped away. On Tuesday I read *In Search of Beyond* by Carlos Carretto page 158 Here he explains the gift of eternal life is the ability to see God as he is not as he may appear to us or we image him. We have to see beyond our finite selves. On Monday I saw past myself to the beyond and it scared me.

Seymour identified an image of himself, one in which the "masks were stripped away" that "saw past myself to the beyond and it scared me." Foster, et al. identified a pedagogy of formation to be practicing the presence of God. The authors found,

> "[T]his task does not end with an awareness of God, the holy, or mystery. It culminates in a transformation of consciousness—of seeing and making sense of things from the perspective of the wholly other symbolized as God, the holy, or mystery. The perspective of the self in this effort is recentered. It establishes an alternative angle of vision to that of one's prior view of self, other, and community." (p. 103)

Seymour participated in one of the performances of the clergy, officiating a funeral ceremony. In the juncture of skills (performance) and identity formation in the learning to be clergy, although students were not required to officiate at the funeral in the course, the professor provided opportunities for the students to cultivate "ways of thinking at the center of their perception of clergy being and doing" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 97).

Jessie reflected on Dr. Morgan's video lecture and the function of these spiritual discipline activities for his leadership as a professional clergy.

Jessie: Here is a quote from Dr. Morgan from his introduction to Module 2:

> "If you are going to lead God's people, then you must first be a follower of Jesus. If you are going to form others for the Kingdom, then the Gospel must first transform you."
>
> This came to life last night as I was leading worship for a healing service and playing piano during the time of prayer and healing. I'm not sure about you all, but it is sometimes difficult for me to focus and be transformed by the Spirit of God. Last night was just a little reminder of how important it is for me to live a disciplined spiritual life outside of weekly services and church programs. Otherwise I'll get caught up in saying the right...or wrong...thing, playing the right piano notes, or singing the correct melody. It's a reminder that God must transform me throughout the week so that I might be filled and out of the overflow be able to lead.

In order for the professional clergy to be a leader of the Christian community, they had "to live a disciplined spiritual life." Yet this was not a set of rules and regulations to be kept for tradition sake. The Carnegie study stated that an implication of *practicing holiness* was "[....] more concerned with fostering the character of the habitus of the religious tradition than in replicating its rules" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 115). Jessie continued that he had to be transformed by God "so that I might be filled and out of the overflow be able to lead."

In the fifth module after reading a specified book, the discussion board assignment required students to discuss their understanding of what the perspective

would mean in their leadership as clergy. The discussion prompt stated, "Share some of what you understood from Susan Muto [author] about the kind of love and respect and leadership you are called to pour into a formation in common group." Shawn reflected on who he has been and how he needs to change. His talk varied from past tense to present with a forward look as shown in these excerpts: "The Lord has challenged me through Muto … I've been too results oriented. I need to … I am praying for the ability to see evidences of grace in the here and now, rather than focusing so much on the future. I have found that if you don't do this,…" This last statement seemed to reflect past experience with negative results—just the opposite of what would have been desired from a results-oriented person. Shawn showed an inclination towards a new focus in his role as leader; a new vision or *pastoral imagination* (Foster et al., 2005).

In response to a later question in the same module, Shawn affirmed his tension between a past identity and a future vision. He stated,

Shawn: I feel strongly that I am called to be a pastor. I specifically want to be part of a discipleship ministry that is instrumental in revitalizing an existing congregation. I've wrestled with this call during this class, and am more determined than ever to implement a true equipping ministry than ever. The idea of a 2-year academy seems daunting to me, but also very exciting. I'm currently trying to work out ways to adapt this model to my current context.

His desire to "revitalize an existing congregation" implied a congregation that had not grown or has even diminishedand his recognition that the past performance had been problematic. Shawn saw a positive alternative in the approach that was advocated in the course and by the author. He expressed some hesitation, "… seems daunting to me," which was immediately followed by a positive avowal, "but also very exciting." He then stated that he was attempting to employ the approach in his ministry at that time, how he was endeavoring to work out the tension.

In Shawn's talk, we saw transformation in process. He reflected on the past, recognized the difficulties in the past, and then explored a new vision for the future. In Wenger's (1998) terminology, Shawn expressed *images of the past and future*, the problems of the past and needs for the future, along with *images of possibilities* in the model presented in the course, as well as *images of ourselves* in his recognition of his personal need for transformation in order to have a role to bring revitalization in the existing congregation. Shawn was making meaning for his role as minister.

In response to the same question, Jessie identified an emphasis of the author Muto and then interpreted it by integrating a biblical example.

Jessie: I particularly enjoyed her emphasis on consonance or flowing together with, being in tune with the Spirit of the Living God. At another point she said, "We cooperate with the work of the Spirit." It reminded me of a passage in Acts when the apostles and elders, and the whole church sent Judas and Silas with Paul and Barnabas to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. They made the statement that "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." I believe this is a good biblical example of what she is talking about. Susan said, "We cooperate with the work of the Spirit." I just love this image of us cooperating with the Spirit instead of putting up obstacles for the Spirit to have to maneuver. This inspires me to really seek to pursue cooperation with the Spirit of God.

He quoted the author and stated "I just love this image of us cooperating with the Spirit [….] This inspires me to really seek to pursue cooperation with the Spirit of God." Jessie did not focus on his own past concept and behavior, but yet contrasted the past in general through an "instead of," similarly to Shawn's "rather than" construction. He ended with a forward-looking statement, "This inspires me…."

In response to the later question in the module, "What kind of specific discipleship/equipping ministry do you think the Lord may be calling you to?," Jessie responded,

Jessie: However I am involved in music leadership whether it be as a worship pastor/leader or otherwise, I see myself discipling those involved in the music ministry of the church (choir, worship team, drama teams, etc). All too often I have been a part of choirs and music ministry teams and there does not seem to be a lot of Christian maturity (generalization) found within those groups. It seems to me people just kind of show up to practice, crack a few jokes, show up on Sunday, sing a few songs and go home. My desire is that there would be intentionality in building relationships and spiritual growth through something like the 2-year academy, but probably on a smaller less intense scale. In some ways I feel like across the board, but specifically in music ministry the church has lost the vision, who we worship and why. A focus on talent emerges and gifts are sometimes put on the back burner. I would love to see people's gifts exposed and used and then see these folks grow in their passion for God, worship, those they are ministering with, and those 'outside the church.' I realize this seems a bit idealistic, but I believe it can be done and done well. With God's help and direction this is my prayer for me and the worship ministry I believe God has called me to.

Jessie's reflection was comparable to Shawn's process. He started with an image of himself in the future, "I see myself …." This is then followed by an image of the past that is problematic; Jessie stated, "…often I have been a part of […] and there does not seem to be a lot of Christian maturity (generalization) found within those groups." After a description of the past problem, Jessie gave an image of possibility, "My desire is that there would be intentionality in building relationships and spiritual growth through […]." He contrasted this with again the past image he believed to be problematic, "I feel like … the church has lost the vision, who we worship and why." Jessie provided an example of the lost vision in his area of music ministry in the congregation, "A focus on talent emerges and gifts are sometimes put on the back burner." Next Jessie again gave an *image of the possibilities* with an affirmation of his intent to bring this image about in his ministry.

Jessie had not indicated whether this was a new concept for himself or whether the course and author confirmed what he was already imagining. However, in a follow-

up discussion, Jessie provided a little more insight into his image of himself, which afforded insight into the problematic image of the past. The discussion prompt asked the students to "share insights from your daily readings as well as praises, requests, and accountability points." Jessie wrote,

Jessie: "Help me, O Lord, to let my old self die..." (Job, p149 Henri Nouwen)
This passage really grabbed ahold of me this week when I read it. I need a constant reminder to die to the 1000 big and small things that build up my false self. The false self that says I can do it on my own or that "loves" compliments and praise or that feels inadequate. Today I need to die to this false self so that "my actions, words and thought can become a hymn of praise to [Him]." This is my prayer for me as well as our group. Let's die today.

Jessie identified that the "false self … 'loves' compliments and praise or that feels inadequate," which corresponded to his example of how the church has lost its vision through a focus on talent (musical) that deemphasized gifts (generally understood as capacities that bring praise to God and works to accomplish the mission of the church). The problematic "false self" or image of the past was the focus on individuals and their musical abilities rather than the focus on God in awe or worship of the Deity. Jessie concluded by quoting the author, again expressing an *image of the possibilities.*

Formation Leading to Performance

Jessie and Shawn in their discourses both exemplified the process of formation of their identity as clergy when presented with *images of possibilities*, a model that gave a vision for the future, from what they perceived the image of the past to have been. Both seemed to express some uncertainty. Shawn stated, "…seems daunting to me" and Jessie said, "I realize this seems a bit idealistic," but affirmed a belief in the possibility of a different approach from the past. Shawn was "currently trying to work out ways" in his current clergy role while Jessie, who was not yet in the professional ministry, determined

"I believe it can be done and done well. With God's help and direction this is my prayer

for me and the worship ministry I believe God has called me to." Both Shawn and Jessie

offered volitional speech acts concerning performance. Their performance as clergy was

developing with this commitment, although Jessie was not able to implement the

performance at that point in time.

On the other hand, Bobby expressed desire but with skepticism. He stated,

Bobby: I do appreciate Dr. Muto dependency on the Holy Spirit as she indicates the
need for a "pace of grace in spiritual formation. Additionally, she indicates the
need to be freely chosen & not harshly imposed. I am wondering how discipleship
accountability can be satisfied in a ministry context of say a 2 year commitment?
When I consider the issues many face on a daily bases, I wonder how this maybe
accommodated? I really want to engage our people in discipleship formation, but
I question how to feasibly do so?

Bobby began, "I do appreciate," including the non-required helping verb "do" that added

emphasis while at the same time expressed qualification to the sentiment. Twice he

questioned the strategy. The sentences were declarative statements with the preface, "I

am wondering" and "I wonder" but Bobby ended both sentences with question marks.

His sentence structure conveyed reservations and possibly hesitation concerning the

approach while yet tempering or possibly not trusting his response. He closed with the

tension that Shawn and Jessie expressed, but was drawn in the opposite direction. "I

really want…but I question how to feasibly do so?" Again, a question mark on a

declarative sentence expressed the perplexing struggle in which Bobby was engaged.

While Shawn and Jessie indicated they see potential difficulties, they committed

themselves to change, Bobby hesitantly desired transformation, and questioned how to

accomplish the change. Bobby did not have an *image of possibilities* and expressed no

image of the past and future. At this point Bobby had not demonstrated any volition towards transformed performance.

Learning from Interpretation

Foster et al. (2005) found that critical thinking was at the heart of the interpretation pedagogies used by educators of future clergy. However, they stated, "…the end of critical thinking is not reflective skepticism; it is to move students through reflective skepticism to service, praxis, or some action responsive to the influence or claim of the religious horizon on the interpretive practice" (p. 93). In the previous discussion Shawn and Jessie moved through reflective skepticism to a commitment to action, whereas Bobby had not taken the final step to action.

In response to a question asking the students "What kind of specific discipleship/equipping ministry do you think the Lord may be calling you to?" Seymour demonstrated progress in the construction of his identification as a clergy member. Seymour stated, "I feel much more confident in responding to this question than I did eight weeks ago." He continued to give the nature of his previous uncertainties by stating, "I have had problems linking my church appointment with my service projects." He then added two ringing statements that each started with "I now understand […..]" The repetition in sentence structure accentuated his perception of progress. Seymour articulated the resolution of his previous uncertainty, writing,

Seymour: I now understand I am called to make disciples in the church. These individuals may or may not participate in my programs but they will look beyond themselves. I now understand better that service is about co-formation. I see my church ministry in a prophetic sense. This is rambling but the bottom line is I am comfortable with the deacons role due to the link between equipping and service.

Foster et al. (2005) identified the goal of critical thinking to be understanding, which from the clergy educators they studied, was "viewed as *making sense* of the text, situation, event, or relationship under discussion" (p. 89). Seymour had now made sense of his new role.

Summary

To use Wenger's (1998) *modes of belonging*, Seymour's images of himself transformed from his past uncertainty to *images of the possibilities*, which brought stronger self-efficacy to perform the role of clergy. Similarly, Shawn's and Jessie's critical reflection on their *images of the past* with *images of the possibilities* enabled them to arrive at volitional statements of change in the performance of their ministry. While Seymour did not endeavor to perform or commit to action as Shawn and Jessie did, his identity as a clergy was strengthened. He made an interesting statement concerning the outcome of his new understanding, "These individuals [disciples in the church] may or may not participate in my programs but they will look beyond themselves." Seymour's identity would shape the identity of those with whom he ministers. His professional identity was being formed; how he perceived himself in the community of practice was becoming clear to him, though the practice might not be fully defined. Shawn, Jessie, Seymour and even Bobby were negotiating the meaning of their roles as the professional clergy.

Appendix F

PR610 Preaching

According to the syllabus and tradition, the Preaching course in the education of the clergy was a practics course, generally labeled as practical theology. The Preaching course was one course in a the set of three course categories, Preaching, Worship, or Music, from which the Master of Divinity students must choose two courses from two of the categories(The Seminary, 2009a, p. 58). This set of courses was in the broader area of "The practice of ministry." Prerequisites for the course were a two unit Foundations of Proclamation course and either an Old Testament or New Testament Inductive Bible Study course so the students have previously learned how to interpret the Christian scriptures.

Preaching or the delivery of a sermon or homily is a premier practice of the professional clergy. Dr. Carl Knight, the professor for the course, affirmed this in the syllabus (Fall 2009), writing, "Most of your congregation will see you most of the time as a leader of worship and a preacher of sermons" (p. 2). Therefore, the course's main pedagogical effort would be performance.

The Preaching course did not emphasize extensive discussion fora interactions. Students were instructed to post their assignments, including sermon outlines and video-recorded sermons, in the discussion fora and comment on one another's work providing feedback for consideration. The professor also provided feedback on the video-recorded sermon assignments and on other assignments. There were a total of 7 fora for the course. Table A.6 shows the contributions to the discussion forum for the first sermon

outline assignment, the first assignment in Module 2, for all students and for the four

students participating in the study.

Table A.6

PR610 Contributions to Forum: Assignment # 3 Outline and Design of Sermon One

Authors of thread entries	Posts	Responses	Mean responses per post	Median responses per post	Contributors (including professor)
Non-participants, study participants, and professor	15 (one per student)	79	4.9	5.0	16
Study participants' posts with participants', nonparticipants', and instructor's responses	4 (one per student)	21	5.25	5.0	16

The class participation grade included the discussion fora, but it also encompassed the 6-

8 page theology of proclamation paper. This class participation accounted for 25% of the

final grade

Performance as the Principal Focus

Dr. Knight required each student to prepare and preach two sermons during the

semester. The syllabus stated, "The overall goal of the course is to enable you to prepare

and deliver sermons more effectively." In the syllabus Dr. Knight also stated,

> This course emphasizes "learning by doing." In some academic courses one learns
> a body of material and is then tested on it to see how much one has learned. But
> we will be putting principles into practice before becoming fully proficient in
> them.

Performance of the practice of preparing and preaching sermons was paramount. Wenger

(1998) identified practice to be "learning as doing." In doing the practice, the novices

learn to perform the practice and the experts, such as Dr. Knight, are the mentors. In the

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syllabus Dr. Knight shared his own personal story as a preacher, which, he humorously added that according to his aunt started at age five when "I preached to my uncle's cows" (Syllabus, Fall 2009, p. 3).

Since Dr. Knight and the distance classmates could not be physically present for the preaching of the sermons in the online course, the students video recorded their preaching and uploaded the video to YouTube. The uploaded video was made available to the student's classmates for their viewing and feedback. As well, the student was to have an onsite observation group, who would complete an evaluation form immediately after the delivery of the sermon. Foster et al. (2005) listed the elements of performance to include the script to be performed, which in the Preaching class was the sermon. A second aspect of the performance was the performer and the audience viewing and hearing the performance, which was the student-preacher with a multi-faceted audience including the in-person audience in the situation of the live preaching of the sermon and the distance audience viewing the recording. The third element of the pedagogies of performance in the Carnegie study was the means or manner of the performance, where the student should develop proficiency in "how to" write and deliver a sermon and progressing into a fluency in preaching. The onsite audience, peers, and the professor evaluated both the preparation and delivery of the students' sermons in order to facilitate the third aspect, the means and manner of the performance. The fourth element of the pedagogies of performance encompassed a continued expansion of the *pastoral imagination*. As an expert in the field of preaching having taught preaching and related courses for forty years at the seminary, Dr. Knight stated several learning outcomes for the students including, "Preaching is a worship experience. Preaching is spiritually

formative. Methodology is as theological as content. Preaching is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit" (Syllabus, Fall 2009, pp. 3-4). These attributes of preaching portrayed the *pastoral imagination* to be developed in the students.

When providing peer feedback, mostly the students offered encouragement and appreciation to one another for the sermons shared. Comments included, "Good job, Dontae. I look forward to hearing the final product," and "Good, significant work here. I really like the depth of the research as well as how you are structuring the sermon. Excellent, and I look forward to hearing it preached. God bless!" Morris only gave one response to his classmates and it was predominantly affirmation, but he did engage the sermon.

Morris: I enjoyed listening to this message and the way you related the life of Jesus to our lives today so that we get a better idea how to fight off the temptations that are thrown at us by Satan. I also liked when you were talking about the Holy Spirit and the train whistle started, it fit in perfectly. I also had to smile when you started to talk about Satan tempting us today and the cell phone began to ring, perfect timing! Wonderful.

However, sometimes the students offered constructive criticism.

Barbara: I just finished listening to your sermon. Thank you for this important message. Your introduction captured my attention, but I might have preferred a story about your grandson, the Boy Scout, that spoke to the idea of being prepared. At first I did not pick up on your thesis but eventually I caught on-which may have been what you intended. If I understood correctly, your thesis was that we must be prepared to face temptation and we prepare by staying immersed in God's word. I liked the way you applied the message to us today. Good work.

The goal was to help one another improve performance in a vital task of their profession. By viewing the sermons, the students were building a *shared repertoire* not only of the sermon content, but additionally a repertoire of effective and ineffective communication devices in preaching.

Dr. Knight provided more extensive feedback to the students on the delivery of their sermons. He positively evaluated Dontae's first sermon with some constructive criticism.

Dr. Knight: Thank you for your sermon. It was a delight to hear.
You have a clear, crisp, and cogent speaking voice; easy to listen to.
Calm and reasoned in thought and action.
Good control of your material and that without copious notes; along with a well sequenced body movement, and apt gestures.
Not hard driving, but with conviction, compassion, and resolve in your earnestness about your topic.
You have some solid theological tenets and biblical undergriding in your development.
I would have like for you to have stayed in Exodus--develop that story without any of the contemporary stuff or even New Testament implications; then in part two, you have to So What? for application to us. there are always two meanings in every text: a) what did the author say and intend for that audience; and b) what is the eternal 'good news' of the passage?
[2 paragraphs omitted]
Well, good job; I had a good time listening and found joy and hope in your sermon.

Dr. Knight evaluated aspects of the sermon delivery, for example, "You have a clear, crisp, and cogent speaking voice, easy to listen to" and "Good control of your material and that without copious notes, along with a well sequenced body movement, and apt gestures." He also appraised the sermon development as preached, such as "You have some solid theological tenets and biblical undergriding in your development." Additionally Dr. Knight pinpointed an area for potential improvement, "I would have like for you to have stayed in Exodus [….]"

Dr. Knight responded to Robert's second sermon as follows:

Dr. Knight: First off, Robert, I regret not responding to your outline of the Lu 4 passage, or did I? I have it marked that I did, but I do not recall doing it. At any rate, your schemata was rather discursive; a rambling about with good gospel stuff, and hefty analysis about the variants in Nazareth and Capernaum. But, I did not sense an over-riding thesis, an ah ha, and governing sentence, crisply stated

and well delineated as overall 'big idea' of the sermon. Could you summarize the sermon in a sentence?

You impress me as one who is going to give your congregants something to eat or to chew on for a while. You roll up your sleeves and say, "Now, lets get to work on this passage." You have the gift of unpacking a truth and leading a congregation into some deep theological and biblical waters. And you application gets to the point and we take away grist for the mills of our minds. (How about that for an image?)

You came across, though, as heady and lecturish. And that is not bad, as Craddock states, "A bird is not nourished by chewing, but by chewing food."

You show evidence of know the story, the background, and you dig around and find nuggets of value for all who will listen. Maybe you need to lighten up a tad; have more fun; less intense; more 'come now and let us reason together'; and enjoy the trip. I will be interested in reading your final paper on the 'theology of proclamation'--that is, what do you see and understand to be the major task of proclamtion? Today, I felt more like I was listening in on a C-span lecture than a heart-warming encounter with the living God.

You got the 'goods', Robert. Enjoy it...develop it...and sit back and watch God work through you. Love ya, Dr. Knight

Dr. Knight, though not as infatuated with this sermon as with Dontae's, again identified the positive and the areas needing work in the sermon and delivery. Positively he acknowledged Robert's "gift of unpacking a truth […]" but identified that the sermon was "a rambling about with good gospel stuff, and hefty analysis." The last issue of "hefty analysis was the critical point throughout in that Dr. Knight stated, "You came across, though, as heady and lecturish." Dr. Knight not only critiqued the sermon, he also gave guidance for improvement. He asked Robert, "Could you summarize the sermon in a sentence?" and suggested, "Maybe you need to lighten up a tad; have more fun; less intense [….]" Dr. Knight concluded with affirmation of Robert's potential, "You got the 'goods', Robert. Enjoy it...develop it...and sit back and watch God work through you. Love ya, Love ya," Dr. Knight's critique focused on the means and manner of the performance and also tendered one of his goals, "watch God work through you."

In response to Dr. Knight's evaluation of his second sermon, Robert wrote,

Robert: I really thought I had lightened the mood up a bit. I guess I'm going to have to learn how to do that - I'm very used to lecturing and such, and that is finding its' way into my sermons. I will continue to work on my delivery. Thank you very much for your help!"

Robert's process for improving his performance included becoming conscious of his characteristics in order to change future practice. Interestingly, Robert identified this same issue to Barbara concerning her preaching.

Robert: I enjoyed listening to your delivery; it was pleasant and easy to understand. The only comment I might make is one which has been brought to my attention, and that is you didn't seem excited about the subject. It was a great teaching presentation, but it might be a better preaching presentation with some emotion. The delivery was almost too smooth and even.

After the difference between teaching and preaching had been pointed out to Robert ("one which has been brought to my attention") he became conscious of this in Barbara's sermon as well. In the language of a community of practice, the students gained an *image of themselves* in order to progress to an *image of the possibilities* (Wenger, 1998). As the Carnegie study noted, the formation process of the tradition and identity continues through the performance of the practices in time and context; "and this interplay of *performance* and *forming* often takes place with transforming intent" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 170).

Dr. Knight expected the students to use only a brief outline when preaching. Robert and Barbara both acknowledged that they were accustomed to using a full outline or a full manuscript when speaking publicly. Robert acknowledged,

Robert: I was a bit nervous. Having been in engineering, my culture is to have everything laid out nice and neat, all tied together, and with notes to work with. I had just four sentences on the sheet I used to preach from this time, and it took me a while to get used to not being able to quickly refer to a note when I got to each area of the sermon. As they say, onward and upward. Thanks for the feedback. God bless.

Dr. Knight's outline-only requirement was a new skill set for Robert and Barbara to acquire; however, likely their preaching would be more efficacious and fluid in manner of their sermon delivery as desired in the third element of the pedagogies of performance (Foster et al., 2005). However, the fluidity for Robert was not accomplished in the two sermons preached for the class as was shown in responses, but he committed, "I will continue to work on my delivery" using a volitional speech act.

Interpretation

Even with this heavy emphasis on performance, other pedagogies were found. The course description emphasized a pedagogy of interpretation, stating, "This course approaches preaching as a theological practice and from a perspective shaped by the Wesleyan tradition; it is informed by a conscious integration of doctrinal and biblical exegesis and the practice of theological hermeneutics" (The Seminary, 2009a, p. 205). The "biblical exegesis" and "theological hermeneutics" were the work of interpretation. In the syllabus Dr. Knight identified a subgoal of the course "to develop a method for studying biblical passages for preaching" (Syllabus, Fall 2009, p. 4). It was recognized that interpretation was foundational in the preparation of the sermons, though the practice of interpretation was not the principal effort of the course. The students shared their interpretation of the biblical passages for their sermons in the discussion fora, but there was not extensive conversation regarding those interpretations. Barbara responded to her classmate's interpretative study for the second sermon stating, "I am interested in what you discover about the use of the word 'unclean.' That is something that I had never noticed." However, she did not follow-up the insight after viewing his sermon.

Beyond the biblical interpretation was the recognition that understanding the

theory of the preaching practice was also essential for clergy students. The students read

textbooks that covered preaching theory and presented their critiques in a discussion

forum. Dr. Knight wrote, "Good practicum (praxis) grows out of a healthy understanding

of theory behind the performance" (Syllabus, Fall 2009, p. 5). In the second discussion

forum the students discussed the theory of preaching as presented in the textbooks

especially as that theory related to the development and delivery of sermons for the

students. Robert wrote a lengthy response from which only the first and last paragraphs

are included in the excerpt.

