

ABSTRACT

A CURRICULUM TO EQUIP
LAY PASTORAL CANDIDATES FOR
SERVICE IN THE PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE

By

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

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SERVICE IN THE PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE

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Problem

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, Pennsylvania Conference leaders nurtured a desire for lay pastoral development. However, a cohesive training program did not emerge. Although lay training programs with other foci and the efforts of some local salaried pastors had produced a few lay pastors, a streamlined, accessible, principle-driven, and competency-based program was needed. With an increase in pastor to member responsibility of 64% from 1970 to 2005 and no growth in the number of churches in the same period, the creation of a training program was deemed to have missional import.

Method

An eleven-month curriculum was formed and delivered during 2008. Its purpose was missional. It included the learning components of linking theory to practice, fostering spiritual formation, and utilizing mentoring relationships. It taught the competencies of people skills, biblical preaching, spiritual vitality, spiritual leadership, and team building. Curriculum success was measured by ministry longevity and surveys of graduates, congregations, and mentors.

Results

Twenty-seven students enrolled in the course, eighteen of whom graduated. Graduates reported that their ministry activities increased an average of 60% and their overall ministry ability an average of 66%. In the competency areas, they estimated increases of 27% in people skills, 58% in biblical preaching, 39% in spiritual vitality, 49% in spiritual leadership, and 43% in team building. Lay pastoral mentors and congregations also positively assessed their abilities. The main curriculum weakness was an underdeveloped mentoring program. Five graduates were placed in pastoral positions and all graduates increased ministry involvement.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that a streamlined, accessible, competency-based, and principle-driven curriculum for lay pastor development significantly increases lay involvement in ministry. This finding suggests that broad implementation of the proposed curriculum would have positive missional impact. It may also have implications for other forms of ministerial education.

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A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

By
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CHAPTER 1

THE NEED FOR LAY PASTOR DEVELOPMENT

Financial and personnel deficits have amplified recent calls for lay pastors, even catching the ear of popular media (P. Smith, 2004). Although groups like Jehovah's Witnesses, Presbyterians, Latter Day Saints, and Christadelphians have long relied on lay pastors as a matter of principle, others increasingly engage them to stretch resources. Robert J. McClory notes, "One indicator of change is that since 1997 there are more paid, professional [Catholic] lay ministers than priests working in U.S. parishes, and the gap continues to grow" (2006, p. 12). This resurgent interest is especially true of Catholic, Presbyterian, and Lutheran churches (P. Smith, 2004).

Problem and Purpose

The trend toward lay pastors also appears in Seventh-day Adventism (e.g. Boggess, 2007). The problem is that, in many conferences, the introduction of lay pastors has preceded the organizational adjustments necessary to accommodate them. First among these necessary adjustments is the provision of training. Thus, the purpose of this study was to develop and test a curriculum that would equip lay pastoral candidates for service in the Pennsylvania Conference.

The differences between lay pastors and salaried pastors are three: pay, licensure, and education. Pay levels vary within the denomination (*Lay pastor ministry description*,

2002) but Pennsylvania Conference lay pastors are unpaid. Besides lack of pay, licensure, and education, Pennsylvania Conference lay pastors function with full pastoral responsibilities.

The present study does not address pay or licensure to any great extent. Instead, it mitigates the education deficit by developing and testing a curriculum to equip candidates for success in the Pennsylvania Conference. Since education has been shown to increase pastoral success (Swanson, 1999, p. 273), this purpose is relevant.

This study discusses the need for such a curriculum, reviews previous training efforts, identifies the competencies needed for lay pastor acceptance and success, develops a curriculum, adopts teaching methods, presents findings that result from a field test of this curriculum and methods, then offers suggestions for broader application of these findings.

This chapter evaluates the need for such a curriculum, reviews previous training efforts, briefly outlines the curriculum, and previews future chapters.

The Demand for Lay Pastors in Pennsylvania

The demand for lay pastors in Pennsylvania emerges from statistical data and leadership vision. Both statistical data and leadership vision demonstrate that missional needs require more pastors. However, the increased urgency has produced what might be termed a poorly resourced mandate; where the mandate is clear but the means to fulfill it are not available.

Statistical Data

The Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has nurtured a return to broad use of lay pastors since the late 1990's. In 2001, Conference leaders initiated calls

to “raise up” 200 lay pastors to lead constituent churches. In spite of attempts to train lay pastors, a substantial, continuous, and accessible training program had not been established until this project began in 2008.

From a missional perspective, the need for more lay pastors is acute. According to figures from the Office of Archives and Statistics at the General Conference ("Pennsylvania Conference,") pastoral coverage trends verify the need. The number of salaried pastors decreased from 53 (43 ordained and 10 licensed) in 1970 to 46 (33 ordained and 13 licensed) in 2005. During the same period, membership increased 43% (from 7,023 to 10,028). This amounts to an increase in pastor to member responsibility of 64% (from 133 members per pastor to 218 members per pastor).

If these trends continue without intervention, the Pennsylvania Conference mission may suffer in predictable ways. Potential maladies include evangelistic stagnation and the inability to plant new churches, as the limited pastoral staff is increasingly occupied with current members who may expect the same from their pastors that they did when pastors had fewer parishioners.

Other statistics collaborate this concern. A comparison of recent state population ("Pennsylvania,") and Adventist membership ("Pennsylvania Church,") shows that, after a century and a half of active mission, Adventist membership (18,645) accounts for only 0.15% of the Pennsylvania population (12,448,279). The average annual membership gain from 1970 to 2005 has been a mere 0.78%.

Continued reliance on salaried pastors for both mission expansion and member retention will produce the same miniscule growth. Given current denominational resources and allocation policies, Pennsylvania Conference cannot start significant

numbers of new churches in new communities, as its mission demands (see *Pennsylvania Conference Church Planting Policy*, 2010), without a new strategy. Either lay members must lead church planting efforts or lay members must lead existing churches, allowing salaried pastors to church plant.

Calculations made from the above statistics demonstrate the strategic need for broader lay involvement. Including Pennsylvania pastors from the geographically overlapping Allegheny East and Allegheny West conferences, there is a ratio of roughly 1 Adventist pastor to every 200,000 Pennsylvania residents. More hopefully, there is a ratio of 1 Adventist member to every 668 Pennsylvania residents. A new plan for reaching Pennsylvania is needed, a plan that involves more members in ministry. The words of Christ are timelier than ever: “Beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Luke 10:2).

Leadership Vision

Over the past decade, Pennsylvania Conference leaders have had an increased awareness of the need for new mission strategies; and lay pastor use has remained part of the discussion. Conference presidents Mike Cauley and Ray Hartwell have kept it forefront. The efforts of Executive Secretary and Ministerial Director, Barry Tryon, and Assistant to the President for Mission, Bill Peterson, have aided this emphasis.

Former Conference President, Mike Cauley says that, at first, his interest in lay pastors was driven by financial pressures. Then he saw how “the work prospered under this arrangement” and “began to see it as the vehicle for . . . breakthroughs in small churches which had experienced little growth in the past”. He explains that his support

has theological roots as well, saying, “I think the priesthood of all believers is a golden concept.” (Personal communication, April 6, 2010).

Current Conference President, Ray Hartwell explains that lay pastors “enable us to expand mission across Pennsylvania” and “to plant new churches”. He also contends that members become “strong spiritually when taking up a role in ministry, churches . . . work together more, and church members . . . work more individually when a lay pastor is leading.” (Personal communication, April 1, 2010). Although Hartwell sees challenges too, he is undeterred in his support for lay pastoral ministry (*General Conference session bulletin*, p. 75).

Current Executive Secretary and Ministerial Director, Barry Tryon has a similar vision, saying,

There are at least two reasons why I would support the use of lay pastors. First, because I have seen lay persons who were given the gift of spiritual leadership and have watched them effectively lead a church with the same ability and dedication as a paid pastor. The other reason I support the use of lay pastors is that there is no way that paid clergy will ever be able to finish the work of growing God’s kingdom. Thankfully, this was not the design intended by the Head of the Church and lay members will be a part of the final work of the church. (Personal communication, March 31, 2010)

Tryon promotes lay pastoral ministry for the reasons mentioned. However, as the Ministerial Director, he must translate those ideals into the world of policy and precedent. This can prove difficult, and yet he persists (see *Systemic factors* in chapter 4 for Tryon’s list of challenges).

Current Assistant to the President for Mission, Bill Peterson adds that “there is a great harvest and we do not have enough workers to reap it. We can never hope to have enough full time pastors to reap it. The early church was made up of lay pastors. The last day church, during the time of trouble, will be led by lay pastors.” (Personal

communication, March 29, 2010). Peterson enthusiastically supports the vision of broader lay pastor use, and he has demonstrated this through action.

These conference leaders, while understanding the complexity of lay pastor use, passionately support it. The reason is missional, expressed in their awareness that present resources will not afford broad expansion.

A Poorly Resourced Mandate

With such wide and passionate support among Conference leaders, one might wonder why, at the commencement of this project in 2008, the Conference had only six recognized lay pastors. Perhaps what has kept a consistent program of lay pastor development from emerging has been that no person or office has been given the task. Although Pastor Frank Gonzalez served as Lay Pastor Coordinator for a short time in the 1990's (personal communication, Mike Cauley, April 6, 2010), the position did not continue. Peterson points out that it is not within his purview (personal communication, March 29, 2010), Hartwell is occupied with presidential tasks, and Tryon already holds two fulltime positions: ministerial and executive.

Conference administrators passionately want lay pastor development. Yet, a hard truth remains: appeals for lay pastors throughout the past decade constitute a poorly resourced mandate. These appeals have nurtured interest but a realistic path to engagement has been nearly absent, especially as it regards training. Here lies the problem this project has addressed.

As a Pennsylvania Conference pastor, the vision of developing lay pastors across the Conference caught my heart and imagination from the start (when the vision emerged in 2001). During the subsequent seven years, I had thirteen people approach me for

training. When I saw the need, it appealed to my love of teaching and my passion for advancing the gospel. I soon found that developing people for ministry was the most satisfying part of ministry. Consequently, when the opportunity arose to develop people beyond my district, I was overjoyed at the prospect. The meeting of passion with opportunity gave birth to this project.

Training Methods Previously Employed

A review of training methods previously employed reveals their purpose and scope, shows their relative effectiveness, and demonstrates that Conference administrators and pastors have worked hard to mitigate the poorly resourced mandate described above. This review includes methods used prior to 1998 but gives special attention to the decade from 1998 to 2008.

Methods Employed Prior to 1998

From the 1940's through the 1980's, lay ministry training was not a major priority in the territory of the Pennsylvania Conference. Efforts were small-scale and isolated. During the 1930's, however, General Conference-led training developed successful lay ministers (J. C. Holland, 1937; Leach, 1939; Manry, 1934). A full review of these early efforts appears in chapter 3. The most substantial resurgence of the 1930's paradigm is recent.

The man who put lay ministry development back on the Pennsylvania Conference priority list was Frank Gonzalez. In the late 1980's, as a pastor, Gonzalez did elder training throughout the Conference. Barry Tryon describes it as "intense 'masters level' material with reading and homework" (personal communication, March 31, 2010).

In the mid-1990's, Russell Burrill, then Director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute, led the next training initiative. He taught a three-year course on church growth, which inadvertently produced “the core of the first wave of lay pastors” and both courses “were successful in raising the level of lay leadership in the Conference—though not intentionally developed for lay pastors” (Barry Tryon, personal communication, March 31, 2010). By the late 1990's, lay pastor development had re-entered the collective consciousness of the Pennsylvania Conference.

Methods Employed from the Years 1998 to 2008

The ten years that have led to the present study are best characterized as a time of synergistic partnership between administrators and pastors. Pennsylvania Conference administrators have cast vision and provided programs while pastors have shared in the maturation of both vision and programs.

The Impact of Administrators

Mike Cauley, former Pennsylvania Conference President, anchored the ideal of lay pastor development in Conference administrative culture. He began the decade with a call for 200 lay pastors. Cauley built on momentum Gonzalez and Burrill had created. Besides placing lay pastors who emerged from their work in pastoral positions, Cauley asked salaried pastors to each develop one or two candidates in their district. This expectation has become part of the Pennsylvania Conference culture and has resulted in a few more lay pastors.

In 2000, Cauley appointed Bill Peterson to a new position, Assistant to the President for Hastening the Harvest (a title which later became Assistant to the President for Mission). Peterson created a program called Mission Training Station (MTS) in 2002,

which was an ala carte correspondence approach to lay pastor development. Students chose eight ministry skills from a list, to comprise their curriculum. Although this was a quality program, participation was minimal.

Peterson later, in 2006, invited several pastors to adapt MTS to their districts, which led to the present study. In 2004, Peterson introduced coach training as a way to support existing lay pastors and church planters. This resulted in several trained coaches.

The most successful lay ministry training program Peterson initiated is Equipping University, a bi-annual conference that Andrews University conducts, which trains lay ministers of all types. It began in 2007. Although this program appears to have made a significant impact on lay ministry, and is helping nurture a missional culture, its direct impact on lay pastor development is hard to calculate. More time is required to measure its full impact but initial indicators are promising.

Current Conference President, Ray Hartwell has also improved lay pastor development. Besides partnering on Cauley's efforts while Ministerial Director and Executive Secretary, as President, Hartwell has continued the push for lay pastor development. Much of what has been gained through Bill Peterson and Barry Tryon can also be credited to him. Hartwell's unique contribution to lay pastor advancement has been his tenacity for lay pastor placement. In the year following the decade under focus (2009), he placed seven new lay pastors in churches.

Barry Tryon, while still pastor of a local district, worked jointly with colleague Jerry Finneman to train lay pastors in 1997 (Tryon, 1997). More substantially, he undertook an extensive program to mentor local elders from September 1997 to August 1998 (Tryon, 2001). Since becoming Ministerial Director and Executive Secretary for the

Pennsylvania Conference in 2004, his efforts have shifted toward training salaried pastors. However, as Ministerial Director, he remains responsible to coordinate lay pastor use and has overseen the present study.

The Impact of Pastors

Brad Cassell is a prominent case of a pastor working synergistically, and experimentally, with conference administrators. He led what he calls the “locally grown model” of lay pastor development in one of the Pennsylvania Conference mission districts. (Mission district is a Pennsylvania Conference term which describes a district of three to six churches that makes lay leadership primary). Cassell’s tenure began in 2003.

His system for establishing lay pastors in existing churches is as follows: First, teach the biblical idea of a pastor as equipper. Second, elevate the lay pastor candidate to head elder. Third, re-emphasize the idea of pastor as equipper. Fourth, in the first year of the process, add the title of lay pastor to that of head elder. Fifth, in the second year, elect a head elder under the lay pastor of each church and change the salaried pastor’s title to mission leader. Sixth, eventually remove the salaried pastor. (Personal communication, November 3, 2008). Cassell’s work resulted in three active lay pastors, all of whom had graduated from Burrill’s program.

Shawn Shives is another impressive case of synergy with Conference administration. He led what he calls a “need-based curriculum” in the other Pennsylvania Conference mission district. This also began in 2003.

Shives believes it works best for the local salaried pastor to train lay pastors. His process of teaching had four stages: First, study the concepts in books. Second, practice them together. Third, assign the student a task to do alone. Fourth, debrief on what the

student did. (Personal communication, November 4, 2008). Shives' work resulted in two unofficial lay pastors and a significant increase in lay ministry involvement.

Ray Hartwell identifies Shives' labors as especially important to the advancement of lay ministry in Pennsylvania Conference (personal communication, April 1, 2010).

Mike Cauley says that, if he were leading Pennsylvania Conference lay pastor development now, he would get Shives "to help . . . train full-time pastors to oversee teams of lay people who may become lay pastors" (personal communication, April 6, 2010). The work of Pastor Shives is instructive.

David Clevenger inherited the district Brad Cassell pioneered, with the addition of one new lay pastor and three new churches. His tenure began in 2006 and the addition of one church and lay pastor occurred two years later. Although none of the four lay pastors he oversees have been minted under his leadership, Clevenger has refined the process of lay pastor oversight and ministry growth. He has also helped develop a system of compensation and resourcing for them. His district, at the time of writing, represents the most extensive single use of lay pastors to pastor existing churches. (David Clevenger, personal communication, April 7, 2010).

In the past decade, several other Pennsylvania Conference pastors have also worked to develop lay pastors. These include Moses Andrade, David Klinedinst, Mike McCabe, David Reinwald, Lonnie Wibberding, Bob Williams, and others.

Implications

The persistence of efforts to develop lay pastors in Pennsylvania Conference over the past decade highlights the sense of need. This brief history also demonstrates that the most effective lay pastor training has been small-scale and local. Whatever success has

occurred should be credited to the collaborative efforts of the leaders mentioned. In similar fashion, the success of the curriculum proposed and tested here is made possible by the work of these leaders.

A Proposed Training Curriculum and Methodology

As noted above, this study is limited to the proposal and field-testing of a specific, competency-based curriculum with specific methodological components. These competencies and components emerge from biblical ecclesiology, methods previously employed in Pennsylvania, and relevant literature. A full description of this curriculum appears in chapter 4 but a simple preview is afforded here.

Biblical Ecclesiology

Biblical ecclesiology defines ministerial development as spiritual development. It also calls for broader distribution of church leadership responsibilities and contends that laity should conduct local church leadership in all its forms.

A developmental survey of the church in Acts endorses three primary leader types: apostles to expand the mission, deacons to care for human needs, and elders to guide spiritual direction (Clouzet, 1997, pp. 54-61; Didache," 1999, p. 267; Stout, 1983, pp. 62-67). Although these roles exhibit some fluidity, generally, the apostles take the gospel to new regions while deacons and elders lead established churches.

A lay pastor is the closest modern parallel to the New Testament elder, containing both the lay and spiritual leadership elements. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has recognized this (*Local church elders*). Careful scrutiny of Paul's work with Timothy offers competencies needed for such leadership. Most importantly, biblical

ecclesiology dictates that the needs of the mission must guide church structure (Matt 28:18-20). A more complete review of relevant ecclesiology appears in chapter 2.

Methods Previously Employed

Methods employed in Pennsylvania Conference during the past decade offer two instructive guides. First, as noted above, the most successful training methods have been local. These include the labors of Shawn Shives and Brad Cassell. Second, the most successful training methods involved active ministry in the curriculum. Shives and Cassell modeled this well.

Methods employed prior to the past decade offer one more instructive guide. These training methods had academic depth. This includes those led by Frank Gonzalez, which Barry Tryon describes as “masters level” (personal communication, March 31, 2010) and Russell Burrill, which lasted three years. Pennsylvania Conference leaders widely regard these as having laid the foundation for success in this decade. Peter Swanson confirms the value of academic depth as a predictor of pastoral success (Swanson, 1999, p. 273).

Relevant Literature

Relevant literature identifies pastoral competencies that meet the criterion of quantifiable consensus, as well as components of an effective training program. These works confirm the competencies found in Paul’s letters to Timothy (see chapter 2). The five most prominent are people skills, biblical preaching, spiritual vitality, spiritual leadership, and team building. Statistical reports and professional works further confirm these.

Historical documents reveal training methods previously employed, as well as their missional impetus. Scholarly studies on pastoral development isolate components of effective training programs. The two most important are the need to personalize teaching methods and the need to link principle to practice in the learning experience. A full review of relevant literature and its implications appears in chapter 3.

Curriculum Outline

Ecclesiology, history, and literature converge to commend a curriculum that has one purpose, includes three learning components, and teaches five competencies. First, its purpose must be missional. Second, it must include the learning components of theory combined with practice, spiritual transformation, and mentoring relationships. Third, it must teach the competencies of people skills, biblical preaching, spiritual vitality, spiritual leadership, and team building.

