Reducing the Identity Crisis in Doctor of Ministry Education

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Reducing the Identity Crisis in Doctor of Ministry Education

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ABSTRACT: By ATS description, the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree properly belongs to the larger and more diverse family of degrees called “professional doctorate.” This article looks to the praxis-centered nature of professional doctorates as a means of addressing the identity crisis facing D.Min. education amidst the (ubiquitous) influences of the Wissenschaft model, whose hegemony in Western institutions over the last 150 years has worked to sustain an impassable rift between matters “academic” and “professional.” I begin by discussing the challenge that many classically trained theological educators face when teaching in programs that have a distinctively professional focus, such as that of the D.Min. I then survey the rise of the Wissenschaft model and its impact on theological education—particularly as it gave rise to the so-called “clerical paradigm.” In addition, I propose that D.Min. education can reduce the tendency to succumb to the influences of the Wissenschaft model by orienting itself in relationship to the broader category of “the professional doctorate” to which it belongs. I do this first by highlighting the distinctive curricular features of professional doctorates in light of those typical to the Ph.D. degree, and then examine the formative role played by “praxis” as the defining component of advanced professional education. I conclude by suggesting that the distinguishing criterion that guides D.Min. education is the unique theological vision that informs Christianity as a whole.

Introduction: the identity crisis within doctor of ministry education

This article is written for Ph.D.-holding faculty members who are teaching in Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree programs and thus required to engage in “professional doctoral education.” Since its inception some thirty years ago, the D.Min. degree has suffered from an identity crisis brought on, largely, by classically educated scholars who have envisioned such programs according to the influences that shaped their own theological education. Those who attended seminary in the mid to late twentieth century very likely encountered two pedagogical extremes that characterized most instances of education during that period. I argue that this phenomenon is due to “the Wissenschaft model,” which I explain in more detail below. On the one hand, theological schools tended to teach classical disciplines, such as biblical studies, theology, and history in isolation from practical concerns. On the other
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hand, “practical” or “professional” disciplines were often taught without reference to the theoretical underpinnings proper to the profession to which it was directed. Accordingly, modern theological education failed to be praxis-centered because it focused either on theory without practice or on practice without theory. Graduates of modern seminaries went away with a bevy of academic facts about the Bible, theology, and history and a collection of practical facts pertaining to the day-to-day work of ministry, but rarely were these facts in either case accompanied by an explication of the theoretical rationale needed to determine how best to apply what was learned. With regard to the D.Min. degree, the influence of the Wissenschaft model has worked to blur its distinctive identity and value as a professional doctorate, prompting classically schooled educators either to deprecate it as an inferior degree—whose only value is to bolster one’s skills as a practitioner—or to preserve its dignity by requiring the same caliber (and type) of academic rigor as the Ph.D.

I propose that the D.Min. degree has a value all its own, equal to that of the Ph.D. though different. To appreciate the unique value of the D.Min. degree, however, it is necessary for those in theological education to extricate themselves from the either/or extremes of the Wissenschaft model and to see afresh the possibilities of “praxis-centered learning”—a pedagogical model that predates Wissenschaft by at least six hundred years. To that end, it will help to consider the distinctive features of the Wissenschaft model, its influence on the educational enterprise, particularly in professional theological education, and how best to construe the nature of the D.Min. degree so as to transcend the limitations of this model.

