

EXPECTATION VERSUS REALITY AMONG MALE GRADUATES OF SEMINARY
WHO ENTERED THE MINISTRY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Charles R. DeGroat

Frances Benton, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor and Chair

Patricia Wolskee, Ph.D., Committee Member

Hilda Glazer, Ed.D., Committee Member

Garvey House, Ph.D., Dean, Harold Abel School of Psychology

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Abstract

The past three decades have witnessed a growing body of literature on pastoral health and longevity in ministry. However, little attention in the literature is devoted to the connection between educational expectations formed in seminary and ministry realities experienced in and among congregations. Using the phenomenological approach of Clark Moustakas, this study explored the lived experiences of seven male graduates of Reformed Theological Seminary, a seminary in the Presbyterian tradition, who were ordained to pastoral ministry. The participants, while grateful for their theological preparation, reported dissatisfaction about the adequacy of their education for the complexities of ministry. In sum, for these participants a disconnection between seminary preparation and pastoral life was perceived.

Dedication

I dedicate this to my friends in the pastorate, walking the pilgrim road with that

long obedience in the same direction.

Without much gratitude or reward, you continue to labor on for the kingdom

that is not of this world.

May you enjoy a mystic sweet communion along the way...

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

While much has been written on the emotional demands of pastoral ministry (Darling, Hill, and McWey, 2004; Blanton and Morris, 1999; Krause, Ellison, and Wulff, 1998), little attention has been devoted to the educational preparation of pastors and its influence on their expectations of ministry. In the most far-reaching study to date on pastors who have exited ministry, Hoge and Wenger (2005) highlight a gap between expectations formed in seminary, and the realities of pastoral life. However, while the study illuminates the gap between expectation and reality, it fails to substantially explore the pastors' experience of this gap. Research is needed which explores the expectation versus reality gap in greater depth. This is the basis of this study.

Background of the Study

A variety of studies spanning a range of methodologies and across an array of denominations show that members of the clergy are prone to stress, burnout, disillusionment, and, in some cases, an early exit from the ministry. Among clergy, the reasons for this are manifold. Studies have shown that compassion fatigue (Stamm, 2002), a lack of emotional support (Lummis, 1996; Krause, et al., 1998), intrusive demands (Lee, 1999), spousal stress (Darling, et al., 2004), a lack of social connectedness (Ellison and George, 1994), workaholism (Lehr and Lehr, 2006), and a failure in preparation (Hoge and Wenger, 2005) play an important role in pastoral success and

satisfaction. A study of 5000 men and women across 15 denominations found shortcomings among clergy in their understanding of boundaries, their confidence in doing practical ministry tasks, and their competence in dealing with the emotional pressures of ministry (Zikmund, Lummis and Chang, 1998). They write, “Very few of the clergy women or clergy men in our study see their seminary experience as offering any real help in helping them survive and find satisfaction in their difficult and sometimes lonely lives as clergy” (p. 103).

In a study of 900 ex-ministers across five denominations, Hoge and Wenger (2005) find a growing trend of pastors leaving the ministry. The study concludes with a series of recommendations beginning with the improvement of seminary education and pastoral preparation. The mixed methodology study provides some illuminative qualitative data. A 45 year-old Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA) pastor noted the absence of education on pastoral self-care at the seminary level. He notes, “Everybody who goes into ministry needs...a therapist, a mentor, and a pastor. Clergy (are)...taught the mechanics of theology, but not the practical application of translating what they’ve learned into...the reality of parish life” (p. 203). He argues that the therapist is invaluable for dealing with personal life issues, a mentor for practical matters such as how to do a funeral, and a pastor for spiritual direction. Another ELCA pastor argues that the caliber of seminary students and pastoral candidates has decreased over the years, with men and women coming to seminary not because they have been groomed in a church and affirmed in their call to ministry, but because ministry looks like a good second career option. He noted that these students come not with a sacred call, but with a sense of entitlement, seen in an attitude of what they can get rather than what they can

give. A Presbyterian (PCUSA) pastor cited the absence of seminary education on “healthy time off” (p. 208), highlighting how ill-prepared he and other pastors are to set good boundaries in ministry, and avoid burnout and stress. These findings suggest the possibility of a gap between seminary expectations and ministry realities (Hoge and Wenger, 2005).

These studies provide context and incentive for further research, particularly around the educational dimension. Hoge and Wenger (2005) suggest that what is taught and learned in a seminary environment has implications on pastoral life and ministry. It is implied that seminary learning forms certain expectations of what pastoral life and ministry might be. Expectations formed in other educational settings have been the subject of prior studies (Ali and Saunders, 2006; Brinthaupt, 2004), providing an illuminating context for this study.

Statement of the Problem

Upon surveying 900 ministers across a spectrum of denominations, Hoge and Wenger (2005) conclude, “Many [pastors] felt ill-prepared to perform essential pastoral tasks and told us that the realities of parish life were different than they expected” (p. 202). With this background in mind, further research is needed which illuminates the actual experiences of pastors as they face the expectation versus reality gap. This study is one contribution in that direction. While Hoge and Wenger (2005) offer some qualitative data, which indicates that pastors are generally disappointed in the relevance of practical and personal training in seminary, their data and discussion is preliminary, at best. Their study lacks in two main ways. First, an in-depth qualitative study of the pastoral

experience of the expectation versus reality gap was beyond the scope of the study. The study serves to highlight the need for more practical ministry preparation, but does not sufficiently explore the particular problem of the expectation versus reality gap. Second, the qualitative data in the study reflects the experiences of pastors across a broad range of denominations, trained in a variety of different settings. While this provides a general sense of pastoral experience, it does not necessarily contribute to a more precise understanding of experiences among pastors from particular seminaries and within particular traditions. It is possible that some seminaries within some traditions train pastors better than others. Therefore, this study took a step in the direction of providing more precise experiential data by focusing on one seminary and one denominational tradition.

Because more specific research is needed in order to understand the gap between expectation and reality as it is reflected among graduates of a particular seminary serving in a particular denominational tradition, this study focused on the lived experiences of pastors who graduated from Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida (RTS-O). The participants were ordained pastors in a common denominational tradition (Presbyterian) with a minimum of five years of ministry experience. By studying individuals from a common seminary and tradition, this study highlights how the lived experience of a gap between expectation and reality is manifested among a unique group, rather than an eclectic, multi-denominational group, also reducing variability.

Purpose of the Study

The study advanced an understanding of the lived experience of expectation versus reality among a unique group of pastors. It augments research literature on the emotional demands of pastoral ministry by highlighting one specific aspect of this issue, the gap between expectation and reality (Hoge and Wenger, 2005; Zikmund, Lummis and Chang, 1998). The themes that emerged, while highlighting the experiences of particular individuals from a particular seminary in a particular tradition, can be used by future researchers who study this phenomenon within other unique seminary settings and denominational traditions. The general conclusions made by Hoge and Wenger (2005) regarding the expectation versus reality gap can be, through this study, viewed from the experiential lens of Presbyterian pastors to illuminate their unique perceptions.

The study has the added benefit of providing valuable data to the administration of RTS-O. The rich and substantial experiential data provides a window into the particular experiences of seminary graduates within the Presbyterian tradition. Qualitative data can be and has been particularly helpful for academic institutions as they make policy and curriculum decisions (Patton, 2002).

Qualitative Research Questions

Moustakas (1994) argues that qualitative research provides the researcher with the opportunity to explore a lived experience or phenomenon. Unlike quantitative research hypotheses, phenomenological research questions invite narrative data on a lived experience. Qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, has no hypotheses. Qualitative research questions are open-ended, and allow for improvisation and

elaboration within the interview, providing the researcher with an opportunity to explore the phenomenon as it emerges from the participant's experience.

That said, the primary research question invited the participant to explore and elaborate upon his unique experience of the expectation versus reality gap. Participants were asked: "Expand on your lived experiences/perceptions of the expectations of pastoral ministry and life formed in seminary, and the realities you have faced since being in ministry." The researcher allowed sub-questions to emerge from the participant's initial response. In many cases, participants were asked to expand on the research question (RQ) as it related to their marriages, relationships with parishioners, spiritual state of being in ministry, emotional health, and private lives outside of ministry.

Nature of the Study

The study used a qualitative phenomenological approach, employing the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen modification proposed by Moustakas (1994). There are four major processes of phenomenological analysis in the work of Moustakas (1994). Though the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen modification provides the step-by-step details of analysis, the four major processes which provide the foundation of this research include:

1. Epoche: the intentional setting aside of preconceptions and biases
2. Phenomenological Reduction: a description of the experience of a phenomenon
3. Imaginative Variation: the process of arriving at structural themes that underlie the phenomenon
4. Synthesis of Texture and Structure: a final description of the essence of the phenomenon

Important for this study and all phenomenological studies is the epoche process which frees the researcher from bias or subjectivism. The method of Moustakas (1994) allows the researcher to look “inside [in order] to become aware of personal bias, to eliminate personal involvement with the subject material...or at least gain clarity about preconceptions” (Patton, 2002, p. 485). The process involves a focused reflection on the data, a bracketing of preconceptions, and an awareness of emerging themes, which represent, in the end, core conclusions that can be made from the narrative data.

Significance of the Study

This study augments a growing body of literature within the general field of pastoral emotional health. In particular, it provides an educational component that the literature is missing. Hoge and Wenger (2005) found that burned-out pastors experienced stress, loneliness, self-doubt, pressure, failed projects, and failed expectations. While studies have shown the multiple levels of emotional stressors on pastors (Darling, Hill, and McWey, 2004; Blanton and Morris, 1999; Krause, Ellison, and Wulff, 1998), Hoge and Wenger (2005) connect the difficulties of pastoral life to seminary education. This connection provides the missing link between expectation and reality. In particular, it provides a unique lens in its particular focus on one seminary and one tradition. It is hoped that this study will ignite interest in future studies on other seminaries and in other traditions. Together, studies such as these can provide valuable data which may inform seminary policy and curriculum decisions and better equip pastors for the emotional demands of ministry.

Definition of Terms

Expectations Formed in Seminary

The study assumes that certain expectations of pastoral ministry and life are formed in seminary. The expectations are formed around what the participant actually anticipated pastoral life and ministry to be before entering full-time ministry. Hoge and Wenger (2005) cite qualitative data, which confirms that some pastors find pastoral ministry and life to be very different than what they expected it to be based in their seminary experience. The seminary experience may include different formats such as classes, internships, mentoring experiences, seminars, and/or other activities. However, the interviews will invite participants to define their own lived experience of formed expectations while in seminary.

Present Pastoral Realities

The study also focuses on the lived experience of present pastoral realities. In this, the researcher is interested in understanding the actual experiences of pastoral life and ministry as perceived by the participant. While expectation is concerned with the past anticipations, reality is concerned with actual present-day perceptions of pastoral life and ministry.

Gap

The notion of a gap between expectation and reality, as used in this study, is meant to define the experienced differences between expectation and reality. The word is not meant to convey a preconceived notion of the size or nature of the gap. In a phenomenological approach, it is important to allow the participant to define whether or not he experienced a gap, and to elaborate on the size and nature of the gap.

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue, as a concept used in this study, is defined as a kind of “vicarious trauma” (Rothschild and Rand, 2006) that is experienced among people in helping professions. Because pastoral ministry is a helping profession, and because pastors are called upon to engage people in a variety of relational contexts, it is important to understand how pastors perceive this fatigue in their current work in light of their past expectations.

Denominational Tradition

The study also references denominational traditions. A denominational tradition does not necessarily represent one particular denomination, but denominations within a particular historical tradition. In this case, the research is interested in Presbyterian pastors. While there are a variety of Presbyterian denominations, the tradition finds its roots in Scotland in the 17th century, manifested today in common creeds, confessions, ecclesial structures, and organization. While there are a number of Presbyterian denominations with cosmetic, practical, and even theological differences, the tradition is

rooted in a common history and heritage. Thus, this study focuses on the Presbyterian tradition, in contrast to a Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, Orthodox, Charismatic or other tradition.

Pastoral Life and Ministry

Finally, the study defines pastoral life and ministry as the general vocational realities around which pastors experience life. Indeed, pastoral ministry includes the personal life of marriage and family (Darling, Hill, and McWey, 2004) as well as work-related factors (Blanton and Morris, 1999). Krause, Ellison and Wulff (1998) argue that the intense scrutiny of pastors and their families leaves little room for marriages and families not to be impacted by the daily realities of congregational and church life. Thus, the study assumes that language of pastoral life and ministry includes not only what happens when a pastor is engaged in leading Sunday morning worship, but how he experiences the totality of his life.

Assumptions and Limitations

The researcher assumed that reliable past research indicated that some pastors perceive a gap between the expectations of pastoral life and ministry formed in seminary, and the reality once in ministry (Hoge and Wenger, 2005; Zikmund, Lummis and Chang, 1998). However, these findings were based on a broad overview of multiple denominations and seminary experiences, and not on particular manifestations of the phenomenon within a specific seminary community and denominational tradition.

This researcher, as most qualitative and quantitative researchers do, also brought a set of biases to the project. As an adjunct seminary professor, the researcher is interested in seeing the study benefit future pastors. However, in order to avoid bias, several elements were incorporated into the study.

First, participants were used who had not studied under the researcher. Because the researcher has been teaching at RTS-O for three years, participants were used who had been in ministry no less than five years. This assured that the researcher would not be involved in a dual relationship with anyone who participated. Further, the use of epoche as a qualitative process to ascertain and minimize possible biases was utilized using the approach of Moustakas (1994).

Second, purposeful random sampling was used to choose participants (Patton, 2002). This is a common tactic within qualitative research, preventing the researcher from handpicking participants who might align with certain views or assumptions held by the researcher.

Third, pseudonyms were used for the participants to protect their confidentiality. The participants were designated numbers from 1-7 for codification and organization.

Fourth, the researcher employed epoche using the approach of Moustakas (1994). Epoche is a phenomenological strategy used to bracket biases. While it is impossible to completely eliminate bias, epoche is a fundamental first-step in the approach of Moustakas (1994) to accomplishing a credible study.

Another limitation was the number of participants. Because of the voluminous data elicited in phenomenological research, and because a single researcher is involved in

the investigation, the study is limited to seven participants. The researcher expects that future studies will provide an even greater amount of narrative data on the phenomenon.

Finally, for a variety of reasons the study is limited to males. This does not emerge from any bias on the part of the researcher. Ideally, a study of this nature would include males and females. However, the researcher could not identify a female graduate of RTS-O currently in full-time pastoral ministry. Further, prior research indicates that the kind of difficulties women experience in pastoral ministry can be significantly different than men (Zikmund, Lummis and Chang, 1998). The researcher believes that it is important that a similar study be done focusing on the unique challenges women face, particularly in the male-dominated Presbyterian tradition.

Summary

This study provided an important and necessary addition to literature on pastoral education and preparation. In its specificity and focus, it shed light on the particular experiences of seminarians and pastors in a common tradition. However, it can only be understood as it is placed in the context of broader research on the subject. Indeed, there is a wealth of literature, rooted in church history as well as in the social sciences, that gives context to this study. This is the subject of the next section.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A study of the lived-experience of educational expectations and practical ministry realities falls under the broader umbrella of literature on pastoral emotional health and well-being. In this broader genre, one finds a vast range of both popular and research literature. In sum, pastors in the twenty-first century are experiencing increasing pressure from the outside, and increasing pressure from within (Taylor, 2001). Loneliness, moral failure, spiritual dryness, apathy, anger, identity crisis, and temptation are leading to increased numbers of pastors leaving the ministry prematurely (Zikmund, Lummis, and Chang, 1998). Further, the connection between seminary training and pastoral life is beginning to be addressed. According to both popular literature (Armstrong and Morledge, 2005) and research studies (Hoge and Wegner, 2005), it is evident that seminary preparation plays a central role in the emotional and relational preparation of pastors.

The information for this literature review emanated from a variety of sources. In particular, the research done by the Pulpit and Pew initiative at Duke University Divinity School provided the greatest volume and specificity of data on pastoral life and preparation. However, a wealth of resources from a variety of psychological and theological journals, spanning several decades, provided rich content which would inform the research. The researcher utilized books, journals, web resources, and other relevant data published through the end of 2007.

In this chapter, several aspects of the literature will be explored. First, the historical landscape of literature on pastoral life and ministry is reviewed. In this, one finds a wide range of writings on the subject. Second, literature on pastoral well-being is explored. In this, one finds much related to the complexities of modern pastoral life. Finally, research specifically focused on the educational dimension is explored. Within this section, two main areas of literature are reviewed: research focused on pastoral preparation, and analogous research on non-pastoral, yet relevant, topics related to educational expectations.

Historical Context

Literature on the health and preparation of the Presbyterian pastor dates back several centuries. Baxter (1656/1997) notes the spiritual “diseases” of a great many pastors of his day, noting battles with “self-seeking, negligence, pride and other sins” (p. 39) which led to the ruin of pastors and their congregations. A wealth of centuries-old pietistic literature on the nature of pastoral life can be found not only in the Presbyterian tradition, but within Lutheran, Dutch Reformed, Anglican, and non-conformist traditions (Stoeffler, 1971). Indeed, within this broad landscape of pastoral literature, one also finds a discussion of the proper role and content of pastoral training, along with laments about ill-prepared pastors already in ministry (Oden, 1983).

It is within these early discussions that pastoral preparation begins to be addressed with greater precision. During the 17th century, there was a growing concern around the importance of a “learned clergy” (Jones and Armstrong, 2006), manifesting in university endowments for divinity schools specifically designed for the training of pastors. The

argument, as it is found across the early literature, is that a specific school designed for pastoral preparation could better account for both theological content and emotional/spiritual character (Stoeffler, 1971). This idea connected the benefits of monastic training within the Catholic tradition of earlier centuries with an anticipation of the future needs of pastors in an ever-modernizing society. As one notable clergyman argued, better training would produce morally sound pastors better attuned to their own needs, and better equipped to minister to the wounded souls of parishioners (Baxter, 1656/1997).

In the 19th century, similar efforts were made in London by the renowned preacher Charles Spurgeon. Sensing the urgency of the time, Spurgeon argued that the demands of modern life required schools adept at teaching both the content and character of pastoral service (Drummond, 1992). Spurgeon's awareness came not only from his own continual battle with depression, but from an acute sense of the emotional and physical needs of the great many people whom he served. The connection between the importance of seminary preparation and the readiness of pastors for the personal and public rigors of ministry is a significant contribution

For a variety of historical reasons, Presbyterian seminaries in the late 19th and 20th centuries took an intellectualistic turn, focusing more on debates around theological orthodoxy and less on pastoral life and character (Noll, 1992). As a result, seminaries became increasingly irrelevant on practical issues, producing pastors less prepared for the emotional and relational demands of ministry (Benner, 1998). However, early research studies on the psychological dimensions of pastoral ministry arose out of a need to better understand the many stresses pastors face. Johnson (1970) noted the unique dangers of

pastoral ministry as well as the importance of further research on these dangers in order to insure that pastors enter the ministry with a degree of emotional health. Further, he argued for the importance of a more practical pastoral education. In these ways, Johnson's (1970) study paved the way for a wealth of empirical literature in the next decades.

Another early spokesman on issues of pastoral health was Henri Nouwen, the renowned Dutch psychologist and Catholic priest who taught psychology and pastoral theology at Notre Dame, Harvard, and Yale. Nouwen's (1970) early work focused on the need for pastors to engage their own emotional wounds. In a later work, Nouwen (1991) lamented how many seminaries lead pastors to become "entangled in such a complex network of discussions, debates, and arguments about God and God-issues that a simple conversation with God...has become practically impossible" (p. 49). Again, the connection between pastoral training and pastoral preparation for the practical aspects of ministry is clear.

Current Research on Pastoral Life and Ministry

Occupational stress within helping professions is a well-known phenomenon (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, 2001). However, pastoral ministry is a helping profession with its own intrinsic set of stressors and complications. Researchers have investigated pastoral emotional and relational well-being from many angles, some of which include burnout (Darling, Hill, and McWey, 2004), compassion fatigue (Stamm, 2002), interpersonal emotional support (Krause, Ellison, and Wulff, 1998), spousal stress

(Darling, Hill, and McWey, 2004), and premature exits from ministry (Hoge and Wenger, 2005).

Burnout

Burnout has become one of the more significant issues to arise in pastoral literature. Maslach (2003) defined the features of burnout “an overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and a lack of accomplishment” (p. 190). These features are demonstrated in pastoral literature related to burnout. Blanton and Morris (1999) noted that the lack of social support in ministry proved to be one of the most important factors in a pastor’s tendency toward burnout. Darling, Hill, and McWey (2004) argued that ministry engenders symptoms of fatigue and burnout through the high interpersonal demand associated with pastoral counseling, crisis management, compassion fatigue, time away from home, and more. Hoge and Wenger (2005) found a correlation between pastoral burnout and premature exits from the ministry, noting that pastors who have not been trained for the practical rigors of ministry are less likely to endure.

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue is a phenomenon discussed within the context of helping professions. Unlike burnout, it is often connected to unresolved past issues which manifest in a present relationships (Rothschild and Rand, 2006). Because of this, compassion fatigue, unlike burnout, features a rapid onset, often coming without warning as the helper faces an external trauma which triggers his own internal trauma (Figley,

1995). Weaver (2003) noted that many pastors are susceptible to compassion fatigue because, quite often, they have not engaged in personal psychotherapy to deal with their own pasts. Ferguson (2007) argues that though pastors are often “first responders in times of trauma and crisis” (p. 16), their lack of adequate training means that they will not have the internal resources and practical skills necessary to attend to the crisis.

Interpersonal Emotional Support

While pastoral ministry offers the opportunity for rewarding interpersonal interactions, pastors often find that loneliness and conflict are far more prevalent than they expected. Pastors tend to be isolated from the emotional support needed for well-being in the ministry (Lummis, 1996). Krause, Ellison, and Wulff (1998) found that in the Presbyterian Church (USA), pastors tended to have the least amount of emotional support and most negative interaction with others among all the members of the church. Because of their role and responsibilities, pastors become emotionally isolated and embittered in the face of continuing conflict. In a cross-denominational study, Blanton and Morris (1998) found that a lack of emotional support not only impacted pastors, but had negative effects on a pastor’s marriage. This emotional spillover leads pastors to deal with marital problems in isolation from their community.

Spousal Stress

As previously stated, the stress of ministry can impact a pastor’s marriage. Blanton and Morris (1999) found that the loneliness of pastoral work, combined with inadequate clergy pay, tended to combine to negatively impact marriages. Darling, Hill,

and McWey (2004) noted that pastors and their spouses lack the coping strategies necessary to deal with the many stressors of ministry. Hoge and Wenger (2005) cited a correlation between pastoral burnout, fatigue, interpersonal struggle, and marital dissatisfaction. Clearly, the relationally-demanding challenges of ministry spill over into marital life.

Premature Exits from Ministry

Pastors who struggle with the emotional and relational demands of ministry also tend to leave ministry prematurely. In a cross-denominational study, it was determined that pastors were forced to exit their ministry posts for a variety of reasons, including conflicts in vision, interpersonal conflict, interpersonal incompetence, unrealistic expectations, lack of church discipline, and contentious individuals or power groups (Barfoot, Winston, and Wickman, 2005). In the largest study to date on this issue, Hoge and Wenger (2005) echoed previous findings, but added the component of inadequate seminary preparation as a primary reason why pastors exit the ministry prematurely.

Educational Preparation and Expectation

A less frequently addressed aspect of pastoral life and ministry is the educational preparation pastors receive for the complexities of their vocation. While the literature on pastoral well-being makes it clear that they struggle with a host of emotional and relational issues, there is far less clarity on how to address these issues in pastoral training programs.

Preparation to Care for Others

One aspect of the literature on pastoral preparation is focused on the adequacy of training for the complexities of modern-day emotional demands. Lehr and Lehr (2006) reported that 90% of graduating seminarians were ill-prepared for the rigorous demands of pastoral care. Because of this, some researchers have focused on the connections between pastoral training and mental health.

Quinn and Talley (1974) created a six-month pilot program for seminary students for the purpose of training and experience with individuals struggling with marriage problems, illness, and aging. Two groups of eight students met once a week in order to learn the requisite skills, and engage in the practice of care for people in need. The program proved effective. Participants reported a greater awareness of emotional needs, as well as a greater capacity to address these needs personally and through a range of mental health services in the community. In a similar study, Anderson, Robinson, and Ruben (1978) combined self-report and case studies in a study that demonstrated the importance of collaboration between pastors and members of the mental health community.