Robert: The first overall impression I got from reading both books is that Craddock
        spent virtually all of his writing speaking to the sermon itself. He did spend a
        chapter of about 6 pages speaking about the preacher's habits as it pertains to a
        life of study, but for the most part he spoke to the sermon preparation itself. In
        contrast, Demaray devoted almost a third of his book to the preacher, covering
        everything from the calling and anointing to how a good study library should
        look. I also got the feeling that Craddock's book was a more formal work than
        was Demaray's.
        One critical point that I gained from both of them was that preaching from
        a manuscript as I normally do is something to be avoided. […]
        Second, I gained a lot of insight into how to prepare for a sermon before
        you even have a subject to preach on. For instance, Craddock points out that a
        sermon is preached in context. […]
        Third, especially with Demaray, there is a lot of information about how to
        become prepared for preaching illustrations and background. He gives some
        recommended publications that we should read on a regular basis, not limiting
        them to Christian publications. […]
        Fourth, I gained a better perspective on sermon form. Craddock gives a list
        of possible sermon forms (Pg 177) and Demaray speaks to the order of a sermon.
        […]
        Fifth, a sermon must have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. […]
        Both books work to help prepare us for sermon preparation and delivery,
        and I think by reading both of them we get the total picture. Craddock is more
        concerned with the sermon itself and goes into great detail on how to do so, but is
        light on preacher preparation. Demaray spends more time on preacher
        preparation, but (my opinion only) is not as detailed as Craddock on how to set up
        the sermon. Both books stress that going to the original Biblical texts, in original

language if possible, is the only way to get at what God has for you to say from a text.

Dr. Knight: Robert, you have succinctly stated the basic tenets of both authors quite clearly and vividly. I am sure you also have taken note, that good theory must get internalized; that is, having read these authors, so what? In order words, how am I going to use them. And use them you will. They not only sit on your bookshelf...they must become 'flesh and blood' as you journey into the prep and delivery of God's Word. They can be your best friends...better yet, your summary thoughts, if taken seriously, will see to it that you will be 'greening and growing' in your journey of becoming an articulate, effective proclaimer of the Word. Enjoy the trip!

Robert: Dr. Knight, after I had finished writing my assignment I came to the same conclusion. I am going to make an outline of my points and keep them near my sermon preparation area so I will not forget any of them. I'm sure I will find other points to improve on as we go. Thanks for the feedback!

Robert proffered his understanding from the textbooks and the implications for his performance when developing and delivering sermons. Dr. Knight affirmed Robert's insights and urged him to "internalize" the theory. Robert voiced a volitional speech act, "I am going to make an outline of my points and keep them near my sermon preparation area so I will not forget any of them." While this was not directly performance of the sermon delivery or preparation, Robert voiced an intention to let his understanding of the theory guide his pastoral work of preaching.

Formation

Another syllabus (Fall 2009) statement, "Preaching is spiritually formative" (p. 5), recognized the formation aspect of the course. Dr. Knight frequently contributed encouragement in his discussion forum responses to the students inciting images of possibilities with words like "A good job. You are growing and greening and the best is yet to be. You are better than you think you are, and you are not as good as you are going to be. Enjoy the trip!" Dr. Knight attempted to raise the *pastoral imagination* of the novice preachers (Foster et al., 2005). Student responses sometimes expressed thanks for

his encouragement and "kind words," and after reading a sample provided by Dr. Knight in his evaluation of her first sermon, Barbara exclaimed, "Now that's the kind of preacher I want to be when I grow up! I have much to learn. Thanks for your comments and suggestions. I will consider…."

Dontae noted how one of the textbooks focused on the formation of the preacher through *practicing the presence of God* and *practicing holiness* (Foster et al., 2005) before the actual sermon preparation. In the textbook critique discussion, Dontae summarized,

Dontae: Demaray [author] goes on to describe the preacher's altar as being constantly in tune with God and God's will through daily scripture reading and prayer. … He encourages, too, that preachers take regular and consistent times for personal recreation.

The preacher's spiritual, mental, and physical formation was critical for the preparation of the sermons.

Contextualization

In their critiques of the textbooks in the second assignment discussion forum, the students identified the emphasis of one author on the context of the sermon. Robert isolated the emphasis on the audience and situatedness of the sermon. He recapped the author, "His point is that we must be aware of to whom and under what circumstances a sermon is being prepared." Dontae pinpointed multiple contexts discussed by the author including the "historical context" of the local congregation and the preaching tradition and the "pastoral context" concluding, "This message creates for the preacher and congregation a kind of fluidity between proclaimed Word and weekly/daily ministry." The sermon, thus, connects to the larger community and practice of the church. Dontae continued with the "liturgical context" of the sermon where "the sermon exists within the

context of the people's worship of God." Lastly, Dontae noted the author's "theological context" of the sermon asserting, "The sermon not only uses theology as a tool for understanding scripture and revelation but is itself a theological act," recognizing that the sermon itself is a study of God and the actions and desires of God. Through the reading of this textbook the students gained understanding that the sermon was not just the creation of a speech and effective communication, but appreciated the multiple contextual natures of the sermon connecting the past to the present.

Summary

The pedagogies of interpretation of the biblical passages underlying the sermon as well as the theory behind preaching was significant for the student preachers. The students also became aware of the consequence of the preacher's formation and the sermon's broader context on their preaching habits and effectiveness. However, the predominant emphasis and evidence in the Preaching course supported the development of the performance of the clergy students in preparing and delivering sermons.

Four students of the fifteen enrolled in the Preaching course participated in the study and of the four only two provided regular feedback to their classmates, which limited the data available for analysis. In the discussion fora the professor's feedback and some feedback from classmates assisted the student preachers to become aware of areas for improvement. Evidence exhibited that some students gained images of themselves and images of the possibilities in achieving greater efficacy in their preaching practice. The focus was on the means or "how to" of sermon preparation and delivery but developing fluidity or the manner of the sermon delivery was identified to a lesser extent. Dr. Knight's passion for good sermons fostered an expanded pastoral

imagination, the fourth element of the pedagogies of performance, as Barbara wrote, "that's the kind of preacher I want to be."

Dr. Knight proffered encouragement, correction, and guidance in his feedback to the students. Similarly, Foster et al. (2005) stated,

> The most explicit moments of the coaching of individual progress in the practice occurred through words of encouragement, questions that requested further engagement with a given text or thought, and the feedback on and assessment of sermons. (pp. 94-95)

Dr. Knight's coaching provided insightful feedback for the students to improve their sermon development and delivery. However, the lack of discussion interaction by some of the students limited the peer feedback. This kept the interaction mainly limited to student-instructor. The students who did participate in student-student interaction provided encouragement and some insights for improvement. Story telling did not arise in the participating student discussions limiting the development of the *shared repertoire* (Wenger, 1998), though the sermons included stories as illustrations. However, the data set was very limited for the PR610 Preaching course so it is possible that other non-participating students shared more of their personal experiences. The focus of the course was to develop and deliver sermons in a learning by doing manner. The students viewed one another's sermons and read the sermon outlines, which did add to the *shared repertoire*, as when Barbara noticed the new insights for the word "unclean." However, according to the syllabus, Dr. Knight valued the community interaction. The discussion fora were not structured with discussion prompts to encourage the personal sharing that provides the generation of a shared repertoire. Perhaps Dr. Knight could have facilitated more discussion by responding beyond the evaluations of the submitted work.

Appendix G

YM510 Youth Ministry

The Youth Ministry course is identified on the Fall 2009 syllabus as the "primary course out of which all other Youth Ministry courses grow" (p. 2). The course is required for the Master of Arts in Youth Ministry (The Seminary, 2009a, p. 97) and is a practice of ministry core elective for the Master of Divinity program (The Seminary, 2009a, p. 58), which means that it is one of a set of courses from which Master of Divinity students must choose. The course syllabus for Fall 2009 identifies the field of Youth Ministry as practical theology (pp. 2-3).

Dr. Darin Baker structured the course into three modules with weekly discussion fora. The students were required to answer the question prompts and to respond to their classmates each week, but in the instructions for the fora in the syllabus Dr. Baker stated that he was more interested in quality than quantity of posts. The participation grade for the discussion fora was determined by timeliness of the postings and "interaction with and use of the course material" (Syllabus, Fall 2009, p. 4). Additionally the students created a one-year youth ministry portfolio as a group project, an authentic activity for pastors engaged in youth ministry in a local church. Students also made class presentations and wrote several integrative papers among other activities that engaged the students with the content of the course.

Twelve persons enrolled in the course but after the first module only 10 persons posted in the discussion fora; however, the five participants remained active throughout the semester. The course required weekly participation in the discussion fora reflecting on the course content presented through the weekly readings and multimedia

presentations and responding to one another's posts "in a thoughtful and informed

manner" (Syllabus, Fall 2009, p. 4). As with many of the classes included in this

research, the study participants were already practicing ministry either as non-ordained

youth ministers or pastoral leadership positions working with youth and youth ministers.

One student worked in a denominational group home for troubled youth. Thus, the

students in this particular offering of the course brought extensive experience to the class

discussions. Table A.7 provides an example of the number of contributions to the weekly

discussion fora.

Table A.7

YM510 Contribution to Forum: Module 1Week 3 Ecclesial and Pastoral Theology

Authors of thread entries	Posts	Responses	Mean responses per post	Median responses per post	Contributors (including professor)
Non-participants, study participants, and teaching assistants	12	53	4.4	5.0	13
Study participants' posts with participants', nonparticipants', and instructor's responses	5	20	4.0	3.0	13

Performance as the Principal Focus

Foster et al. (2005) stated, "Through these pedagogies of performance seminary

educators emphasize the interaction of academic and religious expectations for effective

leadership in clergy practice" (p. 157). One objective of the Youth Ministry course is to

"acquire the skills necessary to develop a comprehensive youth ministry that is reflective

of a theological, ecclesiological, and developmental perspective" (Syllabus, Fall 2009, p.

3), which highlighted the collaboration of the academic and religious in the pedagogies of performance identified by the Carnegie study. The students wrote individual theology of youth ministry papers providing a mission statement with scripture passages and, among other requirements, addressing "How this theological starting point addresses youth, both in terms of their stages in the lifecycle and in terms of their cultural position" (Syllabus, Fall 2009, p. 5). In this assignment the students would have shown interpretation of both scriptures and theories as well as application of those interpretations and theories in the context of youth in the local church and society, describing the type of leadership with youth they envision for themselves. Through this assignment, the students engaged in the praxis of practical theology discussed in the Introduction to the Pedagogies of Performance, which would be the basis of their performance of leadership with youth. As mentioned earlier, the students additionally created a group Youth Ministry Portfolio. Among other requirements, the portfolio included a selection and description of a model of youth ministry and a one-year calendar of programming for youth ministry. In these two assignments we see the emphasis in the course upon performance or what one does in leadership.

In the discussion fora the questions frequently asked students to reflect upon their own or their local church's performance in relation to what they have read. Midway through the course in the Module 2 Week 8 Models of Ministry discussion forum, Joan, currently a youth pastor, wrote, "After reading this week's reading assignments [concerning views and models of youth ministry] I realized we got some work to do in our ministry!" While Joan did not elucidate the specifics in her response above, sometimes students pinpointed specific areas to target for change in their performances.

In the last module's Module 3 Week 11 Philosophy Planning Budgeting forum, one

prompt stated, "Look at your current ministry calendar. Which of the five areas that most

youth ministers fail to consider, and share which of these five you have failed to consider

and how you will work to include it in the future." Three of the five participating

students identified the same area as their area of need. However, we see an exchange

between two students in which one student expanded on how he would overcome this

deficit and this sparked new possibilities for his classmate.

Jonah: I have failed at working in conjunction with other ministry leaders. Currently we
do not have transitional programs (or mechanisms) to help move students from
the children's ministry to the youth ministry and from the youth ministry to the
college/young adult ministry…. I hope to work closer with our Children's
ministry director and develop plans and programs that help facilitate the transition
for our elementary students coming up to Middle School Youth Ministry.
    Luke: Thanks for your post. In response to the question on the area that most
youth ministers fail to consider, like you, I also said that working with
other ministry leaders is an area I really need to improve on. You talked
about working with other leaders to help with the transition of students
from one grade/level to another. I hadn't even thought about the issue so I
appreciate that you've mentioned it. This is an important issue, and
something I certainly need to/will do in my own youth ministry setting
here.

In the above exchange we see not only the reflection on experience through the lens of

the academic theories and models, but also the value of the shared dialog. Both of these

students recognized a similar "failure" in their current performances. Jonah continued by

naming a new plan of action to overcome this failure, "I hope to work closer with our

Children's Ministry director…." Luke then responded that Jonah's specific plan of

action was a new insight for him, writing, "I hadn't even thought about…" With this

new *image of the possibilities* (Wenger, 1998), Luke established "I certainly need to/will

do…." Both students expressed determination, to make identified changes in their

ministry practice. Speech Act Theory would assert these statements to be actions

(Austin, 1962). This dialog became a *shared history of learning* for Jonah and Luke in community of practice terminology (Wenger, 1998).

Integration of Formation and Performance in Learning

The Youth Ministry course did not focus specifically on formation, but yet some responses did express formational issues as they are integrated with performance, especially in leadership. A discussion forum early in the course brought about the integration of formation and performance of the youth pastor. The questions for the first module's third week's discussion forum entitled Ecclesial and Pastoral Theology Discussion Forum, closely followed Osmer's (2008) four questions to address the four tasks of practical theology, which was discussed in the Introduction to Performance. Osmer identified questions for practical theology courses as the following: "What is going on? [*descriptive-experiential task*] Why is this going on? [*interpretive task*] What ought to be going on? [*normative task*] How might we respond? [*pragmatic task*]" (p. 4). Dr. Blake posted a series of questions as follows:

1. What does the average person in the world think that the church is? What does the average person in the congregation think that the church is?
2. Think about the various metaphors for the church. Which one is the most important to you and why?
3. Which of the six tensions in the church do you find to be the most difficult to navigate? Why?
4. Specifically, what should be the role of the church in regards to the youth we work with?
5. Think about the many metaphors for pastor. Which one do you most resonate with and why?
6. If we really take seriously the idea that we are called first and foremost to be pastors, not just youth pastors, how will this change the way we interact with adolescents?
7. What difference will this make in the lives of adolescents? In the life of the church? In your life?

Questions 1, 2, 3, and 5 address Osmer's first two practical theology questions asking what is happening and why. Question 4 shifts to asking "what should be" reflecting practical theology's normative task and questions 6 and 7 focus the students on how they should respond or the pragmatic task.

After reading the course content, the students reflected on these questions. Megan responded to question 6 stating,

Megan: "Walking the walk" and "Talking the talk" are what a pastor is and does. In being a pastor you become a mentor, a role model, and an example to these kids. In the pastor role you are in essence, the connecting point for the kids to all generations in the church.

Megan emphasized the pastor's character, who she or he is, as "a mentor, a role model, and an example" for the youth. Megan's speech reflected integration of formation and performance, "what a pastor is and does."

Sherry focused more on actions or performance of the youth pastor.

Sherry: We need to tenderly care for them as persons, to form relationships with them, to listen to them and let them know they are loved despite what they do...and it is only then are they going to trust us and listen to us when we present the Truth to them.

The actions of the pastor were focused on relationships with the youth, which implied a mentoring role model relationship, in which "only then are they going to trust us."

Luke's response was similar to Sherry, but then he added a statement at the end that comes back to Megan's *formation* emphasis. Luke saw the relational actions of the youth pastor, which he described, as a basis for the formation of the youth. Luke wrote,

Luke: Seeing ourselves as pastors first should help us to focus on the nurturing, serving and caring nature/aspect of our relationship with youth. … Also, I think we would end up being more intentional in our relationships with them, and we would probably be more interested in what they are BECOMING and not just in what they are DOING.

Joan's response to question 7 of this assignment, again reflected the integration of performance and formation.

Joan: The difference would make a life long mark on everyone's life (teenagers, the church, my life). Micah 6:8 would be our daily prayer! "This is what Yahweh asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God." Like Hampton said, "These are not just things that we do; they are ultimately a reflection of who we are at our very core."

Joan addressed through the scripture passage issues of *practicing the presence of God* and *practicing holiness* (Foster et al., 2005), two aspects of formation pedagogies. In all of these discussions I saw the interaction between who the pastor is and what the pastor does.

A focus on the relationships between the pastor and the larger local church community in other fora suggested this integration of formation and performance also. In the previously discussed dialog from Week 8's forum's question, "which of these five you have failed to consider…?," both Jonah and Luke identified their need of interacting with other ministry leaders in their local congregation. They demonstrated their awareness of their failure (Jonah: "I have failed at working in conjunction with other ministry leaders"; Luke: "The issue that I normally fail to consider is working in conjunction with other ministry leaders"). Furthermore, the men demonstrated valuing involvement with other ministry leaders (Jonah: "I hope to work closer with our …."; Luke: "something I certainly need to/will do…."). Receipt of the communication message (becoming aware), response to the message, and valuing the message are the initial actions that lead to internalizing values by acting upon them until one's performance is characterized by those actions (Krathwohl et al., 1964).

Towards the end of the course in the Module 3 Week 13 Leadership discussion forum, Joan stated, "The biggest thing I feel I struggle with is pride. Always feel adults don't care for teenagers as much as I do or they don't have their best interest in mind. This class has helped me to see that we can't do this alone!" Joan reflected an image of herself and the course has shown her an *image of the possibility* in the community (Wenger, 1998). She had realized she previously viewed herself as a lone worker and she now needed to provide more adult participation with the youth ministry.

In the same discussion forum Sherry, similarly to Joan, confirmed the need for the community participation and wrote,

Sherry: However, what I have taken from this class that has assisted me is to not give up and continue to try recruiting people and working to bring every adult in the congregation to the awareness that these young people need them (and want to be with them!) even if they don't believe it!

Sherry provided specific activities, "recruiting people and working to bring every adult in the congregation to the awareness [....]," that were needed to accomplish the vision of the possibility. In Sherry's comment specifically and implied in Joan's posting, we see the integration of formation and performance. One's image of self—a lone worker or a community worker—affected one's practices, shaping one's identification within the community. This in turn has an effect on the community practice, in this case, whether the youth will be separated from the larger community, especially the adults, or will be incorporated within the larger community.

Midway through the course in the Module 2 Week 10 Godbearing Forum, Luke posted a story that illustrated his valuing of the community interaction and his concern when community involvement was not occurring for the youth.

Luke: Sometime ago we had a youth Bible study group that met every week to study the Scriptures. The youths who attended were the same youths who came to youth fellowship, or played youth sports, or were involved in the youth music group. The Bible study was going well, but we realized that the youths were not benefitting from, or contributing to, the total life of the church in terms of relationships/interaction with adults (and vis versa). While the Bible study group was helping them understand what it meant to be a young Christian, they were not getting the big picture of being a young Christian within a community of Christians – and this is an important part of their identity development.

Luke had previously identified his lack of involvement with the other pastors in his local church congregation, his personal failure in this regard as a model to the youth. In addition, Luke had expressed a concern for "what they [the youth] are BECOMING." Luke's current post expressed his value for the youth to have "relationships/interaction with adults….," which he claimed was "an important part of their identity development." The theme of these posts is that the segregation of the youth and youth pastors from the larger, local church community is detrimental to the identity development of the youth as Christians in community.

The formation process involved becoming characterized by one's values, where one's actions and life's activities are organized around those values. As Joan quoted one author in the third week's forum, "These are not just things that we do; they are ultimately a reflection of who we are at our very core." One's values affected one's persistent actions or practice. In the examples provided, when the pastor valued relationships with the youth and the involvement of others that included other ministers or other members of the congregation, the conscious performance of those inclusive, relational actions would result in a formation of relational practice. The implication extended the role of the pastor to be a formative model to others. One's identity within the community of practice affected the practice of the community (Wenger, 1998).

Interpretation as Learning

The discussion fora question prompts asked the students to read and interpret

principles and models by authors for the various topics and then reflect on the practice of

their personal ministry or their local church community. In the Module 2 Week 9

Godbearing Life forum Sherry spoke of a personal ministry reflection.

Sherry: I love the continuum chart for program leaders vs. missionaries. In all honesty, I demonstrate aspects of both. I have felt called to be a missionary for many years, but that calling is going to a foreign land to serve people who are different from me. Being a youth minister isn't that much different, but I've never looked at it that way. I've always thought of those 2 things as separate callings in my life.

Sherry's reflection on the continuum chart revealed a new insight for her—"Being a

youth minister isn't that much different…. I've always thought of those 2 things as

separate…." Realizing this integration of her current ministry provided a new *pastoral*

imagination (Foster et al., 2005).

Luke provided a different view of the continuum chart, writing,

Luke: As I look at Dean and Foster's "A Continuum for Youth Ministry" chart, it looks as if the program leader is not as important as the missionary. I think that there is a place (and timing) for each role and they both should be equally respected as having a valid and important ministry to youth. …

Luke continued that he saw himself as performing the role of missionary most of the time

but sometimes acting as the program leader, indicating that his interpretation of these

tasks was not a continuum at all. Joan was even more critical of this chart, stating,

Joan: The feeling I have when looking at the continuum for youth ministry is boredom. As a program director it appears like someone who directs the airplanes when the planes are ready to land and take off. Nothing there but direction. As a missionary we are more intentional about what we are doing. We desire to be more relational people. I see myself as a missionary because of the desire to work along side God to help teenagers spread their wings! I believe my church sees me as a missionary as well.

Megan saw tension between her own view of her role and the view she believed her superiors have of her role. She wrote,

Megan: My first feeling was that God was alive and moving and exciting and challenging with the missionary.....I see Jesus. Here at the Home..I see myself as a missionary but I am sure "the powers that be" that run the Home see all of us a mere program leaders.

Each student had their own meaning-making experience with the continuum chart, interpreting it according to the individual situation and perspective.

In the following week's forum, Godbearing Forum continued, the initial question prompt asked again for a personal interpretation, "As Dean and Foster [authors] point out, the whole paradigm of finger-pointing and hand-holding is the job of being a spiritual director. How comfortable are you in this position and why?" An extensive dialog ensued from Sherry's post from which most of the interaction is printed below.

Sherry: The finger-pointing/hand-holding chapter was my favorite out of the entire book! The image of this paradigm brings about the image of Christ and His disciples in my mind, as Jesus was their guide, mentor, teacher, and friend. I can picture Him walking down the path, holding the hand of Peter or James or another, pointing the way to the Truth as He taught. With this image in mind, I don't picture a "spiritual director," per se. But I do see myself as one who might do the same as Christ with the youth in my care, except that my finger-pointing means pointing the way to Him!

    Megan: The term Spiritual Director intimidates me. Me? A Spiritual Director? It's kinda a scary thought to me. I to see myself as just someone whom God has chosen to work through....to be Jesus hands, and feet, and eyes, and heart. It's not me who is doing it....it's Christ!

        Joan: I think that we need to consider this term "Spiritual Director." I agree that at first it seems intimidating, but this practice of hand-holding and pointing seems to be the practice of a spiritual director. Actually Dean and Foster suggest that "Spiritual Director" is a professional (trained) role and a spiritual guides are those God-bearers and sign-posts that point toward God (142-143).

So, I would suggest that we reclaim this role of spiritual guide (or director) as we become God-bearers—its a good term and a very good role. It's not just for "experts" (142).

            Dr. Baker: In some places the term "faith mentor" may prove a bit more accessible, or just being a spiritual or soul friend.

Sherry: Thanks. I love the image of hand-holding and finger-pointing. It's just the term "spiritual director" that bothers me, though I wish it didn't. I guess it makes ministry sound so rigid and business-like. I do prefer faith mentor or something similar instead. I couldn't even call Jesus a "spiritual director" though that is what he did. But I am not the one directing these kids lives; God is!

The students wrestled with the concept of "spiritual director" between the image of themselves and the interpretation they gave to the concept (intimidating) and the meaning of the authors, "hand holding and finger-pointing." Joan asserted, "I think that we need to consider this term…. So, I would suggest that we reclaim this role…." Dr. Baker intervened and supplied a less intimidating term, which Sherry embraced.

The second question of the tenth week's forum asked the students to reflect on the practices of their local church community.

Examine again the six characteristics the Lutheran study found. Which of these six is your church doing well? Which does it need to improve in? Knowing what you know about ministry and practical theology, what other characteristic would you suggest would be important that is not listed?

(Due to the length of these discussions, the postings have been abbreviated for the analysis.) Sherry identified issues for her local church.

Sherry: I think the characteristic my church is doing well right now would be the youth program as well as the service aspect. The area it needs to improve in greatly are the family-based aspects as well as other adults mentoring the youth.

Joan posted, "Our church is totally all about the service to the world. There are numerous opportunities for teenagers and adults to put their faith to work in the world [….]" Jonah wrote similarly but expanded his response further,

Jonah: Our church does well: Service to the World—there are always plenty of opportunities for students to serve on mission trips and mission projects throughout the community (big and small); Apprenticeship—through other ministry areas, students are recruited and given leadership opportunities. I think we need some work on the other aspects: Integrated Family Faith—we just do not

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see this across the board in our congregation and too often faith in the family seems to be individualized…; Engaged Congregation—we do this on some level, but I do not think that our congregation is "tuned-in" to the needs of adolescents; [….]

Luke provided an extensive evaluation on his local congregation and went beyond the content of the textbook reading.

Luke: I think our church does well on #1 – Faith is integrated in family identity and practice [….]
    Which ones do we need to improve on? Truth is, we need to improve on all of the other five factors, but especially #6 – excellent high school and young adult ministries [….]
    Other characteristic that I suggest would be important that are not listed are
    Campus ministry – I find that if youths are exposed to a campus ministry at school of college it provides them with an opportunity and motivation to maintain their relationship with God.

The students reflected on their local church ministries, both positively and negatively, but there was not any extensive interchange for this discussion question. The responses of those involved in local church ministries were comparable except for Luke. Nonetheless, the students exhibited critical thinking and integration of the readings to these and similar questions throughout the course (Foster et al., 2005). However, no one confirmed volitional action in regards to the identified deficiencies, which might have been a desired outcome for these interpretative acts.

Context and Learning

Sherry noted in her posting for Week 9, "I have felt called to be a missionary for many years, but that calling is going to a foreign land to serve people who are different from me. Being a youth minister isn't that much different, [….]" In one sense youth ministry had its unique context even if within the same socio-economic, ethnic

community as the larger church community. As students reflected on their ministry

experiences with youth, there was always an implied need for contextualization.