The rise of the Wissenschaft model and the bifurcation of modern education

The Wissenschaft model germinated and flourished in the fertile soil of the modern age’s post-Kantian era, when it was almost universally believed that “pure reason” was the foundation of “practical reason.” Under the impetus of Wilhelm von Humboldt, head of the Prussian government’s section on cultural and educational affairs, the University of Berlin became the vanguard of modern “research universities”—and the first institution to confer the (modern) Doctor of Philosophy degree. Other German universities quickly followed suit, attracting many students from other countries, including the USA. By 1884, for example, thirteen of Johns Hopkins’ faculty had earned German doctorates. Accordingly, even though in 1861 Yale University was the first American institution to confer the Ph.D., scholars of American higher education typically cite the founding in 1876 of Johns Hopkins University as the decisive moment when the “Berlin” model made its début tour de force in the American Academy. According to Daniel Fallon, during this period of birth and development of the American university, “the dominant influence, the overriding ideal, was the model of Humboldt’s enlightenment university.”
Parker Palmer speaks about the power of “thinking the world apart,” by which he means the capacity to look at the world through analytical lenses. Such thinking, to be sure, has its rightful place, he assures his readers. But for all its help in science and technology, such either/or thinking “has also given us a fragmented sense of reality that destroys the wholeness and wonder of life. Our problem,” he continues, “is compounded by the fact that this mode of knowing has become normative in nearly every area, even though it misleads and betrays us when applied to the perennial problems of being human that lie beyond the reach of logic.” In describing “our problem” thus, Palmer underscores the pervasiveness of modernity’s Cartesian dichotomy, which sundered the “pure” from the “practical,” the mind from the body, the rational from the affective—and of which the Wissenschaft model is the pedagogical counterpart.

The Wissenschaft model served effectively to bifurcate the modern pedagogical enterprise into two (often mutually exclusive) foci, both of which are necessary but neither of which can stand without the other: the theoretical extreme and the practical extreme. Palmer offers a fitting description of Wissenschaft’s first extreme in which the focus of study is directed outward—on the objectified other—whether history or nature or someone else’s vision of reality. The inner reality of teacher and student is thus neglected in favor of a reality “out there.” Says Palmer:

The ideal of objectivism is the knower as a “blank slate,” receiving the unadulterated imprint of whatever facts are floating around. The aim of objectivism is to eliminate all elements of subjectivity, all biases and preconceptions, so that our knowledge can become purely empirical. For the sake of objectivity, our inner realities are factored out of the knowledge equation. When this phenomenon occurs, the educational process does not strive to locate and understand the self in the world, but rather to get self out of the way. Consequently, “we become manipulators of each other and the world rather than mutually responsible participants and co-creators. We become manipulators when we are schooled to be detached spectators of a world ‘out there.’”

This, argues Palmer, is typical to the “conventional classroom.”

The Wissenschaft model’s second focus, the practical extreme, can be traced to one of its chief architects, Friedrich Schleiermacher, who (“successfully”) defended theology’s place as a valid discipline in the emerging research university. David Kelsey observes that the rise of the institution of the university from the Middle Ages onward effectively overthrew the hegemony of theology, leaving the matter very unclear as to what, if any, place it would have in higher education:

In the research university the basis of theology’s claim to overarching authority was not recognized, and in effect the faculties of arts and sciences were made dominant. Granted, disestablishment does not necessarily mean eviction. Nonethe-
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less, so radical a restructuring of power in the university left it very unclear whether theology still had any role in it.\textsuperscript{8} Schleiermacher offered an answer to the question of theology’s place in the university in his seminal work, Brief Outline of the Study of Theology.\textsuperscript{9} He argued that theology, like the medical and legal sciences, are not divisions of a region of being or knowledge per se, but rather a discipline that is ordered toward a given professional goal. Its aim is practical. More specifically, the function of theology, according to Schleiermacher, was to guide clerics in carrying out their respective pastoral duties. Far from Thomas Aquinas’s conception of theology as the “Queen of the sciences” that functions to orient all other university disciplines toward their ultimate (divine) telos, theology under Schleiermacher came to occupy a much less exalted place in the academy.

The influence of the Wissenschaft model on theological education

Edward Farley offers a cogent analysis of Schleiermacher’s contribution to the Wissenschaft model and the far-reaching implications for theological education in the modern period.\textsuperscript{10} He argues that Schleiermacher’s move succeeded in preserving a place for theology in the research university, but only by evacuating it of much of its essential content. Theology became “clericalized,” delimited to matters proper to pastoral responsibilities and tasks, thus losing its essential “praxis element” by which to conceive of the church’s relationship to the world:

Ingenious as the solution was, it created enormous problems of conceiving how theology has anything to do with institutions, human beings, or culture outside the leadership of the church. In other words if theology is related to practice simply by way of clerical leadership, it does not have an essential praxis element related to the world as such. “Theology” in other words does not refer to the self-understanding of the community of faith as it exists in relation to the world.\textsuperscript{11}