A curriculum meeting these specifications has been developed and field-tested in the Pennsylvania Conference. Curriculum delivery spanned eleven months of 2008. Each session was approximately two hours long and occurred on the first or second Sunday of each month, followed by doctrinal and in-ministry assignments. The purpose, learning components, and competencies were served in various ways.

The very presence of this curriculum and the missional ecclesiology it teaches served the missional purpose. Involving more people in ministry, as this course has, is a step toward sending traditional pastors away from established churches to unreached areas.

Several rudiments served the needed learning components. In-ministry assignments obliged students to apply theory to practice in their own ministry contexts,

and their reports demonstrated progress. A required spiritual development plan, class prayer sessions, biblical exercises, and use of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12) nurtured spiritual growth. However, no effort was made to quantify results. Assignment critiques and student relationships with home pastors facilitated mentorship. Although observation suggests that quality mentorship took place, this part of the curriculum lacked structure.

The class schedule and assignments served the competencies, given that all presentations contributed to an understanding of them and assignments required their application. The topic schedule was as follows:

- Course Introduction (one hour)
- Spiritual Development for Ministry (one hour)
- Theological Foundations of Preaching (two hours)
- A Framework for Biblical Preaching (two hours)
- Mastering Sermon Delivery (two hours)
- Emotional Intelligence in Ministry (two hours)
- Pastoral Counseling (two hours)
- Managing Conflict (one hour)
- Spiritual Leaders of History (one hour)
- Spiritual Servant Leadership (two hours)
- A Theology of Church (two hours)
- Becoming a Ministry Mentor (two hours)

Class sessions employed a combination of lecture, discussion, and problem-solving exercises. See chapter 4 for a more complete description of the curriculum.

Initial Results

Twenty-seven students initially applied for and gained acceptance into the course. Only eighteen continued participating after the second month. However, every student who continued in the course after this point also graduated. Most of those who did not continue only applied but never started coursework.

By early 2009, the Pennsylvania Conference had placed five graduates in pastoral positions. Three others created and led evangelistic events the same year. A full

description of outcomes appears in chapter 4. Here, it is sufficient to note that the course demonstrated general success. It has been highly regarded by students and Conference leaders.

Definition of Terms

This study contains only a small number of technical terms. Although each is defined in its context, attention to the meaning of these terms here may prove helpful to the reader.

First among these is the term *lay pastor*. Although arrangements vary by denomination and circumstance, this study defines a lay pastor as an associate or lead pastor who is recognized but not significantly paid for their services ("Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventists," 2008).

Two theological terms summarize core elements of the theology underlying this project. *Ecclesiopraxis* refers to the activity of the New Testament church. *Theopraxis* refers to the activity of God in relation to humanity and His church.

Quantifiable consensus describes the need to measure the level of agreement on what areas that pastors most need have competence in.

The term *principle* designates the reason behind specific actions, as opposed to the actions themselves. It is used to describe the need for instilling an understanding of the rationale behind ministry instead of only prescribing actions.

Summary

A full treatment of lay pastor development includes several considerations, many of which are not addressed in the present study. This study does not seek to establish whether lay pastors are the best remedy for limited resources. Neither does it attempt to

establish the qualitative supremacy of a specific training system. It seeks only to justify the legitimacy of lay pastors and to measure the effectiveness of a streamlined, accessible, principle-driven, and competency-based curriculum for lay pastor development. The primary measure of its success is the level to which it increased the number of people involved in pastoral ministry. The secondary measure is the general ministry impact of graduates.

The present study is laid out as follows: Chapter 1 discusses the need for a curriculum, reviews previous training efforts, and previews the other chapters. Chapter 2 explores the theological foundations of lay pastoral ministry, offering justification for and content of lay pastor training. Chapter 3 examines relevant literature to further explore the justification and content of lay pastor training. Chapter 4 outlines the curriculum formation and field test, and reports outcomes. Chapter 5 offers suggestions for further exploration, and presents recommendations for broader application of these findings.

Finally, the purpose of this study was to develop and test a curriculum that would equip lay pastoral candidates for service in the Pennsylvania Conference. The following chapters document this process.

CHAPTER 2

A THEOLOGY OF LAY PASTOR DEVELOPMENT

A theology of lay pastor development emerges from two sources: the acts of God (theopraxis) and the acts of His church (ecclesiopraxis). The acts of God reveal His nature: theology in the strictest sense. The acts of God's church reveal operational practice: theology in action.

The acts of God appear most clearly in the person of Jesus. John termed Him the Message (λόγος) made flesh (John 1:1-14) and Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Although God's approach to humanity predates its revelation in Jesus, these and other texts suggest that He is the clearest disclosure of God's intentions toward a sinful world. Study of Him shows how God's relational, redemptive nature shapes all ministry.

The acts of God's church appear most clearly in its formative phase. Ray Anderson (1997, pp. 6-9) ably argues that praxis (church activity) reveals theology. Early church praxis clarifies God's relational, redemptive nature and unveils a theology to shape modern praxis. The intent here is not to copy their practice but to let the theology behind it shape that of today. The book of Acts documents how the church formed around God's mission mandate (Acts 1:1-9). Study of it shows how God's relational, redemptive nature shapes pastoral ministry.

Theopraxis: Foundational Theology

A theology of lay pastor development contains two pillar concepts that give purpose and direction to all ministry. These pillars emerge from study of God's relational, redemptive nature and work: theopraxis. Both employ human contact to save sinners. First, God became human to save humans. Second, God called humans to the same task for the same purpose.

The Relational God: Immanuel

The first pillar concept that gives purpose and direction to all ministry is God's act of incarnation. God expressed His relational nature best by choosing to become human. The first result of sin was separation from God. This was heard in God's question, "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9) and felt in banishment from Eden (vv. 22-24). Sin demanded that God cease to be "God with us" (Immanuel) but He chose incarnation to reclaim that bond (Rom 5:10), demonstrating His relational nature.

That choice was not an isolated, magnanimous act but a persistent part of His nature. He took the same posture in the Old Testament, initiating contact with people from Adam to the prophets. Prominent examples include Abram, Moses, the Israelite refugees, and the sanctuary. When God called Abram, a friend observed, "God is with you in everything you do" (Gen 21:22). When God called Moses, He promised, "I will be with you" (Exod 3:12). When God called Israel from Egypt, He went with them in a cloud (Exod 13:21-22). When God commissioned a sanctuary, it was that He "may dwell among them" (Exod 25:8). Such cases expressed God's heart but its fullest expression awaited the incarnation of the New Testament.

When God entered flesh, He removed all reasonable doubt of His relational nature. Matthew records the directive to “call His name Immanuel, which translated means, ‘God with us’” (Matt 1:23). His name marks His purpose and His purpose marks His nature. It is this relational nature that inspired Him to become human to save humans. God’s extreme behavior reveals His heart. Hybels and Mittelberg observe, “Jesus intentionally rubbed shoulders with the lowest of spiritual reprobates of His day because they mattered to Him and He wanted to lead them into the family of God” (1994, p. 99). In other words, He related to the sinful to save them. This nature should guide those who act in His name.

The Redemptive God: To Seek and to Save

The second pillar concept that gives purpose and direction to all ministry is God’s use of humans. Robert Coleman’s classic work *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (1996) brought this fact into collective consciousness. God’s nature leads to redemption, and His redemptive strategy explains why He calls humans to minister. Jesus stated His mission plainly, saying, “the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). A brief look at His mission strategy uncovers the aspect of redemption that best informs a theology of lay pastor development; that God calls people to ministry for their own redemption. Mark provides an adequate view of this strategy.

Jesus began with a basic message that encapsulates His mission. He “came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel’” (Mark 1:14-15). These three statements give the backdrop, the stakes, and the appeal of Christ’s mission. The backdrop is the messianic promise, stated as “the time is fulfilled.” The stakes are a place

in God's kingdom, stated as "the kingdom of God is at hand." The appeal has two elements, stated as "repent and believe in the gospel." The Greek for repent is μετανοείτε, which denotes a change of direction (Thayer, 1996, p. 405). The Greek for believe is πιστεύετε, which denotes a trusting relationship (Thayer, 1996, p. 511). Because there is a kingdom to gain, Jesus called the people to change the foundations of their lives; their direction and object of trust. He called them to a trust relationship with Him that required them to live their theology (Wilson, 1983, p. 13).

He then built on the call in a specific way. This is where insight into lay pastor development emerges. Those He wished to redeem, He called to service. "He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men'" (Mark 1:16-17). He didn't tell them to follow Him so they could learn repentance and belief (the elements of His message). Instead, He called them to minister (to "become fishers of men"). Jesus used this strategy persistently. He shaped people through service. By living His passion, they came to know His heart; a concept Reggie McNeal (2000) expands.

"He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons" (Mark 3:14-15). Later, "He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs" (Mark 6:7), instructing them to serve sacrificially (vv. 8-11). He universalized this practice with the words, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34); and He immortalized it with the Gospel Commission (Mark 16:14-16). The call to service is an aspect of redemption; the means to learn the repentance (μετανοείτε) and trust (πιστεύετε) Jesus preached.

The case of the rich young ruler illustrates this. He asked Jesus, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17). Jesus answered, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (v. 21). He called him to serve the poor and join His ministry team. For salvation to work, it must address the basis of sin: selfishness (Jam 1:14-15). Jesus’ persistent strategy reveals that God calls other humans to ministry, in part, to save them. Selfless service is the best antidote for selfish sin.

This strikes at the heart of lay pastor development. Since God’s call to service is part of redemption, the first impetus for lay pastor development is opening the way for people to answer the call and be redeemed. This also implies that effective ministry development is spiritual development (see Herrington, Creech, & Taylor, 2003, pp. 129-142).

Thus, two pillar concepts emerge from a study of God’s nature. First, God became human to save humans. This choice unveils God’s relational heart. Second, God called humans to the same task for the same purpose. This strategy unveils God’s redemptive heart. God’s relational, redemptive nature implies that lay pastor development is spiritual development. What remains to explore is the shape of that development. A survey of ecclesiology reveals it.

Ecclesiopraxis: Foundational Developments

Developments in the New Testament church reveal the theology underlying its praxis. This theology becomes clear by tracing the church’s movement from an ideal to a living organism, the emergence of elder as lay leader, and Paul’s instruction to Timothy.

In short, a careful look at early church activity (ecclesiopraxis) clarifies it. Such study offers guides for joining God in His incarnational work.

The New Incarnation of Christ: The Body of Christ

The link between God's nature and the church's identity is the seed of ministry. Anderson contends for a similar view (2001, pp. 61-74). Jesus initiated salvation as "God with us" (Matt 1:23) and God promises the end of salvation in similar terms. He predicts a future time when "the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them" (Rev 21:3). What remains of the redemption sequence is the present, and it embodies a unique incarnation, a unique example of "God with us".

The church is this divine incarnation, commissioned to live out God's nature (see Haggard, 2002, p. 143). After casting the vision for all believers to minister, Paul says, "Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it" (1 Cor 12:27). This statement defines the church as the new incarnation of Christ, God in the flesh. It suggests that a call to ministry is not only part of redeeming the called but also the means of revealing God (Burrill, 1996, pp. 105-118). It suggests that the church should embody Christ's relational, redemptive nature. Specifics aside, it is a divine mandate that all church members must fulfill (vv. 15-22), a mandate to "invest in people" (Hybels & Mittelberg, 1994, pp. 214-215). Helping lay pastors do their part honors the mandate.

Other metaphors collaborate the ministry of all believers. Jesus offered two of them in the Sermon on the Mount. After citing the persecution of ancient prophets, He said, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty *again*? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled

under foot by men” (Matt 5:12-13). In other words, He expects His followers to impact others for God, as did the ancient prophets; their faith is useless, like bland salt, if they don’t.

He followed the metaphor of salt with that of light, saying, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do *men* light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (vv. 14-16). As Jesus outlined the Christian life at the start of His ministry, the message was unmistakable: a call to Christ is a call to minister.

Paul added the metaphor of Creation to the same message. After noting that Christ “died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” (2 Cor 5:15), he described living for Christ as becoming “a new creature” (v. 17). Finally, he depicted this new creation as participation in “the ministry of reconciliation” (v. 18) and concluded that converts are “ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through” them (v. 20). This is incarnational language. Paul viewed conversion as a call to minister, with God working in and through the believer.

Peter and John revived priesthood as a metaphor to endorse the same doctrine. The implication may be basic; priests link people with God. This metaphor first described believers at the Exodus. Instead of a limited priesthood, God envisioned a whole “kingdom of priests” (Exod 19:6). This, however, relied on their obedience (v. 5) so it failed. Peter taught that Christ had restored this vision of “a royal priesthood” for the expressed purpose that they “may proclaim the excellencies of Him who . . . called” them

(1 Pet 2:9). Though John did not explain the metaphor, he also used it in Revelation, calling believers “priests and kings” (Rev 1:5), and quoting the same words on the lips of the heavenly chorus (Rev 5:10).

Each of these metaphors vividly contends that God calls the church to live out His relational, redemptive nature (see McVay, 2006 for further study on metaphors for the church). Further evidence is that Jesus portrayed the judgment in relational terms. The backdrop was the parable of ten virgins (Matt 25:1-13), which stressed preparation for the Advent, and the parable of the talents (vv. 14-30), which stressed service as preparation. To these Jesus added the climactic image, the Advent itself, saying, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats” (vv. 31-32). At this defining moment, the deciding factor in salvation is how people treated “the least of” fellow humanity (vv. 40, 45). Paul may have had this parable in mind when he wrote, “the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Gal 5:14). This makes sense in light of the new incarnation. It is a matter of accurately presenting God.

God in humanity is the new incarnation, whether seen explicitly in the body of Christ metaphor or implicitly in the metaphors of salt, light, Creation, and priesthood. The new incarnation should do what the first one did: by human contact, connect people with God. As Reuel Howe notes, “This kind of meeting between man and man cannot occur without an implicit meeting between man and God” (1963, p. 105). Thus, Howe agrees that ministry is God making contact through humans. This ecclesiology may be

taken broadly to endorse lay pastoral ministry because it endorses the ministry of all who meet with God (see Patterson, 2010). Whatever the implications, a theology of lay pastor development must account for the responsibility born of the new incarnation.

From Embryo to Body of Christ: The Story of Acts

To learn which part lay pastors play in this new incarnation, one must understand the whole body. Examining the body parts described in 1 Cor 12 provides incomplete guidance. That pericope addresses an existing church, and so does not discuss its underlying structure but assumes it. The apparent hierarchy of v. 28 is a comparative value assessment of church functions rather than a structural framework, or skeleton. The concern of imbalance in the chapter 12-14 context confirms this (v. 31). To pattern a new body from 1 Cor 12 would produce one without a skeleton. To understand the whole body, it is necessary to observe its development from embryonic ideal to mature body of Christ. Acts traces the conception and birth of the church in this way. It uncovers the skeletal structure that shaped the mature church body. This skeleton had three main components: apostle, elder, and deacon.

Christ's mission mandate was the hand that formed this skeleton. The church was conceived when Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives and said, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Giving no further guidance, "after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (v. 9). The disciples had no blueprint to guide their church development except the structures of Judaism, their ministry with Christ, and this mission mandate. The mandate became the hand that

shaped the church, while the structures of Judaism and their ministry with Christ infused strategic and structural elements.

The church was born when the Holy Spirit came. It emerged as an uncoordinated mission organism (Acts 2:1-40) but rapidly matured. Each step it took toward maturity, it took to protect the mission. The apostles were the first leaders. Their role was to establish Christianity in new places (Matt 28:16-20; Mark 3:14-15; Luke 6:13; Acts 1:8). It was to these men that Jesus spoke those famous words, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matt 28:18-19). The apostles started to evangelize but soon learned they needed help. Their first problem was caring for converts; “there were added [in one] day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). It was impossible for twelve men to care for so many and still evangelize. The body needed more hands.

Eventually, they chose deacons to oversee this need. From the start, members exercised mutual care. “All those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they *began* selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need . . . And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:44-45, 47). Then a problem emerged that threatened to halt mission. “A complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic *Jews* against the *native* Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of *food*” (Acts 6:1).

The apostles sensed danger and warned, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve [διακονεῖν] tables” (v. 2). In response, they let the mission shape the church and chose deacons to oversee member care (vv. 3-6). This was a service

ministry (διακονέω) structure they had seen in those who cared for Christ and themselves (Mark 15:40-41). The result was just what they hoped; “the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly” (v. 7). To serve the mission, the church grew from one type of leader to two. The deacon ministry allowed the apostles to keep evangelizing.

Next, they chose elders to lead the spiritual direction of local churches. After the church chose deacons, the rest of Acts records the apostles’ broad missionary travels to plant churches in new regions. However, these new churches gave rise to a new problem that, again, threatened to halt the mission. The new churches needed strong spiritual leaders. The apostles could not stop evangelizing to lead the churches but neither could they leave the churches without leaders. The apostles turned to a leadership model that had served Israel since the time of Moses (Exod 18:13-26); leading elders. Acts records the case of the churches in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch as follows: “When [the apostles] had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed” and left to evangelize new regions (Acts 14:21-26; see also Titus 1:5). The role of the elder as leader in spiritual matters is explicit in the case of Acts 15:1-33. To serve the mission, the church grew from two types of leaders to three. The elder ministry allowed the deacons to keep caring for social needs and it let the apostles keep evangelizing.

This survey shows that Christ’s mission mandate shaped the church of Acts around three groups of leaders, which comprised the structural skeleton. The first group was the apostles, whose role was expanding the gospel’s reach to new regions. In modern terms, they were evangelists and church planters. The second group was the deacons,

whose role was oversight of mutual member care. Today, pastors and elders often fill this role but, biblically, it belongs to the deacons. The third group was the elders, whose role was guiding the spiritual direction of each local church. Elders and deacons elicited the most defined qualifications of any New Testament offices (1 Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9) and repeatedly appeared as primary local leaders (Acts 11:29-30; 15:1-31; 16:4; 20:17, 28; 21:18; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 5:17-19; Tit 1:5-11; Jam 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1-4), confirming their prominence. Apostles received no such ordered list of qualifications but this is probably because they were already established as primary; Christ called them directly (Luke 6:12-13), with the lone exception of Matthias (Acts 1:26).

These groups form the skeleton of the New Testament church body. *The Didache* confirms the primacy of elders and deacons in the local church (15:1-2) and Kenneth Stout observes the same skeleton (1983, p. 62; see also Dederen, 2000 and Fortin, 2010). Paul further details it in 1 Cor 12 but does not offer a new one. The details there concern this study less than the implications of this broad leadership structure for lay pastoral ministry.

Before these implications are addressed, a qualifier should be made. It is faulty to assume that the biblical paradigm for church operation constitutes a mandate. That is an often repeated but unproven assumption. This structure is described in broad narrative and never prescribed. Furthermore, the parameters of each role were sometimes fluid. One such example is when deacon Philip exercised the apostolic function (Acts 6:2-6; 8:4-8). The structure that developed around the mission was practical for its time. The mandate remains the mission itself, not the structural paradigm. Nonetheless, a more effective mission structure has never been widely tested and proven. The biblical

structure remains the most successful in history (see Burrill, 2001), making it a practical guide.

Elder as Paradigm for Lay Pastor: Spiritual Leadership

To let Scripture shape the modern pastor's role, the first question of study is the function of local spiritual leaders in the New Testament. This is a different question from whether paid clergy should preside over local churches or go as apostles (missionaries). The question regards the local function, whether paid or unpaid. The answer comes from the church structure explored above, from which it is clear that the local spiritual leaders were elders (Stout, 1983, pp. 62-67).

Terminology and the Elder's Place

The primacy of elders in local spiritual leadership is clear in biblical thinking but not in modern minds. Historical shifts in terminology have confused the issue, creating the need for further clarification. Several terms refer to local church leaders. Besides deacon (διακόνος) and elder (πρεσβύτερος), the notable terms are pastor (ποιμήν), overseer (ἐπίσκοπος), and prophet (προφήτης).