After reading about historical cycles of ministry with youth, one question in the

Module 1 Week 4 Cultural and Historical Discussion Forum asked the students to reflect

on the cycle identified for the current period of time (1990 -). This question required the

students to consider the time-period context of their current ministry. None of the student

practitioners were born within the current cycle. While other students spoke of changes

in worship and leadership within the churches for this cycle, Jonah emphasized spiritual

formation issues for the youth. He wrote,

Jonah: I think you will see trends emphasizing intimate prayer and worship experiences
and a a new look at the narratives we are living into as Americans. Teenagers will
grow in their thirst for depth, authenticity, and passion as they are progressively
faced with more and more shallowness form our culture—in relationships,
experiences, and information. These trends are important, because I believe that
students will be more open to a depth that they will not find at school and in
culture. If the church steps in and offers a deeper narrative to live in, teenagers
will be interested as they are progressively dissatisfied with American cultural
life.

The cultural context for most of the students was the United States of America

(USA). However, one study participant was from outside the USA and was currently

working in ministry in a third country, neither his home country nor the USA. This

student did not post in the Week 4's forum. However, in week 5 he perceived the

American-centrism expressed in the reading materials and concepts for the week. In

Module 1 Week 5 Adolescent Identity Forum, he reflected,

Lester: I confess that I had a little bit of difficulty relating the lecture's points on
"egocentrism: personal fable" to the Caribbean (non-USA) context in which I
live. While many adolescents here in the Caribbean do have sense of personal
"uniqueness", not many view themselves as indestructible and not many get
"caught up in a mental world far removed from reality". For a lot of our
adolescents, the opposite is quite true: they see themselves as vulnerable (and

become very defensive). Also, because of a lot of social networking that occurs in the Caribbean at this age, a lot of our adolescents are very well "grounded" in the reality of their world/context. I think that this may be so because of some of the social dynamics that occurs in a predominantly matriarchal society as ours (Caribbean's). I agree with the readings on adolescent's formal operational thought: adolescents are very imaginative, and I can see how youth programs can be geared toward harnessing/engaging their creativity/imagination in ways that enhance their personal, social and spiritual development.

Two student participants as well as the professor responded to Luke's comments.

Dr. Baker: I think you are on to something we should keep in mind. For the most part Santrock is governed by some North American cultural assumptions (remember our historical session) so sometimes aspects of the "personal fable" include specific cultural expectations.
Jonah: Thanks for your post Lester. I agree with Dr. Baker that this is an important thing for us to keep in mind.
Sherry: […] I understand what you mean about most of them not going through this process; the youth I have worked with in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and other places are the same. These students literally don't have the luxury of thinking its "all about them" when the majority of the time they are just trying to survive and help take care of their struggling families. I think most of what we are learning here applies to American teenagers, but I also think that we can apply some of it to teens in foreign countries while on the mission field as well. I love hearing about what you are doing in the Carribbean. Thanks so much for sharing!!!

In this exchange the class was reminded of the contextual nature of their assumptions including the assumptions of the authors of the course readings. This *shared history of learning* might have made the point more emphatically than reading a textbook (Wenger, 1998).

Summary

The structure of the discussion fora mostly focused the students' interaction based on the course content. Through the interpretation of the readings, students enacted personal meaning-making. The students were to reflect and integrate the readings with their personal experience and ministry contexts. Volitional acts sometimes resulted from these reflections. The students interacted with one another, sometimes sharing stories of

personal experiences, but this was not extensive. While context was an underlying issue for youth ministry reflections, through the dissimilar cultural background of one student, the class became more cognizant of cultural assumptions in readings and personal experiences.

The discussion fora afforded opportunities for student-student interaction and also asked them to relate the course content to their own experiences and contexts at times. The professor frequently engaged the students providing student-instructor interaction. However, the student-student interaction did not result in lengthy conversations as in some of the other classes analyzed in this study. Perhaps an explanation for the lower engagement of student-student interaction was the focus on the student-content interaction. In most modules the discussion prompts did ask the students to relate the content material to their experiences in youth ministry by identifying points of congruence or incongruence, but this created an evaluative tone for the student postings rather than a sharing of stories that build a shared repertoire.

Appendix H

NT502 Greek 2

The primary purpose of the NT502 Greek course was for the students to learn to read and interpret Koiné or common Greek in order to exegete the New Testament in its original written language. The course objectives focus on the cognitive skills of vocabulary memorization, grammar and syntactical relationships, phonology and morphology, and exegetical tools (Syllabus, Spring 2009). While the focus of the course was not direct interpretation, the students gained the skills necessary for interpretation of the New Testament in particular. Since NT502 was the second course in the Greek series, some students had enrolled together in the first course with the same instructor; however, other students had a different instructor in another section offering of the course—the skill content would have been the same. While NT501 was a prerequisite for NT502, this course, NT502, was not a required course for the Master of Divinity degree as only three credit hours of Greek, NT501, was obligatory for the program.

The course requirements specified, "*Participation*: Students will receive the opportunity to practice and develop their Greek skills through online discussion and collaboration. Regular engagement and preparation are therefore essential for meaningful participation" (Syllabus, Spring 2009, p. 1). However, the course instructional structure did not include written discussion fora on a week-by-week basis. In the third week of the course the instructor offered to do a virtual video conferencing session each week in Adobe Connect Pro as he had done in the first Greek course. Nine of the seventeen students enrolled in the course responded positively to his offer. Seven indicated the video instruction had been helpful in the previous course, though two

indicated they had not attended the synchronous session but had viewed the recorded sessions to fit their schedules. Two others in the current course said they would only be able to watch the recordings after the sessions but thought the recorded synchronous session would be helpful. I did not have access to these recorded sessions of Q&A. This form of participation reserved the interaction to student-content with instructor-student supplementing the understanding of the content. Perhaps the students could have benefitted from student-student interaction in the discussion fora as well.

Since there were no content discussion fora, I looked at the general course fora for evidence of student engagement. Three students did post a devotional thought of Scripture reflection or a Christian song for meditation in the Devotional forum for three of the fourteen weeks of the course; each devotional had one student response from three different classmates plus a response from the instructor. On week 6 the instructor indicated he had forgotten to post the link for the Devotional forum that week until late. After week 8 there were no links to the devotional forum. Whether this was due to the students not offering to post a devotional or the professor forgetting is unknown. The course also had a Prayer forum to which three students posted with only one response from a classmate. The devotional forum was not a requirement, although it might have been a useful forum for the students to put into practice the Greek translation and interpretation skills they were learning on a short Scripture passage upon which they could reflect.

Community

The Open Forum, where students could post whatever they wished, contained 16 posts and 29 responses that displayed community development. Four students used this

forum to greet fellow classmates at the beginning of the semester. The first student titled

his post "Back in the saddle again" referring to the continuance from Greek 501. Other

classmates picked up the western theme with "Howdy," "I look forward to more Greek

wrangling with ya'll. Giddyap!," "Saddle up!," "Preciate-cha," "How's that grab ya?"

and a story from Renae about her first sight of real cowboys wearing plaid polyester

pants. Renae expressed light-hearted dread towards the coming course saying, "Well, it's

good to feel the light western mood for a bit before my Greek Depression sets in ☺."

Hannah, Mitchel, and Ashley greeted former classmates from Greek 501. The

camaraderie among the students provided a sense of belonging and openness for the

class.

Professor Jensen posted some news concerning Greg, one of the students.

Prof. Jensen: ...and who is listed as "Coach of the Year." [website]
   Myron: WOW--nice work, Greg--Congratulations!
      Greg: Thanks.....the girls that I coach are simply amazing.....they are the
         best athletes around and more so, are some of the best students
         around!!! We did win the state title two weeks ago and that makes
         it back-to-back. What simply boggles my mind is that in my five
         years there, we've won the state title three times now. It's all due to
         being able to coach the best.....
            Here's the thing....as exciting as it was to do that feat back-
         to-back, I was even more excited to be back in seminary. Sounds
         different but this is simply where I need to be. Now I'm just trying
         to win any sort of title in Greek!!! I probably have the title in
         grades (if you look at it upside down....) But I will get there, my
         Greek comrades!!!
      Hannah: Hey Greg congrats!
            Isn't it time for a new toga picture??

Acknowledging student accomplishments even outside the class helped to connect the

students. Two classmates rejoined with exclamations of congratulations. Myron's

capitalization of "WOW" is a netiquette shout. Greg expressed appreciation and then

switched the focus back to the seminary work, articulating a sense of purpose and community with his seminary experience.

Beyond the class community, Mitchel asked the instructor about the new seminary president. He added the line, "I'm just an [online] student trying to know what's up." This line suggested a sense of distance between the seminary community and the distance student emphasizing how the distance students are removed from the institutional identity group described in Gee's identity development. Bill, the instructor, responded that the new seminary president had been announced a few hours earlier adding, "It had been a complete secret to most of us until now." His response implied that the distance student was the same as others in the seminary community—unaware of the administrative and institutional occurrences at the seminary.

Learning from Interpretation

In the Open Forum Jim shared study aids and other students expressed appreciation. Hannah told how she was using her Greek New Testament with her daily scripture reading and meditation, "In pursuit of understanding through saturation I have been trying to read some of my GNT [Greek New Testament] alongside my devo reading in the morning." Greg responded, "Thank you Hannah for the note about having the GNT with devotions....I just hadn't thought about that (to be honest) but do want to try it now." These exchanges were low-key but facilitated the study of Greek among the classmates.

The Course Questions forum, where students could ask public questions to the professor, contained 14 posts with 35 responses. The value of these student-professor interactions in this forum was that all students could then see the question and response.

Questions about exams and clarification of assignments along with problems with the course management system used were common but students could also ask questions about lesson material to correct misunderstandings of the concepts.

In one instance Rich and Professor Jensen had five interchanges (10 entries) concerning an area of grammar, the infinitive, with which Rich was struggling. Rich initiated the question on April 17 after answering multiple incorrect responses on the week's worksheet. Instructor Jensen offered to assist but asked for more clarification to provide the right guidance. After two exchanges Rich did not respond until April 27, when again he wrote, "The second part [of the worksheet] had me completely stumped. I did get most of the tense and voice right. I will just struggle through this quiz and try to do well on the final." Professor Jensen responded within a half hour, "I'd like to be more helpful to you if possible, Rich. Is there a particular sentence/verse you'd like to unpack? We can even do it via phone, if that's helpful." In this interchange Rich expressed despair, "I will just struggle through…" to which Instructor Jensen responded with care, "I'd like to be more helpful…" and offers a more personal contact method, the phone. Rich responded the next day with some specific questions to which Professor Jensen replied, "Thanks for clarifying, Rich. Let's see how this rationale plays out" and provided a lengthy, technical explanation. On April 30, Rich wrote that he had attempted some additional worksheet problems and had them correct. He asked one more question about translating the Greek infinitive into English. To this question Professor Jensen responded a half hour later affirming the question and providing an answer with examples,

Prof. Jensen: Good question. I would allow what seems to be the most natural English
translation prevail, so long as that translation does not in any way compromise the
meaning. For example, I often employ "infinitives as direct objects" in "to + verb"

constructions: "I like to fish." But, if I'm using the infinitive as an "infinitive as subject," I will likely switch to a gerund: "Fishing is fun!"

Professor Jensen exhibited care for Rich in his struggle to understand the complex grammar issues. The instruction not only modeled the interpretative skills being studied but also modeled an attitude of concern within his didactic response. Through this completely unstructured Course Question forum the students and instructor interact in a personable, supportive manner in order to provide content clarification instruction.

    Towards the end of the semester a short exchange in the Open Forum between students and the instructor expressed their learning.

Hannah: Phew! It is quite exhausting drinking from this fire hose! I would ask a question if I even knew what to ask. I know I will understand it all about a month after class is over. That seems to be my lag time.

    Mitchel: Agreed. The subjunctive had/has a lot to offer! Identifying those clause markers is key. I, personally, need to somehow create more hours where I can just practice working through translating. Anybody want to grade some 9th grade geography essays? That would free up a few hours for me.

        Prof. Jensen: A great drill pad for us at this point is 1 John. Specifically, work through 1:1-10, and see how you get along.

    Prof. Jensen: Sadly, your perception about the lag corresponds nicely to mine. There needs to be a "saturation period" for the concepts to take root in our gray matter. But once the material is there, and accessed from time to time, it comes out effortlessly. Want proof? Translate this.

        oi` agaqoi anqrwpoi blepousin ta ponhra tekna en tw|erhmw)

        Was this (nearly) automatic? Could you do it that easily 9 months ago? You're making progress!!!

    Hannah: Thanks! I needed that. I do actually know something!

This short and light-hearted interchange conveyed a shared history of learning among the students. Hannah, even though somewhat overwhelmed by the course content, displayed confidence, "I know I will understand it all about a month after class is over" rather than despair. Mitchel used the language of the Greek scholar, "The subjunctive had/has a lot to offer! Identifying those clause markers is key." He was now an insider to the community of persons who could interact concerning the subjunctive mood and "clause

markers." Professor Jensen offered inspiration presenting a test to read/translate a sentence. He reminded them what they knew now that they did not know before they started the Greek courses. In these short examples, the instructor communicated that the students were now part of the community, the community of clergy who know Greek in order to read and interpret the New Testament scriptures in preparation for sermons and Bible studies.

Summary

While the course was not structured for student-student interaction, the Course Questions and Open discussion fora afforded those students who were willing a place to interact, offering engagement with the community. The professor interacted in the fora also as both the expert able to answer questions and also the comrade. Eleven of the fourteen students participating in the research contributed at least once in these fora. The Open Forum was similar to the coffee shop where students could hang out and take a break from the drudgery of the Greek study. These students used the unstructured discussion fora to self-identify the shared repertoire of the struggle to learn their Greek.

The course itself provided a *shared history of learning* (Wenger, 1998) as Hannah and Mitchel's comments at the end of the course implied. The accomplishment of successfully completing the Greek courses serves as a rite of passage aspect for many seminary students. They now identified with the community of clergy who passed the first stage to be qualified interpreters of the New Testament.

Appendix I

CH502 Church History II

The Church History II course was a core course required of all Master of Divinity

degree students, one course of six in the theological orientation requirement. The course

description provided the focus for the class,

> An introduction to the development of Christianity from the Reformation to the
> modern period. Emphasis is placed on the central historical figures, movements,
> and theological issues, with attention given to their importance for Christian
> ministry today. Major texts and interpretive studies are read. (The Seminary,
> 2008, p. 162)

One of the course objectives, "To appreciate the importance of primary sources in their

original contexts and the nature and effects of historical interpretation," (Syllabus, Spring

2009, p. 2) augmented the emphasis on the historical documents. A second course

objective afforded the objective for an understanding of historical interpretation.

> To view the Church's present ministry in the light of the prior beliefs and actions of
> the Christian community, and to develop capable and effective Christian ministry and
> leadership for the contemporary church which will maintain its faithfulness to its vital
> heritage. (Syllabus, Spring 2009, p. 1)

The course familiarized students with the interpretative traditions in the history of the

church and then the students engaged in their own interpretative work pertaining to those

traditions in order to be effective Christian leaders in their current-day churches.

Interpretation was prominent in the course, with the goal of the interpretation being the

formation of religious leadership to perform the guidance of the local congregation in its

context.

Dr. Joyce Ward organized the discussion fora for the course differently from the

other classes in the research. For each of the seven content modules she created one

discussion forum but within a module's forum she created five to seven threads. Each

thread contained an initial post asking a question or set of questions concerning a particular aspect of the reading for the module. All students answered the question(s) in each thread for the module. Groups were not utilized with this structure; the students responded to only one other student's answer in most threads with responses optional for one or two identified threads. Thus, for a module, which covered two weeks of the semester, a student wrote five to seven answers to the questions for the module and responded to three to seven classmates. The discussion requirement was similar to those classes that utilized groups for the modules.

Twenty students enrolled in the course and fifteen agreed to participate in the research. For the third module students and the professor wrote 241 entries (posts and responses) in the 6 question threads. In the Module 3 Question 1 forum, where a response to a fellow student was required from each one, 17 students authored initial answers, with 3 students, 2 of the research participants and 1 non-participant, not contributing (see Table A.8). The professor provided 9 responses to student entries and the students wrote 23 responses to their classmates' entries. Six student answers (initial entries) of the 17 did not have a classmate response; one student posted his answer a week late. The module discussion forum consisted of three additional threads similar to this one and two that did not require responses.

Table A.8

CH502 Module 3 Question 1 Forum

Authors of thread entries	Posts	Responses	Mean responses per post	Contributors (including professor)
Non-participants, study participants, and professor	17	32	2.9	18
Study participants' posts with participants', nonparticipants', and instructor's responses	13	29	3.2	18

The questions in the module threads commonly centered the students' attention on the reading content, which included numerous historical documents and original writings by historical figures. The questions required the students to interpret the documents and integrate what they learned from module to module, facilitating the students to see influences and perspectives from previous elements of church history on later events and writings. For the most part students were not asked to share their present-day experiences. Accordingly, within these questions even the student-student interaction focused on student-content.

One question asked in each module, "Again, name one person out of this week's reading whose story particularly spoke to you, and briefly explain why" directed students to personal meaning making. However, Dr. Ward did not require the students to read and respond to a classmate's entry in this thread in each module. Thus, the interaction remained a student-content engagement.

A few questions probed the impact of earlier theologians and church leaders upon current day beliefs and local church practices. Such a question, named "The Pietist way and the spiritualist way," in the fifth module included the following questions.

> What practices do Woolman and Law (see last module) see as essential to a life of holiness, and why? What similarities and differences do you see between them and other devotional/mystical writers we've discussed? How do these emphases fit (or do they?) with practices which your church sees as essential to the holy life?

Students rejoined with more interpretative responses summarizing and contrasting the views often without answering the last contextual question. Some students responded with broad application: "In our own congregation, we have a combination of these practices to see that people have both a private and public walk with God" and "I find in the practices of my own church to have echoes of all of these people in various ways," to which Dr. Ward responded, "Any specifics you would like to share?" Kimberly answered regarding a general theological belief system, "I attend a Methodist church so of course we align ourselves with John Wesley and I would say towards Arndt." Jerome responded similarly but augmented with details of the local church beliefs as expressed in their practices.

Jerome: Our church would tend to align more with the works of Arndt, Luther, and Spener. I do believe, however, that we also have a good bit of spiritual diversity in our congregation, and there are elements of Liguori's piety here as well, though I do not think our folks would consider making their will one with God's an expression of such sensual intimacy. Because of the Wesleyan influence, our congregation looks to Wesley for a means of devotion and piety; since he was obviously influenced by Luther and the Pietists, we are definitely closer to that approach to a life of faith. Our Christian Education program is very strong, and people obviously place a great emphasis on devotion with the scriptures. We also believe that our faith in God brings us to the work of fulfilling our mission in this world.

Cheryl answered with a disparaging critique of her church stating, "I could see Law's essay being very convicting to me and my church. because we are all wearing our

devotion like a removable mask for Sunday only. [….]" Laura, however, countered

Cheryl's critique,

Laura: Not so much that I see many Christians wearing devotion as a mask or only on Sunday, I do agree that some, perhaps many, believers struggle to find ways to live out their faith in a secular, politically correct place as we live in today. I agree completely that Law's example has much to teach all of us. I was equally moved by his writings.

Gilbert's entry was the exception to these general answers and supplied a more complete

response to the question, "How do these emphases fit (or do they?) with practices which

your church sees as essential to the holy life?"

Gilbert: My Church places a strong emphasis on God's Word. As somewhat traditional Methodists, we tend to view the works of love to be the outgrowth of a disciplined life. God's Wordis taught regularly to all peoples in various settings. If our weakness is to be acknowledged, it is that we do not facilitate people's personal study better. While we teach the importance of personal devotion and study, we do only a marginal job in equipping people on how and what to do in these times of personal devotion.

Even when the questions directed the students to apply their interpretations to their own

contexts, the students continued to concentrate on the content. Module 7 was the

exception and is presented later.

Interpretation

As has already been discussed in earlier sections, local church congregations

envisage their professional clergy to be interpreters of the Christian scriptures and the

church tradition. The interpretive abilities of the pastor accords confidence by the

Christian community in the pastor's guidance for the church and life decisions of the

congregants, similarly to the interpretative abilities of a medical professional guiding

health decisions for patients. Interpretative proficiencies are fundamental for the

professional clergy.

As stated above, the students read historical documents and original or translated English writings, compared and contrasted those writings across modules as well as within, and then offered their interpretations of those writings. As stated earlier, the work of interpretation was paramount for the course. Furthermore, Dr. Ward identified a "shared experience" rationale for the use of the historical documents and original writings. In the fifth module she wrote,

Dr. Ward: Part of the reason behind all the reading … is to give you a basis for shared experience, believe it or not. If you only read what Gonzalez and I have to say about our Christian brothers and sisters in each era we're studying, you are only getting their thought "twice removed." I would rather introduce you to a whole host of witnesses in their own words. That way you know, as the years in ministry go on, who you want to go back and spend some time in contemplation with.

The Church History course afforded the students *a shared repertoire* of the professional clergy. A *shared repertoire* in the practice of a community of practice is comprised of historical events, discourses, stories, artifacts, and other phenomena (Wenger, 1998). Furthermore, Wenger characterized social learning to involve meaning making from experience. Through the students' interpretation of this shared repertoire of historical events and writings, they experienced the church's negotiation and re-negotiation of meaning. This experience with the shared repertoire also bestowed the opportunity for personal meaning making for the students as to their faith and practice.

Starting with the Module 3 discussion forum Dr. Ward asked the students to compare and contrast the current module's readings with the viewpoints from the previous module(s). (The first module comprised introductory activities.) A few examples of the interpretative exercises that occurred and were shared in the discussion of the first question in Module 3 follows.

Cheryl: Which aspects of the Schleitheim Confession and the extract from Menno Simons echo the teaching of the "magisterial" Reformers you have been reading?

Both the Mennonite doctrine and the Reformers hold Scriptural teaching / doctrine highest in authority, above human wisdom or the traditions of the Church.

What assumptions do the Anabaptists make about the Christian faith that are significantly different from the magisterial Reformers (either in specific doctrines or general approach)? For one, the Anabaptists are complete pacifists – they will not take up arms, and they will not even allow believers to hold a public office that might have to deal with war or violence, or that symbolizes the power of the state, or that requires an oath of office. Magisterial Reformers allowed office-holding because a Christlike magistrate can bring glory to God (and because it was lucrative), and so much of Scripture deals with leaders (kings, priests, prophets) in the public arena.

How would you describe the Anabaptist ideas on separation from the world (especially in light of what you know about monasticism from Module Two)?

The Schleithelm Confession talks about God creating the world as a series of binary opposites: light and dark, good and evil, righteous and sinful, etc. Their approach cannot allow for any middle ground. If they don't separate, they will amalgamate. These ideas are an over-simplication of a complex world, but [….] I don't think we could call Anabaptists "hermits" in that sense.

Where do you find yourself agreeing or disagreeing with Anabaptist assumptions?

I would like faith-life to be simpler. I like their radical equality, and their unity. I even agree with their tendency to hyper-literalize scripture. I am not sure I could plow my individuality (its expression, really) under in the name of radical community. And while I believe the Amish and Mennonites have a witness in the world by virtue of their status as ratrace dropouts, it is not one the world really understands. I'm not sure outsiders can find Christ from that witness. If not, then what good is this devotion? Would God really approve?

Jimmie: The Anabaptists believed that the church and culture were in opposition. They preached separation from government and society and they preached pacifism. The Anabaptists believed in what they saw as the literal teachings and instructions of the Holy Scriptures. [….] The magisterial reformers regularly made compromises with the city/state governments, whereas the Radical reformers had no desire to "work" with the governments of any sort. The Anabaptists desired a somewhat ascetic, monastic lifestyle that was separate from the world. They believed that to associate with the wrold was to invite corruption into their lives. I believe that we should not be of the world, but we are called to be in the world. We cannot effectively "deal" with the world if we seclude ourselves from the world.

Reginald: It would seem that the Anabaptists position toward the world was one of separation where the people thought that there should be no obligatory connection

with the world where they would be forced to submit to its rules rather than Christ. This was expressed in the example of Menno Simons encouraged his followers not to take positions that required oaths, though they were to obey the civil authorities as long as their commands were not contrary to the mandates of Scripture (Gonzalez, 59). [….] I would agree with the desire to consecrate yourself one hundred percent to the Lord, but would lean more toward Jesus teaching that we are to be the salt of the earth. With that in mind, it would seem that for the salt to perform its function acting as both a preservative and flavoring agent, that it would need to be connected to and involved in the affairs of the world, without being of it or corrupted by it.

Laura: How different the Schleithem Confession is from Luther's Order of worship that was designed to speak to the unbeliever and those new in the faith. This confession seems to leave no opportunity for nonbelievers to become believers. It's a 'you are in or you are out' situation. You can be in and be thrown out but where is the opportunity for those who are out to come in?

They seem to be in agreement with the magisterial reformers reflecting a consensus of abuses and misleading acts in the contemporary church. They acknowledge that God's grace has been made available to all (cover letter to the Schleitheim Confession).

I just cannot bring myself to the place, with regard to monastic separation or the Anabaptist vision, that living in separation/isolation is where we are called to go and stay. Christ's example assures us that some time alone with the Father, in prayer, in solitude, in devotion is needed but then we are to take what we have been given and go out into the world and share what we have been blessed with in every way. I struggle with the concept that because sin exists in the world, the Anabaptists seem to think that has somehow contaminated much of creation in such a way that it is unredeemable. I also cannot wrap my mind around the idea that creation is anything other than good. From the beginning creation was good and remains such even with sin in the equation. Perhaps my definition of good and sin differs from what these authors were thinking. Laura

These representative answers characterized the viewpoints of the documents and church leaders and theologians and then ascertained points of congruence with and divergence from the reformers—Luther, Calvin, and others—and monastics discussed in Module 2. Cheryl and Jimmie made declarative statements of their characterizations of the viewpoints while Reginald and Laura used the word "seem(s)" to construe the conceptions tentatively. These variations in expressions could be characteristic of personality differences of the students. Subsequently the students reflected on these

viewpoints and related them to their own beliefs. Cheryl identified those aspects with

which she is sympathetic and those with which she is in disagreement. Jimmie provided

a counter argument to the viewpoint, "I believe that we should not be of the world, but

we are called to be in the world. We cannot effectively "deal" with the world if we

seclude ourselves from the world." Reginald, too, offered a counter to the viewpoint

based upon Jesus' teachings in Christian scripture. Laura also disagreed with the

Anabaptist position, "I just cannot bring myself to the place [....]" and later added a

possible explanation for her disagreement, "Perhaps my definition of good and sin differs

from what these authors were thinking." Through the interpretative process the students

were negotiating meaning for themselves as well that strengthened the conceptualization

of their identity as clergy in the Wesleyan tradition. Similar discussion transpired in the

remaining modules.