In the literature that followed Schleiermacher’s proposal, theology increasingly came to be construed along the lines of “theological technology.” “Its concern,” says Farley, “was for methods for preserving and extending the Christian community, the science and art of the functions of ministry.”\textsuperscript{12}

The unhappy outcome of the Wissenschaft model’s influence on theological education—including advanced programs oriented toward ministerial leadership such as the D.Min.—is the severing of theory and practice, in which matters theoretical and matters practical are construed as existing in separate spheres of knowledge. On the one hand, meaningful reflection on the correspondence between “academic” subject matter and the praxis of Christian ministry is ignored in favor of a sterile, abstracted analysis of such material in isolation from any practical considerations. On the other hand, the so-called practical area exists in contrast to the domain of theory, “thereby emptying
itself of theory responsibility even though its subdisciplines are themselves a
*theoria* of practice and not just actual practice.”¹³ When these subdisciplines try
to conceive of a theological vision by which to account for their existence, they
have no internal source from which to draw. Farley correctly argues that the
only thing they can do “is build some sort of bridge from the independent
disciplines of the so-called academic side: from the Old Testament to preach-
ing, from moral theology to pastoral care, and so forth. In other words,” Farley
concludes, “there is no gathering up of these studies, as Schleiermacher
proposed in his notion of the essence of Christianity, into a clear criteriology for
these fields.”¹⁴ Practical ministerial disciplines in modern theological educa-
tion were thus truncated by what Don S. Browning and others call the “clerical
paradigm,” which is “the post-Schleiermacher tendency to associate practical
theology with the specific arts of homiletics, liturgics, catechetics, and poimenics
(pastoral care) needed by the ordained minister to maintain the internal life of
the church.”¹⁵

The result is a divide between the seminary and church that has left many
seminary graduates feeling that their education did not provide sufficient
preparation for the realities of parish ministry.¹⁶ Such dissatisfaction with
seminary education accounts, at least in part, for the soaring popularity of the
many conferences and seminars hosted by “teaching churches” and organiza-
tions like Willow Creek Community Church and Youth Specialties. If left to
choose between pure theory and pure practice, sensible church leaders appear
more inclined toward the latter.

The best intentions of theological educators notwithstanding, it is often the
case that advanced programs oriented toward ministerial leadership betray
their vulnerability to *Wissenschaft*’s two extremes, leaving them vulnerable to
an identity crisis that forces the choice between pure theory and pure practice.

**The need for praxis-centered learning and the utility of professional
doctorates**

It can be fairly argued that for certain fields of theological education the
“academy” is the proper domain. ATS clearly differentiates between basic and
advanced programs that are oriented toward ministerial leadership and those
oriented toward theological research and teaching. The trick, it seems, is in
finding a praxis-centered pedagogical model that enables each field at once to
engage both the theory and practice proper to its field. While this is of particular
importance for programs oriented toward ministerial leadership, it is arguably
just as important for those preparing themselves to be educators of students
who will be going into ministerial leadership—even if a teacher’s chosen field
in the seminary is “academic.”

Praxis-centered education instantiates the creative interplay between knowl-
edge and practice that functions to instruct and refine one’s engagement in a
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given (professional) context. In this sense, *praxis*, as Ray S. Anderson observes, is to be distinguished from the concept of *practice*. For Anderson, “*praxis* denotes a form of action profoundly saturated with *meaning*, a form of action that is value-directed and ‘theory-laden.’” He elaborates:

Praxis is reflective because it is action that not only seeks to achieve particular ends but also reflects on the means and the ends of such action in order to assess the validity of both in the light of its guiding vision. Praxis is theory-laden because it includes theory as a vital constituent. It is not just reflective action but reflective action that is laden with belief.

