LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SEMINARY STUDENT SPIRITUAL FORMATION: RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON A REVIEW OF SCRIPTURE AND A SURVEY OF EVANGELICAL SEMINARIES

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ABSTRACT

SEMINARY STUDENT SPIRITUAL FORMATION: RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON A REVIEW OF SCRIPTURE AND A SURVEY OF EVANGELICAL SEMINARIES

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Concern for the spiritual formation in ministerial training has grown in recent years, and reasons for this are discussed. The history of spiritual formation in pastoral training as well as relevant Scriptures are reviewed. Particular attention is given to Christ's earthly ministry as well as key biblical terms related to spiritual formation. Certain expectations based on the weight of Scripture are determined. Results of a spiritual formation survey sent to thirty-five evangelical seminaries and a self-study of the writer's own seminary are analyzed. This project makes recommendations for enhancing seminary spiritual formation efforts.

Abstract length: 93 words.

To my father and mother
Erwin and Jean Wegert,
whose expressions of love, encouragement, and commitment
have born me along to this point.

To my wife
Marilou,
a "helper comparable" to me.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Evangelical theological seminaries of the twentieth century have no direct counterpart in either the Old or New Testaments of the Bible. Yet for centuries seminaries have been instrumental in training those responding to a personal call to become spiritual shepherds in the church of Jesus Christ. It has generally been assumed that preparing students for such a ministry includes more than educating them in theology, inculcating certain skills such as preaching and counseling, and training them in methods of church growth. One primary reason for this is that the New Testament's criteria for church leadership center more on the extent of the minister's personal likeness to Christ than on any other factor. In his letters to Timothy and Titus, the Apostle Paul clearly establishes spiritual qualities above either skills or knowledge as the essential elements by which a man's eligibility for church leadership is evaluated.[1]

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[1]1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9. (Scripture references are taken from the New King James Bible.)

Throughout their history, however, seminaries have varied widely in the perception of their role in forming candidates for ministry as well as in the specific methods employed to achieve such ends. Today, however, spirituality is being "rediscovered" across the spectrum as seminaries demonstrate a heightened interest in the personal and spiritual dimensions of growth in students preparing for ministry.[2] One explanation for this resurgence may be the widespread publicity surrounding the moral failures of several popularly-known preachers. Another possible reason is that the task of Christian ministry has become increasingly more complex and multifaceted within a context which itself has become more pluralized and outwardly secularized. For their part, churches are requiring more from their pastors, with matters of integrity and spirituality high on their list of requirements. On a societal level, public interest in matters of "spirituality" has also reached a new pitch due to widespread media attention. All of the above issues have challenged the church and its Christian institutions to provide the leaders capable of helping society discern the authentic from the

[2]Francis A. Lonsway, Profiles of Ministry, Association of Theological Schools, 3 (Fall 1996), 1.

bogus.[3] In the midst of these needs, the mandate facing both the church and the institutions created to help form its leaders remains the same as it has been for two millennia: recruiting and training ministers of the Gospel whose character, theological knowledge, and life-style cohere to form a living, powerful illustration of the message they proclaim week after week. The project described in this paper is designed to assist in the fulfillment of this mandate.

Need for the Project

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary (LBTS) has an ongoing reputation for training ministry students who are committed to the sufficiency of an inerrant Scripture, competent in Christian ministry, and zealous to establish and grow local churches. As an academic community, the seminary seeks to impart both the knowledge and skills necessary for leadership in Christian ministry. As a Christian community, however, LBTS also seeks to cultivate in its students spiritual growth and faithful service to Christ and His church,[4] a desire shared by other evangelical

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[3]Susanne Johnson, Christian Spiritual Formation in the Church and Classroom (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 11.

[4]"The Mission of LBTS," Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary Catalog, 1998-99, 6.

seminaries with a similar mission. Dallas Theological Seminary, for example, recognizes that "*cultivation of the spiritual life* is inseparably fused with the scholarly study of biblical and related subjects," and therefore, one of its goals is to develop students who are "*mature in their relationship with God*" through the spiritual disciplines.[5] Similarly, Grace Theological Seminary seeks to develop Christian ministry leaders through "the cultivation of *spiritual life*" in a "*spiritual* and prayer-charged environment."[6] Likewise, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary "conducts its programs in *an environment of spiritual nurture* for the development of Christian leaders."[7] Indeed, most of the evangelical seminary catalogs reviewed by this writer contain at least some mention of the importance of spiritual nurture and growth reflected in either the school's mission statement, goals, or policies.

At the present time, however, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary lacks a comprehensive spiritual

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[5]Dallas Theological Seminary Catalog, 1997-98, 11 (emphasis added).

[6]Grace Theological Seminary Catalog, 1995-96, 11 (emphasis added).

[7]The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Catalog, 1995-96, 5 (emphasis added).

formation program for ministerial students which adequately reflects the priority of spiritual life development and Christian maturity found in its own mission statement. Nor has it fully integrated issues of the heart with the more traditional seminary goals of educating the mind and training in ministry methods. The project underlying this dissertation is designed to advance the cause of spiritual formation program development and integration.

The absence of a coherent spiritual formation program in seminary education may reflect a tacit assumption that candidates for admission either have the spiritual maturity required for ministry or that they will somehow gain the necessary maturity over the course of the traditional seminary experience. While classes, chapel services, and field experience characteristic of most seminaries no doubt contribute to spiritual growth, it is invalid to assume that this process occurs universally or that it is adequate when it does. Nor does a general standard of "adequacy" offer much help in the absence of well-defined outcomes in the spiritual domain.

Without systematic efforts to evaluate, monitor, and foster spiritual formation in the lives of seminarians based on their individual needs and personal objectives for attending a theological school, the seminary risks producing

sons of Ephraim, described by Hosea as "a cake half-baked."[8] Graduates can be filled with the highest knowledge and trained in the most effective ministry methods yet remain spiritually "challenged," which, in the final analysis, renders them biblically unfit and unprepared for a role of shepherding God's people. Nonetheless, students completing the academic requirements of seminary are almost assured of being graduated unless behavior or attitudes are severe enough to call for disciplinary action. Clearly, more careful attention is called for in the spiritual development of ministerial students.

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary is certainly not alone in this concern, nor is wider debate over the role seminaries ought to play in the process finished. Some seminaries, for example, regard themselves as part of the church and naturally carry out spiritual formation efforts as part of the students' ongoing Christian education. Other schools, independent of church sponsorship, are reluctant to engage in what they see as the church's responsibility.[9] Some have held that since a person's spiritual life can not be quantified, charted, or assessed, it is personal and

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[8]Hosea 7:8 (NEB).

[9]Charles M. Wood, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education," Religious Education 86 (Fall 1991): 559.

should be left up to the individual.[10] Still others warn against focusing on any special "ministerial" spiritual formation because of the danger of fostering clerical elitism.[11] Most, however, would agree that some amount of spiritual formation is imperative for seminary training.

Corresponding with this last statement, H. Jack Perkins has identified no less than eleven needs in the area of spiritual formation unique to students at his seminary.[12] Students, he discovered, need:

1. A broadened understanding of and a commitment to practice the Spiritual Disciplines.
2. Help for understanding prayer and the receptive mode of consciousness.
3. An introduction to and availability of spiritual formation resources.
4. The setting, time, and space to surface and deal with personal issues.
5. To assume personal responsibility for personal growth.
6. To develop mentoring relationships when exploring the Spiritual Disciplines.
7. A balance between the vertical and horizontal

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[10]Paul Wilkes, "The Hands That Would Shape Our Souls," The Atlantic Monthly (Dec 1990): 72.

[11]George Lindbeck, "Spiritual Formation and Theological Education," Theological Education, Supplement 1 24 (1988): 30.

[12]"A Project Introducing Seminarians and Spouses to the Concept of Christian Psychospiritual Formation" (D.Min. Diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1993), 101.

dimensions of faith.

8. To experience the Bible more devotionally.

9. To give themselves permission to surface emotional, physical, social and intellectual issues from a spiritual perspective--view life holistically.

10. The discipline of theological reflection.

11. To face specific issues that may hinder character development.

Based on this author's personal experience as a seminary student, seminary admissions counselor, and seminary instructor over the past fifteen years, it is agreed that this list not only characterizes the spiritual formation needs of today's seminary students, but it also points to the need for continued discussion about the spiritual life and needs of students at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.

But questions immediately arise. Where should we begin? What relative weight should the spiritual component carry in seminary education? What should the spiritual component seek to produce and accomplish? What are practical ways to invest in the spiritual growth of seminary students, and what parameters should frame such a task? Do other seminaries share this concern, and how are they going about the process? The existence of such questions underlies the need for this dissertation. Answers to such questions must be sought, first, from God's revelation in

Scripture, and secondly, by following one of the precepts found therein, from the wisdom in a "multitude of counselors."

The Purpose of the Project

This project seeks to frame a spiritual formation program for pastoral training at LBTS which is effective in meeting the seminary's objective to foster spiritual growth of students within the paradigm of Scripture. It aims to facilitate a more adequate formation of the ministerial candidate primarily as a Christian person, recognizing that true ministry of any kind is actually the natural and expected fruit of a life lived in harmony with the Eternal. To accomplish this objective, a certain amount of foundational information is needed, and these data will be collected from two primary sources:

1. A review of key scriptural passages and concepts pertaining to spiritual formation. Both spiritual goals and formation methodology will be sought from the Bible.

2. A survey of representative evangelical seminaries in the U.S. investigating the nature of their spiritual formation programs. The survey focuses on three key areas: assessment of spiritual formation and readiness for ministry, the major components of their spiritual formation program, and mentoring relationships.

This information will benefit both LBTS and the wider Christian community. Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary will be provided with a synopsis of biblical considerations

bearing upon the task it faces, an understanding of what is taking place in the broader evangelical seminary community, and an opportunity for self-evaluation in the light of such considerations. The writer contends that seminary education in its twentieth-century expression must continually be recast in the light of biblical truth as well as its own charter and history to ensure that "tradition" has not surmounted the Word of God in a task crucial to the future of the Church. A fresh look at the biblical paradigm has potential to expand horizons and offer new insight. Horizons are also expanded by considering how others in the Lord's wider "vineyard" approach similar tasks, and this provides the rationale underlying the survey component of this project. Such data will afford LBTS the opportunity to compare its own efforts with those equally as dedicated to similar goals which may, in turn, reveal methodologies worthy of further consideration by the school.

The larger evangelical community, particularly that segment concerned with ministerial training, will benefit by having a synopsis of spiritual formation efforts underway at a cross-section of its seminaries. Perhaps the survey data and corresponding evaluations will broaden the horizons of other seminaries as well and suggest areas where they, too, can make improvements. As "iron sharpens iron," there is always value in comparing one's own efforts with those of

others pursuing a similar mission. Conversely, a seminary which isolates itself "seeks [its] own desires and rages against all wise judgment."[13]

The Limits and Scope of the Project

A working definitions of certain key terms will help frame this project. "Spiritual formation" is a relatively new term in academic circles for a biblical concept having two dimensions. Considered from the vertical dimension, spiritual formation is literally the "forming of one's spirit" to be in harmony with God,[14] a concept which includes a host of activities, relationships, and disciplines wherein this formation is known to occur. Considered from the horizontal dimension, it is:

> help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him . . . to respond to this personally communicating God, and to live out the consequences of that relationship.[15]

In the final analysis, spiritual formation is none other than the work of God, who alone creates light and forms

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[13]Pr 18:1.

[14]Richard A. Hunt and Joan A. Hunt, "Spiritual Formation and Motivation for Ministry as Measured by the Theological School Inventory," The Journal of Pastoral Care 47 (Fall 1993): 275.

[15]William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, The Practice of Spiritual Direction (New York: Seabury Press, 1922), 8.

darkness.[16] Seminaries, which for purposes of this project are defined as residential institutions of higher learning existing primarily to give theological and ministerial training, are one of the tools God uses to carry out this work.

A survey instrument was designed to solicit information about spiritual formation efforts being conducted at representative evangelical seminaries which are similar to LBTS in both doctrine and ministry philosophy. While the collective wisdom and effectiveness of other denominations and religious traditions is not denied by the writer, this study was intentionally limited to a relatively small number of like-minded schools. Greater time and funding would have enabled considering a broader spectrum of religious expressions, with the possibility that more innovative approaches to spiritual formation may have been discovered, but unfortunately this was not possible under existing constraints.

Another limitation lies in the depth and breadth of survey data solicited. The survey was purposefully kept short and questions simple. One reason for this is the heavy work-load facing seminary administrators who were being asked to complete the survey. Surveys unreturned

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[16]Isaiah 45:7.

because the administrators did not have the time to complete them were considered worthless to the present effort compared to those returned with limited but valuable data. The writer was also aware of the inherent limitations of statistical data in revealing the true attitude towards spiritual formation on seminary campuses. To ascertain that, one may have to become enrolled as a residential student. The author's primary interest lies in suggesting scripturally sound recommendations in the area of spiritual formation which are being successfully implemented by seminaries in which there is an established level of confidence.

This dissertation project does not attempt to construct a full spiritual formation program. Instead, it attempts to bring to bear upon current efforts the weight of history as it relates to seminary education, the weight of Scripture, and the voice of experience of other reputable practitioners in the field. It is hoped that these combined weights will provide impetus for improvements, particularly through systematization and integration of present efforts.

Methodology of the Project

Motivation for this project grows out of the author's ten years involvement with seminary students at LBTS in the position of Graduate Admissions Coordinator. Recently he

also began co-teaching two new Spiritual Formation courses which are required of all Master of Divinity students, Spiritual Formation I and II. Based on this exposure, the need exists, he believes, to incorporate these courses into a comprehensive spiritual formation program for ministerial candidates rather than allow them to remain merely as two more academic courses in the overall seminary academic curriculum.

This project begins with a general review of the history of seminary education, considering broad historical trends affecting its development. Included in the discussion are key differences between Catholic and Protestant traditions which, from a historical perspective, have produced widely divergent approaches to spiritual formation efforts. Social and cultural trends which have influenced, and in many cases, weakened, interest in spiritual formation of seminary students are also considered, along with suggested reasons why such a trend is now being reversed.

Key biblical data relevant to spiritual formation issues are reviewed, with special consideration given to Christ's earthly ministry among His closest disciples. Reasons are suggested why some elements of Christ's three and a half-year ministry are equally valid for seminary training today, whereas others should not be reproduced due

to the unique characteristics of history's only perfect teacher and disciple-maker. From this review is derived a set of expectations for pastoral training purportedly consistent with the New Testament paradigm.

In the survey portion of this project, a representative group of evangelical seminaries were asked to complete a spiritual formation survey consisting of basic questions regarding their assessment of readiness for ministry, their spiritual formation program, and the nature of their mentoring relationships, if any, between students and faculty. This allows a comparison of spiritual formation efforts at LBTS with what is currently underway in the larger evangelical seminary community. The end result is a self-assessment which includes a set of recommendations designed to move the seminary towards more integrated and systematic spiritual formation efforts.

At this point mention should be made of the underlying research methodology employed in this study. John W. Creswell identifies two basic paradigms appropriate for research in the social sciences: qualitative and quantitative.[17] A quantitative methodology generally uses deductive logic wherein a previously established theory is

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[17]John W. Creswell. Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 1.

tested using a fixed set of variables for the purpose of developing generalizations that contribute to the theory and enable one to better understand phenomena under investigation.[18] Data collection methods most appropriate for this paradigm include experiments and survey instruments which serve to minimize the effects of such factors as "context" and researcher bias on the results of the study.[19] Qualitative research, on the other hand, is inductive in nature whereby the researcher arrives at theories or patterns by gathering information, asking questions, forming tentative categories and theories, and then comparing these with other theories.[20] Data collection efforts for qualitative studies are often highly contextualized and take forms such as ethnographies and case studies. In these the researcher is a participant whose own experiences are important to the study rather than merely a distant observer.[21] One succinct way of conceptualizing these two is to say that a quantitative method is designed to collect numbers, and a qualitative method is designed to collect

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[18]Ibid., 7.

[19]Ibid., 10.

[20]Ibid., 96.

[21]Ibid., 12.

words.[22]

While using both paradigms in a single study has potential disadvantages, including expanding the duration and resources needed to complete a project, compelling reasons exist in the literature for recognizing that such designs can actually complement one another.[23] If this is the case, research efforts must not always strictly conform to one or the other of these paradigms. In fact, "mixed-method" studies can be preferred ways of accomplishing certain pre-determined objectives, including expanding the breadth and scope of a project in order to more adequately address the research question[24] as well as gain greater confidence in one's conclusions.[25] Since both of these potential benefits were important considerations for this study, it utilizes elements from both paradigms.

In that it uses components from both qualitative and quantitative paradigms, this research can be classified as a "mixed-method" study. Creswell identifies several mixed-

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[22]Jennifer C. Greene, Valerie J. Caracelli, and Wendy F. Graham, "Toward a Conceptual Framework for Mixed-Method Evaluation Designs," Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis 11 (Fall 1989): 256.

[23]W. A. Firestone, "Meaning in Method: The Rhetoric of Quantitative and Qualitative Research," Educational Researcher 16 (1987): 16.

[24]Greene, et al., 260.

[25]Firestone, 16.

method types, one of which is called "dominant-less dominant," which, as the name indicates, includes a single dominant paradigm with a lesser part of the study drawing from the alternative paradigm.[26] The predominant paradigm of this study is clearly qualitative in that it seeks to inductively arrive at categories and patterns of spiritual formation efforts based on the response of certain "informants," mainly other seminaries, rather than identifying such patterns *a priori*. However the study also proffers a "tentative" conceptual framework for spiritual formation, defined almost entirely in verbal terms, based on the New Testament and, to a lesser extent, the weight of church history and tradition. The project also involves a self-study in which observed categories and patterns are weighed against the framework presented in Scripture. Finally, the researcher acts as both observer and active participant. All of these elements fit well within the parameters of the qualitative study as defined by Creswell. On the other hand, this project also makes use of a survey instrument followed by statistical analysis of the results, both of which are components more typical of a quantitative approach to social science research.

To say that this project utilizes a predominantly

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[26]Creswell, 177.

qualitative, yet mixed, paradigm identifies certain attributes of the project and helps answers why it was chosen to accomplish identified goals. One feature of the project is that its primary audience is made up of colleagues in the field of seminary education, a population more comfortable and familiar with verbal descriptions of reality than mathematical ones. The study also admits that "context," that is, seminary education in the evangelical tradition, heavily (and unashamedly) informs the study, as do the set of biases and values of the primary researcher. Additionally, statistical randomness was not considered to be a crucial factor in selecting seminaries to be surveyed. While these factors would rightfully be "anathema" to any thoroughgoing quantitative research project, they are quite at home in a study such as this constructed primarily around the qualitative paradigm.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORY AND NATURE OF SEMINARY EDUCATION IN RELATION TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Evaluating the appropriate role of spiritual formation in seminary education requires a basic understanding of the history and nature of seminaries in the overall task of ministerial preparation. To do this, this chapter will briefly consider certain key historical and cultural factors which have influenced the development of evangelical seminary education in the United States, particularly in relation to the seminary's role in spiritual formation. It will be shown that various pressures have shifted concern away from matters of "piety" in seminary students, and it will explain how and why that trend is now being reversed.

The History of Seminary Education

Throughout the first millennium of church history, the disciplines of "theology" and "spirituality" could not be readily distinguished. Beginning with Paul, those rated theologically competent were also considered spiritually

mature.[1] For the majority of Christians during this era, the services of worship were the schools of the church, and it was through these services that both religious seekers and Christians, including those destined to become overseers of the flock, learned of, and grew in, Christ.[2]

As Christianity competed with pagan philosophies, specialized schools for inculcating Christian knowledge soon developed, and just as a student would attach himself to an eminent philosopher to learn his philosophical system, so a Christian would seek out and attach himself to a teacher such as Clement or Origen. As early as the second century catechistical schools became the form of Christian "higher education" for those wanting something more that what was available through the common worship of the church.[3] Suffice it to say that long before there were seminaries as such, teachers and students were engaged in theological education.

Such "schools" evolved as they gradually adapted to a changing cultural conditions and teacher personalities, with the result that theological education, as it was pursued

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[1]Lindbeck, 20.

[2]Donald J. Bruggink, "One Hundred Years in the Task of Theological Education--The Historical Background of Theological Education," Reformed Review 19 (May, 1966): 3.