The final module presented a case study of a church decision regarding a current

day issue. The discussion forum post asked, "Do you see a connection between these

debates and any previous debates in church history which we've looked at in this class?"

Several students started with their interpretations of the readings. Jimmie reflected,

Jimmie: As I read the previous modules I realized that one overarching theme was on
equality. The theologians of hope, Moltmann and Pannenberg, tried to initiate a
balance of theology. There is hope for the future. The liberation theologies
showed that a shift to the temporal does have certain dangers. Conservative
Protestants have moved toward theological discussion, as has the evangelical
movement within conservatism. Each issue, be it women's rights, homosexuality,
feminism, racism oppression, etc- has been an attempt to achieve equality. Each
"side" has drawn on tradition, Scripture, reason, and eexperience to put forth its
own views. The debates are somewhat similar to ones in the past. The debate over
slavery comes to mind, as does the debate over women's rights in the church. I
think that, hopefully, we can learn from history--what worked and what did not
work- and apply it to our congregations today.

Cody and Phillip acknowledged that the base disagreement in the case study revolved around interpretation.

Cody: The UMC case study, honestly, was mostly over my head. I am not in the methodist system, so that was a bit much. However, it seems that there is a lack of clarity from those in charge as to the role and power of a pastor. They both can argue their differing opinions from the same source! That is crazy! It all boils down to a matter of interpretation, though.
Phillip: Cody you are right, it often comes down to interpretation. My challenge with this is: who is doing the interpreting and what end are they pursuing? Biblical interpretation during the colonial period resulted in justifying slavery. […]

Phillip recognized that interpretation could be used to detrimental outcomes, and so, how church leaders or a church body interpreted tradition and scripture was crucial for the practice. He recognized issues of power in the interpretative process, but did not pursue the concept.

The *pedagogies of interpretation* classified in the Carnegie study encompassed a phenomenon to be interpreted, the interpreter(s), and a method of interpretation (Foster et al., 2005). The discussion fora interactions in the Church History II course acknowledged the historical texts that were being interpreted and, of course, the students doing the interpretation; however, a method of interpretation was not in evidence as it was in the NT(IBS)510 Matthew course. Perhaps the Church History I course had taught a method of interpretation or the instructor assumed that the students knew how to interpret their reading.

Learning Involving Formation for Practice

In Module 4 the second question discussion forum Laura perceived the relation of the historical confessions and declarations of faith, the formative, with the practice of the Christian church.

Laura: There is a difference in what is 'expected' of those who have heard the word and choose to believe and those who have not ever even heard of the love of God given through the life of Jesus Christ. The scriptural call to those who believe is to love, serve and make disciples. Until one believes there are no such demands. As these various confessions of churches were developing they were largely addressing issues of religious practices for believers and seeking to make sure those they perpetuated were scripturally sound. If we all were able to live that way we would be certain that we are never a stumbling block to anyone.

Laura's closing statements summarized the practice of the church leaders and theologians she and the class had been reading. In the midst of other perspectives, church council decisions created creeds and confessions as declarations of belief. These creeds and confessions reified the community's beliefs that guided practice. Her statement "If we all were able to live that way we would be certain that we are never a stumbling block to anyone" exhibited alignment with the confessions guiding religious practices that were scripturally sound, an expression of *practicing holiness* (Foster et al., 2005).

Pastoral imagination and religious leadership. The Carnegie study identified the development of a pastoral imagination as an aspect of religious leadership where the clergy form patterns of leadership "that shape how they negotiate the interplay between institutional processes and the people who participate in them*"* (Foster et al., 2005, p. 104). One of the course objectives stated,

> To view the Church's present ministry in the light of the prior beliefs and actions of the Christian community, and to develop capable and effective Christian ministry and leadership for the contemporary church which will maintain its faithfulness to its vital heritage.

In the same discussion thread concerning the case study, Kimberly's entry verbalized a larger *pastoral imagination* which articulated a vision and discernment whether the vision was present or not (Foster et al., 2005).

Kimberly: I think we should continue to bring up these controversial issues with the members of our congregation. As leaders, we are given the task to lead in a

Christ like manner and if we do not, then we fail our congregations as the spiritual leaders.

Kimberly's vision was to "lead in a Christ like manner." Cheryl paralleled Kimberly's response from Jesus' teachings.

Cheryl: I believe that to help our congregations work through these issues, we must wax parabolic: specifically, the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds in Matthew 13:24-30. We must meditate on the possibility that we, from our finite point-of-view, are not able to successfully separate the productive from the unproductive. It is God's judgment that is needed. If we persist in sorting prematurely, we will damage the harvest. We need to emphasize sowing and growing, knowing that God will reap and winnow.

These women saw their roles as clergy to guide their congregations to address controversial concerns in a manner that would be fitting with the Christian scriptures. That would be the vision that would guide their leadership.

Reification and participation. Wenger (1998) argued that the negotiation of meaning in a community of practice interwove participation and reification. In the case study discussion Todd proffered his own experience in a similar thought as to Kimberly and Cheryl and augmented the vision to specify the participation of the congregation. Rather than merely passing a decision to the church members as a reified decision, the congregation should participate in the dialog.

Todd: This leads to a scenario that is akin to those occurring in the Catholic Church as it became the Anglican Church in England. Rooted in political intrigue, power struggles, and the moral issue of divorce, a church was made that would accommodate the worshipers. This unfortunately is happening today as political correctness and activism seems to drive the doctrine, worship, and structure. There is also a longing that is reminiscent of Luther, Calvin, the pietists, and the fundamentalist, to allow Scripture to again transcend the situation of the church as it is. Modern social problems and issues like homosexuality, Abortion, poverty, hunger can be mitigated, but only when the church quits arguing, and has a radical change of heart to follow Christ instead of self. National issues are easy to be fervent about, yet it has always been helpful for me to draw my congregations into dialogue concerning locally relevant issues, thinking about how Scripture addresses the issues and then applying that process to larger arguments within the church and society.For example, while we might have

strong opinions on Gay and Lesbian folks, how do we feel about gossip, adultery, and gluttony? Perhaps if Scripture tells us how to approach this, one might see a more Christ like way to approach other issues. This seems to be what sparked the reformation, a fresh look at ancient truth which inspired reforming ideas that stretched the church.

Gilbert announced his intention in a speech act declaration.

Gilbert: I plan to keep these discussions in the open for the congregations I lead. The problem has come about so many times when people were hesitant to discuss issues affecting the church, only depending on policy statements to justify their position. Policy statements always follow the organizations culture. In order to maintain community we must continue to openly and lovingly debate and discuss our positions without falling into prejudice and judgment regarding issues of individual behavior. Love God and Love People.

Laura continued in her entry that was printed previously to identify the necessity for the on-going meaning making process,

Laura: Should those Catholics been open to God speaking and stopped the practices that they had?", this is a question that we as a body of believers must constantly be asking ourselves. Is what we are saying and how we are living matching what we are called to do and be? If not we must change it. That is why we must continually scrutinize what we say and do.

However, in another entry Laura viewed meaning making to be the responsibility of the church leadership, "These important conversations among the leadership of today and tomorrow are essential to our being able to be the church in a truly biblical way."

The negotiation of meaning was on-going. Kimberly's "I think we should continue to bring up these controversial issues with the members of our congregations," Todd's "it has always been helpful for me to draw my congregations into dialogue concerning locally relevant issues," and Gilbert's "I plan to keep these discussions in the open for the congregations I lead" all affirmed the pastor's role of leadership that allocates participation in the negotiation of meaning among the congregants. Laura, on the other hand, left the negotiation of meaning to the leadership to be enacted in the

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church as a reified practice of the congregation. The manner in which the students

viewed the role of the pastor would determine their practices.

Interpretation Leading to Contextualization

The case study in Module 7 also afforded the opportunity for students to

contextualize history for their current ministries as implied in the entries already

discussed. Another question in the case study asked, "How can we help our

congregations relate these issues to struggles the church has faced in the past?" Phillip

commented,

Phillip: Interesting case. I think that the issues of homosexuality, feminism, racism and
the like will continue to be topics of interest for all Christian denominations to
grapple with. [….]
Today, we can help our congregations see, through history, how
abusive and selfish interpretation of the Bible has resulted in the devastation and
oppression of people; God's people. We must remind our congregations that it is
our responsibility to invite God's people into the kingdom; it is the Holy Spirit's
role to convict them. We have got to get on common ground and to see ourselves
being Christians through the lenses of Jesus.

Phillip desired to learn from history rather than repeat history in the treatment of concerns

in the church today. Jerome closed with the tension of learning from the past and yet

recognized the new for each context,

Jerome: We must learn from these controversies within the church. The subjectivity of
each situation makes it difficult to reach a workable conclusion, but in the end,
when we work together to bring about justice and peace, we can catch a glimpse
of God's kingdom.

Jerome related an experience of hearing a popular preacher speaking about preaching

sermons on controversial issues. Jerome concluded, "I hope the issues present in our

world shape the message we bring to our congregations." While these students and

others did not determine specific actions to follow, they did affirm the necessity for

contextualization and the how interpretations of history can inform that contextualization.

Disagreements

Students at times expressed disagreements with one another. This course exhibited more disagreements than most courses that were analyzed. The relational manner in which the students and the professor addressed these disputes invited trust and acceptance (Rovai, 2001). Question 1 in Module 3 involved a lengthy exchange where disagreements were expressed and resolved.

Cheryl: Where do you find yourself agreeing or disagreeing with Anabaptist assumptions?

> I would like faith-life to be simpler. I like their radical equality, and their unity. I even agree with their tendency to hyper-literalize scripture. I am not sure I could plow my individuality (its expression, really) under in the name of radical community. And while I believe the Amish and Mennonites have a witness in the world by virtue of their status as ratrace dropouts, it is not one the world really understands. I'm not sure outsiders can find Christ from that witness. If not, then what good is this devotion? Would God really approve?

Dr. Ward: Although, there was the whole event when the Amish girls were murdered a few years ago and their whole "ratrace dropout" status received media attention: http://www.amishgrace.com/ and http://www.amazon.com/Amish-Grace-Forgiveness-Transcended-Tragedy/dp/0787997617 (one of the authors just spoke at Huntington, so it's on my mind.)

> I know the Amish witness challenges me to take Christ's call on my life more seriously. I can't speak for anyone else.   JLW

Jimmie: I must speak in defense of the Mennonites. To be ratrace dropouts they sure stepped up to the plate immediately after Hurricane Katrina hit and moved into south Alabama and began rebuilding and repairing homes in this area. They were very visual in this community/area. (South Alabama, south Mobile county, Dauphin Island, Bayou La Batre, etc). Jimmie

> **Cheryl:** Thanks, Jimmie. I would also amend myself on the Mennonites, since I shop at a "Fair Trade" shop run by the local Mennonite church, who was a leader in this movement to get the majority of profit back to the local producer. My church had a most effective pastor who grew up Mennonite; he taught us to give without robbing people's dignity. He was a bee-keeper, and traveled to Haiti and African countries to teach this sustainable profession that provided a protein source, a resource to make into crafts (wax), and a product to sell (honey), as well as cross-pollinating the countryside and making the whole area

more productive. I admire the Mennonites - if the
Methodists ever kick me out, that's where I'm going.

Cheryl: Yet, we would hate to think that the secular world only learns of
them through horrible tragedy and "sacrificial lambs." We read this
book at church, too. But we are already following Christ's call.

Sometimes I think the LOCAL CHURCH is too separate to
have any effect on people outside it. So this witness to our
conscience has its place.

Laura: Cheryl I like how you refer to the local church.
Sometimes looking at these reform groups in history it is
difficult to think of them as individual groups/churches
living out what they understood their call to be. I struggle
with this posture of the modern local church as 'separate' as
we learn of these reformers and traditions that promote
separatism both in the monastic traditions and the
Anabaptists, etc. […]

One final thought so that I am clear, I am not
questioning the prayer, worship, etc things that many
churches are doing but questioning more the things they
seem resigned almost comfortable with not doing. Much
like some of these separtist groups and monastic orders.
Clear as muddy water?!?! Laura

Cheryl: If by "the things they seem resigned almost
comfortable with not doing," you mean evangelism
and ethics, I don't think you're muddy at all. Some
of us Christians today are spiritually bipolar - we
have one life at the office, and another at church,
and the two do not meet at all...

[…]

I'm hard on us...

Dr. Ward: *Yet, we would hate to think that the secular world only
learns of them through horrible tragedy [....]*

I didn't mean that such a horrible thing had to
happen in order for the Amish to have a witness; all I meant
was that when it did happen, they did suddenly have a very
obvious one. JLW

Cheryl had identified the Amish and Mennonites as "'ratrace' dropouts" which

Dr. Ward and Jimmie disputed. Dr. Ward reminded her of the murder of the two young

Amish girls, which made national news. Jimmie recounted how the Mennonites had built

new homes on the Gulf Coast after hurricane Katrina. To Jimmie Cheryl retracted her

statement with her own experiences of community involvement by Mennonites in her

locale, but she countered Dr.. Ward's statement stating, "Yet, we would hate to think that the secular world only learns of them through horrible tragedy and "sacrificial lambs." To this statement, Dr. Ward clarified her intention, "I didn't mean that such a horrible thing had to happen in order for [….]"

This exchange had several repair statements (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). Both Cheryl and Dr. Ward made statements that were either perceived as incorrect or offensive by the intended reader. When this was brought to their attention, they amended or clarified their meaning. Cheryl thanked Jimmie for his "I must speak in defense of the Mennonites." His perspective seemed to prompt Cheryl to reconsider and remember her own positive experiences with the Mennonites. Jimmie's introduction to this discord expressed vindication of the Mennonites and not an attack on Cheryl.

Laura was tentative in her interaction. She started with a point of almost admiration, "I like how you refer to the local church […]," which Laura frequently did in her interactions, after Cheryl had typed "LOCAL CHURCH" capitalized, a means of raising her voice online. When Laura ended her thoughts, she added, "Clear as muddy water?!?!" This expression could be construed as a lack of confidence in her ability to express her thoughts or it could be interpreted as inviting dialog. From her other interactions, Laura seemed to be encouraging and invited dialog, frequently ending her comments with a question. In a later discussion forum Laura responded to Cheryl's entry with, "OUCH! Why don't you tell us how you really see it Cheryl." This suggested that Cheryl was brash in her comments. Laura in this later exchange stated her points of disagreement and agreement with Cheryl and ended in an affirmation, "I was equally moved by his writings. Thanks for cutting straight to the point. You would make John

Wesley proud!" Perhaps Laura in this earlier third module, attempted to be soft-spoken in her interactions with Cheryl so as not to receive a harsh response, but later chose to pinpoint Cheryl's brashness. Cheryl did not respond in the second interchange.

The tone of the disagreement interactions among the students generally used a connected voice (Rovai, 2001). In the discussion forum for the first question in Module 5 Kimberly had evidently misread Jimmie's post. The following conversation took place.

Kimberly: Jimmie,
        Your comment on the negative influence that the Anglican Church had on Wesley doesn't right quite right with me. I did not get that impression from the readings. To me that would the same as saying that the Catholic Church had a negative affect on Luther.
        I think, and I certainly could be wrong here, that both these gentlemen we positively influenced by these churches in the fact that they could see where the churches had gone astray.
        I hope that makes sense.... your thoughts? Kimberly
Jimmie: Kimberly,
        I appreciate your posting but I must ask you to re-read my post.
        I never said the Anglican church was a bad influence of Wesley. I did say that the spiritualist way may have negatively influenced him. Jimmie

Kimberly, like Jimmie earlier, did not attack but kept the focus on her own response, "Your comment […] doesn't right quite right with me. I did not get that impression […]." She then added her interpretation of the reading prefaced with "I think, and I certainly could be wrong here" and concluded similar to Laura with "I hope that makes sense….your thoughts?" She invited continued dialog. Also it appeared that Kimberly had revised her statement but in doing so, she had omitted a word and written "right" twice. A likely possibility for her statement would be "doesn't sit quite right with me." Kimberly did not declare Jimmie's error with a fiercer "your comment […] isn't right." However, Jimmie disputed her comments but prefaced his challenge with a relational "I appreciate your posting" and then continued, "but I must ask you to re-read my post."

The employment of "I must ask" was an interesting way of requesting Kimberly to

correct her understanding of his post. Jimmie could have said, "Please re-read my post,"

which would have been a polite imperative but would have more of a command sense.

This phrase, "I must ask," has an imperative sense, but the imperative is upon Jimmie; he

is the one compelled to ask. Kimberly did not respond to his last entry though.

Dr. Ward frequently added a phrase to her comments to lessen the power of her

remarks as the professor. In the interchange with Cheryl printed earlier, Dr. Ward

concluded with "I can't speak for anyone else." Another expression she would use was

"That's my two cents worth" or a smiley face emoticon. Once when correcting a student,

Dr. Ward added, "But you may have had something else in mind." This left the

conversation open for dialog. She did not hesitate to correct misunderstandings but also

provided encouragement to the students along with direction. Once a student questioned

something Dr. Ward had commented. Her response was "Thanks for pushing the

professor!" and continued with her response.

Generally the students and professor applied relational language in their

discussions inviting dialog and respecting one another. A few students were more

outspoken and disconnected in their conversations. When disagreements occurred, they

would state the differing perspective but without attack. At times they would engage in

repair statements to restore the relationships when needed.

Summary

Church History II presented extensive posts within the discussion fora but the

main interaction was student-content. The professor identified her intent to build a

shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998) of historical writings for the student clergy to reference

during future ministry. Student interpretative efforts were predominant throughout the discussions. Some discussion questions and student exchanges did reveal elements of formation of practice and contextualization stemming from their interpretation.

The professor was active in the discussions and used relational, connected language to lessen her expert power (Rovai, 2001). Students also for the most part used relational language in their exchanges, and often when disagreements arose, one or both students sought to repair the relationship (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). These relational interactions encouraged a sense of belonging.

Appendix J

DO690 Wesley's Theology for Today

DO690 Wesley's Theology for Today was a two credit hour course, one of six

courses required in the Theological Orientation section for the Master of Divinity degree.

Also listed in this section were the Basic Christian Doctrine courses and two Church

History courses among others, all of which were 500 level courses. Students taking

DO690 would likely be further along in their seminary studies, although the 2008-2009

Academic Catalog only listed one recommended preparatory course, ST501 Method and

Praxis in Theology, and no prerequisites.

> The course description identified the purpose of the course stating,
>
> This course focuses upon the distinct theological contributions of John Wesley to the larger Christian tradition. It integrates theology and the practice of ministry by showing the impact of Wesley's theology on his ministry and indicating the relevance of the Wesleyan model for the contemporary church. (The Seminary, 2008, p. 170)

The integration of theology and practice of ministry for the contemporary church

indicated emphases upon pedagogies of performance and contextualization. However, in

order to understand the theology of John Wesley, an 18th century English church

reformer,[9] the students read and interpreted many of his sermons as the syllabus stated,

"Wesley's own writings should be the primary basis for interpreting Wesley" (Spring

2009, p. 6). Elsewhere in the syllabus the professor, Dr. Leonard Wagner, proffered the

value of reading Wesley's sermons for the course, "Wesley's sermons were intended to

shape the beliefs of his preachers" (Spring 2009, p. 5). The course description implied

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[9] John Wesley and his brother Charles were Oxford graduates ordained as Anglican (Church of England) clergy. They sought to reform the English Catholic church and established a movement that organized as the Methodist Church after their deaths.

that, through reading and discussing Wesley's sermons, the course intended to shape the beliefs and practices of students preparing to be clergy in the current time. Accordingly, I expected to observe elements of interpretation especially towards practice and contextualization in the students' discussion fora entries.

Weekly discussion fora were identified as "the main component of the course" (Syllabus, Spring 2009, p. 3). The professor required the students to answer one or two questions from a provided list with lengthy (250 words each for two questions or 400 words when answering one question) responses complete with citations and proper sentence structure and grammar. Students then read their classmates' answers and respond with 150 word substantive responses to two posts. Dr. Wagner wrote, "The purpose of the weekly interactive discussions is to provide students with a structured opportunity to develop more fully their understanding of the issues. Effective learning usually takes place better in a conversational environment than in a strictly lecture setting" (Syllabus, Spring 2009, p. 4). However, the length and formal writing requirements lessened the "conversational environment" as compared to other classes. Also since the students only responded to two others, the interchanges were fewer. Still Dr. Wagner highly valued the interactive component of the course.

The instructors, especially the two teaching assistants (TAs), were highly active in the discussion fora. In the Week 3 discussion shown in Table A.9, the TAs, one male and one female, made 43 responses to the students' answers and the professor added 6 comments for a total of 49 entries, 38.3% of the 128 total during the module, with an additional ten student responses directed back to the TAs. The student-student interaction accounted for 69 entries in the 23 posts, a mean response of 3.0. The

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instructors posted a mean of 2.1 responses per post and the total instructor-student-instructor interaction accounted for a mean of 2.6 responses per post. Frequently the TAs were commenting upon technical details such as an unacceptable length of the entry, poor grammar or sentence structure, poor development of thought, but also gave praise for insightful comments where appropriate. The TAs frequently told the students that Dr. Wagner had instructed them to only accept posts that met the length requirements.

Table A.9

DO690 Discussion Forum Analysis: Week 3 Interactivity

Authors of thread entries	Posts	Responses	Mean responses per post	Median responses per post	Contributors (including professor)
Non-participants, study participants, and professor	23	128	5.6	5.0	26
Study participants' posts with participants', nonparticipants', and instructor's responses	13	74	5.7	5.0	26

Interpretation

Beginning in week 4 the reading assignments and discussion questions began to focus on Wesley's sermons. In the week 4 forum, students selected two from twelve questions offered for discussion after reading three sermons and several supplemental documents. As expected, the students explained the sermons and inferred their meaning for ministry today. As these posts were lengthy, only one post will be examined, but it is representative of other posts by other students. Elisa read the sermon "The Almost Christian," which Wesley preached at Oxford, and answered the question, "What do you think of Wesley's distinction between the "almost Christian" and the real Christian? Did

Wesley over-do this distinction?" She also read "Salvation by Faith" and responded to the question, "In his sermon, "Salvation by Faith," how is "salvation" defined?" As the professor instructed, both responses were included in one post. Especially for question 11, Elisa moved between the sermon and the current day.

Elisa: 11. The College at Oxford was an ideal setting for Wesley's sermon, The Almost Christian. It would also be a timely message today for the Christian seminary student. This was a passionate plea for listeners to reflect on the condition of their hearts. Wesley was uncovering the destructive philosophy of secular humanism which would find a permanent seat in the university.

Like a secular humanist, the almost Christian believes that with good will we can build a better world. Wesley speaks of heathen honesty and their concern with feeding the poor, not to be unjust or to take away their neighbors' goods; there was an expectation of love and acceptance from one another. Like the secular humanist, the almost Christian was concerned with this life and making it meaningful. And so he/she would abstain from wine, gluttony and slothfulness.

There was and is sincerity, a real inward principle of religion. Herein lies the danger, this in itself is a religion but it lacks love of the one true God who said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and thy neighbor as thyself." [….]

Wesley dug deeper into the heart of his Oxford audience by asking, "that you perhaps have not been even almost a Christian?" Wesley causes even this present day student to question where ,"where am I in Christ and if I have not Christ in my heart, if I cannot say, Whom have I in heaven but Thee, if I have not the victory that overcometh the world, even faith then where am I and how am I to lead others in their faith? No,this is a message for the present as much as for Wesley's time and not overdone at all.

3. Salvation is a term which Wesley defined as a deliverance from the power and dominion of sin. It is that which Jesus came for, to save His people from their sins. Being delivered from sin's power was for the present time and was offered to all people. It was offered to all who acknowledged the death of Jesus as the only means of being saved from eternal death and His resurrection, "as the restoration of us all to life and immortality." It is accepting His death on the cross as full payment for our sins.

Wesley refers to the various forms of deliverance which the believer receives as he/she is saved. The believer is saved from the guilt of sin, he is no longer condemned by God, himself or the world for, "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Because salvation proceeds from the love of God and "perfect love casteth out fear", the believer is also saved from the fear of God's wrath, of eternal punishment as well as the fear of falling away from God. He explains how God as a loving Abba Father is not waiting for us to fail in order that He may strike us, but He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit and the love of God.

God also saves us from the power of sin. In 1 John, [….] It is because through salvation God's love is shed abroad in our hearts. It is that love which actually changes our nature which was bent towards sin from the fall. Thus the term born again. For this salvation which is through faith, in the present world for all people, by the atonement of Christ , has justified us before God and in His eyes it is just as though we had never sinned. This is the salvation of which Wesley preached.

Elisa concluded her first response, "No, this is a message for the present as much as for Wesley's time and not overdone at all." Her repetition of the negatives, "No," and "not overdone" emphasized her conclusion for question 11. She interpreted the "almost Christian" to correspond to "the destructive philosophy of secular humanism" that was lacking, Elisa believed, true love and faith. This warning, Elisa thought, was relevant for herself as a current day student preparing for the ministry as it was for the 18th century Oxford student preparing for the professional clergy. In the third question on the sermon, "Salvation by Faith," Elisa defined salvation, delivered an outline of what salvation accomplished in one's life, and declared, "This is the salvation of which Wesley preached." The question did not request an application for today's minister, but Dr. Wagner followed up with a question asking if Elisa has heard preaching on salvation that includes "victory over sin and living a holy life?" Elisa responded,

Elisa: I'm sure there are sermons on victory over sin and living a holy life but I can't say I am ever stirred by the message. […] it is mostly through my readings at seminary that I am encouraged to a life of holiness."