*Practice* typically refers to the methods and means by which one applies a skill or theory, which tends to sever truth from action or method (the problem that I have identified with the “clerical paradigm”). The assumption is that what is true “can be deduced or discovered apart from the action or activity that applies it in practice. In this way of thinking,” says Anderson, “truth is viewed as existing apart from its manifestation in an event or an act.” Not so with praxis:

Praxis is an action that includes the telos, or final meaning and character of truth. It is an action in which the truth is discovered through action, not merely applied or ‘practiced.’ In praxis one is not only guided in one’s actions by the intention of realizing the telos, or purpose, but by discovering and grasping this telos through the action itself.

In theological education, praxis must inform both academic and practical fields. Theoretically based fields like biblical studies, Christian history, and systematic theology require grounding in praxis so as not to be abstracted from churchly life. When such disciplines are not thus informed, the educational process often falls (unwittingly) into *Wissenschaft’s* first extreme—namely, teaching academic subject matter without any regard for the practical concerns of ministry.

One way for theological educators to avoid the extremes of the *Wissenschaft* model is to conceive of the D.Min. enterprise in light of the broader category of degrees to which it belongs—the “professional doctorate,” which offers a ready-made, praxis-centered pedagogical model that characteristically engages theory and practice. Professional doctoral education is not new to higher learning. First conferred by the University of Paris in the mid twelfth century, professional doctorates have existed for some 850 years. Tom Bourner, Rachel Bowden, and Stuart Laing observe that professional doctoral programs were commonplace in European universities from the twelfth century on, primarily in the disciplines of theology, law, and medicine. Although the bifurcating effects of the *Wissenschaft* model endured through most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there is now a resurgence of such professional doctorate degrees as the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), the Doctor of Clinical Psychology (Psy.D.), Doctor of Business Administration (D.B.A.), and the D.Min. All told,
professional doctorates now comprise about 5.5 percent of all doctoral degrees conferred by U.S. institutions. Of the 40,744 doctorates awarded by U.S. universities between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001, 2,238 were in the field of business and other professional areas.22

ATS states that the purpose of the D.Min. degree is “to enhance the practice of ministry for persons who hold the M.Div. degree and have engaged in ministerial leadership.”23 Accordingly, the goals that an institution adopts for its D.Min. program “should include an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry, enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis and ministerial skills, the integration of these dimensions into the theologically reflective practice of ministry, new knowledge about the practice of ministry and continued growth in spiritual maturity.”24 In terms of content, D.Min. programs are required to “provide advanced-level study of the comprehensive range of theological disciplines” that provides for:

- An advanced understanding and integration of ministry in relation to the various theological disciplines;
- The formulation of a comprehensive and critical understanding of ministry in which theory and practice interactively inform and enhance each other;
- The development and acquisition of skills and competencies, including methods of pastoral research, that are required for pastoral leadership at its most mature and effective level; and
- A contribution to the understanding and practice of ministry through the completion of doctoral-level project/thesis.25

Thus conceived, the D.Min. degree falls properly under the rubric of professional doctorates.

Educational institutions typically describe their professional doctoral degrees by comparing and contrasting them with the traditional Ph.D. Central Queen’s University, for example, highlights the distinctive nature of its professional doctorate by delineating two modes of knowledge. “Mode 1 Knowledge,” which is equated with the Ph.D., is “university-based, ‘pure research’-oriented, discipline-based, homogeneous and ‘depth’ seeking, expert-led, supply-driven, hierarchical, and peer reviewed from within a ‘community of scholars.’” “Mode 2 Knowledge,” which is equated with the professional doctorate, is:

- problem-solving around a particular application and context
- transdisciplinary knowledge and skills or appropriate for solving a problem rather than an academic interest
- heterogeneity in the way the problem-solving conditions and the research team change in the course of the project
- knowledge production in a huge range of organizations including universities
- a sensitivity to social accountability and reflexivity which are built in from the start.26
Similarly, Stephen Hoddell of the University of the West of England observes several factors that broadly characterize the difference between professional doctorates and Ph.D.s. While he admits that there are exceptions, he offers the following as distinguishing characteristics of each:

**Professional Doctorate**

- Usually modular and often, but not necessarily, credit based. The taught modules are often shared with related master’s level programmes.
- Usually part-time, but there are some subject areas where this is not the case.
- There are normally explicit criteria for assessment of the Professional Doctorate; usually these are related to explicit learning outcomes.
- Most Professional Doctorates are cohort based—partly because of the need to offer taught elements efficiently, and partly because of elements of teamworking.
- While there is a requirement that the candidate demonstrate a high level of knowledge and understanding within the field, this must also be related to professional practice.