[3]Ibid.

during the first six centuries, became at least as pluriform as it is today.[4] In surveying this history, Arthur G. Holder sets forth four models of theological education, represented by four well-known and influential figures of the early church. These four models help frame the discussion to follow, particularly as it relates to the role of seminaries in spiritual formation. Each model is indicated by a compound term describing at once its sociological location and primary pedagogical concern, followed by a brief description.[5]

1. Origen of Alexandria: The Academic/Intellectual Model. Origen (d. 251) became the head of the catechetical school at Alexandria, saw Christianity as a grand educative enterprise and intellectual activity as the pathway into the ultimate mysteries of God. For him, the context of ministerial preparation is the "school," the ideal teacher serves as a "tutor," and the successful student is one who has an inquiring and well-informed mind.

2. Antony of Egypt: The Monastic/Spiritual Model. Around 271 A.D. Antony chose a reclusive life in the Egyptian desert, but so many disciples gathered around him that he was persuaded to serve as their spiritual guide. Students came to him seeking salvation and spiritual formation in the context of what later came to be known as monasteries. To Antony and his followers, the ideal teacher is a "spiritual guide," and the successful student is one who earnestly and whole-heartedly seeks full personal salvation.

3. Augustine of Hippo: Ecclesial/Vocational Model. Following ordination as Bishop of Hippo in 395, Augustine took the apostolic community at Jerusalem as the model,

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[4]Arthur G. Holder, "Making True Disciples: Models of Theological Education from the Early Church," St. Luke's Journal of Theology 34 (June 1991): 17.

[5]Ibid., 18ff.

gathering his clergy to live with him in his household. For him, the context of ministerial preparation is the "community of faith" living in obedience to a common rule of life. The ideal teacher is a "pastoral leader" and the successful student one who is wholly devoted to the common good of the community above one's own interest.

4. Gregory the Great: The Apostolic/Practical Model. Even after consenting to become Bishop of Rome in 590, Gregory maintained a burning zeal for evangelism by sending emissaries to distant lands. He considered the ideal context of ministerial training participation as the ongoing mission of the church, with the teacher serving as "supervisor" of that experience. The successful student is one filled with apostolic zeal.

These four models representing divergent "streams" in the early history of the church portray various "tensions" prevalent in modern seminary education today. They also serve as poignant reminders that such weighty questions about the role of seminaries in spiritual formation cannot be answered by church history alone.

The second millennium, which saw the rise of Scholasticism and the arrival of universities, brought a growing differentiation between theology and spirituality. Theology grew to become an academic discipline which could be studied apart from any deep regard for matters of personal spiritual maturity. It was within this milieu that formal seminaries were instituted for the purpose of preparing clergy. The first of these date back to the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century which established seminaries for the purpose of training Roman Catholic

priests.[6] The first such institutions isolated seminarians from the outside world and emphasized moral and spiritual formation over theological knowledge or ecclesiastical tradition.[7] The first Protestant seminary was opened by the Pietists in 1688, when clergy training in "godliness" was also a key item in their plan for church renewal.[8] A case can be made that the current debate over the role of spirituality in seminary education has roots traceable to the divorce between theology and spirituality arising during this era and out of this milieu.

Though early Protestant and Catholic seminaries both emphasized development of piety in their students, efforts in Roman Catholic seminaries were founded on significantly different theological underpinnings than their Protestant counterparts. Catholic doctrine holds to an ontological distinction between "priest" and "layman," which contrasts strongly with the Reformed/Calvinist concept of the priesthood of all believers. Whereas in Protestant thinking, ordination is that of a Christian to a higher function of ministry, Catholic seminaries train what they

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[6]Carl A. Volz, "Seminaries: The Love of Learning or the Desire for God?" Dialog 28 (Spring 1989): 103.

[7]Ibid.

[8]E. Glenn Hinson, "The Spiritual Formation of the Minister," Review and Expositor 83 (Fall 1986): 587.

believe is a different kind of reality than what is found in the church's pew.[9] Historically, this has produced a divergence of both form and methodology among the representative seminaries of these two groups. Training in the Roman Catholic tradition, for example, generally emphasizes "being" over "doing," seen in the fact that most Catholic seminaries in the U.S. today have full-time teams dedicated to the spiritual formation of candidates to the priesthood.[10] Roman Catholics, it seems, are more consistent in the expectation that their training institutions live up to the underlying purpose implied in the term "seminary," which means a "seed-bed" or nursery for spiritual formation and growth.

The Protestant seminary, on the other hand, has developed within its own theological framework, which has strongly influenced the expectations of what a seminary should be and do. According to Steve Hancock, two particular doctrines are crucial in this regard. One is the Reformed/Calvinist assumption that the church is the primary locus of spiritual growth. Participation in the ongoing

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[9]Steve Hancock, "Nurseries of Piety? Spiritual Formation at Four Presbyterian Seminaries," in The Pluralistic Vision: Presbyterians and Mainstream Protestant Education and Leadership, ed. Milton J. Coalter, John M. Multer, and Louis B. Weeks (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992): 73.

[10]Ibid.

life of the Christian community has historically been considered the main vehicle for spiritual formation. While Protestant seminaries have always acknowledged a role in the faith life of students, they have generally not understood themselves to be the primary place for spiritual formation, even for the students who go there for ministry training.[11]

A second doctrinal issue influencing the approach of Protestant seminaries towards spiritual formation is a general reluctance to admit any direct causal relationship between the classical disciplines and spiritual growth. Too close of a correlation would impinge upon the paramount doctrine of the freedom of a sovereign God.[12] As a consequence, Protestants have been reluctant to attribute any vital role to spiritual disciplines in the process of becoming or making disciples of Jesus Christ.

E. Glenn Hinson adds a third doctrinal factor emanating from the Protestant Reformation which effectually downplayed the need to "form" persons for ministry, and that is its emphasis on "voluntariness" in the process of faith development. This theological development of the Reformation resulted not only in wholesale closing of monasteries but also the casting aside of a "panoply of

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[11]Ibid., 74.

[12]Ibid., 75.

devotional aids which had served the faithful for centuries."[13] Consequently, Protestant seminaries arising from this milieu saw relatively little need to train, encourage, and model personal faith development in their students.

In conjunction with these doctrinal issues, certain cultural and historical factors in the United States played important roles in the evolving form and purpose of seminary training. The Revolutionary War and the settlement of vast new territories in North America, for example, caused a critical shortage of educated clergy available from Europe and a growing population of Americans in need of pastors and churches. But for most European settlers in North America, their requirements were quite simple: people needed to know the Bible that revealed their God, and their pastors were expected to officiate at regular services and at the rituals that mark the steps along life's path.[14] In the decades to follow, perceived attacks upon the church from movements such as Deism and the new spirit of scientific inquiry justified the growth of a theological intellectualism in American seminaries.[15] The revivals of the early nineteenth

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[13]Hinson, 587.

[14]Wilkes, 71.

[15]Elwyn A. Smith, "The Evolution of Purpose in American Theological Education," Theological Education 2 (Winter

century also heightened the need for doctrinal training by producing large numbers of converts in need of immediate training in theological fundamentals.[16]

Factors such as these increased the demand for the products of theological training while simultaneously suppressing interest in the relatively labor-intensive and slow process of spiritual nurture within evangelical seminaries. The general characteristics of the seminary student population at this time, however, did little to reverse this trend. Most seminary applicants were at least socialized in Christian beliefs and practices, and the majority could be expected to have some exposure to devotional disciplines such as Bible reading and prayer.[17] Most candidates for the ministry had the beginnings of spiritual formation and were naturally expected to grow in this area while in seminary.

In the early years of the twentieth-century seminaries began associating themselves with universities, which were themselves experiencing a broadening milieu of free investigation and reflection.[18] This new power, according

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1966): 65.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Lindbeck, 15.

[18]Smith, 68.

to Elwyn A. Smith, added an important purpose for the existence of seminaries: the maintenance of the church as a viable intellectual and social institution.[19] The number of "graduate seminaries," that is, those requiring a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college, quadrupled during a thirty-year period.[20] These factors helped further solidify the shift away from an emphasis on piety in seminary training. While the earliest schools began as pious communities of aspiring leaders withdrawing from the world to focus attention on matters of spiritual formation, the modern seminary was rapidly becoming a center of critical theological reflection devoted to training professional pastors to minister in an increasingly diverse, complex, and even religiously pluralistic society.

In becoming integrated with the larger American education system, seminaries soon adopted certain attributes of that system which also impacted the spiritual nurture of their students. Progress came to be measured primarily through courses, grades, and credits. Curricula became fragmented, and religion was studied as "science."[21] "Divinity schools emphasized more and more the scholastic

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[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Volz, 106.

elements of clerical study--the Bible, church history, theology--often to the exclusion of the spiritual."[22] These pressures from the education establishment further weakened the historical tie between spiritual formation and intellectual pursuits. Corresponding with these trends in academia, "ministry" in Protestant churches was becoming more of a profession than a vocation, with the result that one's life, life-style, and call from God were becoming increasingly less significant in the overall task of ministry preparation seminaries were expected to carry out.[23]

The combined pressure of theological, historical, and cultural trends has served to weaken the emphasis on spiritual formation that once played an central role in ministerial training. Today, however, the trend appears to be reversing itself, and this for a variety of reasons. The discussion at this point turns to consider what these shifts involve.

Changing Trends

One trend responsible for the recent increase in concern over the role of seminaries in spiritual formation

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[22]Wilkes, 72.

[23]Ibid.

is the changing make-up of the pool of seminary applicants. A higher percentage of seminary applications are being submitted by those who could be classified as religious "seekers" as compared to mature members of congregations sensing a specific call to pastoral oversight.[24] For many of these applicants, an elementary understanding of Christian doctrine can no longer be presumed. Neither can it be expected that applicants in this category have at least been socialized in Christian beliefs and practices, something that could be said of most applicants of a previous era.

One example of a formerly commonplace Christian practice is prayer, experience in which can no longer be presumed. In the public school attended by the writer during the 1970's, each day began with prayer to the God of the Bible. Every student, whether from a Christian home or not, regularly came under the influence of this facet of Christian culture and discipline. But prayer has now been banned from the halls of public education. This example is used to illustrate the fact that what was once a fairly universal process of community formation through participation in a "Christianized" culture has virtually come to a halt in the waning years of the twentieth century.

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[24]The author's ten year's experience in seminary and graduate admissions confirms the validity of this statement.

Attributes, perceptions, practices, and even the world-view common to most seminary students of a previous era can no longer be assumed. A growing number of applicants are essentially "first generation" Christians.[25]

A second factor prompting greater concern for spiritual formation in evangelical seminaries is increased pressure from constituent churches. Seminaries are being asked by their constituent churches to take a greater initiative in nurturing the faith and piety of pastoral candidates.[26] One reason for this is that evangelical churches of all sizes and denominations have been effected to one degree or another by scandalous behavior on the part of Christian leaders, many of whom have drawn widespread public disdain upon Christianity. When leadership fails, churches naturally look to seminaries for both an explanation and a remedy. To use an economic analogy, seminaries are yielding to the pressure of the marketplace and are now giving more careful consideration to the personal character of those being graduated for ministry.

A third factor increasing interest in spiritual

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[25]Interestingly, on the day in which this section was being written, one seminary student came by the writer's office in seminary admissions to joyfully announce his upcoming graduation. Reflecting back upon the history of his seminary experience, he mused, "I became a Christian in April, and began seminary in August."

[26]Hancock, 97.

formation is increased ecumenical dialogue between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Evangelicals are finding that they can learn from others in the area of spiritual formation, and many are rediscovering long-abandoned modes of spiritual guidance, many of which have remained fairly alive and well within Catholicism down through the centuries.[27] While evangelicals cannot share in much of the doctrine underlying spiritual direction of those preparing for Catholic priesthood, they have come to realize that Catholics have been practicing spiritual formation for a long time and that experience in beneficial spiritual practices has great pedagogical benefit.

What all these factors have to do with the seminary's role in spiritual formation is the subject of this project. At the onset, one thing is certain--any approach that presupposes either a foundational level of spiritual formation in seminary applicants or homogeneity of background, tradition, or commitment is likely to run into difficulty on that score alone.[28] But this may be assuming too much too soon. A preliminary question must be resolved

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[27]The immense popularity of recent books on the subject of spiritual disciplines in indicative of this trend. Richard Foster's Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988) and Dallas Willard's The Spirit of the Disciplines (New York: Harper Collins, 1988) are perhaps the best known.

[28]Wood, 551.

first, and that is whether the seminary has a legitimate role in spiritual formation. To answer that question, the nature of seminary education must be further addressed.

CHAPTER THREE

TOWARDS A BIBLICAL PARADIGM FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF SEMINARY STUDENTS

This chapter seeks to build a conceptual paradigm for spiritual formation of seminary students by considering biblical parameters relevant to the task of training church leaders. Seminary education, which is often characterized by the absence of truly integrated spiritual formation efforts,[1] is first considered in light of Jesus' earthly ministry among his disciples. The initial question to be addressed is, How does traditional seminary education compare with Jesus' training of the church's first leaders?

Secondly, certain aspects of Christ's earthly disciple-making are identified which differentiate His unique ministry from that of the church, and, by extension, the seminary today. Key questions here include: Are there components of Jesus' training which the seminary should not attempt to duplicate, and, if so, why? Further, are there

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[1]A contention thoroughly articulated by Alan Jones, "Are We Lovers Anymore? (Spiritual Formation in Seminaries)," Theological Education 23 (Fall 1987): 9-29.

valid distinctions between the training of the Twelve Disciples and the training of pastors today that should inform a paradigm for spiritual formation in today's seminary context?

Thirdly, various facets of the New Testament goal of spiritual formation are considered, along with methods identified in Scripture by which the goal is to be attained. The questions to be addressed here include, What Scripture passages lie at the core of spiritual formation, and what do these tell us about either the goal to be strived for or the procedures necessary for attaining it? Further, what are the implications of these passages for seminary training?

Flowing out of this study is a set of "expectations" for seminary training which will serve as criteria for evaluating current spiritual formation efforts. These help answer the question of how a seminary spiritual formation program should be evaluated and what can be done to bring it into greater conformity with the scriptural paradigm. This will lead to the proposal of a conceptual model for seminary spiritual formation to address the question of how spiritual formation efforts can be integrated with other facets of a seminary training program in a way that is supported by the scriptural paradigm. Additionally, it considers how the various components of a seminary program can be arranged to foster maximum spiritual growth. Before

these questions are addressed, however, the overall nature of seminary education must be framed in its biblical perspective.

The Nature of Seminary Education in its Biblical Perspective

Success or failure in the overall seminary enterprise cannot be properly assessed apart from a biblical rationale for seminaries. At a basic level, since seminaries serve churches by helping to train the pastors who will lead them, the role of seminaries in spiritual formation cannot easily be separated from the church's biblical "constitution," its biblically defined responsibilities, and the biblical qualifications of those who oversee them. An immediate problem arises, however, in that seminaries are nowhere mentioned in Scripture, a fact responsible for no small degree of ambiguity and debate surrounding their overall role and function.

This general ambiguity carries over to the particular question of spiritual formation in seminary education. Wood, for example, questions whether the task of spiritual formation has any legitimate place at all in a theological school.[2] On one hand, some schools consider themselves an extension of the church and carry out spiritual formation of

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[2]Wood, 551.

their students in its behalf while others, more independent of church sponsorship, are reluctant to engage in what is considered a "church" responsibility.[3] Just where does responsibility for spiritual formation lie?

Scripture locates primary responsibility for spiritual growth with the individual Christian. In concluding his second letter, Peter exhorts his readers to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."[4] At another level, however, God has provided spiritual shepherds who share His burden for the maturity of the flock and who willingly enter into the labors necessary to bring this maturation about. It was to the end of spiritual formation, Paul says, that he preached, taught, warned, labored, worked, and strived.[5] Elsewhere, in an extended passage dealing with the function of the church and relationships between Christians, Paul encourages members to do <u>all</u> things for the edification of the body of Christ. Therefore it can be said that faith communities themselves share in this responsibility for spiritual formation among their members.[6] Individuals, pastors, and the larger

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[3]Ibid., 559.

[4]2 Peter 3:18.

[5]Col 1:28, 29.

[6]1 Cor 14:26.

community, therefore, all have biblically valid roles in spiritual nurture. Responsibility begins at the level of one's individual walk with God yet extends to the others in ones surrounding spiritual community. In relationship to the church's ministry to itself, as opposed to its purely evangelistic mandate, this is what the church is to be about at all times and in all of its various manifestations. "Whenever you come together . . . [l]et all things be done for edification."[7]

In light of this multi-tiered and mutually-shared responsibility, insisting on a "church-seminary" dichotomy in relationship to spiritual formation may actually add more heat than light to the discussion. Spiritual formation is a responsibility shared (albeit in varying degrees) by all believers in all relationships and at all times they gather in the name of Jesus Christ. It applies to the various Christian "communities" in which believers find themselves as they work out their salvation with fear and trembling. It also applies to the various Christian "institutions" they have established to further the work of the Kingdom of God on earth. Examples of such communities and institutions include, but would not be limited to, Sunday morning church worship services, Sunday school classes, deacons meetings,

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[7]1 Cor 14:26.

family devotions, neighborhood Bible studies, para-church organizations, and school or office prayer groups. While the ostensible purpose for each of these varies, as do other variables including leadership, setting, and mission, edification of the saints is a desired outcome of each one.

Instead of arguing whether seminaries are a legitimate extension of the New Testament church as it carries out the commission to make disciples of all nations,[8] is it not more productive to recognize them as expressions of the church going about its work? With such an understanding, spiritual formation moves beyond its status as a debatable seminary enterprise and locates itself at the very heart of everything the "church" is to be about. Biblical parameters informing the process of spiritual formation in any contextualization of the "church-at-work" could then justifiably be applied in the particular context of seminaries and the training they offer. It is these parameters that are taken up in the following section.

Biblical Parameters of Spiritual Formation

A biblical paradigm for spiritual formation could conceivably be approached from two distinct perspectives. One approach would be to consider the imperative for

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[8]Matthew 28:19.

spiritual growth incumbent upon all who profess faith in Jesus Christ. The other would focus exclusively on the spirituality of those aspiring to positions of oversight in the Christian church, a concern which is the particular interest of seminaries and of this project. While God never holds a lower standard for "laity" than for "clergy," New Testament passages dealing with church leadership indicate that personal character of an exceptionally high caliber is the primary qualification for oversight of a local congregation.[9] Elders are to be examples to the flock,[10] and that would imply well established on the path of spiritual maturity. Only if this is true are they qualified to challenge others to follow them as they follow Christ.[11]

While there is no valid distinction between the shepherd and those in his flock in regard to either the process of spiritual formation or the goal to be sought, it is maintained that shepherds lead by being "out in front." Active involvement in the spiritual formation of ministerial candidates is therefore crucial, if not central, to the fulfillment of the seminary's mission of preparing exemplary church leaders. One would therefore expect seminaries to be

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[9]Most notable among these are 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

[10]1 Peter 5:3

[11]2 Thes 3:7;

intimately concerned with spiritual formation.

Until recently, the validity of this last statement could not have been easily proven by looking at evangelical seminary programs in this country. Concerns over personal discipleship often fell far behind other matters such as academics and skill-development. Spiritual formation was assumed to take place spontaneously and naturally through standard seminary activities such as class participation, chapel attendance, and optional internships.[12] This author, along with a growing number of scholars and academicians, contends that these no longer suffice, especially insofar as they represent separate and isolated entries on a list of seminary graduation requirements. What is currently being done by seminaries to change this pattern, and what more can be done are the subjects of this project.

Jesus' Training and the Seminary's

Progress in the traditional evangelical seminary is evaluated through achievement in the cognitive domain. The

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[12]A belief shared by numerous writers on the subject of spiritual formation of seminary students. See, for example, Jack H. Perkins, A Project Introducing Seminarians and Spouses to the Concept of Christian Psychospiritual Formation, Doctoral Dissertation, Midwestern Theological Seminary, 1993, 6; MaryLou Riggle, Spiritual Formation: Implications for Theological Education, Doctoral Dissertation, Nazarene Theological Seminary, 1989, 4; and Forster Freeman, "Spiritual Direction for Seminarians," Theological Education 23 (Autumn 1987): 44-56.

seminary experience is often characterized by lectures, note-taking, reading, studying assigned textbooks, written reports and examinations, for all of which the student is given a letter grade indicative of his progress. In the earthly ministry of Christ, by contrast, progress is comprehended in terms of the changed lives of His followers. Peter, for example, began as a rash fisherman whose tongue often bore testimony to his shallow understanding of the ways of Christ and His kingdom. Through his intimate and transforming relationship with Jesus Christ, however, he became an effective and powerful preacher leading thousands to Christ on the day of Pentecost.[13] Progress in Peter's spiritual development is measurable through obvious changes in his responses to life's circumstances, dramatic improvements in his patterns of speech, and in the abundant and fruitful ministry which issued from his life.

