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Leadership Development Through Theological Education in the Theological Education Initiative of Central Missouri

April A. Welch
Bethel University

Recommended Citation

BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BETHEL SEMINARY ST. PAUL

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

IN THE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

OF CENTRAL MISSOURI

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE IN

CHURCH LEADERSHIP - ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS

BY

APRIL A. WELCH

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

MAY 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first acknowledge my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the lover of my life and soul who has been with me from the beginning, seen me through it all, and will be with me in the end.

Secondly, I acknowledge my brother, Kent Andrew Welch, who has loved me unconditionally and believed in me through the years to do anything that I set my mind toward!

Next, I wish to acknowledge Rod Casey, who was my mentor through the process.

Thanks go out to Woodcrest Chapel for helping me to obtain my degree through the ministry and the financial assistance they have provided throughout the years.

I am very grateful to Justin Irving and Ceallaigh Anderson for their patience and guidance through the years as I completed this program.

I also wish to thank:

- Bethel Seminary for taking a chance on a girl who had dreams of earning a doctorate,

- my thesis advisor, Julie Berndt, for her loving guidance through this last 18 months of hard work,

- my second reader, Katie Friesen-Smith, for taking time out of her busy schedule to help someone she has never met,

- Tim Senapatiratne whose library guidance got me out of multiple jams throughout the four years of the program,

- my readers and editors, Mike Horton, Bellyn and Nathan Kaplan, Anne Johnson, and Katherine Shepard, and

- my dear friends and cheerleaders, Valorie Nordbye, Jason Esposito, and Drew Christian, who kept me going to the bitter end! WE DID IT!

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ABBREVIATIONS

TEI   Theological Education Initiative of Central Missouri

ECLI   Emerging Church Leadership Institute

CCB   Church Community Builder

TFE   Theological Field Education

TEE   Theological Education by Extension

ABSTRACT

Access to leadership development through theological education is limited in places without seminaries. People in central Africa or in the middle of the United States, for example, might lack access to adequate theological education. The Theological Education Initiative decided that it wanted to fill that gap in Central Missouri, so it created the Emerging Church Leadership Institute (ECLI), a leadership development program entering its tenth cohort this fall. Every semester, active ministry leaders meet with volunteer instructors to delve into doctrines, hermeneutics, apologetics and other topics. Because an analysis of the program was lacking, the researcher used phenomenological research methods to discover the program's results from those who know it best—the graduates.

An in-depth study of biblical and theological principles of the three components of the program—theological education, leadership development and non-traditional educational settings—was conducted in conjunction with a field research program. The three streams of research presented unifying themes in these three areas which helped to form principles for another ministry to duplicate or to create its own program for leadership development.

The field research determined that, in the eyes of the program participants, the program accomplished the goals it set out to meet. The biblical and theological research discovered a history of this type of education for leadership development in non-

traditional settings. Therefore, the mandate to have theological education that follows scriptural principles was being met within the program.

Finally, the academic research stream had arguments in favor of and against these types of educational settings. However, the consensus in that stream is that the current traditional settings are not working to their full potential and need to be reformed. A new approach would be more successful and, given the many positive results of the ECLI educational experience, the research determined that their model can be effective across a diverse range of ministry settings.

DEDICATION

To Miss Lily Mariah Welch

If you trust in God and believe, you can do anything!

INTRODUCTION

Anyone reading this dissertation, in all likelihood, has or is engaged in some kind

of theological education program. But this is only the starting point of the discussion. The

next question is "What type of program was it?" People go to seminary, take classes

online, participate in adult education, and have on-the-job training programs. Though

different in format and scope, all of these are educational opportunities. A follow-up

query might be, "What was the point of the program?" Answers might range from

knowledge to spiritual formation to leadership development. These questions are the

focus of research in this study.

To be in ministry, is to need answers to these questions. Linda Cannell

understands this issue:

> But the church is often mistaken as an organization, and as such, it is assumed to
> be represented by one or more institutions of education, especially because it is
> associated with training academies of many sorts: Bible schools, ministerial
> seminaries, theological schools, divinity schools. Whether such schools are *served
> by* the church or are intended *to serve* the church is one of the most confused
> issues in all of professional education.[1]

Her point is valid. What is the point of theological education? To serve the church? To

serve the educational institution? The following thesis argues that neither of these is the

case; rather, theological education is for the people involved. It is for leadership

development of the one in ministry, which then benefits the members in that ministry.

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[1] Linda Cannell, *Theological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church*
(Newburgh, IN: Edcot Press, 2006), 9.

Traditionally, theological education has been reserved for clergy. However, there is presently a shift towards offering any leader in the church the opportunity to develop basic skills such as hermeneutics, systematic theology, and language study. Churches are recognizing that theological education will help leaders at all levels improve in their ability to teach and lead others. Michael Jinkins shares this concern: "Today, perhaps more than at any time since the Reformation, we need to recover the proper and distinct role of Christian scholarship in the life and leadership of the Church, and we need a renewed appreciation for the unique vocation of the theological scholar."[2] Typically, small group leaders, Sunday School teachers, and recovery group facilitators have not had basic theological education. One of the reasons for this is a lack of access to these programs.

Traditional theological education takes people out of their homes and ministries and asks them to move to a campus for two to four years of study. But many people do not have the ability or time to leave their everyday lives for such an extended time. F. Ross Kinsler worries that the traditional methods are hurting the ministers they intend to create: "The purpose of the seminaries and Bible institutes is to prepare leaders for service among all the congregations, especially among the poor, but we have seen over and over again that they too are instruments of alienation and elitism."[3] The ministers need an alternative that meets their needs.

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[2] Michael Jinkins, "Loving God with our Minds: The Vocation of Theological Education in the Life and Leadership of the Church," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 2, no. 1 (Spring, 2003), 3.

[3] F. Ross Kinsler, "Theological Education by Extension: Service Or Subversion?" *Missiology: An International Review* 6, no. 2 (April 1978), 184.

Consequently, non-traditional educational settings are starting to dominate the landscape. Whether it is an online program, an adult education program, or on-the-job training, education is reorienting the delivery systems to accommodate more students, many whose needs would go unmet by traditional education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, for example, 56 percent of all two and four year degree-granting institutions offered some form of distance education using instructional technology during the 2000–2001 academic year.[4] This is the new frontier.

Churches are in desperate need of leadership and leadership is in desperate need of education. Robert K. Martin supports this idea that leadership development is essential for church leaders and should be provided by theological educators:

> When approaches to church leadership are multiplying exponentially and when congregations and denominations are grasping frantically for the next best thing in leadership development, is it not the responsibility of reflective practitioners and teachers to boldly commit the socially unpardonable and ask a question of theological method and education: how do we understand what church leadership is and does; and perhaps more importantly, how might we best come to know and describe the process by which church leaders (including ourselves) investigate, reflect, and act theologically?[5]

The responsibility of educators is to create curriculum that meets the needs of the church today. Leadership development is greatly needed for all ministers whether lay leaders or clergy.

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[4] National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2003*, (Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, June 2003), 38, accessed December 31, 2014, http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/2003067.pdf.

[5] Robert K. Martin, "'Mind the Gap': Closing the Distance between Theological Method, Theological Education, and Practical Theology for Religious Leadership," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2003), 2.

These three areas—leadership development, theological education, and non-traditional educational settings—are the foci of this study. The aim of this project is to discover a model of theological education for developing church leaders that will work outside of a seminary setting.

CHAPTER ONE: PROBLEM AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Statement of the Problem

Jesus said to the disciples, "What a huge harvest! How few workers! On your knees and pray for harvest hands!" (Matt. 9:37, The Message). This idea—that there are so many jobs to do and not enough people to do them, and further, that not just anyone can do the job—transfers to many different contexts, and many teachers, leaders, or even CEOs completely understand this sentiment. For churches, as for any organization or employer, the ideal workers and leaders arrive already equipped and ready for the job's demands. The reality, though, is that most workers and leaders must be trained, and that entails some risk. Churches, ministries, or businesses cannot continue to invest in leaders by sending them elsewhere for further training because some may never come back. This loss presents a challenge in almost every organization today.

The problem this project addressed is that access to leadership development through theological education is limited in places without seminaries. This study was narrowed to ministry organizations concerned with the theological education of their leaders.

For centuries, even to the present, heresies have entered the church because of lack in foundational knowledge of theology. Therefore, it is imperative that any leadership development of ministry leaders be grounded in Scripture. In response to this problem, the researcher studied biblical models of "in situ leadership development"

through theological education. It is these examples throughout the Old and New Testament that a ministry leader should follow to develop her own style.

Because the findings in modern academic studies were also relevant for the project, the researcher reviewed the relevant literature relating to leadership development through theological education, with special attention given to models of "in-ministry formation." Further, the researcher conducted a thorough examination of the prevailing educational theories and methods in modern theological education to see if her ideas were novel or supported by academics working today.

For field research, the writer participated in a program and analyzed the leadership development process of the students in the Theological Education Initiative of Central Missouri. This organization is trying to support ministry leaders in developing their full potential to create and empower future leaders outside of a traditional educational setting. It was the perfect program for studying the effects of such training upon participants.

Lastly, the researcher discovered principles for implementing a theological education program for developing leaders in a non-traditional setting. The desire is that these principles will help others to find the right blend of leadership development, theological education, and non-traditional educational settings to create their own program for success in their areas of influence.

Delimitations

The following delimitations were imposed on the project to restrict its scope and size to adequately create an in-depth study on the subject matter.

The scope of the history of theological education is broad, detailed, and extensive. It was not possible or desirable to do a thorough review of the history of theological education for this project. Therefore, the research was restricted to the intersection of non-traditional settings and leadership development.

This project discussed some of the issues of theological education in the seminary setting but does not offer solutions for that setting. The focus was narrowed to non-traditional settings.

This project discussed leadership development outside of theological education, but only made recommendations within a ministerial context. The project was specifically created to impact people in ministry and therefore limited the recommendations for other settings.

Online learning environments are relatively new and are being thoroughly researched today. This project only provided a brief overview of them, since that form of non-traditional education setting is not the focus of the study.

Assumptions

In limiting the scope of the project, the researcher made certain assumptions in regard to the point and purpose of the project.

The first assumption was that the goal of theological education is to develop leaders. Others may feel that theological education is specifically for spiritual formation. While spiritual formation is vital to creating a Christian leader, it remains only a part of theological education, not the only goal.

The second assumption was a belief that knowledge without praxis is pointless information. The desire of education is to move the student to use the knowledge he or

she has acquired in daily life. To obtain knowledge but not use it would make the wisdom gained purposeless.

The third assumption was that ministers need an ability to persuade and lead others. They need to be able to influence others' everyday lives and affect their eternal destinies. If a pastor lacks these gifts, her job, as well as the spiritual wellbeing of her followers, would come into question. A leader has to have followers or he is not a leader.

Subproblems

After identifying the problem to address, four subproblems arose. Each of these subproblems were necessary to approach the subject through different lenses of research. Those lenses, in turn, helped find a solution addressing the original, larger problem.

The first subproblem was to identify scriptural models of theological education. These models were being used to develop biblical leaders in the context in which they lived. A thorough study of Scripture's witness to education in the Middle East was valuable to this project. The goal was to discover transferable principles for use today.

The second subproblem was to discover what the literature reveals about issues within leadership development. This was further refined to only non-traditional educational settings engaging in theological education. Consulting academic research of those who have gone before provided a foundation for moving forward to develop a new model.

The third subproblem was to conduct a case study using the phenomenological research method. This study analyzed the Theological Education Initiative and its use of theological education to develop leaders within its student population of central Missouri.

The fourth subproblem was to determine what can be learned, adopted, or adapted from the Theological Education Initiative's existing program to develop leaders. This current program offered a framework for analyzing what does and does not work in present-day education.

Setting of the Project

In 2005, Rod Casey created The Theological Education Initiative (TEI) as a non-profit based in Woodcrest Chapel to provide opportunities for local ministers to engage in theological education in Central Missouri. The first program that TEI developed was the Emerging Church Leadership Institute (ECLI), the purpose of which was to cultivate the knowledge and leadership skills of church leaders to improve their ministries and create sustainable healthy faith communities. ECLI is a three-year program of theological study at a bachelor's degree level for current ministers, with a new cohort beginning every fall. The program holds semester-long classes on a bi-weekly basis for local pastors, deacons, or developing Bible study leaders to attend, with one hundred people having taken classes since its inception. It imparts biblical principles with modern views of ministry that empower its members to make a difference in the world through theological means. The program encourages students to apply the knowledge gained from the classes in their existing ministry settings.

TEI desires to create a seminary extension campus in Columbia, Missouri. Currently, the Initiative is working with A.W. Tozer Seminary in Redding, California, to offer satellite courses for its baccalaureate degrees. The goal, however, is to become another campus location for the school, offering the entire catalog of degree programs,

not merely one or two classes. Because TEI's mission is to develop leaders by educating them, all areas of TEI involve education and leadership.

 The goal of this project was to analyze the way that TEI is educating within ECLI before the permanent seminary campus is created. The reason for this is that many churches could begin an ECLI program but not every church could begin a seminary. The analysis of this program identified transferable principles for other ministries to use for creating other educational settings.

Importance of the Project

The Importance of the Project to the Researcher

The author of this project always thrived in educational settings. In the world, she quickly discovered that the transcript in her hand could open doors and give authority. If a person was not rich, he or she could become someone through education. If a person looked young, having initials after his or her name commanded respect. If that person were female, she could gain access to new platforms from which to speak. Education elevated.

