

Pastoral Theology, Imagination, and Formation in Preaching Seminarians at Church on the Hill

Blaine D. Crawford

Submitted to the faculty of Western Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Ministry

Holland, Michigan
2020

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

HOLLAND, MI

D.MIN. PROJECT

Title of Project: Pastoral Theology, Imagination, and Formation for a
Pluralistic Society

Author: BLAINE D. CRAWFORD

Project Committee: _____
Chuck DeGroat Date

Alvin Padilla Date

Internal Reader: Kyle Small

External Reader: Faye Taylor

Abstract

From a broad vantage point, this paper is about pastoral theology and pastoral formation. However, the intricate details and the winding journey reveal that it is about so much more. Animated by the life and ministry of Lesslie Newbigin, I explore a framework of pastoral theology for a pluralistic and constantly changing world. Such a pastoral theology is grounded in a classical pastoral theology yet is open and innovative through its cultivation and practice of pastoral imagination. After explicating pastoral theology and pastoral imagination and understanding them more deeply through the life and work of Lesslie Newbigin, the paper takes a turn from pastoral theology to pastoral formation.

The second half of the paper considers how the formation of pastors through seminary education and field education. Utilizing the work of the Dreyfus brothers and their model for professional growth, pastoral formation is explored in a larger context and longer timeline with particular attention paid to the development of pastoral imagination. Through the research project, I explore to what extent pastoral imagination can be formed through cross-cultural field education experiences.

This paper seeks to provide a response to what it means to be a pastor in today's church in North America and how we form such pastors.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1. A Personal Journey into Pastoral Theology	1
Chapter 2. Pastoral Theology for a Pluralistic Society	12
Chapter 3. The Pastoral Theology and Imagination of Lesslie Newbigin	35
Chapter 4. Pastoral Formation for a Pluralistic Society	59
Chapter 5. A Case Study: Cultivating Pastoral Imagination in Field Education .	97
Chapter 6. Implications	129
Appendices	
I. Evolution of Internship Program at Church on the Hill	144
II. Phenomenological Research Interview Questions	148
Bibliography	150

List of Figures

Dreyfus Professional Development Model	78
--	----

Acknowledgments

To Brittnee, my wife and friend; a wellspring of encouragement and love.

Chapter 1: A Personal Journey into Pastoral Theology

Near the end of his book, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, Lesslie Newbigin poses a question: “What kind of ministerial leadership will nourish the church in its faithfulness to the gospel in a pluralist society?”¹ After years of serving in South India, Newbigin had returned to his native Great Britain. What he experienced was the demise of Christendom. In its place had arisen a pluralistic, and in his estimation, secular society. Drawing on his years of experience, Newbigin posited that the church in Great Britain found itself in a missionary context. For Newbigin, the shift in context required a shift in ministerial leadership and outlook. He writes, “We have lived for so many centuries in the ‘Christendom’ situation that ministerial training is almost entirely conceived in terms of the pastoral care of existing congregations.”²

A mental model of ministry that was solely focused on the care of existing members in existing congregations was insufficient to address the tides of change that had swept across Britain in his absence. It was inadequate to lead the church. Newbigin knew that a different model of ministry was necessary, one that would be able to faithfully proclaim the gospel in word and deed while speaking to the pluralistic, secular society around it. Newbigin asks, “If the gospel is the good news of the reign of God over the whole of life, public no less than private; if the Church is therefore called to address the whole public life of

¹ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1989), 235.

² Ibid.

the community as well as the personal lives of men and women in the private and domestic affairs, what kind of ministerial leadership is needed?"³

In response to his question, Newbigin begins to sketch what sort of ministerial leadership he has in mind. It is a preliminary sketch, short on specifics, but broad in scope. He concludes this section with a succession of questions, leading to his answer: "Is it the primary business of the ordained minister to look after the spiritual needs of the church members? Is it to represent God's kingdom to the whole community? Or – and this is surely the true answer – is it to lead the whole congregation as God's embassy to the whole community?"⁴ Newbigin starts a conversation about the type of pastor necessary for the church in a post-Christendom, pluralistic, and secular society.

Newbigin's question has remained with me since I read it for the first time in seminary. It has been a constant companion in ministry. In seminary, the question spawned musings about the responsibilities and skills of the pastor. I remember learning best practices from church planters and missional leaders, thinking about all the things I would do as a pastor to answer Newbigin's question. I was living in Denver, Colorado, at the time. When I attended Denver Seminary, it was the first time in my life that I lived a community of more than 10,000 people. It was a whole new world, especially after having attended college in Orange City, Iowa, a context where Dutch Reformed Christendom remained

³ Ibid., 236.

⁴ Ibid., 236-237.

vibrant and active. In Denver, I was exposed to people of other faiths and people of no faith. Up until that point in my life, I could safely assume that the person I was interacting with was a Christian, even if a nominal one. In Denver, that assumption was tossed out the window outside of the seminary community and I found myself assuming that I was often the only, or one of few Christians, in a particular context. This was both unsettling and exciting. Newbigin's question animated me, begging me to find a way of being pastor that would connect and relate to the people around me.

But when I accepted my first call and entered parish ministry, the question did not make as much sense. The first church I served out of seminary was a mid-sized, suburban congregation in Rochester, New York, that was almost 100% Caucasian, in an area overwhelmingly white, of middle-class socio-economic status, and comprised predominantly of retired individuals or those quickly approaching retirement. Some of my passions for ministry in a pluralistic setting and engaging with the broader world fell flat in this context and one of the reasons was that Christianity was still assumed in the lives of many people, even if it was not regularly practiced.⁵ The question went dormant during these

⁵ One of the ways Newbigin identifies Christendom is by the act of demarcating ourselves from other Christians. In Christendom, our task is to distinguish ourselves by our theology, our worship, and our ethics, from other churches. In a missional, pluralistic context, our work is directed to demarcating ourselves from the world. The partner of engagement is changed from church-church to church-world. One of the ways that I think you can identify yourself as living in a pocket of Christendom is if you find yourself distinguishing what kind of Christian you are, typically by denominational affiliation. In a truly post-Christendom context, your Christian identity broadens to such a degree that simply saying you are a Christian may be more than enough to confuse the person you are speaking with (and may even invoke the question, "What's that?").

years, as I largely provided pastoral care to congregants and conducted funerals on an almost monthly basis. It was a deeply formative time in growing into my roles as a pastor, but it was a different conversation (and a different mental model) from my final year in seminary.

When I accepted a call to my current church, Church on the Hill, the question was reawakened. Church on the Hill is located in Flushing, Queens, in New York City, and is known for its diversity in a city of diversity. Upon moving, I was greeted immediately by racial, ethnic, and religious diversity like I had never experienced before. For the first time in my life, I regularly found myself a minority in my own neighborhood, whether because of the color of my skin or the language that I speak. The borough of Queens is one of the most diverse places in the world, with nationalities and ethnicities from around the world filling its neighborhoods. Queens is home to over 2 million people and those people speak 180 distinct languages⁶ and affiliate with a wide variety of religions.⁷ Flushing, a specific neighborhood in Queens, exhibits this diversity. Also known as the Chinatown outside Manhattan or for one of the densest populations of Koreans outside of Seoul, South Korea, Flushing is a racially

⁶ Gus Lubin, "Welcome to the Language Capital of the World: Queens, New York," *World Economic Forum*, last modified February 22, 2017, accessed August 20, 2020, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/02/queens-in-new-york-has-more-languages-than-anywhere-in-the-world?utm_content=buffer74269.

⁷ Robert P. Jones, "Religion in New York City's Five Boroughs," *PRRI*, last modified April 13, 2016, accessed August 20, 2020, <https://www.prrri.org/spotlight/religion-new-york-citys-five-boroughs/>.

diverse neighborhood. Church on the Hill is located in north Flushing, outside the hustle-and-bustle of downtown Flushing but just as diverse. A century ago, the neighborhood was primarily German, Italian, and Greek (one of the neighboring Catholic churches still has one mass each week in Italian; a large Greek Orthodox church is also nearby). In the latter part of the 20th century, immigrants from Asia (first from Korea and later from China) began settling in Flushing. Today, the neighborhood surrounding the church is predominantly Asian and Asian-American with a growing Hispanic population. One can walk to the local park and not see another white person and not hear anybody else speak English. In many ways, Flushing is a harbinger of the America forecasted in coming decades.

The church I serve is a historically Caucasian congregation formed in 1927, to what at the time was a developing New York City suburban neighborhood. The congregation is English-speaking; about 65% of our congregation is white with the roughly remaining 35% being Asian-American. At Christmas and Easter worship services, as many as a dozen nationalities may be represented in a congregation of 100 members. Many in the surrounding neighborhood identify as Catholic, Greek Orthodox, or None.

The Newbigin question has become a live question for me in my current ministry, one existing not in a theoretical realm (like seminary) or one that seemed implausible (as in Rochester). Flushing, Queens, is an example of what Newbigin envisioned when he wrote of a secular, pluralistic society. And so, I no

longer could deal with hypotheticals or abstracts – I needed to figure out a response to Newbigin’s question.

This project began with the Newbigin question and my own personal journey to decipher how I was to minister to Church on the Hill and its surrounding community of Flushing, New York. But it became more than that.

Origins of Internship Program at Church on the Hill

During my tenure at Church on the Hill, we started a seminary internship program. The summer preaching internship at Church on the Hill began in the summer of 2016. The impetus for beginning this ministry was two-fold. First, it was part of my desire to regularly work alongside interns. I experienced so much life change and professional growth in my own internship experiences. My mentors were influential forces in my development and I hoped to be the same for seminarians. Second, the internship program arose from a desire to assist female preachers gain the experience they needed to more effectively serve in churches.

At the time, I was serving on the Commission for Women of the Reformed Church in America (RCA). During my time on the commission, we conducted a comprehensive survey on the state of clergywomen in the RCA.⁸ One of the most startling findings for myself and for the commission was how few ordained women were serving in roles with preaching as a primary responsibility. In addition, a large number of respondents suggested that they did not even

⁸ Unpublished survey and findings, Reformed Church in America (RCA), Commission for Women, 2015-2017.

consider a preaching role upon graduation from seminary. It was far more common for women to apply for associate positions rather than a senior pastor role or a solo pastor role, both of which have regular if not weekly preaching as a main responsibility. What was less clear from this survey was *why* this was the case.

One possible cause was the minimal preaching experience that female seminarians had upon graduation. By the time they graduated, they may have only preached a handful of times (and some of those in the classroom). This produced several problems. First, many female students did not feel confident enough in their craft of preaching to take on the responsibility of weekly preaching after graduation from seminary. Second, the students did not feel comfortable enough to submit sermon samples to search committees (and in some cases, had zero recorded sermons to submit as part of the search process). Third, connected to the prior point, the sermon experiences that women had were more often in the context of a youth group or college ministry and not in the context of Sunday worship. The second and third realities contrasted starkly with my own experience, in which, by the time I had graduated from seminary, I had preached upwards of fifty sermons; the majority of which occurred during Sunday worship, and thus, had the ability to submit the best of them to search committees for consideration.

One of my own realizations in this was that while I had been willing to drive hours for preaching opportunities, one of the reasons I was afforded these

pulpit supply opportunities in the first place was because of my gender. I could preach anywhere because I was a male student. Female seminarians are not afforded the same access to opportunities as I was. I began to wonder and explore how this reality might be changed on a more local level and not through the Commission's work petitioning the General Synod. Thus, the summer preaching internship began with a particular focus – to provide ample opportunity for a female seminarian to preach and receive regular feedback. Upon completion of the internship, a search committee could no longer claim that the female student had inadequate experience or that they had *only* preached to youth groups. The student would leave the internship with a sermon portfolio of recorded sermons with the hopes that these could be used in their search for a first call. My dream was that by getting female students preaching experience during seminary that they would be more willing to explore and pursue preaching ministries right out of seminary. Even if preaching was not the main responsibility of their first call, my hope was that it would encourage them to pursue preaching in their subsequent call.⁹

Focus of Project

As the internship program developed, no longer was I only concerned with how *I* might provide the necessary ministerial leadership for a pluralistic society. I also was attentive to and now directly involved in the formation of other pastors who might also provide the necessary ministerial leadership. While

⁹To read more about the evolution of the internship program, see Appendix I.

this project began with personal questions (Who am I as a pastor? What am I supposed to do? How do I become that kind of pastor?), it developed a parallel path—How do others become the sort of pastors needed to faithfully serve Christ’s church today? What role can I play in that development? It shifted from a project limited to pastoral theology to a project that also explored pastoral formation. It expanded from only considering my own journey to thinking through the larger framework and structures that train and educate seminarians and future pastors. This project is therefore an interplay between pastoral theology, pastoral formation (including seminary education and more specifically field education or internship experiences), and pastoral imagination.¹⁰ It became not only about the pastor I could become but the collegial ministry I could share with other ministers.

In the next chapter, I will provide a survey of some key writings on pastoral theology before providing my own understanding. This chapter will attempt to provide an answer to the Newbigin question. In chapter 3, I’ll look specifically at the pastoral theology and pastoral imagination of Lesslie Newbigin, which builds upon my argument in chapter 2 while also identifying what I think is the unique contribution of Newbigin’s pastoral theology and imagination. Newbigin’s work will lead us right into the second part of the project. While chapters 2 and 3 are focused on the Newbigin question, chapter 4

¹⁰While I believe pastoral imagination belongs under the category of pastoral theology, I also believe that it needs to be explicitly delineated as a separate category as it gets scant attention and yet I believe it is key to the development of ministers to serve in a pluralistic society.

begins to explore the formation question: “How do we train and form this type of pastor for the church today? Thus, chapter 4 will examine different perspectives on theological education and pastoral formation with my own views concluding this chapter.

In Chapter 5, I turn my attention to a lived example of a formational experience by sharing an evaluation of the internship ministry of Church on the Hill. My research seeks to answer two questions: 1) How are students being formed for pastoral ministry through the preaching internship at Church on the Hill? 2) What factors contribute to that formation? Through interviews with former interns, I wanted to learn the ways this ministry is forming pastors for the world today and how that formation is happening. While the explicit goal of the summer internship program is to provide preaching experience to female seminarians so that they might fill pulpits earlier in their pastoral careers than they otherwise would, it is not disconnected to the Newbigin question which animates my research. I see the internship ministry of Church on the Hill being one part of a far larger tapestry of pastoral formation. My curiosity is also piqued by the limited time-frame of a field education internship. What kinds of transformation can we reasonably expect to happen in a ten-week internship? Do certain factors encourage or increase transformation in the lives of students? At the conclusion of this chapter, the evaluation of the ministry stemming from the interviews will come into conversation with the content of the earlier chapters of this thesis.

Then, in the concluding chapter, I will propose some pathways forward for churches, seminaries, pastors, and students who daily live with the Newbigin question: “What kind of ministerial leadership will nourish the church in its faithfulness to the gospel in a pluralist society?”¹¹

¹¹ Newbigin, *The Gospel in Pluralist Society*, 235.

Chapter 2: Pastoral Theology for a Pluralistic Society

A Crisis of Pastoral Identity

In every time and place, ministers of Jesus Christ have defined, either explicitly or implicitly, what that calling entails. This calling is largely inherited through the tradition of the church but in each generation and in each new context, particular accents have emerged. When taking into account the history of Christianity, we see both a continuity in pastoral calling as well as innovations and adaptations. The Newbigin question (“What kind of ministerial leadership will nourish the church in its faithfulness to the gospel in a pluralist society?”) follows suit by seeking an answer that will be faithful to the gospel (and how the tradition has passed on the gospel) as well as contextualized to meet the current missional challenge.

With the crumbling of Christendom in the United States, accompanied by the decline of church membership and participation in the church and the rise of pluralism, much anxiety circulates about the future of the church in North America. Questions about the identity and purpose of the church and consequently, the minister, have risen to the forefront of the conversation in the church’s life. In ages past, metaphors and ways of understanding the church and the minister were more uniform. This is to be expected in more homogenous communities where diversity was low and worldviews were held more or less in common. But today, a multitude of metaphors are proposed for ministerial leadership. I think all of these proposed metaphors are an attempt to answer the

Newbiggin question, even unbeknownst to the writers proposing the metaphors. Pastors are grasping and searching for faithful and embodied ministerial leadership in the church today. Pastors, theologians, and authors are responding to the concerns of the world and the desire for the church to grow in healthy ways in witness to the world. Even a brief survey of the recent literature on pastoral identity and ministerial leadership exposes one to a proliferation of perspectives on what pastors are to be: pastor as theologian¹²; pastor as visionary leader¹³; pastor as community organizer¹⁴; pastor as justice advocate¹⁵; pastor as ethicist/moral theologian¹⁶; pastor as coach¹⁷; pastor as counselor¹⁸; pastor as spiritual guide¹⁹. The list could go on and on. The multitude of metaphors can be overwhelming. As a young pastor, I felt (and still feel) this confusion frequently.

¹² Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson, *The Pastor Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015); Todd Wilson and Gerald Hiestand, eds. *Becoming a Pastor Theologian* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016); Kevin Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan, *The Pastor as Public Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015).

¹³ Andy Stanley, *Visioneering* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 1999); Andy Stanley, *Next Generation Leader* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2006); Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012).

¹⁴ Alexia Salvatierra and Peter Heltzel, *Faith-Rooted Organizing* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2013).

¹⁵ Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook, *Injustice and the Care of Souls* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009); Danielle Ayers and Reginald Williams Jr, *To Serve This Present Age* (Chicago: Judson Press, 2013).

¹⁶ Sondra Wheeler, *The Minister as Moral Theologian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017).

¹⁷ Keith Webb, *The COACH Model for Christian Leaders* (Active Results LLC, 2012).

¹⁸ John Patton, *Pastor as Counselor* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015).

¹⁹ Howard Rice, *The Pastor as Spiritual Guide* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1998).

How do I understand myself and my calling as a pastor? What is my role as pastor in this church and community? What exactly am I supposed to be doing as pastor?

I applaud the efforts that are ongoing in understanding the role of the pastor in relation to the church and to the world today. At the same time, each of the proposals seems to suggest that they are *the* final word, that their proposal is *the* way out for the church, leading her from the wilderness back to the Promised Land. Behind the proposals are pleadings from the authors, such as “If only we took Christian thought and doctrine more seriously and were able to articulate it with more clarity and passion, then more people would come to understand and believe;” or “If only we could cast a vision as big as God’s kingdom and then enlist faithful members to carry out that vision in our church and community, then people would begin coming to church again.” These proposals have been faithful attempts at guiding ministers but to date, none have led the church back to the Promised Land. They may have worked for the specific author in their specific context. But they have not worked equally as well in all places of ministry. Much is to be gleaned from the proposals, all of which seem to capture and emphasize aspects of pastoral ministry that the authors feel to be neglected or altogether ignored today.

What the multitude of metaphors do suggest, correctly I believe, is that there are many ways to do faithful ministry in the world today. There might be better or worse ways of being pastor and there might be boundaries of what we

include in the definition of ministry, but ministry is as diverse as God's children. Instead of adding to the proliferation of singular metaphors to dictate all forms of pastoral ministry, I want to affirm the diversity of models for ministry. The diversity of these understandings of pastoral ministry together demonstrate how multi-dimensional pastoral ministry really is. You get the same sense from Robert Dykstra, in his edited volume *Images of Pastoral Care*, in which the authors propose a variety of creative proposals for self-understanding for pastors and pastoral care-givers. In his introduction, Dykstra pushes back at the notion of finding one metaphor that fits all contexts and instead proposes holding a multitude of metaphors simultaneously that can then be applied appropriately with pastoral wisdom.²⁰ Pastoral ministry will require multiple metaphors to guide and direct embodied action and faithful leadership in the church.

These metaphors, new and old, are the innovative edge of the answer to Newbigin's question. They are faithful appropriations of the gospel based on the context of their ministry. But what ties this mass of metaphors together? What binds together pastors as visionaries and pastors as counselors, pastors as coaches and pastors as moral guides? What is the faithfulness to the gospel and the tradition that sets the boundaries and lays the foundation of pastoral ministry?

Pastoral ministry is varied and the world around us is ever-changing. In their proposals, pastors and authors are seeking a steady foundation on which to

²⁰ Dykstra, Robert, ed. *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005).

build their ministry. A simplified, focused, and narrow understanding of what it means to be a pastor lessens the internal anxiety and confusion. However, what this has created is the adoption of one metaphor after another, quickly dispensing one for whatever is the newest or latest innovation in the church world (i.e., Christendom context). I believe we should seek a grounding and we should seek a steady foundation for understanding. I believe this grounding comes not by racing from the latest pastoral metaphor to the next, but instead comes from accepting an invitation to become rooted in the classical understanding of the pastor. This is not so that we may act like a pastor in 16th century Geneva or 5th century Rome, but so that we return to God's call for pastors that has nourished and served the church for centuries.

Responses to the Pastoral Identity Crisis

In the mid-20th century, the American church witnessed an explosion of growth and renewal. In the years following World War II, America experienced a baby boom and an economic boom. The suburbs were growing quickly and churches were planted to meet the growing demand in these areas. If there was a golden era in American Christianity, this era was probably it. During these years, church membership grew, churches buildings constructed, and Sunday schools filled children. During this period, the role of the ministry began to shift. No longer were ministers focused primarily on worship and pastoral care; now they became managers of a variety of church programs and ministries. Simultaneously in culture at-large, an inward turn in spirituality was taking

place where people now sought to discover and live their most fulfilling life. This therapeutic turn significantly changed understandings of ministry and the church. However, as pastors became program directors and therapists, some began to raise alarm that something was missing and they began to call for a return to an ancient vision.