Jesus' training methods also differ from those in the traditional seminary. Jesus' training was developmental in nature, incorporating recognizable phases throughout His three-year involvement with the twelve disciples. It began with a time of preparation in which His followers did little more that observe their teacher in a variety of settings

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[13]For this and several of the following ideas, the author is indebted to the Ng Peh-Cheng, "Jesus' Training Methods and The Seminary's," Theological Education Today 11 (July 1982): 8.

including home visits, weddings, and speaking engagements. This phase gradually gave way to a time of practice or "internship" carried out under His close supervision and evaluation. Supervised training then issued forth into full-fledged productivity as disciples assumed ministries bequeathed to them by the resurrected Lord.[14]

Seminary training, on the contrary, is often not as developmental in its progression as was that of the Lord. The required academic curriculum may not have a distinct sequence to it, and students are generally graduated and implicitly deemed ready for ministry upon completing a set of courses. While internships may be included as final components of the curriculum, training for the most part centers around knowledge and skills courses comprising the bulk of the preparation for ministry. Relatively little emphasis is placed on fostering progressive spiritual, psychological, and professional development throughout the seminary experience.[15]

Another difference between Jesus' training and the seminary's is seen in the relationships students have with the faculty who constitute their primary "mentors." Seminarians see their professors mostly in class and, to a

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[14]Ibid., 7.

[15]Dwight L. Grubbs, "Response to 'Are We Lovers Anymore,'" Theological Education 23 (Fall 1987): 34.

lesser extent, in the office for the purpose of academic advising. Faculty/student relationships for some students may never advance beyond this point. For Jesus, however, the focal point of his training was an intimate personal relationship with each disciple. Through His relationships with them He served not only as Teacher, but also as Counselor, Friend, Brother, Comforter and Savior.[16] Seminary curricula are often designed to train for a specialization. Jesus, on the other hand, trained generalists. He offered wide-ranging yet very applied study in "foundational" courses such prayer, teaching, preaching, witnessing, and caring. Further, what Jesus taught was always modeled for them.

Nor was the setting for Jesus' training anything like the modern seminary campus. Wherever and whenever a "teachable moment" occurred with his band of itinerant followers, it seems, Jesus took the opportunity to enlighten them in the ways of God's Kingdom. A. B. Bruce points out in his classic work The Training of the Twelve that it was the "unsystematic" and "occasional" nature of Jesus' training which sets it apart from that given in theological schools.[17] Yet, in the course of their time together, all

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[16]Ibid., 8.

[17](Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1971), 544.

the lessons they needed to learn as "apostles of a spiritual and universal religion" were heard from the Master's lips.[18]

Seminary education generally utilizes a standard curriculum for all students in a given degree program. Jesus, on the other hand, closely tailored his "curriculum" to the unique capabilities, weaknesses, and needs of each disciple with an eye to his future ministry. This may be why Jesus would often select certain followers to accompany Him while leaving others behind.[19] To some he revealed insight apparently withheld from others. His words of encouragement[20] or rebuke,[21] sometimes painfully blunt, were both situation and person-specific.

A final point of comparison is that the seminary experience often includes a sizeable component dedicated to training in such areas as leadership, program administration, and oratory skill, while the core of the curriculum in Jesus' school appeared to be learning how to follow Christ in the discipline of "servitude."[22] Jesus made it clear that He came not to be served but to serve,

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[18]Ibid., 545.

[19]e.g. Matt 17:1, 26:37.

[20]e.g. Matt 16:17.

[21]e.g. Matt 16:23.

[22]Luke 22:26.

and what the disciples observed in Him as a servant, they were to duplicate in their own ministries as those who were truly his followers.[23] As Joseph Stowell points out, the cause of Christ is empowered by those who see themselves as servants to others for the cause of God's kingdom.[24] They would convince the world that He truly was the Messiah sent from God, He told them, through their service, love, and unity, and thus the gospel would spread.[25]

Construction of a biblical paradigm for spiritual formation of seminary students must begin with a candid recognition of these differences between Jesus' first "discipleship" efforts and what is now presented in seminary education. These differences suggest ways in which traditional seminary education could be brought into closer conformity with the methods Jesus employed in preparing leaders for the early churches. This is not to degrade modern seminary education nor to suggest a wholesale return to Jesus' methods. There are obvious and valid reasons why the goal should not be to duplicate each of Christ's techniques, some of which are considered in the following section. Yet several preliminary "expectations" against

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[23]John 10:27; 13:14.

[24]Following Christ (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 123.

[25]John 17:21, 23.

which to evaluate seminary training could be made based on the principles derived from Jesus' training. By way of summarizing the previous discussion, these expectations are outlined below.

One expectation emerging from Jesus' methodology is that seminaries, in their concern for spiritual formation, must have a way of evaluating progress in the spiritual lives of their students. This would, it seems, require some form of initial evaluation, monitoring of progress along the way, and a final evaluation upon completion of formal training. Additionally, training should be fitted in some degree to the student's initial level of maturity and future ministry, and should both complement and facilitate subsequent growth. In other words, one would expect the curriculum to be progressive and customized for each student, yet with training in "foundational" subjects such as prayer, evangelization, and teaching included for all.

Additional expectation arising from Jesus' methodology is that training should involve ongoing personal contact with each student, that it would include experiences beyond the classroom setting, and that a capable "mentor" would guide each student towards greater maturity. Contacts and shared ministry experiences should provide opportunities for the "teacher/trainer" to model Christ-likeness in a variety of settings, not just a classroom, thus extending the

training experience beyond the walls of the seminary buildings and the borders of the campus. A final consideration is that if "service" was the touchstone of Christ's ministry and training, one would expect service to somehow be institutionalized in the seminary's overall curriculum as well.

Christ's Unique Discipleship Ministry

Though much more could be said about Christ's training of his disciples, the most crucial element of that training can be summed up in the simple fact that the first disciples lived in His presence for a period of three years. When one considers what the first disciples were called upon to accomplish and indeed did accomplish in the years following His ascension, it is not surprising that Jesus kept them so close to Himself while He had opportunity. The fruit of this intimacy is born out in the Book of Acts and the New Testament Epistles which bear witness to the tremendous effectiveness of this time spent with the Master.

Yet a significant transition took place following the Lord's ascension to the right hand of the Father. Now He no longer gathers to Himself itinerant disciples who leave families and occupations to follow Him throughout the regions of Judea and Galilee. Somehow the ministry He established was now to continue without His physical

presence. To ensure this, He promised that the Holy Spirit would be sent to continue the work He had begun. One evidence of this transition is seen in that the word "disciple," while prevalent in the Gospels, is virtually absent in the Epistles and the Book of Revelation. Commenting on this shift, Walt Russell points out that not only is the term absent, but so is the very discipleship model Jesus used with the Twelve.[26] Why this is so must be answered before attempting to construct a spiritual formation paradigm consistent with the epistolary portions of the New Testament.

Russell suggests a two-fold explanation for the apparent changes in "discipleship" methodology following Christ's departure from earth. One reason is that from the time of Pentecost, emphasis in the church shifted from individual discipleship to corporate or body discipleship.[27] While one-on-one training can still be seen in the church, particularly as it relates to leadership development,[28] the overwhelming emphasis in the later parts of the New

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[26]Unpublished paper entitled "Discipleship" submitted as a course requirement at Dallas Theological Seminary, 1977. (Paper was made available by the author.), 5.

[27]Ibid., 8.

[28]Most notable in this context is 2 Tim 2:2, written by the apostle Paul to a church planter charged with the task of selecting spiritual overseers of local churches (1 Tim 3:1-7).

Testament is on corporate edification of the body of Christ.[29] This concept is seen, for example, in Paul's admonition for pastors to facilitate the spiritual formation of the entire body of Christ by equipping the saints to do the work of ministry.[30] As the first Apostles carried out the Great Commission, "discipleship" quickly became a group-effort rather than the private privilege of a few "super-saints."

A second reason for what appears to be the absence of Jesus' concept of disciple-making in the epistolary record is His unique office as the Son of God. As such, Jesus continually calls all His followers, including pastors, seminary professors, and other leaders, into a permanent and ongoing discipleship relationship with Him. This relationship includes radical commitment to Him as a person of the Godhead and life-changing trust in Him as both "Savior" and "Lord." What makes Jesus' discipleship paradigm unique, then, is that such a relationship could never be duplicated by any earthly mentor or spiritual overseer regardless of that person's level of Christian maturity.

One implication of this is that any spiritual formation

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[29]Eph 4:16.

[30]Eph 4:11-12.

paradigm must acknowledge as foundational the on-going co-discipleship of all parties involved in the process. Rather than the hierarchical and authoritative discipleship model seen in the Gospels, a post-ascension model must emphasize believers building up one another while all are being simultaneously trained directly by Christ.[31] This in no way denies the benefits of mature believers working closely with younger converts, but recognizes nevertheless that they are both growing together in Christian maturity. This concept does, however, bring into question any transitory, hierarchical (one-directional) discipleship models that are constructed primarily from Jesus' methodology derived from the gospel record.

Because of misconceptions associated with the term "discipleship" especially as it relates to the unique and non-repeatable aspects of Christ's methodology, Sondra Matthaei suggests that discipleship be replaced by the term "faith-mentoring," a concept which allows for a reciprocal process to occur in seminary spiritual formation.[32] Recognizing that students have an important role to play in the process, and acknowledging the bi-directional or omni-directional flow of God's grace in mentoring relationships

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[31]Ibid., 10.

[32]"Faith Mentoring in the Classroom," Religious Education 86 (Fall 1991): 540.

greatly impacts one's spiritual formation paradigm. From the perspective of seminary training, it means that the classroom and possibly the entire seminary campus attains the status of a "sacred space" which honors God's work in and through all the relationships it enfolds.[33] It also means that students and faculty alike can greatly benefit from the Spirit-controlled and dynamic processes taking place during the seminary experience.

In addition to Christ's physical absence, other differences from the first century model should be considered in constructing a spiritual formation paradigm appropriate to the seminary context. These include the differences between the oriental culture of biblical times and modern Western culture, the advancement of twenty centuries of church history, including the completion and availability of the canon of Scripture, and the ready availability of an immense corpus of Christian scholarship. Biblical principles remain constant through time, however, and the challenge to uncover and apply these to the seminary context remains. What foundational principles did Christ and the authors of the New Testament consider important? What was the overall goal the New Testament writers had in mind in the spiritual development of their converts and

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[33]Ibid., 541.

churches, and what procedures did they implement to bring that goal about? These questions are crucial to establishing a valid spiritual formation paradigm and are the subject of the following section.

The Biblical Goal and Process of Spiritual Formation

While the term "spiritual formation" is relatively new in academic circles, the concept it represents dates back to God's original self-disclosure to man in the Garden of Eden. Genesis records that man was created in God's image,[34] but through the Fall that image was lost and rendered incapable of natural transmission to subsequent generations.[35] In this sense, "spiritual formation" can be viewed as the progressive restoration of spiritual attributes originally given to man but lost in the Fall.[36]

Overturning the curse upon the human race and the restoration of God's image occurs only by way of spiritual union with the Lord Jesus Christ, also called in Scripture the "Second Man" and the "Last Adam."[37] By revealing Himself through the incarnate Word and through the teachings

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[34]Genesis 1:27.

[35]Genesis 5:3.

[36]John 3:5.

[37]Romans 5:10, 17-19; Jesus as the "last Adam" and the "second Man" is found in 1 Cor 15:45ff.

and admonitions of the written Word, God makes possible the "spiritual formation" of the entire Body of Christ.[38] In recording both the earthly life of Christ and the writings of those transformed by Him, Scripture describes both the goal to be attained in spiritual formation and the means of reaching it. One writer suggests three key biblical terms which circumscribe the goal: "formation," "discipleship," and "maturity."[39] Considering passages in which these terms are found reveals a multi-faceted image of what God desires in the life of believers and shows ways in which seminary spiritual formation efforts can facilitate what God intends to accomplish following a person's conversion to Christianity and in his preparation for future ministry.

Formation

In Romans 12:2, Paul encourages believers to refuse passive conformity to a world system from which they have

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[38]Several New Testament passages indicate that their authors wrote for the explicit purpose of causing their readers to grow in their Christian life. Examples include Luke 1:1-4; John 20:31; 1 John 1:1-4; 5:13. 1 Peter 1:10-12 indicates that the Old Testament prophets had a similar ministry in mind. I Cor 10:6 and 11 intimate the entire Old Testament "story" was played out and recorded for the "admonition" of New Testament believers.

[39]John M. Dettoni, "What is Spiritual Formation," The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel and James Wilhoit (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 11.

been delivered and instead to be "transformed" (Gr. *metamorphao*) by an active, spiritual renewal of their minds. In Galatians 4:19, Paul likens himself to a mother in labor as he strives to see Christ "formed" (Gr. *morphao*) in his converts. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, he teaches that believers are spiritually "transformed" (Gr. *metamorphao*) into the Lord's image as they behold His glory. The root word in each of these passages (Gr. *morphao)* suggests that the inner being or essential nature of a believer is radically altered through the normal (and expected) process of Christian growth.[40] The result is an ever increasing likeness to the person of Jesus Christ along with corresponding changes in outward behavior. Transformation from the inside out is the goal of spiritual formation and one towards which all seminary training must be oriented.

Each of the three passages mentioned above points to a distinct area of responsibility in the "formation" component of seminary training. Romans 12:2 emphasizes the personal responsibility of each believer to focus his mind on that which will produce spiritual transformation. One way the seminary experience could greatly enhance this process is by

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[40]Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, 2 Vols. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 1:155.

incorporating Scripture as a primary text in the seminary classroom. While this may go without saying in evangelical circles, more could be done to further this objective than is presently being done. In Bible, theology, language, and exegesis courses, for example, faculty members could challenge students to memorize and meditate upon relevant passages of Scripture throughout the semester in conjunction with the more "academic" assignments. The syllabus for each seminary course could include one or more spiritual formation objectives which would serve to guide the selection of appropriate Scripture texts. Each class should be seen as an opportunity to further the overall spiritual formation objectives of the seminary.

The first two verses of Romans 12 also considers non-conformity with the world as part of the spiritual formation process. This aspect would certainly be enhanced if the seminary experience represents for the student some degree of separation from pressures from the world system such as that from a "secular" job or humanistically-based studies at a secular school. For some students seminary could even become a "desert" experience comparable to that of Moses, Paul, and Christ Himself, all of whom enjoyed a time of relative isolation and intense spiritual renewal prior to involvement in "full-time ministry." Seen from another perspective, seminary training could also constitute a

response to Jesus' invitation to "come aside . . . to a deserted place and rest a while."[41] Building upon the "retreat" dimension of seminary in this way could enhance the spiritual growth of those needing to come apart from pressures of the world before full engagement in ministry.

Use of the term "formation" in Galatians 4:19 appears to address the responsibilities of those who oversee the spiritual formation process more so than those undergoing it. Paul's "laboring in birth" over his converts identifies the task of spiritual oversight as difficult and potentially painful. From this it would seem that a seminary committed to undertaking biblical spiritual formation would compliment formal classroom training with relationships with qualified mentors willing to invest the time and possibly strenuous and even painful efforts required to oversee the process of spiritual growth.

A third emphasis is seen in 2 Corinthians 3:18 which describes believers being molded in their moral nature and

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[41]Mark 6:31. The author has met with numerous prospective seminary students who expressed a felt need to participate in such an experience. Some of these were graduating from humanistically-based education institutions and needed a spiritual "change of scenery" where they do not have to contend for their doctrinal beliefs. Some were enrolled at liberal theological schools. Still others were sensing the need to break away from spiritual oppression at their place of employment. All wanted to prepare for future ministry, but realized that in addition to the formal training, they also needed a "quiet place" in which to rest and collect themselves spiritually.

transformed into God's image as they behold the glory of the Lord. This passage underscores the importance of a Christ-centered curriculum and seminary campus environment. If Christ is truly exalted throughout every facet of the training, seminarians can rightfully be expected to grow in His likeness while in study. Based on this principle, seminary administrators should coordinate and oversee seminary programs in such a way as to ensure a truly Christ-centered experience. One would also expect seminary faculty and staff to reflect and model Christ-likeness in their relationships and interactions with students.

Discipleship

"Discipleship" is a second concept embodied in spiritual formation. The verb "make disciples" is actually the only imperative in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19f; "go," "baptizing," and "teaching" are participial verbs qualifying or further defining what is involved in making disciples. The term itself (Gr. *matheteuo*) means "to cause someone to be a follower or imitator."[42]

A disciple is made and spiritual formation occurs to the degree that a believer consciously and progressively patterns his life after Jesus Christ, seeking to do what He

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[42]Louw & Nida, 1:471.

did, live the kind of life that He lived, and obey His commands. As a disciple grows, he becomes increasingly qualified to encourage others to follow in his footsteps. Just as Paul encouraged his converts to follow him as he followed Christ,[43] the pattern of Christ-like living can be similarly transmitted from one believer to another. Johnson summarizes this concept as follows:

> Attending to the lives of official and ordinary saints within the extended community is a vital means of spiritual formation. Training in Christianity fundamentally is training in following a person. Those who have learned to follow provide us with paradigms of growth and maturity in the Christian life. We learn what it means to follow Christ mainly through watching how other believers from many times, places and circumstances have followed.[44]

Seminary training incorporates the biblical process of disciple-making when maturing students personally observe and interact with more mature members of the body of Christ. Nevertheless, the biblical concept of making disciples cannot be equated with models that are authoritative or predominantly content-centered.

One way "disciple-making" could be integrated into a seminary curriculum is by studying the lives of believers in various time-periods, places and circumstances. Through studies in church history, for example, students can learn

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[43]1 Cor 4:16, 11:1; Phil 3:17.

[44]Johnson, 125.

what following Christ meant for others who have gone before. The heroes of church history comprise part of the "great cloud of witnesses" whose recorded lives and deeds encourage believers to run their own race with endurance.[45] Professors of church history have a tremendous opportunity to foster spiritual growth through their subject.

Another often overlooked opportunity for integrating spiritual formation with traditionally academically oriented subject is in studying the Gospels, and in particular, the life of Jesus. Part of becoming like Christ is following Him in the overall "style of life" He chose for Himself.[46] Faith in Christ involves not only trusting in Him as Savior, but also believing that the specific practices in which He engaged are worthy of emulation.[47] Scripture clearly demonstrates that Jesus' life was characterized by specific activities such as solitude, silence, prayer, service, sacrificial living, study, and meditation on Scripture. Students must be taught that His great public acts arose from a life formed through the spiritual disciplines. A spiritual formation program must not overlook the tangible ways of imitating Christ's manner of life as it is recorded

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[45]Heb 12:1.

[46]Willard, ix.

[47]Ibid.

in the Gospels. One would expect a seminary program to provide teaching, personal challenges, and opportunities to experience the classical disciplines of the Christian life, all within a context of personal accountability.

Maturity

A third concept embodied in the process of spiritual formation is "maturity," a term referring to growth in Christ-likeness over time. In Colossians 1:28 and 29, Paul states that the goal of his preaching and teaching ministry was to present every individual under his oversight mature (Gr. *teleios*) in Christ Jesus. As long as some remained at unacceptable levels of spiritual infancy,[48] he was committed to laboring fervently for their spiritual growth.[49] Paul and other New Testament writers were deeply concerned for the spiritual maturity of those under their care,[50] a concern which ought to be shared by those responsible for seminary training. Addressing this concern on the seminary level would require developing ways of evaluating and monitoring the spiritual growth of students throughout the

[48]e.g. 1 Cor 3:1-3.

[49]e.g.. 1 Cor 15:10 where Paul speaks of his "abundant labor" for the believers in Corinth, and Col 1:9-13, Paul's prayer for growth in the Colossian church.

[50]e.g.. John's as reflected in 1 John 1:3 and 5:13, and Peter's as reflected in 2 Peter 1:13-15.

seminary experience, including initial assessment, ongoing monitoring of spiritual development, and some kind of final evaluation. Scripture suggests various indicators of spiritual maturity which could be applied to this assessment effort, including the ability to teach others[51] and the capacity to discern good from evil.[52] A seminary experience designed to foster maturity in the lives of its students should establish an appropriate set of biblical indices of maturity and have a system for evaluating students by them.

