“AS GOES THE SEMINARY”:
HOW SEMINARIES ARE INTENTIONALLY PRODUCING
SPIRITUALLY ALIVE PASTORS

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by
Matthew James Hook
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Tables</th>
<th>iv</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Understanding the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Biblical and Theological Perspective</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Purpose</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Spiritual Formation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritually Formational Experience</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Disciplines</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritually Alive Pastor</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population and Sample</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Population and Sample .................................................................55
Data Collection .................................................................................56
Instrumentation ..................................................................................56
Variables ............................................................................................59
Delimitations and Generalizability ..................................................60
4. Findings of the Study ....................................................................61
Reliability ...........................................................................................62
Profile of Subjects .............................................................................63
  Age and Gender ...........................................................................63
  Seminary and Years Attended .......................................................64
  Relationship to Family of Origin ...................................................65
  Spiritual State Today .................................................................65
  Self-Perceived Growth since Seminary .......................................67
  Personal and Spiritual Disciplines ...............................................71
  Reflections on the Seminary Experience ....................................72
  Most Significant Spiritually Formative Seminary Experience ......73
Spiritual Life Today ...........................................................................75
Relationship of Seminary Experiences to Other Areas ..................77
Trends in the Factors Influencing Spiritual Life Today .....................78
  Spiritual State’s Effect on Spiritual Life Today .........................80
  Spiritual Growth Factors Affecting Spiritual Life Today ...............81
  Comparing Seminary Factors with Spiritual Life Today ............83
  Comparisons with Gender as the Variable ...............................85
with Confidence Levels of 95 and Above .....................................................125

E. Gender Comparison of Mean Responses with Standard Deviations ..........126

F. Comparing Responses of Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary with United
   Theological Seminary Using the t-test with Confidence Levels .................129

G. Definitions of Statistical Terminology ......................................................130

Works Cited .................................................................................................131
# TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Quantifiable Contexts for Spiritual Formation in Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Cronbach Alpha Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Seminary Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Family Relationship Growing Up in Percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Subjects’ Spiritual State Today in Percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Current Level of Satisfaction in Ministry in Percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Growth in Relationship to God in Percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Growth in Relationship to Others in Percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Growth in Relationship to Oneself in Percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Growth in Relationship to Christian Ministry in Percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Growth in Present Personal and Spiritual Disciplines in Percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Sources of Significant Spiritual Growth at Seminary in Percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Contexts of the Subjects’ Most Spiritual Formational Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Factors Contributing to Spiritual Life Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>Relationship of Seminary Experiences to Growth since Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Comparative Spiritual State References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>Comparison of Evangelical and Mainline Seminaries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURES

Figure

4.1 Subjects’ Age Range ..............................................................................................................................................63
4.2 Comparison of Mean Responses of Spiritual Life Today
   with Spiritual State Today ......................................................................................................................................81
4.3 Comparison of Mean Responses of Spiritual Life Today
   with Spiritual Growth since Seminary ..................................................................................................................82
4.4 Comparing Seminary Factors with Spiritual Life Today ......................................................................................84
4.5 Comparison of Seminary with Spiritual State Today ..........................................................................................86
4.6 Comparison of the Seminary Experience between UTS and GETS .................................................................87
4.7 Comparison of Means between Full-Time and Part-Time Students .................................................................94
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ABSTRACT

“AS GOES THE SEMINARY”: HOW SEMINARIES ARE INTENTIONALLY PRODUCING SPIRITUALLY ALIVE PASTORS

by

Matthew J. Hook

Many congregations are afraid seminaries are not producing “spiritually alive pastors.” Those concerned wonder if the seminaries are doing enough intentional spiritual formation of seminary students. The purpose of this research was to analyze how seminaries intentionally engage their students in spiritual formation, based upon the perceptions of recent seminary graduates and the contexts of their spiritually formative experiences.

The study involved surveying recent seminary graduates serving as United Methodist pastors, looking at present spiritual well-being, spiritual growth, and contexts of their formative experiences while at seminary. The explicit claims made by representative seminaries were also examined.
CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Introduction

“I believe God is calling me to full-time ministry. I’m heading to seminary.” The look on her face said, “Uh oh.” Her words were both a warning and a challenge: “Don’t lose your faith.” My friend’s words shocked me, but they were only the first of many similar expressions. I was called to give my future career life over to God’s work through the church, yet people were concerned with the very process through which that could happen. While at seminary, I discovered I truly enjoyed the academic classes and challenge as well as the community, chapels, and covenant group experiences. Though I had days of frustration and doubt, God brought me through a growing and wonderful time of my life, for which I am grateful.

Unfortunately my experience seems somewhat atypical. Seminary was a significant influence in preparing me for ministry leadership and personal spiritual growth, however, many more pastors seem to struggle so much that their ability to lead a local congregation is impeded. Persons who genuinely wanted to devote their lives to leadership in the Christian church have tremendous personal struggles. Remaining spiritually invigorated is a struggle for pastors, though they genuinely want to devote their lives to leading Christian churches. While much discussion could be given to the types of persons called to seminary today, that is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, this project focuses on the seminary experience as the common denominator and the opportunity that the seminary has to shape students spiritually. Seminaries commit themselves to preparing men and women for Christian ministry and intentionally or
unintentionally structure their theological education around the task of forming spiritually alive pastors.

Inside and outside the classroom, many seminaries appear to lack intentional processing of spiritual formation. The issue of spiritual formation in seminary came to my attention through my father, Jay Hook, an involved United Methodist layperson. After I had graduated from seminary, my father became a part of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary’s board of trustees. When he was asked to chair the board, he visited twelve of the thirteen United Methodist seminaries and Asbury Theological Seminary. While visiting each institution, he met with presidents and deans in order to learn about seminary education and his role as chair of the trustees. One of his questions to each of the seminaries was, “What are you doing to offer spiritual formation for your students?” The majority of the respondents pointed to the weekly chapel services at the seminary. A few of the seminaries highlighted their student covenant groups, but in most cases, no other options outside of the classrooms were named. Though some seminary caucuses and causes held worship, prayer, fellowship, or service opportunities for their constituencies, little seminary-wide focus or direction brought spiritual formation to the fore. The lack of spiritual formation options named by the seminary leaders surprised my father and saddened me. When seminary chapel worship stands as the primary source of spiritual formation, the serious lack of attendance at those chapels intensifies the issue.

The isolation of seminarians from the local church seems to add to the concern. Apart from field education and church attendance, students may or may not have a built-in connection to a local worshipping body, a source of accountability, or spiritual disciplines, apart from individual practice. James P. Wind and Gilbert R. Rendle cite
evidence of reluctance among some United Methodist clergy to encourage others to enter ministry, suggesting a breakdown of both formal and informal channels of calling “the brightest and best” to leadership. Some church leaders view the wilderness experience of many seminarians as part of the spiritual maturation process. Nevertheless, this laissez-faire approach only heightens the lack of direction and lack of accountability for seminarians, especially when other institutions and organizations are taking the opposite approach of actively calling and training and holding accountable those in the process toward full-time ministry.