Eugene Peterson was one such voice. In his book *Working the Angles*, Peterson names the reality that he observed among his colleagues:

American pastors are abandoning their posts, left and right, and at an alarming rate. They are not leaving their churches and getting other jobs.... But they are abandoning their posts, their calling. They have gone whoring after other gods. What they do with their time under the guise of pastoral ministry hasn't the remotest connection with what the church's pastors have done for most of twenty centuries.²¹

As the church and ministers adapted to a new context, they left something behind, a faithfulness to the historical tradition and calling of pastoral ministry. This calling had been abandoned to church management and the pastor was now responsible for running the business of the American church. Peterson continues,

The pastors of America have metamorphosed into a company of shopkeepers, and the shops they keep are churches. They are preoccupied with shopkeeper's concerns – how to keep the customers happy, how to lure customers away from competitors down the street, how to package the goods so that the customers will lay out more money.²²

Pastors had succumbed to the temptation to run their church, not much different than a businessperson might run their business or a politician run their

²¹ Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 1.

²² *Ibid.*, 2.

campaign. Peterson laments, “The pastor’s responsibility is to keep the community attentive to God. It is this responsibility that is being abandoned in spades.”²³

Peterson proposes that the way back to faithfulness for pastors was through a recovery of the historical practices of ministers. Peterson’s suggested remedy focused on the spirituality of the pastor. It was a call to focus on being before doing, a being rooted in God. Peterson calls ministers back to the practices of prayer, Scripture reading, and offering (and I might add receiving) spiritual direction.²⁴ These quiet acts, likely unseen by the church, are the ways in which pastors learn to pay attention to God, and in turn, become the pathways for pastors to help their churches pay better attention to God.

Peterson utilizes a metaphor from trigonometry to distinguish between the visible acts of pastoral ministry and the invisible acts that are the source for the external actions.:

The visible lines of pastoral work are preaching, teaching, and administration. The small angles of this ministry are prayer, Scripture, and spiritual direction. The length and proportions of the ministry ‘lines’ are variable, fitting numerous circumstances and accommodating a wide range of pastoral gifts. If, though, the lines are disconnected from the angles and drawn willfully or at random, they no longer make a triangle. Pastoral work disconnected from the angle actions . . . is no longer given its shape by God. Working the angles is what gives shape and integrity to the daily work of pastors and priests.²⁵

²³ Ibid., 3.

²⁴ Ibid., 3-4.

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

Peterson is pushing back against the notion that the pastor is a shopkeeper, ministry manager, therapist or professional, understandings of ministry that reached its nadir, along with the mainline Protestant church, in the 1960's and 1970's in North America. Pastoral ministry had narrowed itself to pastoral actions and responsibilities, and these pastoral ministries were then 'professionalized' according the standards of other professions rather to the inherent integrity and tradition of pastoral ministry itself. Peterson pleads with ministers to recover a pastoral spirituality, not at the expense of pastoral responsibility, but as the foundation to it.²⁶ Peterson calls the American pastorate to recover the life source of their ministry through their own spirituality, a spirituality shared by pastors through the centuries.

Other voices joined in with Peterson. While Peterson's emphasis was on the spirituality of pastors, other parts of this ancient vision of pastoral ministry began to emerge. William Willimon examined classical understandings of ministers. Willimon's work focused on the responsibilities that pastors perform as part of their calling. Pastors are preachers, counselors, teachers, evangelists, prophets, and leaders.²⁷ In contrast to all the new metaphors and correlative responsibilities, Willimon invites us to revisit the tasks and responsibilities that

²⁶In the foreword to Peterson's book *The Contemplative Pastor*, Rodney Clapp comments, "If Eugene H. Peterson were not a Presbyterian, he might be a monk." Rodney Clapp in Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 1.

²⁷ William Willimon, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), see chapters, 7, 9-11. See also William Willimon, ed. *Pastor: A Reader for Ordained Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002).

have served as the bedrock for pastoral ministry for centuries.²⁸ The classical tasks of the minister have been colloquially named as teaching and preaching, baptizing and catechizing. While pastoral responsibilities are wide and varied (and pastors end up performing tasks they never imagined they would be completing), a consensus of what is essential to the practice of pastoral ministry emerges from historical study. For pastors, hundreds of needs surface every week, some of which need immediate attention. And yet, in order for pastoral ministry to not devolve into a catch-all calling, where everything that nobody else wants to handle or address becomes the responsibility of the pastor, the pastor must be diligent in attending to the essential responsibilities. Willimon calls ministers to return again to the primary tasks of pastors in ordained ministry as seen through the centuries.

Thomas Oden also contributed to this conversation. His landmark book, *Pastoral Theology*, published in early 1980's, sought to convey a classical, ecumenical, and theological framework for pastoral ministry. Oden, a church historian and author well acquainted with the Patristics, sought to connect modern pastoral theology with more ancient understandings. Oden writes, "All the varied activities of the pastor have a single center: life in Christ. Pastoral theology seeks to point to that center in credible contemporary language and to

²⁸ Peterson does not completely ignore pastoral responsibilities in his call to ministers. He names preaching, teaching, and administration as the three essential tasks. Peterson, *Working the Angles*, 5.

see every single function in relation to that center.”²⁹ Oden is concerned with both a classical foundation in Christ and the contemporary expression of pastoral ministry. He worries that in our attempts to meet the changes within the culture, we have left behind the center in which our ministry lives and moves and has its being. He identifies another challenge confronting pastoral theology – specialization. The disciplines of pastoral ministry have been severed from one another, offering pastors no clear, comprehensive, or unifying vision for ministry.³⁰ Later in the book, Oden provides a general definition of the pastor: “The pastor, concisely defined, is a member of the body of Christ who is called by God and the church and set apart by ordination representatively to proclaim the Word, to administer the sacraments, and to guide and nurture the Christian community toward full response to God’s self-disclosure.”³¹ In Oden’s definition we see both the grounding he implores of his reader in the classical tasks of ministry but also an openness (guiding and nurturing can take a multitude of forms) to faithful, contextual actions.

Other voices, like Oden, expressed a yearning to reconnect with our past and to re-source pastoral ministry from church history. These voices did not want to talk about prior generations of pastors; rather, they sought to talk with them, generating a creative dialogue with prior generations of ministers. Andrew

²⁹ Thomas Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*. 1st ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

Purves is one such author. In his book, *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition*, Purves dialogues with five esteemed pastors in church history: Gregory Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, Martin Bucer, and Richard Baxter.³² He seeks to draw lessons from each, which allow pastors today to hold up a mirror to their own ministries while also learning about the role and function of pastors from church history. Purves writes, “A reading of the classical pastoral writers gives us cause for critical thought concerning the purpose of pastoral work as practiced today. . . . The task . . . is to allow these classical texts to provoke us into critical thinking by disturbing our calm, culture-bound assumptions concerning ministry.”³³ Purves acknowledges that pastoral theology is “occasional and contextual, written as circumstances required,” but also notes some common themes that emerge in a classical pastoral tradition: a high view of calling, a sense of the complexity of ministry, and the substantial level of commitment required of ministers, intellectually, morally, emotionally, and spiritually.³⁴

Similar books include compilations of ancient pastors writing on the pastoral life. One such book, *The Pastor: Readings from the Patristic Era*, reveals a major discrepancy in how pastoral ministry was discussed then compared to

³² Andrew Purves, *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

³³ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

today.³⁵ Many of the Patristic authors were less focused on theological acumen or a vital spirituality. Rather, their focus was directed toward the character of ministers. Personal ethics, largely derived from the Pastoral Epistles in the New Testament, was a major focus of these authors. Pastors are moral exemplars. They represent with their life the kingdom of Jesus Christ. One of the benefits of reading and interacting with the pastors serving in a culture and time far removed from our own is that it shines light on both our current state of pastoral understanding but also illumines neglected or forgotten aspects that previous generations found vital and essential. To modern ears, the moral exhortations from the church fathers may sound off-putting. Yet, they also expose how much our own lives are shaped by individualism and relativism.

The ancient tradition is not an idea that lives in our minds; it was real pastors serving real churches in real places. Interacting and learning from these pastors contribute to our recovery and reconnection with this ancient tradition. Engagement with ancient practitioners highlight the importance of character development in clergy, the high calling that should both excite and give pause, the internal struggles clergy have faced, and the variety of ways it has been practiced through the years.

What kind of ministerial leadership will nourish the church today? Pastors who are grounded and rooted in the classical tradition of pastoral theology but who are also innovative and adaptive in the embodied forms of

³⁵ Philip Culbertson and Arthur Bradford Shippee, ed. *The Pastor: Readings from the Patristic Era* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

ministry for their particular contexts. While there may be consensus on the classical tradition, I noted earlier the diversity of improvised forms of ministry. So, how do pastors know which new metaphor to adopt? Where does this adaptive, contextual, and embodied form of ministerial leadership come from?

A Missing Component: Pastoral Imagination

Pastoral imagination might be the very key to developing pastors for the church in today's world. While much attention has been devoted to pastoral knowledge, pastoral skills, and pastoral spirituality, pastoral imagination has been underemphasized or ignored. Craig Dykstra proposes that there is pastoral imagination at work in good pastors. This imagination, while difficult to define, allows pastors to enter a wide variety of situations and "see what is going on there through the eyes of faith."³⁶ This imagination goes beyond seeing and leads to acting: "This way of seeing and interpreting shapes what the pastor thinks and does and how he or she responds to people in gestures, words, and actions. It functions as a kind of internal gyroscope, guiding pastors in and through every crevice of pastoral life and work."³⁷ Later, Dykstra will refer to pastoral imagination as a "distinctive and very special kind of intelligence" that leads to "real creativity and integrity" in ministry.³⁸ Pastoral imagination is "a way of

³⁶ Craig Dykstra, "Pastoral and Ecclesial Imagination," in Bass, Dorothy C., and Craig R. Dykstra. *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2008), 41.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

seeing into and interpreting the world which shapes everything one thinks and does.”³⁹

Pastoral ministry is varied according to the gifts, temperaments, and skills of the pastors and according to the unique ecclesial contexts in which these pastors are called to serve. Craig Dykstra suggested as much in writing, “To be a good pastor, you have to be very smart in lots of really interesting ways.”⁴⁰ This is not just a recent trend or observation about pastoral theology in ministry (as if we could return to the golden era of a simpler, more focused and disciplined life for clergy). Reinhold Niebuhr wrote, in his reflections during his first pastorate during the 1920’s, “[Pastoral ministry] is a task which requires the knowledge of a social scientist and the insight and imagination of a poet, the executive talents of a business man and the mental discipline of a philosopher. Of course, none of us meets all the demands made upon us.”⁴¹

Pastoral imagination builds upon pastoral knowledge, pastoral skills, and pastoral spirituality and it emerges in relationship to the person and the place. Pastoral imagination is the bridge between the classical model of pastoral ministry and faithful models of ministry for today’s world. Pastoral imagination lives from a discerning heart to know how to be faithful to the past and faithful to God’s present and future action in the world. It will be a near-impossible task

³⁹ Ibid., 47-48.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 51.

⁴¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 174.

as Niebuhr suggests. And yet, this is exactly the ministry to which pastors have been called today.

The amount of writing on pastoral ministry from the last 50 years far outnumbers prior generations. These writings have focused on particular skills (preaching, pastoral care, administration), new metaphors of ministry, leadership and leadership development, the spiritual life of pastors, pastoral memoirs, and dialogue with other fields of study. The literature accentuates different areas of importance. I believe the abundance of writing is a sign of the wrestling so many are doing as they struggle with pastoral identity and the mission of the church in our modern world.

In this next section, I bring together the various threads explored above into a more cohesive pastoral theology for the church today. Then, in the next chapter, I will explore Lesslie Newbigin's pastoral theology through this prism.

Classical Pastoral Theology

So, what is classical pastoral theology? While the responsibilities of pastors vary and while the emphases and requirements of pastors may differ in degree depending on context, there does seem to be a consensus of what one might call a 'classical' tradition of pastoral theology. This classical pastoral theology forms the foundation of all pastoral ministry, regardless of context. A classical pastoral theology includes the basic skills and identities needed for pastors to serve Christ's church faithfully. The pastor should strive for growth in these essential skills and mastery in this essential knowledge.

Pastoral theology is the study of the ministry of the pastor. It is an art and science, reflecting on the pastor in the context of God, God's church, and God's world. While some use the terminology of pastoral theology to refer exclusively to pastoral care, I will use the term in a far broader sense.

Pastoral theology is comprised of four components: pastoral knowledge (knowing); pastoral skills (doing); pastoral spirituality (being); and pastoral imagination (seeing and interpreting). The first three, together, form the foundation from which the fourth, pastoral imagination, can emerge. All of these aspects take a lifetime to form, but there may be ways to accelerate some aspects of the formation. Each of the components becomes more pronounced at different stages of the formational process.

Pastoral Knowledge

Justo Gonzalez writes, "It is necessary to remember that in its better times the church has always had a highly educated pastoral ministry and that one of the characteristics of the lesser times has been an ignorant clergy."⁴² Educated and trained pastors have always been important to the church (with varying degrees of how one defines being educated and trained). Pastors are a learned community, who have committed themselves to loving God with their mind as well as with their hearts and bodies. While the fears of a well-educated clergy disconnected from the real world and their congregations can be substantiated

⁴² González, Justo L. *The History of Theological Education* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015), 217.

with examples from throughout church history, nevertheless, the call of pastors to commit themselves to study and learning remains a vital part of the calling.

Pastors should grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Bible; theology; creeds, confessions, and catechisms; church history; and worship and liturgical arts. But the list could extend much further to include ethics, pedagogical theories, counseling assessments and techniques, philosophy, ancient (and modern) languages, and more. With each passing year, the amount of knowledge grows exponentially. There is no way for one human being to master it all. While I do not offer an exhaustive list of topics and sub-topics pastors should master, I do want to emphasize that pastors commit themselves to a lifetime of learning, beginning with a learning immersion in seminary, in which the student sets aside a period of time to focus on the knowledge and preparation needed to serve in ministry. The life of the mind of the pastor does not end upon the completion of seminary; rather, it is just beginning. Pastors should commit themselves to regularly challenging themselves to grow intellectually as they continue to serve as pastors through reading, writing, conferences, and other means, not focused exclusively on the practice of ministry but on continuing to explore and love God's world. Gonzalez helpfully reminds his reader at the end of his book, "What ministerial education is to seek is not only that candidates for orders know the Bible and theology but above all that they know how to employ that knowledge in such a way as to encourage

dialogue with the rest of human knowledge.”⁴³ The knowledge of theology and the Bible is the beginning of the knowledge a pastor will need to learn.

Pastoral Skills

In order for pastors to fulfill their responsibilities, a number of skills must be performed with faithfulness and competency. These skills are varied and may be used more or less depending upon the context. Pastors should develop skills for preaching, pastoral care, worship planning and leadership, administration, teaching, and leadership. These skills are developed for the purpose of God’s mission and for the purpose of building up and equipping God’s church for mission. Lists of pastoral skills vary in length and specificity. I have attempted to name broad skills that can be translated for different contexts. Within all these skillsets, a variety approaches exist that enable pastors to fulfill them well.

Pastoral Spirituality

Pastoral spirituality can be broken down into several sub-categories. Pastoral identity includes the sense of calling, including an assessment of one’s gifts for ministry. It also includes the metaphors or identities ministers adopt to understand their role and function in ministry. But it goes deeper. Pastoral spirituality also refers to the spiritual disciplines that feed and nurture the spiritual life of pastors. It includes a self-knowledge and self-compassion that come through confession, healing, awareness, and commitment to change.

⁴³ González, 224.

Pastoral spirituality also is comprised of the character of the pastor. This ethical dimension is both seen and unseen yet is critically vital for the sustainability in ministry. Character formation, while connected to spirituality, is more expansive. And character formation, while connected to ethics and boundaries in ministry, is also more expansive than meeting legal and professional requirements. Character formation is at the core of Christian discipleship and the pastor, as chief disciple, should be leading the way in what a life looks like when lived with God (or what life looks like when increasingly conformed to the image of Christ).

Pastoral Imagination

Pastoral imagination emerges from the soil of pastoral knowing, pastoral doing, and pastoral being. It is the practical know-how, the wisdom that separates a novice from an expert, or a beginner from a seasoned veteran. Pastoral imagination involves all one has learned and then prompts the pastor to discern exactly what that entails in face of the current situation. Pastoral imagination is about seeing, interpreting, and embodying a faithful response.

Dykstra is right in putting pastoral imagination in an interdependent relationship with ecclesial imagination.⁴⁴ Pastoral imagination arises from specific pastors serving specific congregations comprised of specific individuals. If pastoral imagination can only be learned through engagement in ministry,

⁴⁴ Dykstra, "Pastoral and Ecclesial Imagination," 43.

then it is inseparable from the church's imagination. Dykstra states the importance of this mutual relationship:

Particular congregations and the church as a whole can wither and die – or betray their calling – if they are not consistently fed and led by pastoral leadership possessed of the capacity to perceive, truthfully and deeply, through eyes of faith, what is actually going on in the world of which they are a part; to imagine what new life God is calling God's people to embrace; and to strengthen and enable the people to see it themselves and to live into it creatively.⁴⁵

Pastoral imagination is indispensable to ecclesial imagination just as ecclesial imagination is indispensable to pastoral imagination. They develop in symbiotic relationship with one another. They develop over time as the trust between pastor and congregation grows through shared experiences of exultation and disappointment.

I want to take Dykstra's work one step further that will elucidate another factor that informs pastoral imagination. Not only is there a relationship between pastoral imagination and ecclesial imagination, there is also a connection to a missional imagination. A missional imagination is a way of seeing and interpreting the world outside the walls of the church. In response to the Newbigin question, we are not attempting to find and form pastors for the church as it currently exists. We are seeking pastors to meet the cultural challenge the world faces today. As we think about the type of pastors needed for the church today, we desire pastors who are doing more than imagining their roles creatively within the context of the church; we need pastors and churches

⁴⁵ Ibid., 43.

imagining their roles creatively within the context of the world. Pastoral imagination is not formed then only in relationship to the ecclesial body one serves. Pastoral imagination is also informed by the place where one lives, works and plays (which ought to be the same place where the church lives, works, and plays). Thus, a pastoral imagination, ecclesial imagination, and missional imagination are mutually interdependent upon one another.

Adding missional imagination to the paradigm places the church and the minister back into their proper context for ministry – the world. A pastoral imagination that develops without a missional imagination will forever be stunted. Without a missional imagination, a pastor is left with a Christendom lens through which to see and understand the church and the world. Missional imagination extends the context to the local community where one engages in ministry. This larger context shapes the pastor just as much as if not more than the context of the church. Putting pastoral imagination and ecclesial imagination back into the context of the world makes clear to pastors the purpose for ministry. Pastoral imagination and ecclesial imagination do not germinate in a vacuum. They sprout in the world. Paying attention to the larger context of where the church is will also significantly impact what type of pastor one will be. A pastor serving a church in Flushing, Queens, should minister differently than a pastor in northwest Iowa. A pastor in Holland, Michigan, will serve differently than a pastor in the East Bay. The temptation for young ministers and seminarians is to adopt a pastoral imagination, with little thought to context.

This is how imagination gets left behind. Yet, pastoral imagination comes out of the soil of place. Because of this reality, serving in different places will necessarily yield different pastoral imaginations.

Pastoral imagination arises out of pastoral knowledge, pastoral skills, and pastoral identity. Many of these are formed in the seminary context and will continue to be formed throughout a minister's life. However, it goes deeper than knowledge, skills, and identity.

Pastoral imagination comes forth from the uniqueness of one's ministry context plus the gifts, skills, experiences, and life of the individual. One cannot borrow someone else's pastoral imagination for the long-term – it has to come from within. Often, the temptation is to adopt one particular way of being pastor and asserting that all pastors need to follow suit (recall the multitude of ideas about what a pastor is to be in the world today from the beginning of this chapter). Pastoral ministry cannot be sustained on the pastoral imagination of another, but it often starts that way.

Pastoral imagination, built upon pastoral knowledge, skills, and spirituality, and informed by an ecclesial imagination, missional imagination, and an understanding of one's self and one's gift, discerns what is needed from the pastor at a particular moment or in a particular season. Does the congregation need a visionary leader? Does the community need a social justice advocate or prophet? Does the church need someone to care and counsel them in their grief? Do they need a teacher? A fundraiser? An administrator? Adept

pastoral imagination creatively adopts ways of being pastor that are attuned to the season of ministry in the church for the sake of ministering to the community. Thus, over time, the pastor will need to adopt and learn new ways of being pastor. What I am asserting in this section is that the materials that give rise to pastoral imagination should be the same for ministers (skills, knowledge, identity) but because those materials are interacting with different individuals, in different churches, in different geographical locales, pastoral imaginations will vary as widely as God's children. Overlap between pastoral imaginations will occur and pastoral imaginations in the same geographical locale will be similar, but there is not a one-size-fits-all model for pastoral identity and imagination.

Conclusion

The classical pastoral tradition provides the answer to the first part of the Newbigin question. It aligns us in faithfulness to the gospel and to the traditions of the church. Pastoral imagination answers the second part of the question. Pastoral imagination creatively embodies ways of being pastor dependent upon individual, church, and world. In the next chapter, I want to explore how this faithfulness and imagination looks in the life, thought, and ministry of Lesslie Newbigin.

Chapter 3: The Pastoral Theology and Imagination of Lesslie Newbigin

As Newbigin was the impetus for my journey of learning, it is fitting to return to his own response to his question: “What kind of ministerial leadership will nourish the church in its faithfulness to the gospel in a pluralist society?”⁴⁶ In addition to examining his response that immediately followed this question, in this chapter we will also look at his life, ministry, and writings to explore more fully the pastoral theology and pastoral imagination of Lesslie Newbigin. It is offered not as a paradigm for ministry for myself or other pastors to follow. Rather, it is intended to show the unique pastoral imagination that emerged in the life and ministry of Lesslie Newbigin, providing a concrete example of the theory explored in the previous chapter. My hope is that Newbigin’s pastoral theology and imagination may serve as an invitation for ministers to listen to their own lives, to live faithfully from them, and to embrace the pastoral imagination that emerges for their ministries in their communities. Pastors, in developing their own pastoral imaginations, do well to learn from the pastoral imaginations of others, but they do better when they listen to their own life, ministry, and context, and respond to what God reveals and gives.