A second facet of maturity is the subject depicted in Paul's discussion of the "perfect man" of Ephesians 4, yet this is often overlooked in discussions of discipleship. Here it is not the individual Christian who is in view. Paul has in mind, rather, a mature congregation of believers giving evidence of its corporate maturity through its unity and a commonly-held faith (4:13), its steadfastness in the face of error and false doctrine (4:14), its speaking the truth in love (4:15), and its total membership involvement in loving, body-edifying ministry (4:16). From the beginning of Christianity, growth and formation of the community has been the primary focus, with the formation of individuals issuing from the life of the healthy

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[51]Heb 5:12.

[52]Heb 5:14.

community.[53] To properly accommodate this facet of maturity in ministerial training, the seminary experience cannot ignore exposure to and participation in a maturing fellowship of believers. By the time of graduation, seminarians should be capable not only of recognizing the marks of a mature body of believers but skillfully leading a congregation towards such an end as well.

It is an essential yet often overlooked principle that God has ordained and equipped the church to be "self-edifying." Indeed, it is to be the very vehicle of maturity for Christians.[54] The New Testament epistles are filled with exhortations for believers to participate in activities fostering edification of the body. Members are called upon to love, care for, admonish, greet, serve, forgive, comfort, exhort, submit to, sing to, confess to, minister to and show hospitality to one another, all with an eye toward building one another up in the faith.[55] Paul caps one discussion of the activities of the assembled body with the words, "Let

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[53]Rita Cowan, "Spiritual Formation in the Seminary Community" (Doctoral dissertation., Phillips Graduate Seminary, 1991), 103.

[54]Eph 4:16.

[55]Exemplary passages include Rom 13:8; 15:14; 1 Cor 12:25; Col 3:16; 1 Th 4:18; Heb 3:13; 10:25; 1 Pt 4:9, 10; 5:5.

all things be done for edification."[56]

It follows that spiritual formation during the seminary experience cannot be separate from active involvement in a an expression of the body of Christ. Believers grow in the context of faith community, and seminary spiritual formation efforts would be severely limited without such involvement. Indeed, the gathered seminary community as well as its various sub-units (e.g. classes, chapel services), could be viewed as particular expressions of the Christ's body through which edification occurs. A seminary spiritual formation program cannot ignore the fact that group settings are one of the most vital contexts for spiritual formation and guidance, and individual classes as well as other forms of meetings on and off campus, are suited to that end.

Other Goals

Scripture suggests other less tangible concepts which shed light on the goal of spiritual formation. While these goals defy objective quantification or inclusion as tangible components of a curriculum, they must be considered in the structure of a spiritual formation program. "Holiness" and "sanctification" are key concepts implying both position and potential. Though the believer has "been sanctified through

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[56]I Cor 14:26.

the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all,"[57] the "state" of the Christian, regrettably, does not always match his "standing." Yet the New Testament paradigm of spiritual formation stresses the process whereby believers experience in ever-increasing measure the holiness in which they already stand.[58] Seminaries acknowledge the importance of sanctification by encouraging students to dedicate the time, energy, and space amid the pressures of schooling to comprehend and facilitate these changes God wants to bring about in their lives.

"Fruitfulness" is another concept which, while not equivalent to spirituality, suggests both a goal to be sought and evidence of proximity to it. Galatians 5:19-21 suggests that a life being spiritually formed will produce inward fruit such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, as well as corresponding outward manifestations of these qualities. Certainly the concept of "fruitfulness" should be considered in evaluating the changes brought about by seminary training. This would seemingly entail evaluation of life and ministry for evidence that such fruit is being born.

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[57]Heb 10:10.

[58]Lawrence O. Richards, A Practical Theology of Spirituality (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 24.

Finally, "love" must be seen as the crowning concept in ministry preparation. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 13:3 that a minister could pay the "ultimate price" by giving up all his material wealth or even his physical life and yet not profit eternally because of the absence of love. Love is the consummate measure of spirituality as well as its highest aspiration.[59] This is undoubtedly why Alan Jones suggests that seminaries be called "crucibles of love."[60] John Meyendorff would agree, adding that the church, whose oneness is of transcendent origin, is the appropriate object of that love to be fostered through seminary training.[61] Perhaps Jesus stated it most succinctly in describing the greatest commandments in terms of love towards God and neighbor.[62]

What unites these biblical images comprising the goal of spiritual formation is the person of Jesus Christ. For Him, spirituality consisted of living a human life on earth in complete and total harmony with God the Father. In Jesus, spirituality and normal human experiences were

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[59]Ibid., 27.

[60]Jones, 10.

[61]"Response to 'Are We Lovers Anymore?'" Theological Education 23 (Autumn 1987): 42.

[62]Matt 22:36-39.

perfectly unified in daily life.[63] The person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His present glory at the right hand of the Father must be central to every facet of spiritual training in the seminary program. Admittedly, for any of Christ's followers, this union of spirituality and earthly life involves much more than human effort alone. Yet man does have his part in the process, and this part is one in which seminarians who are to be successful ministers must be well-trained and along which path they should be well-advanced. A seminary spiritual formation program must involve biblically sound methods, goals, activities and relationships. These must be intentional, both on the part of the seminary in providing them and on the part of the student in incorporating them as essential components of his seminary preparation. Virtually everything the seminary is and does should support the process of inner transformation.

For the first disciples, spiritual formation was the inevitable consequence of living and experiencing the Master in an intimate and personal daily walk with Him.[64] It cannot be otherwise with disciples today. While Jesus no longer walks the shores of Galilee or teaches in the Temple

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[63]Meyendorff, 49. The following passages illustrate this unity: John 5:19-20; 6:38; 8:28-29; 12:44-45, and 14:9-11.

[64]V. James Mannoia, "Spiritual Formation: Christ Formed in Us," Preacher's Magazine 61 (Dec-Feb 1985): 33.

at Jerusalem, He did make arrangements for His physical absence, promising that upon His departure the "Spirit of truth" would come and guide His followers into all truth.[65] From a human perspective, therefore, the process of spiritual formation requires disciples to avail themselves of the fullest possible ministry of God's guiding Spirit. If a seminary program for spiritual formation is established upon the scriptural parameters in this chapter, the seminary can be an environment where this crucial process is fostered.

A Conceptual Paradigm for Spiritual Formation

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, biblical truth applicable to all Christians has a heightened importance for those called to be leaders and overseers in the church. Since spirituality lies at the heart of the Christian faith, spiritual formation ought to be at the heart of seminary training. But this may be a difficult concept to implement in light of the tremendous amount of knowledge and skills usually considered necessary for success in ministry. How can "spirituality" be tacked on to a curriculum already overloaded with knowledge and skills courses? One answer is a more thorough integration of

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[65]John 16:13.

spiritual formation concepts into the formal curriculum of seminary education.

Sounding a theme common to many advocates of integration, Dwight Grubbs finds knowledge and skills courses themselves an inadequate preparation for ministry, and he challenges seminaries to incorporate in their curricula and environment the information, encouragement, and living examples necessary for the intentional spiritual formation of students.[66] He warns that just because spiritual formation cannot be conceptualized in terms of courses or semester hours, it does not mean it is optional in forming effective ministers.[67] Sandra Schneiders suggests that spirituality be considered an essential "discipline" rather than a "subject," raising it above the level of cognitive material to be learned and emphasizing the process of learning what is available and personally investigating what is not yet understood.[68]

Schneiders suggests a three-fold rationale for studying spirituality incorporating intellectual, transformative, and pastoral components. Each facet reinforces the centrality of spirituality to the overall purpose of seminary

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[66]Grubbs, 34.

[67]Ibid., 35.

[68]Sandra M. Schneiders, "Response to 'Are We Lovers Anymore?'" Theological Education 23 (Autumn 1987): 30.

preparation.[69] First, as with any academic discipline, the search for knowledge about spirituality including its history, theology, and praxis form the basis of an intellectual rationale for studying spiritual formation. This is perhaps the easiest to assimilate as most seminarians expect seminary teach them new things. Most students also find learning new subjects and expanding their knowledge motivating and intellectually satisfying. While some would be content with this form of growth alone, a biblically sound spiritual formation program cannot justifiably remain at the cognitive level.

An intellectual understanding of spiritual formation concepts must be conjoined with personal experience of the subject. This suggests a second, what could be called transformative rationale. The discipline of Christian spiritual formation, representing, as it does, the "living and powerful" Word of God, has potential to bring about positive changes in the lives of its students. A biblically sound paradigm for spiritual formation fosters this Christ-like growth at every possible juncture in the seminary experience, including the classroom. Spiritual formation is "studied" so that students are transformed spiritually.

Flowing from a well-rounded study and experiential

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[69]Ibid., 32.

understanding of spiritual formation should come a desire to help others live their spiritual lives more fully and fruitfully. This suggests a pastoral rationale as the highest aspiration of the seminary's spiritual formation program. Those with a heart for ministry are further encouraged in their study of spiritual formation by being reminded of benefits to others that flow from a mind well-educated, a minister well-trained, and a life well-lived. Seminary students must be trained in the methodology and techniques of facilitating the spiritual growth of other believers.

The diagram in Figure One, adapted from a model presented by Robin J. Pryor[70], suggests a way of integrating spiritual formation with the full range of traditional seminary subjects. Under this paradigm, spiritual formation lies at the heart and center of ministry preparation, with Schneider's three-fold rationale as well as other factors such as denominational polity and practice, church liturgy, missiology and ethics "informing" the process. According to this model, all other disciplines and activities of seminary training find their organizing center in "being," that is, the spiritual formation of seminary students.

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[70]"Nurturing Spiritual Development in the Uniting Church: Spiritual Development and Theological Education," Ministerial Formation 66 (July 1994): 17.

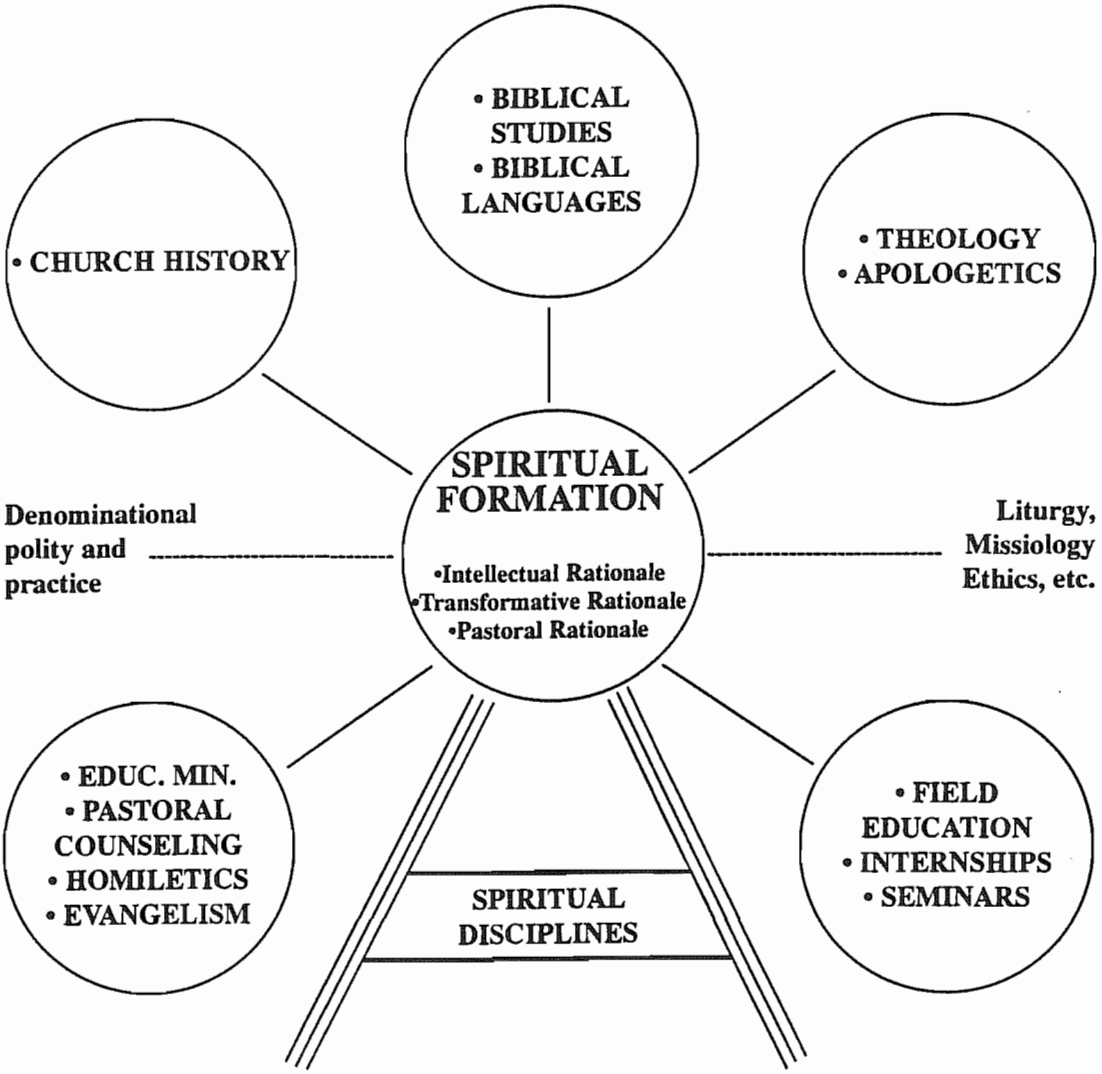

FIGURE ONE. Spiritual formation in relation to overall ministerial formation in seminary education.

Such a model would effect both the delivery and content of traditional seminary subjects in tangible ways. Theology, for example, would extend beyond systematics, dogmatics and ethics to include theological reflection on the human experience of the mystery of God. Students would be challenged to participate in the theological enterprise themselves (i.e. "do theology") and work out implications of biblical doctrine for their own lives and ministries. This recalls the common pattern in Pauline epistles where doctrine is presented followed by the out-workings of that doctrine in the lives of Paul's readers. The writer has long maintained that responsibility flows from doctrine, and the seminary student should be required to establish for himself and his ministry what those responsibilities are.

Under the rubric of integration biblical studies would be expanded to incorporate a meditative approach to scripture complementing critical study. Church history as mentioned previously would give particular attention to the patterns and practices of spirituality underlying key individuals, movements and eras of Church history. Internships and practicums themselves would expand to become not only places to practice ministry, but opportunities for personal and theological reflection, expanded mentor relationships, and spiritual growth. The spiritual disciplines, their inculcation, supervised practice, and

reflection are placed at the foundation of this paradigm, acknowledging that in the full redemption of life by Christ the entire human personality, including the body, is accepted and made whole.[71] Such a model affords due weight to the classical disciplines practiced by devotional and spiritual masters down through the centuries. The approach taken in matters of spirituality must at once be theologically, historically, christologically, and psychologically sound, and this model accommodates all these various criteria.

The paradigm properly locates "academics" by acknowledging the different domains of learning (cognitive, affective, and skill) and keeping them in proper relation to one another. The top half of the diagram, it will be noted, is concerned primarily with what the student knows: a proper understanding of doctrine, biblical languages, and church history. The bottom half relates mainly to what the student can do: skills in preaching, counseling, administering, and evangelizing. "Being" is central to all of these, a concept which orients the entire seminary enterprise around "the one thing needful" in each believer's life, becoming like Christ.

When growing into the image of Christ is made the

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[71]Ibid., 19.

highest priority, time spent at the feet of the Master, seeking His glory and being transformed into His image rises in priority as the seminary develops and implements its various programs. None of this denies the important role played by academic learning, training, and human relationships in that process. It does, however, acknowledge that the scriptural criteria for those seeking pastoral office have more to do with character than they do with either knowledge or skills.

Above all else, this model reveals the importance of creating "space" in the seminary experience, even beyond those for the practice of specific disciplines, for students to reflect upon the God they serve and, in this light, to attend to the state of their own souls. It abhors the notion that students who come to seminary with their own hurts and wounds and immaturities should have them anesthetized or overlooked by the busyness of seminary life or by ministry to others. It incorporates all elements of a student's life, including work and family, and considers them crucial to the overall preparation of the believer/minister. And finally, it recognizes the importance of "faculty formation" in the process of student formation, acknowledging not only the role of professors-as-mentors but also their need for ongoing spiritual growth and the reciprocal role students play in that process as well.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION SURVEYS

How closely do evangelical seminaries adhere to the conceptual paradigm and biblical parameters discussed in the previous chapter? The answer to this question was sought through a spiritual formation survey sent to representative seminaries selected from the membership list of the Association of Theological Schools. Thirty-five evangelical seminaries considered similar in doctrine and ministry philosophy to Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary were sent a spiritual formation questionnaire in the second half of 1996. A cover letter signed by the dean of LBTS and the author explained Liberty's interest in learning from other schools about their spiritual formation efforts. The questionnaire and cover letter are reproduced in Appendix A. The thirty-five seminaries to which questionnaires were sent are listed in Appendix B. Of the thirty-five surveys mailed, twenty-six were returned, for a response rate of 74%.

Survey questions were divided under three headings: Assessment, Spiritual Formation Program, and Mentoring.

Under Assessment, five questions sought to determine the extent of student assessment efforts conducted before, during, and after seminary training. Under Spiritual Formation Program, four questions were asked concerning the existence and nature of the seminary's formal spiritual formation efforts, including the availability of particular courses dedicated primarily to spiritual development of students. Under the heading of Mentoring, five questions focused on the extent and nature of student relationships with those considered personal spiritual "mentors." An open-ended question at the end of the survey instrument solicited suggestions for LBTS in building its spiritual formation program.

Survey Results

Assessment

Assessment is here defined as all the steps seminaries employ to evaluate both their own efforts as well as the students' progress relative to the overall goal of spiritual formation and ministerial preparation. Assessment may involve one or more of the following: initial assessment of readiness for ministry of incoming students, periodic evaluation throughout the seminary educational experience, exit evaluation, and ongoing assessment of alumni. A summary of assessment survey results is found in Table One.

Table One
Assessment

1. Does your seminary formally assess readiness for ministry of incoming (admitted) M.Div. students?

Yes	No
20 (76.9%)	6 (23.1%)

2. If you answered "yes" to Question #1, what tests or other instruments are used?

Instrument	# of seminaries	% of those formally assessing	% of total respondents
Psychological inventory	11	55.0	42.3
Formal interview	10	50.0	38.5
Temperament analysis	7	35.5	26.9
Spiritual gifts inventory	6	30.0	23.1

3. Do you assess readiness for ministry of outgoing seminary students?

Yes	No
21 (80.8%)	5 (19.2%)

4. If so, what means are used to accomplish this assessment?

Means	# of seminaries	% of those assessing	% of total respondents
Exit interview	14	66.7	53.9
Required internship	11	55.0	42.3
Capstone course(s)	8	25.8	30.8
Comprehensive exam	5	23.8	19.2
Other	7	33.3	26.9

5. Do you regularly conduct an alumni survey assessing the seminary's performance in preparing students for ministry?

Yes	No
15 (57.7%)	11 (42.3%)

Survey results indicate that seminaries consider assessment of readiness for ministry an important component of spiritual formation efforts. Over three-fourths (77%) of responding schools assess readiness for ministry of incoming students, and they employ a variety of means to accomplish the task. Written instruments are the predominant method, with over half (55.0%) of the schools that assess readiness for ministry utilizing a psychological inventory of some kind. Over a third (36%) of schools that assess readiness for ministry utilize a temperament analysis, and only slightly fewer (30%) give students a spiritual gifts inventory. Twelve percent report using the Association of Theological School's (ATS) "Profiles of Ministry," an assessment program designed specifically for seminary students. Stage I of the Profiles of Ministry is designed to assess seminarians on "thirty characteristics judged most important for the beginning minister by laity and clergy throughout the churches of North America."[1]

Some schools use methods other than written instruments to assess incoming students. Half of the schools which assess new students conduct a formal interview of incoming students. Twelve percent report utilizing a specially

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[1]"Assessing Your Personal and Professional Gifts for Ministry: Profiles of Ministry-Stage I," The Association of Theological Schools Brochure, Pittsburgh, PA, n.d.

designed seminary course in which student assessment is an integral part. These special courses are offered under titles such as "Discovering Your Ministry Potential" or "Introduction to Ministry." Twelve percent rely on faculty/advisor evaluations of students that are conducted early in the student's program, with these evaluations carried out through a formal interview or through a class specially designed for assessment purposes.