Through her interpretation of these sermons, Elisa conveyed issues of formation: formation as a "real Christian," *practicing the presence of God*, and as a preacher to proclaim salvation by faith, *practicing holiness* (Foster et al., 2005). As students interpreted Wesley's sermons and more, a new *pastoral imagination* developed of what

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they were to be and do in their ministry, the leadership they were to offer to their

congregations. The students were being shaped by the sermons they read.

Formation

Students repeatedly communicated expressions of formation in their writings. In

the second week's discussion forum, Kathleen articulated a "high calling" for the

Wesleyan clergy.

Kathleen: [4 paragraphs omitted] I believe we can learn from Wesley today. We are the
"sent ones" of God in the world today, called to make known the presence and
love of our Father. I think that when we really understand the high calling to
which we have been called, the same passion and energy that is so evident in John
Wesley's life will be evident in our lives as well.
  Morris: These are some good responses, Miss Kathleeen – they seem to both tie
into each other. Wood certainly paints Wesley as the radical reformer. Part
of me wonders how well he would have been received if the Anglican
church had continued as it was. Would he still be the reformer or would
have have been labeled a heretical radical? Your responses started me
thinking about what makes the difference between the two. It may not be a
smooth, perfect road - Wesley's certainly was not – but Wesley seems to
carry out his commission with an amazing zeal and focus that he had not
had previously. We have to be passionate about our calling and trust the
Word to be our guide. It helps us understand both our calling and our
nature. It also helps us understand our place in the universal church that
transcends our place in the local church. What a great reminder that we
will all one day be part of one church and one family.

Morris proposed the question of "radical reformer" versus "heretical radical" to

Kathleen's previous answers to the discussion questions. He pointed out the

identification basis for the clergy, the "calling." The second aspect, "trust the Word to be

our guide," suggested *practicing the presence of God* through prayer and scripture

reading, which Morris likened to "our nature." His final statements also revealed a

greater vision, "our place in the universal church that transcends our place in the local

church." Morris had started this line of critical thinking in a previous response to another

student earlier.

Morris: Wesley is an interesting study in generational ministry - he seems to reflect his ancestry so many times - and this is certainly one of them. I think Wesley showed amazing chivalry through the course of his ministry. He only went into churches where he was welcome (of which there were only a few) and he never did what many ministers accused him of - stealing parishoners. He only went to those who would never step foot in church – whether out of fear, shame, or whatever other motive there might be.

Though, to play the ... for lack of a better term ... devil's advocate, should he have deferred to the authorities? The Bible says, "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you" (Heb 13:17). What moves one from "leading reformation" to "arrogant disobedience"? Does is go back to the axiom that history is written by the victor?

Graham: "should he have deferred to the authorities?" What if the authorities are wrong? What if the authorities (as did bishop Butler in my opinion) are completely missing the point? Their dialogue (Wesley/Butler) was civil, given the disparity of their positions. [….] Order and authority are important in any organization, and those with oversight responsibility must see to it that not just anyone is charged with care for the flock. But I think mainline denominations today have placed too high a priority on order, and have neglected to take into account (as did bishop Butler) the gifting and guiding (and yes, the authority) of the Holy Spirit in their dealings with those called to ordination and pastoral preaching.

Oh, and if we are going to bring ancestry into this, what about mother Susannah? She drew some criticism for drawing large crowds to her house so she could explain what her curate had preached about....

Morris raised conflicting questions about Wesley, "…should he have deferred to the authorities?" and "Does i[t] go back to the axiom that history is written by the victor?" Graham rejoined with two "What if …" questions disputing Morris in defense of Wesley. The repetition in Graham's reply generated emphasis, expressing emotion. Then Graham yielded to Morris's point, "Order and authority are important in any organization," but followed with a counter, "But I think …." relating a current-day problem with the denominational authorities as Graham saw it. Graham implied that he perceived Wesley as a role model to refute the status quo of the institution and to act upon what he perceived to be the moral way. By reading these accounts of the writings

and life of John Wesley, the students commonly distinguished him as a model for their ministry and lives as professional clergy. Foster et al. (2005) detected modeling as one of the *pedagogies of formation* in the development of the professional clergy. Through Wesley's writings students acquired a model for ministry.

Interestingly, Graham ended by bringing the discussion back around to a previous post referring to Wesley's dissenting ancestors and included Wesley's mother, who drew more crowds to her home when she explained the sermon of the curate (her husband and others) than attended the morning service, as one of those dissenters of authority. It was unclear if this addition was to vindicate "one's nature" as the reason Wesley was a dissenter or was a side note that Graham used to remind his classmate of Wesley's mother, who was a strong influencer in Wesley's life.

The above exchanges demonstrate that some students, Morris in this example, were willing to consider Wesley's example critically for his ministry and Morris did so publicly in two separate discussions. Herein we see that the students not only encouraged one another but challenged one another's thinking in the formation process. Students encountered formational experiences from one another as well as the sermons they were reading.

Loretta also challenged a fellow student but in a different manner. In the second week's discussion Loretta began to see a greater vision for the pastoral ministry in the introductory reading about John Wesley. She identified *practicing holiness* as an "utmost concern" for herself and her parishioners. In the dialog that followed with Julian, Loretta shared a personal story of her own recent pastoral ministry that articulated her vision.

Loretta: 5. Comment on some of the things that you find particularly interesting in the life and ministry of Wesley reported in Chapters 11-18.

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I thought that I had a pretty good understanding of what Wesley's life was like, but I realized that what I knew only the skimmed surface of his life and ministry. He did not live a comfortable life, but that seemed irrelevant to Wesley. He had one goal and that was to use everyday to evangelize the lost. He never missed an opportunity; he even evangelized on the back of a horse at a trot as a convicted sinner tried to flee. Wesley was forced to occupy many barely habitable places for his ministry. Wesley often focused on the disreputable spots because that is where his target audience was located. (Wood, 147) He was outside under door posts or tree in the rain and violent storms. (Wood, 149) In one location, the smell of swine was obnoxious. Wesley himself reported that the people must surely love the Gospel to endure such conditions. (Wood, 151) In short, Wesley's pulpit was more about the location of people in need of the Gospel message, than in a church or society meeting.

[6 paragraphs omitted]

In conclusion, I was so encouraged by reading about the life of John Wesley. I was fired up at the prospect of what ministry can be and encouraged to put more of myself into the spreading of the Gospel and seeking after the lost at all costs. Having said that, personal holiness is an utmost concern for myself and new converts. Benefits of my ministry will be lasting only if the new converts are protected from Satan's efforts to steal them away.

Julian: Loretta,

> I too was intrigued by the evangelical nature of John Wesley's ministry. I am curious and wonder where the Methodist Church has placed this emphasis upon evangelism. I have been in pastoral ministry for 10 years and pastored almost as many churches (not because I moved that frequently but because I served 3-4 at a time) and I think that an evangelical zeal is mostly lacking in our churches. I'm not sure if it arises from a 1950's culture in which everyone was saved and everyone went to church or if it arises from a simple lack of concern…I tend to give them the benefit of the doubt and assume that it is not the latter.
>
> I would be intrigued to know what you think can be done within the context of the modern church to reignite this evangelical zeal?
>
> I have to confess my own in ability to properly prompt and motivate churches to restore this as a central point of their ministry.
>
> Julian

Loretta: Julian, (I know that this is long, but please read it through; I
> pray that this witness will encourage you.)

>> In June I went to a church that was limping and in serious decline, they did good to have about 20 on a Sunday morning. I told them the first Sunday that I was there that, I was not really concerned about preaching nearly as much as I was concerned about prayer. We started a prayer group that week. I started teaching them on prayer. We used book called, Mighty Prevailing Prayer, by Wesley Duewel. About the same time they started mentioning their lost loved ones by name in prayer.

I placed the names on little cards and each week we would pray for the lost. Eventually there were about 60 names on our cards. Also each week they prayed for me and I prayed for them. (Does your congregation pray for you? Often the pastor is the least prayed for person in the Church.)We passed out the cards and gathered in groups of three of four. For weeks and months we did not see a lot happen. I told them to hang on and not be discouraged, that these people would fall under the wooing grace of the Holy Spirit.

After I started at the church, I also started fasting at irregular times for needs that came up with the church or the church family. Every time I prayed and fasted, there was spiritual breakthrough. It was amazing. Later I learned that John Wesley required the early Methodist to fast every Wednesday and Friday until 4:00 p.m. as part of a regular spiritual discipline. I started doing that as regular part of my spiritual discipline.

About two or three weeks ago, there was a man in our church who had been very faithful in attendance for the last two or three months, but he was not saved. He played in our band and sang. (The new band is also an answer to prayer.) He was supposed to sing a song that day, but he could not stand the conviction that he was under. He left church between Sunday school and church under the guise that he was sick. We started the service and I just concluding the announcements and I saw him come in the back door. The next thing that I know is that he is bounding down the isle saying "I need help, I need help."

I was thought that he was having a heart attack. I asked him, "What's wrong?"

He said, "I am a sinner and I need help." It was at this point that I figured out the nature of his "heart problem." I asked him if he was ready to receive the Lord as his savior and he said, "Yes."

The great thing about this was that this was the convicting power to the Holy Spirit – It was not me; I was giving announcements. Prayer and fasting humbles us before God and clears out the spiritual opposition that is in the way of God doing the work that he wants to do anyway.

The next day another man that we had been praying for by name received the Lord.   The following Wednesday at prayer meeting, a man came to prayer meeting, who had never been there before, to receive the Lord. (We had prayed for all three of those men July and August, respectively.)

Lasts Wednesday, a woman came to prayer meeting to rededicate her life to the Lord. I do not think that she had ever been to prayer meeting before either.

Sunday evening, another woman rededicated her life to the Lord.

As you can imagine this has built the faith of our people in an enormous way. Last week we had 16 prayer warriors at prayer meeting and we had 61 at church service on Sunday. I do not really care about the filled pews nearly as much as I do about the filled hearts.

I say all of this to say that God will work anywhere, no matter how low or how dry. Dedicate yourself to prayer and fasting and enlist the help of as many as you can. Hang in there and do not become discouraged. Sometimes it takes a while – several months – but it is worth the knee time. All praise be to God Almighty! Blessings, Loretta

Loretta spoke of prayer and fasting in faith, means of *practicing the presence of God,* in her vision of ministry that she shared with her congregation. She imparted this vision with Julian as a challenge, articulating a vision "grounded in their religious tradition, for determining a course of action in clergy practice" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 120).

Performance and Contextualization

As the course description stated, the course purpose was to encourage integration of theology and ministry practice showing "the relevance of the Wesleyan model for the contemporary church." Foster et al. (2005) described performance to be an extension of formation. As the students considered the theology of John Wesley, they considered what the theology meant for their own performance in ministry in the 21st century. The course design did not require authentic performances, but the students expressed performance as volitional intentions.

After reading about Wesley's emphasis on sola scriptura (only Scripture) in the third week's forum, Joey reflected on Wesley's use of scripture in sermons and sermons preached in the present times.

Joey: […] Textual, expository preaching like that of John Wesley is getting harder and harder to find in the church today. Our preaching seems to be more focused on entertaining or making ourselves feel better than on Biblical preaching. We need to get back to preaching the Word.

I do intend to be a preacher of the Word. I am currently serving as the youth pastor at a United Methodist church and so I only get the opportunity to preach about once a quarter, but when I do get the chance I make the congregation keep their Bibles open because we study the Word together. I try to do the same thing with the youth. One of the challenges that I see in the church is that I believe we have the most Biblically illiterate generation in the church. That Bible illiteracy begins with the parents of the youth that I serve. Therefore, one of my goals has been to get the youth in the Word. To have them be readers and students of the Word, not simply hearers of the Word. It is a huge challenge when many of them are so complacent about their faith.

TA Banks: Joey, I'm glad you feel a calling to be a Bible teacher. That is definitely part of the meaning behind Paul's meaning of the pastor/teacher (Eph 4:11), and both parts are essential for pastors. One suggestion, when you teach young people to read the Bible, consider also teaching them how to read the Bible. Many read a biblical passage in a monotone, machine-gun rapid fire, non-stop way. The commas, colons, semicolons, and question marks are vitally important for understanding. Also, it is rare that the one who reads in public does so with the appropriate voice modulation. It takes some practice, and your example will be a blessing, especially to the youth, that will bear fruit in their lives.

Joey: I agree with your ideas on reading the scriptures. Although I have made a strange discovery with my Jr. Highers. There are two techniques that seem to work well in getting them to hear what they are reading. The first is speed reading. Everyone takes a verse and we see how fast we can read the scripture passage. Then we go back and read it for meaning. I believe it works so well because they are all concentrating on following along when we speed read that it sinks in. The second, is a dramatic reading by either an individual or a group.

TA Banks: I'd not heard of the speed reading technique. Initially, it didn't set well with me, but, in thinking about how you follow the speed reading with a second reading for meaning, and perhaps a dramatic reading, I like the idea. I can see the appeal for today's kids. For one thing, you have made reading the Bible fun. If I understand you correctly, the speed-reading is much enjoyed by the children and so the second reading for understanding doesn't seem so boring.

Tell me more about this interesting idea as the semester progresses.

Joey declared, "I do intend …" with the emphatic use of "do" and explained his current ministry experience where he revealed this intention in present action. The TA rejoined with advice for the audible reading of the scripture to improve understanding, offering

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instruction to enhance performance. In this instance, though, Joey responded in agreement, he then told of his own technique, labeling it as his "strange discovery." As with the formation interchanges presented earlier, the discussion forum allowed the student to share his experience. TA Banks replied that after thinking about, he saw merit in the technique and invited more interaction. Though the student was the learner in the class, Joey was able to share his own practice.

Reflecting on Wesley's sermons, students also recognized areas of their ministry performance to which Wesley's theology related. In week five students read Wesley's sermons teaching about the sacraments, baptism and Holy Communion. Joey deliberated at length concerning the baptism of infants, with which he disagreed. He concluded his argument with the paragraph below and Dr. Wagner replied.

Joey: I really appreciated Dr. Wagners power point and how he described the history of infant baptism. I realize that infant baptism has been practiced in the church much longer than the belief in believer only baptism. I also understand the argument that baptism is the NT equivalent of circumcision, but I do not agree with that argument. Circumcision incorporated a male baby into the congregation of Israel under the Abrahamaic covenant. They were made a part of the covenant based on being a descendant of Abraham. However, in the New Covenant, we do not become a part of the covenant by birth, but by rebirth. Jesus said that you must be born again. Baptism in the New Covenant is an outward sign of that rebirth. Therefore I do not believe the argument that infant baptism is equal to circumcision.

Dr. Wagner: Hi Joey,

Regarding infant baptism, you mentioned the difference [....]
You mentioned that you were a United Methodist. If so, you really do need to resolve this issue. If you are unable to support and practice the ritual of infant baptism, you most likely will never be accepted in any conference. So you will want to be sure to give this matter plenty of consideration before you go before a Board of ordained ministry.
Blessings, Leonard

Joey: Dr. Wagner,

I do hear what you are saying about the BOM [Board of Ordained Ministry]. I started as a candidate and then dropped out because of my beliefs about infant baptism and knowing that it does not agree with UM doctrine. [....]

My question for you then is what is the status of an infant that has been baptized? Are they saved? I thought faith in Jesus Christ was the only way to enter into the new covenant. What does infant baptism really do for the infant that a dedication or praying parents and a community of faith cannot do for the infant until thay are able to make their own decision? […]

In his response, Dr. Wagner identified the subject in regards to ordination for the clergy in the denomination of the student. Joey acknowledged the concern and then continued the dialog with the heart of his disagreement. Dr. Wagner's candid directive presented an identity focus for Joey, whether he could align with the doctrinal requirement of the United Methodist clergy.

Kelly also addressed the same question in the discussion forum. Kelly agreed with the doctrine of infant baptism, but wanted to "articulate this well." She shared her personal story that included her mother's infant baptism, which kept her from renouncing her faith to join the faith of her husband.

Kelly: 9. Baptism is considered by the larger catholic tradition from the time of the Early Church Fathers to be the NT counterpart to the OT practice of circumcision; hence even as eight-day old boys were circumcised and formally made a part of the "congregation of Israel ," so baptism should be offered to infants. What are your views on this?

In part I wanted to answer this question because I am one of those students whose ordination will require a defense of the practice of infant baptism and want to be sure that I will articulate this well. However, it interests me. I am a half Jew. As back ground that meant that I celebrated Christian and Jewish holidays and did not really understand a lot of our beliefs until I "became" a Christian and suddenly my Jewish roots really meant something.

However, I had often wondered why in the Christian community we had to become Christians when the Jews were born into Jewish faith. This did not come from a place of being born a political or geographical Jew, but a definite Spiritual Jew. Jewish parents say "we are Jewish" and this is our history of faith. They never raise their children saying "I hope that one day you will become a Jew and adhere to the faith I have been following." Circumcision was a sign of the covenant that the child even at eight days old belonged to Yahweh and would be raised to follow Him, even following Him. Infant baptism in the household of Christian faith is the sign and seal of the work of the grace of God in the sacrifice

of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit conveyed on that infant child, just as circumcision to the Jews was a sign of covenant.

My mother to her dying day confessed the importance of her own infant baptism. Marrying a Jewish man in the days of her rebellion toward the church she was often asked by his family to formally become a Jew. This would mean a public denunciation of her belief in Jesus as Messiah. She always said that she felt in her heart that it was not her parents teaching or her own study of the Scripture that kept her from doing this but that it was most definitely that she was baptized as an infant and sealed for the day when she would be faced with that choice. That sentiment is something that I am becoming fonder of as I grow in faith myself.

[….]

Infant baptism is the recognition of this young and tender human being as a child of God. Infant baptism sprinkles the child with the grace of God and holds them in family of God as they grow physically and spiritually and marks them as one who is set apart for God's everlasting kingdom.

There is no need for re-baptism later in life because there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4-5) and the desire for this action means a misunderstanding of what Jesus did through his death, burial and resurrection which was a one time event that covered all that was necessary for us to have forgiveness and eternal life.

Sidney: Kelly, Thank you for sharing some very personal stories with us in response to Q 9. It shows that certain issues that the church faces are not abstract thoughts being wrestled with, but concrete and very personal to the lives of people in their journey of faith. In the case of infant baptism, the question I have is, is it salvific? Because if one believes, [….]

TA Banks: [First, …]

Second, if you want to give an able defense for infant baptism [to the Board of Ministry, United Methodist], then you will have to write in your own words the defense John Wesley puts forward. Albert Outler, in his introductory comment for Sermons 18-19, says: [….]

Dr. Wagner gives a clear explanation supporting infant baptism in his PowerPoint lecture for this week that can be a huge help to you in this regard. Personal anecdotes, while they may well be true accounts, will not likely be accepted by your church board because they are looking for theological reasons.

As this was Kelly's stated purpose in selecting the question on infant baptism, TA Banks

advised Kelly in the formulation of her answer for the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Sydney also responded and though he did not agree with infant baptism, he identified the

magnitude of these discussions as the theology related to practice, "certain issues … are

not abstract thoughts …, but concrete and very personal ….” He then proceeded with questions that introduced his own thought.

Other students also selected the question on baptism. Jordan spoke of new understanding from the readings.

Jordan: I learned quite a bit in reading this section. Heretofore, I was not aware of Wesley's views on baptism and how it can differ from regeneration. I also learned, I believe for the first time, of his views on the assurance of faith.

Additionally, Lisa spoke of learning Wesley's belief on infant baptism and found that it affirmed her own belief, sharing her personal story. Kathleen likewise was learning about the theology and recognized a cultural perhaps generational issue of individualism that shaped one's belief on infant baptism.

Lisa: 9. The topic of infant baptism has been one I've wrestled with personally, and I've known many families who have been divided on this issue. What I've decided, like John Wesley, is that I agree with the practice and find no reason not to baptize infants. I didn't know Wesley's opinion of this until I did the current reading, but was glad to find that we both understand the active agent in baptism to be God, and not the person being baptized. This is what it boils down to for me, and is consistent with the gift of grace as a whole, especially since we can do nothing on our part to gain God's mercy, and cannot even begin to earn His pardon. It stands to reason that even in those sacraments He gave to us, which serve to help us be a remembering, grateful and participatory people, He would be the One at work.

Kathleen: I think in America and in western culture we tend to be more individualized and to value independence. I can definitely speak from my generation of young adults that many have expressed the desire to be re-baptized though they had been baptized as an infant as well. We tend not to see the communal aspect and the interdependence involved in our family relations and as well as church community. I hope that this will develop more in our church cultures. I've recently been introduced to the value and reasons for infant baptism, and understand this doctrine much more than before. There is a definite parallel between circumcision and baptism, one of being set apart for God, and an act of faith surrendering to His will being done in our lives.

Kathleen stated, “I hope this [interdependence] will develop more in our church cultures.” Her use of “I hope” did not have the same volitional intention as some

students employed, but her desire spoke to the pastoral imagination of what she was coming to value in her ministry.

Elisa did not accept infant baptism but stated she was "open to rethinking my position" based upon what she had learned. Joey voiced his disagreement with infant baptism, though, he seemingly misread Elisa's post stating he disagreed with her.

Elisa: I have embraced the view that Baptism should be a self conscious decision by a person who has accepted Christ and desires to walk in the way of salvation. When I first attended the Methodist Church, I was present at a Baptism and was relieved to hear the minister use the word dedication as this is the practice I had grown under in a non denominational setting. I found the power point on Infant Baptism food for thought with the connection to circumcision and the fact that households in the early church were baptized.I am open to rethinking my position on this. Elisa

Joey: I disagree with you on infant baptism, but agree with many of your questions and struggles concerning infant baptism and confirmation in the church. First, infant baptism. Why do you believe in infant baptism? Is it simply because of church tradition? I agree that infant baptism has been practiced longer than believer only baptism in the church. However, I feel the NT and the New Covenant are clear that one should believe first and then be baptized. I can accept the comparison of baptism to circumcision because it is the outward sign that makes one a part of the community of faith. By birth, infant males were circumcised on the eighth day and therefore became a part of the congregation of Israel. However, I believe Jesus himself is clear that it is not by birth, but by rebirth that we become a part of the church or God's family. Therefore, the outward sign, baptism, should follow that rebirth which makes us a part of the church.

Is the seriousness of the subject matter properly communicated? What exerted efforts are made to involve the parents?

I had a very good confirmation class two years ago because I tried something very different. No denominational curriculum! I wanted to stress to the kids that we are looking for life change, not for them to go through some program. It was short only because it is so hard to get people to commit to something greater than 12 weeks and even that is a stretch. I met with the youth and their parents the first night and laid out the plan. Over the 3 months, we met 6 times and did two service projects. They had 4 major homework assignments to be completed with their parents help. The course was designed to involve parents as mentors, teaching their children faith, exactly what they are supposed to be doing. You should have heard the grumbling from both students and parents as they left the meeting. However most of them did it and I got lots of positive feedback from parents and some kids thought it was OK. Then on

> Confirmation Sunday, we had the students briefly share their faith story, then we asked them what particular gift or blessing they would like us to pray for them; pastors, friends, and family prayed over them and they were confirmed. What a powerful service that was!

Joey went on with a story from his ministry experience concerning confirmation, which is usually done for children who were baptized as infants. So even though he disagreed with infant baptism, he shared a story that provided meaning for the participants in confirming their previous baptism.

Similar discussions of learning occurred in other areas. Kelly wrote concerning the "means of grace" such as Holy Communion, prayer, fasting—practices categorized as *practicing the presence of God* and *practicing holiness* by the Carnegie study (Foster et al., 2005). Elisa encountered a similar learning experience.

Kelly: I think I just came to a deeper understanding myself. Years ago in a Bible study I learned about the Jewish wedding ceremony and how the groom offers a cup to the bride to seal their marriage. This connects to how Jesus has offered us His cup and in effect says to us through the Lord's Supper, "Will you marry me?" I have never taken communion since without thinking of His sincere offer that He paid for with His life.

> Sharing this brings me to a very difficult place. I took communion for granted for years. I think that so many in the church take it because it is offered without thinking of the significance of what they are doing. I guess I am fearful of sounding judgmental, but I think it is factual. Almost no one in the church fasts, we have become Biblically illiterate because lay persons rarely study the Scripture on their own and people seem to be uncomfortable praying. We are good at fellowship, but I think Wesley meant something deeper to occur in our fellowship, like encouraging one another on to grace and growth in God's love. I think I need to teach and model the importance of these means. I don't want to be leading a church that Wesley would have to ask, "Why are not we more holy?"

Elisa: While driving my 17 year old daughter home from school today, I shared with her my new found appreciation for Holy Communion. In the services at our church, I enjoy the prayer over groups of us as we partake of the bread and juice and it is a time of communion with the Lord. After reading Wesley's sermon however I feel....well there's so much more that we need to be talking about. That it's a time for pardon, strength and a refreshing of our souls needs to be told. […]

Kelly's statement, "I think I need to teach and model the importance of these means" indicates volition in a contemplative manner. Elisa echoed similar reflection, "I feel…well there's so much more …" While the students held differing views and at times they disputed one another, they saw implications in the theology for their ministerial practice. They were making decisions as to whether they would baptize infants, what they would emphasize and how they would emphasize the sacraments and other *means of grace*, and sometimes they were making decisions that affected whether they would be able to identify themselves with a specific denominational clergy in their practices. Dr. Wagner and the TAs offered explicit direction when appropriate in the preparation towards ordination, the formal recognition of the students as professional clergy.

Stories

As already noted, the students shared personal stories of meaning making for themselves that also became a shared repertoire for their classmates. When reading and discussing the theological concept of sanctification, Loretta shared an incredibly personal story that illustrated her private process of sanctification.