Another way the issue of spiritual formation in seminary came to my attention was through a conference at which I led a workshop. The seminary chapel was very unique, eclectic, and almost urban in its design. While I enjoyed the service and the novelty of the worship setting, I was troubled as I thought to myself, “What a disservice this chapel is to the students.” While many unique things could be done with the space, it was so dissimilar from the sanctuaries where most of the seminarians would serve, they would never have a chance to see and practice what could be done creatively with the more common worship setting of most local churches. I wondered how much preparation seminaries truly offer students. I left the conference wondering how this unusual setting could prepare pastors of local congregations for leading worship and wondering about the transferability of the seminary’s spiritual preparation of students to be spiritual leaders. Since the United Methodist Church requires a Master of Divinity degree from a theological institution, those seminaries could be the locus of a more intentional approach toward spiritual and practical preparation of the local pastor.

Many local congregations are frustrated, having suffered through a string of
pastors who were less than involved in effective spiritual leadership of the church. Many pastors’ personal needs have been greater than their personal spiritual disciplines, interfering with their ability to minister to others. Local churches want spiritually alive pastors. Given the downward trend in clergy retention and health and church participation in America, a closer look at the common denominator of the seminary experience may shed light on the development of spiritually alive pastors.

This study was an attempt to identify the context of the formative spiritual experiences while at seminary of United Methodist clergy in the North Central Jurisdiction who have been in ministry for approximately five years. The perceived gaps among the seminary, the local church, and the spiritual preparedness of local church pastors form the backdrop of this study.

The Problem

Many local congregations believe that the seminaries are not producing spiritually alive pastors. The local church looks to the seminary to provide competent leaders who will provide direction and spiritual leadership. Nevertheless, as Gene Wood states, “[M]ore than 1,200 pastors leave the ministry each month due to stress, church-related issues, family issues or burnout…. [B]urnout rate is at an all-time high with only 50 percent of pastors completing their working years as a pastor” (36-37). Churches ask if a better way to prepare pastors could be planned in order to prevent so many from leaving and to provide more stable, longer-tenured leadership.

A systemic or structural gap exists between the local churches and the seminaries. According to Dr. Ted A. Campbell, a level of mistrust and blame continues to exist:

Seminaries, as you might guess, became prime targets for blame, and one of the knee-jerk responses of a seminary leader today is to try to deflect
responsibility for the decline from one’s own institution. I remember that when the seminary I served through the 1990s tried to engage in discussions with denominational leaders in the early years of the decade, we spent a great deal of time pointing fingers across the room, with vociferous comments like the following. “If seminaries would just produce credible pastors, we wouldn’t be in the shape we’re in today.” “Well, if the churches would send us candidates halfway prepared, we could do a better job with them.” (2)

The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust discovered three basic schisms among theological education and pragmatic expectations of graduates and the congregations they serve. The first breach is between pastors and professors. “Pastors do not think professors understand the realities of the parish, and professors do not think pastors understand their commitment to scholarship and safeguarding the essentials of the faith” (32). A similar fracture appears with church members who perceive seminaries as failing to equip students to be successful pastors (32).

The breach that surfaced regarding theological education and congregational needs is most alarming. Congregations expect seminary graduates to cultivate four basic competencies in their educational training. The four proficiencies (given here in the order of congregational priority) are personal spiritual maturity, interpersonal relationship skills, church management ability, and biblical and theological relevance. This research determined that, as a whole, theological schools address the latter issue of biblical and theological relevance and neglect to deal with other major issues, including the personal spiritual maturation of seminary graduates (M. J. Murdock 35). Noting the number one proficiency desired by congregations in the Murdock study, this paper sought to define personal spiritual maturity as a characteristic of those persons who may best be described as “spiritually alive pastors.” From spiritual aliveness come the other proficiencies or the ability to gather persons who contribute to them.
Another issue that demands attention is the very question of whether seminaries can possibly prepare persons for the role of local church pastor. Congregations place extensive demands on pastors, impacting the pastors’ perceptions and expectations of themselves. Some studies have found that up to 40 percent of religious leaders drop out of the ministry and 75 percent go through a period of stress so great that they consider quitting (Dirmann 1). Tina Dirmann notes the unusual stresses:

The demand to be on-call for a congregation 24 hours a day … puts church leaders in a constant whirlwind of stressful events. Some even characterize the profession as more stress-ridden than that of a doctor dealing with terminal illnesses, since the doctor can walk away from the situation when he leaves the room. These pastors often have emotional links to those they are helping. (1)

Psychologist Richard Blackmon adds, “Pastors are the single most occupationally frustrated group in America. For a pastor to remain spiritually alive, he or she must have discipline to set personal limits, take time, and develop as a person” (qtd. in Dirmann 3). Self-discipline fits under the umbrella of spiritual formation. Given the number of seminars, networks, and support groups available for clergy in the midst of ministry-related stress and burnout, the seminary could perhaps impact the church most by laying the foundation for spiritual formation and personal health of future pastors while they attend seminary. Laity call for theological education to address the spiritual aliveness of clergy.

Essentially, the pastor must learn to engage in spiritual growth, similar to the growth of any organism. Aliveness involves nourishment, breathing, and a variety of activities that strengthen the organism. Spiritual growth is an ongoing and organic process, impacted by personal health, local environment, relationships, and community. Spiritual growth is not begun in seminary, nor does it end there. Nevertheless, as the role
of the seminary exists to train clergy for theological thinking and to teach skills necessary for local church leadership, a case may be made for ministry training that involves understanding the reality of the spiritual life and health of the pastor. This training includes a theological understanding of how to sustain and grow in spiritual health. While seminaries may teach understanding of the necessity of spiritual vitality, they must also teach the pragmatics of sustenance and growth, particularly in the midst of both the internal and external pressures of the pastorate:

The minister (or leader) is called to be the wounded healer, the one who must look after his or her own wound, but at the same time be prepared to heal the wounds of others…. [This involves] vulnerability, and therefore compassion (co-suffering) and availability, and companionship (co-eating of bread) and mutual dependence, both of which offer healing and the marks of such leadership. (Amirtham and Pryor 2)

As seminarians go through the process of education, they engage in rigorous intellectual scholarship; however, as Virginia Samuel Cetuk points out, that is just one element of the vocation:

Ministry … requires considerable physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual energy. To be an effective pastor one must stay fit on every level, remain curious and intellectually alive, be willing to do the ongoing work of self-reflection in order to offer authentic and helpful leadership, and maintain a spiritually disciplined life. (22)

While she makes a case for spiritual formation in theological education, she does not spell out how those fundamental disciplines are learned. Whether or not seminaries question the church about the preparedness of the applicant, the fact remains that spiritual well-being, health, and aliveness are major issues for individuals approaching the ministry.

**A Biblical and Theological Perspective**

A spiritually alive pastor receives his or her life from God. Physically or
spiritually, life comes only by the giver of life, the living God of Israel manifest in Jesus Christ. God’s triune nature creates life, redeems life, and sustains life. The Bible is the meta-narrative of the God of life reaching out to people offering life and then redeeming that life. Fully commensurate with that offering of life comes the means of sustaining it. From a human standpoint, the cycle of sustaining life includes reaching out to create new life. Scripture emphasizes the nature of God as being the One who sustains God’s people.

For people to be alive, they must take in food, air, and water. Throughout the Bible, the Scripture writers enlighten God’s people in the means of sustenance. Powerful metaphors detail the spiritual food available to believers via the Scriptures, the sacraments, prayer, and guidance for living. From the Old Testament to the New Testament, grain offerings, manna, the Lord’s Prayer for daily bread, Jesus Christ himself as the Bread of Life (John 6:35) and “true bread from heaven” (John 6:32), the body of Christ broken in remembrance of him, and even physical bread are considered gifts of God. Eating together and the breaking of bread symbolized the formation of a covenant. In the New Testament, this covenant was deepened and extended to the love feast and the Lord’s Supper.