**Ph.D.**

- Never credit based, and almost invariably seen as a single integral programme.
- Traditionally full-time, but with an increasing number of part-time candidates. This trend is likely to increase as a consequence of student debt.
- While most universities specify that the Ph.D. should be based on a significant original contribution to knowledge, there is not usually any interpretation of this into explicit assessment criteria.
- Most Ph.D.s are individual, although in the sciences the individual project may be carried out in the context of a research group or team.
- A Ph.D. may or may not be related to practice—and can be purely academic in focus.

One of the best comparative analyses of professional and academic doctoral education, though particular to the British context, is that of Tom Bourner, et al., “Professional Doctorates in England,” which is based on data gleaned from 109 professional doctorate programs in English universities. While the authors
admit that neither professional nor academic programs are homogeneous, they adduce a “majority model” for each and then compare and contrast the two types of programs along the lines of twenty “distinctive features that are common to the professional doctorates” and “that together could reasonably be said to comprise ‘professional doctorateness’ at least as it is interpreted in English universities.”

It may be fairly argued that with one or two exceptions these features are common to most professional doctoral programs in the United States as well and therefore merit at least a cursory overview.

According to Bourner and company, the twenty identifying features of professional doctorates that may be distinguished from the Ph.D. are: “career focus,” “domain of research topic,” “research type,” “research focus,” “starting point for research,” “intended learning outcomes,” “entry qualification,” “experience as an admission requirement,” “taught component,” “modularity,” “position of master’s level work,” “initial or in-service continuing professional development,” “mode of study,” “integration of work and study,” “integration of theory and practice,” “cohorts,” “variability of duration,” “form of the research outcomes,” “assessment,” and “breadth of studies.”

In terms of career focus, while the traditional Ph.D. is designed to prepare professional researchers, the professional doctorate is aimed at developing “researching professionals.” The domain of the research topic therefore has a different focus—namely, to make a contribution to “the knowledge of professional practice.” This, in turn, impacts the type, focus, and starting point of research. While the burden of most Ph.D. programs is to produce an original contribution to a given field of knowledge, the type of research that professional doctoral programs engage is “applied research,” which the Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development describes as “an original investigation undertaken to gain new knowledge and with practical aims and objectives.” Accordingly, one’s research typically focuses on a topic that has immediate relevancy to one’s own field of professional practice, and therefore takes as its starting place a given problem in the professional context that requires investigation and resolution. The intended outcome of such a course of study is “a significant original contribution to knowledge of professional practice,” along with one or more of the following:

- Personal development (often specifying reflective practice);
- Professional level knowledge of the broad field of study;
- Understanding of professionalism in the field;
- Appreciation of the contribution of research to the work of senior professional practitioners.

The career-based focus of professional doctoral research in turn impacts such program components as admissions criteria and the delivery system. While a four-year baccalaureate degree is typically the minimum entry qualification for most Ph.D. programs in English universities, the minimum level of entry in most professional doctoral programs is a master’s degree in the same
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field of study. Experience is also an admission requirement in most professional doctoral programs. Less a distinguishing feature among academic and professional doctoral programs in the United States and Canada is the “taught component” (i.e., required coursework—English Ph.D.s require only the completion of a passable dissertation), for both Ph.D. and professional doctorates in North America typically include this component. What remains constant among English and American professional programs is the emphasis on the critical interface between what is “taught” and one’s professional context. This in turn affects the delivery system. Typically, professional doctoral programs have a modular structure and are cohort based. They are geared to function as a form of in-service professional development that incorporates one’s professional work and doctoral studies, joining theory and practice. Accordingly, the doctoral-studies component is typically part-time.