Loretta: Hey there TA Banks,

Thanks for a great response. I personally can bear witness to what Wesley said in these two sermons and in what you said in this post. I wonder about Zinzendorf's vision of humanity that he could not see what should have been obvious to the objective observer. Any student of Christian humanity can see the effects of sin, even after justification.

I also liked your explanation about the Holy Spirit slowly revealing our sins so that we can deal with them a little at a time. Before I made the decision for pastoral ministry, this process started happening to me. I came face to face with a man who abused me as a child. The Holy Spirit asked me what I was going to do now, and I replied that I was going to forgive him. I realized that the Spirit of the Lord was showing me issues in my life that needed to be dealt with and doors that needed to be closed before I stepped into ministry. Over the course of about 18 months, the Lord showed me one thing after another which needed to be dealt

with. I considered this the process of sanctification and it involved much repentance. It was a time of preparation. Each time the Lord showed me something else, I gave thanks to him for this because I knew that he was doing a work in me. (I have to admit that after a while, I thought, "Surely Lord, we are getting close to end! ☺)

TA Banks: Loretta, Thank you for providing concrete examples from your own life. I don't pretend to understand the difficulty you faced in dealing with someone who had abused you as a child, but in order for you to talk about it in this forum, God has certainly given you much grace, love and healing in overcoming this difficulty. Sometimes I have to remind myself that this is a life-long process. I have been at it for over fifty years and God is still not done with me. Maybe I'm a slow learner, or maybe the job is bigger than I realize. In either case, praise God!

Loretta told her story that occurred before "I made the decision for pastoral ministry."

Thus, this experience was not a result of her seminary education, but TA Bank's post had

reminded her of her experience and she reflected upon it. The discussion forum afforded

the opportunity for Loretta to both have her experience affirmed by another's thoughts

and to make her story public for others to reflect on its potential meaning for their lives.

Stories shared in a community of practice built *a shared repertoire* from which the

community may learn and to guide future practice (Wenger, 1998). Wesley's sermons,

which the students read for the course, were part of this shared repertoire. Students

added their stories that expressed or described, as TA Banks said, "concrete examples"

for the contemporary time. The students and all readers negotiated personal meaning

making for their lives and ministry practice that paralleled the community's tradition.

Student-Instructor Interaction

As noted in the introduction, there was extensive interaction from the teaching

assistants in the discussion fora. As noted at the beginning of the analysis on DO690, in

the first weeks the instructor posts considered technical issues for posting. Students were

frequently told that their posts were too short and thus unacceptable. One student

protested that his post was just five words short of the requirement. The TAs also

identified poor grammar and critiqued the quality of the answers.

TA Johnston: You have some good thoughts and ideas and certainly are able to synthesize from what your are reading, but you do yourself a disservice by not watching your grammar and sentence structure. There are too many errors for me to re-write them here to highlight them for you. I am sorry if I sound hard but it will be well worth it if you can ensure you post responses and write papers that have good grammar and structure, not only for the benefit of your classes and degree here but for anything you have to write for your denomination/church/community in the future.

　　Hope this helps. We do have resources and help on campus for students wanting to improve these things, but I am not sure where you are located and whether you can access these. Let me now if I can help in way.

TA Banks: Aloha,

　　You maxed out on points for this question, so you know I liked your critical thinking and reflection. Just a couple of pointers: When you re-read what you wrote, before posting it, please look for incomplete sentences. Because two of your sentences are incomplete, they become meaningless. I'll let you identify them in your posting. Usually, your grader, and certainly any of your professors, will not be as lenient on this. I appreciated the coherence in connecting your three paragraphs.

TA Johnston: You highlight some good points from your reading reference the question but your whole response seems to be quoting from your reading relevant parts and not adding any insights of your own. Your rating would have been better if you had added some of your own thoughts too.

　　Blessings Alexandria

TA Banks: Anytime you lose a rating due to a low word count, feel free to resubmit your answer... keeping in mind the due dates. If the word count is met, then we give you a quality rating. You can see the rating system posted on the class icon - labeled "rating system." We don't grade higher only because of a lengthy answer. We look for "insightful understanding" and "critical reflection," as well as some indication that the material had actually been read.

　　Your answer would have received a rating of 5 if you had expanded only briefly on Wesley's itinerant ministry by mentioning Whitefield as the one who convinced Wesley to use field preaching because Whitefield was a major player in Wesley's life.

　　Of course expanding your answer to give not only meaningful information but some analysis would help. For instance, John Wesley's mother was a major influence in his life that can hardly be over-emphasized, but this useful fact begs to have an illustration or two accompany it, along with your own analysis/explanation as to why this fact is important. For example, if you had only

mentioned the importance of John Wesley's mother in the way I mention, above, you could earn a solid "5" rating (versus a "3" or "4" at the most) for simply presenting a string of un-analyzed facts. Critical thinking and reflecting is a great key.

TA Banks at times gave lengthy posts of his own reflection in a way that implied that his answer was the correct answer. In one discussion forum, he instructed four other participants to "please see my extended reply to Loretta."

The instructors did give supportive and encouraging feedback to the students as well and sometimes shared their own experiences.

TA Johnston: Great response Loretta, I enjoyed reading it and can see you read well the material and engaged with it too. It is true that many of us today can learn much from how Wesley approached his vocation as well as from what he preached and taught. Blessings

TA Banks: Jordan, I liked the fact that you not only listed some "things" about Wesley's life and ministry, but you also reflected a bit on each thing." You had a smooth, coherent flow of thought from one paragraph to the next.
        Feeling "conviction" on some "things" in Wesley's life and ministry is included in the goals of this course. I'm glad you are gaining a lot from this course.

Both TAs used relational language, but the tone of their entries were authoritarian (Rovai, 2002). But both TAs also used accusative language with the use of "you" or "your:" "but you do yourself a disservice by not watching your grammar and sentence structure" and "Your answer would have received a rating of 5 if you had [….]" Only once did a student show frustration, "it was literally 5 words short of 250," for these critiques. Many students thanked the TAs for helping them to progress, "Thank you for your assessment as well as your pointers to help me improve my work. Elisa." The intense academic and technical focus on the writing perhaps limited the conversational dialog experienced in some courses, but it did abet the students to articulate clear arguments, which could be beneficial in their professional work.

Summary

As the main component of the course, the discussion fora lacked a dynamic found in other courses. The students met their requirements for the most part, but, overall, there was not the dialogic exchange. In a few cases students did respond additionally with short responses, but the TAs noted that those were too short to accept. One student responded that that post had been above her required two responses and asked if every response had to be 150 words. The TA responded that he commented so that other students knew that he recognized that it was an unacceptable post. The length requirement of the posts could have deterred extensive exchanges.

The discussion fora focused the students' attention on the content. While the students responded to one another, the focus was typically on the content. The student-instructor interaction as noted frequently dealt with technical corrections although there were content meaningful interactions between the instructors and the students as well. Still in the student-content prominence, students offered numerous stories of their own experiences and acknowledged the relevance of the content for their current and future ministries.

Appendix K

MS620/ME745 Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched

The Practice of Ministry core electives (eighteen credit hours) for the Master of Divinity program required one course for the Apostolic Ministry obligation within those core electives. The Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched course was one of eleven possible courses meeting that requirement. As a missions/evangelism course, I would expect to find evidence of contextualization in the course activities. The course description identified the focus of the course: "Studies in organization leadership, especially the leadership of change, applied to the contemporary challenge of helping local churches move from tradition to mission and become effective 'apostolic' churches." The implication of this course description is that the course emphasized a change in focus "from tradition to mission" for the local church and the leadership necessary to bring about that change. The first course objective stated that the students would be able to "understand how missional/apostolic churches differ in outlook and practice from inwardly focused churches." This implied that "tradition" was equated with "inwardly focused churches" and thus mission/apostolic churches would be outwardly focused. The title of the course, Leadership of the Church for the Unchurched" could be interpreted as Leadership of the missional/apostolic (outwardly focused) church for those outside the church for whatever reason. Since the course also emphasized leadership, issues of formation of the leader were expected. The Carnegie study recognized one of the abilities of the religious leadership was to discern if a vision is present (Foster et al., 2005). As stated, the first course objective identified a desired vision to be one of focusing on people outside the church. In other words, the students

preparing for pastoral ministries would need to discern if a local church held a vision that was missional/apostolic that led to practices that were outwardly focused. Another objective implied an emphasis on interpretation stating that the students would "be able to articulate the biblical-theological rationale for a missional/apostolic ecclesiology as articulated in the writings of […]" (Course Guide, Spring 2009, slide 4).

Dr. Andrew Moser valued collaborative work articulating his learning philosophy as follows:

> My aim as a professor is not just to impart knowledge but even more to facilitate learning and competence. Since we learn better from participatory activities than formal presentations, I feature discourse and collaboration in my courses more than lectures. Still, while students must be responsible for their own learning, I want to help all I can." (Course Guide, Spring 2009, slide 6)

The class was divided into groups, which had group discussions where they collaborated to create a case study throughout the semester. Open-ended questions from the case studies comprised the final exam for the course indicating the importance of this group work in the course. Each group had five or six members including the teaching assistants (TA) and doctoral students. Twenty-four students initially enrolled in the course and twelve of them participated in the research. One additional student joined the class late and four teaching assistants also participated in the discussion fora. One group did not include any study participants whereas five of the six students in the third group participated in the study. Only two of the TAs, who facilitated the discussion fora, participated in the study, though one of the two joined the study late.

Additionally, there were six content discussion fora throughout the semester, which were major components in the course. The instructors organized the discussion fora with one thread per group. All members of a group posted their initial answers to the discussion prompts as well as their responses to their groupmates within the same thread.

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The discussion fora occurred at irregular periods, sometimes weekly and once at a spread of three weeks between fora. In this framework only the study participants' entries were counted in the second row of Table A.10.

Table A.10

MS620/ME745 Discussion Forum 2 (week 4): Comparing Guder and Hunter

Authors of thread entries	Posts Responses	Mean responses per post	Median responses per post	Contributors (including teaching assistants)
Non-participants, study participants, and teaching assistants	5 (1 per group)	93	18.6	17	29
Study participants and teaching assistants	(included in the 5 posts)	52	10.4	7	14

For all the discussion entries collected for the research, Group 1 had 31 entries, Group 2 had 32 entries, Group 3 had 89 entries, Group 4 had 35 entries, and Group 5 had 0 entries. Within Group 3, TA Vaughn posted 37 of the 89 entries, 41,6%, of the group's discussion entries.

Interpretation Leading to Contextualization

After reading two of the textbooks and viewing the professor's video lecture, the students answered question prompts for discussion and then responded to two groupmates' interpretations for the second discussion forum in Week 4. Guder's textbook was a theoretical explanation justifying the missional emphasis for churches from a theological perspective. The textbook by Hunter presented six case studies of "megachurches" in the USA. Two of these megachurches were referred to in the dialogs: Willow Creek Community Church in the Chicago area (Pastor Bill Hybels) and

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Saddleback Church in Southern California (Pastor Rick Warren, who wrote *The Purpose-Driven Life* and *The Purpose-Driven Church*). In Group 3 Kendra wrote the following:

Kendra: The information in the lecture regarding bringing about a missional mindset in the tradition church was very helpful. The list of 12 keys to mobilizing church members was like a quick checklist, to scan the areas of the church life and see how missional the church might or might not be. I realize that these keys bear more thoughtful consideration as well, they are not meant only as a quick checklist, but they do provide a place to start.

I also really appreciated the 3 options given at the end of the lecture: Work with what is, Start something new, and Keep what's valuable. Each of these approaches can yield valuable information about the congregation [....]

As far as comparing the two books we have read so far, I feel like Hunter's book puts feet on the concepts laid out so carefully and methodically by Guder's group of writers. For example, Guder lays out the vision for small groups in the chapter on Equipping God's People for Mission, but even after reading the chapter, I didn't feel like I had enough understanding to move into using this model. Hunter, with his careful study of the 6 churches, reports on what each church uses, shows that their approaches are different, both from each other and progressively in the life cycle of each church. It felt more like going to a clothing store and trying things on till you find something that fits right and works for the purpose. It seems like Hunter's book takes a fair amount of the trial and error out of finding what might work for a given situation.

While Hunter is more practical, he also keeps reminding the reader of his vision, the missional church vision. He doesn't always go into depth in explaining it, but with the richness of Guder's theological work to fall back on, his references to the missio Deo [Dei] make a lot of sense.

Kendra compared the two textbooks on a wide spectrum that reflected the emphases of the books: one book was practical but did not provide definitions and the other author was theoretical but not practical. The teaching assistant, Vaughn, praised her work and asked a critical thinking prompt, "Keep thinking whether the principles and practices outlined in Hunter could be applicable everywhere?" Kendra used expressions such as "I feel like [...]," "I didn't feel like [...]," and "It seems like [...]." These tentative statements gave a weak presentation of her interpretation. Another way to construe Kendra's language is that she desired to express her interpretation of the textbooks in a non-authoritarian manner, thus, maintaining a relational tone with her groupmates. This

was her interpretation and not the only interpretation. However, her final paragraph

contributed a straightforward summary, though cursory. TA Vaughn urged Kendra to

continue reflecting.

In the same group a lengthy discussion thread involving five members, including

Kendra, demonstrated how TA Vaught pressed students to wrestle with the implications

of these books for the church today. Due to the extensive length of the discussion, the

analysis has been broken down into three conversations that occurred within the thread.

The thread started with a conversation mainly between Bobby and the TA for Group 3,

Vaughn. Vaughn was from India. Bobby initiated the thread when he wrote his

paragraphs on the textbooks and lecture as required by the assignment. TA Vaughn

addressed Bobby and Kendra as "Friends" in his opening response in the thread setting a

relational tone, reiterated the differences in the two books similarly to Kendra's initial

post (printed above) and then proceeded to raise questions to prompt deeper thinking.

The conversation between Bobby and TA Vaughn follows.

Bobby: One of the key elements that assist in transformation from traditional to
Apostolic Churches that was touched on in the lecture was prayer. The leadership
must be committed to prayer if sustained revivification is to happen... [….]
Additionally, I appreciated the emphasis on love as a motive for evangelism with
the need to model genuine hospitality. A Pastor told me many years ago, "that
people don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care".
When people understand that leadership is committed to their best interest then
missional change becomes easier.
  Both Guder and Hunter seem too imply that church leadership has the
primary responsibly for bringing about an apostolic, or missional ethos. And, in
doing so both are confronted to consider, how modernity impacts or impedes that
objective.
Kendra: I appreciate your bringing out the importance of prayer. I think in NA
[North America] we are so goal oriented and program oriented that we
forget the necessary wind of the Spirit blowing through and empowering
our ministries.
    i also like the idea that the church needs to feel like the leadership
isn't trying to manipulate them, that the changes are hopefully (if bathed in

prayer) in their best interest. It is definitely a challenging walk for the leadership.

TA Vaughn: Friends,

I liked reading both the books. While Guder's Missional Church laid a solid theological foundation, it lacked what I might call "a missional church with skin on." [….] Hunter fulfills the need of a missional church with skin on, with his excellent profiles of six missional churches in the USA which are reaching out to the post modern people. However, interestingly, he does not call them "missional;" rather, he uses a different term "apostolic" again without much justification for his preference over the term missional.

What does missional mean? Why it needs to be used today? Why and how is it different from apostolic? Which is a better term, biblically, and theologically, and why? These are some of the questions I thought are worth reflecting. You may also please add your own questions for further discussion while debating on these.

TA Vaughn: Bobby, Are you saying that each congregation has a distinct missional calling? In that case how can Hunter's six case studies be applicable to other churches? Please unpack a bit.   Thanks.

Bobby: TA Vaughn,   I believe that each church has a distinct assignment by the Holy Spirit to reach what Hunter terms as the Unchurched. The end objective is the same but the approach is different or distinct. Thus, the need for prayer from missional leadership. I think that the danger is we often view what church A is doing and think it maybe duplicated in church B. I have witnessed Pastors attempting to do what maybe successful for other churches without considering what God has distinctly called them to accomplish. Successful missional or apostolic churches are a result of doing what has been assigned.

TA Vaughn: Thanks for clarifying Bobby. I agree that every church has to discover their God given missional calling, in their own context, rather than just trying to copy an xyz mega-church, which is what I see happening in the US today. But it is a hard work to discover one's calling and mission with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which few people are willing to do. It is rather easier to buy a few copies of Purpose Driven Life/Church and start following it blindly, as though it was the universal will of God for all churches everywhere. Peace.

[about 1 hour later] TA Vaughn: In my readings about this new movement of churches in the West, especially from Hunter's book, I get the impression (and I may be wrong) that to be able to reach the post-modern generation, one has to be "apostolic" in the sense of adopting new methods and

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strategies. Especially from the examples of Willow Creek and Saddleback, [….] I do not think Jesus and the New Testament meant such a thing about being apostolic when they laid emphasis on going out into the entire world to preach the gospel.

[3 paragraphs omitted that laid out TA Vaughn's interpretation of the New Testament work]

Bobby: TA Vaughn, I appreciate your observations, & passion for the church. I was wondering what is your assessment of what is termed as the missional or apostolic church is in the east or specifically Northern India? And what if any comparisons to you see as regards to fulfilling an apostolic mission with the same cultural challenges in that faith context that you have witness here in the west?

TA Vaughn: Well, Bobby, I wish I could talk to you in person about this issue from the perspective of a colonized Indian. However, I would limit myself to saying that the problem with post-modern generation's aversion to Christianity is not just about culture, which could be fixed by adapting to "their" culture. The issue is deeper. What about the theological assumptions that shaped this culture and slowly drove people away from the church? Is out ecclesiology is biblical and acceptable? Can these theological issues be fixed by having a megachurch with a rock band and self-help, feel-good messages which, instead of questioning and challenging the Western post-modern mindset, try to appease and sooth it? Is it about methods and strategies or about God and his son Christ, i.e., theology? Is the theology being challenged and rearticulated and, if so, is it biblical and transforming people's lives? I get sick learning that people here would

change their church just on the issue of carpet/drapes/parking lot, etc., when millions of people in India sometimes risk their life just to get to a nearby church, if they can find one, and that too may be miles away. Well, I have so many questions......but very few answers!!
Peace.

Bobby: TA Vaughn,   I am intrigued by the conversation that has been generated. I greatly appreciate you prophetic insight and passion. I think I understand much of the discussions presented. I must say your evaluation has tremendous merit. I had the opportunity to lead a team of ministers from the U.S. in 2007 to West Africa. Time nor space will allow for me to express the many things I learned. Though many came to gleam from the our ministry team, I left feeling empty. Their passion & hunger for God humble me greatly. I indicated to the Pastors that waited to listen to us, that the fervor they express caused me to question my love for God. I witness many Pastors who lived in dire circumstances, have zeal & passion that put me to shame. I saw many walk for miles too come & worship with no modern conveniences. I do think the Church in the west, particularly America has much to learn, or die too when we consider what many believers endure for the sake of Christ. I thought I had

something too offer them, in regards to ministry, but left feeling I received so much more. I pray your passion never diminishes, voices such as yourself challenge us (me) to consider a missional mandate rarely expressed.

TA Vaughn: Bobby, As an outsider, one more question that intrigues me is this: How much of the so-called church growth in the American churches is truly a first-time conversion growth and not growth from what I prefer to call "basket fishing"? Has there been any research done on this? I would love to read...

Bobby: TA Vaughn, I think I understand what you mean by the term, "outsider" but please bear in mind you are a part of His body. And, as such I believe our Lord has place you hear to help bring about His will to His church. And, maybe you many [may] serve a missionary to the church here in the west?

I do think, & it has been my experience that many here do move from church to church, often without ever experiencing a true conversion to Christ. As you see we do need much prayer! Grace to you my friend... Until then-
Because of "Him"
Bobby

Through these conversations TA Vaughn spurred the students to engage a

contextual encounter (Foster et al., 2005) from a perspective different from their common

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cultural outlook. The Carnegie study identified that a contextual encounter allowed the students to react, retrieve, and reconstruct. For the course Hunter's book, in particular, tendered the case studies of the six megachurches for students to engage a contextual discussion of the church in the postmodern world; this afforded the reaction step. Foster et al. (2005) stated, "The contextual practice of *reacting*…centers on simultaneously expanding student consciousness of their own contexts in dialogue with their deepening consciousness of the contexts of those involved in the case" (p. 139). TA Vaughn's comments and questions such as, "How can Hunter's six case studies be applicable to other churches?" and "What does missional mean? Why it needs to be used today?," prompted students to react. Bobby responded that he believed that each church had a "distinct assignment" from the Holy Spirit, in other words, that the megachurch's approaches were not applicable to each church context and TA Vaughn concurred.

Guder's book presented the theological perspective that proffered the *retrieve* step of the contextual encounter where the students retrieve "the [theological] tradition for assessing the facts they have identified" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 140). However, the students did not critique Hunter's six case studies via the theological perspective presented in Guder's book. After the initial two interchanges, about an hour later TA Vaughn replied to his own post laying out a lengthy personal reflection that provided a biblical critique. TA Vaughn imparted his interpretation of the theological perspective beginning with "I do not think Jesus and the New Testament meant such a thing ["using catchy phrases and themes, popular style of music, stylistic buildings, modern technological gadgets, …"] about being apostolic." After Bobby inquired as to TA Vaughn's assessment of the church in India with the church in the USA regarding

cultural issues, TA Vaughn rejoined with reflection and questions to prompt deeper thought such as "What about the theological assumptions that shaped this culture [postmodern] and slowly drove people away from the church? Is out [our] ecclesiology is biblical and acceptable?" and later "Is it about methods and strategies or about God and his son Christ, i.e., theology? Is the theology being challenged and rearticulated and, if so, is it biblical and transforming people's lives?" The students were prompted to retrieve the biblical and theological tradition for assessing the case studies, but Bobby did not respond in this nature, rather he hedged, "I am intrigued by the conversation that has been generated. I greatly appreciate you prophetic insight and passion. I think I understand much of the discussions presented. I must say your evaluation has tremendous merit."

The third step in the *contextual encounter* is to reconstruct, during which the students interact "the facts of the case or situation with the Christian vision" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 141). Bobby sensed the passion expressed by TA Vaughn and replied, "voices such as yourself challenge us (me) to consider a missional mandate rarely expressed." Bobby had had an earlier encounter with another cultural perspective as he had been on a mission trip to Africa, which he related similar emotions from that experience. His final entry in the exchange stated, "As you see we do need much prayer!" These statements did not indicate reconstruction, but did convey thoughtful reception of TA Vaughn's perceptions. Bobby originally did not think that the megachurch approach was applicable for every church, but he had not voiced his critique through an extensive retrieving of the theological tradition prior to the discussion and did not demonstrate volitional reconstruction. However, in a personal email communication to me Bobby wrote, "it in my opinion was the most challenging course I have had @ [the Seminary]" (personal

email communication, May 27, 2009). He went on concerning the lack of the professor's voice in the course, "but the involvement from the professor was not as evident as in some of the other on-line classes I have had." Perhaps Bobby reacted to TA Vaughn's goading as TA Vaught exhorted the students towards critical evaluation of the course content and their own culture. Bobby, even though he was gracious in the discussion forum, may have found that distressing, but did not openly disagree as other students did.

Even with the ardent opinions articulated, TA Vaughn and Bobby maintained a relational tone that encouraged discussion. When TA Vaughn proffered his own interpretation of the readings, "I get the impression (and I may be wrong) that [….]," he welcomed dialog through the use of the parenthetical disclaimer. This could be considered as a tentative or weak presentation, but similar to Kendra earlier, it could also indicate relational language. The passion of TA Vaughn's response, which Bobby identified, indicated TA Vaughn's entry was not tentative or weak. While probing Bobby's thinking, TA Vaughn continued to maintain the relational tone of the conversation ending his responses with "Peace" on two occasions after raising potentially offensive issues such as "I get sick learning that people here [USA] would change their church just on the issue of carpet/drapes/parking lot, etc., when millions of people in India sometimes risk their life just to get to a nearby church, […]." TA Vaughn brought his cultural experience into the dialog by referencing his homeland, India, which stimulated Bobby's interest in the cultural experiences. TA Vaughn critiqued the megachurch phenomenon in the USA from a "colonized Indian" perspective. At one point TA Vaughn referred to himself as "an outsider" in reference to the church in the USA. Bobby responded that TA Vaughn was a "part of His [Christ's] body" and thus not

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an outsider within the universal church. Bobby closed his entries with simply his name (not printed) until the final entry in the exchange where he concludes with "Grace to you my friend..." and a closing, "Because of 'Him' [Christ]" along with his name. These expressions signified warmth in the exchange with Bobby echoing TA Vaughn's initial address, "Friends," with an even more personal "my friend." Again, the relational tone was maintained even though TA Vaughn was criticizing the church in Bobby's culture.

After TA Vaughn shared his biblical interpretation relating to the megachurch phenomenon, Kendra and Minnie responded as well.

TA Vaughn: In my readings about this new movement of churches in the West, especially from Hunter's book, I get the impression (and I may be wrong) [conversation printed above]

Kendra: TA Vaughn, I really appreciate your questions and observations here. I wonder how much of what you are questioning would fall into the category of Chapter 3 of Hunter's book on making the gospel culturally relevant. He argues that Jesus did speak the gospel in terms of culture that the people understood.

I do agree with the ideas in Hunter's book that suggest making the gospel accessible to seekers today, i.e. at least recognizing that we have language and expectations that are seated in years of church history and "church" culture.

How do we break open the "clique-ishness" of the church? Will that happen through some of these high-tech means used by the larger churches or will/are they create(ing) cliques in and of themselves?

Minnie: Ongoing conversations between the ecclesia and surrounding culture are not just necessary, they are essential. Jesus set the pattern for enculturation by stepping down from glory and taking human form. He chose to live at a particular time and place. He broke bread, healed the sick, cast out demons, preached, prayed, laughed, cried, was rejected, bled and died within the context of the gospel community. When the church seeks to exchange relations with the given culture a rich dialogue manifests that allows for a greater depth of understanding, mutual respect, and kingdom growth potential. Just as Jesus took on human flesh to make himself known, when the church is intentional about putting on the "flesh" of a particular community the ecclesia becomes known by the indigenous culture.