Clemens, Corradi, and Wasman (1978) found that pastors were inadequately prepared for the complexities of pastoral care. Yet, they confirmed the importance of continued training for pastors, citing the long tradition of pastoral care, the special significance of religious leaders in society, and the great availability of pastors to meet the emotional needs of people. Likewise, Gullledge (1992) found that pastors were uniquely suited to minister to the aging, yet because of inadequate training in seminary carried many stereotypes and inaccuracies into their ministry to this population. Weaver

(1995) argued for a closer relationship between religious and mental health training, noting the overlapping tasks of both.

Pastoral Self-Care

Another important aspect of pastoral preparation is a focus on the self-care necessary for the rigors of ministry. As is often the case with helping professionals, pastors face a variety of familial, personal, physical, and spiritual complications that arise from ministering to others (Ferguson, 1997).

Psychologist and theologian Henri Nouwen was an early proponent of pastoral self-care. Nouwen (1970) argued that a new generation of pastors would need to reckon with their own personal woundedness in order to properly minister to others. Most relevant for this study was Nouwen's (1970) observation that male pastors are often afflicted with an absence of their fathers, manifesting in anger, an inability to trust authority, and an emotional distance that prevents connection with others.

Nouwen's insights about the connection between past relationships and present ways of relating are confirmed empirically, as well. In a study of 672 seminary students from 14 seminaries, Cardwell and Hunt (1979) found that emotionally unhealthy pastors were most likely wounded in past relationships with caregivers. Even more pertinent for this study was the recognition that these pastors go on to struggle with interpersonal relationships in the ministry. With this connection, it is apparent that seminaries may provide an important role in preparing students to deal with their own emotional wounds prior to entering ministry.

In a qualitative study of 398 senior pastors, Meek, et al. (2003) concluded with five factors which contribute to the emotional and spiritual health of pastors. They noted that pastors are most able to cope and last for the long term in ministry if they are,

1. Intentionally Balanced: They know the risks of not having boundaries, and they make the appropriate life adjustments to achieve balance.
2. Intentionally Connected: They understand the need for social connection and interpersonal support, and take the necessary steps to get it.
3. Secure in their Calling: They are firm in their sense of purpose.
4. Disciplined Spiritually: They are committed to the spiritual disciplines, taking times for rest, solitude, personal reflection, and more.
5. Self-reflective: They recognize that in order to know God, they must know themselves and become aware of their weaknesses and needs (p. 342).

A comprehensive study by Darling, Hill, and McWey (2004) of 259 clergy members and 177 clergy spouses used a variety of instruments, including the Family Inventory of Life Events (FILE), a compassion fatigue self-test, the Family Crisis Oriented Personal Evaluation (FCOPES), the Spiritual Well-Being Scale, the Occupational Stress Inventory, the Orientation to Life Scale, and the Satisfaction With Life Scale. They found that the significant emotional demands faced by clergy and their families often led to burnout, demoralization, and discouragement. Their findings led to eight major recommendations which can inform educational decisions regarding seminary preparation. Their recommendations include,

1. Providing pastors and their spouses opportunities for spiritual enrichment, including retreats, opportunities for sharing “faith journeys” with others, learning habits of self-care, and developing interpersonal skills.
2. Built-in support networks from denominations or local groups which curtail feelings of isolation and loneliness.
3. On-going education and enrichment programs on a wide variety of subjects and with interdenominational cooperation.
4. Intentional internships for candidates and young pastors with experienced and seasoned veterans.

5. Periodic feedback from congregations to pastors which allow reflection and dialogue.
6. An increase in pastor salaries, with adequate provision for healthcare, children's education, and retirement.
7. Greater allowance of time away with family.
8. Future research on what will happen as large numbers of baby boomer clergy retire, and why some are leaving the ministry prematurely (p. 275).

Finally, the response of one pastor in Hoge and Wenger's (2005) comprehensive study of pastors leaving ministry adds a personal dimension to the data. Remarking on the absence of education for pastoral self-care at the seminary level, this pastor noted, "Everybody who goes into ministry needs...a therapist, a mentor, and a pastor" (p. 203). Clearly, this pastor echoes what has already been found in the literature. Meek, et al. (2003) stated it more simply: "[Pastors] have needs" (p. 345). Because of this, the literature on pastoral well-being and self-care is not only comprehensive in its assessment of the many complicating issues pastors face, but proactive in its positive recommendations for pastoral health into the future.

Curriculum Development

Research has also addressed the education of the pastor in and through specific coursework and character formation programs within the seminary curriculum. This is an important but recent development in the literature. For this study, it highlights the connection between seminary education and pastoral realities.

While failures of pastors in the arena of sexuality have been highlighted in the media, some have seen the need to articulate a new vision for the sexual and personal development of seminarians. Gregoire and Jungers (2004) wrote, "As the church looks

toward the future, it must invest in prevention of sex addiction and abuse by its clergy and focus, in particular, on the sexual education and personal development of seminarians and those who participate in their formation” (p. 71). In this study, they proposed amending seminary curricula to include courses on legal and ethical issues, boundaries, sexual identity and abuse, and sexual issues (HIV, AIDS). However, their proposal recommended not only more coursework, but personal spiritual direction for seminarians. Spiritual direction has much in common with counseling, yet casts emotional and sexual issues in terms that relate to personal spirituality and belief. Spiritual directors, according to Gregoire and Jungers (2004), would offer seminarians the possibility of having “one place where they begin to share their questions about their sexuality” (p. 76). They argued that the high availability of pornography and the shame that a struggle with sexual addiction provokes require relational interventions at the seminary level. Thus, Gregoire and Jungers (2004) posited a vision for educational change based on more focused coursework and more intentional mentoring of seminarians through spiritual direction.

Meek, et al. (2004) surveyed 585 alumni from five evangelical seminaries asking about perceptions of their seminary training as it related to sexual health. While respondents were exposed to books and articles on the topic of sexuality in seminary, they noted that seminary education, on the whole, failed to address the significant emotional and sexual issues faced by pastors. The exception was found among pastors who, while in seminary, specialized in pastoral counseling or took additional counseling courses. The responses of many of the respondents demonstrated immature and potentially dangerous attitudes and practices which can affect pastoral life and ministry.

In a study of 900 ex-ministers across 5 denominations, Hoge and Wenger (2005) found a growing trend of pastors leaving the ministry. While these reasons include burnout, interpersonal conflict, and other common pastoral struggles already noted, the authors found that seminary preparation was among the most important of the factors. Regarding his seminary experience, one participant in the study noted, “Clergy [are]...taught the mechanics of theology, but not the practical application of translating what they’ve learned into...the reality of parish life” (p. 203). Change in seminary strategies, according to this participant, must happen in the context of participation in a larger community which includes seminary faculties, local pastors, and mental health workers. Assessing the full range of quantitative and qualitative data, Hoge and Wenger (2005) found that “many [pastors] felt ill-prepared to perform essential pastoral tasks and told us that the realities of parish life were different than they expected” (p. 202). Seminaries, they argued, must adapt to modern complexities by offering coursework and spiritual direction geared toward the practical realities of ministry.

Finally, The Association of Theological Schools (2006) published a Master of Divinity Curriculum Revision Folio which addressed the growing need for personal and spiritual formation among seminary students. A growing concern about liability is prompting schools to visit the idea of psychological pre-screening, curriculum changes, and clinical internships which address emotional development. The Folio suggests that there is a growing conviction among seminary faculty and administrators that seminaries cannot afford to deal with spiritual and personal issues through add-on courses, but must address the curriculum as an integrated whole. Further, as one un-identified contributor to the Folio suggests, these changes must reflect the will of a “faculty community” (p. 53)

corporately committed to the same ends. This document reflects the general will of a large association of theological schools from a variety of denominational backgrounds, reinforcing the connection between pastoral well-being and seminary education.

Analogous Research

While the domain of seminary education is most critical for the current study, one can find discussions of educational expectations and realities in literature focused on other educational settings. Brinthaupt (2004) found that students prospered most when professors set educational expectations that would match the outcomes in reality. While focusing his research on the outcomes of particular courses and the successes of students in those courses, Brinthaupt (2004) found that realistic appraisals of what students should expect fostered greater success.

Ali and Saunders (2006) found that support at one level of education predicted success at the next level, further highlighting the holistic nature of educational concerns. In this case, relational support played a significant role in the success of students at the next level, providing an analogy to the kinds of relational support structures necessary at the seminary level for success in ministry.

Summary

This study benefits from a rich background in church history and research literature. Though the historical data presented would not hold up to the rigors of contemporary analysis within the social sciences, it does provide a necessary lens into the issue. This lens is further widened by the thoughtful inquiries of researchers over the past

four decades. A voluminous body of data on pastoral life, as well as pastoral training, gives both context and clarity of purpose to a study like this. In the next chapter, further elaboration on the methods of this study will bring even greater clarity to the research problem at hand.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Restatement of Purpose

The study advances an understanding of the experience of expectation versus reality among a unique (Presbyterian) group of pastors. It augments research literature on the emotional demands of pastoral ministry by highlighting one specific aspect of this issue, the gap between expectation and reality. The themes that emerged, while highlighting the experiences of particular individuals from a particular seminary in a particular tradition, can be used by future researchers who study this phenomenon within other unique settings. The general conclusions made by Hoge and Wenger (2005) regarding the expectation versus reality gap can be, through this study, viewed from the experiential lens of Presbyterian pastors to illuminate their unique perceptions.

The study has the added benefit of providing valuable data to the administration of Reformed Theological Seminary (Orlando). The rich and thick experiential data provides a window into the particular experiences of seminary graduates within the Presbyterian tradition. Qualitative data can be particularly helpful for academic institutions as they make policy and curriculum decisions (Moustakas, 1994).

Research Design

This research design utilizes a qualitative, empirical, phenomenological methodology. The four major processes of the phenomenological approach of Moustakas (1994) include:

1. Epoche: the intentional setting aside of preconceptions and biases

2. Phenomenological Reduction: a description of the experience of a phenomenon
3. Imaginative Variation: the process of arriving at structural themes that underlie the phenomenon
4. Synthesis of Texture and Structure: a final description of the essence of the phenomenon

This process provides a structured way of studying the qualitative data in order to avoid subjectivism. Patton (2002) notes that the method of epoche in the work of Moustakas allows the researcher to look “inside [in order] to become aware of personal bias, to eliminate personal involvement with the subject material...or at least gain clarity about preconceptions” (p. 485). The process involves a focused reflection on the data, a bracketing (or setting-aside) of preconceptions, and an awareness of emerging themes which represent, in the end, core conclusions that can be arrived at from the narrative data. This study uses the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen modification employed by Moustakas for its detailed analysis.

Target Population

The population includes male graduates of RTS-O who have received a Master of Divinity degree, have been ordained to pastoral ministry, and have served for five years or more. The seven participants included in this study were chosen by random selection.

Reformed Theological Seminary is a regionally accredited graduate institution located in Oviedo, Florida, a suburb of Orlando. It is considered a non-denominational institution in the Presbyterian tradition specializing in pastoral training. According to the Dean of Students (David Kirkendall, personal communication, May 22, 2007), seminary

enrollment has averaged between 150-300 students for the past decade with students who go on to serve in a wide range of ordained and non-ordained ministry capacities.

Selection of Participants

Resources on ordained ministers were retrieved from a common alumni database open to all faculty at the seminary. Participants have never studied under the researcher at any point during their seminary education. The researcher telephoned ordained ministers who have served for five years or more. The telephone script included the following:

I would like you to participate in a research study entitled: Expectation versus reality among male graduates of seminary who entered the ministry: A phenomenological study. The purpose of this research study is to understand better the expectations of pastoral life and ministry formed in seminary, and the realities experienced once in pastoral ministry. The study will augment a growing body of research on pastoral health and satisfaction, and may be of particular use to the seminary in curricular and policy decisions.

You qualify for this study because you are a graduate of Reformed Theological Seminary (Orlando) with a Master of Divinity degree, have been in the ministry for 5 years or more, and are ordained.

You will be asked questions regarding your experience of both the expectations you had before entering ministry, and the realities you have experienced since being in ministry. This will be a face-to-face interview. Your responses will be recorded in written form and audio taped in order to preserve an accurate record of your comments. Before the interview begins, you will be asked to complete demographic information about your background such as your age and how long you have been in the ministry. You will also be given a summary of your transcribed interview for feedback. All feedback will be incorporated into the study.

Your name will not appear on the interview notes or the audiotape, so your answers will be anonymous. All written records will be marked with a code number rather than your name in order to protect confidentiality. All information that is obtained in connection with this study, including the informed consent document, will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my study which no one will

have access to but me. The audiotapes, interview notes and transcribed documents will be kept for seven years after the results of the study are published. Thereafter, the audiotapes will be burned and the paper documents will be destroyed by shredding. Your identity will not be revealed without your written consent.

There are no risks associated with this study and you will not receive any benefits. Your participation is completely voluntary and you will be free to refuse to respond to any question during the interview or withdraw from the study at any time.

Of the interested pool of candidates, the seven participants were randomly selected using a random number generator. Patton (2002) describes this as "purposeful random sampling" (p. 240), a procedure which bolsters credibility and minimizes suspicion within a qualitative study. As Patton (2002) notes, "The credibility of...randomly selected cases is considerably greater than the personal, ad hoc selection of cases" (p. 241). While this sampling procedure does not permit statistical generalizations, it does provide the study with an added measure of credibility.

Phenomena or Focal Elements

Qualitative studies do not propose hypotheses and are not interested in discussing variables, but seek to explore a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenon in this study is the lived experience of the male graduates of seminary now in pastoral ministry.

Procedures

The lived experiences were gathered in interviews with participants. Experiential data was collected through individual interviews with the participants at a private clinical counseling office in Oviedo, Fl. Interviews were scheduled for one hour, and were

digitally recorded. The research questions were open-ended. As is the case in qualitative interviewing (Creswell, 2006), the researcher was open to hearing elaborations that went beyond the originally-stated research questions, and were deemed relevant to the research. A transcriber was used, and signed a confidentiality statement.

Qualitative Research Questions

Qualitative research provides the researcher with the opportunity to explore an experience or phenomenon. Unlike quantitative research hypotheses, phenomenological research questions invite narrative data on a lived experience (Moustakas, 1994). Creswell (2006) argues that qualitative research questions are open-ended, and allow for improvisation and elaboration within the interview, providing the researcher with an opportunity to explore the phenomenon as it emerges from the participant's experience.

That said, the primary research question invited the participant to explore and elaborate upon his unique experience of the expectation versus reality gap: *Expand on your lived experiences/perceptions of the expectations of pastoral ministry and life formed in seminary, and the realities you have faced since being in ministry.* A host of sub-questions emerged from this. The researcher will allow the sub-questions to emerge from the participant's initial response, though the focus of the study always remained on the expectation versus reality gap. While there are a myriad of possible side roads that both researcher and participant could explore in a study such as this, the researcher re-focus the participants so that they remained on topic (Moustakas, 1994).

Data Collection

Potential participants were contacted by telephone or e-mail by the researcher in order to assess interest. Those interested were asked to answer a basic set of demographic questions in order to ascertain whether they matched the criteria for participation in the study. All potential participants were asked to sign an informed consent document and were given a signed copy. Using a random number generator, seven participants matching the demographic criteria were randomly selected. Interviews were scheduled, and were conducted in a private counseling office in Oviedo, Florida. All interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder. The digital audio recordings were transcribed using a transcriber who signed a confidentiality agreement. All identifying markers of the participants were removed from audio or notes, and participants were labeled with the numbers 1-7.

Data Analysis

Upon reception of the transcriptions, the researcher carefully compared the transcribed and audio data in order to assess accuracy. Following this, the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen modification was carefully followed in order to analyze the data. Each participant was approached independently. The researcher employed epoche prior to reading the data. The transcripts were then read several times. Horizontalization was employed as a phenomenological technique which allows the researcher's awareness of the data to expand. During this time, each statement was given equal value. And during these readings, the researcher gained a sense of the data as a whole.

Following this, the researcher listed non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements from the transcripts. According to Moustakas (1994), these statements are “invariant horizons” or “meaning units.” For the purpose of this study, the language of “meaning units” was employed. The researcher read and re-read the meaning units several times in order to gain a picture of the data as a whole, and in order to become aware of themes which would emerge from each participant’s meaning units. As themes emerged, the researcher recorded and organized relevant thematic statements. In order to be characterized as a theme, the researcher required the presence of at least two significant meaning units.

The next phase in the process required the thematic statements to be fashioned in to a description of the textures of the experience. This individual textural description is a narrative elaboration on the themes for a particular participant. In this, verbatim examples from the meaning units are used to illustrate. Following this, the researcher reflected on the textural descriptions in order to discover emerging structures of the experience. The structures were formed into a textural-structural description, an elaboration of the structures in narrative form. This process was repeated for each participant.

Finally, the researcher surveyed all seven of the textural descriptions of the participant themes, forming a composite picture. The researcher created a table in which the themes could be viewed by participant. Next, the researcher created a composite textural description of the themes, using verbatim examples to illustrate places of coincidence and contrast. Finally, in similar fashion the researcher created a table in which structures could be viewed by participant. The researcher composed a composite

textural-structural description in order to compare and contrast the structures. The final composite processes provide a holistic picture of the meanings and essences of the lived experiences.

Expected Findings

Though a previous study (Hoge and Wenger, 2005) indicated a gap between expectations formed in seminary and the realities of ministry life, the researcher set aside biases in accordance with the phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994). It was expected the participants would present thick and rich narrative data of the expectation-reality gap based on their own seminary and pastoral experiences. It was also expected that the process of analysis would result in common essential features which would illuminate the phenomenon. In sum, the researcher anticipated that participants would contribute personal experiences in the form of stories, anecdotes, examples, and applications which would provide for the emergence of themes and underlying structures of the experiences. These findings, in turn, could be a valuable contribution to the larger field of pastoral and educational research, and provide specific data to RTS-O.

CHAPTER 4. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to shed light on the lived experiences of ordained pastors who were educated at Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando (RTS). The experiences of these pastors emerged from thoughtful reflection on their years at seminary, and how their education prepared them for the realities of pastoral life and ministry. A phenomenological approach guided the data collection and analysis of this study (Moustakas, 1994). During the analysis, themes and structures emerged which together contributed to an understanding of the meanings and essences of the participant's lived experiences.

This chapter begins with a discussion of preparation, reviews the data collection process and the data analysis procedure, and provides a description of the sample. Following this, the meaning units and themes for each participant are listed followed by a description of the textural and structural themes. This general outline is followed for each participant. The chapter ends with composite textural and composite structural descriptions of the experience of the participants as a whole.

Preparation for Data Collection and Analysis

The phenomenological approach used for this study is that of Moustakas (1994), employing the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen modification as a step-by-step process of collection and analysis. It should be noted that as a first step in the procedure, the researcher

employed the phenomenological tactic of epoche. Epoche requires the researcher to set aside any biases or preconceived ideas about the outcome of the study. Through a careful process of self-reflection, the researcher is compelled to set aside ideas or assumptions that might distort the study or create a bias. This researcher was particularly committed to the process of epoche given his familiarity with RTS Orlando.

Data Collection

Potential participants were contacted by telephone or e-mail by the researcher in order to assess interest. Those interested were asked to answer a basic set of demographic questions in order to ascertain whether they matched the criteria for participation in the study. All potential participants were asked to sign an informed consent document and were given a signed copy. Using a random number generator, seven participants matching the demographic criteria were randomly selected. Interviews were scheduled, and were conducted in a private counseling office in Oviedo, Florida. All interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder. The digital audio recordings were transcribed using a transcriber who signed a confidentiality agreement. All identifying markers of the participants were removed from audio or notes, and participants were labeled with the numbers 1-7.

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Upon reception of the transcriptions, the researcher carefully compared the transcribed and audio data in order to assess accuracy. Following this, the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen modification (Moustakas, 1994) was carefully followed in order to

analyze the data. Each participant was approached independently. The researcher employed epoche prior to reading the data. The transcripts were then read several times. Horizontalization was employed as a phenomenological technique which allows the researcher's awareness of the data to expand. During this time, each statement from the participant was read equally in order to avoid giving more value to one statement over another. And during these readings, the researcher gained a sense of the data as a whole.

Following this, the researcher listed non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements from the transcripts. According to Moustakas (1994), these statements are "invariant horizons" or "meaning units." For the purpose of this study, the language of "meaning units" was employed. The researcher read and re-read the meaning units several times in order to gain a picture of the data as a whole, and in order to become aware of themes which would emerge from each participant's meaning units. As themes emerged, the researcher recorded and organized relevant thematic statements. In order to be characterized as a theme, the researcher required the presence of at least two significant meaning units.

The next phase in the process required the thematic statements to be fashioned in to a description of the textures of the experience. This individual textural description is a narrative elaboration on the themes for a particular participant. In this, verbatim examples from the meaning units are used to illustrate. Following this, the researcher reflected on the textural descriptions in order to discover emerging structures of the experience. The structures were formed into a textural-structural description, an elaboration of the structures in narrative form. This process was repeated for each participant.

Finally, the researcher surveyed all seven of the textural descriptions of the participant themes, forming a composite picture. The researcher created a table in which the themes could be viewed by participant. Next, the researcher created a composite textural description of the themes, using verbatim examples to illustrate places of coincidence and contrast. Finally, in similar fashion the researcher created a table in which structures could be viewed by participant. The researcher composed a composite textural-structural description in order to compare and contrast the structures. The final composite processes provide a holistic picture of the meanings and essences of the lived experiences.

Description of Sample

Initially, 13 male pastors expressed an interest in participating in this study. From this group, seven were randomly selected using a random number generator. Table 1 shows important demographic information without revealing any that would compromise confidentiality. The participants ranged in age from 32-44. All participants were white males in Presbyterian ministry settings. Six of the seven participants indicated ordained membership in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), while one indicated ordained membership in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). All were graduates of Reformed Theological Seminary between 1995 and 2001, and had been out of seminary five years or more. All of the participants were married. Information regarding their year of graduation, current place or places of ministry, or current positions have been left out to protect participant confidentiality. At least two potential

participants had indicated in a pre-interview conversation that these demographic factors might compromise confidentiality if included.

Table 1 – Demographic Information.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Age	36	40	33	32	33	44	41
Race	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
Denomination	PCA	EPC	PCA	PCA	PCA	PCA	PCA
Married?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Presentation of Findings

In this section, the meaning units and themes for each participant are listed followed by a description of the textural and structural themes. This general outline is followed for each participant. The chapter ends with composite textural and composite structural descriptions of the experience of the participants as a whole. To protect confidentiality, the names of professors have been changed.

Meaning Units for Participant 1

1. I expected that I'd have some conversations and begin to get to know my professors.
2. I'm interested in talking on breaks and after class and really seeing how the course materials apply, but I'm not sure if that one quite worked out the way I thought it would.

3. RTS professors back then, I don't know how they are today, but back then were fairly busy and to get an appointment with John Doe was like pulling teeth...or not just John Doe...Jim Doe was tough, Bob Doe ...Sam Doe was gracious with his time, but the guy wasn't as practical and you couldn't really nail him down.
4. Maybe I should tell you what was positive. Sam Doe was available. Ralph Doe wasn't around a lot, but when he was there he was honest and we'd hang out with him in the courtyard on breaks and he'd tell it straight. Like he did in class. But most of the others were tougher to get stuff out of.
5. I think what I'm saying is that I expected more involvement with the professors. I expected them to give me a sense of what I'd get in ministry, or what their experiences were in the church.
6. I mean, trust me I'm not trying to dig on professors or anything, and I know they're busy, but not just to lecture at us, and then be unavailable or have these limited office hours. Does that make sense?
7. I'd say overall my experience at RTS was good because I met some friends who continue to be friends today and I don't think I'd be doing what I'm doing without them.
8. I guess in one way my professors were right about the need for friendships outside the church when ministry gets lonely.
9. I remember in one of my practical theology classes a prof talking about ministry being a lonely vocation, maybe in Theology of ministry class, and [my wife] and I can really identify with that.
10. I mean, these are good men, and I had professors from Harvard and Duke and Oxford, but those places are a long way from my church.
11. I had to do a funeral three weeks into my first gig in ministry and I didn't have a freaking clue what to do.
12. I was pissed when I had to go digging through books looking for funeral resources. That should be standard fare in seminary.
13. I wish I learned more about a number of practical ministry things - Weddings. Pastoral counseling. A dude's kid was molested at one point, and I thought some good my class notes are for this. I mean, are you getting the disconnect?
14. ... my only experience in ministry was from watching my own pastor and I'm not sure I got a picture of how hairy the pastorate could be.