However, it also added expectations. Others assumed a graduate knew all the right answers. Leadership ability was believed to be innate. Natural public speaking skills were considered a given. Anyone with a degree above baccalaureate was automatically a teacher. This researcher was shocked when she realized that this was not the truth. American culture encourages these views of education but reality was very different.

This researcher accepted leadership roles after graduation but did not like what they brought out in her. She discovered that the way others had taught her before was not

always the preferred way, as her teaching style was judged too informal. The researcher

realized that she had been thrown into positions that her education had not prepared her

to handle. It was easy to buy into the myth that education equals leadership ability, but

the truth is that not every student who graduates will necessarily be a leader, teacher, or

innovator. It is not necessarily true that the more education a person has, the better leader

he or she is. In some cases, higher education may instill behaviors and ways of thinking

that are counterproductive to good leadership.[1]

Sometimes people with higher education adopt an elitism that alienates them from

others. In order to perpetuate the myth about the superiority of graduates and to protect

themselves from being found out as no better than anyone else, they hold others at arm's

length and react guardedly. They do not want anyone to know that education does not

automatically impart authority, give them better leadership skills, or prepare them for

being better teachers. But then the question becomes "What does it do?"[2]

The system said that this researcher had jumped through all of the hoops, that all

the right answers were given, and that she was prepared to "go out and make disciples."

Yet, that is not how it felt at all. Even more, when looking around at the others who were

graduating, it felt like some of them were even less prepared. Are these leadership

characteristics only instilled in someone by trial and error? Does a potential leader just

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[1] April A. Welch, "A Mixed-Method Approach To Correlation Between Higher Education And Effective Team Leadership In Missouri Campus Ministers" (Effective Team Leadership Project, D.Min., Bethel Seminary, 2012).

[2] Curtis L. Brungardt, "The New Face of Leadership Implications for Higher Education" (Leadership Studies Project, Fort Hayes State University, April 27, 1998), accessed August 31, 2014, http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/lead_edu.html.

have to try her hand at it to see if she can actually lead or teach others? These questions drove the desire to figure this out.

The Importance of the Project to the Immediate Ministry Context

TEI sees a need for area pastors to have the resources for their sermon preparation, devotional life, and in-depth theological study available within their reach. In fact, there are no seminaries within 100 miles of Columbia, Missouri. There are also people that need to be equipped for ministry who do not meet the requirements for admission into seminary. For those reasons, the Emerging Church Leadership Institute was created and began providing theological education to develop leaders in ministry positions within Woodcrest Chapel and other surrounding churches. The Institute has been operating for ten years and desires a thorough evaluation of the impact it has had in developing these leaders. The strengths and weaknesses of this program have been discovered to improve the program moving forward. The purpose of doing this research project was to bring about change within that organization. In this case, it is being used to prepare for the A. W. Tozer extension campus at Woodcrest Chapel in Columbia, Missouri.

The Importance of the Project to the Church at Large

The community that benefited from the research conducted in this dissertation was the theological education community. This can range from an organized seminary setting all the way to a Bible study in a local neighborhood. The implications of the study ideally will make a global change in the way that theological education is carried out.

This may take years to have such far-reaching effects, but the researcher is confident that the increases in knowledge in this subject area can influence the broader culture.

The desired good of this project is a significant impact in the way theological education is carried out. That impact would be the ability for students to walk away from education with not only the knowledge but the practical skills to apply it with successfully developed leadership skills for the implementation process of those theories. Overall, no student will leave school feeling ill-equipped as a leader in his or her field of education. Education for ministry is TEI's focus of education and is critical to people's lives and souls.

Although traditional educational settings do not typically achieve it, even someone without natural talent can be taught to be a better leader, citizen, and worker. However, leadership ability is affected by many variables: not only by education, but also by personality, position and popularity. Therefore, each student's results will vary. Attempting to uncover the multiple reasons behind how each student is affected by their education will help the researcher to provide individually-tailored educational experiences. This, in turn, will bring out the best in each student. But until the variances in students' results are understood, it will be hard to address their causes. Evaluating multiple possible factors behind the differences will help to create diverse positions on how to overcome these pervasive issues.

Research Design

This project was designed as a qualitative study utilizing case study and phenomenological research methods. Following the subproblems determined above, the first step was to study Scripture to determine biblical models of theological education

being used to develop leaders of the Bible in the context in which they live. Research looked for overarching themes and personal examples of leadership development, theological education, and non-traditional settings.

The second step in the research was to undertake a review of current literature related to the study. Research focused on the three areas of the study independently and any instances of overlap that could be found in current academic studies. The review focused on all forms of media including journal articles, books, thesis/dissertations, and web sources.

The third step in the research was to conduct the field research portion of the project. This included arranging meetings with the founder, leaders, and attendees of ECLI classes who are presently engaged in some form of leadership development within TEI. At these meetings the researcher collected several forms of data through conducted personal interviews, observation, and collection of written relevant documents including curriculum and strategic plans. All of these methods of information collection immersed the researcher in the field setting to discover the phenomenology of the program.

The fourth step required the researcher to collect, analyze, and synthesize the data from each of the preceding sources to look for unifying themes. After an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the program was conducted, a list of key components was created to determine the overall effectiveness of the program at developing leaders.

CHAPTER TWO: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

This project was created to help ministry contexts develop leaders utilizing theological education as the main mode of delivery. In this case, the project used a theological framework and then consulted the Bible for what it taught on this subject. Further, the outcome was to create leaders for ministry and therefore the model must be based on scriptural principles. The goal, through a systematic evaluation of Scripture, was to create a model of leadership development that uses theological education as the formational principle.

Leadership is for Everyone

Jesus poured His life into His apostles. They in turn taught other believers that it was not just the Pharisees or Apostles who are called to minister to others. An example of this teaching is 1 Peter 2:4-6:[1]

> As you come to Him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame" (Isa. 28:16).

Peter was speaking to new believers and reminding them of who Jesus was—"rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him." He then made a comparison between Jesus and the new believers "who are also chosen by God and precious to Him." Just as he

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible references are to *the New International Version* (Nashville,TN: Zondervan, 2002).

called Jesus "a living stone," Peter also called them "living stones." I. Howard Marshall

noticed this as well: "In this way Peter makes an incidental point to his main theme:

Whatever the world may think of Him, Christ is God's chosen and honored Servant. He

will go on to show in a moment how Christ is the prototype for believers, who also are

living stones, chosen by God."[2] This implies that the new believers were "dead" (i.e.,

"stones") and were only now coming to life.

Moreover, they were "being built into a spiritual house." Even though they were

once dead, they were coming to life and given a purpose: to be built into a spiritual

house. R. C. H. Lenski remarks on Peter's use of metaphors for believers moving from

being a house to priests: "The striking change of figure plus the advance from a house to

priests in that house is no less than grand. This is the great doctrine of the spiritual

priesthood of all believers, and that a royal priesthood, one that was long forgotten in

Catholicism but was brought fully to light again by Luther and the Reformation."[3] They

were becoming a "holy priesthood," but Peter was talking not only to people going into

professional ministry but to every reader. They too were able to offer "spiritual sacrifices

acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." In the long history of Jewish tradition, which his

readers would recall, only the priests could offer the sacrifices to God.

> In Israel of old there were three special groups: the priesthood, the Levites, and
> the warriors. In the Church, or Assembly of God, all are priests, to go unto God as
> worshipers; all are Levites, to serve their brethren in holy things; all are soldiers,
> to fight the good fight of the faith. There is no separate priesthood now, no clerical
> order recognized by God as distinct from and with authority over those who are

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[2] I. Howard Marshall, "1 Peter," *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series,* ed. Grant R. Osborne, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 67.

[3] R. C. H. Lenski*, The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the Three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), 82.

content to be called and call themselves mere laymen, or the laity. All believers
are a holy priesthood, as we learn in verse 9, a royal priesthood also.[4]

But now Peter was telling the new believers that they have taken over that role, they can

offer "spiritual" sacrifices and would not have to present physical ones. The most

important promise at the end was that "they will never be put to shame."

Jesus' style of teaching was focused on the students He had at the time: everyday

common folk. That is, He taught in a way that everyone, not only biblical scholars, could

understand. Nicholas C. Burbules explains,

> Jesus' distinctive use of parables—short fictional narratives told in the third
> person—represented a type of *mashal* not evidenced in the Jewish Bible, although
> they were part of the wider rabbinic tradition. These figurative devices allowed
> Jesus to teach in a style that provided for both "popular intelligibility and
> impressive pregnancy," an unusual achievement that managed to draw from
> familiar, concrete, and accessible examples, while at the same time inviting rich,
> multiple interpretations that avoided pedantic modes of teaching and the petty arts
> of the scholastic learning.[5]

By using metaphors comparing the kingdom of heaven to things here on earth, Jesus

worked to help the people understand not only heaven, but the God who ruled it. He gave

examples that people could connect with so that they could see themselves within the

stories.

The word "teach" is used 242 times in the New Testament, most often in reference

to Jesus. A Pharisee recognized Him as a teacher: "Now there was a Pharisee, a man

named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at

night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher who has come from God'" (John

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[4] H. A. Ironside, *Expository Notes on The Epistles of James and Peter* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux
Brothers, Inc, 1947), 28.

[5] Nicholas C. Burbules, "Jesus as a teacher." *Spirituality and Ethics in Education: Philosophical,
Theological, and Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Hanan Alexander, (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press: 2014): 4.

3:1-2). Even a member of the Sanhedrin, who were instrumental in His death, recognized Jesus as a teacher who had come from God. Therefore, it is essential to look at Him when discussing theological education.

Jesus' Educational Experience

Jesus' life was shaped by educational experiences. In Luke 2, Jesus is sitting at the feet of the rabbis in the temple. "After three days they found Him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard Him was amazed at his understanding and his answers" (Luke 2:46-47). In his study of Luke's Gospel, R. C. H. Lenski says that this passage helps to point out how unique Jesus was during His educational experience. He says,

> [Jesus] listened and He asked respectful questions. The next verse implies that He also answered questions. The teaching was not mere lecturing but was interspersed with questions both to and from the teacher. We have no unnatural picture of the lad Jesus like that found in the apocryphal gospels. He is a well-trained boy who knows His place and acts with respect toward these rabbis. But He is indeed intensely interested in all they have to say and eager to elicit more information, for these were more important men than the rabbis He could occasionally hear in Nazareth. But even so, all who were listening—and there must have been quite a few who had assembled gradually— "were in amazement."[6]

This educational experience would then shape Jesus' own ministry with the disciples. His training in the education of the day, wisdom instruction, would make Him an effective teacher for his own students. Walter Brueggemann explains,

> At the very center of wisdom instruction is a buoyant, confident affirmation of God who presides over this orderly social process that produces well-being. It is the link between pragmatic benefit and theological affirmation that makes wisdom instruction so powerful and convincing. Such teachers are not merely shrewd

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[6] R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), 164.

operators, but they spend their time trying to discern how God presides over the creation and human life.[7]

This is exactly what Jesus would do with the disciples—carry on the traditions of wisdom instruction. He would help them to discern how God presides over the creation and human life through parables. As Perry G. Downs observes,

> Jesus' purpose as a teacher was to influence the experiences of His students so that their lives would be different. He wanted them to experience God as their Father and to live in the reality of that relationship. Jesus wanted them to live righteously in obedience to the commands of God and to experience fullness of life in relationship to God. His objective as a teacher was to touch the lives of His students.[8]

The Gospels contain many examples of Jesus teaching and the apostles questioning the teaching and exploring the depths of the implications of the meaning. Four examples can be found in Matthew alone. Jesus was always willing to answer their questions and to challenge them to think theologically. He really wanted to encourage them to see spiritual truth that could be found outside of the traditional doctrines and structures that they had grown up with in their Jewish society.

Education within Scripture

Because educational settings can vary so greatly, taking diverse forms throughout history and across cultures, coming up with a broad but specific definition of a teaching situation can help identify these settings within Scripture. Herman Horne usefully offers such a definition, identifying a components of a "teaching situation" as:

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[7] Walter Brueggemann, "Passion and Perspective: Two Dimensions of Education in the Bible" *Theology Today*, 269 (1985): 176.

[8] Perry G. Downs, *Teaching For Spiritual Growth: An Introduction to Christian Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 33.

(1) a teacher; (2) a pupil, or pupils; (3) environment, which may be amplified to include classroom, laboratory, library, apparatus, etc., even the social *milieu;* (4) curriculum, or thing taught; (5) aim, or that which the teacher would accomplish by means of instruction in the life of the pupil, and (6) method, or the way of the process.[9]

In Scripture these conditions are met time and again, though not in what one would think of as a "traditional setting" in modern education. In this study, some examples identified and evaluated from the Scriptures are: Paul, Elijah and Elisha, Wisdom's Pursuit, and the Overall Pursuit of God.

Paul

Outside Jesus' experience, examples of education within the New Testament include Paul, a "Pharisee of Pharisees" (Acts 23:6). He had studied logic and law within the ranks of the religious leaders of the day. In his study of Acts, R.C.H. Lenski says of Paul: "'*I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees,* descended from Pharisee ancestry, intends to say, 'a genuine Pharisee.' In this very Sanhedrin Gamaliel had sat, a Pharisee, one of the great ornaments of Judaism, under whom Paul himself had received his education."[10] As a Pharisee, he was part of the theological education setting of Judaism of that day.