Paul, also, knew how to transcend culture with the gospel message: "Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified; a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to

the Gentiles but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:22-24).He took the gospel message and shaped it in a manner that the culture around him could understand, yet continued to unashamedly and boldly "preach Christ crucified." To the "Greek he became Greek," in order "to win as many as possible" (1 Corinthians 9:19).

Perhaps, "becoming Greek" is somewhat at play at the Saddlebacks of America. Maybe there is a genuine attempt to reach out into the Westernized culture and appeal to those obsessed with having a psycho-analyzing, glitzy, bubble gum, tech saavy, Rock Band Savior. In some respects their enculturation efforts are working . However, to desire to use the "American Jesus" as a "just add water" model for across the board kingdom colonization is beyond foolish.

At Saddleback and every other church, there remains a delicate balance between shaping the conversation around the given culture and fulfilling the mission God has for that particular body. The temptation lingers about for us to lean so far into the culture that we find ourselves looking, speaking, and acting no differently. How easily we forget the church is supposed to be the one transforming the culture, not the other way around. The ongoing challenge for church leaders is to successfully package the gospel in a manner that is accessible to the given culture, without diluting the life giving message.

We can avoid these trappings by patterning our called out gathering after Christ's earthly ministry. Not only did Jesus engage the culture around him, but he radically redefined the boundaries. Christ broke down barriers that separated persons by gender, race, social status, and righteousness imparted by religion. His message transcended culture. By bridging these cultural gaps we become Christ in the here and now, the church for the unchurched, and usher in the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Kendra and Minnie engaged the concepts in Hunter's book as well as TA Vaughn's critique. Kendra counterbalanced TA Vaughn's questions with her interpretation of Hunter's chapter 3, "…on making the gospel culturally relevant. [Hunter] argues that Jesus did speak the gospel in terms of culture that the people understood." Minnie continued in that vein of thought giving examples of Jesus' and then the Apostle Paul's lives. She equated Paul's "becoming Greek" to the work of Saddleback Church; exhibiting the retrieving step of *contextual encounter* (Foster et al., 2005). Minnie retrieved the theological tradition stating, "Not only did Jesus engage the culture around

him, but he radically redefined the boundaries. Christ broke down barriers that separated persons by gender, race, social status, and righteousness imparted by religion." She then engaged that tradition with the current context asserting, "At Saddleback and every other church, there remains a delicate balance between shaping the conversation around the given culture and fulfilling the mission God has for that particular body." Kendra and especially Minnie exhibited the third step of *contextual encounter,* reconstruction, in that they engaged the Christian vision with the case.

In yet another conversation in the same Group 3 thread in week 4, Kendra again rejoined the dialog with TA Vaughn.

TA Vaughn: Thanks for clarifying Bobby. I agree that every church has to discover their God given missional calling, in their own context, [conversation above]

> **Kendra:** TA Vaughn, I understand your statement about the "blind" acceptance of the purpose driven life paradigm. You also state truly that many churches, people, even pastors do not or will not take the time to seek the Holy Spirit's clarification on their church's mission.
>
>> How does a group of worshipers in our individualistic society go about seeking God's desire for a particular church? Though not ideal, perhaps the taking on of the Purpose Driven life paradigm can begin to shake things loose at least. We studied that book as a church body, it was preached on for 3 months. The lives of several people were deepened in Christ because of it. We took what applied and have laid aside the rest.
>>
>> Not ideal, but it was a start. Better than nothing I think.
>
> **TA Vaughn:** Yes, Kendra. There is nothing wrong with using the PDL/C book to read and study as long as one is willing to spend time with God himself to (re)discover how to be a God-driven person/church. I think, being missional means that we align our lives and church to be what God wants us to be doing today and in the future. Nevertheless, my main problem with the PDL philosophy is that it is more self-centered than God-centered and seems to miss out the significant role of repentance in the gospel it preaches. Whereas, the biblical gospel has repentance as the key feature in the transformation of people. Blessings.
>
> **TA Vaughn:** Friends, I wonder if all are aware of the latest on "seeker friendly approach" as the Hunter's book is somewhat dated? Blessings.

Responding to TA Vaughn's entry, Kendra distinguished areas where she agreed with him and then raised a question that introduced a point of disagreement, "How does a group of worshipers in our individualistic society go about seeking God's desire for a particular church?" She then described her church's experience studying *The Purpose Driven Life*. Kendra closed her story with "Better than nothing I think," a relational tempering of her dispute. In the react step of *contextual encounter*, the students were to identify the facts at issue, which Kendra did by recognizing the value of the megachurch pastor's approach to reaching the unchurched (Foster et al., 2005). The following week TA Vaughn responded and affirmed her experience but imparted his personal caveat to the approach. While this conversation ended, Kendra and other students could reflect on the texts, the conversations containing different perspectives, and their own experiences to make meaning for themselves and their pastoral leadership in the future.

In this extensive Group 3 thread the students explored issues involved in a *contextual encounter* (Foster et al., 2005) raised first by the textbooks and then furthered by TA Vaughn's cultural perspective. TA Vaughn questioned the megachurch phenomenon from his cultural perspective where extreme poverty is the experience of the masses. Since megachurches in the USA are synonymous with wealth, TA Vaughn did not perceive them to be fulfilling the mission of the New Testament. The students from the USA tended to see, as the textbook alleged, the megachurches to be apostolic, or relevant to the culture, within the wealth-driven culture of the USA. Bobby was the only one within the group that refrained from articulating this conclusion perhaps due to his previous mission experience in a third-world country. Each student reflected on the reading and the dialog to create meaning for themselves as to the contextual encounter.

In the discussion in Group 1 Jason addressed several similar issues. Only two members of Group 1 participated in the research and so full conversations were not available, but Jason's entries exhibited deeper levels of interpretation of the reading.

Jason: One of the differences I perceive between the Missional Church and the Apostolic church as described by Guder and Hunter is that the Missional Church seems to be more others focused, while the apostolic church described by Hunter is others focused, but for a specific group. [….]

Jason: As a side note, Willow Creek has been doing a research project for the last several years called REVEAL. The research revealed a continuum of belief; Exploring Christ, Growing in Christ, Close to Christ and Christ Centered. The nutshell is that after surveying the members of willow and 200 other churches that Hunter would define as "apostolic", they came to realize that very few of the membership were actually "Christ Centered" Christians. The research points out that these Apostolic Churches are tall in growing numbers, but short on growing people in depth of relationship with Jesus Christ. The Willow REVEAL study has inspired willow and other "Apostolic" churches to look more closely at their model and incorporate ways to not just bring people in the door and keep them, but to grow them in relationship with Christ too. I submit that the "apostolic" church would have a great deal to learn from Guder's book.

Jason articulated the differences in the terms in the textbooks. He also pinpointed the weakness in the megachurches as identified by the more current study completed by Willow Creek, one of the leading megachurches in the USA. However, Jason did not engage in a *cultural encounter* as arose in Group 3. One of the difficulties with the small group discussion fora is that issues with which one group is wrestling may also be addressed by another group. A combined discussion may have provided further insights for all.

Critical thinking. Foster et al. (2005) found that among the faculty studied in the Carnegie study, *pedagogies of interpretation* had one commonly shared practice, "require that students develop the ability to *think critically*" (p. 89). In the discussion thread presented above TA Vaughn asked critical thinking questions of the students such as

"What does missional mean? Why it needs to be used today? Why and how is it different from apostolic?" He probed the students to compare key words and how the authors used these words. He queried as to the relevance of the concept for their ministries today. In other discussions TA Vaughn also pressed the students while at the same time expressing thanks for their contributions.

TA Vaughn: Mike, Thanks for your perceptive post. Are you saying that the church today can and should be both a movement and an institution? Secondly, I agree that the emphasis on witness is the way forward in mission which is also a biblical way of being a church.

TA Vaughn: Alexandra, Thanks for your above response. I wonder, however, how would you support the idea of working in the same structure of denominationalism that has not worked most of the time in the past? Hasn't it stifled the growth potential of the churches? Secondly, [….]

TA Vaughn: Kendra, thanks for your wonderful thoughts.
You raise a very good point: "I think it would be easier to begin a new congregation with this missional mindset than to retrain a traditional congregation." I, too, think it is very difficult to change the mindset of a traditional church into a missional one and much easier to start one that imbibes this thinking from the beginning. So, is there any hope for our traditional churches? Should we leave them as they are?
It will be good if other group members keep on interacting on such issues.
Alexandra: I think that there is hope for collaborating among denominations and for redeeming the mission of God through denominational structures. For example, my husband and I are members of a Baptist church, and we know that the pastor is very "spirit led." Even thought he works for a large denomination, and is intentionally about not breaking their by-laws, he still finds freedom to preach under the spirit and not through religion.
TA Vaughn: Alexandra, Thanks for your post, though a bit late ;)
Would you please unpack a little how your pastor is making his church a missional one within the structure, so that others could also learn from this case. Thanks.
Alexandra: 1. Equipping the body. The pastor is intentional about equipping everyone in the church to be involved in some capacity. He is bold (but loving) in speaking out about how the whole church needs to work together to fufill God's mission.
2. Adapting the worship style. Our church has one service, but with different styles of music (hymns,

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contemporary worship, etc.) This appeals to various ages and lifestyles.

    3. Discipleship. We have opened up several small group options for people to be involved in.

    I would not say that our church is apostolic today, however I believe that our pastor has an apostolic vision for where he wants to lead us.

TA Vaughn thanked each student in the above discussions using various ways of recognition, for example, "your perceptive post" and "your wonderful thoughts." Then he proceeded to ask his questions and share his reflection on the issues. Foster et al. (2005) noted that when teaching towards critical thinking, the professors in the Carnegie study modeled their own critical thinking and coached the students towards critical thinking. By articulating his own reflections, TA Vaughn modeled critical thinking for the students. He revealed his interpretation of the tradition, "I agree that the emphasis on […], which is also a biblical way of being a church," identified assumptions, "it seems there is a common assumption, which of course is not correct, that there is no accountability[…]," and drew out implications for practice, "I, too, think it is very difficult to change [….] So, is there any hope for our traditional churches? Should we leave them as they are?" TA Vaughn moreover coached the students through the questions asking for deeper thinking such as his question to Mike, "I wonder, however, how would you support the idea of working in the same structure of denominationalism that has not worked most of the time in the past? Hasn't it stifled the growth potential of the churches?" He also requested Alexandra to "unpack a little how your pastor is making his church a missional one" and then added the purpose for his request, "so that others could also learn from this case." Alexandra complied and articulated a concise but explicit basis for her claim—points 1, 2, 3—with a brief summary, "I believe that our

pastor has an apostolic vision for where he wants to lead us." Alexandra's use of "I

believe" could be interpreted to be tentative, but likely she was tempering the conclusion

to be her perception. TA Vaughn perceived that the discussions were not just about the

individual learning, but that they might all learn from one another.

Beyond the TA prompting critical thinking, the students also prompted one

another to deeper reflection. Walter simply asked his classmate to "unpack that a little."

Walter: In your discussion of "from institution to movement" you mentioned that after
you purchased a building "a staleness developed". Could you unpack that a little?

In the third discussion forum in week 7 when responding to the discussion prompt

questions, Bobby openly shared his own questions about the concepts they were

studying: vision, values, and mission.

Bobby: 2. Why is this approach to a missional strategy called neither organizational nor
organic? What do those terms connote? Why is the term covenantal used to
describe missional ecclesiology?
Perhaps, the most difficult for me to articulate is missional strategy? I am
aware of the need to make proper assessments of resources, personal gifting, faith
culture, previous accomplishments, projected goals and the like. Honesty I have
engaged in most of them all, and I suppose my thinking may seem antiquated
when it comes to targeting a missional strategy. And, perhaps my understanding
of a definition of missional ecclesiology relative to mission strategy is obscure? I
am hard pressed to anticipate strategy, because rarely have I witnessed God
lending to any strategy, I or the best of spiritual minds may seemly contrive of.
This brings me to another dilemma; perhaps my understanding of a missional
church based upon our examples or discussions may not be accurate? When I
consider strategy from my limited experience, and a biblical model it's anything
but calculable. Moses strategy was a stick! Gideon strategy was to blow the
trumpet! David used a rope & a rock and our Lord a cross. Forgive me, I am
really challenged here and need some explanation, I hope to employ one strategy,
John 2:5b ["His [Jesus'] mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'"
(*Holy Bible*, New International Version, 2011)].
Kendra: It seems like you and I reached a similar conclusion though we may
have stated it differently and that is that God is behind the missional
vision, values and strategy and the entrepreneurial focus comes from
human motivation.
I agree with your questions about missional strategy. The best
"strategy" for the biblical characters you listed was to listen and obey. I

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am wondering how one does that with a group of people. I wonder if the question of how to do this is why the church becomes institutionalized...it's easier, more predictable and much easier to plan for and control.

I think your reference to John 2:5 is interesting...perhaps pulled a bit out of context when you consider the topic of following God's lead in a missional church setting. I think I get your meaning and that is, that we follow Christ's leading and direction.

Three times Bobby started a statement with the word "perhaps" but ended the statement with a question mark (?). This implied that Bobby was stating his own opinions but was uncertain about his views as they seemed to be at variance with the content of the course or was inviting feedback similar to a question that would be phrased, "Is this, perhaps, …?" Kendra responds in affirmation to Bobby's assessment but then flips what he was advocating from an individual perspective to a community perspective. Kendra broached the matter of *reification* (Wenger, 1998). She suggested that the institutionalization of the church was the outcome of reifying the actualization of the strategy of "listen and obey." Kendra also proffered self-effacing opinions starting with "I am wondering [….]" and "I wonder if [….]" yet these ended with a period (.) rather than a question mark as Bobby's did. I interpreted this to be modest way of challenging Bobby's thinking, fitting with Bobby's tentative language.

Reflection. Critical reflection and action is one of the phases of *contextual transformation* (Foster et al., 2005)(p. 148-149). TA Vaughn responded to Minnie's posting in the second discussion forum and raised the issue of reification, where the practices of a community are solidified, stating, "Christianity has been turned into churchianity, […]" versus participation, where the practices of a community remain dynamic (Wenger, 1998). Minnie articulated the participation aspect of Christianity,

"mission is living out the gospel message through sacrificial, daily living by God's

people, [….]"

TA Vaughn: Thanks Minnie for your thoughtful post.

Two main concepts stand out: Kingdom of God and Witness. These are not only biblical expressions but are also the most relevant ones for today's church. Christianity has been turned into churchianity, neglecting the kingdom of God. And Christian's responsibility of sharing the gospel with others as a life style has been turned into mission as a program of the churchianity that need to be carried out, neglecting the witnessing aspect. A witness is one who has experienced and seen for oneself. He/she only can testify to others his/her experience. Whereas in mission some people without first-hand experience of Christ have been sent as "missionaries" to the "pagans" because it was required of them as a program (mission) of their church!

It is high time, I think, that we returned to the basics and unshackled the church and mission from its secular, worldly accretions and lead it to be a witness of its faith as God's people seeking others to bring into the Kingdom of God through Christ, and rejoicing with them even if they do not want to "join" our church.

Minnie: I couldn't agree more. We have neglected for too long the untapped power found in God's kingdom. Wesley knew this power. He viewed the Christian convert as one entering into the kingdom of God. [….]

Mission is not something that the church can compartmentalize, or elect to do. Nor is mission by proxy going to work. No, mission is living out the gospel message through sacrificial, daily living by God's people, the called out gathering, for God's people, the receiving world. In this self giving way we become the embodiment of Christ on earth, God's kingdom mission, and we break down barriers that separate church and world in the process. [….]

Kendra: What strikes me about your thinking is the intentionality this kind of thinking and Christ-following calls for. I think some of the people in our churches are on "auto-pilot" when it comes to their Christian living. [….]

In another post, TA Vaughn asked about other practical suggestions to help the existing churches/people embrace this concept. Something very simple and do-able and hopefully impacting would be to call people's attention to what they are praying, what they are singing, what the words of the liturgies say as we pray them.

We CAN continually invite people to be awake as they worship, to develop their spiritual eyes and ears. I think I need some kind of do-able thing like this in addition to praying for God's direction because this whole concept has been kind of overwhelming for me.

> I know the church is God's project and He is not surprised at all about where the church is in North America today. But this reading has caused me to feel disheartened about ministry when I see how far people in my church are from this vision.
>
> Well, one thought led to another, I guess. Thanks, Minnie, for your inspiring post.
>
> **Minnie:** Kendra, Thanks for your warm, encouraging words. I agree with you that […] Yes! We just go through the motions without really listening to what we are saying.
>
> I hope you don't become to "disheartened." It takes honestly, and often times painfully, reflecting on where we are to begin the process of moving to where we need to be. [….]

Kendra joined the conversation and reflected on practical suggestions to accomplish the participative aspect of the church community. She proposed "to call people's attention to what they are praying, what they are singing, what the words of the liturgies say as we pray them" and "invite people to be awake as they worship, to develop their spiritual eyes and ears." Kendra emphatically wrote "CAN" in all capitalized letters, which in netiquette indicates raising one's voice or shouting. Kendra ended by saying, "this whole concept has been kind of overwhelming for me." Through this discussion and reflection, it appeared that Kendra had now grasped a course of action in her role as pastor or religious leader. The Carnegie study identified this as the *pastoral imagination* that comprehended a vision to guide the action of the leadership and the community (Foster et al., 2005). Kendra comprehended how to facilitate her congregants to be active participants in their faith rather than simply observing the reified practices of liturgy and mission of the church. The critical reflection of the group, which considered the biblical tradition and engaged that tradition in critical analysis of their contexts, achieved a vision of *contextual transformation* for Kendra. Similarly as in the Carnegie study, the discussion forum did not reveal actual student involvement in transformation in their faith

communities, nonetheless, Kendra voiced intentional proclamations of a transformational

vision.

Formation of the Religious Leadership

In the second discussion forum Group 3 thread Bobby conveyed indicators of

formation: *practicing the presence of God*, *practicing holiness,* and *practicing religious*

leadership (Foster et al., 2005).

Bobby: One of the key elements that assist in transformation from traditional to
Apostolic Churches that was touched on in the lecture was prayer. The leadership
must be committed to prayer if sustained revivification is to happen...
[conversation printed earlier]
Both Guder and Hunter seem too imply that church leadership has the
primary responsibly for bringing about an apostolic, or missional ethos. And, in
doing so both are confronted to consider, how modernity impacts or impedes that
objective.
Kendra: I appreciate your bringing out the importance of prayer. I think in NA
[North America] we are so goal oriented and program oriented that we
forget the necessary wind of the Spirit blowing through and empowering
our ministries.
i also like the idea that the church needs to feel like the leadership
isn't trying to manipulate them, that the changes are hopefully (if bathed in
prayer) in their best interest. It is definitely a challenging walk for the
leadership.

From the lecture Bobby and Kendra both recognized the significance of the habit of

prayer for the leadership to discern God's vision for the church and bring about

transformation in the mission of the church. Concerning *practicing the presence of God*

Foster et al. (2005) stated,

"[T]his task does not end with an awareness of God, the holy, or mystery. It
culminates in a transformation of consciousness—of seeing and making sense of
things from the perspective of the wholly other symbolized as God, the holy, or
mystery. The perspective of the self in this effort is recentered. It establishes an
alternative angle of vision to that of one's prior view of self, other, and
community." (p. 103)

In essence, Bobby especially recognized that the pastoral leadership in a local church should be *practicing the presence of God* in his or her own life to recenter in order to ascertain God's vision for the local church.

Bobby then tied this with love and hospitality, reminiscent of Jesus' statement that to love God and love one another was the summation of the commands given by God to the Hebrews. Love and hospitality would be the embodiment or execution of the presence of God in the religious leader's life. The Carnegie studied characterized *practicing holiness* to be "more concerned with fostering the character of the habitus of the religious tradition than in replicating its rules" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 115) and a "pedagogical practice integral to forming clergy identity, spirituality, and practice" (p. 110). Bobby gleaned from the course content the essentialness of the religious leadership to live out the presence of God in love and hospitality in the transformation of the local church's mission.

From the course content Bobby also articulated the role of the leadership to bring about transformation within the local church. *Pedagogies for practicing religious leadership* form "patterns of leadership in which the theories clergy espouse are congruent with the theories embedded in the dispositions and habits that shape how they negotiate the interplay between institutional processes and the people who participate in them" (Foster et al., 2005, p. 104). Inherent within *practicing religious leadership* is the ability to cast a vision and discern when the vision was present. The professor through the course content guided the students to see the necessity of the missional transformation within their ministries. The Guder textbook, as was stated earlier, provided the theological framework for the missional vision and the Hunter textbook offered actual

practices of well-established churches living the missional transformation. Bobby ascertained the vision of the transformation. Kendra pinpointed the danger of manipulation by the leadership in the transformation of a local church community ending with "It is definitely a challenging walk for the leadership." Kendra identified the need for the religious leadership to have a vision and be able to discern if that vision was genuinely being enacted or if the enactment of the vision had fallen into manipulative device. These students did not speak of their local church's vision or the discernment of whether the vision was present at the current point in time.

Negotiation of Meaning

Wenger's (1998) Community of Practice acknowledges that the negotiation of meaning involves participation and reification in a social process. An active exchange transpired in Group 4 in the Week 2 discussion where students read a website concerning "Christendom to Post-Christendom" and wrote, "paragraphs on two of the seven ecclesiological shifts that are described. Focus on the implications for a local church with a mission focus." Students then responded to two classmates' posts. Peter posted his thoughts and then responded to Alvin's post with two more interchanges occurring. In this lengthy exchange Peter and Alvin disagreed noting various biblical metaphors, but Peter related the participatory significance of the exchange that the value was not in agreement but in the dialog, stating, "the central most important thrust is that we are having the discussion. The discussion may be more transformative than any one image in of itself."

Alvin: From settlers to sojourners: in Christendom Christians felt at home in a culture shaped by their story, but in post-Christendom we are aliens, exiles and pilgrims in a culture where we no longer feel at home.

For a church with a missional focus, this transition from settlers to sojourners is one that frees the church to live out of a spiritually guided center instead of an established station or position. This concept can be best expressed through biblical metaphor as the difference between the Israelites traveling with the cloud by day and fire by night as compared to the settled nation of Israel worshipping around the temple. We as Christians are not called to settle in this world, but we are travelers through it. The change in western Christendom forces us to recognize this more openly.

From maintenance to mission: in Christendom the emphasis was on maintaining a supposedly Christian status quo, but in post-Christendom it is on mission within a contested environment.

Because of this transition from maintenance to mission, churches are being forced to either change from fortress mentalities or face extinction. [….]

Peter: Alvin, I gave a bit more formal reply in my own posting to your comments but let me say briefly a few remarks that have little to do with my posting. "Transformation is slow." Brueggemann always used to go around quoting it (he saw it written on a blackboard in a classroom in his home church when he visited - thought it was profound...like a fortune cookie saying...). The church will change however, there are no guarantees for any one specific congregation. It is seen as Darwinian notion at times but one that is actually the church keeping true to its foundation.

As to sojourners, I always remember there is a little complexity to biblical witness. Israel's central understanding of itself was land, kingship, covenant, and Temple (see Stuhlman's Order Amid Chaos: Jeremiah As Symbolic Tapestry - great book on the symbolic world of Israel). Temple was seen as God's presence in their midst and was a pillar of their self-understanding. Exile, as we see in Jeremiah, was the dismantling of this world. While we can then see diaspora take over as a feature of Jewish identity they were also commended to 'build and plant' (Jer. 29). In other words, I Peter's 'this world's is not my home' conception of a holy people, set apart, is not the only biblical image that can be mobilized, and properly so, for us as church.

I think Guder, et. al, only mobilizes some of the available images of the text to provide an accounting of who we as followers of Christ. Maybe we can find others that can fill out an image of who we are as church?

[1 paragraph omitted]

Anyway, it was a good post. Thank you for your thoughts (if you see something differently, please respond...).

Alvin: I can agree with the statement that transformation is slow. People are not convinced of a need to change instantaneously, it occurs in small steps and stages. [….]

As to your response to my Sojourner's comment, I can agree to the complexity of biblical witness. From my understanding of the history of Israel and the church, there have been two operational aspects. Each one takes on different names,

associations, and degrees of influence based on the era, but they operate similarly throughout the corporate history of Israel and Christianity.

The first is the settled mindset which would include Israel's primary metaphors of land, kingship, covenant, and temple. Yes, these are Israel's primary metaphors and understandings of itself, but that does not mean that these concepts and their physical actualizations are the perfected plan of God. For example, Brueggemann laments some of the actions of the kingdom and temple mentality in his book "Prophetic Imagination" as amounting to slavery.

The second aspect can be labeled prophetic or missional or apostolic. This is the voice within the church that counters or offers a different perspective. This is the sojourner, desert, cloud by day fire by night perspective to which I was very vaguely and shortly referring to in my earlier post. [….] The people did not have command of the presence of God, instead God directed the people in where they should go and His Spirit was seen as coming and going as It pleased.

Particularly, I would argue that the sojourner metaphors are more powerful to our understanding than any of the settled metaphors. [….]

In the gospels, Jesus declares that the temple (the settled building) can be torn down and rebuilt, but that those who worship Him worship in Spirit and truth and that God's temple is within us. This speaks more closely to the metaphor of the sojourner or exile who takes home along with them.

[1 paragraph omitted]

I would merely say as a rule, that I am in favor of the shift from seeing ourselves as settlers in this land to seeing the church as sojourners traveling together with God. That said, I can write no more, everything I have written is straw."

Peter: Alvin, I guess the biblical metaphors all take their bite. They have their strengths and their weaknesses. We probably find some more useful at particular times than others. Sometimes, I would think, they pick us, and other times, we choose them.

