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A TALE OF TWO SCHOOLS:
THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERS IN PROTESTANT SEMINARIES

by

Patricia A. Rhodes

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014

Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

Scholars and practitioners increasingly consider the spiritual development of leaders to be essential, not only for individual well-being, but that of the culture at large. This is particularly important for clergy, a profession centered on spiritual leadership. While the institutions in which most Protestant ministers pursue training have historically privileged scholarship over spirituality, this has changed substantially since the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) added spiritual development of students to its accreditation standards in 1992. Since then, seminaries have sought to comply in various ways.

This study explored two Protestant seminaries, addressing these questions: (a) what is the process seminaries engage in as they seek to implement a model for the spiritual development of leaders? (b) What is the lived experience of leaders who are impacted by a seminary's spiritual formation approach? (c) How do seminaries provide formational opportunities for a leader's personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and public witness/social concern, as mandated in the ATS standards for accreditation? (d) How does the spiritual formation model of a seminary that added it to an established structure compare to that of one that incorporated it from the start?

Using qualitative methodologies, this study relied upon extensive document analysis, interviews (with alumni, students, administrators and faculty), a student focus group and on-site participant observation. The findings suggested that (a) the core values of seminary founders sets the trajectory for the institution's spirituality emphasis (b) key leaders—high level administrators as well as faculty members—play an integral role, not only in implementing, sustaining and supporting the spiritual formation model, but in the

personal development of students themselves, and (c) changes in the culture and student demographics increasingly elevate the need for a curricular approach to spiritual formation.

This study should be of interest to anyone interested in Protestant theological education. Professional schools may also gain insights into the challenges involved in seeking to integrate professional, personal, human and spiritual values into their programs. Finally, the study has heuristic value, providing impetus for future exploration into how organizations and leaders can better embody and reflect human and spiritual values.

DEDICATION

To Joe...words can't express, so I won't even try.

And to leaders in every profession—clergy or otherwise—who struggle day in and day out to embody an authentically spiritual way of being in their life and work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A journey like this never takes place in isolation, and indeed, without the support, encouragement, challenges and insights of a large community of sojourners, I would not be standing at this fork in the road. Although it is impossible to identify them all, there are a few significant individuals who played critical roles along the way.

Dr. Theresa Monroe was a true gift as my committee chair, ever challenging me to ask the harder questions and sharing my excitement when treasures of understanding emerged. She understood what was really at stake, and I could not have asked for a better mentor.

Dr. Mark Foreman and Dr. David Herrera also served on my committee, each one helping me to shape the study with their unique insights and probing questions. I count them both as lifelong friends and am thankful for their support.

I consider myself incredibly privileged to have been introduced via email to Dr. E. Glenn Hinson, spirituality scholar and gracious encourager who has walked this path far longer than I, and for whom I have the utmost respect. I am deeply grateful for the time and energy he so freely gave to help me formulate my research.

The entire academic community at the USD School of Leadership and Education Sciences has been a great family these four years. My own cohort taught me much with their love of learning and diverse research interests. I am so appreciative of the few who walked by my side and kept me going in the tough times. They know who they are. There were also two professors who were invaluable for my own growth during these four years. First, Dr. Robert Donmoyer—a constant encourager who made me feel at home from the first class I took under his leadership. Dr. Lea Hubbard was an incredible

resource who taught me everything I know about qualitative research. I have learned so much from both of these scholars.

Finally I must give thanks to God, who has faithfully loved me and continually called me to higher planes of understanding and joy. Without the presence of the Divine at each juncture on this journey, I am certain that the pieces would never have fallen into place. Gratitude seems a paltry response, but I offer it with a full heart and a spirit that is eager to walk together wherever the next venture takes us.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

In an address to leaders in North America, Bill George (2007), Harvard business professor and former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Medtronic corporation, challenged them with a moving message to turn things around, noting the following:

America today faces a major crisis in leadership that spans the fields of politics, government, business, non-profits, education and religion. Confidence in our leaders, especially in business and politics, has fallen to an all-time low. Recent surveys by the Gallup poll show that only 22 percent of Americans trust our business leaders, and even fewer trust our political leaders. That's not just a problem – it represents the potential for disaster. (n.p.)

George, speaking from his own experience as a successful CEO known for an emphasis on healing patients rather than increasing revenue, went on to make a strong call for leaders who could tap deeply into their own spirituality in order to function ethically and authentically.

The burgeoning literature on leadership and spirituality suggests that this is no passing fad, but instead a movement (Western, 2008) in which both scholars and practitioners hope to shape a new paradigm. Indeed, Patricia Aburdine (2007), author of *Megatrends 2010*, argues forcefully that of the seven critical developments for leaders in the new millennium, the focus on spirituality is the greatest. Citing an abundance of statistics and providing colorful illustrations of professionals from all walks of life, Aburdine insists that we are in a season of unprecedented global change in which the internal world of a leader has become paramount.

The impetus for connecting spirituality with leadership is diverse—from concern over ethics scandals to the recognition of an ever-increasing demand for global competencies, to the need for a more holistic mindset in the workplace—but the common

theme is a clarion call for leaders to embrace the importance of spirituality in their life and work (Steingard, 2005). Indeed, the nascent body of empirical evidence points to the benefits of spirituality for such things as personal productivity, reduction of absenteeism and employee turnover (Fry, 2003), even going so far as to indicate that spirituality produces a competitive advantage, as demonstrated by Mitroff and Denton (1999) in their landmark study of religion, spirituality and values in the workplace.

Perhaps more importantly however, is the growing realization that leaders cannot effectively bifurcate their inner selves from the exercise of leadership without serious consequences, not only for their own well-being but that of the culture at large (Fairholm, 1998; Baudot, 2011). As Baudot argues:

Whether one believes the spirit is grounded in the epigenetic material of the human brain or in the transcendent ether of an unseen Universal Intelligence some would call God, this dimension of life is essential to the humanity and harmony of modern society. (p. 16)

Spiritual leaders are those then, who embrace this dimension of life by seeking to integrate their entire being—body, mind, heart and spirit—in their exercise of leadership. Fry (2003) suggests that when this takes place, it will be “like a nuclear reactor in that it generates the fusion necessary to power the learning organizations of the new millennium” (p. 718).

This conviction has led to a call for more holistic leadership training across all disciplines—from programs to develop spiritual resilience in the army (Pargament & Sweeney, 2011), to the formation of spirituality groups in business organizations such as the Academy of Management (Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005), to the addition of spirituality courses in leadership studies programs, and entire specializations in medicine (Carson & Koenig, 2008). As Dolan and Altman (2012) suggest: “Today, thousands of

individuals representing a new breed of visionary leaders are emerging in all fields of human endeavor around the world. They are leading a quiet revolution energized by the power of the soul” (p. 25). This quiet revolution has created a substantial body of data in the scholarly literature, in which “spirituality and leadership have even been characterized as ‘falling in love’” (Dent et al., 2005, p. 641).

If it is true that the exercise of leadership in secular disciplines such as those above mandates this sort of holistic approach, what might this suggest about the profession of clergy, those leaders for whom spirituality is intrinsic to the very nature of their career and daily life? Not only are these men and women tasked with the responsibility of fostering spiritual growth among individuals and the community at large, but they play a distinctive spiritual role in the culture (Doolittle, 2007; Foster, 2006). Given that people in need seek assistance from ministerial leaders more than any other helping profession, members of the clergy potentially yield an astounding impact on human development (Williamson & Sandage, 2009).

Today, those currently training to serve in ministerial leadership roles in North America number well over 81,000, with women and people of color being the fastest growing subgroups (Aleshire, 2011b). While one might assume that a central part of their training relates to the development of their spiritual selves, this is not necessarily the case, and in fact, higher level education for clergy has often been accused of the very sort of unhealthy bifurcation that leadership theorists increasingly critique (Hands & Fehr, 1993; Keely, 2003). Clearly more needs to be understood about this perplexing reality.

This dissertation research sought to make meaning of this enigma by exploring two Protestant seminaries and the leaders who were trained by them. The purpose of this

chapter is to introduce the study. I will first provide a brief sketch of the role of theological seminaries in North American culture in regards to the spiritual development of clergy. I will then explore the contributions of some current empirical studies, as well as the limitations to the knowledge we have, demonstrating the need for further understanding regarding how ministers prepare for their role in society. Finally I will explicate the specific purpose of my study, including the research questions that framed it.

Theological Education and Spiritual Formation of Ministers

Protestants have historically considered spiritual formation of their members to be within the purview of the local church. In America's early years, ministers were educated in liberal arts institutions such as Harvard or Princeton, followed by a six-month apprenticeship in a church under another minister. The system had its weaknesses however, and to address the gaps, the first Protestant seminary was founded in 1808 (Carroll, Wheeler, & Aleshire, 1997). While Protestant theological institutions soon began to proliferate, they were modeled largely after their liberal arts forbearers, tending to focus primarily on the student's acquisition of theological knowledge, with the assumption that spiritual development would take place within churches and families (Hinson, 1973; Lindbeck, 1988).

How well churches have accomplished this task continues to be a contentious topic, but as religious analyst Armstrong (2009) suggests, Protestant seminaries' propensity to dichotomize theology and spirituality has been detrimental to ministerial spiritual development, a reality exacerbated by the fact that ministerial candidates who enter seminary have often embraced faith as older adolescents or adults and thus have

little spiritual background. This, plus the growing Western custom of parishioners moving from church to church or even bypassing the church entirely in favor of an allegiance to a parachurch organization, produces a field of seminarians that spans a wide spectrum of spiritual maturity (Brushaber, 1993; Carroll et al., 1997), from students with a rich Christian heritage to those having no religious training at all ("Seminaries and the," 1999). Beyond this, there is an increasing trend of seekers who attend seminary as a means of furthering their spiritual quest for meaning (Edwards, 1980; Frykholm, 2011).

Accreditation and the Call for Integration of Spiritual Formation

In the final quarter of the twentieth century, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), an agency tasked with providing accreditation for seminaries of all faiths within the United States, began to assert that there were deficiencies in ministerial spiritual formation, making the case for a stronger commitment to it within theological institutions (Edwards, 1980; Hinson, 1973; "Voyage, vision, venture," 1972). Often met with resistance by seminary administrators who believed that this was not their domain, the ATS formed a second task force on the spiritual development of ministers that conducted research from 1978-80. Among other things, the findings of this group suggested that most Protestant seminaries still had no intentional program for the spiritual formation of their students (Edwards, 1980). In retrospect, Daniel Aleshire (2011b), executive director of the ATS, notes that it is not surprising that institutions which were built to endure, with identities rooted in the teachings of scholars of some 1500 years past, would be resistant to change, at least in the short term.

But in the long term, change has taken place in response to several factors. First, a sense of dissatisfaction among both churches and clergy regarding the level of spiritual

preparedness for ministry among seminary graduates began to emerge (Naidoo, 2011; Wheeler, Miller, & Aleshire, 2007). Second, interaction and discourse between Catholics and Protestants, possibly the fruit of Vatican II, opened the door for Protestants to explore Catholic spirituality, which connected them to a breadth of historical Christian traditions, teachings and formational practices (Hinson, 1986). Finally, in 1992, the ATS added a requirement to include spiritual formation in seminary curriculum and degree programs oriented toward ministerial leadership in their standards for accreditation (Frykholm, 2011). While this remains nonspecific and still does not apply to purely theological degrees, seminaries have sought to comply in varying measure (Association of Theological Schools [ATS], 2012).

Spiritual Formation in Protestant Seminaries Today

In their original call for changes in seminarian spiritual development approaches, the ATS cautioned against simply adjusting the curriculum or adding a staff member to give oversight, warning that this could lead to “dangerous compartmentalization and pigeon-holing, militating against the sought end result” (“Voyage, vision, venture,” 1972, p. 197). Due to the broad spectrum of institutions the ATS oversees, they offered concepts and overarching principles, but did not set an agenda with specific guidelines, or provide markers by which seminaries might measure their progress (Keely, 2003; Reisz, 2003). As a result, there remains little agreement regarding what formational approaches within seminaries should look like, or how to best accomplish the challenging task (Foster, 2006; Fuller, 2007; Hess, 2008; “Seminaries and the,” 1999a; Williamson & Sandage, 2009; Wood, 1991). While Catholics have a rich monastic heritage with historical “rules” regarding formation, as well as detailed instructions from the Vatican

(United States Conference of Bishops, 2006), Protestants are at a distinct disadvantage by comparison. As Wood argues: “Among those who grant that spiritual formation may have a legitimate place in theological education, few are inclined to think that there is anything at all simple about the answer to the next question: What sort of place does it have? What is its role?” (p. 550).

This can be seen in the contentious nature of the discourse regarding the relationship between intellectual/theological and experiential/formational emphases, which continues to plague seminaries (Hands & Fehr, 1993; Keely, 2003). The two are often pitted against each other, viewed as competing for resources such as student study time or faculty attention (Smith, 1996). This has created a gulf between the two components that Galindo (2001) argues has been “disastrous” for its effect on student learning and development. As institutions situated within a social order that tends toward a dualistic esteem of knowledge over praxis and cognition over experience, the battle to prioritize spiritual development is an uphill one for seminaries, many of whose stakeholders remain uncertain about what steps they ought to take (Finke & Dougherty, 2002; Foster, 2006; Hands & Fehr, 1993; Smith, 1996).

Closely related to this struggle is that of determining the appropriate institutional locus for spiritual development. While there are clarion calls for an integrative formational approach that will encompass every facet of a seminarian’s life (Hinson, 1973), many schools have addressed the need for compliance with formational standards by either adding courses on spiritual development to an already full curriculum (Jones, 1987) or establishing special programs that are extemporaneous to the educational process (Gilpin, 1988, p. 6). Some insist that it is up to individual professors to embrace

a formational praxis, while others make the case that seminaries must provide communitarian settings, or even transform deeply-rooted paradigms in order to elevate the role of spiritual formation (Smith, 1996; Winkelmes, 2004). Leaders of denominations with firmly entrenched practices and priorities weigh in on the discourse, as well as scholars who decry the role of seminaries regarding any focused formational attention at all (Jones, 1987; Smith, 1988).

The one thing that most *can* agree on is that seminaries face enormous pressure to produce results in terms of ministerial leadership readiness. Dearborn (1995) notes:

We have entrusted to our seminaries and theological schools a daunting responsibility. They are expected to prepare wise, compassionate, theologically astute and pastorally proficient servants who can lead the Church and our societies through the crises of the twenty-first century. (p. 7)

This pressure is manifested in churches whose parishioners tend to point the finger at seminaries if they believe that their ministers seem inadequate or unprepared for the task at hand, at times accusing schools of churning out graduates “with the right answers, but to the wrong questions” (Harkness, 2001, p. 143).

Statement of the Problem

Protestant seminaries could glean much from the journeys of other institutions if they had access to the results of empirical studies of existing formation programs, including the processes by which these have been implemented and the leaders influenced by them. There is, however, a dearth of research on seminarian spiritual formation (Lincoln, 2010; Reisz, 2003; Wheeler et al., 2007). While there have been a plethora of studies on the spirituality of students in the social sciences, seminarians have been largely ignored, which, as Williamson and Sandage (2009) point out, is a strange

phenomenon given the size of the population of graduate students in higher education theological institutions.

Limitations in Current Research

The limited body of quantitative research concerning theological institutions does not provide thick description of the spiritual experiences of students, and at times statistical results are contradictory. For example, the ATS conducts a graduate student questionnaire every year, with one of the items enabling the graduates to rank the three most meaningful components of their seminary experience. As one of the choices offered, spiritual formation has never garnered a place in the graduate's top three spots. In fact, graduates over the past few years have consistently rated their training in spiritual formation significantly lower than other forms of training such as biblical studies or Christian history, but at the same time ranked it higher in terms of perceived importance (Association of Theological Schools, 2011).

During the same time period, in a separate longitudinal study that included 2300 seminary graduates, the alumni ranked their seminary formation experience much higher than those in the ATS graduate survey (Wheeler et al., 2007). What made the difference? Why the discrepancy? Unless we can probe the narratives that accompany the lives of some of these students, we will never be able to ascertain possible answers.

The few qualitative studies that involve seminaries also have certain limitations in addressing the need to understand formation programs. First, they tend to focus on students and graduates, but not on administrators, faculty or ministerial leaders who are now practicing in the field (Naidoo, 2011). One exception is a well-placed study of the culture of two different seminaries that included an exploration of the spiritual

atmosphere (Carroll et al., 1997), but it did not explicate the spiritual formation component in-depth nor seek to understand the processes by which each of the schools embraced the difficult challenge of implementing their particular model¹.

Need for Shared Understanding

Clearly there is a broad need for shared understanding of Protestant seminary approaches to spiritual formation. As far back as 1980, Tilden Edwards (1980), leader of the ATS task force on spiritual formation in theological schools wrote: “It is important that schools pursuing spiritual formation as an integrated element of their mission are in communication with one another. These can be formative times for this aspect of theological education” (p. 39). The degree to which this kind of communication among Protestants has taken place is uncertain, but given their vast differences and diverse historical traditions, it has most likely been minimal. In-depth studies that delve into seminary formational approaches—the people, programs and processes—are critical for bridging this gap.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this dissertation inquiry was to elicit greater understanding of Protestant seminaries and their formational approaches by exploring the models of two very different institutions. One of these was founded in 1947, with little initial emphasis on the spiritual development of students, and has sought to incorporate it into their established system over the past few decades, while the other implemented an integrative spiritual formation focus almost from its beginning in 1992. Specifically, I studied the

¹ Throughout this dissertation I use the term “model” in a non-technical sense to refer to a seminary’s general approach toward spiritual formation, which varies from school to school.

journey each institution has traveled, seeking to identify their distinguishing characteristics and components, and the lived experience of those involved—from administrators, to faculty, to graduates working in the field.

By immersing myself within their worlds, I wanted to be able to tell the story of each institution and its stakeholders in a way that not only explicated their uniqueness, but could serve as an encouragement to other seminaries which are at various stages in the process of establishing their own formational model. To that end, I explored the following general questions:

- What is the process that two Protestant seminaries engage in as they seek to implement a model for the spiritual development of leaders?
- What is the lived experience of leaders who are impacted by the spiritual formation approach at two Protestant seminaries?
- How do two Protestant seminary's spiritual formation models provide formational opportunities for a leader's personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and public witness/social concern, as mandated in the ATS standards for accreditation?
- How does the spiritual formation model of a seminary that added it to an established structure compare to that of a seminary that incorporated it from the start?

In summary, the overall purpose of this research was to compare and contrast two different seminaries in order to more fully understand not only the process by which they seek to develop their leaders spiritually, but the means by which the relevant stakeholders

have come to embrace their particular approach. In the chapter that follows, I will further explore the literature that has influenced my framing of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In their allegory of a modern business leader, Bolman and Deal (2011) suggest that much of the breakdown in modern society may be the detritus of leadership theory and praxis that has neglected the soul. They poignantly point out:

Perhaps we lost our way when we forgot that the heart of leadership lies in the hearts of leaders. We fooled ourselves, thinking that sheer bravado or sophisticated analytic techniques could respond to our deepest concern. We lost touch with a most precious human gift—our spirit. (p. 6)

The anthropological approach toward this “gift” of spirit suggests that it is integral to human nature, cutting across cultures and traditions (Wolfteich, 2009). Indeed, research indicates that at least 82 percent of the world’s population follow some religious or spiritual tradition, making it imperative that leadership theorists explore possible connections between the exercise of effective leadership and one’s spiritual beliefs, values and paradigms (Fry & Kriger, 2009).

The attempt to do just that has illuminated an intriguing connection between the constructs of leadership and spirituality. For example, one meta-analysis of 150 different studies on the relationship found a clear overlap between the values and teachings in many spiritual traditions and those of leaders who were able to motivate followers, inspire trust and create a positive ethical climate (Reave, 2005, p. 656). The proliferation of findings such as these has inspired a burgeoning body of organizational and leadership theory regarding spirituality in the workplace, with tenets increasingly embraced by both scholars and practitioners (Dent et al., 2005), giving rise to what has been called a “new breed of visionary leaders” (Dolan & Altman, 2012, p. 25). Indeed, a shift toward understanding the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of effective leadership

spirituality is seen as critical for learning organizations in light of increasing globalization and its ensuing complexities (Steingard, 2005).

Leadership and Spirituality among Clergy

Nowhere is the connection between leadership and spirituality manifested more succinctly than in the clergy; leaders whose profession by its very nature demands spiritual wisdom, depth and articulation. The cultural significance of this group, estimated to be as large as 600,000 and overseeing some 350,000 congregations in the U.S., cannot be overstated (Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2006). Often overworked, underpaid and at times underrepresented in public discourse (Doolittle, 2007), these men and women are not only tasked with the challenge of nourishing their own sense of well-being and meaning-making while guiding and enhancing that of others, but are expected to champion social justice and peace for humankind at the same time (Hands & Fehr, 1993).

A failure for clergy to attend to personal spirituality would be inane, given the breadth of their job description and the expectations of those they serve. Foster (2006) suggests that in addition to ordinary tasks like teaching and preaching and being on call for individual, communal or societal crises, people expect them to:

... expertly field questions about sacred texts and ethics; to preside competently at public rituals; to evoke, welcome, and respond to often fumbling articulations of highly intimate spiritual experience and deeply personal need... to sense which aspects of their particular religious tradition might best provide resources for healing or liberating; they must know how to be prophetic in given situations and how to frame appropriate responses for changing situations and circumstances in congregations and communities. (p. 272)

The ability to meet demands such as these cannot come solely from a body of knowledge or specific skill sets. Indeed, it would seem that of all professions, clergy must possess a

great deal of spiritual resilience and inner well-being. But how do they acquire this?

What types of training does a minister undertake that might ready him or her for this enormous spectrum of responsibility?

It might seem obvious that the education clergy relies on to prepare them to lead, would of necessity encompass their own spiritual development. This, however, has not always been the case. Indeed, there remains an ongoing debate among stakeholders over questions such as: Should ministerial candidates applying for graduate level education be required to demonstrate a certain level of spiritual maturity? What role does the church have in the spiritual development of aspiring clergy? How important is scholarship and the accumulation of pertinent knowledge in regards to preparing clergy to lead congregations spiritually?

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the history of this debate by looking at the literature that explicates it, particularly as it relates to the training of Protestant clergy. In the following pages I will first address the meaning of spiritual development for ministers, commonly referred to as *spiritual formation*. Because their ministry preparation takes place primarily within the seminary context, I will then offer an overview of the history of Protestant theological education in America, including the trajectory of formational approaches, and the more recent attempt to formalize these through accreditation standards for seminaries. I will end with the challenges that seminaries face today in seeking to implement spiritual formation for their students in preparation for ministry.

Defining Spiritual Formation

The term *spiritual formation* has its roots in the Catholic Church in relationship to the preparation of priests for ministry, with the label gaining an elevated status when Vatican II directed that doctrinal and priestly training be linked to it (Howard, 2008). An interview with Daniel Aleshire, Executive Director of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), suggests that this term has gained popularity among Protestants in the last twenty-five years, garnering a variety of meanings (“Seminaries and the,” 1999). The literature suggests that most definitions of the term fall within three general and overlapping approaches—spiritual formation as process, practice and personhood.

Spiritual Formation as Process.

One approach toward spiritual formation is to view it as the process by which one becomes spiritually mature. For example, Porter (2008) suggests that spiritual formation is “simply the Protestant doctrine of sanctification in a new key,” in which every follower of Christ has been traditionally called to be made holy or conformed to the image of Christ over the course of their lives (n.p.). Well-known Protestant philosopher and spirituality writer, Dallas Willard (2000) describes spiritual formation as the process of “reshaping the personality” so that one more readily responds to the “direction and energizing of the Holy Spirit” (p. 256).

Spiritual Formation as Practice

Spiritual formation is also used to describe a set of spiritual practices that form the soul (Keely, 2003). These usually center around (but are not limited to) habits of life largely related to prayer, which enhance one’s relationship with God and “nurture and strengthen Christian identity and life” (Jones, 1987, p. 19). Often called spiritual

disciplines, these practices are not to be viewed solely as a means to an end, but rather, as a way to help individuals discover and deepen their own spirituality, and in turn “embody religious commitments” (Foster, 2006; Naidoo, 2011).

Spiritual Formation as Personhood

Finally, spiritual formation as a construct is used to refer to one’s personhood; an ontological approach that encompasses the integration of all aspects of the self—intellectual psychological, social, cultural and spiritual—based on the assumption that all of life is spiritual, (Galindo, 2001; Naidoo, 2011). This approach has gained popularity, particularly in reaction to the tendency to privatize or individualize spirituality. From this perspective, spiritual formation involves the “actualization of the human capacity to move beyond the self in knowledge, freedom, and love, in and through relationships with others, and with God” (Downey, 1997, p. 35).

Seminaries often describe one of their primary purposes as ministerial formation, which means that they seek to provide “what is needed to form those being educated into people with the appropriate blend of qualities which will enable them to minister effectively, whether in an intra- or inter-cultural setting” (Harkness, 2001, p. 142). The accreditation standards issued by the ATS related to spiritual formation suggest that there are four ways in which seminaries ought to be shaping this blend of qualities: personal faith, moral integrity, emotional maturity and social concern. This mandate, however, is a relatively new one, with Protestant ministerial formation having a storied history, as I will demonstrate next.

Theological Education in America: A Historical Overview

While spiritual formation by its very nature implies a lifelong journey, the 81,000 plus ministers who currently attend accredited theological education institutions will be expected to demonstrate a level of spiritual mastery upon graduation (Wheeler, Miller, & Aleshire, 2007). As Foster (2006) notes, seminaries are the primary settings in which disciplined, intentional cultivation of clergy's "imaginative capacity for engaging in complex and rich professional practice" takes place (p. 22). Indeed, the Latin meaning of the word seminary means a "seed plot" and was originally used to designate schools in which clergy were considered seedlings that were being cultivated for later transplanting into the culture at large (Carroll et al., 1997; Gilpin, 1996).

The establishment of schools bearing the designation of seminary took place within the first of roughly three movements regarding religious education for ministers in America (Farley, 1983). I will offer an overview of these overlapping eras by employing Farley's terms, which are, the *Period of Pious Learning*, spanning the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the *Period of Specialized Scholarship*, spanning the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the *Period of Professional Education*, spanning the mid-twentieth century until the present. For a summary overview, see Figure 2.1.

The Period of Pious Learning—Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

While the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Colonial America actually predate the foundation of the first stand-alone seminary, this period represents a critical juncture in terms of ministerial formation. Protestant clerical education during this era can only be understood against the backdrop of the Reformation, which had brought about the rejection of monasteries as the locus of spiritual training for ministers, and in

Figure 2.1. Historical summary of theological education

their place adopted the European model of education, which was rooted in Enlightenment science and took place within the university (Farley, 1983; Gilpin, 1996; Hinson, 1973).

Early institutions such as Yale, Harvard or Princeton offered liberal arts education with a classical curriculum that included theology for the profession commonly referred to as divinity (Cheesman, 2010; Foster, 2006). Sheldrake (2007) describes what this entailed:

The value of abstract intelligence was overestimated. Consequently the experiential dimension of human life was to be questioned continuously throughout an analytical journey towards what could be proved. The notion that theology was a science became linked to the belief that science could generate value-free knowledge. This pointed theology towards a position of isolation from context or personal feeling. (p. 45)

Hinson suggests that this form of clergy training followed the model set up by the humanist Erasmus in sixteenth century Europe, treating “religion as a doctrine of life rather than a mysterious redemption” (p. 78).

The university as a conduit of piety. This did not mean, however, that ministerial formation was nonexistent. Indeed, Western culture had long promoted education in general as “the comprehensive formation of character” (Gilpin, 1996, p. 1), which would enable men² to take their place as responsible leaders within the culture, whether clergy, government or commerce. In short, Protestants viewed the universities as essential for bringing about any type of social change or religious reform (Miller, 1990). Thus, seen as a means by which students could learn and embrace a life of piety (a term which addresses the formative aspects of spirituality), the expectation was that universities would be catechetical, not just for ministers, but for students in every academic field.

Much of the literature written by university scholars during that time, such as Cotton Mather’s *Manuductio ad Ministerium* in 1726, was designed to advise students regarding the life of faith, specifically the development of character traits such as “humility, remorse and the glorification of God” (Farley, 1983, p. 8). Shortly before releasing this treatise, Mather and the board of overseers for Harvard had visited the university to check on rumors of a lack of orthodoxy and ungodly behavior by students, where they asked among other things whether the teachers ever “conferred with their pupils about their interior state and labor as men in earnest with them for their conversion to God (Gilpin, 1996, p. 16).”

² At this point no women occupied official positions as clergy or engaged in theological education.

Reading divinity. It is important to note that during this period a university education was only the beginning of Protestant clergy's spiritual preparation for ministry. While denominational traditions varied, the common norm was that every student was required to serve as an apprentice for a period of time after his formal schooling ended. Called *reading divinity*, the purpose of this season was to more fully form the minister's character for civic religious leadership. More often than not, the apprenticeship located the ministerial candidate within a parish, living in the home of the minister who led the student through a series of religious texts in which he was required to write lengthy essays in response to his mentor's questions. In addition to the one-on-one training, the student engaged in parish life at the direction of his tutor, who often walked with him through the lengthy process required for ordination (Foster, 2006; Gilpin, 1996).

While it was assumed that the study of divinity, first in the university and then under a tutor, entailed a pursuit of a personal knowledge of God and a life of piety, by the end of the eighteenth century, many began to fear that clergy formational attempts were falling short. In addition, the Congregational Church had lost state support and their role in culture was waning, even as the universities seemed to be moving towards secularism. Protestant scholars, still enthralled with Enlightenment rationalism, saw the need to establish institutions that would meet the criteria for academic rigor, yet provide opportunities for practical ministry as well as spiritual formation (Hinson, 1973).

First seminary established. This led Congregationalists to form the first stand-alone seminary in Andover, Massachusetts in 1808, which not only united various theological groups throughout New England, but established a precedent for post-graduate study as part of ministry preparation (Hinson, 1973; Carroll et al., 1997).

Indeed, while Andover struggled in many ways, its establishment altered public perceptions regarding theological education. As other seminaries formed, following in Andover's steps, the expectation became that they would have at the very least, "a multiple faculty, a fourfold curriculum, and a strong department of Bible to be considered institutions of first rank" (Miller, 1990, p. 80). By mid-century there were over fifty such institutions in the United States.

With seminary leaders viewing their role as one of preparing men to become scholars and serve society, intellectual formation became paramount, deepening the public image of a Protestant minister as a theologian. Religious historian Miller (1990) offers the following description:

Whether Puritan or Anglican, the minister was a man of the study. People expected the minister to spend hours with his books, studying theology and other learned arts. From that center, the faithful shepherd ventured forth to catechize, preach, and visit the sick and dying. When people had special religious needs, they called on the minister in the study, which also functioned as an office. The sermon was, of course, the most important product of the study. (p.129)

With small enrollments at first, seminaries did try to combine the roles of education and apprenticeship through close, ongoing relationships between faculty and students. Indeed, the seminary atmosphere in the beginning days was like an English boarding school where "character...was as important as content" (Miller, 1990, p. 26). Johnson (2010) describes the environment:

The first building on Andover's campus had a room dedicated as the chapel...Chapel was required for both faculty and students, both before and after classes for Morning and Evening prayer. The Trustees set the time for these services. Morning prayer was set for 7am in the Winter, starting fifteen minutes earlier every two weeks until it began at 6am the first of March. The seminary also gathered on Sunday for worship on the Lord's Day. (p. 7)

Foster (2006) suggests however, that the broadening curricular focus eventually led to an emphasis on interpretation and performance that left spiritual development up to the students themselves. They soon began to organize their own prayer and study groups, which would become the dominant mode of attempting to achieve piety for seminarians.

Universities and divinity schools. The rise of seminaries did not mean that the universities no longer saw themselves as responsible for clergy preparation. For a time in fact, the bulk of ministers continued to rely on university education for ministerial training. As seminaries grew in number and popularity, however, the universities responded by isolating divinity from the rest of the educational process, enabling their students to acquire more targeted academic knowledge regarding Scripture, church history and theology in much the same way as their seminary counterparts. Still, the universities' need to maintain an educational program amenable to a varied public slowly altered the disposition of their offerings, and students preparing for ministry began to exit, providing fodder for the importance of the nascent seminary movement (Miller, 1990).

Princeton Theological Seminary formed. Along with the growing uncertainty regarding the efficacy of clergy training in the university, were growing theological controversies as a result of the second great awakening³ that spawned hundreds of new converts and ministerial candidates. Presbyterian pastors, concerned about theological education and doctrinal impurity at their flagship institution of Princeton University, established The Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in 1812, later

³ A religious revival that took place in North America from approximately 1790 to 1840, in which millions of people came to Christian faith and joined Protestant denominations.

becoming Princeton Theological Seminary. On the one hand, it appears that Princeton Seminary also sought to elevate piety, or the spiritual formation of ministers. They held Sunday afternoon meetings for students with faculty members who provided spiritual counsel, and the inaugural message of the first president, Charles Hodge, was titled, "The Importance of Piety in the Interpretation of the Scriptures" (Miller, 1990).

The importance of scholarship and its relationship to piety however, was central to Princeton's stated intent. Their original charter included the following statement of purpose:

... to unite in those who shall sustain the ministerial office, religion and literature; that piety of the heart, which is the fruit only of the renewing and sanctifying grace of God, with solid learning; believing that religion without learning, or learning without religion, in the ministers of the gospel, must ultimately prove injurious to the church. (Princeton Theological Seminary, n.d.)

Governed by the church, yet with an avid promotion of scholarship and a commitment to modernity in its approach, Princeton reinforced an ethos that would impact the spiritual development of ministers for generations to come. While many assume that these early seminaries such as Andover and Princeton simply took on the role of the church in developing ministers, albeit somewhat differently, historian Miller (1990) says that this is a critical misreading of history. These institutions and others that would follow in their path were, in actuality, ensuring that the role of the minister as "learned gentleman" would not only continue, but would increase in importance.

The Period of Specialized Scholarship—Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

By the 1840s the second generation of seminary and divinity school faculty and administrators had become even more deeply committed to the premise that the primary purpose of clergy education was to promote the ideal of scholarship (Gilpin, 1996). This

was fueled in part by American graduates of German universities who came back to teach in both venues, bringing with them an increasing emphasis on research and scientific professionalism, which made theology (divinity) its own field of study (Cannell, 2010). The Bible was, to the new theologians “analogous to the various bodies of data analyzed by scientists” (Miller, 1990, p. 107).

Theology as science. This was a high-water mark of a new era in which theological science began to replace ministry based divinity, and scholarship brought together the church and culture at large. Leaders of American Protestantism, particularly within university divinity schools, envisioned their role to be that of shaping society through the education of leaders. Cherry (1995), summarizes this effort:

To join the mission of the church with the educational venture of the emerging modern American university was, in this vision, to move the cause of Protestant Christianity to the very core of the commanding values, ideas, and aspirations of the American people. Sweeping in its perspective and resolute in its institution-building, the effort to create a learned ministry through alignments with the American university constituted one of this country's most notable educational endeavors. (p. xi)

The problems, however, that the scholarship ideal and pedagogy produced were significant. University divinity schools, having already altered values and praxis to maintain relevance for their public constituency, increasingly left behind confessional theology in order to define themselves academically, adding specialties in various topics and naming chairs for esteemed scholars (Miller, 2007). This put a subtle pressure on seminaries to further formalize and expand their offerings. Soon they began to enlarge their libraries, hire faculty largely on the basis of academic achievements, increase the fields of study, and systematize the requirements for ministerial practice. As Miller explains:

Seminary catalogs and curricula increasingly contained long lists of courses, more or less organized under departments that were occasionally related to large fields. More and more continued to be taught, and done. Knowledge of the whole was rapidly losing place to knowledge of the parts. (p. 50)

As a result, attaining higher degrees of specialized knowledge came to be seen as vital in order for ministers to keep pace with modernity and stay relevant in a rapidly changing world.

The separation of divinity into an array of specialized fields was hazardous for the spiritual development of ministers. Gradually the goal of studying in order to deepen one's knowledge of God became one of increasing scholarly knowledge in disciplines such as theology, church history and doctrine (Farley, 1983). This would fuel a growing fracture between leaders and groups within Protestant Christianity.

Diverging worldviews. While theological education continued to support a blend of piety and intellect in theory, the practical outworking of this varied tremendously, from university divinity schools to mainline seminaries to the swelling ranks of ministers emerging from the revivals of the era. On one hand, the isolation of the study of theology to its own specialization created a state of confusion and dispute regarding how ministers ought to be educated (Cannell, 2010), with the newer groups of evangelicals contesting the efficacy of graduate-level education for clergy. This persisted throughout the nineteenth century, but inevitably the prevailing philosophy and emphasis on scholarship won out and most denominations resorted to establishing their own seminaries.

Having grown enormously in number as a result of the second great awakening, the Methodists opened their first seminary in 1847, which led to eleven theological schools, forty-four colleges and universities and 130 women's seminaries by 1880 (Finke & Dougherty, 2002). Educators within these and other seminaries rooted in revivalism

employed a pedagogy of “rhetoric and exhortation” that sought to reach student’s hearts and minds, leading them to a love of truth (which meant a love of God), and a commitment to moral action (Foster, 2006). Revivalists soon began forming groups and organizations to address issues such as temperance, assimilation and evangelization of immigrants and popular education. One outcome was the proliferation of Bible Schools and Institutes that would offer undergraduate training for these religious leaders with a strong emphasis on personal piety and mission work (Foster, 2006; Gilpin, 1996).