Assessment near completion of seminary training appears to be equally as important as initial assessment in the schools surveyed. Over four-fifths (81%) of respondent schools assess readiness for ministry of graduating students. This is almost the same percentage that formally assesses incoming students, with the data showing a strong correlation between those assessing incoming students and those assessing graduates. Only one school reports assessing incoming students but not assessing outgoing students, which means that a full 95% of schools assessing outgoing students (73% of all respondent schools) also assess readiness for ministry of incoming students. Therefore almost three-fourths of respondent schools seek to evaluate actual growth in spiritual maturity and ministry potential over time. These have a mechanism in place and apparently make some attempt to ascertain "value-added" by the seminary experience.

As with assessment of incoming students, the means employed to assess outgoing students vary widely among evangelical seminaries. Two thirds (67%) of the schools assessing soon-to-be graduates require an exit interview, and over half (55%) require a ministry internship. Over one fourth (26%) do so with a capstone courses, and only slightly less (24%) report giving final-year students a comprehensive examination. Other means of exit assessment mentioned in surveys include development of a doctrinal statement by the student and administration the ATS' Profiles of Ministry, Stage II, an instrument specifically designed for ministry students at the completion of their formal training. Almost three-fourths (71%) of schools assessing outgoing students utilize two or more of the means discussed above.

The concern for assessment of seminary students drops markedly once they graduate and leave school. Almost half (42%) of responding schools indicate they do not regularly survey alumni to investigate how well the seminary prepared them for the ministries in which they are involved. This is unfortunate, as alumni active in ministry would presumably be in a better position than those in or just completing seminary to answer questions about the adequacy of their seminary training. Of the respondent schools which do regularly assess alumni (58%), a full 80% of these (46% of

total respondents) assess both incoming and exiting students as well. This figure indicates that those schools which understand the value of assessing alumni are also those which highly value assessment *per se* and consider it important in the overall task of ministry preparation.

Spiritual Formation Program

A summary of the answers to questions about spiritual formation program is given in Table Two. Over four-fifths (85%) of respondent schools indicate having a formal spiritual formation program. Since the term "formal" in the questionnaire was left undefined in the cover letter and questionnaire, this may have contributed to some ambiguity in the responses. For example, of the 15% of respondent schools indicating they have no formal spiritual formation program, all marked one or more "components" of a spiritual formation program in the subsequent question. This fact, combined with numerous comments referring to anticipated developments in spiritual formation efforts at schools stating they have no official "program," resulted in the assumption being made that, for the purposes of this study, virtually all respondent schools either have or are about to have some semblance of a spiritual formation program.

The term "formal" was originally selected for the

Table Two
Spiritual Formation Program

6. Does your seminary have a formal spiritual formation program in place for those training for the ministry?

Yes	No
22 (84.6%)	4 (15.4%)

7. What are the major components of your spiritual formation program?

Component	# of seminaries	%of seminaries
Chapel Services	24	92.3
Spiritual Formation Courses	24	92.3
Small Groups	21	80.8
Required church involvement	17	65.4
Assignment of mentor	13	50.0
Campus pastor/chaplain	8	30.8

8. If spiritual formation courses are indicated in Question #7, how many semester hours of spiritual formation course-work are required of M.Div. students? _____ semester hours

(Figures below based on 24 schools indicating that spiritual formation courses are major components of SF program)

# of hours	# of seminaries	% of seminaries
0	5	20.8
1-3	8	33.3
4-6	9	37.5
7-9	1	4.2
10+	1	4.2
TOTAL	24	100%

9. How many additional semester hours of spiritual formation course-work are available beyond the required spiritual formation courses?

(Figures below based on all 26 respondents, seeking the number of elective spiritual formation.)

# of elective hours	# of seminaries	% of seminaries
0	7	26.9
1-3	7	26.9
4-6	3	11.5
7-9	2	7.7
10-12	2	7.7
13+	5	19.2

questionnaire to detect if the seminary has a systematic approach to spiritual formation, that is, whether efforts have been consciously integrated into somewhat of a spiritual formation program of one sort or another. Several respondents, however, interpreted the term "formal" to mean "required." Regardless of the way the question was interpreted, it is certain that a large majority of seminaries consider spiritual formation efforts important enough to incorporate them in some programmatic fashion. Many of these components are also required of all students.

In answer to the question, "What are the major components of your spiritual formation program?" (Question #7), no school listed less than two components regardless of how they answered the previous question about the existence of a formal spiritual formation program. Because of the universal response to this question, the following analysis proceeds on the assumption that all twenty-six respondent schools essentially have a spiritual formation "program."

All but two respondent schools (92%) indicate that chapel services constitute major components of their spiritual formation efforts. Chapel services have traditionally played a key role in seminary life, and therefore a high response rate to this particular component was not unexpected. One question not addressed by the survey, however, is the extent to which chapel attendance is

required of seminary students and, secondly, how often chapel services are conducted.

To obtain further data on this question, the "spiritual life" section of nineteen seminary catalogs were reviewed combined with follow-up telephone calls to several schools. At the nineteen seminaries studied, chapel services were conducted an average of three times per week. At approximately one-third (36.8%) of these schools, chapel attendance is "required," and for some the requirement is considered "curricular," meaning that students cannot graduate without meeting minimum chapel attendance requirements. At another third of the schools (31.5%) chapel attendance is considered optional, with catalogs employing terms such as "expected," "encouraged," and "voluntary." For an equal number of schools (31.5%), no indication is given in the school catalog as to whether chapel is required or voluntary. Since one would expect a mandatory chapel attendance policy to be made explicit in school publications, it is likely that chapel attendance is optional at these schools as well.

All but two respondent schools (92%) indicate that spiritual formation courses are a major component of the seminary's spiritual formation program. The fact that spiritual formation courses rank equal with chapel services indicates that such courses are now at a level of signal

importance within the curricula of evangelical seminaries. This could also be said of small groups (often referred to as discipleship groups), which were reported as important components at 81% of respondent seminaries. This reflects an understanding that spiritual formation is a process extending beyond the walls of the classroom and chapel and that the student body's ministry of edification to itself is considered a critical element in the process.

Slightly more than half (65%) of respondent seminaries require church involvement of their students, while several others noted that church attendance was "expected" although not actually required. Follow-up phone calls to several schools with required church involvement revealed various levels of intensity with which a church attendance policy is enforced and monitored. At the lowest level church attendance is required though not formally tracked. At a slightly higher level of accountability, attendance is tracked only during the semester or semesters in which the student participates in some form of supervised field ministry, which usually takes place towards the end of schooling. At the highest level of accountability, the student is required to register for a field education course or Christian service assignment each semester he is enrolled full-time. Accountability may involve the student submitting a semester record documenting church involvement

or even receiving a grade from the supervising pastor of the church in which he is involved.

Approximately half of all respondent schools assign a designated mentor to each student enrolled in ministerial training programs at some time during seminary training. Such seminaries recognize the importance of relationships in the spiritual formation process that are more personal and intimate than what can be found in the classroom. Further details concerning these mentoring relationships were solicited on a later section of the survey, and these results are summarized below.

Less than a third of respondent seminaries (31%) have a designated campus chaplain or pastor, although several schools commented that faculty often serve in such a role when necessary. In posing this question on the survey, it was assumed that the presence of a designated campus chaplain would communicate a strong message about the seminary's concern for the spiritual well-being of students, although faculty sensitive to spiritual issues in the lives of students could presumably have the same effect if their availability and willingness in this area was widely-known. Only one school added "spiritual retreat" to the list of elements in its spiritual formation program, however this concept merits further consideration and is taken up in the spiritual formation program recommendations in Chapter Five.

One seminary commented that it offers a course on the subject of prayer as part of their spiritual formation program.

While 92% of respondent schools indicate spiritual formation courses are a major component of their spiritual formation efforts, schools vary widely in the number of semester hours of "spiritual formation" actually required of their pastoral training students. Survey questions in this regard sought to determine what portion of the seminary curriculum focuses primarily on who the student is over against what he knows or what he can do, that is, "being" over "knowing" or "doing." It also sought to evaluate, in a limited fashion, the extent to which training in spiritual formation is integrated with the curriculum rather than relegated to extracurricular activities.

The existence of required spiritual formation courses indicates that some degree of integration of spiritual formation concepts occurs within the academic curriculum in almost 80% of respondent seminaries. One-third of respondent seminaries require between one and three semester hours, over one-third (38%) require between four and six semester hours, with a small percentage (8%) requiring more. In practical terms, this means that two-thirds of respondent seminaries probably require either one or two courses designated as spiritual formation. The average

number of required spiritual formation semester hours for schools which offer any spiritual formation courses is 3.5. Considering all respondent seminaries, including those which do not require any spiritual formation courses, the average number of required spiritual formation course work drops to 3.2 semester hours.

Interpretation of these data requires several qualifications. Although certain courses are listed in seminary catalogs as "spiritual formation," it must be acknowledged that spiritual formation concepts and related spiritual growth can be facilitated through virtually any course the seminary offers. Studying theology, church history, biblical Greek, and learning to prepare and deliver sermons all have a potentially formative effect on the heart and soul of students. In effect every seminary course can be a course in "spiritual formation." Indeed, the highest level of integration of spiritual formation concepts occurs when seminary administrators and faculty capitalize on this potential and expressly seek to foster spiritual growth at every opportunity, including through each course in the curriculum. Integration is further enhanced when students are made aware of the formative goals and opportunities associated with each course they take, although this survey did not seek to detect integration occurring at this level.

A second qualification, previously alluded to above,

is that the essence of spiritual formation is not "knowing" or "doing," but "being." Because most of the seminary courses offered in traditional classroom format are oriented towards acquiring some combination of knowledge and skill, the concept of a spiritual formation "course" may, in itself, appear somewhat self-contradictory. However, any attempt to foster spirituality must begin with a cognitive awareness of the discipline, and therefore a certain amount of course "content" must be mastered if the student is to have a framework within which to understand the contemporary experience of living out the Gospel.[2] While the student masters the content of the discipline, however, the ultimate goal, in this case, is for the content to transform the student. The degree to which seminaries move beyond teaching the content of spiritual formation to inculcating concepts in the lives of students is crucial to the success of any spiritual formation program. This factor, however, was not possible to accurately measure with the survey of this study.

Another limitation of the survey instrument should be noted. While it was initially assumed that only courses classified as either "spiritual formation" or a related title (e.g. "spiritual growth," "discipleship") would be

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[2]Schneiders, 31.

considered by respondent seminaries, the survey did not precisely define what constitutes a "spiritual formation" course. Since respondent seminaries were allowed to impose their own definition in answering related survey questions, the result is that some schools may have considered courses in other disciplines as comprising part of the set of additional spiritual formation opportunities while others may have considered only courses with "spiritual formation" in the title. While this may have introduced a slight discrepancy in the responses, it was not considered significant enough to effect the results or overall conclusions.

The number of optional spiritual formation courses offered was considered a measure of a seminary's integration of spiritual formation into the overall curriculum. Because of the diverse levels of maturity represented by an entering seminary class, spiritual needs can vary widely among student. One rationale underlying this question was to identify the number of schools having "elective" spiritual formation courses which also evaluate readiness for ministry of incoming students. It would appear that such schools would have the advantage of being able to assign "spiritual remediation" courses to students with greater identified needs. Approximately three-fourths (73%) of respondent seminaries have optional or elective spiritual formation

courses. Of the 20 schools which assess readiness for ministry of incoming students, four-fifths also have elective spiritual formation courses which conceivably could be assigned to those needing "developmental" work in the area of spiritual formation. Unfortunately, it is not determined how many such schools go so far as to assign specific courses in an attempt to address identified spiritual needs.

Mentoring

Mentoring in spiritual formation is based on the concept that certain individuals are not only further along than others in their spiritual journey with Jesus Christ but also have the ability and desire to assist others make progress in "the Way." In this regard, it is generally assumed that seminary faculty are more mature in Christ and in Christian ministry, and that based on this greater knowledge, experience, and maturity they are qualified mentors of seminary students. As discussed in Chapter Three, because all Christians remain disciples of Christ regardless of their level of maturity, a purely hierarchial discipleship model ("I am the mentor; you are the disciple.") is unacceptable. But this in no way undermines the value of mentoring *per se*, which remains as valid today

as Paul's reminder to his converts, "For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us."[3]

The survey questions in this section sought to identify the extent to which seminaries recognize the importance of mentoring relationships extending beyond the formal classroom or academic advising settings, and how and where such mentoring is carried out. It also sought to identify what, if any, expectations are placed upon faculty members in their relationships with seminary students. A further indicator of the role seminary faculty play in mentoring was sought in the identification and designation of specific faculty members with the experience, training, and aptitude for mentoring students. Results of survey questions having to do with mentoring are summarized in Table Three.

Slightly less than half (42%) of respondent schools have a "spiritual formation team" existing as a subset of the seminary faculty body. Due to limitations of the survey instrument, what is not known is how many of the remaining 58% of respondent seminaries expect, and even train, all faculty members to carry out mentoring responsibilities. It is possible that virtually all faculty members at schools without designated spiritual formation faculty actually constitute an active spiritual formation team, while at

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[3]2 Thess 3:7.

Table Three
Mentoring

10. Does your seminary have a designated "spiritual formation team" as a subset of the entire seminary faculty?

Yes	No
11 (42.3%)	15 (57.7)

If your school assigns a "mentor" for each student, please answer Questions 11-14:

(Figures based on the figure of 13 schools which assign mentors to students.)

11. For how many semesters does the formal mentor-student relationship continue?

# of semesters	# of schools	% of schools
(No response)	2	15.4
2	1	7.7
4	2	15.4
5	1	7.7
6+	7	53.8

12. How often does the mentor meet with the student during a given semester specifically for the purpose of discipleship?

Frequency of mtg.	# of schools	% of schools
(Not specified)	4	30.8
2x per sem.	1	7.7
3x per sem.	2	15.4
Weekly	6	46.2

13. Which of the following characterize the mentor-student relationship (check as many as apply):

Characteristic	# of schools	% of schools
One-on-one interaction	13	100
Shared prayer	12	92.3
Office setting	11	84.6
Group meetings	10	76.9
Informal setting	10	76.9
Free discussion	9	69.2
Shared ministry off-campus	9	69.2
Home discussion	8	61.5
Personal assignments	7	53.8
Printed discipleship materials	4	30.8
Retreats	1	7.7

14. Is faculty course-load adjusted to accommodate mentoring responsibilities?

Yes	No	No Response
4 (30.8%)	8 (61.5%)	1 (7.7%)

other schools a mentoring mentality may not be instilled in the faculty to any significant degree. Such a question was not addressed by the survey. Another question left unanswered by the survey is the amount of training in spiritual formation given to members of the spiritual formation team.

Fifty percent of respondent schools reported assigning mentors to pastoral training students. Additional survey questions for schools responding affirmatively sought to investigate this mentor relationship in terms of its duration, frequency, and nature. Over half (54%) of "mentoring" schools report that the mentor-student relationship continues for the duration of the seminary experience, reflecting a deep commitment on the part of these seminaries to the spiritual formation of each student through personal accountability, modeling, and training. Another one-fourth (23%) of "mentoring" schools maintain a formal mentoring relationship for at least half of the average six-semester seminary experience. Regarding the frequency of meetings, in almost half (46%) of the seminaries carrying out mentoring, mentors meet weekly with their students, further evidence of a deep commitment to the application of mentoring concepts in these schools. Another one-fourth (23%) report meeting between two and three times per semester.

To investigate the nature of the mentoring relationships, seminaries were asked to check any number of characteristics describing to interactions between mentors and students. While some of these characteristics may seem contradictory to others, it is recognized that dynamic mentoring relationships take on a variety of forms and occur in different contexts over time. While the survey instrument was not capable of determining mentoring dynamics, it did in many cases reveal a diverse set of mentoring settings and activities within individual schools.

One-on-one interaction and shared prayer are predominant characteristics reported by almost all schools having such meetings (100% and 92% respectively). Eighty-five percent of mentoring schools report meeting in faculty offices, and 77% utilize group settings as part of the process. Between fifty and seventy-five percent of "mentoring" schools indicated that faculty meet informally with students, involve them in free discussion, share ministry experiences off-campus and meet in homes. This reveals that such schools have expanded not only beyond the classroom walls but beyond the seminary campus itself in their efforts to nurture the spiritual growth of students. In tangible ways some seminaries are duplicating or at least attempting to imitate the spontaneous, informal, intimate, and trans-contextual ministry Christ had in the lives of his

closest disciples. Of the thirteen mentoring schools, almost one-third (31%) report that faculty course-loads are adjusted to accommodate the time commitment that mentoring entails, representing another way in which seminary administrators communicate to faculty and students alike that spiritual formation is a key element of the seminary's overall purpose and plan.

Evaluation of Results

From a survey of the biblical record in Chapter Three were derived a set of expectations incumbent upon seminary training if it is to conform to the scriptural model. This section will attempt to answer the question of how seminaries live up to these expectations. One fundamental expectation emerging from this study is that if seminaries are to adequately prepare church leaders, they must take an active role in the spiritual formation of ministerial candidates. Survey results indicate that this message has been widely received by evangelical seminaries. One indication of this is the large majority of schools assessing readiness for ministry either initially, at the conclusion of training, or both. Only twelve percent of respondent schools indicate no formal assessment of readiness for ministry at any time throughout the process. Since three-fourths of schools assess both at the beginning

and the end of seminary training, it appears that individual course grades do not constitute the only method of evaluating changes in "readiness for ministry" over time, and this is good news. Neither does it appear that schools tacitly assume either a relative homogeneity or acceptable levels of spirituality in incoming students. A preponderance of seminaries, it appears, recognizes the need to not only evaluate spiritual preparedness but to take an active role in remedying perceived deficiencies detected in their students.

Further indication of widening concern for spiritual formation is seen in the fact that most schools have spiritual formation courses included in their curriculum, and virtually all schools have in place some form of a spiritual formation "program" extending beyond simply offering spiritual formation courses. While schools may differ widely in the degree of systematization of such a program, a variable that was not measured by this survey, all schools have a multitude of program "components," with many also indicating by way of comments that more developments on this front are underway. Spiritual formation on seminary campuses has thankfully moved beyond the assumption that the desired spiritual growth would occur naturally through class participation and campus chapel services, and such a development is to be applauded and

encouraged.

Another expectation emerging from the scriptural paradigm relates to the variety of training methods and settings Jesus employed in preparing His followers compared to the fairly narrow range of settings characteristic of traditional seminary education. Results indicate that some seminaries are moving in this direction as well. Schools with established mentoring relationships apparently foster those relationships in a variety of settings, with some mentors regularly participating in mutual ministry opportunities with students as well as having them in their homes. Both of these represent encouraging innovations to the traditional seminary programs normally limited to campus activities. Schools which support mentor relationships throughout the duration of the seminary program are exemplary in this regard.

While the activities discussed above are encouraging, there is obvious room for improvement, especially in schools not including mentoring as a significant component of their overall program. Since the concept was a significant feature of Christ's training, it is difficult to conceive how mentoring can in any way be avoided as a key ingredient in seminary preparation. The personal element associated with mentoring would also be essential in any attempt to "tailor" a curriculum to the unique needs and future

ministry of each student in the manner of Jesus with his trainees.

To accomplish this may require seminaries to put forth efforts which were not identifiable by the survey instrument, including measures to modify faculty perceptions of their roles if not their actual job descriptions. On-going, in-service faculty training may be needed to clarify spiritual formation goals for students, identify agreed-upon indicators of spiritual maturity, coordinate efforts, and discuss discipleship or mentoring methods. Faculty training should reinforce the concept of on-going discipleship of all participants in the seminary experience, including the mentors themselves. Training should also help prepare mentors for the "birth-pangs" inevitably associated with sponsoring spiritual growth. No cost, including efforts to lower the student-faculty ratio or increase the supply of qualified mentors, should go unevaluated in considering ways to implement this necessary component in ministerial preparation.

Survey results show that schools both with and without formal mentoring are otherwise employing a variety of non-traditional settings for their training. A majority of schools, for example, utilize small groups, and, whether recognized or not, in this they are utilizing a primary means Christ established for training his leaders. Ideally,

all schools should include not merely small group experiences for their students but also formal training in the use of small group ministry, a component which the survey did not directly assess.

Internships are opportunities for supervised ministry often included in the final phase of seminary training. As such, they parallel the final phase of Christ's training of his disciples, whom He sent out on supervised assignments allowing a progressive and orderly transition leading up to His earthly departure. It appears, however, that a significant number of seminaries fail to recognize this as an essential element of pastoral training. Nonetheless, when properly integrated with the curriculum, internships constitute a viable means of assessing readiness for ministry of outgoing students and forming a needed bridge between formal training and full engagement in ministry.