The most instructive features of these terms are their overlap and ambiguity, which suggests that they do not always refer to distinct offices. As demonstrated above, the recognized offices were apostle, deacon, and elder. The terms pastor, overseer, and prophet were descriptors or charismatic functions not limited to a specific office, as Ron Clouzet also contends (1997, p. 57). Consequently, a careful ecclesiology should concern itself with functions rather than terms. A survey of terms confirms this.

The word pastor (ποιμήν) is not prominent in the New Testament (see Clouzet, 1997, pp. 57-58). Most English translations render the Greek word ποιμήν as pastor only

once in the New Testament. Paul used it in his list of leadership functions. He wrote that Christ “gave . . . some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12). Burrill argues that the Greek for “pastors and teachers” (ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους) forms a compound rather than distinct terms (1998, pp. 94-95). The switch of conjunction from δὲ between the other offices listed to the more strongly linking καὶ between these terms suggests the compound. The descriptive clause “for the equipping of the saints” confirms it, defining the terms jointly as ministry mentorship.

Elsewhere in the New Testament, ποιμήν refers to Christ as nurturing leader (Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27; John 10:1-21; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25). In fact, every church-related, New Testament use of this term outside Eph 4:11 is description rather than title, suggesting that its use in this verse is the same. The term does not designate an office but a function performed by each type of leader in their realm, whether apostle, deacon, or elder.

Ποιμήν is the word for shepherd. Initial adoption of the term to describe leaders, apparently, appealed to the shepherd metaphor of a person who keeps the group in order (Isa 63:11). In spite of its popularity, the practice of drawing specifics of a local leader’s role from a metaphor used for broad description is faulty, especially when an explicit description of that role is present. It is also faulty to draw a parallel between Jesus as the good shepherd (John 10:11) and the pastor; unless the modern pastor is meant to embody all that Jesus is and does. It is faulty because Jesus just as perfectly embodies the servant role of deacon and the evangelistic role of apostle. The result of this reasoning has been

the merger of all church leadership functions into the pastoral office. This is both unbiblical and impractical.

Two other terms require attention as well. The words overseer (ἐπίσκοπος) and prophet (προφήτης) also describe local spiritual leaders. Biblical authors employed them as broad terms of description. In Acts 20:17, 28, Paul called the elders (πρεσβυτέρους) of Ephesus overseers (ἐπισκόπους), who must pastor (ποιμαίνειν) the church. This overlap demonstrates that such terms were descriptions rather than titles. In Phil 1:1, Paul also pairs the term overseer (ἐπίσκοπος) with deacon (διακόνος) when addressing local leaders, showing its interchangeability with the expected elder (πρεσβύτερος). He may use it because it is a more inclusive description of local spiritual leadership than πρεσβύτερος, which denotes advanced age. Whatever the case, the term describes function, not title.

Similarly, Luke pairs prophets with teachers (προφήται καὶ διδάσκαλοι) in Acts 13:1 to form a possible compound like the “pastors and teachers” (ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους) of Eph 4:11, suggesting that pastor and prophet may be marginally interchangeable in his mind. All this overlap and ambiguity shows that varied terms do not change the three-part leadership structure observed in Acts. Instead, the variations appear for descriptive reasons. The paradigm for spiritual leadership in the local church remains the office of elder. Thus, the biblical definition of this office suggests a paradigm for the local spiritual leader’s role today; the role of the leader commonly called pastor.

Church Praxis and the Elder’s Role

To define modern pastoral ministry, then, it is necessary to further define the ministry of elders in the New Testament church. Seminal texts include Acts 15:1-35; 20:17-36, 1 Tim 3:1-7, and Titus 1:5-11. A study of these texts reveals that elders kept

order, taught doctrine, settled disputes, guarded the weak, and trained others to minister. These texts also reveal that the traits needed to serve these functions are spiritual integrity, teaching ability, people skills, team building, and general leadership skills.

The elder's functions emerge from both instruction and narrative. Their function of keeping order appeared when they were appointed for that purpose (Titus 1:5). Their function of teaching doctrine appeared when they were chosen for this ability (1 Tim 3:2). Their function of settling disputes appeared when they served as final arbitrators (Acts 15:1-2). Their function of guarding the weak appeared when they were called to dispute the wolves attacking the flock (Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9-11). Their function of training others to minister appeared when they were called pastor-teachers, who must equip the saints for ministry (Eph 4:11-12).

The elder traits emerge from qualifications for office. The trait of spiritual integrity appears as an extensive list of spiritual requirements (Titus 1:6-7). The trait of teaching ability appears as a concern for doctrinal purity (vv. 9-11). The trait of people skills appears as gentleness and peaceability (1 Tim 3:3). The trait of team building appears in the demand for a well-led household (vv. 4-5). The trait of general leadership skills appears in terms of description like shepherd, overseer, and ruler (Eph 4:11; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 5:17). Fostering in students knowledge of their function is a matter of simple instruction but instilling these traits must be the center of lay pastor development.

A practical questions remains: that of pay. Scripture's ambiguity on ministerial pay comes, in part, from the transition between the limited Old Testament ministry (Num 18:26) and the priesthood of all in the New Testament (1 Pet 2:9). It is no longer clear where the line between paid and unpaid ministers should be drawn.

Although ancient Israel had an elaborate system for sustaining priests, the New Testament church had only thin roots in this tradition. Paul referenced the Old Testament to justify paying elders and apostles but rejected his own pay and hinted that certain elders deserved it more than others (1 Cor 9:6-15; 1 Tim 5:17-18). In New Testament economics, Paul's concern was not primarily a matter of justice but of practicality. At the time, to a degree, all church members lived from a common purse (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35). Evidence that this practice went beyond Jerusalem appears when Paul combats distortion of it (2 Thes 3:10-12). It appears that the idea of paying a leader for a reason other than need was foreign to their thinking. In light of this, the force of Paul's argument is that the church should care for a leader's need, without complaint. Biblically, then, the question of pay should be answered practically; do what is necessary. Stout agrees (1983, pp. 67-71).

Early Seventh-day Adventists appear to have operated this way. Adventist pioneer, Ellen White described the paid ministry role as that of apostle, though she didn't use the term (1902/1948, pp. 18-21). This suggests that early Adventists adopted a practical approach to the question of pay. Pay centered on those serving the apostolic function (see Burrill, 1999, pp. 49-62), presumably because such ministers were too transient to otherwise secure gainful employment.

The New Testament elders were equivalent in function to modern lay pastors. They were largely unpaid and they served as primary local leaders. This fact validates the ministry of lay pastors today, because it is consistent with biblical ideals. Furthermore, it makes lay pastors the most biblical option and, from a missional viewpoint, invalidates the long-term use of paid clergy in the local church. The New Testament mission remains

the mandate for the church of today. The New Testament structure is not the mandate. However, elevating lay leadership back to New Testament heights by placing lay pastors as primary local leaders would make way to put paid clergy back in the business of expanding the mission to new regions. In essence, it could put the mission mandate at the forefront again.

Paul's Curriculum for Timothy: A Case Study

Although the broad function of elder in the local church is the most instructive line of study, specific guides for functional success are also helpful. These emerge from a survey of Paul's instruction to Timothy. Although Timothy also served the role of apostle, when Paul wrote his two famous letters, Timothy was laying foundations for the local church. Thus, the immanent issues are those of local leadership.

Paul's development of Timothy presents the most comprehensive New Testament model of ministerial training besides that of Jesus. Paul took him along on his apostolic travels to help teach the gospel (Acts 16:1-4) and later sent him to keep spiritual and theological order in Macedonia and Corinth (Acts 19:22; 1 Cor 4:17). He was Paul's student, given the title of son (1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:22; 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2). This teacher-student relationship yields five ministerial competencies to guide the development of local spiritual leaders.

In his letters to Timothy, Paul was most concerned that Timothy teach and practice sound doctrine (1 Tim 1:3-11, 18-20; 4:1-11; 6:20-21; 2 Tim 1:13-14; 2:14-3:17). This concern has two sides to it, suggesting two separate competencies. First is the issue of Timothy's own spiritual vitality; taking care to practice sound doctrine. Second is his ability to teach it to others. Paul called him to preach in a way that converted hearts (2

Tim 4:1-5). In his letters to Timothy, Paul made no distinction between preaching and teaching. His heart's burden was that Timothy advance truth and godliness in his own life and in the lives of others.

Paul's next great concern was for Timothy to manage relationships well, including conflict resolution and relationship nurture (1 Tim 2:1-15; 5:1-25; 6:3-10; 2 Tim 2:14-26; 3:1-9). Though he must boldly share truth (2 Tim 1:6-12), he was to avoid useless conflicts (1 Tim 6:5) and show respect for all (1 Tim 5:1-25). This suggests a third necessary competency: people skills.

Two less prominent, but still pressing, concerns also appear in Paul's instructions. The first is team building. The second is evangelism. These provide the fourth and fifth competencies. He wrote about developing and organizing others for ministry (1 Tim 3:1-13; 2 Tim 2:1-2) and wrote that evangelism was part of Timothy's calling (2 Tim 4:5). Less space is given to these in the letters but their necessity is clear.

Although other ministerial competencies may also emerge from careful examination of Paul's letters to Timothy, spirituality vitality, teaching/preaching ability, people skills, team building, and evangelism are the ones Paul emphasized most. In light of Timothy's local leadership role, these competencies give guidance to what is called pastoral ministry today and suggest elements for curriculum formation.

Summary of Implications

The steps that remain to set a biblical foundation for lay pastor development are, first, reviewing the principles discovered and, second, applying them to curriculum formation. The principles reflect God's wisdom and their application makes it practical for today.

Review of Broad Principles

A theology of lay pastor development has emerged from two sources: the acts of God (theopraxis) and the acts of his church (ecclesiopraxis). It has been shown that God uses humans to reach humans, both as a means to share the gospel with others and to deepen His nature in His agents. Collectively, they are a new incarnation of God. Three primary leader types comprise this incarnation: apostle, deacon, and elder. The apostle is paid to expand the mission to new regions. The deacon oversees the care of local social needs. The elder is the local spiritual leader. Local spiritual leaders, whether they call themselves pastors or elders or lay pastors, are agents to keep this incarnation intact. Lay pastor development forms people to serve this leadership role. That form includes the competencies of spiritual vitality, teaching/preaching ability, people skills, team building, and evangelistic skills. If these competencies are instilled and applied, paid clergy can be freed to expand the mission to new regions.

Principles Applied in Curriculum Formation

Drafting these principles and competencies into a workable curriculum is a challenge addressed more fully in chapter 4. The biblical evidence validates the competencies in the curriculum proposed there and gives a structure for church operation. However, distinct challenges and unresolved questions accompany this quest, some of which will find answers only by experimentation. The most daunting challenge is reintroducing the lay element to pastoral ministry. Lay pastors are a revival of the biblical elder's role, returning local leadership to the laity while maintaining an acceptable level of title familiarity (i.e. pastor) for members.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE RELATING TO LAY PASTOR DEVELOPMENT

Literature relating to lay pastor development is diverse. Works addressing ecclesiology, lay ministry, pastoral ministry, ministerial training, lay pastor development proper, historical reports on such efforts, and education theory inform a curriculum for lay pastor development. A full literature review of each related discipline would be exhausting and unproductive. The previous chapter draws an understanding of ecclesiology, lay ministry, pastoral ministry, and some aspects of ministerial training directly from Scripture. Although the following literature review includes works in each of these areas, its emphasis is on literature that directly addresses ministerial training, with a complementary look at historical reports. Excluding historical reports, the works considered are limited to those published between 1998 and 2008, except where another work is deemed of special value to this study.

The works reviewed are divided into the following categories: First, historical reports on lay training in the territory now governed by Pennsylvania Conference offer a perspective on the heritage that this project continues. Second, scholarly works on pastoral development reveal components of effective training programs. Third, statistical reports on pastoral practices and desired traits show what current ministry models set as

expectations of pastors. Fourth, professional works suggest needed pastoral competencies, providing a window into how current thinking relates to biblical practices.

This survey assumes that the primary skills necessary for pastor and lay pastor are the same, since they serve the same functions; although training contexts will differ. The necessary lay pastor competencies that surface from relevant literature are people skills, biblical preaching/teaching, spiritual vitality, spiritual leadership, and team building. Elements of educational approach and related considerations that emerge from this survey are the need for practical in-ministry assignments, the need for a learning community, and the need to integrate learning with life experience.

Reports on Lay Training in Pennsylvania Conference, 1901-2008

The first category is that of historical reports. These record information about lay pastor development through time. The *Visitor*, which is the official news outlet of the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, is the only significant published source of primary information about lay pastors in the locality and region of the Pennsylvania Conference. Unpublished efforts have likely been made but no records of them have been found. A review of articles appearing in the *Visitor* between 1901 and 2008 reveals representative facts about the education, scope, and status of lay pastors in the territory now governed by Pennsylvania Conference.

A Period of Extensive Lay Ministry Training

A series of articles from the 1930's highlight a General Conference sponsored training program for "lay ministers" that began in New Jersey in 1934 (p. 1) and grew to include Pennsylvania by 1937 (J. C. Holland, 1937). The program's expressed purpose was to teach lay members how to conduct public evangelistic efforts and win souls

(Manry, 1934). The periodical record demonstrates that lay pastors of the 1930's were unpaid (J. C. Holland, 1937; Leach, 1939).

A Period of Sparse Lay Ministry Training

From the 1940's to the 1980's the continued use of lay pastors in the region is evident (K. J. Holland, 1960; Ihrig, 1951; Logan, 1966; Pinkney, 1956, 1957) but there is no information about their training, only evidence that they pastored churches and remained unpaid (Hubert, 1988).

A Period of Renewed Lay Ministry Training

More recent reports from the 1990's and early 2000's reveal the most concerted efforts to develop lay pastors in Pennsylvania since the 1930's. A 1992 report mentions lay pastor development in one local church (Seltzer). A 1997 report highlights a training program led by three salaried pastors for the purpose of training students to "lead and nurture churches" (Finneman, p. 30). The competencies taught were spiritual formation, preaching, and administration. A 2001 report features a Columbia Union training program conducted by the North American Division Evangelism Institute ("Lay minister of evangelism training school,"). Other reports show that individualized lay pastor training also occurred but details are sparse (Tryon, 1997).

Implications

From this survey of historical documents, it is clear that lay pastoral ministry is a part of the Pennsylvania Conference mission and tradition. It is also clear that lay pastors have historically been unpaid, or largely unpaid, and have been called upon for evangelism, preaching, and church leadership.

Scholarly Works on Pastoral Development

The second category of pertinent literature is comprised of proposed methods and content for pastor or lay pastor development. Among works that address either form of pastoral training are those that examine specifics of curriculum or its delivery and those that propose holistic approaches.

Several scholars explore adaptations of theological education to the needs of specific world cultures. Examples include Donald Macaskill's (2007) research in Scotland, Norman R. Lindsay's (2006) work among Alaskan natives, David Leslie's (2004) work in England, Sylvester Nibene Kuubetersuur's (2003) program in Ghana, Cindy Shek-Yin Wong's (1998) studies in Hong Kong, and others.

Due to the nature of scholarly research, most of the relevant works report field research in a very limited setting, as do these examples mentioned above. However, most such works suggest principles or methods to be applied in broader contexts. In view of this, the works reviewed below are assessed for their broadly relevant principles and methods.

Unique Training Approaches

Many studies address unique training approaches. These include methods for teaching students to reason from theory to practice, using spiritual formation as the governing educational framework, implementing relational elements in the training process, teaching skills for working with an aging church population, making the development of emotional health central to ministerial education, recognizing and attending to the hidden curriculum, and teaching ministerial competencies by telling culturally relevant stories.

Learning to Reason from Theory to Practice

Several authors recognize that students must learn to reason from theory to practice. Dorothy Bass and Craig Dykstra (2008) offer a collection of essays that emerged from conversation between pastors and academics. Through the varied opinions of diverse contributors, at least one premise is clear: academic understanding must inform practice. The implication for ministerial training discussed in this work is that students must begin to learn the skill of translating good theory into good practice before leaving school. A consensus among contributors is that this element lacks in standard curricula. Arch Chee Keen Wong (2007) also examines the deficit.

Significantly, ministerial students place a higher value on the academic elements of their education. Donald Scott Fox (2005) demonstrates this and argues that strong academics have a positive effect on their professional satisfaction and longevity. He first reports on his extensive research to determine the level of student satisfaction with the many specifics of their education. He then reports on his efforts to define the relationship between their satisfaction in training and their longevity in ministry. He concludes that the academic aspects of their training produced higher satisfaction and, therefore, greater professional longevity. The clear implication is that an academic curriculum might be more effective than a solely practical one.

These scholars agree on the need to link theory with practice, and the need is addressed in various ways. Graeme Smith (2008) recommends what he calls an enquiry-based learning process for use in theological education. This approach relies on past student experience in conjunction with theological reflection to make the connection between theology and practice. Smith notes that this is similar to problem-based learning, in which students learn by solving problem scenarios. A major difference is that Smith's

enquiry-based learning has the tutor active in infusing information into the problem-solving process.

Howard Worsley (2005) applies a more traditional form of problem-based learning to ministerial training. This is a model used in medical education. It

organizes the curriculum around problem scenarios rather than subjects or disciplines. Working in groups, students explore these complex situations, considering what further information or skills they require to proceed. It is a learner-centred enquiry, often using personal learning contracts, in which students are forced to engage with their learning needs and to take responsibility for their development. (p. 72)

The learner-centered enquiry that Worsley describes is a form of constructionism. Seymour Papert formulated this theory, which contends that learning is a reordering of knowledge gained through experience rather than a transmission of knowledge (Harel & Papert, 1991).

Roland Reim (2003) goes a step beyond Smith and Worsley, endorsing a fully hands-on learning approach as an alternative to competency-based curricula. He argues that focusing on competencies distracts from a student's ability to respond to their calling in a way that produces dynamic growth. Richard Bryant (2004) responds to Reim, defending the competency-based approach to ministerial training. Bryant shows from survey data that pastors feel the competency-based approach provides a focused way toward their development.

The foregoing solutions to the disconnection between theory and practice vary widely. Nonetheless, there is general agreement on the need to link them in some way.

Spiritual Formation as the Governing Educational Framework

Another trend in ministry education is toward spiritual formation as the governing framework. Maureen R. O'Brien (2007) examines the need to nurture theological

reflection among American Catholic lay pastors, proposing the use of “models of conversation-based theological reflection to aid their self-construction of ministerial identity” (p. 232). This is meant to address the belief that “the emergence of these ministers has preceded the full development of a viable theology of ministry to encompass their identity and role” (p. 213). The same is true in Pennsylvania Conference. O’Brien sees spiritual formation as the solution.

Some cite a heritage of spiritual emphasis as the impetus to recentralize spiritual formation in curricula (see Randall, 2007) and others cite the desire of students. Carol Margaret Tasker (2002) reports that ministerial students have expressed the need for help in spiritual formation for 150 years without significant attention. She argues for the use of intentional learning experiences in ministerial education to open the way for spiritual formation. In a two-year study of 120 ministerial students of 40 nationalities, who engaged in a ten-week required spiritual formation class, she found that the positive spiritual impact of the class extended to both social contacts and ministry plans. Tasker also offers seven points of application for educators of pastors in training, which can be summarized in the need for personal spiritual development within curricula.

In a similar vein, Kathleen Hope Brown (2002) details a six-month program for the spiritual formation of lay ministers. It is ultimately a plan to develop their spiritual maturity but recognizes connections with development in biblical knowledge, a growing sense of call, and a strengthened sense of ministerial identity.