Biographical Sketch of Lesslie Newbigin

Lesslie Newbigin is best known in North America today for his claim that the church in Western society needs to have a missionary encounter with

⁴⁶ Newbigin, *The Gospel in Pluralist Society*, 235.

Western culture. This is an important slice of his life and ministry but only part of it. While his writings during this last stage of life and ministry equals if not exceeds his output from his pre-retirement days, we must not overlook the experiences that gave shape to Newbigin's theology and pastoral imagination.⁴⁷ In his book, *Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life*, Geoffrey Wainwright portrays Newbigin in the line of the great bishop-theologians in early church history.⁴⁸ There's good reason for this claim. Newbigin was a pastor and a missionary; a theologian and an administrator; a bishop and a teacher; and eventually, after he 'retired,' a parish pastor one last time. Before entering ordination training at Westminster College, he committed himself to the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland. Upon graduation (and after his wedding to his beloved wife Helen), Newbigin was commissioned as a missionary to Madras, India. There, he devoted himself to learning a new language and culture but a serious bus accident sent him back to the UK for surgery. He eventually returned to India, this time to Kanchipuram. Here, Newbigin thrust himself into the busy schedule of a district missionary. His ministry extended beyond Kanchipuram as he reached out to local villages. As time passed, he became more involved in efforts to unite disparate church missions in South India. He was a voracious

⁴⁷ Paul Weston in Newbigin, Lesslie and Paul Weston, *Lesslie Newbigin: Missionary Theologian: A Reader* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 13. Much of what follows in this brief introduction to Newbigin is drawn from Weston's sketch of Newbigin's life.

⁴⁸ Geoffrey Wainwright, *Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 390.

defender of the scheme and was selected and consecrated as a bishop of the newly formed Church of South India (CSI) and served in this role in Madurai. During this season of ministry, he became more involved in more global efforts for mission and ecumenicity. When the International Missionary Council (IMC) considered becoming part of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Newbigin was called to oversee and enact this transition. After the incorporation of the IMC into the WCC, Newbigin became the first director of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism and an assistant general secretary in the WCC. In this role, Newbigin travelled extensively throughout the world. In 1965, Newbigin returned to India to an appointment as the Bishop in Madras, whose diocese was far larger than his previous one. When he reached retirement age, he and his wife Helen returned to the UK as he accepted a teaching post at Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, where he taught for five years. Newbigin eventually took one more pastorate, at 72 years-old, to serve a congregation in Winson Green in Birmingham.

Newbigin's plethora of experiences gave him a unique perspective on the world and the church in missionary contexts. He was an ardent defender of the unity of the church and the centrality of Christ. He taught in classrooms and in villages; he trained lay pastors and spoke at international conferences; he created structures for mission and liturgies for a united church. Indeed, Newbigin can take a seat among the theological forebears of the Christian faith.

Keys to Newbigin's Pastoral Theology

In his masterful theological biography of Newbigin, Geoffrey Wainwright states, "Lesslie Newbigin's entire career may properly be regarded as pastoral in the broad and christological sense of the term."⁴⁹ While most of the attention paid to Newbigin is devoted to his writing and thinking, Newbigin was a pastor at his core. Whether as a pastor to fellowships of people or as a shepherd to shepherds in his role as bishop, Newbigin was first and foremost a pastor.

To best understand Newbigin's pastoral theology and imagination, I think it is helpful to keep in mind a few key commitments. First, for Newbigin, ministry does not take place in a church but in the world.⁵⁰ In Christendom, the actions of the minister take place within the church for the sake of the church. In a missionary context, the actions of the minister take place with the context of the world for the sake of the world. Wainwright concurs: "The authentic pastorate will never be for Newbigin merely inward looking."⁵¹ Newbigin is critical of the mental model of ministry developed during Christendom which conceives of ministry almost completely in terms of "pastoral care of existing congregations."⁵² For Newbigin, pastoral ministry is always a public ministry,

⁴⁹ Wainwright, 135.

⁵⁰ George Hunsberger, a renowned Newbigin scholar, reminded me of this in a personal conversation. Hunsberger thinks this point is one of the unique and lasting contributions of Newbigin's thought and ministry and maybe the key to interpreting and understanding Newbigin.

⁵¹ Wainwright, 136.

⁵² Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 235.

not limited to the private realm of the walls of a church or the individual members of the church.

Second, Newbigin's ecclesiology is inseparable from his pastoral theology. This, in and of itself, is not unique. What is unique is Newbigin's emphasis that the church carries out the mission of God as a sign, instrument, and foretaste of God's kingdom. Newbigin's exploration of pastoral ministry is not focused solely on the discrete activities of the minister that can easily be parsed out. Instead, Newbigin sees the responsibilities of the pastor through a framework of equipping the members of the church to be on mission as well. Much of his time in South India was training and equipping others to carry out face-to-face ministry. The members of the church, living faithfully and lovingly in the world, are the great witnesses to the truth of Jesus Christ and his kingdom. Newbigin boldly claims in *The Gospel in Pluralist Society*: "I believe that the major impact of such [missionary] congregations on the life of society as a whole is through the daily work of the members in their secular vocations and not through the official pronouncements of ecclesiastical bodies."⁵³ Thus, the actions of pastoral ministry are oriented to this end of training and equipping the members of the church to fulfill the mission of the church.

Third, just as it is impossible to separate Newbigin's ecclesiology from his pastoral theology, we also ought not separate discipleship from his pastoral ministry. These two are closely connected in his thought. For both disciples of

⁵³ Ibid., 235.

Jesus and ministers of Jesus, faith is expressed in word and deed. Faith is always faith in action. One of the ways Newbigin describes the mission of the church is “hope in action.”⁵⁴ Separating the proclamation of the gospel from the enactment of the gospel is anathema to Newbigin. He writes, “People should be able to see that being a member of a Christian congregation means caring for your neighbors as surely as it means sharing in worship and in the ministry of the Word and sacraments – indeed that the Word and sacraments of the gospel are emptied of their meaning if they are not part of the life of a caring congregation.”⁵⁵ Newbigin’s pastoral ministry, while deeply thoughtful and reflective, is directed toward action, which requires that the pastor remain a fellow disciple.

Newbigin’s Pastoral Theology

Throughout this project, I have used Newbigin’s question to frame my study. It is worth looking now at how he answers his own question. Newbigin asks, “What kind of ministerial leadership will nourish the church in its faithfulness to the gospel in a pluralist society?”⁵⁶ He then offers his fullest exposition of pastoral leadership:

The task of ministry is to lead the congregation as a whole in a mission to the community as a whole, to claim its whole public life, as well as the personal lives of all its people, for God’s rule. It means equipping all the

⁵⁴ Lesslie Newbigin, *A Word in Season: Perspectives on Christian World Missions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1994), 38-39.

⁵⁵ Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 36.

⁵⁶ Newbigin, *The Gospel in Pluralist Society*, 235.

members of the congregation to understand and fulfill their several roles in this mission through their faithfulness in their daily work. It means training and equipping them to be active followers of Jesus in his assault on the principalities and powers which he disarmed on his cross. And it means sustaining them in bearing the cost of that warfare.⁵⁷

In his answer to his own question, we already see the emphases noted above. This mission is to the “community as a whole” and concerns the “whole public life.” The minister equips the members to “understand and fulfill their several roles in this mission.” And, this training forms “active followers of Jesus” engaged in the work of making all things new (and challenging the principalities and powers actively working against God’s kingdom).

Having a better understanding of Newbigin’s understanding of pastoral ministry and what lies behind it, we will now examine Newbigin’s pastoral theology through the interpretive framework I proposed in the previous chapter: pastoral knowledge, pastoral skills, pastoral spirituality, and lastly pastoral imagination. More than a decade before Newbigin’s provocative question in *The Gospel in Pluralist Society*, his book, *The Good Shepherd*, was published. *The Good Shepherd* is the closest we get to a comprehensive pastoral theology from Lesslie Newbigin. In reality, the book is a compilation of short talks presented by Newbigin to clergy in the Church of South India serving in Madras for the purpose of encouraging and equipping these ministers. Nevertheless, in the talks, we get an insider’s view into how Newbigin understood pastoral ministry (at least in the South India context). Newbigin addresses everything from the

⁵⁷ Ibid., 238.

theology of pastoral ministry to the practical details of carrying out the work of being a pastor. What follows will largely be drawn from this text, while supplemented by additional writings and talks of Newbigin.

Pastoral Knowledge

Newbigin writes, "Behind every life that has really changed the world through the power of words, there lies always the hard, patient and hidden labor of study, reflection, and thought."⁵⁸ This was certainly true in the case of Lesslie Newbigin. Even a cursory reading of his works suggests a breadth and depth of thought that could only arise from a lifetime of study and learning. While Newbigin was truly a man of action, that did not lead him to neglect the life of the mind. In fact, he exhorts the pastors of Madras to be students:

All our days, two things which should excite in us that eager and restless curiosity which will drive us all the time to widen and deepen our understanding. The first is the exceeding greatness of the God whom we preach. The second is the greatness, richness and variety of the world to which our preaching is addressed.⁵⁹

These two impulses set the direction of a minister's study and learning—study of God and study of the world in which we live and serve.⁶⁰ Here, Newbigin's exhortation to studying and exegeting cultures becomes so important. If the culture is the primary place for which the gospel is spoken and

⁵⁸ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Good Shepherd* (Oxford: Mowbray, 1977), 110.

⁵⁹ Newbigin, *The Good Shepherd*, 111.

⁶⁰ Newbigin gives four suggestions for a course of study: 1) Always have one big book you are working on; 2) Try to read original works rather than summaries; 3) Always keep some Bible work going; 4) Always be reading something other than theology, in Newbigin, *The Good Shepherd*, 114.

enacted, it will take place in forms and systems that the culture understands. One of Newbigin's critiques of theological education in his time was the lack of engagement with the culture. The Enlightenment influence on theological education, which occurred during a period of Christendom, emphasized distinctions within the church and paid less attention to the world.

For Newbigin, the knowledge necessary for being a pastor is vast; yet, it should not prevent ministers from always learning and growing. His thoughts and theology are what many remember him for today; behind his writing is a lifetime of study and reflection. Newbigin is acquainted with a vast array of knowledge spanning theological disciplines and other fields of study. In *Foolishness to the Greeks*, one of his directives to the Western church desiring a missionary encounter with their culture, was to find "help in seeing our own culture through Christian minds shaped by other cultures."⁶¹ In order to unravel how enculturated our understanding of church and salvation has become, Newbigin points us to non-Western (and presumably non-white) perspectives. Newbigin's study did not conclude when he finished his seminary training. The witness of his life portrays a man who kept learning until the end.⁶²

⁶¹ Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1986), 146.

⁶² A number of individuals who knew Newbigin personally have shared with me that they would go and read to Newbigin in his later years when his eyesight no longer allowed him to read.

Pastoral Skills

Newbigin follows a traditional understanding of the skills necessary for pastoral ministry. First, pastors are to preach Jesus Christ. The pastor is the preacher of the word of God. Newbigin says that there is “nothing more fundamental to our ministry than this.”⁶³ Newbigin is aware that sermons are full of tired words. His solution is that preachers must preach Christ: “The business of the sermon is to bring hearers face to face with Jesus Christ as he really is.”⁶⁴ Elsewhere, he expands on his vision of preaching. It goes far beyond the individual coming face-to-face with Jesus. “In all our preaching and teaching about the hope that the gospel makes possible, we have to keep steadily in view the fact that what the gospel offers is not just hope for the individual but hope for the world.”⁶⁵ The context of the world comes into view here but Newbigin wants to take it one step further. He wants to connect the individual’s experience of salvation to their calling as disciples to live and serve in the world. He writes, “A preaching of the gospel that calls men and women to accept Jesus as Savior but does not make it clear that discipleship means commitment to a vision of society radically different from that which controls our public life today must be condemned as false.”⁶⁶ The pastor as preacher proclaims and announces the

⁶³ Newbigin, *The Good Shepherd*, 24.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁵ Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 43.

⁶⁶ Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 132.

finished work of Jesus Christ and seeks to enlist, encourage, and equip the disciples of Jesus to fulfill their missionary task in the world.

Second, pastors are responsible to lead worship and administer the sacraments. Newbigin calls this responsibility our “highest and most sacred privilege.”⁶⁷ He laments how easily leading worship and presiding at the sacraments can become mechanical, routine, and dull. For Newbigin, worship is the joyful corporate act of the people of God, joining with the church on earth and in heaven, in offering praise and adoration to God. Newbigin writes, “If we are truly leading our people in the worship of the living God, there will be men and women who can go out from the church every Sunday with that testimony on their lips and in their hearts.”⁶⁸

Third, pastoral ministry takes on a priestly character, mediating between humans and God not as a go-between but as a helper, which results in two important manifestations.⁶⁹ First, pastors are to regularly pray for all of the members of their congregation. Second, they are to regularly visit their church members. Newbigin is insistent that there is a deeply personal component to pastoral ministry that the parishioners would trust the voice of the pastor, like the sheep who recognize and trust the voice of the Good Shepherd.

⁶⁷ Newbigin, *The Good Shepherd*, 28.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

Thus far, Newbigin's pastoral responsibilities follow the classical descriptions of what pastors are to do. But Newbigin also adds accents on several additional important duties. First, the pastor is a peacemaker. Newbigin expends considerable attention on church discipline. One gets the sense that this absorbed a large amount of time in his pastoral and bishopric duties.⁷⁰ Both Michael Goheen and Wainwright note the importance of church discipline in Newbigin's pastoral theology.⁷¹ Because the church's witness to the world was so central to Newbigin, letting sin, injustice, and evil fester in the life of the church harmed this witness. The pastor was to walk between the tensions of Pharisaism and Sadducee-ism or harsh judgmentalism and capitulation to culture. The purpose of "all Church discipline is that the person concerned may be saved, may be forgiven, healed, and restored to the Church's fellowship."⁷² The peace and unity of the church was central to the church's witness to the world but that did not allow the church or the pastor to take a *laissez-faire* approach to sin. It was to be addressed with the hopes of confession and restoration.

Newbigin also emphasizes the pastor as evangelist. He wants to empty the baggage associated with evangelism and goes so far to say, "The truth is that we do not truly understand the Gospel if we spend all our time preaching it to

⁷⁰ Ibid., 46.

⁷¹ Michael Goheen, *The Church and Its Vocation: Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2018), 135-136; Wainwright, 142.

⁷² Newbigin, *The Good Shepherd*, 53.

Christians.”⁷³ Evangelism is presence and proclamation, sign and interpretation. For Newbigin, evangelism (“people simply full of good news which we have to share with all our friends”) has been confused with proselytization (“agents of an organization trying to strengthen itself in the world by getting more members and more influence”).⁷⁴ Too often, evangelism has exploited the weaknesses of those receiving the message. Newbigin wants to recover the evangelistic role of the pastor but emphasizes it must be done in the way of Jesus – that is, in the way of incarnation. We must truly be with people (presence) and we must not be afraid to share the good news (proclamation). Pastors can do this most freely when they are not evangelizing for the purpose of building their own kingdom in a church but are working instead for God’s kingdom in the world.

The pastor plays another public role in addition to being an evangelist. The act of leadership, just as the act of the mission of the church, is more than telling the gospel; it is showing the gospel through lived action. Newbigin writes, “Ministerial leadership for a missionary congregation will require that the minister is directly engaged in the warfare of the kingdom against the powers which usurp the kingship.”⁷⁵ I believe the key phrase is *directly engaged*. The pastor is the church’s representative to the world on behalf of Christ and will be called upon to be involved in the welfare of the community. The pastor

⁷³ Ibid., 61.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 59.

⁷⁵ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 240.

challenges the powers of evil and the ways of this world out of step with God's kingdom. The pastor advocates for the forgotten and neglected, the oppressed and the marginalized.

Lastly, pastoral leadership for Newbigin is directed to the training of the laity for understanding and fulfillment of their several callings in the world. This role permeates his writings: "All truly pastoral ministry in the Church has as an essential part of its content the training of others to be ministers of Christ in the world.... The test of our ministry will be the extent to which our people become ministers."⁷⁶ If the church's primary mission is lived through the church dispersed in their daily lives, ministerial leadership must also be pointed in this direction. Thus, the ministerial priesthood "serves, nourishes, sustains, and guides" this calling.⁷⁷ Newbigin uses other verbs to describe this task as well. Leaders are to "enable, encourage, and sustain the activity of all the members."⁷⁸ One of his suggestions for accomplishing this is the creation of work groups. He writes, "We need to create, above all, possibilities in every congregation for laypeople to share with one another the actual experience of their weekday work and to see illumination from the gospel for their daily secular duty."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Newbigin, *The Good Shepherd*, 76.

⁷⁷ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 235.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 143.

The training and equipping of the laity for faithful ministry in their daily lives is the crux of his ecclesiology. Discipleship is directed toward the missionary purpose and calling of the church. It is not about personal fulfillment, self-satisfaction, or self-realization. Nor is discipleship equipping members to fulfill the internal ministries of the church. Discipleship is directed toward the world. The pastor is to shift the vision of church members in this direction, opening their eyes to the gospel and opening their hearts to God's call. Newbigin articulates the dynamic: "Therefore true pastoral care, true training in the Christian life, and true use of the means of grace will be precisely in and for the discharge of this missionary task."⁸⁰

Pastoral Spirituality

In reflecting on his own ministerial training, Newbigin lamented a weakness in the Reformed tradition – the emphasis of the mind over the heart. He writes, with respect to his seminary experience, "I had been surprised and shocked to find the whole area of the interior life, of the struggle to find and keep a steady discipline of prayer, meditation, and contemplation, was – apparently – ignored."⁸¹ Ministerial leadership is faith in action and in order for this to be sustained, the pastor must first and foremost, seek to be a follower of Jesus. The hidden life of the pastor must be cultivated and nurtured. Newbigin writes of the importance of this hidden life: "What can make [the gospel] credible is the

⁸⁰ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God* (New York: Friendship Press, 1954), 146.

⁸¹ Lesslie Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda: An Updated Autobiography* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1993), 30.

existence of communities of people, local congregations, who believe it, celebrate it, live by it, act on it in the world. And for that we need pastors who believe it, live it, and allow the Bible to shape the way they see the world.”⁸² Allowing the Bible to shape the worldview, finding the strength and courage to persevere, discovering sustenance for proclamation – all of these require abiding in Christ. Abiding in Christ is the life source of the pastor: “To abide in Christ means to let his words abide in us and constantly refer everything to them. It means going back to them again and again and being willing again to start afresh like a child going down to the bottom of the class.”⁸³ Newbigin further advises, “The more time we have to give to the ministry of public prayer, the more time we need to spend in private prayer.”⁸⁴ This time of prayer also includes mediation on Scripture: “We have to make the words of Jesus our constant theme of meditation, to come back again and again to them, to listen afresh to them, to apply them to our situation as it changes each day.”⁸⁵ He exhorts pastors to be disciplined in their prayers as well as creating a simple system in order that each person in the congregation is prayed for regularly.⁸⁶ In his own devotional life, Newbigin used Lancelot Andrewes’ *Private Prayers* to guide his times of prayer. He encourages pastors to not underestimate the importance of prayer in their

⁸² Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 204.

⁸³ Newbigin, *The Good Shepherd*, 142.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 143.

ministry: "This wrestling with God in prayer. . . is at the heart of our abiding in him. Through this we are changed. But that is the smallest part of it. Through this, the world is changed."⁸⁷

Pastors are first disciples of Jesus Christ following him in the way of the cross. Then, and only then, do they invite others to take up the cross and follow them as they follow Christ. This life of discipleship is nurtured in regular prayer, out of which flows mission and ministry. "A true pastor must have such a relation with Jesus and with his people that he follows Jesus and they follow him."⁸⁸

Pastoral Imagination

Pastoral imagination arises out of one's life story and one's gifts and in dialogue with one's church and one's context. In the examples that follow, I want to show some of the sources which gave birth to Newbigin's pastoral imagination. Some of the key insights and particular innovations in Newbigin's ministry and theology arise out of his personal experiences, the places he served, and the people he worked alongside and for. In other words, Newbigin's pastoral imagination is unique to him and who God created and called him to be.

Newbigin's faith and pastoral imagination are pointedly influenced by a vision of an image he experienced as part of his coming to faith. One summer, while a university student, Newbigin served in the Rhondda Valley in South

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Newbigin, *The Good Shepherd*, 14.

Wales, an area known as one of the darkest spots in the country in the midst of much despair. This area was specifically known for the miners who “had been rotting for years in hopeless unemployment and destitution.”⁸⁹ He worked specifically with a men’s recreation club where religion was explicitly excluded from the program. As the weeks passed, Newbiggin wondered whether he was of any help, writing, “I became less and less convinced that we were dealing with the real issues. . . . Now, at that moment, these men needed some kind of faith that would fortify them for today and tomorrow against apathy and despair. Draughts and ping-pong could not provide this.”⁹⁰ One night, near the end of the summer, the drinking of the men got out of hand, leaving Newbiggin to retreat to his tent in defeat. It was there that Newbiggin experienced God:

It was a vision of the cross, but it was the cross spanning the space between heaven and earth, between ideals and present realities, and with arms that embrace the whole world. I saw it as something which reached down to the most hopeless and sordid of human misery and yet promised life and victory. I was sure that night, in a way I had never been before, that this was the clue that I must follow if I were to make any kind of sense of the world.⁹¹

In the original ending to his autobiography, Newbiggin concludes with this image as well. In reflecting on his life and ministry, this image of the cross still brought hope and imagination. Newbiggin writes,

Although there is so much that is puzzling, so much that I simply do not understand and so much that is unpredictable, I find here – as I have again and again found during the past fifty years – a point from which

⁸⁹ Newbiggin, *Unfinished Agenda*, 10.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

one can take one's bearings and a light in which one can walk, however, stumblingly. I know that that guiding star will remain and that that light will shine till death and in the end.⁹²

This controlling image was one that provided comfort and guidance to Newbigin in ministry. This image was one of many influential happenings in his life that shaped his pastoral imagination. We will now look at some of the others.