Paul became the chief educator of all of the Christian church after Jesus' death. As author of majority of the letters that are now The New Testament, and as planter of majority of the churches outside of Jerusalem, Paul's teachings permeated the church. The most eloquent and humbling passage from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians focuses on this continued wisdom tradition that we saw in Jesus' education, being passed

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[9] Herman Harrell Horne, *Teaching Techniques of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1920), 1-2.

[10] R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of The Acts of The Apostles* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), 934.

down:

> Yet among the mature, we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Cor. 2:6-8).

He understood that with wisdom, people would be able to have lives to bring God the glory and to bring them to fullness.

> For consider your call; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is source of your life in Christ Jesus whom God made our wisdom (1 Cor. 1:26-30).

It was in the Christian community that anyone was able to gain wisdom through their relationship with God. They didn't have to participate in the Sanhedrin to gain knowledge of who Jesus is or what God desires in their life. They just had to pursue after Him.

Elijah and Elisha

Elijah and Elisha, possibly the greatest prophets of the Old Testament, journeyed around Israel to visit "companies of prophets" or schools in Jericho, Bethel, and Gilgal, before Elijah was taken up to heaven (2 Kings 2). Paul R. House references this in his Commentary on 1 and 2 Kings.

> Elijah's more immediate purpose in moving from Gilgal to Bethel seems to be to see the "company of prophets" that reside in Bethel. . . Fifty prophets serve as witnesses as Elijah and Elisha stop at the Jordan. . . The fact that this group of prophets has seen this miracle becomes important later, for Elisha's repetition of the act will confirm in their minds that Elisha is truly Elijah's successor.[11]

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[11] Paul R. House, "1, 2 Kings" Vol. 8, *The New American* Commentary: *An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, (Nashville, TN: B and H Publishing Group, 1995), 258.

The form of education in which these prophets participated did not always follow with traditional models. It was more often in the form of apprenticeship, individual study, or communion with God than a teacher-pupil arrangement. August H. Konkel put it this way, "Elisha has been discipled by Elijah and anointed to be his successor and became the leader of a prophetic guild. . . The prophets of his band made a living through normal occupations, just as Elisha did until anointed as a disciple of Elijah. . . A second band of prophets from Jericho comes with news of the same revelation."[12] Because we have the evidence of these "schools" seen in the Old Testament, it may serve to help others pursue education in a "non-traditional" setting.

Wisdom's Pursuit

In Scripture there are frequent admonitions to study, meditate, and reflect on the Word of the Lord. Joshua is told by God to "keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" (Josh. 1:8). To memorize and ponder Scripture serves the purpose of educating oneself with the words so that it can impact one's life. Hebrews reminds the reader, "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Similarly, Solomon teaches us that the pursuit of the Word of God is thought to be the best education possible, above and beyond what the world has to offer. As Ray C. Stedman writes, "Scripture is the only reliable guide we have to function properly as a human in a broken

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[12] August H. Konkel, "1 and 2 Kings," *The NIV Application Commentary,* ed. Terry Muck, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 380.

world. Philosophy and psychology give partial insights, based on human experience, but they fall far short of what the Word of God can do."[13] People must personally read and individually experience Scripture if a complete education is to be attained.

Wisdom is exalted as the greatest gift of all through the writings of Solomon and the Proverbs. Gerhard Von Rad noticed this: "Wisdom, the order given to the world by God, is the most precious thing of all."[14] In Proverbs 8, Wisdom, here personified as Lady Wisdom, is clearly represented as a meaningful pursuit. To encourage willing participants to discover the truth, she explains the value of wisdom, more precious than "silver," "gold," or "rubies" (Verses 4-11). She then goes on to detail the products of wisdom: "sound judgment," "insight," "power," "righteousness," "justice," and guidance away from "evil," "pride," and "arrogance" (Verses 12-22). While speaking of her mysterious origins with the beginning of time, Lady Wisdom also makes clear her closeness to God, as she was "rejoicing always in His presence" (Verses 22-31). Lastly, she offers a plea to seek her out for one's own benefit, for the blessings and favors wisdom makes available (Verses 32-36). Leo G. Perdue notes, "Thus wisdom as teacher is the fundamental emphasis made by this [passage] … The divine wisdom that shaped the cosmos and rules providentially over creation and history is both the instructor of the unlearned and the embodiment of sapiential teaching."[15] Man must listen to and pursue her in order to pursue knowledge of and closeness to God.

Proverbs taught the followers of Yahweh how to live a rich and full life. As Von

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[13] Ray C. Stedman, "Hebrews," *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*, ed. Grant R. Osborne, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 60.

[14] Gerhard Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1972), 148.

[15] Leo G. Perdue, *Proverbs*, (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2000), 138-139.

Rad observes, "There were numerous occasions for thinking about specific limits which were encountered by the wise men in their search for knowledge and in their instructions for mastering life and for correct behavior."[16] Close study of these "searches for knowledge" and "instructions" is the path of an abundant life. As David A. Hubbard points out, "The aim of the speeches in Proverbs 1-9 has been to accent wisdom's worth and thus attract the young students who will be Israel's future leaders to pursue it with might and main. This chapter [8] is the core course in the teacher's curriculum."[17] The wisdom teachings of Proverbs serve to instill the desire to pursue after God and, further, to share the knowledge gained through that pursuit with others who come after.

<div align="center">*Pursuit of God*</div>

Time spent with God is itself an education. Learning about who He is and the desires of His heart will educate the believer not only on His will, but also about herself and her fellow Christians. It is faith in Jesus that allows one to unlock these secrets of God. He provides the wisdom of who God is and allows it to transform the seeker. Melinda Roper writes,

> Through faith in Jesus Christ, we have access to the secret and hidden wisdom of God. Our knowledge, judgment, and action, if they are to be of God through Jesus Christ, must be in harmony with the folly and scandal of the cross. Individuals, groups, and churches that claim to be Christian are those who are permeated with the wisdom of God in Jesus Christ. [18]

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[16] Von Rad, 97.

[17] David A. Hubbard, "Proverbs," *The Preacher's Commentary,* ed. Larry Ogilvie, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), 117.

[18] Melinda Roper, "Ecclesiastical Imperatives in Theological Education," *Theological Education* 19, no. 1 (09/01, 1982): 108.

Jesus was truly the perfect human being. Study of His life, His ministry, and His

character therefore provides the strengths and qualities to strive toward. A. W. Tozer tells

us that "Always, everywhere God is present, and always He seeks to discover Himself to

each one"[19] It is the pursuit of God through Jesus Christ that leads to fulfilled lives and

allows man to discover the secret to a life of purpose above and beyond selfish or worldly

concerns. Perry G. Downs emphasizes that this does not exclude other kinds of

knowledge, but the attempt to understand "the nature of God" must remain central:

> Modern Christian educators have worked hard to understand humankind—how
> we learn, how we develop, why we respond in the ways we do. Clearly the
> modern Christian educator must understand something of psychology, striving to
> comprehend the nature of persons. But there has not been equal effort to
> understand the nature of the God we serve and whose character we are to emulate.
> No wonder our faith is often feeble and our worship uninspired. We tend to put
> more emphasis on understanding people than on our understanding God. We must
> learn to do both with equal fervor.[20]

Downs here understands that a true education comes from studying the Maker.

Understanding of God will help to understand oneself, as well as the rest of humankind.

This pursuit of Him will provide the blueprint for life.

Purpose of Education

Self-Reflection and Sensitivity to Others

Ideally, education creates self-reflection and sensitivity to others. These are the

characteristics that Jesus was trying to build in His disciples. Matthew 16, for example,

reads:

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[19] A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Christian Publications, 1948), 64.

[20] Perry G. Downs, *Teaching for Spiritual Growth*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 45.

 "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" Jesus asks…"But what about you?" He asked, "Who do you say I am?"…"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:13-19).

Here, by asking the apostles who "people" say He is, Jesus was demonstrating a sensitivity to others. Then, when He asks who the apostles say He is, Jesus is teaching self-reflection. Lastly, He is calling Peter to leadership in the "kingdom of heaven" by this knowledge. This model can be utilized today in education.

To be able to influence and teach people, one must be able to understand them. Thus, says W.P. Merrill, Jesus came to not only reveal God, but also to reveal to humankind its own humanity:

His aim, as the Great Teacher of men, was, and ever is, not to relieve the reason and conscience of mankind, not to lighten the burden of thought and study, but rather to increase that burden, to make men more conscientious, more eager, more active in mind and moral sense. That is to say, He came not to answer questions, but to ask them; not to settle men's souls, but to provoke them; not to save men from problems, but to save them from their indolence; not to make life easier, but to make it more educative. We are quite in error when we think of Christ as coming to give us a key to life's difficult textbook. He came to give us a finer textbook, calling for keener study, and deeper devotion, and more intelligent and persistent reasoning.[21]

Just as the parts of the trinity are in tune with each other and model community, so can humankind reflect the trinity on earth by doing those very things. Education can help do that.

Teach Others

Teaching is an important part of successful ministry. God's desire is for His

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[21] W.P. Merrill, *Christian Internationalism*, (Whitefish, MT: Kressinger Publishing, 2007), 42-43.

followers to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have

commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20). This is the great commission that all followers of

Jesus were called to complete in one's ministry and life.

Jesus wanted the apostles to teach others through the examples of their lives and

through their words. Sometimes this would be through direct contact and simple ministry.

However, sometimes this would necessarily be through hardship and unpredictable

circumstances. In Luke 21, we see Jesus telling the apostles that they will "bear

testimony" in the midst of persecution:

> But before all this, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering
> you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and
> governors for My name's sake. This will be a time for you to bear testimony.
> Settle it, therefore, in your minds, not to meditate beforehand how to answer; for I
> will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to
> withstand or contradict. You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and
> kinsmen and friends, and some of you they will put to death; you will be hated by
> all for My name's sake (Luke 21:12-17).

Jesus knew that the world would be judging Him by what His followers would do and

say. Just by taking on the name of Jesus as "Christians," they were teaching others what

He truly is like, even if it was being done poorly. This gives great responsibility with their

words and lives to be "little Christs." If they spoke as ignorant fools, then they poorly

represent Christ. They needed to educate themselves to be able to teach others who do not

know Him.

Practical Application of Theology

There are several key passages that discuss the practical application of theology as

being essential to ministry and faith.

Jesus and His Disciples

After Jesus spent time teaching His disciples, He sent them out on the road to go and minister to others, repeating this pattern throughout the three year ministry (Luke 9 and 10). A. B. Bruce, in his book *The Training of the Twelve*, recognizes this pattern:

> The twelve are now to come before us as active agents in advancing the kingdom of God. Having been for some time in Christ's company, witnessing His miraculous works, hearing His doctrine concerning the kingdom, and learning how to pray and how to live, they were at length sent forth to evangelize the towns and villages of their native province, and to heal the sick in their Master's name, and by His power. This mission of the disciples as evangelists or miniature apostles was partly, without doubt, an educational experiment for their own benefit.[22]

He would spend time teaching and demonstrating the proper behaviors, and then He would send them out to do the same. Afterward, they would be expected to reproduce this pattern within their own disciples and churches they created.

Moses

Another example of education not for one's self but for making disciples of others is Moses. It is significant that Moses was not allowed to stay up on the mountain; he had to go down and teach the people (Exod. 24, 32). After having to leave his family and return to the Hebrew people and free them, Moses then had to teach them all he had discovered about God. He had to give them the commandments and help them build the ark and tabernacle. He had to lead them through the wilderness and deliver them to the Promised Land. For A. W. Tozer, Moses exemplifies someone who pursued after God fully:

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[22] A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1971), 99.

> Come near to the holy men and women of the past and you will soon feel the heat of their desire after God. They mourned for Him, they prayed and wrestled and sought for Him day and night, in season and out, and when they had found Him the finding was all the sweeter for the long seeking. Moses used the fact that he knew God as an argument for knowing Him better. "Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight"; and from there he rose to make the daring request, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." God was frankly pleased by this display of ardor, and the next day called Moses into the mount, and there in solemn procession made all His glory pass before him.[23]

This was not just someone who had gained knowledge of God; he had to teach others everything in a practical way. He could not keep the knowledge for himself; rather, he had to give it away or His people were going to be stuck in the spiritual slavery of Egypt. Even though they were freed physically and had left Egypt behind, they carried false gods with them into the wilderness. They even lost the first set of the Ten Commandments because of their spiritual enslavement to the golden calf. They could not see that the law set them free, that it did not bind them as in Egypt. The people needed Moses, their teacher, to help them see.

Love and Leadership

James 2:20 warns believers that faith without deeds is useless: "You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?" Having knowledge or belief in something means nothing; it is the application of that belief into the real world that makes a difference. D. Edmond Hiebert writes that the "do you want evidence*"* phrase "implies an unwillingness by the objector to face the issue. His unwillingness to agree with the truth set forth is not due to any obscurity of the subject but the reluctance

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[23] Tozer, 82.

to acknowledge the truth."[24] James is reminding the believers what they already knew: they had to put into practice what was taught to them. It was the proof that they were who they said they were. John also discusses this same idea, saying that "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (John 15:8). There is no benefit in keeping knowledge or faith for oneself.