15. I think I expected my professors to prepare me for the general things I'd see out there – what to do with an alcoholic who is your elder, or how to do a funeral, and things like that.
16. I just felt like an ass. I mean my senior pastor asked me to do a funeral, and I was like sure...if you tell me what to do. And I felt like an ass.
17. [I felt] embarrassed. Like I let him [my pastor] down. Like he's thinking why did I hire this guy? I mean, it didn't turn out like that, but that's what I was thinking.
18. In some ways, I couldn't be more grateful. I feel like I got the best theological training I could.
19. I don't think some of the professors could translate their theology into working models for pastoral ministry.
20. I'd expect my seminary to say this is the substance of what we believe and here are the implications for your work in the church. Now go to it. But most of the coursework was disconnected from other courses. You'd go from a killer lecture on the Canon with no practical content or application at all to story-time with Ralph Doe.
21. [My hope is] that there'd be some general point to the whole thing that RTS wanted us to get out of it, not just random professors from really great institutions with a lot of really great knowledge who don't really have any clue of how to apply it or how it fits in to pastoral ministry.
22. I don't think all of them even had ministry experience, so what can you expect?
23. I don't think it's too much to expect professors in a ministry training program to actually train people for ministry and not just to pass an ordination exam.
24. It's frustrating. But I don't want to betray my alma mater. I got a good theological education at RTS.
25. I probably need therapy, right?
26. My wife's great, unbelievable confidence in me, and it's been tough to be in ministry together.

27. I expected that we'd have the time of our lives in ministry. She's way more talented than me. I just saw us teaching and leading things together and hosting small groups and more.
28. Ralph Doe said it [marriage] would be tough. I think Fritz Doe did too. Lonely. Sometimes they described situations that didn't fit, like wives who really hate pastoral ministry, but my wife doesn't hate it. Sometimes she wishes I had a 9 to 5, but she doesn't hate it.
29. I didn't expect that we'd be as lonely as we are.
30. She [my wife] just hasn't connected to other women like she thought she would.
31. Where we're at, nothing against the south, but she's not from the south and she's not comfortable with the things of the south, or maybe better the women's roles in the south. . But, again I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know the south very well, and neither did she. I don't know that the seminary can do much about this.
32. All in all, she [my wife] had a good experience there, met good friends, got involved in Mrs. in Ministry, felt pretty loved on by people at our church.
33. [Spiritual life was] probably something that I expected would be far better in seminary than it was. That was for me, maybe not for everyone, but for me one of the driest times spiritually and I don't think I ever expected that.
34. Sometimes we had to do prayer assignments and such things for a class, but that doesn't affect it.
35. The busy work was death to my soul. I don't know that I expected so much of it. I thought the reading would be rich, and some of it was. But you can't read the stuff devotionally when you know you'll be tested on it, or you know you've got five freaking hundred more pages to read that week of crap for other classes.
36. I expected that I'd grow spiritually in seminary. I didn't. And then, I expected that I'd grow spiritually after seminary. And that happened a little. But it mostly didn't happen. Because the busyness just doesn't stop. You move from the busyness of papers and essays and exams to the busyness of getting a job to the busyness of preparing for ordination to the busyness of phone calls and hospital visits and teachings and kids being born and interviews with guys like you.

37. If I could say one thing to the seminary, I'd say it's no use graduating pastors who know how to pass an exam but are spiritually dead.
38. What I'm getting at is more like spiritually uninspired, unmoved. When you get unmoved by your theology, and it continues for years, something's up. Seminary shouldn't just teach you to parse Greek words, but to pray, to pray passionately.
39. Jesus taught his disciples to pray. He modeled it for them. Not much of that in my seminary experience.
40. It helps to share these experiences, and it helps to know, at least I think this is the case, that it might help other seminary students in the future.

Textural Themes for Participant 1

Professors

1. I expected that I'd have some conversations and begin to get to know my professors.
2. RTS professors back then, I don't know how they are today, but back then were fairly busy and to get an appointment with John Doe was like pulling teeth...or not just X...Jim Doe was tough, Bob Doe ...Sam Doe was gracious with his time, but the guy wasn't as practical and you couldn't really nail him down.
3. Maybe I should tell you what was positive. Sam Doe was available. Ralph Doe wasn't around a lot, but when he was there he was honest and we'd hang out with him in the courtyard on breaks and he'd tell it straight. Like he did in class. But most of the others were tougher to get stuff out of.
4. I think what I'm saying is that I expected more involvement with the professors. I expected them to give me a sense of what I'd get in ministry, or what their experiences were in the church.
5. I mean, trust me I'm not trying to dig on professors or anything, and I know they're busy, but not just to lecture at us, and then be unavailable or have these limited office hours. Does that make sense?
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8. I mean, these are good men, and I had professors from Harvard and Duke and Oxford, but those places are a long way from my church.
9. I don't think some of the professors could translate their theology into working models for pastoral ministry.
10. I'd expect my seminary to say this is the substance of what we believe and here are the implications for your work in the church. Now go to it. But most of the coursework was disconnected from other courses. You'd go from a killer lecture on the Canon with no practical content or application at all to story-time with Ralph Doe.
11. [My hope is] that there'd be some general point to the whole thing that RTS wanted us to get out of it, not just random professors from really great institutions with a lot of really great knowledge who don't really have any clue of how to apply it or how it fits in to pastoral ministry.
12. I don't think all of them even had ministry experience, so what can you expect?
13. I don't think it's too much to expect professors in a ministry training program to actually train people for ministry and not just to pass an ordination exam.

Disconnection

1. I'm interested in talking on breaks and after class and really seeing how the course materials apply, but I'm not sure if that one quite worked out the way I thought it would.
2. I think what I'm saying is that I expected more involvement with the professors. I expected them to give me a sense of what I'd get in ministry, or what their experiences were in the church.
3. I had to do a funeral three weeks into my first gig in ministry and I didn't have a freaking clue what to do.
4. I was pissed when I had to go digging through books looking for funeral resources. That should be standard fare in seminary.

5. I wish I learned more about a number of practical ministry things - Weddings. Pastoral counseling. A dude's kid was molested at one point, and I thought some good my class notes are for this. I mean, are you getting the disconnect?
6. ... my only experience in ministry was from watching my own pastor and I'm not sure I got a picture of how hairy the pastorate could be.
7. I think I expected my professors to prepare me for the general things I'd see out there – what to do with an alcoholic who is your elder, or how to do a funeral, and things like that.
8. I just felt like an ass. I mean my senior pastor asked me to do a funeral, and I was like sure...if you tell me what to do. And I felt like an ass.
9. [I felt] embarrassed. Like I let him [my pastor] down. Like he's thinking why did I hire this guy? I mean, it didn't turn out like that, but that's what I was thinking.
10. I don't think some of the professors could translate their theology into working models for pastoral ministry.
11. I'd expect my seminary to say this is the substance of what we believe and here are the implications for your work in the church. Now go to it. But most of the coursework was disconnected from other courses. You'd go from a killer lecture on the Canon with no practical content or application at all to story-time with Ralph Doe.
12. [My hope is] that there'd be some general point to the whole thing that RTS wanted us to get out of it, not just random professors from really great institutions with a lot of really great knowledge who don't really have any clue of how to apply it or how it fits in to pastoral ministry.
13. I don't think it's too much to expect professors in a ministry training program to actually train people for ministry and not just to pass an ordination exam.

Relationships

1. I'd say overall my experience at RTS was good because I met some friends who continue to be friends today and I don't think I'd be doing what I'm doing without them.
2. I guess in one way my professors were right about the need for friendships outside the church when ministry gets lonely.

3. I remember in one of my practical theology classes a prof talking about ministry being a lonely vocation, maybe in Theology of ministry class, and [my wife] and I can really identify with that.
4. I didn't expect that we'd be as lonely as we are.
5. She [my wife] just hasn't connected to other women like she thought she would.
6. All in all, she [my wife] had a good experience there, met good friends, got involved in Mrs. in Ministry, felt pretty loved on by people at our church.

Gratitude

1. In some ways, I couldn't be more grateful. I feel like I got the best theological training I could.
2. It's frustrating. But I don't want to betray my alma mater. I got a good theological education at RTS.

Marriage

1. My wife's great, unbelievable confidence in me, and it's been tough to be in ministry together.
2. I expected that we'd have the time of our lives in ministry. She's way more talented than me. I just saw us teaching and leading things together and hosting small groups and more.
3. Ralph Doe said it [marriage] would be tough. I think Fritz Doe did too. Lonely. Sometimes they described situations that didn't fit, like wives who really hate pastoral ministry, but my wife doesn't hate it. Sometimes she wishes I had a 9 to 5, but she doesn't hate it.
4. I didn't expect that we'd be as lonely as we are.
5. She [my wife] just hasn't connected to other women like she thought she would.
6. Where we're at, nothing against the south, but she's not from the south and she's not comfortable with the things of the south, or maybe better the women's roles in the south. . But, again I didn't know what to expect. I

didn't know the south very well, and neither did she. I don't know that the seminary can do much about this.

7. All in all, she [my wife] had a good experience there, met good friends, got involved in Mrs. in Ministry, felt pretty loved on by people at our church.

Spirituality

1. [Spiritual life was] probably something that I expected would be far better in seminary than it was. That was for me, maybe not for everyone, but for me one of the driest times spiritually and I don't think I ever expected that.
2. Sometimes we had to do prayer assignments and such things for a class, but that doesn't affect it.
3. The busy work was death to my soul. I don't know that I expected so much of it. I thought the reading would be rich, and some of it was. But you can't read the stuff devotionally when you know you'll be tested on it, or you know you've got five freaking hundred more pages to read that week of crap for other classes.
4. I expected that I'd grow spiritually in seminary. I didn't. And then, I expected that I'd grow spiritually after seminary. And that happened a little. But it mostly didn't happen. Because the busyness just doesn't stop. You move from the busyness of papers and essays and exams to the busyness of getting a job to the busyness of preparing for ordination to the busyness of phone calls and hospital visits and teachings and kids being born and interviews with guys like you.
5. If I could say one thing to the seminary, I'd say it's no use graduating pastors who know how to pass an exam but are spiritually dead.
6. What I'm getting at is more like spiritually uninspired, unmoved. When you get unmoved by your theology, and it continues for years, something's up. Seminary shouldn't just teach you to parse Greek words, but to pray, to pray passionately.
7. Jesus taught his disciples to pray. He modeled it for them. Not much of that in my seminary experience.

Textural Description for Participant 1

The themes that emerged from the meaning units of Participant 1 include professors, disconnection, relationships, gratitude, marriage, and spirituality. The first theme to emerge was professors. The participant was clearly impressed by the resumes of his professors, as he noted that they were “from Harvard and Duke and Oxford,” but added that “those places are a long way from my church.” While the pedigrees of professors impressed him, it was clear that the participant was disappointed in their inability to “translate their theology into working models for pastoral ministry.” For this participant, the fact that professors received degrees from prominent institutions did not necessarily mean that their content was fruitful for ministry realities. He posed the question, “I don’t think all of them even had ministry experience, so what can you expect?” What the participant did expect was an education that would “actually train people for ministry and not just to pass an ordination exam.” He added, “[My hope is] that there’d be some general point to the whole thing that RTS wanted us to get out of it, not just random professors from really great institutions with a lot of really great knowledge who don’t really have any clue of how to apply it or how it fits in to pastoral ministry.” He also expected more interactions with professors. The participant said that “I expected that I’d have some conversations and begin to get to know my professors. RTS professors back then, I don’t know how they are today, but back then were fairly busy and to get an appointment with John Doe was like pulling teeth...or not just John Doe...Jim Doe was tough, Bob Doe...Sam Doe was gracious with his time, but the guy wasn’t as practical and you couldn’t really nail him down.” This expectation is linked to his hope that seminary education would come from professors who were speaking not

only out of good theology, but out of personal experience in ministry which could be shared with students. The participant remarked, “I think what I’m saying is that I expected more involvement with the professors. I expected them to give me a sense of what I’d get in ministry, or what their experiences were in the church.” The participant clearly did not want to be overly critical, as he clarified, “I mean, trust me I’m not trying to dig on professors or anything, and I know they’re busy, but not just to lecture at us, and then be unavailable or have these limited office hours. Does that make sense?” In this, he seemed to seek validation for his criticism. Moreover, he wanted to emphasize the positive experiences, which serve to demonstrate his real hope for what seminary could be. He said, “Sam Doe was available. Ralph Doe wasn’t around a lot, but when he was there he was honest and we’d hang out with him in the courtyard on breaks and he’d tell it straight. Like he did in class.” He added that “my professors were right about the need for friendships outside the church when ministry gets lonely.” More specifically, he saw this professors commentary on ministry as particularly relevant for his marriage, as he added, “I remember in one of my practical theology classes a prof talking about ministry being a lonely vocation, maybe in Theology of ministry class, and [my wife] and I can really identify with that.” However, despite the positives the participant was dejected by the reality that he could go from one class to the other without much continuity. He remarked, “I’d expect my seminary to say this is the substance of what we believe and here are the implications for your work in the church. Now go to it. But most of the coursework was disconnected from other courses. You’d go from a killer lecture on the Canon with no practical content or application at all to story-time with Ralph Doe.” This anticipates the next theme to emerge, disconnection.

For this participant, disconnection illustrates the gap between content and application. For him, this might have happened on breaks between classes. “I’m interested in talking on breaks and after class and really seeing how the course materials apply,” he remarked, “but I’m not sure if that one quite worked out the way I thought it would.” However, what helped most was his relationship with a local pastor during seminary. He said, “... my only experience in ministry was from watching my own pastor and I’m not sure I got a picture of how hairy the pastorate could be.” Yet, in the classroom, this participant’s search for “practical content or application” came to head most clearly when he discussed specifics. He noted, “I wish I learned more about a number of practical ministry things [like] weddings. Pastoral counseling. A dude’s kid was molested at one point, and I thought some good my class notes are for this. I mean, are you getting the disconnect?” He continued, “I think I expected my professors to prepare me for the general things I’d see out there [like] what to do with an alcoholic who is your elder, or how to do a funeral, and things like that.” At this point, the participant was visibly frustrated, which manifested most clearly in a story about doing a funeral. He said, “I had to do a funeral three weeks into my first gig in ministry and I didn’t have a freaking clue what to do.” He added, “I was pissed when I had to go digging through books looking for funeral resources. That should be standard fare in seminary.” His language and tone intensified at this point, as he remarked, “I just felt like an ass. I mean my senior pastor asked me to do a funeral, and I was like sure...if you tell me what to do. And I felt like an ass.” The participant was clearly embarrassed by his lack of practical knowledge and how this might affect his senior pastor’s view of him, as he noted, “[I felt]

embarrassed. Like I let him [my pastor] down. Like he's thinking why did I hire this guy? I mean, it didn't turn out like that, but that's what I was thinking."

Another theme that emerged was relationships. The participant noted that "in one of my practical theology classes [I remember] a prof talking about ministry being a lonely vocation...and [my wife] and I can really identify with that." Relationships emerged as both important in seminary and important for ministry. Relationships formed in seminary became formative for this participant. He noted, "I'd say overall my experience at RTS was good because I met some friends who continue to be friends today and I don't think I'd be doing what I'm doing without them." While in ministry he noted that his wife "hadn't connected to other women like she thought she would," seminary was different. "All in all, she [my wife] had a good experience there, met good friends, got involved in Mrs. in Ministry, felt pretty loved on by people at our church." He summarized his thoughts by lamenting that "I didn't expect that we'd be as lonely as we are."

A similar theme that emerged was marriage. Closely related to relationships, marriage is a theme that further echoed thoughts on loneliness and ministry difficulty. About his wife, the participant said, "My wife's great, unbelievable confidence in me, and it's been tough to be in ministry together." The difficulty is highlighted in several statements made by the participant. One highlights a seminary expectation which has not become a reality. He remarked, "I expected that we'd have the time of our lives in ministry. She's way more talented than me. I just saw us teaching and leading things together and hosting small groups and more." This has not come to fruition in part because "She [my wife] just hasn't connected to other women like she thought she would." The participant elaborated on this, saying, "Where we're at, nothing against the

south, but she's not from the south and she's not comfortable with the things of the south, or maybe better the women's roles in the south. But, again I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know the south very well, and neither did she. I don't know that the seminary can do much about this." In all, while his wife has struggled, she does not hate pastoral ministry. He said, "Ralph Doe said it [marriage] would be tough. I think Fritz Doe did too. Lonely. Sometimes they described situations that didn't fit, like wives who really hate pastoral ministry, but my wife doesn't hate it. Sometimes she wishes I had a 9 to 5, but she doesn't hate it."

The participant also expected that his spiritual life would be further developed in seminary. This was summed up succinctly when he said, "[Spiritual life was] probably something that I expected would be far better in seminary than it was. That was for me, maybe not for everyone, but for me one of the driest times spiritually and I don't think I ever expected that." Much of this is wrapped around the concept of busyness. He remarked, "I expected that I'd grow spiritually in seminary. I didn't. And then, I expected that I'd grow spiritually after seminary. And that happened a little. But it mostly didn't happen. Because the busyness just doesn't stop. You move from the busyness of papers and essays and exams to the busyness of getting a job to the busyness of preparing for ordination to the busyness of phone calls and hospital visits and teachings and kids being born and interviews with guys like you." The patterns of busyness formed in seminary, according to this participant, continue into ministry. In seminary, "The busy work was death to my soul. I don't know that I expected so much of it. I thought the reading would be rich, and some of it was. But you can't read the stuff devotionally when you know you'll be tested on it, or you know you've got five

freaking hundred more pages to read that week of crap for other classes.” Even the best assignments seemed to disappoint. “Sometimes we had to do prayer assignments and such things for a class, but that doesn’t affect it.” Yet, assignments are not how prayer is learned, according to the participant, but in relationship. He noted, “Jesus taught his disciples to pray. He modeled it for them. Not much of that in my seminary experience.” The participant’s disappointment in seminary busyness extends to his lament about dispassionate theology. “When you get unmoved by your theology, and it continues for years, something’s up. Seminary shouldn’t just teach you to parse greek words, but to pray, to pray passionately.” On this theme, his final thought is an admonition to seminaries. “If I could say one thing to the seminary, I’d say it’s no use graduating pastors who know how to pass an exam but are spiritually dead.”

The final theme is gratitude. The participant is grateful for the good things he did receive while acknowledging his frustration. He said, “In some ways, I couldn’t be more grateful. I feel like I got the best theological training I could.” He added, “It’s frustrating. But I don’t want to betray my alma mater. I got a good theological education at RTS.”

Structural Description for Participant 1

The structures or essences which emerge with this participant are relation to others, relation to self, space, and time. The underlying structure of relation to others is exemplified in the importance of relationships, whether with professors or among peers or in marriage. Indeed, an essential part of his experience in seminary that was missing was relationships with professors who would “model” prayer, where there would be

“conversations” in which he could “get to know” those to whom he has entrusted his education. In these relationships, ideas would be massaged into practicalities. Among his peers, he could spend time “talking on breaks and after class and really seeing how the course materials apply.” With his senior pastor in ministry, he could experience confidence rather than “embarrassment” as a result of not knowing how to do a funeral. With his wife, he could experience being known and embraced by parishioners rather than the loneliness which he, in fact, did experience. One might also expand this structural essence to his relationship to the seminary, which emerges as ambivalent. It is characterized, on the extremes, by both gratitude and anger.

The participant’s relation to self is seen most clearly in his own inner sense of expectations which went mostly unfulfilled during this time in seminary. Indeed, this is where the participant is most animated in his responses. At times, his responses touch on an internal angst which is expressed in self-contempt (“I just felt like an ass”) and other-centered contempt (“I was pissed”). There was a sense that the participant felt unprepared for the complexities of ministerial life. In this, there is embarrassment, if not shame, when confronted with his lack of preparation to do a funeral with his senior pastor. This structure is also seen in his yearning for God in seminary. In fact, one aspect of this is found in his disconnection from self and God through prayer as a result of busyness.

A third structure which emerges is space. The participant longed for a place where he could be known by professors. This space was often filled by the busyness of professorial obligations or student demands. Instead of walking along the journey of seminary preparation with his professors as “models” of prayer and spirituality, he

experienced a void which manifested in spiritual dryness and deadness, and a dispassionate theology. He longed for a space free of the burdens of assignments and obligations where his soul could be opened to prayer.

Closely related is the structure of time. Within the busyness, he has no time for relationships, for prayer, or for the kinds of experiences which prepare pastors for the complexities and nuances of ministry.

Meaning Units for Participant 2

1. I had in seminary a sense and that sense was affirmed that right theology was essential, right theology ruled the day, so my goal was to, and this was personally, to develop an apologetic that made me a competent pastor.
2. I had no clue what really being a pastor meant at that time.
3. I really viewed it [ministry] as defending the faith for those who were unenlightened.
4. I saw preaching as informative, indoctrinating, and if one had right theology and a correct vertical relationship with God then the other more complicated aspects of life would fall into place.
5. And now I'm realizing that, as I reflect on my seminary experience, is that it was just too much information to absorb and process. So, you scramble to perform to pass tests, and to get credentialed, and to become a preacher.
6. My seminary experience became a means to an end.
7. I was drinking water from a fire hose.
8. So, in many ways I floated through seminary. And I figured I would figure out how to be a pastor when I got into ministry.
9. Right, so it became a purely academic experience.
10. And this amidst a lot of talk, mostly by students, about being spiritually formed and or spiritually matured. Students constantly talked about this, in between classes and after classes. We wondered why seminary had to be an information-dump. We were disappointed. And we were frustrated. And the

bottom line is that you can't do this in one field ed class with Roger Doe, that's just not the place to process 3 years of theology.

11. Yes, but it's funny that the most significant practical experience we'd get as students was mock ordination exams. It was an exercise in practicing for our ordination oral exams, and it really helped. The feedback was good. It was useful.
12. Now, don't get me wrong, we had really cool practical theology classes with Ralph Doe and Fritz Doe, and we got some useful stuff, had a hold a baby at baptism, and that stuff, and even then they were more whimsical than serious. But you had this sense that between all of this doctrinal, apologetic, theological framework being stuffed in my head, and this other class on how to hold a baby, I realized that there was something significant in between that wasn't there. And think this is the no man's land of spiritual formation that everyone is trying to figure out.
13. What I did get, I got mostly from church, and my pastor who was a preacher, who saw leadership as communication, and that's it. Pretty one dimensional. No counseling. No idea of practical aspects on ministry. He was an articulate speaker, and so that's what I thought I had to become.
14. That one dimension (learning to preach) is an extremely useful tool. Preparation for sermons for me is the easiest thing for me to do in pastoral ministry. It's fun. I know how to study. I know how to do the spade work, and dig deeply in Scripture. And I know how to craft a good sermon. So homiletic training was outstanding at RTS.
15. But what I realize is that my integration was so sorely lacking. How does the pulpit affect counseling? Visitation? Ministry organization? A longterm purpose for your local church.
16. I isolated the pulpit and I assumed preach right and everything falls into place. But the reality is nothing falls into place. It was the EF Hutton mentality...if I just speak it and it's true, people will listen. But they'll listen, and they don't get.
17. RTS helped a bit with the cultural exegesis. The homiletics classes helped. But I was out in the world as a stockbroker, so I had a lot of cultural insight coming in. But again, it was pretty one dimensional education.
18. Well, the realities of parish ministry are these. Marriages are crumbling, people are confused and busy and ill-equipped for dealing with the complexities of life. And they ask you, where do I go, and what do I do? And they sit across from you and they have total biblical illiteracy. And I have to

preach to a range of people...I have two mentally handicapped folks, and then I have medical doctors. You have some pretty significant choices to make. Some people hear you and resonate. Some people what you're saying makes no sense.

19. Nothing in seminary helped with the relational difficulties I'd experience in ministry. The bulk of it I gained in my first ministry position. I saw the level of pain, level of fragmentation, level of brokenness in people's lives. And this becomes harder when you become a senior pastor, because you're the one has the most say. You get the highest levels of criticism, because the buck stops with you.
20. I just finished reading preaching Matthew. Bottom line was this: the disciples want to be exactly like the Rabbi, they want to become like the Rabbi, so for the preacher you are asking people to become just like Jesus. But the preacher embodies the rabbi, so it's this crazy twist that you can't ask people to become like the Rabbi unless you first are the Rabbi. And in seminary, it's this kind of Rabbi-formation that is missing. It's just information, not a development of wise followers of Jesus.
21. I'm trying to do this, I mean this is tough...I don't want to bash seminary. I mean, I would give up a semester of my two practical theology classes, one of my electives, and even the intro to counseling for an experience of some kind of job shadow, something in the church that really rocks my world. But, understand that you run the risk of pairing up students with pastors who are one-dimensional though, like in my experience, so I don't know the answer.
22. I could have chosen a kind of pastoring where I stayed in an emotional bubble, I'm sure a lot of pastors do that.
23. One of the most significant things this has affected is my emotional capacity to be a husband to my wife. If I'm emotionally tapped, it really negatively affects my marriage.
24. They brought in people [in seminary] who talked on things like this [marriage] every so often. But you got the sense that it would be more of a time issue. Most of what I got was that it was a time management issue. But it's more than that. It's an emotional exhaustion issue. You can set boundaries, but if your day is emotionally demanding you have nothing to give. You can be home in the evening, and an emotional vegetable. It's tough.
25. Your wife reads your emotional states, and she knows when you're just taking up space, sucking up air, and that's my biggest challenge right now...I didn't realize how much emotionally energy this would require. It's gigantic.