Thomas William Eric McIlwraith (1998) posits that spiritual formation among lay ministers grows from maximizing significant incidents in their ministry. He reports on a study of women serving as lay ministers in Catholic churches. He then suggests that

one significant implication of his study is the need to expand the focus of ministerial education

more toward the realms of the affective and the 'inner' life, beyond the visible toward the invisible, beyond the sensible world to the realm of mystery. Along the same lines, therefore, and in addition to the considerable and proper emphasis currently being given in spiritual guidance direction, it seems . . . that an increased role for the transformative adult educator who could attend, in group settings, to both the affective and cognitive sides of this enterprise would have considerable merit. (pp. 231-232)

This perspective reflects the general sense of need to integrate spiritual formation with skill development. McIllwraith's final point about an increased role for the transformative educator previews the next area of interest.

Relational Elements in the Training Process

As noted above, Graeme Smith (2008) infused the relational element into problem-based learning. The need for relationships in the learning process has received increased attention recently. This may emerge from generational perspective. Whatever the source, several applications to ministerial training appear.

To address concerns unique to educating persons of the X and Millennial generations for pastoral ministry, Michael James Thompson (2002) proposes an internship program. He takes a positive view of these generations, arguing that their different characteristics are born of the present culture, shaping members of these generations to lead well in the present culture. Since he also concludes that both the needs of their times and their learning processes are different, he proposes what he terms a pre-service model of training, which amounts to a one-year internship curriculum.

Jin Ho Cho (2002) offers an approach to integrate faith, practice, ministry, and theology in ministerial training that also depends on relational elements. Cho's most

forceful application is suggesting the inclusion of “community living educational situations as a method of building character and spiritual training” (p. iv). Cho’s impetus for this study and its recommendations is the contention that, “Theological knowledge without devotion cannot connect with everyday life; rather, it can produce a negative influence in the Christian community” (p. 1). Thus, Cho believes that including the relational element in ministerial training is a matter of theological integrity.

On a less intense level, Dwight Riddick (2005) also includes the relational element. He offers a church-based supplemental pastoral training program intended to strengthen confidence, leadership skills, and spiritual formation for the African American Baptist Church. In Riddick’s system, low intensity training takes place in a real church ministry context and centers around a devotional guide and one-on-one coaching with the trainer.

Similarly, Francisco Jimenez-Arias (1998) presents a supervised in-ministry training method that uses pastor-mentors to guide the development of skill-confidence among students in late ministry training. Although his research was unable to quantify the usefulness of pastor-mentors, he maintains that the evidence supports it. He, like those cited above, believes the relational element crucial to ministerial training.

Skills for Working With an Aging Membership

An area that has received little attention, but for which a good case can be made, is the need for pastors to understand the elderly. James L. Knapp and Jane Elder (2002) report that most seminary curricula give little, if any, attention to the needs of elderly members. They argue that, given the aging of the American populous and the disproportionate interest in the church among the elderly, this element must be infused

into ministerial training. They conclude that, if this is not done, ministers will be inadequately prepared to do ministry that is relevant to their parishioners.

The Development of Emotional Health

Awareness of the need to attend the personhood of clergy is growing (Doolittle, 2010; Francis, Robbins, Kaldor, & Castle, 2009; Francis, Wulff, & Robbins, 2008; Meek et al., 2003; Miner, 2007). Jean Elizabeth Barkley (2000) contends that intentional integration of the student's life experience into ministerial education strengthens learning and ministry health. She states that her "research affirms the importance of developing other ways of ensuring that appropriate attention is given to the personhood of the ministry candidate" (p. 157). This includes attending to both positive and negative past experiences. As means to this integration, she suggests the use of "clinical pastoral education, therapy, work with peers, internship, and field placements" (p. vi). Her concerns are mostly mental health related.

Recognizing and Attending to the Hidden Curriculum

James Muli Mbuva (1998) raises another intriguing issue. He contends that the social environment and the ideology of the training entity interplay to produce explicit, implicit, and hidden curricula. According to Mbuva, the fact that "the explicit and implicit curriculum provide a gateway for hidden curriculum to take place as transformation into Christ likeness is demonstrated in students' everyday life experience" (p. 318). In other words, the effectiveness of the hidden curriculum appears in the level of life transformation that occurs among students. This transformation, then, is a measure of the effectiveness of the explicit and implicit curricula.

Teaching Competencies Through Culturally Relevant Stories

Paul David Parks (1997) advocates the use of culturally relevant stories to teach ministerial competencies. This parallels the narrative nature of Scripture. In the Middle Eastern context, his researched showed a slight positive correlation between teaching theology through narrative and increased learning. Beyond the level of knowledge obtained, Parks found a high level of enthusiasm for the approach among students. Although his primary conclusion is the need for culturally relevant teaching methods, his research does suggest the possibility that a narrative-based approach to ministerial training would prove effective.

Implications

Each of these contributions must be considered in the development of an overall training program, especially in curriculum delivery, and specifically to integrate the theoretical with the spiritual and the practical.

Comprehensive Systems and Methodologies

Although many of the previous works propose whole systems of training, their foci rest on the introduction or maximization of specific elements of that training. Several works are more strictly focused on proposing *comprehensive* systems and methodologies for training pastors. These include a learner-directed approach, a high-touch curriculum centered on relationships, a program that fosters learning by doing incarnational ministry, a sixteen-week holistic ministry training course for lay preachers, an intentionally biblical paradigm for ministerial training, and a lay pastor curriculum slanted toward pastoral visitation.

Learner-Directed Education

Donald Macaskill (2007) contends for a less academic approach to ministerial training. Macaskill addresses the perception that ministers in the Church of Scotland are unprepared to understand and execute their roles. He starts with the view that the formation of ministerial identity occurs “through the complex interrelationship of response from others, inherited and perceived role models, peer group influence, congregational, community and institutional role expectancy and professional training” (p. 24). The role of education, in Macaskill’s view, is setting the direction of this development process. He suggests the use of a “learning director” (p. 33) to serve as a long-term guide, helping the student integrate and use the available avenues for development. Macaskill concludes

A reconceptualized, re-envisioned model of theological education which is person centred, affective, moulded to fit the needs of the student rather than the faculty, might possibly be closer to what theology as an art form is itself. It might also result in the churches gaining individuals who might be able to respond to a situation where they will be able to cope with not knowing what to do, and with being ministers amongst a people who don’t want them to do what they want to do. Theological education is not about a toolkit but about letting people have the confidence to use the compass that their education has given them. (p. 34)

Macaskill’s approach is not truly less academic, in the sense of minimizing ministry theory, but more focused in its academic content and integrated with experience. It does what Smith (2008) and Worsley (2005) also do; teach students to reason from theory to practice.

High-Touch Education

Donna Bartleson Manwaring (2004) offers a three-year in-ministry training program for new pastors to supplement their seminary training. Her curriculum includes concepts of administration, leadership, and relationships. Her methodology employs a

retreat, a mentor, a small group, and ministry supervision. The system could be described as a high-touch training system. Of additional interest to the present study is Manwaring's corollary deduction that administrative and relationship skills are still in great need among post-seminary ministers. This suggests that these skills should be points of emphasis in ministerial training curricula.

Incarnational Education

Sylvester Nibene Kuubetersuur (2003) presents a program of incarnational ministry development to ensure the practical relevance of ministerial education. He proposes a field education program intended to make students aware of the life situation of those to whom they will minister. He argues that only through this incarnational approach to ministerial training will ministry development be truly Christ-like.

Holistic Education

Johnny Verne Baylor (1999) presents a sixteen-week approach to training lay preachers. Although this program is designed to develop pulpit help, and not the other ministerial competencies, Baylor intends a holistic development that includes five areas. These are self-awareness, ministerial competence, theological understanding, commitment to Christian service, and an understanding of the mentoring relationship.

Biblical Paradigm Education

Though each of these works appears here because it contributes to curriculum and process development, two works are of special interest to the present study. The first is *A biblical paradigm for ministerial training* by Ron E. M. Clouzet (1997). It is key because it supplies a well-researched and already defended framework for the delivery of a

Seventh-day Adventist ministerial curriculum, such as the one the present work proposes.

In summary of his work, Clouzet offers the following:

From our biblical survey and historical review, there are three ministerial training objectives that rise up with clarity above others. The first is character development as the key theological objective. The second is community as the understood environmental objective. And the third is a missional methodology in ministerial training. These constitute the pillars holding the ministerial education platform. (p. 288)

These principles provide both the slant and environment for teaching the desired competencies. Although Clouzet's conclusions emphasize character and mindset above vocational competencies, he acknowledges that biblically based vocational competencies remain necessary (pp. 316-317). His burden is that, "Today's paradigm for ministerial training should not be marginally but intentionally biblical" (p. 288). Consequently, in developing a curriculum, this study follows Clouzet's philosophy of making it intentionally biblical.

Pastoral Visitor Education

The second work of special interest to the present study is *Developing, implementing, and testing a training program for lay pastoral ministry in selected churches of the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* by Kenneth B. Stout (1983). This work explores a question similar to that of the present study; namely, how to establish lay pastors in existing churches. It explores the question in the same geographical region and denominational context as the present study.

Stout covers the obstacles to lay pastor acceptance most thoroughly but also recommends a process and the training environments. Though Stout's training program emphasizes pastoral visitation (pp. 131-161) and occurred more than twenty-five years before the present study, his approach and observations within the general context of the

present study remain the best comprehensive source of localized insight about lay training.

Implications

Each training system outlined here reveals elements necessary for a successful lay pastor curriculum and its delivery. Of special value are the elements of personal transformation and the integration of theory with practice.

Statistical Reports on Pastoral Practices in North America

The third category of relevant literature is comprised of field research reports that help identify competencies for success in the pastorate. As far as they extend, these help establish what lay pastors must learn in order to succeed. However, objective research in this area is limited, perhaps because it is difficult to quantify success or because indicators of success are situation specific.

Hundreds of works suggest pastoral competencies based on experience and dozens more develop a theological understanding of ministry. Though these works contribute to the body of collected wisdom, it is a purpose of the present study to identify pastoral competencies that meet the criterion of quantifiable consensus. Statistical reports include data on member participation, the views of lay leaders on needed pastoral traits, and common pastoral practice.

Member Participation

A U. S. Congregations study reported by Deborah Bruce (2007) found that only 38% of all worshippers are involved in a small group of any kind outside the worship

service. This suggests that most congregants will accept or reject their pastor on the strength of his or her preaching, since this is their prime point of contact.

Traits Lay Leaders Want

In a Duke University study, Adair T. Lummis (2003) presents research on needed pastoral competencies. She identifies nine “of what lay leaders see as the most important clergy attributes when they are searching for their next pastor” (p. 3). Although some of these traits are innate and would be hard to teach, the teachable traits in this list are demonstrated authenticity, good preaching and worship leading, spiritual leadership, people skills, consensus building, and innovation. These findings show that, as far as member buy-in lays a foundation for pastoral leadership, these are the traits essential for lay pastors to learn.

Pastoral Practices

Another Duke University study presented by Becky R. McMillan (2002) shows which pastoral competencies are most exercised. The study found that Protestant clergy spend their ministry time in four major areas. They spend 32% of their workweek preparing for preaching and worship, 20% of their workweek providing pastoral care, 16% of their workweek administering the congregation’s work and attending meetings, and 14% of their workweek teaching and training people for ministry. Part-time Protestant pastors, working about half the number of hours as full-time clergy, spend 41% of their workweek preparing for preaching and worship while all other percentages drop; a fact with special application to Adventist lay pastors, who are usually part-time volunteers.

Implications

The results of these studies are evidence of either the demands placed on clergy or their chosen priorities. Whatever the case, they indicate the pattern that congregations will probably measure lay pastors against, either to validate or invalidate them.

Professional Works that Suggest Needed Pastoral Competencies

The fourth category of relevant literature is comprised of works identifying the competencies needed for pastoral success. The competencies that emerge from this literature are people skills, biblical depth, preaching ability, spiritual vitality, member training skills, team-building ability, spiritual leadership strength, and the ability to connect with all age groups.

All Clergy

Jorene Taylor Swift (2007) and Clifford Dean Sanders (2000) contend for the centrality of people skills in ministerial curricula. As cited above, Donna Bartleson Manwaring (2004) studied the opinions of new pastors to develop a three-year in-ministry training program to supplement their seminary training. She identifies people skills as the most desired area for supplemental training, especially in the area of conflict management.

A study by James David Coggins (2004) used surveys to identify the pastoral character qualities and leadership competencies needed for success in pastoral ministry. This study parallels the concern of the present study, in that it identifies needed characteristics and competencies that meet the criterion of quantifiable consensus.

Coggins reports that pastors ranked God-centered biblical ministry and knowledge of God's Word as the top two knowledge competencies, they ranked being

evangelistic and preaching to change lives as the top two behavior competencies, and they ranked having a teachable spirit and being a self-starter as the top two competencies for starting in a new ministry situation. He also reports various aspects of comparison between the perceptions of pastors and the perceptions of their denominational leaders. The most notable of these differences is that pastors rank relationship skills third among the needed behavior competencies and their leaders rank it first (pp. 90-92).

Adventist Clergy

Henry Peter Swanson (1999) offers the best research to identify pastoral competencies that engender success among Seventh-day Adventist clergy. Swanson studied two groups of Adventist pastors, one group with ten baptisms or less and another group with fifty baptisms or more over the same three-year period.

In regard to the literature consensus, Swanson notes, “There was wide agreement that pastoral effectiveness was closely related to interpersonal relationships” (p. 268). In regard to general aptitude for pastoral success, Swanson reports, “high-baptism pastors were more likely to have achieved scholastic honors, attended the SDA Seminary, and have seen growth in membership” (p. 273). The clear implication is that academic strength helps pastoral success.

Among other findings, Swanson identifies seven pastoral tasks that lay leaders and pastors rank as most important. “By their own self-ratings and by the estimates of lay leaders from their congregations,” Swanson reports, “the high-baptism group of pastors spent more time on seven aspects of their work . . .” (p. 273). These seven task areas should guide curriculum formation. Swanson reports the following:

There was a gratifying degree of agreement among pastors and lay leaders concerning most-important, and least-important pastoral tasks. Educators may need to make

changes in curriculum in order to develop in students superior levels of competence in the performance of the pastoral tasks of highest ranking:

1. Practicing the spiritual disciplines of personal prayer and devotional Bible study
2. Training members for service within the congregation and for participation in its outreach program
3. Involving members in church-growth activities
4. Sermon preparation
5. Strategic planning and visioning
6. Ministry to children and youth
7. Pastoral care of sick and infirmed members. (pp. 281-282)

Swanson provides a competency list from the Seventh-day Adventist context but it does not differ substantially from competencies identified in other contexts.

Implications

The most prominent competencies identified in these professional works provide the content of effective lay pastor training. The most important competency area, next to spirituality, is people skills.

Summary and Implications of Literary Findings

The above works do not represent an exhaustive review of related theory. They are limited to the issues with most direct bearing on the scope of this study; namely, the proposal of a curriculum to improve lay pastor acceptance and success. Historical reports demonstrate what has been tried, and for what purpose, in the area of the Pennsylvania Conference. Scholarly works on pastoral development reveal components of effective training programs. Statistical reports and professional works identify pastoral competencies for curriculum inclusion.

Historical reports demonstrate that the Seventh-day Adventist church in Pennsylvania has a history of lay pastor success. The level of this success has

corresponded to the level of training available, with the apex occurring in the 1930's. The purpose of lay pastor development in the region of the Pennsylvania Conference has consistently been evangelistic, whether lay pastors have served evangelistic functions directly or indirectly. Also, most lay pastors have ministered without significant remuneration.

Scholarly works on pastoral development reveal components of effective programs. A component that appears in various forms in various works is helping students link theory to practice, both in the learning process and as a ministry skill. This contends for making actual ministry part of the learning process, whether through hands-on learning or problem solving in simulated ministry scenarios. Another component that appears in various forms is making personal, spiritual transformation a part of ministerial development. That is to say that a good training program not only changes students' minds but also changes their characters. A final component of effective training programs that appears prominent in the literature is use of relationships in the learning process, by nurturing a peer community and having ministry mentors.

Statistical reports identify competencies that are expected in pastors. These expectations are set by pastoral practice. This, in turn, may be guided by tradition, biblical concepts, public demands, or a combination of such factors. Whatever their genesis, the most commonly expected competencies are biblical preaching, people skills, spiritual leadership, pastoral visitation/counseling, and team building.

Professional works also identify needed competencies, which meet the criterion of quantifiable consensus. They are people skills, biblical knowledge, biblical preaching/teaching, spiritual vitality, team building, spiritual leadership, and the ability to

connect with all ages. Although each study identifies a slightly different list of priorities, the overlap is extensive. The competencies that appear repeatedly are people skills, biblical preaching, spiritual vitality, spiritual leadership, and team building/training.

The collected wisdom of the works reviewed here demands a lay pastor curriculum that has one specific purpose, includes three specific learning components, and teaches five specific competencies. First, its purpose must be evangelistic, as the Pennsylvania Conference tradition dictates. Second, it must include the learning components of linking theory to practice, fostering spiritual transformation, and utilizing relationships. Third, it must teach the competencies of people skills, biblical preaching, spiritual vitality, spiritual leadership, and team building. These form the curriculum outlined in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

A FIELD TEST OF THE PROPOSED LAY PASTOR CURRICULUM

The merit of a practical idea is measured by its results. The purpose of this study was to develop and test a curriculum that would equip lay pastoral candidates for service in the Pennsylvania Conference. The preceding chapters have shown that the lay pastor curriculum proposed in this dissertation synchronizes with missional need, sound theology, statistical data, and conceptual studies. The field test, however, reveals to what level good theory has been made practical. The pilot of this curriculum began in February 2008 and finished in December of the same year, with an online variation operating from April 2008 to February 2009. The Lansdale SDA church served as the classroom.

Its philosophy and methods are explained and assessed below. Although the following information demonstrates that the curriculum fulfilled its purpose, the level of success may have been influenced, both positively and negatively, by unmeasured factors. These are also acknowledged and explored below.

Philosophy and Methods

The philosophy and methods of curriculum formation and delivery involve six major areas. These are student inclusion criteria, educational theory, course schedule, assignment types, variations to the planned program, and key learning components.

Inclusion Criteria

The criteria for inclusion in the course were three: pastoral referral, registration completion, and consultation with each candidate's pastor.

Promotion relied on referrals from Pennsylvania Conference pastors. On December 17, 2007, every pastor in the Pennsylvania Conference received a flier attached to an email introducing the course. The email said, "If you know anyone who would be a good candidate for lay pastor training, I have attached a flier for a program I will begin in February". The flier listed the five competencies that underlie the curriculum, the course schedule, contact information, and the following course description:

Introducing a new kind of lay pastor training . . . , a program to teach you what you need to know most. Classes are free but not without commitment. If you just want another certificate to hang on the wall, this is not for you. If you want to impact Pennsylvania for Christ, this could be your chance. These classes will teach you what it takes to succeed as a lay pastor (see *Is God calling you?* in appendix B).

In addition to the email and flier, individual pastors in the vicinity where the course would commence were more directly encouraged to send candidates. Furthermore, at the request of Pennsylvania Conference Mission Department leader, Bill Peterson, a verbal announcement was made at a lay ministry rally (Equipping University) to promote the online section of the course. These promotional efforts resulted in a total of twenty-six students. Two others transferred in to complete their previous lay pastor training, making the final enrollment twenty-eight. The online section and the inclusion of these two previous students are variations treated among other variations below.

Registration involved a simple form (see *Lay pastor course registration* in appendix B) that asked candidates to give their contact information, to rate their level of skill in the five competency areas, and to answer other diagnostic questions. The reason

for collecting contact information was to correspond with students. The reason for having candidates rate their level of skill in each of the competencies was to track their perceived competence throughout the learning process. The reason for the diagnostic questions was to learn what outcomes were reasonable to expect.