All of these developments took place within a growing debate regarding the authority of Scripture and the reformulation of Christian doctrine based on scholarly research. Specifically, the influence of higher criticism of sacred texts by educators trained in European universities, as well as the ethical challenges in an increasingly pluralistic and industrialized culture had fueled an agenda in the mainline denominations that approached theology with the same “free and fully critical inquiry that defined academic work throughout the university” (Gilpin, 1996, p. 89). These leaders did not consider this to be an exercise in abstraction, but one which would spiritually develop clergy by instilling in them an authenticity and honesty rooted in a rational understanding of their beliefs. Indeed, they argued that only rigorous academic freedom in regards to every discipline could adequately prepare clergy for a world of increasing complexity.

Conservative scholars disagreed, soon losing their influence within the universities, leading them to pour their efforts into sectarian seminaries as well as the burgeoning Bible schools. While the term “evangelical” once referred to most Protestants, it soon became the self-designation of conservatives who maintained an emphasis on personal salvation and resisted the historical-critical approach to Biblical

interpretation. Darwinism and modern science drove the wedge between modernists (liberals) and fundamentalists (evangelicals or conservatives) even further, although both groups continued to embrace the specialized scholarship approach to clergy training.

While pedagogies were vastly different, each venue in which ministerial preparation took place now embraced the fourfold curriculum that included specializations in Bible, history, theology and practical theology (the practice of ministry), a framework that continues to characterize most seminaries today. As the century came to an end, the culture itself was undergoing radical changes, further exacerbating the fragmentation of theological education.

Changing culture. In an essay seeking to capture the uniqueness of the role of clergy in the early twentieth century, the author writes:

Modern industrial societies, distinguished by cultural pluralism, status mobility, and rigorous performance standards, generate a wide range of religious needs; increasing sensitivity to these needs heightens the demand for divergent lines of religious specialization and, consequently, increasing the complexity of religious organization. (Gannon, 1971, p. 66)

One of the manifestations of this complexity was increasing pluralistic voluntarism in which Americans felt entitled to choose what they believed met their personal needs—from grocery stores to schools to religion. This soon created a competition for members within congregations and along with that, a pressure for ministers to broaden their skill-sets. At the same time, many churches were becoming multipurpose in their scope, seeking to meet a vast array of needs, both among their members and within their neighborhoods. From soup kitchens to gymnasiums, from Sunday Schools to sewing circles and youth groups, churches expanded their horizons, and clergy were expected to keep up, with a growing need for training in diverse areas such as music, administration and religious education (Cherry, 1995; Gilpin, 1996).

Seminaries and divinity schools alike, from both ends of the theological spectrum, responded to the need with an elective system, enabling graduate-level specialty along with skill acquisition for ministry through scholarly seminar type coursework. Field education, designed to address everything from religious education to counseling, hospital visitation and missions (Miller, 2007), was added to the mix, soon becoming the norm for ministerial candidates. These were the vehicles by which a minister prepared for his role in the church and culture he in which he was to serve (Cherry, 1995).

Specialization and clergy formation. In theory, the university divinity schools continued to prepare ministers spiritually and not simply educate scholars. In reality however, attempts to maintain the connection between the heart and the mind had dulled, and the spiritual formation of students no longer fit within the institutional structural or pedagogical components of university clergy education. A comprehensive study of university divinity schools in North America in the 1930s concluded that the formation of individual ministerial students had no clear oversight, with one of the primary causes being the “multiplication of departments, the spread of specialized theological learning, and the increased academic responsibility within a restricted field imposed upon members of a modern faculty” (as cited in Cherry, 1995, p. 37).

Protestant mainline seminaries experienced similar struggles as the emphasis on specialization and pressure to comply slowly disintegrated the fragile system of clergy formation they’d once employed. The more conservative seminaries, influenced by the revivalist experience and religious training schools, increasingly focused on practical skill development of their students, with an emphasis on popular piety that could be attained through certain spiritual experiences and publicly discerned through a leader’s

character. This led to an embrace of a performance orientation toward the spiritual life, with a focus on ‘doing’ that would become a defining feature of evangelical seminary education (Foster, 2006).

In 1924 the first comprehensive study of seminary education was conducted, and the results were troubling. The researchers found that in addition to financial problems and a lack of coherency as to what degrees should be offered etc., there was a critical void in ministerial spiritual development across the spectrum.

Despite their rhetoric, most schools made minimal efforts in this area. Chapel services were often provided, and of course, students were exhorted to be faithful in prayer, but in the main, little real instruction was provided...In other words, piety, one of the twin supports of the nineteenth-century seminary, was strangely absent from the schools of the twentieth. (Miller, 2007, p. 323)

While many seminaries had been founded with the goal of retaining the kind of pietistic focus of their forbears, the plethora of disciplines that had proliferated in order to keep up with the growing demand for a diverse array of religious leaders across Protestantism worked against this goal. Indeed, the increasing push toward professionalization of ministers would only complicate the struggle to address clergy formation in both conservative and mainline seminaries, where the vast majority of students preparing for ministry now attended.

The Period of Professional Education—Mid-Twentieth Century to the Present

In 1936, the United States Employment Service categorized all gainful employment into eight occupational groups with sixteen subgroups. The first group, *Professional and Kindred Workers*, had a subgroup labeled *Professional Workers*, with 42 titles including architects, authors, lawyers, professors and physicians, among others (Chapman, 1944). This is the category into which clergy fell, having earned their place

among those professionals who, due to their high levels of specialized education, were deemed adequate to meet the needs of the modern world. A common denominator among these groups was the existence of schools designed explicitly for increased training, which institutionalized the role of the professional (Gannon, 1971), an identity seminaries had come to embrace for their students:

Above all, the schools wanted for their graduates and for themselves the high status that Americans gave to the expert, to the person who knew what needed to be done and how to do it. The minister should be at least as skilled in the cure of souls as the modern physician, who had received similar professional training, was in the cure of bodies. (Miller, 2007, p. xii)

Clergy as professionals. In their broad-based critique of the professional movement in education, Curry and Wergen (1993) define professionals as those who “(1) share specialized skills requiring extensive systematic and scholarly training, (2) restrict access with rigorous entrance and exit requirements, and (3) because of their importance to society, claim high social prestige” (p. xiii). Some suggest that, based on descriptions such as these, clergy ought not to be ranked among professionals, but instead relegated, “along with artists and literary intellectuals, outside the inner circle of science-based cognitive rationality” (Foster, 2006). Yet, as Foster notes, the specialized knowledge and expertise that came to characterize ministerial training and persists to this day, at the very least makes the clergy “distant ancestors” of the modern professions (p. 3).

Throughout the twentieth century, as churches continued to become complex organizations with a variety of specialized ministries, they looked to seminaries to provide them with professionals who could meet their needs. Scholarly specialization soon became full-fledged tracks of study based on skill sets for particular ministry professions, whether this meant religious education, worship, pastoral care, social work,

teaching, or missions (Farley, 1983; Foster, 2006). As a result, seminaries became the arbiters of what the profession of clergy would entail, primarily through their curriculum.

Theory to practice gap. The primary critique of the professional movement in general has been the chasm that seems to exist between the academic environment and the field in which the professional is called to implement his or her practice. The faulty assumption, based on a *theory to practice* model, has always been that knowledge in and of itself will produce what professionals need in the way of practical skill or even the character development necessary for their particular role in society (Curry & Wergin, 1993).

Clergy, along with other groups of professionals who relied upon scholarly education as the primary means of training, were plagued with this theory to practice gap, giving rise to a schism between academicians and practitioners regarding how to address it. Seminary leaders who privileged scholarship tended to relegate practice to field work or summer institutes while increasing areas of specialization. Practitioners responded by calling for more academic coursework that would relate directly to actual ministry experience (Foster, 2006).

These attempts to bridge theory to practice only added to the overcrowded curriculum, eventually rendering “the rational, content and unity of the study of theology irrelevant,” according to Farley (1983, p. 19). At the same time, the demand for multiple areas of expertise for clergy watered down any attempts at developing them spiritually (Cannell, 2010). The pressure on ministers to demonstrate success as professionals continually increased, as can be seen in the description provided by sociologist Moberg (1962) in the 1960s:

The typical American minister is a bureaucratic leader...Professionalism and specialization accompany this bureaucratic orientation. The clergyman must seek his advancement and satisfaction within a narrow profession; the services included in his calling have been narrowed by specialization and growth of competing 'secular' professions. (p. 418)

Congregations, as a result, viewed their ministers as corporate executives who were expected to produce results, which at times led some to utilize questionable, if not unethical methods in order to increase the number of parishioners (Hinson, 1986).

Professionalism and spiritual formation. As the pressure to perform and the expectations of expertise increased for ministers, many lacked the spiritual framework with which to handle the weight of ministry. This resulted in large numbers of clergy experiencing burnout, disillusionment and heartache, with the attrition rate among Protestants escalating throughout the twentieth century (Doolittle, 2007; Harbaugh & Rogers, 1984; Nouwen, 1996). The theory to practice model, by continuing to dichotomize academic work and professional practice, was deemed a failure by many, with serious consequences in regards to the clergy (Gilpin, 1996).

The one area of specialization that never found a place within most curriculum or programs of Protestant seminaries was that of spiritual formation (Cheesman, 2010), and in fact there seemed to be little emphasis on it at all. In an overview of the research conducted on seminaries in the last quarter of the twentieth century, Freeman (1987) discovered some dismal outcomes of this. One study in 1972 had determined that both professors and students viewed any attempt to discuss the inner life of the spirit or prayer as “unwarranted invasions of privacy or as an impertinent irrelevancy” (p. 45).

Freeman’s (1987) meta-analysis also explicated a study done in 1973, in which 5000 representatives of 47 denominations overwhelmingly identified the development of a minister’s personal faith as a key ingredient in readiness for ministry. Another study

done around the same time however, demonstrated that while seminary faculty communicated great concern for knowing how to help their students develop spiritually, when asked whether their institution had developed an intentional means by which to do so, almost all responded with “a qualified or unqualified no.” In studies of Protestant seminary graduates, a common response was that although their academic training was excellent, they had learned little in regards to developing their own faith journey or that of others. Indeed, by 1992, less than 40 percent of seminarians felt that seminary had helped them to grow spiritually at all (Babcock, 2002). Clearly something had to be done.

Accreditation and Spiritual Formation

As early as the late nineteenth century, concerns began to be raised regarding the need to standardize seminary education, and in 1918 the first Conference of Theological Seminaries and Colleges in the United States and Canada took place at Harvard Divinity School. There, more than 100 representatives from 53 institutions and 15 denominations addressed the issue of standardization, seeking to determine what was necessary to adequately prepare clergy for the demands of modern ministry. While practical issues such as spiritual development were raised, some resisted strongly, “calling for adherence to the intellectual aims of theological education” (Cable, 1970, p. 9).

This conference spawned an organization that would eventually become the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), the accrediting agency that further established the role of seminaries as the professional training vehicle for clergy. In the 1970s the ATS decided to try to ascertain what churches were looking for in their ministers, investing in an extensive *Readiness for Ministry Project*. In a stunning discovery they

found that “in general, American Protestant Christians were less interested in their pastors’ theological competence than in their spirituality and leadership ability” (Miller, 2007, p. 753).

In 1978, the ATS received a grant enabling them to embark on a two-year pilot program in which they sought to better understand how to prepare “faculty, clergy, and lay leaders as spiritual mentors for students and others seeking guidance” (Edwards, 1980, p. 7). Another grant led to several conferences on spiritual formation for theological school faculties. These two components coalesced to become known as the “ATS-Shalem Institute on Spirituality,” which operated primarily to address the concern seminaries were facing regarding the lack of spiritual development for their students. In a report documenting these efforts, Edwards noted that while the notion of spiritual formation was a relatively new phenomenon for Protestant theological schools, nevertheless:

The Association of Theological Schools expects some manifestation of spiritual formation to be evident and assessable in our schools, yet there is no commonly agreed upon model for either spiritual formation or its assessment. (p. 34)

In 1992, the ATS institutionalized their expectation that spiritual formation would take place in seminaries by making it an accreditation mandate. Well aware of the variety of schools they represented, as well as the voluntaristic ethos of many seminaries’ traditions, the ATS avoided explicit guidelines, keeping the requirement fairly general and vague. This, along with an increasing emphasis on outcome based learning has had a significant impact on seminaries who have sought to comply since then. Some institutions have done so by adding courses on spiritual formation, others have tried to implement more robust models that would include practices such as covenant groups and

spiritual direction, while others have moved to influence faculty pedagogy with a more organic synthesis between academic knowledge and spiritual experience (Foster, 2006; Frykholm, 2011).

These things, along with a nascent body of literature by eminent scholars in support of formative theology, as well as a growing ecumenism and cross-pollination between Protestants and Catholics since Vatican II, have served to positively inform the discourse regarding the spiritual development of clergy (Carroll et al., 1997; Hinson, 1986; Lincoln, 2010). However, the debate over the seminary's role in, as well as proper pedagogy for spiritual formation continues, bringing with it a number of critical challenges. In conclusion I turn to these.

Current Challenges in Ministerial Formation

Perhaps the most salient issue relates to the ongoing debate concerning what role the seminary experience ought to play in a student's spiritual development. There are, however, related concerns such as the integration of scholarship and formation, the disparate levels of entering students' spiritual maturity, and the fear of spiritual formation requirements becoming programmatic and stiflingly uniform across schools. While the difficulties are not limited to these things, each of them is something seminaries grapple with, perhaps daily, and although some institutions are further along than others in resolving the attendant tensions; it is unlikely that most have found satisfactory means of addressing these challenges.

The Continuing Debate

While their reasons vary, large contingents of scholars and practitioners are still not convinced that spiritual formation belongs within the purview of the seminary. For

those who contend that it does, the question of what role it should play is a divisive one (Wood, 1991). Some fear that spirituality has been removed from the theological enterprise for so long that any attempts to bring it back will make it little more than “an orphan, an erratic block within the seminary” (Lindbeck, 1988, p. 30). Still others note that in an atmosphere of increasing competition for resources, formation activities or emphases are seen by various stakeholders as a threat (Smith, 1996).

One critical issue is whether the seminary model as it stands today can really facilitate the kinds of experiences needed for spiritual development. There are concerns of indoctrination in which students might feel compelled to go along publicly, but fail to own their experience in any personal way, as well as the danger of students assuming that the methods of formation put forth within the institution can be meaningfully transferred to the settings in which they minister (Harkness, 2001). In a poignant essay, Hall (1988) suggests that because formation by its very nature is something that ought to cause a person to look outward and forget themselves in service to others, the pedagogical process and focus on the self that higher education requires might actually betray the “foundational presuppositions” of a faith tradition, even as it seeks to develop that very faith (p. 57).

In the end, there is little agreement on the question Hinson (1973) puts forth when he suggests we must ask: “Formation of what kind of minister for what kind of ministry in what kind of church in what kind of world” (p. 85)? Even students who demand a greater emphasis on formation aren’t exactly sure what they want, a reality that may reflect an “incoherent longing for something that is missing from their lives” (Roberts, 2004, p. 47). At the heart of the disagreement on whether formation belongs in seminary,

and if so, what its role might be, are the difficulties inherent in the integration of requisite disciplines and pedagogies, and the structures that might facilitate this. This topic alone has garnered the greatest level of attention as theological institutions have sought to comply with ATS standards.

Towards an Integrated Approach

To some, the attempt to integrate theology and spirituality is like trying to mix oil and water, while others strongly disagree, pointing to the absurdity of dichotomizing these things, given that American Protestant teaching has always viewed theology as a “theory of lived experience” (Gilpin, 1996, p. 163; Warfield, 1941). However, the propensity to pit these things against each other goes deep and leads to divergent conclusions; one being that prioritizing scholarship inhibits formation and the other being that privileging formation cannot help but weaken scholarship (Paulsell, 1998).

In calling for an integrated approach, Jones and Jennings (2000) suggest that the very success of a seminary should be assessed on the basis of how well belief and practice is interrelated, and whether students seek to embody a holistic pattern of study, prayer and service. The question becomes, how is this to take place? Should courses in spiritual development be a part of the required curriculum or ought these types of learning experiences to take place outside of the classroom? And if courses are offered, should they impart content or require engagement, something that has at times been deemed inappropriate for the academic setting (Smith, 1996)?

A failure to satisfactorily address these kinds of questions has created a lack of consensus among seminaries regarding pedagogies, structures, programs or curriculum. It may also be the reason that the ATS (Association of Theological Schools, 2012) has

continued to issue no explicit formative requirements of seminaries, mandating only that ministerial degrees “provide opportunities through which the student may grow in personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and public witness” as well as develop “intellectual and affective, individual and corporate, ecclesial and public” capacities (p. 41).

In his landmark examination and assessment of theological education in the United States, Farley (1983) suggests that the problem of integration goes much deeper than outward structures. Indeed, he contends that while seminaries have a “legacy from the past which provides it with a tradition about Christian faith, the ministry and the church” these things are present in form, but not in convicting essence. In fact, because faith is no longer the “binding reality, the primary agenda-setting power” that directs the overall program of study within seminaries, Farley believes that there is a lack of unifying purpose to inform decision-making, creating no small amount of confusion, as well as contributing to the underlying assumption among students that academics have “little or no relevance to the successful prosecution of ministry” (p. 13). Add to this the disparate levels in motivation and maturity among students entering seminaries today and the difficulties escalate.

Disparate Levels of Spiritual Maturity

Glenn Miller, in this second anthology of the history of theological education provides the following description of seminary students up until the late 1960s:

..typically white males in their twenties, liberal arts graduates of church-related colleges and universities, who left behind rural and small-town background to attend seminary in the city. Most of their fathers were farmers, ministers, tradesmen or owners of small business. These students were reared in the churches, participated in religious activities in college, maintained their denominational connections while divinity students and

returned to their denominations as ministers or as other religious professionals. (p. 30)

Since that time the demographic makeup of North American seminaries has changed drastically, with the latest records showing it to be 66 percent male and 34 percent female and only 57 percent Caucasian, with 32 percent African American and the rest divided among Hispanics, Asians and others. More relevant to this discourse is the fact that it can no longer be assumed that students who attend seminary have been reared in churches or indeed have participated in religious activities prior to attending seminary at all.

Not only do some students choose seminary as spiritual seekers with little religious background, but those who come from various specific faith traditions may resist the imposition of formational approaches, preferring the more established academic coursework (Edwards, 1980). In addition, churches, once assumed to be the locus for formation, now bear the fruit of clergy leadership that have not been able to pass on what they never received in seminary—a means by which their parishioners might be spiritually developed. As a result, the students they send to be educated for ministry are often in need of the most “elementary catechesis” (Lindbeck, 1988, p. 16). Lindbeck points out that because of this and the growing demands on clergy, including the lack of congregational support, seminaries must emphasize spiritual formation more than ever before in order to prepare students for the vastly changing role of ministry.

Aleshire (2008) summarizes this problem and the attending pressure it has put on seminaries:

In a time when new seminary students know less of the Christian tradition than previous generations, when North American culture is less aware of the Christian story than it has ever been, and when the work of ministry has become more complex and less predictable than ever before, the

educational response cannot be to lower expectations. In an era like this one, theological learning needs to be enhanced, and the work of theological schools becomes even more important. (p.8)

Given these kinds of needs, it is not surprising that a movement to establish some form of uniform model for spiritual development in theological education has emerged. This is the final challenge I will explore.

The Drive for Uniformity

In a discussion of his own seminary experience at Princeton, Roberts (2004) tells of the chorus of complaints by students regarding the lack of spiritual formation, suggesting that this cry has become a cultural phenomenon that has grown exponentially in volume across the country. The inherent danger in student discontent is that schools may be prone to look for quick fixes, particularly in light of the outputs that accreditation requires (Lincoln, 2010). Concerns regarding this have contributed to a drive for uniformity, and within the American market culture there is no shortage of potential solutions, often accompanied by pressure to embrace them. Roberts relates of one group of faculty who created a formational program that they began to franchise out to other seminaries, and then were “willing to use strong-arm tactics to expand their empire” (p. 45).

While cross-pollination among Protestant seminaries could be a healthy, invigorating process, every school has its own culture, making any attempt at consensus regarding how to implement spiritual formation an exercise in futility (Naidoo, 2011). Additionally, the denominations that finance many of the seminaries have their own rules and principles regarding curriculum and formation, and these will generally differ (Jones, 1987). As Foster (2006) points out, clergy formational practices are “harder to transplant from one religious context to another than are the more standardized pedagogies typical

of the cognitive and practical apprenticeships” (p. 8). In the end, it seems that the one thing seminaries do have in common when it comes to formational approaches is a level of dissatisfaction as they face the daunting responsibility for preparing men and women for ministry (Hess, 2008).

Conclusion

Despite the enormous challenges that seminaries face regarding ministerial formation, this is an exciting and critical moment in their history. Not only is the culture increasingly in need of “comprehensive narratives of meaning, identity and action,” but clergy are positioned to play a central role in religious communities that seek to address this (Foster, 2006, p. 260). From his vast research that included interviews with seminary faculty members from across the nation, Foster concluded that the burgeoning emphasis on and attention to spiritual formation that now exists is tantamount to a reform movement within seminary education. As far back as 1980, Edwards (1980) and the ATS predicted that this would be a ripe moment for overcoming a “schizophrenia” that has existed for centuries regarding the knowledge of God. Indeed, if seminaries can successfully bring together theology and spirituality, instead of continuing to be handicapped by the ancient dichotomy, they have the potential for these constructs to relate in a “mutually correcting and enriching complementarity” (p. 20).

Based on over three decades of labor and ministry among seminary personnel, Daniel Aleshire (2008) reminds us, however, that theological schools move slowly, addressing problems through committees that write background papers that lead to faculty discussions and more committee meetings until the desired change can finally be voted upon, at which point the search for funding begins. The drive to make spiritual

formation a central component in seminary education, addressing well over a century of imbalance, is still relatively new, having only begun in earnest in the 1970s, fueled in 1992 by the implementation of ATS accreditation standards.

Seminaries across the nation are at various stages in bringing about the kinds of changes that have the potential to positively impact not only the clergy preparing for ministry, but the society within which they will one day serve. In the study that this dissertation lays out, I had the privilege of exploring two of these seminaries, each of which was at a very different stage in implementing a spiritual formation model for their students. In the next chapter I will explicate the methodology I used in to do so.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

“Description provides the foundation upon which qualitative inquiry rests”

(Glesne, 2011, p. 7). As simple as this may sound, it has profound implications for the mindset with which I engaged in this study. Specifically, I relied upon a grounded theory approach that is process rather than product oriented (Patton, 1990), with an intention towards mindfulness and a heightened sensitivity to my own hermeneutic. My qualitative design involved a cross-case comparison utilizing a variety of instruments—interview, focus group and document analysis—to facilitate the collection of data that was both descriptive and emergent. I tried to be continually aware that I was joining the research participants as part of an ongoing interpretive circle (Macbeth, 2001), in which we explored together the phenomenon of spirituality within their unique context. This type of approach was most fitting for explorative purposes in that it enabled the examination of human thought, behavior, interactions, and perceptions, without the constraints of preconceived patterns or the limitations inherent in quantitative studies.

I will begin this chapter with a brief review of the study context and research questions. Then I will address the research methodology or *Plan of Inquiry* (Josselson & Lieblich, 1993) that I followed, which includes the settings, design, sampling and chronology. I will then articulate my data collection techniques and data analysis procedures, as well as address the issues of ethics and credibility or trustworthiness. I will end with the limitations and significance of this particular study.

Study Context

This was an exploratory, open-ended study. The Association of Theological Schools' (ATS) accreditation standards provided some context for discovery, but these were used to gain greater understanding and not for assessment or evaluation. My own role and positionality⁴ was important in both formulating and conducting the research. I am Protestant by faith and practice, as well as a writer on Christian spirituality, and have some history with each of the specific seminary traditions within which this study took place. These things uniquely positioned me to participate in this research (albeit also introducing a subjectivity bias, which I will address in the limitations).

By way of reminder, my research questions were:

- What is the process that two Protestant seminaries engage in as they seek to implement a model for the spiritual development of leaders?
- What is the lived experience of leaders who are impacted by the spiritual formation approach at two Protestant seminaries?
- How does a Protestant seminary's spiritual formation model provide formational opportunities for a leader's personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and public witness/social concern, as mandated in the ATS standards for accreditation?
- How does the spiritual formation model of a seminary that added it to an established structure compare to that of a seminary that incorporated it from the start?

⁴A term qualitative researchers use to acknowledge that every researcher has certain "markers of relational positions" such as race, gender, class etc. that influences how one relates contextually, and forms the voice with which research is conducted (Maher, 1993, p. 118).

Research Methods

As noted above, this study is epistemologically situated in grounded theory, a research methodology that facilitates an emergent and interpretive approach to the data, as the researcher constructs what Charmaz (2006) calls an “abstract theoretical understanding of the studied experience.” Every decision regarding the methods I explicate below was in some way influenced by my intention to “honor people’s stories as data that can stand on their own as pure description of experience” (Patton, 1990, p. 115).

Settings

My research took place in two settings, both of which were campuses of seminaries that are historically rooted in Protestantism. The first was Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR), a small, relatively unknown institution which began in 1992. Although it identifies with early Baptist heritage and tradition, the seminary maintains no official ties to any one denomination, but maintains a loose connection with a group of moderate Baptist churches from which most of their students are drawn. Known for its ecumenical focus however, BTSR welcomes students from all Christian faith traditions. The seminary began with a strong commitment to spiritual formation as a central component and as a result, compliance with spiritual formation accreditation standards was inherent in their approach from the start.

The second setting was Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Theology (Fuller SOT), a large, flagship institution which has been in existence since 1947. Fuller SOT is not only known and respected in the evangelical world, but also across the spectrum of Christian thought. Because it is multi-denominational, Fuller represents a variety of

traditions, and is not constricted by external hierarchical structures of any particular faith group. Due to their years in existence, they have had a shifting approach to spiritual formation and have had to address the more recent addition of accreditation standards regarding spirituality for their students within the context of an existing curriculum. To that end, this institution provided a contrasting view of the process of implementation and compliance regarding spiritual formation models within the theological educational context.

Design

For this cross-case comparison design, each institution's spiritual formation model (as opposed to the institution itself, or any specific individual), was the case. However, the seminary formation model cannot be understood outside of the larger institutional context, and holds meaning only in relationship to those who participate in it. To that end, I engaged with the perspectives of seminary administrators, faculty members, alumni and student within the actual seminary environment.

I began by first exploring each seminary on its own merit, focusing on its complexity, uniqueness, and connection to the context of theological education (Glesne, 2011). As Patton (1990) has noted, my most critical responsibility was to represent each individual case, understanding that the project's integrity depends on this. Only after exploring each case individually, did I seek to compare and contrast their models of spiritual formation.

Sampling Strategies

This research necessitated a variety of sampling strategies, all of which were purposeful in some way. See Table 3.1 for an overview and description of these. In

selecting the seminaries themselves, I used purposeful *illuminative* sampling to obtain two information-rich cases from which I believed I could learn the most. Both seminaries were cooperative and open, giving me a broad spectrum of access. The sampling strategies for individuals within each seminary varied, as will be explained below. While I was aware that it would be impossible to reach saturation in regards to potential data, my goal was to interview enough participants to provide breadth and depth to an understanding of spiritual formation models in each seminary, as well as the leaders who interact with them (Josselson & Lieblich, 1993).

Table 3.1

Overview of sampling procedures

Sampling Strategies (Patton, 1990)

Source	Strategy	Description
Seminaries	Illuminative	Individual cases from which the most can be learned, selected for strategic reasons
Administrators	Criterion	Cases that meet predetermined criterion of importance
Focus Group—BTSR	Criterion	(see above)
Faculty Members	Maximum variation	Seeking diversity on specific characteristics of the sample
Alumni--BTSR	Stratified purposeful	Major variations with homogeneous sample in each strata
Alumni—Fuller SOT	Referral, Snowball	Using references to locate information-rich cases

Administrators and faculty. I used criterion sampling to identify potential participants, looking for administrators who were in some way connected to the implementation of the spiritual formation model. I conducted these interviews either in person, via Skype, or over the telephone. In the case of BTSR, I also engaged in a lengthy email exchange with the original professor of spirituality who is now retired. For

Fuller SOT, four of the administrators I interviewed had served on a spiritual formation task force that was appointed in 2008 by the provost, and one of them has been responsible for a massive curriculum revision directly related to spiritual formation that will be implemented in the Fall of 2014.

I also interviewed at least two faculty members from each institution, using a version of *maximum variation sampling* in order to include at least one who taught spirituality courses, as well as one who taught outside of that discipline and has had little personal connection with the seminary's model. Finally, at the end of my data collection, I was able to interview Daniel Aleshire, the acting director of the ATS.

Alumni and students. I interviewed 15 alumni from each seminary. In the case of BTSR, I was able to use a *stratified purposeful* sampling strategy, drawing from over 80 respondents to a survey/invitation that the school sent out asking for anonymous volunteers. I was thus able to ensure gender-balance, as well as to secure participants from each of three groups—those who graduated more than 10 years ago, those who graduated six to ten years ago, and those who graduated within the last five years.

In the case of Fuller SOT, school policy prohibited me from gaining access to any sort of email list, and they were unwilling to extend the invitation to alumni on my behalf. I had no choice but to rely on referrals from an administrator. When this elicited only five volunteers, I took advantage of my relationships in ministry with friends connected to seminaries, and made the need known on Facebook, asking for referrals. Within several days I was able to obtain the other ten volunteers through this form of social media *snowball* sampling. This included four women and eleven men, from both the main and Coast campuses, evenly distributed among those who graduated more than

10 years ago, those who graduated six to ten years ago, and those who graduated within the last five years. I had a previous personal acquaintance with two of the Fuller SOT alumni.

I conducted a focus group of current students on site at B TSR during their lunch hour. The school posted the need on their website as well as on a flyer that was handed out on campus a few weeks in advance of my arrival. When the numbers were low one week out, the liaison with whom I worked personally encouraged students to participate. Ten students signed up, and nine attended. Unfortunately, I was unable to secure a focus group at Fuller SOT. I worked with their student affairs office at length in trying to make this happen, but once again, school policy prohibited them from sending out emails or posting flyers. They did post the need on a student website, as well as sent out one tweet while I was on campus. When students did not sign up, I spent one morning walking the campus, inviting students to participate, but was unsuccessful. The fact that I could not secure a focus group of Fuller SOT students became in and of itself a critical piece of data, which I will explicate in my findings.

Data Collection

I utilized four methods of data collection. The first was to look at artifacts from the material culture in order to enrich and bring context to the rest of the data (Glesne, 2011). I began by exploring each institution's current catalogue and website. Once I had established contact with various administrators and faculty members, I was able to secure a large number of relevant extant data, with historical documents, course syllabi, task force minutes, letters and official accreditation correspondence between the seminaries and the Association of Theology Schools (ATS). I was also given access to further

document data by both institutions when I visited their campus. At some point I determined I had reached adequate saturation and stopped the document analysis, with over 60 pieces included.

Interviews. The second method of inquiry were the interviews, all of which were conducted either in person, over the telephone or via Skype. The following articulates the approach I took:

The research interview is based on the conversations of daily life and is a professional conversation; it is an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee. An interview is literally an *inter view*, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest. (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

Every interview was semi-structured with preplanned initial questions and probes, which I formulated after initial conversations with administrators and the document analysis. However, in a quest for themes and meaning-making, I offered a number of open-ended questions, as well as provided participants the opportunity to add anything of importance that they felt I had not addressed. Additionally, a number of the interviews, particularly with administrators, became free-flowing interchanges, yielding rich data. These interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. (See Appendices A-C for interview protocols).

Focus group. The third data collection technique was that of the focus group, comprised of students at BTSR. While this also involved an interview guide, I functioned more as a facilitator than interviewer, seeking to obtain quality data in BTSR's social setting from the conversation among the participants (Patton, 1990). I also recorded this session verbatim, while taking notes to enable me to identify participant voices, and consider nonverbal cues in my analysis.

Researcher as instrument. Ultimately I viewed myself and my role as the primary instrument in this study. Not only was I involved in the above activities, but I had the benefit of being on campus among the faculty, staff and students for several days at each campus. Throughout the study I kept copious field notes, and wrote analytical memos to capture my own sense of what was going on, or, more specifically, to chronicle “emerging sensitivities and evolving substantive concerns and theoretical insights” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2001, p. 355). I was attentive to my own emotions, my judgments, my concerns, and even my dreams, which proved meaningful, as the analysis will show.

At first I believe I functioned in the role that Glesne (2011) identifies as the *observer as participant*, which meant that I was more of an observer than a participant; I was the outsider who had been graciously allowed into their context. However, I often found individuals that I interviewed sharing with me as if we were colleagues interested in the same topics. While I can’t be sure, I suspect the administrators and perhaps some faculty may have googled my name and discovered my involvement in Christian spirituality, which may have been a catalyst that allowed me to move into the role of *participant observer*, which I believe enhanced the hermeneutic process.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis is an ongoing, iterative *and* interactive process that began as I perused the first literature on the topic of spirituality in seminaries, and will likely continue well after this study is complete. Beyond my own field notes and analytical memos, the process of coding was a critical component in the data analysis.

Coding is largely an interpretive act that seeks to uncover substantive significance of patterns and themes (Saldaña, 2009; Patton, 1990).

Coding cycles. In first interrogating the data, I framed my coding attempts around my research questions, including the development of the institution's spiritual formation model and the current model's structure, as well as the four foci from the ATS standards (personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, public witness/social concern). While I will only articulate a couple of the coding cycles here, the reality is that because coding is cyclical, I went back and forth through several cycles before settling on a set of working codes and moving into patterns and themes. From the beginning I used coding software (Atlasti), which enabled me to include scores of documents and interviews, and easily revisit the coding process on a regular basis.

First cycle coding. I first engaged in numerous readings of the documents provided for me, using *structural coding* methodology, which relies on conceptual phrases related to the research questions (Saldaña, 2009). Once I had an initial list, I went back through the texts line by line in order to list every occurrence that fit within any of the codes I had constructed. This lengthy process yielded over 100 codes, and was helpful in informing my interview protocol for both the interviews and focus groups, particularly regarding the testing of emergent themes.

For the interviews, focus groups and personal reflections, I used the codes established through the documents, as well as *in vivo* coding (Saldaña, 2009), which relied on the participants' own words as I looked for phrases that represented their voices. I also relied on descriptive coding, identifying topics of relevance such as *attitudes*

toward spiritual formation model, challenges to spiritual formation, etc. This led to the addition of at least 15 more codes.

Second cycle coding. While I call this “second cycle coding,” it took place after numerous interactions with the data; massaging and manipulating the codes, and adding new ones as needed. During this cycle, as well as subsequent ones, I sought to “develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization,” based on the code list (Saldaña, 2009, p. 149). I began by grouping all codes found in the first cycle under broad themes, exploring their relationships, patterns and “structures of observability” (Nespor, 2006, p. 301). Using this *focused* coding process enabled me to both merge a number of codes that covered the same themes, and eliminate codes that had infrequent quotations or lacked relevance. In this way I developed a corpus of more permanent working codes and categories, each of which fit into a broad category, by choosing those that seem most salient or made the most analytic sense (Charmaz, 2006). This resulted in 22 categories with approximately 150 codes (See appendix D).

Conceptual framework. There were a number of helpful ways to conceptualize and frame the data, given the fact that I interacted with it intimately and continuously throughout the collection and coding process. Regarding the history and development of the spiritual formation model for each institution, I mapped the entire process in a graphic timeline, adding dates, key personnel, decisions and changes, seeking to organize and visualize their unique story (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

In regards to the student and alumni perspectives, along with my own field notes, I engaged in *codeweaving*, which seeks to integrate the key code words and phrases into some sort of narrative form (Saldaña, 2009). In essence, I tried to imagine what a

storyline of a typical seminary student might be, particularly in regards to their personal spiritual needs while a student. Finally, I interrogated all of the data regarding curriculum and co-curricular activities at each institution to formulate a process matrix (Patton, 1990) that adequately captured the institutions' spiritual formation model (or in the case of Fuller SOT, the future model).

To conduct the cross-case analysis, I revisited the data related to several components by bringing up codes for each institution and laying the quotations side by side. After going back and forth between the relevant data for the seminaries' numerous times, I was able to formulate an analysis of ways in which the two institutions converged and diverged. As Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggest, I functioned much at this point as an editor who cuts and pastes until a pattern begins to emerge. It was an inductive and iterative process, but enabled me to tentatively suggest the answers to each of the questions I set out to explore in this study, as will be seen in chapters four, five and six.

Ethical Considerations

I received permission from both seminaries to identify them for the purposes of this study, as well as future journal articles. There were a number of public figures from each seminary who also gave me permission to identify them by name, as it would be difficult to use their responses without doing so. This included the presidents of both seminaries, as well as the founding president of BTSR and the school's original spirituality professor who implemented its initial model. Otherwise, all names and identifying characteristics of alumni, students, faculty and administrators who were interviewed or participated in the focus group are confidential and I changed identifying characteristics (gender, field of study etc.) to protect the subjects. All participants signed

detailed consent forms regarding the maintenance of confidentiality (See Appendix E for sample).

I was open and divulged the purposes of my research to all participants, believing that this was a necessary factor in seeking to represent their voices and standpoints. I was also convinced that their awareness of the research design and intent would not harm the credibility of their interaction with me since I am not engaging in any sort of evaluative or assessment process.

Credibility and Reliability Issues

In qualitative research, trustworthiness rather than validity is the goal (Wolcott, 1990). My intention throughout the study was to seek to be “balanced, fair, and conscientious in taking account of multiple perspectives, multiple interests, and multiple realities” (Patton, 1990, p. 575). There were, however, several threats to trustworthiness in this study. Some of these were my own personal subjectivity and bias, the small number of alumni (n=15 for each seminary) and the predispositions they brought as volunteers for the study. Additionally, the administrators for each school chose some of the professors for my interviews, which may have reflected their own biases. Finally, my time on each campus conducting observation was relatively short (four days), and in the case of Fuller SOT, the lack of current student input was a weakness. In light of these things, as well as the fact that qualitative research can never be fully value free, I tried to address issues of trustworthiness in the following ways, all of which have been recommended by scholars with a wealth of qualitative research experience.