Professional doctoral education as “engagement in praxis”

The common thread throughout professional doctorates is the dynamic interplay between theory and practice. The University of Canberra, Australia, for example, describes its professional doctorate as a “course oriented to the informed and critical application of knowledge to problems and issues concerning the professions or professional practice.” Similarly, the University of Queensland conceives of professional doctorates as “coursework programs which allow experienced professionals to return to study to improve their professional practice through the application of research to current problems and issues.” Queensland’s programs seek the intentional balancing of research and practical application. “This qualification combines coursework and research, with a component of not less than 33 percent and not more than 66 percent research.” In the end, the desired outcome is “a significant contribution to the knowledge and practice of the profession.”

Professional doctoral education is designed to help students engage praxis in their respective professional contexts by increasing the level of intentionality with which they carry out the actions specific to their profession. As praxis occurs, professional learning occurs. James Will observes that praxis is “a dialogical and dialectical process that may continuously correct our ideological tendencies.” The overarching objective is to empower students to engage in action that is not only aimed at achieving a given end, but that also “reflects on the means and the ends of such action in order to assess the validity of both in the light of its guiding vision” (Anderson). The “guiding vision” in every instance is determined by the values that guide a given profession to esteem certain means and ends over all others—and is thereby “value-laden.”

In the end, happy praxis is gauged by evaluative criteria internal to the professional context to which it is directed. Praxis serves these criteria as both prophet and priest—at once correcting and refining them; at once clarifying
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and reinforcing them. This is true of most professions, including Christian ministry. ATS envisions such a phenomenon in its framing of the purpose, goals, and general content of D.Min. education. The use of such phrases as “... integration of ministry in relation to various theological disciplines,” and “... a comprehensive and critical understanding of ministry in which theory and practice interactively inform and enhance each other,” reflects the essence of praxis-centered education whose guiding vision is that of ministry itself.

Doctor of ministry education as “engagement in praxis”

Like other professional doctoral programs, D.Min. education is committed to achieving healthy praxis in the respective professional settings to which it is directed. What distinguishes D.Min. education from other professional doctorates is the unique theological vision that informs Christian ministry. Arguably, different Christian traditions are guided by varying overarching visions of Christian ministry. There is, however, at least one distinguishing characteristic particular to most conceptions of ministry. Paul Ballard and John Pritchard observe that the term praxis “points to the fact that all practice reflects the inner dynamic that informs it.” And the inner dynamic to which the praxis of Christian ministry points is the underlying conviction that Christian ministry is, to borrow from Peter Hodgson, a participation in the praxis of God in which God is present in specific shapes or patterns of praxis that have a configuring, transformative power within historical process, moving the process in a determinate direction, that of the creative unification of multiplicities of elements into new wholes, into creative syntheses that build human solidarity, enhance freedom, break systemic oppression, heal the injured and broken, and care for the natural. This theological vision provides the evaluative criteria by which to gauge the authenticity of all actions typically associated with Christian ministry. “There are forms of action,” says Anderson, “that appear to be comforting and even reconciling, but if they do not reveal Christ, these ministries are not of God. That is, these ministries are not actions of God. For God has acted in Jesus Christ and continues to act in him. . . .” In the light of this vision, the practice of Christian ministry is the practice of participating in Christ’s ongoing ministry to the Father on behalf of the world. The question that D.Min. educators must address is not merely one of practice—e.g., “What skills and competencies are required of ‘good pastors’ or ‘effective leaders,’ and how might D.Min. education enhance these?”—but one of praxis: “What is the nature and shape of Christian ministry as the participation of God’s praxis in the world, and how might D.Min. education serve the church and its leaders in the actualization of this vision?”
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Summary and conclusion

