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Learning in the Midst of Action: Phronesis in the Seminary

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

LEARNING IN THE MIDST OF ACTION:
PHRONESIS IN THE SEMINARY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF PORTLAND SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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PORTLAND, OREGON

SEPTEMBER 2019

Portland Seminary
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

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Dedicated to my wife, Anna,
who never stopped cheering for me.

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ABSTRACT

The U.S. Assemblies of God Cooperative Fellowship (AG) remains one of the least educated, and least interested in education, denominations. A perceived disconnect between graduate-level learning and practical application deters many AG pastors away from continuing their education, leading to a nationwide trend of not being “well-educated.” AG pastors have a different set of values than mainstream evangelical denominations. Thus, the pastors seek their pastoral development from sources other than mainstream higher education. If universities can create more opportunities for practical training within typical course work, provide wisdom and character development, and facilitate mentoring relationships, then AG ministers would be much more likely to consider returning to higher education for further development.

This dissertation will focus on bringing online practicum learning experiences into leadership and ministerial graduate studies in the Assemblies of God denomination. This dissertation asks the question, in what ways will offering an online practicum experience increase higher education attractiveness and effectiveness to AG pastors, as opposed to a typical online program? This dissertation postulates that communicating the practical usefulness of a master’s degree in Ministry Leadership by incorporating practical learning within the MA will attract more AG pastors to higher education. Incorporating new-to-seminary methodologies, such as competency-based education, prior learning experience, a hand-picked lead mentor, and more concentrated peer interactions will encourage AG pastors to consider and attend higher education in greater numbers. This dissertation will explain the nature of this problem within the AG and the history of how we got there, show what some others have tried, and then present a new

recipe made from old elements that will produce an entirely new product. Like in chemistry, how just changing the amount or method of delivery of a familiar compound can change the chemical entirely, so can this new combination of pedagogical ideas change the end product. The artifact presented with this dissertation will outline some of the technical requirements and aspects, such as a degree plan, course descriptions, and a course syllabus.

SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The Assemblies of God denomination is one of the most under-educated religious groups in America. While some may look down on the Assemblies of God (AG) because of this, many AG ministers are proud of that statistic. Benefits come with being a grassroots movement, and maintaining Jesus' "take nothing for your journey" mentality of evangelism is one of them. However, being under-educated has its limitations.

This dissertation seeks to create a mechanism that will encourage pastors to consider returning for graduate studies and believes this will have a huge positive effect on the pastor's life and ministry. Imagine a world where the church and seminary formed a mutual apprenticeship with each other;¹ a mutual apprenticeship between church and university that will allow both parties to fully understand each other, and to more accurately understand the people they try to serve. With the seminary and church more intimately, intentionally, and respectfully tied together, realistic and potent breakthroughs shape the next generation of students who will be taught. To accomplish this, this paper will begin by providing an argument for why AG ministers should consider more education in their ministerial pursuits. This introduction will briefly survey AG history, heritage, and values and educational statistics compared to other denominations. This section will then conclude with a look at what currently exists within higher education's current paradigm.

¹ Christian Scharen, *Fieldwork in Theology: Exploring the Social Context of God's Work in the World*, ed. James K.A. Smith (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2015), 113.

How We Got Here

A Brief History

On New Year's Day 1901, the Pentecostal Revival sparked as Agnes Ozman gave an utterance of tongues after receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This turn-of-the-century event ignited into a movement that today includes almost 10% of the world's population and growing. After this initial event in 1901, the Holy Ghost movements spread around America to many others who had never² seen this experience before. Yet despite not having any formal written theology or leadership structure in place, these people continued to passionately pursue God and figure out their theology as they went along. This observed history of AG, and Pentecostal movements in general, has led to some theologians and academics poking fun at the phrase "Pentecostal theology" by calling it an oxymoron.

But with an influx of people from all over the world joining their ranks as they flew in to witness and experience this new outpouring, especially at Azusa Street, the movement had trouble keeping up with its own growth, especially in the areas of church polity and administration. The evangelical core value of being driven to win conversions was exponentially elevated for Pentecostals because of their belief in the imminent return of Christ. The Pentecostal movement saw more missions impact in the world than any other denomination or movement before it, evidenced by the fact that today, there are over 600 million Pentecostals and Charismatics globally. Within this group of many

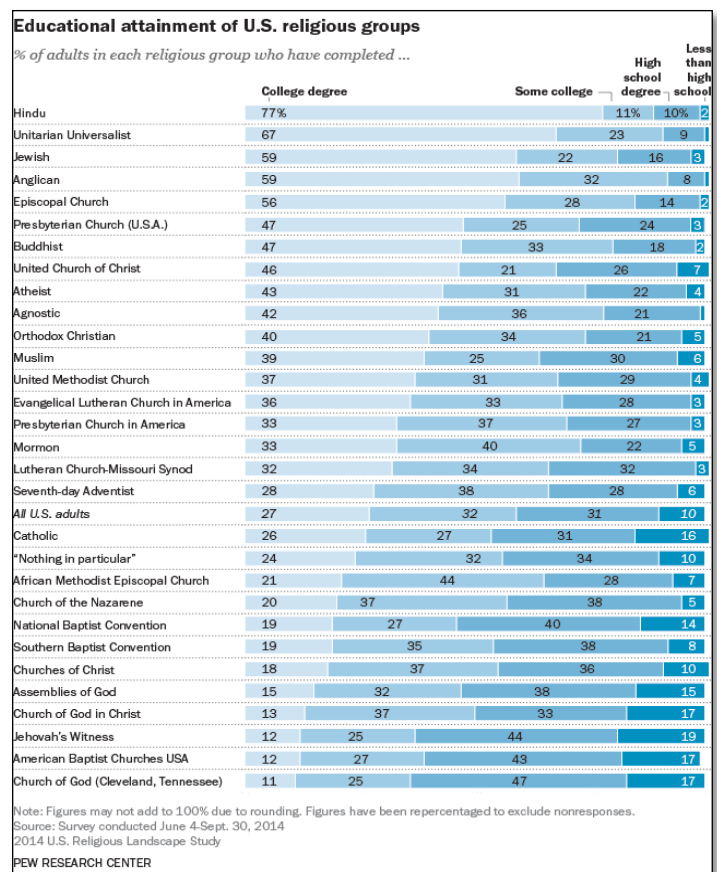
² Roswell Flower, "The Genesis of the Pentecostal Movement," *Enrichment Journal*, 1970. http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/199904/016_genesis.cfm.

denominations, one of the largest is AG, which has over 67 million adherents. All of this growth happened from a vastly undereducated group that compiled their theology as they ministered.

The Pentecostals' emphasis on conversion doesn't leave as much room for other values that other denominations traditionally held in its place. Most obvious of these is the value of education. As Figure 1 shows, the AG has placed far less importance on education than almost all other denominations in the U.S. The lack of value on education by the AG is best reflected by the level of education of its ministers. While some

denominations, like the United Methodists, require a Master of Divinity for ordainment before one can even begin pastoral ministry, the AG only requires basic, non-college-level education. Specifically, they require 28 classes that can be taken from non-accredited Bible institutes, the most common being the *Berean School of the Bible*³ which is unaccredited and intentionally

Figure 1 - Educational Attainment of U.S. Religious Groups

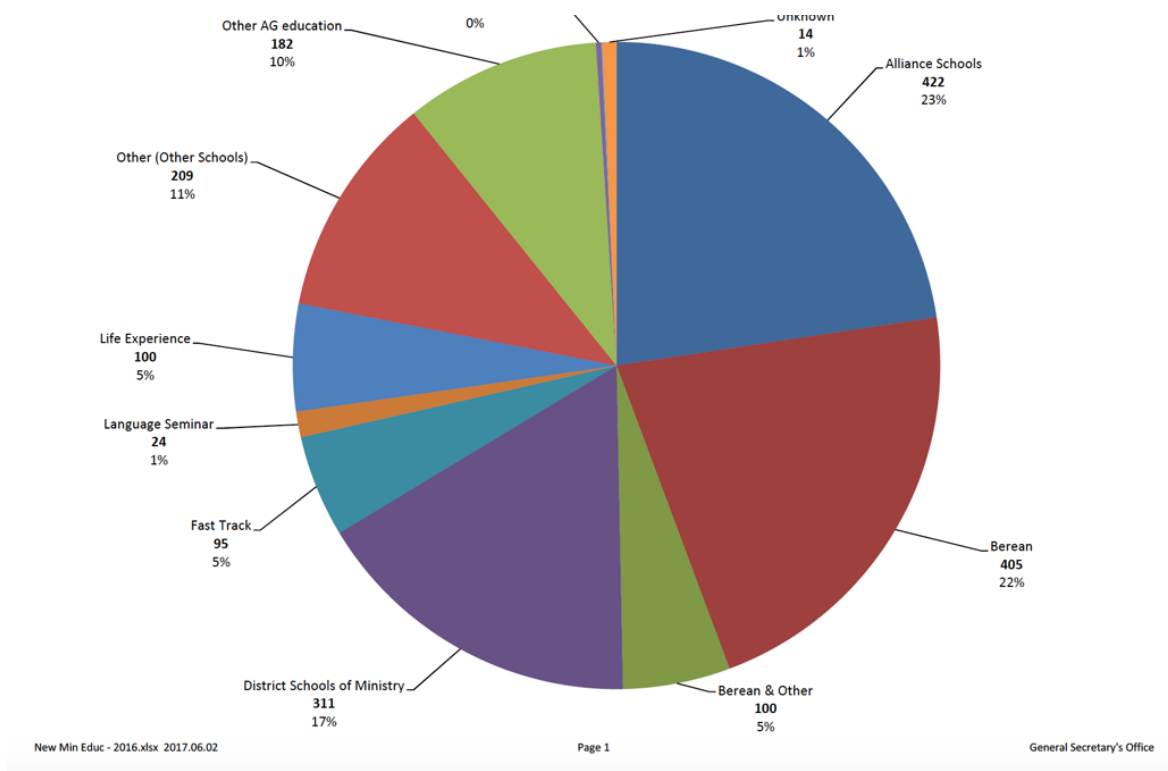


³ "Berean School of the Bible," Global University, accessed January 31, 2019, https://www.globaluniversity.edu/berean_index.cfm.

not college-level. To achieve the minimum level of credentialing through the AG, students need only eight of these Berean classes. This low educational standard for AG ministers represents its values.

The national office of the AG tracks the educational sources (Figure 2)⁴ from which their ministers have received their educational requirements for ordainment. As Figure 2 shows, only about 25% of AG ministers have completed their schooling from Berean, while another quarter have gotten their requirements through a “District School of Ministry,” which offers a variance of Berean, and about 5% have been awarded their

Figure 2 - Education Sources for US AG Ministers



⁴ James T. Bradford, *AG USA New And Transferred Ministers Education 2016 Overview* (N.p.: General Secretary's Office, 2017), 3.

educational requirements through “life experience” while only 23% of AG ministers come from the regionally accredited “alliance schools.”

In the AG, cultural norms reflect that no one values higher education. To some, this may sound irrational and might lead one to hold less respect for the AG and other Pentecostal denominations, but it is important to understand that these values are simply the consequences of a people who are passionately devoted to the *Missio Dei*.⁵ This is the language of an evangelistic (not evangelical) movement, of a denomination that went from zero to over 600 million in less than 100 years. The attitude of these people was, and still is to a certain degree, “Jesus is coming back SOON, so we need to save souls NOW.” For the AG, if people are getting saved, that is good enough.

Pentecostal Values

James K.A. Smith writes in his book *Thinking in Tongues* about the five tenets of Pentecostalism. Smith’s list includes: radical openness, enchanted theology, a non-dualistic affirmation, an affective epistemology, and an eschatological orientation.⁶ This important clarification actually places Pentecostalism in an entirely separate category than evangelicalism as understood by a handful of theologians, including Smith and others like Pentecostal scholar Amos Young. In fact, these tenets of Pentecostalism differ significantly from what David Bebbington identifies in *Modern Evangelicalism in Britain*

⁵ The *Missio Dei*, being the mission of God (that all should be saved) that began in the heart of God.

⁶ James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2010).

as the four pillars of evangelicalism: conversionism,⁷ activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism.⁸ Pentecostals will attest to the four pillars of evangelicalism, but Smith's five tenets identify that five foundational ways Pentecostals differ from evangelicals. The various ways these two different value sets get played out can hardly be understated. One of the most marked differences is the Christian's reaction and responsiveness to their personal experiences.

Bebbington says of the Charismatics and Pentecostals in Britain that "experience was... elevated above theology in the charismatic scale of values."⁹ This holds true today in AG, but it should be pointed out that although Pentecostals may view their experiences as authoritative over theology, they do not elevate personal experience over the word of God. In line with the first tenet of radical openness, Pentecostals are open to new experiences and actively seek God within them. This is not an absurd notion. After all, when the original Pentecost came, there was no precedent for what was happening! Peter and the other disciples must have been very surprised to see tongues of fire come down and hear many different languages spoken at once.¹⁰ Part of the DNA of Pentecostals is to be open to God doing the unexpected in our midst, and then reflecting afterward to determine if it was God's work, just as Peter did that first day of Pentecost. For the

⁷ Bebbington defines Conversionism as the "belief that lives need to be transformed through a "born-again" experience and a lifelong process of following Jesus." National Association of Evangelicals, "What is an Evangelical," accessed August 20, 2019, <https://www.nae.net/what-is-an-evangelical/>

⁸ David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (N.p.: Routledge, 2015).

⁹ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 242.

¹⁰ Acts 2:3.

Pentecostals at the turn of the century who saw God moving in new and powerful ways in the lives of the poor, uneducated, and outcast, it was logical to treat education as unnecessary. What is the point of apologetics when miracles occur daily, and Jesus could return any day?¹¹ God blessed this movement without requiring education; their numbers grew without years of study. Consider these three lines of dialogue that capture the practical mindset of the Pentecostal.

Does it work? – “*Yes.*”

Is it sin? – “*No.*”

“*Then let’s do it!*”

This attitude and their expectation of Jesus’ imminent return are why many church¹² buildings in Pentecostalism were built very cheaply. They didn’t think they would have to worry about passing the building down to the next generation. And, to some degree, Pentecostals treated education the same way they built their buildings early on. Pentecostals invested the least amount of resources and took the cheapest and quickest route. Bob L. Johnson Jr. writes, “A review of the modern Pentecostal movement does indeed provide evidence that substantiates the anti-intellectual sentiment found within the evangelical movement and wider American society.”¹³ But this

¹¹ Albert E. Stuernagel, “Signs of the Approaching End of the Age : An Interpretation of the Times in Which We Are Living,” *The Latter Rain Evangel* (May 1, 1927): 4-7.

¹² Bill Bishop, “Americans Have Lost Faith in Institutions. That’s Not Because of Trump or ‘Fake News.’,” *The Washington Post*, March 3, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/03/03/americans-have-lost-faith-in-institutions-thats-not-because-of-trump-or-fake-news/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.65b649bcb4ce.

¹³ Bob L Johnson, “In Search of a Pentecostal Theology of Knowledge-Work: Exploring the ‘Under’ Charted Territory of the Scholar-Researcher Vocation,” *Pentecostal Educator* 4, no. 2 (2017): 19.

sentiment was not out of laziness, but out of an intense conviction for the salvation of the lost: they put other things to the side that would slow them down from the immediate conversions and results they were praying for so fervently.

American Values

In the 1960s, almost by accident, a phrase struck a chord with the masses. It was Jack Weinberg who first uttered, “Don’t trust anyone over 30,”¹⁴ but it quickly became the mantra for the decade. This distrust of authority and the system was being applied to politicians and clergy alike. The trust and respect that Americans once had in the clergy began to sharply decline. Without realizing it at first, America entered a cultural shift as the postmodern value of deconstructionism began to rise. A wide-ranging sense of distrust toward all those in power became more prevalent in the population.

This shift happens as secularism becomes the dominant worldview in America. Charles Taylor writes about this in his landmark book, *A Secular Age*,¹⁵ where he provides a compelling theory of the past, present, and future trajectory of Western intellectual thought. In it, Taylor offers a socio-philosophical account of the shift from a theistic to a non-theistic orientation in society and its defining institutions.¹⁶ The significance of this transition and the effect it had on the world cannot be understated.

¹⁴ Berkeley Daily Planet, “Don’t Trust Anyone Over 30, Unless It’s Jack Weinberg,” Berkeley Daily Planet, April 6, 2000, <http://www.berkeleydailyplanet.com/issue/2000-04-06/article/759?headline=Don-t-trust-anyone-over-30-unless-it-s-Jack-Weinberg--Daily-Planet-Staff>

¹⁵ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018).

¹⁶ Johnson, “In Search of a Pentecostal Theology,” 15.

Specifically, in regard to education though, Taylor writes about how higher education is particularly affected by the world's paradigm shift into secularism and late modernity. Bob L. Johnson Jr. summarizes, "Whereas prior to the Enlightenment it was impossible *not* to believe in God, Taylor argues that it is now impossible *to* believe in transcendence. The *default* orientation that marked the philosophical orientation of the pre-modern period –*belief in a transcendent reality* –has given way to the unbelief of late modernity."¹⁷ Additionally, as James K.A. Smith notes in *How Not to Be Secular*, being secular today really means not just a new belief, but that there are more options of what to believe today than at any other time in human history. Smith states that we are "caught between myriad options for pursuing meaning, significance and fullness."¹⁸ This shift of attitude, trust, and values cannot be understated. Johnson continues, "Secularization has come as the sacred roots of higher education have been severed. The once pervasive influence of religion on the intellectual life of America's preeminent institutions of higher education has all but vanished.... In today's academy non-belief is the only legitimate academic perspective."¹⁹ This cultural shift set the seminary up for a large drop in interest and enrollment. With the plummeting of perceived respect/admiration of clergy and the rising frequency of scandals, skepticism, and suspicion of the public to the pulpit, many students found callings that were more respected and financially viable. Because of this distrust in the system and institutions, seminaries experienced huge drops in attendance,

¹⁷ Johnson, "In Search of a Pentecostal Theology," 15.

¹⁸ James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids, MI, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 62.

¹⁹ Johnson, "In Search of a Pentecostal Theology," 15.

which then then led to budgetary concerns, and many institutions began to water down their admission process or grow hybrid programs incorporating a profession beyond pastoral ministry to try to attract more students. This trend of institutions migrating away from ministry degrees is bigger than just an AG issue; it happens across all denominations nationwide.²⁰

As a result of this cultural shift, students' enrollment continues to trend toward pursuing ministerial type work but in the secular sector.²¹ This type of altruistic work might be secular in nature, but it still allows the student to be on the front lines, actively doing the same type of work that they might have been doing in ministry, e.g., counseling or teaching. This attitude shift was also accelerated by the America's new desire to prefer therapy over theology, and counseling over pastoral care. Douthat writes in his book *Bad Religion*,

As [the philosopher] Ronald Dworkin pointed out ... the United States has witnessed a hundredfold increase in the number of professional caregivers since 1950. Our society boasts 77,000 clinical psychologists, 192,000 clinical social workers, 105,000 mental health counselors, 50,000 marriage and family therapists, 17,000 nurse psychotherapists, 30,000 life coaches—and hundreds of thousands of nonclinical social workers and substance abuse counselors as well.²²

This trend continues where universities today offer many alternative options for would-be pastors. Perhaps if a higher education institution can understand that people stopped valuing ministry degrees, perhaps there is a way they can recalibrate their degree that will

²⁰ Ross Gregory Douthat, *Bad Religion: How We Became a Nation of Heretics* (New York: Free Press, 2013), 80-81.

²¹ Douthat, *Bad Religion*, 240-241.

²² Douthat, *Bad Religion*, 240-241.

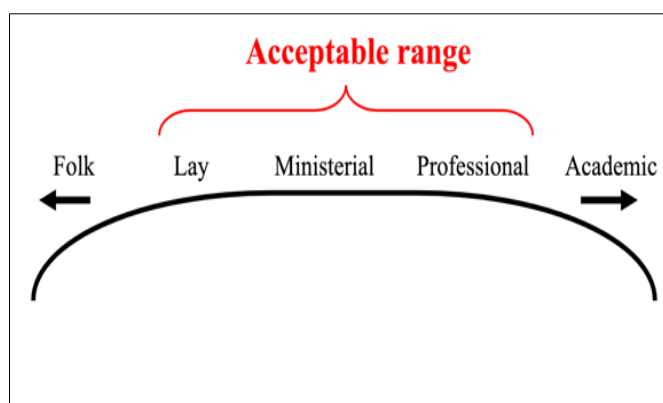
make it more applicable to the current generation, more effective at equipping its saints and ministers all the while not losing its core convictions.

Why Is This a Problem?

The Danger of the Status Quo

Daniel Tomberlin articulates the issue with our current state of biblical education: “There is a crisis of Biblical illiteracy in evangelical and Pentecostal churches, the very churches that claim a high view of Biblical inspiration.”²³ In the AG, those pastors who are educated have settled for, at best, what Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson, in *Who Needs Theology*, label as lay theology, that is, theology that is informed but isn’t mature and able to articulate itself.²⁴ It is functional and acceptable (see Figure 3), although not quite consciously understood. Relatively speaking, this is still a step up for AG, whose movement came from grassroots “folk theology” experiences. Folk theology is the kind

Figure 3 - Grenz & Olson Levels of Theology



²³ Daniel Tomberlin, “The Real Crisis in Christian Education,” August 4, 2019, <http://www.danieltomberlin.net/the-real-crisis-in-christian-education/>.

²⁴ Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *Who Needs Theology?: An Invitation to the Study of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), chapter 2.

of theology “that rejects critical reflection and enthusiastically embraces simplistic acceptance of an informal tradition of beliefs and practices composed mainly of clichés and legends.”²⁵ As Figure 3 shows, according to Grenz, folk theology is the lowest form of theology, while lay theology is merely passable. AG pastors maintain this lay theology (not ministerial theology or professional theology) because it was what was modeled for and handed down to them.

If that is folk theology, then what is the definition of good theology? That is, of course, a hard question to answer specifically. But taking a step back, there is a bigger resolution to this question, one that would unify denominations more than it would separate them. To do this, we look back at a concept that was one of the most important concepts in the early church, that is the *Regula Fidei*, or rule of faith.²⁶ This rule of faith is a unifying creed that many can buy into. This rule eventually became refined enough that the *Regula Fidei* became the Nicene Creed. Grenz and Olsen state it this way: “Good theology, therefore, brings the theoretical, academic intellectual aspect of Christian faith into Christian living. In so doing, theology becomes immensely practical—perhaps the most practical endeavor one ever engages in!”²⁷ While it’s impossible to articulate what good theology is based on denominational differences and preferences, Olson and

²⁵ Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *Who Needs Theology?: An Invitation to the Study of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), Chapter 2.

²⁶ Another Benedict, “Regula Fidei,” 2018, <https://www.anotherbenedict.org/regula-vita/regula-fide/>

²⁷ Grenz and Olson, *Who Needs Theology?* 43.

Grenz's definition provides a strong framework to work from, which primarily points back to the fundamentals represented in the Nicene Creed.