For people to be alive, they must take in air. In addition to the symbol of bread, the connection between air and breath and the Holy Spirit runs throughout the Scriptures. The Hebrew and Greek words *ruah*, *n’sama*, and *pneuma* refer to wind, breath, or spirit, connoting the absolute necessity of this air for one to be spiritually alive. Wisdom and understanding are given by “a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty” (Job 32:8). In Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones, God’s breath causes them to be made alive again (37:9).
For people to be alive they must take in water. Water is vitally important to life. In ancient times, people understood water as a basic element of the cosmos. Water (along with bread) was understood to be the minimum sustenance necessary for human life. Palestine was largely dependent on rainfall for moisture, and famines due to drought were devastating. Water has been tied to the Spirit of God, who “hovered over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2). In addition to the waters of baptism, water plays a part in giving life. The New Testament connects water with the Spirit as well, as the Spirit is “poured out” (Acts 2:33; 10:45; Rom 5:5) and the disciples are “filled” with the Spirit (Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 2:4, 8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52).

Water was also a vital part of ritual, particularly for cleansing and purification. Spiritually alive Christians reckon with their own evil, maintain that the sinful self is the problem, and realize that the “self” cannot solve the problem of the self because the “self” is the problem. Cleansing is regularly needed and received through the power of Jesus Christ. This reckoning with sin is what distinguishes the spiritually alive Christian from others who live with vigor and liveliness apart from Christ.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, living water refers to physically flowing water. Prophetically, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah refer to the living waters of God’s blessing and salvation. Several times in the Gospel of John, Jesus announces that he is the source of “living water” (John 4:10, 11; 7:38). Though scholars debate whether the living water refers to Christ or to the Holy Spirit, the fact remains that the “water of life” (Rev. 21) denotes genuine, everlasting, eternal life. “This image not only points to an ever-flowing source of water, but also to its quality, which contains, creates, and communicates life” (Myers 1048). These qualities that contain, create, and communicate life are of particular
interest for pastors leading local congregations.

Local churches are seeking pastors who are spiritually alive, who take in sustenance, who get energy from those sources, and who grow in their connection to Christ, with a measure of vigor and liveliness to the point of overflowing. Churches are looking for pastors who can share the living water of Jesus Christ as a natural overflowing of God’s blessing and salvation. Though the vocabulary may not be common, it plays out in the local church as evidenced by many lay leaders who look for spiritually alive leaders:

On all sides we hear the cry that we need leaders of faith in our churches and theological schools…. Recently, a chairperson of a pastoral search committee called me and inquired about a candidate. He asked “Do you know this minister well?” “Yes, I do,” I replied. “Tell me,” he said, “is the candidate a real believer, or simply a professional in ministry?” The chairperson was looking for a faith-driven candidate whom the congregation and community could recognize as a believer, backed by energy, enthusiasm, and a depth of spiritually, a closeness to God, and the ability to communicate that divine presence to others. (Calian 94)

Spiritual aliveness is closely tied to spiritual well-being. As measures developed by Brian D. Babcock (Spiritual Growth), and those in Measures of Religiosity (edited by Peter C. Hill and Ralph W. Hood) created by R. F. Paloutzian and C. W. Ellison (Spiritual Well-Being), and Todd W. Hall and Keith J. Edwards (Spiritual Assessment Inventory) indicate, spirituality involves both a religious and social dimension. The vertical relationship with God and horizontal relationships with others cannot be separated when talking about a person’s spiritual aliveness. Whereas spiritual formation may carry with it a stereotype of introspection to the point of exclusivity, spiritual aliveness conjures up more of an emphasis on relationships, of which the relationship with the self is only one dimension. Other relational dimensions of spiritual aliveness are
relationship with God, with others, and with one’s calling (Babcock 85).

**The Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to analyze how seminaries are intentionally producing spiritually alive pastors. Based upon the perceptions of recent graduates of the contexts of their formational experiences while at seminary, examination can be made of seminaries’ efforts to engage their students in spiritual formation. This study searched for what is working, based on questionnaires answered by recent seminary graduates.

In order to make the most use of the data, the subjects’ perceptions of their present spiritual well-being were studied. Research was done to examine what their respective seminaries claimed to make available for their students. The research focused on the context of the students’ formative experiences. The long-term purpose of this project was to determine whether the subjects’ formative seminary experiences could be attributed to their spiritual vitality in full-time ministry. Following up on the presupposed correlation, a close examination of the created contexts, models, and methods of those seminaries engaging their students in intentional formational experiences could be made. The analysis could assist seminaries, boards of ordained ministry, and annual conferences in the adequate preparation of local pastors.

This study began with the assumption that the more intentional seminaries are in offering spiritual formation and spiritually formative contexts of learning to their students, the more equipped those students would be in their roles of ministry leadership in the local church. Assuming that the possibility of increasing the number of spiritually alive pastors exists, the correlation between the specific measures taken by the seminary and the responses of the spiritually alive subjects can be examined and named.
While spiritual formation in theological education has come under scrutiny, this study has provided an opportunity to examine the responses of several seminaries to this debate, as well as trends in theological education. While the seminaries are called to train a theologically educated clergy, they are also called to produce a pragmatic curriculum that prepares local pastors for the many tasks and roles they will face. Coupled with the emphases of theological education and pragmatic curriculum may or may not be spiritual formation as a third area of need for pastoral preparation, leadership, and scholarship. The survey responses and examination of seminary catalogues from representative seminaries clarify the investment of the seminaries in spiritual formation and the implied effectiveness of that investment.

**Research Questions**

To determine how seminaries form students spiritually, the instruments used provided data to answer three basic questions.

**Research Question #1**

What do recent seminary graduates remember as their most formational experiences while at seminary?

**Research Question #2**

What explicit claims do seminaries make with respect to the spiritually formative experiences their institutions make available to their students?

**Research Question #3**

What patterns emerge from the data with respect to ways in which seminarians are intentionally formed spiritually?

**Definition of Terms**
In this study, several terms must be defined.

**Spirituality**

_Spirituality_ is a much-used term right now in American culture. For several reasons, spirituality and spiritual formation are evasive terms that are nebulous enough to be manipulated into several definitions. Jo Anne Grace warns that often spirituality gets defined by the professional field studying it:

The behaviorist … [sees spirituality as] an abiding belief that a positive change is achievable…. The psychotherapist … [may see it as] an altered state of consciousness that is experienced rather than learned; known rather than believed; lived rather than expounded. It is an attitude rather than a practice; it encourages individuality and a loving acceptance of life, self and others…. An ethicist … [may see it as] concern with that which is valued and how it is valued…. A philosopher … [may see it as] a life principle that pervades a person’s entire being. (1-2)

Some trace the present use of spirituality to French Catholic origins, perhaps going back only to the seventeenth century in that language. Others point to attitudes, beliefs, and practices connecting people to supersensible realities, deep, rooted, or radical life based around ultimate meaning, rather than power, pleasure, or possession (Dunnam, _Alive in Christ_ 33).