Since almost half of seminaries surveyed do not require church involvement of their students, it is possible that many ministerial trainees are missing out on a vital component of the New Testament concept of maturity. Since "maturity" in the Bible includes both individual and corporate dimensions, in addition to seminary efforts promoting personal maturity, it is essential that students preparing to lead a local church toward greater spiritual maturity actively participate in a maturing body of

believers throughout the time of their training. Due to limitations in the survey instrument, however, the number of seminaries actually incorporating this concept in their training was not determined. The existence of small groups, campus chaplains, and on-campus chapel services, however, give evidence that some seminary communities rightfully construe themselves to be expressions of the body of Christ in their own right. Such involvement is a healthy adjunct to participation in a local church as well as a contributing factor to overall spiritual formation.

Few schools have apparently considered the "retreat" dimension of seminary training, yet such an experience appears to be a vital component of Christ's preparation of his followers. While active engagement in supervised ministry (e.g. internships) are necessary, especially near the time of completing the program, schools should consider ways in which the early months or semesters of seminary training could constitute a "quiet place" wherein students concentrate more on their personal walk with God and ministry to Him than on any outside ministry. Activities fostering this dimension could include, but would not be limited to, individual and group retreats, marriage week-ends, and Christian service courses focusing on personal spiritual development.

There are several other expectations arising from the

New Testament paradigm which could not be evaluated with the survey instrument used in this study. These do, however, provide avenues for evaluation of spiritual formation efforts at a deeper level. For example, while an overwhelming majority of seminaries offer spiritual formation courses it could not be determined from the survey whether these courses offer training in foundational spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, serving, worship, and sharing one's faith. Since following Christ for His first disciples included walking the paths He walked in the spiritual disciplines, seminary training should include teaching, modeling, and opportunities to participate in the disciplines of the Christian life.

The extent of integration of spiritual formation within the overall curriculum is another facet which the survey instrument was unable to fully evaluate. Schools were asked how many semester hours of spiritual formation course-work were both available and required, and these figures offered valuable insight. In almost four-fifths of respondent schools, some spiritual formation course-work is required, revealing that spiritual formation is, to at least some extent, integrated into pastoral training curricula at most evangelical seminaries.

This, however, leads to additional questions whose answers would shed further light on the value of any

spiritual formation program. For example, to what extent are all courses in the curriculum seen as opportunities to grow in the spiritual realm? To what degree are students challenged to focus on the scriptural truth underlying each discipline studied? Do instructors in all subject areas challenge students to memorize and meditate upon the Word of God? How and to what degree is Christ exalted in all facets of the program? How is the study of particular disciplines, church history, for example, used to provoke emulation of great saints and spiritual masters of previous generations, and how are theology courses utilized as opportunities to reflect on one's experience of the mystery of God? Answers to such questions would reveal much more about how far seminaries have come in their spiritual formation efforts than could be discovered by this study alone.

CHAPTER FIVE

SELF-EVALUATION AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION RECOMMENDATIONS

A stated goal of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary is to "provide an environment in which students are encouraged to strengthen their commitment to Christ, certify their call to service, and develop an abiding love for God and His Word."[1] The seminary also seeks to develop in its students "a lifestyle of actively communicating the Christian faith through *personal integrity* and evangelistic witness" (emphasis added).[2] An underlying premise of this project is that these goals make necessary a spiritual formation program integrated with the overall seminary training experience, and, conversely, that such a program will strongly enhance the achievement of these goals.

Where does Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary presently stand in its efforts to "form" students in their Christian walk in preparation for future ministry? An

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[1]Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary Catalog, 1996-98, 6.

[2]Ibid.

answer to this question was sought through a self-evaluation using as a guide the same survey instrument sent to other seminaries. The survey document is found in Appendix A. Questions were answered by consulting a variety of information sources, including the seminary dean, assistant dean, internship coordinator, and the seminary catalog. Data were integrated with the author's personal awareness of seminary policies and activities.

Overall, this evaluation reveals that positive and encouraging efforts in the area of spiritual formation are currently underway while specific areas are identified in which more could be accomplished. This self-evaluation proceeds in a way similar to the evaluation of other seminaries and follows the three major sections of the survey ("Assessment," "Spiritual Formation Program," and "Mentoring"). Concluding each section are a set of relevant recommendations derived from the biblical paradigm presented in Chapter 3 as well as the evaluation of spiritual formation survey results in Chapter 4.

Evaluation of Assessment Efforts

1. Does LBTS formally assess readiness for ministry of incoming (admitted) M.Div. students?

No. At present, LBTS does not formally assess readiness for ministry of incoming students other than what

takes place through the normal seminary admission process. To be considered for admission, the student must submit a seminary application and have his pastor submit a pastor's reference form. The application for admission asks questions concerning conversion experience, church affiliation, ministry involvement, and career goals. The pastor's reference form solicits information about the student's personal character and other factors related to the applicant's potential for success in ministry. While this information is used by the Office of Graduate Admissions in making an admission decision, it is not utilized by seminary faculty or administrators in any subsequent assessment, training, or monitoring of the student in matters related to spiritual formation. In the absence of any post-admission evaluation of spiritual maturity or readiness for ministry, the seminary is behind over three-fourths of other evangelical seminaries which carry out one or more methods of evaluating incoming students. In failing to establish a baseline measurement of spiritual readiness, the seminary can have no objective measure of "value added" by the seminary experience nor can it properly assess its own efforts towards promoting spiritual growth or readiness for ministry.

One exception to this occurs when a student applies for a Pastoral Training Program Scholarship (PTPS) at Thomas

Road Baptist Church (TRBC), the seminary's founding church. Applicants for the PTPS are required to submit up to three additional recommendations which comment on the student's personal character and potential for ministry. Through these recommendations combined with the internship/ scholarship application which requests information about ministry background and future plans, the applicant is closely evaluated regarding readiness for ministry before being awarded an internship/scholarship and assigned a ministry position at the church. Since the scholarship is financially attractive and the internship offers valuable practical experience, the program is popular, encompassing over twenty-five percent of the incoming student body for the fall semester of 1997.

2. If you answered "yes" to Question #1, what tests or other instruments are used?

The seminary presently does not employ any formal means of assessing readiness for ministry of M.Div. students following admission. A newly adopted mentoring program has the potential to become a primary vehicle for initial assessment of readiness for ministry, although at present it is not at all used in that capacity.

3. Does LBTS assess readiness for ministry of outgoing seminary students?

Yes.

4. What are the means used to accomplish this assessment?

The seminary utilizes a required three-semester hour Pastoral Ministries Internship as a primary means of assessing readiness for ministry of those who are advanced in the M.Div. program. Approval to participate in this internship requires successful completion of at least nine pre-requisite courses comprising part of the M.Div. curriculum as well as completion of a learning contract between the intern and the church pastor who will be supervising the semester-long internship. Completing the learning contract involves establishing goals for the internship in the categories of personal growth, spiritual development, theological application, and pastoral ministry experience. The contract articulates the responsibilities of the supervising pastor, which is then signed by both the intern and the supervising pastor. A copy of the LBTS Internship Learning Contract is included in Appendix C.

During the semester-long internship, the intern is required to complete the following: a weekly ministry journal, a mid-semester personal evangelism reflection paper, an end-semester personal evangelism reflection paper,

and an end-semester internship reflection paper. Instructions for these reflection papers are listed in Appendix D. In addition to documents submitted by the student, the supervising pastor also submits to the seminary the following: a mid-semester sermon evaluation form, an end-semester sermon evaluation form, a mid-semester intern evaluation form, and an end-semester intern evaluation form. These forms are shown in Appendix E. These last two documents reflect the supervising pastor's evaluation of the following attributes of the intern: personal character qualities, relation to superiors, relation to others, pastoral skills, leadership skills, and worship-leading abilities. As part of the process of assessing these attributes, the supervising pastor meets one hour or more weekly with the intern to discuss progress towards goals, theological issues, ministry challenges, and encouragement. He also conducts an exit interview with the student upon completion of the internship.

For students who are not enrolled in the Pastoral Ministries Internship, there are few opportunities for ongoing assessment of readiness for ministry other than the grades received from seminary courses and obligatory enrollment in "Christian service" each semester. Seminary students receive a grade for each semester of Christian service awarded by the supervisor, although this person is

not necessarily a pastor of the student's local church. Assessment of Christian service relates mainly to fulfillment of whatever service obligations were arranged at the beginning of the semester, and these may have little to do with either the students spiritual maturity or his readiness for ministry. It is also likely that many Christian Service projects do not involve mentoring relationship where progress in these categories is closely monitored or assessed.

The newly developed mentoring program at LBTS (discussed more fully under "Evaluation of Spiritual Formation Program" below) offers great potential to facilitate ongoing assessment of spiritual readiness throughout the seminary experience. It could also serve the need for a comprehensive outgoing assessment. As the program has just recently been initiated and includes few explicit guidelines for mentors, any assessment and documentation of results would now be taking place solely at the discretion of individual mentors.

In light of the above, it is possible that a seminary student at LBTS misses out entirely on an early evaluation of his readiness for ministry or any ongoing monitoring of spiritual progress until the semester of the required Pastoral Ministries Internship, which usually occurs near completion of the degree. Herein the seminary falls short

of the discipleship pattern observed in Christ's ministry, who continually monitored the spiritual needs and progress of each disciple under His tutelage. Without initial evaluation, monitoring of ongoing progress, and some kind of exit evaluation, student advancement towards the goal of maturity in Christ while enrolled in seminary cannot be properly evaluated, nor can the seminary determine any adjustments needed in its programs to better foster that spiritual formation. Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary lacks a comprehensive evaluation of desired life-changes occurring during the seminary years.

5. Does LBTS regularly conduct an alumni survey assessing the seminary's performance in preparing students for ministry?

No. Alumni remain an untapped resource in relation to assessment of the seminary's efforts at spiritual formation and preparation for ministry. While an alumni data base is presently maintained by the office of the seminary dean, graduates active in ministry are not regularly surveyed to determine how well their seminary training prepared them for their present ministry. In this the seminary is behind a majority of evangelical seminaries carrying out some form of periodic surveys of alumni.

Assessment Recommendations

1. Expand the assessment now used for those applying for the Pastoral Training Program Scholarship to all seminary students. Consider supplementing this with additional forms of "readiness for ministry" assessment of all incoming students through one or more written assessment instruments.

The availability of seminary internships at TRBC offer positive opportunities to further the spiritual formation goals of LBTS. While the Pastoral Training Program Scholarship does not encompass all seminary students, it does provide instruments for an early evaluation of spiritual maturity and readiness for ministry. These assessment instruments which comprise part of the application for the seminary internship/scholarship program (i.e. ministry background questionnaire and three recommendations) should be required of all incoming students not just those applying for a scholarship. These documents should then become part of the students permanent record in the seminary office. Both the student and those recommending the student should be advised that the information on the recommendations will become part of the student's file and will be used in conjunction with efforts to facilitate spiritual maturity and readiness for ministry. A standardized form similar to the one presently sent with the application for admission should be used to guide those making recommendations in providing specific information deemed useful in facilitating the student's spiritual

formation and preparation for ministry.

Additionally, the seminary should follow the wisdom of the majority of evangelical seminaries studied by administering a formal written assessment of incoming students and should consider including a temperament analysis to guide mentors and advisors in meeting the student's real needs for spiritual growth. The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) was mentioned by more than one seminary as was The Association of Theological School's (ATS) Profiles of Ministry, Stage I. This latter instrument should be evaluated to determine its potential for serving in this capacity. Evaluation would involve sending one or more representatives from the seminary to a Profiles of Ministry Orientation Workshop designed to orient those considering this assessment program. These would then be responsible for recommending on its usefulness in this regard.

The required Pastoral Ministries Internship, while admittedly a means of advancing the student's preparation for ministry, should also be considered an essential component in the seminary's assessment efforts. The internship is designed for those well along in the M.Div. program, and therefore progress in the spiritual realm attributable to the seminary experience should be evident by this time. Furthermore, the "assessment" portion of the

Pastoral Training Internship considers truly biblical indicators of maturity such as ability to teach others (evaluated through sermon evaluations) and the ability to discern good from evil (evaluated through mentor evaluation of character traits). Results from these internship evaluations should therefore be carefully reviewed by the student's seminary mentor and used to facilitate growth in areas where any demonstrated weaknesses remain and encourage and praise growth that is detected. This would require comparison of the student's initial assessment with those resulting from the internship. Recommended remediation for identified deficiencies could include such things as "elective" courses, more focused time with a mentor, greater accountability in areas of personal disciplines, and assignments designed to foster development of particular character qualities.

2. Assign each student a seminary mentor whose responsibilities include reviewing results from initial assessment of readiness for ministry and formulating spiritual formation recommendations from that assessment.

A fledgling mentor program currently exists at LBTS in which seminary faculty are assigned mentoring roles with approximately three students each. Presently, only students participating in the Pastoral Training Program Scholarship are assigned mentors. Few explicit guidelines or documentation exists to direct the student-mentor

relationship. Mentors do not have at their disposal any prior assessment of the student's readiness for ministry or spiritual maturity other than what is ascertained through personal contact with the student. Neither are mentors directed to assess these variables or document their findings.

Expansion of the mentor program to include all pastoral training students is deemed essential to the "assessment" portion of the spiritual formation program. Mentor assignments should therefore be done early in the seminary experience, with each mentor being willing and capable of committing the time and effort necessary to oversee the process of spiritual growth throughout the seminary experience. Assessment coupled with ongoing monitoring of spiritual growth should be central to the mentor's role in the life of the student.

To assist mentors fulfill their roles, faculty should receive training to ensure a common understanding of mentoring goals and methods among all mentors as well as common direction in how to use information derived from initial assessments in guiding students. Specifically, the "learning contract" portion of the Pastoral Ministries Internship Application should be modified so that it can be used to contextualize the mentoring relationship for <u>each</u> student and thereby allow the mentor to clearly grasp why

the student chose to attend seminary, what he perceives his own spiritual needs to be, what he seeks to gain from seminary, and how the seminary can help the student attain his goals and prepare for his calling.

The learning contract presently included as part of the internship application requires the student to establish explicit goals in the following four areas:

> Personal Growth: Improvement in self-understanding, interpersonal relationships, and empathetic communications.
>
> Spiritual Development: Spiritual formation through practicing spiritual disciplines such as meditation, devotional reading, prayer, fasting, serving, giving, study.
>
> Theological Application: Integration of seminary application to life experiences.
>
> Pastoral Ministry Experiences: Supervised practice of all facets of ministry such as preaching, teaching, counseling, church administration, conducting services, leading worship.

Requiring the student to establish personal goals in each of these categories at the onset of his seminary experience will benefit the student and his mentor. It will force the student to make explicit his thoughts in these areas that heretofore may have been only poorly defined. A "spiritual formation retreat" would serve well to facilitate the establishment of such goals at a critical time in the student's life and ministry (cf. Recommendation 6 under "Spiritual Formation Program" below). Completion of this

exercise will benefit the mentor through a more comprehensive understanding of the particular "calling" the student is following in attending seminary and will hopefully reveal ways in which the mentoring relationship, as well as the entire seminary experience, can facilitate the student's pursuit of that calling. Documentation of such a seminary-wide learning contract would become part of the student's spiritual formation file to ensure continuity in the event of personnel changes within the faculty. A suggested Seminary Goals Worksheet is found in Appendix F.

3. Conduct regular surveys of seminary alumni.

The seminary should begin periodic assessment of alumni to evaluate their perception of how adequately LBTS prepared them for the ministries they now have. The survey should solicit suggestions for improving the seminary's preparation for ministry. Regular communication from the seminary could also keep local alumni who are pastors informed of the internship program while inviting them to serve as supervisors/mentors of seminary interns.

Evaluation of Spiritual Formation Program

6. Does LBTS have a formal spiritual formation program in place for those training for ministry?

Yes. According to the somewhat liberal definition for

spiritual formation "program" established in Chapter 4, it can be said that LBTS has in place the essential elements for such a program. Several qualifications of this statement, however, are needed. One is that these elements, in their current arrangement, could be further systematized to enhance their effectiveness in the lives of students. For example, under the present degree of systematization, it is possible that students fail to comprehend the full range of opportunities for spiritual development at their disposal. It is also possible that students may not be fully aware of the importance of concentrating on their own spiritual growth during the seminary experience. One possible reason is the emphasis on cognitive development traditionally associated with graduate level courses. Another may be the general absence of specific spiritual formation objectives in either course syllabi or incorporated in seminary publications, policies, and procedures. Another reason may be the lack of a systematic approach to student spiritual development within the overall Master of Divinity curriculum.

This is not to say that students are devoid of encouragement in the area of spiritual formation, as there are various opportunities for this to take place throughout the seminary experience. Through the new student orientation at the beginning of each semester, as well as

announcements in class and word-of-mouth, seminary students are made aware of the range of opportunities for spiritual growth during their seminary experience. These are elaborated in answer to Question 7 below.

7. What are the major components of LBTS' spiritual formation program?

The seminary has a variety of opportunities for spiritual growth, and these experience varying levels of participation on the part of seminary students. Ministry Chapel services are held weekly and receive wide publicity on the campus, although the extent of seminary student participation is difficult to determine because the large majority of attendees are undergraduate ministry students. On an alternate day of the week, university-wide convocations are also held, and here it is also difficult to determine seminary participation. The absence of a regular chapel service restricted to seminarians means that students are missing a key opportunity to experience "seminary-as-community" with fellow students of similar ages and life-challenges.

A newly-begun mentoring program in the seminary holds tremendous promise for fostering spiritual growth, although it is presently limited to a segment of the total body of pastoral training students. Guidelines for mentors and

expectations for both mentor and student have yet to be formulated. A campus pastor's office is available on the university campus, although it is heavily involved with serving the needs of undergraduate students. The seminary dean maintains an "open-door" policy for seminary students, although his active nation-wide speaking schedule may prevent ready access to his office. Seminary faculty are available during office hours for personal counseling as needs arise, although it is uncertain to what extent professors are called upon to serve in this capacity.

All full-time pastoral training students are required to participate in a "Christian Service" assignment each semester, which is often some form of local church involvement for seminarians. The expectations incumbent upon students and the criteria for evaluating their Christian service may vary widely each semester. Two spiritual formation courses are required in the M.Div. curriculum.

In spite of the various spiritual formation components available to students, certain key opportunities to promote spiritual formation are absent at LBTS. One is that students may graduate without experiencing the Holy Spirit's ministry through a small group fellowship. Depending upon the type of local church involvement and degree of participation in the Pastoral Training Program Scholarship,

some students may fail to receive close spiritual oversight and accountability for spiritual growth during their training. Furthermore, local church attendance is assumed but is neither required or monitored. Therefore if a student's "Christian Service" is not based in a local-church, there may be little or no accountability for participation in the body of Christ. The seminary does not sponsor spiritual retreats for student, though great spiritual benefits could accrue from such an activity. Seminary faculty members do not receive uniform training in discipleship, nor is mentoring an expressed component of their job description. Students may graduate without personally knowing their instructors other than through the classroom. Many of these missing elements at LBTS were central to the discipleship ministry of Christ and are therefore also elements which the seminary would do well to try to emulate in the modern context.

The seminary also lacks true coordination of spiritual formation opportunities, as nowhere do all spiritual formation opportunities find an organizing center. Survey results from some seminaries, along with their additional comments, hint that spiritual formation is often a central concern and centrally coordinated within evangelical seminaries. The present situation at LBTS is such that students may fail to comprehend the seminary's interest in

their spiritual growth, the crucial importance of actively pursuing spiritual growth while in seminary, and the full range of opportunities available towards that end. Neither is there central coordination of efforts to ensure that each course in the curriculum includes explicit spiritual formation objectives.

8. If spiritual formation courses are indicated in Question #7, how many semester hours of spiritual formation course-work are required of M.Div. Students?

Students are required to take two, one-credit spiritual formation courses for a total of two credit hours, an amount well below the average number of required spiritual formation credits in evangelical seminaries surveyed, which is 3.5. The author considers these two required courses foundational to the existing spiritual formation program. The first one, Spiritual Formation I, seeks to establish a biblical, christological, and practical rationale for practicing spiritual disciplines. The second, Spiritual Formation II, seeks to enhance the student's ministry potential by focusing on two things, developing an intimate personal relationship with God and active participation in a dynamic community of faith. The student is challenged in both of these courses to consider spiritual formation as central to overall ministerial preparation and to understand

that who he *is* before God is more important that what he *knows* or what he *does*.