First, I was fully committed to candidness in relating to all participants (Wolcott, 1990). To facilitate this, I engaged in reflective practices throughout the process, seeking

to manage my own subjectivity so that it did not become “unwittingly burdensome” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 20). Indeed, I found my own biases changing over the course of the study as I assimilated information previously not available to me, which I believe is an indication that I did manage my subjectivity, at least as far as possible. I used random member checking, giving a number of participants the opportunity to review the transcripts of their own words and make changes as they deemed fitting. I also released my early analyses to administrators who had taken differing positions to evaluate and offer feedback (Patton, 1990).

I employed a great deal of rigor in data collection and analysis, including the use of coding software to enhance verification of my interpretive processes (Saldaña, 2009). The use of several different sources of data provided a sort of *crystallization* (rather than triangulation) of data, with each source offering perspectives like facets of a jewel that hopefully illuminated and strengthened the others in some way to create a coherent whole (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Finally, I tried to note and highlight any disconfirming evidence or outliers, seeking to understand what I could learn from them that would enhance my analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010).

Significance and Limitations of Study

As noted previously, in its simplest form the purpose of this study was to contribute to the relatively small body of knowledge that exists regarding how seminaries seek to develop leaders spiritually. In addition, there was the potential for the emergence of grounded theory regarding the process of adding formational components to pre-existing structures within theological education institutions (Borman, Clark, Cotner, & Lee, 2006). The findings of this study could prove helpful to BTSR and Fuller SOT,

particularly as they read the comparisons to each other, as well as the perspectives of the various players and the ways in which these coalesce and diverge.

The study could also prove practically useful to other seminaries who are just beginning to establish a formational component, or those who have been or are in the process of adding to or expanding their approach. The level of descriptive depth that this qualitative study provides could also be helpful to the ATS, which is somewhat dependent upon statistical measures to understand how seminary spiritual formation approaches are perceived by participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010).

The results of qualitative studies however, are not meant to be generalizable in the way that quantitative studies are often used. These are two unique institutions, and thus my interaction with and interpretation of the data is limited in that respect. According to Donmoyer (1990) however, qualitative studies of individual cases have three advantages. First they provide indirect access to the sites and data with which the researcher has interacted, which may not be readily available to the reader otherwise. Second, the perspective of the researcher is a valuable asset to the study, and in this case, my background and ability to speak the same language as the participants has proven valuable in both data collection and analysis.

Finally, for stakeholders who want to learn more about how to address seminarian formation, projects such as these can offer insight without creating a defensiveness that might ensue in the face of negative or perplexing quantitative results. Therefore, I believe that this entire research process can be used to *extrapolate*, or to make “modest speculations on the likely application of findings to other situations under similar, but not

identical, conditions” (Patton, 1990, p. 584). This provides an ongoing and future heuristic value to the study.

In the next chapter I will explore the first case, which is the spiritual formation model at BTSR, by examining the first three research questions. I will seek to unfold the breadth of this institution’s uniqueness through extant documentation, as well as the perceptions of key individuals, from the current president and students to alumni who graduated more than ten years ago.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS—BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT RICHMOND

The building blocks for the findings of a cross-case comparison are the individual cases, each of which must be fully explored and analyzed prior to bringing them together (Patton, 1990). To that end, this chapter will offer a description and analysis of the spiritual formation model at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR). In review, my study of the seminary's model was framed by the following research questions:

- What is the process that BTSR has engaged in as they sought to implement a model for the spiritual development of leaders?
- What is the lived experience of leaders who are impacted by the spiritual formation approach at BTSR?
- How do BTSR's spiritual formation models provide formational opportunities for a leader's personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity and public witness/social concern, as mandated in the ATS standards for accreditation?

I will begin with the first question, exploring BTSR's history and the role spiritual formation has played in the school's past, along with the process they went through in crafting their spirituality emphasis, as well as outlining the elements of the current model. I will then move to the lived experiences of both alumni and students, including their understandings regarding how the four components—personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity and social concern—have been addressed. I will end this chapter with a discussion of my findings.

My Campus Experience

A single beam of light reflected from the stained glass that seemed oddly out of place in the hallway of the office complex where I stood. I pondered the swirling mass of color and soon there emerged an image of a person standing on a massive sunflower, arms outstretched beneath a multi-hued orb. The plaque below, quoting Dr. E. Glenn Hinson, to whom the window had been dedicated in 1999, explained: “God’s love energies are continually pouring on us. We simply need to open like a flower to the morning sun, allowing God’s love to fill us and flow through us to others.”

Reading that, I couldn’t help but think of the role Dr. Hinson had played so many months earlier as I began to formulate the questions at the heart of my research. As he was one of the few authors in the small body of literature on Protestant seminarian spirituality, I had written him, and in the ensuing months our email interchanges came to represent over 15 pages of critical engagement. Eventually I would come to understand how very central this man’s life work is to the subject of study that comprises this dissertation.

The window that had captured my attention hung in a business park situated in the outskirts of Richmond, Virginia, the new location for BTSR. From offices marked by half unpacked boxes to the temporary signage over the doors, the seminary was clearly in transition, probably unlike any it had experienced in its nascent history. This structure was a striking contrast to the campus that the seminary had just vacated, one centered within a theological consortium of other institutions, comprised of buildings more than a century old, resonant with colonial Virginia—its ancient traditions, rich history and sense of stability.

What had brought them here, to this place, seemingly more geared for financial transactions than spiritual? And what significance might this have on the spiritual development of the leaders for whom this seminary was designed? This is the story I will attempt to tell—it is their story, but one into which they have graciously welcomed me. The time I spent on the BTSR campus, though short, put a human face on the large amount of data that I had been reviewing in anticipation of this visit. I walked the halls of that campus more aware than ever that the pages I would write would, of necessity, flow through the grid of my own perceptions. Given this reality, I hope that the words which follow will honor those things which the students, faculty and administration at BTSR have entrusted to me to share.

The Place

It was, in many ways, a tumultuous time across the globe. On a dark December evening in 1988, Libyan terrorists shot down United States' PAN AM flight 103 in the skies over Scotland, killing all 270 people on board. Six months later, almost a million Chinese citizens began to gather daily in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, protesting political corruption and calling for democracy, only to be violently mowed down by government tanks on June 4th. Civil unrest plagued East Germany as well, but a more hopeful outcome ensued as the Berlin wall came down and hordes of East Germans rushed across the border to celebrate their newfound freedom.

At the same time, conservatism was on the rise in the West, with Ronald Reagan in the U.S. and Margaret Thatcher in Britain enjoying unprecedented popularity. In what was perhaps a reflection of the mood of the times, one of the oldest and largest Christian denominations in America, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), began to come apart,

with conservatives calling for greater doctrinal purity and moderates insisting on the “Free Church” tradition from which they had sprung, which included “the voluntary principle in religion, religious liberty, separation of church and state, and voluntary association to carry out the world mission of Christ” (E. Glenn Hinson, personal communication, May, 2013).

A key locus of the battle was the seminaries, where Boards of Trustees began singling out professors deemed to be insufficiently doctrinaire. If these faculty members did not comply with the new regulations, they either quit or were fired. In this way, the SBC systematically overhauled the faculty and administration rosters for each of their six seminaries in what many exiled professors now acerbically refer to as “the fall.” The result was a critical gap in seminarian preparation for more moderate Baptist students who felt they no longer had a denominational home. A hand-typed artifact titled “The Need,” which I found in a box of historical documents at BTSR reflects the urgency of the situation:

When we ask the question, “Where are these students now going?” the answer is that they are not going anywhere else to seek theological training. For example, in the state of Virginia there has been a 37% drop in the number of Baptist students receiving any ministerial training since 1986. A survey of applications and enrollments at non-Southern Baptist divinity schools has not discovered that these students are going elsewhere in large numbers. The obvious fact is that we are losing an entire generation of ministerial students. [83:7]⁵

To address this growing need, a group called the Alliance of Baptists began to discuss options for theological education that would be different from anything currently offered, and in March of 1989 voted to establish a seminary in Richmond, Virginia. They

⁵ Longer quotations which are taken from coded documents in this chapter will reference the location within the Atlas.ti program. The first number represents the document and the second number represents the line the quote begins.

hired Thomas Graves as President, a pastor and professor of philosophy of religion from North Carolina, in March of 1991. Additionally, they brought on two other full-time faculty members—a male church history scholar and a female professor of New Testament and Greek—and several adjunct professors. Thirty-two students began classes that September in a leased building, and in May, 1994, they celebrated with their first graduating class. In those three years, the school tripled the size of its faculty and saw the student body grow to more than 130, as well as purchased a permanent site.

More recently under the financial strain of a changing economy and unmanageable debt, BTSR was forced to sell the home it had known for over 20 years. The new location, though vastly different, reflects an intention on the part of the school to accommodate the 21st century reality of a student body that will, in part, commute or engage in long distance learning. The current President, Ron Crawford, described the changes this way:

The transition that we are in now is one in which one more thing is being added to the pantheon and that one more thing is adapting to 21st century culture. And you see that everywhere. You see it in the smart-boards, you see it in the way this building is laid out, you see it in this location we have chosen, you see it in the block schedule. The strategic plan that faculty members have seen and turned their nose up a little bit, and trustees will embrace overwhelmingly, is that one of the four priorities is to incorporate in all the courses an awareness of 21st century culture and how the church must respond. [90:30]

Over the course of the week, I would come to understand the ways in which BTSR has had to wrestle with this issue of keeping pace with a rapidly changing culture while continuing to provide for the spiritual needs of its students. Although consensus on how to move forward may prove difficult, at the very least, these faculty members and administrators have not shied away from asking the hard questions, which will become apparent as the story unfolds.

The layout of the seminary's structure, which Dr. Crawford says was built for the future, is a rectangular edifice with offices and classrooms on three outer sides and a large communal lounge on the fourth. The offices have large picture windows looking out on a parking lot which is framed by tall oaks softening the asphalt view. Each office is unique, put together by the faculty member or administrator who inhabits it, characterized by mismatched furnishings, family pictures and personal artifacts such as the plaque in the Hebrew professor's office that shows two stone tablets with the inscription, "What would Moses do?" All of this lends a sense of hominess and warmth to the otherwise business-complex feel.

A rectangular hallway lines the offices and lounge, framing the centerpiece of the building, which is the chapel, a large room resembling a church with rows of seats and a stage that holds a piano and podium. The stained glass window I wrote of earlier hangs at the back of the stage behind the Eucharist table and shines through to the outer hallway where students come and go between classes. Susan⁶, a soft-spoken history professor, shared the significance of this:

And I think the fascinating thing about this architecture, even though we haven't reflected on it theologically in rich ways, I do like the fact that the chapel is in the middle and all the classes and offices are around it. [86:25]

This may well represent a metaphor for the school's commitment to keep spirituality central, even as so many other aspects shift under their feet.

One thing that hasn't changed since BTSR opened its doors in 1991 is their mission statement, which hangs proudly on the wall of the student lounge. It speaks of

⁶ Except when given permission, all names and descriptive details have been altered to protect participant's privacy. The following administrators provided permission to identify them: Thomas Graves, E. Glenn Hinson, Ron Crawford, Tim Gilbert.

several things, such as the school being distinctively Baptist in heritage and racially and gender inclusive. Perhaps more importantly, it states that “the seminary, while seeking excellence in scholarship, will provide for and encourage the spiritual growth of its faculty, staff and students.” Having articulated the priority of spirituality from its inception, the question that remains is how they went about institutionalizing this. It is to this process that I now turn.

The Process

What does it take for a seminary to establish and maintain a commitment to the spiritual development of its students? How does such an emphasis become entrenched within the ethos of the institution? Does publicly articulating this as a value ensure that spirituality will endure as an integral part of the school’s activity, both curricular and co-curricular? These were the questions I wanted to try to answer by looking at BTSR’s history. Because the seminary is only 22 years old, that which took place in their beginning days and months is critical for understanding the development of their spiritual formation model.

Earliest Signs

Beyond the mission statement, other hints of an initial emphasis on spiritual formation at BTSR can be seen in various historical artifacts. One is a program for a faculty retreat that was held the first semester that outlines a schedule with a deeply spiritual focus, including times for worship, Eucharist, centering prayer, reflection, and a final session on attending to spiritual disciplines. Another is a scrap of paper with the title, *Why BTSR?*, which contains notes that seem to pertain to a faculty discussion on the debate between the Greek words *paideia* (formation) and *wissenschaft* (knowledge),

which stated, “we are unwilling to divide the two and pick one or the other—both are essential.” In addition, the original seminary by-laws reiterated the mission statement’s commitment to providing for and encouraging spiritual growth in faculty, staff and students, and added, “Admission policies, however, do insist on applicants being serious about their own spiritual growth.”

What was the source of this priority for BTSR? Spiritual formation did not become an accreditation mandate until 1993, two years after the seminary’s founding. In addition, Baptist seminaries had not traditionally included the discipline, and in fact, according to Hinson, actually resisted, “partly out of suspicion of Roman Catholicism and partly out of fear of the subjectivism of this” (personal communication, June, 2013). An interview with Thomas Graves, the founding President, provides a critical key. Having earned a Master’s degree in Sacred Theology from Yale, Graves spoke of his relationship there with Professor Henri Nouwen, well-known Catholic priest and spirituality scholar and author, who at some point encouraged him to take some time out in a Cistercian monastery. This proved life-changing. Graves shared:

Our training as Baptists is entirely verbal, so I go to a Cistercian monastery where they take a vow of silence and nobody wanted to hear me talk. That was the most therapeutic thing I did in my life. I realized how hollow I was, uh, having developed usable skills in Baptist life, but when those skills were taken away, there was nothing left. [92:6]

Graves became friends with Nouwen, who shared with him his study of how spiritual development had been replaced by practical theology and pastoral care in American Protestant seminaries. This lack, Graves told me, was in large part the impetus behind his determination to include spiritual formation when he was hired by the trustees to become President. It thus became one of three pillars upon which the school would be founded, the other two being cross-cultural education, and practical ministry training in

partnership with the local church. These three pillars or “legs of the stool” as some described them, have been articulated in almost every descriptive public document since the seminary began.

I visited with Dr. Graves at his home in a quiet well-manicured neighborhood in the Richmond suburbs. He was a warm man with Southern gentility who still teaches as an adjunct at BTSR, in spite of some limitations from having multiple sclerosis. Graves was articulate about the seminary’s history and the role he played, and enjoyed reminiscing over the early days. With refreshing honesty, he shared his surprise at how quickly the spiritual formation focus had become institutionalized at BTSR, saying: “My idea was, well, we’ll try this, and if it doesn’t work, we’ll go some other direction. But it took root very quickly.” This was most likely in large part due to the next critical decision he made.

Curricular Anchor--Professor of Worship and Spiritual Formation

Hiring E. Glenn Hinson as professor of spirituality in BTSR’s second year was a strategic, and in many ways courageous decision for Graves. This was a radical departure from the norm in Baptist life, and indeed across Protestantism. One of Grave’s experiences illustrates it well:

Between the time we had made the decision that we were going to focus and have a key part of the required curriculum to be on spiritual formation, I remember announcing that to a group of Presidents and Deans in the Richmond Theological consortium and they laughed. And I announced we had begun a search for a professor of spirituality, and I remember H--- from Union saying, “What in the hell are you talking about?”

Graves laughed heartily as he shared this, but went on to say that as soon as they heard the name Glenn Hinson, they were duly impressed, for having someone like Hinson “helped validate that process.”

Thomas Benson, a long time theology professor at BTSR, looking every bit the scholar with his well-trimmed beard and corduroy jacket, shared that people were in awe of Glenn Hinson in those days. He shook his head, still amazed that he had been a colleague with the man he says was the only Baptist professor of spirituality in the world at the time. Hinson's reputation probably made Graves's decision to offer him the job an easy one. Beyond that, Graves, as well as his other two faculty members had studied under Hinson as professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he taught for 30 years before becoming embroiled in the doctrinal controversies there. Though Hinson, an internationally known spirituality lecturer, had remained at Southern Seminary through a fierce and personally painful battle, when the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board defunded a seminary in Switzerland because he taught there, he knew it was time for him to leave the denomination.

Hinson is a complex and deeply thoughtful man, at times exuding a humility that belies his public stature. When I first sought his council on my dissertation topic, he told me that he lacked the credentials in that much of his understanding of spirituality had come through a "journey with students," as well as personal relationships with well-known spiritual leaders such as Douglas Steere and Thomas Merton, who had shared critical course materials with him. Hinson is moved by his influence on student's lives, sharing with me that even now he receives letters almost weekly from those who took spirituality courses like one he first taught at Southern Seminary in 1963 called *Classics of Christian Devotion*, which had emerged from his contact with Merton. He felt strongly, and still does, about what he calls "the evangelical concern for doctrinal purity," sharing:

The mystery of God is a truth far beyond any human efforts to express it in propositional statements. Faith is to me commitment to a Reality far beyond human conceptions. As Abraham Heschel one said, "Faith is a blush in the presence of God." I thought of spiritual formation as a way to free people from obsession with doctrine, giving them a deeper foundation to stand on so that they didn't fear to explore how God fits into everyday human life. (personal communication, June, 2013)

BTSR's first job description for Hinson, titled Professor of Worship and Spirituality, was broad and varied. It called for him not only to teach courses, but to work with local retreat centers to provide spiritual experiences for students, give leadership to seminary chapel worship and "work with students to help them develop their spiritual resources and the ability to draw on those resources in order to sustain the necessary undergirding for effective ministry." He implemented two courses immediately, drawing from the mainstream of Christian spirituality and as he put it, "trying to get Baptists to recover the contemplative tradition they inherited from Puritanism." These two courses were mandatory for every student, and were normally taken during their first year at the seminary.

Introduction to Spirituality was a foundational course, and according to the original syllabus, was designed, among other things, to help students develop spiritual disciplines, connect their personality type with their approach to spirituality and help them achieve balance by integrating the experiential, social, institutional and intellectual dimensions of their spiritual life. *Ministers as Spiritual Guides* was designed to help ministers understand the need for spiritual guidance by looking at master spiritual guides throughout the history of Christianity, as well as gain basic insights and skills in how to guide others spiritually. Hinson soon added other spirituality courses such as *Classics of Christian Devotion* and *Prayer in Christian History*, which were electives that students were encouraged to take.

Hinson remained at BTSR for seven years, during which time a model for spiritual formation was established and institutionalized, making it the first Baptist seminary to have done so. While Hinson suggests that he has been given more credit than he deserves, the reality is that his influence is indelibly stamped upon the history and life of the school, as the stained glass window I had stood before attests. Graves made it clear that because he had no real experience with spiritual formation, he trusted Hinson to guide the process.

While the model was created largely through the grid of Hinson's expertise in church history, he incorporated spiritual practices such as journaling and retreats and an emphasis on the development of one's spiritual life. When I asked Graves whether this had been integrated into the overall life of the school in some way, he shared of faculty retreats, but went on to say:

I don't think it would be fair to say the spirituality emphasis was integrated in all classes, I'm sure that didn't happen, but there was significant spillover...The faculty was clearly aware of that because we were talking about required courses, and not just one. So we were taking a huge part of the entire curriculum and saying two of those courses were going to be on spirituality. [92:20]

While Hinson would have liked to have implemented mandatory courses in spirituality for every year the student was in seminary, he was unable to do so in his short time there, partially due to the difficulty of balancing coursework with all the required dimensions, as well as his own demanding workload. However, after the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) added spiritual formation to their standards in 1993, other schools, particularly several newly formed moderate Baptist seminaries, turned to BTSR for guidance. As Graves told me,

We sent a lot of copies of syllabi, course outlines, bibliographies...It's interesting, at least from the Baptist schools if you began to look at the

materials that are put out, that at least five or six of the schools you'll find an amazing similarity to ours...I mean we were very happy to have persons pattern what they were doing on ours, but that happened many times in terms of the spirituality emphasis.

While the curriculum was the hub of BTSR's early spiritual formation model, the school also sought to incorporate other activities that might enhance spiritual growth among its students. I will offer an overview of these next.

Co-curricular Activities

From the beginning, even before Dr. Hinson's arrival in 1992, BTSR made it clear in public documents that its approach to spirituality would go beyond coursework.

The first course catalog in 1991 stated:

In addition to the seminary's providing courses in spiritual formation, the seminary community will worship and pray together. Opportunities will be available for special workshops and retreats to help students in their spiritual formation and to facilitate their developing the spiritual resources necessary for the effective practice of ministry. [99:2]

The most consistent and visible attempt to do this was the weekly chapel service, which was planned and implemented by a group of students and faculty. On most weeks, there was a choir, which was traditional for Baptists in the South. I chatted via Skype with a greying spiritual director named Cathy, who attended BTSR in those first years and she shared of how she found chapel extremely meaningful as a musician who was often asked by either a professor or fellow student to sing as part of the chapel service.

Chapel was offered three times a week at first, but was never required, and attendance, according to alumni from the early years, was usually no more than 30 students, which several suggested had to do with lack of time on their part. Most appreciated the opportunity however, whether they attended or not, as a pastor named Mike who now serves in nearby suburb told me:

I was probably a typical seminarian in that the first year I was very active in chapel, then unfortunately I kind of slacked off with that, but ...because I was working full time in a parish and going to school full time with both of these degrees, having a place to worship where I was not the leader was very refreshing to me, and um, my lack of attendance, probably a nice way to put it, of chapel in those last years was not anything about chapel, it was probably just me not taking advantage of that opportunity. [25:54]

The issue of students' busyness and lack of time for co-curricular activities such as chapel was a recurrent theme, and may have been the impetus behind reducing chapel to twice a week within the first several years and once a week currently.

Early on the school held annual lectures on various topics that at times connected with student spirituality. There were also monthly "community conversations," but it is not clear whether these were designed specifically with student spiritual formation in mind. Planned co-curricular events did not seem to be central to BTSR's formative model, as the student's lived experiences will reveal. The curricular foundation, however, remained intact, even after Hinson was replaced in 1999.

Maintaining the Focus—Second Spirituality Professor

Hinson's successor was an Oxford-educated church historian named Stephen Brachlow, who specialized in the Desert Fathers, and remained in the position until his retirement in 2012. During his 15-year professorship, Brachlow built on the foundation that Hinson laid in two primary ways. First, he gave a greater emphasis to the practice of spirituality in terms of the classroom experience and student engagement. Specifically, he integrated spiritual practices in all of his courses and demonstrated the centrality of these in his own life as he related to students. One student shared poignantly:

...there was a professor, Dr. Brachlow, who at any given time would meet with you or talk with you, listen with you. I mean any time we had a class, be it Christian traditions, Intro to Spirituality, he always made time after class to sit with you and talk with you. And there was a park owned by Union seminary and it had a labyrinth, and you would see him walking

with students there, walking and praying, or sitting there listening quietly and praying. [87:42]

The second thing that Brachlow did was consistently add spirituality courses such as *Celtic Spirituality*, *Sabbath-Keeping*, and *The Wilderness Retreat*, which proved to be a continual favorite among students, many of whom took it more than once without credit just for the experience.

Brachlow's recent retirement has left a gap at the seminary, and is the subject of much discussion, both among faculty and students; due to the fact that he has not yet been replaced. There is some question whether the position will be maintained, as a result of financial restrictions the seminary faces. The current mandatory spirituality courses are being taught by other faculty, who plan to rely on outside lecturers to fill out areas in which they lack expertise. One professor suggested that they might try to fill two holes—spirituality and Church History—with one new hire, but an administrator offered the following:

I think it's more how can we creatively use the resources we have to maximize effectiveness for our students, whether that be one full time person and a couple of affiliate or... you know I know that we're strongly committed to really providing quality education in the area of spiritual formation, I just don't know what that position will look like at this point so, I don't think it's going to be an either or, I think it's going to be how can we realistically achieve our objectives. [89:21]

One of the students I spoke with on campus shared that he felt the greatest loss the seminary had ever experienced was this professor, who had "made spirituality relevant," for scores of students over the years. It seems the legacy that Brachlow left was one of breadth and depth for the spiritual formation model. When I asked one long-term administrator whether Brachlow had introduced any real changes, she mentioned the many courses he formulated; including one on green spirituality called *Praying on Planet*

Earth, but concluded that he hadn't actually altered the model itself in any way. Indeed, the basic frame that Hinson implemented is still intact at BTSR, as we will see next.

Current Model

While there are various nuances in the ways that faculty and administration describe the current spiritual formation model at BTSR, the one consistent refrain is that the school has always stood for three things: spirituality, mission immersion (cross-cultural education) and practical ministry, and that spiritual formation will continue to remain a core element in student education and development. President Crawford offered perhaps the most graphic illustration:

INT: Okay, how would you describe the spiritual formation—if we called it a model—how would you describe it?

PRESIDENT CRAWFORD: I think I would describe it as um, hmmm, I hate to use something like crabgrass, but it's on my mind as this season comes along, and I mean that in the sense that it permeates everything, but you only see it coming up in different places.

INT: ...and it's really hard to get rid of though.

PRESIDENT CRAWFORD: Yes it is, once it is entrenched (laughter). So I do think of spirituality here similar to that kind of image in that it's everywhere in all we do and yet there are specific places where it is very tangible and I think those kind of places would be in that Intro to Spirituality course and in a second course called Spiritual Guides and Leaders, which focuses on more of the practical disciplines of spirituality and finding what works for you. [90:37]

This is an apt description of a model that has undergone only minor changes from its inception until now. One example of these changes is that students pursuing academic degrees in theology, such as the Masters in Theological Studies (MTS) are no longer required to take spiritual formation courses, while they are still mandatory for the more practical degrees such as Masters of Divinity (MDIV), which is designed to prepare students to become pastors or other full-time Christian ministers. This is reflective of a

larger pattern in Protestant seminaries, which bifurcates theology and practical degrees. I will address the impact of this on spiritual formation in my final chapter.

The spiritual training for students who are pursuing practical degrees has broadened to include greater focus on their spiritual journey while in seminary in various ways. For example, in an initial *Exploring Ministerial Identity* course, students are required to determine one way in which they hope to grow spiritually during seminary, as well as connect their personality type to their spirituality. They address this contextually the next year in the *Ministers as Spiritual Guides* course and again in the third year during their internship under the guidance of a local minister and in conjunction with the school's Field Education director. The role of faculty advisor has been expanded to complement this, with the added responsibility of discussing the student's spiritual life during advisement sessions once or twice each semester.

Finally, there is the mandatory *Missions Immersion* course, which involves spending time within another culture. Although not specifically identified as relating to spiritual formation, this experience continually came up when students and faculty spoke of formative experiences. Given that the ATS lists "social concern" as one of the components of spiritual formation, it seems to be a natural fit in this discourse. See figure 4.1 for a graphic overview of the current curricular model.

Figure 4.1. BTSR Spiritual formation model for MDIV students (curricular)

Further institutionalization. In the Fall of 2013, BTSR welcomed Dr. Tim Gilbert, a former community college dean from Texas, as the new dean of students. An energetic man whose wife and daughters—one of whom graduated from BTSR—are all ordained ministers, Gilbert put spiritual formation front and center in his first faculty retreat just before the semester began. He was excited as he shared his goals with me where we sat in his corner office, easily accessible to anyone who happened to walk by:

When I'd looked at our website it says, "Here are the three main things we do: Mission Immersion." And you pull up the page and it's got all these goals. And then, "We do Practical Ministry." And you pull up that page and it talks about all these goals...but when you pull up the spiritual formation page... it didn't say much about what our goals were in terms of what is it that we're going to do with spiritual formation. So coming in as the new Dean I decided one of the things we really needed to do was start with, "What is Spiritual Formation?" Do we have some idea about what the goal is in terms of the kind of people we want to shape? [91:1]

What Gilbert hoped to accomplish was to at least come up with a working list of traits that might guide their efforts to address the spiritual development of students.

particularly since there was no faculty member currently overseeing this critical aspect. Although there was some reticence among faculty to try to assess something as nebulous as spirituality, they nevertheless identified nine characteristics (See figure 4.2) that they thought should be addressed in the student's formative journey while at seminary. As Gilbert assured me, these are beginning steps, but this kind of focus at the faculty retreat is significant in that it represents the intention on the part of a high level administrator who answers only to the president and trustees, to achieve a more systematic approach toward the formation of BTSR students.

Figure 4.2 Spiritual formation goals for students at BTSR

While BTSR's spiritual formation model can be articulated via narrative and charts, these clearly cannot reveal what kind of spiritual development is actually taking place at the seminary. For that, we must listen to those most impacted—the students—

whose stories I will now explore.

The Participants

The data upon which I am basing this description of students' lived experiences comes from three sources. First, I interviewed 15 alumni based on a random stratified sample of over 100 students who responded to an initial email. The final group of participants was gender-balanced and included four students who had graduated within the past five years, five who had graduated six to ten years back, and six who graduated more than ten years ago.⁷ In addition, I conducted a focus group on campus of nine students who volunteered to spend their lunch hour chatting with me. Finally, my own campus visit and interview experiences are a critical source of data as well.

Alumni and Student Perspectives

While many students have connections to BTSR because of its relationship to moderate Baptists, there are a variety of reasons people choose to attend seminary. A number of the alumni, as well as some in the focus group mentioned "a call" to ministry, for which seminary seemed the next logical step. For example, Charlie was a successful engineer living the American dream until his wife left him with his young daughter, which sent him plummeting into suicidal depression. After a life-changing spiritual experience, his "call" sent him to the internet to Google "seminaries in Richmond." Within nine months he was a full-time student at BTSR and today is a pastor of a small church in Southern Virginia.

⁷ Data description and analysis will be broken down into groups based on years out of seminary when there are significant differences between them. When there are no significant differences, all references relate to the entire fifteen alumni and/or focus group.

A number of the alumni I interviewed were not necessarily interested in church ministry, but wanted a spiritual foundation for non-profit or social work. Cheryl, now an administrator at a nonprofit organization came to BTSR to pursue community development after having lived with a group of people of all faiths who worked together to help homeless drug addicts, whereas Kandi, a Baptist minister's daughter wanted a career that would enable her to pursue social justice in some way. She now serves as a foster care social worker in her local community. For an overview of all fifteen alumni, see Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

BTSR Participant Descriptions

Name	Gender	Purpose for Attending	Current Vocation
[One to five years out]			
Charlie ⁸	Male	Ministry	Pastor
Thomas	Male	General interest	Hospital Chaplain (volunteer)
Brent	Male	Ministry	Pastor
Sharon	Female	Ministry	Prison Chaplain
[Six to ten years out]			
Kandi	Female	Ministry	Social Worker
Leslie	Female	Ministry	Pastor
Alan	Male	Ministry	Pastor
Philip	Male	Ministry	Pastor
Kathryn	Female	Ministry	Hospital Chaplain
[Ten plus years out]			
Cheryl	Female	Ministry	Nonprofit program manager
Cathy	Female	Social Work	Palliative Care Social Worker
Sam	Male	Ministry	Prison Chaplain
Marie	Female	Ministry	Unemployed, aspiring author
James	Male	Ministry	Pastor
Peter	Male	Ministry	Priest (Episcopalian)

Draw and expectations. As one of three pillars on which BTSR was founded, I expected participants to mention spiritual formation as a significant factor in drawing

⁸ Not actual names.

them to the school. This proved true in only four cases, with three of these being among those who attended more than ten years ago. James, a jovial pastor sporting a beard and surrounded by bookshelves in his home office told me:

Yes, and that's actually one of the things that drew me there, I was able to sit down with the admissions ... they said, "come on in, Dr. Graves, the president is available, why don't you come in and talk to him?" And that was, coming from a school of 20,000 and to walk into the president's office and have him say there are three emphases in this school, one of them being spirituality...Um, that really drew me there, and then getting to meet, well Dr. Hinson...I went in and sat in on one of his classes and was really impressed. [25:6]

Spiritual formation was mentioned only one other time as a drawing factor among all the other participants. Most often, they gave the seminary's location as the primary reason for attending, with two other common reasons being referrals (from pastors or professors to friends who previously attended), and specific degrees offered.

As I probed deeper in terms of what the participant's expectations were regarding seminary and their own spiritual journey, there seems to have been a slight shift in perspectives over the past 20 years. In the group that attended more than ten years ago, even though half had said they were drawn to the school because of its spiritual emphasis, they really did not have specific expectations, largely because their focus was on academics. Consider, for example, my conversation with Marie, a talkative aspiring author:

PARTICIPANT: I decided that I wanted to go to BTSR and the fact that they had an emphasis on spirituality was a big draw. I only applied to one seminary, I was tied to Richmond.

INT: What expectations did you have regarding spiritual formation and BTSR?

PARTICIPANT: I don't know that I had any expectations before I started. I was very focused on the academics for which I was very eager. I didn't really think about either community life or spiritual

formation as part of seminary, although both became more important once I was in seminary.

An inner city teacher named Sam, also from the 10-year-out group said he expected the work to be graduate level and not “Sunday School with homework” like his previous seminary, while Cathy suggested that spiritual formation was not the seminary’s responsibility, and that “these kids have to do that on their own.”

Alumni in the other groups (six to ten years out, one to five years out) tended to express more in the way of expectations regarding spirituality. Peter, an Episcopalian deacon married to a Baptist pastor, shared:

I thought that they probably would offer things sort of outside of the box, you know more than classes on systematic theology and things like that—taking courses like ministers as spiritual guides or spirituality, you know these are all things that I sort of expected that they would offer and they did and I enjoyed taking those kinds of things.

Leslie, a soft-spoken woman who now pastors the college ministry in a large church told me, “I think I went in thinking everybody would be talking about their own personal lives and their own devotions, and that was not reality.” Others offered general assumptions, like: “an overall feel that the seminary would prepare me spiritually as much as it did academically” or that “all the professors would be very spiritual, and it would come through in their lectures.”

Perhaps the most interesting trend was that of current students, who for the most part seemed to have no expectations. When I tried to ascertain why, the responses were telling. Josie, a brash young woman with an infectious laugh who had found BTSR on the internet told me: “I had never had a formal introduction to spirituality, so I didn’t know what that looked like.” This was the common response—that students really didn’t know much about spirituality or spiritual formation, and as a result, they came with few

expectations. This may reflect a shift in the types of students who attend the seminary today as opposed to 20 years ago, which I will delve into later in my discussion.

Whether BTSR alumni and students knew a lot or a little, and whether their expectations were met specifically or not, they had much to say about their experiences regarding spiritual formation once they got to the seminary. Leslie, the college pastor who expected more personal spiritual sharing, told me: “What they had was appreciated when I did get there, but it was a spirituality that was different from anything I had experienced up to that point.” These kinds of perceptions regarding spirituality are what I wanted to understand as I talked with students and alumni from BTSR about their formative experiences—both curricular and co-curricular.

Formation and the curriculum. My discussions with alumni and students regarding coursework and spiritual formation covered three areas. First, there were the mandatory courses, as well as spirituality electives or other classes that participants specifically mentioned as formative for them. Second, given that spiritual formation is a core value of the school I asked them to identify ways in which this emphasis might have come out in other coursework such as languages or theology. These discussions led to the third area, which is the ways in which faculty members influenced students spiritually, both in the classroom and in relationships outside of it. These are the things I will explicate in this section.

Specific courses. Those who had the most to say about the coursework’s formative impact were alumni who attended BTSR more than ten years ago, which is notable, given the length of time that has passed. While they may not have been able to recall specifics, they remembered deeply personal experiences. Cheryl, the volunteer

coordinator I mentioned earlier, told me that she felt that every course that she took at BTSR emphasized spirituality, but then shared this memory:

...it was a course where we also kind of dreamed a vision of this—maybe this setting in which we would be the leaders of spiritual formation, and um, of course I wrote about a community and I wrote about a center where people from all different faith groups would come and continue their own journey, strengthened for the journey—I don't remember what that class was called. [22:5]

Most in this group mentioned the two mandatory courses, and not surprisingly, the influence of Glenn Hinson. James, an American Baptist pastor who was effusive in his praise of BTSR talked about how he uses his notes from Glenn Hinson's class in ministry to this day. Sam, now a prison chaplain, shared of one very special experience:

Another Glen Hinson class where he gave us the choice between a final exam and a prayer retreat and everybody took him up on the prayer retreat thinking that would be easier and we had to turn in a notebook on that where we had different articles and writing on prayer throughout the church. I ended writing probably the best script I ever wrote for the drama team based on that weekend. So this entire 50 page notebook...to this day, those words still come from a very spiritual moment in my life, almost a vision, yeah. [33:14]

Other courses mentioned were the *Pastoral Care* class, as well as the *Mission Immersion* course, which prompted a number of alumni in this group to relate transformative experiences they had as a result. Peter shared:

And a fourth thing that I think helped me was that you had to do this Mission Immersion, you know everybody is required, and I went to the World Council of Churches' missions conference in South Brazil and that was just life-changing, it was my first time to do something like that and we went with 20 seminarians of other denominations and the worship with all these Christian traditions, that changed my life to this day. [27:8]

While most of those in the next two groups (six-to-ten years out, one-to-five years out) could identify at least one mandatory course, they often struggled to remember the name, and did not have a lot to say about the impact. There was one exception, however.