To this discussion the study offers the simple definition of _spirituality_ as _connectedness_. One may feel _spiritual_ being around nature or another person in that one may feel connected to nature or that person. In some circles this view of spirituality has impinged pluralism upon present-day Christianity. Susanne Johnson notes the pervasiveness of spirituality as being something more than connectedness, as it relates to Christianity:

What troubles me … is the seemingly widespread revival of “spirituality without Christianity,” a phenomenon as evident in the church as in the culture…. The question pressing the church is not so much whether our
children will have spirituality but whether Christianity will have our children! (12)

Thus, this study sought to clarify Christian spiritual formation, which is developing ways to live connected with Jesus Christ. Throughout this project, spirituality and spiritual formation refer strictly to Christian spirituality and Christian spiritual formation. The object of this formation is always connecting to God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

**Christian Spiritual Formation**

Maxie D. Dunnam applies Christian spiritual formation through the lens of Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* [emphasis mine] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.” The connection with Christ emphasizes the dynamic reality of Christ in the life of the believer:

> Spiritual formation is that dynamic process of receiving through faith and appropriating through commitment, discipline, and action, the living Christ into our own life to the end that our life will conform to, and manifest the reality of Christ’s presence in the world. (Dunnam, *Alive in Christ* 33)

Christian spiritual formation is more than conversion or sanctification, more than one’s character or morality. For the purposes of this study, Christian spiritual formation is more than just skills or practices needed for ministry:

> Spiritual formation is not synonymous with the ability to think and evaluate theologically, as essential as such activity is. It includes not only the way we think, but the kind of persons we are. Different Christian traditions will express it differently, but at its core, spiritual formation means something like growing in grace, becoming more like Jesus, learning to live a holy life, increasing our love for God and service to others, or practicing Christian virtues. (Senior and Weber 24)
In some respects, spiritual formation includes the topic of clergy self-care, although spiritual formation is much more than that. In this respect, spiritual formation becomes difficult to fit into a preexisting seminary core curriculum. Whereas clergy self-care had been integrated into courses of practical theology or pastoral care, spiritual formation may be seen as more than the sum of these parts. In many theological institutions, spiritual formation is approached holistically, across all departments. This more broad treatment of spiritual formation being inherent with a healthy view of seminary education (Cetuk; Amirtham and Pryor) has been the approach of traditional, mainline seminary education since the emergence of the present model.

**Spiritually Formational Experience**

The spiritually formational experience upon which the research of this project was based could be described as an “epiphany” moment, having to do with a revelation or new awareness of the presence of God and a basic level of understanding of what that experience means for the individual or community.

This experience may take place within the span of a moment or over the course of time, such as the experience of being in covenant with a small group for some set time. Importantly, this formational experience takes on no specific outward manifestation. It does, however, initiate a new understanding or deeper awareness that leads to altered thinking, manifested outwardly in the believer’s life.

**Spiritual Disciplines**

The spiritual disciplines of Christianity represent a serious response to the grace of God already received in justification and regeneration. These habits are the means of further grace or aids in maturation. They consist of personal and corporate practices:
reading the Scriptures, practicing devotional reading, praying, fasting, worshiping, 
sharing in the Lord’s Supper, participating in small groups, practicing self-denial (cutting 
off needless expense, frugality, generosity), serving (aiding in meeting the material needs 
of others in both symptoms and causes), as well as missions evangelizing (aiding in 
meeting the spiritual needs of others).

**Spiritually Alive Pastor**

Although people have a sense about what is a spiritually alive pastor, this study 
must define it for research purposes. Webster defines “alive” as having life, “that 
property of plants and animals (ending at death) which makes it possible for them to take 
in food, get energy from it, grow, etc.,… vigor, liveliness” (“Alive” 349). Thus, a 
spiritually alive pastor is the Christian leader of a congregation who takes in sustenance 
from, gets energy from, and grows in his or her connection to Christ, with a measure of 
vigor and liveliness, quantifiable by religious well-being and spiritual growth assessment 
instruments.

**Methodology**

This project was an evaluative, correlational study utilizing standardized 
questionnaires and subsequent examination of seminary catalogues.

**Population and Sample**

The population was made up of those elders ordained in 2001 and 2002 in the 
United Methodist Church who were serving as pastors in the North Central Jurisdiction, 
out of seminary a minimum of four years (N=188). The sample were those self-selected 
participants who responded to the mailed survey (n=88).

**Variables**
Within their responses, two major self-reported variables were studied. The pastor subjects surveyed each named the seminary they attended. This variable was extremely important because of research question #2, “What explicit claims do seminaries make with respect to spiritually formative experiences their institutions make available to their students?” From the total of all the seminaries named by the subjects, the two seminaries listed most were studied in order to examine the espoused values, the spiritually formative programming, the choice of faculty members, the implicit and explicit theories of theological education and spiritual formation, and the null values of the seminaries. Research was done by reviewing the seminary’s course catalogue. This set of variables included Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and United Theological Seminary. These alumni represented thirty out of eighty-eight seminary graduates responding to the survey. The other major variable studied was the subjects’ spiritually formative experiences while attending seminary.

The most important correlational variable available for this study was the present self-perceived spiritual well-being. While this variable would be impacted by several extraneous variables, spiritually formative experiences and their contexts while at seminary would have an impact on present spiritual aliveness of the pastor.

Extraneous variables were kept in mind as the study proceeded, and consideration was given them upon interpreting the outcomes. First among the variables of the present-day well-being was the subjective nature of spiritual formation. The ongoing life situations of each subject were recognized as a second factor. These variables would involve the personal lives of the pastors, their experiences of the ordination process in the United Methodist Church, and their present contexts of ministry.
Other extraneous variables that would have affected the subjects’ experiences while at seminary were the academic quality and discipline of the students entering seminary, the leadership potential of students entering seminary, the previous spiritually formative experiences of the respondents, their various ages, and their previous church experience. More factors included the variety of experiences beyond seminary such as ability and motivation levels, which are outside the parameters of this study. An additional variable of the seminary experience was whether the respondent was a resident or nonresident, full-time or part-time student. As spiritual formation takes time, many students who had to balance family and job situations may have been unable to give the time necessary to focus on their spiritual formation while at seminary.

**Instrumentation**

The study employed a self-assessment instrument involving three emphases: a present assessment of the subjects’ spiritual well-being, spiritual growth since leaving seminary, and some open-ended questions based on their spiritually formative experiences while at seminary. The subjects’ present understanding of the well-being of their spiritual lives and their relationship with God drew from questions obtained from Leslie A. Andrews’ and Glenn John Powell’s research on missionary family profiles in the article “Families in Missions” and from Ruth Rambo’s study of “Women Married to Ministers.” By selecting certain items from other research, moderating variables on spirituality such as the impact of dissatisfaction in other areas of life can be monitored. The subjects were asked to reflect on their spiritual growth since leaving seminary, based on Babcock’s Spiritual Growth and Self-Assessment Instrument, followed by some questions regarding spiritual formation in the seminary context. The survey concluded
with an open-ended question based on their formational experiences while at seminary. Specifically, contexts of significant spiritual formation were sought in hopes of determining the intentionality of seminaries represented in the study.

**Data Collection**

The subjects were obtained through the information contained in their respective annual conference journals, as contained in the *General Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church* for 2001 and 2002 (Babbitt and Haralson).

**Delimitations and Generalizability**

The outcome of the assessment tools was based on seminary students who went on to become church pastors in the North Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church. The data collected was limited to the self-reported evaluations of recent seminary graduates.