Community is the key to ministry and requires active participation in another person's life, which is also an act of love. The early church modeled this idea. A church formed a community, where all members of that church shared both luxuries and necessities, like food, shelter, clothing, land, and so on. The community included like-minded individuals coming together to help one another in faith and in life. There are no heroes of the faith in Scripture who kept to themselves. Sharing one's faith and helping others carry their burdens are key elements to ministry and a healthy active Christianity. This is the model Jesus left for His followers.

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[24] D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Epistle of James: Tests of a Living Faith* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), 188.

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITTERATURE

Review of Related Research

A thorough review of scholarship and research in the areas of leadership

development, non-traditional ministry settings, and theological education was conducted

for this project. While there is already a wealth of knowledge in each of these areas, this

project seeks to discover the intersection of these three to help ministries develop their

own programs. Uncovering all possible approaches for this will help confirm or reject

this as a fresh approach able to equip leaders for ministry in the future.

Leadership Requires Education

> Nearly everyone in missions or Christian higher education says we are in the
> business of training developing leaders, but do we actually succeed. Seminaries,
> Bible colleges, Bible institutes, discipleship training classes, formal and
> nonformal training programs, and apprenticeship training all exist to train leaders.
> We promote TEE [Theological Education by Extension] programs, conferences,
> seminars, and workshops as leadership development. We all know of extension
> education programs, correspondence and other distance models whose designers
> claim to be training leaders. Some of us have also developed cassette training
> programs based on cassette tapes. There are church-based training programs,
> mobile institutes, camps, and desert training centers. We could name scores of
> other training models.[1]

Following this insight, Edgar J. Elliston goes on to describe in his article several of the

possibilities for leadership development in Christian higher education. The problem is

that, while choices abound, it is difficult to make an informed decision about what kind

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[1] Edgar J. Elliston, "Designing Leadership Education," *Missiology: An International Review* XVI, no. 2 (April 1988): 203.

of education really makes better leaders. This is a crucial point because leadership is the key to any organization's success. As Mandfred W. Kohl notes, "We have learned from the past that every institution, including the Church, either advances or declines depending on its leadership. Leaders reproduce what they have learned."[2] Correspondingly, the minister will tend to reproduce what he/she has learned and pass it onto the ministry participants. The output of a leader bears a resemblance to the input. Thus, Skip Bell asserts, "Religious and non-profit organizations, like for-profit organizations, need a model for transformational leadership development that integrates learning, changing, and doing into the on-going experience of their members."[3] There is an ongoing filtering of information and style between the leader and the follower. With the knowledge that the leader will only pass on what he or she has learned, one realizes that education is the key.

America today continually focuses on educational events for leadership. In the modern church, there is "Leadercast" or the "Global Leadership Summit," two-day broadcast conferences that find current leaders and scholars to share their words of wisdom. The common theme of these workshops is that good leadership requires "fine-tuning" and "ongoing work," as well as continued education. Bill Hybels, Senior Pastor of Willowcreek Community Church, challenges everyone to value leadership development: "If you care at all about the church you attend, the government you pay

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[2] Manfred W. Kohl, "Radical Change is Required for the Leadership of the Church Today 'Let's Get Back to Basics,'" *International Congregational Journal* 6, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 115.

[3] Skip Bell, "Learning, Changing, and Doing: A Model for Transformational Leadership Development in Religious and Non-Profit Organizations," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 9, no. 1 (03/01, 2010): 95.

taxes to, etc., then you better care about leadership. The future of every one of those enterprises rests on leadership." [4] For this reason, Willow Creek and other megachurches continue to develop these annual events to help support and lead Christians throughout the world. In 2014, the Global Leadership Summit reached over 200,000 leaders.

Of course, the idea that leadership requires education prevails in the business world. Most CEO's of Fortune 500 companies have MBAs or some other graduate degree.[5] Even informal education, such as the conferences mentioned earlier, or training programs within a company are seen as essential for leadership. Suggestions for books to read at home or courses based on the book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* are usually looked at as a necessary first step in developing one's leadership. Within modern social sciences, there are plenty of personality tests, emotional quotients, or leadership questionnaires for people to take and then learn about how to work with others of differing temperaments.

With this ubiquitous focus on leadership in society, Christian trainers have begun to develop an education program ideally suited for Christian leaders. A review of related research will look at these three components of a leadership education model: non-traditional settings, theological education, and leadership development.

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[4] Bill Hybels, "Hard Fought Leadership Lessons," *2014 Global Leadership Summit*, accessed on August 15, 2014, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UEXkqUjFwo61SLL8bav9ilKot9HUS2BLxMAkxgO6dU/mobilebasic?pli=1.

[5] Fiona Salvage, ed, "Alma Mater Index: Global Executives," *Times Higher Education, (*September 2013), accessed on December 7, 2014, http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/DigitalEditions/thealmamater2013/index.html.

Non-Traditional Settings

In their work on the matter, D. Bruce Roberts and Robert Reber approach the topic from a practical point of view of one whose job it is to train members of the clergy through continuing education. Surprisingly, they argue that they "know of no studies nor any evidence which would suggest that traditional approaches to continuing theological education have much, if any, effect on the actual practice of ministry."[6] This is very disheartening for those who work in the field of theological education. In fact, from the experience of one who currently participates in the pursuit of a doctoral education in ministry, it erodes one's faith in the worthiness of the endeavor.

Roberts and Reber clarify throughout their article that it is important to transform education, rather than eliminate it. They argue for a model of peer-education groups driven by creativity, rather than one stifled by old paradigms. However, it is also important to keep the first question in mind: should ministries be focusing on education to improve leadership? The results of their initial study showed that the peer-education group provided the participating pastors with greater leadership skills such as self-confidence, growth in public speaking, positive body language abilities, increased influence in family and church, and positive recognition of internal feelings. Roberts and Reber and their fellow denominational leaders used this feedback to develop additional peer-education groups throughout North America. By remodeling educational experiences for the participants, they found an increase in leadership skills in both

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[6] Robert E. Reber and D. B. Roberts, *A Lifelong Call to Learn: Approaches to Continuing Education for Church Leaders* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 17.

beginning pastors and the more advanced participants. Their research supports the idea that peer-education works to improve leadership in ministers.

Linda Cannell similarly argues for a church-based program for developing ministry leaders, instead of a traditional school setting. She contends, "Theological schools are not only dubious centers for ministry development, but they take students/leaders out of the very contexts where their skills and awareness need to be enriched," that is, the churches where they will be leaders. Cannell goes on to say, "The growing church-based theological education movement sees its mission as developing leaders in context."[7] If the church is finding and recruiting the future leaders in the first place, it also makes sense to educate those leaders as an intermediary step to entering a formal educational experience in a traditional setting.

In the seminal work *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University* Edward Farley compared the two modes of educating the future leaders, and he concluded not only that the providers of formal educational settings reform their strategy, but also that churches should begin taking up the call to educate informally. "Why is it that *theological* education—ongoing studies in disciplines and skills necessary for the understanding and interpretation of Scripture, doctrines, moral principles and policies, and areas of praxis—is taken to define something needed by Christian clergy but never by Christian laity?[8] He calls for theological education for all

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[7] Linda Cannell, "Opportunities for 21st Century Theological Education," *Theological Education as Mission*, ed. Peter F. Penner, (Neufeld Verlag Schwarzenfeld, Germany: Occasional Publications, 2005): 154.

[8] Edward Farley, *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 85.

believers, and then the formal educational institutions would start with students with a foundational knowledge.

Lynn Rhodes, a theological field educator herself, in reviewing his book stated that Farley's observations were exactly what she found was needed in her students:

> The educational process Farley outlines is addressed not only to clergy but to all believers. Students would have some experience in foundational studies and interpretation before seminary. As a field educator I applaud the emphasis on the education of *all* believers and the importance of critically examining the real work of people in relation to Christian vocation. The mainline seminaries would certainly be more focused if they could count on theological education in the church. And many people called to the ministry of the church in the world could be sustained by a church that takes their work seriously and provides a basis for critical examination of the dominant cultural values and distortions of meaningful work.[9]

In practice, the church is itself an educational institution. A sermon is at a basic level a moment of teaching others through the communicated word. Every Sunday, pastors educate their congregations in theology, history, ancient languages, and social sciences. Churches have already created small groups, bible studies, and Sunday School to further educate their members in matters of faith above and beyond the weekly message. Many churches already have training in the form of discipleship studies, membership classes, and evangelistic programs. To add another, deeper level of education in the form of formal theological training would be a natural outflow of what a church already does every week.

Agreeing with this idea, Russell W. West says, "I sense church-based theological education may yield insights for leadership educators who strive to prioritize missional

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[9] Lynn Rhodes, "Foundational Questions," *Christianity and Crisis* 3, no. 17 (April 1989): 123.

values in their formational work."[10] The church has already established those values

within its members. They, in turn, impart those to others within the congregation through

the ministries of the church. Further, in his work on theological education outside and

inside the church, West discovered that once theological education is moved outside the

church environment, it creates new problems for the people who are to become the

leaders of that church: "When church leadership formation is un-harnessed from its

missional context, the formative process is compromised, and additive renovations, while

possibly commendable in moving in right directions, will not render it complete."[11] To

have a complete theological education, one must have that education tied to context so

that the leader is prepared for the future of ministry that lies ahead.

Tim Dearborn, speaking from his own experience, describes what it was like to go

into his pastorate unprepared for all of the duties he was going to face:

> The first memorial service I ever attended in my life was as the officiant. The first
> time I had ever seen someone die was as their pastor. The first sermon I ever
> preached was before a congregation. The first couple in marriage crises I ever
> encountered was as their supposed therapist. The first budget I ever saw
> developed was as a program administrator. I may have been able to write 20-page
> papers on heaven, prepare brilliant strategies for church growth and articulate a
> clear understanding of marriage. I knew great theories of communication and the
> servant role of the pastor. However, no one had ever guided me in how to live out
> these truths. [12]

He goes on to argue that it is indeed the church's responsibility to form its own leaders:

"The responsibility for leadership formation has never left the church; rather the church

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[10] Russell W. West, "Church-Based Theological Education: When the Seminary Goes Back to Church," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 2, no. 2 (09/01, 2003): 117.

[11] West, 133.

[12] Tim Dearborn, "Preparing Leaders for the Church of the Future: Transforming Theological Education Through Multi- Institutional Partnerships," *Transformations: World Evangelical Fellowship* (Oct/Dec 1995): 7.

has not always embraced her role in forming the people of God for the work of the ministry in ways which were adequate to the cultural context."[13] He further argues that to take a minister out of the church and out of the world and put them into a seminary is to disadvantage them for the life of their ministry.

However, some would argue that returning formal educational responsibilities to the hands of the churches would be a mistake. Theologian Walter Brueggeman, for example, argues, "Perhaps the primary issue in education, in relation to the Bible, is to break the grip on church education which tends to be privatistic, idealistic, and spiritual."[14] He argues that without multi-dimensional perspectives something would be lost in the education and the product would be dysfunctional clones of the denominational leaders. Gail Hevey actually suggests the opposite of Brueggeman, that it is the seminary which is creating those types of leaders: "Traditional sources of strength—biblical and theological—are under attack … For strength to be renewed, patriarchal, hierarchical methods of operation"—in other words, the traditional structures of seminary education—"will have to be abandoned." [15] Perhaps both points of view could be correct without negating each other.

One pedagogical approach positioned between these extremes is Theological Education by Extension (TEE). Before the creation of online courses, this program targeted those rural pastors for whom a long commute would inhibit their duties to their

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[13] West, 135.

[14] Walter Brueggemann, "Passion and Perspective: Two Dimensions of Education in the Bible," *Theology Today* 269 (1985): 172.

[15] Gail Hevey, "Challenges of the Christian Inheritance," *Christianity and Crisis* 3, no. 17 (April 1989): 100.

congregations. It would eventually become the main mode by which pastors in third world countries would receive their education as well. Ross Kinsler and Ken Mulholland launched these programs in Central America, and Richard Sales launched his version in Africa.[16] These programs allowed them to reach large numbers of pastors needing help, but without needing the resources that a Seminary must raise.

Today, of course, one can hardly discuss non-traditional education settings without mentioning online programs, and these too offer something of a compromise between Hevey and Brueggemann. Just like the extension courses, they are available around the world, at a time convenient for the student, at a reduced cost for the student and school. Several schools are now wondering if these learning environments are effective or not. Numerous studies of this new form of education setting already exist today. According to Karen Swan, the prevailing thought at this point is that there is no discernable difference between online and in-seat learning environments as far as "learning effectiveness" goes.

> The goal, the raison d'etre, the stuff of education is learning. Thus learning effectiveness must be the first measure by which online education is judged. If we can't learn as well online as we can in traditional classrooms, then online education itself is suspect, and other clearly critical issues, such as access, student and faculty satisfaction, and (dare we say it) cost effectiveness are largely irrelevant. Indeed, when online learning was first conceived and implemented, a majority of educators believed that it could never be as good as face-to-face learning. Many still do. In fact, however, we now have good and ample evidence that students generally learn as much online as they do in traditional classroom environments.[17]

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[16] Richard Sales, "Theology Among The People: Theological Education by Extension and the TAP Program," *Multiple Paths to Ministry: New models for Theological Education,* ed. Lance R. Barker and B. Edmon Martin (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2004): 67.

[17] Karen Swan, "Learning Effectiveness: What the Research Tells Us," *Elements of Quality Online Education, Practice and Direction* (2003): 1.