A congregation can only rise to the level of the pastor, which is frightening if the leader's theology is only folk or lay theology. If AG pastors maintain their current level of theology, how can they raise the theological level of the church? A better educated pulpit will lead to a better educated pew.²⁸ More than this, without good theology, bad theology will sprout up like weeds among the saints. Good theology, and the good practices that come from good theology, takes intentionality of study, training, reflection and feedback. Seminary has historically not always provided access to these types of good practices.

AG: A Pioneer in Non-Traditional Education

Despite the fact that the AG doesn't prioritize higher education, they have been a pioneer in non-traditional education. Even from the first general council at the inception of the AG, preparing and training more ministers of the Gospel was a primary concern. It is listed in the minutes of the meetings from the first council that the five priorities of the AG would be, "Agreement in Doctrine, Conservation of word, Facilitating foreign missions, Chartering church in accordance with law, and Proposing bible training school to train young people."²⁹ The fifth priority mentioned was education and training, but the words "college", "university" or "seminary" are never mentioned. It seems what was

²⁸ Tomberlin, "The Real Crisis in Christian Education."

²⁹ The Assemblies of God: Our Heritage in Perspective, Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center February 21, 2019, <https://ifphc.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=history.main>

important for those founders was simply developing ministers, not achieving some level of accredited education. This focus is born out of a heart for missions and extending the gospel to the ends of the earth. Today, Global University has been a forerunner on this front. Dr. James E. Book writes in “A History of AG Non-Traditional Education”³⁰ about some of the amazing achievements accomplished by men and women who were called to extend basic Christian education to the corners of the earth. This education endeavor was a world mission dedicated to saving the lost, not just bringing more education. Education was the vehicle to better reach more unsaved nationals. Book shows that the AG and Global University working together has been a testament that through non-traditional education, unbelievers can be converted at remarkable rates. Book writes that many hundreds of thousands of new believers were discipled because of this effort, and of those many became ministers.

True Stories from AG Pastors

Beyond statistical data and history lessons about the AG, it is helpful to hear directly from some AG pastors to understand their ethos in relationship to education. A prime example is one Bay Area senior pastor who, in a conversation about bringing an accredited practicum experience to their church interns, said, “our slogan for our program is *Come and Die*. If someone is worried about accreditation and a degree, then they are

³⁰ James E. Book, “A History of AG Non-traditional Education Part 1,” *AG Heritage* 23, no. 2 (2003): 26-32.

not fit for our program.”³¹ For this church, it was considered harmful and even worldly to be concerned about more education, worldly accolades, or accreditation.

Beyond this, there are stories from pastors who say 30 years ago they were fired from their churches for bringing up to their senior pastors that they wanted to go to night school to get their master’s degree. Today in the AG, there are youth pastors, associate pastors, and even senior pastors who don’t have a single credit of college to their name. Some might gasp at this, while many from within the AG would say, “So? Let’s look at how effective they are.” And indeed, many are effective without higher education. Furthermore, among AG pastors who already have some education, there is hardly any interest in going back to get their master’s. Their question is, “How will help this my ministry?” They have the perception that a university is not where you go to learn ministry. It is the perception that the university only has, as Grenz labels it, *academic theology* to offer.³² To them, the Master of Divinity is rightly named because it has no earthly value.

Ministerial Statistics and Insights

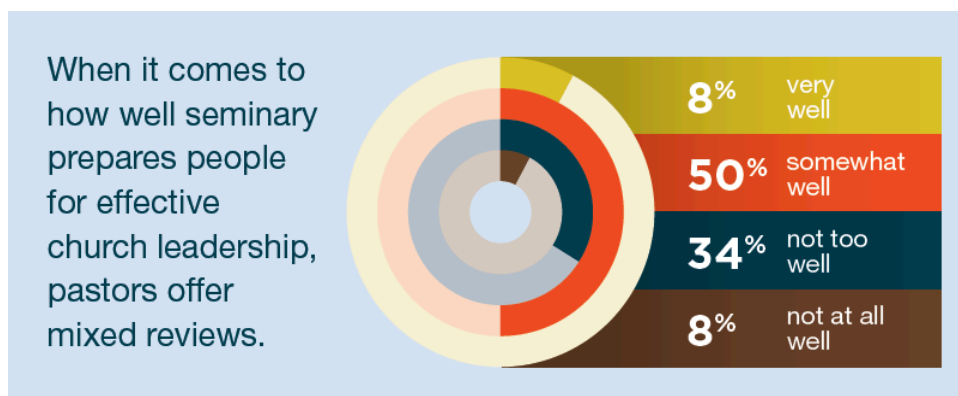
In the 2017 edition, Barna Institute (Barna) published *State of the Pastors*, which provides some insights on the state of the American Clergy. Barna states, “Church leaders are educated and (usually) well-prepared. Three-quarters have pursued higher education—most commonly a bachelor’s degree or M.Div.—and feel it was good

³¹ “Glad Tidings’ Discipleship Institute,” Glad Tidings San Francisco, accessed January 31, 2019, <https://www.gtsf.org/gtdi/>.

³² Grenz and Olson, *Who Needs Theology?*, Chapter 2.

training. Despite how graduates rate their personal experience, the overall reputation of seminary, however, is far less positive.”³³ Additionally, Barna research shows that “the

Figure 4 - How Well Does Seminary Prepare People?



most common degrees among pastors include a Bachelor of Arts / Science (70%) and a Master of Divinity (49%). One out of five pastors (21%) has received a doctoral degree of some kind, most often a D.Min. (14%).”³⁴ Barna’s research speaks definitively that across all denominations, “pursuing higher education remains a popular choice for pastors.”³⁵ Seventy-three percent of pastors have studied for ministry at a college or university, and 45% have attended an official seminary, while only 2% have not attended any type of formal Bible school.³⁶ As Figure 4 illustrates, pastors also provided an opinion of how well seminary prepares them for ministry, and 42% of those surveyed do not think that seminaries prepare people well.

³³ Barna and Pepperdine University, eds., *The State of Pastors: How Today's Faith Leaders Are Navigating Life and Leadership In An Age of Complexity*, vol. 2016 (Barna Group, 2017), 60.

³⁴ Barna and Pepperdine University, eds., *The State of Pastors*, 62.

³⁵ Barna and Pepperdine University, eds., *The State of Pastors*, 62.

³⁶ Barna and Pepperdine University, eds., *The State of Pastors*, 62.

Barna mentions a statistic that is not entirely surprising, that those who actually attended seminary rated seminaries as much better at preparing pastors for ministry than did those who did not actually attend. Barna writes,

Whether a pastor attends seminary seems to bias him or her toward or against its practical value. That is, pastors who attended seminary are twice as likely as those who did not attend to say such institutions are doing very well at preparing people to effectively lead churches today. And those who did not attend are twice as likely as those who did to say seminaries are doing not at all well when it comes to preparing pastors for ministry.³⁷

This is an important distinction. From the outside, it is easy to complain at the big institution claim that it is wasteful and antiquated. But those who have experienced what it is supposed to be often appreciate their time spent there.

Focusing on Pentecostal clergy, Barna found that “advanced education appears to be more important in mainline denominations than in non-mainline churches [Pentecostal churches are considered non-mainline by Barna’s definition]. One reason is that it’s more common for mainline denominations to require a seminary degree before one may be

Figure 5 - Educational Distribution among Evangelicals

Religious denomination	High school or less	Some college	College	Post-graduate degree	Sample Size
Assemblies of God	53%	32%	11%	4%	456
Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee)	64%	25%	8%	3%	111
Church of the Nazarene	43%	37%	11%	9%	101
Churches of Christ	46%	37%	11%	7%	496
Independent Baptist (Evangelical Trad.)	49%	34%	12%	5%	822
Interdenominational (Evangelical Trad.)	24%	46%	16%	14%	206
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod	35%	34%	20%	12%	457
Nondenominational charismatic	36%	38%	16%	10%	187
Nondenominational evangelical	29%	37%	22%	12%	682
Nondenominational fundamentalist	38%	37%	20%	5%	107
Presbyterian Church in America	30%	37%	21%	12%	156
Seventh-day Adventist	34%	38%	18%	10%	164
Southern Baptist Convention	46%	35%	13%	6%	1,833

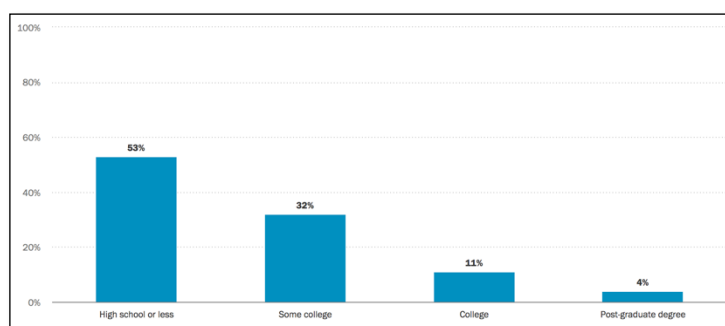
³⁷ Barna and Pepperdine University, eds., *The State of Pastors*, 65.

considered for ordination.”³⁸ This is undoubtedly the primary reason that pastors in mainline denominations are also “more apt to have earned a Master of Divinity (83% vs. 37%) or a Doctor of Ministry (22% vs. 11%).”³⁹ This emphasis apparently affects the type of congregation that is attracted to the church; as Figure 5 shows, only 4% of the Assemblies of God adherents have a master’s degree, which ranks as the second lowest of the thirteen different denominations listed in Figure 5.⁴⁰

Assemblies of God Statistics

The AG score for educational attainment is among the lowest of all U.S. religious groups, not just Christian denominations.⁴¹ Pew Research confirms that this is not just true for the AG congregants, but for the AG clergy as well. There are, of course, anomalies, but by and large, the AG as a denomination does not emphasize education or

Figure 6 - Educational Attainment for AG Adherents



³⁸ Barna and Pepperdine University, eds., *The State of Pastors*, 65.

³⁹ Benjamin Wormald, “Religious Landscape Study,” Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, May 11, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-denomination/assemblies-of-god/>.

⁴⁰ Wormald, “Religious Landscape Study.”

⁴¹ Caryle Murphy, “The Most and Least Educated U.S. Religious Groups,” Pew Research Center, November 4, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/04/the-most-and-least-educated-u-s-religious-groups/>.

continuing education. As Figure 6 shows, only 4% of AG adherents have a post-graduate degree.⁴² Less than half the 9.3% of the general population of the U.S. has a post-graduate degree.⁴³

The AG also currently lacks any sort of requirements for its clergy regarding continuing education. In 2015, the idea of mandating continuing education for pastors was denied by an overwhelming vote from the General Council of the AG pastors.⁴⁴ This denial was alarming considering all of the other professions that require continuing education. Doctors, nurses, psychologists, teachers, therapists, insurance salespeople, managers, lawyers, logisticians, and analysts all require continuing education to keep credentials.

In a recent interview with Dr. George Wood, former General Superintendent of the AG, Dr. Wood explained that the ethnic diversity of the AG is a partial explanation for why the AG has less educated ministers than other denominations.⁴⁵ The Pew Research Center presents data that shows the AG being significantly more diverse than other U.S. Protestant denominations,⁴⁶ and much of that diversity is represented by ethnicities that do not, on average, acquire as much education as Caucasian

⁴² Wormald, “Religious Landscape Study.”

⁴³ Reid Wilson, “Census: More Americans Have College Degrees than Ever Before,” The Hill, April 3, 2017, <http://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/326995-census-more-americans-have-college-degrees-than-ever-before>.

⁴⁴ “Minutes of the 56th Session of The General Council of the Assemblies of God,” AG Constitution and Bylaws (The General Council of the Assemblies of God, August 7, 2015), <https://ag.org/About/About-the-AG/Constitution-and-Bylaws>. Resolution 5, Continuing Education. 57.

⁴⁵ Personal interview with Dr. Wood, April 28, 2019.

⁴⁶ Pew Forum, “Racial and Ethnic Composition,” accessed June 15, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/racial-and-ethnic-composition/>

demographics. There are 23 Ethnic fellowships within the US AG all of which have additional layers of leadership and governance. As shown in Figure 7⁴⁷ the ethnic AG population is significant and continues to increase steadily. These diversity numbers are even higher than the overall US diversity ratios, which lists Caucasian as 76.5% as compared to the AG which is only 56.2% white.⁴⁸

	<u>Asian/Pacific Islander</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Hispanic¹</u>	<u>Native American</u>	<u>White²</u>	<u>Other/Mixed</u>
2001	3.4%	6.2%	16.3%	1.3%	70.6%	2.1%
2002	3.5%	7.1%	16.6%	1.2%	68.8%	2.8%
2003	3.7%	6.7%	17.4%	1.3%	68.6%	2.4%
2004	4.0%	7.2%	18.0%	1.4%	66.5%	3.1%
2005	3.9%	7.7%	18.4%	1.4%	65.5%	3.0%
2006	4.1%	8.0%	19.1%	1.4%	64.3%	3.1%
2007	4.2%	8.7%	19.2%	1.5%	63.0%	3.3%
2008	4.1%	9.0%	19.5%	1.6%	62.3%	3.5%
2009	4.1%	9.0%	20.1%	1.7%	61.7%	3.4%
2010	4.1%	9.1%	20.4%	1.6%	61.1%	3.7%
2011	4.2%	9.7%	21.5%	1.6%	59.6%	3.5%
2012	4.3%	9.8%	21.7%	1.4%	59.2%	3.5%
2013	4.4%	9.6%	21.7%	1.5%	58.7%	4.0%
2014	4.7%	9.9%	22.5%	1.6%	57.6%	3.8%
2015	4.8%	9.7%	23.0%	1.5%	57.2%	3.9%
2016	4.8%	10.1%	22.2%	1.3%	57.7%	4.0%
2017	4.7%	10.3%	23.2%	1.4%	56.2%	4.2%

Figure 7 – Percentage of AG Adherents by Race

When you take these numbers in comparison with the educational attainment by ethnicity, it's clear that this is a significant contributing factor for the overall averages for the AG. As Figure 8 shows, 32.8% of caucasians have a Bachelor's, while only 22.5% of the black population and 15.5% of the hispanic population have a Bachelor's degree.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ "AG USA Aderence by Race, 2001 to 2017," Ethnic Relations, accessed August 5, 2019, https://ethnicrelations.ag.org/-/media/Ethnic-Relations/Resources/Adherents_by_Race.pdf.

⁴⁸ "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States," Census Bureau QuickFacts, January 2018, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045218>.

⁴⁹ Camille L Ryan and Kurt Bauman, "Educational Attainment in the United States: 2015," United States Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p20-578.pdf>.

While this explains some of the discrepancy, it does not fully answer why the educational gap is so big between the AG and other denominations.

Educational Attainment of the Population Aged 25 and Older by Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, and Other Selected Characteristics

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total	High school graduate or more		Some college or more		Associate's degree or more		Bachelor's degree or more		Advanced degree	
		Percent	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Percent	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Percent	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Percent	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Percent	Margin of error ¹ (±)
Population 25 and older	212,132	88.4	0.3	58.9	0.5	42.3	0.5	32.5	0.5	12.0	0.3
Age											
25 to 34	43,006	90.5	0.6	65.0	0.9	46.5	0.9	36.1	1.0	10.9	0.6
35 to 44	39,919	88.7	0.5	62.8	0.9	46.7	1.0	36.3	1.0	13.8	0.7
45 to 64	83,213	89.4	0.4	59.0	0.7	42.6	0.7	32.0	0.7	12.1	0.5
65 and older	45,994	84.3	0.7	49.7	0.9	34.1	0.9	26.7	0.8	11.3	0.7
Sex											
Male	101,888	88.0	0.4	57.6	0.7	41.2	0.7	32.3	0.6	12.0	0.4
Female	110,245	88.8	0.3	60.1	0.6	43.4	0.6	32.7	0.6	12.0	0.4
Race and Hispanic origin											
White alone	168,420	88.8	0.3	59.2	0.6	42.8	0.6	32.8	0.6	12.1	0.3
Non-Hispanic White alone	140,638	93.3	0.3	63.8	0.6	46.9	0.7	36.2	0.7	13.5	0.4
Black alone	25,420	87.0	0.9	52.9	1.4	32.4	1.4	22.5	1.2	8.2	0.7
Asian alone	12,331	89.1	1.2	70.0	1.9	60.4	2.0	53.9	2.0	21.4	1.5
Hispanic (of any race)	31,020	66.7	1.1	36.8	1.0	22.7	0.9	15.5	0.7	4.7	0.4
Nativity Status											
Native born	175,519	91.8	0.3	61.3	0.5	43.3	0.6	32.7	0.6	11.9	0.3
Foreign born	36,613	72.0	1.0	47.6	1.1	37.6	1.1	31.4	1.1	12.5	0.7
Disability Status											
With a disability	28,052	78.6	0.9	41.6	1.2	24.9	1.0	16.7	0.9	5.7	0.5
Without a disability	183,351	89.9	0.3	61.5	0.5	45.0	0.6	34.9	0.5	12.9	0.3

¹ A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 Current Population Survey.

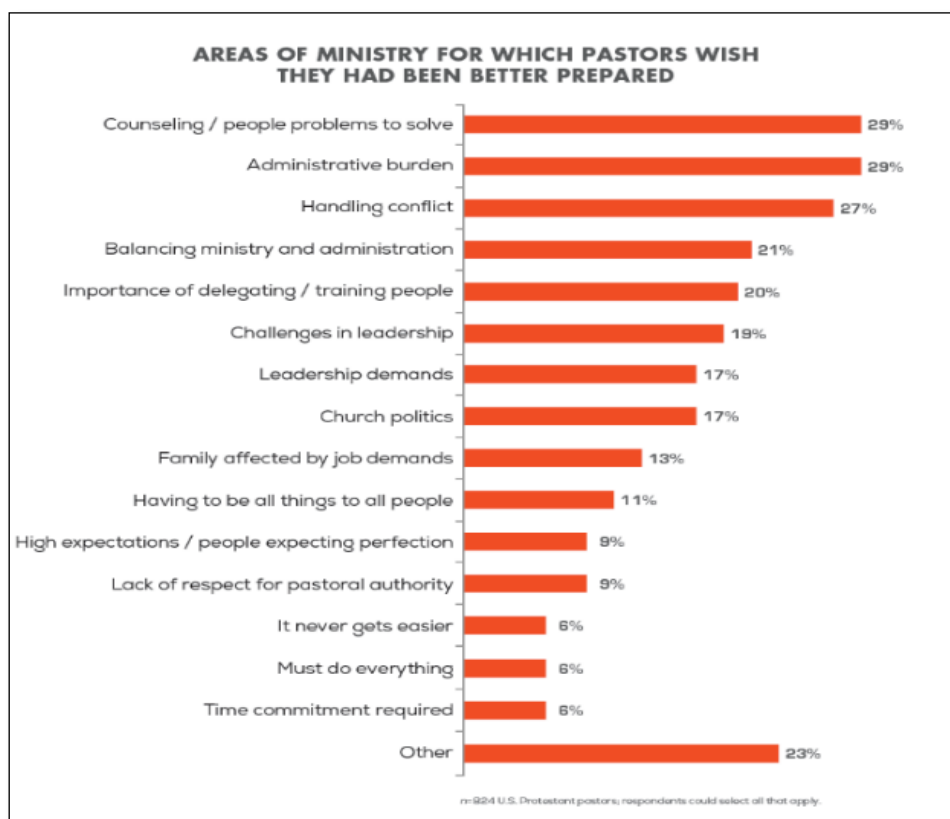
Figure 8 – Educational Attainment by Race

The Disconnect

The real question to be asked is, does higher education equip pastors to be more effective in ministry? If the answer to this question is not a clear yes, it only follows that Pentecostal churches will have some strong criticism toward spending valuable resources of time and money on accredited education. In the past, the pendulum of education in Christianity has swung too far both ways. On one side, there are the over-theologized priests of monasticism and the bishops debating about angels on a needle, while on the other side are the evangelists who shout and holler sermons, unaware of themselves using scriptures out of context. There are some pastors who have been marginalized because they don't have the right letters after their name. At the other extreme are pastors who

have failed at pastoring a church and yet were accepted to teach ministerial, pastoral, and leadership classes because they had a Ph.D. in “leadership.”

Figure 9 - Areas of Ministry for Which Pastors Wish They had been Better Prepared



When a student only has academic education and no hands-on training, they inevitably enter the ministry unprepared. Researchers at Barna identified pastors who had been through seminary but still felt unprepared in many areas of ministry. And, as Figure 9 shows, “many pastors feel they were not adequately prepared for leading people, dealing with conflict and the administrative tasks that are part and parcel of being a pastor in the 21st century.”⁵⁰ Higher education is, of course, still a powerful tool for the

⁵⁰ Barna and Pepperdine University, eds., *The State of Pastors*, 66.

Christian community, and this dissertation simply argues for a more centered way. Despite the discouraging statistics that have been shared about Christian higher education, Daniel O. Aleshire, author of *Earthen Vessels: Hopeful Reflections on the Work and Future of Theological Schools*, writes “persons educated for ministry tend to end up in ministry, stay in ministry, and believe that their education provided good preparation for what they are doing.”⁵¹ Therefore, it is worth reiterating that those pastors who had not been to seminary also confessed to feeling ill-prepared for ministry and, in most cases, they felt this to a greater degree than those who had been to seminary.⁵² When a student only has experience and no studies, they are unprepared for many inevitable issues. They are in danger of falling susceptible to and teaching distorted theology. They are unaware of the possibilities of their own growth, and they cap the growth of their own congregation by having capped their own.

Why Didn't They Teach You That in Bible College?

It's common to hear amongst pastors, “They didn't teach me *that* in Bible college.” This idiom is a fun jab pastors like to throw at their alma maters to show that what they are doing is a lot harder than they thought it would be. While the critique is valid to some degree, this statement gives the educational system too bad of a reputation. First and foremost, Bible colleges were not designed to teach students *that*, whatever *that* may be. They were not ready to learn it! The students weren't asking those questions,

⁵¹ Daniel O. Aleshire, *Earthen Vessels: Hopeful Reflections on the Work and Future of Theological Schools* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 131.

⁵² Barna and Pepperdine University, eds., *The State of Pastors*, 64-65.

either. If they had, many of the professors could have answered with ease. It is only when the students were finally given an opportunity for real leadership that those practical questions became urgent. How to deal with the angry church member; what to do when someone keeps shouting in tongues in back the of your church; how to attract, recruit,

Figure 10 - A Visual Ethnography of What Seminary Ought To Be



and develop teams of people; and how to lead leaders is not immediately pressing when students are sitting in a hermeneutics or a systematic theology course. It's also not as pressing when the student is playing intermural Frisbee for their whole college experience rather than being actively involved in ministry alongside their studies. Had they been in active ministry, their questions would have changed, and their learning experience along with it. While the institution is to blame for what it has chosen to systematize, the student is also to blame for not diving into ministry throughout school.