26. It was dry spiritually during seminary.
27. When I reached the ministry, my habit was study your butt off to prepare this message, to prepare this teaching. But I found that the more I entered into people's brokenness, the more of a shepherd I became. When you study, you get answers...it's propositional. When you're in people's lives, you realize you have little to give, not the answers, and you find yourself praying even as you meet with them, "Lord, give me a sense of how to care for this person, give me something to say or offer."
28. I felt more comfortable in those shoes than in the one-dimensional up-front leader role. I feel like I've taken a different path, not necessarily one I learned was available in seminary, and it has deepened me, deepened my relationships, deepened my emotional life.
29. I think it boils down to putting some significant choices in front of these pastors...use words like pastor-shepherd, pastor-counselor, pastor-ceo, pastor-communicator...definitive trajectories through which guys can begin to envision their ministry...this is what it looks like, these are the tools you need, and then aiming them toward this goal. This would at least bring some context and meaning and maybe a telos to the work of seminary education.

Textural Themes for Participant 2

Disconnection

1. I had in seminary a sense and that sense was affirmed that right theology was essential, right theology ruled the day, so my goal was to, and this was personally, to develop an apologetic that made me a competent pastor.
2. I had no clue what really being a pastor meant at that time.
3. I really viewed it [ministry] as defending the faith for those who were unenlightened.
4. I saw preaching as informative, indoctrinating, and if one had right theology and a correct vertical relationship with God then the other more complicated aspects of life would fall into place.
5. And now I'm realizing that, as I reflect on my seminary experience, is that it was just too much information to absorb and process. So, you scramble to perform to pass tests, and to get credentialed, and to become a preacher.
6. My seminary experience became a means to an end.

7. I was drinking water from a fire hose.
8. It was dry spiritually during seminary.
9. So, in many ways I floated through seminary. And I figured I would figure out how to be a pastor when I got into ministry.
10. Right, so it became a purely academic experience.
11. And this amidst a lot of talk, mostly by students, about being spiritually formed and or spiritually matured. Students constantly talked about this, in between classes and after classes. We wondered why seminary had to be an information-dump. We were disappointed. And we were frustrated. And the bottom line is that you can't do this in one field ed class with Roger Doe, that's just not the place to process 3 years of theology.
12. Yes, but it's funny that the most significant practical experience we'd get as students was mock ordination exams. It was an exercise in practicing for our ordination oral exams, and it really helped. The feedback was good. It was useful.
13. Now, don't get me wrong, we had really cool practical theology classes with Ralph Doe and Fritz Doe, and we got some useful stuff, had a hold a baby at baptism, and that stuff, and even then they were more whimsical than serious. But you had this sense that between all of this doctrinal, apologetic, theological framework being stuffed in my head, and this other class on how to hold a baby, I realized that there was something significant in between that wasn't there. And think this is the no man's land of spiritual formation that everyone is trying to figure out.
14. But what I realize is that my integration was so sorely lacking. How does the pulpit affect counseling? Visitation? Ministry organization? A longterm purpose for your local church.
15. I isolated the pulpit and I assumed preach right and everything falls into place. But the reality is nothing falls into place. It was the EF Hutton mentality...if I just speak it and it's true, people will listen. But they'll listen, and they don't get.
16. RTS helped a bit with the cultural exegesis. The homiletics classes helped. But I was out in the world as a stockbroker, so I had a lot of cultural insight coming in. But again, it was pretty one dimensional education.

17. I just finished reading preaching Matthew. Bottom line was this: the disciples want to be exactly like the Rabbi, they want to become like the Rabbi, so for the preacher you are asking people to become just like Jesus. But the preacher embodies the rabbi, so it's this crazy twist that you can't ask people to become like the Rabbi unless you first are the Rabbi. And in seminary, it's this kind of Rabbi-formation that is missing. It's just information, not a development of wise followers of Jesus.

18. I think it boils down to putting some significant choices in front of these pastors...use words like pastor-shepherd, pastor-counselor, pastor-ceo, pastor-communicator...definitive trajectories through which guys can begin to envision their ministry...this is what it looks like, these are the tools you need, and then aiming them toward this goal. This would at least bring some context and meaning and maybe a telos to the work of seminary education.

Preaching

1. What I did get, I got mostly from church, and my pastor who was a preacher, who saw leadership as communication, and that's it. Pretty one dimensional. No counseling. No idea of practical aspects on ministry. He was an articulate speaker, and so that's what I thought I had to become.

2. That one dimension (learning to preach) is an extremely useful tool. Preparation for sermons for me is the easiest thing for me to do in pastoral ministry. It's fun. I know how to study. I know how to do the spade work, and dig deeply in Scripture. And I know how to craft a good sermon. So homiletic training was outstanding at RTS.

3. I just finished reading preaching Matthew. Bottom line was this: the disciples want to be exactly like the Rabbi, they want to become like the Rabbi, so for the preacher you are asking people to become just like Jesus. But the preacher embodies the rabbi, so it's this crazy twist that you can't ask people to become like the Rabbi unless you first are the Rabbi. And in seminary, it's this kind of Rabbi-formation that is missing. It's just information, not a development of wise followers of Jesus.

4. When I reached the ministry, my habit was study your butt off to prepare this message, to prepare this teaching. But I found that the more I entered into people's brokenness, the more of a shepherd I became. When you study, you get answers...it's propositional. When you're in people's lives, you realize you have little to give, not the answers, and you find yourself praying even as you meet with them, "Lord, give me a sense of how to care for this person, give me something to say or offer."

Emotion

1. I could have chosen a kind of pastoring where I stayed in an emotional bubble, I'm sure a lot of pastors do that.
2. One of the most significant things this has affected is my emotional capacity to be a husband to my wife. If I'm emotionally tapped, it really negatively affects my marriage.
3. They brought in people [in seminary] who talked on things like this [marriage] every so often. But you got the sense that it would be more of a time issue. Most of what I got was that it was a time management issue. But it's more than that. It's an emotional exhaustion issue. You can set boundaries, but if your day is emotionally demanding you have nothing to give. You can be home in the evening, and an emotional vegetable. It's tough.
4. Your wife reads your emotional states, and she knows when you're just taking up space, sucking up air, and that's my biggest challenge right now...I didn't realize how much emotionally energy this would require. It's gigantic.

Complexity

1. Well, the realities of parish ministry are these. Marriages are crumbling, people are confused and busy and ill-equipped for dealing with the complexities of life. And they ask you, where do I go, and what do I do? And they sit across from you and they have total biblical illiteracy. And I have to preach to a range of people...I have two mentally handicapped folks, and then I have medical doctors. You have some pretty significant choices to make. Some people hear you and resonate. Some people what you're saying makes no sense.
2. Nothing in seminary helped with the relational difficulties I'd experience in ministry. The bulk of it I gained in my first ministry position. I saw the level of pain, level of fragmentation, level of brokenness in people's lives. And this becomes harder when you become a senior pastor, because you're the one has the most say. You get the highest levels of criticism, because the buck stops with you.

Textural Description for Participant 2

The themes which emerged for Participant 2 were disconnection, one-dimensional leadership, preaching, emotion, and complexity. Participant 2 experienced a deep sense of disconnection which emerged as a prominent theme from his meaning units. For him, seminary was “purely academic” which caused him to treat it as necessary, but unrelated to being pastor. It was simply “a means to an end.” He noted, “in many ways I floated through seminary. And I figured I would figure out how to be a pastor when I got into ministry.” In many ways, this was informed by his initial expectations. He assumed seminary was supposed to be purely academic. He remarked, “I had in seminary a sense and that sense was affirmed that right theology was essential, right theology ruled the day, so my goal was to, and this was personally, to develop an apologetic that made me a competent pastor.” Seminarians were to become apologists, “defending the faith for those who were unenlightened.” And preaching played a central role in this for Participant 2. “I saw preaching as informative, indoctrinating, and if one had right theology and a correct vertical relationship with God then the other more complicated aspects of life would fall into place.” As a result, Participant 2 “had no clue what really being a pastor meant at that time.” His experience in ministry of preaching failing to deeply change people has opened him to a new way of thinking about seminary preparation. “I isolated the pulpit and I assumed preach right and everything falls into place. But the reality is nothing falls into place. It was the EF Hutton mentality...if I just speak it and it’s true, people will listen. But they’ll listen, and they don’t get.” Thus, preaching itself is not about information-dump, nor is seminary education for Participant 2. “I’m realizing that, as I reflect on my seminary experience, is that it was just too much

information to absorb and process. So, you scramble to perform to pass tests, and to get credentialed, and to become a preacher.” This overwhelming content-dump of information was like “drinking water from a fire hose,” a factor that contributed to a spiritual dryness. For him, seminary as it was done during his years was “just information, not a development of wise followers of Jesus.”

That said, the first theme also illustrates the very real tension experienced by seminary peers who wanted to become “wise followers of Jesus.” He noted that there was “a lot of talk, mostly by students, about being spiritually formed and or spiritually matured. Students constantly talked about this, in between classes and after classes. We wondered why seminary had to be an information-dump. We were disappointed. And we were frustrated. And the bottom line is that you can’t do this in one field ed class with Roger Doe, that’s just not the place to process 3 years of theology.” In this participant’s experience, very few things were seen as useful. However, one stood out. He chuckled as he remembered, saying, “It’s funny that the most significant practical experience we’d get as students was mock ordination exams. It was an exercise in practicing for our ordination oral exams, and it really helped. The feedback was good. It was useful.” Another useful part of his education came through Practical Theology coursework. Shifting from negatives to positives, he noted, “Now, don’t get me wrong, we had really cool practical theology classes with Ralph Doe and Fritz Doe, and we got some useful stuff, had a hold a baby at baptism, and that stuff, and even then they were more whimsical than serious.” But the disconnect was still evident. Participant 2 added, “you had this sense that between all of this doctrinal, apologetic, theological framework being stuffed in my head, and this other class on how to hold a baby, I realized that there

was something significant in between that wasn't there. And think this is the no man's land of spiritual formation that everyone is trying to figure out." In the end, "what I realize is that my integration was so sorely lacking. How does the pulpit affect counseling? Visitation? Ministry organization? A longterm purpose for your local church?"

Closely related and important enough to be isolated as yet another theme is preaching. He noted, "That one dimension (learning to preach) is an extremely useful tool. Preparation for sermons for me is the easiest thing for me to do in pastoral ministry. It's fun. I know how to study. I know how to do the spade work, and dig deeply in Scripture. And I know how to craft a good sermon. So homiletic training was outstanding at RTS." However, his preaching has been nuanced by the idea of living out his sermons in practice rather than simply dispensing information. This is articulated best in his description of the rabbinic ministry of Jesus. He said, "I just finished reading preaching Matthew. Bottom line was this: the disciples want to be exactly like the Rabbi, they want to become like the Rabbi, so for the preacher you are asking people to become just like Jesus. But the preacher embodies the rabbi, so it's this crazy twist that you can't ask people to become like the Rabbi unless you first are the Rabbi. And in seminary, it's this kind of Rabbi-formation that is missing. It's just information, not a development of wise followers of Jesus." In the end, preaching is a transformative work for Participant 2, not simply an informative work.

Participant 2 has also discovered in his post-seminary experience that his emotional life has taken on a greater importance, and this appears as yet another theme. The kind of pastoring he learned in seminary could have led him to a place where he

“stayed in an emotional bubble.” He added, “I’m sure a lot of pastors do that.” Seminary attempted to address emotions but in a way that was unhelpful. He noted, “They brought in people [in seminary] who talked on things like this [marriage] every so often. But you got the sense that it would be more of a time issue. Most of what I got was that it was a time management issue. But it’s more than that. It’s an emotional exhaustion issue. You can set boundaries, but if your day is emotionally demanding you have nothing to give. You can be home in the evening, and an emotional vegetable. It’s tough.” This emotional exhaustion affects his family. “One of the most significant things this has affected is my emotional capacity to be a husband to my wife. If I’m emotionally tapped, it really negatively affects my marriage.” Thus, “your wife reads your emotional states, and she knows when you’re just taking up space, sucking up air, and that’s my biggest challenge right now...I didn’t realize how much emotionally energy this would require. It’s gigantic.”

The final theme which emerges is complexity. Seminary failed to prepare him for the complexities of ministry life. “Nothing in seminary helped with the relational difficulties I’d experience in ministry. The bulk of it I gained in my first ministry position. I saw the level of pain, level of fragmentation, level of brokenness in people’s lives. And this becomes harder when you become a senior pastor, because you’re the one has the most say. You get the highest levels of criticism, because the buck stops with you.” He went on to more specifically highlight the rigors of pastoral work. “Well, the realities of parish ministry are these. Marriages are crumbling, people are confused and busy and ill-equipped for dealing with the complexities of life. And they ask you, where do I go, and what do I do? And they sit across from you and they have total biblical

illiteracy. And I have to preach to a range of people...I have two mentally handicapped folks, and then I have medical doctors. You have some pretty significant choices to make. Some people hear you and resonate. Some people what you're saying makes no sense." Indeed, for Participant 2 the classroom is far-removed from the everyday realities of pastoral life and parishioner life.

Structural Description for Participant 2

The structures to emerge for Participant 2 were relation to self and relation to others. Participant 2, perhaps more than any other participant, had a strongly established internal conception of what ministry ought to be. While the structure of relation to others is seen, in part, through his remarks about engaging the brokenness of people, his relation to self still dominates. Indeed, Participant 2 came to seminary with a very well-developed sense that preaching was not only his personal passion, but the most important aspect of his education. The main benefit of seminary would be the further development of his personal skills in preaching and apologetics. For this reason, Participant 2 was, in many ways, quite satisfied with seminary in many respects because it matched his internal conception of what a pastor ought to be.

However, Participant 2's strong paradigm was shifted as a result of several experiences. Each of these experiences, though external, had a profound internal impact. Most significant has been his experience of being in ministry. In ministry, he has discovered that his previous conceptions of pastoral life were "one-dimensional." Experiencing the "brokenness" in the lives of parishioners has caused him to re-think what pastoral work is supposed to be, and question previous models from both seminary

and his earlier church experiences. It has caused him to reflect on prior conversations with students about spiritual formation. And, it has provoked an internal dissatisfaction with what he did receive in seminary. Indeed, as Participant 2 has experienced the complexities of ministry life, he has experienced an internal paradigm shift.

A secondary structural issue is relation to others. It is in and through relationships that Participant 2 would re-think his paradigm for ministry. Once strong conceptions of ministerial priorities were relativized by the complexities of human suffering. In fact, Participant 2 now experiences a level of emotional weariness from his interactions with his congregation. At an earlier time, this would have been unimaginable, due mostly to his strong belief that preaching could and would make people's lives better. While his previous conception isolated him from others, his new conception places him squarely in the mess of human struggle with fewer answers and far less certainty than he had previously.

Meaning Units for Participant 3

1. Seminary education is largely irrelevant to real life in ministry.
2. The theological battles going on among people hiding in their seminary offices are not the relevant issues of people in urban congregations.
3. What you anticipate seminary will give you is very different than what it actually offers. In actuality, some people become less ready to minister contextually and relevantly, and more prone to divisiveness on theological issues that really don't matter to lay people.
4. While I am grateful to RTS for what it did provide me, I am hopeful that it can become more than it was when I was there.
5. These [theological issues that seminaries focus on] are not the questions people are dealing with [in my city].

6. They [seminary professors] are not dealing with the relational issues ordinary people are dealing with.
7. They've [seminary professors] got to get their heads out of their asses.
8. Life is harder and more complex than seminary lets on, even in practical theology courses.
9. A lot of my experience was nuanced by relationship with a good pastor, a group of some good friends, and a counselor. I can't imagine being where I am now without that stuff.
10. There was certainly a body of data that I needed to gain...reformed distinctives, etc. But the body of data is not enough.
11. None of the methodology behind the classes prepared me for ministry.
12. I do not have a good model from seminary which answers the kinds of methodological questions or provides the needed paradigm for cultural and personal interaction.
13. Today I am walking a couple through a divorce, and I received no training in this apart from what I might have gained from the counseling program in a vicarious fashion, or from some pastoral friends.
14. Sitting with people and loving them well isn't something we got in seminary.
15. Seminary provided important information for theological and ecclesiastical exams, but not for ministering to broken people.
16. Jesus MO when someone was going through existential crisis was not giving them some theoretical framework, but being with them.
17. I give praise for my RTS professors as they provided the kind of information for the membership manual our church put together, but that's one small piece.
18. As one who lived the Counseling Program vicariously through two process groups led by MAC students, marital counseling with my wife, group counseling with a very good MDIV friend going through some struggles, and being mentored by a good friend and pastor, all while at RTS, I must admit that I still regret having not gone through the counseling program in a more official capacity. After five years of ministry, my findings are quite comprehensive...drum roll if you please..."Life is complex!"

19. The psychological and sociological issues found in today's church that pastors now face seem immense and at times insurmountable. In seminary, these are largely unaddressed.
20. Pastors need to know how to minister to hurting people. Knowing that there are trained professionals who are a "referral" away is at times quite comforting. Yet, I must also say that vocational specialization as response to cultural complexity has me a little concerned.
21. But I am also afraid that "everyday" pastors, whether it be due to a deficiency/spot in their training or to the complexities of our culture, are not serving God's flock well by being so quick to pawn the sheep off to licensed and trained professionals.
22. While at RTS, I found it curious that "integration" courses always flowed in one direction, theology towards the counseling students, and not vice-versa. As a pastor, I found the "Introduction to Counseling" course to be formative. In fact, I find myself pouring over the notes I took in that class even today. Yet, as a lecture lab, its usefulness is still largely theoretical rather than existential.
23. It was only in the student led process groups and under Sonny Doe's counseling that I began to understand categories and paradigms that were inextricably linked to my own spiritual formation and to that of those around me.
24. Tomorrow's pastors, even the young guys entering seminary shortly after college, are aware of the need to develop these types of counseling skills as pastors. Most come from broken homes and high degrees of familial dysfunction, and because they do, they are aware, or at least should be, that they need to see and experience an intentional mapping between the two disciplines.
25. Seminary does not prepare you for the difficult questions that arise in marriage like "How do we handle issues of calling?"
26. My wife struggled immensely with leaving the security of one position to go to another. But these were questions that we had no context for after seminary.
27. Seminary was a spiritually dry time for me. Relationships are what kept me going.

28. Seminary could provide more integration between the purely theoretical and the deeply spiritual so that students enjoy and delight in what they're reading rather than dying under its weight.

Textural Themes for Participant 3

Disconnection

1. Seminary education is largely irrelevant to real life in ministry.
2. The theological battles going on among people hiding in their seminary offices are not the relevant issues of people in urban congregations.
3. What you anticipate seminary will give you is very different than what it actually offers. In actuality, some people become less ready to minister contextually and relevantly, and more prone to divisiveness on theological issues that really don't matter to lay people.
4. While I am grateful to RTS for what it did provide me, I am hopeful that it can become more than it was when I was there.
5. These [theological issues that seminaries focus on] are not the questions people are dealing with [in my city].
6. They [seminary professors] are not dealing with the relational issues ordinary people are dealing with.
7. They've [seminary professors] got to get their heads out of their ass.
8. Life is harder and more complex than seminary lets on, even in practical theology courses.
9. Sitting with people and loving them well isn't something we got in seminary.
10. Seminary provided important information for theological and ecclesiastical exams, but not for ministering to broken people.
11. Jesus MO when someone was going through existential crisis was not giving them some theoretical framework, but being with them.

Professors

1. They [seminary professors] are not dealing with the relational issues ordinary people are dealing with.
2. They've [seminary professors] got to get their heads out of their asses.
3. The theological battles going on among people hiding in their seminary offices are not the relevant issues of people in urban congregations.

Positives

1. A lot of my experience was nuanced by relationship with a good pastor, a group of some good friends, and a counselor. I can't imagine being where I am now without that stuff.
2. It was only in the student led process groups and under Sonny Doe's counseling that I began to understand categories and paradigms that were inextricably linked to my own spiritual formation and to that of those around me.
3. I give praise for my RTS professors as they provided the kind of information for the membership manual our church put together, but that's one small piece.
4. While I am grateful to RTS for what it did provide me, I am hopeful that it can become more than it was when I was there.

Complexity

1. As one who lived the Counseling Program vicariously through two process groups led by MAC students, marital counseling with my wife, group counseling with a very good MDIV friend going through some struggles, and being mentored by a good friend and pastor, all while at RTS, I must admit that I still regret having not gone through the counseling program in a more official capacity. After five years of ministry, my findings are quite comprehensive...drum roll if you please..."Life is complex!"
2. Life is harder and more complex than seminary lets on, even in practical theology courses.

3. The psychological and sociological issues found in today's church that pastors now face seem immense and at times insurmountable. In seminary, these are largely unaddressed.
4. Pastors need to know how to minister to hurting people. Knowing that there are trained professionals who are a "referral" away is at times quite comforting. Yet, I must also say that vocational specialization as response to cultural complexity has me a little concerned.
5. These [theological issues that seminaries focus on] are not the questions people are dealing with [in my city].
6. They [seminary professors] are not dealing with the relational issues ordinary people are dealing with.
7. Today I am walking a couple through a divorce, and I received no training in this apart from what I might have gained from the counseling program in a vicarious fashion, or from some pastoral friends.

Marriage

1. Seminary does not prepare you for the difficult questions that arise in marriage like "How do we handle issues of calling?"
2. My wife struggled immensely with leaving the security of one position to go to another. But these were questions that we had no context for after seminary.
3. As one who lived the Counseling Program vicariously through two process groups led by MAC students, marital counseling with my wife, group counseling with a very good MDIV friend going through some struggles, and being mentored by a good friend and pastor, all while at RTS, I must admit that I still regret having not gone through the counseling program in a more official capacity. After five years of ministry, my findings are quite comprehensive...drum roll if you please..."Life is complex!"
4. Today I am walking a couple through a divorce, and I received no training in this apart from what I might have gained from the counseling program in a vicarious fashion, or from some pastoral friends.

Relationships

1. Today I am walking a couple through a divorce, and I received no training in this apart from what I might have gained from the counseling program in a vicarious fashion, or from some pastoral friends.
2. They [seminary professors] are not dealing with the relational issues ordinary people are dealing with.
3. A lot of my experience was nuanced by relationship with a good pastor, a group of some good friends, and a counselor. I can't imagine being where I am now without that stuff.
4. Sitting with people and loving them well isn't something we got in seminary.
5. Jesus MO when someone was going through existential crisis was not giving them some theoretical framework, but being with them.
6. As one who lived the Counseling Program vicariously through two process groups led by MAC students, marital counseling with my wife, group counseling with a very good MDIV friend going through some struggles, and being mentored by a good friend and pastor, all while at RTS, I must admit that I still regret having not gone through the counseling program in a more official capacity. After five years of ministry, my findings are quite comprehensive...drum roll if you please... "Life is complex!"
7. It was only in the student led process groups and under Sonny Doe's counseling that I began to understand categories and paradigms that were inextricably linked to my own spiritual formation and to that of those around me.
8. Seminary was a spiritually dry time for me. Relationships are what kept me going.

Spirituality

1. Seminary was a spiritually dry time for me. Relationships are what kept me going.
2. Seminary could provide more integration between the purely theoretical and the deeply spiritual so that students enjoy and delight in what they're reading rather than dying under its weight.

Counseling

1. As one who lived the Counseling Program vicariously through two process groups led by MAC students, marital counseling with my wife, group counseling with a very good MDIV friend going through some struggles, and being mentored by a good friend and pastor, all while at RTS, I must admit that I still regret having not gone through the counseling program in a more official capacity. After five years of ministry, my findings are quite comprehensive...drum roll if you please... "Life is complex!"
2. The psychological and sociological issues found in today's church that pastors now face seem immense and at times insurmountable. In seminary, these are largely unaddressed.
3. Pastors need to know how to minister to hurting people. Knowing that there are trained professionals who are a "referral" away is at times quite comforting. Yet, I must also say that vocational specialization as response to cultural complexity has me a little concerned.
4. But I am also afraid that "everyday" pastors, whether it be due to a deficiency/spot in their training or to the complexities of our culture, are not serving God's flock well by being so quick to pawn the sheep off to licensed and trained professionals.
5. While at RTS, I found it curious that "integration" courses always flowed in one direction, theology towards the counseling students, and not vice-versa. As a pastor, I found the "Introduction to Counseling" course to be formative. In fact, I find myself pouring over the notes I took in that class even today. Yet, as a lecture lab, its usefulness is still largely theoretical rather than existential.
6. It was only in the student led process groups and under Sonny Doe's counseling that I began to understand categories and paradigms that were inextricably linked to my own spiritual formation and to that of those around me.
7. Tomorrow's pastors, even the young guys entering seminary shortly after college, are aware of the need to develop these types of counseling skills as pastors. Most come from broken homes and high degrees of familial dysfunction, and because they do, they are aware, or at least should be, that they need to see and experience an intentional mapping between the two disciplines.