    [1 paragraph omitted]

    Tradition may just be the received "Cliff Notes" of our debates - hashing it out. So, whether 'sojourners' or 'settlers,' the central most important thrust is that we are having the discussion. The discussion may be more transformative than any one image in of itself. Each image might say something truthful of who we are, and who we hope to be in relation to God, but I do not think that any one image will speak to the full reality of who we are as

people of God. I think this is one of the nifty little reasons for having so many images. They all speak truth from one angle or another, leaving it to us to puzzle it out. (Notice we thought it important to preserve four different pictures of Jesus and not just one. We enjoy the interpretive reality of a jesus that never is one-dimensional. Those who follow after Jesus are anything but one-dimensional.)

How transformation may come is not through […] but the slow work of interfacing with the God of the text through its tropes and in community with each other. We do this together (and in this case - virtually).

[1 paragraph omitted]

I guess I continue to see more dialogical expression to how we work with both text and with each other.

So, thanks for the 'straw' (I would not call it such by the by...).

Also...Prophetic Imagination was a nice reference...it was a fun book.

Alvin: I appreciate your responses this week. Initially I was intimidated about the depth of dialog you were bringing to the table filled with references to other authors and texts which I have been exposed to, but have not fully investigated. I really appreciate your candor in our discussion and your ability to see nuanced understandings of the kingdom. I know that I will enjoy these discussions with you in our group. They will prove challengingly insightful I am sure.

The dialog of our differing perspectives on God will only deepen and enrichen our understanding of the mysteries of God. So, here's to an unwrapping of the unfathomable mysteries of God.

Peter: Alvin, No intimidation required just your responses. The bibliography is just that, bibliography. There are lots of books, some good, some well, just there. The books just help me think through a topic. Of course, they do not substitute for the thinking. Sometimes I do it well...sometimes I might miss the boat (ask my wife - she catches my poor thinking all the time).

I am sure that you might throw something out there that I have not read, tried, or thought about before now. I do not even think it is that hard to do.

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So, continue to throw stuff out and we will kick it around a bit. Once again, like in my response, it is not about agreement, only doing the work according to our gifts. Grace is in the exchange.

Alvin and Peter's exchanges were contextual in that they were interpreting biblical imagery engaging in an analytical dialog with their current context. As they wrestled with the metaphors, they were processing an image of the church and its role today. As Peter wrote, "I think we as a people of God, linked as we are to the text, are always negotiating which metaphor best articulates our experiences as well as our hopes." Peter used the language of a community of practice for negotiating meaning making (Wenger, 1998). He continued later in the post, "I think this is one of the nifty little reasons for having so many images. They all speak truth from one angle or another, leaving it to us to puzzle it out." While these metaphors referred to the church, they shape the vision and guide the pastors as they provide leadership in the local church. It was important that the students identify metaphors to shape how they would guide and interact with the people within their churches. Various metaphors spoke differently to each one in their context providing for personal and later communal meaning making.

Yet in the midst of the disagreement, Peter and Alvin invited interaction from one another. Peter concluded, "Thank you for your thoughts (if you see something differently, please respond...)" and "So, continue to throw stuff out and we will kick it around a bit." Alvin expressed appreciation for Peter's openness in the dialog, isolated points of agreement and disagreement with Peter, and acknowledged intimidation from Peter's scholarly thought. Alvin displayed his intimidation by ending his first rejoinder with "everything I have written is straw" which Peter countered that he did not view

Alvin's remarks as straw. However, the intimidation Alvin experienced did not prevent

him from articulating his perspective. Peter tempered his imposing words by admitting

his own weaknesses, "The books just help me think through a topic. Of course, they do

not substitute for the thinking. Sometimes I do it well...sometimes I might miss the boat

(ask my wife - she catches my poor thinking all the time)." Alvin recognized that their

diverse viewpoints were beneficial stating, "The dialog of our differing perspectives on

God will only deepen and enrichen our understanding of the mysteries of God" and Peter

affirmed this, "it is not about agreement, only doing the work according to our gifts.

Grace is in the exchange."

George also disagreed with Alvin's initial post but no dialog ensued George's

response. Perhaps this was due to the fact that George came into the discussion six days

after Alvin's initial post. However, the dialog between Alvin and Peter continued over 9

days from February 21 until March 2 so they had opportunity to respond to his post.

George: "Unfortunately, many churches choose to remain as they are and expect other
people to conform to their image."
I believe that the heart of Christians in churches today are in the right
place. I don't think they are choosing to remain the same rather I believe that they
don't know 'how' to respond to their changing environment. I don't think it is a
willing rebellion but rather reveals a lack of understanding

Another explanation might be that George did not offer evidence for his opinions and

also did not enter into the contextual nature of Alvin and Peter's exchange.

Group 4 had another exchange in which Peter speaks of the multiple communities

within which they all held identities. He saw that the lack of acknowledgement of those

multiple identities played into a reason for differing perspectives. Peter disagreed with a

non-participant's post,

Peter: My first response is that I am not quite ready to say we are fully under siege as Christians in North America. [….]

      While it is harder to find easily formula for sermons, it is much more accurate with the lives we all lead. For example, I am not just a Christian but a Christian who happens to hold certain views about public policy that differs from others, likes certain sports teams over others, certain car brands over others, am male, married, no children, etc. In other words, my identity is actually made up of lots of other identities which all take their bite and ask of me certain allegiances. Mission has to ask how faith takes action and claim upon my life as well as the wider movement of God in the world.

      In other words, when Paul walked out of a synagogue, he was still a Jewish guy in the first century who had certain allegiances, beliefs and loyalties,views of the world as a Roman, etc. but still he had to find out how they all came in line with 'new creation' that claimed central place (Gal. 3.28). Obviously, from all the conflicts we read in the various letters, 'new creation' did not mean agreement on whether Paul was Democrat or Republican. Identities we hold will conflict with each other. It is no wonder that we then have conflict with each other in our communities...we do not often even acknowledge our own conflicted identities. Its hard business working it all out. However, I think that such work is what it means to follow after Christ and speaks to how Christ is working himself out in us.

      Christendom can help aid us in saying what is no longer appropriate as people of faith but the alternative is the trick.

      I always hold up Stout's Democracy and Tradition. He speaks to a careful engagement with the broader culture, in all its diversity, as persons of faith (even does so from traditional neo-orthodoxy...).

      Anyway, good posting...

[Non-participant:]

      Peter: I agree with you on how central our identity in Christ should be in our lives. However, I do think people negotiate quite a few different identities that are important to them (my father still takes his "Dad" role seriously...even in his 70s...you get the point). So, it always the negotiating of multiple identities that I think becomes part and parcel of how mission gets worked out both by those who have experienced Christ and those who do not claim any such experience.

      As to our bind, I think that our difficulty is how we speak of Christ often predisposes us to Christendom. [….]

      D.T. Niles, who gave the first address in 48 at Amsterdam of the World Council of Churches, had a wonderful saying, "The gospel is one blind beggar showing another blind beggar where to get a crust of bread." If I was going to be forced into some neo-orthodox model of Christianity, this would at least be a good starting point. Grace is first and foremost what fuels our ability to speak and give expression to the kingdom of God in our lives.

      [1 paragraph omitted]

> **George:** I'm not sure that I agree that the majority to minority was the cause of the center to margin and settler to sojourner as you are. I do see them moving 'hand in hand' but I don't see a causal relationship. [….]
>
> **Alvin:** I place my reply as a reply to George's reply because I agree with him that the shift from majority to minority was not the causation of the other shifts. I also agree that we see these shifts as moving hand in hand. No one of these shifts caused the other, it was more of a common current with the different factors pushing each other along, and others becoming more prominent off of the shift from the other changes. For example, the shift from settlers to sojourners was a current that was already there in Christian thought, but its message reached greater prominence as the other shifts took place. Or so I think.

Peter proffered his postmodern viewpoint that differed with a perspective where there is only one explanation with an expectation that "we 'have the answer' and they buy into our narration or not." Peter preferred a dialog "that allows someone experience Christ becoming embodied in the midst of their life." George and Alvin also disagreed with the non-participant's post but on another basis—they did not see a causal explanation among the cultural shifts. Though, similarly to Peter, George concluded, "We [the church] now speak from a thousand voices where we once spoke from ten." The church has become more diverse. Alvin again demonstrated his intimidation at the end with "Or so I think," or perhaps he did not want to appear too autocratic.

Relationships

Besides the relational tone that was maintained in the discussions even when disagreements occurred, students also expressed support and encouragement to one another. Frequently they voiced thanks and appreciation for comments, new insights, and affirmation of their own thinking. During week 7's discussion Kendra expressed

personal learning concerning the *missio Dei* (God's mission) with regrets for the lack of that understanding in her previous ministry.

Kendra: Alexandra and Bobby, I was struck with a common thread in both of your postings which is a good reminder for me as I can be a "take charge" kind of person. Not only do we seek God's direction and follow it as best we can (one side of the "take charge"), but it is important to pray for those who aren't following the direction or don't get the vision of the missio Dei (the servant side of "taking charge").

        I think this is so much on my mind because we (my husband and I) are leaving a church after 15 supposedly fruitful years here. We haven't understood the concept of missio Dei to really emphasize it in those terms and perhaps we have been frozen by our mission statement, but as we take our leave, it seems that not much has changed in the hearts of the people.

        I'm sure that is not true completely, but some days it does feel discouraging.

Bobby: Kendra   I appreciate your desire, and heart for our Lord & His work! Please don't burden yourself unduly concerning the results of your ministry efforts. I have tremendous confidence in Gods ability to accomplish His purposes even when we seem to struggle with it.

        The fruit of your efforts may not be seen for some time to come. Our Lord didn't witness the results of His labor of love until He was gone as well. You have a great heart, & God is & will use you & your husband in an amazing way. He sees you efforts, 1 Corin. 4:1-6

Kendra: Thanks, Bobby. These encouraging words were/are a blessing to me.

Bobby encouraged Kendra with a focus on the *missio Dei*, "confidence in Gods ability." Bobby continued with inspiration for her for the past and the future. Kendra acknowledged his words writing, "These encouraging words were/are a blessing to me." The use of the double verb "were/are" implies that continued to be encouraged—perhaps words that might remain in her memory for when she would have discouraging thoughts in the future. Though the students did not meet face-to-face, they expressed concern and support for one another.

Summary

Within the discussion fora in this missions and evangelism course, students interacted with the readings for the course as well as their own memories of the biblical writings. The students responded to one another as they were directed, but TA Vaughn was particularly instrumental in facilitating the student discussions in Group 3. TA Vaughn prompted them to deeper reflection and sharing his own interpretations and observations from his cultural perspective, thus, providing extensive instructor-student collaboration. The professor did not engage in the discussion fora whatsoever and so the students lacked his voice in these dialogs. As Bobby's personal email indicated, he found the lack of the professor's involvement made the course more challenging. Possibly the division of the class into small groups limited the discussions that might have occurred also.

Still evidence of interpretation and contextualization as well as some aspects of formation were observed in the students' discussion postings. Group 3 identified issues of the dynamic of reification and participation in multiple conversations in the process of negotiating meaning.

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Wright, J. R. (1990, March 12-18, 1990). *The sources and structures of authority in the church.* Paper presented at the Second Anglican/Oriental Orthodox Forum, Monastery of St. Bishoy, Wadi El Natrun.

Yeung, A. S. W., & Ferry, B. (2002). *Developing a peer learning community through the use of cmc*. (ED472042). Hong Kong: Retrieved from http://search.epnet.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&an=ED472042

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

VITA

Rovina L. Hatcher
September 15, 1955
Portland, Indiana

EDUCATION

M.A. Christian Education, Candidate, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School,
Deerfield, Illinois, 1991
Emphases: Management and Family Studies

M.A. Secondary Education–Business, University of Missouri–Kansas City,
Kansas City, Missouri, 1984

B.A. Business Education, Olivet Nazarene University, Bourbonnais, Illinois**,** 1977
(summa cum laude)
Second Major: Biblical Literature with Greek minor

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN EXPERIENCE

Instructional Designer, Online Education, College of Arts & Sciences, University
of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky"
July, 2011-December, 2012, part-time.

TEACHING AND RELATED EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor of Christian Education and Pastoral Ministry
Director, Master of Arts–Religious Education program
Director, Distance Education and Faculty Technology Coordinator
Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (APNTS), Taytay, Rizal,
PHILIPPINES, September, 2005 – July, 2011.

Information Services Training Coordinator, Asbury University, Wilmore,
Kentucky, July, 1998-September, 2005.

PUBLICATIONS

Hatcher, Rovina, ed. *Discipleship through the Bible: Lessons in Christian
Leadership*. Manila: Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2011.

Hatcher, Rovina, and Joan Mazur. "Communities of Practice in Online Classes?
Evidence from a Qualitative Content Analysis of a Discussion Forum." In
Global Learn Asia Pacific 2010, ed. Zoraini Wati Abas, Insung Jung and
Joseph Luca, 4200-4209. Penang, Malaysia: AACE, 2010.

Kwon, Dong-Hwan, and Rovina Hatcher. *Thesis Handbook*. Manila: Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2010.

Hatcher, Rovina, ed. *A Preschool Curriculum: Growing in God through Love and Obedience*. Manila: Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2008.

Hatcher, Rovina, ed. *Local Church Leadership Training: In Pinoy Way*. Manila: Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2008.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Childhood Salvation: An Analysis of Horace Bushnell." *Bokyum Gwa Shinhak [Gospel and Culture] 4* (1992): 127-144.

Retter-Hatcher, Rovina. "Becomer." *Bread* 2, no. 6 (1977): 24-25.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Conference/Seminar Convener

VOICE (Values Orientation In Classroom Education) Training. Presenters: Laura Bonney, Ruth Haynes, and VOICE staff. Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, March 19, 2011.

Creative Hands-on Children's Ministry Workshop. Presenters: Dale and Liz VonSeggen, Kurt Jarvis, Marion Jean Grant. Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, June 7-20, 2010.

Women and Ministry. Presenters: Lee, San Young, Ph.D., Nativity Petallar, Ed.D., Beverly Gruver, Carolyn Seifert, D.Min., Rovina Hatcher (all ordained elders in their respective denominations). Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, March 21, 2009.

Asia-Pacific Wesleyan Women Clergy and Leadership Conference. Keynote speaker: Nina Gunter. Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, January 29-February 1, 2007.

Refereed Presentations

Hatcher, Rovina and Joan Mazur. "Communities of Practice in Online Classes? Evidence from a Qualitative Content Analysis of a Discussion Forum." Presentation at Global Learn Asia Pacific 2010, Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education, Penang, Malaysia, May 17-20, 2010.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Multimedia Effectiveness: Is It Worth It?" Presentation at the annual Kentucky Council on Post-Secondary Education and Kentucky Virtual University Faculty Development Conference–Innovations in Teaching & Learning: Meeting 21st Century Challenges, Louisville, Ky., May 20, 2002.

Workshop Presentations

Faculty Development

Hatcher, Rovina. "Active Learning for Adults" and "Holistic Instructional Methods." In-service Staff (full day) Training, Salvation Army Officers' Training College, Tanay, Philippines, January 28, 2010.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Teaching and Living in an Inter-cultural Seminary." Presentation to the Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary faculty, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, November 30, 2009.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Curriculum Foci." Presentation to the Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary faculty, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, July 10, 2006.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Creating PowerPoint Presentations," July 17, 2006.

Hatcher, Rovina. Online and blended learning training workshops for the faculty at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, 2007-2010.

Christian Education

Hatcher, Rovina. "Holistic Instructional Methods." Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries (full day) Training, Church of the Nazarene Central Visayan District, Cebu City, Philippines, September 27, 2008.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Ambassadors–Children's Mission Emphasis in the NMI (Nazarene Missions International)." Presentation at the Nazarene Missions International Workshop, Church of the Nazarene Metro Manila District, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, October 21, 2006.

Hatcher, Rovina and Mark Hatcher. Marriage Enrichment (weekend) Seminar, Owensboro Audubon, Church of the Nazarene, June, 2000.

Technology

Hatcher, Rovina. "Stop Trafficking and Exploitation of People–Unlimited Potential (step-UP) Training 4 Trainers" (Microsoft Office 2003), 30 hours. Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, January 31-March 7, 2009.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Getting Started with Microsoft Access." Association of Christian Librarians Pre-Conference (half-day) Workshop, Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky, June 9, 2003.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Creating an Interactive Document of Art History in PowerPoint." Art History II class, Dr. Linda Stratford, Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky, January 23, 2002 and January 27, 2003.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Creating Newsletters in Microsoft Publisher," 3 sessions. Journalism class, Dr. Marcia Hurlow, Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky, September 10, 12, and 14, 2001 and September 10,12, and 15, 2003.

Invited Presentations

Christian Education

Hatcher, Rovina. "Childhood Salvation: How Do We See Children?" Unpublished paper presented at Let the Little Children Come: A Forum on Child Theology, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, December 4, 2010.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Intergenerational Missions: Making Christ-like Disciples in Our Homes and Local Churches." Keynote presentation at the Nazarene Missions International Convention, Church of the Nazarene Metro Manila District, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, December 19, 2009.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Nazarene Missions: Where We've Been, Where We're Going." Keynote presentation at the Nazarene Missions International Convention, Church of the Nazarene Metro Luzon District, San Jose City, Philippines, November 17, 2009.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Identity Formation: Determining Who We Are." Unpublished paper presented at the Women and Ministry Forum, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, March 21, 2009.

Hatcher, Rovina. "The Ministry of Christian Education: The Priesthood of Believers." Faculty Induction Address, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, October 5, 2007.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Make a Connection with God: The Purpose of Christian Education." Keynote presentation at the annual Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries Convention, Church of the Nazarene Metro Manila District, Taytay, Rizal, Philippines, December 8, 2007.

Technology

Hatcher, Rovina. "Social Work Administration Use of Technology." Social Work Administration class, Dr. Ike Adams, Asbury College, Wilmore, Ky., April 14, 2004.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Social Work Technology." Social Work Administration class, Dr. Ike Adams, Asbury College, Wilmore, Ky., April 7, 2004.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Integration of Blackboard for Traditional Classes," Presentation to the Teaching-Learning-Technology Roundtable. Asbury College, Wilmore, Ky., January 30, 2003.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Relational Databases in Business Management." Business Management of Information Systems class, Mr. Dale Kierstead, Asbury College, Wilmore, Ky., October 15, 2002.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Hypermedia in PowerPoint," Association of Christian Schools International Technology Summit: Using Technology to Enhance Instruction, Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky, March 22, 2002.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Basic Photo Editing," Association of Christian Schools International Technology Summit: Using Technology to Enhance Instruction, Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky, March 22, 2002.

Hatcher, Rovina. "Multimedia Effectiveness," Teaching-Learning-Technology Roundtable, Asbury College, Wilmore, Ky., February 28, 2002.

THESIS COMMITTEES

Thesis Advisor

Mangubat, Ingrid. "The Relevance of Rosales Wesleyan Bible College Curriculum for Urban Ministry." MA-RE thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2011.

Yang, Young-In. "Development of an Effective English Teaching Strategy for Korean Learners in the Philippines: A Project Thesis." MA-RE thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2011.

Woolery, Julie. *"Graduate Theological Students' Educational Expectations and the Experienced Curriculum Foci: Knowledge-centered, Learner-centered, Society-centered."* MA-RE thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2009.

Hwang Jeong Sook. "An Assessment of the Korean Track Program of Faith Academy in Relation to the Development of the Ethnic Identity of the Korean Missionary Children." MA-RE thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2009.

Hallig, Joan. "Perceptions of the Denominational Standards for Adult Sunday School in the Local Churches of the Nazarene in the Metro Manila District.*"* MA-RE thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2008.

Thesis Committee Chairperson

Kim Dong Ju. "A Survey of Senior Adult Education of Select Presbyterian Churches in Yangpyungkun Kyungkido, Korea: A Basis for Adult Educational Development Program." MA-RE thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2010.

Thesis Committee Member

Davis, Jarrett. "A Case Study of the Self-identity of the People of Looban Outreach Church View of Their Relationship with Their Mother Church." MA-CC thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2011.

Kaburuan, Emil Robert. "Communication Behavior with Internet Use in a Wired Religious Community Among APNTS Residential Students." MA-CC thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2008.

Rafael, Marimel. "A Curriculum Design for Cambodia Wesleyan Bible Institute in Phnom Penh." MA-CC thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2007.

Sagud, Erlie. *"Perceived Family Strengths of Philippine Wesleyan Ministers in Northwestern Luzon and Central Luzon Districts."* MA-RE thesis, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2006.

COMMITTEE SERVICE

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (APNTS)
    Christian Education Department, chairperson, 2005-2011.
    Women in Ministry, chairperson, 2005-2011.
    Faculty IT Committee
        Coordinator, 2008-2011.
        Member, 2005-2011.
    Ministry Resource Center, 2005-2011.
    Holistic Child Development program, 2008-2011.
    Thesis Handbook Committee
        Co-chair, 2009-2010.
        Member, 2007-2010.
    Library Committee, 2005-2008, 2009-2011.
    Stop Trafficking and Exploitation of People with (Microsoft's) Unlimited Potential (step-UP) organizing committee, 2009-2010.

Asbury University
    Teaching-Learning-Technology Roundtable Steering Committee, 1999-2005.
    Information Services Department, 1998-2005.
    Information Services Department, Assistant Director of Instructional Technology, 1999-2000.
        Supported technological advancement for the academic departments including

Taejon Christian International School, Taejon, Republic of Korea
    Board of Trustees, 1993–1994.
    Finance Committee, 1989–1990, 1991–1994.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Certified Instructor, Application Software, New Horizons Computer Learning Center, Lexington, Kentucky, February, 1998-July, 1998.

Office Systems Instructor, Lexington Community College, Lexington, Kentucky, part-time, August, 1996-December, 1997.

Instructor, Kentucky College of Business, Danville, Kentucky, part-time, September, 1996-May, 1997.

Christian Ministries Guest Instructor, Asbury University, Wilmore, Kentucky, Spring, 1996.

Instructor, Christian Education at Korea Nazarene University, Chonan, Korea, March, 1992-June, 1995.

Instructor, Office and Administrative Services, Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon, Illinois, part-time, January, 1983-May, 1984.

Business Teacher, Center Senior High School, Kansas City, Missouri, 1977-1981.

MINISTERIAL EXPERIENCE

Missionary, Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Philippines, Global Missions, Church of the Nazarene, Lenexa, Kansas, September, 2005-July, 2011.

Assistant Pastor (unpaid), Nicholasville Church of the Nazarene, Nicholasville, Kentucky, 1996-2004.

Kentucky District Church of the Nazarene
District Nazarene Mission International (NMI) Council Member, 1996-1998.
District Sunday School Council Member, 1996-1998.

Missionary, South Korea, Global Missions , Church of the Nazarene, Lenexa, Kansas, 1986-1996.
Instructor, Korea Nazarene University, 1992-1995
Mission Treasurer, 1988-1990.
Korean Language School, Mokwon University, Taejon, Korea, 1987-1989.

Team Ministry with late pastor-husband, Stockton Church of the Nazarene, Stockton, Illinois, 1984-1986.

Team Ministry with late pastor-husband, Dixon Church of the Nazarene, Dixon, Illinois, 1981-1984.

Northwestern Illinois District Church of the Nazarene.
Teen Quizzing Quizmaster, 1982-1984.
Campmeeting Youth Co-Director, 1983, 1984.

Summit View Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, Missouri.
Children's Church Co-pastor, 1978-1981.
Vacation Bible School Director, 1979-1980.

Student Mission Corps (SMC), Barahona, Dominican Republic. Summer, 1976.

Assistant Program Director, Green Valley Salvation Army Camp, Peoria, Illinois, Summer, 1975.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Conferences Attended

Global Learn Asia-Pacific 2010: Global Conference on Learning and Technology, Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education, Penang, Malaysia, May 17-20, 2010.

VIVA: Asia Cutting Edge (Holistic Child Development conference), Bangkok, Thailand, November 19-26, 2007.

Philippine Association for Graduate Education (PAGE) Conference, Manila, Philippines, Sept. 24-26, 2007.

"Come to the Water" Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy, San Diego, California, April 20-23, 2006.

"Partnering for Success" Council for Christian Colleges and Universities Technology Conference, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 2-5, 2004.

"Come to the Water" Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 16-18, 2004

EDUCAUSE "Together We'll Think IT Through," Nashville, Tennessee, October 10-13, 2000.

Training Attended

"Learning Theories and Technology Integration," Council for Christian Colleges and Universities on-line professional development, Facilitator Ginger Dennis, Ed.D., LeTourneau University, Spring 2003.

"Planning and Teaching Effectively in the On-line Classroom," Council for Christian Colleges and Universities on-line professional development, Facilitator Shauna Tonkin, Regent University, Fall 2002.

"Extended Learning [On-line Classes] Faculty Training," Asbury Theological Seminary, May 21-25, 2001.

"Web-Based Training," Langevine Training, Washington, D.C., December 12-14, 1999.

LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION

Ordained Elder, Church of the Nazarene, Kentucky District, July 19, 2001 to present

Missouri Teaching Certificate, 1978 to present (lifetime)

Illinois Teaching Certificate #1078549, 1982-2000

Kentucky Provisional Teaching Certificate #346-52-0923, 1995-2000

Microsoft Certified Trainer in Office 2000, March 2004

Microsoft Office Specialist Master Certification in Access 2000, PowerPoint 2000, Word 2000, Excel 2000, Outlook 2000

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

AACE, Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education, 2010-2011

AECT, Association for Educational Communications & Technology, 2003-2004, 2006-2007

Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy, 2004-2007

HONORS AND AWARDS

Golden Key International Honour Society, University of Kentucky chapter, 2012

Omicron Delta Kappa: The National Leadership Honor Society, University of Kentucky chapter, 2012

Phi Kappa Phi, University of Kentucky chapter, 2010

Phi Delta Lambda, Olivet Nazarene University Gamma Chapter, 1977

Valedictorian, Mahomet-Seymour High School, 1973

ACADEMIC RESEARCH INTERESTS

Curriculum and instructional design

Online education: Communities of Practice

Pastoral Ministry: Professional identity development