What the seminary wishes they could retort to “they didn’t teach me that in Bible college” is to share the long list of things that can’t be learned in the busy pastorate, like thinking theologically instead of pragmatically, receiving feedback from peers and instructors, growing relationships outside your church, growing your writing muscles,

and reading books harder than current pop-theology books.⁵³ Both education and practical experience are vital for making an effective ministry in today's world. The solution is a meshing. As Figure 9 illustrates, the institution should mandate getting your hands dirty. Smith clarifies, it is fieldwork, the actual getting your hands dirty in ministry, that should be theology's self-critique.⁵⁴ When theology is immediately placed in church, it allows for an immediate real-world evaluation of the theology and theory.

A Word of Warning for Seminaries

While this dissertation strongly advocates that AG pastors should consider more higher education, it's crucial to point out that this does not mean that more education is always helpful. It's a fair question to ask: how well are the more highly educated denominations doing, in terms of growth, in comparison to the less educated Assemblies of God? As shown in Figure 11, over the past 40 years, the number of adherents of

Figure 11 - Denominational Growth in America

	Assemblies of God	Episcopal Church	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Presbyterian Church (USA)
1975	1,239,197	2,857,513	5,401,888	3,544,099
1980	1,732,371	2,786,004	5,276,489	3,272,518
1985	2,082,878	2,739,422	5,230,518	3,057,226
1990	2,181,502	2,446,050	5,240,739	2,856,713
1995	2,387,982	2,536,550	5,190,489	2,665,276
2000	2,577,560	2,333,327	5,125,919	2,525,330
2005	2,830,861		4,850,776	2,313,662
2010	3,030,944	1,951,907	4,274,855	2,016,091
2015	3,192,112	1,779,335	3,668,034	1,572,660
1975-2015 % Change	+158%	-38%	-32%	-56%

⁵³ Greg Lanier, "15 Things Seminary Teaches Me That My Busy Pastor(ate) Can't," Greg Lanier, April 19, 2018, <https://glanier.wordpress.com/2018/04/18/15-things-seminary-teaches-me-that-my-busy-pastorate-cant/>.

⁵⁴ Scharen, *Fieldwork in Theology*, 113.

mainline Protestant denominations has declined significantly, while the AG has experienced continued significant growth.⁵⁵ The AG is one of the few denominations still growing in the U.S. (the Roman Catholic Church and Southern Baptist Convention both show modest increases, although their growth has plateaued in recent years,),⁵⁶ and yet it's one of the least educated. More education is not the universal answer to more effectiveness.

⁵⁵ "Church Stats, 1975-2015," Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, May 10, 2017, <https://ifphc.wordpress.com/2017/05/10/church-stats-1975-2015-charts-show-decline-of-mainline-protestants-and-growth-of-pentecostals/>.

⁵⁶ "Church Stats, 1975-2015."

SECTION 2: OTHER SOLUTIONS

Introduction

Institutions have been looking for more effective and attractive ways to deliver education for many years now. Whether they're driven to have increased impact or increased enrollment, they continually search for ways to improve. The ideas presented in this dissertation are just a small addition to the very long conversation that pedagogy has had. In some ways, this section is reminiscent of a state of the union address for higher education. Although it is impossible to look at every individual program being brewed into existence by the higher education universe, both traditional and non-traditional trends will be discussed. This section will start by looking at all of higher education while focusing most on ministerial training within higher education. Voices from the traditionalists, non-traditionalists, and the total revolutionaries will all be considered. This section ends with discussing a few cutting-edge practices currently being implemented. Some of these will be adapted in section three, which will present a program that seminaries can use to bring more action and experiential learning into their ministerial education.

Higher Education Perseverance: Traditional Models Persist

Is the Sky Falling?

It's been heralded for many years that the sky is falling on higher education, and that its collapse is inevitable. The threat to higher education is real and constant. From trade schools, to Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), to programs like Unbound

College services⁵⁷ where students can shop around and attend many different colleges at the same time to get exactly the classes they want, new concepts constantly threaten the current system. Some of these methods are attempts to refine traditional education, while others want to dismantle the system and start again.

Despite these threats, enrollment in higher education continues to trend upward (although it has dipped the last few years). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) states, “Enrollment in 2-year and 4-year colleges rose 37 percent from 15.3 million in fall 2000 to 21.0 million in fall 2010, and then decreased 6 percent to 19.8 million in fall 2016.”⁵⁸ However, the 2016 number is still 28% larger than the 2000 number, so the recent dip is not as alarming as it sounds. For perspective the 2016 enrollment of 19.8 students comes to 6.1% of the total American population.

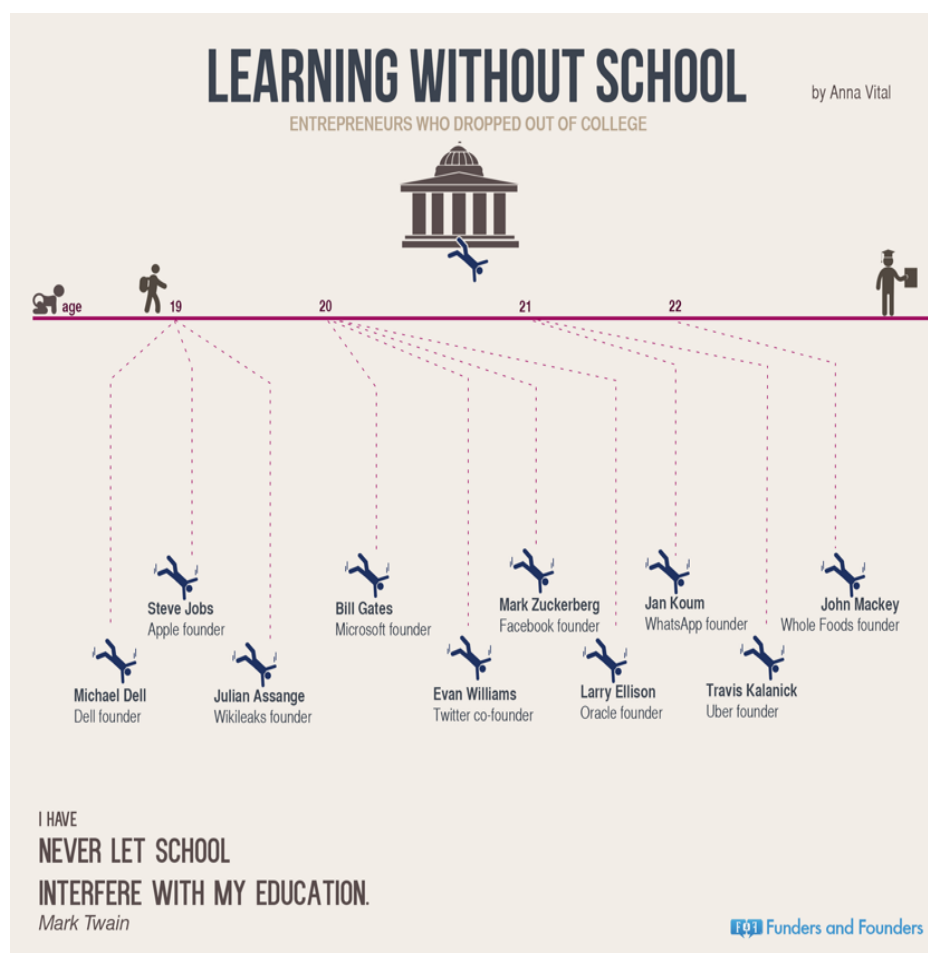
Part of the reason this “sky-is-falling” attitude continues to abound is the misplaced admiration given to the idea of the classic “self-made man.” America idolizes the self-made person who can pull themselves up by their own boot straps. One can be christened a hero if they drop out of college and become a first-generation millionaire, or even billionaire. A millionaire is one thing, but a millionaire college dropout is another thing entirely. Steve Jobs, Jay Z, Richard Branson, Aretha Franklin, Quentin Tarantino, James H. Clark, Bill Gates, and Evan Williams are the poster children of this archetype

⁵⁷ “Unbound Gives You a Proven Plan to Reduce Your College Expenses and Graduate Faster,” Unbound, accessed December 9, 2018, <https://getunbound.org/how-it-works>.

⁵⁸ Thomas D. Snyder, *Mobile Digest of Education Statistics*, National Institute for Education Statistics (N.p.: U.S. Department of Education, 2018), 9.

(Figure 12).⁵⁹ This model is celebrated and pursued, but unfortunately, it's also unrealistic. These people are the exceptions and that's exactly why their stories are sensational and entertaining. By definition, most people are not the exception, and most people benefit from systematic education. The rise of Steve Jobs or Jan Koum cannot be duplicated on a mass scale.

Figure 12 - Entrepreneurs Who Dropped Out of College



⁵⁹ Rachel Gillett, "11 Wildly Successful People Who Dropped Out of High School," Business Insider, September 27, 2015, <https://www.businessinsider.com/wildly-successful-people-who-dropped-out-of-high-school-2015-9>.

Even in the ministerial world, people love stories of someone who skipped the typical steps. Pastor Perry Noble writes in the forward of *What They Didn't Teach You in Seminary: 25 Lessons for Successful Ministry in Your Church* by James Emery White, "I'm a seminary dropout."⁶⁰ This is a shocking statement considering the background of Perry Noble,⁶¹ who, at the time he wrote this forward, was pastor of a quickly growing megachurch. This invites the reader to think, "Well, he didn't need seminary; maybe I don't, either." Ironically, but not surprisingly, Perry Noble has gotten himself into hot water multiple times by veering too far theologically, like when he changed the 10 Commandments to try to be more relevant.⁶² This is not to discredit all pastors who have succeeded without education, as there are always exceptions to the rules, and God in his sovereignty can choose to use anybody.

Perhaps, though—as this paper will attempt to show—if a seminary was intentionally designed around building practical wisdom, a pastor like Perry Noble might have had a different experience and saved himself from unnecessary conflict, burnout, or theological controversy. Who knows what might have been if there had been an attractive and more practical seminary available to him that added to his character and biblical formation?

⁶⁰ James Emery White, *What They Didn't Teach You in Seminary: 25 Lessons for Successful Ministry in Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI, MI: Baker Books, 2011), foreword by Perry Noble, i.

⁶¹ Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra, "How Perry Noble's Alcohol Firing by NewSpring Compares to Other Churches," Christianity Today, August 8, 2017, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2016/july/how-perry-noble-alcohol-firing-by-newspring-church-compares.html>.

⁶² Tim Brown, "Mega Church Leader Perry Noble Rewrites Ten Commandments," Freedom Outpost, January 20, 2015, <https://freedomoutpost.com/mega-church-leader-perry-noble-rewrites-ten-commandments/>.

As recently as August 2018, Craig Groeschel, pastor of America's third-largest church, shared at the *Global Leadership Summit* some of the reasons he believes deep change is coming to higher education. He points out that the return on investment (ROI) for higher education is not the same as it used to be.⁶³ A bachelor's degree, which some say has suffered academic inflation to the brink of being worthless, can cost on average "\$19,488 [per year] at public 4-year institutions and \$41,468 [per year] at private 4-year institutions,"⁶⁴ which can total over \$150,000 for four years. That's a lot of money that is being invested into this system when you consider that in the 2015-2016 academic year colleges and universities awarded 1,008,000 associates degrees; 1,921,000 bachelor's degrees and 786,000 master's degrees.⁶⁵ Groeschel argues that if you were to spend that money on a house instead, the ROI would be much greater, and this is how he is considering advising his children.⁶⁶

Groeschel brings up a strong point, but this logic shows short-term thinking. It's more plausible that Craig Groeschel has forgotten how much of what he knows actually came from his time acquiring his M.Div. When someone learns so much, it's hard to realize how much you know—until you're put next to someone who has a different foundation. Groeschel, like others, fails to give proper credit to the impact higher education has had in his own life. Nonetheless, Groeschel's comments are not isolated,

⁶³ Craig Groeschel, "Anticipatory Leadership," Global Leadership Summit (lecture, Willow Creek Community Church, August 16, 2018).

⁶⁴ Snyder, *Mobile Digest of Education Statistics*, 53.

⁶⁵ Snyder, *Mobile Digest of Education Statistics*, 36.

⁶⁶ Craig Groeschel, "Anticipatory Leadership," July 31, 2018, 21:48, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wq-prUdEOpw>.

and this is the voice that has continued to rise in America. In response to this feeling, some have attempted to improve the world of higher education, and some have sought to abandon it all together; examples of each will be discussed over the remainder of Section 2.

The End is Not Nigh

For traditional students, cost-savings and convenience of schedule, or rigorous practical internships do not seem to interest a certain demographic, as made obvious by the amount of students still flocking to traditional education. There is a population of students who want, and can afford, to spend their resources on what a traditional college class offers. That is, students still crave the “college experience” and many of their parents are also desiring it for them. Although it’s undoubtedly more expensive than other options, the traditional brick-and-mortar college education is not as expensive as the general public likes to bemoan. Robert B. Archibald, author of *Why College Costs So Much*, explains that the cost of higher education has risen in proportion to the white-collar job salaries that their degrees send new graduates into.⁶⁷ Expensive yes, but not unrealistic. Unfortunately, despite usually requiring a degree, ministerial jobs do not pay as well and have not risen in salary like white-collar jobs.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Robert B. Archibald, *Why Does College Cost So Much?* (N.p.: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁶⁸ C. Kirk Hadaway and Penny Long Marler, “What Pastors Get Paid, and When It’s Not Enough,” *The Christian Century*, June 6, 2019, <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/critical-essay/what-pastors-get-paid-and-when-it-s-not-enough>.

Traditional brick-and-mortar education with live classroom settings do not seem to be going anywhere. It is worth mentioning that Dr. Richard Chromey, professor at George Fox University, predicted in 2007 that the traditional model will continue, and eleven years later this has proven true.⁶⁹ Despite all of “higher education is doomed” rhetoric, the traditional western Socratic model of education has stood the test of time.

Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), for example, came and went, and traditional education is still here. With the concept of providing quality lectures and coursework at scale at an incredibly reduced tuition, many people thought MOOCs meant the end for traditional models. The MOOC system gained a lot of publicity and scared many institutions, but they became a minor player in post-secondary education. If MOOCs were to disrupt higher education, they would have already done so.⁷⁰ Similar to other great-sounding ideas like *Webvan*—considered now to be one of the greatest dotcom disasters⁷¹—that some predicted would be the end of all grocery stores, it was quickly discovered that most people just didn’t want the groceries delivered that way. Perhaps there is a similar explanation for why MOOCs did not catch on. People like their education like they like their groceries, touchable. There is a hesitation with getting your degree—or your tomatoes—from such an impersonal, disconnected force. To go one step

⁶⁹ Richard Chromey, “E-Learning and the Academy: A New Paradigm for Training Youth Ministry Students” (DMin diss., Portland Seminary, 2007), <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/168>, 19-24.

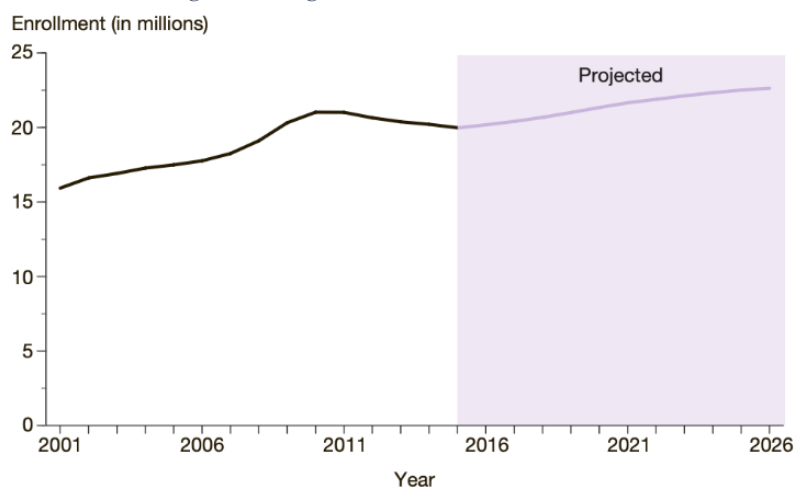
⁷⁰ Robert Schuwer et al., “Opportunities and Threats of the MOOC Movement for Higher Education: The European Perspective,” *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, November 2015, <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/2153/3522>.

⁷¹ Nate Lanxon, “The Greatest Defunct Web Sites and Dotcom Disasters,” CNET, November 18, 2009, <https://www.cnet.com/uk/news/the-greatest-defunct-web-sites-and-dotcom-disasters/>.

further, if MOOCs are enticing to people, then surely accessing free quality teaching from sources like YouTube is even more enticing. Yale University, for example, has posted full undergrad courses for free on their YouTube channel.⁷² Hear and see everything everyone else does in the classroom, and buy and read the text book on your own, for free. All that's missing is the accredited stamp.

Although the demand is certainly less than it has been in the past, there is still a large demand for this traditional type of education. In the 2016-2017 school year, there were 3,895 degree-granting post-secondary institutions (down from 2015-2016 with 4,147 institutions).⁷³ This huge number of post-secondary institutions allows students who are interested in the traditional education experience to be able to it in almost any style or location, which further makes it an alluring options for some students.⁷⁴ As

Figure 13 - Higher Education Total Enrollment



⁷² YaleCourses, YouTube Playlist, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/user/YaleCourses/playlists>.

⁷³ National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2018 At a Glance*, (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018), 4-5.

⁷⁴ Jeffrey J. Selingo, "How Many Colleges and Universities Do We Really Need?" *The Washington Post*, July 20, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2015/07/20/how-many-colleges-and-universities-do-we-really-need/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.aaa2160b6ad3.

Figure 13 shows, the overall enrollment for higher education is still on an upward trend. Even though non-traditional students outnumber traditional students almost three to one,⁷⁵ there are still students seeking to get that traditional college experience. It's true that the overall traditional student enrollment has gone down for six years in a row, although the slide downward is slowing.⁷⁶ Percentages aside, the overall numbers of traditional college students is still incredibly large. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) states that, "16 percent of college students today fit the so-called traditional mold: 18 to 22 years-old, financially dependent on parents, in college full time, living on campus."⁷⁷ But sixteen percent of 19.9 million college students is still over three million students, which is more than enough of a demand to keep the system going.⁷⁸ On top of this, the NCES projects that total college enrollment "is expected to increase 13 percent between fall 2015... and fall 2026,"⁷⁹ which would add almost another 2.6 million students to higher education in the next 10 years. It is worth noting that this sizeable traditional student chunk continues to be true even though

⁷⁵ U.S. Department of Education, comp., *Digest of Education Statistics, 2016*, report, 2018, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=80>.

⁷⁶ Paul Fain, "Enrollment Slide Continues, at Slower Rate," *Inside Higher Ed*, December 20, 2017, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/12/20/national-enrollments-decline-sixth-straight-year-slower-rate>.

⁷⁷ Stephen G. Pelletier, "Success for Adult Students," *Public Purpose*, September 2010, https://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/MediaAndPublications/PublicPurposeMagazines/Issue/10fall_adultstudents.pdf.

⁷⁸ "U.S. College Enrollment Statistics 1965-2027," The Statistics Portal, 2018, <http://www.statista.com/statistics/183995/us-college-enrollment-and-projections-in-public-and-private-institutions/>.

⁷⁹ William J. Hussar and Tabitha M. Bailey, *Projections of Education Statistics to 2026*, April 2018, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018019.pdf>, 23.

the traditional students for almost two decades have known about the many non-traditional and cost savings options of other hybrid programs. Because the traditional students are so different than the non-traditional student, the concepts that will be presented in section three are not a threat to higher education as we know it, but rather an opportunity for those who would never consider traditional environments.

Higher Education Renovation: Non-Traditional Education

Barna reported in their recent a study, “What’s Next for Christian Higher Education”⁸⁰ that many Americans have an unsettling feeling toward higher education. Although these reports challenged the construct of higher education, Barna still presents an overall positive attitude toward Christian higher education, stating, “Perceptions surrounding Christian colleges and universities are positive or neutral regarding high-quality and a well-rounded education.”⁸¹ Later, Barna lists what needs to change about Christian higher education if they are to stay competitive. Barna states nine cultural trends—not fads—that are forcing Christian higher education institutions to adapt. Some of these are newer insights and others have gained momentum for decades. Barna’s cultural categories that need to be addressed are: demographic, social, economic, vocational, institutional, legal, digital, moral, and spiritual⁸² Each of these nine categories must be addressed if there is to be a more accessible educational model.

⁸⁰ David Kinnaman, ed. “What’s Next for Biblical Higher Education?” (Barna, 2017).

⁸¹ Kinnaman, “What’s Next for Biblical Higher Education?” 4.

⁸² Kinnaman, “What’s Next for Biblical Higher Education?” 5.

Most importantly, though, this report concludes with the idea that Christian higher education needs to remember its why, how, and what if it is to remain a viable institution in our modern world. In this report, Kinnaman hints toward a few ideas that are already being implemented by a few churches—some of which will be presented later in this paper. Kinnaman states that Bible colleges have begun to compete for students with churches who are developing their own Leadership Academies or Bible Institutes. These programs are attractive to churches because they prevent their future ministers from leaving their church to go to Bible college in the big city, never returning to their ministry home. While churches may like this, Kinnaman points out that this is competition for the university. However, the artifact of this dissertation can make it so these two entities are no longer opposed. There is a way that higher education could seamlessly blend into the church so that their academy is the university and therefore no longer an adversary.

Non-traditional Education Remains the Majority

Non-traditional education has been a hallmark and an attractive element of many universities for many decades, with each new non-traditional university besting the last in the flexibility, customization, and practicality of their degrees. Non-traditional students have made up about 70% of the student body for the last 10 years. And the numbers of non-traditional students continue to grow, rising 7.1% at private universities just between 2015 and 2016 alone.⁸³ Looking more specifically at the data, the numbers are not quite as drastic as they seem. This is because the National Center for Education Statistics

⁸³ U.S. Department of Education, comp., *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2016, 2018, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=80>.

(NCES) as of 1996 has given a rather inclusive definition of non-traditional students in which a student is defined as non-traditional if they meet any one of seven characteristics: delayed enrollment into post-secondary education; attends college part-time; works full-time; is financially independent for financial aid purposes; has dependents other than a spouse; is a single parent; or does not have a high school diploma.⁸⁴ Those criteria fit a wide array of today's college students and the recent re-definitions began to add a lot more into this category. This means that a student might be 90% traditional and take 10% of their required classes through a non-traditional format, and they would still be categorized entirely as non-traditional. While the previous statistics given in this paper show that number of non-traditional students is increasing, they cannot show *how* non-traditional these non-traditional students are.

What non-traditional means today is much different than it would have meant for the distance education student who submitted his essays via mail in the 1980s. Students today can take entire degrees on their phone, view classes for free online, take classes for a lesser level of accreditation, or have more hands-on training from the real-life practitioners of their degree. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) goes as far as to say that “non-traditional is new the traditional.”⁸⁵

When emphasis is placed away from philosophical thought centers and into the workspace of the true practitioners, students will be naturally attracted to a program.

⁸⁴ “Who Is Nontraditional?” National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), accessed December 9, 2018, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs/web/97578e.asp>.

⁸⁵ Stephen G. Pelletier, “Success for Adult Students,” *Public Purpose*, September 2010, https://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/MediaAndPublications/PublicPurposeMagazines/Issue/10fall_adultstudents.pdf.