One of Newbigin's unique commitments was to help Christians in the workplace and to equip them in their occupations to be ministers participating in God's mission. In reading his autobiography, the source of this impulse becomes clear. His father was a successful businessman and deep thinker, who "was always struggling with the question of how to apply his Christian faith to the day-to-day issues of business and politics."⁹³ While in university, Newbigin was absorbed by these questions and challenges as well and devoted time and energy to helping others explore these. Newbigin felt this was the largest gap in the teaching and training of Student Christian Movement. At the time, Newbigin was preparing to follow his father into the shipping business. During his time at Cambridge, he organized a group of like-minded SCM members into a society for those intending *not* to be ordained so that these questions could continue to be explored.⁹⁴ This focus continued to resonate through his ministry throughout

⁹² Ibid., 241.

⁹³ Ibid., 3.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 1.

his lifetime, but especially so while he served as Bishop in Madras and later, when he wrote extensively of the missionary encounter with Western culture.

Second, Newbigin was an ecumenist through and through and thought the unity of the church was critical to faithful witness in the world. While he grew up in a Christian home, Newbigin began to inhabit the faith and believe for himself while in Cambridge through the ministry of SCM, an ecumenical campus ministry.⁹⁵ Through this ministry, he was exposed to students and speakers of a variety of denominations and theologies. Later, while serving in South India, ecumenism was a pragmatic as well as a theological consideration. When in a pluralistic context as opposed to a Christendom context, ecumenism is a means of survival and support. The glaring differences between different types of churches in Christendom appear much less consequential in a pluralistic context, where the similarities bring churches together. Newbigin's vision for ecumenical ministry was birthed in the post-World War II milieu which gave rise to the United Nations in the political realm and the World Council of Churches in the ecclesial realm.

While Newbigin inherited a global perspective of the church and mission through his time with the Cambridge SCM,⁹⁶ it was not until later in his ministry that he began to grasp the public nature of ministry. After having served on staff with the World Council of Churches, he returned to South India to serve as

⁹⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 23.

Bishop in Madras. In his autobiography, he writes how his perspective had changed in these intervening years:

The years on the WCC staff had accustomed me to thinking all the time about public issues and about the witness of the Church in the political and social order. No one could work for any length of time under the leadership of Wim Visser 't Hooft and then revert to a cozy ecclesiastical domesticity. Looking back in 1965 upon my earlier ministries in Kanchi and Madurai, I felt that I had been too narrowly ecclesiastical in my concerns, and I resolved that I would try to challenge the strong churches of Madras City to think less of their own growth and welfare and more of God's purpose for the whole of the vast and growing city.⁹⁷

The public aspect of ministry and the work of the church oriented to the flourishing of the cities in which they are placed became hugely influential in all that follows in Newbiggin's ministry and writings. But this emerged in his ministry over time, as he accumulated knowledge and wisdom from different places he served and as he looked at a metropolis growing exponentially in his new call and setting.

Lastly, I wanted to note several threads that weave together into Newbiggin's emphasis on training and quipping lay leaders and church members for ministry. After experiencing a call to ministry in a prayer tent in Swanwick while in university, Newbiggin wrestled mightily with what he would tell his father, who assumed Newbiggin would take over his shipping business. Newbiggin also wrestled with leaving behind his "advocacy of the calling to Christian service in industry and commerce."⁹⁸ He wrote to John Mott, a

⁹⁷ Ibid., 203.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 16.

monumental figure in worldwide Christian mission at the time conveying this tension. Mott responded with words that lingered with Newbigin for years to come. Christian ministry, Mott wrote, was “the most high multiplying form of Christian service.”⁹⁹ Newbigin’s fervent commitment to the equipping of the laity also arose from ministry in South India. Almost immediately, Newbigin identified the fundamental problem facing the missionary effort there as the “unwillingness of missionaries to entrust full responsibility to the Indian leaders whom they had trained.”¹⁰⁰ In his diary from the time he wrote, “The test of our sincerity must be: Are we putting the training of the Indians in responsibility above the efficient running of the machine?”¹⁰¹ There was also a pragmatic reality to consider. Newbigin himself, or his fellow missionaries, were unable to be everywhere at one time, even with Newbigin’s extensive travel schedule. If the missionary movement wanted churches in villages and cities to have regular services of worship and communion and regular times for reading and interpreting for Scripture, it became necessary that local lay leaders would be developed in response to this need. Newbigin became convinced of this reality: “I was sure that the only way forward was to develop a local leadership within

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 39.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 40.

the village congregation, even though the vast majority of the members were illiterate.”¹⁰²

These are but a few examples, of which there could be many more, which demonstrate the pastoral imagination of Lesslie Newbigin emerging from his own life story, his gifts such as teaching, and from the contexts in which he served. Newbigin’s pastoral imagination led to creative solutions to the challenges of his ministry; adaptive ways to be pastor or bishop or administrator; and crystallized thinking about the mission and purpose of the church in a missionary encounter with the West. In each and every context he served, Newbigin sought to remain faithful to the gospel while being responsive to the needs and challenges of that particular context. The many threads of his life and ministry came together in his final season of writing and speaking, in which his wisdom and imagination were passed along to future generations.

Conclusion

When he hosted visitors in South India, Newbigin was frequently asked, “Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the church in India?” Newbigin offered a standard reply: “I believe that Jesus rose from the dead, and therefore the question doesn’t arise.”¹⁰³ Newbigin’s pastoral theology contains a hopeful missionary impulse and a realistic ecclesial restraint – the church is comprised of redeemed sinners, people who continue to need forgiveness when

¹⁰² Ibid., 62.

¹⁰³ Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 55.

the powers of darkness bring them into contradiction with their faith.¹⁰⁴ Yet, his confident faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ yielded a hopeful and non-anxious presence even when facing failure. Newbigin was supremely confident in the finished work of Jesus Christ which allowed him to adapt and innovate, to attempt to find faithful expressions of the gospel in each time and place.

Newbigin leaves one final exhortation and encouragement to pastors:

If our 'evangelism' is at bottom an effort to shore up the tottering edifice of the Church (and sometimes it looks like that), then it will not be heard as good news. The Church is in God's keeping. We do not have the right to be anxious about it. We have our Lord's word that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The crux of the matter is that we have been chosen to be the bearers of good news for the whole world, and the question is simply whether we are faithful communicating it.¹⁰⁵

The church's and the pastor's life and ministry are hope in action. Lesslie Newbigin's pastoral theology and imagination leave us with a mirror to better see and understand our own pastoral theology and imagination. Newbigin's ministry and thought emerged from his particular life and calling and should encourage all pastors to listen to their life and pay attention to God's workings in and around them.

¹⁰⁴ Wainwright, 137.

¹⁰⁵ Newbigin, *A Word in Season*, 41.

Chapter 4: Pastoral Formation for a Pluralistic Society

With so many diverse understandings of what ministers are to be in the world today, it follows that seminaries too have wrestled with their role and purpose in forming ministers for Christ's church. Having explored pastoral theology and imagination in chapter 2 and looking concretely at this theory through the life, ministry, and thought of Lesslie Newbigin in chapter 3, we now turn our attention to the formation question that follows on the heels of the Newbigin question: How do we form these sorts of pastors for the church in a pluralistic society?

As we answer this question, we will take a look back at theological education and pastoral formation through the centuries. Through this tour, we will identify the central element as well as take a closer look at a particular part of pastoral formation—field education. This historical survey will then be put in dialogue with models of professional development, as well as content explored in chapter 2, creating a synthesis for pastoral formation and thus setting the stage for the research project which will be explored in the next chapter.

Theological Education

Theological education, like the church that it serves, and pastoral ministry have been thrust into a quickly changing world in which the old ways of being and doing education and church have been called into question. Theological education has always faced difficult choices, determining what is essential and non-essential to the formation of ministers for Christ's church. That remains the

case today. As pastors have sought to answer the Newbigin question, “What kind of ministerial leadership will nourish the church in its faithfulness to the gospel in a pluralist society?”, seminaries have sought to answer its accompanying question: “How do we educate and form that type of pastor?” Craig Van Gelder demonstrates this close connection between pastoral identity and seminary formation in his survey of the development of theological education in the U.S.¹⁰⁶ He divides American theological education history into five periods with precipitating events serving as transitions between eras. In Period One (1600’s to late 1700’s), ministers were trained as *resident theologians*. In Period Two (late 1700’s to mid-1800’s), ministers were trained as *gentleman pastors*. After the Civil War, as denominational systems became more formalized, ministers were trained as *churchly pastors* (Period Three, late 1800’s to 1920’s). Period Four (mid-1940’s to 1970’s) shifted the pastoral identity to minister as *pastoral director*. Lastly, in our current moment, Period Five, pastors are trained and equipped as *entrepreneurial leaders*. In each of these periods, the education the seminaries provided adapted to the shifting pastoral metaphors in vogue during the era.

In his masterful and concise study, *The History of Theological Education*, Justo Gonzalez reveals that prior to the creation of universities and seminaries, a variety of contexts and curriculums were used to form and prepare ministers for

¹⁰⁶ Craig Van Gelder, “Theological Education and Missional Leadership Formation: Can Seminaries Prepare Missional Leaders for Congregations?” in Craig Van Gelder, ed. *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub.), 11-44.

the church. In the early church, ministerial formation was equivalent to the catechumenate and over time, this led to the creation of catechetical schools such as the famed one located in Alexandria.¹⁰⁷ The focus of the catechumenate and the later catechetical schools were not primarily pastors but rather intended as education and formation for all believers. A later development, influenced by Jerome, connected monasticism with pastoral formation, bringing together character and spiritual formation (namely, ascetism) and intellectual study.¹⁰⁸ Another form of pastoral education, cathedral schools, dates back to the 3rd century. Bishops of cathedrals developed their own programs of study and examination for students who were also serving in the churches while learning under the guidance of an established and mature pastor.¹⁰⁹ The 12th century saw the creation of universities, which would serve as the basis for future developments in theological education. The Protestant Reformation brought a renewal of learning and education through literary means (the publication of books and booklets thanks to the invention of the printing press) and through educational institutions. The Catholic Reformation, likewise, experienced a renewed emphasis on education and called for the formation of seminaries (“seedbeds”) for the training of clergy. Gonzalez comments on these new seminaries:

Considering the resulting theological education, one may see in it a

¹⁰⁷ González, 30.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 58.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 77-78.

combination of the ancient monastic schools with their medieval methods and the new methods and opportunities of humanism. For this reason . . . theological education is to take place within the context of a 'seminary,' which is a semimonastic institution in which devotional and community life leads to the formation of candidates for orders.¹¹⁰

Protestant scholasticism ushered in the systematizing of theological education and pastor formation.¹¹¹ It sought to educate as many as possible of those preparing to engage in ordained ministry.

Gonzalez demonstrates that the formation of pastors has varied widely throughout the history of the church. From the church to the monastery to the university, the context of pastoral formation has changed and with it, the particular emphasis of formation. Formation in the church (either through the catechumenate or through cathedral schools) keeps the students engaged in ministry and with the worshipping community of the faithful. Formation in the monastery emphasized character development and self-knowledge and growing in the life of the mind and spirit. Formation in the university focused more heavily on knowledge and doctrine. The challenge for seminaries today is holding together these aspects of pastoral theology in the formation of students for the church.

The Unity and Challenge of Theological Education

In his classic work *Theologia*, Edward Farley analyzes theological education and recommends possibilities for reform. Farley diagnoses the

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 154.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 171.

primary problem of theological education as a lack of central or unifying principle or purpose. This fragmentation has resulted in a large number of sub-disciplines, each operating according to its own plausibility structure, vying for the students' time and for the resources of the seminary. He laments, "These areas of study are offered without any highly visible rationale which clarifies their importance and displays their interconnectedness."¹¹² This makes sense in light of the multiplying metaphors and understandings of ministry. With the idea of ministry changing so rapidly and its concurrent responsibilities and knowledge needed to fulfill that metaphor, seminaries too have sought to respond as Van Gelder demonstrated. A different trajectory also feeds this reality, that is, the specialization of professions seen, for example in theological and biblical studies, has resulted in disciplines and sub-disciplines that may be disconnected from one another by their norms. Both of these trends have contributed to the fragmentation of theological education.

Farley posits that theological education is grasping for a unity, some overarching purpose that can bring the disparate disciplines and classes into a unified whole. Before making his constructive proposal, Farley analyzes three periods of theological education in America to help us better understand how theological education arrived at its current reality. Whereas Van Gelder's historical survey focused on periods in relation to pastoral identity, Farley's survey focuses more on the teaching practices and formational environments in

¹¹² Edward Farley, *Theologia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 4.

each of the eras.

The first period identified by Farley is the “period of pious learning (divinity),” which roughly corresponds chronologically with the founding of the first colonies in America.¹¹³ This era stretches from the pre-seminary era to the founding of the first divinity schools in the U.S. During this period of pious learning, students studied under a pastor who was willing to teach and mentor a group of students. Farley describes these relationships: “In many cases this too was ‘graduate education,’ in that ministers with college degrees sought further work in divinity with a well-known pastor-teacher.”¹¹⁴ Theological education, in this era, provided a “thorough grounding in biblical and classical languages, and the education in divinity was primarily the study of Scripture and the guides, handbooks, or compendia of dogmatics and ethics being written by continental and English theologians.”¹¹⁵ This period was focused less on theology as an objective science, but more on theology as “a personal knowledge of God and the things of God in the context of salvation.”¹¹⁶ Theology and theological education were therefore a practice in piety. It emphasized pastoral identity over pastoral responsibility, but did not dismiss theological or biblical knowledge.

Three factors – the separation of divinity into a distinct subject matter, the

¹¹³ Ibid., 6.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 7.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

rise of seminaries/divinity schools, and the acceptance of the post-college graduate education of a minister – led to the second period of American theological education. Farley calls this era “the period of specialized learning.”¹¹⁷ This new paradigm saw a plurality of theological disciplines, each requiring a specialized teacher. Farley comments that this period should not be seen as a shift from piety to learning (“A learned ministry was never seriously questioned . . .”) but rather “from one meaning of learning to another, from study which deepens heartfelt knowledge of divine things to scholarly knowledge of relatively discrete theological sciences.”¹¹⁸ Largely influenced by German and continental Europe theological education (where many of the seminary professors of the time were educated), theological education took a turn toward the mind, with less of an emphasis on the spiritual life of ministers. This era was thus focused on the knowledge one needed in order to be a proficient pastor.

The last period of theological education, the period of professional education, arose in the mid-20th century. Here, theological education shifted toward preparing the student to be able to perform designated tasks or activities in the parish. Farley blandly states of this era, “To the degree that this is the case, the theological student neither studies divinity nor obtains scholarly expertise in theological sciences but trains for professional activities.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 10.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 10.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 11.

Farley, quotes from the work of Donald Scott, noting that ministry itself has shifted from that of office in the first era to that of profession in the last: “The direction of change was from minister as comprehensive interpreter and shepherd of faith to manager of a local society or some related institution.”¹²⁰ This sounds much like the problem Eugene Peterson would identify as plaguing the North American church. This last era of theological education in the United States focused on the skill, tasks, and responsibilities of pastoral ministry.

For Farley, the problem with theological education today is that vestiges of the specialized era hang over the modern seminary while the outcomes seem to be directed to the professional era (namely, preparing pastors to meet the demands of the church). The inner unity, what Farley calls the *theologia*, is lacking and thus, creating the fragmentation he laments. Farley yearns for a deeper vision, like Peterson, that might bring seminaries back to their true calling and purpose.

Theologia was a concept developed during the Middle Ages and finds its roots in Aristotelian anthropology. Here, knowledge was portrayed as a habit, “an enduring orientation and dexterity of the soul.”¹²¹ Theology as knowledge could be seen “as a *habitus*, a cognitive disposition and orientation of the soul, a knowledge of God and what God reveals.”¹²² For Farley, *theologia* is not

¹²⁰ Donald Scott in Farley, 11.

¹²¹ Farley, 35.

¹²² Ibid.

something that can be achieved through effort and willpower: “The *habitus* originates partly from a supernatural gift and partly as an effort of inquiry.”¹²³

Theologia is a theological understanding, part gift and part inquiry, part piety and part scholarship, that forms the unifying foundation of theological education.¹²⁴ This unifying *theologia* is oriented toward the church, and particularly toward pastors serving the church, but instead of a focus on skills as the primary goal of education, the goal is *theologia*. *Theologia* seeks to bring the disparate parts of pastoral knowledge, pastoral spirituality, and pastoral skills together. Farley, while using different language, is also seeking something very similar to the classical pastoral tradition that can unify a variety of pastoral metaphors. Like the classical pastoral tradition, *theologia* proposes a unifying vision for theological education focused on affirmation of call, the formation of character, the deepening of spirituality, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills for future pastors. And, if we take Farley’s recommendation as the cure for theological education, it also prepares the soil for a pastoral imagination or *habitus* in the pastor to emerge. This is the unifier in theological education and is the point of connection between the church and the seminary.

In the historical survey of theological education, I noted that in later eras, seminaries shifting toward doctrine, information, and the teaching ministries of the church. Seminary became about gaining knowledge about the Bible,

¹²³ Ibid., 44.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 77.

theology, church history, and more. In addition, as the ministry became more professionalized, seminaries became training grounds for the necessary skills to perform the duties of the minister. While this knowledge and these skills are essential to the formation pastors, it neglected other aspects of pastoral theology to the detriment of both pastors and churches. Farley's vision of *habitus* seeks to recover this unity.

Field Education

Another attempt to bridge the gap between the doctrinal training of pastors and the skills required of the pastor was field education, which is where we now turn our attention. While Farley's proposal was focused on the theological school, field education moves the work of theology from the classroom into the church (or other setting) translating theology from an abstract, intellectual enterprise, to a tangible, embodied enterprise found in the practices and ministries of the church. Field education is one component of theological education and is a recent development in the history of theological education.

Field education began in the early 1900's and became common by the late 1940's. The rise of field education corresponds well to Farley's depiction of the third era of American theological education – the professional era. Between 1934-35 and 1954-55, the number of theological schools with field education programs in North America jumped from two to twenty-one¹²⁵ and was growing so quickly that the most comprehensive study of theological education done in the 1950's

¹²⁵ H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, James Gustafson, *The Advancement of Theological Education*. 1st ed. (New York: Harper, 1957), 24-25.

stated that “its organization and direction remain somewhat in arrears.”¹²⁶ This era marked the development of field education as a training ground that corresponded with similar developments in other professions. It was a way to bridge the gap between theory and practice and was directed to the acquisition of the skills one needs to be a successful pastor. It was also an attempt to bring the disparate parts of theological education together for the formation of pastors.

In their comprehensive study of theological education in the middle of the 20th century, Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson suggest three outcomes needed from a student’s engagement with pastoral theology, all of which can be found in the experience of field education: 1) “an interpretation of the care of souls within the church and his pastoral office;” 2) “an interpretation of the meaning of the data and scientific understanding in this field for Christian faith and theology;” 3) “growth in self-knowledge both as a person and as one who is to be a channel for the healing promised in the Gospel.”¹²⁷

We see from these suggested outcomes that the authors are also trying to make whole what was previously separate. No longer is a student listening to lectures on pastoral care; she is now practicing it. No longer is a student reading a book on the trends of religious affiliation in North America; he is now seeing it in the neighborhood around the church. No longer is the student one who can practice ministry in a safe and secure classroom setting with the biggest threat

¹²⁶ Ibid., 22.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 127.

being the feedback from the professor or the dismay expressed by colleagues; now real people in real communities are on the line and the seminarian has responsibility and agency to act. Instead of this transition from seminary to church happening in one full, frightening moment, field education attempts to create a middle place for on-going learning and formation, one that will aid the student in uniting information, self-understanding, and embodied action in the world. Field education intends to offer the safety of the classroom but with more risk and responsibility.

Elaborating on these outcomes, Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson shed more light on how field education might impact the life of a student. First, field education ought to “continually be pushing students to examine the ultimate presuppositions with which they think and with which they judge themselves and the world.”¹²⁸ Field education can name and expose what these presuppositions are and allows the student, with a good mentor, to process them. Second, a good field education site keeps a tight relationship between formal thinking and concrete reality.¹²⁹ Field education does not ignore the theoretical learning of classrooms but seeks to bring it into engagement with real people. Third, field education serves as a place for the vocational discernment and commitment of the student.¹³⁰ Ministry is longer something to be discussed,

¹²⁸ Ibid., 142.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 143.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

written about, or thought about; it is to be practiced. Lastly, field education should strengthen a student's relationship with God, and growth in Christ, as these "are not disparate from our studies and learning but central to it."¹³¹

In a more contemporary book, Matt Floding defines field education and its purpose for students: "Field education is an opportunity . . . to develop ministry skills, practice ministerial reflection, discern your call, experience professional collegiality, and undergo personal transformation."¹³² This helpful definition captures the dimensions of pastoral theology – calling, spirituality (personal transformation), pastoral responsibilities, and ministerial reflection (possibly pastoral imagination). Floding also suggests that field education is a student's introduction to the guild, so to speak.

In addition to the purposes stated above, field education is also an opportunity to practice pastoral skills in a ministry setting. *Engage* lists eight specific areas of ministry (for a parish context) in which a student might gain practical experience (under these broad categories, one might be able to identify even more subcategories): (1) preaching, (2) liturgical arts, (3) pastoral care, (4) evangelism, (5) faith formation, (6) church administration, (7) leadership, and (8) public ministry.¹³³ Of course, one cannot expect a student to become fully competent in any one of these over the course of their field education experience,

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 144.

¹³² Matthew Floding, ed. *Engage* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 5.

¹³³ Floding, *Engage*.

let alone all of them. Yet, students can make progress in one or two of these areas. Through the use of learning covenants or similar frameworks, students, in conjunction with the minister, set learning goals in relation to these skills. The student gains practical experience in pastoral skills and constructive feedback through the internship.