Kathryn, a former professional businesswoman, now a chaplain at a maximum security prison, told me of how she visited a prison for the first time one Christmas with a group from her church. Transformed by this, she began looking at seminaries, telling me: "...in February or March I was talking with BTSR on the phone and by July 1, was sitting in a Greek class there." Perhaps because it was all so new and exciting to her, Kathryn found many experiences at BTSR—from *Pastoral Care* to *Mission Immersion* to her language courses—to be extremely meaningful, and valuable for the work she does now. She did, however, note that this may have reflected her own intentionality:

I did take a lot of Greek and a little bit of Hebrew, but for me, translating and studying the Bible was an extremely spiritual activity, not academic at all. I did feel the spiritual emphasis but I think in my studies that I probably took it to another level just because of my personal orientation... and I would say that is an area that continues to affect me on a daily basis. I lead Bible study in the prison and much of what I do with ... I learned that from Biblical studies and I employ that in my preaching and I preach there on a regular basis, so that is something that has carried over. [32:8]

The focus group (current students) tended to talk about their course experiences more than their predecessors, perhaps spurred by the peer interaction. They mentioned all the same courses that had been brought up before, but added some other meaningful class experiences. The first was a course called *Wilderness Retreat*, which stirred a flurry of lively commentary:

FS4: Yeah, the *Wilderness Retreat*. (everyone laughs and begins to chat among themselves.)

FS2: Yeah we love that.

INT: Is that required?

FS4: No.

INT: But everybody tries to take it?

FS9: Yeah, you can go as many times as you want, but you only get credit for one.

FS5: And usually it's, usually taken in the main term and for graduating students—it's usually their last course—

FS2: (interrupting) although I was the first to take it my first year.

FS7: I did too.

A couple of students went on to tell me that this class was in such demand that Dr. Brachlow had promised to return in May to offer it one final time, and this elicited excited responses from students who hadn't known this.

The other course these students mentioned was *Exploring Ministerial Identity*. When I probed as to why they considered it to be a spirituality course, a quiet, unassuming young man who had commented infrequently throughout the focus group explained that it was revolutionary because of a book they had to read that connected their personality type with their spirituality type:

I learned about all these things that I'd never learned about because I always thought I wasn't a spiritual person...you do your Meyers Briggs and once you figure that out, it is eye-opening because like I'm hard-core introvert but I'm not shy and I didn't understand, but like you carry that with you through seminary and it really, it was revolutionary to me too.
[87:69]

Others agreed, stating that although that course wasn't labeled a spirituality course, it really was because it "puts you on notice, makes you aware of yourself."

Josie talked about the practices that she learned in the *Introduction to Spirituality* course, and why they had such an influence on her:

...we went outside, we walked a labyrinth, we would talk, we would light a candle, it wasn't biblical at all for spirituality, well a little bit, but it wasn't like—the purpose wasn't to focus on the Scripture, it was to focus on your spirit, that's it—I loved it, that was by far my favorite class here because I think that was what like fine-tunes my faith. More than the actual rigorous academia, is that, because I feel more connected to God spiritually rather than through the Bible...[87:129]

This is perhaps an indicator of some of the differences in what students today are seeking compared to those of 20 years ago, which once again, I will explicate further in the discussion.

Integration. In trying to grasp what other ways spirituality might be emphasized at BTSR, I asked the participants if there were professors who perhaps didn't teach spirituality courses, but nevertheless brought spiritual issues into their coursework in some way. There was a fairly consistent response across all four groups, which was that this was normal at the seminary, that while some professors were more intentional or skilled at this than others, most of them did address spirituality in some way. This is so significant that I have included a table that lists these comments (see table 4.2).

Charlie, the single dad mentioned earlier who graduated within the past five years was the one outlier in this discourse. Although he apologized for being negative, most of his interview related his personal dissatisfaction with his experience at BTSR. He told me that he believed maybe only 10-15 percent of the professors were "very spiritual people," which he seemed to base on an intangible feeling he would get because he was a person who could "read character well." He explained:

I mean, I learn a lot by the way people carry themselves, how they speak, not so much about what they tell me to do as far as my spiritual practices, but just how they carry themselves, it really brings me in and um, maybe two to three professors tops really brought me in, and I think that's where I grow spiritually, is when I watch people that are mature spiritually and they carry themselves in a very confident way—that's what draws me in and that's where I grow. Um, very small percentage of professors did that for me. [20:11]

Charlie did describe the professor who oversaw his mission immersion trip as a very spiritual man, and also talked about the dean, with whom he sought counsel every couple of months at his own initiative, demonstrating that even with his critique; he did find some spiritual aid while in seminary.

Table 4.2

Participant comments on integration of spiritual formation

Alumni 10+ years out	Alumni 6-10 years out	Alumni 1-5 years out	Current Students
<p><i>...there was always that striving.</i></p> <p><i>I think I saw it in most of the courses I took.</i></p> <p><i>Spirituality was covered in most courses.</i></p> <p><i>I was able to see year after year how that became more and more of an emphasis.</i></p>	<p><i>...this was something that the entire program was soaked with.</i></p> <p><i>I think that is something that is a part of the DNA of that school</i></p> <p><i>I think they succeeded really well in providing a holistic view of spiritual growth and development and spiritual formation.</i></p>	<p><i>There was a strong focus on spiritual formation through biblical studies and the theological studies.</i></p> <p><i>I do believe it was part of their intentions as well even though it was an academic class.</i></p> <p><i>So it was that kind of process...the way that the professors taught the classes.</i></p>	<p><i>They really try to encourage students to find different ways to practice spiritual formation.</i></p> <p><i>...there are threads of spiritual formation touched on in every class that we've taken.</i></p> <p><i>...there's a reference toward it in all the classes.</i></p> <p><i>...we've always got it in our minds that it is important.</i></p> <p><i>...every professor here buys into what it's all about so we live it.</i></p> <p><i>...woven into every bit of the fabric of the institution.</i></p> <p><i>Spirituality aspect holds just as much weight as any of the other pieces...</i></p> <p><i>They have done a great job of initiating that in our curriculum and community and everyday existence.</i></p> <p><i>At a lot of levels it is just so organic.</i></p>

Faculty influence. Students shared a number of examples about the ways in which they were influenced by certain professors from various disciplines, either in or outside of the classroom. For example, one shared about a Greek professor preaching a sermon in chapel on the spirituality of verb tenses, which she has never forgotten. Another talked about how their theology professor engaged them in theological discussions through the use of art that were very meaningful. Many participants mentioned how the Old Testament professor tied the course content in with current events with comments like this that Kandi shared:

In Old Testament class when S-- would be telling us about the connections between the Jews of the Hebrew Scripture and the holocaust and we weren't even in class anymore, we were just mesmerized and touched by making those connections between the Biblical text and the history and our faith and our spirituality. [22:3]

Kathryn, the businesswoman turned prison chaplain told me that she really felt every professor intended for students to take the coursework and apply it in spiritual ways to their life. When she didn't offer any examples from her own experience, I asked her why she felt this way. She responded:

They were very much open about their own personal quest, their own personal faith life. You know often it was not unusual to open a class with prayer, so I think that they modeled and shared some of their own spiritual life and so I think that made a difference. [32:13]

James concurred, sharing, "I think that was something that was a part of every professor that was there and that somehow their area of study, of expertise, was somehow -- they lived that."

The discussion about faculty inevitably led to participants talking about personal relationships with certain professors and how these impacted them spiritually. While the school has never had any sort of mentoring or spiritual direction program for students, most of them felt they were able to get what they needed by seeking out faculty or administrators, and that the faculty truly cared about them, and pressed them in their personal growth. Phillip shared:

I remember being pushed in the pastoral care class. There was an issue where my father had died early in life and him [the professor] really pushing me where I was not willing to go comfortably and it really gave me some catharsis to change and grow. And he did that both in the classroom setting, and he knew how much it was asking me to stretch, and checked in on me— both before I had to present in class, and afterwards, and he lovingly got me to a better place, not an easier place, but a better place. [33:14]

While participants across all groups suggested that relationships with faculty were available to the degree that the student was willing to pursue them, this seemed to be more natural for those who attended in the early years. They often talked about how they could have a meal in the cafeteria with professors “who lingered,” or going into the prayer room to talk or pray with a faculty member, noting that the school was quite small and had a very intimate feel in those days. Peter, an articulate man who left a Southern Baptist seminary and church to go to the newly formed BTSR and is now studying to become an Episcopalian priest, suggested that there was a unique closeness among faculty and students because of the denominational struggle that they shared. He explained:

All my professors had either been fired or about to be, and they still kept on. That was huge, um every single one of them you know had been attempted to be victimized and they said, no, my faith is bigger than that, we will go and start something new, with a lot of personal risk and a lot of personal cost. So that was very moving to me. And also the same for me. I remember taking babysitting jobs because we were so poor, the old seminary story, but just keeping alive while doing that, and what stayed with me when I left the Baptist denomination was that sense of a spiritual call to a better place so I could point back to my seminary days and say I developed those skills in that setting that helped get me to that place today. [33:14]

This unique camaraderie seemed to diminish some as the years went on. The alumni in the six to ten years out group, although still mentioning faculty relationships and their accessibility, talked somewhat more about a student life director that the school hired, who made himself available to students and was very committed to helping them work through any problems they might be having. Similarly, the one to five year out group talked about the seminary size and how they could talk with professors anytime, but only one gave an example of a faculty member providing spiritual help outside of the

classroom. This does not mean it didn't happen, but just that they were less forthcoming in offering examples than earlier students.

Of the current students, while they talked about Dr. Brachlow's spiritual influence (the spirituality professor), only one mentioned other faculty in this regards—her faculty advisor—with whom she meets twice a semester. When I asked this group for a show of hands, three other students said their advisor addressed their spiritual life, with one student commenting that he had never had those kinds of conversations with his.

Co-curricular formation. Often when I asked participants about activities beyond the classroom that addressed their spiritual life, they weren't sure what I meant until I offered an example such as chapel or conferences etc. Their responses can be broken down into three categories: experiences related to the seminary community, experiences related to chapel, and experiences related to a miscellaneous set of other events. I will summarize these, separating them out by group when relevant.

Community experiences. There were only a couple of examples across the spectrum of participants regarding seminary-sponsored gatherings as a community—small or large—that had the explicit purpose of helping students grow spiritually. These were actually references to small groups within classes such as *Pastoral Care* or as a part of their internship, and participants didn't say much other than to mention them. Instead, students and alumni often spontaneously shared of informal relationships that they developed in a number of ways. A handful mentioned small prayer or Bible study groups, which they started themselves, while others talked about their mission immersion trips and the relationships formed as a result.

Several alumni shared about residential life in the dorm. In the old facility, students were able to live on campus on the third floor of the school, and this created a strong sense of bonding, as well as opportunities for spiritual interaction. The current students lamented this loss. David, an engaging African American man in his early forties launched what became a lengthy discussion in the focus group:

I think that when we had campus housing, there were periods and they were honestly never formal, but very informal, where there were lots of discussions about calling, about where we were in spiritual growth. And it happened in somebody's room or apartment, very impromptu. A lot of it would happen in the lounge, a lot in the hallway. There were always those moments, and I think it happens here, but there were always those moments where we had those discussions out of the blue...[87:61]

Some in the group questioned whether this could happen in their new structure, and most seemed uncertain but hopeful, suggesting I check back with them in a few months, since school had just started.

These students, as well as several alumni, noted that the small size of the seminary and the atmosphere that existed contributed to developing meaningful relationships in which students helped each other with spiritual needs. James talked about BTR being his "sanctuary" during some tough times, while a leader in the focus group shared:

This place, had it not been for this place in my own life, it would, I would not have survived and again it comes to community, it comes through the faculty, the administration, that sense of spirituality and community being and caring genuinely caring for each other, without being prompted. It's because of how we feel for each other. [87:226]

At the same time, a number of participants across the board seemed to dismiss the idea of community entirely, noting that even if they heard of something going on such as occasional lectures or seminary-wide gatherings, they would not have attended because they didn't have time. This refrain, heard from participants in every group, speaks to the

issue of the challenges the seminary faces now more than ever as they seek to meet the needs of commuter and long-distance learners.

Chapel. By far, the most common co-curricular activity participants mentioned was chapel. Overall, those who seemed to find it the most formative were the ones who were involved in the planning or who sang in the choir, although almost all who attended said it was a positive experience. Almost one third of the participants, however, said that they did not attend regularly, due to time constraints or other reasons, such as this one, shared by Sharon:

PARTICIPANT: I didn't go to chapel much, I only went if a friend of mine was preaching... but chapel wasn't something I went to very much. I come from a very low-church worship style...I didn't have any experience with a high church worship and that was boring to me and I didn't know what to do or say so I didn't go.

INT: Okay, thanks for the honesty, so chapel was available but because it wasn't really addressing your own life in the way that you connected to God you weren't drawn to go to that.

PARTICIPANT: Right, I felt more like an outsider because I just didn't know what was going on. [28:60]

I personally had the opportunity to attend chapel for a special service in which they dedicated the prayer window that had been transported from their old location. There were perhaps 15 students in attendance (not including the small choir), and a handful of faculty and administration. As I sat through the rather traditional service, I was keenly aware of a conversation I'd just had with the focus group, many of whom had expressed that they go to church services already a number of times a week in their jobs or internships, and that they don't need one more of those. Josie made her feelings known:

Personally I don't like chapel, not because, I just prefer not to go because I went to school with chapel every day, and I'm just like, "Ugh..." I do

miss the spirituality aspect that you might get out of it, but I don't like to just sit in a pew, sing a hymn, sit down, listen to a homily, sit down, I just don't like that...[87:129]

She went on to speak of practices they had learned in their spirituality courses that she wished were brought into chapel, such as meditation. One alumnus similarly shared that his favorite chapel was when they chanted the Psalms of Lament the entire time.

Participants across the groups mentioned very few other co-curricular experiences as meaningful aspects of their spiritual life. There were occasional references to annual lectures or conferences, ecumenical gatherings in the community, and ministry workshops. Several spoke of going on a retreat—from the early years under Glenn Hinson to later years through Brachlow's *Wilderness Retreat* course—but once again, these were offered as a course, usually for one credit unit. A couple of alumni mentioned the prayer room, which they felt demonstrated the school's commitment to their spiritual growth. After hearing the students give answers to my specific questions about formational opportunities, I wanted to open the door for more spontaneous sharing, so I asked them how they felt the seminary prepared them most for the spiritual challenges they would face when they got out.

Alumni and student positive experiences. Participants shared a variety of experiences that they felt prepared them spiritually for the future, from things they gleaned in specific classes to spiritual practices that they still carried with them. The largest number of responses, however, had to do with students' personal pilgrimage, which they articulated in a variety of ways. For example, one theme had to do with the emphasis on caring for your own soul in order to care for others. An early graduate shared:

I think they taught me the great value of self-care and also that um, my gift to the people I serve uh, is to share with them my journey honestly and faithfully. They certainly taught me to research, they certainly taught me the academic skills and I still use them, but the best thing they taught me was that self-care and ability to make my own soul's health a priority.

This was echoed in various ways by others, including Melissa, a current student, who said that she had learned that unless you know what your own spiritual self looks like and what feeds you, you cannot hope to feed others spiritually.

Closely related to self-care was that of self-discovery, and the freedom to explore your own beliefs without fear of judgment or condemnation. Marie shared:

I think in deepening my, how can I say this? I think seminary experience gave me--as I mentioned earlier about giving students the freedom to really question and dig—and sometimes my answers don't match everybody else's, but that's okay, because it's right for me. And I think seminary as a whole gave me that confidence to develop my own sense of spirituality in different ways and it doesn't have to look like anyone else's.
[30:11]

Other participants agreed, with one alumnus saying that he felt completely free to say anything, adding that BTSR stood for this kind of freedom, always inviting students to be themselves, and therefore, “you never felt like you were an oddball because everybody in their own sense was an oddball if that makes sense, I mean we all had our own take on things.”

At times participants suggested that this kind of freedom was the fruit of professors who wouldn't let them get away with not questioning what they believed and why they believed it. The sense that there was great value in wrestling with your faith was expressed a number of times, as Sharon explained:

Um, I think this may not be exactly where you're going with this, but I think as much as anything else, it was the challenge in pretty much all of my classes to think for yourself and to dig deeper. And it wasn't a specific “you need to believe or think or know this” as much as it was a challenge

to wrestle with the harder issues and the questions and Scriptures and come up with your own answers...I would say that was the main thing I got and that was through everything. [30:32]

Participants suggested that this kind of wrestling strengthened their faith and better prepared them for ministry, as well as broadened their horizons and enabled them to relate to people of other faiths.

This freedom to explore may have had the unexpected effect of stifling expression for a couple of alumni, however. Leslie shared how she wished she'd had a spiritual mentor who could have helped her process the struggles in her early days, that because there was so much freedom and diversity, she was afraid to speak up and tell people, "that's really messing with my ideas about God and the church and the Bible and faith." Charlie, the outlier mentioned earlier, was clearly frustrated with what he felt was a lack of freedom to share one's personal journey, although he couldn't figure out why that was the case:

PARTICIPANT: I'm a very open-minded person and ...now this is just me, but what I've seen at least in that seminary, people don't like to share their spirituality. I don't know why, that's what I've found, you know I have a couple of minister friends and we've talked about that, um, it is hard to put your finger on it, I don't know why, but people don't share that much at that seminary, or they didn't when I was there.

INT: So it seems like people sort of keep their spiritual journey to themselves, it's kind of a private thing?

PARTICIPANT: It's hard to really put this into words, sometimes I feel like, you know... I think at that seminary, people tried to get away from a lot of uh—you don't hear a lot of Jesus talk...but I always felt that, I mean it's good to be open-minded, it's healthy to be open-minded but let's not forget what we're doing here, we need to center ourselves spiritually and I just didn't see that. [20:90]

In the first case, Leslie shared that she came to trust her professors, and seeing such deep faith in their lives freed her to press on until she felt at peace with her own spirituality.

While these were outliers, at least in terms of expressing this struggle, it is not surprising that BTSR has had to deal with these kinds of things, given that they represent a moderate theological base, yet particularly in the early years, attracted students from the more conservative Southern Baptist background.

The other category of positive experiences was the ways in which faculty modeled their spiritual journey. One early alumnus named Thomas told me that while the spiritual emphasis of the seminary didn't specifically impact him, he was changed by watching one of his professors grieve the drawn-out dying of her husband, and found it a very formative experience. Kandi shared:

There were a lot of opportunities where professors were not closed up in their offices doing research or writing or whatever, so they were very available to students and more as colleagues, and even though you respected them academically for who they were and what they had obtained and what they had achieved, I think you also had a sense that they were very approachable and that they really lived and believed what they were preaching and teaching in the classes. And you saw that degree of spiritual maturity, I think, modeled in their lives. [30:61]

Student and alumni suggested areas for improvement. I did give the participants the opportunity to share with me anything they wished the seminary had done differently regarding spiritual formation. For the most part, both the alumni and the focus group tended to be surprised by the question, and had little to say about the seminary's weaknesses regarding their own spiritual development. Even when I probed, at least five of the participants said that there was nothing they thought the seminary could or should have done differently.

Of those who did have suggestions, the responses varied, from wishing there were more spirituality courses, to having a spiritual director, to more seminary involvement in

the community. Thomas told me that spirituality didn't come naturally to him, and to his own detriment, the seminary let him get away with that. He explained:

I feel like especially in the opening weeks if not before then, accepting new students should really be broad enough to say, 'If you want to get something out of this that is not just academic knowledge, but to really have some kind of better understanding as to who you are, who God is and the relationship between the two through this, then try to find a way to slow down during that process.' [21:29]

This was an early graduate, however, and the seminary may address this now through its *Exploring Ministerial Identity* course. Far more common was the kind of response given by a current pastor who told me that he couldn't imagine what they could have done to better prepare him for ministry: "I felt like I was so nurtured and prepared in so many ways. The only thing I could say is more of the same."

While the lived experiences of students and alumni from BTSR provide anecdotal evidence that BTSR is addressing their spiritual needs in more than adequate ways, the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) identify four specific areas in which seminary's are to provide formational opportunities for students—personal faith, moral integrity, emotional maturity and social concern. While I will cover this more fully in the cross-case analysis, I will end this case study with the students' responses when I brought up these particular components.

Student Experience and ATS Components

In my interviews with the alumni and focus group I first shared about the ATS standards regarding the four components. Across the board the participants were not familiar with these, and thus it usually took some time for them to process how they had experienced them, although the focus group warmed up by listening to each other and as a result had more to say. I first asked them to rank how well they felt the school had

addressed each one based on a Likert scale of one to five, with five being high. Once a participant assigned a number to a component, I encouraged them to offer explanations for their choice. Some chose to do so. Table 4.3 shows the mean ranking by both the alumni and the focus group.

Table 4.3

Student and alumni rankings of ATS components

Component	Mean Rank by Alumni	Mean Rank by Focus Group
Personal faith	3.9	4 to 4.5
Moral Integrity	3.4	3
Emotional Maturity	4	4.5
Social Concern	3.5	4

Personal faith commentary. With one or two exceptions, participants stated that they grew in their own personal faith while in seminary. The outliers who did not feel that the seminary adequately addressed this shared that they grew through peer relationships, but that they knew students who went through seminary with no focus on their own spiritual life, and thus, no real growth. The rest of the participants talked about the tools they had been given, or how they'd learned to integrate theology into their personal journey. The most common response, as has been explored earlier, was that they were challenged in their faith, and that the process of authentically examining what they believed and why, produced a great deal of growth. A young man who had come to BTSR from another state expressed this well:

They say if you come here with a faith like a brick house, then a brick gets pulled out and it will tumble, but if you are willing to come here with a spider web, you can pluck a few strands out and it won't change the structure, and that, in a large sum is what it is like. Every professor points you in that direction and helps you work with that. [87:89}

Moral integrity commentary. Participants were more mixed on this component.

Two of them mentioned the ethics course, and a few suggested that this aspect was assumed, or indirectly addressed, but something everybody knew mattered. However, the most common response had to do with stories of moral crises, and how the seminary handled them. Two of the early alumni told similar stories, albeit with different details about the administration firing the student life director because of his stand on homosexuality, which they felt was completely at odds with the things they had been taught at the school. This was their perception, although Dr. Graves assured me that this never happened.

On the other hand, an alumnus named Alan shared of how a professor had an affair with a student and the school handled it really well, being very clear about boundaries. Peter, from the ten-plus years out group expressed his disappointment at the number of students engaged in illicit sexual activity, noting that his previous seminary would have kicked them out. While he did not approve of that approach, he did feel that BTSR could have done more to address sexual morality with its students as they prepared for ministry.

Emotional maturity commentary. Participants who spoke positively about this component referred primarily to their internship where they had to deal with real life struggles, forcing them to grow emotionally. Many spoke of the *Pastoral Care* class, attributing their growth to the professor who had mentored them and provided critical tools for moving into ministry. I was able to sit in on this class, and found the professor a

gentle man with a tender heart, and could see why students were drawn to him and felt emotionally nurtured. The focus group talked a great deal about the Myers-Briggs assessment taken during their first year and how it had helped them. There were only a couple of instances across the board in which participants were unable to offer ways in which emotional issues were addressed.

Social concern commentary. Alumni from earlier in the school's history tended to rank this lower than those who have attended in the past 10 years, stating that it was more theological than practical or that they wished the seminary had been more engaged in the community. Those attending more recently readily shared that this was a pillar of the school, that it was 'very big' and that social justice was inherent in BTSR's ethos.

Numerous participants shared of the life-changing experiences that the mission immersion experience had provided. Here are a couple of examples:

I went to South Africa with a small group of students, we spent about 10 days there and just had an amazing experience, lived with Christians in that community, actually lived in people's homes... We actually had the wonderful opportunity to attend a communion service led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and got to meet him so that was an amazing experience... I think that the overall thing I took away from that was being a part of a much larger global Christian community and it just enlarged my world and my sense of who Christians are and my sense of how God is working in the world, it was awesome. [34:35]

We went to Palestine and Israel and worked with Palestinian refugees. You know coming out of the evangelical background growing up, you know Israel could do no wrong, but being there on the ground and seeing firsthand the treatment of the Palestinians shattered a lot of my political assumptions that I thought were spiritual. And that's why I'm a liberal democrat today because of that experience on the ground on Israel. That was very huge for me and my development. [33:16]

From the alumni and students' perspectives, while they may not have known the specific components mentioned in the ATS standard, for the most part, they found it easy to identify how these things were a part of their experience at BTSR. Looking at the big

picture, taking into account each of their stories, and indeed the larger story of the seminary itself, it seemed that certain themes emerged again and again. I complete this case study with an overview of these and what significance they might have.

Discussion

My exploration of the interviews with faculty, administration, alumni, and students, along with the plethora of public documents yielded two tentative conclusions. The first has to do with the initial commitment to spiritual formation by top seminary leadership and its impact on the trajectory of the school and its core values. The second addresses the ways in which students have changed and the culture at large has shifted, and what this might mean for spiritual formation at BTSR. I will briefly address these and then offer a personal word regarding my own sense of where the seminary stands today.

Initial Commitment and Seminary Trajectory

The impact of BTSR establishing the priority of spiritual formation from the start cannot be underestimated. By introducing this emphasis, President Graves drew a line in the sand, so to speak, making spirituality a fundamental component of the educational process that would affect the trajectory of the school's future. This was manifested in early artifacts and extant materials such as course catalogs, mission statements, and publicity pieces, and used to create shared values in the very first faculty retreat. The decision to hire a full-time professor of spirituality, particularly one with such impressive credentials as E. Glenn Hinson not only demonstrated Grave's unyielding commitment to spiritual formation, but ensured that its place as a pillar of the school would become an

embedded assumption (Schein, 1985), one that faculty, administration and students would all come to share.

This is seen in the statements by students and alumni in Table 4.2, and is also supported by interviews with faculty members and administration, who made comments like “it’s been one of our anchors since the beginning,” or “everything I do is about that and that’s the philosophy here and has been since the beginning,” or “the people in the institution have so thoroughly embraced that idea, that the only struggles are with implementation.” Inevitably faculty members or administrators I spoke with reminded me that spiritual formation was a “pillar” of the school, and no one seemed to question this or suggest things could or should be different.

The strength of this “pillar” is seen in its impact on decisions of critical importance. For example, when I asked President Crawford what advice he might give to a seminary seeking to bring spiritual formation in, he first joked, “Do away with tenure—oh did I say that?” We laughed together and then he explained:

I have used the financial crisis to help reshape. For instance in 08 when we had to downsize the faculty, I followed the rules of ATS, I followed the rules of this institution, those were requirements I had to do, but then I made some specific choices about who was going to stay and who wasn’t and those who were more skeptical about these spiritual kinds of things aren’t here anymore. So that was one of the rules that I used. [90:63]

The emphasis on spirituality also spurred the new Dean of students to press for even greater clarity and commitment to it in his first professional interchange with the current faculty and administration. He explained his reasoning for trying to get them to come up with a list of spiritual qualities to me:

I’ve told my faculty this... I said, can’t we, for us say, here are the characteristics that we think that people ought to have and we’re trying to help people get those and work them into what we’re doing in classes? And so it’s got to be a cross-curricular kind of thing, not just a class that

you do and you've got it...I've done some work on chaos theory and chaos theory talks about living systems and it says living systems go one of two places, they either spiral down to a point and die, or they spiral out into infinity. And so I said spiritual formation for me, what it is like, is where the living system exists. ...so what we're trying to do is find where we are in that living system...[91:30]

Whatever that place may be—BTSR seems securely tethered to an ethos that elevates the spiritual development of its students. Even today as they struggle with the finances to replace the spirituality professor, other faculty members are stepping in to ensure that students get what they need. The trajectory that was set at the start has become more firmly entrenched with each passing year. As President Crawford shared:

I think seminaries would be well-served to find a way to make spirituality part of what they do and to keep revisiting and revisiting and revisiting and trying to get it ingrained at a more authentic level...I don't think it happens in one year, I don't think it happens where all of a sudden you're going to teach a course in spirituality and then three years later move it to a required course. I think it is more foundational than that. [90:65]

While BTSR has done the foundational work to keep spirituality central, this does not mean that their approach has been or is problem free. Indeed, given the unique needs of students today and the changing culture in higher education and beyond, the seminary's approach to spiritual formation may be facing its greatest challenge. I will conclude this case study with a brief overview of my conclusions regarding this.

Changing Culture, Changing Students

In a conversation with President Crawford, he shared with me that he believed BTSR was doing some clear shifting as an institution, largely due to the need to adapt to 21st century culture. Comparing his intention to make this central to the way that they have prioritized spirituality, Crawford suggested that every professor had to emphasize, and every student had to become aware of the dynamics of the postmodern mindset, for themselves and the churches in which they hope to minister. He added, "I don't want to

forsake heritage and history because I am still very traditionalist, I go to a church with a very traditional experience but I don't want to go to a church that ignores the 21st century either." This challenge of holding onto traditions that matter while adapting to a changing world is front and center for BTSR.

The changing culture can be seen in the spectrum of students who attend BTSR today, as compared to 20 years ago. One faculty member told me that there was a time they attracted mostly students from Baptist churches that weren't as conservative, but "then lately some students have come just because we are here." From people "googling" to find a seminary because it sounds interesting, to those who see themselves as just beginning their spiritual journeys, the student profile is gradually changing. For example, when I asked the focus group how they felt the school was addressing their personal faith, Justice, a nervous young woman with piercing eyes jumped in:

Um I don't think I can really answer that one for myself personally because my faith is still being formed. Like I didn't come in here super religious, didn't go to religious schools, so I'm still being formed and I'm very private about it and it's not like in the middle of class, "Oh Jesus..." [87:82]

How does the changing student profile affect the seminary's approach to spirituality? Dean Gilbert suggested that this kind of individualistic mindset works against spiritual formation, and that he felt a responsibility to address this, explaining:

They talk about integrating one's own story into the larger story, I think one of the things in our own day and time is there is a lot of talk by young people about spirituality but they don't really see that in a community setting. It's a very Cartesian individual—but they don't see that in society. The 'nones' when you ask them, they say I am spiritual but not religious. So I think it is important that we talk about it as a community and the kinds of people we want to be... [91:16]

This issue of community, however, brings with it another set of problems. As I noted, more than one third of the alumni and students told me that their lack of involvement in

co-curricular spiritual opportunities was because they commuted and did not have time, no matter how valuable they felt those things might have been.

The increasing number of commuter students, the loss of residential housing and a growing distance learning approach creates critical challenges for schools like BTSR that wants its students to be spiritually formed through relationships with others. The seminary has taken bold and intentional steps to address this, with a location more conducive to commuting, a structure designed so that students and faculty continually “run into each other” as they walk from one place to another, and a block schedule that ensures groups of students will spend more focused hours in each other’s company. Not everyone is convinced this will work. Susan, the church history professor, spoke wistfully of her wish that pastors could be trained in monastic settings “because it’s in the meal sharing and daily life that you become connected then to the lives of people in a way that doesn’t just feel like you’re living dichotomously.”

Dr. Benson, a professor who prided himself on having been around longer than most, expressed his skepticism more directly:

This new schedule we have, that I personally hate ...it’s one thing to say that things have changed and that residential campuses are not as lively as they were when I was a student, I’m trying to find the right word, it still remains to be seen whether this becomes a campus in any real sense. In the old place, when I would, on occasion need to go to my office at 8 or 9 in the evening to get a book or something, there was life in the building which meant there was something going on community wise, which meant formation was happening. [88:74]

He went on to talk about the fact that because the new building would be closed at night, this would never happen. Similarly, Benson criticized the block schedule, suggesting that it was creating entirely different sets of student bodies, depending on which day they had classes.

Dean Gilbert echoed the challenges, noting that they were struggling to find ways to get everyone together. Yet, at the same time, he insisted that the future was inevitably going to hold more commuting students and online learners, which meant that the seminary was going to have to be more creative in making space for community, and fostering it in ways that would enhance spiritual formation. At times in this discussion, it felt as if Gilbert were trying to convince himself. He ended with a soliloquy about the dilemma:

I think one of the things we need is a renewed vision now that we are in a new place. I think we are all kind of going, what happened, where are we? Who are we, now what is the vision we want to do? As we move to a more 21st century perspective--online education and people working with us at a distance—how do I get these things involved in that? What's the best way to do that? Because I'm not foolish enough to believe that online is going away. It's here to stay and it can be done well, depending on the people who are doing it and the energy they are putting into it...That would be my hope and I'm probably an idealist, but if you ask me where I want the institution to go, I would hope we could clarify these things and stay true to the vision of the people that founded this place ... [91:53]

How BTSR will stay true to the original vision is uncertain, but my own sense is that they will find a way. I will conclude this chapter by sharing why.

“There’s Something There”

When I first arrived for my site visit at BTSR, things felt a little like a tornado had blown through and people were coming out of their homes, looking to see who had survived and what the damage had been. They were only two weeks into the semester, and while it felt as if students, faculty and administration alike were trusting for the best, there seemed to be tentativeness in their spirits. At the chapel service, President Crawford offered the message, which he read from a manuscript with little inflection or emotion until he began to talk about tying their past with their future, and at that point, he teared up.

While I was there I had two dreams that seemed significant. In the first, there was an ocean, and what looked like a dead body floating on top of the water. Then, slowly and with great effort, the person lifted an arm, and then a leg to move. The bystanders realized with relief that the person was not actually dead, but just moving very slowly. In the second dream, I was on my street standing with some neighbors when a car drove into our cul-de-sac. We knew right away that it was the military with their team assigned to tell families when a member has been killed. We chatted about how we knew it couldn't be any of us, and then the car turned around and left. As I pondered these things, I felt they might be a metaphor for the seminary in this particular season.

I sensed that perhaps there was a purpose in my visiting BTSR that transcended the study itself. Specifically, I felt that perhaps I was there to encourage them—not because I had anything to offer personally, but because my research facilitated conversations about what mattered to them, and why. Sharing their history and their values served as a reminder that the current struggles were not the whole story, and not even the most important story. This was illustrated in a conversation with a faculty member the day after my dreams. We talked about the challenges and how the seminary had addressed them. I asked her if she could summarize the one thing she felt they had done best in terms of spiritual formation. I believe it is fitting for this case study to end with her poignant words.

PARTICIPANT: And I think the fact that we have just maintained ourselves, that's a real spirituality in and of itself.

INT: ... the word that just keeps coming to me is "The little seminary that could" ...I think it was in the spiritual sense it has been such a struggle, and yet you are still here.

PARTICIPANT: I was just thinking in the bathroom, it's amazing that we're here because we really were on the brink of closing, from what I heard a number of times, so that's sort of amazing.

INT: There's something there.

PARTICIPANT: There's something there. [86:91]

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS: FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Fuller Theological Seminary's School of Theology (Fuller SOT), nestled in the heart of a large Southern California city differs from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond in a plethora of ways, as I will explicate in the cross-case comparison in chapter six. But first, I will fully explore Fuller SOT as a case in and of itself by considering the research questions for this study, which are listed below:

- What is the process that Fuller SOT has engaged in as they sought to implement a model for the spiritual development of leaders?
- What is the lived experience of leaders who are impacted by the spiritual formation approach at Fuller SOT?
- How does Fuller SOT's spiritual formation model provide formational opportunities for a leader's personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity and public witness/social concern, as mandated in the Association for Theological School's (ATS) standards for accreditation?

I will begin by exploring Fuller SOT's history, looking specifically at how spiritual formation has been situated within the school's curriculum and culture in its past, as well as various processes it has gone through in an attempt to establish a model for student spiritual development. I will then delve into the stories of fifteen alumni regarding their personal experiences with spiritual formation while at seminary, and how they feel the four ATS components—personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity and social concern—were addressed, as well as my perceptions of current student views, based on my campus visit. I will end with a discussion of my findings.

My Campus Experience

I took a deep breath, trying to gather my thoughts as I sat in the cool, dark alcove—a stark contrast to the sidewalk just outside where the Southern California sun beat down on students hustling from one class to another. I'd walked to Fuller campus from the guest house where I was staying, hoping to find some students who might respond to a personal invitation to participate in my focus group at lunchtime that day. The small number of those who were not in class sat quietly studying, while a few engaged in conversation. I approached gingerly, offering my flyer and trying to explain in a matter of seconds what I was there for. Overall they were a polite bunch, thanking me for the invitation, but to a person, making no commitment. A student myself, I knew that I was encroaching on time and space they considered a precious commodity. After numerous respectful refusals, I gave up, and with time to spare before my next appointment, settled down in the campus “prayer garden,” which was a small, simple structure just off the beaten path where benches in quiet corners offer respite, and meditative moments beckon from bronzed scripture plaques and stained glass images. The tinkling sounds of water from the reflecting pool suggested a tranquility that belied the harried campus ambiance, as well as my own inner angst.

For months I had been forming impressions about this seminary while absorbing a large number of documents and alumni interviews—and now I was here, trying to make sense of that broad spectrum of data. Were these students really as much on overload as it seemed, or was I projecting my own sense of things on them? What was it really like to go to school here, to sit in classes or attend chapel or engage in reflection groups based on assigned ministries? How were students' spiritual needs met, if at all? And what

were the hopes and dreams of those who were seeking to bring the institution into the 21st century, while holding onto the valuable traditions that had marked them from the start? These were some of my thoughts, and that which I now hope to explicate in sharing my study of Fuller SOT. Even as I write, I feel inadequate to capture the history covering well over half a century, or piece together the narratives of lives into which I have only been given a glimpse. I hold fast to the reality that what unfolds here is one piece in a hermeneutic circle that will expand and be tempered by the reader's own understandings and perceptions, and will continue long after this dissertation has found its resting place amidst the archives of decades past.

The Place

By the summer of 1945, the second war of the century was ending and nations across the globe were trying to put the pieces back together. Although America's economy had benefited, these gains could not begin to assuage the angst of those trying to make meaning of the terrible atrocities that had occurred. Traditional values and long-held assumptions about the preeminence of Western culture began to crumble, and religious belief, once a staple of American life, was increasingly called into question.