**Overview**

In Chapter 2, selected literature and research pertinent to this study are reviewed. The purpose is to provide historical analyses of spiritual formation and theological education in order to study their relationship in present seminary education. The theological foundation of Jesus Christ’s gift of the Holy Spirit for purposes of spiritual nourishment is explored. The subsequent overflowing communicability of this gift in the life of the believer is also explored.

In Chapter 3, a detailed explanation of the design of the project is considered, as well as the means by which the data was collected and evaluated. Chapter 4 reports the significant findings that arose out of the questionnaires and the subsequent inquiries into the representative seminaries. Chapter 5 completes the dissertation with a summary
review and interpretation of the findings. It also offers implications for helping
seminaries become intentional in their planning for spiritual formation, implications for
enhancing the training and preparation of pastors for the local church, and implications
for building another bridge between the local church and the seminary.
CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENTS IN THE LITERATURE

Spiritual formation and seminary education are not new topics. Theological education has been a vital and shaping force of Christianity since the early Church. Former President Dunnam of Asbury Theological Seminary postulates that “As goes the seminary, so goes the local pastor. As goes the local pastor, so goes the local church. As goes the local church, so goes the denomination” (Conversation). Seminary education as it exists today is a fairly recent construct. Seminaries today have added layers to the ideas and philosophies of clergy education and preparation in order to equip and sustain the spiritual formation of the people of God.

In the early Church, no true distinction existed between theological education and Christian spirituality. Indeed, in the earliest of times, Christians hardly had time for the study of theology or the experience of spirituality because the cost of discipleship was high. Kenneth J. Collins discusses the reality of persecution and martyrdom as the richest expression of the early Christians’ commitment to Jesus Christ. He points out that martyrdom was even referred to as the second baptism (2). A broad examination of the emphases of historical spiritual formation adds to the present understanding of how spiritual formation has evolved to today’s understanding, which is a work still in progress. Amirtham and Pryor provide a most helpful overview of spiritual formation throughout the centuries, upon which this brief history is based.

Selected Emphases of Spiritual Formation

As persecution began to wane with the entrance of the Constantinian Age, spiritually devout believers began to discover new ways to express their faith. While
some Christians withdrew to live as hermits, others retreated from society in order to live in communities separated from the world. Much of the Christian understanding of spirituality today has come from the writings of theologians and mystics throughout the centuries as they began reflecting on the idea of spiritual formation and discipleship. Origen wrote prolifically in the second and third centuries. As one of the first Christian writers outside of the New Testament, he offers to Christian believers various guides to Christian living, including the interpretation of the Scriptures, piety, prayer, and martyrdom: “Origen’s homilies … still place us in the milieu of the living word, the word living in the congregation … urging his people to frequent attention to the word of God in church: duty, preaching, and prayer as priestly functions” (201). In the fourth century, Augustine of Hippo, well-known for his passion and emphasis on continued dependence on the grace and glory of God, closely applies Scripture to his own journey as he emphasizes the incarnation within his theology. Beginning his Confessions, Augustine writes, “The thought of you [Lord] stirs him [humanity] so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises you, because you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you” (Augustine: Major Writings 21).

The classic writings of spiritual formation, while each unique in manifestation and description, center on Christ. Basil the Great shaped the monastic movement, and, in the sixth century, Benedict of Nursia brought a sense of order to it. His classic description of the foundations of Christian community has guided Christians throughout the centuries, as he crafted core spiritual doctrine and the monastic rule to govern daily life:

The monk meditated on the words of Scripture by quietly repeating them over and over, ruminating on their meaning. This rumination moved the monk to prayer, and prayer moved the monk to love. In this way, the monk sought to be transformed into another Christ, to “prefer nothing
Collins suggests, “The heart of the Benedictine Rule, created to provide godly direction for monks, is the idea of lowliness” (45). Benedict describes for the Christian world the twelve stages of humility, beginning with obedience. “To become little in one’s own eyes, to consider others as better than oneself, to temper the self’s unending and excessive demands for enlargement, is the way to real peace not only within oneself, but within community as well” (qtd. in Collins 45). Adding to Benedict’s order, John Cassian reflects on the basis for Christian asceticism: “The objective of our life is the kingdom of God…. But our point of reference, our objective, is a clean heart” (39). John Chrysostom outlines the role of the priest as spiritual leader (60-72). In the fifth and sixth centuries, John Climacus developed the image of Jacob’s ladder including thirty rungs for the hidden years of Christ’s spiritual journey. Having insight into the human soul, he deals with such topics as separation from the world (81), the practices of virtues (214, 218, 229, 261, 274), and the attainment of the likeness of God (286). These early Christian writers focus on spiritual formation as the relationship between God and the believer, the world and the believer, and other people and the believer. The pilgrimage and journey motifs were explored and in some cases outlined.

In the fourth and fifth centuries, Celtic Christianity began under the mission work of St. Patrick. These missions in Ireland produced a more community-oriented approach to spiritual formation. George G. Hunter, III describes the process:

The monastic community prepared people to live with depth, compassion, and power in mission. Celtic Christianity seems to have prepared people through a fivefold structure of experiences. 1. Voluntary periods of solitary isolation. 2. Time with your “soul-friend”—not a superior like a “spiritual director,” but a peer with whom you were vulnerable and accountable…. 3. You spent time with a small group of ten or fewer
people led by someone chosen primarily for their devotion. 4. You participated in common life, meals, work, learning, biblical recitation, prayers, and worship of the whole monastic community. 5. Through your small group, and the community’s life, and perhaps a soul friend, you observed and gained experience in ministry and witness to pre-Christian people. (Celtic Way 48)

The lives and writings of the early desert fathers, as well as both the Roman and Celtic ways of spiritual formation, have influenced the movement of Christianity throughout the centuries as they have been revered and rediscovered by subsequent generations. With the advent of the first great European universities founded in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the literature about and exploration of spiritual formation in and out of theological education continued and has grown throughout Christian history to this day.

Around the time of those first universities, Bernard of Clairvaux described the stages of humility necessary for holiness. He realized that self-love in various forms stifles love for God. The love of God is necessary for all other forms of godly love and is absolutely necessary for spiritual development and realizing the kingdom of God in this world (Collins 47). Building upon the stages of humility, St. Francis of Assisi wrote about a renewed vision of Christ and the imitation of Christ. Other medieval scholars and mystics including Julian of Norwich also focus on the love of God, the relationship contained therein, and the ways of stillness, prayer, and piety in order to achieve the realization of God’s kingdom in the world and in the individual. The unknown author of Theologia Germanica writes throughout about I, mine, me, and self:

I answer that a man should so stand free, being quit of himself, that is, or his I, and Me, and Self, and Mine, and the like, that in all things, he should no more seek or regard himself, than if he did not exist, and should take as little account of himself as if he were not. (Winkworth 48)
In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Ignatius of Loyola wrote a manual for those who run retreats:

Through suggested biblical reflection and meditation/contemplation, the retreatant reviews salvation history, makes choices about the direction of life and meets with the crucified and risen Lord…. [Spiritual retreats focus on an] emphasis on God’s loving gifts and the call to love in response. (qtd. in Amirtham and Pryor 190)

John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila offer analyses of the mystical experience, examining the soul’s movement towards union with God through the spiritual discipline of contemplation and prayer. In her work, Teresa of Avila writes of the stages, or mansions, using imagery to discuss self-knowledge, humility, detachment, and suffering, all on the way to union with God. In poetry, John of the Cross writes his prayer:

How gently and lovingly
You wake in my heart
Where in secret You dwell alone
And in Your sweet breathing
Filled with good and glory
How tenderly You swell my heart with love. (579)

The Protestant reformers address the issue of spiritual formation as well. Luther, in his Heidelberg Disputation of 1518, cautions against the idolatry of playing God. He calls the believer to let God be God, rather than elevating the self. Luther’s way of reform combines Christian obedience and renewal, with the focus on God’s grace alone. Even loving spiritual acts done without God’s grace are under indictment (Forde 28). John Calvin addresses spiritual formation as well through his Institutes on faith, prayer, and the sacraments. He begins discussing formation as the sum of his writing: “Nearly the whole of sacred doctrine consists in these two parts: knowledge of God and of ourselves” (15). In the eighteenth century, second generation reformer John Wesley studies and outlines his understanding of growth in the spiritual life in his sermon “The Deceitfulness
of the Human Heart” and in his treatise of “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection.”