8. Jesus MO when someone was going through existential crisis was not giving them some theoretical framework, but being with them.
9. A lot of my experience was nuanced by relationship with a good pastor, a group of some good friends, and a counselor. I can't imagine being where I am now without that stuff.
10. Today I am walking a couple through a divorce, and I received no training in this apart from what I might have gained from the counseling program in a vicarious fashion, or from some pastoral friends.

Textural Description for Participant 3

The themes which emerged from the meaning units for Participant 3 were disconnection. The first theme to emerge was disconnection. Participant 3 is a pastor in an urban and progressive West Coast setting. His experience of disconnection was perhaps best summarized when he said, "These [theological issues that seminaries focus on] are not the questions people are dealing with [in my city]." The disconnect exists because "seminary education is largely irrelevant to real life in ministry." Participant 3 was frustrated by the theological battles that occupy seminary professors. "The theological battles going on among people hiding in their seminary offices are not the relevant issues of people in urban congregations." Participant 3 felt as if seminary professors, in particular, are isolated from relational complexities pastors face on the front lines of urban pastorates. He remarked, "They [seminary professors] are not dealing with the relational issues ordinary people are dealing with." He would add, "Life is harder and more complex than seminary lets on, even in practical theology courses."

This disconnect is illustrated in the gap between what he expected seminary to provide and what he actually received. Participant 2 noted, "What you anticipate

seminary will give you is very different than what it actually offers. In actuality, some people become less ready to minister contextually and relevantly, and more prone to divisiveness on theological issues that really don't matter to lay people." Echoing a sentiment of other participants, he added, "Seminary provided important information for theological and ecclesiastical exams, but not for ministering to broken people." He related this to the life of Jesus. "Jesus MO when someone was going through existential crisis was not giving them some theoretical framework, but being with them."

Closely related to the theme of disconnection is Participant 3's focus on professors. He noted that seminary professors are "hiding in their offices" and "not dealing with relational issues" of ordinary folks. Because seminary professors are given to debate and argument on seemingly irrelevant topics compared to what Participant 3 deals with, he noted with a degree of ire, "They've [seminary professors] got to get their heads out of their assess."

Participant 3 continued coming back to a prominent theme for him, complexity. He said, "As one who lived the Counseling Program vicariously through two process groups led by MAC students, marital counseling with my wife, group counseling with a very good MDIV friend going through some struggles, and being mentored by a good friend and pastor, all while at RTS, I must admit that I still regret having not gone through the counseling program in a more official capacity. After five years of ministry, my findings are quite comprehensive...drum roll if you please...life is complex!" He added, "The psychological and sociological issues found in today's church that pastors now face seem immense and at times insurmountable." However, for Participant 2 seminary failed to prepare him for these realities.

A theme that emerged as important for the participant was relationships. For Participant 2, relationships are where pastors are trained in the rigors of ministry complexity. However, this was lacking in seminary. “Sitting with people and loving them well isn’t something we got in seminary.” A relevant example served to illustrate: “Today I am walking a couple through a divorce, and I received no training in this apart from what I might have gained from the counseling program in a vicarious fashion, or from some pastoral friends.” He argued that his lack of preparation resulted from the fact that seminary professors “are not dealing with the relational issues” that pastors see in their day-to-day work. Where seminary lacked, relationships made the difference however. “A lot of my experience was nuanced by relationship with a good pastor, a group of some good friends, and a counselor. I can’t imagine being where I am now without that stuff.” A student process group and personal counseling made a significant impact on him. “It was only in the student led process groups and under Sonny Doe’s counseling that I began to understand categories and paradigms that were inextricably linked to my own spiritual formation and to that of those around me.”

Counseling emerged as a theme worth elaborating on. Participant 3 regrets “having not gone through the counseling program in a more official capacity” because of the complexity of life he has faced in his two ministry settings. Because of the immensity of the “psychological issues” found among parishioners, “pastors need to know how to minister to hurting people.” However, merely referring people to “trained professionals” does not satisfy him. He noted, “I am also afraid that everyday pastors, whether it be due to a deficiency spot in their training or to the complexities of our culture, are not serving God's flock well by being so quick to pawn the sheep off to

licensed and trained professionals.” He noted the need for integration at the seminary level, as he said, “Tomorrow's pastors, even the young guys entering seminary shortly after college, are aware of the need to develop these types of counseling skills as pastors. Most come from broken homes and high degrees of familial dysfunction, and because they do, they are aware, or at least should be, that they need to see and experience an intentional mapping between the two disciplines.” Yet in seminary the integrative work needed was lacking. He reflected back on his education: “While at RTS, I found it curious that integration courses always flowed in one direction, theology towards the counseling students, and not vice-versa. As a pastor, I found the Introduction to Counseling course to be formative. In fact, I find myself pouring over the notes I took in that class even today. Yet, as a lecture lab, its usefulness is still largely theoretical rather than existential.” For Participant 2, his experience with friends, a pastor, and a counselor allowed him to experience “the counseling program in vicarious fashion.” He noted, “I can't imagine being where I am now without that stuff.”

For Participant 3, another theme that emerged was marriage. He noted, “Seminary does not prepare you for the difficult questions that arise in marriage.” One of the important questions in his marriage is, “How do we handle issues of calling?” Related to this is when his wife “struggled...with leaving the security of one position to go to another.” But seminary provided “no context” for these kinds of questions. As a result, during seminary Participant 3 entered into marriage counseling.

Further, his own personal spirituality arose as a theme from the meaning units. He noted that “seminary was a spiritually dry time.” His hope was that “seminary could

provide more integration between the purely theoretical and the deeply spiritual so that students enjoy and delight in what they're reading rather than dying under its weight.”

The final theme to emerge was positive experiences of seminary. Participant 3 was impacted by Professor Sonny Doe in a very personal way, and under his mentoring and counsel “began to understand categories and paradigms that were inextricably linked to my own spiritual formation and to that of those around me.” At seminary, he participated in student-led process groups which were an important part of his own preparation. He also appreciated the theological content from seminary. “I give praise for my RTS professors as they provided the kind of information for the membership manual our church put together.” However, he ended by saying, “While I am grateful to RTS for what it did provide me, I am hopeful that it can become more than it was when I was there.”

Structural Description for Participant 3

The structures which underlie Participant 3's experience are relation to others, relation to self, and space. The participant's relation to others appears as the primary structure of his experience. It is quite clear that relationships played a primary role in his seminary experience. For this participant, a relationship with a counselor, a pastor, and a process group served to introduce him to the things that have most served him in ministry. In particular, seminary relationships provided an environment where he learned to “sit with people” and “love them well.” This was important, in part, because he has found himself doing counseling and practicing what he called “shepherding” the flock. Further, his significant seminary relationships served to grow his marriage and his own

spirituality in such a way that he feels like he can better serve people. For Participant 2, ministry is predominantly a relational enterprise which requires a significant level of relational experience.

A second structure is relation to self. In the context of helping relationships, Participant 3 discovered his own places of need and weakness. His process group seemed to be a central place of self-discovery. In counseling, process group, and in peer relationships, Participant 3 was able to explore internal feelings not explored in the ordinary seminary experience. He was also exposed to the complexity of life in a way that better prepared him internally for difficult external complexities. In his marriage, however, he lamented that seminary failed to prepare him for vocational decisions, as well as the dynamics of security and stability associated with moving from parish to parish.

The structure of space is seen most clearly in the contrast between places. On the one hand, the participant currently finds himself in an urban setting where the realities of ministry life include a wide array of complexities, including a difficult relational situation in which he was immersed. On the other, he imagines the cloistered office of a seminary professor, disconnected from the outside world. For this participant, the contrast is notable. He imagines the cloistered space as a place where debates unrelated to practical realities take place. He imagines his urban space as a place where real life and real struggles happen. In this sense, the participant juxtaposes a space where needless and unfruitful activities take place versus a space where relationships are formed and real people are ministered to.

Meaning Units for Participant 4

1. I cannot honestly say that I had a firmly formed expectation of what pastoral life and ministry would be like while I was in seminary.
2. I can say that happily, having read Peterson's *Contemplative Pastor* before arriving at seminary had already begun to fuel my imagination a bit for what I might expect. I believe his work gave me an ideal of sorts where I reckoned that I could expect to be engaged in the care of souls.
3. I don't suppose I ever expected my seminary education to fully prepare me for the particular details, traumas, stresses, uncertainties that I would face.
4. I suppose I envisioned seminary as a place where I was receiving a framework for how to understand people, myself and others, and God and his word and the world.
5. I feel like I got a pretty decent foundation laid for such an endeavor that set me on a good course for the additional maturity and learning that has taken place while in the ministry.
6. Some of the peripheral parts of my seminary experience were actually quite helpful in helping me with the realities of pastoral life such as my participation in peer process groups and my going, for the first time in my life, to a counselor due to the emotional crises point that I reached while in seminary.
7. My psychological difficulties, my relational support from friends, and the counseling I participated in was all, in my estimation, a nice supplement to the theological education I received and together they all have coalesced to give me some useful tools for caring for people well.
8. I suppose I have often figured that being part of say the counseling program may have been extra useful for me as a pastor, although I do not know if I would have been willing or able to undergo the rigor involved to do so.
9. The things that I thought mattered so much in seminary do not seem to matter as much to me now.
10. I spend far more time, for good or bad, worrying over how to deal with conflict, or help marriages on the brink of disaster or the best way to accommodate more people, or how to get a group of men who are all older than I, and whom I fear a bit, to get on the same page about something, all relational sorts of things than I do about the exegesis of particular passages of scripture.

11. The theological questions that plague and interest many folks in our denomination and seem to chew up a lot of their time and a lot of our time as seminary students, seem only marginally connected at times to what I am trying to do in the lives of people that I am trying to care for and live with.
12. Driven by good expectations I feel like we heard countless warnings about the church not becoming too important, about fighting sexual temptation, about setting boundaries, guarding the family, etc.
13. I cannot say that I am aware of any vast discrepancy between my experience with and my expectation of my relationships to parishioners. Many of the ways of thinking and understanding that I received in seminary have been quite helpful in my relationships with parishioners
14. I would certainly have appreciated getting an even deeper insight into psychology, the emotions, matters of personal experience in the realm of spirituality, and more.
15. Much of what I learned and received in seminary however has proven most helpful as a starting point with many folks and in many relationships.
16. I actually entered, at least so far as I can remember, entered the pastorate believing that my spiritual condition would be of utmost importance in the spiritual health of the church.
17. I feel like I was given good beginnings at seminary but never fully realized how against the grain I would have to fight for spiritual health in ministry.
18. I don't think I realized just how tempting it would be to be busy all the time and how difficult it would be to devote myself to things like prayer and study and solitude or even baby steps at fasting, you know, all the stuff that nobody sees you doing.
19. At times for instance I have tried to be very devoted to prayer which has proven a great benefit to my spiritual health, but I suspect not many people actually care whether I do this or not although happily I do have some parishioners and fellow elders who are happy when I do.
20. It is awfully tempting to give one's time and energy to the things that make it look like you are on the job. I don't believe I had a good sense of just how much this would be a temptation.

21. Also the temptation to compare myself with others, my church and ministry with others, it has proven a far greater and ubiquitous challenge than I could have possibly conceived of in seminary.
22. I don't believe I figured on being as distracted and pulled in so many different directions in the pastorate as I am now. Being in a solo pastorate, I feel like often I have to give attention to so many different areas that I am scarcely able to fully think about, or be adequately considerate of each of the matters that needs my attention. I didn't, I don't suppose, reckon on being so pulled in so many different directions. This has a considerable impact on one's spiritual temperature and vitality, I would imagine.
23. Fortunately my seminary experience at least gave me an introduction to being concerned about my emotional health, a concept I would never have entertained before going to seminary.
24. While I don't know if my emotional health is good, life in the ministry, struggle, suffering, and what I have learned in seminary and beyond have all converged to give me a sense of being aware of my emotional health and have given me license to care enough about it to make changes when they are necessary for the restoration of my soul.
25. I feel like the emphasis on guarding the family, and not letting the church be one's mistress was so overstated at times that it makes me feel an opposite sort of guilt or unease sometimes, it makes me wonder if we are too free to have a life outside of the church, one that is not intertwined with the church. In that sense my experience sort of lines up with much of what I believe I was led to expect.

Textural Themes for Participant 4

Expectation

1. I cannot honestly say that I had a firmly formed expectation of what pastoral life and ministry would be like while I was in seminary.
2. I can say that happily, having read Peterson's *Contemplative Pastor* before arriving at seminary had already begun to fuel my imagination a bit for what I might expect. I believe his work gave me an ideal of sorts where I reckoned that I could expect to be engaged in the care of souls.
3. I don't suppose I ever expected my seminary education to fully prepare me for the particular details, traumas, stresses, uncertainties that I would face.

4. I suppose I envisioned seminary as a place where I was receiving a framework for how to understand people, myself and others, and God and his word and the world.
5. I feel like I got a pretty decent foundation laid for such an endeavor that set me on a good course for the additional maturity and learning that has taken place while in the ministry.
6. Driven by good expectations I feel like we heard countless warnings about the church not becoming too important, about fighting sexual temptation, about setting boundaries, guarding the family, etc.
7. I cannot say that I am aware of any vast discrepancy between my experience with and my expectation of my relationships to parishioners. Many of the ways of thinking and understanding that I received in seminary have been quite helpful in my relationships with parishioners
8. Much of what I learned and received in seminary however has proven most helpful as a starting point with many folks and in many relationships.
9. I actually entered, at least so far as I can remember, entered the pastorate believing that my spiritual condition would be of utmost importance in the spiritual health of the church.
10. I feel like the emphasis on guarding the family, and not letting the church be one's mistress was so overstated at times that it makes me feel an opposite sort of guilt or unease sometimes, it makes me wonder if we are too free to have a life outside of the church, one that is not intertwined with the church. In that sense my experience sort of lines up with much of what I believe I was led to expect.

Disconnection

1. I don't suppose I ever expected my seminary education to fully prepare me for the particular details, traumas, stresses, uncertainties that I would face.
2. The things that I thought mattered so much in seminary do not seem to matter as much to me now.
3. I spend far more time, for good or bad, worrying over how to deal with conflict, or help marriages on the brink of disaster or the best way to accommodate more people, or how to get a group of men who are all older than I, and whom I fear a bit, to get on the same page about something, all

relational sorts of things than I do about the exegesis of particular passages of scripture.

4. The theological questions that plague and interest many folks in our denomination and seem to chew up a lot of their time and a lot of our time as seminary students, seem only marginally connected at times to what I am trying to do in the lives of people that I am trying to care for and live with.
5. I would certainly have appreciated getting an even deeper insight into psychology, the emotions, matters of personal experience in the realm of spirituality, and more.
6. I feel like I was given good beginnings at seminary but never fully realized how against the grain I would have to fight for spiritual health in ministry.

Pride

1. I don't think I realized just how tempting it would be to be busy all the time and how difficult it would be to devote myself to things like prayer and study and solitude or even baby steps at fasting, you know, all the stuff that nobody sees you doing.
2. It is awfully tempting to give one's time and energy to the things that make it look like you are on the job. I don't believe I had a good sense of just how much this would be a temptation.
3. Also the temptation to compare myself with others, my church and ministry with others, it has proven a far greater and ubiquitous challenge than I could have possibly conceived of in seminary.

Counseling

1. Some of the peripheral parts of my seminary experience were actually quite helpful in helping me with the realities of pastoral life such as my participation in peer process groups and my going, for the first time in my life, to a counselor due to the emotional crises point that I reached while in seminary.
2. My psychological difficulties, my relational support from friends, and the counseling I participated in was all, in my estimation, a nice supplement to the theological education I received and together they all have coalesced to give me some useful tools for caring for people well.

3. I suppose I have often figured that being part of say the counseling program may have been extra useful for me as a pastor, although I do not know if I would have been willing or able to undergo the rigor involved to do so.
4. I spend far more time, for good or bad, worrying over how to deal with conflict, or help marriages on the brink of disaster or the best way to accommodate more people, or how to get a group of men who are all older than I, and whom I fear a bit, to get on the same page about something, all relational sorts of things than I do about the exegesis of particular passages of scripture.
5. I would certainly have appreciated getting an even deeper insight into psychology, the emotions, matters of personal experience in the realm of spirituality, and more.
6. Fortunately my seminary experience at least gave me an introduction to being concerned about my emotional health, a concept I would never have entertained before going to seminary.
7. While I don't know if my emotional health is good, life in the ministry, struggle, suffering, and what I have learned in seminary and beyond have all converged to give me a sense of being aware of my emotional health and have given me license to care enough about it to make changes when they are necessary for the restoration of my soul.

Relationships

1. Some of the peripheral parts of my seminary experience were actually quite helpful in helping me with the realities of pastoral life such as my participation in peer process groups and my going, for the first time in my life, to a counselor due to the emotional crises point that I reached while in seminary.
2. My psychological difficulties, my relational support from friends, and the counseling I participated in was all, in my estimation, a nice supplement to the theological education I received and together they all have coalesced to give me some useful tools for caring for people well.
3. I spend far more time, for good or bad, worrying over how to deal with conflict, or help marriages on the brink of disaster or the best way to accommodate more people, or how to get a group of men who are all older than I, and whom I fear a bit, to get on the same page about something, all relational sorts of things than I do about the exegesis of particular passages of scripture.

4. The theological questions that plague and interest many folks in our denomination and seem to chew up a lot of their time and a lot of our time as seminary students, seem only marginally connected at times to what I am trying to do in the lives of people that I am trying to care for and live with.
5. I cannot say that I am aware of any vast discrepancy between my experience with and my expectation of my relationships to parishioners. Many of the ways of thinking and understanding that I received in seminary have been quite helpful in my relationships with parishioners
6. Much of what I learned and received in seminary however has proven most helpful as a starting point with many folks and in many relationships.

Spirituality

1. I would certainly have appreciated getting an even deeper insight into psychology, the emotions, matters of personal experience in the realm of spirituality, and more.
2. I actually entered, at least so far as I can remember, entered the pastorate believing that my spiritual condition would be of utmost importance in the spiritual health of the church.
3. I feel like I was given good beginnings at seminary but never fully realized how against the grain I would have to fight for spiritual health in ministry.
4. I don't think I realized just how tempting it would be to be busy all the time and how difficult it would be to devote myself to things like prayer and study and solitude or even baby steps at fasting, you know, all the stuff that nobody sees you doing.
5. At times for instance I have tried to be very devoted to prayer which has proven a great benefit to my spiritual health, but I suspect not many people actually care whether I do this or not although happily I do have some parishioners and fellow elders who are happy when I do.

6. I don't believe I figured on being as distracted and pulled in so many different directions in the pastorate as I am now. Being in a solo pastorate, I feel like often I have to give attention to so many different areas that I am scarcely able to fully think about, or be adequately considerate of each of the matters that needs my attention. I didn't, I don't suppose, reckon on being so pulled in so many different directions. This has a considerable impact on one's spiritual temperature and vitality, I would imagine.

Textural Descriptions for Participant 4

A number of themes emerged from the meaning units of Participant 4, including expectation, disconnection, pride, counseling, relationships, and spirituality. The first theme to emerge was expectation. Participant 4 did not have a "firmly formed expectation of what pastoral life and ministry would be like." However, what became clear is that did have some general expectations. He said, "I suppose I envisioned seminary as a place where I was receiving a framework for how to understand people, myself and others, and God and his word and the world." What helped to inform this was his reading of a book which would prove important before he entered seminary. "I can say that happily, having read Peterson's *Contemplative Pastor* before arriving at seminary had already begun to fuel my imagination a bit for what I might expect. I believe his work gave me an ideal of sorts where I reckoned that I could expect to be engaged in the care of souls." This provided a necessary grid for what seminary education would be, yet one that was not un-realistic. In contrast to other participants, he noted, "I don't suppose I ever expected my seminary education to fully prepare me for the particular details, traumas, stresses, uncertainties that I would face." On this, he would go on to say that "much of what I learned and received in seminary...has proven most helpful as a starting point with many folks and in many relationships." He added, "I feel like I got a pretty

decent foundation laid for such an endeavor that set me on a good course for the additional maturity and learning that has taken place while in the ministry.”

The theme of disconnection also emerged from the meaning units. Though realistic about what seminary would provide, Participant 4 also noted that “the things that I thought mattered so much in seminary do not seem to matter as much to me now.” Elaborating on this, he said, “I spend far more time, for good or bad, worrying over how to deal with conflict, or help marriages on the brink of disaster or the best way to accommodate more people, or how to get a group of men who are all older than I, and whom I fear a bit, to get on the same page about something....all relational sorts of things, than I do about the exegesis of particular passages of scripture.” Moreover, “the theological questions that plague many folks in our denomination and seem to chew up a lot of their time and a lot of our time as seminary students, seem only marginally connected at times to what I am trying to do in the lives of people that I am trying to care for and live with.” Disconnection was also apparent in his reflections on his personal life and spirituality. He noted, “I feel like I was given good beginnings at seminary but never fully realized how against the grain I would have to fight for spiritual health in ministry.” Commenting on what might have been done differently, he added, “I would certainly have appreciated getting an even deeper insight into psychology, the emotions, matters of personal experience in the realm of spirituality, and more.”

Another theme that emerged was pride. Participant 4 lamented the temptations of ministry life, saying, “I don’t think I realized just how tempting it would be to be busy all the time and how difficult it would be to devote myself to things like prayer and study and solitude or even baby steps at fasting, you know, all the stuff that nobody sees you

doing.” Commenting on the tug to give his time to more externally productive matters, he said, “It is awfully tempting to give one’s time and energy to the things that make it look like you are on the job. I don’t believe I had a good sense of just how much this would be a temptation.” His pride would also manifest itself in comparison. He highlighted “the temptation to compare myself with others, my church and ministry with others, it has proven a far greater and ubiquitous challenge than I could have possibly conceived of in seminary.”

Yet another theme to emerge from the meaning units was counseling. Participant 4 learned in seminary about emotional health. He noted, “Fortunately my seminary experience at least gave me an introduction to being concerned about my emotional health, a concept I would never have entertained before going to seminary.” His experience was born out of necessity. “Some of the peripheral parts of my seminary experience were actually quite helpful in helping me with the realities of pastoral life such as my participation in peer process groups and my going, for the first time in my life, to a counselor due to the emotional crises point that I reached while in seminary.” His personal experience with counseling proved an essential part of his seminary education. He noted, “My psychological difficulties, my relational support from friends, and the counseling I participated in was all, in my estimation, a nice supplement to the theological education I received and together they all have coalesced to give me some useful tools for caring for people well.” Participation in the MA Counseling would have been ideal. He added, “I suppose I have often figured that being part of say the counseling program may have been extra useful for me as a pastor, although I do not know if I would have been willing or able to undergo the rigor involved to do so.” He

commented on his current emotional state, saying, “While I don’t know if my emotional health is good, life in the ministry, struggle, suffering, and what I have learned in seminary and beyond have all converged to give me a sense of being aware of my emotional health and have given me license to care enough about it to make changes when they are necessary for the restoration of my soul.

Emerging from the meaning units for Participant 4 was the theme of relationships, as well. He experienced relational help from “peer process groups” and personal counseling, along with the “relational support from friends.” These relational foundations have proven helpful in his ministry experience. In ministry today, Participant 4 is better able to “deal with conflict,” assist in difficult marital circumstances, “accommodate people,” and deal with men older than him. These relational realities, however, are only “marginally connected” to the “theological questions that plague many folks in our denomination.” For this participant, seminary relationships “have been quite helpful in my relationships with parishioners.”

A final theme that emerged for Participant 4 is spirituality. He noted, “I would certainly have appreciated getting an even deeper insight into matters of personal experience in the realm of spirituality.” Regarding the realities of pastoral life, he added, “I don’t think I realized just how tempting it would be to be busy all the time and how difficult it would be to devote myself to things like prayer and study and solitude or even baby steps at fasting, you know, all the stuff that nobody sees you doing.” The busyness results in “being so pulled in so many different directions” which “has a considerable impact on one’s spiritual temperature and vitality.” He felt as if he had been “given good beginnings at seminary but never fully realized how against the grain I would have to

fight for spiritual health in ministry.” What is difficult at present is committing himself to spiritual disciplines which are not immediately recognized by congregants. He said, “At times for instance I have tried to be very devoted to prayer which has proven a great benefit to my spiritual health, but I suspect not many people actually care whether I do this or not although happily I do have some parishioners and fellow elders who are happy when I do.”