They may not line up to be in the classroom; however, by giving them the studies where they will actually use it, they will come. For the pastor, this means the local church. This is in line with Stanley and Trinkle's article, *The Changing Landscape of Higher Education*, which states "that the non-traditional college student is really becoming the new traditional student."⁸⁶ The non-traditional student is not just the online or hybrid student anymore, but now can include a more integrated approach.

Failing Extension Sites

One attempt for non-traditional education delivery that has been failing nationwide has been the attempt of the multi-campus university system. For many reasons, the distant campus was not able to deliver the same student experience nor student enrollment as its mother brick-and-mortar counterpart could. Nor could it deliver the same fiscally strong ROI as its online counterpart. Mark Robinson, a former Northwest University extension campus director, compiled a report to study if brick-and-mortar extension campuses were still viable in today's world.⁸⁷ By studying top U.S. universities that have extension campuses, Robinson showed in his research that significant growth is possible for the traditional brick-and-mortar sites, despite the national consensus suggesting that brick-and-mortar colleges are becoming obsolete. If extension campuses wish to survive, Robinson suggests that they develop formal

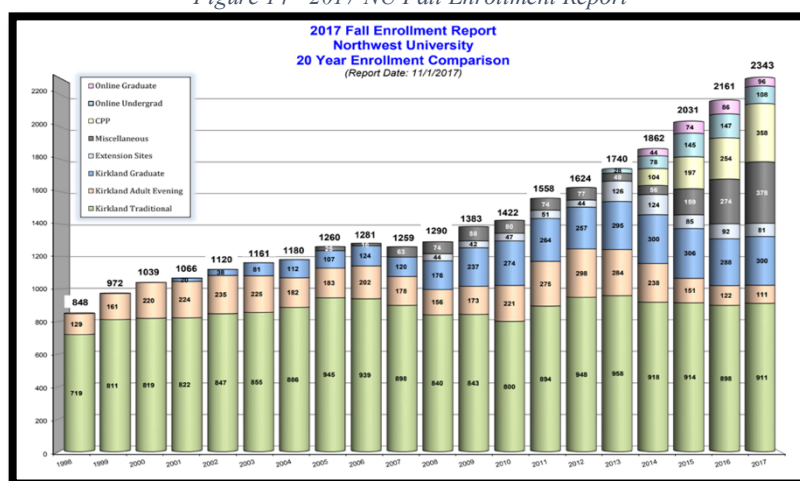
⁸⁶ David Stanley and Dennis Trinkle, "The Changing Landscape of Higher Education," *Educause Review*, February 7, 2011, <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2011/2/the-changing-landscape-of-higher-education>.

⁸⁷ Mark Bryan Robinson, *Report on Extension Campus Operations* (Northwest University, 2017).
2.

practicums with multiple organizations.⁸⁸ While this idea is valid, the role of the extension is not needed to accomplish practicums with other organizations.

Partnerships with churches or organizations that can manage practicums could be done from the main campus, or even with oversight from an online program. Figure 14 shows enrollment numbers from Northwest University, and it's evident that the CPP (Church Partnership Program) is the program with the most growth. It also happens to be the program with an intentionally designed practicum as a core component to learning for all four years of education.⁸⁹ Starting in 2014 with 104 students, it grew to 358 by 2017. This type of practicum, however, has only taken place at the undergraduate level and it is starting a shift in culture. This program could also be effective at the graduate level, which would be in line with my hypothesis.

Figure 14 - 2017 NU Fall Enrollment Report



⁸⁸ Robinson, *Report on Extension Campus Operations*, 12.

⁸⁹ *2017 Fall Enrollment Report* (Kirkland, WA: Northwest University, 2017).

Higher Education Revolution: The Next Big Thing

A New Set of Values

Some would say that, when it comes to higher education, a simple reformation is not enough, a revolution is needed. Some wish for a culture-wide revolution, migrating away from the assumption that this education is vital. Alfie Kohn, who is labeled by *Time* as “perhaps the country’s most outspoken critic of education’s fixation on grades [and] test scores,”⁹⁰ brings everyone’s attention to this question: “how much education do you really need?” To be a well-adjusted citizen, how much education do you really need? To be a pastor of 100 people—more than half of churches in America have 100 or fewer members⁹¹—how much education is really needed? In his book *What Does It Mean to Be Well-Educated*, Kohn does not dismiss education altogether, but he brings a healthy level of skepticism to it.⁹² It’s a skepticism that many Pentecostals would agree with. While other denominations require an M.Div. to start in ministry, many AG pastors don’t have any accredited college education. How much education is required to be a pastor? The AG answer: “Not much!”

Higher education can be likened to disaster preparation. Like the survivalists journeying into the wilderness and bringing along with them everything they might need

⁹⁰ “Alfie Kohn,” The Huffington Post, accessed December 31, 2018, <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/author/alfie-kohn>.

⁹¹ Thom S. Rainer, “One Key Reason Most Churches Do Not Exceed 350 in Average Attendance,” March 25, 2015, <https://thomrainer.com/2015/03/one-key-reason-churches-exceed-350-average-attendance/>.

⁹² Alfie Kohn, *What Does It Mean to Be Well Educated? and More Essays on Standards, Grading, and Other Follies* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

for any possible scenario, or the person who is preparing for WWII and has their home and bunker filled with food, ammo, and every sort of survival tool in existence, they are burdened with a heavy load before they even get going. They are “prepared,” although they don’t realize that 90% of it they may not need. This is seminary today. It gathers everything you might need and might run into in a possible pastorate and hopes you have enough for when you get there.

Is the goal of education for someone to know *what* to think or know *how* to think? If they speak in broken sentences and use improper grammar, and freeze up if you ask them what 8x7 is, are they not well-educated because they do not know those things? Or is it entirely possible that people can be incredibly sharp thinkers and competent in knowing how to critically respond to an issue, but not know the five points of Calvinism? Kohn says we have gotten to our current circumstances because we overemphasize achievement, mistake harder for better, and confuse more learning with getting higher scores. Kohn concludes, “to be well-educated, then, is to have the desire as well as the means to make sure that learning never ends.”⁹³ Cultivating a desire to learn and equipping students with the ability to do so should be the ultimate goal of both institutes and students. Many seminaries have missed this, and sent students graduating without the love of learning instilled into their hearts. Many more students missed it while this love of learning was being freely offered from the universities they attended.

Kohn brings up an interesting point. Corporations today assume schools are there to prepare students to be corporate employees and predictable consumers. There is no talk

⁹³ Kohn, *What Does It Mean to Be Well Educated?* 10.

of the sake of learning for learning's sake. Is the purpose of seminary to prepare people for the pastorate, or is it to create pastors who have the love of learning?

By Kohn's definition, the Assemblies of God has failed. Being a lifelong learner is not a core value of its ministers and people, nor is being well-educated. They want to grow spiritually, but learning is not specifically tied into that. As discussed in section one, at the 2014 biannual AG gathering, a motion to mandate continuing education was put to a vote—and failed by an overwhelming majority. What other knowledge-based profession does not require continued study to at least stay up to par with industry standards? Forcing the AG ministers to learn did not work. The only option left is to inspire them. The goal is not more credits. The goal is not having received more education. The goal is not that AG pastors will simply have more knowledge about denominational history and more explanations on the theories of atonement. It's the ability to make a stronger difference in the ministry call from God that can be the goal of continuing education. Seminary has the potential to inspire lifelong learning more than any other institution. Dr. Jeff Robinson writes about his time in seminary,

In that moment, I realized two things: (1) I've received a rare privilege to be here learning about the things of God from humble men, and (2) When I leave seminary, and after I've studied theology, Bible, church history, and the rest for decades, I won't even know a tiny fraction of one percent of all there is to know. In other words, I will always be a student. Seminary is preparing me to leverage my lifelong learning skillfully.⁹⁴

Can this become the norm, and not the exception?

⁹⁴ Jeff Robinson, "The Big Thing Seminary Did Teach Me: I'll Never Graduate from Learning," Credo Magazine, May 24, 2018, <https://credomag.com/2018/04/the-big-thing-seminary-did-teach-me-ill-never-graduate-from-learning/>.

Context is Queen

It's been said in Silicon Valley that content is king⁹⁵, referring to the importance of not just having a website or an app so you can say you have one, but rather to ensure that your medium will actually have quality content for the consumer. If content is king, then context is queen. And today, Christian higher education has lost its queen. The content of in-depth studies and rigorous coursework is there; the king is secure. However, content delivered in the appropriate context has been lost. The best context is having the training as close to real-life environments as possible, yet in the current system, students have to leave their context in order to learn the content.

Today, a growing trend across the education field is the attempt to bring as much training as possible to the real circumstances in which you would use those skills. From teaching hospitals to primary school teaching programs and counselor clinical experiences, education is becoming more attractive when it is offered in the context in which you will use it. It's not unlike the advice shouted from sports coaches, and validated by recent studies,⁹⁶ "you play like you practice!"

Some colleges are attempting to change to this model. Church internships and church college programs, which are popping up all over the country, have started to offer students the opportunity to learn in the right context. One church that participating in a

⁹⁵ For more information on the famous phrase "Content is king" and it's origin in Silicon valley, as well as it's evolution see Daniel Weisbeck Netbiscuits' article *Context Is King - Long Live the King*. Daniel Weisbeck, "Context Is King - Long Live the King," Wired (Conde Nast, August 7, 2015), <https://www.wired.com/insights/2014/01/context-king-long-live-king/>.

⁹⁶ Charles Duhigg, *Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2014).

Barna study commented on their attempts to bring more context to their training: “We are a teaching congregation with a field education student from an area seminary. We also have a scholarship fund for training church leaders, which we have used to fund Bible courses and attendance at leadership training events.”⁹⁷ Like the Northwest University CPP program, these church internships have the potential to continue to become a mainstream option for students.

A Cutting-Edge Snapshot: A Few Good Institutions

It would be impossible to discuss all the new ways that institutions are trying to train people. Although it is impossible to do a comprehensive study of all U.S. universities, there are no universities that currently offer a program containing all four of the attributes that this dissertation proposes will be most effective in answering this problem (Graduate, Online, Ministerial, Practicum). That said, there are many programs that have unique ways of tying practicum into every level of their education and do very close to what this paper suggests: e.g., School of Urban Missions⁹⁸, Epic Bible College⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Barna and Pepperdine University, eds., *The State of Pastors*, 88.

⁹⁸ “SUM Bible College & Theological Seminary,” SUM Bible College & Theological Seminary, accessed February 27, 2019, <http://sum.edu/>.

⁹⁹ “Epic Bible College and Graduate School,” Epic Bible College, accessed February 27, 2019, <https://epic.edu/>.

and Street Psalms,¹⁰⁰ to name a few. However, none of these operate at the level of regional accreditation, which is the selected scope of this research.¹⁰¹

Duke University, Villanova University and Whitworth University

Duke University, Villanova University, and Whitworth University¹⁰² are of a few of the universities that although they may not realize it, does something unique in the Christian higher academic world. From the research done in this paper, it is very rare for colleges to award practicum credit at a graduate level. Some deans interviewed for this research¹⁰³ even declared that it was impossible to award practicum credit at a graduate level. And yet Duke, Villanova and Whitworth Universities each had a practicum class built into their degree as a recommended option. These practicum classes enable students to earn credit at the graduate level for their ministerial degrees. All three universities require that this practicum be done in person, on campus at a particular pre-approved list of churches. So, although the practicum is completed off the campus of the university, its reach is still limited because a leader may not be able to get

¹⁰⁰ We Develop Incarnational Leaders, accessed February 27, 2019, <https://streetpsalms.org/>.

¹⁰¹ Marvin Oxenham's book *Higher Education in Liquid Modernity* provides more dialogue on the current philosophical conversations surrounding all of higher education. Taking an approach from many angles, Oxenham shows a collection of topics ranging from autonomy to anarchism and democratic citizenship to diversity. Marvin Oxenham, *Higher Education in Liquid Modernity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013).

¹⁰² Kyle Chalko, *Schools Offering Practicum Credit in Their Graduate Degrees*, accessed January 6, 2017, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9MVzUH3sH0IV2ILZDRPUGZyUG8/view?usp=sharing>.

¹⁰³ Jim Jessup and Kyle Chalko, Graduate Practicum, personal communication, November 3, 2017.

the training in the particular church they are in. Additionally, none of these universities had a whole program centered around action or learning in the right context.

George Fox University

George Fox University (GFU) is one of the universities with a model closest to that proposed in section three of this dissertation. GFU has a practicum class that enables students to earn credit at the graduate level and is required for some of their ministerial degrees. The aspect that made this internship practicum experience stand out among others researched was that it was available in many locations, not just at a short list of sister churches. One differentiating factor between this course and the idea presented in this dissertation is that this class was still an academic class and students have many assignments to turn in related to their practicum. Although this GFU internship class is action-based in general, the assignments and reading make this course very academic for a “practicum” course. This is different than the prior-learning assessment, competency-based learning and or practicum learning models that will be presented in section three. Still, by offering a practical training mechanism at the graduate level, they are already ahead of the curve.

Northwest University

Northwest University has become a pioneer in delivering education to practitioners in the space where they need it. Northwest University President Joe Castleberry says,

As I started my time at Northwest we started doing some new things to get ministerial training closer to the people who need it... People need ministerial training close to where they are called or in settings where they can make a life

and that whole life and the local church is an amazing place to train people for ministry... People today more and more want to be training in the context of action, and that's what [our] program is all about.¹⁰⁴

This model has been the primary inspiration for the ideas in this dissertation, but so far Northwest has only done this at the undergraduate level. However, as will be explored in section three, this starting point could become something at the graduate level and even more interconnected to practical training and wisdom development. Being that Northwest University is already an Assemblies of God university, it presents itself as a good landing area for the artifact presented in this dissertation.

A New Mega University

While the last few examples listed are Christians universities that have succeeded in incorporating more action into their program, other secular universities have begun to stand out in the online and accessibility arenas. One particular university, Southern New Hampshire University, has gone all-out in creating a scalable online platform, growing from 8,000 students in 2008 to over 122,000 students in 2018.¹⁰⁵ This mega-university has the potential to disrupt aspects higher education, but not all of it. As stated before, the traditional education system appeals to a different demographic and its spot is secure. However, this new player could significantly disrupt colleges that only partially provide online education with minimal resources. It's hard to compete with institutions that invest

¹⁰⁴ Northwest University, "Presidents Welcome to CPP," YouTube, 0:38, May 3, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYUIWFPME2U&feature=youtu.be>.

¹⁰⁵ Selingo, "How Many Colleges and Universities Do We Really Need?"

heavily into online education because of the large start-up costs associated with a program of this scale.

Additionally, this mega-university model brings us to some disturbing questions, as Washington Post points out, “How many universities do we really need?”¹⁰⁶ Could there simply be a few universities that do online really well? We could also ask how many online Assemblies of God universities do we need? The answer: we need better, not more.

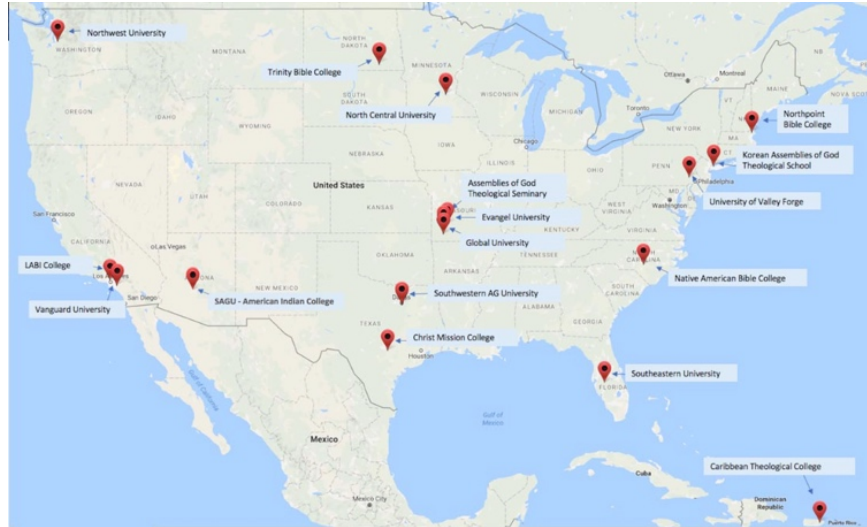
Still Lacking

Although many universities are trying new educational methods, no school is currently incorporating all of the elements that will be synthesized in section three. More specifically for the AG denomination, not a single one of the fifteen Assemblies of God universities in the United States (see Figure 15) are offering the full combination of online, graduate, ministerial practicum. One university might offer three units of “practicum” at the graduate level, but the courses are not online and while it is called “practicum,” a large portion of the “seat and study” time is still accomplished through

¹⁰⁶ Selingo, “How Many Colleges and Universities Do We Really Need?”

reading and writing. Most of these universities did not even seem to realize graduate practicum is possible.

Figure 15 - AG Universities in the US



SECTION 3: THE HYPOTHESIS

Introduction

Section one of this paper described the problem of education within the Assemblies of God, while section two explained the half-measures that other higher education institutions have attempted. Section three will show how a combination of theory and practice—university and parish—can synergize to create a more effective preparation for pastors. Furthermore, this new combination of methodologies will provide a more attractive and genuine experience for ministers considering graduate studies. The synthesis of academic studies and real-life experience can make a stronger transformative experience for the student.

Theological Foundation

Conceptual Framework

The concept that can best encapsulate this dissertation's core message and its artifact can be summarized in one word: phronesis. Phronesis is an ancient Greek word for a type of wisdom relevant to practical action. A helpful method to explain phronesis is to compare it to another Greek word for wisdom, sophia. In fact, sophia is the most commonly used Greek for wisdom in English, but while *sophia* is a more general and abstract type of wisdom, *phronesis* is practical. Phronesis implies both good judgment

and excellence of character.¹⁰⁷ It is wisdom personified, practical understanding and sound judgment.¹⁰⁸

The Greek origin of this word is significant, since Aristotle himself considered *phronesis* to be the master virtue.¹⁰⁹ Aristotle coined this word when he observed the way craftsmen measured round columns with their tools designed to measure straight surfaces. Aristotle witnessed them physically bending the lead straight-rulers to get accurate measurements of curved and concaved pillars.¹¹⁰ Aristotle witnessed wise builders coming up with novel solutions to novel problems. This sort of implementation typically goes against the “how-to” and the curriculum of what a student is taught, since *phronesis* is the “rule-exception-finding” skill. Left alone, this rule-breaking attitude could be hazardous for some, but true *phronesis* implements moral wisdom and only breaks the rules in the right way, for the right things, at the right time. Barry Schwartz, who has written extensively about *phronesis*, says, “A wise person is like a jazz musician, using notes that dance around and as needed. They know what to use to serve and not manipulate.”¹¹¹ Schwartz also makes the distinction that a wise person is made, not born.

¹⁰⁷ Bill Dennison, “It’s All Greek to Me,” Integration and Application Network, August 29, 2013, <http://ian.umces.edu/blog/2013/08/29/its-all-greek-to-me-the-terms-praxis-and-phronesis-in-environmental-philosophy/>.

¹⁰⁸ Oxford Dictionaries, s.v. “Phronesis,” <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/phronesis>.

¹⁰⁹ Barry Schwartz, “Barry Schwartz: Using Our Practical Wisdom,” January 3, 2011, 8:30, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDS-ieLCmS4>.

¹¹⁰ Jim Harris, “Aristotle, Data Governance, and Lead Rulers,” Obsessive-Compulsive Data Quality, September 29, 2011, <http://www.ocdqblog.com/home/aristotle-data-governance-and-lead-rulers.html>.

¹¹¹ Barry Schwartz, “Barry Schwartz: Our Loss of Wisdom,” February 16, 2009, 3:34, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA-zdh_bQBo.

Wisdom depends on experience, and real experience requires “time to get to know people, permission to be allowed to improvise, occasionally to fail, learn from failure, and mentored by wise teachers.”¹¹²

Although phronesis may be difficult to precisely define, we know it when we see it, and we know it even more when it’s absent. For example, part of phronesis is the minimizing of rules and incentives. Rules and incentives are no substitute for wisdom—there is no substitute for wisdom.¹¹³ When things go wrong, there is a tendency to add more rules and incentives and no one gets wiser. Consider the incentives that are typically given by a university for why a student should get a degree. Should a university promote this degree because it makes you more money? Because it gets you better jobs? Because it grows your church? Because it gets you a job at a bigger church? Because it gets you a happier marriage? If universities will agree that they want their students to love learning when they graduate, then they make the love of learning the incentive.

The implementation of phronesis helps the student achieve the best type of learning, which is when what is taught becomes part of the student. Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. writes, “a man’s mind stretched by a new idea, never shrinks back to its former dimensions.”¹¹⁴ In order for an instructor to help a student struggle through a new experience and usher in such growth that they can never return to their original level takes phronesis operating at multiple levels. This sort of learning will need to include the

¹¹² Barry Schwartz, “Barry Schwartz: Using Our Practical Wisdom,” January 3, 2011, 4:57, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDS-ieLCmS4>.

¹¹³ Barry Schwartz, “Barry Schwartz: Using Our Practical Wisdom.”

¹¹⁴ Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*, September 1858, 502.

benefits of formal education as well as on-the-job training and mentoring. It will need a mutual apprenticeship between the academic institution and the church to benefit the student.

Biblical Framework

While the word *phronesis* is hardly found in the Bible, the idea behind the word is very biblical. First, we will look at a survey of how *phronesis* was used in the New Testament, and then look for the Hebrew Old Testament equivalent for this word.

Phronesis is found only two times in the Bible: first in Luke 1:17 and second in Ephesians 1:8. In Luke 1:17, *phronesis* is translated as “wisdom” and highlights the principle that the just will use their “wisdom” to cast judgment on the disobedient. Ephesians 1:8 is more interesting, although not entirely conclusive. This is because of a disagreement over where a period should be placed in this sentence. *Phronesis* in Ephesians 1:8 is translated as wisdom, but the uncertainty of the period placement in question make the attribution of this wisdom unclear. The full passage below shows the word used in the context of Ephesians 1:7-10 (ESV).

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

It's either God has given us this wisdom, or, if the period is moved, then it is referring to God's wisdom. In the ESV, verse 8 alone has no period, “which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight...” In the NKJV verse eight reads, “which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and ^[a]prudence,” and other translations place a period in

the middle of verse 8, which changes the meaning. In the NIV, there is a period, “that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding...” This is also true in the Amplified Bible: “which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and understanding [with practical insight]...” This would mean that it is God’s wisdom He is using, not God’s wisdom He is giving to us. Wherever the correct placement of the period is, what is clear is that phronesis is significant. Whether God has phronesis, or he wants to give it to us, it is worthy of our attention.

In the Old Testament, this idea of phronesis is found, even though the word is not used. The closest Hebrew word would be “Chokhmah,” which is used many times through the Old Testament, but Chokhmah is also an idea that is larger than the word itself, but familiar to the Hebrew people. Chokhmah is similar to the wise young woman described throughout Proverbs 1-7, a spiritual force of wisdom that all have access to.¹¹⁵

Phronesis is also found in the Book of Maccabees (4 Macc 1:18). The Book of Maccabees is heavily influenced by Stoicism, so the tie to the Greek idea of phronesis is even clearer. Because this is outside of the Protestant canon of scripture, this will not be analyzed here, but it should be noted as another point of reference for the significance of phronesis.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Tim Mackie and Jon Collins, “Wisdom Literature,” The Bible Project, 2019, <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/wisdom-series/>.