These questions were as follows: Why did you choose this course? What would you like to gain from this course? What ministry capacity would you like to be serving in two years from now? The final question is especially important to this research. Only about half of enrollees expressed interest in serving as lay pastors. Others wished to become better leaders in other capacities.

Upon receipt of the completed registration forms, each candidate's pastor was consulted to determine if there was cause for exclusion. Because applicants had applied independently, it was not apparent whether their pastors had referred them. All applicants were accepted. This cursory screening process ensured that inductees had adequate potential for success and were of sufficient spiritual and emotional health to entrust with lay pastoral status.

Educational Theory

The educational theory that guided curriculum formation has three foundational beliefs. The first is that students have already learned much of what they need through experience, so a large part of education is helping them apply their knowledge to ministry. The second is that every competency can and should be reduced to its underlying principles. The third, and most important, is that students are best prepared for unexpected ministry challenges when they learn to reason from principle to practice.

Thus, a streamlined curriculum that builds on what students know, teaches core principles, and requires constant ministry application will foster success.

The first educational belief is that students have already learned much of what they need to know through experience. In each of the competency areas, most students have observed what has worked and what hasn't worked. For example, most students have heard hundreds of sermons and known the difference between those that worked and those that didn't. They just need help making sense of what they know and using it to create good sermons. The same is true in the other competency areas. Building on previous knowledge has been proven especially important as students age (Spigner-Littles, April/May, 1999).

The second educational belief is that every competency can and should be reduced to its underlying principles. One important study demonstrates that presenting large amounts of information hinders learning, while smaller pieces of information are better assimilated (Pollock, Chandler, & Sweller, 2002).

The third educational belief is that students are best prepared for unexpected ministry challenges when they learn to reason from principle to practice. This is the most foundational of the three educational beliefs. Inattention to it has been shown to damage learning in children (Klein, McNeil, & Stout, 2005). It has also been shown that, among ministerial students, this is a prominent need (A. C. K. Wong, 2007). Academics and pastors agree that learning to translate principle to practice is essential but lacking in most curricula (Bass & Dykstra, 2008, pp. 91-116).

Other disciplines collaborate the need for helping students link principle to practice. Theories of classic and operant conditioning, for example, contend that behavior

change occurs best with experience involved (Gordon, 1998; O'Daly, 2005). One article reflects a balance between the cognitive and experiential, saying, "Classical and operant conditioning are two of the means by which response sets are formed, but they also can be acquired vicariously through observation and through the provision of verbal information" (Kirsch & Lynn, 2004, p. 386). The present study acknowledges the multiplicity of learning avenues but contends, along with the latest research (*How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*, 2000) and Christ's example (Coleman, 1996), that it occurs best when cognition and experience combine.

This philosophy finds broad support. Sociologists and experts on education have long argued that the extensive and exclusive use of lecture does not facilitate learning as well as guided experience. Frank Smith, in *The book of learning and forgetting*, argues persuasively for this view (1998). Some have also applied it to ministerial training, with good result (Riem, 2003; Worsley, 2005), or argued well for such application (Gibbs, 2000).

In order to satisfy the needs to build on previous experience and to reduce competencies to basic principles, five competencies were identified and shaped into simple presentations. In order to nurture the ability to reason from principle to practice, class presentations were frequently inductive. More importantly, class assignments required direct and immediate application of principles taught.

On a peripheral note, the educational philosophy used also accommodates the four Gregorc learning styles (Gregorc, 2006) and other student idiosyncrasies. The nature of course assignments demonstrates this, as they allow for variant styles of completion.

Combining lecture, discussion, and problem-solving exercises during sessions served the same purpose.

Course Schedule

The curriculum was built around the five competencies that emerge as most essential to pastoral success. Previous chapters detail this research. Those five competencies are people skills, biblical preaching, spiritual vitality, spiritual leadership, and team building. These established the principles that were taught in class and later applied through in-ministry assignments. The content of the course schedule, as outlined below, defines these competencies.

Each competency was given class time roughly proportional to its prominence in the literature reviewed. The exception was spiritual vitality, which the literature placed as third in prominence but theological reflection placed first. Also, the sequence was changed for practical reasons. There were ten class sessions, comprised of twelve presentations, with one session occurring each month. Sessions were two hours in length.

The Course Introduction filled the first hour. The competency of spiritual vitality took the shape of a one-hour presentation titled *Spiritual Development for Ministry* and its corresponding in-ministry assignment. It was otherwise woven into every session and nurtured through Bible study assignments. Biblical preaching took the shape of three two-hour presentations titled *Biblical Foundations of Preaching*, *A Framework for Biblical Preaching*, and *Mastering Sermon Delivery*. People skills took the shape of two two-hour presentations and one one-hour presentation titled *Emotional Intelligence in Ministry*, *Pastoral Counseling*, and *Managing Conflict*. Spiritual leadership took the shape of one one-hour presentation and one two-hour presentation titled *Spiritual Leaders*

of History and Spiritual Servant Leadership. Team building took the shape of two two-hour presentations titled A Theology of Church and Becoming a Ministry Mentor. (See *Lay pastor course blueprint* in appendix B for a description of each presentation).

Each two-hour session had five divisions. During the first five minutes, two students prayed on behalf of the class. During the next five minutes, the teacher reviewed the previous session. During the next forty-five minutes, the teacher gave the first presentation or the first half of a two-hour presentation. During the next ten minutes, the class had recess. During the next forty-five minutes, the teacher gave the second presentation or the second half of a two-hour presentation. During the final ten minutes, the month's assignments were explained and questions answered.

Assignment Types

According to the educational theory endorsed here, helpful learning does not occur until students apply the lecture-taught principles to ministry. Hence, the main assignment each month required just that (see assignments in appendix B). These in-ministry assignments were formulated to help students think through a ministry reality and apply principle to practice in ways that made sense to them. The assignments also minimized non-ministry effort, thus maximizing ministry involvement. They rarely required more than a one page report and reflection on the ministry done. The one purely academic assignment was to write a brief leader biography and draw leadership lessons from it.

The secondary monthly assignment did not directly relate to the competencies, except to nurture spiritual vitality. This consisted of writing a ten-part doctrinal Bible study series, with one part due each month. These covered the twenty-eight fundamental

beliefs (*The 28 fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 2005), according to a prescribed outline (see *Lay pastor course blueprint* in appendix B). The reasons for adding these to the competency-based curriculum were to define the content of the ministry that lay pastoral candidates would advance and to nurture their time with God through Scripture.

The final requirement was class attendance. In cases of absence, students listened to an audio recording of the lecture and completed a post-session survey to substitute for attendance. Such occurrences were rare.

Variations

There were two major variations to the planned course experience. The first was allowing an online contingent, where students took classes through internet-based correspondence. The second variation was admitting two students who had partially completed another form of lay pastor training but wished to finish their work through this program.

Online Contingent

The original plan was to administer the course to onsite students only but one person outside geographical reach showed strong interest. He was accommodated. Hearing of this accommodation, Pennsylvania Conference Assistant to the President for Mission, Bill Peterson asked that the course be extended to a larger online contingent. This was communicated verbally at a lay ministry rally (Equipping University). As a result, twelve of the twenty-eight enrollees were online students.

The online section had a two-month delay, starting April of 2008 and ending January of 2009. To mitigate the loss of personal contact with this group, a pastoral

mentor was assigned to each student. These were selected based on proximity and relationship to enrollees. The pastors who agreed to serve as mentors were Mark Dekle, Michael Goetz, Troy Haagenson, David Livergood, Conrad Reichert, and Lonnie Wibberding.

After initial contact with each pastor, to explain their role as mentor, they received an email on April 7, 2008 that had two attachments and a roster of students assigned to each pastor. One attachment was the course outline for the online section (see *Lay pastor course outline: Correspondence section* in Appendix B). The other attachment contained guidelines for pastoral mentors, a schedule of in-ministry assignments, and the website to access assignment sheets. The primary guidelines given are summarized in the following statement: “Pastoral mentors are asked to meet with their student once per month, either by phone or in person, to review the month’s ministry assignment and offer guidance and opportunity for its successful completion” (see *Lay pastor training course: Guidelines for pastoral mentors* in appendix B).

Online students listened to digital recordings of class presentations from the course website (<http://james.wibberding.com/correspondence.html>) in place of attendance. They completed a post-session survey (see *Post-session survey* in Appendix B) to demonstrate virtual attendance. They also met with their pastoral mentor on a monthly basis. Otherwise, they did the same assignments as onsite students.

Admission of Two Transfer Students

Another variation was the inclusion of two students who had begun lay pastor training through a local adaptation of Bill Peterson’s Mission Training Station (see *Training methods previously employed* in chapter 1). The competencies each student had

already learned through their Mission Training Station curriculum were credited to them and they were allowed to learn the remaining competencies through this course.

Learning Components

The three learning components that theological and literary research require to facilitate a curriculum are theory combined with practice, spiritual transformation, and mentoring relationships. Efforts to link theory with practice through presentation styles and in-ministry assignments appear above. Attempts to foster spiritual development through integration of spiritual content into class presentations, group prayer time, and Scriptural assignments also appear above. In addition, the ministry assignment for the presentation on spiritual development was to formulate a personal spiritual development plan.

By contrast, the component of mentoring relationships was not fully developed. As noted above, students in the online contingent had assigned pastoral mentors. However, no class points were given for meeting with their mentors, which allowed a devaluation of this component. As for onsite students, it was presumed that they were being mentored by the pastors who referred them to the course, and this was communicated to those pastors. The desired mentorship occurred wonderfully in some cases and not in others.

An Evaluation of Curriculum Success

The first measure of curriculum success is whether it increased the number of people involved in lay pastoral ministry. A second measure of success is the level of effectiveness graduates have had in ministry. A third measure of success is the degree to which the course increased student involvement in ministry.

The second and third areas were measured using four survey instruments, having quantitative and qualitative elements. Eight graduates completed the first survey, titled *Lay pastor pre-placement survey* (appendix C), in March of 2009. Ten graduates completed the second survey, titled *Lay pastor twelfth-month survey* (appendix C), in March of 2010. These were administered by mail. The congregations where graduates had been placed completed the third survey, titled *Lay pastor congregation survey* (appendix C), in April of 2010. This was administered and collected during church worship services. Finally, the pastoral mentors who oversaw the lay pastors in their first year completed the fourth survey, titled *Lay pastor mentor survey* (appendix C), also in April of 2010. This was administered by mail. The results of these surveys appear below.

Initial Achievement

It is necessary to understand initial achievement first. Of the twenty-eight enrollees, twelve constituted the online variation and two were transfer students, with fourteen in the planned program. These groups represent varying degrees of achievement. Nonetheless, every student that stayed in the course past its second month graduated, regardless of which group they were in. Students were scored on involvement, meaning that full points were given for any truly completed assignment. The average class score for online graduates was 80%, while the onsite class earned an average score of 87%. The two transfer students were scored on a simple pass/fail basis.

The course completion rate among transfer students was 100%. The course completion rate among the onsite students was twelve out of fourteen, or 86%. The course completion rate among the online variation was five out of twelve, or 42%. By contrast, the 2009 course had five online students, four of which (80%) were certain to

graduate at the time of writing. The difference can be attributed to an added practice of granting points for meeting with one's mentor. Failure to do this in the pilot produced a notable weakness. The centrality of mentors in the success of distance education has been proven (Kemp, 2007).

Number of Lay Pastors Gained

The first measure of curriculum success is whether it increased the number of people involved in lay pastoral ministry. On this score, success is moderate. The Pennsylvania Conference placed five graduates in pastoral positions. In addition, three graduates became lay evangelists, conducting evangelistic events in the year following the course. One of the three also served as a church plant leader. All of these lay evangelists and several others express the desire to serve as lay pastors, but their geographical locations do not correspond to recognized need.

To keep these results in perspective, one should note that Pennsylvania Conference had only six official lay pastors at the time this course began.

Student Success in Ministry

A second measure of success is the levels of effectiveness graduates have had in ministry. One indicator of effectiveness is longevity. A year after placement, all five lay pastors remained in their positions. This suggests a reasonable level of satisfaction among the persons and their congregations. Quantifiable indicators of this appear in the answers that congregants, mentors, and lay pastors give to surveys about their work.

Ministry Observer Perspectives on Competency Development

Surveys of their congregations and pastoral mentors indicate their competence from close but external perspectives. In a survey taken after approximately one year of pastoral service (see *Lay pastor congregation survey* in appendix C), congregations assessed the five lay pastors positively. Using a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not capable and 10 being very capable, they rated them in each competency area. On average, congregants assessed people skills at 8.9, biblical preaching at 8.8, spiritual vitality at 8.8, spiritual leadership at 8.7, and team building at 7.9. See table 1. On a similar 10 point scale, congregants rated their overall satisfaction with the lay pastors at 8.9.

Pastors who serve as mentors for these lay pastors rated their skills using the same scale as congregants did (see *Lay pastor mentor survey* in appendix C). On average, they assessed people skills at 8, biblical preaching at 8, spiritual vitality at 8, spiritual leadership at 7.5, and team building at 6.5. These ratings are lower than those of congregants. See table 2. Their overall satisfaction with lay pastor performance was also lower (8, compared with 8.9). These may be lower because fully trained pastors have a better understanding of the complexity of pastoral ministry. The most helpful correspondence between the two groups is that both groups rated the team building competency lowest. This indicates that it is weaker than the other four curriculum modules.

Table 1
Congregant Ratings of Lay Pastor Competencies

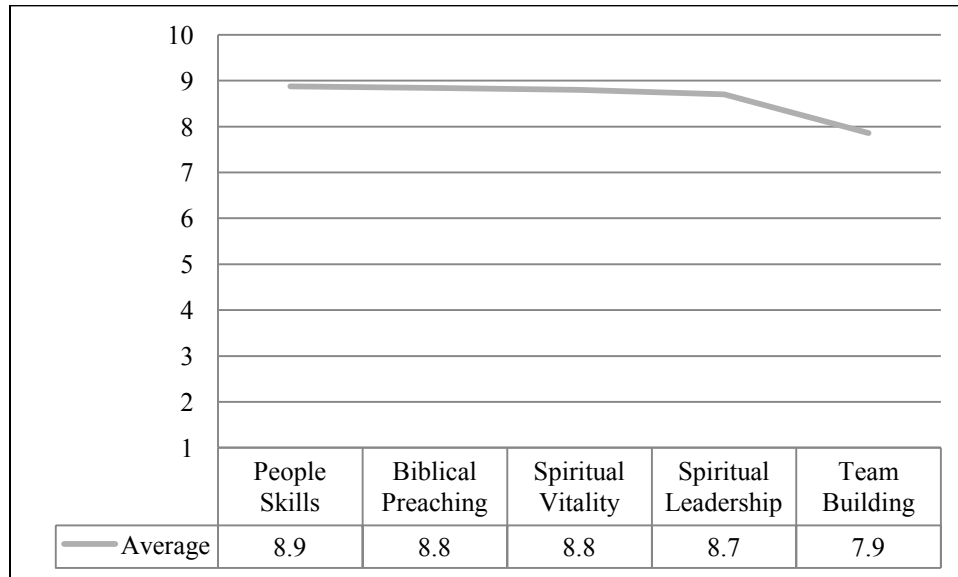
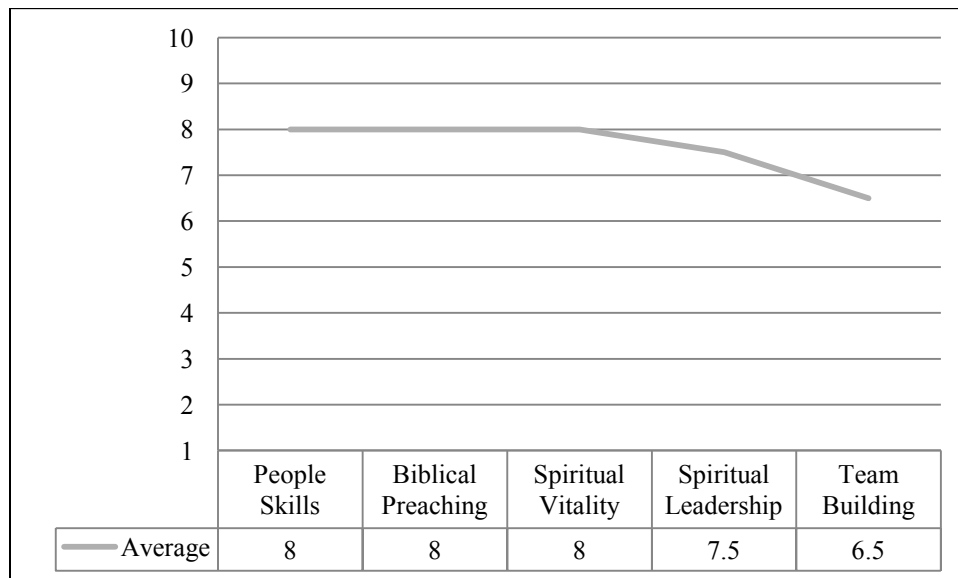


Table 2
Mentor Ratings of Lay Pastor Competencies



Student Perspectives on Competency Development

Surveys of students indicate their competence from their own perspectives. In the survey taken shortly after graduation (see *Lay pastor pre-placement survey* in appendix C), students assessed their development positively. Using a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not capable and 10 being very capable, they rated their skill in each competency area both before and after the course. They estimated a 26% average increase across all competencies. This involved a 19% increase in people skills (from 7.1 to 8.4), a 40% increase in biblical preaching (from 5.9 to 8.3), a 22% increase in spiritual vitality (from 7.4 to 9), a 23% increase in spiritual leadership (from 7.1 to 8.8), and a 25% increase in team building (from 6.9 to 8.6). See tables 3 and 4.

In the survey taken one year later (see *Lay pastor twelfth-month survey* in appendix C), students answered the same question with different results. The question was posed again to see whether time in the field had improved or diminished student appreciation for what they had learned. The estimated average increase across all competencies as a result of the course climbed to 43% (from 26% a year before). This later estimate involved a 27% increase in people skills (from 6.3 to 8), a 58% increase in biblical preaching (from 5.2 to 8.2), a 39% increase in spiritual vitality (from 6.2 to 8.6), a 49% increase in spiritual leadership (from 5.5 to 8.2), and a 43% increase in team building (from 5.4 to 7.7). It should be noted that students rated their pre-course competence lower after a year in ministry, which contributes to the increased numbers. In the same survey, graduates estimated that their overall ability to do effective ministry had increased 66% since enrolling in the course. See tables 5 and 6.