This seeming assault on faith was not new, for in fact the first half of the century had witnessed the pitting of the claims of modernity against ancient faith traditions, culminating in the famous Scopes trial, which left many Christians feeling defensive about their intellectual moorings. This was a key factor in compelling a mismatched pair of men, Charles Fuller, a popular radio evangelist and Harold Ockenga, a theological scholar and pastor, to establish Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947. According to historian Marsden (1987), these men and others from the conservative wing of the

Presbyterian church wanted to “revive the evangelical intellectual enterprise,” as well as provide the kind of education that would equip ministers to give answers to the “rationalism, secularism, and evolutionary emphases” that they felt the church was up against (p. 31, 56).

The seminary held its first classes in a church with 29 students and four faculty members, and today is one of the largest multid denominational seminaries in the world (currently more than 4,500 students), offering 18 degrees at three different schools— theology, psychology and intercultural studies—with over 10,000 graduates from the School of Theology world-wide. The seminary is housed at one main campus and six regional campuses, from Colorado Springs to Houston, as well as within a burgeoning online community. The main campus is in the heart of Pasadena, California, an eclectic mixture of old homes reconstituted into offices and impressive modern structures. Much of this lies to either side of a single commons interlaced with sidewalks where hundreds of students pass each other daily on their way to classes, or sit to study or share a meal on benches under towering oaks. This has been the school’s primary location since 1953.

While Fuller’s public documents emphasize a number of core values—from theological diversity to global engagement to training men and women for ministry— scholarship remains a central part of its ethos, as summed up in the following statement from their current website: “Fuller is known as a global leader in theological education, standing on the front lines of evangelical thought while remaining committed to ministry and mission grounded in scholarship.” [52:37]

With the thrust of academic acumen inscribed on the DNA of the institution from the start, it is perhaps not surprising that spiritual formation has held an uncertain status

throughout the history of Fuller SOT. I talked with a professor named Michael⁹ about this as we sat in his small office surrounded by bookshelves and tables piled high with publications. An intense scholar with a passion for spiritual things, he told me that the privileging of scholarship over spirituality was common in many reformed seminaries which tended to view spiritual formation as the responsibility of the church, and not the seminary. He added:

And Fuller dies hard on that...they are still fighting the battle of recognition as legitimate academic enterprise. I think they are tilting at windmills, I don't think that is a battle anymore...they've got a reputation that they feel they have to uphold. [56:25]

It would be wrong to conclude from this however, that there have not been serious and fruitful attempts to elevate the role of spiritual development for students at Fuller SOT. From the very beginning faculty members were concerned about this, as can be seen in an early bulletin that encouraged students to live holy lives and “maintain their morning watch” in prayer. Yet, the emphasis on spiritual formation has often appeared hit and miss, reliant upon the vision and zeal of isolated individuals or groups, and lacked a coherent, seminary-wide approach. Administrators at Fuller suggest however, that this will soon change as a result of a massive seminary-wide curriculum revision. Before I explicate that and the events that have led up to it, I will address spiritual formation as it has existed throughout Fuller SOT's past.

The Process

Two large binders lay on the table before me at Fuller's student affairs office. The staff there had invited me to peruse these records consisting of more than 40 years of

⁹ Once again, all names and identifying characteristics have been changed to protect participants. When names are used, it is with their written permission.

strategies regarding spiritual formation. Hundreds of pages documented minutes of committee meetings, trustee reports, timelines, proposals, survey results, job descriptions, strategic plans and much more—a repository for decades of hopes and dreams of faculty and students alike who have worked to see the seminary care more deeply and tangibly for the spiritual development of its students. Because it would be impossible to cover all that has taken place in Fuller SOT’s spiritual history, I will offer a brief overview, filling in critical detail as needed.

Earliest Years

There is little evidence of a spiritual formation thrust in Fuller SOT’s first couple of decades. There was a course on the Christian life, as well as one that addressed the minister’s “devotional life, self-discipline, ethical obligations, and practical conduct,” but it is unclear whether these were required classes. Weekly chapel was a mandatory activity until the 1960s when students pushed for voluntary attendance, which they felt would be more meaningful. This eventuated in low attendance and complaints about the spiritual atmosphere (Marsden, 1987). According to Marsden, the school’s focus throughout the 1960s remained on “producing scholarship so scientific that everyone would have to listen to it” (p. 251).

Seventies Shift

In the early 1970s, Southern California was the epicenter of a religious revival that is historically referred to as the *Jesus Movement*, with thousands of college-educated young people embracing a vibrant, effusive spirituality. Fuller’s enrollment, perhaps as a result, grew exponentially, and not surprisingly, a flurry of activity regarding the spiritual

needs of students arose. In 1975, for example, the first *Spiritual Life Committee* was formed and tasked to address spiritual formation on campus.

One of those who championed student spirituality during that season was Robert Boyd Munger, the professor of Evangelism and Church Strategy, described by a faculty member who knew him as one “who symbolized spiritual formation on campus.” Hired as part of the seminary’s intention to provide more practical help for those preparing for ministry, Munger connected deeply with student’s needs, as the faculty member articulated:

...coming into Fuller not as an academic but a pastor, he looked at these Fuller students and said, “Oh man are they stressed out.” Future Shock was the book that helped define the nature of what was going on, so he developed a program that was designed to help the students develop as persons and engage in formational activities. It was fairly successful at the beginning... [95:4]

Munger designed a couple of spirituality courses that appeared in the curriculum in 1977: *Foundations for Ministry* and *Foundations for Spiritual Life*, the first of which continued to be taught and required for Master’s level students at Fuller SOT up through 2008 in various iterations. Other elective courses followed.

The other key event of that era was the establishment of the *Office of Christian Community* in 1978, which provided a variety of services to students and faculty, as well as implemented weekly morning prayer meetings and a student-led chapel with a more informal worship style. One of the office’s more enduring contributions was a co-curricular spiritual formation program that spanned the three years a student was at Fuller SOT and included personal spiritual direction. This voluntary program lasted for 13 years.

A veteran professor named Dr. Jamison lamented the demise of this office, sharing of the events that brought it about. He believed that it never really fulfilled its purpose, noting that “although this office did some good things, it didn’t serve the seminary directly or serve the classes as it was designed to do. It was more of a free-lance thing.” This disconnect, plus some unfortunate situations—one involving sexual immorality among key personnel—led to a complete shutdown in 1999, when *Student Life and Services* picked up the mantle of co-curricular formational activities, where they remain today under the director of student development.

A Matter of Prime Importance

In 2004, Fuller SOT’s online catalog devoted a paragraph to spiritual formation, making the following claim: “Fuller Seminary has committed itself to the principle that the spiritual development of every student is a matter of prime importance in theological education.” One administrator, a quiet woman who cared deeply about student spiritual development commented about that description:

I mean it was written brilliantly on the web about how Fuller is committed to spiritual formation, blah, blah, blah. If somebody read that—if I’d read that, I’d have been here in a heartbeat from that. But then you get here, and there is nothing that backs it up. They did take it down, thank God; I mean I’m sorry it’s gone, but... [101:60]

While this may seem a bit harsh, it is a sentiment that was shared by a number of other faculty and alumni.

The fact remains, however, that from the 1970s and into the new century, there were a plethora of fragmented attempts to address spiritual formation. First, different denominations provided a variety of formational opportunities for their constituents, (and continue to do so). For example, the Office of Presbyterian Ministries offers Monday worship, prayer retreats, mentoring, and spiritual direction, while the African American

Church Studies offers worship events and special classes, and a number of other denominations provide their own smaller version of chapel.

The spiritual life committee continued to meet in various forms, surveying students and faculty every few years, and making recommendations on that basis to the administration or trustees. There were voluntary Ignatian groups (small formational communities based on *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, founder of the Catholic Jesuit order) for staff, faculty and students, which were highly effective and lasted upwards of five years. Faculty meetings explored the topic and ad-hoc committees were tasked with creating a more integrative approach. On a curricular level, the internships for students pursuing a Master's of Divinity degree provided a formational structure with weekly reflection groups, and for a time Fuller SOT was on the verge of offering a robust degree program in spiritual direction.

Lacking a Structure that Would Hold

Many of these things, as well as a host of others established throughout the years to address spiritual development no longer exist. I asked many professors and administrators to help me understand why these good-faith efforts that produced positive results ended, fielding a variety of responses, some practical and some philosophical. The practical included funding issues, as well as personnel. One high level administrator who had attended Fuller as a student in the 1980s explained how closely linked student formation was to the faculty who could devote time and energy to the process, something that had not proved sustainable, given the seminary's size.

...when I was a student, Fuller SOT was known for its dynamic interaction with its students... there was a kind of pastoral care level that was pretty unique ...that was the modus operandi of faculty in those days. And then we went through a period of growth, of huge growth and we

became the largest seminary, arguably in the world... just growing and growing and growing. So the pure demand on individual faculty members for producing scholarship, for teaching loads, for grading papers... tended to mitigate against the kind of individual care that went on... And so there was a kind of a disconnect between the kinds of formational things that students wanted, and the faculty's capacity, given all the other demands on them, to meet that. [109:3]

Another administrator shared of a task force he put together who worked for a couple of years to address this disconnect, but in the end, he concluded: "the season, the people and the timing, it wasn't right. All kinds of things going on so we never got that going...."

Other faculty and administrators suggested that the problems were more philosophical. Professor Jamison shared of the many ways he'd tried to address spiritual formation, sharing his frustrations candidly:

There was always an ambiguity to it. On the one hand, ask any faculty member, are you for spiritual formation, and they'd say, "Sure, of course," like motherhood and apple pie. But in the back of your mind there is the question mark that you are not going to articulate... it took me a while to figure out that people were saying "yes," to me in some of the programs that I tried to put together, but there was a question mark and a "no" in the background that wasn't being articulated. [95:20]

He went on to explain that he believed this ambiguity, particularly when he first came to Fuller, was a reflection of a larger context in which conservative evangelicals on the right had rejected the notion of spiritual formation due to its Catholic connotations, while the mainline church on the left were floundering in their attempt to articulate what it really entailed, and the fact that Fuller fell somewhere in the middle of that spectrum led to a sense of ambiguity when the subject came up.

Another administrator suggested that because Fuller was entrepreneurial, certain people in power, either by their own charisma or their position, could make things happen, but that once they left, the program disappeared:

I look at a wall of history and I see lights coming out from those few people those few times, but there is no foundation for spiritual formation, there is no consistent thread. What's the image? A structure that would hold it after a person is gone? There is no expectation. [55:102]

When I first decided to study spiritual formation at Fuller SOT, I expected to find a program both robust and rich due to the seminary's size and impressive history. I was surprised therefore, when early interviews with some alumni seemed to indicate that there was no coherent seminary-wide formational model, particularly since their website stated: "The spiritual formation of students is central to Fuller's life and institutional calling." Over time, I came to understand that this seeming lack had perhaps spawned what may in actuality be a momentous time in Fuller SOT's history of spiritual formation. Though decades of attempts to address the issue may appear to have died out, like the seed germinating underground in winter, new life is on the horizon.

The Model Today

I will offer a brief overview of the spiritual formation components which exist currently at Fuller SOT. Then I will survey the pieces that have coalesced over the past several years to bring the school to the eve of what President Labberton referred to as "the biggest curricular change we've ever undergone." I will end this section with a description of the impending model as it is currently articulated, both in written documents and from interviews with key players.

Curricular components. While the website states that "spiritual formation is a critical piece of the curriculum in each of Fuller's three schools," in practice, it is currently quite thin at Fuller SOT. The Master of Arts (MA) degrees are the only ones with a mandatory course in spirituality, called *Spiritual Traditions and Practices*. The Master of Divinity (MDIV) degree, which engages the largest number of students, offers

a *Foundations of Ministry* course, which although once formational, is no longer explicitly so. There is a spirituality specialization in the Doctor of Ministry (DMIN) degree, which provides a number of required and elective formative courses, and a DMIN in spiritual direction is currently being designed. The 2012-2013 catalog showed very few elective courses explicitly designed to address spiritual formation for masters students.

Perhaps the most meaningful curricular component for developing students spiritually is the internship required in most MA and MDIV degrees. This calls for students to establish a learning agreement that includes a personal spiritual discipline goal to work on for nine months, during which time they meet with field education staff a few times and their site supervisor weekly in order to process their journey. Students also meet in weekly theological reflection groups with peers, which are led by local pastors or faculty members. A church history professor who had been a part of these shared his experience:

So they do case studies and we ask the people to talk about what happened here, what can we learn from this, what may have been wise, and what may we have wished that we could do again, what can we learn? What theological topics come up for us out of this, what spiritual questions come up out of this? As you might imagine, often the instinct is that it is a theological issue, but I'll see it as a formation issue. [100:8]

There is also the opportunity for spiritual growth through normal coursework. Certain professors, as one administrator told me, "just love God so much that their personal faith flows into their teaching so that piece is always being modeled and they say more is caught than taught." When I asked one administrator whether this sort of integration was common, she estimated that perhaps 60-70 percent of faculty members worked at it.

Co-curricular components. The fact that the curricular emphasis is minimal at Fuller SOT, does not leave it void of spiritual formation opportunities. Indeed, a vast corpus of programs and events lie outside of the classroom. Table 5.1 demonstrates descriptions of seminary-wide components detailed on their website, along with the offerings I was able to trace through interviews and documentation. Beyond these things, there are numerous instances where various special interest groups, churches, denominations, campus clubs and others provide for spiritual development of students. Taking advantage of any of this, however, depends upon the student's ability to find the time outside of class, something that has proved consistently unrealistic. This is one reason for the impetus behind the development of the new model, to which I will now turn.

Dawning of a New Day

The curricular revisions that will take place at Fuller SOT in 2014 were precipitated by a larger shift in higher education at the turn of the 21st century, which called for schools to begin to assess their effectiveness through established goals and intended outcomes rather than inputs such as number of faculty, library size, courses offered etc.. Accrediting agencies such as the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) began working in tandem with seminaries to help them reconfigure their approach on this basis. For example, in 2003, WASC wrote a site visit follow-up letter to Fuller encouraging them to give high priority to establishing seminary-wide learning goals, critical for formulating desired outcomes that would then drive their coursework and activities. By 2006, Fuller's joint faculty adopted five goals, the fifth of which stated that graduates would be

“spiritually formed and committed to the church’s mission in the world.” This was the first time Fuller had made such a broad-sweeping statement regarding spiritual formation, although the sentiment had often appeared in publications.

Table 5.1

Fuller SOT formational components

Component	Website Statement	Current offerings
Spiritual Guidance	<i>Fuller’s student chaplains provide spiritual care, prayer and counsel for students. Chaplains actively refer students for formal spiritual direction.</i> <i>Fuller faculty consider spiritual mentoring to be part of their vocational calling. They offer spiritual care and mentoring in office hours, over coffee or mealtimes, and even in their homes.</i>	Office of Student Affairs oversees student chaplains who offer prayer after chapel and on Thursday afternoons in the prayer garden. They also take appointments for further spiritual needs. Office of Student Affairs offers spiritual direction referrals when requested.
Community	<i>Formally structured seminary small groups provide many students with opportunities to share their lives and spiritual journeys with each other.</i>	Office of Student Affairs oversees “Cultural spiritual formation” groups for ethnically diverse students, Vocational Discernment Groups who practice Ignatian spirituality together. Other miscellaneous student led and initiated groups.
Spiritual “space”	<i>Fuller’s Prayer Garden is open weekdays with a quiet place for prayer and contemplation on the Pasadena campus; other campus rooms are available by reservation.</i>	Outdoor prayer garden in central promenade. (No other structure designated exclusively for spiritual activity.)
Events	<i>Fuller staff and students organize and conduct regular prayer retreats and contemplative events open to the entire Fuller community.</i> <i>Students, faculty and staff gather to hear the word and celebrate the gospel at weekly all-seminary chapel services on the Pasadena campus.</i>	President-led faculty prayer meeting Tuesday mornings. Special events targeting specific needs held seminary-wide on sporadic basis Weekly Chapel planned by team of faculty and students

Fuller SOT soon articulated learning outcomes that would correspond to the seminary wide goals, with the fourth one stating that students “will make discernable progress in their spiritual journey and character formation” (see Figure 5.2 for

relationship between goals, outcomes and course objectives). In 2008, after another site visit, WASC commended Fuller Seminary for having identified these kinds of outcomes at the institutional and program levels, but went on to say that this needed to filter down to the course level, along with assessment plans to determine how the goals were being met. The letter also advised the following: “Given the central place that spiritual formation holds in the Seminary’s mission, work should continue on the creation and assessment of learning outcomes specific to this dimension of student development.”

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: FULLER SOT

Figure 5.2. Relationship of seminary-wide goals to course objectives

While this clearly became a watershed moment for Fuller Seminary, both faculty and administration members told me that their motivation for addressing spiritual formation was not solely to meet accreditation requirements. Rather, because they had determined that it would be a part of their ethos, they were intent on finding ways to

make it happen. When I asked one high level administrator about the issue of compliance, he replied:

The whole paradigm has shifted, saying, “Are you doing what you say you are doing?” and that’s a learning outcome. So it’s always recommendations to help you become a better learning community...we’ve taken this very seriously, we’ve said these are points we want to grow on. And we keep telling the faculty, this isn’t just because of the accrediting agency, but because this is the right thing to do... And this is a big area, and they are holding our feet to the fire...[96:37]

Task force formed. Fuller responded to the WASC recommendation in two ways. First they assured both agencies that they were making key changes in assessment at the course level, which included “seminary-wide involvement in the assessment of spiritual formation.” Second, they noted that the provost would be appointing a spiritual formation task force to coordinate efforts to further develop opportunities for spiritual formation and to determine more appropriate methods of assessment. This task force, which included faculty, administration and students from all three schools, met from 2009 until 2011.

I interviewed five individuals who participated in that task force, and while it was a meaningful experience for each of them, there were certainly moments of frustration, and in some cases, there remains skepticism as to whether their work had any impact. Their first set of recommendations, based on extensive research, interviews and interaction with faculty, included entrance and exit courses with agreed upon outcomes, methods and content, as well as required formation electives in-between. However, when the task force presented these to the faculties of the three schools, they encountered much resistance, with the general argument being, “That won’t work in our context.” One task

force member told me that faculty members expressed concern that they were being asked to turn their classrooms into church services. Another member explained further:

PARTICIPANT: We were still working on what was on the list, and also we were expecting each class to identify some way that that class material could be helpful in their own spiritual life. And we had a lot of push back, just a lot of push back.

INT: Can you give me just some idea of the rationale behind the push back, what was the most common?

PARTICIPANT: "I'm not trained in that," "Who is going to train us to do that," "Who is going to give us the resources?" It was basically an argument from ignorance, "I don't know that, I can't teach that." Which was interesting because I don't see those people as unspiritual people, but the way they operate is to know and to communicate, not to do and to model. [56:101]

As they came back to the drawing board, the task force realized that they were going to have to change their approach. After a series of revisions, they recommended four spiritual formation outcomes for students in every school, articulated as *identity*, *practice*, *integration* and *missional*. (See appendix F for a full description). The hope was that these would be general enough that each department, division and professor could apply them in their own way within their unique context. While they were provisionally approved by the faculty, it was not without a struggle. One member shared of how a colleague responded to them by saying: "I can't do this, we should just be Fuller University and then we wouldn't have to worry about this," a sentiment he felt was shared by a significant portion of the Fuller faculty, many of whom continue to see themselves as primarily academicians.

Spiritual formation collaboration. After the dissolution of the task force, it was unclear what use would be made of their work, if any. One member expressed discouragement at this, noting that she had poured her heart and soul into the process:

I mean it was verbal support all along, but when push came to shove, there was no shove. “Let’s get this in, let’s do something with it. And see these outcomes, each one of you faculty is going to put this into place (pauses) because we have to”—no. [55:97]

The outcomes, however, did have an immediate effect on the office of student affairs, which had continued to oversee co-curricular formational activities. In short, they determined that rather than implementing any more new programs, they needed to take a closer look at the outcomes in light of what was already taking place.

This vision led to a group that called themselves the *Spiritual Formation Collaboration*. With representatives from 18 different departments across campus, the group met a couple of times per semester in 2013 with three goals: First, they wanted to support and encourage each other, second, they planned to collaborate and share vision to minimize overlap in events and opportunities and forge a more cohesive approach, and third, they would assess how the four outcomes the task force had established were being addressed at the co-curricular level in order to provide feedback for accreditation. The sheer amount of data detailing current offerings in spiritual formation was stunning, with eight to ten formational opportunities listed under each outcome, except for *missional*, which had three. Their final report was presented to the provost and will be included in the 2014 self-study that is currently being prepared for the ATS.

Convergence. Three things seemed to converge to create the momentum needed to bring about a rapid and radical revision to the seminary curriculum. First, the work of the Spiritual Formation Task Force and the Spiritual Formation Collaboration provided structure and clarity as the school sought to embrace a learning organization paradigm. Second, a financial crisis forced all three Fuller schools to consider how to redesign and

reorganize for greater efficiency. One high level administrator shared of how this impacted the speed with which they were able to move:

The wheels of change move more slowly in academia, I mean I always tell people that academia is the most conservative section of society largely because it is supposed to preserve and transfer knowledge, but most conservative is theologically religious education because of the values attached to it and the resistance to change. And so these forces that work in society, you know I see this very seriously and I think providentially, there is a spiritual silver lining in the challenges we are facing in terms of making us a better institution to serve the kingdom. [96:99]

Another administrator concurred, noting that the financial situation demanded quicker decision-making processes than ever before.

The third factor involved changes in personnel at the highest levels. One was Douglas McConnell, a Fuller professor and dean, who assumed the office of provost, which purportedly brought about a “sea change” in focus, perhaps because of his many years as a missionary and pastor. A faculty member shared that while the previous provost supported spiritual formation because accreditation required it, McConnell was far more concerned with “the overall ethos and spiritual climate at Fuller.” The second change was the election of Mark Labberton, former provost of Fuller’s School of Intercultural Studies, who began his tenure as seminary president in the Fall of 2013. A number of faculty members as well as administrators expressed their hope that this was going to make a difference, not only because of things Labberton had said, but because of his experience in ministry, something the former president did not have. Indeed, one administrator suggested that the reason spiritual formation had stayed largely under the radar since 1993 was because the president was not a pastor but a philosopher, who consistently communicated that Fuller Seminary was “part of the academy, not part of the church.”

When I interviewed Labberton, it was clear that spiritual formation is something he cares deeply about and intends to keep central as president. Already he has implemented weekly prayer meetings for faculty, and has asked to speak at chapel monthly to keep the vision front and center. I asked him how he would describe the curricular revisions, and after noting how extensive, comprehensive and coherent they were, he told me that many issues have come together, creating a general consensus that it is time to do this:

Everything from the pragmatic question of: “Is being at seminary a way of discerning and coming to lead in a spiritual vocation?” to “Are our students demonstrating that they have shown up in their workplaces post-graduation with the kind of skills and spiritual maturity that is going to help them actually lead in a way that will make a difference?” So I think for just a lot of different reasons, there’s a very big sense that I think many people have that it’s just time... it’s time to take some bold steps...[108:21].

Those bold steps are reflected in the new curriculum, which has been developed over the past six months, and which I will now explicate. See Figure 5.3 for an overview of the timeline that has led to this.

Figure 5.3. Timeline leading to Fuller SOT's curriculum revision

A New Model.

An administrator involved in forming the new curriculum contrasted it with the past when only one course was required in spiritual formation: “In the new curriculum, we are trying to put it, not just in one course, but create a thread that runs through the whole curriculum.” More specifically, the new model would seek to assist students over the entire course of their seminary experience to develop habits of life for spiritual development. As another administrator put it: “There are two things we are asking—how do we make sure we equip people to do what it is we say we want them to do, and how do we make sure they are spiritually mature enough to do it?” To that end, the model includes several curricular components, which are laid out in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Fuller SOT revised curriculum

Component	Description	Degrees Included
Touchstone Course (one quarter)	Vocational discernment, Identity, calling and spiritual formation	Masters in Divinity (MDIV), Master of Arts in Theology and Ministry (MATM), Master of Arts in Theology (MAT)
Practices of Worship and Prayer (one quarter)	Oriented around practices of attending to God	MDIV, MATM, MAT
Practices of Christian Community (one quarter)	Oriented around practices of attending to the community of God’s people	MDIV, MATM, MAT
Practices of Mission (one quarter)	Oriented around practices of attending to the world	MDIV, MATM, MAT
Field Education (3 quarters)	Personal growth plan and weekly theological reflection groups	MDIV

In short, of the nine quarters in which most MDIV students (the degree that specifically prepares for ministry) will attend seminary, seven will directly target the

student's spiritual formation. The *Touchstone* and practice courses will employ a pedagogy described as "praxis-theory-praxis" that incorporates engagement in and reflection upon spiritual practices (their own and others) to help students grow spiritually. The official program learning outcome for these courses states: "Graduates will have demonstrated capacities to cultivate a theologically reflective practice of Christian discipleship." These four courses offer all Masters level students a seminary experience that is hoped will be both integrative and formative in various ways. In addition, the MDIV students will engage in theological reflection groups through field education that have already been expanded to three quarters instead of one.

There is no question that this is indeed a radical venture for a Protestant seminary. Some of those involved, however, question whether it can really work. While the overall sense has been that faculty members are generally supportive, one professor shared that he felt many had resigned themselves to the process as inevitable given the current trends, stating: "This is what we have to do and we'll do it the best we can." Another initially suggested that there was no real spiritual formation in the new curriculum. When I asked what he meant, he explained that not only were there no specific mandatory courses in spirituality, but that the professors teaching the practice courses were not trained in spiritual formation. He concluded:

"What happened is this whole thing of spiritual formation is theoretically spread throughout the curriculum now and when everything we do is spiritual formation, then nothing we do is spiritual formation, and that's the particular challenge at this point." [95:37]

I asked an administrator about the fact that some professors felt inadequate in the area of spirituality, while others believed they were giving up things that were important to them to accommodate the new model. He dismissed their concerns, noting that

everyone needed to not focus on losses, but to see this as solving problems that everyone has known existed for a long time. He went on to share of possible creative pedagogies utilizing those who are proficient in spiritual formation, filming presentations that could be used in the courses as well as potentially made available online for seminary graduates in the future. Overall I sensed that while there will always be concerns, attempts are being made to address these, along with the realistic understanding that this model is still in its formative stages, and will most likely go through numerous iterations as they fine tune it. As I read about and interviewed those involved in the revisions, I sensed a great deal of eager anticipation, and couldn't help but wonder how differently the lived experience of students to come will be from the alumni I interviewed. It is their stories I will now explore.

The Participants

The following descriptions are derived from two sources, alumni interviews and my own observations during those interviews, as well as an on-site visit to the campus. All alumni interviews were conducted either over the phone or via Skype. These participants came from initial referrals by administrators, which led to a snowball sampling strategy using social media to elicit volunteers. The final group included four females and eleven males and was equally distributed across three segments: those who graduated within the past five years, those who graduated six to ten years back, and those who graduated more than ten years ago. In addition, four of the respondents attended the Coast Campus in Mission Viejo, California, while the other eleven attended the main campus in Pasadena. While I was unable to form a focus group of students, I include my own observations on campus as a means of seeking to include their voices, as well.

Alumni perspectives.¹⁰

The backgrounds as well as the current vocation of the alumni that I interviewed from Fuller SOT were varied. Many came to the seminary with a general interest in what it offered in terms of personal spiritual enrichment or learning opportunities, but with no clear vocational goals. For example, Robert, a first generation Vietnamese immigrant who cares for his aging mother, worked in healthcare for twenty years before deciding to go to seminary, hoping that it might provide him with the resources to help patients with their spiritual needs. Others such as Thomas, a young college pastor in Orange County whose supervisors strongly encouraged him to attend Fuller SOT, did so specifically to prepare for full time ministry. Still others attended Fuller with a possible career path in mind, but changed their minds after they arrived. For example, Tracy showed up at Fuller SOT as a new bride, hoping to better prepare for work in higher education. She juggled having a family and going to school over the next several years, ending up majoring in languages and becoming an adult discipleship pastor in a large church. See Table 5.3 for a full overview of the participants.

Draw and expectations. Those who choose Fuller SOT do so for a variety of reasons, but of the 15 Fuller SOT alumni that I interviewed, none of them identified spiritual formation as that which drew them to this seminary. Instead, the two most common explanations they offered were that someone recommended the school (or

¹⁰ Once again, for analysis purposes I divided the alumni into groups based on the number of years they'd been out of seminary (0-5, 6-10, and 10+). Because four of them had attended the Coast campus, I also analyzed these differences. If there is a significant difference between groups based on number of years out or campus, I will note that in my analysis. However, if there is not, then statements refer to the group as a whole.

they'd heard of its reputation), or that its theological approach matched their own. Five alumni from the main campus came simply because the location was convenient.

Table 5.3

Fuller SOT participant descriptions

Name	Gender	Purpose for Attending	Current Vocation
[One to five years out]			
Tracy ¹¹	Female	College Ministry interest	Adult discipleship/formation
Barbara	Female	General interest	Nurse Chaplain (volunteer)
Patty	Female	General interest	Real estate broker
Sung	Male	Ministry-Pastor	Pastor
Doug	Male	General interest	Hospital chaplain
[Six to ten years out]			
Robert	Male	General interest	Health Care worker
Peter	Male	Ministry	Pastor
James	Male	Ministry	Pastor
Thomas	Male	Ministry	Pastor
Elena	Female	General interest	Seminary program director
[Ten plus years out]			
Brad	Male	General interest	Pastor
Kenneth	Male	Ministry	Non-profit Christian leadership
Joseph	Male	General interest—social work	Computer programmer
Dave	Male	Ministry-pastor	Pastor
Mary	Female	General interest	Pastor, now retired

In terms of their knowledge of the school's spiritual formation approach, only one alumnus, a winsome young man named Peter who pastors a small start-up church in the Pacific Northwest, said he knew anything about this, and his understanding was related to seminaries in general:

I knew going in from what I had heard of seminaries that it was gonna be weak and to expect that. That I was going to have to go after it on my own. So to be honest, that was the framework going in—that I wasn't looking for a seminary where that was going to be a high expectation because I had just heard enough from folks that that was a weak point for most seminaries. [15:19]

¹¹ Not actual names

Nine of the alumni said they came to Fuller SOT with no expectations regarding spiritual formation, while six mentioned a variety of general assumptions such as the notion that seminary would challenge them in their faith and help them grow. For example, Joseph, now a computer programmer, went to seminary over three decades ago on somewhat of a personal spiritual quest. He explained:

I think I had pretty high expectations for Fuller to foster my spiritual growth, although I think it was not explicit in my mind and I might not have said so at the time. In the 70's we were all looking for deeper meanings to our lives and I think while I was trying out the idea of the pastorate for myself, I think I also assumed part of it would be a way to get it together in terms of spiritual formation. [21:14]

Robert, the Asian health care worker, was disappointed that seminary had not mentored him as Jesus did his disciples, lamenting: “What good will it be for a student to attend theological seminary if he or she cannot get sufficient help in spiritual growth?” This conclusion differed greatly from that of a retired small-group pastor named Mary, who’d attended seminary to strengthen her ministry skills. A bit taken aback at my question about expectations, she argued:

Yeah, if you call spiritual formation everything—understanding and growing in understanding and maturity in your faith. I guess that sometimes I think that we define spiritual formation a little too narrowly. Um I grew as a person; I think it was a tremendous growing time for me. I loved it, it was fabulous and it stretched me in a lot of ways, not just in the kind of quote unquote spiritual way, but I think as the whole person. I think that all is formational. [42:4]

While there did not seem to be any clear differences between groups (either across years out of seminary, gender or campus) regarding expectations, Robert and Mary’s responses demonstrate the variance in attitudes toward formational experiences at Fuller SOT. These differences are some of what I hoped to understand as I explored the lived experiences—both curricular and co-curricular—of students at the seminary.

Formation and the curriculum. Fuller SOT's inconsistent past in regards to a curricular emphasis on spiritual formation showed up in the responses of the participants when I asked them what courses they took, if any, that directly targeted their personal spiritual growth. Most had to think about the question, and there was not a normative response across groups, with the exception of three who attended the Coast campus in the last five years. Of the other twelve alumni (11 from the main campus, one from the Coast campus), six said they had taken no courses that addressed their personal spiritual growth, although one added, "you know, they all do, uh, you know, touch your spiritual life, I think."

Specific courses. Three different women from the Coast campus mentioned taking two courses, one on spiritual formation and the other called *Foundations of Ministry*. Patty, a free-spirited woman who was effusive in her praise of her seminary experience, shared her most meaningful class assignment:

Our assignment was to go someplace – this was the first time anyone ever asked me to be quiet—but he wanted us to go somewhere for 48 hours to be alone...So I went to the B&B in Laguna Beach near where I lived and I explained to the owner that I did not want to be disturbed...I had a purse for identification and a Bible and a toothbrush. And I think I wrote the best paper I've ever written, called "a time to be silent" about the amazing encounter with Jesus that I felt in that moment because there was no outside stimulation. I walked and never talked to a soul. And I read the Bible by myself and found out that I could do it. [41:7]

The others mentioned one or two courses, which they identified for the most part as electives related to other disciplines such as leadership or pastoral care. Thomas, the college pastor from Orange County told me he'd taken a course on spiritual formation, but that it did not really address his personal life. He explained:

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, I think it brought up some good conversations, but in itself I don't think it contributed to my own personal development. It felt more like a removed conversation about spiritual formation in the life

of the church, and some other contexts but it didn't actually take us through any spiritual formation components.

INT: So it was more geared at how to help a church move in spiritual formation than your own personal journey?

PARTICIPANT: Correct.

The one exception in this discourse was a teaching pastor named Sung who had pursued his Doctor of Ministry degree in which there were several courses that he felt were personally formative. I asked him whether this was related to a spiritual formation specialization in the doctoral program, and he assured me that this was normative, sharing, "I think most of the people that would go to Fuller are people that are thinking about pastoral development more in a holistic sense rather than 'show me how to do something.' My sense is that that is the approach in most of the DMIN program."

Integration. As a participant observer who has had experience in the evangelical world, I understood that some of the participants might not associate spiritual formation with certain classes even if there were formative moments, largely because they were not labeled as such. When I had interrogated the document data earlier, the term "spiritual formation" had not been prevalent, but *in vivo coding* turned up a plethora of other terms such as *disciple* (or some form of it), *growth in Christian maturity*, *character formation*, or *relationship with God*. To that end, I probed deeper with the participants, asking them if there were courses that did address their personal spiritual growth, even if indirectly.

Again, there were no consistent patterns regarding participant responses, but several shared that they felt spiritual growth by students was just assumed by the seminary, and that there was a lack of intentionality in most classes in that regards. Kenneth, an executive in a non-profit consulting company noted that while professors sometimes modeled spirituality, there was no real integrated approach toward it in any

class he took. Tracy, the adult formation pastor shared how every class had aspects such as reflection papers that could contribute to spiritual growth but that “there was nothing that was directly addressing—‘let’s process how your education is forming the soul that is inside of you.’”

This did not mean, however, that participants felt growth had not taken place. A few alumni spoke of how the academic act of study was spiritual in itself and that the truths they were learning were transformative. A serious minded Hispanic woman named Elena, who now works at another seminary coast explained:

Um, they... any spiritual growth in those classes, um, were more a by-product. It was simply the nature of the Word of God, you’re in a Biblical Studies class and you’re reading through whatever the book is, God’s Word doesn’t return empty. So the nature of God’s Word, it’s gonna contribute to your growth, whether you like it or not. [35:35]

There seemed to be some dissonance in these kinds of answers, however. For example, Tracy shared her frustration with the lack of emphasis on formation, particularly in a course called *Christian Spirituality*, which she expected to be highly formative, but turned out largely historical. But later she told of how she fell in love with languages:

I had a bunch of professors who would do a devotional at the beginning and they would use the original Hebrew or Greek and I just felt it was so powerful to hear the original context, the original language and the original words...[35:34]

Similarly, Robert told of his *Church History* class helping him grow spiritually, but later asked if he could be frank, which I assured him was my desire. He then opened up:

I would say the Fuller faculty, they are excellent, well they are scholars in their special field, but they didn’t care, they didn’t care about my spiritual well-being, or my growth...I hope my professor in theology, it would not be like when I went to the UC and studied Biology, okay, so no I thought that the professor at Fuller would also be like a pastor, that should be my spiritual father or spiritual mother, so you know I would discover they

would help me, but no, I discover that Fuller is another academic institution to me. [39:6]

These kinds of contradictions demonstrate the challenges that a multi-denominational seminary such as Fuller SOT faces in seeking to address the specific needs of its students, which I will further address in my conclusions.

Other participants mentioned the fact that professors often prayed or led in short devotions at the start of class or that class discussions could easily lead to personal growth issues, something not only encouraged but welcomed by the faculty. Only one spoke of the theological reflection groups that were part of the MDIV internship, noting that while they were supposed to share how their ministry experiences were forming them, because the course was only two units, it “just communicated that there wasn’t a great value on something like that.”

Three different participants spoke of their experiences in courses that were geared toward leadership development, noting that these were meaningful and growth-producing. The major professor these alumni mentioned used a pedagogy called *the one third rule*, which meant that one third of the class time would be spent practicing what they were learning. Thomas shared how this impacted him:

He [the professor] would have us do exercises and really deep reflection on our own journey and again it was mainly through the leadership lens but it did deal heavily with character. So I ended up trying to take all my electives with him because of that very nature. I felt like it was the only time someone was helping me to develop my internal worlds, not just my mental worlds.

I attended a couple of classes while on campus, one of which was a history of Christian spirituality. It was a large class of perhaps 40 students seated at tables on three tiers in a typical lecture structure. Students were very quiet as they entered, and the professor commented on this as he began the class, wondering out loud if the subject

matter seemed conducive to silence. He went on to do a meaningful spiritual reading, but did not engage the class in reflection or discussion around it. The lecture that followed was primarily historical. I also attended a Greek class, which was equally large with a similar seating arrangement. Here students were more engaged with each other and the professor, but there was nothing of a formative nature—no devotional or opening prayer.