¹¹⁶ For further reading on Biblical phronesis, see Patrick Henry Reardon’s explanation of Jesus’ use of phronesis in his book *Reclaiming the Atonement: an Orthodox Theology of Redemption* Patrick. Henry Reardon, *Reclaiming the Atonement: an Orthodox Theology of Redemption* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2015).

An Ecclesiological Framework – The Harvest and the Laborers

Why is this important for the church to know? Matthew 9:37-38 says, “Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’” Two thousand years after Jesus uttered the words above, the harvest is still plentiful, and the laborers are still few. And they are only getting sparser. In their 2017 address to Christian colleges, Barna predicts a shortage of ministerial leadership on a national scale.¹¹⁷ This problem isn’t with the church alone. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that “In 2016, some 17 percent of 20- to 24-year-olds were neither enrolled in school nor working.”¹¹⁸ This nationwide shortfall means the normal amount of 20- to 24-year-old young ministers that should be entering the ministry are reduced by one-fifth, just to start. This drift should be alarming for the church today. Since the laborers are becoming even fewer, the church has an obligation to do everything possible to bring the best preparation to laborers who are willing to go out. Christian universities who are concerned about making disciples and making Christian leaders cannot delay in doing everything possible to train the next generation of laborers. How, then, can Christian higher education be a good steward of preparing the next generation of laborers who wish to enter the harvest field? This problem is not just a problem for Christian universities because their enrolment is down, this problem is for all of Christianity if the church is to take seriously

¹¹⁷ Kinnaman, “What’s Next for Biblical Higher Education?”

¹¹⁸ “Highlights from The Condition of Education 2018,” *The Condition of Education 2018*, 6.

its call to send out laborers. And the type of leader, that this dissertation is showing, is the type of leader needed to labor in today's complex world.

The History of Seminary

Education has always played a vital role in the growth of Christianity.¹¹⁹ A survey of early Christian history shows the value given and role played by education,¹²⁰ and yet at the same time the origin of seminary is not commonly known.¹²¹ Johnson writes, "As early as the 2nd century schools were established in urban areas of the Mediterranean by leading Christian intellectuals to instruct converts and educate priests and ecclesiastical leaders."¹²² These centers were heavily influenced by Greek philosophy, intellectualism, and even Gnosticism.¹²³ Clement of Alexandria was the leader of one of the first of these centers, around 190 AD, and his writings were philosophical, ethical, and political.¹²⁴

The medieval university system began in 1088 AD in Bologna, Italy. The Catholic church at the time was interested in protecting its liturgical and doctrinal purity and had a great need for systemizing the teaching and passing on their beliefs. These

¹¹⁹ David S. Dockery and Christopher W. Morgan, *Christian Higher Education: Faith, Teaching, and Learning in the Evangelical Tradition* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

¹²⁰ Johnson, "In Search of a Pentecostal Theology," 12.

¹²¹ It was only recently, in 2018, that a textbook was released on this topic, and most of its content was dedicated to essays on contemporary history and theory.

¹²² Johnson, "In Search of a Pentecostal Theology," 13.

¹²³ Dockery and Morgan, *Christian Higher Education*, 19.

¹²⁴ Clement of Alexandria is considered the first to combine platonic thought with Christian thought. For further reading on Clement see his writings in *Christ, The Educator*. Clement of Alexandria, *Christ, the Educator* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

universities began exclusively for the training of Catholic priests. Everything theological taught at these universities was directly controlled by the church.¹²⁵

Less than two hundred years later came Thomas Aquinas, and his influence changed all of Christian higher education.¹²⁶ Aquinas himself, as a product of the medieval university system, was heavily influenced by Greek thought. Aquinas' systematic theology is still taught today, and, of course, it is primarily focused on the study of Scriptures and the creeds. Although Aquinas did write and teach about morality and Christian thought in a way that can edify the Christian life, the curriculum remained elite in nature and focused on theological knowledge as opposed to spiritual transformation.¹²⁷

Throughout the centuries, other subjects and courses began being taught at the University of Bologna, as well as other universities around the world. When students of other subjects began outnumbering the theology students, there gradually began to be more and more complaints of infidelity from the clergy students. The Council of Trent met from 1545 to 1563 to address many church issues, one major issue being the continued immorality of the clergy and clergy students. The council blamed this corruption on two things and came up with two solutions to purify the church. First, they

¹²⁵ Gene Edwards, *Paul's Way of Training Workers or the Seminary's Way* (Jacksonville: Seedsowers Publishing, 2007), 37.

¹²⁶ Dockery and Morgan, *Christian Higher Education*, 21.

¹²⁷ Aquinas wrote extensively about morality and especially so about what he called the "four cardinal virtues". To Aquinas, these virtues were a comprehensive view of morality and a guide to one's life. The first of these cardinal values was prudence, which is incredibly similar to phronesis. Richard J. Regan, *The Cardinal Virtues Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co., 2005).

sent out a militia of men armed with plaster and covered up all of the naked statues.¹²⁸

The second solution was to move all the clergy university students into a “watchable place.” (The word Chancellor means “one who peeks through the lattice.”)¹²⁹ It was out of a demand for purity that they decided to separate the ministerial students from the “worldly” students and place them in a setting of their own. They called it *seminary*.¹³⁰ Not only did the idea of a theological degree start outside of Scripture’s guidance, but so did the idea that the clergy should be taught in their own ecosystem. Gene Edwards¹³¹ summarizes this history: “Fig leaves for naked statues and separate schools for priests! These were the birth of today’s seminary.”¹³²

From here, things only continued to segregate. With the modern university system starting at the University of Halle in 1694,¹³³ the university became infatuated by enlightenment values, which saturated their educational priorities. Seminary followed suit, chasing after enlightenment values and becoming more intellectual and less spiritual. With enlightenment values on the rise, so was the demand for articulate theological

¹²⁸ Sarah Bond, “Medieval Censorship, Nudity and the Revealing History of the Fig Leaf,” Forbes, October 27, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/drsarahbond/2017/10/27/medieval-censorship-nudity-and-the-revealing-history-of-the-fig-leaf/>.

¹²⁹ Gene Edwards, *Paul's Way of Training Workers or the Seminary's Way* (Jacksonville, MS: Seedsowers Publishing, 2007), 48.

¹³⁰ Edwards, *Paul's Way of Training Workers Or the Seminary's Way*, 48.

¹³¹ It is ironic that the man aggressively challenging Christian higher education, Gene Edwards, is an Anabaptist who has largely rejected institutional church structures. While Gene Edwards’ ultimate solution would be to abandon seminary completely, that is not the position of this dissertation.

¹³² Edwards, *Paul's Way of Training Workers or the Seminary's Way*, 48.

¹³³ Dockery and Morgan, *Christian Higher Education*, 22.

stances. “Seminaries and colleges have mostly developed out of tension and disputes,”¹³⁴ with content being more about a particular orthodoxy as opposed to personal spiritual enrichment. As John Milbank says, seminary in a sense is like trying to introduce people to a legacy,¹³⁵ needing to get them up to speed on all that happened before they arrived. This is where they have stayed for the last three hundred years.

Paul, the Wise-Master Builder

The nature of New Testament theological education is perhaps one of the most important questions to ask, especially before one gets entangled in legacy and dogma. Seminary began with the Catholic church wanting to control doctrine, and it quickly grew into needing liturgically trained priests to eradicate sexual impurity.¹³⁶ The purpose of pointing all this out is to allow the reader to have some healthy self-doubt regarding the seminary. Fortunately, looking back at Scripture, the simple but profound two-step biblical model for training church leaders emerges by looking at the Apostle Paul’s ministry.

The first attribute about Paul training men is how he selected them. Titus, Timothy, Gaius, Aristarchus, Secundus, Sopater, Tychicus, and Trophemus¹³⁷ were all already part of their local churches and it was out of this relationship that each man was

¹³⁴ Mark D. Chapman, Sathianathan Clarke, and Martyn Percy, *The Oxford Handbook of Anglican Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 49.

¹³⁵ John Milbank and Douglas Estes, “Paideia and Virtue in the Academy,” *Didaktikos Journal* (January 2019): 18.

¹³⁶ Beyond this, there was no theological foundation to explain why “seminary” even exists.

¹³⁷ Edwards, *Paul's Way of Training Workers or the Seminary's Way*, 95.

approved by their church gathering and then sent to be with a church planter. It can't be understated how important it is that each of these men had already experienced true church life before they had entered their training, and also that each man's local gathering approved them.¹³⁸

The second attribute of the training of these men was that they followed Paul and did everything he did. They were sent to Ephesus and participated in all the details of planting and nurturing a church, because they lived it with Paul. He was their hand-picked lead mentor, so to speak, and the student learned everything about being the church and building a church by doing it alongside Paul. Gene Edwards describes Paul's interaction with his eight men: "[They] observed Paul's life. They heard his experiences. Paul himself was always part of their curriculum. So was their own experience of church life in Ephesus. Church life Pauline-style was the foundation of their days."¹³⁹ This living and ministering in context was the whole process—active engagement in church life, and active, hands-on ministry while living very close to a personal mentor. This unpretentious two-step process continued without an end date. Their relationship with their mentor never stopped; even after the student was sent off to plant a church on their own, the leaders continued their relationships with Paul.¹⁴⁰

Admittedly, this training was possible because Christianity was still at the grassroots level, and Paul was still alive. Today, there is a high demand for church leaders and a stress to develop more leaders faster. Producing leaders via Paul's teaching

¹³⁸ Edwards, *Paul's Way of Training Workers or the Seminary's Way*, 103.

¹³⁹ Edwards, *Paul's Way of Training Workers or the Seminary's Way*, 139.

¹⁴⁰ Edwards, *Paul's Way of Training Workers or the Seminary's Way*, 140.

method is complex when you need so many leaders. This temptation is what has taken the once organic and deeply personal apprenticeships and mentoring or pastoral leadership training and sent students through the assembly lines of seminary development. With this mass production comes the risk of losing authenticity.

As John Drane explains in *The Mcdonaldization of the Church*, (drawing heavily from George Ritzer's *The Mcdonaldization of Society*¹⁴¹) "A theology which comes pre-packaged, and in which there are no loose ends, is not true to life nor can it adequately reflect the richness of the Gospel."¹⁴² Even church has struggled with the mass production mentality to offer a spiritual experience in a 60- to 75-minute Sunday morning production, sometimes offered at multiple times. Some churches even have become successful franchises, too, and have opened multiple-site options, ensuring that wherever you are in X city, you're not more than 15 minutes from one of their campuses.

But this mass production system has not solved the problem of needing more quality leaders. The answer is to create more Pauls, and Pauls are only made slowly and in the way he trained his leaders. Providentially, and despite the university system, many students have personally pursued their Pauls and still experience great mentoring. However, others have simply passed through the system and think they have received what they needed.

A fear of doctrinal contamination might have been what influenced seminary to become more standardized around content and doctrine. But this mass-reproduction

¹⁴¹ George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society: Into the Digital Age*, 9th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2019).

¹⁴² John William Drane, *The McDonaldization of the Church: Consumer Culture and the Church's Future* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Pub., 2002), i.

efficiency eroded some of the true transformational power that was supposed to come with how Paul trained men. The current seminary model makes the common mistake that education is the same as leadership training and, worse yet, discipleship. Gene Edwards says,

Perhaps the greatest and most universal mistake we Christians make concerning the training of men is the unconscious assumption that teaching men the Scripture is the total of what training is. Learn the Bible and presto! You are trained and you are also qualified... It is not Greek, not education, not spiritual power, nor exegetical insight, nor even oratory abilities.¹⁴³

To be clear, seminary should not go back and clone the early church, but it should allow itself to be influenced as much as possible by what Paul modeled to future leaders. There is a way to still have “seminary” and yet have the heart of training people in the church, like Paul did.

Phronesis in the Seminary

Today, phronesis in the seminary would look different amongst many different programs. To say phronesis is needed in the seminary is really just the academic way to say, the seminary needs more practical training as part of its education.

Better on-the-job training and mentoring could impact many industries beyond the seminary. Even something as simple as janitorial training could even be impacted by this implementation of phronesis. A typical janitor’s job description contains not one word about other human beings. Their portfolio primarily involves accomplishing tasks, yet it’s obvious that it takes a lot of wisdom to know how to care for people as a janitor. It

¹⁴³ Edwards, *Paul's Way of Training Workers or the Seminary's Way*, 147.

requires wisdom that normally is only acquired through years of experience. But what if janitors had this wisdom trained in them, instead of hoping they figured it out after years of following a static job description and task list? How can this be nurtured?

Consider if banking were not just teaching bankers to sell loans and service loans, but how to better serve clients. What might medical school look like if the student was not taught how to treat a disease but how to treat a patient who has a life? And what if the student doctor stayed with that patient for an entire year?¹⁴⁴ Could there be a generation of doctors who have time for the people they treat? This is only possible if practical wisdom is taught, the student's character is nurtured, and systems are created to allow for the time needed to practice well.

How much more experience is needed for a pastor to know how to care for people in a busy church? The seminary itself needs to experience some phronesis in order to begin offering more phronesis to students through their programs. But, what do seminaries need to reconsider with practical wisdom? Start with how a student should be developed. In 2019, seminary is a well-oiled system. The system that we currently we have is perfectly designed to get the results we are getting. Have we fully acknowledged the results that this system is producing? To use an old maxim, "However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results." If a student or professor stopped and looked at the results of Assemblies of God higher education, which this paper did in sections one and two, the need for phronesis would become obvious. What does our practical wisdom tell us the goal of education should be, and what rules are worth being

¹⁴⁴ Barry Schwartz, "Barry Schwartz: Our Loss of Wisdom."

bent to better achieve this? This dissertation does not assume it has mastered this virtue nor does it claim to offer the perfect answer for which rules to bend. Instead, the goal is to bring attention to a few areas for seminaries to bring change to better equip the few laborers of the gospel we have.

There are many resources dedicated to the implementation of phronesis across many fields. Samantha Broadhead and Margaret Gregson lay out a framework for understanding how practical wisdom can be enabled or disabled in an educational context.¹⁴⁵ How this could play out in higher education curriculum is almost limitless. Figure 16¹⁴⁶ is a technical breakdown of eight different aspects of practical wisdom and one simple example of how it could be acted out. None of these capacities are born into someone, only built, and often best with the help of a mentor. The only way to achieve this practical wisdom is the gathering of experience and personal reflection on it. While learning from the experience of others is helpful, nothing is as transformative as one's own personal experience,¹⁴⁷ and the intentional reflection on it. Elizabeth Anne Kinsella states, "Reflection often begins in the disruption of routine experiences."¹⁴⁸ The pastoral

¹⁴⁵ Samantha Broadhead and Margaret Gregson, *Practical Wisdom and Democratic Education: Phronesis, Art and Non-traditional Students* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

¹⁴⁶ *Best Practices in the Integration of Faith and Learning for Adult and Online Learners* (CCCU Center for Research in Adult Learning, 2010), 57.

¹⁴⁷ *Best Practices in the Integration of Faith and Learning for Adult and Online Learners*, 62.

¹⁴⁸ Elizabeth Anne Kinsella and Allan Pitman, eds., *Phronesis as Professional Knowledge: Practical Wisdom in the Professions* (Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2012), 4.

implications of each of these capacities and how someone who is competent at these could navigate the unknowns and the turbulence of ministry proficiently.

Figure 16 - Aspects of Practical Wisdom and Their Applications

Aspects of practical wisdom (part two of <i>Summa Theological</i> : question 48)	The person of practical wisdom has the capacity to:
<i>Memoria</i>	remember past events accurately so that they can learn from experience
<i>Intelligentia</i>	understand ‘the first basis from which a thing is known’ or use common sense
<i>Docilitas</i>	be open-minded; to recognise the wide variety of situations to be experienced
<i>Solertia</i>	be quick-witted where they can size up a situation quickly and identify an appropriate course of action
<i>Ratio</i>	research and compare various possibilities
<i>Providentia</i>	see the possible consequences of actions and to estimate how well a course of action would fulfil a goal
<i>Circumspectō</i>	take all the circumstances of a particular situation into account
<i>Cautiō</i>	plan to act cautiously in order to mitigate possible risks

Effectiveness of Practicum

The importance of practicum and real-life training can hardly be overstated. Practicum refers to the work that a student does outside the classroom that earns them college credit through their university. Giving students the opportunity to take practicum courses shows the students how to use everything their learning and models for them the importance of continued learning. In any field, practical experience stretches the mind to show how it *really* works as well as how to respond to all the problems that inevitably come up against the clean theory on the chalkboard.

As highlighted earlier in Figure 9 Barna's research identified these common topics that pastors most often feel ill-prepared for ministry: counseling, people problems, administrative burden, handling conflict, delegation, and church politics to name a few. These areas of ministry for which pastors wish they had been better prepared are difficult to fully grasp in classroom settings. Because of the nature of these problems, they are best solved in situations where the student struggles through the problem and is involved in the creation of the solution.

This list from Barna Group provides a curriculum that a practicum program attempts to prepare students for. It's when the newly graduated student is wrestling with these issues that they bemoan, "they didn't teach me *that* in Bible college." In the midst of a practicum, struggling through the difficulties of real-life ministry, a student is thrown face-to-face with the importance of things like handling conflict, church politics, and handling an administrative burden.

Furthermore, this emphasis on practicum is not only good for the student, it is good for enrollment and degree completion rates. The Education Commissions of the States (TECS) recommends that colleges "Provide multiple avenues to award credit (prior learning assessments, competency-based education, online courses)."¹⁴⁹ TECS recognizes that awarding credits through these multiple avenues encourages students to return to school and more students accomplish more education than without such methodologies.

¹⁴⁹ Lexi Anderson, "Resource Title: 27 Is the New 18: Adult Students on the Rise," Education Commission of the States, August 3, 2016, <https://www.ecs.org/27-is-the-new-18-adult-students-on-the-rise/>.

Effectiveness of Online Learning

If teaching is largely the interactions between the students and faculty, then educators should take into account how human interaction is changing.¹⁵⁰ The world has accepted correspondence education since the 1940s and has accepted online platforms for two decades now, but it has been slower to accept the practicum components through online delivery. For over a decade, though it's been written about, there is little research measuring the effectiveness of the practicum components of these online programs.¹⁵¹ This is perhaps one reason why the majority of universities and their deans have not begun to think along this route. They have not seen any research on how online practicum can be both effective and effectively measured and are afraid it won't be able to hold up to their academic standards or verify that it does.

The secular higher education field is much more familiar with the idea of graduate practicum, and some programs even consider it a crucial part of the graduate experience. It's an industry standard in the psychology,¹⁵² education,¹⁵³ and medical fields.¹⁵⁴ This is

¹⁵⁰ Joanne J. Jung, *Character Formation in Online Education: A Guide for Instructors, Administrators, and Accrediting Agencies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 82.

¹⁵¹ Linda K. Lilienthal, Dennis Potthoff, and Kenneth E. Anderson, "The Development of an Online, Graduate Practicum Course," *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin: International Journal for Professional Educators* 84, no. 1 (2017).

¹⁵² Lori A. Russell-Chapin, Nancy Elizabeth Sherman, and Allen E. Ivey, *Your Supervised Practicum and Internship: Field Resources for Turning Theory into Action* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2016).

¹⁵³ Clive Beck and Clare Kosnik, "Professors and the Practicum," *Journal of Teacher Education* 53, no. 1 (2002).

¹⁵⁴ Dee McGonigle et al., "The Coordinator Role for a Nursing Online Graduate Practicum," *Nurse Educator* 39, no. 1 (2014), <http://www.doi.org/10.1097/nne.0000000000000014>.

true even for these degrees delivered through online formats. Yet graduate practicum is almost unheard of it in the ministerial world for seminary studies and especially for online seminary studies.

One benefit of transferring this methodology into an online course is that the draw of the university grows significantly and can even attract experts to their degree. Some online-graduate-practicums are intentionally designed to attract the expert-student to their program and do so by offering effective online training.¹⁵⁵ This new method of delivery would require a pedagogical shift from institutions. Simply getting students' knowledge up to a certain level is not enough anymore. Effective training requires taking students wherever they are and allowing them to have room to increase their own effectiveness. Linda Lilienthal writes in the *International Journal for Professional Educators* that "Graduate practicum students are usually in-service teachers who have several years of experience in their content areas. As advanced teacher candidates, they are already experts in their fields who are pursuing another degree or endorsement to continue to improve their knowledge and skills."¹⁵⁶ This exact phrase could be said of pastors returning to seminary!

The question becomes, "How can higher education enhance what a student already knows and, in some ways, get out of the way so the student can learn?" All of this will impact more than just the students' experience and outcomes; it also impacts the

¹⁵⁵ Peter Guy Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, comp. Western Michigan University (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2013).

¹⁵⁶ Lilienthal, Potthoff, and Anderson, "The Development of an Online, Graduate Practicum Course," 49.

overall schools' completion rates. Providing elements like “templates, assignment clarity, communication of expectations, and guidelines for the project, increases the advanced candidate's learning and probability for successful completion of the online practicum course.”¹⁵⁷ This change will add difficulty for the educator because they are forced to truly be knowledgeable of industry standards and not self-contained in academia with impractical models and outdated theories.

To argue the effectiveness of online learning is also to bring up the benefits of the ability to be somewhere else. It's not just being outside the classroom and at home for your convenience; it's about the ability to be in the church and in real ministry while learning. Christian Bataldan Scharen writes in his book, *Fieldwork in Theology*, “In order to engage ministry with vitality, perceive the new things God is doing, and ‘participate in God’ leaders have to get out and learn what’s going on and how to relate to the people and context where they are. Fieldwork in theology is that simple—and complicated.”¹⁵⁸ An online program allows the students to be able to reach fieldwork in many more areas. Linda K. Lilienthal, definitively summarizes the findings of a study done on students attempting online supervision programs:

Graduate students in Perry's study believed their professional growth to be positive compared to their peers in other programs, and onsite supervisors made similar conclusions. The onsite supervisors, most of whom had supervised students in more traditional, face-to-face clinical programs, found the online students to be at least as capable and well prepared as students in the more traditional, face-to-face programs. Perry concluded from the study that “there is no reason to be suspicious of online supervision. Indeed, the participants in this study cited some real advantages to it” (2012, p. 65). He found that one of the

¹⁵⁷ Lilienthal, Potthoff, and Anderson, “The Development of an Online, Graduate Practicum Course,” 49.