Table 3
Post-Graduation Student Competency Self-Ratings

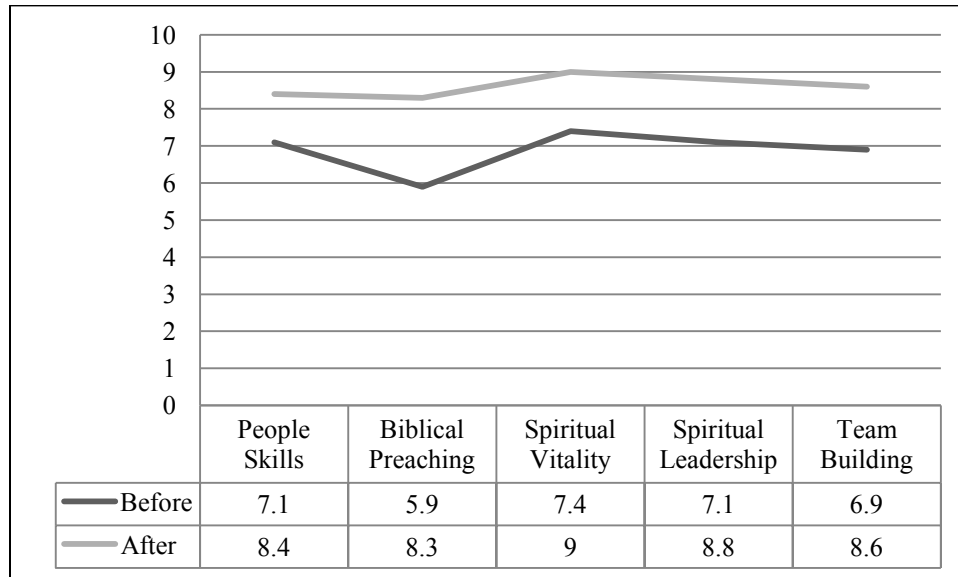


Table 4
Post-Graduation Student Estimated Competency Increase Percentages

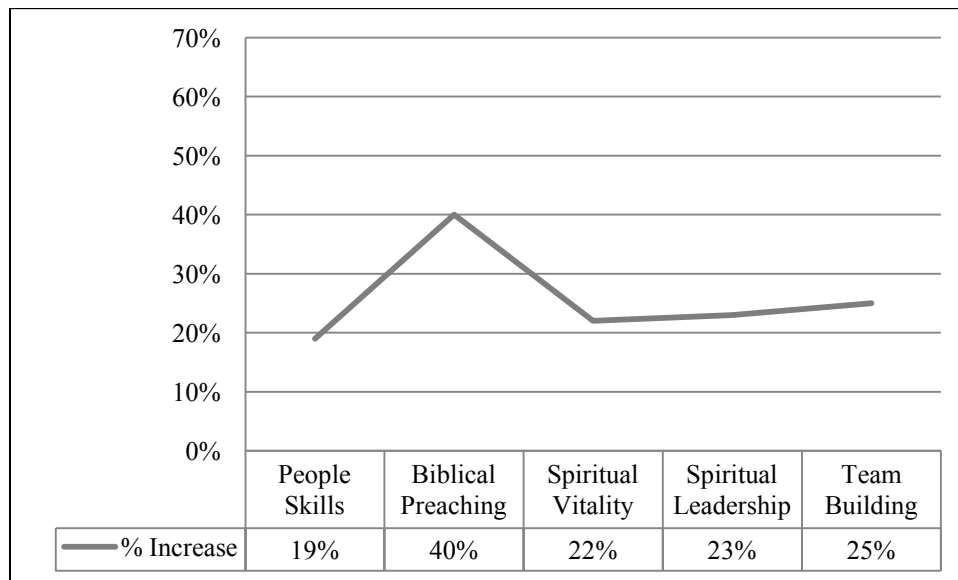


Table 5
Twelfth-Month Student Competency Self-Ratings

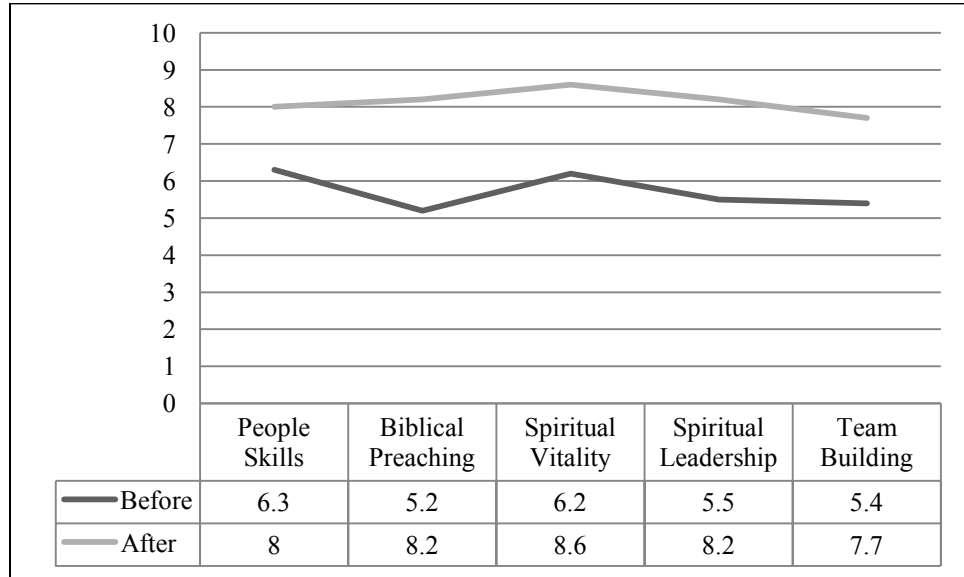
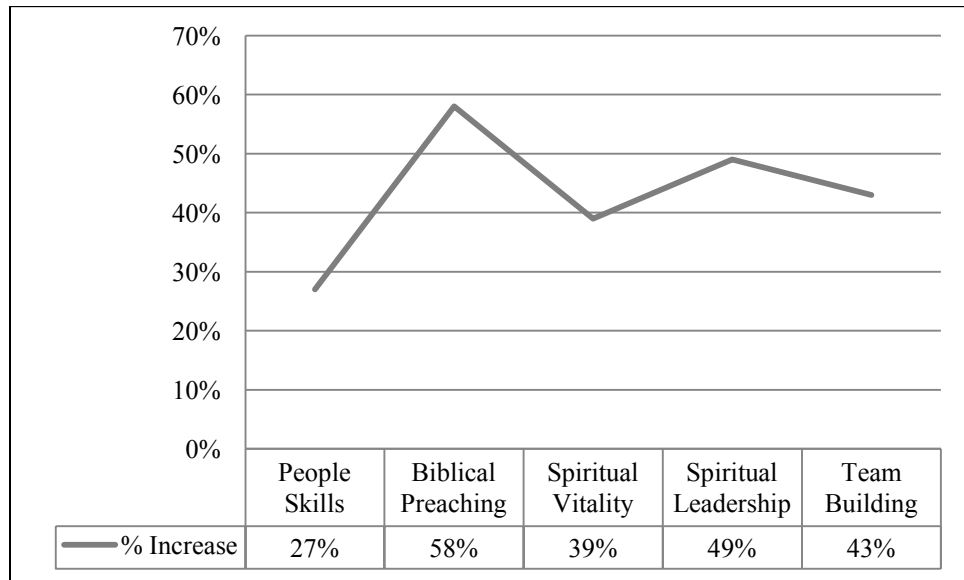


Table 6
Twelfth-Month Student Estimated Competency Increase Percentage



One might explain the dramatic increase in estimated competency levels after a year in ministry several ways. However, it is likely that curriculum design produced this result. If the educational philosophy behind this curriculum has been properly applied, one could predict such an outcome. The twelfth-month survey contained these questions to test this prediction. The purpose of reducing the competencies to basic principles and teaching students to reason from principal to practice was to nurture continued growth amidst changing needs. It appears that it worked.

Other survey data shows a marked change in ministry perception in the year following graduation, also suggesting continued growth. In the pre-placement survey, participants answered the following question: “In pastoral ministry, which of the following areas of capability do you perceive is most needed?” They were instructed to circle one of the competencies. Spiritual vitality was omitted to avoid a sense of obligation that it was the expected answer. One survey participant chose biblical preaching and the remaining seven chose spiritual leadership.

Concerns that the word “spiritual” had skewed results by hinting at an expected answer were eased when students answered the same question a year later. In this case, five participants chose people skills, four chose spiritual leadership, and one chose team building. This shows a dramatic shift in perceptions after a year in ministry. It is a shift away from the universal matter of leadership to the personal matter of working with people. Whether this demonstrates that the curriculum left students ill-prepared for the realities of ministry or that it equipped them to adapt and keep growing, the reader will judge.

A final indicator of how well students feel the course prepared them for ministry appears in their answers to another question. Listing the same four competencies, they were asked, “Which of the following areas do you most feel the need to learn more about?” Again, they were instructed to choose one. Just after graduating, one participant chose biblical preaching, four chose spiritual leadership, and three chose team building. A year later, two chose people skills, four chose spiritual leadership, and four chose team building.

Comparing these findings with the above data on student perceptions of competency growth suggests that student competence developed substantially as a result of this curriculum but they wish to keep growing. This survey does not help identify an obvious area of strength or weakness in the curriculum. However, in both student surveys reported above, the most substantial increase in perceived competence was in biblical preaching. It also constitutes the lowest pre-course rating. This may indicate comparative curriculum strength in teaching this competency.

Student Involvement in Ministry

A third measure of success is the degree to which the course increased student involvement in ministry, including those who did not assume pastoral positions. This measure shows that the curriculum’s positive impact on lay ministry transcends the pastoral office. Without exception, students who completed the survey estimated a significant increase in their ministry involvement a year after graduating. Their average estimated increase was 60%.

As noted above, graduates who were not placed as lay pastors have advanced the Pennsylvania Conference mission in other ways. Even those who have not become lay

evangelists or church plant leaders have appreciably increased their involvement. The positive impact of this course on the ministry involvement of its graduates is profound.

Limitations, Variables, and Other Unknown Factors

This curriculum is a singular influence imposed on and shaped by a complex ministry organization: the Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Several limitations, variables, and other factors emerge from this and other realities. These include systemic, human, content, and imposed factors.

Systemic Factors

Pennsylvania Conference administrators have admirably supported this program, but precedent and policy limit their power. A major issue this study does not answer is how a different system of placement would impact involvement. In current practices, lay pastor placement is secondary to that of salaried pastors. In a missional system, lay pastors, whose occupations often limit them geographically, should be placed in churches near their homes. Conversely, salaried pastors, who have few geographic limits, should be placed where lay pastors are not. Instead, the current system has allowed lay pastoral students to be equipped for ministry but not be empowered.

It is a missional travesty that capable leaders stand idle while communities await the Advent message. Lonnie Wibberding, a Pennsylvania Conference pastor, in his book *Fire your pastor: The hope of a lost world*, demonstrates that the Seventh-day Adventist church originally gave lay leaders priority in local churches (2009, pp. 33-39) and he calculates that the shift away from this has cost the church 98% of its growth potential (p. 38).

Conference leaders want to move toward a more missional model but certain forces hinder progress. Church member attitudes, and consequent fears of constituent rebellion, are primary among them. All three Pennsylvania Conference administrators involved in lay pastor development cite member acceptance as a key to progress (Ray Hartwell, personal communication, April 1, 2010; Barry Tryon, personal communication, March 31, 2010; Bill Peterson, personal communication, March 29, 2010).

Pennsylvania Conference Executive Secretary and Ministerial Director, Barry Tryon, enumerates several systemic factors that hinder lay pastor placement, saying,

One of the biggest obstacles to lay pastor usage is the mindset of members in our conference. While congregations would say lay pastors leading them are doing a good job, many would still like to have a “real” pastor—assuming that then they would really grow.

Another obstacle is geographic location. Ever since the training program with Russell Burrill, we have noticed that, while many lay pastors were trained, they were located in areas far removed from where positions were available. We have not found too many lay pastors who are ready to relocate their homes, lives, and work to another city to serve as lay pastor.

We are still in our first generation of lay pastors, but another potential problem is on the near horizon. When a pastor becomes ineffective in one location (or needs to move for developmental or personal reasons), we move them to another location. When a lay pastor has reached those same points, what does a conference do with them?

Accountability is another issue with lay pastors. When appointed by our Conference Executive Committee, there is little accountability required of them. They receive emails from us with information, but little else is done to evaluate their effectiveness, theology or anything else. The district pastors they are under have little time in their busy schedules to provide this, and the conference ministerial director is too remote.

Finally, there is the issue of training. The men and women who volunteer for a lay pastor position have a wide variety of experience or training in pastoral ministry. There is currently little to no training to continue their development in ministry. They are not able to come to pastors’ meetings because of their “other” full time jobs. I am currently working with a pastor to begin the development of training material on DVD that will begin to provide some training and equipping. I am also planning, at the request of the lay pastors in our conference, a lay pastor retreat week-end. They have requested the agenda to be simple: prayer, worship, training and, mostly, time to talk and share among themselves the joys and challenges of ministry as a lay pastor. (Personal communication, March 31, 2010)

These are serious challenges. Some can be addressed procedurally but some relate to mindset. With the decade-long visioning process that is slowly changing mindsets among Pennsylvania Conference members and courageous leadership from conference administrators, change may yet occur.

Besides the progress in continued training, the Conference has already made progress in the sphere of accountability by requiring a doctrinal review ("Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventists," 2007) and a service agreement of all lay pastoral candidates ("Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventists," 2009).

In spite of systemic limiters, the current system has also provided advantages. The culture of lay ministry in general and lay pastoral ministry in particular, that Conference administrators have nurtured, made this curriculum a natural fit. As a result of this culture and these supportive administrators, advancing the course required little more than asking permission from Conference administrators and informing Conference pastors of its existence and schedule.

Human Factors

Another area that has impacted success is human factors. Six of the twenty hours of classroom instructional time, or 20% was given to guest teachers. These three teachers were David Fales, Ray Hartwell, and Barry Tryon. Each taught approximately two hours of classroom instructional time, or just less than 7% each. These men were chosen for their expertise.

David Fales, MA, NCC, LPC, with his therapy credentials and experience helping troubled teens in Philadelphia, taught the segment in the people skills module on managing conflict. Ray Hartwell, M. Div., with his experience as Pennsylvania

Conference President, taught most of the segment in the team building module on local mission opportunities. Barry Tryon, D. Min., with his doctoral research on mentoring, taught most of the segment in the team building module on mentoring. The absence of these qualified guest teachers would likely reduce the value of the curriculum.

Content Factors

Although quantitative research provided the competencies that comprise this curriculum, their expression through classroom lecture relied on the teacher's ability to synthesize the professional material on each topic. This allows for variation, since each teacher will perceive and synthesize the material differently. However, this is partly mitigated by the fact that each theoretical lecture is primarily a catalyst for student learning and not the main substance of it. Any competent presentation that works near the center of professional consensus will serve this purpose.

Imposed Factors

Finally, this curriculum was developed and administered to learn the answer to one question: Would the availability of a full-spectrum but streamlined, and principle-driven, curriculum for lay pastor candidates increase lay pastor involvement and success in Pennsylvania Conference? The answer is yes. However, the project's narrow focus means that it does not answer other important questions. First, it does not demonstrate which curriculum or delivery method is best but only that this one works to the level that it has. Second, it does not fully explore every relevant issue of education theory that, if applied, might improve effectiveness. Third, it does not use the latest distance education techniques, which might mitigate the high dropout ratio of those taking the course online.

Fourth, it does not allow the teacher to accompany students into the field of ministry for truly hands-on instruction. It does not do many things, but it does what it does well.

Summary and Conclusion

Current Conference President, Ray Hartwell evaluates this course as “the most successful” effort employed to develop lay pastors in Pennsylvania Conference (personal communication, April 1, 2010). Historical and statistical data collaborate his appraisal. No single program since the 1930’s (see *Reports on lay training in Pennsylvania Conference, 1901-2008* in chapter 3) has produced as many active lay pastors. After a year in the field, students estimate a 43% average increase in each competency area and a 66% overall increase in ministry ability. Five graduates have received pastoral placement and all graduates have dramatically increased their involvement in the Pennsylvania Conference mission, to the score of 60%.

This training course was a success but work remains to be done. Much more lay pastor development is needed. The appeals for lay pastors in Pennsylvania Conference remain a poorly resourced mandate. The next chapter identifies areas for further exploration and suggests applications of the lessons learned.

CHAPTER 5

FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION AND EXPLORATION

A study of this nature leaves more questions than answers. It has, however, answered the project's guiding question. The accessibility of a streamlined, principle-driven, and competency-based curriculum does increase lay involvement in pastoral ministry. Still, much work remains to do. Areas that deserve further study include applying this curriculum and its methods in other geographical settings, testing its educational approach in professional training, and exploring other components required for lay pastoral success. A discussion of each appears below.

Shaping a Conference Lay Pastor Training Program

Using this curriculum in new settings will expand its worth. It employs competencies and methods that transcend regional cultures. Hence, evidence recommends that conferences across North America adopt it for use in their territories. In doing so, attention to certain introduction and application factors will nurture success.

Introducing the Curriculum

Conference leaders who wish to introduce this lay pastor curriculum to their field should do so thoughtfully. Each system has a unique set of forces (Senge, 1990, pp. 6-7) to account for. Six steps are recommended for successful adaptation to a new setting.

Step 1: Nurture a Culture of Lay Ministry

The first step for introducing a lay pastor curriculum is nurturing a culture of lay ministry. Before introducing a solution, a critical mass of constituents must see the problem. It took many years to raise awareness of the need for lay pastors in Pennsylvania Conference. The early efforts of Frank Gonzalez and Russell Burrill might produce better results today. Conversely, if not for these early efforts, the present curriculum may have met a Conference culture unready for it. Nurturing a culture that wants change will improve success (Levy, 2002).

How can leaders do so? Mike Cauley, who led the initial return to a lay ministry culture in Pennsylvania Conference, says that he “mainly . . . talked about the lay pastor concept, the priesthood of all believers, and promoted Russell Burrill’s book *Revolution in the church*” (personal communication, April 6, 2010; Burrill, 2001). Nurturing lay ministry interest takes intentionality and persistence, just as with any culture change (Meyerson, 2002).

Cauley also created a sense of urgency by popularizing statistics on Conference decline. John P. Kotter identifies this urgency as the first step in leading change (1996, pp. 35-49). Conference leaders may find that raising awareness of missional decline in their territories will also cultivate urgency. Kotter’s other steps to leading change may prove helpful too.

Step 2: Establish a Strong Placement Policy

The second step for introducing a lay pastor curriculum is establishing a strong placement policy. Before a training program begins, conference leaders must know how to use graduates. David Stull Handley (1997) identifies the factors that increase the sense

among lay pastors of being empowered for ministry. These factors are a clearly defined task, a perception of personal growth, support of staff, openness to new ideas from the “grass roots”, a nurturing team with whom to work, a positive sense of closure and success, and practical training. A well-crafted curriculum can effect some of these elements and the others are effected by placement practices.

From the original field-test in Pennsylvania Conference, nine quality trainees still await placement two years later; although conference officials have worked to mitigate this. Geography has been the main factor inhibiting their placement but such could be overcome if conferences gave lay pastor placement precedence over that of traditional pastors. Whatever a conference chooses to do, operating without a path to engagement should not be an option (Morgan & Stevens, 2005, pp. 55-56).

Numerous alternatives emerge. For example, if immediate placement in the graduate’s vicinity is not possible, conferences could place them as associates on a pastoral staff. This would be with the purpose of transitioning the church to lay pastoral leadership or to await a different position. Part of the value in this is preserving buy-in through continued involvement (Bell, 2003, p. 135). Another option is to place a team of lay pastors under the direction of a salaried pastor to plant a new church. The options are many.

If conference leaders asked themselves what kinds of mission expansion their field could realize with a larger workforce, they would more easily form a placement policy. Lay pastoral trainees can lead mission expansion in their locales if there is a plan to place them.

Step 3: Identify and Enlist a Project Pioneer

The third step for introducing a lay pastor curriculum is identifying and enlisting a project pioneer. This should be a pastor who is able to mentor and organize. The pilot program will commence under their direction. This person's job is to lay a strong operational foundation and adapt the curriculum to the local context. It is important that they come from among the pastors to ensure that they can train other pastors to lead the same process in the church ministry context.

Conference leaders should give this person creative license, with the stipulation that they preserve the curricular and methodological fundamentals outlined below. The program will thrive best when they are free to use their own skills and ideas. This is the nature and value of shared leadership (Pearce, 2003). Pennsylvania Conference leaders modeled this well in their support of the original field test.

Step 4: Recruit and Teach Students

The fourth step to introducing a lay pastor curriculum is to recruit and teach the students. At this step, curriculum application begins. The project pioneer should recruit through established pastors, asking them to recommend persons who have potential and that they can trust with a ministry position. This approach will help screen out those who may damage the process or bring gross dysfunctions into ministry.