In the twentieth century just before World War II, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote of the importance of community in discipleship:

[He wrote] on the eve of World War II for the students and community of the seminary of the Confessing Church…. Not only does it revive a sense that theological education must take place in a communal life where discipleship is taken seriously, but the work had continued to provide inspiration for those seeking to deepen Christian community. (qtd. In Amirtham and Pryor 193)

Jurgen Moltmann theologizes that “[t]he present power of this remembrance and this hope is called ‘the power of the Holy Spirit,’ for it is not of their own strength, reason and will that people believe in Jesus as the Christ and hope for the future as God’s future” (197). The God of hope, who is also the crucified God, sends the Spirit. Faith in Christ and hope for the kingdom are grounded upon the presence of God in the Spirit. Thomas Merton stresses humility as the power of the spiritual life (Amirtham and Pryor 194).

Henry J. M. Nouwen writes about discovering the simplicity of prayer while at a Trappist monastery for seven months:

Today I had the strong feeling that things are basically quite simple. If I could love God with all my heart, all my soul, and all my mind, I would feel a great inner freedom, great enough to embrace all that exists, great enough also to prevent little events from making me lose heart…. When my heart is undivided, my mind only concerned about God, my soul full of his love, everything comes together into one perspective and nothing remains excluded. (121)

Nouwen reflects on his retreat experience, not for how it transformed him, but rather how it enriched and deepened and reprioritized him. Having that growth experience was vital in ways he cannot quite describe, except to say that it was right for him.

Some patterns of spiritual formation emerge when examining the hundreds of books, essays, and biographies written throughout the centuries. Most importantly, the
Hook 27

writings and experiences that moved the Christians in their various forms of understanding spirituality are centered on Christ. The history of spiritual formation is a history of writings and reflections on living in a way “not of this world” but in service to the world. The major themes are humility, love, prayer, community, spiritual disciplines, and union in relationship to Christ. In practical terms, many of these categories overlap in broad sweeping commonalities. Throughout the centuries, writers reflect basic elements of the physical life as they describe growth in the spiritual life. The journey motif and the idea of growth constitute a grid on which to base the formation process. A life of oneness is important. As writers have envisioned it, spiritual formation takes place with Christ as the central template of formation and the object of affection. The Holy Spirit plays the role of connector and intimate companion, laying the groundwork for deepening the believers’ relationships with God, others, and themselves.

Spiritual disciplines have been an important part of spiritual formation. Throughout the history of Christianity, personal spiritual disciplines have included reading the Scriptures, practicing devotional reading, praying, and fasting. Corporate disciplines have included worship, the Lord’s Supper, and small group activity. Public disciplines have included self-denial, preparation for service, ministering to the needs of others, and evangelism.

In many of the writings, Christian community is a key component of spiritual formation. The men and women in these communities subject themselves to the lordship and direction of Christ. “This subjection, however, does not issue in bondage … but brings the greatest liberty of all: freedom from [original emphasis] the power and guilt of sin as well as freedom to [original emphasis] love God and neighbor, unfettered by
excessive self-love” (Collins 149). Spiritual formation can only come through a close relationship and obedience to Jesus Christ. As Teresa of Avila notes, people really become spiritual “when they become the slaves of God and are branded with His sign, which is the sign of the cross” (229).

The cross, the life, and the ministry of Jesus Christ connect the believer to this spiritual life. Dunnam sums up the importance of the connection:

The secret is simply this: Christ in you! Yes, Christ in you bringing with him “the hope of all the glorious things to come” Colossians 1:27…. I’m seeking and discovering the experience of the indwelling Christ. I have come to believe that this is the key to Christian experience, certainly the key to authentic Christian piety and spirituality—to be alive in Christ. (Alive in Christ 13)

To be growing in spiritual formation is to be alive in Christ. Given the history of spiritual formation, the deep desire of local congregations for a spiritually alive pastor is a natural response of those within the community of Christ. Samuel Amirtham and Robin Pryor elaborate on the connection between church members’ growth and the spiritual formation of the church leadership:

Implicit in the notion of spiritual formation linked with theological education, is the aim of moving intentionally towards an educated, reflective, articulate Christian discipleship and leadership. Beyond this, the purpose is of being able to discern the movements of God’s presence within one’s own life, within the lives of others with whom one has some kind of pastoral or supportive relationship, and indeed within the world which is the locus of God’s creative and redeeming presence. (185)

If, then, the link between spiritual formation and theological education today may be studied, an understanding of how theological education developed and evolved into the present forms of seminary education today is equally pertinent.

**The History of Theological Education**

According to the early Church fathers and mothers, the purpose of studying
theology was salvific union with Jesus Christ, what many would call the end of spiritual formation. Theology was not viewed as a science until the rise of the medieval universities, and only in the last two hundred years has theological scholarship apart from the relationship to God been an issue.

At this point, the study of theological education focused on Western Christianity and most specifically on Protestant theological education in North America.

In his book *Theologia*, Edward Farley divides the history of seminary education in the United States into three major periods. Each period is defined by its distinct focus and forms in its approach to theological education.

In the first period, pious learning was the method of educating the clergy during the time of the colonies and the Puritans. This model followed the universities of England, Scotland, and Northern Europe. With undergraduate studies in biblical and classical languages, Scripture, and sacred writings, the main emphasis was on the study of divinity, or *theologia*. Divinity was viewed as the body of materials, doctrines, and knowledge of God. This holistic approach to Christianity was integrated into the various other classical disciplines of the university. In this first period, graduate education consisted of two additional years of study; however, those years were spent with a mentoring pastor-scholar, rather than in the classroom. The mentoring pastor was willing to accept one or more students. In addition to further study, those students exercised piety and practiced spiritual disciplines. The study of divinity was viewed as an exercise in humility, remorse, and glorification of God. The emphases were on a practicing mentor and the study of divinity as an act of spiritual formation itself (Farley, *Theologia* 8).

Farley’s second period of theological education in Western Christianity is the
period of specialized learning. This period began a generation after the first seminaries and lasted through the eighteenth century. The institutions that formed during this second period still exist today. In this specialized learning method, the student is exposed to a wide variety of scholarly methods and disciplines. These methods and disciplines within the study of divinity become separate departments in today’s theological school. For example, “divinity” becomes the sole responsibility of a designated professor. During this second period, schools begin adding additional faculty, staffing areas of emphasis and expertise within divinity itself. The two-year graduate studies of the first period also become more common and scholastically “specialized,” leading to further graduate studies (Theologia 9).