¹⁵⁸ Scharen, *Fieldwork in Theology*, 30.

main advantages to an online practicum was the opportunity for students' exposure to multicultural learning contexts and more diverse participants.¹⁵⁹

Online and Practicum Together

With the importance of both concepts of practical training and online education addressed, the question remains, "How can practicum be effectively implemented for the seminary over the medium of online delivery?" Does virtual space disable the real-life experience this hypothesis targets? To that end, there needs to be a clarification that the practicum work itself is not online. The practicum is live; the observation from a ministry supervisor is live, but the feedback, accountability, and mentoring are through the online structure of peers and mentors. The process of making online practicum viable and accountable is reasonable with today's technology. Linda Lilienthal, associate professor at University of Nebraska Kearney, writes that in today's world the technology has become user-friendly enough for graduate students of any field to be able to record themselves attempting their on-the-job work and then post the videos online with a copy of their lesson plan attached so their classmates can see if the objectives were accomplished. Lilienthal writes, "Students could then access and comment on each other's videos, and instructors could critique student work."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Lilienthal, Potthoff, and Anderson, "The Development of an Online, Graduate Practicum Course," 46.

¹⁶⁰ Lilienthal, Potthoff, and Anderson, "The Development of an Online, Graduate Practicum Course," 46.

Joanne Jung, author of *Character Formation in Online Education*, calls this sort of synthesis of components the premium blend.¹⁶¹ Jung explains that a class can have all the benefits of an online experience and still be successful in incorporating instructor involvement. For starters, the online environment allows for a flipped classroom which carves out less time for information accumulation and significantly more time in the interaction with the material.¹⁶² A flipped classroom concept is when “instruction that used to occur in class is now accessed at home, in advance of class. Class becomes the place to work through problems, advance concepts, and engage in collaborative learning.”¹⁶³ For the seminary, it might be a little misleading to say online “practicum” since the students are not digitally pastoring. Although there is even a possibility of that!

Assemblies of God minister Matt Souza pioneered and launched the first of its kind: a “Gamer Church.”¹⁶⁴ He witnesses and preaches to gamers who are on the same server as him. As they build Minecraft castles and slay Fortnite players, he preaches the risen Christ. Many might dismiss this as juvenile, but the results have been remarkable, sometimes drawing a bigger crowd than a pastor might preach to in his lifetime. Real ministry can, therefore, be done digitally, and therefore can be learned, and trained digitally as well. While Souza’s Gamer Church is a niche ministry and a niche market, it

¹⁶¹ Jung, *Character Formation in Online Education*, 85.

¹⁶² Jung, *Character Formation in Online Education*, 85.

¹⁶³ Bill Tucker, “The Flipped Classroom,” *Education Next*, September 12, 2017, <https://www.educationnext.org/the-flipped-classroom/>.

¹⁶⁴ Hannah Natanson, “An Online Church for Gamers: Va. Pastor Draws Thousands to Worship on Twitch,” *The Washington Post*, July 27, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2018/07/27/a-church-for-gamers-va-pastor-draws-thousands-to-worship-on-twitch/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.687b2752f3d9.

is proof of the real connection that online interaction can provide. This ministry illustrates how the synthesis between online academics, real experiences, and virtual mentoring is viable. Additionally, it is helpful to see that this idea has been successfully implemented at the graduate level across other fields of study, including psychology,¹⁶⁵ education,¹⁶⁶ and medical programs.¹⁶⁷

The Methodologies

Competency-based

Competency-based education (CBE) revolves around the idea that the student must show competency in a skill in order to progress in the course and in their degree. This method means that it's student's skills that is the student's skills are measured, and not simply the student's study time, seat time, or accumulation of abstract ideas. Although the CBE concept has existed at some institutions for more than 40 years and the direct assessment approach has been operating for more than a decade, CBE degree programs are still considered new within higher education.¹⁶⁸ According to the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), "Competency-Based Education (CBE) is beginning to become mainstream, and even so in technical fields. Universities in the

¹⁶⁵ Russell-Chapin, Sherman, and Ivey, *Your Supervised Practicum and Internship*.

¹⁶⁶ Beck and Kosnik, "Professors and the Practicum."

¹⁶⁷ Mcgonigle et al., "The Coordinator Role for a Nursing Online Graduate Practicum."

¹⁶⁸ Klein-Collins, "Sharpening Our Focus on Learning," 4.

Netherlands are even beginning to incorporate CBE into their Medical education.”¹⁶⁹

These CBE programs are attractive because they have the potential to offer more advanced learning and specialized topics than a typical course. CAEL explains,

It offers a flexible way for students to get credit for what they know, build on their knowledge by learning with a deliberate focus on competencies, and earn credentials that are more directly related to employer needs. Instead of evaluating student progress on the amount of time spent in a classroom (using the credit hour), students receive college credit based on their actual demonstration of skills learned. Instruction is designed in a way that builds on previous knowledge in a deliberate and scaffolded way. Many CBE programs are structured in a way that allow students to learn and progress at their own pace, which is ideal for today’s adult learner.¹⁷⁰

The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment produced a report in 2013 called “Sharpening Our Focus on Learning: The Rise of Competency-Based Approaches to Degree Completion,”¹⁷¹ in which they share why CBE is a step up for higher education. CBE programs produce someone who doesn’t just know but can also do; they consistently re-calibrate targeted competencies which ensures quality graduates. They validate the student’s past outside-of-school learning, which simultaneously emphasizes learning after graduation. These attributes are unique to the CBE experience and can enhance systems that already exist. One of the leaders of CBE, Western Governor’s University remarks, “Simply put, it measures learning rather than time...

¹⁶⁹ Fred Scheele, “Introducing Competency-based Postgraduate Medical Education in the Netherlands,” *Medical Teacher* 30 (2008), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01421590801993022>.

¹⁷⁰ Cael, “Implement Competency-Based Education for Adult Students,” accessed December 10, 2018, <https://www.cael.org/higher-education/competency-based-education>.

¹⁷¹ Rebecca Klein-Collins, “Sharpening Our Focus on Learning: The Rise of Competency-Based Approaches to Degree Completion,” Occasional Paper #20, November 2013.

students embark on a learning journey tailored exactly to where their knowledge currently is—and where it needs to be.”¹⁷² Measuring learning instead of time would reflect the true gain of a seminary student.

Another benefit of CBE, and part of the reason for its resurgence in recent years, is its ability to reassure employers who might doubt the value of higher education in an employee’s life.¹⁷³ With CBE, the instructor and student are able to identify and target core competencies that will be important for the student to succeed in their workplace. One CBE program at Southern New Hampshire University promotes an associate’s degree that targets 120 competencies and the student progresses only as they demonstrate “their mastery of the competencies through the completion of tasks or projects assessed by faculty.”¹⁷⁴ This enables the student to be more self-paced, giving more autonomy than a student going through a traditional program would have.

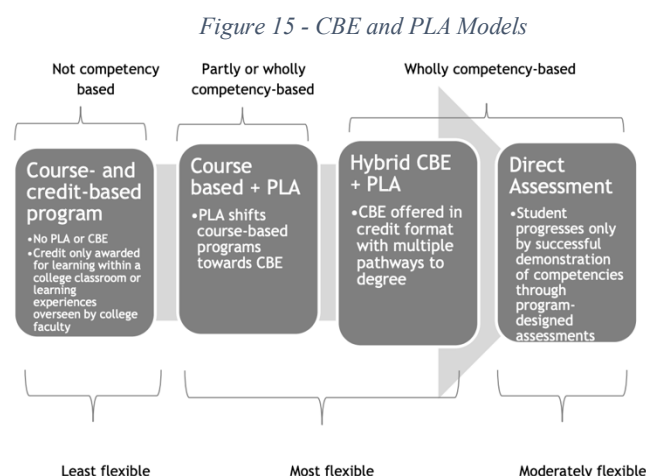
The possibilities of what can be taught and what the student can learn are endless because of how the CBE system takes a student where they are at and puts them on the relevant path forward, regardless of whether they are experts or novices. One program, as highlighted in “Meeting Students Where They Are,” presented by the Center for the American Progress, states that “Westminster’s competency-based M.B.A. program requires students to complete 20 projects that are designed around competencies. The

¹⁷² “Competency-Based Education: A New Way to Learn,” Western Governors University, November 14, 2018, <https://www.wgu.edu/about/competency-based-education.html#openSubscriberModal>.

¹⁷³ “Competency-Based Education: A Powerful Way to Link Learning and the Workplace,” The EvoLLLution, February 6, 2017, <https://evollution.com/programming/applied-and-experiential-learning/competency-based-education-a-powerful-way-to-link-learning-and-the-workplace/>.

¹⁷⁴ Klein-Collins, “Sharpening Our Focus on Learning,” 11.

projects are organized into sequences of six projects per semester that focus on a given theme.”¹⁷⁵ It’s not just outlier universities that are leading the way in CBE. The Center for American Progress reports that it is a national imperative to produce a well-trained and well-educated populace prepared for the new era of jobs, and they recommend that CBE should be at the center of these innovations.¹⁷⁶ In the end, the primary driver behind CBE programs is that they incentivize the student for knowing and doing more as opposed to simply completing their assignments or filling enough seat time.¹⁷⁷



Prior Learning Assessment

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is an emerging new method in higher education, and institutions are quickly playing catch-up to remain competitive with what

¹⁷⁵ Rebecca Klein-Collins and Elizabeth Baylor, “Meeting Students Where They Are,” American Progress, November 2013, http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/617695/Meeting_Students_Where_They_Are.pdf?submissionGuid=0109804b-638f-463d-b2c0-314357e772ab.

¹⁷⁶ Klein-Collins and Baylor, “Meeting Students Where They Are,” 15.

¹⁷⁷ Klein-Collins, “Sharpening Our Focus on Learning,” 4.

they can offer. It offers the chance to award the student not for their work, but for their learning they might have already accomplished. Jamie Merisotis, founder of Lumina Foundation for Education, says, “If we are shifting to a system where what we are measuring is not inputs but the outcomes—the learning that results from higher education—prior learning assessment could become very important.”¹⁷⁸ The awarding of PLA is not via one simple method (Figure 15).¹⁷⁹ It can be achieved through individualized student portfolios, evaluation of corporate or military training, program evaluations, challenge exams, and standardized exams. PLA is different than practicum learning in that it validates learning that was done previously, as opposed to practicum credit, which awards credit for learning done during the course of the classes.

Many universities utilize some amount of PLA at the undergraduate level, but only a few have begun to do this at the graduate level. It is only since 2017 that some institutions began more commonly developing a PLA system as part of their graduate degrees, and in some cases this has had a positive effect on enrollment.¹⁸⁰

Education boards and universities themselves are working to find ways to attract, retain, and graduate more students; and graduate-level PLA is one of these new ideas. This new development opens up a greater opportunity for the Christian university to

¹⁷⁸ Stephen G. Pelletier, “Success for Adult Students,” *Public Purpose*, September 2010, https://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/MediaAndPublications/PublicPurposeMagazines/Issue/10fall_adultstudents.pdf.

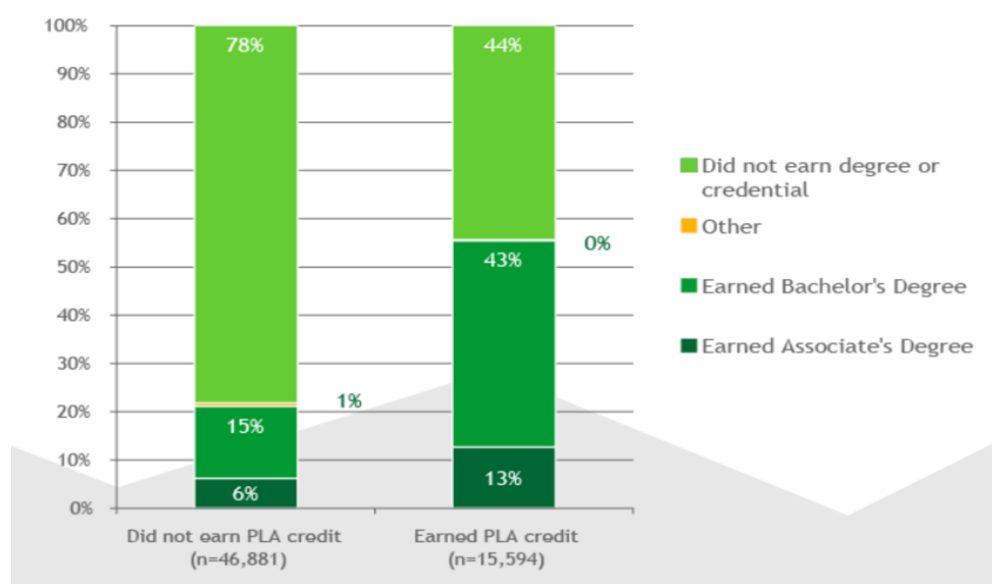
¹⁷⁹ Cael, “PLA and CBE on the Competency Continuum: The Relationship between Prior Learning Assessment and Competency Based Education,” October 2015, http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/617695/premium_content_resources/pla/PDF/CAEL-Views-on-CBE-and-PLA-Oct-2015.pdf?submissionGuid=83551c5c-b7d4-4b3d-b42f-d60dc9c88b71.

¹⁸⁰ Cael, “Implement Competency-Based Education For Adult Students,” accessed December 10, 2018, <https://www.cael.org/higher-education/competency-based-education>.

attract expert pastors to consider continuing education because they are given validation for what they have learned in the field. If a university believes in the value of practical training, it should surrender some of its would be billable credits and award them for free to the student applying for PLA.

The purpose of these new programs is not to try to attract students by watering down the requirements. It is actually good for everyone to allow the student to earn PLA. The employer is better because they know that institutions are emphasizing the right competencies for students; the student is better because they can graduate cheaper and faster; and as figure 16 illustrates, the university is better because degree-completion rates increase drastically.¹⁸¹

Figure 16 - Degree Completion by PLA Credit-Earning for All Students



¹⁸¹ "Prior Learning Assessment Services," accessed December 10, 2018, <https://www.cael.org/higher-education/prior-learning-assessment-services>.

Incorporation of PLA is also a significant feature of adult education programs as opposed to education programs for children. Pedagogy, which actually means child-leading, is helpful, but in the context of our target demographic, perhaps andragogy (adult-leading) is more appropriate. Daniel Warnke writes, “continued use of the term pedagogy (child-leading) can generate something of a ‘blind-spot’ (or at worst an infantilization) limiting the rich life experiences that adult learners offer through a potential educational reciprocity.”¹⁸² Warnke explains that past learning should be accounted for in adult learning programs as a feature and used intentionally for greater learning.

Hand-Picked Lead Mentor

This dissertation opened by stating that the Assemblies of God is one of the least-educated denominations in America. In the AG pastors’ defense, it’s not that these AG pastors don’t care about learning. It’s not that they don’t want to be stretched mentally and spiritually. They just doubt whether the university and its perceived static curriculum can provide what they need. These pastors often pursue their learning from leadership books, seminars, and coaches from well-renowned practitioners in their own field.

With some logistical legwork, a collaboration with these “well-known practitioners” could be brought into a university program. If potential future students are interested in learning from real practitioners and experts, perhaps they could simply bring a leader/mentor with them into the program. The potential student would select a leader

¹⁸² Ian S. Markham, *Reasonable Radical?: Reading the Writings of Martyn Percy* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018), Kindle Edition.

they would actually want to learn from. This adjunct-like lead mentor could be brought in as part of the official seminary program. Similar to how a student might be able to choose an expert adviser for a portion of their dissertation, a graduate student might be able to find a specialized mentor to interact with them throughout the course of their studies. The lead mentor might not have the pedigree to be able to be the professor on file; however, they will be contracted by the university as an expert adviser while someone else fills the position of professor on file.

The student will, so to speak, select their own “Paul” (aka mentor) for the university. After some due diligence from the university, the mentoring relationship would have already begun with a head start because of shared history. This customization feature implemented into the program also gives the potential for leaders with name recognition and industry experts to be brought into the program in small increments. Inviting industry experts could potentially doubly function as free marketing for the program. Details of interaction, requirements, compensation and commitment for the hand-picked lead mentor are laid out in the Artifact Appendix, Appendix 6.

Concentrated Online Peer Interaction

The Washingtonian, in an article titled “Add to the List of Things You Can Do on Your Phone: Take a College Course,”¹⁸³ highlighted VoiceThread and how it has potential to significantly change student and professor interactions for online programs.

¹⁸³ Bill Yingling, “Add to the List of Things You Can Do on Your Phone: Take a College Course,” Washingtonian, August 7, 2018, <https://www.washingtonian.com/2018/08/07/take-college-courses-on-your-phone/>.

Especially in today's upcoming generations who are raised to be responsive to quick images and short videos, this technology could significantly enhance retention. John Medina, author of *Brain Rules*, says, "Those in multi-sensory environments always do better than those in uni-sensory environments." Medina continues that students' recall from multi-sensory environments can last longer than even 20 years¹⁸⁴

To address these issues, Christian universities can incorporate more interactive software for their video content. VoiceThread is an innovative online video interactions and could potentially be the new standard for online classroom communications.¹⁸⁵ Similar to how a video live-streamed on Facebook will remember when comments and like were made while video was playing, VoiceThread adds this feature to conversation around the professors recorded lecture. Essentially this new platform fills the social presence gap found in online learning interactions.¹⁸⁶ For the seminary, a technology like VoiceThread or Zaption (another immersive platform) can provide the much-needed and long-missing social component of online class interactions.¹⁸⁷ As Lilienthal points out, "The new generations are increasingly tech savvy, and teaching and learning need to adapt to new ways of offering courses and programs."¹⁸⁸ Although technology might have

¹⁸⁴ Jon Krauss, "Sensory Integration," *Brain Rules*, accessed January 8, 2019, <http://brainrules.net/sensory-integration>.

¹⁸⁵ "Amazing Conversations about Media," *Conversations in the Cloud*, accessed January 8, 2019, <http://voicethread.com/>.

¹⁸⁶ "Amazing Conversations about Media."

¹⁸⁷ "Amazing Conversations about Media."

¹⁸⁸ Lilienthal, Potthoff, and Anderson, "The Development of an Online, Graduate Practicum Course," 50.

been a barrier for implementations of methods like this in the past, the user-friendly nature of today's technology allows more than just technicians to have access to these types of learning.

Quality Control

Evaluations and quality assessments are a critical component to CBE, PLA, and online methods of education.¹⁸⁹ Joanne J. Jung writes in *Character Formation in Online Education: A Guide for Instructors, Administrators and Accrediting Agencies* about the importance of assessment. In spiritual terms, assessment is important because it is, as Jung points out, about stewardship.¹⁹⁰ As educational gifts and administrative gifts rarely fall on the same person, it is common for educators to bemoan the idea of institutional assessments, but it is needed both for the students and for the instructor. Jung presents a few simple ideas on what an assessment for a course and assignment would look like. For example, laying out some groundwork having a clear rubric, learning outcomes, learning goals, and keeping records.¹⁹¹ Jung references Bloom's expanded Taxonomy (figure 17) and lists the six levels of learning: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. She asks which level the teaching reaches which can be incorporated into the curriculum and rubric can help the ministry supervisor and student repeatedly remember to try and take their learning to the next level, literally.

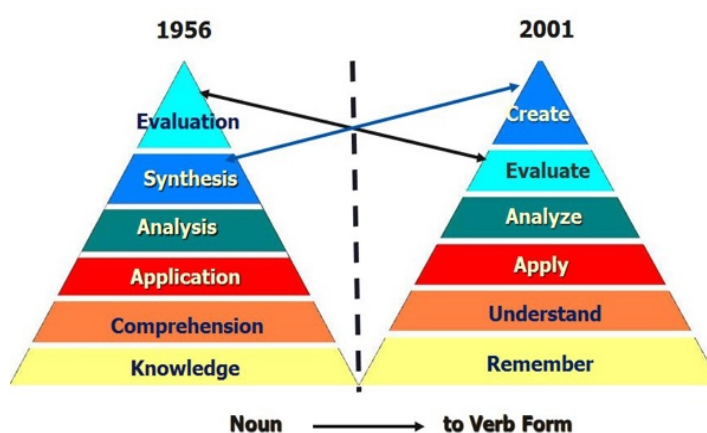
¹⁸⁹ Rebecca Klein-Collins, "Assessment's New Role in Degree Completion: A Registrar's Primer on Prior Learning Assessment and Competency-Based Education," *Council for Adult and Experiential Learning*, 2014.

¹⁹⁰ Jung, *Character Formation in Online Education*, 113.

¹⁹¹ Jung, *Character Formation in Online Education*, 120.

One practice that universities will be more readily able to adopt because of these program methodologies is the ability to receive pertinent feedback and assessment from employers. This feedback from employers is beneficial because it ensures that what a student is learning will still be relevant for the job. Dorothy Wax of CAEL writes, “There must be ongoing involvement of employers in order to ensure that the specific competencies that are part of a degree are the right ones, and also that the assessments used appropriately evaluate those competencies.”¹⁹²

Figure 17 - Bloom's Revised Taxonomy



The Markers

Teaching Spiritual Formation

More than just head knowledge and practical skills, what is most needed for a pastoral training program is adequate spiritual formation. It's unfortunate that this is not a

¹⁹² Dorothy Wax, “Competency-Based Education: A Powerful Way to Link Learning and the Workplace,” *The Evollution*, October 16, 2016, <https://evollution.com/programming/applied-and-experiential-learning/competency-based-education-a-powerful-way-to-link-learning-and-the-workplace/>.

primary goal of many seminaries today, although it is to be expected. Mark D. Chapman writes,

Many institutions emerge because of their sense of needing to provide a distinctive mode and ethos of formation that was rooted in particular theological and ecclesial “party” vision. Perhaps inevitably, this emphasis on formation in the shaping of clerical identity had a tendency to be quickly lost behind emergent party, secretarian and political positioning.¹⁹³

The goal of education is to form the whole person, and this is what John Milbank calls *Paideia*. As Milbank explains it, *Paideia* is an ancient view of education that is about “forming the whole person.”¹⁹⁴

This goal, too, can be better accomplished by having more hands-on interaction and feedback. Warnke writes, “It is worth remembering that priests are trained for the church. While this may seem like an obvious statement, it begs the more searching question: what type of church are they trained for? Far from being normative, or developed from a distinct ecclesial blueprint, the church is multifarious, with as many variants as it has locations.”¹⁹⁵ The church is about the spiritual formation of others in diverse contexts, and this begs the question, how much spiritual formation has the pastor gone through him/herself?

To teach spiritual formation requires the twofold understanding that the students will grow spiritually themselves, but also be equipped to repeat their personal process

¹⁹³ Mark D. Chapman, Sathianathan Clarke, and Martyn Percy, *The Oxford Handbook of Anglican Studies*, 49.

¹⁹⁴ John Milbank, *Paideia and Virtue in the Academy*, Didaktikosjournal.com, January 2019, 21.