Discussions around the question of various classes and integration of spirituality often led students to offer stories of specific professors and the influence that faculty had on them, either through modeling, teaching or relationships. I will share this aspect of curricular formative experience next.

Faculty influence. One of the most poignant stories was shared by Joseph, who attended Fuller some 30 years back. While he indicated that he had no memory of a spiritual formation emphasis in any classes, he was deeply impacted by the authenticity of the professors in their own spiritual journeys.

One thing that stands out in my mind is that G--, who was kind of an icon in theology and ... I kind of got the idea that he had a rough time himself in his personal life and I don't know what that was about, but it seemed like he was struggling a lot. And somebody asked him, well what does this theological concept, how does it relate to your personal life with God? And he started crying you know right in class, you know? So it was things like that that we saw...[40:9]

Another participant concurred, sharing that the courses that impacted him did so, not because they had some direct spiritual emphasis, but because of the professors themselves, explaining: “the class on prayer wasn’t very good, but the professor who prayed at the beginning of my *Church History* class – a transformative prayer, it was more that...”

In terms of relationships with faculty members, participants were scattered in their responses, but there seemed to be a general consensus that while professors did not

promote themselves as spiritual guides etc., if a student sought them out, they were willing to offer help. I asked Joseph about faculty accessibility and he shared:

Oh yeah, it was all very informal, but my roommate, I remember him telling me one time, “Oh I had lunch with D-- today.” “D--, how’d you do that?” “Well I just asked him if wanted to eat lunch because he has to eat lunch like anybody else, so I had lunch with him.” Yeah. All of these professors, I don’t know of any who put themselves on a pedestal or anything like that they were all very accessible, and they were genuine in their faith as well...[40:11]

These kinds of examples were rare from main campus alumni, and in fact one woman explained that from her perspective, faculty engagement was not the norm, adding; “The faculty were expected to teach you and not necessarily provide pastoral guidance.”

There was a striking difference in responses from those at the Coast campus, which were effusive about experiences with faculty members. A talkative nurse named Barbara who studied at Fuller to become a chaplain’s assistant offered this:

One of my first professors always had at some point a get-together at his house and his wife cooked up a storm and people were welcome to come to his home on a Sunday afternoon, sit down, fellowship. I still feel close to him because he made himself accessible on a personal basis, and he just has that manner about him. I know that I could go to his office even today and talk with him. [37:16]

Another Coast campus alumnus told of her Greek professor, who she described as “just so sweet and so wonderful and he would always check in and see how I was doing so we kind of had a standing relationship.”

While I was on the main campus I visited a couple of classes and interviewed professors and administrators, and my sense was that the sprawling physical structure and the size of the classes may have mitigated against that sense of camaraderie that the Coast campus experienced due to its small size and close quarters. The faculty offices on the main campus seemed removed from student pathways, and doors were almost always

closed, which may have contributed to some alumni's conclusion that relationships with faculty were defined by their academic role. Nonetheless, for certain students like Nick, faculty members played a critical role in their spiritual growth, as he explained: "I put a lot of effort into making sure that ... I found out, who do I need to meet next, and how am I going to build a relationship with them?" He offered an example of thoroughly enjoying going out for beer to talk theology with his professor after class, because he was convinced that "transformation happens mostly by osmosis." Nick was somewhat of an outlier, whose opinions are perhaps influenced by the fact that in the past few years he has served as an adjunct professor at Fuller SOT.

Co-curricular formation. Because Fuller SOT offered such a wide variety of co-curricular formational experiences, I was curious to see how engaged students were with these. In particular, I wanted to find out how aware they were of the opportunities that were available, and what their attitudes toward and involvement in them might have been. The responses fell into two main categories—community experiences and chapel or other events.

Community experiences. I began by asking them whether they had experienced formational experiences in community while at seminary. The answers fell into two basic categories—small groups that were a part of required coursework (which is actually curricular, but will be covered here), and relationships they established on their own for spiritual growth. Three different alumni who were in the six to ten years out group talked about a *Foundations for Ministry* class where the school initiated cohorts on a trial basis. Thomas described it for me; with the strong statement that he felt it was a waste of time:

PARTICIPANT: I remember the cohorts –we were told we were joining these ...I remember the focus was a, on having community because a lot

of people were coming from out of country, out of state and I think they were trying to create some opportunity for community and the second thing is yeah, you were supposed to be sharing from a very personal level so I think there was an expressed formation dynamic or if not formation, at least spiritual maintenance of some sort.

INT: And why didn't that happen for you, do you think?

PARTICIPANT: I think partly because I don't remember them being led, I couldn't tell you who led ours. I don't remember them being led by someone with whom I was wanting to engage at that level. And so, I wouldn't say that the things we talked about were unhelpful or useless—there was I'm sure lots of good things we were supposed to be talking about, but like in any context, when it is social engineering to that degree, um, you run the gamut that unless you have really well trained leaders, they oftentimes just don't work. Without the relational synergy there is no thrust to go deeper that way.

The other two alumni described these groups as “pretty weak and not done well,” and “really frustrating.”

Nick was once again an exception, explaining that in his cohort they were actually allowed to choose their own group members, which he felt made all the difference, noting: “I think that's why we actually gave it attention, and those relationships endured even after the class was over.” He insisted, however, that he'd been a part of numerous groups in seminary classes that were formed for him, and that they had never had any impact.

Some students mentioned that they heard about various groups that were offered, such as a vocational support group, but that they didn't have time to attend, or weren't interested, as in Peter's case, who noted:

These are great things, great events, but that doesn't mean that it's helping to really engage you in a process where you are personally processing and having brothers and/or sisters come along side you and form a true spiritual partnership together.

Several did share of forming their own communities, either spontaneously or with intentionality. Joseph, for example, told of how he lived with two roommates and their

house became a gathering place with “people continuously in and out and we did everything from Bible studies to fairly noisy parties, you know and pretty much everything in-between,” while Peter told of starting a group with three peers where “we were meeting in order just to process life and what God is doing and how can we be that spiritual partnership with each other.”

Beyond these, alumni shared random examples of formational opportunities such as some on-campus housing that they had heard of that had a rule of life that was geared to facilitate spiritual community, or a group who met at the Coast campus to help support marriages in ministry, or a Presbyterian pastor’s group funded by the Lilly foundation to address spiritual burnout. At least two alumni suggested that they were not aware of any seminary-sponsored ways that they could have developed spiritual relationships for growth, one noting that she was an introvert and may have missed them, with another relating that she felt she would have joined if she had been given the opportunity. However, another alumnus shared that the lack of community wasn’t entirely Fuller’s fault, given that students came from so many different locations, and often had little in common with their classmates. Three issues seem to come into play here—the school’s size, its eclectic mix of students, and the issue of commuters on campus for classes only, which, once again, I will address in my conclusions.

Chapel and other events. I specifically mentioned chapel to the Fuller SOT alumni, seeking to understand what role it might have played in their spiritual formation while at seminary. There was a striking lack of positive feedback in response. Even those who felt there were good speakers or programs, suggested that it was not really

formational in any way. This included the following responses, which I include simply to demonstrate the consistency:

...those felt mostly like an on-campus worship service with a speaker. I wouldn't say that contributed a great deal to me. [38:13]

Oh yeah, they had chapel, um and that didn't do much for me. I'm kind of more of an informal person and it was pretty scripted. Sometimes they had really good speakers. [40:13]

I mean we had chapel, but chapel was probably mostly simply preaching...I don't remember it being addressed toward the topic of spiritual formation. [44:14]

...it's like, dude, I'm already going to seminary, I'm already going to church, I don't need more information about God, I need to learn to live it out better...The same professors in classes are teaching the chapels, so...I didn't feel the good stewardship of time to get more information on that point. [46:16]

I think they were an opportunity to do some learning but a lot of it was sender-receiver and I mean as far as learning you were expected to come and sit and listen or sing...a lot like our churches. So I wouldn't say that they were formative for me. [47:12]

I attended chapel while I was there as well. It took place in an expanded class structure that could accommodate around 350 students. I arrived early, and observed a group of students and professors planning, practicing, and praying for the service. It was indeed a lively event that mirrored what probably takes place in a large percentage of evangelical churches every Sunday morning. There were songs (sung in a variety of languages), responsive readings that involved the students, and a challenge and opportunity by a professor to personally connect with one's calling into the world. While some students seemed to engage with the service, most seemed distracted and uninvolved, and I found myself wondering whether for them, like their predecessors, chapel failed to be formative.

Nick offered a slightly different perspective, sharing that he felt chapel was pretty well done and that he attended more and more as time went on because he began to

realize how meaningful it was. However, he did say that his attendance was “spotty” since chapel was not required. A couple of others mentioned that they just didn’t have time to go to chapel or that it didn’t fit with their class schedule as commuters. It was not uncommon for participants to mention the fact that since chapel was not mandatory they rarely went. I was reminded of one administrator’s comment that the seminary’s value of chapel could be seen in the fact that it was held in a room that could only house a tiny percentage of the total number of Fuller students, or a professor’s lament that he found it odd that Fuller had no sacred space for students preparing for ministry, which he compared to a medical school with no access to medical facilities.

Beyond chapel, Fuller SOT alumni shared very few other events or activities that proved formational for them. Four of them mentioned going on retreats, some as part of coursework, and some voluntary, noting that these were very meaningful. Tina told of a retreat on Henri Nouwen (a well-known author of inspirational books on spirituality) that was a “pretty awesome experience,” while the aspiring chaplain’s assistant related: “It was a real learning experience, to find out being alone, being quiet, just listening for God’s voice either through Scripture or through silence, um that was a profound impact on me.” Two students mentioned the prayer garden, one of whom had never actually seen it, while the other said he went there for peace and reflection many times.

Those from the Coast campus had more opportunities to share, such as gatherings with guest speakers and interaction with them, celebrations around graduation, or book readings and discussions, but few spoke of ways in which these personally impacted them. Similarly, some from the main campus threw out things they’d heard of such as enrichment seminars, lecture series and symposiums “out the kazoo in Pasadena that are

very rich.” It is noteworthy that the plethora of formational opportunities that Fuller SOT provides doesn’t seem to play out in students’ lived experiences. I will share more on this, including my own experience there in my conclusions. I ended my interviews with two questions regarding how the alumni felt that the school best prepared them spiritually for the challenges they have faced in life and ministry, and what, if anything, they wished the seminary had done differently in regards to their own spiritual development. I will end this section with those responses.

Alumni positive experiences. By far, the most prevalent theme in alumni’s answers regarding how seminary prepared them spiritually had to do with both the challenge to wrestle with their own faith and the humility to accept and appreciate those who differed with them. Almost every alumnus mentioned something along these lines.

Tracy, the young mom who attended the Coast campus shared:

And I think Fuller does that really well, and challenges you to think outside of the box with that and to not be able to answer all the questions, but to pose the questions. And you don’t feel like you’re getting spoon-fed—here is truth, but here is the broad picture, now you decide what you believe about who God is. I like that they did not keep it safe for me.
[35:31]

Nick concurred, explaining that Fuller SOT really emphasized students coming to a place where they could own their faith by wrestling with what they believed and why they believed it, explaining, “a professor you know believes in Jesus is gonna make you write a paper on whether or not you should believe in Jesus, and I think that is a great thing so high marks on that.”

Closely related to this, or perhaps a side- benefit of it, was a sense of acceptance, regardless of what your opinions might be, and a humility about accepting others who differed from you. A couple of different alumni talked about being treated like adults and

how the faculty “allowed us to wrestle with those things and honored that process, and honored where we came down in that process.” Barbara, a quiet, thoughtful nurse, shared:

The teachers gave that sense of value to each student. If you raised your hand and asked something unusual, they would say, that’s an interesting point of view, never putting you down, and keeping that mindset—that permeated the classroom so that students had respect for one another. It’s really critical to grow spiritually ...there’s lots going on inside every human being and that was um, key I felt to making growth more possible, for a healthy environment. [37:13]

Another concurred, noting, “We were exposed to people from different cultures and worldview and I have to say that all my profs were very respectful of those worldviews and conclusions and the process of reaching those conclusions for all of the students.”

Peter summarized the effect this had on him:

And then the other would be the ... humility when we go about ministry that we don’t have it all together and we don’t know it all and um, to come as a humble servant, not a, I don’t know, brash idiot, which spoke to me. So, yeah, just to be a learner, be a learner, I think that’s, yeah, that to this day is extremely formative for me. [46:27]

Several alumni mentioned their own emotional journeys and the ways in which seminary had affected them. The fact that Fuller had a school of psychology meant that there was an openness and encouragement to pursue personal wholeness, even if it meant getting therapy, which one alumni found very refreshing. Others noted how truths that they learned impacted them. One shared of how the idea of *imago dei* or the reality that we are all made in God’s image had deeply transformed her view of herself and others.

Patty, who attended seminary largely for personal reasons shared:

I think the best thing they did for me spiritually was to teach me to love God and to accept his love and forgiveness. Keep in mind I was in my late 50s and I had been a victim of domestic violence for a good part of my life and I had all the things that go along with that in terms of obsessive behavior ... I mean I carried a lot of fear, a lot of insecurity, a

lot of anger. The idea that I had a father who loved me had an incredible impact on me. [41:22]

There were a few comments that directly addressed the academic engagement that Fuller SOT valued and required of every student. One shared that “having people of faith insist that I write, that I do academic work challenging me, was the single greatest gift Fuller gave me.” Some spoke of the beauty of theological truths in all their complexity or the “brilliant New Testament, Systematic Theology and Church History professors,” or how their faith expanded intellectually. One woman talked about the power of learning to engage in theological reflection, sharing: “Reflecting just how my own daily life is reflected in my theology, how what I believe reflects in what I do and how I act, I have Fuller to thank for that.”

Alumni suggestions for improvement. Three of the alumni interviewed, (two of whom attended the Coast campus), said that they really couldn’t think of anything they wished the seminary had done differently. Barbara from the Coast campus shared, “No, I felt like I had a superior experience ... I just felt so loved and accepted and okay with who I was, and so encouraged, I just felt it was over the top.” However, the rest of the participants were not as effusive in their praise, and a couple of participants gave strongly worded critiques of their experience, such as this stark response by Thomas:

In a lot of ways with the exception of a couple of courses ... I would say my money would have been much better spent just reading the books because I incurred an incredible measure of debt from my seminary studies at Fuller which I could never in good conscience encourage anyone to incur for what they would receive. [48:23]

Others were kinder, offering praise for Fuller before providing suggestions for change. The theme that came up most often among these was that they wished the seminary had been more intentional about emphasizing spiritual formation and more

integrative in their approach. (See Table 5.4 for an overview of these types of comments).

Table 5.4

Alumni suggestions

Fuller SOT Comments on Intentionality

*And what I want to say is the **intentionality** was very high on academics but on those arenas you're describing um, I don't recall much of any **intentional** addressing of those arenas.*

*What I wish they would have done is some sort of **integrated** approach.*

*if we're studying Greek or Medieval church history or whatever the content areas that there would be some way in which that **integrates** the fact that I am actually this person who is following Jesus and intending to serve as a pastor in the future.*

*I think as far as a personal faith aspect, it was like I said, pretty informal, and uh, you know I don't think there was a whole lot **intentionally** going on.*

*Uh number one if they'd been more **intentional** about it. ... I think it was just too much kind of an intellectual exercise.*

*I think it would be to be more **intentional** about highlighting the need for spiritual formation. Um, and by being more **intentional** would be maybe providing other avenues for community and even making it part of the requirement because when you leave it in the peripheral, then that just reflects what you think about it you know.*

*So that would be my hope, a more **integrated** approach throughout the training approach as oppose to the specialty approach or the "assume it's happening" approach.*

*You know I would have to say yeah, but in a lot of ways um, I don't think they were as **intentional** as they could have been.*

*And I think that they could in that Foundations class, if its **intended** for spiritual formation, it could be leveraged in that way but I didn't find that it was so I think there was a missed opportunity there*

*So I would simply say that what I really hope is that seminaries learn to **integrate** discipleship and leadership, those two worlds*

Two ideas seemed to undergird these conclusions —first; participants felt that the seminary assumed spiritual growth was taking place, either within other settings such as their churches, or simply as a result of the theological subject matter. Second, participants believed that the seminary was excellent at the academic/intellectual side,

which they appreciated, but felt there was an imbalance that resulted in the neglect of the spiritual. One alumnus explained that Fuller SOT's reputation for being academically superior led to what he called an "ironic resistance" to emphasizing the spiritual, "because the fear is that time given to these subjective areas of spiritual formation will take away from our distinctive as the seminary that trains everybody else's professors."

The discourse on balancing the academic and spiritual at times led to interesting comments regarding whether academically trained professors would be qualified to address spirituality within their sphere, with one participant suggesting that anyone who had to keep up with the research and writing tasks required of full-time professors would be unlikely to have much to pass on in terms of spiritual development. This notion of balance speaks to the unique difficulties seminaries face as academic institutions, which I will explore more fully in my conclusions.

A handful of other participants mentioned a variety of ideas that would have improved their experience, such as more spiritual formation courses, as well as opportunities for practice in learning spiritual disciplines. One made a strong plea for spiritual directors, while a couple of others suggested deeper community experiences. One thought that came up often was that whatever Fuller SOT did, it needed to be a part of the required curriculum, since students' time was so limited, particularly that of commuters who come to campus largely for classes and little else. I completed my interviews with these alumni by sharing with them the four components that the ATS identify as central to spiritual formation, asking them for feedback regarding their experiences with each of these. I will end this section on alumni lived experience with a brief overview of their responses.

Alumni Experience and the ATS components

After sharing a little about the ATS and the spiritual formation components, I asked alumni to first rank how well they felt the school had addressed each one based on a Likert scale of one to five, with five being high. Once a participant assigned a number to a component, I asked if they would like to make any comments. Some chose to do so. Table 5.5 shows the mean ranking separating out the Coast and Main Campus responses, because as I will demonstrate, there was a significant difference in both commentary and ranking between these.

Table 5.5

Main and Coast Campus rankings of ATS components

Component	Mean Rank by Main Campus	Mean Rank by Coast Campus
Personal faith	3.3	4.4
Moral Integrity	3.5	4.5
Emotional Maturity	3.6	4.3
Social Concern	4.1	4.5

Personal faith commentary. As can be seen in the rankings, the responses of those from the Coast Campus were significantly higher, and their comments were much more positive. Barbara shared that the professors seemed to bring personal faith into every lesson they taught, and that she “was always amazed that classes started off with prayer.” Mary, from the Coast campus as well, said that this was hard to rank, although she gave Fuller SOT a five, because she felt growth was just “part of the process, part of the experience” of being a seminary student. Peter felt the same way, but wanted to

qualify his high ranking with the fact that there was no real personal accountability, which meant that it was “very much up to the individual person on how whether or not they are going to take some excellent teaching and truly choose to let it be personally spiritually formative, or just cognitive.”

There was a wide gap in responses from the main campus alumni—ranging from one and a half to five, with no seeming pattern according to years out. Nick shared that his time at Fuller SOT renewed his faith in tremendous ways, adding:

Fuller does a wonderful job of giving an environment in which it's clearly a place of faith, but not one that holds its faith because the doctrine demands it, and to me that gave incredible strength to my personal faith.
[36:17]

Yet Thomas, who attended at roughly the same time, asked if he could give a rank of zero, explaining that to him, Fuller SOT challenged faith, which is good, but that it wasn't partnered with the kind of support that would have encouraged growth. These were the two extremes, with several in-between noting that while they grew spiritually, they didn't receive a great deal of assistance in that from the seminary itself.

Moral integrity commentary. Many alumni noted that moral integrity as a topic was not something they felt that the seminary talked a lot about, and yet they felt it was addressed, either in ethics classes, or the ways that professors handled testing and assignments. Barbara was impressed that they were able to take tests online at home, and that complete trust was put in them to do so with integrity and not cheat. In a similar vein, Thomas told of how he accidentally cheated on a distance test, and when he went to the teacher, she handled it exceptionally in terms of her leadership. He added:

Moral integrity, I would say they spoke quite often about that in courses, about especially being on your honor, writing papers. I did a few distance courses which I think says a lot that they would entrust that level of study

to people in their own time and their own context. So I think they addressed it well... [48:29]

Others praised Fuller SOT for the fact that it was not heavy-handed, but clearly expected students to live up to certain moral standards, taking swift and meaningful action when they didn't. Those who felt that moral integrity was not addressed shared that it seemed to be assumed, and was left to the individual level. The fact that there were no means of checking with students to interact over moral issues or see how they were handling them seemed problematic to one alumnus, who suggested it would be impossible to know what was going on without that. Joseph related that professors modeled honesty and integrity, which was valuable, but again, no one addressed it directly in their lives.

Emotional maturity commentary. While this component drew a wide variety of responses, there were several who mentioned that Fuller Seminary having the School of Psychology, at the very least communicated that emotional health was important. Those who viewed this aspect positively lacked specifics other than that the preparation for pastoral ministry, including the pastoral care class, was helpful. Tracy suggested that this was the primary place that emotional issues were addressed:

There was a class that was specifically geared towards teaching you how to be like a pastoral counselor and that dealt with emotional maturity like learning how to listen more than talking, don't be reactive, how can you be in tune with other people's body language, all that kind of stuff, but really that was probably the only course I took that really emphasized that. [35:26]

Others spoke of dealing with personal emotional issues as a result of these types of courses, with one alumnus noting that it was very formative for him in ways that have continued since.

A few participants felt this was not really addressed in their time at Fuller at all, with Nick noting that it really depended on the person as to whether they wanted to grow in that way or not:

I think that Fuller tends to bifurcate—if you want a world class education that will get you into any PhD program in the world...Fuller could offer you that or it could equally offer you a ride in the park... And then once you were kind of allowed to say look I'm just here to do ministry, which was kind of code for this whole academic thing is just kind of a thing I've got to do ...So I think Fuller at one level had a whole set of courses and instructors and faculty who themselves would insist on your emotional maturity because they weren't kidding around and if you acted like an idiot you weren't going to last very long. But you had the option of at least taking a different professor and not having to grow very much.
[36:17]

Peter shared that he grew much because of Fuller SOT's emphasis on accepting the differences in people's contexts and situations, but he added, "It would have been better if there had been someone seeing me living it out and telling me how I am doing."

Social concern commentary. All participants were consistent in pointing out that Fuller SOT places a great deal of emphasis on this aspect of spiritual formation, although their perceptions regarding what this actually meant varied. For example, Barbara told of taking a class in conflict resolution and how she learned to be able to share her beliefs succinctly without offending others or compromising her position. Brad, a pastor's son, now a pastor himself, pointed to the fact that "They weren't afraid to talk about social issues like abortion or suicide," while Tracy spoke of classes that addressed gender and race differences.

The most common theme, however, was their role as followers of Christ in the world, and their responsibility to be "agents of social change and transformation, or to make the "gospel incarnational, incarnated into our local society." One alumnus shared:

I think that was a topic of regular concern in most courses--that this should guide us to individual connections in the world today, not just secure the afterlife. There were a couple of courses in particular that were focused on Social Justice, and then Fuller having a graduate school in psychology and intercultural studies, I guess testified to a larger institutional value that might have not been explicit all the time, but was sort of woven into the fabric of it. [36:17]

Alumni did not offer any personal experiences with this, and, as Thomas put it, “There’s a pretty obvious goal of everybody there—you’re not supposed to stay at seminary forever...but again, how to actually do that...there’s much to be grown in.”

In sharing about these components as well as answering other questions, there was a striking variety of responses and a lack of consistency across number of years out. While the four who attended the Coast campus were more congruent, even within that group, there were divergences on different topics. While it was difficult therefore, to cull specific themes or patterns from the alumni data, the contribution of interviews with faculty and administrators and the analysis of public documents, along with my own experiences as an *observer participant*, provide some tentative conclusions. I will end this case study with my discussion regarding these.

Discussion

Fuller SOT is a unique institution in a number of ways, and as such, I take a risk in offering conclusions based on my limited data collection and analysis. There were, however, certain ideas or patterns that tended to come up repeatedly, whether in public documents, interviews with seminary leaders or from my campus visitation. I share these noting that once again; my own perceptions and life experiences frame the gamut of interpretation here. To that end, I offer three points for consideration. The first is that Fuller SOT has wrestled continually with the tension between the academic and practical

aspects of theological education, particularly due to the valuing of scholarship with which the seminary was conceived. The second is that, historically lacking a coherent seminary-wide strategy (at least until this point), the emphasis on spiritual formation at Fuller SOT has been dependent on isolated individuals or groups, and thus has not proven sustainable over time. Finally, Fuller SOT's struggle to address the spiritual development needs of its students has been exacerbated by unique distinctives such as its size, commuter population and multi-denominationalism. I will end this chapter with a brief discussion of these three things.

The Scholarship/Practice Tension

In my interview with provost McConnell, I asked him if there were anything he would like to share that I hadn't asked. He responded with a soliloquy on things that he loved about Fuller SOT. Of all of these, the one that he felt was most important was the tension the school maintained between academic scholarship and practical ministry training, something he saw reflected in the two men who began the seminary—one a radio evangelist and the other a highly respected theologian. I heard this example often, a seeming metaphor for decades of attempts to balance the two aspects. McConnell described it this way:

And those two together, that DNA, it never settles well, it never exists without tension...being so pragmatic on the one hand and so scholarly on the other, that we kind of keep both those tensions. It's a challenge without a doubt...I think that kind of thing is hard to get down in the curriculum, but it is part of who we are. [109:18]

There are diverse views on how well the seminary has maintained this tension, and nowhere is this seen more tangibly than in the discourse around the role of spiritual formation, particularly in the curriculum. For example, I talked to faculty members, administrators and students alike, who felt that while the school excelled in scholarship, it

failed to provide adequate spiritual development training. On the other hand, I heard about and spoke personally to some faculty members who felt that at times they had been pressured to be something that they were not, that the push towards a greater emphasis on spirituality in the classroom was not something they had trained for, nor were they comfortable implementing it. One administrator, noting that they were at a better place than ever before, still believed that perhaps only half of the faculty members were ready for the changes that are slated to take place.

Another administrator shared that because most faculty members had never been engaged in pastoral ministry, they simply didn't see themselves as those who could contribute toward the spiritual development of those on that path, which she felt couldn't be further from the truth. She told of one professor who had led theological reflection groups until he was tasked with bringing spiritual disciplines into the mix, at which point he dropped out, feeling unqualified. She explained:

And faculty usually stay with what they know, that's what they are trained to do, so when it got outside of his understanding he backed off, which was really sad because he was one of the most spiritual people I know.
[101:14]

This sort of bifurcation of the academic and the spiritual is something that president Labberton would like to do away with completely. His contention is that people's spirituality is rooted in their identity, and thus can never be set aside, regardless of what their role might be. Careful not to oversimplify, he explained:

I'm not saying that there isn't this kind of double helix quality as you move back and forth between the life of the spirit and life of the mind. I'm not trying to make it synonymous, or even simplistically sequential. I'm thinking of it more—that the images of doing a graduate degree at a seminary in theology, biblical studies, culture or psychology, is specifically to do it out of a sense of Christian vocation. And that the totality of the picture of Christian vocation encompasses the whole of our

lives and the whole of the world, and that we then approach our particular academic study framed by that spiritual vision. [108:12]

How much agreement there is on this sort of perspective is unclear, but one administrator who has been intimately involved with curriculum revision described what is happening now as a “gravitational shift” based on “the sea change in our culture, the sea change in higher education and the sea change in religion.” Suggesting that while past approaches had been technical fixes, like putting a cast on a broken arm, the seminary is now in the process of implementing adaptive change, which he described as more like someone losing an arm or leg and having to learn how to live life in a completely different way. This kind of change is possible now, he argued, largely because the new generation of faculty tends to be more experiential and integrative in general, and because the older generation, of which he saw himself a part, was no longer fighting it as they once had.

In the end, the issue may come down to identity, and whether or not Fuller can alter what seems to be the deeply embedded assumption that they exist primarily to promote evangelical scholarship, or as one administrator told me, be “the West Coast more orthodox version of Princeton at its liberal best,” which has caused Fuller to see itself as deeply rooted in the academy. This identity has, according to this administrator, become more entrenched over the past 20 years due to past president Mouw’s leadership who, he explained,

...was never a pastor, never had an MDIV ...and he consistently says, we are part of the academy, not part of the church That was just never a part of his life experience, which isn’t to say he is not a deeply spiritual person, but it was not part of his own pedagogy or his formation. [56:110]

I found it interesting that the new president (Labberton), who was a pastor for some 30 years, articulated the antithesis of this, stating: “...we do not exist first as an

academy, but we exist first as a spiritual community.” He went on to explain that spiritual formation was at the very center of the seminary’s purpose, with academics, or the life of the mind being “our chief avenue or tool through and with which we go about the process...” How successful he will be in bringing about this shift in values remains to be seen. While others have held a similar view in the past, they either lacked the leadership role to make significant inroads, or the changes they were able to usher in were not sustained beyond their tenure. I now turn to this theme from the data.

Leadership and Incremental Change

I spoke with a few different administrators who have strong feelings about the need for a more integrative spiritual development approach, and have tried to promote this in whatever ways they could. They often shared of their ongoing frustration with the seeming ambiguity about the issue among the faculty and administration, “the ‘no’ behind the ‘yes,’ as one professor put it, which I have already referred to. Another administrator who was on the recent task force shared how even when they worked hard to solicit faculty and administrator input ahead of time, their recommendations were largely dismissed or rejected, concluding that “all of our efforts really didn’t bear any fruit.” He explained:

...we would present something and it would be like, “okay yeah this is what we are going to do.” and then the next time it was like, “Where was that? We’re going on to something new?” “Oh well, we had a meeting with faculty”...and I never knew why we changed, and so every time it was like, whatever we did is gone, and by the time we got to the end, it was all gone. [55:26]

At the same time, professors and administrators alike were quick to point out that the seminary had always valued spiritual formation, a position they supported by relating stories of individuals who had greatly impacted the seminary. While various names were

mentioned, Robert Munger's came up often as the person who laid the tracks in the curriculum for spiritual formation, but more importantly, as the one who symbolized and embodied spirituality. As a result, Munger became the sort of "gold standard," which the seminary sought to perpetuate after he retired. One administrator told me:

The problem was is that you know it was designed by Bob Munger to be Bob Munger's course and ... there was a while there where we tried a number of different iterations, a number of people taught it, and it wasn't—it really, it didn't work to have somebody teaching his course. So they reinvented it and reinvented it...[102:17]

I asked one administrator who was well-versed in the history of formation at Fuller SOT why various attempts through the years had not continued. After a thorough historical analysis, he had concluded that it was almost always related to a person who was "either powerful charismatically or powerful in terms of position," and who led with a great deal of passion, but that when that person left, the program they had implemented ended. I heard several examples of this. One was of a spiritual direction program that was fully approved and organized, but when the key leader left unexpectedly three years into the planning process, the whole thing fell apart, as funding dried up. Another had to do with the Office of Christian Community that was formed as a result of Munger's work, to oversee spiritual formation. As one administrator put it, this was an office with a sad history, with one director leaving after a difficult divorce and another director becoming involved in an immoral relationship with his assistant, which brought the office to a painful end.

Of course, these efforts led by key people have not by any means been Fuller SOT's only attempts to address spiritual formation, as I have already shown, and will cover more fully in the cross-case comparison. The point here is simply that many of those I interviewed felt that the strongest and most successful emphases the school had

experienced regarding spirituality were oriented around individuals who were able to carry the torch while they were there, but who left behind a critical vacuum. These discussions often led participants to suggest that the real problem was that there was never a seminary-wide plan that was supported from the top down. While some of those interviewed have a “wait and see” attitude about the new provost and president, most seemed to hope that these men, both of whom have extensive ministry experience and a commitment to spiritual formation, will finally make the difference.

When I spoke with president Labberton, he was unequivocal in his commitment to keeping the vision for an integrated formational approach across all three of Fuller’s schools. I asked him what he thought was different this time, leading to the following interchange:

LABBERTON: I think that compared to earlier curricular changes this is much more extensive in every direction...And it’s more comprehensive and it’s more coherent. It’s farther reaching and it’s still kind of out of a fundamentally different and more spiritually formative working paradigm... I think that it’s really quite evident to everyone that it is time; that we must move in some direction like this. And this may not be the appropriate expression of it, but it doesn’t need to be—it’s a genuinely good faith effort. And that is what we must do.

INT: And when you say it is time, are you saying that is in reference to the signs of the times, the culture, or the seminary, or the place the seminary is at itself—what is the strongest impetus?

LABBERTON: I think all those things—I think it is a confluence of really all those things...So I think for just a lot of different reasons, there’s a very big sense that I think many people have that it’s just time. This time, it’s time and we need to figure it out, but it’s time to take some bold steps...[108:21]

Most of those I interviewed share Labberton’s strong sense that it is time for a radical change and that Fuller SOT is poised, in some sense, to alter what may be a genetic predisposition toward privileging scholarship over practice, which has hindered past attempts to make spiritual development central to their ethos and activity. What remains

to be seen, however, is how future challenges will be met as they seek to implement the new approach. Fuller SOT is a unique institution for a variety of reasons, many of which will make it more difficult to bring about the kinds of transformation hoped for. I will end this case study with a brief discussion of some of these issues.

Unique Challenges Facing Fuller SOT

Not only is Fuller Theological Seminary the largest evangelical seminary in the world, but it attracts students from upwards of 60 countries, and a multitude of Christian denominations. Beyond that, students attend one of seven different campuses scattered across the United States, and those who go to the main campus in Pasadena often commute from all over Southern California. While there is a general sense that this diversity is what gives Fuller SOT a valuable richness, it also presents challenges in terms of addressing each student's personal spiritual development needs. The size of the seminary alone makes it, as one administrator described, "a fairly impersonal place," which doesn't bode well for the kinds of relationships within which formation seems to thrive.

Two of the clearest challenges the school will face as a result of its unique distinctives is meeting the needs of students who come from vastly different spiritual traditions and dealing with the time constraints their students face, a large number of whom are involved in full-time ministry or other employment. In terms of spiritual traditions, one administrator talked about how it felt like they were continually walking a tightrope just so that everyone felt welcomed and comfortable, even with something as simple as chapel. An administrator at one of the satellite campuses told me of how this

affects the question of how to define spiritual formation, as they learned from the task force experience:

So you get these different flavors that come into this and which makes it a very, very, rich environment. The challenging part is that what comes with that rich environment is a diversity of views ...depending on the tradition that you come out of-- so people coming from a strong sacramental tradition would see it one way, people from a more from the holiness or Pentecostal or even nondenominational world would look at it another way altogether and so on. [50:42]

To add to this, one professor noted that more and more he meets students who “have no substantive memory of any kind of church background,” having been formed largely by para-church ministries, or having had no church experiences.

The other, and perhaps even greater challenge is the degree to which students are fragmented by the demands they face, something one high level administrator suggested was a reflection of the culture at large, adding:

The environment of fragmentation ...isn't just out there, it just enters the hallways every year in spades... the level of fragmentation and some might call it brokenness that we have to deal with on campus these days in a community that is less residential than it used to be ...is such an overwhelming... so I can see that as kind of being an ongoing challenge we will have to face. [96:44]

My own experience on the campus drove this point home. I shared earlier of how I spent some time in the prayer garden after my frustration at not being able to get a focus group together. What I didn't share was how I ended up in the prayer garden that day, and the ensuing significance of my experience.

My Experience

After having tried fruitlessly to enlist participants in the focus group, I wandered the campus a bit aimlessly, wondering what my next steps might be. “Ma’am, can I talk to you a minute?” A voice caught my attention and I looked up to see a homeless man

with a pleasant, albeit toothless smile. He shared some needs and I gave him a couple of dollars, and then he began to tell me all about Pasadena and the school, asking if I'd seen the prayer garden. I told him I wanted to, but hadn't had time, so he offered to take me there. We walked slowly, side by side, with my newfound friend chatting excitedly about the architectural beauty in the cross sculpture outside the garden. As we drew near the bronzed statue, I could understand his enthusiasm. I paused there, taking in various aspects, and he left me to go about his day.

It wasn't until the next morning that the significance of my experience came into focus. My morning reading had posed the following question: *If God was trying to tell me something, would I know?* As I pondered that, I found myself thinking about the homeless man, wondering if perhaps he had been there for my sake, to invite me to that prayer garden. I thought about how I had been unable to rest in that place, feeling fragmented and distracted by all the things I needed to get done, and wrote the following in my journal:

I guess in some ways perhaps I was holding something on behalf of the students here as I sat in the garden. They have built this beautiful space that could accommodate many in quiet contemplation at any time, but it was empty. Students are so busy, so preoccupied, what will it take for the institution to change their outlook?

I think of all the attempts people have made throughout the seminary's history to ground it in a deeper spirituality. Those pages and pages of committee meetings, of proposals, of new ideas, I can almost feel the angst of voices echoing throughout the ages.

And perhaps Jesus in a homeless man walks through the campus calling students and faculty and administrators and staff to a quieter pace, to connect and center and remember why they are really here, but like me, their preoccupations are a distraction that prohibit them from attending to their soul.