The third period of theological education Farley names is the period of professional education. This period began in the first part of the nineteenth century. Between 1800 and 1830, twenty-two such schools were founded. Many were denominational institutions. During this time German theological scholarship gained influence. The specialization of the second period grew more pronounced. Theology was separated from practice, and the fourfold division within the seminaries became the model: Bible, dogmatics, church history, and practical theology. The meaning of learning shifted from study, which deeply affects the student’s heartfelt knowledge of God and divine things, to scholarly knowledge of various specialized forms of theological study. As the nineteenth century progressed, doctoral education rose, adding another layer to the seminary system and adding to the distinction between ministry and graduate studies. Farley points out that ministry has been treated as a profession ever since (Theologia 9). Professional identity comes partly from the pietists of the eighteenth century themselves:
Central to pietism was the individual’s progress in spiritual matters, hence the emphasis on prayer and discipline as the setting of theological study. However, the pietists also wanted to correct any notion of the minister as primarily a knower, a resident scholastic theologian, hence they stressed preparation and training for specific tasks of ministry. This introduces, in addition to personal formation, a second telos of the study of theology: training for ministerial activities. (41)

Apart from strict indoctrination, two tracts appear within the study of divinity. One is the quest of scholarly expertise in theological sciences; the other is the training in the professional skills required for ministry. “It simply seems to be the case that faith is not now the binding reality, the primary agenda-setting power at work in contemporary churches and theological schools” (Farley, Theologia 13). These tendencies miss the mark of intentional spiritual formation of seminarians.

A pluralism appears within theological education as specialization creates a high scholasticism. The university model is suspected of training scholars at the expense of faith and ministry, as H. Richard Niebuhr notes:

If students are not personally involved in the study of theology they are not yet studying theology at all but some auxiliary science such as the history of ideas of ancient documents. Hence theological study is hazardous; the involvement may become so personal and emotional that intellectual activity ceases and the work of abstraction, comparison, and criticism stops. (118)

Lack of integration creates a problem in the other direction, as programming apart from scholarship proves equally dangerous or incomplete. In such an atmosphere, “intellectual activity is at a minimum in both parties; such a school is not a community of students but a propaganda or indoctrination institution” (Farley, Fragility 117).

Today, as it has evolved, seminary education faces a threefold arena of potential weakness. First, the study of theology becomes reduced to propaganda and indoctrination. Second, the study of theology becomes reduced to attending trade school
and learning the tasks of ministry. Third, the study of theology becomes reduced to high scholasticism. At best, the theological study of divinity as the disposition of the soul toward God competes with the other three emphases. At worst, it is simply not considered, and this issue drives the present state of dissatisfaction within the Church.

The word “seminary” comes from the Latin word *seminarium*, which means “seed plot,” suggesting a green house where plants are bred, grown, or developed. “It was used first in medieval times by the church, designating settings where candidates for the priesthood were nourished and formed in their sacred calling apart from distracting ‘worldly’ influences” (Calian 1). The term “seminary” has shifted to refer to the master’s level institutions that provide theological training, education for the passing on of the faith, and ministerial training for churches and agencies. While this shift is true, Carnegie S. Calian points out that it is not a complete definition.

Calian suggests the goal for theological education:

The aim of seminary education is not simply to produce an educated clergy, but even more so to build up the people of God, to become an educated congregation in Christ. The practice of learning is for the purpose of giving hope to others. (5)

This mission of replication ties closely with the goal of seminaries producing spiritually alive pastors for local congregations. By talking about building up the people of God, Calian fills in the institutional gap between the Church and the seminary. He goes on to suggest an inherent obligation of the Church to be empowered as Jesus was by his faithful relationship to God. Those preparing for church leadership, bear the obligation of developing the qualities that may lead the church in the empowerment Jesus modeled.

“All these [fruit of the Spirit] qualities can be summed up as ‘emotional intelligence,’ which is necessary for effective leadership, but is often neglected today.… Emotional
intelligence is the secular way of speaking of soul nurturing” (84). The pastor evidencing the fruit of the Spirit qualities, engaging in soul nurturing, being effective in leadership is the pastor overflowing with streams of living water—the spiritually alive pastor.

The Problems within Theological Education Today

Many seminaries seem to have sidelined soul nurturing or reduced it to practical theology. While it tends to fall under the category of practical theology, the historical evidence contends that spiritual formation is actually much more holistic than one area of theology can encompass. Nevertheless, in the midst of dealing with current issues and identity crises, Calian reflects on seminaries’ lack of spiritual embrace:

[Seminaries seem to] relegate mystery to the sidelines. The Association of Theological Schools recognizes that the “crises of faith” among seminarians is a result of a decline in spirituality that has been going for some years in all seminaries—liberal, conservative, independent, and denominational. (92)

If soul nurturing is handled like a pragmatic ministry task of the trade, the seminaries miss the transformational opportunity to form a spiritually alive leader who can offer that transformational hope to others, training an educated, alive laity. If soul nurturing is treated as a strict scholarly exercise handled only objectively or scientifically, it, too, misses Calian’s mark of effective leadership. Local churches deeply seek after this kind of spiritual leadership. In 1990 George Gallup and Jim Castelli found that “one of the top three reasons why Americans leave the church is that they want deeper spiritual meaning” (144). John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene found that “college-educated people are particularly critical of [a] lack of spiritual nurturing in churches today” (278). These concerns from church leaders seem to have been discussed in seminary circles over the last ten years, but only minor shifts have occurred in the approach to spiritual
formation offered by seminaries.

Throughout the history of theological education, complaints, misunderstandings, and schisms have existed between the established church and the seminary. Farley points out that the complaints come from many quarters: alumni, faculty, students, and laity. Even scholars of seminary education such as Farley, Collins, Calian, and Reggie McNeal generally agree that the typical seminary’s convictional vision for the training and building up of spiritually alive pastors for the work of local church ministry seems relegated to the school’s past legacy. Rather than a part of day-to-day operations, the unifying vision of the seminary is present in few and mostly formal ways. On the other hand, Cetuk counters this view:

[T]hese complaints would only serve as a legitimate critique of theological education if it were possible to prepare students for every situation that will arise. In a world that changes quickly, is complex and ambiguous, and has technological capability which far outdistances its moral maturity—in our world—it is simply not possible to cover everything…. Instead the job of theological education is to teach you how to think critically and theologically about issues of faith and life and ministry. (64-65)

Nevertheless, a cry for clarity of vision calls out to the seminaries as churches face the shift into the twenty-first century and the inundation of modern/postmodern cultural influences. “It is not too strong to say that the theological school will make little progress in understanding its present nature and situation if it overlooks the disappearance of the very thing which is supposed to be its essence, agenda, and telos” (Farley, Theologia 44).

Some address the problem by examining the whole institutional approach modern seminaries take. In Indonesia in 1989, the World Council of Churches held a worldwide event focused on spiritual formation, which resulted in many different ways of examining and measuring seminary curriculum and opportunities afforded for spiritual formation.
Another inherent problem exists with the approach modern seminaries take or do not take in training students in leadership. McNeal views the present state of the church as a danger sign (15-16), although people want “nothing less than real, vital, scriptural Christianity—without compromise, apology, or dilution” (Collins 118). The problem, according to McNeal, is the process by which leaders are developed. “Leadership quality will not improve unless the process for developing leaders is transformed. Academic institutions are organized to reproduce scholars, not leaders” (17). McNeal joins Calian in viewing the influence of a leader as a significant measure of seminary effectiveness. Without leaders, Christianity can expect continued marginalization to the point of losing most of its influence.