In conjunction with the content covered in these courses, they have also provided the basis for a "small-group" experience for students, with the result that mutual edification takes place through the class meetings themselves. Enrollment in these classes has been low enough to permit the kind of interaction between students conducive to open discussion, sharing of burdens and praises in prayer, and spiritual growth, a condition the instructor seeks to facilitate. Although classes have been held in the main seminary classroom building, attempts have been to offset the traditional "classroom" atmosphere through a casual arrangement of chairs and encouragement of open group discussion. The instructor often remains seated with the students, favoring the role of "facilitator" over that of "lecturer."

9. How many <u>additional</u> semester hours of spiritual formation course-work are available beyond the required spiritual formation courses?

A small number of what could be considered "elective" spiritual formation courses are offered under related titles such as "Church Growth V: Spiritual Life," "Personal Evangelism," and "Theology of Pastoral Ministry." There are

no courses entitled "spiritual formation" which are elective in the M.Div. program. However, the list of elective spiritual formation courses could ideally be expanded to include virtually all courses in the seminary curriculum if for each class there were developed a set of spiritual formation objectives. This concept is more fully addressed in Recommendation 4 below.

Spiritual Formation Recommendations

1. Centralize responsibility for spiritual formation efforts within the seminary by establishing a spiritual formation plan and designating personnel responsible for coordinating and implementing the plan.

Coordination of spiritual formation efforts is a crucial need at LBTS. A first step toward addressing this need would be to designate an individual or group of individuals with oversight responsibilities. An initial assignment for such a team would be to develop a comprehensive spiritual formation plan articulating the full range of available spiritual formation opportunities and demonstrating how each opportunity corresponds with the overall spiritual formation objectives of the school. At a minimum, the plan should require each course syllabus in the pastoral training curriculum to identify how the course contributes to spiritual growth and readiness for ministry (See Recommendation 4 below). Students would be given a

copy of this plan, or a student version of it, during the seminary orientation for new students. This document would be written to communicate the seminary's interest in the spiritual growth of students, the importance of participating in the various opportunities for spiritual growth, the seminary's expectations, and the means established to ensure accountability in this area.

2. Assign a qualified mentor to each student during the first semester of enrollment.

The following section includes a fuller treatment of recommendations regarding mentors.

3. Make spiritual formation courses central to the seminary's spiritual formation program.

Enrollment in the two required spiritual formation courses should be kept small, and efforts should continue to cultivate a "small group" experience through the classroom sessions. A room on campus more conducive to small group dynamics than a standard classroom should be made available for all spiritual formation courses.

A third required spiritual formation course, one providing training in small-group dynamics and corporate worship, should be added to the M.Div. curriculum. In this class, students would receive training in directing small group ministry while at the same time experiencing the Holy

Spirit's ministry through the class sessions themselves. Possible texts for this class include Community That Is Christian: A Handbook on Small Groups[3] and Radical Renewal: The Problem of Wineskins Today.[4] Addition of a third spiritual formation course would allow the content of Spiritual Formation II to focus more fully upon the personal and relational dimension of the Christian faith. Three such Spiritual Formation courses should then be offered sequentially, permitting the student to take no more than one per semester and ensuring that he is involved in a small-group experience for at least one-half the average six-semester duration of the M.Div. program.

4. Incorporate spiritual formation objectives into the syllabi for each course in the pastoral training curriculum.

This recommendation is based on the concept that every course offered in the pastoral training curriculum has recognized potential to enhance established spiritual formation objectives of the seminary. While this potential is being partially realized at present, greater benefits would accrue if professors of all disciplines identify specific ways in which spiritual formation can and does occur through each class and then seek to fulfill those

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[3]Julie A. Gorman (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1993).

[4]Howard A. Snyder (Houston: Touch Publications, 1996).

objectives throughout the semester. This would entail revising course syllabi by making explicit any cognitive, affective, and skills-related spiritual formation objectives. Course evaluation surveys should be utilized to assess the effectiveness of such efforts at the end of each semester.

5. Provide for coordinated faculty spiritual formation.

Seminary faculty have ample opportunities to participate in chapel services and corporate worship on campus throughout the semester. Additionally, all are actively involved in one or more ministries outside the realm of seminary, and many serve as pastors of local church congregations. Faculty members, however, should also receive uniform guidance to ensure coordinated spiritual formation efforts within the seminary. This could be accomplished through small group meetings of their own in which they participate as members of the seminary community. "Faculty formation" could be facilitated by the seminary dean or a designated spiritual formation coordinator in order to edify the seminary faculty as a community in its own right, thus fostering unity in their collective ministry to the seminary student body. Objectives of such meetings would include training in mentoring methods, assigning mentors to new students, reinforcing spiritual formation

objectives of the seminary, discussing ways to incorporate spiritual formation efforts into each class, and praying for one another and specific students. Seminary administrators should consider the responsibilities and time commitments of mentoring and training in determining faculty course-loads, perhaps allocating greater mentor responsibilities to those with a higher aptitude or desires in this area.

6. Require a spiritual formation retreat during the first year of seminary.

All students should experience a spiritually formative personal retreat either preceding or at the beginning of the first semester of the seminary experience. Ideally, this should take place after an initial meeting between the student and his mentor wherein results of initial assessment efforts are reviewed and discussed. Such a retreat would be an answer to Jesus' invitation to his disciples to "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while"[5] prior to the beginning of a season in which such "rest" might henceforth be difficult to find.

The only seminary which indicated "spiritual retreat" as a major component of its spiritual formation program was contacted for further details about its retreats. It provides separate group retreats for married and single

[5]Mark 6:31.

students, which are "mandatory" for all students, though not formally part of the curriculum. They involve minimal extra expense for students as they are held over a weekend in mountain cabins made available by a friend of the seminary. Married students are encouraged in the areas of developing a relationship with God and one's spouse. Single students are encouraged in their relationship with God and in the unique privileges, opportunities, and challenges associated with singleness.

While these emphases are seen as potentially beneficial, a retreat early in the seminary experience involving a greater degree of solitude could perhaps provide a more valuable foundation for what follows in seminary. Lectures, large group interaction, or recreation should be de-emphasized, with emphasis placed on the student creating a larger "inner space" for the person of Jesus Christ. The new student could be presented with devotional material, perhaps from one or more of the acknowledged spiritual masters of a previous era, along with assignments in the areas of personal reflection, meditation upon Scripture, and contemplation of its Author. A questionnaire designed to stimulate thinking in these areas as well as an assigned personal journal of the experience would provide additional impetus for personal growth.

If the setting is relatively free from distractions and

other responsibilities, the retreat would be an opportunity for the student to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Further a personal relationship with God through prayer. Since prayer is foundational to a personal relationship with God as well as the basis for anything the student would accomplish while in seminary and in later ministry, it would be appropriate to so commit and dedicate to God the upcoming "chapter" in the student's life. A spiritual retreat would provide an opportune time for such a consecration through extended prayer.

2. Complete a learning contract for the entire seminary experience. Four categories of objectives were listed in Recommendation 2 under "Assessment" above. These categories, originally established to precede the Pastoral Training Internship, are also appropriate for setting goals for the overall seminary training. There would be no better time than a spiritual retreat at the onset of seminary training for the student to ask God and himself what those objectives should be for the following years. As God leads, the student should document learning contract objectives to be shared with the mentor at a later time. A suggested Seminary Goals Worksheet is given in Appendix F.

3. Make firm commitments to maintain and grow in devotional and family life during seminary training and beyond. Recognizing the potential for students to dispense with or reduce devotional time while in seminary due to the academic, financial, and other pressures, the student should commit to developing and maintaining the habits necessary to facilitate spiritual growth. He should also acknowledge and commit to the priority of any family responsibilities he may have. The retreat is an opportunity to cultivate an abiding commitment to spiritual growth parallel to, and if necessary, in spite of the rigors of the seminary's academic training.

Students enroll in seminary with varying levels of spiritual maturity, and therefore it cannot be presumed that they

would be able to accomplish these objectives without guidance. For this reason, one or more spiritual mentors should be on hand as retreat facilitators, ensuring that those needing guidance have the necessary help. The prevailing emphasis, however, should be upon fostering the personal relationship between the student and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Evaluation of Mentoring

10. Does LBTS have a designated "spiritual formation team" as a subset of the entire seminary faculty?

The seminary has a fledgling mentoring program in which students awarded a Pastoral Training Program Scholarship are assigned a mentor from within the seminary faculty. Currently, every faculty member has one or more students to whom he has been assigned as a mentor, although not every pastoral training student has been assigned a mentor. At this point, therefore, the entire seminary faculty body constitutes the spiritual formation team.

11. For how many semesters does the formal mentor-student relationship continue?

Presumably, the relationship between mentor and student continues for the duration of student's participation in the Student Internship Scholarship Program, which could extend throughout the length of the M.Div. program. Presently,

students who do not participate in the internship program are not assigned mentors.

12. How often does the mentor meet with the student during a given semester specifically for the purpose of discipleship?

Students for whom a mentor has been assigned are asked to meet weekly with their mentor. Each student is also assigned an academic advisor, although the purpose of this relationship is primarily to assist in course selection and scheduling. Mentoring guidelines have not yet been established, and faculty participation is somewhat ad hoc. While LBTS is not the only seminary which does not assign mentors to all students to monitor progress in the spiritual realm (approximately half of evangelical seminaries do not have such a program in place), in this the seminary diverges from the New Testament model Christ established with his own disciples. Universal assignment of student mentors represents a key opportunity for moving closer to a biblical discipleship paradigm.

While not all seminary students enjoy the benefits of continual mentoring, each student is required to enroll in a three-semester hour Pastoral Ministries Internship, which does include a mentoring component usually fulfilled by a pastor of a local church. Here the school aligns with the New Testament pattern of combining practical experience with

close supervision, counsel, and feedback. Internship supervisors serve as "adjunct" mentors for the seminary and, as such, are asked to submit mid-term and final evaluations of the student's progress as well as assign a letter grade for the internship. This program is overseen by the LBTS Internship Coordinator working out of the office of the seminary dean. This internship and the related student-mentor relationship lasts for only one semester of the seminary training.

13. What are the characteristics of the mentor-student relationship?

At this stage of its development, the meeting format of the mentor program is truly open-ended. Mentors are free to determine the optimum setting for the type of interaction appropriate to the goals of the meeting. There is no reason, therefore, that this could not include all the characteristics listed on the survey: office setting, home setting, free discussion, group meetings, shared prayer, informal setting, printed discipleship material, one-on-one interaction, personal assignments, and shared off-campus ministry experiences. Due to the novelty of the program, no statistics are available as to which of the above have been incorporated. One would hope that a variety of settings will be used, although it is unclear whether faculty mentors

are aware of the range of opportunities available to them. Jesus trained his disciples in a variety of "real-life" contexts, and there is good reason to emulate that factor to the fullest extent possible in seminary context.

14. Is the course-load adjusted to accommodate mentoring responsibilities?

At present, faculty course-loads are not adjusted to accommodate mentoring time commitments. The mentor's responsibilities have not be made explicit through any form of documentation or inclusion in faculty job descriptions.

Mentoring Recommendations

1. Establish a continuous student-mentor relationship for each student throughout the seminary experience.

Each student should be assigned a willing and qualified mentor from within the seminary faculty as early as possible during the first semester of enrollment. Mentor assignments should not be limited to those involved in a Pastoral Training Program Internship. Responsibilities of the mentor should include:

A. Facilitating initial assessment of the students spiritual development. This would involve compiling results from written assessment instruments, reviewing the results, and interviewing the student. The mentor would be responsible for assessing the student's goals

set forth in the learning contract and helping the student determine how the seminary experience can facilitate meeting those goals.

B. Assisting the student evaluate insight he gleaned during the new student retreat.

C. Monitoring student progress on a periodic basis, submitting written evaluations of the student's progress for inclusion in the student's file, and guiding the student in areas where spiritual growth is needed.

Faculty should be encouraged to open their lives and homes up to the students they mentor, and where possible, students could participate in shared ministry opportunities along-side their mentors.

2. Provide for ongoing training of faculty in mentoring principles and skills.

Faculty expected to serve as role models and mentors must be provided with the resources needed to accomplish the task. This would include providing resource materials which help them understand and fulfill their responsibilities.

The Power of a Mentor[6] is a brief yet helpful booklet which, if adopted by faculty, could help contextualize their role and encourage them to see the array of benefits available through the personal relationship mentoring provides. A personal disciplines accountability worksheet could also be used to guide the student towards consistent participation in spiritually-beneficial habits of the Christian life. At least one faculty coordination meeting should be held before the beginning of each semester to ensure common understanding of mentoring goals, procedures, and standards among both new and returning faculty. Seminary administrators should consider mentoring responsibilities and time commitments in assigning course loads. School administrators and mature seminary students should also be considered as a potential resource pool from which to draw qualified mentors.

3. Train students in mentoring skills while under the oversight and guidance of their own personal mentor.

In the spirit of 2 Timothy 2:2, students should seek to become qualified mentors while they are themselves involved in a relationship with a mentor. While being trained they should also seek to grow in their ability to train others, a

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[6]Waylon B. Moore. (Tampa: Missions Unlimited, Inc., 1996).

discipleship model set in motion by Jesus for all of those who would follow Him in roles of spiritual leadership. Furthermore, students should have opportunity to reflect upon their own mentor experience through formal training in mentoring skills. This could be a topic considered for inclusion in the curriculum of one of three spiritual formation courses. During this semester the student should be assigned to read and report on The Power of a Mentor.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This project has set forth a framework for a more integrated and comprehensive spiritual formation program at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. Direction and insight for such an undertaking has been gleaned from Scripture and a survey of representative evangelical seminaries, in which has been found a demonstrated commitment to forming the person of the minister beyond teaching academic content and training in ministry methods. Research conducted through this exercise has shown that integration of these tasks is both biblically necessary and practically possible. Christ, the example par excellence, modeled for the church a distinct way of training up Christian leaders established primarily upon an intimate, dynamic, and personal relationship with the Master-Teacher Himself, a concept which seminaries ignore to their own peril and the peril of their constituent churches.

Jesus' first disciples began their training by carefully observing the Teacher's life and listening to His teaching. Soon they were given supervised exposure to

ministry opportunities and challenges coupled with feedback and evaluation of their efforts. The final phase of training involved full-fledged, Spirit-controlled ministry first with, and later in the absence of, the Teacher's physical presence. This entire process was completed in no more than three years time, a period similar in length to most of today's seminary pastoral training programs.

This study of evangelical seminaries has shown that all recognize the need to be involved in the spiritual formation of candidates for ministry, although the intensity with which such efforts are pursued and the measures employed vary. Widespread dedication to the goals of spiritual formation is seen in the assessment efforts many seminaries conduct before, during, and at the conclusion of seminary training; in the existence of numerous and varied "elements" comprising a recognizable spiritual formation program on seminary campuses; and in the use of mentor relationships contributing an intimate and personal dimension to what could otherwise be a predominantly group-oriented educational process.

In that they represent historic changes in a positive direction for seminaries, efforts such as those elucidated in this study are both encouraging and a stimulus to yet further action. Clearly, greater efforts are needed for it has not been demonstrated that seminaries fully align

themselves with Paul's teaching that spiritual qualities transcend both knowledge and skill in qualifying a man for church leadership[1] or with Peter's parallel concept that faith and virtue (i.e. character) supersede knowledge in the divine schema.[2] Perhaps this points to need for an even closer association between seminaries and constituent churches than presently exists. Since local churches ultimately determine eligibility to and selection for positions of spiritual oversight, seminaries can not fail to see themselves as vital partners in the overall process of preparing students for oversight roles. Consciousness of this partnership should motivate seminaries to continually assess spiritual formation efforts in light of Scripture, their own charter, feedback from alumni, and the explicit or implicit mandate from constituent churches.

An evaluation of Liberty's current efforts at spiritual formation has shown that the foundational structures of a full-fledged spiritual formation program are in place, with additional components such as ongoing assessment needed. Another components already in place, in particular, mentoring, should be further developed and expanded to include all pastoral training students. Coordinating and

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[1]I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.

[2]2 Peter 1:5-7.

centralizing all spiritual formation efforts will elevate their importance in the minds of faculty and students, and this should become a top priority of the seminary administration.

Recommendations arising from this dissertation touch upon all of the eleven spiritual formation needs of seminary students identified Chapter One (page 7). Two of these recommendations (Numbers 9 and 11), address the possibility that students bring with them to the seminary experience certain negative personal issues that must be surfaced and dealt with in biblical and holistic ways. The hopeful result is that through the seminary experience they are freed of any and all hindrances to spiritual maturity and grow in the ability to minister out of the overflow of health and strength God imparts to them. Steve Meeks reminds seminary students, "Ministry is the flow of God's life to us and through us."[3] In this light, the seminary would do well to 1) acknowledge the possible existence of such needs, 2) help students identify them, and 3) commit to being or providing the context whereby healing and transformation can occur. As with all the facets of ministerial preparation discussed, this will occur only as full-orbed spiritual formation, issues in the realm of

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[3]Relational Christianity (Houston: Calvary Publications, 1991), 103.

"being," maintains a central role in the seminary experience.

With this perspective, the potential for seminaries to positively impact the kingdom of God is virtually unlimited. The record of the early church is clear. Those who had "been with Jesus," though uneducated and untrained, turned the world upside down with the Gospel.[4] What could God do with waves of seminary-trained pastors laying claim to both having been with Jesus *and* having received education and training where the person of Christ is exalted, where his Word is taught as absolute truth, and where the seminary community in all its components is oriented to the spiritual edification of every student God brings to its campus.

While much of the needed infrastructure for a comprehensive spiritual formation program presently exists at LBTS, its complete development awaits the full commitment and coordinated involvement of the seminary's administrators and faculty. The concepts and recommendations herein provided, if adopted, would move the seminary towards a more integrated and therefore more effective program. Presently, much work remains to be done. In that the church of Jesus Christ is the world's only "pillar and ground of the

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[4]Acts 4:13.

truth,"[5] the stakes involved are high, the consequences are eternal, and the time must be redeemed. If we can accept that the lives of those who lead God's church constitute the most powerful and effective sermon they will ever "preach," the seminary experience should, in all its activities, classes, relationships, and curricula, constitute full preparation to the making of "living epistles." This requires nothing less than situating spiritual formation at the core of seminary training, and this, in turn, necessitates a well-constructed spiritual formation program.

[5]I Timothy 3:15.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

The Survey Instrument and Cover Letter

LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BOX 20000, LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA 24506-8001
(804) 582-2326

July 22, 1996

Dr. Paul F. Bubna
Alliance Theological Seminary
350 N. Highland Avenue
Nyack, NY 10960

Dear Dr. Bubna,

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary is seeking to improve its program of spiritual formation for students preparing for ministry. Because there is "safety in a multitude of counselors," we seek your input to make it the most effective program possible. We ask for a few minutes of your time, or perhaps that of the person who oversees this area, to answer questions about what you are presently doing to assess, monitor, and foster the spiritual development of your students preparing for ministry.

In using the term "spiritual formation program," we are interested in the formal elements of curriculum and seminary life designed specifically to foster the spiritual growth of ministerial candidates.

Thank you for your help with this brief survey. **If you would like to receive a summary of the results of this study, please check the appropriate response at the end of the Questionnaire.** You will find a post-paid envelope for your convenience in returning the questionnaire.

May the Lord richly bless your efforts in training workers for His Kingdom.

Sincerely,

Danny Lovett

Dr. Danny Lovett, Dean

William Wegert

William Wegert, Instructor

Encl.