Structural Descriptions for Participant 4

The structures to emerge from the meaning units of Participant 4 are relation to others, relation to self, and time. His relation to others is highlighted by the quality relationships experienced in seminary with peers and a counselor. For Participant 4, a peer process group along with counseling provided a stable foundation for the complexity of the pastorate. In seminary, a number of psychological issues arose which needed to be addressed, and this relational community was significant for his personal healing and maturity.

His relation to self is seen in the importance of emotional and spiritual health. His emotional health became a concern while in seminary, and a variety of seminary relationships contributed to its growth. However, his spiritual health was not nourished in seminary as he would have hoped. As a result, he finds it difficult to nurture his spiritual life in the busy climate of his present ministry. Further, Participant 4 highlighted the issue of pride. In his self-examination, he has discovered a variety of personal temptations in ministry which require his spiritual attention.

Time is a final structure that emerges for Participant 4. Before coming to seminary, this participant engaged in reading which would provide a vision for pastoral life. As a result, Participant 4 had a more realistic understanding of what seminary would be, and what his time after seminary in ministry might be. Further, time reveals itself as a structure in Participant 4's busyness. Indeed, there is not enough time for the kind of spiritual life he would desire. Moreover, the kind of time devoted to spirituality is not as externally productive, producing a concern about what people in his church might think.

Meaning Units for Participant 5

1. The RTS Master of Divinity more generally addresses basic academic requirements for pastors. It would be safe to say, in brief, that the expectations I had from my divinity degree were more academic.
2. After two years of training exclusively in the divinity program, my ministry expectations primarily centered on being a kind of theological Prometheus, who would take top-shelf, complex theological ideas and make them accessible to the masses. Minus the whole getting chained to the mountain ordeal. Essentially, I'd teach. I would transmit doctrine, Bible, and in some cases, vision for the church to people who came to church.
3. I expected to interact with people to some degree, pastors show up at hospitals, after all, but I expected to be equipped with answers to people's questions or hurts. I like explaining, so I thought I'd explain how doctrine met other people's life questions. These were generally intellectual expectations and external to my own life.
4. Because of counseling courses my expectations had substantially changed because I felt attracted to different means of communicating the gospel. I didn't want to teach abstract principles anymore. Instead, I believed my role in pastoral ministry was a calling to embodiment, to live out my own gospel dependence for others' benefit.
5. The principles I learned from my divinity coursework were still true, valuable, and necessary. I still needed to communicate those truths and teach them. But the difference became a distinction between lecturing, preaching teacher and modeling, mentoring teacher. These expectations were more generally relational, using my own life as a community learning laboratory.

6. I would also say that, to the extent my paradigm has moved away from a generally intellectualized approach toward “modeling gospel need in relationship,” I have found my expectations for ministry and the reality of ministry more closely aligned.
7. Only a divinity degree is required for ordination. Consequently, it is my observation that most ministry candidates receive a near exclusive academic preparation for ministry.
8. I would say that my seminary training did little to reinforce the centrality of my marriage in ministry.
9. We spent very little time in our studies on how to make our marriages the center for ministry expression. I left seminary thinking that I would work in the church, on and for other people, by letting them have access to my life, and that my wife would participate by enabling me to be away from home. That’s absurd, it’s only been in the last two years of prolonged family grief that I’ve been seeing what it should look like for my marriage to be my first concern, ministry my second. My wife to get the first and best of my energies, my job to receive out of what’s left.
10. The church hasn’t liked it all that well, either. We all say that family comes first, but when family really needs to come first and sometimes second too, it limits my capacity to be in the office or to do ministry. That’s been the source of some tension between me and the session, and I wouldn’t have expected that after either seminary or a few years of ministry experience.
11. I probably could have pursued relationships the way I always had: with some inherent shallowness.
12. Openness and vulnerability are difficult, and it is increasingly difficult to be transparent in relationship with “a pastor.” There is something about the title that continues to be a mental hurdle for people, as if I am an altogether different species of Christian.
13. In addition, when I counsel men, I understand that there are certain stereotypical difficulties that men have with emotional transparency and vulnerability. I understand it, and I know how to speak to it, in the counseling room. In actual relationship, sitting across the table in a restaurant, when I say the same words, my friends look at me like I’m speaking alien. “Why would we do that? Why go there? Let’s leave things like they are.” It makes me want to throw up my hands and join the Thursday women’s Bible study.

14. People come to pastors with grief, questions, and concerns. They want answers. Relief from suffering. And they want me, as pastor, to provide that. It is a huge temptation for me to try to speak meaningfully into another person's suffering to try to make sense of it for them.
15. I don't think that the divinity degree could have prepared me in the way that suffering has.
16. Rather than seeking out suffering, I think that students need to be prepared for the eventuality of suffering, knowing that God will continue their education and preparation for ministry long after they are graduated from seminary.
17. I think that training in addressing and expressing their own emotions in a God-ward direction would be exceedingly valuable seminary students, coupled with the expectation that the systems they think they have in place will be stripped and refined by suffering. We worship God and relate to Him, not to our systems of training. That is a brutal but critical distinction.

Textural Themes for Participant 5

Disconnection

1. The RTS Master of Divinity more generally addresses basic academic requirements for pastors. It would be safe to say, in brief, that the expectations I had from my divinity degree were more academic.
2. After two years of training exclusively in the divinity program, my ministry expectations primarily centered on being a kind of theological Prometheus, who would take top-shelf, complex theological ideas and make them accessible to the masses. Minus the whole getting chained to the mountain ordeal. Essentially, I'd teach. I would transmit doctrine, Bible, and in some cases, vision for the church to people who came to church.
3. I expected to interact with people to some degree, pastors show up at hospitals, after all, but I expected to be equipped with answers to people's questions or hurts. I like explaining, so I thought I'd explain how doctrine met other people's life questions. These were generally intellectual expectations and external to my own life.
4. Because of counseling courses my expectations had substantially changed because I felt attracted to different means of communicating the gospel. I didn't want to teach abstract principles anymore. Instead, I believed my role

in pastoral ministry was a calling to embodiment, to live out my own gospel dependence for others' benefit.

5. The principles I learned from my divinity coursework were still true, valuable, and necessary. I still needed to communicate those truths and teach them. But the difference became a distinction between lecturing, preaching teacher and modeling, mentoring teacher. These expectations were more generally relational, using my own life as a community learning laboratory.
6. I would also say that, to the extent my paradigm has moved away from a generally intellectualized approach toward "modeling gospel need in relationship," I have found my expectations for ministry and the reality of ministry more closely aligned.
7. Only a divinity degree is required for ordination. Consequently, it is my observation that most ministry candidates receive a near exclusive academic preparation for ministry.
8. I don't think that the divinity degree could have prepared me in the way that suffering has.
9. Rather than seeking out suffering, I think that students need to be prepared for the eventuality of suffering, knowing that God will continue their education and preparation for ministry long after they are graduated from seminary.
10. I think that training in addressing and expressing their own emotions in a God-ward direction would be exceedingly valuable seminary students, coupled with the expectation that the systems they think they have in place will be stripped and refined by suffering. We worship God and relate to Him, not to our systems of training. That is a brutal but critical distinction.

Marriage

1. I would say that my seminary training did little to reinforce the centrality of my marriage in ministry.
2. We spent very little time in our studies on how to make our marriages the center for ministry expression. I left seminary thinking that I would work in the church, on and for other people, by letting them have access to my life, and that my wife would participate by enabling me to be away from home. That's absurd, it's only been in the last two years of prolonged family grief that I've been seeing what it should look like for my marriage to be my first concern, ministry my second. My wife to get the first and best of my energies, my job to receive out of what's left.

3. The church hasn't liked it all that well, either. We all say that family comes first, but when family really needs to come first and sometimes second too, it limits my capacity to be in the office or to do ministry. That's been the source of some tension between me and the session, and I wouldn't have expected that after either seminary or a few years of ministry experience.

Relationships

1. Because of counseling courses my expectations had substantially changed because I felt attracted to different means of communicating the gospel. I didn't want to teach abstract principles anymore. Instead, I believed my role in pastoral ministry was a calling to embodiment, to live out my own gospel dependence for others' benefit.
2. The principles I learned from my divinity coursework were still true, valuable, and necessary. I still needed to communicate those truths and teach them. But the difference became a distinction between lecturing, preaching teacher and modeling, mentoring teacher. These expectations were more generally relational, using my own life as a community learning laboratory.
3. I would also say that, to the extent my paradigm has moved away from a generally intellectualized approach toward "modeling gospel need in relationship," I have found my expectations for ministry and the reality of ministry more closely aligned.
4. I probably could have pursued relationships the way I always had: with some inherent shallowness.
5. Openness and vulnerability are difficult, and it is increasingly difficult to be transparent in relationship with "a pastor." There is something about the title that continues to be a mental hurdle for people, as if I am an altogether different species of Christian.
6. In addition, when I counsel men, I understand that there are certain stereotypical difficulties that men have with emotional transparency and vulnerability. I understand it, and I know how to speak to it, in the counseling room. In actual relationship, sitting across the table in a restaurant, when I say the same words, my friends look at me like I'm speaking alien. "Why would we do that? Why go there? Let's leave things like they are." It makes me want to throw up my hands and join the Thursday women's Bible study.

Emotion

1. We spent very little time in our studies on how to make our marriages the center for ministry expression. I left seminary thinking that I would work in the church, on and for other people, by letting them have access to my life, and that my wife would participate by enabling me to be away from home. That's absurd, it's only been in the last two years of prolonged family grief that I've been seeing what it should look like for my marriage to be my first concern, ministry my second. My wife to get the first and best of my energies, my job to receive out of what's left.
2. The church hasn't liked it all that well, either. We all say that family comes first, but when family really needs to come first and sometimes second too, it limits my capacity to be in the office or to do ministry. That's been the source of some tension between me and the session, and I wouldn't have expected that after either seminary or a few years of ministry experience.
3. Openness and vulnerability are difficult, and it is increasingly difficult to be transparent in relationship with "a pastor." There is something about the title that continues to be a mental hurdle for people, as if I am an altogether different species of Christian.
4. In addition, when I counsel men, I understand that there are certain stereotypical difficulties that men have with emotional transparency and vulnerability. I understand it, and I know how to speak to it, in the counseling room. In actual relationship, sitting across the table in a restaurant, when I say the same words, my friends look at me like I'm speaking alien. "Why would we do that? Why go there? Let's leave things like they are." It makes me want to throw up my hands and join the Thursday women's Bible study.
5. People come to pastors with grief, questions, and concerns. They want answers. Relief from suffering. And they want me, as pastor, to provide that. It is a huge temptation for me to try to speak meaningfully into another person's suffering to try to make sense of it for them.
6. I don't think that the divinity degree could have prepared me in the way that suffering has.
7. Rather than seeking out suffering, I think that students need to be prepared for the eventuality of suffering, knowing that God will continue their education and preparation for ministry long after they are graduated from seminary.
8. I think that training in addressing and expressing their own emotions in a God-ward direction would be exceedingly valuable seminary students, coupled with the expectation that the systems they think they have in place

will be stripped and refined by suffering. We worship God and relate to Him, not to our systems of training. That is a brutal but critical distinction.

Textural Description for Participant 5

The four themes to emerge from the meaning units for Participant 5 were disconnection, marriage, relationships, and emotion. As in the case of other participants, disconnection proved to be a prominent theme. Participant 5 came to seminary with an expectation that his education would be primarily academic. “The RTS Master of Divinity more generally addresses basic academic requirements for pastors. It would be safe to say...that the expectations I had from my divinity degree were more academic.” He added, “After two years of training exclusively in the divinity program, my ministry expectations primarily centered on being a kind of theological Prometheus, who would take top-shelf, complex theological ideas and make them accessible to the masses. Minus the whole getting chained to the mountain ordeal. Essentially, I’d teach. I would transmit doctrine, Bible, and in some cases, vision for the church to people who came to church.” This participant expected seminary to prepare him to offer theological responses to the questions of life. He noted, “I expected to interact with people to some degree, pastors show up at hospitals, after all, but I expected to be equipped with answers to people’s questions or hurts. I like explaining, so I thought I’d explain how doctrine met other people’s life questions. These were generally intellectual expectations and external to my own life.” However, as a result of counseling and counseling coursework, as well as his own personal suffering, Participant 5 experienced a shift in his paradigm. “Because of counseling courses my expectations had substantially changed because I felt attracted to different means of communicating the gospel. I didn’t want to teach abstract

principles anymore. Instead, I believed my role in pastoral ministry was a calling to embodiment, to live out my own gospel dependence for others' benefit." In this, Participant 5 found himself better prepared for the complexities of ministry. He said, "To the extent my paradigm has moved away from a generally intellectualized approach toward modeling gospel need in relationship, I have found my expectations for ministry and the reality of ministry more closely aligned." This could not have happened for Participant 5 without suffering. "I don't think that the divinity degree could have prepared me in the way that suffering has." Yet, not all students experience suffering in seminary. Participant 5 reflected on what seminary could be, noting, "Rather than seeking out suffering, I think that students need to be prepared for the eventuality of suffering, knowing that God will continue their education and preparation for ministry long after they are graduated from seminary." Participant 5 lamented that "most ministry candidates receive a near exclusive academic preparation for ministry." But noted that students ought to be trained in "addressing and expressing their own emotions in a God-ward direction...coupled with the expectation that the systems they think they have in place will be stripped and refined by suffering. We worship God and relate to Him, not to our systems of training. That is a brutal but critical distinction."

Marriage was also an important theme to emerge from the meaning units. For Participant 5, seminary did not adequately prepare him to live as both a married man and a pastor. He said, "My seminary training did little to reinforce the centrality of my marriage in ministry." A naïve view was developed in seminary. "We spent very little time in our studies on how to make our marriages the center for ministry expression. I left seminary thinking that I would work in the church, on and for other people, by letting

them have access to my life, and that my wife would participate by enabling me to be away from home. That's absurd, it's only been in the last two years of prolonged family grief that I've been seeing what it should look like for my marriage to be my first concern, ministry my second. My wife to get the first and best of my energies, my job to receive out of what's left." For Participant 5, the choice to prioritize his marriage has created some tension in his current pastoral position. "The church hasn't liked it all that well, either. We all say that family comes first, but when family really needs to come first and sometimes second too, it limits my capacity to be in the office or to do ministry. That's been the source of some tension between me and the session, and I wouldn't have expected that after either seminary or a few years of ministry experience."

Relationships emerged as another theme. As a result of both significant relationships and counseling coursework, participant give found that his pastoral calling shifted to "embodiment, to live out my own gospel dependence for others' benefit." He began to make "a distinction between [a] lecturing, preaching teacher and modeling, mentoring teacher. These expectations were more generally relational, using my own life as a community learning laboratory." He calls his paradigm "modeling gospel need in relationship." And this has been tough in ministry. He noted the temptation to give up on deeper relationships, saying, "I probably could have pursued relationships the way I always had: with some inherent shallowness." But he did not, choosing instead to risk living out his paradigm among the people in his church. "Openness and vulnerability are difficult, and it is increasingly difficult to be transparent in relationship with a pastor. There is something about the title that continues to be a mental hurdle for people, as if I am an altogether different species of Christian." He has experienced this difficulty with

men in the church, especially. He noted that when he goes out to eat with men and begins to ask honest questions and invite a deeper level of relationships, “my friends look at me like I’m speaking alien. ‘Why would we do that? Why go there? Let’s leave things like they are.’ It makes me want to throw up my hands and join the Thursday women’s Bible study.”

A closely related theme to emerge was emotion. Suffering and struggle, for Participant 5, have been the crucible of maturity and growth. He noted that “it’s only been in the last two years of prolonged family grief that I’ve been seeing what it should look like for my marriage to be my first concern, ministry my second.” Suffering has opened him to greater “emotional transparency and vulnerability” which has caused a “tension” with members of his church body. He notes the stereotypes which see men as unemotional, yet disagrees and attempts to urge the men of his church toward deeper experiences of honesty and vulnerability in ordinary relationships. On the other hand, he recognizes that in times of crisis, pastors are expected “to provide” the emotional care necessary. “People come to pastors with grief, questions, and concerns. They want answers. Relief from suffering. And they want me, as pastor, to provide that.” As a result, he sees the importance of seminary training which addresses human emotion and suffering. “I think that training in addressing and expressing their own emotions in a God-ward direction would be exceedingly valuable seminary students, coupled with the expectation that the systems they think they have in place will be stripped and refined by suffering.”

Structural Description for Participant 5

The structures to emerge from the meaning units of Participant 5 are relation to others, relation to self, and time. This participant's relation to others is both foundational and essential to his experience. While his prior paradigm kept him isolated from others and restricted to activities of the intellect, his new paradigm has opened him to greater transparency and vulnerability in relationships. This has been a great value as well as a heavy burden. The value is seen in the deep sense of meaning Participant 5 receives in his relational ministry. The burden is seen in the tension it has caused. Men in the church struggle to relate openly, and Participant 5 finds himself more easily relating to the women of the church. However, at some personal cost he has chosen to live a more emotionally and relationally accessible life.

Participant 5's relation to self is seen in his reflective movement from a stoic and intellectualistic faith to a relational and emotional faith. Though his doctrinal convictions remain intact, Participant 5 has experienced a shift which brings greater personal meaning and satisfaction. His explorations of the nature of pastoral ministry, human suffering, and human relationships are the product of a thoughtful inner reflection. Rather than ignoring the internal tug of his inner self, he has listened to a voice that invites him to honor what his heart feels for the sake of more meaningful worship and relationship.

Finally, the structure of time underlies an experienced tension between the priorities of a busy pastoral life and family life. Participant 5 has chosen to spend less time at work and more with his family, manifesting in tension with his church leadership. This choice highlights the value Participant 5 places in time with his family.

Meaning Units for Participant 6

1. I had a pretty good idea of the challenges of ministry, at least at the para-church level.
2. I don't think I had a good grasp of what the preaching ministry entailed.
3. While in seminary, the focus is so much on academics that you get lulled into thinking that the ministry is just one big study fest. It didn't take long in my first call to figure out that's not the way it is.
4. My biggest surprise I think has been "the people factor".
5. Seminary prepares you well, in most cases, for the technical aspects of your work, like biblical studies, theology, etc., but it doesn't really prepare you for the onslaught of problems you face in the lives of people, and how those problems will affect you personally.
6. Seminary certainly didn't prepare me for the criticisms and personal attacks I have faced in ministry.
7. I don't know if a seminary has the capability of doing that. A lengthy, year or two, internship program at a local church would uncover some of that, but you don't really feel the full weight of the pastoral load until you are in that office and doing it week in and week out for years. There is just no way around it.
8. Seminary was actually a benefit to our marriage.
9. I didn't have any expectations to my knowledge about what our marriage would look like in full time ministry after seminary. We still have a great marriage, by God's grace, and our ministry life together is a true partnership. God has been amazingly kind to us!
10. I thought everybody would love me. What's not to love, right? Wow, was I surprised at how people in the church can be real assholes.
11. I also didn't realize how sweet it could be when God put you in a congregation of folks who really love Jesus and love each other and want to be growing in His grace. That has been our experience these last six years in the church we planted.

12. Our second call was as senior pastor of a mid-size church in the deep south. Definitely not a fit. It was the proverbial church from hell. I got butchered, probably bringing a lot of it on myself, but it still hurt.
13. Seminary was a spiritual oasis for me, and I really grew by leaps and bounds in my love for God and His Word.
14. Full time ministry can zap you of your spiritual strength quickly. So, I have tried to make it a priority to keep my devotional life consistent and fresh. Seminary was very helpful in this regard, especially in opening me up to the many good books available to help kindle the heart flames for God.
15. I am not burned out now. I think I was a few years ago, but it only lasted a couple of months. I've noticed that I go through "blue periods" about every couple of years. Nothing serious, just sort of lose focus and passion, but it comes back eventually. Maybe it's spiritual A.D.D.
16. Seminary did not prepare me to cope with the emotional roller coaster of ministry.
17. Seminary did nothing that I can think of to help in the area of personal family time.
18. The friendships I made during seminary have been a wonderful source of encouragement to me during times of dryness or discouragement. I can pick up the phone or e-mail a friend and receive a spiritual kick in the butt when I need it.

Textural Themes for Participant 6

Disconnection

1. I don't think I had a good grasp of what the preaching ministry entailed.
2. While in seminary, the focus is so much on academics that you get lulled into thinking that the ministry is just one big study fest. It didn't take long in my first call to figure out that's not the way it is.
3. My biggest surprise I think has been "the people factor".
4. Seminary prepares you well, in most cases, for the technical aspects of your work, like biblical studies, theology, etc., but it doesn't really prepare you for

the onslaught of problems you face in the lives of people, and how those problems will affect you personally.

5. Seminary certainly didn't prepare me for the criticisms and personal attacks I have faced in ministry.
6. I don't know if a seminary has the capability of doing that. A lengthy, year or two, internship program at a local church would uncover some of that, but you don't really feel the full weight of the pastoral load until you are in that office and doing it week in and week out for years. There is just no way around it.
7. Seminary did not prepare me to cope with the emotional roller coaster of ministry.
8. Seminary did nothing that I can think of to help in the area of personal family time.
9. The friendships I made during seminary have been a wonderful source of encouragement to me during times of dryness or discouragement. I can pick up the phone or e-mail a friend and receive a spiritual kick in the butt when I need it.

Complexity

1. My biggest surprise I think has been "the people factor".
2. Seminary prepares you well, in most cases, for the technical aspects of your work, like biblical studies, theology, etc., but it doesn't really prepare you for the onslaught of problems you face in the lives of people, and how those problems will affect you personally.
3. Seminary certainly didn't prepare me for the criticisms and personal attacks I have faced in ministry.
4. Our second call was as senior pastor of a mid-size church in the deep south. Definitely not a fit. It was the proverbial church from hell. I got butchered, probably bringing a lot of it on myself, but it still hurt.
5. I am not burned out now. I think I was a few years ago, but it only lasted a couple of months. I've noticed that I go through "blue periods" about every couple of years. Nothing serious, just sort of lose focus and passion, but it comes back eventually. Maybe it's spiritual A.D.D.
6. Seminary did not prepare me to cope with the emotional roller coaster of ministry.

7. The friendships I made during seminary have been a wonderful source of encouragement to me during times of dryness or discouragement. I can pick up the phone or e-mail a friend and receive a spiritual kick in the butt when I need it.
8. I thought everybody would love me. What's not to love, right? Wow, was I surprised at how people in the church can be real assholes.

Marriage

1. Seminary was actually a benefit to our marriage.
2. I didn't have any expectations to my knowledge about what our marriage would look like in full time ministry after seminary. We still have a great marriage, by God's grace, and our ministry life together is a true partnership. God has been amazingly kind to us!
3. Seminary did nothing that I can think of to help in the area of personal family time.

Spirituality

1. I also didn't realize how sweet it could be when God put you in a congregation of folks who really love Jesus and love each other and want to be growing in His grace. That has been our experience these last six years in the church we planted.
2. Seminary was a spiritual oasis for me, and I really grew by leaps and bounds in my love for God and His Word.
3. Full time ministry can zap you of your spiritual strength quickly. So, I have tried to make it a priority to keep my devotional life consistent and fresh. Seminary was very helpful in this regard, especially in opening me up to the many good books available to help kindle the heart flames for God.
4. The friendships I made during seminary have been a wonderful source of encouragement to me during times of dryness or discouragement. I can pick up the phone or e-mail a friend and receive a spiritual kick in the butt when I need it.

Textural Description for Participant 6

The textural themes to emerge from Participant 6's meaning units were disconnection, complexity, marriage, and spirituality. He summarized the theme of disconnection succinctly when he said, "While in seminary, the focus is so much on academics that you get lulled into thinking that the ministry is just one big study fest. It didn't take long in my first call to figure out that's not the way it is." Like other participants, Participant 6 was pleased with his academic education. "Seminary prepares you well, in most cases, for the technical aspects of your work, biblical studies, theology, etc., but it doesn't really prepare you for the onslaught of problems you face in the lives of people, and how those problems will affect you personally." Ministry introduced Participant 6 to the difficulty of dealing with people. He noted that seminary failed to prepare him for the "personal attacks" he would face, the "emotional roller coaster" of pastoral life, or the family-life issues that arise. Yet, he added, "I don't know if a seminary has the capability of doing that. A lengthy year or two internship program at a local church would uncover some of that, but you don't really feel the full weight of the pastoral load until you are in that office and doing it week in and week out for years. There is just no way around it." What has helped mend the disconnection are the friendships established in seminary. "The friendships I made during seminary have been a wonderful source of encouragement to me during times of dryness or discouragement. I can pick up the phone or e-mail a friend and receive a spiritual kick in the butt when I need it."