Those of us who teach in D.Min. programs do our job best when we bring together the two extremes of the *Wissenschaft* model in a praxis-centered curriculum. In this article, I suggested that the way forward is first to become aware of how the bifurcating influences of this pedagogical system most likely affected us. I observed that while classical disciplines such as biblical studies, church history, and systematic theology were often taught without much consideration given to their convergence with the practical realities of churchly life, so-called clerical disciplines, such as pastoral care, homiletics, and liturgics were taught solely to hone the pastor’s professional competencies in each of these areas. The net result was an identity crisis due to the loss of the praxis-centered orientation proper to theological education and the “profession” (pastoral ministry) to which it is directed. Then I recommended that we look to the tried-and-proven praxis-centered model of professional doctoral education to clarify how best to overcome *Wissenschaft*’s two extremes, and argued that ATS clearly describes the D.Min. as a professional doctorate. This exercise brought to light a model of praxis-centered learning that effectively engages both theory and practice. In each instance, the evaluative criteria by which to determine whether praxis is effective or ineffective toward a given professional end arise from the specific context in which such praxis occurs. In the end, the distinguishing criterion that guides D.Min. education in its task is the unique theological vision that informs Christian ministry as a whole—the participation in the praxis of God. When theological educators are guided by this vision, D.Min. education will be less prone to a *Wissenschaft*-induced identity crisis and more likely to incorporate pedagogical strategies that engage students in the creative, dynamic interplay between theory and practice.

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ENDNOTES


5. Ibid., 37.

6. Similarly, Susan Hanley, drawing upon M. W. Caprio’s work, observes: “The current American classroom, whether grade school or college level, tends to resemble a one-person show with a captive but often comatose audience. Classes are usually driven by ‘teacher-talk’ and depend heavily on textbooks for the structure of the course. There is the idea that there is a fixed world of knowledge that the student must come to know. Information is divided into parts and built into a whole concept. Teachers serve as pipelines and seek to transfer their thoughts and meanings to the passive student. There is little room for student-initiated questions, independent thought, or interaction between students. The goal of the learner is to regurgitate the accepted explanation or methodology expostulated by the teacher.” S. Hanley, “On Constructivism,” Maryland Collaborative for Teacher Preparation (1994), [document online] (accessed June 9, 2003); available from: http://www.inform.umd.edu/UMS+State/UMD-Projects/MCTP/Essays/Constructivism.txt. Cf. also M. W. Caprio, “Easing into Constructivism: Connecting Meaningful Learning with Student Experience,” *Journal of College Science Teaching*, 23:4 (1994): 210-12.

7. In this regard, it could be said that to whatever extent Schleiermacher’s turn to the subject is observed in subsequent approaches to theology, it is largely an extension of the epistemological move made by Kant. Cf. A. C. McGiffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant* (New York: Harper, 1961), who sees Kant’s contribution as a watershed in the development of Protestant thought.


11. Ibid., 27.

12. Ibid., 32.

13. Ibid., 33.

14. Ibid., 33, 34.


16. Cf. for example the study conducted by Trudy J. Haman and Chester H. McCall. They developed a questionnaire-survey, which was completed by 400 senior pastors of mainline denominational churches in California. The findings indicated that seminary education failed adequately to prepare these persons to engage in the 15 skills judged


18. Ibid., 47, 48.

19. Ibid., 48, 49 (emphasis added).


24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 114, 115.


27. S. Hoddell, “The Professional Doctorate and the PhD—Converging or Diverging Lines,” A Presentation to the Annual Conference of SRHE, University of Leicester, 21 December 2000.


29. Ibid., 71 (emphasis added).

30. Ibid., 72. These descriptors comport nicely with the “varied kinds of learning” experiences called for in the ATS D.Min. degree program standards:

Peer learning and evaluation as well as self-directed learning experiences;

Significant integrative and interdisciplinary activities involving the various theological disciplines and careful use of the student’s experience and ministerial context as a learning environment;

Various opportunities for learning and using the disciplines and skills necessary for the D.Min. project including sustained opportunities for study and research on the campus of the institution offering the degree; and


31. Both the appropriate master’s degree and professional experience are stated by ATS as admission requirements for the D.Min. degree:

Admission to the D.Min. program requires the possession of an ATS-approved M.Div. degree or its educational equivalent. Ministerial
experience is not considered the equivalent of or a substitute for the M.Div. degree. Because the achievement of a new level of competence in the practice of ministry is a program goal, requirements for admission also include at least three years of experience in ministry subsequent to their first graduate theological degree, and evidence of capacity for an advanced level of competence and reflection. *ATS Bulletin*, 116.


34. Ibid.

35. Ibid. My emphasis.


40. Ibid., 54.

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