Therefore, the focus that students have on online courses are the cost effectiveness, time

flexibility, and number of degree programs offered. As more and more higher education

institutions look for new ways to reach out to a student population, using the internet

provides access to the whole world.

The most promising form that is half-way between seminary and church-based

programs is the "in-ministry" model of theological education, also referred to as "in-situ"

theological education. This is also the model of theological education that ECLI utilizes

for its students. Linda Cannel describes this type of program:

> The in-ministry approach is related to the church-based approach but doesn't
> necessary require a shift from the seminary to the church. The resulting model of
> theological education is oriented to the whole people of God (not just to the
> training of clergy), involves learning in-ministry, may entail a coming apart for a
> time, and requires a closer relationship between the church and seminary. Study is
> integrative and collaborative. Faculty and students are involved in ministry
> together. The movement of curriculum is toward personal formation, theological
> reflection, and ministry.[18]

In the article that reintroduced this model into the scholarly circles of theological

educators, William Houts and David Sawyer explain the virtues of this model:

> The art of religious leadership is not something that is easily taught in a classroom
> or even field education setting. The unique combination of the person, gifts, and
> personality of the leader, and the context, relationships, and history of the
> congregational setting dictate the particular form of leadership at that place and
> time. We suggest that one of the best ways to foster religious leadership in a
> congregational setting is through intentional peer learning groups. These groups
> have certain characteristics which allow for personal growth and discovery,
> allowing individuals to lead with integrity and imagination in new and unique
> ways.[19]

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[18] Cannell, 154.

[19] Willem Houts and David R. Sawyer, "Learning Religious Leadership *In Situ*," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 11, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 65.

They found that this model of education helped to make their learning current, contextual, and continual since the students could immediately apply what they had learned. By utilizing peer learning groups, or cohorts, the students developed relationships at a deeper level, which they could then use to more profoundly engage in the educational process and to encourage each other in the hard parts of ministry life. Under this model, the additional relational aspect also led to higher ministry retention numbers among the participants.

After extensive study on theological education, this researcher sees that the general scholarly consensus is that seminaries are in need of a change. Russell West describes this struggle:

> Although it is not always recognizable, educators involved in church leadership formation are caught in a predicament. They have accepted a share in the task of forming church leaders. They do so often in the hallowed halls of theological learning and tradition. However, they do so often with a serious methodological handicap. They perform their work at the distinct disadvantage of working, sometimes cloistering, beyond the walls of the operational context—the local church.[20]

In response to similar observations, some groups are currently trying to work within a seminary setting to add a practical component, such as theological field education or service learning. Glenda Hope, director of the San Francisco Network Ministries, has created one version of this type of program which

> has moved academic work out of the seminary classroom and relocated it in learning centers around the city which are locations for ministry. This was done to help students make real connections between academic life and ministry. Both happen in the same place and must daily relate to each other,[21]

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[20] West, 113.

[21] Janet Burks, "Seminary in the Streets: The Network Center for the Study of Christian Ministry" *Christianity and Crisis* 3, no. 17 (April 1989): 117.

Hope created The Network Center because of her experience in the classrooms of San

Francisco Theological Seminary, the format of which, she felt, did not help her when she

began her ministry. In her view, the traditional versions of internships or field experience

from her school and other schools were not helping to build ministers. This version of

education was failing them. Students were not able to see how the theory they learned in

the classroom was carried out in everyday life, nor could they take what they were doing

in the field and then understand the spiritual component of it. But at The Network Center,

her students bring these things together by taking one class per semester in a different

learning center at a homeless shelter, a teen drug rehabilitation center, or an art center.

For 16 years these students have ministered to the marginalized people of San Francisco,

thereby learning and practicing service simultaneously. They feel this makes what they

are learning practical in the moment, not just in theory.

This is the exact idea behind the service-learning movement in academia today as

well. Whether it is in the form of theological field education, service learning, or

internships, sacred institutions are beginning to realize how necessary it is for their

students not to be cloistered in their ivory tower but to instead get down and meet the

masses. Beth Ackerman explains that because the "emphasis on the spiritual development

of students [in] Christian colleges and universities … goes beyond the social-emotional

aspects acknowledged by secular institutions of higher education," there are

> Certain attributes … common among Christian institutions that naturally foster
> the integration of service and learning. The primary attribute is the values-
> centered curriculum and co-curriculum at Christian colleges and universities, but

their emphasis on teaching over research and smaller class sizes also facilitates service-learning.[22]

Service-learning and theological field education are natural extensions of their makeup, and they can be approached a number of ways. There is the fully integrated model described above at the Network Center, which can last several semesters. Next, there is a traditional internship, lasting anywhere from one to two semesters from most seminaries. Lastly, one could incorporate a service-learning project into one or all of the student's classes, involving anything from a day-long to a semester-long commitment. No matter the term of service, service-learning completely integrates with the course subject of the class and is the direct application of the subject matter. All of these are an attempt to help seminaries add more "non-traditional" settings within their degree programs so that students fully integrate theory with praxis. This trend goes against the traditional Schleiermacher's theory/practice split, which insisted that students learn church history, biblical languages, and systematic theology before being allowed to practice theology.[23]

Further, research suggests that changes in student demographics demand a greater availability of non-traditional educational settings. The Fund for Theological Education asked the Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education to help document the changes in the student bodies and to test competing hypotheses about what the changes mean. Significantly, writes Barbara Wheeler, "The survey confirmed that current students

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[22] Beth Ackerman, "Service Learning at a Faith-Based Institution," *SEEN* (March 31, 2010), accessed January 1, 2013, http://www.seenmagazine.us/articles/article-detail/articleid/572/service-learning-at-a-faith-based-institution.aspx.

[23] Craig Van Gelder, "Theological Education and Missional Leadership Formation: Can Seminaries Prepare Missional Leaders for Congregations?" *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation: Helping Congregations Develop Leadership Capacity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009): 35.

are older. The average age is 35, and nearly 60 percent of students are over 30. Roman

Catholic seminarians tend to be the oldest students, rabbinical students the youngest. All

are older, on average, than the sample of law students (26) and medical students

(24.3)."[24] These older students cannot always leave their lives to become full-time

students. They face difficulty in accommodating a school schedule into their daily lives.

Following from this, Jackson Carroll has an important question for educators to ask,

"What does the increase in older students mean—a new maturity, or difficulty in

succeeding elsewhere? No single, simple, or agreed-upon answer exists, but the question

deserves careful attention." [25] Regardless of the reasons, this is a problem that could be

solved by using non-traditional settings. Older students might be better served by night

classes or online classes, for instance. Some take the route of ECLI, attending a program

that is not accredited but, at a lower cost, gives the students the knowledge to succeed.

West reminds us that "it should be of interest [to seminaries] because emerging church-

based formation options [of theological education] may represent market shifts that

evidence a preference for low-cost, in-context, just-in-time training over and against

expensive, residential or delayed implementation models [of seminaries]."[26]

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[24] Barbara Wheeler, "Fit for Ministry?," *The Christian Century* (April 11, 2001): 16-23.

[25] Jackson W. Carroll, "The State of the Art," *Christianity and Crisis* 3, no. 17 (April 1989): 109-110.

[26] West. 114.

Theological Education

Throughout a literature review of this topic, theological education's mandate to focus on leadership was repeated again and again. Manfred Waldemar Kohl puts it this way:

> "Theological education must put greater effort into spiritual formation as part of ministry skills, teaching-and especially modeling/practicing-servant leadership. Theological education *must* focus on training outcomes, on the effectiveness of graduates in ministry. Realistic analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of a school's graduates is essential."[27]

Effectiveness in ministry has been key to evaluating whether a student had truly grasped the purpose of the educational experience at all. "Nearly all of these [theological] institutions state," Kohl goes on, "that the purpose of their existence is to help the Church by providing trained leadership for the various ministries of the Church."[28] Many scholars feel that various theological institutions are failing to meet this mandate. However, when thoroughly studied, some scholars find that in fact theological education does an even better job of focusing on leadership than other types of education. Richard Valantiss states, "Theological educational communities stand apart from all other educational institutions by virtue of their emphasis not only on training and formation, but also on the goal of formation as effective leadership of local religious communities and missions."[29] Many other schools focus on teaching the student to perform a series of tasks or even analytical skills to figure out complex problems. By contrast, theological

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[27] Manfred Waldemar Kohl, "Radical Transformation in Preparation for the Ministry," *International Congregational Journal* 6, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 41.

[28] Kohl, 41.

[29] Richard Valantasis, "Creating Visionary and Enhanced Theological Institutions," *Teaching Theology and Religion* 8, no. 1 (01, 2005): 11.

education focuses not only on the knowledge acquired, but the whole person carrying out the tasks.

Going back to the roots of theological education, there was an emphasis on developing the individual student's ability to reason and to put forth a response to what they had discovered about God. Walter Brueggeman reminds us that "education in ancient Israel is education in a quite concrete passion. Education consists in the older generation communicating its concrete passions to the younger generation and, hopefully, having that younger generation appropriate them with zeal and imagination."[30] The focus with Ancient Israel was on the community. Each leader would not focus on their own ideas or ministries, but rather on what is best for the community as a whole. Brueggemann continues, "Education in passion, in the Bible, is nurture into a distinct community that knows itself to be at odds with dominant assumptions. Torah education is an insistence on being fully covenanted Israel who has been chosen, summoned, commanded, and promised"[31] It is through interaction with the community that the Hebrew student learns what is needed of them.

The modus operandi of theological education in Israel was narrative. This is alive and well in the Old Testament, and also in what would eventually become the Talmud, the oral Torah. "Education in this mode," according to Brueggemann, "consists in telling and hearing stories that are deeply rooted in the memory and experience of this people, but which are open-ended and can be imaginatively carried in many different directions

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[30] Brueggemann, 172.

[31] Brueggemann, 173.

depending on need, possibility, and circumstance."[32] They laid the foundation of their

education with interpretation and application of these lessons. Brueggemann goes on to

say, "Education must equip the next generation of prosperous believers with a perspective

on ethics and epistemology that will withstand the scrutiny of a pluralistic culture."[33]

This generation must live within, not of, the world in which they are found.

On the other hand, the seminaries are the sites of the current theological

educational issues, not the students. Jackson Carroll, in his study on "The State of the

Art," evaluated seminaries and determined that the chief issues that they are facing are:

"gaining clarity about their central mission and embodying it in their programs";

developing and retaining leaders and administrators; and financial issues with inflation,

fund raising, and student debt.[34] Things cannot stay the same within our current

seminaries. Students need practical experience within their education. They need strong

leaders to guide them into ministry for the future. They also need to be able to pay for

their education without placing themselves in financial distress. The choice belongs to the

seminaries about whether they are going to address these issues to attract more students.

It also belongs to the students who choose to attend or not based on how the seminaries

react.

Cornel West brings up the point that seminaries are "within" academia and not

concerned enough about preparing ministers. This could be a critical issue for divinity

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[32] Brueggemann, 173.

[33] Brueggemann, 176.

[34] Carroll, 109-110.

schools being a distraction from students wanting a practical education. He describes the

problem:

> First, the seminaries and divinity schools in which preparation for the Christian
> ministry takes place are increasingly in the grip of either a debilitating ethos of
> academic professionalization and specialization, or a parochial intellectual
> atmosphere of denominationalism and dogmatism…In this way, the very
> character of our seminaries and divinity schools makes it difficult to provide an
> adequate preparation for the vocation (not the profession) of ministry to the
> people of God (not the denomination).[35]

The purpose of theological education is to give people a theological framework through

which to understand the world. Seminaries have traditionally directed the familiar

academic structures toward discovering matters of a spiritual nature. However, people

feel that sometimes the academic structures created in theological education have left

others behind.

Farley called this a "mystery." "We are exploring the mystery of why the ideal of

an educated clergy is found alongside a complacency over uneducated believers in the

life of the church."[36] The result is that theological education becomes primarily for those

who have spent the time in the ivory tower and not those down in the trenches of

everyday life. Thus, says Rhodes,

> the gulf between seminary and church increases, and it becomes easy to conclude
> cynically that what is taught in the seminaries is not really "relevant" to what goes
> on in the churches. That conclusion, according to Farley, is wrong. We are led to it
> because of a confusion within seminary education. On the one hand, seminaries
> still operate as if they were "houses of authority," with the "presumption that the
> historical vehicles through which the community of faith preserves its tradition

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[35] Cornel West, "Imperatives of Seminary Reform" *Christianity and Crisis* 3, no. 17 (April 1989): 101.

[36] Farley, 92.

(Scripture, dogmas, magisterium) have as such, a priori, the character of truth. Accordingly, other truths can be settled, it is thought, by reference to [them].[37]

The idea is that theological education can reflect both real life and the necessities of the church at the same time. This is one of the many reasons that ECLI has developed its format to be open to anyone in a position of leadership, for example, Bible study leader, small county pastor, recovery ministry leader, or hospitality manager. As long as the individual has contact with others and is trying to lead them in a Christlike manner, ECLI will educate him or her in the basics of theology.

Leadership Development Is Essential for Ministry

Regardless of whether that person is liked or effective, whoever is in charge of a ministry is necessarily a leader, by example if nothing else. It is therefore imperative that they become a good one. "This," says Peter W. Marty, "is where pastoral leadership figures in. A pastor has the daily privilege and responsibility of molding an uneven mass of clay and teaching selflessness to people who may be inclined toward a degree of selfishness."[38] Because people are easily caught up in their own selves, leaders must first model that selflessness. From there, they can then help guide others toward that mode of life. This equals leadership.