In field education, practice of core skills is important. The ability to reflect on those experiences, theologically and emotionally is equally important. Reflecting on practice is what Ronald Heifetz and Martin Linsky call “getting up on the balcony.”¹³⁴ From the balcony, we are able to see our actions from a bird’s eye view or a more holistic vantage point. The reflection on practice is crucial to growth in practice.

Field education encourages such reflection through several means. First, case studies are commonly used. Case studies, at their best, “tap into the power of narrative and become a vehicle for understanding lived experiences.”¹³⁵ They are opportunities to live a reflective life—to pay attention to the emotions that linger just under the surface of our lives; to identify unconscious prejudices that taint our ministry; to focus on what was done well and what can be done better next time. Second, students are encouraged to regularly reflect through their own expressive form. Many interns take up the practice of journaling but others use

¹³⁴ Ronald Heifetz and Martin Linsky, *Leadership on the Line* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 53-54.

¹³⁵ Tim Sensing, “The Use of Case Studies in Field Education,” in Matthew Floding, ed. *Welcome to Theological Field Education* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2011), 47.

other artistic forms to capture the events which comprise their internship experience. Third, the supervisor serves as a spiritual mentor or guide, asking thought-provoking questions to help the student get to the heart of the matter. The supervisor is able to see the student in action, listen to the student's perspective of events, and inquire to deepen thinking.

The supervisor/intern relationship is central to many current field education models. Supervisors play an important role in the life of the intern. Charlene Jin Lee reminds us that "a supervising pastor supervises by the very act of ministering. . . . Supervision is more than modeling, however; it is living. How the supervising pastor lives offers substantive glimpses for an intern who is seeking not only to know the how-to of ministry but more so to understand life in ministry."¹³⁶ Jin Lee envisions the supervisor as more than a dispenser of skills and information, although the supervisor will no doubt be both of these things to a student with little to no experience. The supervisor, through her life and ministry, is an indispensable source of wisdom, encouragement, and perspective. The supervisor/intern relationship is slightly different than relationships the supervisor might have with other staff members. The supervisor/intern relationship is a special and unique relationship. Whereas the supervisor, in working with other church staff, is concerned with their development, the primary purpose is the fulfillment of the particular church's ministry and

¹³⁶ Charlene Jin Lee, "The Art of Supervision and Formation" in Matthew Floding, ed. *Welcome to Theological Field Education* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2011), 21.

mission. With regard to the intern, the supervisor is called to come alongside the student during this significant formative experience of field education and help prepare him/her to serve Christ's larger church. The relationship with the intern is oriented, not to the particular church's mission, as much as it is oriented to the global church and the intern's future serving within it.

Jin Lee rightly names the virtue needed in the supervisor/mentee relationship: humility.¹³⁷ Not only does the student need humility, the pastor does as well. Jin Lee writes, "Humility is cultivated when we recognize the 'unfinishedness' of our knowing and being."¹³⁸ Humility allows supervisors to adopt the posture of learning and curiosity, committing themselves to discovery. It creates space for new mental models for understanding ourselves and the world to emerge. Kyle Small calls this a "growth identity," which for him, forms "as one increases in curiosity, complexity, compassion, and contemplation."¹³⁹ The supervisor and the intern are both called to live with humility and with a growth identity in their relationship and ministry together.

In addition to practice and reflection, field education provides a space to practice self-care. Jaco Hamman defines self-care as a "commitment to your optimal health and well-being for your own sake, for those who love and care

¹³⁷ Ibid., 26.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Kyle J.A. Small, "Engaging for Faithful Leadership, in Matthew Floding, ed. *Engage* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 93.

about you, and in the service of God’s kingdom.”¹⁴⁰ He adds, “Never promoting self-involved behavior or narcissism, self-care is one way to love yourself so that you can love your neighbor.”¹⁴¹ Hamman notes that self-care encompasses physical health, emotional/mental health, spiritual health, and relational health.¹⁴² Deborah Davis suggests students adopt a rule of spiritual practices during their field education experience as one component of self-care.¹⁴³ Davis pleads with students to take this seriously: “Please, for your sake, identify those spiritual resources in your life that you find invitational and that connect you to God. Then make a rule for yourself so you can do these life-giving practices faithfully.”¹⁴⁴ Ministry is emotionally and spiritually draining. Pastors and students must find ways to care for themselves so that they can continue their ministry of care to others. The internship provides a space for students to feel some of the drain of pastoral ministry as well as a space for students to find ways to refresh themselves in God’s loving presence.

Field education experiences are fulfilling and challenging because they thrust students into liminal spaces where they are not comfortable, where there is the real possibility of failure, and where the student is able to ‘survive’ the

¹⁴⁰ Jaco Hamman, “Self-Care and Community,” in Matthew Floding, ed. *Welcome to Theological Field Education* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2011), 102.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Deborah Davis, “Engaging in Sustaining Spiritual Practices,” in Matthew Floding, ed. *Engage* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 42.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 43.

experience and tell the tales of it. Field education stretches students spiritually, emotionally, relationally, and professionally but in so doing, opens the space for God to move and act through them. Field education can be daunting but taking the 'easy' or 'safe' internship is not always the right decision. The safe route may be the easy route, but it is not necessarily the most formative route. If students view field education as simply another academic requirement needed for their degree and ordination, they might choose to take the path of least resistance. But if students view seminary as one step in a life-long journey of discipleship, short-term discomfort found in a liminal field education experience, may have profound long-term consequences for their growth and development as human beings and as pastors.

Professional Learning Model

Thus far in the chapter, we have journeyed through the hallways of the seminary out into churches and field education experiences. Before placing the onus of the formation (of fully formed) pastors on seminaries and/or on field education sites, I want to introduce an additional conversation partner. The developmental learning model we will explore provides a larger framework in which to place pastoral formation, theological education, and field education.

In proposing a model for lifelong learning and formation for pastors, Christian Scharen draws on the work of Hubert Dreyfus and his brother Stuart Dreyfus. Hubert, a phenomenologist, and Stuart, an applied mathematician, propose a developmental learning model where the learner moves from novice

to expert, not through instinct or through the passing of time but as the “result of disciplined and conscious participation in practices.”¹⁴⁵ Practices are embodied forms of learning and reflection. This learning model is not limited to use by clergy. It was developed after studying Air Force pilots, nurses, chess players and it has been applied successfully to training professionals in other fields. This model of learning also contains deep resonances with the apprentice model of learning in which one attaches themselves to a master in the field, and through observation, practice, and feedback from the master, begin to develop their own mastery of the skills.

The model proposed by the Dreyfus brothers imagines learners beginning as “novices”, becoming “advanced beginners”, before becoming “competent.” Only later, through more development, will learners become “proficient” before finally becoming an “expert.” The figure on the following page depicts the developmental stages with details pertaining to each stage.

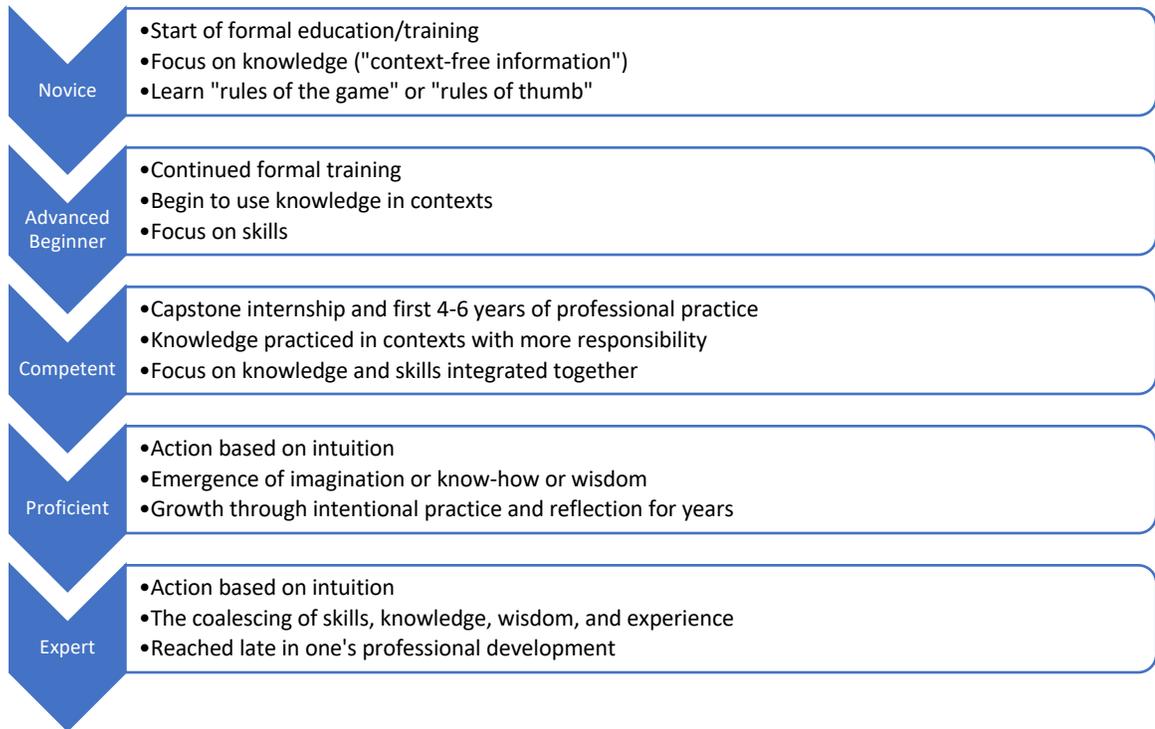
In addition to the stages of development depicted, the Dreyfus brothers propose an associated timeline of when the stages occur in the development of a professional. The first three stages (novice, advanced beginner, and competent), for example, are usually associated with formal training and may include the first years of professional practice in the field.¹⁴⁶ Only later in the developmental

¹⁴⁵ Christian Scharen, “Learning Ministry over Time: Embodying Practical Wisdom in Bass, Dorothy C., and Craig R. Dykstra. *For Life Abundant : Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2008), 268.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

process, after years of practice and reflection, does one transition to the later stages of “proficient” and “expert.”

Table 1



Overview of the Developmental Stages

The early stages (novice, advanced beginner, and competent) of professional development are marked by thinking. Theory is critical in these stages of development. Knowledge provides the basis for practice and the purpose of that practice. Thus, these early stages are filled with learning “articulated knowledge and rules of thumb,” information that will later be essential to the practice of the profession.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

The novice stage usually begins in conjunction with the start of formal training and education, though exceptions do exist. During the novice stage, theory is presented as “context-free” information and this knowledge can be understood, at least at a basic level, without having to experience it firsthand.¹⁴⁸ The novice is committed to learning the foundational knowledge that will allow development to occur at later stages.

The advanced beginner stage happens later in the course of formal training. For a student enrolled in seminary, it would likely happen during the last year of the degree program. The advanced beginner stage thrusts the learner into contexts in which their learning is translated into practice. This is the equivalent of field education experiences or internships. Scharen describes his own field education experience as “a series of overwhelms.”¹⁴⁹ David Wood describes it as “working at the edges of my competence.”¹⁵⁰ No longer does the information reside safely in books and papers in classrooms and libraries. It is now interacting with real people with real problems in the crucible of life. The advanced beginner learns to apply the rules of thumb to real contexts and situations and then reflects on that practice.

The next stage, becoming competent, occurs after the transition from seminary into full-time ministry. Scharen suggests that for the vast majority of

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 271.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 274.

¹⁵⁰ David Wood in Scharen, 269.

practitioners, this stage will not realistically be reached until ministers have served for 4-6 years after the completion of seminary.¹⁵¹ As this stage takes place over many years, the learner might be competent in a specific area, such as worship leadership, from the beginning, but continues develop additional competencies through the practice of ministry. During this stage, Dreyfus notes that the learner has a variety of theories to draw upon and a growing number of experiences from which lessons have been learned. But now, this knowledge and these experiences are used to plan for actions that carry real responsibility.¹⁵² Responsibility, and the weight of it, is the key feature of this stage. Feeling the weight of that responsibility (that my actions have real consequences, not only for myself, but for those under my care and beyond) is critical to the learning that takes place. Without that weight of responsibility, or refusing to embrace that responsibility, will leave learners stuck in this stage. The only way to begin to move toward the next stage of proficiency is through the embrace of the weight of responsibility and the risk that comes with it.

Another component of development during the competent stage is the recognition of emotional systems at work in decision-making. No longer are the learners making “detached, deliberative” decisions based on reason alone, but are now considering the “emotional involvement in decision-making, and the

¹⁵¹ Scharen, 277.

¹⁵² Ibid.

pain or elation related to various outcomes.”¹⁵³ Learners bring the emotional component into the decision-making process right alongside their knowledge and their wisdom gained through experience.

When the learner transitions to the later stages of proficient and expert, a shift takes place. No longer are actions based on thinking or rational calculation alone; they now arise from intuition, an intuition that has been molded by years of thinking, practice, and reflection. Scharen writes, “Through repeated engagement in practice, those who are proficient or expert come to know . . . just the thing that is needed” without having to detach and “plan a rational course of action.”¹⁵⁴ The leap from the competent stage to the proficient stage is the largest in the learning stages because it entails a shift in thinking, embodying, and acting. Scharen continues, “In the stages beyond competent . . . the performer leaves behind calculations that follow rules and maxims to more fluid and intuitive” responses that are “tuned to specific situations and drawing on a whole set of experiences.”¹⁵⁵ Dreyfus refers to this as “know-how.” One is proficient when the tasks of ministry become “second nature” not because they are perfunctory, but because the learner no longer needs to follow a step-by-step plan nor think about each and every piece of the action or event.¹⁵⁶ The whole

¹⁵³ Ibid., 280-281.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 268.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 281.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 283.

system comes into view and the individual actions themselves are woven into this larger picture.

One only becomes an expert after gaining the wisdom that comes through learning and acting at a proficient level. Scharen provides a helpful distinction: “The difference between the proficient performer and the expert is that the former does not yet have enough experience with the outcomes of a wide variety of possible outcomes to react automatically. The proficient performer must still decide what to do.”¹⁵⁷ He continues, “Expertise emerges when the conscious decision becomes intuitive also.”¹⁵⁸ This process takes at least a decade of deliberate practice in the proficient stage. The learned abilities become so engrained that the learner is no longer aware of what he/she is doing. She is engaged in fluid performance or is in flow.

Bob Clinton, in his book, *The Making of a Leader*, also proposes a framework focused on long-term formation. Clinton writes, “God develops a leader over a lifetime. That development is a function of the use of events and people to impress leadership lessons upon a leader.”¹⁵⁹ In his model, Clinton, an engineer by training, methodically and meticulously maps out the components involved in formation.¹⁶⁰ Clinton speaks frequently of tests, in which leaders are

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 285.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 286.

¹⁵⁹ Robert J. Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1988), 25.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 44-47.

given a little more responsibility in order to see how the leader will respond. These tests might be spiritual, emotional, or professional in nature. Maturation for ministry grows as one faithfully employs knowledge, wisdom, and skills to 'pass' the test. Like Scharen and the Dreyfuss brothers, Clinton emphasizes that formation in the early stages is primarily about what God is doing *in* the leader as opposed to doing *through* the leader.¹⁶¹ He cautions against judging the fruits of one's ministry in these earlier stages. For Clinton, God is working through these experiences for future ministry.

It is not until later in life, what Clinton deems the "Life Maturing" stage, that ministry begins to "flow out of being" on account of the mellowing and maturing of one's character.¹⁶² In this stage, leaders use their gifts for ministry in satisfying ways, while continuing to grow in competencies and developing a better sense of guiding priorities. The final stage of the leader's working development comes in the "Convergence" stage where "God moves the leader into a role that matches his or her gift-mix and experience so that ministry is maximized."¹⁶³

These models emphasize the development and formation that takes place over many years and through many, many hours of practice and reflection. They

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 45-46.

¹⁶² Ibid., 46.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 46-47. Clinton has one additional stage that is seldom reached. He defines it as "the fruit of a lifetime of ministry and growth [that] culminates in an era of recognition and indirect influence at broad levels."

also highlight that formation requires a mixture of knowledge, practice, inner growth, and a wisdom or know-how for specific contexts. Scharen concludes, “Development in pastoral ministry, it seems, is not simply a matter of learning from a handful of the best practitioners, but rather a matter of being open to a more complicated set of encounters that in retrospect seem nothing short of providential.”¹⁶⁴ Or as Clinton says, “Leadership is a lifetime of lessons.”¹⁶⁵

These learning frameworks, similar in structure but utilizing different language for different contexts, provide helpful insight when considering the preferred outcomes for theological education and pastoral formation. Learning ministry takes time and there may be no way to accelerate that process exponentially. The best formation for ministry will take decades and will require deliberate and devoted practice for pastors to become experts. Informed by these models, theological education and the formation of pastors in its early stages, focuses on the transmission of information, the development of skills, and the formation of character. If we connect pastoral imagination with the expertise, intuition, and wisdom aspects of the more developed stages in the frameworks, the development of pastoral imagination is the outcome of an accumulation of deliberative practice and reflection built upon a solid theoretical foundation.

The Formation of Pastors

¹⁶⁴ Scharen, 287.

¹⁶⁵ Clinton, 40.

Pastoral theology is an immense field of study, which will take a lifetime to learn and master. The question and the challenge, then, is what do pastors-in-training need during their seminary and field education experiences to equip them to undertake a lifelong journey of being and becoming a pastor?

The work of the minister is varied according to ecclesial context, social context, national context, and personal context. It would be near impossible to expect an individual person to fulfill each and every one of these responsibilities and expectations. It would also be near impossible to expect seminary education and/or field education placement to make one fully proficient in all of these areas (one of the reasons why I find it so disheartening to hear people complain about all the stuff they did not learn in seminary¹⁶⁶). The implications of the immensity of pastoral theology for training future ministers in the classroom or in the field education context is not that we try to give them every possible metaphor of self-understanding that they will ever need in ministry, but rather that we help root them in the core classical tradition and also teach them to adopt new metaphors depending on their field education and (eventually) ministerial contexts.

If pastoral theology is comprised of pastoral knowledge, pastoral skills, pastoral spirituality, and pastoral imagination, how do we form students into pastors? What is the role of theological education more broadly and what is the role of field education more specifically? In this upcoming section, I also will

¹⁶⁶ James Emery White, *What They Didn't Teach You in Seminary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011).

explore how a commitment to life-long learning and viewing pastoral formation as a life-long process, might impact how seminaries think about and envision their work in the years ahead.

The Purpose of Seminary Education

Theological education is an impossible and daunting responsibility. The enormity of the task of training and forming ministers is so broad and expansive that trying to condense this formation experience to a degree program lasting a few years is an unreasonable task. The vastness of the course of study and the immensity of the calling of students creates a daunting task for theological educators and for students. No seminary can fulfill every aspect of forming ministers, especially if under the pressure of a three-year time frame. This is further exacerbated by the reality that seminaries are no longer just preparing pastors for parish ministry, but are also preparing individuals for a variety of callings and careers.

Nevertheless, I believe that seminaries are the primary place for students to gain pastoral knowledge, learn basic pastoral skills, and cultivate a pastoral spirituality. Seminaries are training grounds for pastors and thus, are intended to be places that build upon the discipleship that took place in local churches but that is now to be refined and focused. Seminaries have the theological fortitude to provide the knowledge necessary in the fields of biblical studies, theology, and the practice of ministry. In the Reformed context, learned and educated pastors are valued. The commitment to learning and to the life of the mind should not be

downplayed in order to accommodate training for more practical skills or to allow more space for spiritual formation. Significant learning takes place in seminary and the seminary is far better equipped to provide this training in knowledge than other institutions and organizations in the ecclesial realm.

Seminaries are also the place for students to discover and deepen their calling and develop an understanding of what it means to be pastor. While seminaries have traditionally been a place to confirm callings for students, increasingly, they are places to discover calling. This shift is significant and seminaries should provide spaces to discern and reflect on the students' calling into ministry. Seminaries should provide realistic understandings of what the ministry looks like in the world today. Many students will not serve large churches with multiple pastors on staff. Statistically speaking for mainline denominations, it is more likely they will serve as a solo pastor in a church. This realism should be brought into discussion and explorations of calling. The ministry can be far less glamorous than students imagine it to be and a realistic view can help weather the disappointment experienced in the first call of ministers.

The cultivation of pastoral spirituality should be a focus of seminaries as they prepare students for ministry. This is the monastic dimension to theological education. Formation happens through worship, through spiritual disciplines and practices, both individual and communal in nature. Time for worship,

retreat, Sabbath, rest and renewal, should be built into the theological curriculums to help form and renew future ministers.

Seminaries also teach the skills for pastoral ministry. They are responsible for teaching the necessary skills for preaching, counseling, faith formation, and church leadership. Students will not become experts during the course of seminary education but students should be competent enough to be able to step into ministry upon graduation and fulfill them adequately and faithfully. The development of skills takes place first within the classroom before being practiced later in the seminary experience in internship settings.

Even with a focus on pastoral theology (pastoral knowledge, spirituality, and skills) as the *theologia* that unites theological education, the challenge for seminaries is great. And it remains an immense challenge for students. I echo what Niebuhr and others stated in the 1950's, "Theological education requires long periods of vigorous exploration of new ideas and mastery of some portions of the immense body of Christian tradition. The student needs to 'go into himself' in periods when he concentrates his full intellectual and spiritual powers on ultimate questions of faith."¹⁶⁷

Theological education directed at ministerial formation draws from multiple models of the history of pastoral formation combining aspects of the church, the monastery, and the university. The seminary is a seedbed of formation, helping cultivate the life of the mind, heart, and hands. It is the place

¹⁶⁷ Niebuhr, et al., 116.

where students begin as novices and start to accumulate the knowledge needed to grow into an advanced beginner before eventually developing into competent ministers. Drawing on the professional learning model from the previous chapter, graduates of seminary fall into the early part of the 'competent' stage, where they will continue to be for the first 4-6 years of ministry. Seminaries are thus, preparing students to be competent at some of the key functions of pastoral ministry, with the assumption and the acknowledgment, that depending upon the particular calling and context of the student, there will be gaps in skills and learning that will then become the responsibility of the pastor moving forward.