The project pioneer might enlist other pastors or experts to teach segments of the course but they should remain the governing presence. Also, it worked well in the pilot project to have class once per month and such is recommended here. This allowed students enough time to complete in-ministry assignments and was a comfortable

frequency for their busy schedules. Other important aspects of teaching the course are discussed below in the section on applying the curriculum.

Step 5: Train More Teachers

The fifth step to introducing a lay pastor curriculum is to train more teachers. After the first year, the project pioneer should train groups of willing pastors to administer the curriculum in various regions throughout the conference. Proximity needs would decide the number of regional centers. Group size should also be considered, with eight to twelve being ideal. Having the conference pastors lead this process will help restore the equipping function to pastoral ministry (Eph 4:12; White, 1948) and make quality training available to lay leaders who want it. Such will render missional dividends.

Although the pilot project was a Conference-wide program, three of the five graduates placed in pastoral positions were from the local Lansdale district. The three lay evangelists were also from the local district. Couple this with appraisals from Cauley (personal communication, April 6, 2010) and Hartwell (personal communication, April 1, 2010) that the most successful prior attempts were the local work of Shives and Cassell, and the facts contend that local, pastor-led efforts succeed best. Regional syndication will facilitate this.

These regional groups should have at least two pastors administering the curriculum, to afford complementary skill sets and synergy. The administrator training would center on an orientation session in which the project pioneer casts the vision and explains the rationale behind each program element. It is essential that these regional leaders buy into the curricular and methodological fundamentals.

Step 6: Establish the Project Pioneer as Curriculum Coach

Finally, the sixth step to introducing a lay pastor curriculum is establishing the project pioneer as a curriculum coach. They should meet with the regional leaders electronically before each month's class to coach them through their first year. This will bring a needed homogeneity to the course. The promise of continued "coaching and training" also provides timid volunteers with "the reassurance that they won't be abandoned when they get involved" (Stewart, 2003, p. 23). Training people may be new terrain for some pastors, so they might need the extra contact afforded by monthly coaching.

Applying the Curriculum

Expanding this curriculum to new settings also requires certain fundamentals. This study does not contend for just any curriculum but a specific type of principle-driven curriculum, comprised of distinct competencies and methods. These elements have been tested and proven. Conferences who wish to apply the curriculum to their territories are encouraged to accept these guides. They include the five competencies, the learning philosophy, accessibility, and process factors.

Five Crucial Competencies

The five competencies outlined in this study form a strong curriculum foundation. They emerge from multiple avenues of study as the most important competencies for pastoral success in North America. Small additions may be made but the curriculum will weaken if its administrator eliminates or minimizes any one of them. Adding enough other material to eclipse these competencies will also weaken it, since the abundance of

information reduces absorption (Pollock, et al., 2002). The core competencies are people skills, biblical preaching, spiritual vitality, spiritual leadership, and team building.

The above sequence is the order of importance in which competencies emerge from research. Ideally, though, spiritual vitality should take first priority. However the project pioneer apportions class time to reflect the relative value of these competencies is elective. The central concern is that they give adequate time for students to grow appreciably in each area. Additionally, it is recommended that the curriculum span about one calendar year, consisting of ten to twelve sessions.

A Learning Philosophy

It is not enough to present good concepts. A poor teaching method will retard or reverse learning. Unfortunately, the educational philosophies employed at all levels of formal education assume that learning is hard work. By contrast, Frank Smith observes that “we learn . . . throughout our lives, without effort, without awareness, and with no forgetting” (1998, p. 30). People naturally learn and remember the things in their experience. This suggests that the prime task in teaching these competencies is to facilitate experiences with each one.

The classroom sessions are, then, an orientation to the learning that will occur in the field. Smith also notes that a bad experience in the classroom can inadvertently teach the student that they can’t learn the subject (1998, p. 1). Thus, the best approach to the classroom is to provide a simple but profound understanding of theory. In conjunction with ministry application assignments, real and permanent learning will ensue. Teachers must resist the drive to cover extensive material. Students are best served by learning what matters most in each area. Experience and good sense will bridge the gaps. Hence,

the curriculum must be both more academic, with its principle-driven instruction, and more practical, with its facilitation of experience.

Accessibility

Curriculum accessibility is an immense problem that conference leaders must not overlook. Lay pastor training courses have long existed but have not made a substantial impact in most conferences. The inhibitor is often a lack of accessibility, as is known to be the case with other forms of education (Perna & Thomas, 2009). Geography, cost, and scheduling are three keys to accessibility. Participation will decline if any one of these three becomes an obstacle. More optimistically, if leaders remove these as obstacles, success becomes possible.

The pilot curriculum showed that students who could not participate in the synergy of class time dropped out at a high rate. For them, in effect, geography was the prohibitive factor. This is why syndicating the course regionally is vital. The size of the conference territory will dictate how many regional groups it requires. The distance people will travel and the potential size of each group should also direct how many form.

Another matter of accessibility is whether or not to charge students. This can become a point of debate. Although some argue that charging a fee helps them value the course more, those who graduated from the free pilot course attach great value to it. It is wise to eliminate all obstacles to engagement. Some may counter that it would only be a small fee, in order to increase value. One should ask whether such a low fee really sets the value of the course higher. It may also send the wrong message to students if they have to pay for their training while knowing they will not be paid for their work.

The final concern in accessibility is scheduling. Finding a time when a group of lay people are available for class is difficult. This may have to adapt to the local conference or region. 10:00 am on Sunday mornings worked well for the pilot course. This was late enough to allow weekend sleep and early enough to avoid conflict with NFL® football. Whenever it is, the schedule should accommodate student schedules to encourage participation.

Process Factors

Besides competencies, philosophy, and accessibility, there are process factors to consider. Conferences wishing to implement a training program need to decide who they want to train, how they will screen applicants, how they will facilitate mentoring, and how they will validate student accomplishment.

The application process should match the level of screening desired. It is recommended that conferences admit applicants whom local pastors choose. This will avoid imposing admission criteria that hinder pastors from training those they wish to empower and it will help avoid admitting candidates for whom there is no placement available. In such a case, a simple application form with a confidential pastoral recommendation would suffice. It may be advisable to require additional recommendations in order to obscure a potentially negative pastoral recommendation from the applicant.

If pastors choose applicants, then facilitating mentorship may become easier. Asking the local pastor to engage in monthly mentoring may work well but this should not be mandatory. A pastor may recognize the potential in a member but not have the rapport or the skills needed to mentor them. Not everyone can mentor (Tryon, 2001, p.

24). Outlining mentor qualifications, such as ministry experience, then asking the applicant to identify their own mentor will likely enlist mentors who are qualified in both skill and relationship. Students must be required to meet with their mentors monthly regarding the in-ministry assignments.

When students have completed the course, the conference should recognize their accomplishment with a public ceremony and a certificate of completion. It is essential that the organization validate them. This places worth on their work (Morgan & Stevens, 2005, pp. 26-27) and empowers them to seek pastoral position.

Implications for Other Forms of Ministerial Training

The findings of this study also suggest principles to improve professional ministry education. Certain cautions and potentials emerge. Cautions involve the frequent misconception of what it means to make training practical. Potentials involve elements that could improve the impact of academic programs. The relationship of these cautions and potentials to recent trends is also relevant. These are discussed below.

Cautions for Ministerial Training

Ministerial training should be both more academic and more practical. There are dangers in diminishing either element. An associate danger is the shift to methodological, or how-to, instruction, which teaches the steps to take but not the theory that guides them.

A recurrent compromise between academicians and practitioners is to replace academic understanding and guided experience with classroom learned methodology. This is catastrophic, limiting student potential (Bass & Dykstra, 2008, pp. 290-305). At best, it could provide a catalyst for reasoning from principle to practice. At worst, it neither offers good principle nor facilitates good practice.

It is fundamentally different to give students a methodology to apply to experience than it is to give them principles to apply to experience. It is the difference between preparing them for continued growth and scripting them to quickly exhaust their how-to knowledge. Furthermore, it disconnects students from both theory and reality, from understanding and experience. Ironically, students may feel better prepared for ministry when they understand methodology, because they can picture what to do, but it prepares them only to conduct specific programs in specific settings. It nurtures an ill conceived confidence.

Conversely, educators must not mistake large volumes of information for academic depth. Academic depth suggests conceptual understanding and contemplation. One educator notes that “the greater the information, technology, and demands from the world around us, the more essential the interiority; that is, the inner capacities for discernment, imagination, virtue, reflection, balance, and presence” (Tobin, 2008, p. 235). It has been shown that forcing large volumes of information into the mind actually inhibits learning (Pollock, et al., 2002).

Students taught methodology alone are not equipped for new realities. Students taught mere theory are not equipped for practice. Students sent into the field untaught are not equipped for anything. It is no small matter to ill-equip the leaders of Christ’s mission; training organizations must heed these cautions.

Potentials for Ministerial Training

The potentials for ministerial training parallel the cautions. Just as the imbalance between principal and practice creates danger, the combination of these elements nurtures possibility.

If students understand principles and how to translate them to practice, they can adapt to every new setting. Some will argue that certain people cannot learn to reason from principle to practice. This is doubtful. Nearly everyone employs the skill in some arena. For example, those who operate motor vehicles on public roads constantly apply traffic principles to new roads and intersections. The impediment for most people is not innate incapacity but a dearth of education on how to do so in ministry.

Even if the incapacity of some to learn is conceded, every leader must be able to navigate new realities. “Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real change . . .” (Rost, 1991, p. 102). Thus, if a ministerial student does not or cannot learn to reason from principle to practice, to navigate new realities, they should seek another vocation. Training must not forego this element to accommodate them.

The essential concept is synthesis. There appears to be a broadly perceived dichotomy between academics and practice in ministerial education. The present study reveals it as a false dichotomy. The most successful pastors demonstrate high academic achievement (Swanson, 1999, p. 273) and students learn best through experience (Bryant, 2004; Reim, 2003). The combination of these findings contends for ministerial training that is neither wholly abstract nor wholly experiential. Instead, their merger will foster learning.

Much of ministerial education is neither academic enough to set a basis for good ministry thinking nor hands-on enough to engender practical learning. It is no advantage to talk on lighter levels about the nuts and bolts of ministry while still not doing ministry during the education process. Restoring this balance may prompt a revolution in pastoral

success, as pastors quickly adapt to rapidly changing culture and circumstance. The Church, which has been dubbed irrelevant (Gamble, 1991), might return to relevance.

The Relationship of Cautions and Potentials to Recent Trends

Trends in ministerial education, both colloquial and professional, contain similarities and contrasts to the present curriculum.

Colloquial ministry education has grown more prominent over the past decade. The present curriculum belongs in this category. However, one penchant of the colloquial trend that contrasts with this curriculum is an affinity for methodological instruction.

Two prominent examples are the training schools Amazing Facts College of Evangelism (AFCOE) and A Resource Institute for Soulwinning and Evangelism (ARISE). The strength of such schools is the concurrence of classroom instruction and ministry experience. Their weaknesses include the artificial nature of the field experience, since it is disconnected from the student's life and ministry situation, and the centrality of methodological instruction. ("AFCOE," 2010; ARISE," 2010).

In the realm of professional ministry education, Andrews University has implemented an MA in Pastoral Ministry that moves toward merging theory with practice ("Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews Univeristy," 2010). Its weakness is also that ministry experience does not fully coincide with classroom instruction. Classroom instruction "is offered . . . twice annually in one- and two-week intensives" (*Andrews University bulletin*, 2009-2010, p. 340). However, such instruction may be too occasional to facilitate full integration of principle with practice.

Colloquial education centers like ARISE and AFCOE have one advantage over the present curriculum. They are able to teach more in a shorter period of time.

Professional in-ministry programs, like that of Andrews University, also have an advantage over the present curriculum. They are able to teach much more academic depth, potentially instilling a richer understanding of the principles that guide effective ministry. What both colloquial and professional program leaders can learn from the present curriculum is the need to teach principles concurrent with their practice in the student's actual ministry setting.

Recommendations for Further Research

Finally, this study has not explored several areas which are essential to a complete understanding of lay pastoral development. It has only worked to justify the legitimacy of lay pastors and to measure the effectiveness of an accessible, principle-driven, and competency-based curriculum for lay pastor development. Further study of recent program adjustments and unexplored factors is merited.

Program Adjustments Following the Pilot Year

Several adjustments were made to the program in 2009, the year following the pilot. These adjustments provide opportunity to measure their impact on curriculum success, which would be a valuable extension of the present study.

First, the course name was changed from Lay Pastor Training Course to Lay Ministry Training Course, signaling the inclusion of students who wished to improve their ministry leadership skills but did not plan to be lay pastors. Students were invited to sign up for one of four tracks: lay pastor, associate lay pastor, elder, or (general) leader. New in-ministry assignment options were created to accommodate the various tracks but all students experienced the same classroom instruction.

A second area of adjustment in 2009 was the application process. In addition to completing the application form, candidates were asked to obtain three recommendations. These were required from their pastor, a church elder, and another person of their choice. Finally, applicants came with a mandatory ministry job description. Bill Peterson had suggested this as a means to improve placement rates (personal communication, January 7, 2009). It outlined the ministry students would do during and after the course and required their pastor's signature to verify its authenticity.

A third adjustment in 2009 was requiring all students to have and meet with a ministry mentor. In 2008, online students each had a pastoral mentor but whether or not they met together each month did not impact class grades.

Qualitative questions from the surveys reported in chapter 4 revealed the need for a better mentorship program and a better placement plan, leading to the second and third adjustments. The final impact of all three changes has not yet been measured but initial indications are positive.

Unexplored Factors

The many unexplored factors that present challenges or opportunities to lay pastor development warrant attention. Although it has been shown that the proposed curriculum and methods foster effective lay pastor development, success may improve with the acquisition of more knowledge. Ten areas deserve special attention.

First, the present study does not establish whether lay pastors are the best remedy for limited resources. Alternatives should be explored and tested against the lay pastor model. Although lay pastoral ministry restores the New Testament elder function, a better means to do so may be demonstrated.

Second, the comparative quality of specific training systems needs explored. The present study does not demonstrate which curriculum or delivery method is best but only that this one works to the level it has. A survey and comparative analysis of all lay ministry training programs, both inside and outside the Adventist Church, would prove instructive.

Third, educational theory, especially as it regards distance learning, requires further research. This study does not explore every relevant issue of education theory that, if applied, might improve its efficacy. Particular attention to the needs of adult learners should be given, since that is the demographic that lay pastoral training engages.

Fourth, the present curriculum does not allow the teacher to accompany students into the field of ministry for truly hands-on instruction. Models that facilitate principle-driven learning in the field and eliminate much or all of traditional classroom instruction may hold promise. Such a model should be developed and tested.

Fifth, careful attention to developing a lay pastor placement policy is a vital need. The present curriculum has trained students well but left many without pastoral positions. A careful study of this matter should include financial policies on lay pastor remuneration and the viability of prioritizing lay pastor placement above that of salaried pastors.

Sixth, this study does not probe the presence or absence of a long-term ceiling on the growth of graduates from this curriculum compared to graduates of different programs. Knowing whether this type of education fosters long-term success is a crucial piece of information that would determine whether broad implementation of this curriculum without supplement is appropriate.

Seventh, further maturity of a lay pastor mentor program also holds promise. The simple requirement and assignment of a mentor appears to make a positive impact on student development but little has been done in the present study to maximize this. Exploring areas of mentor training and greater mentor involvement in the instruction process may prove fruitful.

Eighth, one graduate of the pilot course suggests that, because of a lay pastor's limited available time, successful ministry requires a trained administrative team (Scott Burnett, personal communication, April 14, 2010). This identifies another area for development. It posits that local officers in a lay pastor-led church, if not the whole congregation, should undergo a concerted educational process. Further research will determine the nature of such a program.

Ninth, this curriculum and its methods should be tested in other world cultures to learn which elements are universal and which must adapt.

Tenth, the advisability of lay pastors advancing to ordination-track employment should be weighed. Occasionally, conferences will hire a successful lay pastor to fill a fulltime position. Such pastors should be studied for their comparative efficacy.

Further exploration in these ten areas will advance lay pastoral ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This will have a positive impact on church mission.

Conclusion

In Pennsylvania Conference, the accessibility of this streamlined, accessible, principle-driven, and competency-based curriculum has increased lay involvement in ministry, both pastoral and otherwise. In view of this, conferences are encouraged to apply it in their settings, following the prescribed steps and preserving curriculum

fundamentals. Both professional and colloquial training centers should adopt the policy of teaching students how to translate principle to practice, through a combination of classroom instruction and ministry experience. Finally, many issues of curriculum application and impact merit further study.

The most important truth that the present study demonstrates is this: When church leaders equip and empower lay people to lead, mission potential is unleashed.

APPENDIX A

A BRIEF PROJECT REPORT

The facts were grim. In 2000, Pennsylvania Conference had three fewer churches than it had thirty years prior. In the same span, its membership had grown less than 0.8% annually, compared to more than 1.7% across the North American Division, and pastor to member responsibility had increased 37%. In the last decade of the twentieth century, baptisms had also declined. (“North American Division,”)

Conference President, Mike Cauley had the foresight to instigate change. Cauley and Executive Secretary, Ray Hartwell, demonstrated courageous leadership as they cast a vision for broader lay ministry. Specifically, they highlighted Conference stagnation and called for two-hundred lay pastors to remedy the situation. When Hartwell became President in 2003, he continued to cast a similar vision.

Constituents came to own the vision but this created new challenges, chief of which was the need for an effective lay training system. Many members wanted to serve but were without learning opportunity.

Conference pastors and administrators made good efforts to mitigate the deficit. From among the pastoral team, Brad Cassell and Shawn Shives fashioned the most successful localized lay training approaches. From among the administration, Bill Peterson, Assistant to the President for Mission, developed a correspondence-based educational program.

Such labors made training available to some but more was needed. In consultation with Pennsylvania Conference administrators, I developed a streamlined, accessible, principle-driven, and competency-based curriculum.

A careful review of Scripture and relevant literature revealed that an effective curriculum would have one purpose, include three learning components, and teaches five competencies. First, its purpose must be missional. Second, it must include the learning components of theory combined with practice, spiritual transformation, and mentoring relationships. Third, it must teach the competencies of people skills, biblical preaching, spiritual vitality, spiritual leadership, and team building. A curriculum was formed that met these criteria.

The crucial question was whether it would positively impact lay involvement in ministry throughout the Conference. I administered the eleven month curriculum to eighteen students in 2008. Subsequently, five of them were placed in pastoral positions and all of them increased their ministry involvement.

I employed surveys to help quantify curriculum success. Shortly after graduation, all students were asked to evaluate their growth. They rated their skill in each competency area both before and after the course. They estimated a 26% average increase in each competency. This included a 19% increase in people skills, a 40% increase in biblical preaching, a 22% increase in spiritual vitality, a 23% increase in spiritual leadership, and a 25% increase in team building.

After a year in ministry, their perceptions of growth increased. Using the same scale, they again rated their skill in each competency area both before and after the course. The estimated average increase in each competency climbed to 43% (from 26% a

year before). This later estimate included a 27% increase in people skills, a 58% increase in biblical preaching, a 39% increase in spiritual vitality, a 49% increase in spiritual leadership, and a 43% increase in team building.

In the same survey, graduates estimated that their overall ability to do effective ministry had increased 66% and that their ministry involvement had increased 60% since enrolling in the course. Surveys of the congregations where lay pastors were placed, and of their mentors, produced similarly positive competency evaluations. On average, congregants rated their overall satisfaction with the lay pastors at 8.9 out of 10 and pastoral mentors rated their satisfaction at 8 out of 10.

Although much work remains to do before lay training is as available and effective as the Pennsylvania Conference needs it to be, the simple application of this curriculum constitutes a major step forward. It demonstrates that equipping and empowering lay people holds considerable mission potential. The application of a streamlined, accessible, principle-driven, and competency-based curriculum for lay pastor development produces effective lay pastors. Conference leaders should take note.