Leadership then requires education. While there is some disagreement about this—D. B. Roberts, for example, asks, "Is there any evidence that the actual practice of ministry in real congregations is positively influenced or impacted by continuing

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[37] Rhodes, 122.

[38] Peter W. Marty, "Shaping Communities: Pastoral Leadership and Congregational Formation," *For Live Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008): 319.

education events for laity and clergy?" [39]—both research and institutional practice

suggest higher education is a prerequisite for ministry leadership. Indeed, many churches

and ministries require their pastors to obtain at least a bachelor's degree and even a

master's. Some denominations even require a doctorate before permitting a pastor in the

pulpit to preach. Ian Markham agrees with that premise: "We like to believe that the

leadership of a congregation is improved when that person has a graduate degree and

three years of study. "[40] Similarly, William Houts and David Sawyer observe that "the

teaching of religious leadership is an art that has grown and developed over the past half

century at an amazing rate, showing a greater depth and breadth in preparing women and

men to tackle the challenges that they will find in congregational settings as they engage

in professional ministry."[41] Improvements in education have led to better quality leaders.

George G. Hunter III focuses on a minister's whole person affecting his ability to

lead. The minister needs not only leadership, but also management and administration.

"As organizations become more complex and as environments become more competitive

and volatile," Hunter argues, "organizations need both leadership and management to be

effective."[42] Nevertheless, when asked to choose, he brings leadership to the forefront as

the more important quality. He explains,

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[39] D. B. Roberts, "Does Continuing Theological Education Improve Congregational Leadership?" *Clergy Journal* 81, no. 1 (10, 2004): 17-8.

[40] Ian S. Markham, "Theological Education in the Twenty-First Century," *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 1 (Winter 2010), 157.

[41] Houts, 66.

[42] George G. Hunter, III, *Leading and Managing a Growing Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 25.

My experience in church organizations persuades me that all three terms, and another–leader, manager, administrator, and executive–are useful in understanding how churches, and church organizations, are guided and pulled in ways that help achieve their missions. I propose the following distinctions: leadership is the most important role of the three.[43]

Someone can have management and administration skills, but if he lacks leadership he will not be an effective minister.

In the past, leadership for a pastor meant management and administration. With all of the large churches today, this leadership style does not work and creates burnout within ministry quickly. So in today's congregation, leadership means delegation. That is, the head pastor leads a team of administrators and managers to handle the organization, allowing for more personal ministry on the pastor's part. In her study on the characteristics needed for effective 21st century ministry, Jill Hudson discovered that "whether working to encourage members in developing and executing their own leadership gifts or working with the official or elected leaders of the church, the pastor serves as leadership coach."[44] A pastor does not only lead his members; he creates leadership in them, "encourag[ing] the use of teams and … model[ing] healthy team leadership by how he or she recruits, trusts, and supports the team."[45] A minister essentially must have an ability to lead a ministry team.

A ministry setting full of educated leaders is the ideal. Because lay people have over time realized a greater opportunity for ministry, it is now more important than ever to educate the people to make this opportunity more ideal. Richard Rebers and D.B.

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[43] Hunter, 26.

[44] Jill M. Hudson, "Twelve Characteristics for Effective 21st-Century Ministry," *Congregations* 37, no. 3 (06/01, 2010): 5-6.

[45] Hudson, 6.

Roberts focused their research on lay ministers and they came to the conclusion "that continuing education for ministry must involve both clergy and laity. After all, we are all involved in ministry together and need to offer educational programs that inform, enrich, and enable the ministry of all God's people."[46] If the church truly is a "priesthood of believers," then all members of the congregation should pursue education and equip themselves to lead. Therefore, a pastor, being the leader of the congregation, must equip himself or herself to work with the congregation to that end.

Linda Rhodes discovered something important when she attended a meeting with denominational executives. She asked them to outline the kinds of leadership they think the churches will need over the next 10 to 20 years. "The list of expectations", she said, "was over-whelming: Seminaries and divinity schools should be training leaders who are theological reflectors, organizers, spiritual guides, prophets, fund raisers, counselors, and preachers."[47] To master multiple aspects of leadership requires extensive education. To develop this type of educational program to build that kind of leader is the challenge that educational institutions face across all degree programs. They "often must first expose many students to much of the Christian tradition while they also attempt to shape students into Christian ministers of various sorts."[48] The majority of the literature appears to come to a consensus that ministerial degree programs should focus on leadership and then let the practical field education deal with the specifics of their various duties. Janet Burks discovered that:

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[46] Reber, 48.

[47] Rhodes, 121.

[48] West, 102.

Nonetheless, those who have participated—faculty, ministry supervisors, and students—emphasize the importance of a more experiential form of education for ministry. McKenzie, former center teacher who now pastors an inner-city church, reflects that "faculty, those responsible for training the leaders of tomorrow, need to be more accountable to the church, immersed in the realities of everyday life that pastors face if they are going to provide the tools that are truly needed to do ministry in today's world.[49]

Burks reflects the thesis of this project, that by combining experientially-based knowledge with the traditional approach to theological education, and by incorporating all of these three areas—non-traditional settings, theological education, and leadership development—the development of ministry leaders can be improved.

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[49] Burkes, 121.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS OF FIELD RESEARCH

Project Overview

This project required planning and performing several forms of research. These steps were sometimes carried out concurrently, and all were necessary to complete this dissertation.

Step One

The first step was to review Scripture to determine the biblical models of theological education used to develop leaders in the context in which they live. From that, the first conclusion reached was that Scripture characterizes leadership as important for everyone. Here, Jesus's own teaching methods with His disciples became the focus of the study, which then analyzed how Jesus's own educational experiences influenced the teaching style that He would employ later on. Most significantly, the Jewish tradition of wisdom teaching strongly influenced the ways that He taught.

A systematic approach naturally prompted an examination of other educational experiences in Scripture, as well as their purposes. The call to all of humanity to pursue understanding of God was the first such educational experience. The study then proceeded to a deeper look into the pursuit of wisdom that is a meta-narrative within Jewish literature and teachings. Elijah and Elisha's prophet schools were then investigated as Old Testament examples of how this was carried out. Because Paul is, outside of Jesus, the biblical figure about whom the most information is known. Paul is of

course the author of the majority of the New Testament, and he also served as a model of how education was handled. From there, the question of the true purpose of education was addressed. The analysis of Jesus, informed particularly by Matthew 16:13-19, concluded that He led through self-reflection and sensitivity to others in order to successfully teach them.

Lastly, the study turned to the practical applications of theology modeled by Jesus and Moses. In His ministry, Jesus would teach His disciples and then require them to immediately go out and practice what they had learned. Moses, the other example, demonstrated that love is required to be a great leader and to put theology into practice.

Step Two

The second step in the research was to review the current literature related to the dissertation topics. Research focused primarily on the argument that successful leadership requires education. Because the literature revealed that many are dissatisfied with the current state and offerings of traditional educational settings, the study also explored current trends in and results from non-traditional educational settings. Across the board, the literature called for change.

Moreover, the current state of theological education in academia was evaluated through the extant literature. Once again, the literature unambiguously made appeals for changes in modern theological education. The results are showing that the divorce of praxis from knowledge is creating a disadvantage for students once they leave the world of academia and return to the ministry that they are to live out in their daily lives.

The research examined leadership development within ministry. It showed that because leadership is essential for ministry to be effective, leadership training must also be a central element in the education of future ministers.

Step Three

Field research was the third step of the project. A phenomenological approach was chosen for this study because it illuminates the specific and investigates phenomena through how they were perceived by the actors in the situation. This concern for the experience from the perspective of the individual helps bracket taken-for-granted assumptions and usual ways of perceiving. In the human sphere, the phenomenological approach normally translates into gathering deep information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions, and participant observation, and then representing it from the perspective of the research participants. Further, phenomenology allowed the researcher to be in the position of a "situated knower." Since the researcher has been a part of the research setting since its creation, this form of qualitative research was recognized to be the best method for this topic.

Field research was conducted through the Emerging Church Leadership Institute. The study examined the Institute by conducting personal interviews, observing leadership training events, observing the learning environment and interactions between students and teachers, and obtaining relevant documents including curriculum and strategic plans.

Primary data for this field research study came from personal interviews with volunteers from the current pool of ECLI graduates. Participation was completely voluntary and not coerced, so as not to influence interview responses. Forty-two graduates were contacted via email, the addresses having been obtained through Church

Community Builder (CCB), the database used by the church and TEI. This group was chosen because of their full participation in all of the programs of ECLI, as opposed to current students who had not completed the program. They received the participant letter and pre-interview guide (Appendix A) on May 21, 2014. The graduates were asked to respond to the researcher via email with three potential interview dates and times. A total of twelve graduates initially responded, and after attempts to confirm dates and times for interviews, a total of seven graduates were able to confirm and keep the initial appointment schedule.

Between June 1 and September 1, 2014, the researcher interviewed seven graduates of ECLI. The interviews took place in the TEI classroom, behind closed doors for the interviewees to feel comfortable. Each interview was conducted using a video camera to document the experience and each interview was later transcribed. Before beginning the interview, the researcher again went over the pre-interview guide and participant letter with the participants and asked them to officially sign, indicating their voluntary participation. Each interview was conducted using the pre-approved questions (Appendix B). Only when the interviewees requested further clarification or when they had previously answered the question did the researcher give further information on the question's subject matter. In order to give each interviewee five minutes to complete each of the questions, the interviews were scheduled for a one-hour period of time. None of the interviews reached or exceeded the time allotment.

It was not until after all of the interviews were conducted that the researcher discerned that all participants in the one-on-one personal interviews had graduated from ECLI and gone on to become teachers in the ECLI program. This unique position gave

the participants a perspective different than the remaining graduates who did not go on to teach within the program. Therefore, using the online survey software, Qualtrics, the researcher reached out to the remaining graduate population to gain more insight from them. The use of an online survey method increased the level of voluntary participation by giving participants the freedom to complete the project on their own time. The survey questions were the exact questions used in the personal interviews so that it could be determined if there would be unique themes among the graduates versus the graduate/teachers, only this time participants would respond in typed paragraph form. The request for the remaining 35 graduates to participate in this new survey in place of the personal interviews was sent out on November 23, 2014, once again accompanied by the pre-interview guide and the participant letter. The survey opened with the same instructions given to the participants of the personal interviews: to write the answers all in one sitting, to not self-edit, and to write any and all ideas that come to mind when reading those questions. So that participants could not go back and edit answers, the survey prohibited them from going backwards in the survey. This would be similar to the personal interview in that the participants could not "take back" what was previously said. The Qualtrics survey obtained responses from 11 graduates by December 31, 2014. This brought the total of participants to 18 of 42 for a 43 percent participation rate.

Following phenomenological research protocol, immersion within the ECLI program provided the secondary data source for the field research. The researcher participated in leadership training events held by TEI during 2014: The Chick-Fil-A Leadercast in May, Theological Education Weekend with Dr. Gerald McDermott in July, and The Global Leadership Summit in August. In addition, the researcher observed the

learning environment and interactions between students and teachers during both the

Spring and Fall semesters of 2014. Lastly, the researcher obtained relevant documents,

including curricula and strategic plans for all past classes as well as for future ones.

Step Four

The fourth step required the researcher to collect, analyze, and synthesize the data

from each of the preceding sources to identify unifying themes. She used the Atlas.ti

software for compiling all of the data and coding units of meaning to look for the final

themes within the field research. After analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the

program, the researcher created a list of key components for determining the program's

overall effectiveness at developing leaders.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The epistemological position of this study can be formulated as follows: the data are contained within the perspectives of people involved with ECLI, either in a coordinating capacity or as program participant; and because of this the researcher engaged with the participants in collecting the data.

The data from the qualitative field study included interview transcripts, survey answers, and field notes from the researcher's participation in the organizations events. This data was then explicitated and coded into themes following the phenomenological approach of Hycner's explicitation process[1]. This explicitation process has five steps or phases which are: bracketing and phenomenological reduction; delineating units of meaning; clustering of units of meaning to form themes; summarizing each interview, validating it and where necessary modifying it; and extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary. As an overview to the process, summaries of units of meaning for each question will be given, followed by the overarching themes of the entire project.

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[1] R. H. Hycner, "Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview data," In A. Bryman & R. G. Burgess (Eds.), *Qualitative Research* Vol. 3, (1999): 143-164.

Question One

Please describe as detailed as possible what you understand ECLI to be.

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 1. Question One Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
theological education	13	0.23
Leaders	7	0.09
ministry	6	0.64
teach others	6	0.13
effective leaders	2	0.09
leadership development	2	0.07
for everyone	1	0.11

The answers show the students believe that ECLI's primary functions are theological education and leadership development. Student #1 articulated it like this:

> The way I understand ECLI, it was to take church leaders, or I guess emerging church leaders, and instruct them in basic elements of theology, hermeneutics, apologetics, church health and related topics that would help them to be more effective leaders and hopefully to be able to pass on some of this to other people who they might come into contact with. In other words it isn't about us, it was about other people who weren't here.

The student not only sees the purpose as personal development for his leadership, but also as helping others develop this within themselves. As indicated by the table above, ministry and teach others were themes given by other respondents frequently and were seen as important as indicated by the previous answer.

Question Two

Please describe in as much detail as possible how you got involved in ECLI.