Spiritual Formation Questionnaire

Name of your seminary: _____

Your name: _____

Title: _____ Phone: (_____)_____

Mailing address: _____

_____
City State Zip

Assessment:

1. Does your seminary formally assess readiness for ministry of incoming (admitted) M.Div. students? _____ Yes _____ No

2. If you answered "yes" to Question #1, what tests or other instruments are used?

____ formal interview
____ spiritual gifts inventory
____ other (please specify):_____
____ psychological inventory
____ temperament analysis

3. Do you assess readiness for ministry of outgoing seminary students? _____ Yes _____ No

4. If so, what means are used to accomplish this assessment?

____ capstone course(s)
____ required internship
____ other (please specify):_____
____ exit interview
____ comprehensive exam

5. Do you regularly conduct an alumni survey assessing the seminary's performance in preparing students for ministry?

____ Yes ____ No

Spiritual Formation Program:

6. Does your seminary have a formal spiritual formation program in place for those training for the ministry?

_____ Yes _____ No

7. What are the major components of your spiritual formation program?

____ campus pastor/chaplain
____ assignment of designated mentor for each student
____ small groups
____ other (please specify):_____
____ chapel services
____ spiritual formation courses
____ required church involvement

8. If spiritual formation courses are indicated in Question #7, how many semester hours of spiritual formation course-work are <u>required</u> of M.Div. students? _____ semester hours

9. How many <u>additional</u> semester hours of spiritual formation course-work are available beyond the required spiritual formation courses? _____ semester hours

<u>Mentoring</u>:

10. Does your seminary have a designated "spiritual formation team" as a subset of the entire seminary faculty?
_____ Yes _____ No

If your school assigns a "mentor" for each student, please answer Questions 11-14:

11. For how many semesters does the formal mentor-student relationship continue? _____ semesters

12. How often does the mentor meet with the student during a given semester specifically for the purpose of discipleship?
_____

13. Which of the following characterize the mentor-student relationship (check as many as apply):

____ office setting
____ home setting
____ free discussion
____ group meetings
____ shared prayer
____ informal setting
____ printed discipleship material
____ one-on-one interaction
____ personal assignments
____ shared off-campus ministry experiences
____ other _____

14. Is faculty course-load adjusted to accommodate mentoring responsibilities? ____ yes ____ no

15. Suggestions for us as we build our spiritual formation program:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

I would like to receive a summary of the results of this survey:
_____ Yes _____ No

Thank you for your input. Please return this Questionnaire in the post-paid envelope to:

Dr. Danny Lovett, Dean
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
1971 University Blvd.
Lynchburg, VA 24502

APPENDIX B

List of Seminaries to which Survey Was Sent

APPENDIX B

LIST OF SEMINARIES TO WHICH SPIRITUAL SURVEY WAS SENT

Alliance Theological Seminary, Nyack, NY
Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY
Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, OH
Bethany Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN
Biblical Theological Seminary, Hatfield, PA
Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI
Capital Bible Seminary, Lanham, MD
Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, KS
Columbia Biblical Seminary, Columbia, SC
Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO
Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX
Denver Seminary, Denver, CO
Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wynnewood, PA
Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, PA
Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA
Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, CA
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA
Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA
North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD
Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lombard, IL
Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, OK
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA
Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS
Regent College, Vancouver, BC, Canada
Regent University School of Divinity, Virginia Beach, VA
Seminary of the East, Dresher, PA
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX
Talbot School of Theology of Biola University, La Mirada, CA
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL
Western Seminary, Portland, OR
Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA

APPENDIX C

Internship Learning Contract

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
INTERNSHIP
PATH 899

LEARNING CONTRACT

The purpose of the Learning Contract is to help the intern evaluate areas of need and to focus on specific and measurable goals appropriate to the meeting of those needs. The Learning Contract is between the Intern and the Supervising Pastor/Church.

I. General Information

A. Student Intern: _____

Home Address: _____
Mailing Address City State Zip

Home phone: ( ) _____

Field Address: _____
Mailing Address City State Zip

Field Phone: ( ) _____

Degree Program: _____ S/S # _____

B. Supervising Pastor: _____

Name of Host Church: _____

Church Address: _____

Church Phone: ( ) _____

II. Responsibilities of Student Intern

A. Review the ministry placement decisions made during the pre-internship interview.

B. State Internship Goals/Objectives

1. Personal Growth (Improvement in self-understanding, interpersonal relationships, and empathetic communications)
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

2. Spiritual Development (spiritual formation through meditation, supplication, contemplation, devotional reading)
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

3. Theological Application (integration of college education to life experiences)
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

4. Pastoral Ministry Experiences (supervised practice of all facets of ministry)
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

III. Responsibilities of Supervising Pastor

A. Conduct a pre-internship interview with the intern to determine appropriate ministry placement.

B. Review stated goals/objectives of student intern.

C. Assign tasks which are directly responsive to the intern's learning objectives (include 2 sermons/lessons in a church setting).

D. Provide resources to assist intern in achieving goals (courses, research, reading, other)

E. Arrange a one hour weekly conference with intern to:

1. Reflect on student's learning objectives.
2. Reflect on student's professional development.
3. Reflect on theological and other issues arising in current internship.
4. Discuss solutions to conflicts in ministry.
5. Make new assignments.
6. Engage in prayer, fellowship, and encouragement.

F. Prepare a Mid-Semester Evaluation on the intern's progress and ministry performance (Due Mid-Semester).

G. Prepare a critique on each of the intern's sermons or lessons (two sermons required).

H. Make an appointment with intern for an exit interview.

I. Submit the Final Ministry Evaluation with a suggested grade.

J. Submit a letter of recommendation on behalf of the intern.

NOTE: Please see individual forms for due date.

Signature _____ Date _____
Student Intern

Signature _____ Date _____
Supervising Pastor

Signature _____ Date _____
Director of Pastoral Training

After the Learning Contract is completed and signed, give copies to the following:

1. **Student Intern**
2. **Supervising Pastor**
3. **Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary**
   Director of Pastoral Training
   Box 20,000
   Lynchburg, VA 24506-8001

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
INTERNSHIP
PATH 899

INTERN'S WEEKLY MINISTRY JOURNAL

The practice of keeping a weekly ministry journal can assist the student intern in a personal adventure of growth and discipleship. It helps identify needs, goals, direction, and potentiality. It helps to crystallize decisions, examine self, evaluate performance, process events, and relieve stress.

The student intern should use the following instructions and questions in writing his weekly journal:

1. Describe your daily devotional life for the previous week. List new truths discovered (i.e. new to you), errors to avoid, sins to confess, good examples to follow, etc. Relate any known spiritual growth/spiritual formation.

2. Describe what you learned about yourself this past week. Were you slow in making friends? Did you irritate others? What kind of interpersonal relations did you experience? Did you have the ability to like others and be liked by them? Were you empathetic in your conversation with others? Did your own agenda preclude the concerns of others? Did you make emotional responses that were inappropriate in the ministry?

3. Were your actions this past week in harmony with your theology? For example, did your belief in eternal punishment motivate you to personal evangelism? What theological issues were raised this past week? Did you experience the working of the Holy Spirit in such areas as convicting, comforting, leading, filling, teaching, and power for preaching?

4. List all ministry experiences for this past week (observation, participation, or both). Describe your high and low points of the week. Discuss mistakes made and proposed improvements. What would you do differently the next time you have this same ministry opportunity? Evaluate your professional role and identity. In what sense did you function as a pastor, preacher, leader, counselor, soul-winner, administrator, servant? What ministry skills were you able to identify and improve?

DUE ONE WEEK BEFORE FINALS

APPENDIX D

Instructions for Internship Reflection Papers

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INTERN'S PERSONAL EVANGELISM REFLECTION PAPER

MID-SEMESTER FORM

The purpose of this written reflection paper is to lead and assist the student intern in understanding the total ministry of a local church. The intern will give his own evaluation of his experience and service. The mid-semester evaluation will help to guide the student in the second half of the internship.

This paper is to be typewritten, double-spaced, and approximately 3-5 pages in length. Use separate sheets of paper.

1. Assess the major accomplishments in relation to your learning objectives as stated in the learning contract.

2. Discuss what you feel was one of the most valuable contributions that you made in ministry during this period.

3. Did you experience any significant difficulty? If so, describe it and tell how you handled the situation.

4. What theological issues were raised for you? How do they relate to practical ministry?

5. What professional issues did you encounter? Did you deal with such issues as clarification of ministerial identity, confidentiality, and ministerial ethics? Is your internship experience directing you to an area of Christian ministry other than the pastorate? What spiritual gifts for the ministry have you validated?

6. What personal (maturity/identity) issues were raised for you? Was your emotional and spiritual maturity level adequate for your internship responsibilities? How did you integrate personal and professional identity?

7. Comment on your spiritual formation through daily meditation, prayer, contemplation, and devotional readings. Have you been stretched?

8. Describe a situation in which you exercised initiative. How did the people respond?

9. What was the emphasis of your weekly conference? In what ways did this conference help you?

10. Evaluate your effectiveness and readiness for ministry up to this point. In what specific areas do you need special help?

DUE MID SEMESTER

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INTERN'S PERSONAL EVANGELISM REFLECTION PAPER

END-SEMESTER FORM

During the internship experience, the student will have many opportunities to witnes for Christ one-on-one to the unsaved. Give a basic overview of the entire witnessin experience, programs/methods used, and then select two of these experiences and describ them in detail by summarizing as follows:

1. What was the setting of your evangelistic opportunity?
2. What person or persons were involved?
3. What Scriptures did you use as evangelist tools?
4. What were the beliefs of the unsaved person?
5. What were the objections to the gospel, if any?
6. How did you answer these excuses?
7. How did you end the meeting? Did you feel that the fruit was ripe or green? Did yo press for a decision?
8. What was the response of the unsaved person?
9. What plans did you make for follow-up?

DUE ONE WEEK BEFORE FINAL EXAMS

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INTERN'S END-SEMESTER REFLECTION PAPER

This form is to be completed by the Intern. This is your final evaluation. Make it as complete as possible. Type and double-space your evaluation. Read all items before typing. Retain a copy for your files.

1. Positive Memories - As a very general impression, what pleased you most about your internship? What are the major positive reactions you will probably remember the longest?

2. Major Lessons - What broad, important lessons did you learn about the ministry from your internship? Include positive and/or negative lessons.

3. Learning Process - By what process(es) did you learn things during your internship? What dynamics of learning were going on? Which process, if any, was more effective than others?

4. Supervisor/Internship Relationship - Give your reaction to the type of supervision that you experienced. Was it about right, too close, or too loose? Describe the Supervisor/Internship Relationship (teacher/student, father/son, brother/brother, employer/employee, etc.).

5. Range of Duties and Responsibilities - Were you satisfied with the range of duties as an intern? Were you active in all areas of the ministry? What areas could you not explore? Should you have had more responsibilities in any areas?

6. Preparation and Growth - Please comment briefly on your theological and practical seminary preparation for, and growth during the internship in, the areas listed below.
   A. Preaching and Worship
   B. Teaching
   C. Administration
   D. Pastoral Care (primarily one-to-one, such as hospital and shut-in calls, delinquent calls, evangelism contacts, counseling, etc.).
   E. Other Group Work (youth and other organizations, committees and boards, both in the organization and in the community and church-at-large).

7. Strengths/Weaknesses - Based on what you learned and did during the internship, what are your personal/professional/ academic strengths and weaknesses? Tell likes and dislikes.

8. Further Study - What would you like to study further when you return to the University (remedial work, addressing professional needs and interests, etc.)? Mention topics and/or specific courses.

9. Personal Welfare - In general, were all your needs supplied (health, wife/family, finances, living accommodations, car, etc.)? What things pleased or bothered you personally?

10. The Future - What is your preference regarding your future ministry? In what direction or phase of ministry is God leading you? Will you start or assume a church?

11. Faith and Theology - How were your personal Christian faith and theological foundations strengthened during the course of your internship? What theological issues were raised? Give specific examples of integration of theology into practical ministry.

12. Additional Comments - You may add anything not covered elsewhere in this report. Comment on anything that you feel is important. Do you have any suggestions for the Pastoral Internship Program?

DUE ONE WEEK BEFORE FINAL EXAMS

APPENDIX E

Internship Sermon and Intern Evaluation Forms

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
INTERNSHIP
PATH 899

SERMON EVALUATION FORM

MID-SEMESTER - FIRST EVALUATION

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING PASTOR

Student Intern _____

Supervising Pastor _____

Evaluate the sermon using the following grading scale, (1-5; 5 being outstanding);

1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Excellent 5 - Outstanding

CONTENT:

_____Faithful to Biblical teaching

_____Relevant to the needs of the people

_____Use of illustrations

_____Practical applications

STRUCTURE:

_____Introduction (attention-getting, relevant)

_____Central theme (clarity, well-developed)

_____Transition points (clear, flowed easily)

_____Conclusion (appropriate, relevant)

DELIVERY AND STYLE:

_____Voice (clarity, projection, easily understood)

_____Posture

_____Gestures

_____Eye contact with the people

_____Rate of speaking

_____Pronunciation, grammar

_____Ease of communication

EFFECT:

Overall impact: _____Forceful _____Weak

_____Enhanced worship for the people

_____Enabled change in behavior and thinking of the people

_____Aided in overall Christian growth

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Please answer the following:

1. What did you like the most about this sermon?

2. What suggestions would you offer to help the preacher in future planning?

3. In your own words, what was the main point of the sermon?

4. Additional comments.

DUE MID SEMESTER

Mail to - Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
Director of Pastoral Training
Box 20,000
Lynchburg, VA 24506-8001

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PATH 899

SERMON EVALUATION FORM

END OF SEMESTER - SECOND EVALUATION

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING PASTOR

Student Intern _____

Supervising Pastor _____

Evaluate the sermon using the following grading scale, (1-5; 5 being outstanding):

1 - Poor 2 - Fair 3 - Good 4 - Excellent 5 - Outstanding

CONTENT:

_____Faithful to Biblical teaching

_____Relevant to the needs of the people

_____Use of illustrations

_____Practical applications

STRUCTURE:

_____Introduction (attention-getting, relevant)

_____Central theme (clarity, well-developed)

_____Transition points (clear, flowed easily)

_____Conclusion (appropriate, relevant)

DELIVERY AND STYLE:

_____Voice (clarity, projection, easily understood)

_____Posture

_____Gestures

_____Eye contact with the people

_____Rate of speaking

_____Pronunciation, grammar

_____Ease of communication

EFFECT:

_____Overall impact (forceful, weak)

_____Enhanced worship for the people

_____Enabled change in behavior and thinking of the people

_____Aided in overall Christian growth

Please answer the following.

1. What did you like the most about this sermon?

2. What suggestions would you offer to help the preacher in future planning?

3. In your own words, what was the main point of the sermon?

4. Additional comments.

DUE ONE WEEK BEFORE FINALS

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PATH 899

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INTERN EVALUATION

MID SEMESTER - FIRST EVALUATION

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING PASTOR

Student Intern _____

DIRECTIONS: For the items below, decide which of the following performance levels best describe the student's ability. Write the number in the blank.

1. Unacceptable Ability
2. Significantly Below Average Ability
3. Slightly Below Average Ability
4. Average Ability
5. Slightly Above Average Ability
6. Significantly Above Average Ability
7. Outstanding Ability

A. THE STUDENT AS PASTOR

1. _____ Ability to develop trusting relationships
2. _____ Ability to listen
3. _____ Ability to understand and discern needs
4. _____ Ability to respond with empathy and resourcefulness to people in need
5. _____ Ability to accept people who are difference from himself
6. _____ Ability to respect confidential information in an appropriate way
7. _____ Shows appropriate initiative in responding to pastoral needs of persons
8. _____ Summary impressions of the student as pastor

B. THE STUDENT AS WORSHIP LEADER AND PASTOR

1. _____ Ability to plan a well-coordinated worship service
2. _____ Ability to lead in public prayer
3. _____ Use of language in worship and preaching (e.g., grammar, abstractions, slang, etc.)
4. _____ Use of voice in leading worship and preaching
5. _____ Use of body and hand gestures
6. _____ Faithfulness to Biblical text in sermons
7. _____ Organizational clarity of sermons
8. _____ Use of illustrations in sermons
9. _____ Relevance of sermons to the needs of the congregation
10. _____ Summary impressions of the student as worship leader and preacher

C. THE STUDENT AS LEADER

1. _____ Ability to make positive contributions in working with groups and committees
2. _____ Ability to help groups and committees define and communicate their goals
3. _____ Ability to motivate and enable others
4. _____ Ability to manage time effectively
5. _____ Ability to deal constructively with conflict
6. _____ Ability to analyze dynamics of the congregation's formal and informal decision-making process
7. _____ Ability to exercise authority in an appropriate way
8. _____ Ability to support the total ministry of the congregation with enthusiasm and a cooperative spirit
9. _____ Summary impressions of the student as a leader

Field Supervisor's Signature _____ Date _____

DUE MID TERM

Mail to - Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
Director of Pastoral Training
Box 20,000
Lynchburg, VA 24506-8001

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INTERNSHIP
PATH 899

INTERN EVALUATION

END SEMESTER - SECOND EVALUATION

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING PASTOR

Student Intern _____

This evaluation is designed primarily as an instrument to aid the supervising pastor i his task of appraising, guiding, and supporting the student's growth toward effectiv ministry.

DIRECTIONS: For the items below, decide which of the following performance levels bes describe the student's ability. Write the number in the blank.

5 - A very strong point, needing little or no improvement
4 - A strong point, needing only slight improvement
3 - An average ability
2 - A weak area; some skills, but needing much improvement
1 - A noticeable area of weakness, evidencing few skills
NO - Not Observed
NA - Not Applicable

I. THE INTERN AS A PERSON

A. Relation to Self

1. _____ Consecration - Dedicated to Christ and the role of pastoral intern
2. _____ Preparation - Academic and spiritual
3. _____ Dependability - Faithful to God's Word and responsibilities
4. _____ Integrity - Honest in every area of life
5. _____ Temperament - Consistent and healthy emotional responses
6. _____ Appearance - Neat and well-groomed
7. _____ Social graces - Good taste in social activities
8. _____ Self-discipline - Self-control in personal matters
9. _____ Initiative - Self-starter
10. _____ Insight - The intern sees his motives, strengths, and weaknesses
11. _____ Punctuality - Prompt in appointments and deadlines
12. _____ Humility - Humility like Christ, servant's heart
13. _____ Maturity - Personality and professional

B. RELATION TO SUPERIOR

1. _____ Openness - Communicates with warm and honest feelings
2. _____ Guideability - Accepts instruction and correction
3. _____ Loyalty - Supports the total ministry
4. _____ Willingness - Ready to learn and share the work load
5. _____ Consideration - Respect for supervisor's position and leadership

C. RELATION TO OTHERS

1. _____ Church - Friendly toward and respected by God's people
2. _____ People - Sensitive to needs of all people
3. _____ Peers - Wholesome and professional relationship
4. _____ Community - Concern for the needs and projects for the total community

II. INTERN'S PASTORAL SKILLS [1

A. Administration

1. _____ Perceptive - Understands role as administrator
2. _____ Creative - Applies creative solutions to problems
3. _____ Follow Through - Implements responsibilities and projects
4. _____ Delegates - Involves people in growing opportunities
5. _____ Flexible - Change methods as needed
6. _____ Reports Back - Progress reports and communications
7. _____ Efficient, Office - Disciplined desk
8. _____ Efficient, Time - Stewardship of time

B. PASTORAL CALLING (Visitation)

1. _____ Initiative - Prompt and responsible calling
2. _____ Completion - Revisit until call is made
3. _____ Results - Reach goals
4. _____ Ministry - Sensitive to needs
5. _____ Gospel - Win the lost
6. _____ Power - Work in God's strength

C. PASTORAL COUNSELING

1. _____ Diagnosis - Sees the real problem
2. _____ Hearing - Listens to counselee
3. _____ Directive - Apply Biblical principles without legalism
4. _____ Referral - Refers counselee to professional counselor
5. _____ Confidentiality - Keeps counseling sessions confidential

D. PREACHING - See Sermon Evaluation Form

E. TEACHING

1. _____ Preparation - Prepared for teaching assignments
2. _____ Doctrine - Presents basic Bible teachings
3. _____ Relevant - Relates lesson to life
4. _____ Techniques - Variety of teaching methods
5. _____ Individuals - Applies the lesson to individuals as well as the g

III. RECOMMENDED GRADE: _____ Date _____

Supervising Pastor's Signature _____

DUE ONE WEEK BEFORE FINAL EXAMS

Mail or Return to -

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
Director of Pastoral Training
Box 20,000
Lynchburg, VA 24506-8001

APPENDIX F

Suggested Seminary Goals Worksheet

Seminary Goals Worksheet

Name:_____ Date:_____

1. Personal Growth: What improvements in your own personal life would you like to see happen while you are in seminary? Include growth in the areas of personal disciplines and habits (including bad ones that you would like to see go), self-understanding, interpersonal relationships, and communication.

2. Spiritual Development: In what ways would you like to grow spiritually while in seminary? Include any specific areas in which you feel that your present life falls short of mature Christ-likeness.

3. Biblical/Theological Application: In what ways would you like to grow in areas of doctrine? What theological questions would you like to find answers to? What areas of theology would you like to explore further? Are there certain portions of Scripture in which you would like to have a deeper understanding?

4. Ministry Training and Experience: What ministry skills would you like to further develop? List any particular ministry tools and techniques (eg. Biblical exegesis, counseling, teaching, evangelism) in which you would like to become more proficient. In what ministries would you like to gain practical experience?

5. What is your overall ministry goal for attending seminary? For what particular ministry or type of ministry do you believe God has called you to prepare?