Reference List

North American Division. Retrieved April 23, 2010, from General Conference, Office of Archives and Statistics: <http://adventiststatistics.org>

APPENDIX B

LAY PASTOR TRAINING COURSE

This appendix contains the main documents that students used for the 2008 Lay Pastor Training Course. It does not include lecture scripts but an outline of the course schedule along with lecture descriptions appears in the course blueprint.

The first document is the *Lay pastor training course blueprint*, which provides the best overview of course components. This is followed by in-ministry assignment sheets, which constituted the core monthly assignments. Finally, mentor guidelines and a promotional flier are included.

Lay Pastor Training Course Blueprint

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Impetus for the Course

To obey Christ's command to take the gospel to the world (Matthew 28:18-20), Pennsylvania Conference needs more workers. Jesus' words are still true today that "the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Luke 10:2 NIV). The number of congregations in Pennsylvania Conference has not increased in more than 50 years. In the same period, the number of ordained pastors decreased by almost 29% (due to financial limitations). To fulfill the mission of Christ and reach new communities for God, Pennsylvania Conference needs more part-time and volunteer leaders who can lead current churches and allow full-time pastors to plant new churches. Trained lay pastors are the best solution.

Until now, there has not been an objectively developed, readily accessible, and streamlined training program available. This course was developed by asking Pennsylvania Conference pastors which skills are most important to pastoral success. Their answers were compared with the apostle Paul's instructions to Timothy and found to be the same. Thus, this course is guided by both ancient wisdom and current pastoral experience.

Course Objectives

The objectives, or desired results, of this course are as follows:

To teach students the skills needed for both initial acceptance and long-term success as lay pastors of existing churches of the Pennsylvania Conference.

To help students legitimize their calling in a tangible way by earning a certificate of completion.

Educational Philosophy

The educational philosophy that guides this course includes three related principles. The first is the belief that each student already has certain elements of knowledge, experience, and natural skill that can be applied to the ministry task. The second is the belief that each pastoral competency has basic foundational elements that, if taught and practiced, will guide a natural and personalized development in that competency. The third is the belief that these competencies are best developed through practice in real ministry settings. These principles are applied by (1) teaching the most essential principles that underlie each competency without requiring the student to do excessive reading or non-ministry

productive busywork, and (2) assigning the student a practical ministry application exercise for each set of principles learned.

Class Modules

The five class modules are based on the five pastoral competencies rated highest among Pennsylvania Conference pastors (which are also present in Paul's instruction to Timothy). They are spiritual vitality, biblical preaching, people skills, spiritual leadership, and team building. The more specific class sessions are based on these modules. The amount of time given to each module corresponds to the ranking given it by the pastors surveyed. The order of presentation constitutes a natural progression of ministry development. See class descriptions below for details:

Course Introduction:

This session outlines the rationale, educational approach, end results, and expectations for the course.

Spiritual vitality:

Spiritual Development for Ministry—This session explores the role of personal spirituality in effective ministry. It offers insights for developing a stronger personal bond with God and for fostering spiritual growth in others.

Biblical preaching:

Biblical Foundations of Preaching—This session establishes the biblical mandate, scope, and purpose of preaching and develops the student's ability to study the Bible for the purpose of preaching.

A Framework for Biblical Preaching—This session presents a framework for sermon development. It takes the mystery out of sermon formation by helping students identify the basic building blocks of sermon creation.

Mastering Sermon Delivery—This session teaches advanced skills for expanding sermon impact. It identifies keys to improved sermon delivery and audience reception.

People skills:

Emotional Intelligence in Ministry—This session explores how to develop the people skills necessary to thrive in ministry. It identifies the

often sensed but usually unnamed skills of pastors who win the hearts of parishioners.

Pastoral Counseling—This session provides tools to meaningfully counsel those in crisis. It also helps students know when to refer a person to a professional counselor.

Managing Conflict—This session teaches skills for defusing and resolving conflicts in the church. It provides principles and models for managing conflict.

Spiritual leadership:

Spiritual Leaders of History—This session offers a survey of past spiritual leaders who accomplished great change against the odds. Special attention is given to the leadership traits and spiritual dedication that drove them.

Spiritual Servant Leadership—This session outlines both biblical perspectives and recent thinking on leadership theory. It provides principles and tools that help leaders lead in godly ways and godly directions.

Team building:

A Theology of Church—This session develops a biblical understanding of church function and structure, providing a framework for building the church into a biblical team.

Becoming a Ministry Mentor—This session presents methods for developing others into ministry. It gives principles of approach and suggests a process to be applied.

Requirements and Student Rating

Class Attendance—The student is expected to be present at each class session. In the event that this is truly impossible, arrangements may be made to make up for the session missed.

Ministry Application—The student will complete an in-ministry assignment in the month following each class session. Most of these assignments are practical rather than academic and are designed to require the minimum time investment needed to learn the skills intended (more information for each assignment will be given in class). A report is required for each, simply describing the ministry performed and the most significant lessons learned. In most cases, these reports

should take no more than 10-15 minutes to prepare. Submitting reports via email is preferred.

Doctrinal Studies—The student will write their own ten-part Bible study series, covering the basic doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Each study should be designed to take 20-30 minutes to present. These studies will later serve as a tool for introducing others to the Seventh-day Adventist faith. The doctrinal content of each study is included below. The numbers in parentheses are the numerals assigned the doctrines to be covered by that study (see <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html> or any official listing of the Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs).

1. The Composition of Scripture (1)
2. The Godhead (2-5)
3. Creation and the Nature of Man (6-7)
4. Sin, Salvation, and Spiritual Growth (8-11, 22)
5. The Church as Body and Remnant (12-14, 21)
6. Christian Rituals (15-16)
7. Spiritual Gifts and Prophecy (17-18)
8. The Law of God and the Sabbath (19-20)
9. Marriage and the Family (23)
10. The End of Sin and the Restoration (24-28)

Student Rating—The student will be given a rating at the end of the course that reflects the percentage of coursework completed. This rating is calculated according to the following criteria:

Class attendance	10 x 35	350 points
Ministry application	10 x 55	550 points
Doctrinal studies	10 x 10	100 points

Total **1,000 points**

Note: Student ratings will be made available to the Pennsylvania Conference President, and otherwise kept confidential. If the student wishes their rating not to be made available to the Conference President, their request will be respected if submitted in writing.

Class and Assignment Schedule

Following is the complete schedule of course activities, including class sessions and assignments due. On each date listed below, classes will be two hours long, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

- February 10
 - Course Introduction

- Class: Spiritual Development in Ministry
- March 2
 - Class: Biblical Foundations of Preaching
 - Assignment due: The Composition of Scripture (study guide)
 - Assignment due: Spiritual development plan (half page)
- April 6
 - Class: A Framework for Biblical Preaching
 - Assignment due: The Godhead (study guide)
 - Assignment due: Preaching text summary (half page)
- May 11
 - Class: Mastering Sermon Delivery
 - Assignment due: Creation and the Nature of Man (study guide)
 - Assignment due: Complete sermon outline or manuscript
- June 1
 - Class: Emotional Intelligence in Ministry
 - Assignment due: Sin, Salvation, and Spiritual Growth (study guide)
 - Assignment due: Sermon report (critique of fellow student)
- July 13
 - Class: Pastoral Counseling
 - Assignment due: The Church as Body and Remnant (study guide)
 - Assignment due: Social observation report (one page)
- August 3
 - Class: Managing Conflict
 - Class: Spiritual Leaders of History
 - Assignment due: Christian Rituals (study guide)
 - Assignment due: Social participation report (one page)
- September 7
 - Class: Spiritual Servant Leadership
 - Assignment due: Spiritual Gifts and Prophecy (study guide)
 - Assignment due: Leader biography report (half page)
- October 5
 - Class: A Theology of Church
 - Assignment due: The Law of God and the Sabbath (study guide)
 - Assignment due: Personal leadership philosophy report (one page)
- November 2
 - Class: Becoming a Ministry Mentor
 - Assignment due: Marriage and the Family (study guide)
 - Assignment due: Biblical leadership plan (one page)
- December 12
 - Assignment due: The End of Sin and the Restoration (study guide)
 - Assignment due: Mentorship agreement (one page)

Assignment 01 – Spiritual Development Plan

Due March 9

Choose one specific area of spiritual focus:

- Communicating with God (praying, praising)
- Thinking about God (studying, meditating)
- Sharing about God (fellowshipping, witnessing)

Identify the exercises you plan to include in your daily or weekly devotions:

State any other daily or weekly spiritual growth goals (such as time spent):

Assignment 02 – Sermon Text Summary

Due April 6

Text of Study: _____

Provide an outline of your text as it reads:

Identify the subject of the text—what it talks about (be specific):

Identify the complement of the text—what it says about the subject:

Formulate a simple summary sentence—the message people go home with:

Assignment 03 – Sermon Outline

Due May 11

Sermon text:

Formulate the life question:

Identify the biblical answer (from your sermon text study):

Formulate the life applications (keep it doable and with something for everyone):

Create a Preachable Sermon Outline (with main headings, sub-headings, and verse references):

Assignment 04 – Sermon Evaluation

Due before November 1

Sermon you preached

Date: _____ Title: _____

Sermon you evaluated

Date evaluated: _____

Date met with preacher: _____

Preacher: _____

Was the guiding “question” clear?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did the preacher avoid tangents?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was the use of illustrations effective?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was the “question” answered clearly?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was the “answer” clearly biblical?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was the instruction practical?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did a summary statement emerge?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was note-use without distraction?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was body language effective?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
What is your overall impression?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Three insights you learned about preaching from this exercise:

Assignment 05 – Social Observation Report

Due July 13

Briefly describe three separate incidents you have observed, in which three of the reflective listening skills were used or should have been used.

Write a small paragraph on each incident, simply describing the scenario and identifying which skill helped or could have helped the social interaction.

Incident #1:

Incident #2:

Incident #3:

Assignment 06 – Social Participation Report

Due August 3

Briefly describe an incident in which you consciously used at least two of the active listening skills discussed in class. Describe the result, whether positive or negative?

Assignment 07 – Leader Biography Report

Due September 7

Identify an effective spiritual leader, either historical or current, and report the following:

A basic need the leader addressed or is addressing in their time and place:

Two to three leadership traits that contributed to their success:

Assignment 08 – Personal Leadership Philosophy

Due October 5

In one page, describe your personal leadership philosophy. Briefly identify your leadership strengths or interests and how they will help you live out your leadership philosophy.

Assignment 09 – Biblical Leadership Plan

Due November 2

In one or two pages, describe how you would structure a church to accomplish mission. Keep it simple and well organized. Be sure to refer to the way church operated in New Testament times.

Assignment 10 – Mentorship Agreement

Due December 12

Identify a person who will agree to have you mentor them into ministry of some kind (whether lay pastoral ministry, another church office, conducting Bible studies, preaching, teaching, etc.), then create and sign a simple mentorship agreement with them that includes the following items:

- Specific goals of the relationship (such as placement into office or ministry duties performed).
- Length of formal relationship.
- Times and dates of meetings.

Lay Pastor Training Course
(Guidelines for Pastoral Mentors, 2008)

Instructor: James Wibberding, B. A., M. Div.
james@wibberding.com
267.640.7222

Guidelines for Pastoral Mentors:

The role of the pastoral mentor is threefold:

- To offer the lay pastor student simple guidance through their ministry assignments.
- To provide the lay pastor student opportunities to practice each area of ministry assigned.
- To offer any additional guidance the mentor deems necessary to development the student into productive ministry.

Pastoral mentors are asked to meet with their student once per month, either by phone or in person, to review the month's ministry assignment and offer guidance and opportunity for its successful completion as outlined above.

Ministry Assignments Schedule:

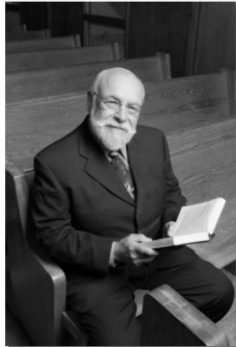
Following is a basic list of the ministry assignments and their due dates. On the first of the month that each assignment is due, the student will receive an assignment sheet that details the specifics of that assignment. These assignment sheets, along with a full course outline, are also available to pastoral mentors at <http://james.wibberding.com/correspondence.html>.

- April 30: Spiritual development plan (half page)
- May 30: Preaching text summary (half page)
- June 30: Complete sermon outline or manuscript
- July 31: Sermon report (critique of fellow preacher)
- August 31: Social observation report (one page)
- September 30: Social participation report (one page)
- October 31: Leader biography report (half page)
- November 30: Personal leadership philosophy report (one page)
- December 31: Biblical leadership plan (one page)
- January 30: Mentorship agreement (one page)

Is God calling you?



Pennsylvania needs lay pastors . . .

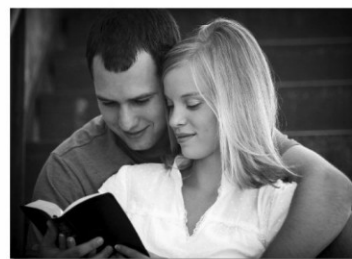


Introducing a new kind of lay pastor training. In any field, the difference between success and failure is a few key traits. To find those key pastoral traits, we interviewed 25 Pennsylvania Conference pastors. Then we compared their answers with Scripture. The result is a program to teach you what you need to know most.

Classes are free but not without commitment. If you just want another certificate to hang on the wall, this is not for you. If you want to impact Pennsylvania for Christ, this could be your chance. These classes will teach you what it takes to succeed as a lay pastor.

Expect to learn the following competencies:

- * People skills
- * Biblical preaching
- * Spiritual vitality
- * Leadership skills
- * Team building



(Details on reverse side)



The lead teacher and program coordinator for this ten-month course is pastor Jim Wibberding. Jim is known as a practical pastor and engaging teacher. He is leading this course as part of his Doctor of Ministry studies.

Class Schedule:

- February 10
Course Introduction
Spiritual Development in Ministry
- March 2
Biblical Foundations of Preaching
- April 6
A Framework for Biblical Preaching
- May 11
Mastering Sermon Delivery
- June 1
Emotional Intelligence in Ministry
- July 13
Pastoral Counseling
- August 3
Managing Conflict
Spiritual Leaders of History
- September 7
Spiritual Servant Leadership
- October 5
A Theology of Church
- November 2
Becoming a Ministry Mentor

For more information or to join the program, contact Pastor Jim Wibberding at james@wibberding.com or 267.640.7222

Classes held at the Lansdale Seventh-day Adventist Church

APPENDIX C

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

This section contains the survey instruments used to measure the impact of the Lay Pastor Training Course. These include surveys completed by students immediately following graduation and after one year of ministry. Surveys of congregations and pastoral mentors are also included.

Lay Pastor Pre-Placement Survey

Name: _____ Date: _____

The purpose of this survey is to learn your opinions regarding how well the 2008 Lay Pastor Training Course equipped you for pastoral ministry.

Please compare how capable you were in the following areas before the 2008 Lay Pastor Training Course with how capable you are in these areas after the course. Do so by rating your capability in each of the following areas (both before and after) on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not capable and 10 being very capable.

People skills

Before:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable
After:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable

Biblical preaching

Before:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable
After:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable

Spiritual vitality

Before:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable
After:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable

Spiritual leadership

Before:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable
After:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable

Team building

Before:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable
After:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable

The following questions help us improve the course in specific ways. Please answer candidly.

What is the most significant thing you wanted to gain from this course when it began?

What did you actually gain from this course?

In pastoral ministry, which of the following areas of capability do you perceive is most needed? Please circle one.

People skills Biblical preaching Spiritual leadership Team building

Which of the following areas do you most feel the need to learn more about? Please circle one.

People skills Biblical preaching Spiritual leadership Team building

If you could improve one thing about the Lay Pastor Training Course, what would you change?

Lay Pastor Twelfth-Month Survey

The purpose of this survey is to learn your opinions regarding how well the 2008 Lay Pastor Training Course equipped you for pastoral ministry.

Please estimate by what percent, if any, your involvement in ministry has increased since you first enrolled in the Lay Pastor Training Course.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Please estimate by what percent, if any, your ability to do effective ministry has increased since you first enrolled in the Lay Ministry Training Course.

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Please compare how capable you were in the following areas before you started the Lay Pastor Training Course with how capable you are now, after this year spent in ministry. Do so by rating your capability in each of the following areas (both before and after) on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not capable and 10 being very capable.

People skills

Before:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable
After:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable

Biblical preaching

Before:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable
After:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable

Spiritual vitality

Before:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable
After:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable

Spiritual leadership

Before:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable
After:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable

Team building

Before:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable
After:	Not capable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very capable

The following questions help us improve the course in specific ways. Please answer candidly.

What is the most significant thing you have learned in this year of ministry?

In pastoral ministry, which of the following areas of capability do you perceive is most needed? Please circle one.

People skills Biblical preaching Spiritual leadership Team building

Which of the following areas do you most feel the need to learn more about? Please circle one.

People skills Biblical preaching Spiritual leadership Team building

Drawing from your experience in ministry, if you could improve one thing about the Lay Pastor Training Course, what would you change?

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- Wong, C. S.-Y. (1998). *Christian religious education in Hong Kong: Professional ministry and ministerial preparation*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL.
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JAMES R. WIBBERDING

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OBJECTIVE

My purpose in ministry is to understand, practice, and teach a mission-centered ministry paradigm that advances the work of Christ in human lives. I will do this through parish ministry, ministry mentorship, teaching, and whatever else God leads me to.

EDUCATION

2007 – Present Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI

Doctor of Ministry

Concentration: Leadership

Dissertation topic: Lay pastor development

Projected completion: August, 2010

2002 – 2004 Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI

Master of Divinity

Minor: Biblical and cognate languages

1995 – 2000 Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, TN

Bachelor of Arts

Major: Theology

Minor: Biblical Languages

1994 – 1995 Southern College, Collegedale TN

Certificate of Auto Body Repair

WORK EXPERIENCE

2008 – Present Lay Ministry Training Course Director

Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventist

Developer and teacher of curriculum for lay pastors, elders, and other church leaders.

2005 – Present District Pastor

Lansdale, Souderton, PA

Employed by the Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Pastor of two congregations, comprised of 200 members.

Mentor of two neighboring churches and their pastoral intern.

Spiritual leader and guest teacher at Huntingdon Valley Christian Academy.

Leader of PA Conference Philadelphia area ministerium.

2000 – 2002 District Pastor

Brockway, Clearfield, Cory, Distant, Seneca, Warren, PA
Employed by the Pennsylvania Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
Sole pastor of an experimental six-church district.
Trainer and mentor to volunteer ministers and task force workers.

1999 – 2000 Assistant Pastor
Floral Crest, Higdon, AL
Employed by the local churches.

1998 – 1999 Assistant Pastor
Shelton, Elma, WA
Employed by the local churches.

SKILLS

Excellence in biblical, expository preaching.

Conflict management (for my own district and neighboring ones).

Leadership strength in developing functional structures.

Teaching, through curriculum formation and delivery to lay pastors, preaching seminars, and guest-teaching academy students.

Proficiency in biblical and cognate languages: Akkadian, Middle Egyptian, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek.

Both academic and popular writing.

PUBLICATIONS

Preaching Module of *NAD Curriculum Resource* (Center for Creative Ministry, 2010).

“Teaching Preaching,” *Ministry* (August 2007): 26-27.

Sabbath Reflections: A Weekly Devotional (Big Fish Publishing, 2006).

Learn to Preach Before Next Weekend (Big Fish Publishing, 2006).

Research Assistant for *NIV Application Commentary: Leviticus-Numbers* (Zondervan, 2004).

Numerous newspaper articles for a popular audience, 2005 – Present.

MEMBERSHIPS

Society of Biblical Literature, 2005 – Present.

Adventist Society for Religious Studies, 2005 – Present.

Adventist Theological Society, 2008 – Present.