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 2. Question Two Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
invitation	9	0.75
nomination	6	0.5
Leaders	4	0.1
ministry	4	0.08
theological education	4	0.05
Dr. Rod	3	0.23
spiritual formation	3	0.05
teach others	3	0.04
time commitment	3	0.12
orientation	2	0.08
continued educational pursuit	1	0.06
Hermeneutics	1	0.06
hesitation	1	0.06
leadership development	1	0.03

ECLI uses a nomination and invitation process for acquiring new students wherein former students and staff members nominate candidates to the program. No formal advertising is used to attract people to the program. The director looks over the nominations and then sends out invitations accordingly. Consequently, that process dominates the answers to this question, with nomination and invitation coming in as the top two responses.

Student #12 described his process, "I was invited/nominated by a participant completing the 3 year program. It fit my life circumstances well and my desire to know

more about God and I'll always be grateful I said 'Yes'." No graduates gave any

indication of regret or discouragement for participating in the program.

Question Three

Please describe as detailed as possible your participation in ECLI.

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 3. Question Three Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
theological education	10	0.13
graduate	7	0.64
time commitment	7	0.33
student	3	0.23
TEI seminars	3	0.16
cohort	2	0.11
Hermeneutics	2	0.13
teacher	2	0.09
apprentice	1	0.09
donations	1	0.09
Dr. Rod	1	0.07
teach others	1	0.01

In their responses, graduates focused on theological education. A majority indicated that

they were graduates and discussed the time commitment the program required for the

three years. Some discussed the cohort model that the program utilizes to keep the same

group of students together through the three years as a support system for the individuals.

Student #10 gave insight into her perspective of the program, "I attended and

participated in each class assigned to my cohort. I participated by reading all assigned

material and engaging in each classroom format by asking questions and processing

material within the group. I appreciated the opportunity for group dynamics of dialogue

and discussion v[ersu]s only lecture." She appreciated the diversity of presentation styles

from the instructors. The use of interaction within the group setting to discover the

material also stands out as significant, being preferred to lectures about the material.

Question Four

Please in as much detail as possible describe what you felt you received from your participation in ECLI.

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 4. Question Four Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
theological education	12	0.16
teach others	8	0.13
spiritual formation	7	0.23
ministry	5	0.11
leadership development	4	0.13
cohort	3	0.17
effective leaders	3	0.19
Hermeneutics	3	0.21
accessibility	1	0.08
continued educational pursuit	1	0.06
teacher	1	0.04
TEI seminars	1	0.05
time commitment	1	0.04

Once again, the overwhelming response is that theological education was a central

benefit of the program. A large portion of respondents also identified developments in

their own spiritual formation and an increased ability to teach others as significant

outcomes.

Student #8 aptly describes all three of these ideas in his answer:

A solid foundation and process in which to better understand and interpret God's
Word. These tools help me to be better prepared to deliver God's message from
not only the Pulpit but also during every day encounters with friends, family, and
co-workers. Proper interpretation of the Bible is key when faced with difficult
questions from non-believers.

The reach of ECLI for this student was not only in his own life, but in the lives of those

he ministers.

Question Five

**Please describe as detailed as possible the ministry that you were involved in before
ECLI.**

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 5. Question Five Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
Ministry	12	0.31
Leaders	11	0.34
teach others	11	0.18
Teacher	4	0.19
theological education	4	0.05
leadership development	1	0.03
time commitment	1	0.04

ECLI is the "Emerging Church Leadership Institute," so participants should be leading in

some ministry capacity. This helps to understand the responses above. Quite a few of the

participants were serving already in a teaching capacity as well. This question was asked,

to identify what type of participants were engaged in the program, but also what

ministries were previously participated in by those who would go on to graduate.

Student #1 shared the story of what brought him not only to ECLI, but also to his

church, Woodcrest Chapel:

> I married my wife and one of the conditions was that we had to go to church. She brought me to Woodcrest. And I just kinda lopped along here for two or three years, enjoyed it, and didn't participate much. Until I broke a knee cap. I couldn't do the things that I wanted to do physically. So somebody suggested that I take the Discover Class. And then that I go to men's ministry and I did it with a whole lot of suspicion. Because how do I sought groups like that, they end up, I mean I'm joking, but end up selling lightbulbs, and cookies, and having fundraisers, and things like that, that I just hate. And what I found, was it wasn't like that at all. And I found a marvelous group of men. And actually after three years, I ended up facilitating classes. I ended up doing a lot of reading. I ended up even leading the ministry for two years. So I became very active and um that sorta was a lead I guess to bringing me to ECLI.

For him, ECLI was the culmination of all that God was doing in his life and leading him

toward. He went from not even wanting to attend church to becoming an active leader in

his ministry community.

Question Six

Please in as much detail as possible describe the ministry that you are involved in now.

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 6. Question Six Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
ministry	7	0.16
teach others	7	0.11
Leaders	6	0.17
effective leaders	1	0.06
hesitation	1	0.06
leadership development	1	0.03
spiritual formation	1	0.03
theological education	1	0.01
time commitment	1	0.04

A majority of the graduates are now participating in ministry and teaching others on a weekly basis. This is important because it reflects the explicit purpose of ECLI. Significantly, six respondents also self-identify as leaders. Further, for a majority of the respondents, there was a change in the degree of ministry participation from before the program to now. Only one respondent identified as doing less, because she needed a break. Student #6 gave the answer that every teacher hopes to hear from their students, "Many of the same [ministries] as before. Just have more confidence." It is indicative of the program's quality that it has given her more confidence to do what God has called her to do.

Question Seven

Please describe as detailed as possible the difference that you see between the two ministries now.

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 7. Question Seven Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
theological education	7	0.09
teach others	5	0.08
leadership development	3	0.1
spiritual formation	3	0.09
teacher	3	0.14
hesitation	1	0.06
ministry	1	0.02
time commitment	1	0.04

Students most frequently identified a greater base of theological knowledge and their

increased ability to teach others as the central differences. Student #4 describes it this

way:

> The ministries are no different, but now I bring additional knowledge and
> maturity to the table. I am both more excited, and more patient now. I have a
> more gentle approach to learning and to working with people. I am more solid in
> my beliefs, but also more open to gaining greater understanding that might cause
> me to alter those beliefs and their application slightly. I also feel better equipped
> to resource people when they have questions that require their own investigation
> and discovery.

She describes a change in her leadership development, her ability to teach others, and

also her own theological beliefs. All of these themes are central to the program's goals.

Question Eight

Please describe in as much detail as possible what ECLI did for you personally.

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 8. Question Eight Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
spiritual formation	7	0.23
theological education	7	0.09
leadership development	4	0.13
teach others	4	0.06
cohort	3	0.18
continued educational pursuit	1	0.07
ministry	1	0.02

The key benefits the graduates identified were in the areas of spiritual formation and theological education. Leadership development and their ability to teach others came in as secondary responses. All of these areas are fundamental goals for the program, and with the desired outcomes being reached, the director would call the program a success.

Student #3 identified these areas in her answer, "Personally, ECLI deepened my understanding of religion, helped me fine tune what I believe and gave me confidence to share my beliefs with others and back them up with knowledge." The responses were unanimous in their praise of ECLI. No students complained of negative consequences of the program.

Question Nine

Please describe as detailed as possible what ECLI did for you in your ministry.

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 9. Question Nine Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
teach others	5	0.08
leadership development	4	0.13
theological education	3	0.04
ministry	2	0.04
spiritual formation	2	0.06
teacher	2	0.09
hesitation	1	0.06
student	1	0.07
time commitment	1	0.04

Once again, students identified an increased ability in teaching others as the chief result of the program. Leadership development and theological education were also cited by several respondents. Student #9, in working with Recovery ministries, describes the experience this way: "In dealing with emotional health, there is always a skewed view of God in there somewhere. I have been able, because of ECLI classes, to state the true nature of God (with Scripture to back it up) to help people move along in their spiritual journey." Her ability to translate what she has learned to impact other's spiritual journeys is considered success for the program directors to identify as a development that they have made through the implementation of the program.

Question Ten

Please describe in as much detail as possible what you would say to someone outside of ECLI what the program is all about.

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 10. Question Ten Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
theological education	10	0.13
teach others	5	0.08
leadership development	4	0.13
spiritual formation	4	0.12
Leaders	3	0.08
for everyone	2	0.17
accessibility	1	0.08
effective leaders	1	0.06
ministry	1	0.02
time commitment	1	0.04

Obviously, theological education is the main component of the ECLI program. However, the positive identification of spiritual formation, leadership development, and the ability to teach others most strongly encourages the directors about the impact of the program. That these benefits are identified by program participants proves that the program is more than just the acquisition of knowledge. It supplies the ability to apply that knowledge to one's own ministry and life.

Student #4 explains what she would say to a potential student:

I tell them that it is a great opportunity to get some real foundational teaching in a number of important aspects of the faith. I tell them that it is hard work and a real commitment, but that it is worth every sacrifice, and that they will get out of it as much as they put into it. A big selling point is that there is no other opportunity

out there to get access to this level of teaching in a more affordable and
approachable manner. If you want to be a better ministry leader, ECLI is a must.

It is important to note that she points out the accessibility, the leadership development,

and the theological education of ECLI as the selling points of the program. These three

are exactly what this project sought to discover and the student responded without

prompting on these important areas.

Question Eleven

Please describe as detailed as possible any other activity within TEI that you have participated in.

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 11. Question Eleven Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
TEI seminars	5	0.33
hesitation	3	0.23
theological education	2	0.02
continued educational pursuit	1	0.07
teach others	1	0.01
teacher	1	0.05

The Theological Education Initiative holds special seminars every semester to enhance

learning not only within the ECLI community, but also for the central Missouri Christian

ministry community at large. For a low or no fee, all local pastors are invited to

participate in these seminars where world-renowned scholars come and share their

expertise. The participants get to engage in theological inquiry of the highest level,

whether it is a study on the union of faith and science or a comparison of world religions.

Understandably, some graduates from ECLI continue their participation in these

programs.

Student #10 identifies this as an important part of the program, "I attend each

Theological Weekend offered at Woodcrest. I am very grateful for the opportunity to

continue to be exposed to the best theological thinkers around."

Question Twelve

What else do you want to tell me about your experience with ECLI?

Students responded to this question with the following units of meaning:

Table 12. Question Twelve Codes

Units of Meaning	Number of Responses	Question Frequency/ Project Frequency
teach others	4	0.06
theological education	4	0.05
cohort	2	0.11
continued educational pursuit	2	0.14
TEI seminars	2	0.11
accessibility	1	0.08
effective leaders	1	0.06
for everyone	1	0.08
Leaders	1	0.02
ministry	1	0.02
spiritual formation	1	0.03
student	1	0.07
teacher	1	0.04
time commitment	1	0.04

Again, several students identified the ability to teach others and the increase in their

theological education as the most important parts of the ECLI experience. Student #8

considered the program to be important for not only pastors, but for anyone wanting to

increase their knowledge in God, "I feel that the program is very beneficial not only for

those who have a desire to serve as Pastor but also for those who desire to increase their understanding of God to the point that they feel comfortable in sharing Christ with others." That the student saw the program as necessary for lay people as well as clergy is significant. Further, his recognition of the importance of sharing knowledge reflects a key value for the program. For obvious reasons, then, these answers were extremely satisfying for the program's leaders.

CHAPTER SIX: EVALUATION AND DISCUSSION

Themes from Biblical/Theological Perspective

Several themes emerged in the study of the Scriptures and theological material. The first is that everyone is or can be a leader. A person does not have to be given a title in order to lead. All believers should lead by example, share wisdom and knowledge with others to encourage personal growth, and urge others toward their callings and purposes in this life.

Secondly, a person's education shapes his or her leadership approaches and abilities. This is a firmly held belief in the Jewish tradition, and Jesus himself helped to instill it in His disciples. Paul would proceed to promote it in the churches that he planted, and Elijah and Elisha felt it was necessary to use education to train new prophets in their schools.

Third, theological education does not need to look exactly like today's typical models. In biblical times, education happened everywhere there were people. It could take place on a mountain, in a letter, or in a church. It was not relegated to schools. Any time spent with God can shape an individual, which means that prayer, meditation, study of the Word, and worship are all forms of education. Leaders even used singing psalms as a means to educate an illiterate population in ancient times.

Lastly, the purpose of education is not solely for the improvement of the individual student; rather, the knowledge gained must be shared with others. Scripture

clearly admonishes all people to spread around what they have learned. The most important part of this education is love, not only for God himself, but also for ourselves and for all of humanity. All people deserve compassion and mercy, and the lesson of love will enhance our lives to the fullest.

Themes from Literature Review

Both popular and academic circles believe that leadership requires education. Whether in business, politics, or theology, any leader is expected not only to have an education, but to continue educating themselves as well. A good leader is necessarily knowledgeable on the latest developments, trends and news.

As in the review of Scripture, the academic literature indicates that education comes in many forms. Non-traditional settings are becoming a main site of education for a number of reasons: because of more convenient locations, greater ease of use, fewer pre-requisites, and more flexible time structure. Further, education is no longer seen as novel or for the exceptional child, but for everyone. Multiple modes of delivery are therefore needed to serve students today. Even traditional classroom settings are veering away from lecture and wrote memory as the primary modes of instruction. Teachers at all levels are trying to incorporate methods from outside the classroom to aid in the praxis of the knowledge that the students are acquiring.