The Purpose of Field Education

Pastoral skills are learned through practice. Books can be read, lectures can be heard, exams can be passed, but until skills are practiced, they are not learned. Initially, skills can be introduced and practiced in the classroom but eventually they must be practiced in the spaces that they will eventually be practiced – in ministry contexts. Drawing on the learning model of the Dreyfuss brothers, early internships for students should be focused on skill development and providing opportunities for students to practice ministry. Internships should focus on a particular skill (pastoral visitation, teaching youth Sunday school, serving as liturgist in the service) that allows students to gain experience in a safe and supportive setting. Theological reflection and spiritual formation play a role in all internship, but feedback on skills should take a primary purpose in early internships. The practice of skills can take place in any ministry context and thus,

place or context has less importance for these early internships. In these early field education placements, churches, and more specifically, supervisors, serve as coaches around skills, which includes direct observation, feedback, reflection, and more practice.

Internships should not be fail-safe. The responsibility of the internship should provide some risk. Remove the threat of failure and you remove the potential for growth. Newbigin, when reflecting on his time serving at York Street Mission of St. Columba's Presbyterian Church, writes of his discouraging experience as the Sunday School superintendent. He concludes, "But it was good for a theological student to learn how to talk to children and for a future missionary to learn how to cope with what seemed like continuous failure."¹⁶⁸ For Newbigin, the uphill and frustrating challenge of this internship developed a resilience in him that would become all the more important when he was serving in the mission field. Real responsibility should be given to students.

Field education serves as a place for growth in skills, self-knowledge, and self-care. While initial internships should focus on basic skills of ministry, later internship experiences should provide an opportunity for students to begin to learn and develop pastoral imagination. In these later field education experiences, I wonder whether students might be able to quicken the development of their pastoral imagination by serving in a cross-cultural context.

¹⁶⁸ Newbigin, *Unfinished Agenda*, 30.

Cross-Cultural Field Education Placements

In cross-cultural experiences, the student, in addition to practicing skills, deepening self-knowledge, and taking time for self-care, is challenged to learn a new church in a new neighborhood in a new context. Students are forced to synthesize all this new information quickly, especially when the internship is time-bound. Being in a new place, a student's observational senses are heightened. They are more aware of their surroundings; more aware of themselves; and more aware of how they are interacting with others and the world around them. This applies all the more so in cross-cultural experiences.

When one leaves a country or finds themselves a minority race or language group, many of one's commonly-held assumptions about how and why one interacts with the world the way one does is called into question. It does not mean these assumptions are wrong; it does mean they must now be examined. This learning can happen in any field education context but I am suggesting that serving in cross-cultural contexts that are highly secular and pluralistic provide a unique space with the potential for even more growth and development to take place, which extends beyond the practice of skills.

In his autobiography, *Unfinished Agenda*, Newbiggin writes of his experience in South India. He says, "A new missionary has to accept a kind of drastic diminishment. To learn the language and the culture of another people he must again become a child."¹⁶⁹ The process of learning a different culture and

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 44.

-serving in a different context opened Newbigin to a ministry out of weakness and a ministry dependent upon God. Unfamiliar places become places to encounter and depend on God. They are spaces where humans are invited to live by faith. Cross-cultural contexts evoke this in the life of students. Faithfully doing ministry requires a deepened faith in God to minister when we are not in a place of power or privilege but when we are drastically diminished.

For field education sites to be a formative home for students, especially for those relocating in order to inhabit a cross-cultural experience, a supportive ecosystem is a necessity. Pastoral formation and pastoral imagination grow in relationships. Students in these cross-cultural experiences need support on multiple levels. They need emotional support, relational support, cultural support, and professional support. They need individuals to process their experience with to test what they are seeing and learning in order to gain wider perspective and insight. They need people to help them weather the loneliness and the disorientation one can feel in a new place. They need people to encourage them as pastors, and not simply as students, people who look to them for care, wisdom, and support. Cross-cultural internships can be risky because they stretch students and students can be stretched beyond capacity. A supportive community knows when to push the student and when to pull back, when to encourage and when to challenge.

Cross-cultural internships are built on the assumption that some skill development has already occurred. Students should not be practicing ministry

skills for the first time. Limited experience is acceptable, but students who are in a new place and learning to do everything for the first time will be overwhelmed. With a base of skills and experience, the cross-cultural internship, while still developing knowledge, skill, and identity, begins to delve more into pastoral imagination. The focus thus shifts from the knowing and doing of ministry, to the wise application of knowledge and skills, in interaction with a specific place from a personal understanding. The student, in a cross-cultural context, begins to see how bound their ministry imagination is to prior places they have served or worshipped. Now, the student has to figure how what it means to be pastor to *this* people in *this* place. New skills, new knowledge, and even a new identity might be necessary to minister well.

Cross-cultural experiences expose students to different ways of ministering. While some aspects may look no different from the context from which they come, the specific accents will look different based on the pastors they serve alongside and the people to whom they minister. The purpose is to see different pastoral imaginations at work even if all the pastors are from the same denomination or theological school of thought. Why? Because being a pastor is a unique melding of the personal, the context, and the foundations of pastoral theology. Even a minister may have to adopt multiple imaginations at points in their ministry in the same church, because the world around them changes or because they themselves change. The minister who serves as supervisor should be someone who has a somewhat developed pastoral

imagination and knows why they are doing what they are doing in relationship to their church and community and how it grows from their own gifts and weaknesses.

One does not complete a pastoral internship, even a cross-cultural one, with a fully formed pastoral imagination. It is a partially-formed imagination for a particular place. On-going development and discernment will need to occur when the student begins serving in a different context with a different set of people.

Conclusion

If pastoral imagination is formed and developed over time, we should not expect seminary graduates to have a fully formed way of seeing and interpreting their ministry in the world. Seminaries can, however, help form the knowing, being, and doing of seminarians, thus giving them the knowledge, the character, and the skills necessary for imagination to emerge. Seminaries, by focusing on the first three aspects of pastoral theology, set themselves, and their students up for realistic expectations. Seminaries cannot and should not seek to fully form pastors in their 3-10 years in school. While this might be an ambitious goal, it is ultimately a goal that will leave students and the churches they serve wondering why their seminary did not teach them *x*. Seminaries have a specific purpose in formation. Seminaries must shift from understanding themselves as a finishing school for a profession, and instead as one step (albeit a hugely important and necessary step) in a much larger formational process.

Field education is another step in the formational process for pastors. Using the theoretical knowledge and basic skills gained through seminary, the student begins to practice ministry and reflect upon it. Field education provides additional space to practice pastoral skills, time to form pastoral spirituality, and the opportunity to try on pastoral imagination. Field education and internship experiences expose students to pastoral imaginations but also help them begin to develop their own pastoral imagination. As imagination is formed primarily in context and even more specifically, in the act of ministering in a context, internships provide that vital bridge, transitioning seminarians to the next step of their formational process. In a world where seminary education is moving more and more to on-line offerings, with some seminaries even offering full Master of Divinity degrees without stepping foot on campus, the place and context for pastoral formation become all the more important. Even on-line seminary programs should urge students to serve in cross-cultural contexts.

The best seminary education coupled with the best cross-cultural field education experience still may not be enough to fully develop a student's pastoral imagination. Craig Dykstra reminds us that "pastoral imagination emerges over time and through the influence of many forces," and the best way to develop pastoral imagination is the actual practice of ministry.¹⁷⁰ Pastoral imagination, like pastoral skills, identity, and knowledge, will take a lifetime of effort and commitment to foster.

¹⁷⁰ Dykstra, "Pastoral and Ecclesial Imagination," 41-42.

In this chapter, we have explored the roles of theological education and field education in the formation of pastors. In this last section, I posited that the development of pastoral imagination can be accelerated through students interning in cross-cultural contexts in which they begin to imagine and practice ministry in a particular place and in a particular culture. In the next chapter, this hypothesis will be tested as I assess the seminary internship program at Church on the Hill.

Chapter 5: A Case Study:

Cultivating Pastoral Imagination in Field Education

Throughout this paper, I have been exploring what faithful ministerial leadership might look like in the world today. In chapter 2, I made a case for a classical pastoral foundation from which a pastoral imagination can grow. In chapter 3, explored this in relation to Lesslie Newbigin's thought and ministry. In the last chapter, I proposed using a framework of professional development to understand the formation of pastors and the distinct (yet overlapping roles) of seminary education and field education. At the end of the chapter, I suggested that cross-cultural field education experiences might accelerate the development of pastoral imaginations in students. In this chapter, this theory will be tested by examining the outcomes of students who have served as summer preaching interns at Church on the Hill.

While one of the specific goals of the preaching internship is to create better training opportunities so that more women feel confident enough to assume preaching positions out of seminary, this goal is not unrelated from the larger questions I have asked as part of this project: What kind of pastors do we need for today's world? How do we form and educate pastors? Are our current formational processes working? The goal of preparing more female preachers is a sub-goal of this greater goal of forming pastors for God's church in God's world today.

For the research project, I have sought answers to two questions. First, how are students being formed for pastoral ministry through the summer preaching internship at Church on the Hill? Second, what factors contribute to that formation? I am interested in both how pastoral theology and imagination are being formed in students as well as what contributes to that formation.

Methodology

To seek answers to these research questions, I conducted a phenomenological research project in which I interviewed past summer preaching interns at Church on the Hill. These interviews were semi-structured. A set list of questions was provided to the former interns in anticipation of the interview and formed the general outline of the interview.¹⁷¹ However, during the interviews, I asked follow-up questions asking for clarification or elaboration on statements made by the participants.

Two of the four interviews were conducted in-person. The other two were conducted via video conferencing. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The interviews provided retrospective insight from the former interns. For some, they had accepted their first call and were engaged in ministry. They were able to reflect on how this actually prepared or shaped them for ministry. Other students were still completing seminary at the time of the interview. This created

¹⁷¹ The full list of interview questions can be found in Appendix II.

differing distances and vantage points from former interns to reflect on their experiences.

I also sought two other sets of data to provide a fuller picture of the students' experiences. First, during the course of the internship, the student was required by the seminary to submit a number of assignments. These formal papers included a Learning Covenant mapping out goals and hopes at the beginning of the summer and a reflection paper at the conclusion of the internship. These formal data sets provided more of an in-the-moment perspective. Instead of looking back and reflecting on the experience, these papers were reflections of how they were making sense of their experiences *as* they were experiencing them. This formal set of written reflections were submitted to professors (and to me) during and at the end of their internships.

Because of the nature of these formal reflections, they may not mirror the vulnerability or authenticity of what the students truly felt and experienced. Thus, the last set of data I looked at was the journal entries of the students written during their internships. Some students journaled often; others at key junctures or in response to impactful events. Thus, some students provided far more journal entries for my research than others. Each of the students had the agency to self-edit journal entries before submission to me for this project and some chose to provide only some of their journal entries and not all of them.

Taken together, the three data sets are able to provide varying degrees of openness and authenticity; varying degrees of distance and time; and varying levels of formality and informality. I also acknowledge the incompleteness associated with the third set of data – the journal entries.

Lastly, I recognize and acknowledge my dual roles in my research. I am both the minister/supervisor and the researcher. I am both a ministry reference and a researcher. I am both a researcher and, in some questions, the researched (with questions about the role of the mentor/supervisor in the formation of the interns). Thus, to claim complete objectivity in my research is to claim the impossible. However, the degree of honesty and, at times, critical feedback given to me by the interns both during their summer internships and in the course of this research project, should lead one to conclude that their responses are honest and not intended to flatter or win over the researcher.

Findings

The overwhelming response from the former interns was that the internship at Church on the Hill was very significant if not the most significant part of their pastoral formation. From their responses, I conclude that significant growth occurred specifically in two areas: pastoral skills and pastoral spirituality.

Internships are a vital contributor to skill acquisition and development in the life of students. This should come as no surprise as one of the overarching purposes of internships is to grow professionally, taking what was learned in the

classroom into the church or the ministry context. While some skills are more difficult to measure than others, a skill like preaching can be judged by student, minister, and congregation. Growth in preaching was a common refrain from each of the students.

One student stated that her skills grew by leaps and bounds during the summer internship,¹⁷² leading her to conclude about herself: “I felt equipped to lead in ways that I never imagined.”¹⁷³ A student with less ministry experience commented that she had a hunch that she could teach and preach but because of her lack of direct experience doing those things, she wasn’t actually sure. The summer provided her ample time to do both of these things, confirming for her the hunch she had been carrying for years.¹⁷⁴ For this student, the practical experience of “doing” ministry was essential for her growth as part of the internship.

Another student commented on the “sustained” practice of preaching and that her growth came through doing it Sunday after Sunday. Before the internship, she never had the experience of preaching week after week. This repetition not only furthered her preaching skill set, but also was about “using those spiritual formation muscles” enabling her to trust God more.¹⁷⁵ Two

¹⁷² Intern #1, interview by author, November 1, 2019.

¹⁷³ Intern #1.

¹⁷⁴ Intern #2, interview by author, November 8, 2019.

¹⁷⁵ Intern #3, interview by author, November 15, 2019.

students commented on how helpful it was breaking down sermons into different parts (the nuts and bolts of preaching). This led to newfound confidence in writing but also broadened the types of sermons the students would preach.¹⁷⁶

All four students named the sermon they preached without a manuscript as the biggest factor in their development (all students are required to preach at least one sermon without a manuscript during the course of the summer). All four interns were most nervous and least excited about this sermon. But all of them noted the confidence that comes from having preached without notes.¹⁷⁷ They felt more prepared and they felt they had internalized the sermon at a deeper level than other sermons. In addition, they talked about how they were forced to rely on God in the week leading up to this sermon (and on the Sunday morning before worship).

For one student, it became clear almost immediately that she was a far better and freer preacher when she preached without a manuscript. It felt better to the student – she was more comfortable outside the pulpit and found herself not relying on reading the words on the page.¹⁷⁸ It set her free from some of her perfectionist tendencies to make sure she said everything exactly as it was written on the page. The congregation also received her preaching in a different way. They felt like she moved from reading a sermon to preaching a sermon;

¹⁷⁶ Intern #3; Intern #4, interview by author, November 21, 2019.

¹⁷⁷ Interns #1-4.

¹⁷⁸ Intern #4.

from reading a paper to talking to people. Her voice, her emotions, and her presence became more evident in the sermons. This particular student spent the rest of the summer preaching without a manuscript. She was beginning to find her voice. Another student made the opposite discovery. For her, preaching without a manuscript, while a good challenge, was not enlivening to her and her preaching. She did not feel it was a clear or organized. She felt she left out important information she wanted to share.¹⁷⁹ This act of pushing students just beyond their place of comfort seemed to be a significant moment of growth in their preaching and in their ministry.

Internships provide a space and time to practice and develop skillsets that are necessary to fulfilling their pastoral calling. Internships also have the potential to be a significant space for spiritual transformation. Based on the responses from the student, a major contribution of the Church on the Hill internship experience is its commitment to spiritual development. The students encountered God, deepened and strengthened their faith, regularly practiced spiritual disciplines (formal and informal), found healing, and opened themselves to new pathways for continued growth.

For all the interns, significant spiritual growth occurred through the internship. The internship was about far more than just skill acquisition and becoming a better pastor. It was also the space for self-awareness, growth,

¹⁷⁹ Intern #2.

healthy habits/ disciplines. It provided the space for perspective; for leisure; for solitude; and for exploration.

All the students are required to practice the Sabbath as part of the internship, setting aside one day on which they will complete no ministry or school work. The Sabbath is to be a day for spiritual refreshment and renewal. Each of the students mentioned the importance of practicing Sabbath during their internship. This requirement, while difficult to keep at times (just as it is for ministers), served as a source of life, not just for the preaching ministry but for larger life questions. One student wrote about the joy she experienced on the Sabbath as she shifted from “moving quickly” and “accomplishing a lot.” She discovered, “I find more fulfillment in [life] when I have rested, taken time for myself, and set healing boundaries.¹⁸⁰ Sabbath helped her realize that she could accomplish nothing and she and the world would be okay.¹⁸¹

Sabbath was not the only practice conducive to spiritual formation. Both the sermon preparation and sermon delivery were practices where God was regularly encountered. Sermon preparation, done personally or alongside the pastor, became a substantive time for soaking in God’s Scripture, praying, and listening. For one student, using *lectio divina* as part of her sermon preparation helped her “experience God in new ways . . . but good ways.¹⁸² Another student

¹⁸⁰ Intern #1.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

said that the most consistent place she experienced God during the summer was through her daily immersion in her sermons.¹⁸³ Likewise, another intern commented that preaching is an intense spiritual practice because “you are listening so intently to the Spirit to what God is saying in God’s Word and wrestling with it in a really specific way.¹⁸⁴ The intern found herself wondering often whether or not she was going to have a word for God’s people each Sunday. This weighty responsibility stretched her “beyond her capacity” and being stretched in this way sent her back to God and God’s Word. She concluded, “The act of preaching is putting yourself out there and trusting God.”¹⁸⁵

Students also spoke of moments just before delivering the sermon where God’s presence or assurance was known and felt. They sensed that God was near or they felt a wave of peace would wash over them during the musical prelude. Others spoke of the sacred moments on Sunday mornings as they were reviewing their sermon for the last time before delivery and feeling touched and anointed by God.

Students were impacted beyond spiritual disciplines and the work of ministry. They also reported that the internship contributed to forming healthier habits for life. The summer provided the time for regular exercise and was a

¹⁸³ Intern #2.

¹⁸⁴ Intern #3.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

break from the busy pace of life in seminary. It slowed them down. One student discovered how important “personal health” and “self-care” were to being a pastor.¹⁸⁶ Being with people regularly and carrying the responsibility for preaching each week revealed to her “how much I need to take care of myself.”¹⁸⁷ The student admitted she did not take good care of herself during the course of her internship, but the internship did reveal to her how essential personal health would be if she were to last in ministry over the long-haul.

One student made a connection between her physical habits and spiritual practices. She discovered that she’s a “very mobile person” and that “walking and praying” was relaxing and grounding in a way that sitting and praying was not.¹⁸⁸ Her times of physical refreshment also became times of spiritual refreshment.

Other students practiced disciplines that fit their passions. Two students talked about playing piano and singing praise songs in the quiet of the sanctuary. These were intimate moments with God when the church was emptied for the day. Another student, in trying to build her confidence, repeated affirmations of who she is in Christ¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Intern #2.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Intern #3.

¹⁸⁹ Intern #2.

Whether through the observance of Sabbath, the work of the preaching ministry, or individual disciplines adopted, students experienced a refreshed faith during their internship. One student described the internship as a “web” created for “spiritual formation” that deepened “faith in God” and the “building of relationships.”¹⁹⁰ The overall impact of this formation was a deeper trust in God and a personal spirit more attuned to the workings of God’s Spirit.

Building upon the spiritual formation mentioned above, the students also experienced growth in other aspects of pastoral spirituality, including in their self-confidence and courage and in their understanding of their own call. The internship was also a place of deep healing.

As we saw above, there was a growing confidence in their skillset of preaching which correlates with their growing confidence in God’s call upon their lives.¹⁹¹ Words that repeatedly came up in the interviews with the students included courage, resilience, independence, empowerment, confidence, and stability. With more practice of pastoral skills, they found themselves believing that they could actually be a pastor and do the things pastors do. A simple affirmation like “I can really do the preaching thing,”¹⁹² was a powerful statement to own for one student.

¹⁹⁰ Intern #3.

¹⁹¹ Intern #1.

¹⁹² Intern #2.

This confidence in their skillset also gave them confidence to see themselves as being worthy or up to the task of their calling. One student reported the self-confidence that erupted during the summer. She experienced herself as more of a leader while also being herself “completely.”¹⁹³ Prior to this internship, she had felt the urge to be a particular type of leader. This leadership type made her feel like she had to cover up or disregard parts of herself because it did not fit the mental model. A breakthrough came when she realized she could be herself. She said, “I think people at Church on the Hill were very knowing of who I was and didn’t want some sort of, like, fake, could-be-perfect sort of person which I wasn’t. And they just accepted me for who I was.”¹⁹⁴ She described her summer internship as a gift and she left feeling valued for who she was as a person.¹⁹⁵

But another dimension of growth in confidence did surprise me. The students grew in confidence as human beings. The location and setting of the internship stretched students, growing their confidence to try new and different things.¹⁹⁶ New York City provided a backdrop for exploration. The city more broadly, and Flushing more particularly, thrust students into new experiences. They were unavoidable. Students learned to navigate buses, subways, and trains.

¹⁹³ Intern #1.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Intern #2.

They learned to navigate a neighborhood without the luxury of having their own car. They walked to more places. They explored the city, sometimes with the guidance of mentors and church members but other times on their own. They got lost on public transit, took the wrong train, found themselves in new neighborhoods, but found a freedom and ultimately a newfound confidence: "I can do this on my own!" Students felt empowered when they reached the point of finding their way around the city on their own. One student said, "It was really empowering actually, just exploring on your own . . . [and] growing as a human being."¹⁹⁷ The city provided ample opportunities for the students to grow in this way.

Several students talked about how this regaining of confidence came at a crucial point in their lives. They had just come off a difficult season and found themselves shackled in fear, shame, and self-doubt. They admitted that they needed to regain confidence and trust. Learning to successfully navigate the New York City was one step in rebuilding confidence, strengthening courage, and instilling independence.

This growth in confidence spilled over into their discernment of their calling. Students reported greater clarification in their sense of calling. This should not suggest that they knew exactly what they were going to do upon completion of seminary. Just as often it meant they knew what they were *not* going to do. This opening of some doors and closing of others helped the

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

students feel more confident that, notwithstanding the lack of specific details, they knew they were called to serve in ministry – some felt more drawn to church, while others were more drawn to interfaith work or campus ministry – but all were more confident of their calling. One student shared how she had envisioned failing during her internship and having to leave mid-summer, proving to herself and everyone else that she was not cut out for ministry and everybody had been mistaken about her gifts.¹⁹⁸ Students found confirmation of their calling not only from themselves but also from the congregation.