Once again, the related theme of complexity emerged from the meaning units. Complexity is best-described by Participant 6 as "the people factor." He was surprised

by what he found in ministry. “I thought everybody would love me. What’s not to love, right? Wow, was I surprised at how people in the church can be real assholes.” People are complex, and “the onslaught of problems you face in the lives of people” impact the pastor and his family personally. He has faced attack and criticism from parishioners. One story illustrates: “Our second call was as senior pastor of a mid-size church in the deep south. Definitely not a fit. It was the proverbial church from hell. I got butchered, probably bringing a lot of it on myself, but it still hurt.” The complex ministry life leads him into “blue periods about every couple of years” where he loses “focus and passion.”

A minor theme to emerge was marriage. Interestingly, Participant 6 noted that “Seminary was actually a benefit to our marriage,” a comment he expected would be different than that of others. “I didn’t have any expectations to my knowledge about what our marriage would look like in full time ministry after seminary. We still have a great marriage, by God’s grace, and our ministry life together is a true partnership. God has been amazingly kind to us!”

Finally, the theme of spirituality emerged for Participant 6. Once again, he expected that his responses might not match others. He noted, “Seminary was a spiritual oasis for me, and I really grew by leaps and bounds in my love for God and His Word.” He also enjoyed describing his current ministry experience, and its spiritual benefits. “I also didn’t realize how sweet it could be when God put you in a congregation of folks who really love Jesus and love each other and want to be growing in His grace. That has been our experience these last six years in the church we planted.” However, he did say that “full time ministry can zap you of your spiritual strength quickly.” To remedy this, he adds that he has “tried to make it a priority to keep my devotional life consistent and

fresh.” For him, seminary was an important part of preparing him for this. “Seminary was very helpful in this regard, especially in opening me up to the many good books available to help kindle the heart flames for God.”

Structural Description for Participant 6

The structures to emerge for Participant 6 were relation to self, relation to others, and space. The most dominant and essential structure of his experience is relation to others. It reflects both a source of pain and pride. While seminary was more concerned with academics, ministry introduced Participant 6 to what he called “the people factor,” introducing him to a host of critics. With some ire, he describes how people can be “assholes.” People have been the hardest aspect of ministry for him. Yet, his most valued and meaningful relationships stand in contrast to this. Seminary friendships have been a source of encouragement and spiritual renewal. Relationships in his current congregation are a source of great pride and spiritual benefit. Indeed, this relational extreme shows the marked contrast between the encouraging benefit of good relationships in pastoral ministry and the damage done by bad relationships.

Relation to self is seen in his reflection on his emotional state. He noted that he is not burned out, but mentions the difficulty of personal attacks and criticisms which caused emotional turmoil in the past. Though Participant 6 is in a good spiritual condition presently, he lamented spiritual struggles at a previous church. On a marital level, Participant 6 is particularly satisfied.

Space is yet another structure to emerge. One can see the benefit of a healthy space to minister in contrast to an unhealthy space. In his unhealthy spaces, he is faced

by critics and experiences personal attacks, suffers from spiritual and psychological burnout, and loses focus and passion. In healthy spaces, he experiences great spiritual encouragement, finds a new sense of passion and zeal, and finds greater meaning in relationships. The contrast between a healthy space found in one church and an unhealthy space found in another is foundational for his experience.

Meaning Units for Participant 7

1. Seminary provides the basic groundwork and tools for ministry, but doesn't give you the instruction manual on how to use them once you're in real life situations.
2. I expected seminary to be more difficult than it was. I expected that we would really have to think through issues, debate and hash through problems. I was surprised that there wasn't a challenge to critical thinking. The biggest challenge was taking accurate notes in class to regurgitate on an exam.
3. My professors were mostly seen in the classroom. Outside of class, they would go off to their other jobs and ministries. I wish I had more time with them.
4. Having time with professors is critical. It's about really hashing out the ideas as they relate to life.
5. RTS Orlando sells itself on top notch scholarship, but may be guilty of producing half-assed pastors and shepherds of souls.
6. Honestly, some of the cynicism I received from professors in the classroom bled into my own ministry and preaching, and I came off as arrogant early on in my ministry experience.
7. Professors need to model biblical integrity. They can't be cynics. I expected to find very faithful and godly men, and found some. But I also found some who seemed very angry at the church and at other professors.
8. I really wanted to learn how to pray. You'd sort of expect the seminary to teach that. It didn't though. It taught me about exegesis and analysis, theodicy and ethics, but not how to pray. That's really strange.

9. I really did hope that one of the focuses at seminary would be on developing me as a Christian man of character. Of course, we can't expect this from just the seminary, because the church plays a role in this. But I am surprised that so little is discussed in terms of character.
10. Much of what I got at seminary is largely irrelevant today.
11. I am grateful for several things – my counseling courses, my friendships, my exposure to rich doctrine, my ability to breeze through an ordination exam.
12. My marriage really struggled in seminary, due in part to my wife's reluctance to go into ministry. She did not really find a kindred soul in this, and the topics addressed at the RTS women's ministry were largely irrelevant to her.
13. My wife had no categories for her role in the church, and felt like the seminary should have given some insight about this.
14. My own view of marriage is largely based on experiences I had with pastors, and not from seminary courses.
15. Much of what was taught in the practical theology program was basic. Educational Ministry was a joke. The Ralph Doe courses were largely storytelling, and he re-told the same stories over and over, though I don't think he realized it. It was like a stand up comedy routine. I was looking for something substantial.
16. I did appreciate the sexual conference that the seminary sponsored which opened my eyes to the realities of sexual abuse and addiction. Dan Allender's stuff was probably the most relevant material I got at seminary for what I see in people's lives today.
17. Gary Doe's counseling course kicked ass too. He talked about the kinds of difficult people you'd see in the church, and I still have those notes.
18. Don't patronize us with multiple choice and fill in the blank exams like we're in high school. Make us interact. Ministry is not a fill in the blank exam. It's a think on your feet experience that requires wisdom, not a bunch of disconnected facts.
19. I think seminary may have to re-think its whole approach. It is becoming so disconnected from the real world. The issues argued about at General Assemblies are so radically divorced from where most people live. There must be a more embodied paradigm for seminary education.

20. Education is so much more than information transfer, but is meant to move the affections, challenge the heart, engage the mind, impact the culture.
21. In terms of emotional health, I don't believe I can overstate the importance of personal counseling that I did while in seminary. In it, I found deeply rooted idols of esteem and pride and power that began to be broken as I saw their impact on my marriage and relationships.
22. While I don't think it is imperative that every student get counseled, I do think that the RTS is very different than the self help Gospel of modern culture and therapy. My experience was that counseling was one avenue where my idols could be exposed and repented of in an environment that was confidential and safe.
23. My church experience at RTS was mixed, in part, because my wife and I found it difficult to plug in to one church. For a variety of reasons, I found pastors to be generally pretty busy and unable to meet regularly, and in our church search I basically settled on a church because of its ability to provide me with an internship rather than anything else.
24. I think RTS ought to have a campus pastor. I expected it would when I came. Having a Dean is fine, but a campus pastor would be able to interact more deeply on spiritual issues, and provide venues for prayer and growth.
25. My spiritual experience at the seminary was basically difficult, in part because I was more diligent about my studies than maintaining my personal prayer or devotional life. The busyness of seminary doesn't help.
26. Ministry is not any less busy than seminary, though I did believe I'd have more time to study and meditate. The relational demands are just too great.
27. I am ambivalent about my seminary experience.
28. RTS is losing its alumni support in its reluctance to adapt to modern ministry demands. Its death may not be because of liberalism, but because of irrelevance.
29. The MDiv needs to be re-thought. The courses were designed during a different time. Both content and methodology need more than a band-aid, they need major surgery.
30. The seminary needs fresh voices from guys of character, perhaps some women in teaching roles too, who are not mired in John Doe's cynicism but who are hopeful about the new day that is dawning for the church.

31. North America is the new mission field, but we're still acting like it's God's country. Seminary doesn't address this at all.
32. What is compelling about a church that is busy excommunicating its conservative Anglican brother rather than envisioning ways of bolstering our catholicity without compromising the essentials?
33. When I am convinced that RTS Orlando is ready to move in new and fresh directions, then I will send young men there. Right now, I am not convinced. Talk is cheap. I want to see what happens in the next three to five years.

Textural Themes for Participant 7

Professors

1. My professors were mostly seen in the classroom. Outside of class, they would go off to their other jobs and ministries. I wish I had more time with them.
2. Having time with professors is critical. It's about really hashing out the ideas as they relate to life.
3. RTS Orlando sells itself on top notch scholarship, but may be guilty of producing half-assed pastors and shepherds of souls.
4. Honestly, some of the cynicism I received from professors in the classroom bled into my own ministry and preaching, and I came off as arrogant early on in my ministry experience.
5. Professors need to model biblical integrity. They can't be cynics. I expected to find very faithful and godly men, and found some. But I also found some who seemed very angry at the church and at other professors.
6. Much of what was taught in the practical theology program was basic. Educational Ministry was a joke. The Ralph Doe courses were largely story-telling, and he re-told the same stories over and over, though I don't think he realized it. It was like a stand up comedy routine. I was looking for something substantial.
7. Gary Doe's counseling course kicked ass too. He talked about the kinds of difficult people you'd see in the church, and I still have those notes.

8. Don't patronize us with multiple choice and fill in the blank exams like we're in high school. Make us interact. Ministry is not a fill in the blank exam. It's a think on your feet experience that requires wisdom, not a bunch of disconnected facts.
9. The seminary needs fresh voices from guys of character, perhaps some women in teaching roles too, who are not mired in John Doe's cynicism but who are hopeful about the new day that is dawning for the church.

Disconnection

1. Seminary provides the basic groundwork and tools for ministry, but doesn't give you the instruction manual on how to use them once you're in real life situations.
2. I expected seminary to be more difficult than it was. I expected that we would really have to think through issues, debate and hash through problems. I was surprised that there wasn't a challenge to critical thinking. The biggest challenge was taking accurate notes in class to regurgitate on an exam.
3. Having time with professors is critical. It's about really hashing out the ideas as they relate to life.
4. RTS Orlando sells itself on top notch scholarship, but may be guilty of producing half-assed pastors and shepherds of souls.
5. I really wanted to learn how to pray. You'd sort of expect the seminary to teach that. It didn't though. It taught me about exegesis and analysis, theodicy and ethics, but not how to pray. That's really strange.
6. I really did hope that one of the focuses at seminary would be on developing me as a Christian man of character. Of course, we can't expect this from just the seminary, because the church plays a role in this. But I am surprised that so little is discussed in terms of character.
7. Much of what I got at seminary is largely irrelevant today.
8. My marriage really struggled in seminary, due in part to my wife's reluctance to go into ministry. She did not really find a kindred soul in this, and the topics addressed at the RTS women's ministry were largely irrelevant to her.
9. My wife had no categories for her role in the church, and felt like the seminary should have given some insight about this.

10. My own view of marriage is largely based on experiences I had with pastors, and not from seminary courses.
11. Much of what was taught in the practical theology program was basic. Educational Ministry was a joke. The Ralph Doe courses were largely storytelling, and he re-told the same stories over and over, though I don't think he realized it. It was like a stand up comedy routine. I was looking for something substantial.
12. I did appreciate the sexual conference that the seminary sponsored which opened my eyes to the realities of sexual abuse and addiction. Dan Allender's stuff was probably the most relevant material I got at seminary for what I see in people's lives today.
13. Gary Doe's counseling course kicked ass too. He talked about the kinds of difficult people you'd see in the church, and I still have those notes.
14. Don't patronize us with multiple choice and fill in the blank exams like we're in high school. Make us interact. Ministry is not a fill in the blank exam. It's a think on your feet experience that requires wisdom, not a bunch of disconnected facts.
15. I think seminary may have to re-think its whole approach. It is becoming so disconnected from the real world. The issues argued about at General Assemblies are so radically divorced from where most people live. There must be a more embodied paradigm for seminary education.
16. Education is so much more than information transfer, but is meant to move the affections, challenge the heart, engage the mind, impact the culture.
17. RTS is losing its alumni support in its reluctance to adapt to modern ministry demands. Its death may not be because of liberalism, but because of irrelevance.
18. The MDiv needs to be re-thought. The courses were designed during a different time. Both content and methodology need more than a band-aid, they need major surgery.
19. North America is the new mission field, but we're still acting like it's God's country. Seminary doesn't address this at all.
20. What is compelling about a church that is busy excommunicating its conservative Anglican brother rather than envisioning ways of bolstering our catholicity without compromising the essentials?

21. When I am convinced that RTS Orlando is ready to move in new and fresh directions, then I will send young men there. Right now, I am not convinced. Talk is cheap. I want to see what happens in the next three to five years.

Counseling

1. I am grateful for several things – my counseling courses, my friendships, my exposure to rich doctrine, my ability to breeze through an ordination exam.
2. Gary Doe’s counseling course kicked ass too. He talked about the kinds of difficult people you’d see in the church, and I still have those notes.
3. In terms of emotional health, I don’t believe I can overstate the importance of personal counseling that I did while in seminary. In it, I found deeply rooted idols of esteem and pride and power that began to be broken as I saw their impact on my marriage and relationships.
4. While I don’t think it is imperative that every student get counseled, I do think that the RTS is very different than the self help Gospel of modern culture and therapy. My experience was that counseling was one avenue where my idols could be exposed and repented of in an environment that was confidential and safe.

Spirituality

1. I really wanted to learn how to pray. You’d sort of expect the seminary to teach that. It didn’t though. It taught me about exegesis and analysis, theodicy and ethics, but not how to pray. That’s really strange.
2. I think RTS ought to have a campus pastor. I expected it would when I came. Having a Dean is fine, but a campus pastor would be able to interact more deeply on spiritual issues, and provide venues for prayer and growth.
3. My spiritual experience at the seminary was basically difficult, in part because I was more diligent about my studies than maintaining my personal prayer or devotional life. The busyness of seminary doesn’t help.
4. Ministry is not any less busy than seminary, though I did believe I’d have more time to study and meditate. The relational demands are just too great.

Textural Description for Participant 7

The themes to emerge for Participant 7 were professors, disconnection, counseling, and spirituality. The first theme to emerge was disconnection. Participant 7 noted that, “My professors were mostly seen in the classroom. Outside of class, they would go off to their other jobs and ministries. I wish I had more time with them.” The importance of this was emphasized as he said, “Having time with professors is critical. It’s about really hashing out the ideas as they relate to life.” He noted that, “RTS Orlando sells itself on top notch scholarship, but may be guilty of producing half-assed pastors and shepherds of souls.” In part, this is attributed to the character of some professors. “Honestly, some of the cynicism I received from professors in the classroom bled into my own ministry and preaching, and I came off as arrogant early on in my ministry experience.” He added, “Professors need to model biblical integrity. They can’t be cynics. I expected to find very faithful and godly men, and found some. But I also found some who seemed very angry at the church and at other professors.” With some specificity, Participant 7 illustrated with examples. “Much of what was taught in the practical theology program was basic. Educational Ministry was a joke. The Ralph Doe courses were largely story-telling, and he re-told the same stories over and over, though I don’t think he realized it. It was like a stand up comedy routine. I was looking for something substantial.” He enjoyed a basic counseling course. “Gary Doe’s counseling course kicked ass too. He talked about the kinds of difficult people you’d see in the church, and I still have those notes.” He also critiqued the kinds of exams given. “Don’t patronize us with multiple choice and fill in the blank exams like we’re in high school.

Make us interact. Ministry is not a fill in the blank exam. It's a think on your feet experience that requires wisdom, not a bunch of disconnected facts." In summary, he noted that "the seminary needs fresh voices from guys of character, perhaps some women in teaching roles too, who are not mired in...cynicism but who are hopeful about the new day that is dawning for the church."

Another theme to emerge was disconnection. He summarized it broadly saying, "Much of what I got at seminary is largely irrelevant today." He noted, "Seminary provides the basic groundwork and tools for ministry, but doesn't give you the instruction manual on how to use them once you're in real life situations." He highlighted the absence of teaching on prayer, saying, "I really wanted to learn how to pray. You'd sort of expect the seminary to teach that. It didn't though. It taught me about exegesis and analysis, theodicy and ethics, but not how to pray. That's really strange." Reflecting on the larger problem, he said, "I think seminary may have to re-think its whole approach. It is becoming so disconnected from the real world. The issues argued about at General Assemblies are so radically divorced from where most people live. There must be a more embodied paradigm for seminary education." He added, "Education is so much more than information transfer, but is meant to move the affections, challenge the heart, engage the mind, impact the culture." As an alumnus, this participant found that RTS Orlando might struggle for support in the future. "RTS is losing its alumni support in its reluctance to adapt to modern ministry demands. Its death may not be because of liberalism, but because of irrelevance." Regarding the Master of Divinity degree, he mused, "The MDiv needs to be re-thought. The courses were designed during a different

time. Both content and methodology need more than a band-aid, they need major surgery.”

Another theme to emerge was counseling. He said, “I am grateful for several things – my counseling courses, my friendships, my exposure to rich doctrine, my ability to breeze through an ordination exam.” He noted the significance of “Gary Doe’s counseling course” as it related to “the kinds of difficult people you’d see in the church.” On a personal level, he was particularly serious about the impact counseling had on him. “In terms of emotional health, I don’t believe I can overstate the importance of personal counseling that I did while in seminary. In it, I found deeply rooted idols of esteem and pride and power that began to be broken as I saw their impact on my marriage and relationships.”

The final theme to emerge was spirituality. Participant 7 had a desire to learn “how to pray” in seminary, but did not find this to be a priority. Thus, “my spiritual experience at the seminary was basically difficult, in part because I was more diligent about my studies than maintaining my personal prayer or devotional life. The busyness of seminary doesn’t help.” He added, “Ministry is not any less busy than seminary, though I did believe I’d have more time to study and meditate. The relational demands are just too great.” As a suggestion, he said, “I think RTS ought to have a campus pastor. I expected it would when I came. Having a Dean is fine, but a campus pastor would be able to interact more deeply on spiritual issues, and provide venues for prayer and growth.”

Structural Description for Participant 7

The structures to emerge from the meaning units of Participant 7 were relationship to self, relationship to others, and time. Relation to self is evidenced throughout the meaning units. Participant 7 noted the importance of integrity. He had hoped to develop his own character through observing others. His desire for seminary to be a place of prayer with faculty members of integrity represents his own internal values for ministry. His counseling brought up personal issues of pride and arrogance which were addressed. His own high internal value system left him disappointed by what he perceived to be low priorities on personal spirituality and integrity. Finally, his own internal values require that he withhold his recommendation of RTS Orlando to future students until he sees improvements. Clearly, Participant 7 has a strong personal framework for seminary education that is evidenced in his high idealism.

Relation to others is also seen in Participant 7. His value on relationships is seen in multiple comments about time with professors, the importance of friendships and personal counseling, and the relational demands of ministry. It is clear that Participant 7 had a high value on spirituality being modeled, and hoped to see that fostered by relationships with professors. Further, the participant noted the importance of his marriage, and the benefit of counseling during seminary for its health.

The structure of time is also seen in the meaning units of Participant 7. He noted that “having time” with professors is critical. The value he places on this is highlighted by his desire to see them model the Christian life over the course of time. Further, he sees seminary and busyness as a threat to substantial time with God and family. For Participant 7, busyness is a threat to the spiritual health of a pastor, and must be

addressed in the seminary environment in order to prepare a pastor for the rigors of ministry life.

Composite Textural Description

Table 2 shows how themes emerged among the seven participants. While the individual descriptions showed how themes emerged among each participant, the composite textural description seeks to show how the themes emerge as a composite whole.

Table 2 – Individual Themes by Participant.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Professors	X		X				X
Disconnection	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pride				X			
Relationships	X		X	X	X		
Expectation				X			
Counseling			X	X			X
Marriage	X		X		X	X	
Spirituality	X		X	X		X	X
Gratitude	X						
Emotion		X			X		

Complexity		X	X			X	
Preaching		X					
Positives			X				

As is seen in Table 2, the only theme to occur in all of the participants was disconnection. Disconnection emerged as the most prominent theme, which is fitting given the focus of the study. It illuminates the gap between expectation and reality, between educational preparation and ministry application. Depending on one’s point of view, all of the remaining themes can be viewed as perspectives on the major theme of disconnection. However, each theme emerged from the data, and stands on its own as a unique description of the lived experience of the participant.

That said, the theme of disconnection is an appropriate starting point. Though it appears as a common theme among participants, it takes on different meaning for each of the participants because of the uniqueness of their experiences and the differences in their expectations. All of the participants spoke in unison regarding the over-emphasis on intellectual-doctrinal content in seminary. While most were appreciative of the solid content they received, they found seminary to be largely irrelevant for the relational demands of ministry. Participants used different expressions to describe the disconnection between intellectual and relational concerns. Participant 1 talked about a “failure to translate” academic content into practical application. Participant 2 talked about a lack of “integration” between academic and practical matters. Participant 3 used the language of irrelevance to describe the disconnection. Participant 4 spoke in terms of a marginal connection between his seminary education and his current ministry.

Participant 5 spoke of the disconnection by contrasting the “abstract” principles he learned in seminary with an approach of “embodiment.” Participant 6 saw the disconnect existing between the “academics” of seminary and “the people factor” of ministry. Participant 7 noted that seminary is “disconnected from the real world” and “divorced from where most people live.”

Participants 1, 3, and 7 were, perhaps, the most vocal in their frustration and the most animated in their language. Each described in colorful language their disappointment in the irrelevance of their seminary education and in their unmet expectations. Participant 1 described feeling like an “ass” when asked to do a funeral because he had not been prepared for such a thing in seminary. Participant 3 contrasted the cloistered seminary environment with his urban setting with rather colorful language. Participant 7 described the prospect of waning alumni support for an increasingly irrelevant education for the modern demands of ministry. Each of these participants, in his own way, reflected a basic cynicism about the direction of the seminary, though to differing degrees.

Participants 2 and 5 were less cynical and had similar expectations coming into seminary. They viewed both seminary and ministry as primarily intellectual enterprises, and expected seminary to be more doctrinal and apologetic in its approach. Each viewed seminary as a preparation ground to make them conduits of solid theological information to their congregations. Participant 2 was under the false assumption that pastors “preach right and everything falls into place.” Participant 5 pictured himself as a “theological Prometheus.” However, for different reasons both of these participants have found this approach to be less than satisfactory. For participant 2, ministry itself changed his

perceptions of what seminary ought to be and how it ought to prepare people for the pastorate. He now views seminary preparation in terms of “spiritual formation” rather than “information dumping.” Participant 5, on the other hand, experienced a combination of peer process groups and counseling in seminary, and intense suffering after seminary. His experiences shifted his perspective on seminary education and pastoral ministry to “modeling Gospel need in relationship.”

Participants 4 and 6 were more positive than the others. Participant 6 echoed the other participants in his view that seminary education is primarily academic, failing to prepare pastors for the relational and emotional complexities of ministry. However, he is not sure if seminary can prepare pastors for these kinds of things unless substantially longer and more involved internships are required. Participant 4 came to seminary with a more realistic expectation of what he might get and not get. He said that seminary provided a “decent foundation” and “framework” for his future ministry. But he also spoke at length about how he availed himself of opportunities for peer process groups and personal counseling. Both of these things have proved to be a great benefit for his marriage and ministry.

Looking at the participants as a whole, a picture emerges that is basically consistent, yet individually contoured. The consistencies are telling. The participants viewed seminary as an intellectual enterprise. However, all would agree that this is not adequate for pastoral preparation. The most significant reason for this was the relational dynamics of ministry. Each of the participants shared experiences of relational difficulty. The difficult relational experiences came in different forms: marriage crises, personal attacks and criticism, pastoral care and counsel, relating to unchurched people, and

handling personal marital issues. In many cases, the participants felt ill-equipped to minister. In some cases, participants cited personal counseling and process groups as great helps while in seminary for dealing with current ministry issues. But, in all cases, the participants would have preferred a more relational education in both content and methodology.

A secondary picture to emerge among all of the participants is their disappointment in the practical aspects of seminary teaching. In some cases, participants noted that they were ill-prepared for weddings, funerals, pastoral counseling, crisis, and other practical issues. In every case, participants agreed that practical theology was, on the whole, a weak point in their educational experience. One notable exception to this is preaching. There was some disagreement among participants as to the effectiveness of their education for their preaching ministry. In summary, the theme of disconnection emerged as prominent among each of the participants, and consistent threads in the meaning units demonstrate the absence of what they claimed to need, a relationally-oriented, spiritually-formative approach to seminary education.