This may indeed be the strongest challenge that Fuller SOT, and indeed any seminary seeking to address spiritual formation faces in light of the cultural upheaval thrust upon

us through the technological revolution. As one administrator shared wistfully, “we can’t be a hospital, but if we can be a retreat center, if we can be a haven to help people in the study of their academic pursuits...” This is a noble goal, and only time will tell how realistic it may be for Fuller SOT.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS: CROSS-CASE COMPARISON

At times, conducting research on Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR) and Fuller Seminary School of Theology (Fuller SOT) has seemed like trying to compare apples to oranges, given the substantial differences between the two schools. For example, Fuller SOT is one of the largest seminaries in the world, while BTSR may be one of the smallest. Most of BTSR's students come from a moderate Baptist background, while Fuller SOT students come from over 100 Protestant denominations. BTSR is located in the antebellum heartland, while Fuller SOT is located on the trend-setting West coast. While these differences and more are significant, I had to continually remind myself that the cases in the study were not the schools themselves or even the students, but instead, their spiritual formation models. These, it turned out, had a great deal in common as this chapter will demonstrate.

The purpose of this study was to explore how two different seminaries have approached the development of a spiritual formation model, looking at both the institutional history as well as the lived experiences of students involved. Because one of the cases, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR) sought to integrate spiritual formation from its inception in 1992, while the other, Fuller Theological Seminary School of Theology (Fuller SOT) has been in the process of introducing a more intentional model over the past several years, a comparison of the two models has unique significance. The research question that will be explicated in this chapter is: How does the spiritual formation model of a seminary that added it to an established structure (Fuller SOT) compare to that of a seminary that incorporated it from the start (BTSR)?

Spiritual Formation Models' Divergence and Convergence

I will first compare and contrast the two current models by looking at the schools' core values based on public artifacts. I will then explore the similarities and differences in their curricular and co-curricular components, relying on my own campus visits and interviews with students and alumni, as well as those with the faculty and administration. I will end with a comparison of how each school's model seems to address the four components—personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity and social concern—that have been mandated by the Association of Theological Schools' (ATS) accreditation standards.

Looking at the Larger Narrative

Public documents such as websites and online course catalogs communicate institutional values both directly and indirectly, by what they say as well as by what they do not say. To that end, I explored the 2012-2013 offerings of these public documents for each school, seeking to understand the ways that the institutions sought to situate spiritual formation.¹² I will first outline how the two seminary's approaches compare and contrast based on these, and then I will discuss the data.

General descriptions. On their website main pages, Fuller seminary and BTSR describe themselves initially in very different ways, with neither mentioning spiritual development directly:

Fuller Seminary Main page description: *Since its founding by radio evangelist Charles E. Fuller in 1947, Fuller Seminary has equipped students to be leaders with a mind for scholarship and heart for the*

¹² Because Fuller Seminary houses three different schools—theology, psychology and intercultural studies—it has a general main page and separate pages for each individual school. Thus, when I refer to Fuller SOT in this chapter's descriptions, I am relying on data from the main page and the Fuller SOT page.

gospel. Fuller is a global leader in theological education, standing on the front lines of evangelical thought while remaining committed to ministry and mission grounded in scholarship.

BTSR Main page description: *Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR) was formed in 1991 in celebration of historic Baptist values, as Baptist life in the South moved sharply toward a narrow theological perspective. Consequently, historic Baptist freedom is a hallmark of BTSR: freedom to question, freedom to discover, freedom to learn, and freedom to serve in Jesus' name.*

BTSR goes on to explicate its “unique ethos,” which states among other things that:

“excellence in ministry and academics are core values at BTSR.” Similarly, the Fuller SOT page states that, “academic excellence and ministry effectiveness are inextricably linked.” Just before that however, it notes that they place a strong emphasis on “the theological formation of the mind accompanied by an equally important emphasis on character and ministry formation.” In this way, Fuller SOT’s website description addresses spiritual formation explicitly, while BTSR’s does not.

Purpose Statement. The two schools share similar purpose statements. BTSR’s statement affirms their commitment “to provide advanced theological education and training for effective leadership in the various ministries of the church,” while Fuller SOT states its dedication to, “the equipping of men and women for the manifold ministries of Christ and his Church.” Each school then goes on to include the mention of spiritual formation in slightly different ways. Fuller SOT suggests that it seeks to fulfill its purpose through “graduate education, professional development and *spiritual formation*,” while BTSR lists a series of principles, the first of which states: “The seminary seeks to maintain excellence in scholarship and to provide for and encourage the *spiritual growth* of its faculty, staff, students, and constituents.”

Master of Divinity (MDIV) emphases. Both schools address spiritual formation in their introductions to the curriculum for the MDIV degree, which is the most popular degree and considered more practical in that it prepares men and women for ministry. Fuller SOT first notes that the curriculum requires “rigorous academic discipline,” then goes on to say that this involves “the fruit of such discipline, *personal spiritual growth and maturity*.” BTSR takes a more explicit approach, noting that the MDIV degree includes three areas of emphasis; *spirituality*, global mission immersion, and congregational-focused education, followed by sections describing each of these. The section on the spirituality emphasis states that “academic preparation must be accompanied by attention to *spiritual formation*,” and goes on to describe what this will include.

Course descriptions. I explored the current course descriptions for each school, coding them for what appeared to be the primary emphasis in each—academic knowledge, spiritual formation or ministry training. There was some subjectivity in this, as I determined whether a course was designed to address the student’s spiritual growth based on the brief description. While I understand that formation can take place even in courses with a cognitive orientation, what I looked for in the descriptions was something that indicated specifically how the course would address the student’s personal growth. For example, BTSR offered a course titled *Spiritual Autobiographies*, which studied “significant spiritual autobiographies in the history of Christianity,” and had the following in the description: “Class members will seek to understand and articulate more fully *their own spiritual journey* in light of these classic texts (italics mine).” I coded this course as both academic knowledge and spiritual formation. On the other hand, Fuller

SOT offered a course called *Christian Spirituality*, described as “A survey of the practice of piety in the Roman Catholic, Reformed and Arminian traditions with a focus upon the distinctive theology of each,” which I coded only academic, because there was no mention of personal spiritual application. This does not mean that there was none, only that the course description did not include it.

The total number of codes assigned per school was: Fuller SOT—284 and BTSR—204. Although my interpretation might have introduced a bias, it would have done so equally across schools, and thus, the findings were interesting in regards to spiritual formation course descriptions. While the schools were identical in the percentage of academic course descriptions, spiritual formation course descriptions at BTSR were approximately seven percent of the total, while Fuller SOT’s was three percent. This does not address which courses were required, which I will cover in the section under curricular opportunities. At this point, I primarily wanted to discover the story that public documents might tell about a seminary’s spiritual formation emphasis. See table 6.1 for a summary.

Table 6.1

Course descriptions based on overall Coding

	Fuller SOT	BTSR
Academic Course Descriptions	65%	65%
Ministry Training Course Descriptions	32%	28%
Spiritual Development Course Descriptions	3%	7%

Other spiritual formation emphases. Another important difference between BTSR and Fuller SOT has to do with how each one uses public documents to describe

opportunities for spiritual formation at their school. For BTSR, one of the headings on its website main page is “Spiritual Formation,” which links the reader to a page with a lengthy description of what this entails. Neither Fuller Seminary’s main page nor the School of Theology main page has a section describing their spiritual formation approach. I did find one, however, on a link for prospective students. See table 6.2 for a comparison of the content on each school’s pages.

Table 6.2

Spiritual formation content on websites

Fuller SOT Prospective Student Page	BTSR Spiritual Formation Link from Main Page
<i>You want your intellectual development and your preparation for effective ministry to coincide with an ever-deepening intimacy with God.</i>	<i>Theological education addresses the mind, as well as, matters of the heart. To this end, you will take courses that introduce spirituality and the spiritual disciplines, especially prayer. These disciplines aid in cultivating both private and corporate means for spiritual development.</i>
<i>The spiritual formation of students is central to Fuller’s life and institutional calling.</i>	<i>In addition to providing courses in spirituality the seminary community worships and prays together.</i>
<i>Spiritual formation is a critical piece of the curriculum in each of Fuller’s three schools. Fuller’s faculty build prayer, singing and devotional bible study into class-time. In addition, many courses focus specifically on spirituality, spiritual formation and discipleship.</i>	<i>Opportunities are available for special workshops and periodic retreats to help students in their spiritual formation and to facilitate their developing spiritual resources necessary for effective practice of ministry.</i>
<i>(Goes on to list opportunities from chapel to Prayer Garden, to contemplative retreats)</i>	<i>Dr. Stephen Brachlow, Professor of Spirituality, leads students to focus on the importance of prayer, meditation, and quiet reflection and how they impact our spiritual life.</i>

Discussion regarding public documents. Based solely on the public documents, it would be difficult to determine significant differences in regards to the way in which the two schools value spiritual formation. Both include it in their purpose statements, both offer a list of ways students can engage with it, and both speak to its importance for the MDIV degree. However, I would suggest that BTSR’s public documents demonstrate that spiritual formation is more centrally situated than at Fuller SOT for three reasons.

First, given the importance of the internet in today's culture, by providing a link to it on the main page, BTSR makes a stronger statement as to its institutional value. In contrast, I had to navigate a number of links to find the spiritual formation description on the prospective student page for Fuller SOT. This seems noteworthy, but taken alone, could simply reflect the reality that Fuller, due to its size and three schools, must include more information on the main pages of their website.

The second reason that I would suggest BTSR emphasizes spiritual formation more centrally is the formative emphasis in the course descriptions, in which it had a higher percentage than Fuller SOT (seven percent versus three percent). This indicates, at the very least, that more of the professors at BTSR have a stated intention of seeking to integrate formational aspects into their coursework than do Fuller professors. Because the percentage difference is small, this too, in itself, does not make the case. However, the fact that BTSR includes mandatory spiritual formation courses for all degrees and specializations except the Masters of Theological Studies (MTS), while Fuller SOT includes a mandatory spirituality course only for the Master of Arts Degree (MA), seems to indicate that BTSR is currently more intentional about integrating spiritual formation into their overall approach. I will now examine the curricular aspect more thoroughly.

Spiritual Formation and the Curriculum

The most significant difference between the two schools regarding curriculum is that for BTSR, mandatory courses have been in place from their inception and continue to be for MDIV students, while the Fuller SOT history is less clear. They added a course for MDIV students in the 1970s, and according to one administrator, maintained an emphasis in spiritual development in that course until the last few years when they began

the process of curriculum revision. (While Fuller SOT's impending curriculum paints a very different picture, since it has not yet been implemented, I will address it only in my final chapter.) There are at least three other significant differences between the two schools. These are the ways in which faculty and administration talked about the curricular formation issue, as well as the ways that students and alumni described their coursework, including the integrative nature of non-formational courses.

Faculty and administration conversations. I interviewed a total of five administrators and faculty members from BTSR and nine from Fuller SOT, as well as attended two classes on each campus. My overall sense was that participants at both schools were strongly committed to and believed in the need to address spiritual formation for their students. Professors in disciplines such as theology and church history from both schools told me of meaningful ways in which they personally seek to bring formative opportunities into their classroom. The two institutions had this in common. But when I stepped back and looked more intently into the data, there were at least two ways that faculty/administration responses diverged.

Who we are. Conversations with the faculty and administration at BTSR regarding the curricular role of spiritual formation were rampant with references to spirituality being in the school's DNA. Every participant mentioned this in some way, saying things like, "It's a part of who we are," "It's a part of everything we do," and "It's who we are and always will be." A number of them reminded me that it was one of the three pillars upon which the school was founded. When I asked President Crawford if he ever encountered disagreement among faculty regarding the role of spiritual formation, he said no, explaining:

...The people in the institution have so thoroughly embraced that idea, that the only struggles are with implementation—do we do this or that, so those are the conversations. It is so foundational to the institution that we just don't have—I mean, and you might expect that with biblical or historical faculty but you don't find that here. We'll struggle about a lot of things, but that...there is no question, there just isn't that sense—that's all who we are. [90:27]

While a Fuller SOT administrator who served on the spiritual formation task force shared a similar sentiment regarding how spiritual formation was valued across the board, his comments reflected a critical difference:

Well as an institution... It's never been a question of whether or not it's important or we need that in our lives, in fact in the meetings that I'm in, even when people don't agree with each other, I'm always impressed with kind of the depth of spirituality that is expressed in engagement with each other...the real argument has never been about its value, it's always in its delivery. How do you do it? Where do you do it? And who is qualified to do it? [50:45]

The “real argument,” which had to do with the question of *where do you do it?* surfaced numerous times in discussions with Fuller SOT faculty and administration, who suggested that while attitudes may be changing, many still hold to the view that there is a “dichotomy between the church and the academy, and the seminary belongs to the academy.” One Fuller SOT administrator told of how this was articulated by a faculty member when presented with the task forces' four spiritual formation outcomes:

Interesting, it had been approved and gone through everything at the joint faculty meeting, and then the pushback came. And at the end, one of my colleagues said, “I can't do this, we should just be Fuller University and then we wouldn't have to worry about this.” And I think that really articulates not only that person's voice, but a majority, no a significant portion of our population. “We're just an academic institution. That's not our business, that's not what we're supposed to do.” [56:45]

This perhaps explains why the notion of DNA in Fuller SOT conversations was not connected with spiritual formation, but instead the school's academic ethos, noting things like “we are an academic institution from the beginning,” or “we're so tuition

driven and see ourselves as very academic... if you have the academic chops you are welcome.” One high level administrator did state however, that while spiritual formation was never “a dominant part of our DNA,” there has been a major shift over the past 10-20 years, explaining:

With the younger generation of faculty I’ve found it’s no big deal. They’re much more integrative coming to these things—it’s a more experiential generation. ... But people my age and a little older, that sort of mid-60s to 70s crowd, it’s not that they are against it and no one is fighting it anymore. ... It’s a new generation and it’s that faculty, and they are leading some of the older faculty, that are the leaders for this educational curricular redesign...I would say that well over half of the faculty are with this... But there are some outliers. [96:56]

Thus, the ways in which each school’s stakeholders view spiritual formation and its role in the curriculum differs, with BTSR continuing to hold it up as an original pillar even as they downsize and let faculty go, and Fuller SOT having up to half of their faculty still questioning whether it is the seminary’s responsibility.

Intentionality. The second difference that was apparent between the two schools was related to the construct of intentionality. At BTSR, a number of participants made the point that their school’s approach really centers on a commitment to integrating spiritual development, not only in required courses, but in all courses, as well as in relationships outside of the classroom. One administrator suggested that by hiring a professor with spiritual development as his focus from the start, they “raised the level of intentionality.” Another concurred, noting, “Spirituality was important at BTSR from the very beginning, we were one of the first that was really intentional with that.” Another professor shared of his relationships with students, leading to this interchange when I asked him about faculty advising:

PARTICIPANT: ... if you are attentive, attentiveness is important, it is akin to intentionality.

INT: So specifically, is there an intentionality to go beyond just academic advising--

PARTICIPANT: Oh yeah, yeah, that's how we do things. It's built in, built in at the institutional level. But also for me, I like students and so I'm interested in them as people, so it just happens.

While many of the Fuller SOT faculty and administration affirmed the importance of instilling a greater institution-wide intentionality, some expressed reservations about how and when this would happen. Their assessment was that while the school has made strides toward implementing some sort of formational approach over the years, these had traditionally gone by the wayside when other things took priority. One administrator told about starting a spirituality program that he felt faculty really supported, adding, "...it would have flown had we not, right after the financial crisis, changed out all of our degree programs." Another shared a similar story about getting approval but no funding for a spirituality program, lamenting: "my experience at Fuller is that on the one hand we say yes, but on the other hand we don't really want to do much." This lack of intentionality led to a few strong statements such as one administrator saying: "I have been here long enough to see so many attempts go down in flames that I don't even expect anything anymore," and another sharing his doubts, adding:

I mean I may be wrong at this point; it's just that in 20 years of experience of a lot of frustration over those years, trying to get this going, in this context...it's a lot easier in other places.

It is important to note that even those who expressed these kinds of things articulated cautious optimism for where Fuller SOT is heading, and the fact that the new administration has made it clear this time will be different. These faculty and administrators, to a person, love their work, were highly complementary of the seminary in general, and continue to have hope, even amidst reservations rooted in past experience.

Students and the curricular experience. As noted in previous chapters, I asked alumni from both schools how many courses they took that they believed were designed to directly address their spiritual development (I did not give any other parameters). A comparison of their answers can be seen in Table 6.3 below. The BTSR alumni, for the most part, were able to quickly answer the question, and many of them went on to add that they considered their *Mission Immersion* experience also highly formative. A number of the Fuller SOT alumni struggled to identify these, and it is noteworthy that 40 percent of them said they took no spiritual formation courses. Additionally, while 60 percent of the BTSR alumni indicated that they took three or more spirituality courses, only 6 percent of the Fuller SOT did so, and those were in the doctoral program.

Table 6.3

Number of spiritual development courses taken by alumni

Number of Spiritual Development Courses	BTSR Percentage (n=15)	FULLER SOT Percentage (n=15)
No Courses	0	40
One Course	27	20
Two Courses	13	33
Three Courses	33	0
Four-plus Courses	27	6 ¹³

Integration. While the BTSR alumni were more prone to comment on the required courses than the Fuller SOT, neither group offered much by way of description or explanation about these. However, the next question I asked tended to elicit stories from members of both sets of participants. The question was: *In courses that did not*

¹³ The one person at Fuller SOT who took more than four courses was in a DMIN spirituality specialization.

target it directly, what kind of emphasis on personal spiritual development, if any, did they have? I first sought to interpret their responses quantitatively, using the categories *none or minimal, fair amount, or pervasive*. See table 6.4 for an overview of the responses.

Table 6.4

Spiritual formation integration in coursework

Amount	BTSR Percentage (n=15)	FULLER SOT Percentage (n=15)
None or Minimal	13	47
Fair Amount	40	27
Pervasive	47	26

Again, there is a significant difference, in that 87 percent of the BTSR alumni suggested that there was a fair amount or pervasive integration of spirituality into their other coursework, compared to 53 percent of Fuller SOT, with 47 percent of these saying there was none or that it was minimal. In terms of the stories that they told, however, there were many similarities. A BTSR alumnus shared about his Greek class:

We were all really wowed by the fact that Glen Hinson could read and translate straight out of the Greek New Testament so he was our guru. Not that we wanted to be able to do that but I understood the value in that that there was so much more in the Biblical text than we are aware of at all because we are confined to English...I don't use my Greek on a daily basis, but um, it's a reminder, you know I remember that that desire is part of who I am, and in very meaningful times. [22:6]

A Fuller SOT alumnus shared the sentiment, noting, "I had a bunch of professors who would do a devotional at the beginning and they would use the original Hebrew or Greek and I just felt it was so powerful to hear the original context, the original language and the original words."

In another example, a Fuller SOT alumnus told about a church history professor and how he communicated:

... the way that he told that he told the story of the church, was always highlighting and pointing out how God was moving to accomplish God's purposes... so there was something about the way he told the story that brought out God's providence in the journey of the church and that always spoke to me, he made me like church history again. [43:8]

A BTSR alumnus similarly told of her Old Testament professor, and being "mesmerized and touched by making those connections between the Biblical text and the history and our faith and our spirituality," while another shared:

...that professor spoke so eloquently, taught so eloquently about the OT as a narrative, and about God's relationship with people and what does it mean to be a chosen people, and the idea of being chosen for responsibility not for specialness. And I think that that contributed to my spiritual development in several ways. [23:8]

The idea that the level of integration depended on the professor was common to both schools. A Fuller alumnus shared her conclusion that "there were professors that were intellectual and professors that opened up the heart and in most cases they were pastors, not book writers, cranking out books left and right." Another Fuller SOT alumnus told of how it wasn't necessarily the spirituality professors who impacted him most, but:

...the professors who engaged around topics, I mean specifically, New Testament, systematic theology and church history. I had brilliant faculty in all of those and I felt as though they asked the questions that really mattered, about you know life being—and part of what made them so brilliant was that they were obviously engaged in trying to live those out...[36:17]

Along the same lines, a BTSR alumnus shared that, unlike her Old Testament professor who took a largely intellectual approach, "I saw some of the professors being very open about how they lived their faith and it was helpful."

Discussion regarding curricular approach. Based on the conversations with faculty and administration, it is clear that the hurdles Fuller SOT has faced and may continue to face in implementing a spiritual formation model are not ones with which BTSR has had to contend. These overall differences played out predictably in the student experience. Not only were the BTSR alumni and students clear about which spiritual formation courses they took, but for the most part, spoke of the integrative aspects in other courses as normative. Fuller SOT alumni, however, were often not able to articulate a single course that was spiritually formative, and at times expressed strong frustrations over what they did not receive. The thing that was consistent across both schools was what alumni felt made a class spiritually formative, which was a professor's ability to articulate his subject matter with skill and depth, and the sharing of his or her own spiritual life in the process of teaching, as well as the relationships that they had with them. I will share more about these in the cross-case comparison of the seminaries' co-curricular approach, to which I now turn.

Spiritual Formation and the Co-curricular Components

It is not surprising that Fuller SOT, given its size and denominational breadth, offers a vast array of co-curricular spiritual formation opportunities, far more, in fact than BTSR. The two schools, however, tend to provide the same kinds of experiences, such as chapel, retreats, small groups and spiritual guidance of some sort. I will not take the time to reiterate these as they are outlined in chapters four and five. A critical issue, however, is that a large number of participants from both schools told me that they did not take part in co-curricular opportunities, primarily due to their busy schedules and the fact that they commuted and were not on campus when events took place. As a reflection of the

enormous cultural changes that seminaries face, this is such a significant issue that I will cover it in my conclusions in the final chapter. Here I will give a brief overview of the differences and similarities in co-curricular opportunities based on the perceptions of the alumni and students from each school, ending with a discussion of these.

Community/peer relationships. Participants from both BTSR and Fuller SOT tended to share few examples of developing peer relationships that were formative, and those that they mentioned were rarely seminary-sponsored. Occasionally someone would identify a group that they heard about, but were not a part of. The peer relationships in community that alumni did address took on three forms. First, there were those that were a part of coursework, such as the MDIV cohorts at Fuller SOT or the theological reflection groups that both schools incorporated into their internships.

There were also relationships that developed because of residential living proximity. BTSR alumni talked about this this far more, although one Fuller SOT alumnus mentioned residential housing he'd heard about that was geared specifically to develop students spiritually. Finally, alumni and students from both schools told of either starting their own groups, or of relationships that naturally took place as a result of being on campus together. One BTSR alumnus shared:

That was just friendship which in turn would help spiritual growth development especially those years in seminary with all the new information, they would be the place that I would go and dialogue and not fear those issues, and for me that group was very formative, for those issues, yeah.

One Fuller SOT alumnus said a similar thing, but then added: "again you're catching these classes on the fly and it wasn't always that easy." This was a common refrain, that even when they heard about groups, or started a group or wanted to be a part of a group, it was often not possible; given the parameters and constraints they were under. The one

exception across schools was the residential students at BTSR; something the focus group lamented the loss of with the new facility.

Chapel and other events. While two or three participants from each school identified co-curricular opportunities such as seminars or interfaith events, the thing mentioned most was chapel. At Fuller SOT, chapel is a joint venture with their other two schools and is held weekly at 10 a.m. in a large seminar classroom. At BTSR, while chapel was originally held three times a week, it now offers the same service two times a week at 11 a.m. in the designated worship center, in order to accommodate their block schedule. The most common response regarding chapel from participants at both schools was that they did not attend. While the small number from Fuller SOT who said they did attend tended to describe chapel positively, when I probed deeper, they concluded that they did not feel it contributed directly to their spiritual growth, as demonstrated in the following interchange:

PARTICIPANT: I didn't really do chapel at Fuller and in part it was because if I happened to be there, on a Wednesday when chapel was, and I was, I needed to be there for the afternoon, if chapel happened to be in-between classes or, then I would attend chapel, but I would say that I attended maybe 20 percent of chapels while I was there.

INT: Would you say that the 20 percent were structured in such a way that they contributed to your spiritual development?

ALUM24: If I don't remember an experience in chapel in particular, I just remember attending, I'm going to have to say no, I think I would remember if I did, don't you think?

Participants from BTSR were more prone to suggest that chapel was positive and meaningful, even if they didn't attend much, such as one who related that because he had a full time job and was a full-time student, he did not go. He was careful, however, to say that this was no reflection on chapel, but, as he put it, "probably just me not taking advantage of that opportunity." A contingent of the focus group, however, was quite

unhappy with what chapel offered, expressing desires for more spiritual experiences rather than “just another church service.”

Spiritual direction. I asked alumni two questions regarding spiritual guidance; first, whether the seminary provided any type of structured relationship with a faculty member or administrator for the purpose of spiritual direction. While participants from both schools mentioned academic advisors or internship supervisors, some of whom touched on spiritual issues, each one said that the seminary had not provided structured spiritual guidance for them. The second question I asked was whether they developed relationships with faculty members or administrators that proved to be spiritually formative. Eighty-six percent of the BTSR alumni said that they had, while 73 percent of the Fuller SOT participants said they had.

There were some significant differences in commentary about this topic. Many BTSR alumni talked about the size of the school and how easy it was to develop relationships that were meaningful with faculty members and/or administrators. However, participants from both schools were very clear that engaging in these kinds of relationships was up to the student, and if he or she did not take the initiative, then it did not happen. Finally, some of the Fuller SOT alumni expressed that they believed the faculty did not see themselves in this role, but were instead there to educate and not provide spiritual direction, while these kinds of comments did not come up with the BTSR group.

Co-curricular discussion. Co-curricular spiritual development is the area of most convergence between the two seminaries, with the caveat that Fuller SOT offers a much wider array of opportunities. In fact, Fuller employs an administrator for whom co-

curricular spiritual formation is one of their central responsibilities. As I noted in chapter five, when this administrator sought to gather a coalition of people from various ministries and offices across campus who were connected in some way to spiritual development programs or opportunities, 18 different representatives across the three schools responded. The list that they put together of the things that were available to students was enormous. I relate this to make the point here that even though Fuller SOT offered many more opportunities than BTSR, the alumni that I interviewed from Fuller were no more likely to be engaged in these than the BTSR alumni were in their school's events.

I am not suggesting that these opportunities are without merit, or that students who take advantage of them do not benefit greatly, but only that based on this study, co-curricular events do not seem to play a significant role in a student's spiritual development. As I noted, I will further address some of the reasons for this in the final chapter. I will now move to the final comparison, that regarding views and experiences related to the ATS standards.

Spiritual Formation and the ATS Components

As noted in previous chapters, one of the dependent variables in this study was the degree to which the four components that the ATS identifies as important for spiritual formation are being addressed in the seminaries. These are; personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity and social concern. I asked the alumni and students to rate how well they felt their school addressed each of these on a Likert scale from one to five, with five being high, and then offered them the opportunity to make comments. See Table 6.5 for the cross-case comparison of these ratings. I asked faculty members and

administrators how they felt their school was addressing these overall. I will offer a comparison of the responses from the two schools, beginning with student perspectives and then moving to the faculty and administration. I will end with a discussion of these.

Table 6.5

Comparison of student and alumni rankings of ATS components

Component	Mean Rank by BTSR	Mean Rank by Fuller SOT
Personal faith	3.9	3.6
Moral Integrity	3.4	3.5
Emotional Maturity	4.0	3.6
Social Concern	3.9	4.1

Personal faith-student. The numbers above fail to reveal some critical elements regarding how alumni felt about personal faith. While the mean ranks are fairly close, within each school there was a wide span, with more than one participant ranking it a five. There were also scores as low as two at BTSR, and one at Fuller SOT. The spread is not surprising, given that the construct is personal faith, which made for very individualized answers regarding how their faith was developed while at seminary.

A common theme from participants at both seminaries was how their faith expanded as a result of wrestling with new ideas and understandings, particularly in regards to Scripture. For example, a BTSR alumnus shared:

...part of the challenge of seminary is that it challenges you to a more mature faith. And you know Biblical studies my goodness, sometimes they blow right out of the water some of the notions you grew up with, so that's a big part of what goes on I think. But I see that in a very positive way as I see the seminary challenges some of those notions and develops a more mature faith than they came in with. [32:23]

A Fuller alumnus shared similarly:

Part of your adult responsibility is to wrestle with this stuff yourself... a professor you know believes in Jesus, is gonna make you write a paper on whether or not you should believe in Jesus, and I think that is a great thing, so high marks on that. [36:15]

Not all participants agreed, however. Two from BTSR expressed concern about whether certain professors even had a personal faith. One Fuller alumnus shared: “I think challenging is good but challenge has to be partnered with support or otherwise it just becomes antagonistic,” and another said, “There was a lot of wrestling through issues, or through ideas, but not personal spiritual growth. It didn’t seem like there was a lot of concern there.”

Personal faith-faculty and administration. Faculty members and administrators from both schools suggested that a student’s personal faith is developed largely in relationship to curricular content, particularly theology, although it was up to the individual student. Administrators from both BTSR and Fuller SOT expressed concern as to how consistently this was taking place, and whether faculty members were addressing matters of faith explicitly. Dr. McConnell, the provost at Fuller SOT, shared:

And I would say that one of the challenges we have is that we are better at deconstructing theological myths than reconstructing theological maturity. Um, and as a result of that we have to work at it ...Because it is much easier to help somebody grow past their Sunday School view of God than it is to help them grow into the majesty and magnitude of that same God. [109:12]

A faculty member from BTSR questioned the entire notion of assessing personal faith, arguing: “I hope it’s going on, I’m trying to foster it, but since you can’t measure it I don’t know why you’d want to try,” while a Fuller SOT professor noted that since “faith is what we do absolutely every day, it seems odd to single it out.”

Moral integrity-student. None of the participants from either school tended to rank this very high, often noting that they didn't believe it was specifically addressed. Many chose not to comment on it at all. Of those who did, they identified similar themes, mostly having to do with courses on ethics or the school's ethical policies. Students from both schools mentioned modeling from faculty, or disciplinary situations that took place, which in the case of BTSR included a couple of negative examples. Overall, the consensus across schools was that moral integrity was something that was just expected of them and they knew it. A BTSR alumnus shared:

To me, I mean definitely there was a strong emphasis on, and maybe an assumption that your walk is gonna match your talk and that you are going to live in a moral way. I would say that wasn't taught in a mature way, but it certainly was an underlying presence all the time...there wasn't an ongoing emphasis that was open on moral integrity, but an assumed one.
[32:25]

Similarly, a Fuller SOT alumnus noted that they just knew they were expected to do the right thing, while another concluded: "it may be that it was more assumed than any place expressed, but I don't remember talking about moral integrity very often."

Moral integrity—faculty and administration. Comments regarding how moral integrity was addressed focused mostly on coursework, in ethics classes or elsewhere for administrators from both schools. For example, a BTSR administrator talked about how it is addressed in the internship through discussions about moral and legal liability, and also in mission's courses, where she suggested that the immorality of colonialism is hit pretty hard. Similarly, a Fuller SOT administrator noted that over the past ten years he has seen a shift in that, "we don't have the specialists in ethics, we have a whole lot of people teaching in other fields...who have expertise in the field of ethics and they bring that in."

President Crawford from BTSR talked at length about how important it is for him to address this in the courses that he teaches, particularly by telling stories from his own life, adding, “I think they need to hear it from an old guy. So I do talk about moral integrity in the course of their life and ministry that they choose.” Administrators from Fuller SOT tended to tell me about the *Community Standards*, which are articulated in a lengthy document detailing moral positions to which students must read and agree to adhere when they enter the seminary.

One administrator, however, lamented that he has heard that Fuller students do not have a great reputation in the community, and often don’t abide by the standards, with the seminary not always fair in applying discipline:

So, the story is told of a student who got his girlfriend pregnant while in seminary, they were both students, he broke up with her, graduated without any repercussions—it was obviously a breach of the contract of community standards, but she was punished because now she had to raise a child, couldn’t finish, and no one cried foul. I heard about it a year later and thought, ‘that is just ridiculous.’ [56:16]

He also mentioned gays being held to a higher standard than their heterosexual peers.

When I asked him about the inconsistencies, he talked about how large the seminary was, making it easy to get lost unless you had extreme problems, adding: “How do we find a way to be a good steward of every student who comes into the entire fold?”

Emotional maturity—students. Participants from BTSR, for the most part, indicated that their emotional maturity was addressed in their pastoral care classes, and to some degree the internships. Several Fuller SOT alumni also mentioned a pastoral care class, with a couple of students adding that having the School of Psychology demonstrated the seminary’s valuing of this area of growth. Students from both schools, however, made the point that this was really up to the student, and didn’t always happen.

A BTSR alumnus shared, “I think people who wanted to grow up were given support and encouragement but there were some students who clearly didn’t want to grow up, they just wanted to mark their time and get a diploma and get a job.” Similarly, a Fuller SOT alumnus related:

There was a track at Fuller that wasn’t going to challenge you really hard. And then once you were kind of allowed to say, “Look I’m just here to do ministry,” which was kind of code for, “This whole academic thing is just a kind of a thing I’ve got to do, I gotta check the boxes, um, but I can remain fairly infantile and you know get a degree in junior high ministry and off I go.” [36:20]

Emotional maturity-faculty and administration. While administrators or faculty members from both schools identified courses such as pastoral care or internships where emotional maturity was addressed, a number of them shared that this was the area in which they felt their school was the weakest. Provost McConnell at Fuller SOT suggested that “...collectively we do not have near the emphasis that we do on other things,” noting that the lack of emotional maturity in students had become an increasingly difficult issue. Another Fuller SOT administrator told of how disciplinary issues had skyrocketed in the past couple of years, adding:

Now we have recommendations required to get in, spiritual testimonies of people’s faith, but we’re starting to take that a little more seriously I think. But that’s sort of an Achilles’ heel for us. We’ve had problems there, and like most theological schools our students are getting younger, right out of college, and college students are less mature than before. [56:15]

A BTSR Bible professor told of how he hated that emotional issues tended to stay under the radar unless someone got in serious trouble and suggested that they really needed to do more in early assessments, such as psychological testing. Fuller administrators told of how they were working on this in the new curriculum, leaning on the School of Psychology to provide the balance.

Social concern-students. In this category, Fuller SOT alumni tended to offer more positive responses overall regarding how social concern was addressed. However, for the most part, their comments were related to the institution's emphasis on social justice, including the weaving of it into course content, but very little in the way of personal stories or application. A majority of the BTSR alumni, on the other hand told of how their own experiences formed them, particularly with the mission immersion trips, which a few pointed out reflected another of the school's three pillars.

Social concern—faculty and administration. Faculty members or administrators from BTSR offered little commentary regarding social concern, although one suggested that this was one of the school's strengths, adding the following about the mission immersion experience, as well as her own approach:

I think Dr. L-- leading the students, he usually travels with the students, has been a very powerful connection, with students understanding that our church is not confined by borders; it's around the world, that's been very powerful. My own sort of perspective on the church is that ...we are a part of something far wider than ourselves that God is doing in the world, so that's one of my real angles. [86:89]

Various faculty members or administrators from Fuller SOT also identified social concern as a seminary strength, although they expressed it in slightly different language.

You know I would say that's probably more of our strength, um, I think some of the leading voices on our campus are those who are concerned about one, the health of the church in terms of its numbers, therefore the evangelical impulse that was part of Charles Fuller being a radio evangelist, at the same time some of the ethical concerns, social justice issues. I think students get a pretty heavy dose of that here, and many students come here because of that. [81:82]

While none of the faculty members or administrators from BTSR shared examples of how social concern was being addressed, Fuller SOT provost McConnell told me that as a result of having "had a flourish of really good appointments of faculty

that were younger and had such a holistic view,” a number of topics such as racism, poverty and domestic violence were now regularly on the table. The week I was on campus, the school did indeed host evening seminars addressing these kinds of things, although they were co-curricular.

ATS component discussion. While most of the faculty and administration at both schools seemed to be aware of the four specific components that the ATS identifies, many of them struggled to articulate how these were being addressed. The default seemed to be to consider what classes probably covered these topics, and as a result, there were more similarities than differences in how the two sets of participants described their school’s approach. In both cases administrators and faculty members tended to relate personal faith to theology, moral integrity to ethics, emotional maturity to pastoral care and social concern to missions.

This may explain why, across the board, alumni tended to identify the ways in which the components were addressed as topics rather than by personal experience. A number of the alumni from both schools were surprised at these components and did not feel they had anything to do with their spiritual growth at the seminary. Even when they were affirming, they normally said things like, “they really teach that here,” or “they are big on that.” The exception to this was the BTSR alumni and students who related more personal stories about moral issues and to a greater degree, their mission immersion experiences and how these changed and developed them spiritually.

The component with the greatest difference in alumni rank was emotional maturity, with BTSR at 4.0 and Fuller SOT at 3.6. This may have to do with the fact that because of its size, BTSR is able to provide an atmosphere that feels more emotionally

safe and inclusive. Indeed, when I separated out the ranking of the students at the Fuller SOT Coast campus, which is roughly the same size as BTSR, it was 4.25, offering support to this conclusion. The differences between the two schools in terms of size, demographics, location and denominational affiliation are significant, as noted earlier, and it is impossible to know all the ways these things impact the spiritual formation models in each institution. However, there are some tentative conclusions to be drawn in comparing the two seminaries based on the data. I will end this chapter with these.

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the question: How does the spiritual formation model of a seminary that added it to an established structure (Fuller SOT) compare to that of a seminary that incorporated it from the start (BTSR)? I sought to answer this by looking at public documentation, curriculum, co-curricular activities and the ATS components, including the perspectives of alumni, faculty members and administrators from each.

It is important to note that I did not seek to compare how effective either model is at spiritually developing students, or even how efficiently either institution implements the model they have established. Rather, my goal has been to look at the ways in which the actual models themselves, as well as their place within the institution, converge and diverge.

Divergence

While it is clear that the models do share similar components, the larger meta-narrative suggests that there are two important differences in BTSR and Fuller SOT's overall approach towards spiritual formation.

Different identities. The first critical area of difference related to the schools' spiritual formation models has to do with overall seminary identity. While there were some at BTSR who felt that the school was struggling to forge their identity in light of recent changes, almost every person I talked to spoke of the "three pillars" of the school, noting that spiritual formation was one of them. Many referred to it as part of the institutional DNA. This was in contrast to Fuller SOT, where there seemed to be a lack of coherency regarding identity. Rather than any mention of spiritual formation as central, a number of faculty and administrators talked about the DNA of scholarship with which the school was started, noting that this continues to be what the institution tends to be known for.