Students reported that in addition to their calling being clarified, it was also expanded. One student wrote that her sense of call had “opened” and she felt “softer toward being called into full-time ministry as a preaching pastor.”¹⁹⁹ One student noted that her sense of calling to preach was like a seed buried in her heart. This seed had always been there but it was covered up for years. The internship uncovered this seed for her and allowed her to finally do what she had always felt called to do.²⁰⁰ She had started her internship afraid of being a preaching pastor in a senior pastor or solo pastor role. She had assumed she would serve as an associate for many years before assuming a role like that. But

¹⁹⁸ Intern #1.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Intern #3.

the internship helped her realize that “[preaching] is what I love to do and God is with me in it.”²⁰¹

This expansion of calling applied not just to forms of ministries, but to different mental models of ministry. Multiple students noted the church building functioned more like a community center and the pastor was responsible for running it all and not only presiding over the faith community.²⁰² One student spoke of the “freedom to expand models of ministry and work.”²⁰³ The church and its context, while certainly having similarities with prior experiences of the students, also opened new ways of thinking about and doing ministry.

The newfound confidence and clarity of calling led to outcomes after the internship. One student was taken under care of classis beginning the ordination process for her denomination. After years of trying to wrap her mind around being a woman in ministry, she realized this was her next step. In the interview, she said, “Church on the Hill, I think, kind of pushed me over the edge, like, ‘You can be a pastor,’ and kind of naming that over and over and over again.”²⁰⁴ Later in the course of the interview, she confessed that she would not have looked at the positions she explored during her job search process and definitely

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Intern #1, 4.

²⁰³ Intern #3.

²⁰⁴ Intern #1.

would not have taken the position she currently serves in without the internship at Church on the Hill.²⁰⁵

The most unexpected finding in my research was the theme of healing in the lives of the students. All four students spoke of the healing that took place during the summer. For one, it was about regaining a sense of self. After feeling a sense of being shattered, the internship was a “bringing back together.”²⁰⁶ All the students were coming out of difficult seasons in their lives for a variety of reasons. Students arrived “shattered,” “exhausted,” “tired,” “closed-off,” and “broken.” Students reports a sense of peacefulness and growth that came through the rhythms of the summer.²⁰⁷ There was time for reflection and rest, ministry and exploration, and this balance opened up space for God to speak and to work in their lives.

Students experienced healing in regard to relationships, especially relationships with authority figures. One student reflected on how “extremely tentative and non-trusting of male leadership” she had become after prior unhealthy experiences.²⁰⁸ Another discussed how defensive and closed off she had become to a white male in leadership, as she had experienced years of being misheard and misunderstood. Internships can be a source of relational healing,

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

of opening the wells of trust again after prior hurts and disappointments. Healthy internships can give space to students working through the pain and grief that comes from hurt and can begin the process of learning to trust again. Healing did not end with the internship. Two students reported that they started counseling after the internship to continue the healing work they needed in their lives. The internship exposed the places of woundedness and began the healing process but the students knew more healing would be required of them.²⁰⁹

Students also reported growth in the area of relationships. Many of the students reported that they developed healthier relational boundaries over the course of the summer, often having learned the hard way through poor boundaries. Several students reported specific conversations that led to becoming over-involved and fused in relationships with church members. One student noted, somewhat surprisingly, that ministry is “spending a lot of time with people and just living life with them.”²¹⁰ The student said that being away from home (and the boundaries assumed there) made her more aware of the lack of boundaries that initially exist in a new place because they are undefined. She came to see when she needed to take time for herself and when she needed to be social. A central part of her growth through the summer was the development of better boundaries for herself so that she could be healthier personally and more effective pastorally. By the end of the summer and the conclusion of the

²⁰⁹ Interns #2, 3.

²¹⁰ Intern #2.

internship, the students often had been able to begin implementing healthier boundaries. They were able to better recognize unhealthy situations and were better able to care for themselves before and after these situations.

Formative Factors

In conducting this research, my interest was not only in what happened in the lives of students but also how it happened. What were the contributing factors that helped create an environment conducive to learning and growth? A few themes emerged from the data sets. The major response was loving, caring, supportive relationships on multiple levels – relationships with the members of congregation, with the mentor team, with the minister’s spouse, with the minister as mentor.

One student shared the epiphany she had at the end of her internship capturing intern relationships at their best: “Ministry is a two-way street. Pastors minister and are ministered to. It’s lovely.”²¹¹ The relational role the congregation played came through clearly in the responses. One student initially feared that the congregation would stop coming to worship when she started preaching. “The fact that they just showed up on Sunday,” meant so much to her. Students spoke of the congregation being very supportive and respectful, kind and accepting, and most of all encouraging. The many words of kindness and encouragement “exploded over,” making the students feel like the whole

²¹¹ Intern #1.

congregation was invested in their formation, not just a small group of individuals.²¹²

But it was not only the encouragement and support of the congregation that students felt was formative for them. They also spoke of the critical feedback they received and some of the difficult relationships they encountered with church members. These places of criticism and conflict, while difficult at the time and immensely frustrating, became formative for them. Students realized they could have shown up differently or set better boundaries. They could have become curious and more open to a differing opinion or perspective. These relationships were crucial to their relational growth as discussed earlier in this chapter. The encouragement and support of the congregation was vital to the formation of the students. But encouragement and support were not enough—the moments of critical tension also proved vitally important.

It was also abundantly clear what was not helpful for students to receive from the congregation. All the interns, except for the first, felt like they were being compared to previous interns because of explicit comments from members of the congregation. The students, for their first few weeks, expressed a desire to be known for who they were and not simply another intern like the last one.²¹³ As the summer internship progressed, the comparisons lessened but the frustration early in the summer was difficult for the students. A great gift that

²¹² Intern #1.

²¹³ Interns #1, 2, 4.

congregations can give to interns is to allow them to be themselves and not to function exactly like previous interns.

Another significant contributing factor was the role of the mentor team. The mentor team contributed to the formation of students through friendship, feedback, prayer, and vulnerability. Each student was assigned a mentor team comprised of three members of the congregation and the minister. The members of the congregation were picked especially for their gifts of encouragement and honesty.

A number of students noted the presence of these mentors during their internship. The mentors were more than just parishioners – they were friends and confidants. The mentors are encouraged to spend time with the student outside of the internship, taking the students on outings in NYC and sharing meals with them. These informal times together provided support and friendship. One student said she felt honored that the mentors would spend so much time with her, not out of obligation, but because they “wanted to spend time with me.”²¹⁴ Another student shared that this relationship was a two-way street. The student felt secure and safe in the relationship but she noted it changed and deepened when one of the mentors came to her and shared with her deep pains in her own life. The student characterized this as one of the sacred

²¹⁴ Intern #2.

moments of her internship, the moment when two vulnerable people met and could minister and support one another.²¹⁵

Prayers from the mentor team also played a role in students feeling cared for and supported. Mentors are asked to pray for the students regularly throughout the internship. On Sunday mornings prior to worship, the mentor team gathers to pray with the student. This was formative both for students and mentors. Students reported a peace that came through this brief time before the worship service and leaving with a feeling of God's presence and God's supportive family.²¹⁶ One student confessed that whenever she got nervous while leading the worship service, she would often look for one of her mentors in the pews for reassurance. Without fail, she found a loving and kind face.²¹⁷

Similarly to their relationships with the congregations, students also experienced challenge through the feedback they received from their mentors. All the students, to varying degrees, noted how helpful the sermon feedback was and how seriously they took the feedback each week. An unintended consequence was also that the students learned healthy ways to process feedback. There were multiple occasions with the students when they found themselves brooding over a comment by one of the mentors. This brooding often amplified the shame voice within them. These instances provided opportunities

²¹⁵ Intern #1.

²¹⁶ Interns #1, 4.

²¹⁷ Intern #1.

for the students to engage the mentor more directly and ask for clarification.

These were breakthrough moments that, from my perspective, created better and healthier ways to emotionally engage in feedback from others.

This feedback also offered to the student a perspective from the pews. I recall one particular instance where the student was using an analogy that I thought would fall flat and I told her that during her sermon preparation. She still felt confident enough to deliver it. In the sermon feedback from the mentor team, all the mentors described how imaginative and helpful the analogy was for them as they followed the sermon from beginning to end. Afterwards, I apologized to the student for my ill-conceived advice (this experience was a humbling and formative moment for me).

Mentors took the role of sermon feedback very seriously, with many of them re-listening to the sermon a second time on-line before they submitted the feedback to the student. The time and attention devoted by the mentors gave the students confidence that this was feedback worth listening to seriously. It gave them a sense of voice and confidence that their sermons and their words mattered.

The mentor team helped the students to envision themselves beyond the internship and into the future. The mentor team could often see gifts and abilities better than the student and implored the student to see and claim those gifts in their lives and ministries. The mentor team in this way, expressed an interest and commitment to the student that extended beyond the internship and beyond the

direct benefits the student could bring to them and their church. For one student in particular, the end-of-summer reflection with the mentor team became a sacred moment of transformation. Even at the conclusion of her internship, the student expressed both affirmation and hesitation about her calling to be a pastor. One of the mentors said to her in this final session: “You are fully capable of doing this . . . if you want to, but you don’t have to.” These words were affirming and liberating for the student. They were affirming in that the mentor team was fully confident that she could be a pastor – in fact, that she could be their pastor. But there was also freedom in that the student could choose to follow this calling (and even if she did not, the mentor team would still love her). This moved the student from thinking, “I have to pursue this calling,” to “I’m choosing to pursue this calling out of my own volition.” These affirming words invited a response from the student, one the student has since answered.²¹⁸

One unique relationship that impacted students was the relationship with my wife Brittnee. Three of the four summer interns lived with us at the parsonage. This created a larger role for my wife in the relational formation of students. But it’s clear from the interviews that she played a hugely formative role in the lives of all the students. Brittnee was a source of consolation during difficult points of the internship but more than anything else, she was a huge encourager for women to be women and not feel compelled to apologize for it. You might call her the feminist cheerleader behind the scenes of the internship.

²¹⁸ Intern #1.

She encouraged students to see themselves in roles that matched their skills rather than cultural expectations in the church. She had conversations about what it was like as a woman in the workplace and the challenges that women still face. She was a source of constant encouragement and blunt honesty.²¹⁹

The students noted the hospitality and acceptance experienced living at the parsonage that eventually grew into deeper friendships.²²⁰ Students felt like they did not have to be “on” at the parsonage even if they were living in the same house as their boss. A couple ground rules helped create this environment. First, the student and I would not talk about ministry in Brittnee’s presence unless Brittnee invited it. Second, the student and I did not talk about work and ministry on our Sabbath days.

The mentor/supervisor relationship might be the most crucial relationship in an internship experience. The relationship with the supervisor can make or break the internship experience. From the interviews, the minister contributed to the formation of students in a few key areas. The pastor was the chief encourager and this voice was especially important in the vulnerable moments after a worship service with the internal voices of shame began to shout.²²¹ This steady voice was present even in situations when things didn’t go well in a ministry setting.

²¹⁹ Interns #1, 2, 3.

²²⁰ Interns #1, 3.

²²¹ Intern #1.

The students also expressed that they felt heard, seen, and known. One student expressed how she felt empowered to speak up when in similar contexts from her past, she had been silenced. She did not feel like she would be silenced by the mentor and therefore she could express freely and openly what was happening.²²² One of the reasons students felt like they could speak up was because what they said mattered to the mentor. The students felt that what they said, even if challenging to the pastor or to the ministry, would be heard, mulled over, and responded to by the mentor. One student said the pastor lived with “a spirit of learning and growth”²²³ that made the student feel as if they were learning and growing together and not as if the mentor had all the answers and the student was there to receive them. Another student shared about an impactful moment where she and the minister were meeting to plan for an upcoming event. She said, “I was expecting [the mentor] to come and say, ‘Alright here's what I think we can do,’ but [the mentor] started the meeting by saying, ‘Alright, what do you want to do?’”²²⁴ That was a moment of empowerment for the student. It was the realization that she had something to offer, that she was a pastor, and that the relationship was not simply about what the mentor could offer to her. Several of the students shared similar stories of experiences where they were given an opening to think and plan, with the

²²² Intern #2.

²²³ Intern #1.

²²⁴ Intern #3.

mentor but without the mentor instructing them exactly on what they should do. One student described this way of supervision as “a way of managing and not my managing and allowing me to figure out how to how to live in that space.”²²⁵ Another student described it as setting wide boundary markers and then giving the student freedom to play and minister within that in the way most fitting to her.²²⁶ This way of supervision was not micromanagement nor was it hands off. The students felt the mentor was there to process the ministry situation if needed but also felt like they did not have to ask for permission or approval on every decision. Another student said one of the aspects that made this internship great was because “it provided space to try things out and the freedom to try things out and kind of work out the kinks and try a different things.”²²⁷ This freedom and empowerment seemed to play a formative role in the students seeing themselves as pastors.

When reflecting upon ministry experiences, the minister provided a non-judgmental space to process what happened and how the student and the congregation were responding to the ministry event. One student commented that it is important to her that she knew that the mentor wasn’t going to be upset even if things didn’t go well or according to plan.²²⁸ In the face of failure, the

²²⁵ Intern #2.

²²⁶ Intern #4.

²²⁷ Intern #3.

²²⁸ Intern #2.

minister was not going to pile on with shame but instead talk through what happened and the reasons and motivations at work in the student's life. This steady presence was noted by another student as well, who appreciated the times when she expressed great frustration about something challenging happening in the ministry. In response, the minister did not feed the frenzy or add to the frustration but instead, helped the student to think through what was happening from other perspectives.²²⁹ This steady presence was a listening presence, an encouraging presence, but also a challenging presence.

The supervisor plays a role in challenging the student to stretch themselves beyond where they currently feel capable. One key example of this is the requirement from the minister that the student preaches at least one sermon during the summer without a manuscript. All four students expressed reticence about this requirement. All four students expressed in the interviews that this was more than just reticence – feelings of anger and resentment were often felt toward the minister even if not expressed by the student at the time. Without the challenge required, none of them thought they would try preaching a sermon without notes. But after being pushed to try this, all of them cited the growth in preaching skills that came through because of it.

Students also spoke about the importance of the weekly reflection time with the mentor. It was a time of thinking theologically about certain practices in ministry. It was also a time for the student to be seen as a human being, with

²²⁹ Intern #4.

feelings and a life distinct from the ministry itself. These conversations provided perspective as well as more self-knowledge for the student. Good questions asked by the mentor were important. Sometimes these questions were about specific events that had taken place in the ministry. Sometimes these questions were about the internal workings of the student. Other times, they were questions specifically related to a practice of ministry. Good questions asked by the mentor opened up avenues for healthy processing and conversation.²³⁰

The last important role of the mentor was his emphasis on spiritual practices and self-care. All the students appreciated the fervor with which the mentor made them commit to Sabbath-keeping and to adopting other spiritual disciplines. Often, during the reflection time, the supervisor would ask the student how they were planning to rest on their Sabbath in order to encounter God and find rest. This idea of planning for rest and renewal was new to a couple of students but became a healthy reminder for them each week. The pastor, in some ways, served as accountability partner for the spiritual disciplines, checking in regularly with what the student was practicing and encouraging them in the endeavor. A couple students mentioned the comments made by the pastor that the spiritual disciplines were just as important as the actual work of ministry. This empowered them to take the time for spiritual rest

²³⁰ Intern #3.

and renewal during their internship, even if it was considered during “working” hours.²³¹

Relationships were the overwhelming contributing factor to the formation of students. But another factor was mentioned by two students. I mention it here as it relates to my hypothesis that cross-cultural field education experiences accelerate the growth of pastoral imagination.

For the students who expressed the importance of place for the internship, they talked about unconscious biases that were exposed and brought to light. One student shared about growing up in a majority white culture and loved “witnessing and experiencing God” working through people of different races and ethnicities at Church on the Hill.²³² These students were impacted by the stories shared with them by members of the congregation of how they or their families immigrated to the United States and the challenges they faced and the sacrifices they made. But more significantly, they were impacted by the welcome and hospitality from people of other nationalities/ethnicities. One student shared about the role a Chinese-American family played because, as she put it, they “took her in,” inviting her to family activities and meals. One of the outcomes of this experience was a new way of seeing people. The student grew “more attuned to people who are on the outside.”²³³ She discussed how

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Intern #1.

²³³ Ibid.

important it was to live as a minority, to have the experience of not always being able to communicate and understand the people around you. The two students who named place as an important factor reported this experience broadened their lived understanding of the kingdom of God, as they witnessed daily signs in multiple languages and cultural goods, such as food, representing people from around the world who were living together in one place.

Conclusion

The students who served as interns at Church on the Hill had their lives altered by the experience. They were formed as pastors, growing in skills and deepening their identity. They found their callings clarified and sturdied. They experienced encouragement and affirmation, and a community of love and grace, which led them to feel more empowered to pursue their calling more.

Not only were they formed as pastors, they also changed as human beings. They experienced spiritual and emotional healing. They developed healthier practices and committed themselves to continued growth after the internship. They left with a better understanding of themselves, what makes them tick, what wears them out, and how they should respond. They developed healthier boundaries in their relationships. They experienced rest and peace. They experienced that their voice matters and that they matter and are important whether or not they are ministers. They became more authentic, less defensive and closed off, and more open to God and God's world. One student said it best

and I think it captures the sentiment that all the students felt by the end of the internship: “I can call myself pastor.”²³⁴

The overwhelming factor that contributed to this growth was encouragement from relationships. The church served a community of encouragement, with layers of support provided to the student from the corporate level of the entire church, down through a core group of individuals serving as the mentor team, and eventually to the roles played by the minister as supervisor and the minister’s wife as friend and confidant. These factors contributed to the healing, growth, and confidence the students repeatedly reported.

Another important factor was the practice of ministry and the freedom to practice it. Students were not serving as cogs in the machine of ministry. They had the opportunity to try new things, to fail, to try again, and to practice week after week. The repetition of sermon preparation and delivery paired with other ministry responsibilities gave them experience in not only doing ministry, but intentionally reflecting on it. There was freedom for ministry, the risk of failing, and the assurance that this failure was not fatal to them or to the church.

When it comes the development of pastoral imagination, the results are mixed. The context of a cross-cultural field education placement was significant for two students but other two students said little to nothing about place. Because the evidence is inconclusive, I cannot say that my hypothesis is correct.

²³⁴ Intern #1.

There might be a few reasons to account for this reality. First, pastoral imagination, as explored in prior chapters, may simply need more time to develop and ferment. A ten-week internship may not be enough time for it to percolate. Second, the practice of the skills of ministry may have been so new to the students that their minds and hearts were so focused (and overwhelmed) in the performance of these responsibilities that they were not yet to the point of putting the pieces together in a pastoral imagination. At the same time, it might be way too early to conclude that this experience had no impact on the pastoral imagination of all the students. Only time may bear that reality out.

The internship ministry of Church on the Hill has played a significant role in the formation of its students as they prepare for pastoral ministry. The formation that occurs in students is primarily in the areas of pastoral responsibilities and pastoral spirituality. While some growth in pastoral imagination occurred, it was not universal and to the depth of growth witnessed in pastoral skills and pastoral spirituality. Nevertheless, the internship is clearly not a failure. The students are transformed through the experience, but they are not transformed in the way that I had predicted or so sincerely wanted. Only as time elapses will we be able to better understand the full impact of the students as they graduate from seminary, are ordained, and serve in churches and in other ministries.

Chapter 6: Implications

Throughout this thesis, I have sought to answer the Newbigin question: “What kind of ministerial leadership will nourish the church in its faithfulness to the gospel in a pluralist society?” I have suggested that a return to the classical tradition of pastoral theology and identity is needed but not as a way of reenacting the past. Rather, this pastoral foundation, coupled with a burgeoning pastoral imagination, will birth pastoral leaders living from a variety of metaphors in the variety of places God has called us to serve. I suggested that cross-cultural field education experiences might be a way to quicken the development of this pastoral formation. While this may be true in certain contexts, it did not prove to be the case for all the interns at Church on the Hill. Rather, interns at Church on the Hill developed pastoral skills and greatly deepened and strengthened their pastoral spirituality, both of which are foundational to the later development of pastoral imagination.

Field education remains a crucial piece of pastoral formation and theological education. It provides the space to bridge the gaps between theory and practice; it provides opportunity to bear the real responsibility of the calling; and it provides a space to grow up in the faith and in one’s calling. The learning one gains from a cross-cultural field education experience can be gained through other means – through the classroom, through a field education experience that is not cross-cultural, through retreats, and other means. Yet, the development

that happens in field education and specifically, cross-cultural field placements, continues to play a pivotal role in the formation of pastors.

Cross-cultural field education experiences create liminal spaces, where transformation happens and this transformation yields greater self-understanding. In liminal spaces, questions of identity and purpose rise to the surface. No longer can one hide behind routines, habits, or social systems. Cross-cultural field education experiences push the onus of agency upon the students to discover, learn, and embody who they are and who they are called to be in this world. These experiences can strip away the facades we live behind. They can erode the crust of past pain and hurt. They can be places where we experience God.

Second, in these liminal spaces, God is encountered. As God is encountered, students learn to trust and rely on God more. Without the crutches of normal, everyday life, students are left with few choices other than relying on God. The experiences of the interns at Church on the Hill confirm this reality. The internship at Church on the Hill proved formative not only because of the preaching skills that grew throughout the summer. Rather, it was formative because the students encountered God throughout the preaching process – from preparation through delivery. The internship became about more than skill acquisition; it became about meeting God and being ministered to by this God.