Another prominent theme to emerge among the participants was spirituality. In terms of frequency, it was the second most active theme, emerging in five of the participants. Perhaps most significant was the consistency of comments about the busyness of both seminary and ministry. Participant's 1, 4, and 7 were most vocal about the busyness pastors are susceptible to. Participants 1 and 7, in particular, noted the busywork given in seminary coursework, and contrasted this with the absence of time and teaching on prayer. Participant 3 called seminary a "dry" time spiritually, borrowing a metaphor common in Christian parlance as it relates to the wilderness experience of the

Israelites. It should be noted that participant 2 used this same language, though spirituality did not emerge as a theme for him from the meaning units. Participants 4 and 6 were more positive about seminary spirituality. Participant 4 noted that his experience of spirituality in seminary was a “good beginning,” while participant 6 spoke of seminary as a “spiritual oasis.” Participant 4, however, said that he “would have appreciated more” attention to spiritual matters in seminary. The overwhelmingly positive response of participant 6 is due, in part, to the fact that he took seminary classes over a longer period of time than most, and enjoyed the assigned readings on a more devotional level. In ministry, participant 6 noted that his spiritual life has been impacted, in large part, by his relationship to church parishioners. Overall, this theme is marked by a good deal of consistency across the participants with the notable exception of participant 7.

The next cluster of themes (relationships, marriage, counseling, complexity, emotion, pride) emphasized the relational matrix of seminary and ministry. A theme to emerge as common among four participants was relationships. This theme also bears close resemblance to the theme of counseling which emerged among participant’s 3, 4, and 7. The participants for this theme, it should be noted, had something to say about the relational matrix of both seminary and ministry. However, for participant’s 1, 3, 4, and 5, the clustered meaning units formed into a clear theme of relationships. All four of these participants found that a counseling relationship was helpful during seminary. Participant 4, in particular, talked about a time of life-crisis where counseling was especially salient. Participant’s 1, 3, and 4 all experienced peer process groups which allowed them the freedom to speak openly about personal life issues and struggles. These relationships extend into their current ministries and continue to provide encouragement. Only

participant 4 found seminary to be helpful relationally, but directly attributed this to “peripheral” aspects of seminary life including counseling and process groups. Indeed, this would likely be the case for all four of these participants because of the opportunities for counseling and processing they experienced. In one form or another, all described the relational isolation or loneliness of ministry. As a whole, this theme identifies the importance of seminary relationships for the growth and endurance of the pastor. It adds the unique therapeutic relationship as an additional source of help in special situations.

Marriage was a theme identified in participant’s 1, 3, 5, and 6. It should be noted that all of the participants were married at the time of the interviews, but three chose not to reference their marriage in any significant way for this study during the interview. Across the board, these participants noted that seminary does not do enough to prepare pastors for the complexities of marital and family life in ministry. Even participant 6, who noted how his marriage grew while in seminary, highlighted the lack of teaching on family time in ministry. Participant’s 1,3, and 5 spoke of the tensions experienced in ministry on family time and support. Participant 5, in particular, has had problems with his church leadership as a direct result of spending too much time with his family. Participant 3 indicated a lack of teaching on marriage in seminary, particularly in relation to both pastoral calling and family security (financial). Participant 5 also noted the absence of teaching on doing marriage counseling for others once in ministry. Most prominently, the sub-themes of loneliness, lack of support, and lack of time emerge from the meaning units.

Counseling was a theme emerging from the meaning units of three participants. It is tangentially related to the theme of marriage, as multiple participants noted the

importance of counseling for their marriages. It also bears a resemblance to the theme of relationships, as evidenced among four participants. It was further seen as an important addition to the highly academic approach of RTS Orlando. Participant's 3, 4, and 7 all spoke of their counseling experiences as helpful on personal and practical levels.

Participant 7 spoke of RTS Orlando's approach as different than "self help" models in its focus on rooting out core idols in people's lives. All three highlighted the importance of their own counseling as it related to caring for other people better. Participant 3, in particular, stressed the complexity of the modern world, and the importance of pastors with a capacity for psychological insight. All three would have preferred more training, while two expressed regret at not completing a master of arts in counseling degree.

Complexity was another closely related theme to emerge from the meaning units of participant's 2, 3, and 6. Each of these participants spoke of the complexity of ministry among broken people. Once again, this theme is closely related to the themes of relationships and counseling. Participant 2 noted the importance of spiritual formation on the seminary level in order to better prepare pastors for the significant external and internal realities of ministry life. Participant 3, an urban pastor, spoke of the irrelevance of current seminary education for the kinds of people he pastors. Participant 6 lamented the "people factor" evidenced in the criticism, personal attacks, and "emotional roller coaster" found in pastoral ministry. All three found seminary education lacking in its preparation for the many difficulties pastors face. Viewed through the larger lens of other related themes, most of the seven total participants felt that graduates of RTS Orlando are ill-prepared on a personal/emotional level and on a cultural/sociological level to face the challenges of today's pastorate.

The personal/emotional level just noted is well-evidenced in the next theme, emotion. Participant 2 talked specifically about not learning how to cope well with the emotional exhaustion of ministry. Though he learned about basic time-management issues, he felt unprepared to deal with the larger issues of exhaustion emerging from the difficult relationships in ministry. Participant 5 echoed these sentiments, and has found that healthy emotional boundaries have caused tension for him with church leadership. Further, healthy emotional expression as a man has caused tension with men in the church who do not know how to be vulnerable and honest with other men. Participant 5 was the only one to note the importance of seminary teaching on God-ordained emotions and their importance for worship and relationships.

A final theme within this relational cluster was pride. Participant 4 was the only pastor to comment in a way that emerged into a theme. A particularly salient issue for him has been the perception among parishioners that a pastor should stay busy. He notes the temptation to look busy, to devote time and energy to make it appear as if he is constantly busy with his ministry. Because of this, spiritual disciplines suffer. He also notes the external temptation to compare his church to others in order to measure success. Both he calls issues of pride. And both represent significant personal and relational challenges for his ministry.

A final cluster of themes (professors, preaching, expectation, gratitude, positives) focus on seminary education in particular, though they bear great relevance to ministry as well. The theme of professors could also be added to the relational cluster because of the common relational content of the meaning units. However, it best serves this study clustered within this group. As a theme, it emerged among three participants who shared

a common desire for deeper relationships with their seminary professors. Participant's 1, 3, and 7 shared a common desire for more relationship and more relevance from their professors. Participant's 1 and 7 cited specific professors who were helpful and specific professors who were unavailable. Seen through the larger lens of the previous theme of disconnection, each of these participants saw many of the professors as unable to relate to students or apply materials in a way that was meaningful. The fact that some professors lack ministry experience was also highlighted. Further, some professors were seen as cynical or antagonistic to other professors in a way that failed to model "integrity" for the students. Participant 1 summarized the issue in a way that all three might agree with: "I don't think some of the professors could translate their theology into working models for pastoral ministry."

The final four themes represent minor voices within the larger study. Each is represented by only one participant. However, each was included for its clear emergence from the meaning units for those participants. Preaching emerged as a theme for participant 2 who originally viewed ministry as preaching-focused. He noted that his seminary and internship experience affirmed this view, causing him to believe that the pastor's central role was to dispense doctrinal content to parishioners. The theme of expectation emerged for participant 4 who had much to say about what he originally expected from his education. Indeed, participant 4 was the most positive participant, and he had a "firmly formed expectation" of what to expect. His expectations did not include much of what others did say. He did not assume seminary would prepare him exhaustively for the many contingencies of pastoral life. In the end, he was quite pleased with the basic foundation laid by RTS Orlando.

This provides a clear transition to the final two themes – gratitude and positives. Participant 1 was grateful for his seminary education, and felt like he “got the best theological education he could.” Though he feared betraying his school with critical comments, he emphasized his great appreciation for the academic side of the program. Participant 3 discussed several positives he saw at RTS Orlando, highlighting the pastor he had, the process groups he benefited from, and the personal counseling he received. Though not degree requirements, participant 3 availed himself of peripheral things available through or around RTS Orlando. In particular, Prof. Sonny Doe provided wise counsel and mentoring which created “categories and paradigms that were inextricably linked” to his spiritual formation. Though critical of many aspects of RTS Orlando, both of these participants showed great appreciation for important aspects of their education.

Composite Structural Description

The composite structural description seen in Table 3 emerged from a careful and reflective analysis of the composite textural description. The four structures to emerge were relation to self, relation to others, space, and time.

Table 3 – Individual Structures by Participant.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Relation to Self	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Relation to Others	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Space	X		X			X	
Time	X			X	X		X

The structure of relation to self was seen in all seven participants. This is evidenced in personal reflection on multiple levels. Participants reflected on personal spirituality, emotional health, pride, and relational satisfaction. Spirituality emerged as a prominent theme, and underlying this theme was a common passion for connection with God. This emerged as a structure because of its prominent place for personal meaning and satisfaction. Participants were dissatisfied with seminary, in many respects, because it failed to provide at this essential and meaningful level. Indeed, it failed to provide the context for personal and intimate connection with the sacred in professor relationships, in the classroom, and in other important ways. In its focus on academics, RTS Orlando provides for one important value in their commitment to theological education but lacks another core value, spiritual formation. Relation to self is also evidenced in a value on emotional health and relational satisfaction. These, too, are important values for pastors who have seen the emotional/relational complexities of ministry, and who sense the need for training in the art of counseling, human emotion, and congregational care. Seminary,

in many respects, failed to prepare most of the pastors in this study adequately for what are now core values for their pastoral lives and ministry.

The structure of relation to others was also seen in all seven participants. The participants highly valued relational ministry. Each spoke in unique ways of the importance of seminary relationships. For most, this structure is undervalued in their seminary education. Though a prominent value for these pastors in their current ministries, all but one participant lamented the relational climate and preparation of RTS Orlando. It is fair to say that while seminary under-valued the relational dimension in its content and methodology, all of these pastors have placed a high value on embodied life in their ministries. It is also safe to assume that all would champion the further development of relational content and methodology at the seminary level. Participants found great value in the relational aspects of seminary they did encounter, however.

The structure of time appeared as an underlying structure for participant's 1, 4, 5, and 7. This structure is evidenced in the high value placed on meaningful time with God and others. This stands in contrast to the busyness fostered by seminary life and coursework, and found in their demanding and time-consuming pastoral ministries. Meaningful and sacred time is compromised by other activities. In seminary, it is compromised by the busywork given in courses as well as the excessive academic demands. In pastoral ministry, pastors seek to meet the demands of parishioners while attempting to maintain time for spiritual disciplines. Often, the former wins. The participants feel spiritually weary, as a result. Indeed, they feel as if time is not on their side.

The structure of space is closely related. One might summarize the essence of their experiences by saying that sacred space is more highly valued and stands in stark contrast to occupied space. Occupied space is evidenced in the busy life. In seminary, there was little room for personal reflection, prayer, time with professors, an opportunity process through coursework, or venues for practical ministry reflection. These things are valued by the participants, thus becoming sacred, areas where God can reveal Himself and deepen them personally and practically. What could have been sacred space was often occupied for these participants by busy work, information/content laden lectures, a packed academic schedule, and other seminary priorities. Interestingly, the academic has the potential to be sacred space, as evidenced in several participants. However, when the academic became “water from a fire house,” as noted by participant 2, what could have been sacred became occupied, constricting, even profane.

In sum, the participants in this study contributed to a growing body of data on pastoral preparation and life. The essences of their experiences reveal what prior studies have alluded to. A gap was revealed between the expectations of their educational preparation and the realities they experienced once in ministry. Most of what the participants found helpful during their seminary years were un-required, peripheral seminary experiences like process groups, counseling, pastoral relationships, and relationships. Though all were grateful for their theological and academic preparation, the thematic and structural findings reflect a basic dissatisfaction with their seminary preparation.

CHAPTER 5. RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

While much has been written on the emotional demands of pastoral ministry (Darling, Hill, and McWey, 2004; Blanton and Morris, 1999; Krause, Ellison, and Wulff, 1998), little attention has been devoted to the educational preparation of pastors and its influence on their expectations of ministry. Hoge and Wenger (2005) highlighted a gap between expectations formed in seminary, and the realities of pastoral life. However, while the study illuminated the gap between expectation and reality, it failed to substantially explore the pastors' experience of this gap. This study represents a qualitative exploration of that gap among ordained ministers who graduated from a common seminary (Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando) and in a common theological tradition (Presbyterian). This chapter includes a summary of the study, a summary and discussion of the findings, the significance of the study, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

In this qualitative study, seven participants were asked to share their experiences of the expectations they formed during their educational preparation for the pastorate, and the realities they experienced once in ministry. All seven participants were male graduates of Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida (RTS-O). Six of the seven graduated from seminary to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church in America,

while one graduated to be ordained into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The participants ranged in age from 32 to 44 years of age. All were married. All were white males.

The participants were randomly selected using an alumni database from RTS-O. The study required that participants be graduates of RTS-O who had not studied under the researcher, and were ordained to ministry for five years or more. Participants had to sign an informed consent document attesting to their understanding of their study and their willingness to share their lived experiences of the phenomenon.

The data was collected through interviews at the clinical office of the researcher in Oviedo, Florida, but not on the campus of RTS-O. The researcher posed an initial open-ended question, and followed up with relevant questions. The interviews lasted approximately one-hour. All interviews were digitally audio-recorded, and transcribed by an independent transcriber who signed a confidentiality agreement.

Summary of Findings

A number of themes emerged from the data which reveal much about the lived experience of educational expectation and ministry reality. Among the themes, disconnection emerged as the most prominent, which is reasonable given the focus of the study. It illuminates the gap between expectation and reality, between educational preparation and ministry application. Indeed, it might be argued that all of the remaining themes provide commentary on the major theme of disconnection.

Though disconnection appears as a common theme among participants, it takes on a different meaning for each of the participants because of the uniqueness of their

experiences and the differences in their expectations. All of the participants spoke in unison regarding the over-emphasis on intellectual-doctrinal content in seminary. While most were appreciative of the solid content they received, they found seminary to be largely irrelevant for the relational demands of ministry. Participants used different expressions to describe the disconnection between intellectual and relational concerns. Participants talked about a “failure to translate” academic content into practical application, noted a lack of “integration” between academic and practical matters, lamented the lack of relevance to contemporary ministry demands, contrasted the “abstract” principles learned in seminary with real and practical issues of life, and cited the disconnect between the “academics” of seminary and “the people factor” of ministry. One participant summarized the overall feeling well, noting that seminary education is “disconnected from the real world” and “divorced from where most people live.” Some participants expressed greater frustration and cynicism than others. In general, there was a consistent sentiment that seminary education needed to move from a focus on information to spiritual formation.

With this, spirituality emerged as another prominent theme. Participants lamented the busyness of seminary, and related this to the busyness they discovered in their pastoral work, as well. There was a general consensus that the patterns learned in seminary crossover to pastoral ministry. Habits of spiritual neglect and apathy learned in seminary continued into ministry despite desires to the contrary. Seminary spiritual “dryness,” as one participant noted, was directly related to an absence of time and teaching on prayer by professors. Spiritual formation is not seen as a priority in seminary education, and not modeled by professors. Thus, participants viewed seminary as failing

to teach and model the most necessary and core attributes of pastoral life, summarized as spiritual maturity, prayer, and rest. Seminary education, in general, was viewed by participants as inclined toward information gathering rather than spiritual formation. The most positive participant viewed seminary spirituality optimistically, in part, because he took courses over a longer duration and had time and opportunity to read the course texts devotionally. It is fair to conclude that in its attempt to teach as much theological content as possible in a three year divinity program, seminary education at RTS-O inadvertently habituates students to busyness and teaches students to de-value their spiritual life.

A cluster of themes (relationships, marriage, counseling, complexity, emotion, pride) emerged with an emphasis on the relational matrix of seminary and ministry. All of the participants spoke in some way about the relational complexity of ministry. RTS-O, in most cases, failed to prepare them for this complexity in its standard divinity program content. However, “peripheral” aspects of seminary life including counseling and process groups contributed to the preparation of several of the participants. In these settings, participants learned how to deal with crises, both personal and marital. However, at another level, participants found that these “peripheral” relational settings mirrored the relational matrix of ministry, preparing them in advance for the difficult work of relating to people who are different or who need care. Further, these settings gave them concrete ways of coping with the relational isolation and loneliness of ministry. As a whole, this cluster of themes identifies the importance of seminary relationships for the growth and endurance of the pastor. It adds the unique therapeutic relationship as an additional source of help in special situations.

. A final cluster of themes (professors, preaching, expectation, gratitude, positives) focus on seminary education in particular, though they bear great relevance to ministry as well. A clear desire among participants was more time with professors. Seen through the larger lens of the previous theme of disconnection, participants saw many of the professors as unable to relate to students or apply materials in a way that was meaningful. The fact that some professors lack ministry experience was also highlighted. Further, some professors were seen as cynical or antagonistic to other professors in a way that failed to model “integrity” for the students. Participant 1 summarized the issue in a way that all might agree saying, “I don’t think some of the professors could translate their theology into working models for pastoral ministry.” Despite this, almost all of the participants expressed some form of positive commentary on their time at RTS-O. Even the harshest critics of their education expressed gratitude for certain aspects of it. In particular, participants found themselves well-prepared for certain aspects of ministry, including ordination exams, teaching, and preaching.

Several underlying structures also emerged in the course of the analysis. Common to all of the participants was the qualitative structure of relation to self, which shows evidence of the meaning of personal spirituality, emotional health, humility (versus pride), and relational satisfaction. Participants almost universally expressed their high value on connection with God. Participants were dissatisfied with seminary education, in many respects, because it failed to provide a context for this important value in and through a lack of professor modeling, classroom teaching, and more. Relation to self is also evidenced in a value on emotional health and relational satisfaction. These, too, are important values for pastors who have seen the emotional/relational complexities

of ministry, and who sense the need for training in the art of counseling, human emotion, and congregational care. Seminary, in many respects, failed to prepare most of the pastors in this study adequately for what are now core values for their pastoral lives and ministry.

The structure of relation to others was also seen in all seven participants. The participants highly valued relational ministry. Each spoke in unique ways of the importance of seminary relationships. For most, this structure is undervalued in their seminary education. Though a prominent value for these pastors in their current ministries, all but one participant lamented the relational climate and preparation of RTS Orlando. It is fair to say that while seminary under-valued the relational dimension in its content and methodology, all of these pastors have placed a high value on embodied life in their ministries. It is also safe to assume that all would champion the further development of relational content and methodology at the seminary level. Participants found great value in the relational aspects of seminary they did encounter, however.

The structure of time appeared as an underlying structure for most of the participants, evidenced in the high value placed on meaningful time with God and others. This stands in contrast to the busyness fostered by seminary life and coursework, and found in their demanding and time-consuming pastoral ministries. Meaningful and sacred time is compromised by other activities. In seminary, it is compromised by the busywork given in courses as well as the excessive academic demands. In pastoral ministry, pastors seek to meet the demands of parishioners while attempting to maintain time for spiritual disciplines. Often, the former wins. The participants feel spiritually weary, as a result. Indeed, they feel as if time is not on their side.

The structure of space is closely related. One might summarize the essence of their experiences by saying that sacred space is more highly valued and stands in stark contrast to occupied space. Occupied space is evidenced in the busy life. In seminary, there was little room for personal reflection, prayer, time with professors, an opportunity process through coursework, or venues for practical ministry reflection. These things are valued by the participants, thus becoming sacred. They are areas where God can reveal Himself and deepen them personally and practically. What could have been sacred space was often occupied for these participants by busy work, information/content laden lectures, a packed academic schedule, and other seminary priorities. Interestingly, the academic has the potential to be sacred space, as evidenced in several participants. However, when the academic became “water from a fire house,” as noted by participant 2, what could have been sacred became occupied, constricting, even profane. A challenge posed to seminary education, as a result, is how it will provide space for the kinds of things these participants value, and have found meaningful in ministry.

Significance of the Study

This study represents the first known study of a particular seminary on the gap between education and ministry reality. While prior studies have provided a multi-denominational and macro-level look at the problem (Hoge and Wenger, 2005; Zikmund, Lummis and Chang, 1998), this study focuses on one seminary in one denominational tradition. And while these studies have provided important quantitative data, this study provides a qualitative picture of the kinds of things seminary graduates in pastoral ministry find meaningful and important. Indeed, Patton (2002) notes the significance of

qualitative studies for educational environments. This study may provide RTS-O important information, while providing an impetus for future researchers to focus on other seminaries in other traditions.

Most importantly, the study highlights the disconnection between educational preparation and ministry reality through the lens of one seminary. As evidenced in the Literature Review, educational preparation for pastors has a long and rich history. However, the participants in this study highlight the fact that the 21st century invites new ways of conceiving of seminary preparation because of the complexities of contemporary pastoral life. As was discussed in the Literature Review, Presbyterian seminaries in the late 19th and 20th centuries took an intellectualistic turn, focusing more on debates around theological orthodoxy and less on pastoral life and character (Noll, 1992). In particular, the study illuminates the current need to re-focus on pastoral life and character in the Presbyterian tradition. The participants in this study were quite satisfied with their theological preparation, but find that contemporary realities require a greater focus on spiritual formation, relational preparation, and methodology. One might contend that as in the days of Charles Spurgeon, pastoral preparation needs to balance its focus on *both* content and character, both academic preparation and pastoral living (Drummond, 1992).

In sum, this study provides a thick and rich qualitative account to which other studies have only alluded (Hoge and Wenger, 2005; Zikmund, Lummis and Chang, 1998). While these studies refer to the gap between educational preparation and ministry reality, this study explores how the gap is manifested in a specific way, in a specific tradition, at a specific seminary. Future studies should focus on how the gap manifests itself at other seminaries and in other traditions.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, the study is limited in the number of participants used. Because of the voluminous data elicited in phenomenological research, and because a single researcher was involved in the investigation, the study was limited to seven participants. The researcher expects that future studies will provide an even greater amount of narrative data on the phenomenon.

Second, for a variety of reasons the study is limited to males. This does not emerge from any bias on the part of the researcher. Ideally, a study of this nature would include males and females. However, the researcher could not identify a female graduate of RTS-O currently in full-time pastoral ministry. Further, prior research indicates that the kind of difficulties women experience in pastoral ministry can be significantly different than men (Zikmund, Lummis and Chang, 1998). The researcher believes that it is important that a similar study be done focusing on the unique challenges women face, particularly in the male-dominated Presbyterian tradition.

Third, the study is focused on a conservative Presbyterian seminary in the South. Noll (1992) notes that the Presbyterian tradition tends toward a focus on intellectual and doctrinal content in contrast to pastoral character and service. It is expected that other seminaries in different traditions may have different emphases. Further, seminaries in different regions of the United States (and globally, in fact) may have different emphases. Therefore, this study cannot be generalized to all seminaries. Indeed, it may not be able to be generalized to other Presbyterian seminaries in different regions or countries, for seminaries even within the same tradition have different faculties, curriculums, and foci.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Because of the inherent limitations in this study, it would be profitable for future researchers to do studies which fill in the gaps elaborated in the previous section. Indeed, the literature would benefit from studies that account for a more diverse range of participants. All of the participants in this study were white males from a conservative Presbyterian seminary in the South. Whether or not one might find a similar gap between expectation and reality, for instance, among black women from a liberal seminary in the North is yet to be seen. The gap between expectation and reality has been posited in general terms (Hoge and Wenger, 2005) across gender and denomination, but its specific manifestations are yet to be seen in other seminary and tradition-specific contexts. Might this gap look different among Catholics, Methodists, Charismatics, or Baptists? Would the gap manifest uniquely in an urban setting, in middle America, or in the global South? How would women experience the same phenomenon? These and other questions represent the landscape of future qualitative research on the gap between expectation and reality.

Conclusion

With this study included among others on pastoral education and life, there is a clear consensus that pastors face a myriad of challenges in their unique vocation. From the literature review, it was shown that pastors experience burnout, compassion fatigue, marital stress, moral failure, interpersonal conflict, depression, doubt, feelings of inadequacy, administrative complexity, and more. Even more, as they reflect back on

their educational experiences, they report that their seminaries failed to train them adequately for the realities of ministry. A wide range of reasons may account for this across a broad range of seminaries and denominations. However, this study brought focus and specificity in its concentration on one particular seminary and denominational tradition.

More than any other theme represented in this study, disconnection was reported as a universal experience among the participants. Reflecting back on the original research question, one can clearly acknowledge that for these participants, a gap between educational expectations and ministry realities was experienced. This study provides rich qualitative perceptions that can now be utilized by Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, as well as other seminaries that deem it to be useful, to narrow that gap. Indeed, as that gap narrows and as seminaries begin to provide a more complete education to their students, it will be interesting to see whether the symptoms of burnout, inadequacy, stress, interpersonal conflict, and more diminish. For future researchers, this question may rise to the surface. It is this researcher's hope that the findings reflected within this study provide both the content and impetus for positive change, for the sake of the next generation of pastors.

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