Similarly, theological education is no longer just for the pastor. Theological education is important for all believers in that it is about their lives, their relationships with God and with each other. It is applicable to everything they do, whether it is reading the Bible, learning about doctrines, or studying the history and tradition of the church. All of this knowledge is important for fully comprehending God's will for their lives.

While theological education benefits all believers, for all ministry leaders, some kind of leadership development is also essential. To withhold the educational experiences from lay leaders in the church, is to set them up for disappointment or worse, failure. If members of a congregation are going to lead others in any capacity, they must be equipped to do so. It is important to educate them, because heresy is spread where ignorance abounds. And this education can come in many forms in order to suit the needs of the leaders.

Themes from Field Research

The following themes are the results of that explicitation of the data:

Theme One

Each graduate experienced a change in their lives because of the program.

Each student described a difference in his or her life, ministry, spiritual growth, or personal development because of the program. For each person it was different, but all of them registered some change in their lives. For example, student #2 attested, "Personally, ECLI changed my life. I value the experience with deep appreciation and strongly encourage others to take the courses. Already, I wish I could go deeper in this study. I'd love to download a few brains."

Theme Two

The education gathered from ECLI altered the relationships in their lives.

Whether it was their own relationships with God or with others in their ministries, each student registered a positive change in their relationships. Student #13 said, "[I] have explained the opportunities that are there for people who want to learn and grow in

their knowledge of God through ECLI. That the information and materials presented allow[s] one to gain a better understanding of God's Word which then makes it easier to speak to others about God."

Theme Three

Every student had a positive experience with the education.

No one described negative effects from the education they received. Praising the experience, Student #15 said, "It has tremendous value, even if you are not going on to take seminary classes. It is valuable for leaders in any arena."

Theme Four

The students' leadership of others was positively affected.

Everyone stated that the education affected the way that they worked with or led others. Student #1 described how he tries to instill the passion that he discovered into those to whom he ministers: "[I learned] how to talk to other people about it, how to try to get them to truly fall in love with it. [How] to look forward to studying the Bible. Reading the Bible, not as some sort of a uh, duty or an obligation or just something we do every day in our devotions, but something you really fall in love with doing."

Unifying Themes

The purpose of this study was to tie the following three areas together: theological education, leadership development, and non-traditional educational settings. All three research streams of study have attempted to achieve that result. The biblical/theological stream attempted to demonstrate that theological education was used for leadership development throughout the Judeo-Christian tradition. Very rarely were traditional

educational settings used until the beginning of the New Testament times. Even then, Jesus Himself defied the tradition of the Sanhedrin and utilized 'in-situ' forms of education. His teaching was in the moment, context based, and practical for immediate purposes. He encouraged His followers to immediately employ what He had taught them. There was no separation of education from praxis.

In the review of the academic literature, the researcher discovered that considerable work has been done in these three areas. Moreover, there is a wide range of views on each of the proposed facets of this project, some in opposition, but still plenty in support as well. Leadership development in the secular, as well as sacred world, includes an educational component, but the setting in which that development happens has changed throughout the years and continues to change. Some scholars wish to reform the current educational structure, while others aim to abolish the current structure and create a new one altogether. Either way, the literature agrees a change is taking place.

Lastly, the researcher evaluated an existing program that models the three components proposed by the current project. ECLI was a well-established program with several years of graduates to draw from as research subjects. These graduates were able to analyze the program from the position of the situated knower. They not only had completed the educational study, but they were back in their ministry settings and able to see the results that the education provided. This provided a point of view of this program, unique to someone from the outside. The results from the study concluded that the goals of leadership development through theological education in a non-traditional setting were successful according to the graduates of the program. All experienced positive change

from their participation in the program that helped them in their ministry settings and daily lives.

Therefore, these three streams of research have concluded not only that it is possible to develop this type of program, but that such a program may be entirely necessary to meet the needs of those in ministry today.

Principles for Establishing Future Leadership Development Education

Three principles were discovered in this study that can be transferred to other ministry settings:

Principle One

Create a time structure that works with the participants' lives.

In the case of ECLI, because of the busy lives of lay people, the program meets one night a week, every other week, for seven sessions per semester, at two and a half hours per session. The participants then have two weeks to complete their reading and homework assignments.

The Biblical example was always conducted inside of people's lives. Jesus would teach on the boat while they were fishing, or Moses shared the Ten Commandments while they wandered through the wilderness. Education was not done outside of daily life, but while life was occurring.

In modern education today, it is non-traditional educational settings that are focusing on this principle. They want to offer education to everyone, not just to those who are ready to dive into education as a solo pursuit. There is a call out for traditional educational settings to change this facet of their programs.

Principle Two

Make the program praxis based, so that the participants can apply it in their ministry settings immediately.

In the case of ECLI, the participants must currently be ministry leaders. Therefore, they are always incorporating what they are learning into their current ministry settings.

Elijah and Elisha's schools were full of practicing prophets. They were ministering to towns all over Israel. Jesus would have the disciples go out on their own and baptize and make disciples. He did this while He was alive, He didn't wait until after He was gone to have them do this.

Even traditional educational settings are filling their programs with practical based components, be it service learning, internships, or field education. The divorce of information from praxis is no longer seen as valid in modern education.

Principle Three

Have the curriculum be learner-sensitive – tailor the information to the type of student.

ECLI is an adult education setting. The program and curriculum therefore follow educational models for adult education. Instructors assess prior knowledge, homework assignments are general so the students can mold them to their current ministry settings, and textbooks/materials are at a bachelor's degree level.

Jesus modeled this in what He told the masses versus what He told the disciples. He went deeper with the disciples and even deeper still with the three. Paul tailored each

of his letters to the different churches to meet their individual needs, they weren't just blanket statements to each church.

Just as churches have become seeker-sensitive, so has modern education become learner-sensitive. If the goal is to help the student achieve maximum capacity of knowledge and understanding, then there must be a recognition that each person does not learn the same. Tailoring the information and teaching methods to assist the learner is the most effective way to achieve maximum success.

Project Evaluation

This study utilized the phenomenological method of research. This method helped to go deeper into the single case study. The mode of questioning within phenomenology was a wide-open general set of questions that attempted to not lead the participants to the answers. This mode helped eliminate bias from the participants in the interviews. For the participants with the online survey, they had no direct interaction with the researcher. Therefore, they did not have the ability to be influenced by her. Their answers were given at their own time and pace on an individual basis.

The coding system utilized follows traditional phenomenological practices. The researcher in phenomenology is in the position of a situated knower and therefore is influenced by the system in place. Moreover, in phenomenology this is seen as important to fully understand the program being studied and not utilize words or units of meaning that are not given by the participants themselves.

Another researcher could duplicate this study. Yet, to follow phenomenological principles, they would need to spend the same amount of time within the program as the

original researcher. This way they would fully understand the position of the situated knower, and be able to assign the same units of meaning to the responses.

The greatest challenge in the research process was the voluntary nature of the project. Volunteer research subjects are needed to eliminate bias. However, it makes it hard to achieve the goal of a majority for your sample size. Enlisting research subjects is always the most frustrating part of the project.

Strengths

The first strength of the project lies in its originality. In the extant literature, the researcher discovered no studies trying to combine the three areas that make up the core of this project. More information and research into the intersection of these ideas will not only improve pedagogical studies as a whole, but may also spur the necessary changes of the educational system.

The project is unique in yet another way, in that this is the first study of the ECLI program. Nobody has previously attempted to gather information from the participants formally. This information is thus new even to the coordinators of ECLI. It has greatly helped the director and the administrator of the program to hear responses from graduates on how the program worked and especially how it changed their lives.

The final strength of the project is the insider information that comes from the position of the situated knower. The graduates know how their lives and ministries were before, and they have had the time to see the full results of their participation in the program. They have had the necessary distance to more objectively see if the education they received was beneficial or not, both in their lives and in their ministries.

Weaknesses

One weakness of the project was the number of participants. In qualitative research, a small sample size is sufficient, and that size was met. However, in any field research, having a majority of the potential participants respond is ideal. At 42 percent, that majority was not reached.

Another weakness of the project would be the two modes of data collection. Unfortunately, the researcher was not able to schedule personal interviews with all of the participants. This was the original plan for the project, but because participation was voluntary, many respondents were not able to accommodate such a request. The researcher therefore added the online survey to the project to increase the number participants and get a fuller picture.

CHAPTER SEVEN: REFLECTION

The Researcher's Perspective

As a participant observer in the Theological Education Initiative for four years, this researcher has seen the change in the hearts, minds, and behaviors of the participants. There have been people who were not confident enough to share about their faith who have since become great evangelists. Some who would never previously have dreamed of teaching became ECLI Instructors. Still others, who would not read the Bible because they did not understand it, have become Bible study leaders. Encouragingly, as seen in the interview answers, the students still want more classes and to continue the program beyond its completion.

The program was a success for its students, and it consequently became contagious to others. The participants are not the only ones to see change in themselves. Others recognize it and seek it out as well. Whereas admission into the program was previously by invitation only, people now approach the leaders and pursue getting into the program. The phenomenon has created a movement toward education for better leadership.

Summary and Conclusion

This dissertation is asking for change in the modern educational system. The development of leaders is key for the next generation to move forward. Right now there is a disconnect between knowledge gained in school, and output in practical life. This

needs to be remedied. The program and principles described in this project are to help others consider either renovations that need to be made in their programs or construction of an educational program from scratch. These principles can be used outside the United States in any ministry setting trying to develop leaders. The researcher has participated in theological education in Africa and has used several of these principles there to help within a school setting and within a church setting as well. The desire is to help administrators of programs to meet the needs of the students and the ministries they are serving.

The greatest benefit of this project was an analysis of the job that ECLI has been doing over the past ten years. The results are reassuring that the graduates and the people that they lead are benefiting from the program. ECLI is going to continue to work on developing leaders not only at Woodcrest, but this year has included members of four other congregations as well. This past spring, ECLI graduated the first class from its satellite campus in Harrisburg, MO. Plus, this fall TEI saw the approval by the Missouri Department of Higher Education for the A.W. Tozer Seminary Campus. The goal to provide a seminary-level education in Central Missouri is being fulfilled.

The problem this project addressed is that access to leadership development through theological education is limited in locations without seminaries. The answer to that problem is that you can develop leaders through theological education in a non-traditional setting. You can follow the key principles identified by this study, enlist instructors, write your curriculum, find ministry leaders, and have an amazing program that impacts the lives of not only the students, but the congregants they lead.

Suggestions for Further Research

There are several areas of further research that can be conducted from this project. The three main focuses of this dissertation can be studied individually or together, making the possible research nearly endless. However, for this researcher the desired future project would be to dive into the area of why higher education is not doing a good job developing leaders. From there, that research would dig further into how we can improve that aim. Where this current project focused on non-traditional educational settings, the next would focus on traditional settings. How can universities and seminaries improve their systems so that they build better leaders? Can we make higher education more accessible to other personality types and intellectual levels? Is that what causes higher education to be unsuccessful in developing leaders, that it attracts the "wrong" type of person? All of these questions would take a lifetime of qualitative social science research. Perhaps, then, that is precisely the field this researcher should enter.

APPENDIX A: PRE-INTERVIEW GUIDE

Pre-Interview Guide

This pre-interview guide provides: (a) the purpose of the project, (b) definition of the terms used, and (c) the main areas of questioning.

Purpose of the Project:

The purpose of the study is to answer the key problem statement: access to leadership development through theological education is limited in locations without seminaries. Research is being conducted for a dissertation on the use of theological education for leadership development in non-traditional educational settings. The qualitative study utilizes phenomenology and case study methods for determining the experiences of the participants. Specifically, an interview is used to determine if there is a phenomenon within the educational methods used at the Emerging Church Leadership Institute (ECLI). Each participant will need to have a dedicated one-hour session in which they participate in a video-taped interview. These results will be analyzed as part of a doctoral program in Church Leadership: Organizational Systems at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, MN.

Definitions of Terms Used:

Qualitative Survey: A survey that uses questions that are non-numerical and incorporate flexibility and responsiveness to individual context.

Phenomenology: a qualitative research method that was founded by Husserl that concentrates on the detailed description of conscious experience, without recourse to explanation, metaphysical assumptions, and traditional philosophical questions.

Leadership Development: a process that one engages in that creates the ability to lead others.

Theological Education: the acquisition of knowledge through a theological framework.

Main areas of questioning:

The qualitative portion of the survey will consist of twelve questions where the participant can answer truthfully based on their own perspectives from their participation in any TEI programs. Reflection will be on the classes taught, knowledge gained, application in ministry settings, and personal leadership development.

Enclosures: Participant Letter

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Phenomenological Questions

Please describe as detailed as possible what you understand ECLI to be.

Please describe in as much detail as possible how you got involved in ECLI.

Please describe as detailed as possible your participation in ECLI.

Please in as much detail as possible describe what you felt you received from your participation in ECLI.

Please describe as detailed as possible the ministry that you were involved in before ECLI.

Please in as much detail as possible describe the ministry that you are involved in now.

Please describe as detailed as possible the difference that you see between the two ministries now.

Please describe in as much detail as possible what ECLI did for you personally.

Please describe as detailed as possible what ECLI did for you in your ministry.

Please describe in as much detail as possible what you would say to someone outside of ECLI what the program is all about.

Please describe as detailed as possible any other activity within TEI that you have participated in.

What else do you want to tell me about your experience with ECLI?

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