This encounter with a God who ministers is an experience of the healing presence of God. Cross-cultural field education placements can be places where

students experience God's healing in their lives – healing from past abuse, healing from overwhelming shame and guilt, healing from self-doubt and self-pity, healing from the hurt caused by the church and disciples of Jesus. An elder once commented to me, "The students come to us so broken." Yes, but this very internship can be the place where they experience the healing and grace from God.

Third, cross-cultural field education placements can provide clarity of calling. In this liminal space of learning about oneself and learning to rely on God, students are also challenged to think about what God is calling them to do. For the students who interned at Church on the Hill, calling was shaped in their time here, some in very significant ways. For several, it provided them the confidence to fully accept that they are called to be pastors. The call went from a theoretical, "This is a good idea," to "I can absolutely do this if I want to.... And I want to."

Cross-cultural field education experiences offer the ability to see different types of pastoral imagination at work, in response to the pluralism and secularism we find in the world. The range of pastoral imagination is greater in these cross-cultural experiences because more and more pastors are having to blaze their own trail in these spaces in response to God's call.

If we want to form pastors for today's world, cross-cultural field education experiences should be essential to seminary education. But the calls for action extend beyond the theological institution. In what follows, I will map out

implications for a number of areas of ministry and persons impacted by my claims and findings.

Implications for Seminary Students

If students wish to challenge their learning and formation, a great option for them is to serve in a cross-cultural field education experience. It may not be the easiest setting or even the most convenient. But it will be a setting that stretches them in new ways and may open them to vistas unimagined. Students must take a long-term perspective on their formation. While a student might be closed to an urban field education placement because she never sees herself serving in that context, that does not preclude the possibility that such an internship would be central to her own formation (and may even close off possibilities in the future she could never envision). For students who have experienced more privilege because of their gender or race, a cross-cultural context for field education is beyond important. The experience of being a minority can be formative in so many ways. Students of privilege should be especially prodded or even assigned to experiences that will stretch and challenge them.

During the course of their theological education, students should seek out a variety of ministry settings and internships. They should see for themselves how ministry is done in different churches and in different regions. They should explore a variety of skills while focusing on deepening their core skills for

ministry (preaching, teaching, pastoral care, etc.). These core muscles will serve them well regardless of their role in the future.

Implications for Field Education and Seminaries

As more and more of seminary education moves to on-line or distance programs, field education should be growing in importance for students. More and more, the classroom will largely be in ministry contexts with seminaries providing the knowledge and skill training for ministry. I think this requires more intentionality and more resources for field education. Field education deserves a greater role in seminaries. This is not to diminish the role of other faculty and departments. It is to recognize the changing landscape of seminary education and pastoral formation which is trending toward becoming less classroom-based. While more resources are needed for a larger role for field education, this does not necessarily require more faculty hires. It might suggest creating more partnerships with ministers to serve as supervisors as students and investing more resources, through spiritual direction and coaching, to these supervisors to better train and equip them. The seminary would be entrusting more of the formation through field education to churches and supervisors and thus, should invest more heavily in training churches to be incubators of formation. This might also require raising the bar of expectation for supervisors, including a commitment to on-going learning and certifications in order to keep supervising students. The seminary, through their own faculty, could provide this on-going training, which might include skill-based classes as well as

knowledge-oriented classes. Field education seems to get short shrift in many seminary settings and that deserves to be reversed in the coming years as theological education moves off the residential campus.

Seminaries, specifically their field education offices, should be intentional in seeking out cross-cultural field education sites that would provide sufficient support and transformational experiences for their students. Field education personnel should encourage and even push students toward sites that will stretch them in new ways, even if it is only for one of their internship experiences. Field education offices should be selective of the churches and pastors they choose to work with; a bad internship experience can do an equivalent amount of harm as a good experience can bring growth. Field education personnel thus should not solely be focused on students and not solely on churches but on student/church partnerships and how they might work together for formation to happen.

In order for these cross-cultural field education experiences to make sense for students (especially in light of increasing tuition and increasing debt), the pay for these internships must make economic sense. In the cases where the host church is unable to come up with the financial resources to pay the student, the seminary, if they believe the church and pastor are able to provide a high-quality internship experience, should provide financial resources for those internships to still take place. Development officers at seminaries should seek to raise funds for

precisely this purpose – to open the doors to more cross-cultural field education experiences that would not increase the financial burdens of the students.

Lastly, seminaries need to do less, not more. Seminaries are not able to fully form pastors during their years of enrollment. Formation will take many, many years. Seminaries play a distinct role in the formation of pastors but it means that seminaries will have to be more than professional schools and more than a theological school offering studies in every possible sub-discipline. Seminaries should focus on the core of students and create in them patterns of behavior and thought that will allow formation to continue to happen long after seminary education has ended. The academy, by nature, will always be trying to narrow the focus to smaller and smaller disciplines of study. The seminary, in some ways, ought to be a more generalist course of study. A general course of study does not lack depth necessarily, but again provide the core knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for one to enter ministry and take the next step of their formational journey.

If pastoral formation and the development of a pastoral imagination takes a life-time to grow, the role seminaries play should begin to shift as well. If the focus on Master of Divinity programs is narrowed to pastoral knowledge, identity, and skills needed to begin serving in a church (and the prerequisite knowledge needed to grow in these dimensions), the scope of classes for the master's level courses is about the fundamentals. Coursework is less oriented to electives and narrowly chosen topics in specific disciplines. Grounding the

student in their craft becomes the intent of all this coursework. However, scholars serving seminaries have so much more to offer in their areas of expertise. What if these special electives became part of an on-going curriculum offered to pastors serving in ministry in order to grow pastoral imagination? Pastors committed to their on-going learning and formation would not limit themselves to attending week-long conferences, but instead enroll in semester long courses (that could include an on-campus component) in which they could more narrowly study a specific area that may be essential for their pastoral imagination. This accomplishes multiple ends. Professors still get to go deep into areas of study but instead of sharing that knowledge with Master of Divinity students, they get to share it with ministers active in the context of ministry (and who might have more wisdom and imagination to engage the material). This model might also accomplish a need for pastors. Instead of having to seek out conferences in different places around the world, they look to the educational arm of the church, its seminaries, to provide ongoing learning for imagination. While a Doctor of Ministry degree may be a part of this, it need not be limited to degree programs. Lastly, this model keeps the church in dialogue with the academy and the academy in dialogue with ministry practitioners. These programs would need to find an economic model that works and need to find a committed audience of pastors to regularly engage.

Implications for Pastors

The pastor, serving as the supervisor, plays a significant role in the development of ministers. Not only is the minister the one most closely monitoring the progress of the student and providing timely feedback, the minister, for better or worse, is a role model for who a pastor is and what a pastor does. The student, like an apprentice following the work of a master, takes on the habits of a minister. The role the minister plays extends beyond that of being boss or supervisor. The role of the minister is one of wisdom, patience, and kindness. The minister functions to represent the best of what a minister can and should be in the world. The minister is a source of spiritual reflection and guides the student in reflecting on what is going on under the surface of events and happenings during the internship.

Ministers can and should learn from the skillsets associated with two similar but distinct schools of growth – spiritual directors and coaches. The minister as supervisor functions dually in these roles and it takes wisdom to know which is needed in particular circumstances. The minister as spiritual director will assist the student in paying attention to God – in themselves, in their ministry, in the church they are serving, and in the world. This is slow work that might lead to new conceptualizations of God and God’s work. While these paradigm shifts do not happen in every internship, they do happen and these can be both deeply unsettling and deeply exciting for students to discover. The minister as spiritual director is to walk with the student where they are in these

transitions. Spiritual directors also assist the student in paying attention to themselves, specifically what is happening inside. What are they feeling? Where is there hurt? Grief? Frustration? Excitement? Energy? Spiritual directors give the space to students to explore this emotional terrain and create intentional spaces in the internship to reflect and be in touch with themselves.

Ministers as coaches function in a similar but distinct role. Coaches might also explore what is going on inside of the students but with a more focused approach toward action. Coaches help students envision and plan for next steps of action in ministry and in life. It is reflecting on the work of ministry and how to improve it. It could be walking step-by-step through planning a Bible study or preparing a liturgy. It could also be directed to planning and envisioning a Sabbath day.

Ministers who are supervisors can grow as both a spiritual director and as a coach. There are certificate programs and books. It can also be beneficial to ministers to have been the recipient of both spiritual direction and coaching in their own lives, to better understand the experience as the one being directed or coached. Ministers can learn to ask good questions. They can stretch their capacity to listen more and talk less, to let the student do the work, rather than always inserting their own thoughts. The minister, growing as spiritual director and as coach, will not only benefit the interns who serve the church. It will also benefit the church as a whole, as it provides new skillsets with which to relate to and guide members of the congregation.

Serving as a supervisor will require more than the skills of a spiritual director or coach. Spiritual maturity is required. The fruit of the spirit should be reviewed regularly. The minister is expected to be in touch with themselves and their own growing edges and to model what an emotionally healthy spirituality looks like. As supervisors, pastors will not only experience the joys of walking alongside a student; they will also experience frustration. What one does with this frustration and how one responds to it is critical in the work of the minister. Without fail, a minister will experience interns who are more gifted than they are and at times, more skillful than they are in the work of ministry. The feelings of jealousy and envy are sure to follow. Ministers will witness students reaching and connecting with certain parishioners that they have never been able to connect with in any way. They will see parishioners gravitating toward the wisdom and presence of the student. Ministers must be self-aware of these feelings. They must also grow in their own self-confidence and understanding so that they do not feel undermined or threatened by the ministry of the student.

Ministers should be forewarned when they host an intern that a mirror will be held up to them, exposing both their gifts and their flaws as ministers and human beings. These can be opportunities for growth (painful growth, but growth nonetheless). Students can push ministers in areas that have been neglected or ignored in ministry as they bring a set of fresh eyes. If ministers do not feel pushed by their student, they are probably hiding part of themselves and their work. Ministers should be appropriately vulnerable with students and they

should invite students into their own growth. Instead of only showing off the finished product of what a minister looks like, more growth can happen for both the minister and the student when the minister invites the student into their own learning and change.

Hosting an intern should provoke a pastor to being a pastor par excellence. This is not to suggest that pastors have to be perfect in order to host an intern. It is to suggest that hosting an intern should motivate one to continually be growing as a minister of Jesus Christ. Ministers can sharpen their own skills for ministry during this time as they coach and direct interns. They can reflect more deeply on why they do certain tasks in particular ways and whether there might be a better way to work.

While the minister functions as a role model to the intern, the minister is not creating a miniature version of themselves in the intern. The minister tries to inhabit who they are in the task and calling of ministry and then tries to help the intern do the same. Thus, a student does not have to perform parts of the ministry in exactly the same way as the minister but the minister can and should share about what they have found helpful for themselves. Ministers can challenge students to stretch themselves in ways that might mimic what the pastor does, but the expectation is not that they always need to perform it in this way because the minister does. It is rather to explore whether this might be a proper response to their own calling.

Implications for Churches

The primary prerogative for field education sites is to provide the safety and the responsibility required for a liminal space to exist. Without this safety, the space deflates. Without responsibility, the possibility of transformation decreases. Churches who host students should seek to construct layers of support that extend beyond the minister/supervisor. The minister/supervisor is vital to the success of an internship but the minister alone cannot make a formative experience for the student. Instead, layers of support are needed. Beyond the pastor, a small group of individuals should commit themselves to praying for, supporting, encouraging, and orienting the new student to the church and to the area. This group, which is able to develop a deeper relationship to the student, can also provide the words of criticism that are needed. But because the relationship is established and under the pretext of support and encouragement, the feedback can be received differently. It's also vital for feedback to come from beyond the pastor, who is not omniscient. The whole church should be encouraged to spend time with the intern over meals. At Church on the Hill, we have encouraged members to take students to their favorite places in the New York City metropolitan area. These experiences are ways to see the world as church members do and also provide time and space to listen to and get to know the members of the church. These activities should be encouraged as part of the internship even if it may not appear that "work" is being done.

Churches should be prepared for students to fail. It is almost inevitable if a student is leaning into the liminal space that failure will occur. The church must keep in mind that failure is not fatal and while it may disrupt worship or ministry for a week or two, ultimately it is beneficial for the student. In many cases, the pastor/supervisor must be the buffer between parishioners offering overly harsh criticism and the student. The callings of interns are fragile. It does not mean students need to be coddled but it also does not mean that they should bear the brunt of unfair and demeaning criticism.

The church's role is to encourage, encourage, and encourage. The church is able to benefit greatly from the ministry of an intern. The posture of encouragement gives the church an openness to receive what God is offering to them through the intern. It may not be as polished or as crisp as when the minister leads the service, but it does not preclude God from speaking. The intern offers a new voice and a different perspective from the pulpit. It prevents churches from becoming enraptured by one preacher and allows other voices to be heard. Interns bring fresh perspectives, a clear set of eyes to see what's happening in the life of the church, and even new ideas. The short-term nature of the relationship should not diminish the ministerial role the student does play while serving.

The church should not seek for interns to expand or extend their ministries. Interns are not a cheap way to add staff or to try a new ministry. The likelihood of failure for a new venture in ministry is high. These failures can feel

fatal for an intern that is wondering whether or not they have the ability and the gifts to be a minister. As stated above, risk and challenge are essential to formation. While a new venture offers up this risk, it does so without the safety needed for transformation. Internships are focused on the transformation of the student. If the church and ministry are transformed through the student all the better but that is not always the case and should not always be the expectation. In fact, I believe those are unfair expectations to place upon a student being formed for ministry. Churches can best assist students in the formation process by placing them in ministries that are established. But in order for these to be transformative, there must also be some risk. Interns that are cogs in ministry machines are also less likely to experience transformation. They may gain skills and practice ministry, but if the focus is more on the ministry of the church than the formation of students, both will get short shrift.

Conclusion

My hope is that this thesis will spur conversation and ministry in seminaries and churches alike around the formation of pastors. I hope that it will urge pastors to engage in life-long learning with their colleagues as their own pastoral imaginations emerge. I hope this will serve as a helpful resource to theological educators as they are actively involved in preparing ministers. I pray that this will contribute in some small way for the development and equipping of pastors to serve in a secular, pluralistic society.

Appendix I: The Evolution of the Internship Program at Church on the Hill

The internship program was created with the primary focus on preaching/worship and a secondary focus area for ministry that was chosen after conversation with the student and the pastor. During the 10-week internship, the student would preach seven sermons (a three-week stretch and a four-week stretch with a break in the middle). At least one of these seven sermons would be preached without a manuscript. The student would also be responsible for crafting and leading parts of the liturgy at least seven times during the summer. Two worship services would be led from beginning to end by the student.

The secondary focus for the internship was flexible. Students could choose to lead a Bible study or adult education class. Students could work at our weekly women's shelter for homeless women. They could choose an emphasis in pastoral care. This was to supplement their primary focus and calling for the summer – to preach the gospel.

In the early iterations of the internship, two layers of support were in place for students. As pastor, I served as supervisor and mentor to the student. We met weekly for reflection. We also discussed a common book on preaching that we read throughout the summer. In addition, a mentor team, comprised of three members of the church, met with the intern at the beginning, middle, and end of the summer. They primarily functioned as a sounding board at these

meetings and listened to the student reflect on their experiences. The mentor team also provided sermon feedback to the student, submitting completed sermon review forms to the student and pastor on a regular basis.

The students were also required to engage in spiritual disciplines and practices. Sabbath-keeping was a required practice; others could be chosen by the student. The internship included this spiritual formation component from the beginning.

At the end of each internship, in addition to reflecting on the summer with the student, I would ask for feedback on the internship program as a whole and how it might be different and improved. Over time, some additional and more intentional pieces have been added to the program. First, the mentor team has taken on additional responsibilities in their role. They have committed themselves to praying regularly for the student and have joined together to pray for the student prior to each worship service. They have been intentional about introducing the student to other church members, gathering groups for lunch or for other cultural outings in NYC. They have provided another set of ears and eyes to the student, distinct from the minister's and have added a substantial layer of encouragement and support. Second, the preaching preparation process has changed. I now begin the sermon writing process each week with the students. Together, we engage in a *lectio divina* type practice of listening to and reflecting on God's Word. This practice is adapted from Anna Carter Florence's Six Steps/Questions for the Preacher. This slow meditative approach to God's

word has been extremely formative for the students and refreshing for me as the minister. Third, another change to the sermon preparation process has been a component of active coaching in the sanctuary. Prior to preaching the sermon, the intern will preach a part or parts of the sermon in front of me in the sanctuary. I then offer feedback, less on content, and more on presence and voice. I want them to embody the word and offer it to the congregation in a way that it will be heard. This exercise is not to help them find my voice or to imitate my preaching, but to try on for themselves their own voice.

The last change to the internship has been a networking component. As former interns began to graduate from seminary and look for their first calls, I realized another piece of support was needed. Students needed a network that might help them become aware of and discern opportunities. But the network was about more than just filling up a black book of important contacts. It was also to introduce them to their future colleagues in ministry and to expose them to the variety of ways that ministers inhabit their calling. I realized early on while supervising students that no matter how empathic and understanding I might be as a supervisor, I would never fully understand the experiences of a female seminarian. However, other female clergy could and could help these students process their experiences better. Now, during the course of their internship, the student meets with 6-7 pastoral leaders in the NYC area, serving in a variety of roles from parish ministry to non-profit leadership, to staff roles at the Regional Synod and General Synod levels.

The last change has been a structural change but I think helpful to the success of the interns. In addition to having time each week with the student for sermon preparation and an additional time for theological reflection, I also instituted an administrative meeting, during which we can talk through the nuts-and-bolts of the week. This has allowed the time of theological reflection not to become encumbered by the day-to-day realities confronting students. They now have different spaces so that everything can be given full attention.

Appendix II: Phenomenological Research Interview Questions

1. In what ways did you experience/encounter God during your internship?
2. How did your understanding/experience of God change?
3. What kinds of transformation did you experience through your internship?
4. What changed in you as a result of the internship?
 - a. Spiritually?
 - b. Personally?
 - c. Relationally?
 - d. Vocationally?
5. How did your understanding/experience of the church change?
6. How did your understanding/experience of ministry change?
7. What spiritual disciplines did you practice through your internship and how do you think they contributed to your formation?
8. How did your supervisor contribute to your formation?
9. How did the mentor team contribute to your formation?
10. How did the congregation contribute to your formation?
11. In what ways did place (Flushing, New York), contribute to your formation?
12. Was there a particular moment/circumstance/event that contributed to your growth?
13. How did your understanding/experience of yourself change?
14. How did your pastoral skills grow?
15. How did your pastoral identity/calling grow?
16. How did your pastoral character grow?
17. How did your pastoral imagination grow?

18. If you were to use a metaphor, a word, or a phrase to capture your internship, what would it be?
19. Looking back now, what is the most lasting, significant impact of the internship?

Bibliography

- Ayers, Danielle and Reginald Williams Jr. *To Serve This Present Age*. Chicago: Judson Press, 2013.
- Bass, Dorothy C., and Craig R. Dykstra, ed. *For Life Abundant : Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*. Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2008.
- Clinton, Robert J. *The Making of a Leader*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988.
- Culbertson, Philip and Arthur Bradford Shippee, ed. *The Pastor: Readings from the Patristic Era*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.
- Dykstra, Robert, ed. *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005.
- Farley, Edward. *Theologia*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.
- Floding, Matthew, ed. *Engage: A Theological Field Education Toolkit*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.
- Floding, Matthew, ed. *Welcome to Theological Field Education*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2011.
- Goheen, Michael. *The Church and Its Vocation: Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2018.
- González, Justo L. *The History of Theological Education*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015.
- Heifetz, Ronald and Martin Linsky. *Leadership on the Line*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002.
- Hiestand Gerald and Todd Wilson. *The Pastor Theologian*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2015.
- Hybels, Bill. *Courageous Leadership*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.
- Jones, Robert P. "Religion in New York City's Five Boroughs," *PRRI*, last modified April 13, 2016, accessed August 20, 2020, <https://www.prri.org/spotlight/religion-new-york-citys-five-boroughs/>.

- Kujawa-Holbrook, Sheryl. *Injustice and the Care of Souls*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.
- Lubin, Gus. "Welcome to the Language Capital of the World: Queens, New York." *World Economic Forum*. Last modified February 22, 2017. Accessed November 2, 2020. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/02/queens-in-new-york-has-more-languages-than-anywhere-in-the-world?utm_content=buffer74269.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard, Daniel Day Williams, and James Gustafson. *The Advancement of Theological Education*. 1st ed. New York: Harper, 1957.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*. Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1986.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Good Shepherd*. Oxford: Mowbray, 1977.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1989.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Household of God*. New York: Friendship Press, 1954.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *A Word in Season: Perspectives on Christian World Missions*. Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1994.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *Unfinished Agenda: An Updated Autobiography*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1993.
- Newbigin, Lesslie and Paul Weston, ed. *Lesslie Newbigin : Missionary Theologian : a Reader*. Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2006.
- Oden, Thomas C. *Pastoral Theology : Essentials of Ministry* 1st ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.
- Patton, John. *Pastor as Counselor*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015.
- Peterson, Eugene. *The Contemplative Pastor*. Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1989.
- Peterson, Eugene. *Working the Angles*. Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1987.

- Purves, Andrew. *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
- Rice, Howard. *The Pastor as Spiritual Guide*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1998.
- Salvatierra, Alexia and Peter Heltzel. *Faith-Rooted Organizing*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2013.
- Stanley, Andy. *Next Generation Leader*. Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2006.
- Stanley, Andy. *Visioneering*. Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 1999.
- Van Gelder, Craig, ed. *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation*. Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2009.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin and Owen Strachan *The Pastor as Public Theologian*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2015.
- Wainwright, Geoffrey. *Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Webb, Keith. *The COACH Model for Christian Leaders*. New York: Morgan James Publishing, 2019.
- Wheeler, Sondra. *The Minister as Moral Theologian*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2017.
- Willimon, William, ed. *Pastor: A Reader for Ordained Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002.
- Willimon, William. *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002.
- Wilson Todd and Gerald Hiestand, eds. *Becoming a Pastor Theologian*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016.