¹⁹⁵ Reasonable Radical, 47.

with others. The work of James Houston¹⁹⁶ on Christian mentoring is helpful when looking at what type of personal growth should be incorporating in a program for pastors. In *The Mentored Life: From Individualism to Personhood* Houston masterfully shows how models today do not work unless they bring the student into more intimacy with Christ. This is an essential element to the artifact and ethos of the degree program. For the effort of this program cannot be undertaken just to make Christian mentors better doers. Houston points to the danger that happens when the church blurs the doing and being categories too closely, thus making Christian discipleship about “becoming a more efficient religious entrepreneur...of the Gospel.”¹⁹⁷ What must be present is true discipleship, which will always be expressive of Christ’s suffering love.¹⁹⁸ With this focus and with methodologies incorporated from Tom Camacho’s *Mining for Gold* to pull out the greatness that already lies within, a more genuine and unique discipleship experience can happen.¹⁹⁹ By involving these methodologies listed in the dissertation’s artifact, it leaves room for more unique and personable mentoring. Collectively the content of the courses, the delivery of the instruction, and the accumulation of the course

¹⁹⁶ J. M. Houston also wrote *For Christ and His Kingdom*, which, among other things, discussed the idea of Paradosis, the transmission of a living faith to the next generation. This book provides some of the most current dialogue happening around Christian Higher Education. J. M. Houston and D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *For Christ and His Kingdom: Inspiring a New Generation* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Pub., 2013).

¹⁹⁷ J. M. Houston, *The Mentored Life: from Individualism to Personhood* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Pub., 2012), 118.

¹⁹⁸ Houston, *The Mentored Life*, 118.

¹⁹⁹ Tom Camacho, *Mining for Gold: Developing Kingdom Leaders Through Coaching* (UK: IVP, 2019).

work point toward more mentoring moments in the student's life leading to deeper spiritual formation.

Teaching Character

This system which provides room for spiritual formation also provides space for character development as well. Not only does phronesis impact the methods of education by incorporating CBE, PLA, and practicum learning, but phronesis also impacts the content itself. With the implementation of these new methodologies, extra emphasis can be placed on certain learning outcomes that were previously only hoped for. Some might call this growing character, “soft skills,” or other intangibles, but these skills fall under phronesis. This model of education can help the program grow more character, wisdom, and love of learning in the student.

Dan Allender, in *Leading with a Limp*, talks about how in the latter part of the twentieth century, universities and seminaries began to admit that their programs were lacking in something essential.²⁰⁰ Their students were graduating with a deficit in being competent in the real world. Seminaries brought in professors who were still active pastors and had a sense of more than just theory, where things were actually proven to work. These classes intentionally brought students out from behind their desks and took them into the trenches. But Allender explains that despite this emphasis and new marketing ploy, the program still consists of about “80% content, 15% skill, and only about 5% ethics/character.”²⁰¹ This increase is only a slight change from what Allender

²⁰⁰ Allender, *Leading with a Limp*, 17.

²⁰¹ Allender, *Leading with a Limp*, 17.

said the higher education system was like in the first half of the twentieth century, which was 90% content, 5% skill and 5% ethics/character. Allender's point is in regard to focusing more on ethics/character as opposed to content and says the seminaries have not taken this problem seriously enough. These "soft skills," or character-based competencies (critical thinking, teamwork, communication, adaptability, problem solving), are what Dorothy Wax says "employers often care about more than institutions might expect."²⁰²

Jung points out that there is a skepticism about character formation in an online program, and rightfully so. So much in online education has become automated, with an inaccessible professor giving generic feedback about writing skills as opposed to the meaningful personal interaction that it could to be. But just because many have opted into the "uninvolved approach to online education"²⁰³ does not mean an online platform is incompatible with character formation. Jung reminds us that character formation is more than outward change. Building character is a slow process tied inseparably to spiritual growth. While many classes might claim to teach character, the character components of the course proposed in the artifact are directly integrated into the course.²⁰⁴ Because the new curriculum can be written to be observed either through a live mentor or submitted videos, actionable tasks can be assigned and viewed. Far different than a pre-meditated paper, real reactions to real situations show what's really in the core of a student. For example, a student may have the assignment of writing and sharing their testimony, forming a small group, promoting an event, or making an updated church policy manual.

²⁰² Wax, "Competency-Based Education."

²⁰³ Jung, *Character Formation in Online Education*, 15.

²⁰⁴ Jung, *Character Formation in Online Education*, 53.

Each of these scenarios will provide the raw material for reflection with a mentor. In previous models, the character component of a course might have just been a student conduct policy. As Barry Schwartz says, “there is no better way to tell people you’re not serious than to tie up everything you have to say about ethics into a little package with a bow and send it to the margins as an ethics course.”²⁰⁵ The medium is the message, and if the medium is low-key, unattached, and generic, then the message will be as well.

There are, of course still limitations to online classrooms, but Jung has some solutions to offer. One big barrier of a classroom setting is that the instructor may struggle to bring their emotions and style to the interaction, which is part of what helps build character in the students. But there are many solutions to this, and Jung lists a handful of ideas to bring more pathos and ethos into the educational processes, like making collaborative assignments, taking advantage of smart phones, and social media incorporation.²⁰⁶ Another barrier in the online classroom is the removal of the spontaneous moments that happen with live interaction. The unanticipated moments when the teacher responds to a student’s frustrating question in love and patience, or the teacher’s response to real-life situations instills lessons that would be impossible to recreate over a prerecorded class. Consider how the typical class might have changed on the date of September 12, 2001. Every classroom in America shared the events of the day before, and this added to the teaching of that class. However, in a prepackaged class, all of the reactionary components a professor brings to a classroom, whether good or bad,

²⁰⁵ Barry Schwartz, “Our Loss of Wisdom,” February 16, 2009, 13:41, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA-zdh_bQBo.

²⁰⁶ Jung, *Character Formation in Online Education*, 84-86.

are removed, eliminating impromptu teaching moments. Prerecorded classes would have simply got back to work on the twelfth and would have missed a key educational opportunity. It's not that the online method is limiting; it's that the hands-off automated experiences cut the students' development short.

Teaching Wisdom and Lifelong Learning

Because of the intentional value the program demonstrated in the artifact places on mentoring, additional potential is created for the growth of a student's wisdom. Barry Schwartz hits on this idea by explaining that just offering more ethics courses does not help people be more ethical.²⁰⁷ Suffice to say, this type of effort to teach wisdom is much more effective than creating curriculum called contemporary wisdom. Phronesis, again, is practical wisdom, and that is something that is either learned slowly through pain of experience, or smoothly through the pain of discipline or learning, reflection, and application. Wisdom is when insights are met with application, but insights only come from self-experience or out of insight spoken into you from someone else. Lastly, more than just saying that "learning is important after one graduates," these methods can cultivate a love for learning because the efforts are already immediately benefiting the work.

Possible Gaps

From video recordings to feedback from on-ground supervisors, a lot can be done to monitor a pastor remotely, but there is still some leadership training that has to happen

²⁰⁷ Schwartz, "Our Loss of Wisdom."

in the in-between times of a normal assignment. The video might record the youth pastor doing a game with the youth, but not how he prepared the activity beforehand with his volunteer. It might record him doing an altar call, but not the words he says as he prays with people at the altar. Important work happens before and after the record button is hit. This is why the on-site ministry supervisor (mentor) is irreplaceable even when the program is also filled with a classroom instructor, an expert adviser, and a cohort of peers.

There are also doubts that come from the higher education world. In the 2017 book *Education Is Not an App: The Future of University Teaching in the Internet Age*, Jonathan Adam Poritz and Jonathan Rees discuss some of the technicalities and pedagogy of education and inherent limitations that come from online and remote-based learning.²⁰⁸ However, Poritz and Rees focus all their energy on pointing out problems and not offering viable solutions; and their argument is refuted by recent studies that show that flipping a classroom model does not change the grades of the students in a positive or negative way.²⁰⁹

The fact that graduate practicum courses are already being taught as online courses underscores Perry's comment that "the discussion of whether online supervisions can be effective is really a conversation about competing cultures, the culture of those

²⁰⁸ Jonathan Adam Poritz and Jonathan Rees, *Education Is Not an App: the Future of University Teaching in the Internet Age* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017).

²⁰⁹ Rhea Kelly, "Study Finds Flipped Classroom Model Does Not Improve Grades in Health Science Course," Campus Technology, April 18, 2018, <https://campustechnology.com/articles/2018/04/19/study-finds-flipped-classroom-model-does-not-improve-grades-in-health-science-course.aspx>.

who are comfortable with technology and aware of its capability for teaching and learning, and the culture of those who are not as comfortable with technology.”²¹⁰ If Perry is correct then these cultural changes are bound to happen slowly. But for those who see these new technologies and methodologies as a way to enhance the training of future ministers and therefore add value to the Kingdom, then change may happen faster than Perry suspects.

Personally Commissioned Barna Group Study

Early on in the research process I began looking for statistical evidence regarding the benefits of graduate school in a pastor’s life. Knowing how significant graduate school was for me, I wanted to show how effective graduate school can be in the development of a pastor. I asked Barna Group if we could prove increased effectiveness with the information they gather for their typical state of the pastors address.²¹¹ The findings from this data were fascinating, but not what this study was hoping to find through statistical research.

Specifically, I asked Barna Group to compare a pastor’s educational attainment with their ministry effectiveness. Barna Group’s initial response to this research inquiry was simple, “Can you let me know what you have in mind in terms of ‘effectiveness’?”

²¹⁰ Lilienthal, Potthoff, and Anderson, “The Development of an Online, Graduate Practicum Course,” 49.

²¹¹ Brooke Hempell, emails with author, April-May 2019.

We can certainly pull out data on education and longevity in ministry to run correlations, but I'm not sure how we'd define effectiveness.”²¹²

What does effective mean? To fully measure effectiveness would take a case study on each congregation that each pastor served in. It would take lengthy and thorough study to account for discipleship, evangelism, growth rate vs transfer growth rate and church growth vs. city growth rate. Does a bigger number mean there is effectiveness? What number? Attendance, baptisms, Holy Spirit baptisms? And to complicate things further, how can we know what really is effective? Just because a pastor sees fruit, this sign does not mean what they were doing was effective. Could they be reaping the fruit from the previous pastor's work? Could God be blessing their ministry *despite* what they are doing instead of *because of* what they are doing?

Because the scope of that type of study would be too large and contain too many unknowns, we decided that for the purposes of this study to look for the supplementary benefits of seminary. For the seminary-graduated pastor, is there a measurable effect on any of the following: longevity, job satisfaction, marital satisfaction, income, size of church, etc.? It was clear we were grasping at straws, but nonetheless we ran the data.

Barna Group came back with this response: “In the attached, reading down by columns, you can see that those with a seminary degree have higher salaries and work at larger churches. They also say their relationships are slightly better. However, a small proportion are more likely to be dissatisfied with their ministry compared to those

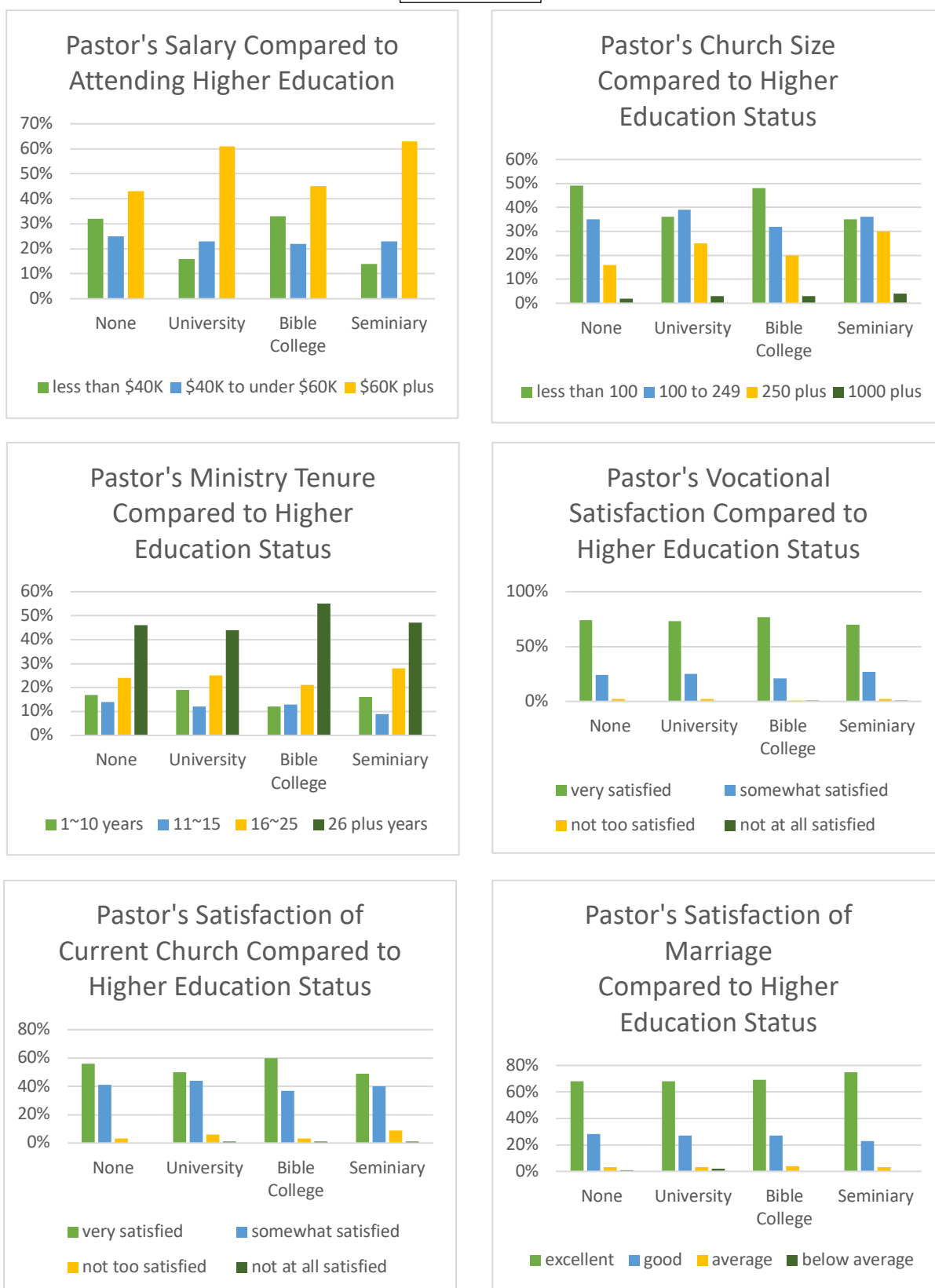
²¹² Brooke Hempell, email with author, November 19, 2018.

without a seminary degree.” The six charts at the end of this section illustrate what the data revealed.

So, there was a statistical difference between seminary graduates and non-seminary graduates—but not much of a difference. The most noticeable difference was in the salary area: seminaries comprise 18% fewer lowest-income positions, and 20% more highest-income positions.

What can we conclude from this? The data is incomplete and will probably always be. In fact, while the data shows correlation, it may not be the master’s degree that makes the difference. Perhaps being the type of person who would care enough and study enough to get a master’s degree makes the difference. And those types of people, perhaps, are the ones who are more dissatisfied and have higher-paying jobs. Also, while the statistical difference is negligible, that does not negate the enormous impact a master’s degree can have in an individual’s life. This research shifted the direction of my writing and the development of this new degree program. At the very least, this research Barna provided is a healthy dose of humility for higher education. Graduate work might have helped some, but statistically, it is not the universal enhancement educators might it wish to be, as the multiple graphs in figure 18 illustrate.

Figure 18



Marketing Considerations

The NCES 2018 annual report noted an interesting statistic, which stumps many. “In 2016, some 17% of 20- to 24-year-olds were neither enrolled in school nor working, compared to 12% of 18- and 19-year-olds and 5% of 16- and 17-year-olds.”²¹³ Could a program that offers more than just work and more than just education be more attractive to a generation where 17% are neither working or going to school? Furthermore, in a national poll conducted by Lumina and Gallup in 2013 it was found that

87 percent of respondents said that students should be able to receive college credit for knowledge and skills acquired outside the classroom; 75 percent said they would be more likely to enroll in post-secondary education if they could receive credit for what they already know; and 70 percent said that if a student demonstrates mastery of material in less time, the student should get credit for a course without completing the full session.²¹⁴

This proves how marketable and attractive CBE, PLA, and other action-oriented methodologies are. Online, graduate, ministerial practicum experiences are an untapped market in the Assemblies of God.

Additionally, Barna reports that methods like experiential learning, and mentorships are very attractive to the millennials, who are interested in making a difference.²¹⁵ Barna explains that churches are having a more difficult time identifying millennials for ministry leadership and development. One factor may be the rise in popularity of entrepreneurship among younger generations. “Social enterprises and tech

²¹³ “Highlights from The Condition of Education 2018,” *The Condition of Education 2018*, 6.

²¹⁴ Klein-Collins, “Sharpening Our Focus on Learning,” 16.

²¹⁵ Barna and Pepperdine University, eds., *The State of Pastors*, 154.

startups promise talented young Americans exciting and fulfilling work, luring them away from more traditional vocational paths.”²¹⁶ These startups have low barriers of entry, which make them less risky to try out. In ministry, this entrepreneurial spirit plays out by the young person joining outreach-oriented ministries or parachurch ministries, which are a much safer option for them as opposed to attempting the traditional full-time ministry gig route and risking failure. Although there are many complex issues involved in engaging Millennials, research seems to point to the idea that this recipe of learning and training will be popular in the years to come.

Conclusion

There is a story that Vesta Sproul, wife of the late R. C. Sproul, commonly told about her husband’s love of reading biographies “He loved books, but he also loved people because he knew he could learn from people. He loved to learn, and he could learn from anyone.”²¹⁷ Sproul loved reading biographies in particular because they brought into confluence his two loves: books and people. Vesta Sproul concluded with an insight that showed R.C.’s theologian’s mind was wed to a pastor’s heart, which is a good model for Christian higher education should be.

Seminaries can move forward with the mind of a theologian married to the heart of a pastor being lived out in action for the gospel. Jeff Robinson, senior editor of the Gospel Coalition, commandeers this attribute given to RC Sproul: “That’s how I want to

²¹⁶ Barna and Pepperdine University, eds., *The State of Pastors*, 88.

²¹⁷ Stephen Nichols, “Remembering R.C. Sproul, 1939–2017,” Ligonier Ministries, December 14, 2017, <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/remembering-rc-sproul/>.

be as a pastor and theologian—in deep conversation with books [and] in deep relationship with people... That’s why seminary and the local church form such an effective tandem for raising up and filling out faithful ministers of the gospel.”²¹⁸ Pastors need to be cultivators of academic thought, as well as purveyors of practical wisdom committed to compassionately pouring it into the next generation.

To revisit the biblical model of training people, the Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the church of Philippi, “And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment” (Phil. 1:9 ESV). May this be true for seminary students, the seminary leaders and the seminary itself. May these programs and their learners grow not just in knowledge, but in knowledge and in love. There is too much at stake for the Kingdom of God should Christian higher education get this wrong.

²¹⁸ Robinson, “The Big Thing Seminary Did Teach Me.”

SECTION 4: THE ARTIFACT

The artifact is a 36-unit master's degree in Organizational Leadership with a Cognate in Ministerial Leadership. Each course contains material on real leadership in contemporary ministry. Courses start with a building block and a direction, while built for CBE potential that will help students advance while taking into consideration where they are starting from. These courses are interactive, and each one requires application in real-world ministry contexts.

This degree contains some features unique to the ministerial graduate student experience. This degree will emphasize PLA where credits can be awarded based on learning the student has already obtained in their personal lives. When a student does not qualify for PLA, this degree plan will also allow for six units of practicum studies a student can earn by doing ministry in their approved local context. These classes are designed to be accomplished remotely and students will submit videos of themselves attempting the course outcomes in real ministry. Peers will then be able to interact in semi-live conversations about the student's engagement. Students will view video lectures through interactive software and will submit videos of their application attempts through the interactive video software as well.

The degree will incorporate the opportunity for students to have at least one hand-picked lead mentor. This customizable portion of the degree allows the student to personally choose a mentor to walk with them and give them feedback on the content they are working through. The lead mentor will not be the official professor on file, but will have direct interaction with and oversight of a portion of the student's participation and performance grade. This hand-picked lead mentor will need to be vetted and

contracted by the school, allowing for a large window of eligibility for real-life expert practitioners to become the “hand-picked lead mentor.”

This artifact and dissertation as whole, *Learning in the Midst of Action: Phronesis in the Seminary*, can help institutions interested in making their ministerial training less “seminary” like. The artifact will include the degree outline, a sample course description, a course syllabus for one of the practicum courses, and a course syllabus from a content course. The final version will include syllabi for each of the unique courses. The final curriculum will also provide more technical detail for how students can access the software required in the degree.

SECTION 5: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION

Goals and Strategies

The main goal of my track 02 dissertation is to inspire AG pastors to consider and enroll in this graduate degree. I will test a beta version of this degree by working with the Dean of the College of Adult and Professional studies at Northwest University to discuss implementation of the cognate at NU. The success of the artifact will be measured by the enrollment, retention, and completion rates of the degree. Students' evaluations of the course will also be taken into consideration. It's possible that many universities would be interested in a program like this, especially if it is proven marketable at NU. Furthermore, by being employed at NU and working in similar programs, there are opportunities to implement, if not the whole package, elements of this artifact into preexisting programs. While this may be only a half-measure, if successful, it will give further proof of concept to the credibility of this artifact as a whole.

Audience

The intended audience for this artifact is two-fold. Ultimately, it is intended to benefit the student; however, the artifact is written to be used by the university. Universities can take this artifact and actually begin to implement it. Both universities and students that they are action-oriented will see how these different methodologies will benefit their time as a student with increased learning and effectiveness.

Artifact Scope and Content

This artifact will contain the degree plan, cognate plan, course description, and two course syllabi. The term cognate is used because it is the term given when courses are taken from disciplines different from the major, similar to a “minor” in an undergrad program. The term concentration is used when the courses are taken from the same academic discipline as the major. This artifact will take technical know-how in creation to meet accreditation standards and will take additional technical know-how when implemented in schools that reside in different regional boards of accreditation.

Budget

The artifact itself does not cost, but the real-life implementation of the artifact would cost based on the size of the school and the size of the class. The additional cost a university would face besides typical staffing to run an education program would be the software subscriptions and the hand-picked mentor contracts. VoiceThread is the primary software needed to enhance online class discussion and student video submission feedback. VoiceThread is only \$99 per year for a single instructor and up to fifty students, but for an entire university it can be in the thousands.

The hand-picked lead mentor would be a fee based off the current practices of the university. Industry standards, however, suggest the lead-mentor be paid \$250 per semester per student they are working with, which is 25% what an adjunct professor might expect to be paid for an alternative course. This is concerning, though, because this course would still have to pay a professor, which would cut into the university’s operating budget.

Promotion

This program could be promoted by the marketing department of a university but would be attractive to a new type of demographic, that is, those who are currently pastors but have never considered returning for higher education. It would appeal to those who are keenly interested in results and increasing effectiveness. It will be important to communicate the specific ways this program will increase the effectiveness of a pastor and their ministry.

Standards of Publication

The completed artifact will meet current academic accreditation criteria.

Action Plan

The action plan for this artifact is straightforward. From the completion of this dissertation, the course is ready to be presented in its whole to NU and begin being dissected, adjusted, and implemented for use in its programs. The degree, which has previously been approved by the Dean of Leadership at NU, is already live. However, this artifact presents a new specialization available for this degree, through the use of the cognate.