Different challenges. The second difference is closely related to the first, having to do with the challenges each seminary has faced in regards to implementing or making changes to their spiritual formation model. Specifically, Fuller SOT has had to continually deal with questions as to the role of spiritual formation and whether it is even the responsibility of the seminary. This debate, centered on the "why" of having a spiritual formation model, has clearly impacted past attempts at elevating the role of spiritual formation for Fuller SOT. BTSR, on the other hand, appears to have operated as if spiritual formation has been non-negotiable from its earliest years, and as a result, the decisions they've made and challenges they have faced have had more to do with practical issues such as finances or personnel, or more specifically the "how" of implementing the model.

Convergence

The data also suggests that the spiritual formation models as well as the processes involved in implementing them at both Fuller SOT and BTSR share two realities related to the people involved.

Role of key players. The single most important area of convergence between the two school's models was the importance of key personnel. Not only did participants from each seminary tend to identify specific individuals who had been significant for the overall institution in regards to spiritual formation, but alumni and students often told stories of faculty members or other personnel who uniquely influenced their own spiritual development. Another example is that while BTSR benefited from having a founding president committed to the spiritual development of students, many noted that for the first time Fuller SOT has a president who is fully committed to spiritual formation, giving them a great deal of hope for the future.

Role of curriculum. The striking lack of involvement in co-curricular activities by participants from both schools highlights the importance of the seminaries' curricular approach in regards to spiritual development of students. The majority of alumni and students self-identified as commuters, many of whom were in ministry or working full-time in some other capacity, as well as having families while attending seminary. While the size of BTSR, as well as the residential housing may have mitigated the effects of this to some degree, nevertheless, when describing spiritually formative opportunities at seminary, students drew upon classroom experiences—from faculty modeling to spiritual practices to wrestling with time-honored traditions and beliefs.

This was even more explicit for those who attended Fuller SOT, many of whom tended to describe seminary as an addendum to an already over-full life, and expressed greater frustration at the lack of formative content in coursework. And while both schools' administrators emphasized the importance of field education internships in terms of spiritual formation, these were rarely mentioned by students or alumni, reinforcing the idea that their expectations for spiritual growth revolved around coursework.

In the next chapter I will further explicate these differences and similarities as I explore the themes that consistently came up over the course of the study. Specifically I will draw from the discussion sections in each of the three findings chapters in order to offer implications for stakeholders as well as potential areas of future research, and to share the ways that this study impacted me as a person and a researcher.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to compare the spiritual formation models of two Protestant seminaries, one of which has been in place since the institution's inception in 1992, and the other being the result of attempts to add it to their existing structure over the past several years. In researching the models at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR) and Fuller Theological Seminary School of Theology (Fuller SOT), I have explored public documentation as well as extant historical records, the values and perceptions of administrators and faculty members, and the lived experiences of students and alumni. Each case was examined on its own merits in order to answer the first three research questions, followed by a cross-case comparison to address the fourth. These were:

- What is the process that two Protestant seminaries engage in as they seek to implement a model for the spiritual development of leaders?
- What is the lived experience of leaders who are impacted by the spiritual formation approach at two Protestant seminaries?
- How does a Protestant seminary's spiritual formation model provide formational opportunities for a leader's personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and public witness/social concern, as mandated in the ATS standards for accreditation?
- How does the spiritual formation model of a seminary that added it to an established structure compare to that of a seminary that incorporated it from the start?

The impetus behind this exploratory study was a gap in the literature as well as in practical knowledge regarding how seminaries address the issue of the spiritual development of their students, particularly given that spiritual formation became an accreditation requirement in 1992. This held unique significance in light of the fact that Protestant seminaries have historically privileged scholarship and given less attention to the personal spiritual development of students.

The findings presented in chapters four through six contained discussion sections based on the data. The purpose of this chapter is to tie these together by exploring the key themes that emerged in both the individual case studies and the cross-case comparison. I will supplement this with data from an interview with Daniel Aleshire, director of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), whose perspective as one who has walked with a broad spectrum of Protestant seminaries over these 20 years of spiritual formation implementation in accordance with accreditation standards is invaluable. I will first address three dominant themes, offering implications based on the data. I will then share personal reflections on my own journey and address the limitations of this study. I will conclude with thoughts concerning future research based on the emergent findings.

Study Themes

While the amount of data assimilated for this study was substantial and provided a wide variety of interesting findings, the most important elements can be encapsulated within three central themes. These are:

- The importance of institutional beginnings in setting the trajectory of its spiritual formation emphasis.

- The invaluable role of leadership in implementing, sustaining and supporting not only a spiritual formation model, but the development of students themselves.
- The increasing importance of the curricular role in light of a changing educational culture and student demographics.

For an overview of these themes as they relate to the findings in chapters four through six, see Table 7.1.

Table 7.1

Summary of research themes and findings

Central Themes	Key Findings BTSR	Key Findings Fuller SOT	Key Findings Cross-Case Comparison
<i>The importance of institutional beginnings in setting the trajectory for spiritual formation emphasis.</i>	Significance of founding president's commitment to spiritual formation in establishing spirituality focus	Struggle with bifurcation of academic and spiritual since founding with academic focus	Different identities: Fuller SOT—scholarship BTSR—spirituality Different Challenges: Fuller SOT--related to seminary responsibility (<i>why?</i> and <i>who?</i>) BTSR—related to implementation (<i>how?</i>)
<i>The invaluable role of leadership in implementing, sustaining and supporting not only a spiritual formation model, but the development of students themselves.</i>	Significance of Spirituality professorship	Significance of 'torch-bearers' Downside—lack of sustainability	Role of key players: top leaders, faculty, 'torch-bearers'
<i>The increasing importance of the curricular role in light of a changing educational culture and student demographics</i>	Challenges of changing culture and changing student population	Challenges of size, varied traditions, changing student population	Narrowing of focus to curricular components due to changing student population

Theme One: The Importance of Beginnings

Beginnings matter, as Miller (1990), chief historian regarding Protestant seminaries, points out:

Beginnings set the standards that guide institutions throughout the course of their development. The metaphor is organic. The full tree is already in the genetic code of the seed, prefigured in the germ cells of the parents. (p. 75)

This theme, the importance of institutional beginnings in setting the spiritual formation trajectory for seminaries, resonated with clarity from the data drawn from Fuller SOT and BTSR, each of which was begun with a specific ethos that remains deeply entrenched today.

For BTSR, spirituality was determined to be one of three key emphases before the doors of the seminary ever opened, and was stated as such in by-laws, promotional materials, trustee minutes, the mission statement and the first course catalog. While it was at first referred to as one of “three legs of a stool,” spirituality eventually became known as one of the “three pillars” on which everything else would rest, a fact attested to by almost every participant in the study. Fuller SOT, on the other hand, was begun with among other things, the intention of providing a scholarly approach that might restore respect for the intellect of conservative Christians. As Marsden (1987) notes, Fuller SOT inherited the Princeton model, which heralded the role of a minister as “gentleman theologian,” who could lead the church and culture spiritually by virtue of his mental acuity.

Entrenched identities. Throughout their histories--Fuller SOT's 65 years and BTSR's 20 years—each institution has stayed true to the original identity, with participants referring to it respectively as “in their DNA.” Like a plumb-line, scholarship

for Fuller SOT and spirituality for BTSR has held sway, framing the questions they asked and the decisions they made at critical junctures.

This explains in part why Fuller SOT has had to repeatedly address the issues of whether a seminary is the place for spiritual formation and whether academically trained professors are qualified to implement spiritual formation. It is most likely the reason that as many as half of their faculty members still question what may seem to them to be a shift away from their roots, as the current leadership presses into a stronger spirituality emphasis.

The core identity of BTSR fueled the decision to hire a spirituality professor in its earliest years, who in turn established the curricular bent, making spirituality courses mandatory for all students. While some changes have taken place, the school has never veered from a commitment to keeping required spirituality courses in the curriculum, even in the face of financial tightening and ensuing curriculum revisions. Although all faculty members may not be equally adept at providing formative opportunities, they do not question that it is part of their responsibility. Additionally, at a recent critical juncture when the school changed locations, radically altering their environment, the new dean chose spiritual formation as the centerpiece of the faculty retreat to launch the year.

Implications. What can we glean from this? What value does such knowledge offer to pertinent stakeholders? I would suggest three things. First, for administrators at new theological education institutions who might plan to start slow or without an articulated focus in regards to the spiritual development of students, this can serve as a red flag, reminding them that the way in which they begin will have repercussions across the history of the seminary. Second, for administrators whose school began without a

spirituality thrust and who have been trying to add spiritual formation to an existing structure, it can be an encouragement to know that going against core values embedded in the foundation of an institution is no easy feat, as Fuller SOT's journey demonstrates. Making the spiritual development of students central for any established institution will require more than a casual approach in order to forge needed changes and will not happen overnight or without a great deal of courage, tenacity and dogged determination to pursue it in the face of potentially obstinate opposition.

Finally, for all Protestant theological education institutions, these two cases are a reminder of a heritage that harkens back to the Enlightenment when epistemological assumptions were formed that have framed ministerial training for over two centuries. As a result, the bifurcation of scholarship and spirituality won't abate without a great deal of intentionality on the part of administrators, faculty members, and the students themselves. The divide between knowledge about God and the experience of life in the presence of God is one that must be continually addressed in any seminarian formation model, and indeed any leader's life.

The Invaluable Role of Leadership

It is perhaps no surprise that when participants from either school spoke favorably about formative experiences or the school's spirituality emphasis, they invariably related it to some individual. While these comments often referred to those in official positions who were connected with the seminary's spiritual formation model, many times they identified other individuals—faculty or staff members, or administrators—who had personally impacted them through classroom experiences or relationships that they developed with them outside of class.

Legends, torchbearers and mentors. For BTSR, the individual mentioned most often was the founder of the spirituality model, Dr. E. Glenn Hinson. Having attained almost legendary status, alumni, faculty members and administration alike spoke of his influence, not only on the school, but individual lives. Closely related to this was the impact of his successor, Dr. Stephen Brachlow. While Brachlow expanded, but did not fundamentally change the spiritual formation model, his name was mentioned over and over—by students who told personal stories, and by faculty and administration who spoke of his influence. In addition to these two men, students and alumni mentioned a number of other individuals who had informed their spirituality—from Old Testament professors to a student life director to the president of the seminary.

While Fuller SOT has no spiritual formation “founding father,” one name came up numerous times, and that was Robert Munger, who established what seems to be the seminary’s most memorable emphasis on spirituality in the 1970s. Indeed, there is a seminary chair named after him, designed to ensure that the investment he made would be carried on. Alumni also mentioned specific professors who impacted them in the classroom or who reached out to them, providing spiritual guidance and even friendship.

Additionally, when an administrator or faculty member from Fuller SOT spoke about the various times when the school has had a meaningful spiritual formation component, they almost always identified a specific individual who made it happen, someone who carried the torch by virtue of their passion and zeal. In fact, one administrator that I interviewed suggested that based on her own in depth study of the history of spiritual formation at Fuller, that the presence of a torchbearer to champion the

cause was the single most important predictor of a spirituality emphasis lasting at Fuller SOT.

Challenges. The fact that people and relationships have been so critical for seminarian spirituality also creates challenges, in that when key players leave, the institution faces a gap that may not be easy to fill, as Fuller SOT experienced numerous times. While no institution would purposefully rely on any one faculty member or administrator to ensure a central focus is maintained, it seems that spirituality, because it is so keenly connected to a person's way of being, uniquely lends itself to this kind of dependency. BTSR is in this position right now, as they try to determine how and whether to replace Dr. Brachlow in light of finances and curriculum needs. Time will tell whether current professors will be able to fill in the gaps and maintain the emphasis.

Implications. The role of key players is certainly not surprising, but there are some meaningful inferences to be made from looking at these two seminaries. The first relates to the vast difference it makes when the individuals who champion spiritual formation are leaders in positions of power and influence. In the case of BTSR, Dr. Graves, the founding president, not only introduced the emphasis, but according to documents of early trustee meetings and publicity pieces, continued to insist that the school maintain that focus throughout his tenure.

In contrast, it appears that until now, no Fuller SOT president ever pressed for a spirituality emphasis, and thus the school's history is dotted with spurts of formational emphases that died out when the torchbearer left. This makes it all the more striking that the introduction of a spiritual formation model as robust as the one Fuller SOT will soon launch, is strongly supported by the top three administrators—the president, provost and

dean, all of whom made it clear that this time will be different from attempts in the past; that they are introducing long-term seminary-wide change, not just adding a component that may or may not last.

The second implication of this theme has to do with hiring of faculty. The data from both seminaries made it clear that the role of faculty members was absolutely essential for spiritual development of students. While Fuller SOT still has some work to do in changing the mindset of a substantial number of faculty members, more than one administrator told me that new hires, particularly those who are younger, is the thing that will eventually enable them to alter deeply entrenched mental models. Similarly, the president at BTSR, when faced with a waning in support for spirituality, used financial downsizing to let faculty members go who weren't fully on board.

This reality, however, brings up another implication and that has to do with the training and educational background of seminary professors. What equips them to address the spiritual development of their students? What educational experiences contribute to them becoming the kinds of people that students are looking for as spiritual role models? This is a critical question for every Protestant seminary, because even those institutions that herald spiritual formation generally do not require spiritual development courses for theology students who are preparing to teach in a seminary or other higher education institution. Indeed, the ATS does not include these degrees in the accreditation standards for spiritual formation. This seems to create a vicious cycle in which students feel their professors do not emphasize or embody personal spirituality and professors feel they are being asked to impart something for which they have never been trained.

Daniel Aleshire explained the ATS' reasoning behind the lack of formational standards for theology students, noting that they oversee a large number of schools, including university based divinity schools in which many students attend, not to be formed in some specific tradition, but to obtain academic knowledge. His sense, however, was that an individual obtaining a PhD in a Protestant seminary would be formed in more ways than they think, and certainly far more than in a university divinity school, where objectivity and distance from the discipline are still required.

Based on the responses of participants from both BTSR and Fuller SOT, I would argue that there is a clear need for theology students to be included in spiritual formation models. Fuller SOT's administration appears to have come to the same conclusion, evidenced by the fact that in their new model, every master's level student will be required to take the four foundational spirituality courses, with the MDIV having the added benefit of three internship classes focusing on spiritual development. I believe their approach will be important to watch, with the potential of becoming a test case from which other institutions might learn.

Changing Culture and the Importance of Curriculum

Numerous times in interviews with stakeholders from both BTSR and Fuller SOT, references were made to the ways that the culture was changing, as well as the students themselves. Not only are more students coming as seekers with little spirituality background, but those who do have experience in a religious tradition seem more fragmented in terms of identity and emotional intelligence. For Fuller, this is exacerbated by the fact that they draw students with a plethora of expectations and traditions from every Protestant denomination. For both schools, the reality that students are

increasingly becoming commuters whose time at seminary is, in many ways, isolated from the rest of their world, makes the task of addressing spiritual development particularly complex. Aleshire, describing this as “messy territory,” explains:

And then you had more students who were commuting from the local area, fewer students are moving to attend a particular seminary, and the result is that we are offering theological education where about the only place you can count on people seeing one another is in class. They are not even around for chapel necessarily, and so there’s a sense in which, Tricia, the model has already changed...

BTSR has addressed this in two ways. First, their new location layout is designed to create natural settings for community, with the hope that students will interact more and be drawn to spend longer daytime hours at the seminary. In addition, they have put most of their spirituality focus on mandatory courses, with little expectation regarding student involvement in other events. While Fuller SOT continues to offer a wide variety of spiritually formative experiences outside of the classroom, their new model comes at it with a strongly curricular approach, with the expectation being that incorporating spiritual practices into a number of key courses will facilitate spiritual growth within the students.

Implications. Given the changes which, as Aleshire points out, have already taken place, seminaries that hope to spiritually develop their students must deal with the fact that the only guaranteed access they have to students is in the classroom. Because the ATS does not specifically require seminaries to implement mandatory spirituality courses, stakeholders could easily demonstrate that they are addressing the standards through co-curricular opportunities. But if they are serious about seeing students develop spiritually, seminary leaders must ask, how much formation is really taking place in these events? Or on a more basic level, how many students avail themselves of these?

At the same time, addressing spiritual formation as part of the classroom experience, whether directly through mandatory courses, or indirectly through the pedagogies of spiritually sensitive professors raises a host of other issues. How can seminaries take into account the various levels of spiritual maturity their students bring with them? Is there a danger of some traditions being privileged and others left out? What practices actually form a student? Indeed, what does it mean to be spiritually formed?

In my interview with Aleshire, he shared that 20 years ago when the spiritual formation standards were first introduced, the issue of whether it is the seminary's responsibility was at the heart of the discourse. However, he believes that has shifted and now the questions have far more to do with things like *what is spiritual formation?* or *how are we supposed to accomplish it?* These are not simple concerns, and as Aleshire suggested, "sometimes an issue of this kind doesn't get off the ground because it is just too complex. The plane is loaded so full..."

Seminaries that have in the past and continue now to wrestle with these things perhaps should not be discouraged at various attempts that have resulted in a "failure to launch." To that end, it is surely prudent to remind all stakeholders—administrators, faculty members and students alike—that while the pace of change related to spiritual formation in theological education may seem inordinately slow, given the historical frame and the weight of the cargo, patience is surely warranted.

Personal Reflections

As a qualitative researcher, I am keenly aware that any presumed objectivity I might have had in this study was tempered by a lifetime of experiences, perceptions and

values that accompany me wherever I go. In one of my final interviews, Daniel Aleshire made a statement in passing, which for me has become rife with significance.

Addressing what seminaries can and cannot realistically accomplish given inherent parameters, he suggested:

Part of the seminaries task is to help people so they don't have one *way of being* religious from their religious activities, and another *way of being* religious within the academic world—their environment in the school [italics mine].

The phrase *way of being*, gets at something I have wrestled with throughout the research process, which is that this venture was not solely about *doing* in order to fulfill degree requirements, but was in every way interwoven with who I am. Though there were times I found it easier to retreat within the safe confines of scholarship than to deal with philosophical conundrums that the data presented, I could not stay there. As a result I was often plagued with questions—*What does this mean for me? What difference would this make in how I live? What does this tell me about myself?*

Perhaps this harkens back to the defense of this dissertation proposal, that pristine moment before an interview was conducted or a single document analyzed. First, one committee member asked me to explain the hermeneutic circle to which I'd referred (as any good qualitative researcher would) in my methods section. Then another asked if I had a bias toward either of the seminaries, sort of implying that I'd already shown my cards. Then there was the sobering moment when my committee chair described my dissertation as a “sort of larger case in point about the historical split with academic theology from the lived embodiment of it,” asking whether I would help heal that divide or perpetuate the split through my research.

Lessons Learned

These were the things I could not get away from, and for which I'm not sure I have answers for today. But what I do know is that the lesson of this split, one that surfaced in countless ways through the study, is one that also plays out in my life every day as I seek to integrate the things I know and do with the person I am. For in the end, the need that Aleshire described is not only a challenge for every Protestant seminary, but for every leader who hopes to live authentically, centered in a *way of being* that informs action and thought and relationships and life itself.

What I have been continually confronted with is that authenticity does not come easy; that living from the inside out does not happen without tenacity or grit or desire that surpasses the yearning to be seen as capable or knowledgeable or successful in the eyes of a fractured culture. These were the lessons I learned from the participants in this research—from those students and alumni who wanted more from theological education than a diploma and a mother lode of information; from those faculty members who drew students in by some intangible quality they embodied and which informed their pedagogy; and from those administrators who were unwilling to give up, who at times found themselves alone out on a limb and other times toiled behind the scenes in patient hope for the changes they knew had to come.

Full Circle

In many ways, this brings me back full circle to my literature review, which began with Bolman and Deal's (2011) contention that "the heart of leadership lies in the heart of leaders." Indeed, every leader, whether in ministry or medicine or law or science, will be able to effect change to the degree that he or she embodies a way of being in every sphere

of life, whether home or work or play. Although I certainly valued this premise before conducting this study, it has become far more deeply ingrained as a result of the process. For that I am deeply grateful.

Limitations

I have just alluded to one of the most important limitations in this study, and that is that fact that I, as the researcher, was the primary instrument used to conduct the research. This means that while I did seek to manage my biases, it would be foolish to think that I succeeded completely. I cannot articulate nor do I know all the ways my own perceptions or values influenced the research process, but one example comes to mind, which is that I am a contemplative by nature, and as a result my thinking regarding spirituality tends to skew towards interiority, which I suspect was reflected at times in the conclusions I drew, or even the questions I asked. In addition, my background in spirituality may well have prevented me from asking follow-up questions because I assumed, perhaps incorrectly, that the participant and I had a shared knowledge. I am sure there are other instances like this, which the reader will be able to ascertain and must take into account in processing the research results.

Beyond this, the study is limited in a variety of other ways. First, it looked at only two institutions, quite different from each other and entirely unique as far as seminaries and spiritual formation models go. As Aleshire pointed out to me:

We have to let schools define how they understand the area and how they understand the constituency they serve and the students who will work among that constituency, and then in ways that are theologically and educationally appropriate for them.

Beyond this, the alumni and student participant pool that I drew from was small and while their perspectives were valuable, we have no way of knowing how representative

of the larger population they may have been. Additionally, my observation time at each institution was rather short, and given each institution's decades of history, it would be presumptuous to assume I was able to fully capture the nuances of campus life and experience.

I noted in my methods chapter that I sought to improve the trustworthiness of this research in every way that I could. However, this was a cross-case comparison based on two cases, with limited transferability in terms of other institutions. Still, I would suggest that the amount of data collected, particularly the use of artifacts, historical documents, critical correspondence and participant perspectives, brings forth a level of understanding that can prove helpful to any stakeholders related to Protestant theological education. In the end, it may be that the knowledge gained through this will be most valuable for heuristic purposes, to which I now turn.

Further Research

This study contributes to a small body of literature that explores seminarian life, and in particular the spiritual development of students in those institutions. Because of the critical role these leaders play in the culture, as well as the relationship between spirituality and leadership, there is a need for further research within the context of Protestant theological education. This would include, but should not be limited to longitudinal studies that explore the changes seminarians go through over the course of their education, as well as pre- and post- studies of institutions that have successfully added spiritual formation to their existing structures and curriculum. Some of the most important data needed in the coming years are the perspectives of alumni from a

spectrum of institutions regarding their sense of spiritual preparedness for ministry based on their seminary training.

One area that I did not look at explicitly is that of distance learning and the increasing trend towards online education. While the ATS currently does require at least one third of all seminary coursework to take place at a physical location, they have granted one school experimental status to offer a degree done entirely online. Given the intensely personal nature of spiritual development and the critical role of key leaders who embody it, it would be enormously important for researchers to explore this in the context of distance learning as soon as possible.

Conclusion

In a survey of over 2300 alumni who earned master's degrees from theological education institutions, the researchers explored how well participants felt their theological training had prepared them for the profession of clergy. A key finding was that while graduates ranked personal/ spiritual formation and cultivating leadership lowest in terms of what they received, they ranked them highest in terms of how crucial these were for their life and work since seminary. The researchers concluded that, "There is a discrepancy...between what theological schools are best at providing and what practitioners say is most crucial in ministry" (Wheeler, Miller, & Aleshire, 2007, p. 26).

While this dissertation inquiry did not specifically seek to assess seminarian educational effectiveness, it did contribute to an understanding of how Protestant theological seminaries are attempting to bridge this "discrepancy." By comparing two very different institutions, three themes emerged, which were first, that the emphasis on spiritual formation with which a school begins will tend to remain the same decades later;

second, that with commuting students being less invested in seminary life due to a changing culture, spiritual development approaches must focus primarily on time spent in the classroom. Perhaps the most important finding was the most obvious one, which is that the potential to implement a meaningful spiritual formation model is dependent on leaders who embody an authentically spiritual way of being, both in their pedagogy and praxis.

Given the vital role of clergy as leaders in North American culture, this study has important implications for stakeholders connected with theological education.

Philosopher James K.A. Smith (2009) describes education as “a holistic endeavor that involves the whole person...in a process of formation that aims our desires, primes our imagination, and orients us to the world” (p. 39-40). Thus, at whatever juncture a Protestant seminary may find itself regarding spiritual formation today, whatever obstacles it faces or progress it celebrates, the path ahead must be characterized by a relentless resolve to forge a holistic approach that will not only inform and shape each student’s way of being in the world, but prepare them to pass it on to those who will one day look to them for guidance and support.

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APPENDIX A**Alumni Interview Protocol**

I'd like to begin by having you share a little background. First, what drew you to the seminary (how did you end up there?) and second, what are you doing now?

Did you know anything about the seminary's approach to spiritual formation before you went? If so, what?

What were your expectations regarding spiritual formation, if any, as you entered seminary?

I'd like to name various components and ask a couple of questions to see what role you feel they played in your spiritual development during seminary:

How many courses did you take that you would say were designed to intentionally address your spiritual growth/formation?

In courses that did not target spiritual formation directly (languages, theology, Biblical studies etc.), what kind of emphasis on your own personal spiritual development, if any, would you say that they had?

Did the seminary facilitate any sort of structured role with either a member of the faculty or administration, which was for the purpose of helping you with your spiritual growth or formation? If so, what did it look like?

Did you develop informal relationships with faculty or administration that you would say contributed to your spiritual growth/formation while you were there? If so, what was the nature of those relationships?

Were you aware of any other opportunities that the seminary provided in the way of training or spiritual disciplines or experiences that contributed to your spiritual growth while there? If so, what were they?

Did the seminary facilitate any type of structure to develop relationships with other students that would provide a communal approach to your spiritual growth? If so, what?

Did you develop any other kinds of communal relationships on your own at the seminary that you would say contributed to your spiritual growth/formation?

The Accrediting Board (ATS) lists four components in their spiritual formation standards. I would like to name each one, and ask you to rank these on a scale of one to five, with one being the least effective and five being the most effective, in regards to how well you feel the seminary addressed this as a part of your own spiritual growth/formation:

Personal Faith

Moral Integrity

Emotional Maturity

Social concern/personal witness

In looking back, what would you say that the seminary did that most prepared you for the spiritual challenges that you have faced in life and ministry?

What, if any, do you wish the seminary had done differently in terms of your spiritual development and formation?

As we finish up here, I'd like to give you a few minutes if you have anything you'd like to add-answers to questions I didn't ask, or should have asked, or if you have any questions, please feel free to ask them.

APPENDIX B**Administrator Interview Protocol**

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS: Tell purpose of study. Explain that I will begin with his personal background, and then move to questions about the institution.

Can you share a little of your own spiritual journey? Where it began, where it has taken you to this point?

You received your MDIV and PhD here at Fuller—what years?

I'm not asking for a definition per se, but when you think of spiritual formation, what does it bring up for you? How do you see it?

How would you describe Fuller's School of Theology in terms of its identity? What does it want to be known for?

When you attended seminary here, how was personal spiritual formation addressed, if at all?

When you came, did you have a sense of what role did you felt the seminary should play in a student's spiritual formation? Did that vary depending on what degree they were seeking?

On your webpage it speaks of "formation of the mind accompanied by an equally important emphasis on character and ministry formation. For us academic excellence and ministry effectiveness are inextricably linked." Can you tell me how you see personal spiritual formation fitting into that? (in other words, is ministry formation another word for personal spiritual formation?)

As Dean, what do you see as your responsibility in regards to the spiritual development of students?

As you look back over the 11 years you have been here as Dean, how would you describe the way that the SOT has sought to deal with the issue of spiritual formation—both through curricular and co-curricular means?

What role has the accreditation process played in this?

I know that the task force came up with four outcomes for spiritual formation, and a couple of people have suggested that these will be reflected in the new degree requirements that are currently being formed. Is this right?

If so, can you give me some idea of how that is going to play out?

What kinds of obstacles or challenges do you think seminaries face in seeking to address spiritual formation?

If you were to describe the spiritual formation approach to someone interested in attending here (let's say after the new degree requirements are in place), what would you say?

What kind of formational opportunities will they encounter?

From your experience either as a student or faculty member, to what degree would you say faculty members seek to integrate formative opportunities into their own coursework? Syllabus? Etc.

In the ATS standards that describe spiritual formation, they list four components of formation: personal faith, moral integrity, emotional maturity and social concern/personal witness.

Were you aware of these specifically?

How would you say the SOT has sought to comply with these as components of formation? (walk through each one)

As you look back, what encourages you the most, and what frustrates you the most about where Fuller SOT is right now in terms of the spiritual development of its students?

What advice would you give to other seminaries who are seeking to bring spiritual formation into their structure?

APPENDIX C**Faculty Member Interview Protocol**

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS: Tell purpose of study. Explain that I will begin with his personal background, and then move to questions about the institution.

I have read your bio and I would like to begin by asking you about your official title: Professor of ----- . Where did that title come from, and what does it mean?

What brought you a place of personal interest in spirituality and spiritual development?

I'm not asking for a definition per se, but when you think of spiritual formation, what does it bring up for you? How do you see it?

What would you say that Fuller SOT would like for its identity to be?

If someone were to ask you what Fuller's approach toward spiritual formation is, how would you answer that?

In your time at Fuller SoT, what attempts have you seen or been a part of to address the spiritual development of students—either from a curricular focus or co-curricular?

What have been some of the obstacles or challenges to institutionalizing spiritual formation as a key component in the school of theology's approach toward educating clergy?

When a student comes here today, what formational opportunities will they encounter?

Will any of these be mandatory?

(Components to cover: curricular, co-curricular, community, faculty involvement—direction, spiritual disciplines, events)

What courses on spiritual formation have you taught at Fuller? How often?

How would you describe your role as a professor in terms of its relationship to spiritual formation in courses that are not directly designed to address it?

What attempts, if any, do you make to integrate formative opportunities into your coursework? Syllabus? Etc.

In the ATS standards that describe spiritual formation, they list four components of formation: personal faith, moral integrity, emotional maturity and social concern/personal witness.

Were you aware of these? Do you know of any attempts to address these aspects directly? Or any attempts to assess students' formative journey here in relationship to these?

Model: strengths, weaknesses, advice

Where do you think Fuller SOT is heading in this area?

What encourages you the most and what frustrates you the most regarding Fuller's approach to formation right now?

What advice would you give to other seminaries who are seeking to bring spiritual formation into their structure?

Is there anything you would like to add that perhaps I have not covered, or which you feel is important?

APPENDIX D**Cycle Coding Categories and Sub-codes**

ATS EMOTIONAL MATURITY

ats emotional maturity_co-curricular
 ats emotional maturity_commentary
 ats emotional maturity_curricular
 ats emotional maturity_electives
 ats emotional maturity_mandatory
 ats emotional maturity_rank

ATS MISC

ats misc_faculty awareness
 ats misc_general references

ATS MORAL INTEGRITY

ats moral integrity_electives
 ats moral integrity_mandatory
 ats moral integrity_co-curricular
 ats moral integrity_commentary
 ats moral integrity_curricular
 ats moral integrity_rank

ATS PERSONAL FAITH

ats personal faith_co-curricular
 ats personal faith_commentary
 ats personal faith_curricular
 ats personal faith_electives
 ats personal faith_mandatory
 ats personal faith_rank

ATS SOCIAL CONCERN

ats social concern_co-curricular
 ats social concern_commentary
 ats social concern_curricular
 ats social concern_electives
 ats social concern_mandatory
 ats social concern_rank

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

course descriptions_academic
 course descriptions_formational-others
 course descriptions_formational-self
 course descriptions_practical

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

degree requirements_academic
 degree requirements_areas of emphasis
 degree requirements_formational
 degree requirements_general description

degree requirements_practical

DO DIFFERENTLY

do differently_community groups
 do differently_greater integration of spirituality
 do differently_greater intentionality
 do differently_more sf courses or requirements
 do differently_nothing
 do differently_other
 do differently_outside resources
 do differently_spiritual guidance
 do differently_Stronger leadership

DRAW TO SEMINARY

draw_degrees offered
 draw_diverse experiences/atmosphere
 draw_location
 draw_other
 draw_referrals/reputation
 draw_size
 draw_spiritual formation
 draw_theology

ETHOS

ethos_missional
 ethos_personal development
 ethos_scholarship
 ethos_training for ministry

EXPECTATIONS OF SF

expectations of sf-faculty spirituality
 expectations of sf-general assumptions
 expectations of sf-none

GEN SEMINARY

gen seminary_core values
 gen seminary_description
 gen seminary_doctrinal statement
 gen seminary_history
 gen seminary_identity

KNOWLEDGE OF SF

knowledge of sf_much
 knowledge of sf_none
 knowledge of sf_some

MODEL CHALLENGES

model challenges_assessment
 model challenges_competing demands
 model challenges_divergent
 views/diverse settings
 model challenges_faculty not equipped
 model challenges_fear of the unknown
 model challenges_institutionalizing
 model challenges_misc
 model challenges_personnel
 model challenges_student limitations
 model challenges_tradition/resistance
 to change

MODEL COMMUNITY

model community_experiences offered
 model community_none
 model community_structured
 model community_unstructured

MODEL DEVELOPMENT

model development_historical
 approach
 model development_outlook for future
 model development_process

MODEL INTEGRATION

model integration_certain professors
 model integration_fair amount
 model
 integration_formational_practices from
 coursework
 model integration_general references
 to
 model integration_illustration
 model integration_none or minimal
 model integration_pervasive
 model integration_reflection

MODEL MISC

model misc_advice to others
 model misc_assessment
 model misc_descriptions

MODEL PROGRAMS/EVENTS

model programs/events_chapel
 model programs/events_misc
 model programs/events_outside
 speakers
 model programs/events_retreats

model programs/events_spaces

MODEL SF COURSES

model sf courses-2
 model sf courses_0
 model sf courses_1
 model sf courses_3
 model sf courses_4+
 model sf courses_available
 model sf courses_required

MODEL SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

model spiritual guidance_unstructured
 none or unhelpful
 model spiritual guidance_academic only
 model spiritual guidance_faculty/admin
 involvement
 model spiritual guidance_had to seek
 out
 model spiritual guidance_internships
 model spiritual guidance_structured
 guide some
 model spiritual guidance_structured
 none
 model spiritual guidance_student
 chaplains
 model spiritual
 guidance_unstructured_faculty
 relationships

STRENGTHS

strengths_balance academic and
 spiritual
 strengths_coursework
 strengths_diverse experiences
 strengths_events (chapel etc.)
 strengths_expanded spirituality
 strengths_faculty admin
 strengths_freedom to explore
 strengths_humility perspective
 strengths_other
 strengths_relationships with others
 strengths_self-care
 strengths_spiritual practices
 strengths_spirituality emphasis

APPENDIX E

Participant Consent Form

University of San Diego
Institutional Review Board
Research Participant Consent Form

For the research study entitled: Tale of Two Schools: The Spiritual Development of Leaders in Protestant seminaries

I. Purpose of the research study

Patricia (Tricia) Rhodes is a student in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research study she is conducting. The purpose of this research study is to explore the spiritual formation models of Protestant Seminaries.

II. What you will be asked to do

If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to:

Participate in one private conversational interview regarding your experiences with spiritual formation as a seminary student. You will be audiotaped during this interview. Your participation in this study will take 30-45 minutes.

III. Foreseeable risks or discomforts

This study involves no more risk than the risks you encounter in daily life.

IV. Benefits

While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped researchers better understand how individual's develop intrinsic spirituality.

V. Confidentiality

Any information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file and/or password-protected computer file in the researcher's office for a minimum of five years. All data collected from you will be coded with a number or pseudonym (fake name). Your real name will not be used. The results of this research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings, but information from this study will only be reported as a group, and not individually.

VI. Compensation

You will receive no compensation for your participation in the study.

VII. Voluntary Nature of this Research

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to do this, and you can refuse to answer any question or quit at any time. Deciding not to participate or not answering any of the questions will have no effect on any benefits you're entitled to, like your health care, or your employment or grades. You can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

VIII. Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact either:

1) Patricia (Tricia) Rhodes Email: prhodes@sandiego.edu Phone: 858-449-4581

2) Dr. Teresa Monroe Email: tmonroe@sandiego.edu Phone: (619) 260-7241

I have read and understand this form, and consent to the research it describes to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Signature of Participant

Date

Name of Participant (printed)

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX F

Fuller SOT Spiritual Formation Task Force Outcomes

Spiritual Formation Outcomes: Final Document

At Fuller Theological Seminary we affirm and accept responsibility for consistently nurturing the process of spiritual formation in our community. We acknowledge that the touchstone of spiritual formation is the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ through the work of the Spirit. As a gardener prepares the soil for seed, we believe part of theological education is to create an environment conducive for the work of the Spirit to continue developing disciples of Christ. We therefore hold to the following outcomes of spiritual formation for our students at Fuller.

By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, students will:

1. Recognize and develop the narrative of their spiritual journey by engaging their own cultural context and heritage and deepening personal awareness of identity and vocation as a disciple of Jesus Christ through intimacy with God. (Identity)
2. Be exposed to the practices and disciplines which shape faith and character specific to their callings. In particular, students will learn to draw upon the resources of Christ's church and the Fuller community so as to root their lives in Scripture, worship, corporate and personal prayer, ministries of service, and other Christian practices. (Practice)
3. Develop a capacity to integrate their academic training, and their vocational formation with their life in the Spirit, growing in wisdom, skill, faith, hope, and love. (Integration)
4. Articulate a passionate and active participation in Jesus Christ's mission in the world, refined in community and informed by tradition, global realities, and opportunities as well as their own gifts and skills. (Missional)

Approved by: Joint Faculty
April 24, 2012