While the ideas are represented in section three of this paper and meshed into this cognate, they are not being implemented to their full potential. This artifact as an intentional first step brings these theoretical ideas into fruition. Perhaps in the future these ideas and methodologies could be proven, sharpened, and honed enough to be able to be implemented across multiple degree programs and perhaps even across a whole seminary.

SECTION 6: POSTSCRIPT

Summary of Execution

This artifact had a peculiar method of execution. While I was originally attempting to study education to deliver to those in the undeveloped world without access to ministry education, I realized that there was another demographic of undereducated people. A population from my own tribe, that I was much more familiar with, and understood more intimately. After this shift in demographic target, it was a lot easier to identify elements and practices that would be attractive to this type of minister. I began by researching other universities in the U.S. and getting a general idea of the current state of graduate practicums. Combining elements from multiple universities, I sat down with the Dean of the College of Adult and Professional Studies at Northwest University, Dr. Jim Jessup, and began brainstorming what a new degree might look like at NU. Dr. Jessup provided some direction on the requirements of a degree, practicum, and graduate courses and this direction became the framing for what I wanted to create. Diving further into research and discovering a deficit of hands-on training, as well as a common feeling that seminary does not prepare people enough, I began a more critical course selection. These courses were built around what Barna's research has shown that pastors confess to feeling most ill-prepared in. My field research involved visits to other universities as well as an educator's conference. Finally, with more research, I discovered additional creative methodologies that also matched the ethos of what the program stood for, and this further strengthened the ideas of marrying education and practical training.

Personal Discovery

The process of deconstructing Christian higher education and attempting to reconstruct it with more effective methods has been exhausting. At times, it has been emotionally frustrating as I realize the shortcomings my own education has had, and at other times it's been exhilarating to imagine a new generation of students learning more directly in the field because of this methodology. Despite the irreverence that this paper has shown at times to seminary education, I am still deeply grateful for the education I received from the four different institutions of Christian higher education I have attended. As I criticize, I also realize I am a product of this education and am grateful for the shoulders I stand on.

I suspect that those currently within Christian higher education are more or less happy with the way things are because it is the system that attracted them to study; and now the institutions have been reinforced with more of itself. The ideas presented in this paper may not make sense to those at the top in higher education, but remember this program is not for them. It is designed for those who would never normally attend to begin seminary to begin with.

Post-Graduation Considerations

After graduation, this work will (hopefully) continue to be developed into Northwest University's degree programs. The degree and cognate are already in process, and throughout the next year, some of the other methodologies listed in this paper will continue to will expand beyond this new degree to the programs already in place at NU. Concepts like hand-picked lead mentors and CBE will need to prove effective and

financially viable. After a successful track record of this, it's possible that these ideas could be implemented beyond the College of Adult and Professional Studies department at Northwest University. Lastly, if successful, it is only a matter of time until other universities begin mirroring the ideas and unpatentable methods listed in this paper. While this competition might be professionally disadvantageous, it will be exceedingly fulfilling on a personal level.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1—Degree Plan**MASTER OF ARTS IN LEADERSHIP STUDIES WITH MINISTRY
LEADERSHIP COGNATE**

The Northwest University MA in Leadership Studies prepares graduate students for higher levels of responsible leadership through both education and training. Student focus their efforts by reflection and reengaging in the leadership contexts that they are already in. The student's studies in leadership theory will be measured against the student's real-life application of the subject matter.

The Ministry Leadership Cognate expands the leadership capacity of students by allowing them to view their professional development through their chosen filter of a personal mentor. This type of real-life application will help lead the students toward making a difference in the organizations in which they are serving. Elective credits allow students to further broaden their studies into areas fitting their professional interests.

The MA in Leadership Studies courses are fully available online, with real ministry engagement as the only prerequisite. Thus, students can begin their program at various times of the year. Professional Studies Cognate courses are offered through their respective colleges, so students work closely with their academic advisor to determine course scheduling.

MA in Leadership Studies (36 credits)

Leadership Studies Core.....			18
LDRS	5173	Leadership Theory	3
LDRS	5283	Group Dynamics and Personnel Development	3
LDRS	5383	Organizational Leadership	3
LDRS	5493	Leading Change.....	3
LDRS	5543	Organizational Communication and Conflict Resolution..	3
LDRS	5673	Leadership Ethics and Virtues.....	3

Ministry Leadership Cognate..... 18

The Professional Studies Cognate allows students to explore leadership within their chosen professional field. Students select courses in consultation with their academic advisor from curriculum offered through one or more of NU's Colleges of Business, Ministry, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Suggestions include:

Ministry Leadership Cognate Requirements:

CMIN	5913	Practicum Intro*	3
CMIN	5923	Practicum Outro*	3

Ministry Leadership Cognate Options:

PMIN	5xx3	Conflict Management & People Skills Theory*	3
PMIN	5xx3	Administrative Training*	3
PMIN	5xx3	Developing Leaders in the Church*	3
PMIN	5xx3	Leadership Excellence and Life Balance*	3
PMIN	5xx3	Ministry Essentials	3
PMIN	5xx3	Spiritual Formation & Development	3
PMIN	5xx3	Pastoral Care & Human Development	3
PMIN	5xx3	Ministry Leadership & Administration	3
BIBL	5xx3	Reading the Bible: Exegesis & Interpretation	3
BIBL	6xx3	Biblical Preaching & Teaching	3

* New Courses developed for this artifact.

Appendix 2—Course Descriptions

PMIN 5xx3 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT & PEOPLE SKILLS THEORY – This course provides a study of soft skills necessary for working in human development. Students will assess their own leadership styles and strengths and show engagement in attempting new skills. ***This course will incorporate competency-based education methods.**

PMIN 5xx3 CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING – This course provides a study of industry standard ministry practices that are used by the world's most efficient ministries, churches, and business. Students will assess their own administrative competence and show implementation of new administrative skills and habits. ***This Course will incorporate Competency-Based Education Methods.**

PMIN 5xx3 DEVELOPING LEADERS IN THE CHURCH – This course discusses effective models for developing various demographics in church life. Students will choose a particular demographic (youth, adult, lay-leader, support staff, pastoral staff, board members) and develop and implement a discipleship and leadership plan over the semester. ***This Course will incorporate Competency-Based Education Methods.**

PMIN 5xx3 LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AND BALANCE – A study on the philosophy behind excellence in ministry and the paradox of ministry and life balance. Students will examine case studies, analyze their own work and home lives, and begin implementing new behaviors. ***This Course will incorporate Competency-Based Education Methods.**

LDRS 5XX3 PRACTICUM INTRO – This course is designed to help students identify a present ministry problem and assist them in overcoming it. Students will select and work with their hand-picked lead mentor to build a syllabus and course of action to overcome this problem. **(Can be awarded as PLA)**

LDRS 5XX3 PRACTICUM OUTRO – Following the same format as PRACTICUM INTRO, this course is designed to help students identify a present ministry problem and assist them in overcoming it. Students will select and work with their hand-picked lead mentor to build a syllabus and course of action to overcome this problem. Students will also analyze their skills and effectiveness in handling this problem as compared to their initial PRACTICUM INTRO course. **(Can be awarded as PLA)**

Appendix 3—Abbreviated Course Syllabus #1

Developing Leaders in the Church Syllabus (PMIN 5xx3)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course discusses effective models for developing various demographics in church life. Students will choose a particular demographic (youth, adult, lay-leader, support staff, pastoral staff, board members) and develop and implement a discipleship and leadership plan over the semester. *This Course will incorporate Competency-Based Education Methods.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is specialized to answer the student's specific ministry problem regarding developing church leaders. The main purpose of this course is to provide the student with a possible solution to their problem and guide them along in its implementation. Students will work to identify a current ministry problem and evaluate the problem and other solutions that have been tried, and work to hypothesize a more effective solution. Students work with their approved lead mentor to evaluate how they are doing and their overall pictures of ministry effectiveness.

This course will identify the various aspects of developing leaders in the church, including recruiting, training, curriculum development, systematic structures, and transformational and leadership models. The student will identify concepts that work with either laity or ministerial demographics.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify a key problem pastors face in developing leaders in the church. (Bloom's #1)
2. Analyze the shortcomings of ministerial and laity church leadership development in light of previous ministry training (Bloom's #4)
3. Evaluate multiple possible solutions to increase the effectiveness of church leadership development systems. (Bloom's #5).
4. Develop the most appropriate solution for the church's leadership development needs within a specifically identified context. (Bloom's 6)
5. Assess the short-term and possible long-term effects of the newly proposed leadership development model to be implemented upon all involved. (Bloom's #5)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. Bible
2. Students will choose a book from the provided bibliography with their lead mentor that will inform the construction of their solution to their ministry problem.
3. VoiceThread

4. Zoom Video Conferencing

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. VoiceThread Lecture & Reading Discussion – 20%
2. Lead Mentor Interactions – 30%
3. Activity Journal – 20%
4. Summative Reflection Paper – 30%

COURSE POLICIES

Please refer to the Student Handbook for details related to Northwest University College of Adult and Professional Studies Course Policies, which clearly outlines procedures for the following: academic honesty, attendance, adding classes, dropping classes, course withdrawal, late work and incomplete grades, student support services, and more.

POINT DISTRIBUTION

Total Points = 1,000

Week	VoiceThread: Lecture & Reading Discussion (Assignment #1)	Lead Mentor Interaction (Assignment #2)	Activity Journal (Assignment #3)	Summative Reflection Paper
1	50	100	50	N/A
2	25	N/A	25	N/A
3	25	N/A	25	N/A
4	25	100	25	N/A
5	25	N/A	25	N/A
6	25	N/A	25	N/A
7	25	100	25	N/A
8	N/A	N/A	N/A	300

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

1. VoiceThread Lecture/Reading Discussion
 - a. Student will respond to the recorded VoiceThread materials and show interaction with the week's studies.
 - b. The student can respond multiple times, and all responses should total around 250-500 words.
2. Lead Mentor Interaction
 - a. Students must meet with their lead mentor a total of eight hours over the semester.

- b. The student will meet three times with their chosen lead mentor and discuss their current roadblocks regarding developing leaders in the church settings.
 - c. These hours may be split up as needed and may be done over Zoom Video conference or in person.
- 3. Application and Activity Journal
 - a. Students will log their ministry hours and submit their completed log at end of the semester.
 - b. The student must be actively engaged in their ministry and spend at least eight hours a week working toward their ministry goal.
- 4. Summative Reflection Paper
 - a. The student will write a brief description identifying how the ministry solution was pursued and if it was successful, and will present a updated model to move forward with developing leaders after the completion of the course.
 - b. This assignment will be 10 to 12 pages.

Student must have a Lead Mentor approved prior to beginning this course.
See the *Lead Mentor Requirements & Application* for more information.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

SESSION 1: Identifying Potential Leaders

This week, we will work to achieve the following course outcomes as defined above: Analyze biblical concepts of divine revelation and its theological significance.

To achieve this, please complete the following:

Required Reading:

- Progress through the books agreed upon by the student and lead mentor based off the bibliography.
- Read through the articles assigned to you by your lead mentor based off the bibliography.

Required Multimedia:

- VoiceThread Video Lecture. Link: www.voicethread.com
- (This lecture is the same for everyone)

Assignments:

VoiceThread: Lecture & Reading Discussion

- a. View the weekly required materials
- b. Reply with your video response directly to your class's video.
- c. Make sure to incorporate your specifically assigned reading and the video lecture presented in VoiceThread. Other students will be on their own reading plan and your insights from your material may be helpful for them.

Lead Mentor Interaction #1

- a. Meet with your lead mentor to discuss the needs of your ministry situation.
- b. Collaborate with your lead mentor to develop a reading and study plan that will inform your work.
- c. Brainstorm the type of work you will need to do over the semester and sketch an activity plan for the work moving forward.

Activity Journal & Application Essay

- a. This assignment will contain two major features: an activity journal and an application essay.
- b. Activity Journal: Students will log their time spent specifically working on this ministry issue.
- c. Application Essay: Students will write a three- to four-page essay commenting on the effectiveness of work they did this week related to their ministry problem. Students will discuss why they prioritized what they did in their activity log, as well as rating their execution and performance of the tasks attempted. Students will end by composing an action plan for the following week's activity journal.

- d. For week 1, be sure to incorporate the collaboration from the time with the lead mentor.

(SESSIONS 2-7 not included in this sample syllabus)

SESSION 8: Toward a Practical Model of Developing Leaders in the Church

Summative Reflection Paper

1. Critique your work done this semester as a whole in regard to developing leaders in your church setting.
2. Beyond the actual performance of this specific attempt, critique your overall skills and ability and confidence in addressing this situation in future.
3. Make sure to refer to or reflect on the general topic of each week's study.
4. Conclude by devising a development plan for your church leaders to be used after completion of this course.
5. Use succinct paragraphs and, if possible, visual illustration of the model you believe to be the most effective for developing leaders in your church environment.

Instructions:

- Length: At least 10 to 12 pages, double-spaced, excluding the cover page and reference pages, formatted in Turabian style.
- Cover page containing: title of paper, your name, course number and name, instructor's, name, and date.
- Introductory paragraph: Set forth a clear thesis statement that you will argue in your project.
- Body: Write a carefully constructed analysis of one of the Pentecostal/Charismatic writings noted above in light of what you have learned in this course.
- Conclusion: A concise statement that reaffirms your thesis statement.
- References: At least 10 quoted references to scholarly articles, including at least five from the Northwest Library. Also be sure to incorporate insights (either agreements or disagreements) that came from your lead mentor.
- Documentation: All sources must be documented on a separate reference page, using Turabian format.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Not included in this sample syllabus)

Appendix 4—Abbreviated Course Syllabus #2

Ministry Intro Practicum Syllabus (PMIN 5913)

And Graduate Practicum Worksheet

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ministry practicum assists students with applying their learning to a real-life ministry setting under the direction of an experienced ministry leader. The practicum includes identifying and clarifying a ministry-related issue that is causing, or could cause, problems within the ministry, researching possible short-term and long-term effects of the problem, identifying possible solutions, narrowing those options to the best solution, and developing ways to initiate the solution. Students select and work with their approved lead mentor to build a proposal and course of action to overcome the situation.

CLASS OVERVIEW

This course is specialized to answer the student's specific ministry problem. The main purpose of this course is to provide the student with a possible solution to their problem and guide them along in its implementation. Students work with their approved lead mentor to evaluate how they are doing and their overall pictures of ministry effectiveness.

COURSE OUTCOMES OVERVIEW

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify key ministry problem (Bloom's #1)
2. Analyze ministry problems in light of previous ministry training (Bloom's #4)
3. Evaluate multiple possible solutions to ministry problem (Bloom's #5).
4. Develop the most appropriate solution to ministry problems (Bloom's 6)
5. Assess the short-term and possible long-term effects of the proposed solution upon all involved. (Bloom's #5)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. VoiceThread
2. Students will choose a selection book from the provided bibliography with their lead mentor that will inform the construction of a solution to their ministry problem.
3. Zoom video conferencing
4. Hand-picked lead mentor

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Initial paper – 25%
2. Practicum hours – 25%
3. Mentoring – 25%
4. Reflection paper – 25%

COURSE POLICIES

Please refer to the **Student Handbook** for details related to Northwest University College of Adult and Professional Studies Course Policies, which clearly outlines procedures for the following: academic honesty, attendance, adding classes, dropping classes, course withdrawal, late work and incomplete grades, student support services, and more.

HAND-PICKED LEAD MENTOR REQUIREMENTS

1. The lead mentor must be someone who is:
 - a. Strategically placed within the ministry to be able to mentor the student through the ministry problem clarification and solution proposal process. The mentor must understand the possible solution's impact for the whole ministry.
 - b. Experience in a related field to student's current profession.
2. The lead mentor must be willing to:
 - a. Meet on a regular basis throughout the semester.
 - b. Assess possible solutions presented by the student.
 - c. Guide the student through administrative approval processes, based on the particular problem identified and solution proposed.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Initial Paper**
 - a. Student will write a brief description identifying the ministry problem to be address.
 - b. The student should pick a specific and measurable ministry goal to address which address their ministry problem, so as to ensure progress can be evaluated.
 - c. This assignment will be 250-500 words.
2. **Practicum Hours**
 - a. The student must be actively engaged in their ministry and spend at least eight hours a week working toward their ministry goal.
 - b. Students will log their ministry hours and submit completed log at end of the semester.
3. **Mentoring**
 - a. Students must meet with their lead mentor a total of eight hours over the semester.
 - b. These hours may be split up as needed and may be done over Zoom video conference or in person.
4. **Reflection Paper**
 - a. The student will write a brief description identifying how the ministry solution was pursued.
 - b. This assignment will be 250-500 words.

Graduate Practicum Syllabus Worksheet

Due prior to semester start

Instructions: Graduate practicum student candidate must fill out this worksheet with all pertinent information and submit it to GraduatePracticum@University.edu. An official syllabus will be created by the university office and returned to the student.

**To be filled out by graduate practicum student candidate*

Student Name: _____ *

Church/Ministry Name: _____ *

On-Site Ministry Supervisor: (can be different person from lead mentor)

Name: _____ *

Email: _____ *

Phone: _____ *

1) PRIMARY PRACTICUM TOPIC

a) Preferred Topic: _____ *

b) Back-up Topic: _____ *

(Write that main thing you wish to accomplish or learn this semester, i.e., event planning, speaking to adults, developing lay leaders)

2) OBJECTIVES

(Write four objectives you wish to accomplish in regards to your Primary Practicum Topic, i.e., event program planning, leading a creative team, marketing and promotion, event follow-up.)

a) _____ *

b) _____ *

c) _____ *

d) _____ *

3) CONTEXT

(Describe the context in which your Primary Practicum Topic engagement will be attempted.)

4) See the Lead Mentor Application Form to see more Requirements

Appendix 5—Lead Mentor Requirements and Application

Lead Mentor Requirements and Application

LEAD MENTOR REQUIREMENTS

1. The lead mentor must be someone who:

- a. Exemplifies “best practices” in ministry.
- b. Has demonstrated a proven ministry of cooperation and integrity.
- c. Understands possible solutions’ impact for the whole ministry.
- d. Is experienced in a related field to the student’s current profession.
- e. Has a minimum of 10 years of pastoral experience.
- f. Is not a relative of the student.

2. The lead mentor must be willing to:

- a. Invest significant time in the student.
- b. Meet on a regular basis throughout the semester or student’s enrollment.
- c. Assess possible solutions presented by the student.
- d. Guide the student through administrative approval processes, based on the particular problem identified and solution proposed.
- e. Refuse to serve as a mentor in those areas in which they lack the expertise or if their involvement is not in the best interest of the student.

Instructions: Graduate practicum student candidate must fill out this worksheet with all pertinent information and submit it to GraduatePracticum@University.edu. An official syllabus will be created by the university office and returned to the student.

**To be filled out by graduate practicum student candidate*

STUDENT'S APPLICATION FOR A LEAD MENTOR

5) BASIC INFO

Student Name:

_____ *

Church/Ministry Name:

_____ *

On-Site Ministry Supervisor: (can be different person from lead-mentor)

Name:

_____ *

Email: _____ *

Phone: _____ *

6) CONTEXT

(Describe the context of the ministry in which you currently serve.)

7) HAND-PICKED LEAD MENTOR RECOMMENDATION

(Write a proposal for why you're Hand-Picked Lead Mentor Recommendation will be a good fit for you and what you wish to learn practically this semester.)

a) MENTOR INFORMATION

Name: _____ sex: _____ age: _____

Church/ministry: _____

City: _____ state: _____

Cell number: _____ Email: _____

b) REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

i) Why do you recommend this person to be your lead mentor?

ii) What do you wish to gain from this mentor?

iii) Please describe any personal history or connection you have with the lead-mentor recommendation.

iv) Is it your intention for this person to continuing mentoring you in future semesters?

LEAD MENTOR'S APPLICATION

Why do you want to be the lead mentor for the applying student?

Are you considering remaining the lead mentor for future semesters?

Please attach most recent resume or CV:

Appendix 6—Data from Personally Commissioned Barna Research

Analysis Text: Pastor's Compensation

		Attended seminary		What type of educational institution did you attend?			
		all	Yes	No	a college or a Bible college	a seminary or school of theology / theological school	
Base	Unweighted	859	395	464	450	187	395
	Weighted	855	392	463	435	189	392
Pastor's Compensation	less than \$40K	24%	14%	32%	16%	33%	14%
	\$40K to under \$60K	24%	23%	25%	23%	22%	23%
	\$60K plus	53%	63%	43%	61%	45%	63%

Analysis Text: Church Size

		Attended seminary		What type of educational institution did you attend?			
		all	Yes	No	a college or a Bible college	a seminary or school of theology / theological school	
Base	Unweighted	896	408	488	468	196	408
	Weighted	896	406	490	454	199	406
Church Size	less than 100	43%	35%	49%	36%	48%	35%
	100 to 249	36%	36%	35%	39%	32%	36%
	250 plus	22%	30%	16%	25%	20%	30%
	1000 plus	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%

Analysis Text: Ministry tenure

		Attended seminary		What type of educational institution did you attend?			
		all	Yes	No	a college or a Bible college	a seminary or school of theology / theological school	
Base	Unweighted	896	410	486	467	196	410
	Weighted	895	407	488	452	198	407
Ministry tenure	1~10 years	17%	16%	17%	19%	12%	16%
	11~15	12%	9%	14%	12%	13%	9%
	16~25 years	26%	28%	24%	25%	21%	28%
	26 plus years	46%	47%	46%	44%	55%	47%

Analysis Text: Overall, how satisfied are you with your vocation as a pastor?

		Attended seminary		What type of educational institution did you attend?			
		all	Yes	No	a college or a Bible college	a seminary or school of theology / theological school	
Base	Unweighted	901	410	491	469	197	410
	Weighted	901	407	494	455	200	407
Overall, how satisfied are you with your vocation as a pastor?	very satisfied	72%	70%	74%	73%	77%	70%
	somewhat satisfied	25%	27%	24%	25%	21%	27%
	not too satisfied	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
	not at all satisfied	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%

Analysis Text: And how satisfied are you with your ministry at your current church, specifically?

		Attended seminary		What type of educational institution did you attend?			
		all	Yes	No	a college or a Bible college	a seminary or school of theology / theological school	
Base	Unweighted	898	409	489	467	197	409
	Weighted	898	406	493	453	200	406
And how satisfied are you with your ministry at your current church, specifically?	very satisfied	53%	49%	56%	50%	60%	49%
	somewhat satisfied	41%	40%	41%	44%	37%	40%
	not too satisfied	6%	9%	3%	6%	3%	9%
	not at all satisfied	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%

Analysis Text: Please rate how satisfied you are right now when it comes to each of the following. relationship with your spouse

		Attended seminary		What type of educational institution did you attend?			
		all	Yes	No	a college or a Bible college	a seminary or school of theology / theological school	
Base	Unweighted	476	142	334	174	119	142
	Weighted	490	147	343	174	120	147
relationship with spouse	excellent	70%	75%	68%	68%	69%	75%
	good	26%	23%	28%	27%	27%	23%
	average	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%
	below average	1%	-	1%	2%	0%	-
	poor	-	-	-	-	-	-