Some scholars believe that a more significant overhaul of the seminary paradigm of learning is needed. Stephanie P. Marshall exposes the dysfunctional pedagogy reflected by most seminaries. For example, she points out several assumptions in the present paradigm:

Learning is treated as passive and incremental rather than dynamic and developmental; learning is acquired information, not constructed meaning; learning is defined by calendar and how long one stays on the task and not by demonstration [of what has been learned]. (180)

On the other hand, Marshall offers more functional models of learning: “We crave connectedness and meaning, we seek lasting and deep relationships, we grow by sharing and not by keeping secrets, and we need to trust and be trusted in order to feel safe enough to dare” (181). Marshall calls on seminaries to offer increased opportunity for learning in the context of significant relationships and experiences. She names community as a significant factor for education and personal growth. This community-focused approach echoes Hunter’s observations in *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*, as
well as the teaching church model, in which ministry is performed on the job under the supervision of experienced mentors and practitioners.

Seminary and church leaders may need to reexamine the standards for measuring seminary students. If a standard measure could be reached, churches could put more confidence in seminary certification:

[Seminaries could vouch] for the graduate’s having developed competencies that equip him or her to minister effectively. Seminaries will need to decide if they are willing to accept this challenge. If they are, then their graduates’ capacity to demonstrate call, character, commitment, and competence will need to drive the learning efforts. (McNeal 123)

Given the modern-day fractured approach to theological education, the dilemma for seminaries remains how to offer spiritual formation to students. With the wide variety of views toward spiritual formation, a common answer to the issue does not exist. Many still wonder how a seminary can intentionally form students spiritually in order to encourage the growth of spiritually alive pastors. Some view spiritual formation as a discipline that gets special classroom treatment via practical theology courses, while others see it as personal well-being courses via pastoral care classes. In Cetuk’s view, seminaries largely more or less successfully treat spiritual formation as a part of each of the disciplines and classes, provided the seminary students approach their seminary journey with the right attitude. Deans and administrators vary on the amount of extracurricular time they require of master’s-level students, even when that time is for specifically spiritually formative opportunities like chapel and covenant groups:

While formation takes place in quite ordinary and spontaneous ways, it cannot be left to chance. On the other hand, formation of character is not something that can be entirely planned…. Formation as our educational intention reorients the way we define the nature and tasks of Christian education. (S. Johnson 136)
Spiritual formation must be intentional, but must not be confined only to certain areas.

In terms of a holistic approach to the problems of spiritual formation within seminary education, Cetuk looks at the journey motif as “eminently useful for theological school students with the twin goals of faith formation and preparation for lifelong service in ministry” (69). The dilemma remains of how seminaries prepare local pastors for sustaining their spiritual growth after their time in seminary, while serving the demands of the local church setting.

To study this dilemma, this questionnaire asked pastors themselves: In what context did you experience your most significant spiritually formative moment at seminary?

Review of the Literature of Spiritual Formation Instruments

Only recently have the number of measurements of spirituality grown, thanks to an increase of interest in spirituality among Protestant theological schools and those in the health professions. Peter C. Hill and Ralph W. Hood list approximately 227 published measurements for testing religiosity and spirituality. Limitations among these instruments include the lack of large-scale use in research. The subjective nature of spiritual formation makes it difficult to assess apart from self-assessments. Factoring out variables such as life experience and current relationships becomes important to the problem of examining the inward nature of spiritual formation as well because religiosity and spirituality are closely related to perceived quality of life issues in various areas of life, sense of self, and relationships. Rambo notes how marriage, work, church, and community impact the sense of well-being of clergy spouses (102). M. M. Poloma and B. F. Pendleton have shown the close link between religiosity and issues of life satisfaction,
existential well-being, and overall happiness (255-76).

The vast majority of spirituality measurements employ survey research, involving relationships among educational, psychological, and sociological variables. “Surveys are used to measure attitudes, opinions, or achievements—any number of variables in natural settings” (Wiersma 157). For many of these measurements, the Likert Scale offers the most reliability of measurement. The ordinal scale available “orders the scores on some basis, such as low to high or least to most” (296), which commonly measures attitude, though caution must be used, as “intervals between scores are not established” (296).

Babcock reviews the current literature available for spiritual formation testing:

[T]he body of literature is growing, particularly in the health profession but also from social scientists and psychologists, that is demonstrating a predictive link between a person’s religious and spiritual health and his or her level of satisfaction and well-being in other areas of life. (73-74)

An aspect of the project involves a review of seminary catalogues of those two seminaries with the most subjects. These observations point out the heightened importance of understanding what steps seminaries take in forming pastors spiritually, as all United Methodist pastors who are ordained as elders attend seminary. The role pastors play in helping people holistically link religion and spirituality to other areas of life is important for the health and well-being of people to whom they minister. A largely unspoken goal of the church and Christian spiritual formation is to encourage ways in which a person’s faith may overflow into all areas of life. Unless the pastoral leaders of the church experience the overflowing of the Holy Spirit into all areas in their own lives, and unless they experience ways of cultivating the overflowing nature of the Spirit in ongoing ways, the members of the local church will have a more difficult time of integrating faith and life in ways categorized as spiritually alive.
Biblical and Theological Reflection

Spiritually alive pastors are the Christian leaders of congregations who take in sustenance, get energy, and grow from their connection to Christ, with a measure of vigor and liveliness, appropriately expressed by Jesus as those leaders containing living water:

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’” (John 7:37-39)

The Nature of the Spirit Offering Life

Throughout Scripture, few images and metaphors more continuously point the believer to the inherent dynamic nature of God than the image of living water. In order to capture the dynamism of the Holy Spirit, this study examined the nature of the Spirit as depicted throughout Scripture as living water.

The living God of Israel manifest in Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to empower believers in living, keeping, and sharing the faith. God’s triune nature creates, redeems, and sustains life. The Bible is the account of the God of all life, reaching out to people and empowering them by offering salvation in life and new life.

Water and the Spirit in the Old Testament

The Holy Spirit brings the energy of God to creation: “The Spirit of God was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters” (Gen. 1:2). In several other places, the Hebrew writers note the role of the Spirit in creation (Gen. 2:7; Job 26:13; Isa. 32:15). Fully commensurate with that offering of life come the means of sustaining that life. Indeed, in the historic Nicene Creed the congregation refers to the Holy Spirit as “the Lord, the giver of life” (United Methodist Hymnal 880).
The Nature of the Spirit Offering New Life

Throughout Scripture the nature of God is to be the One who sustains his people, even offering them hope and salvation in the midst of disobedience. The prophets speak to wayward Israel of the Spirit coming as a blessing of water: “For I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendents” (Isa. 44:3). Isaiah implies that God will redeem all of Israel. Later, following his discourse on the triumph of the suffering servant, Isaiah invites every one who thirsts after God to receive salvation. “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost” (Isa. 55:1). The oracle lifts up the waters that wait for any who come, teeming with life that cannot be bought. God freely offers this sustenance.

Jeremiah names the sins of pride and idolatry: “For my people have committed two evils: They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (Jer. 2:13). Previously, God’s salvation was the fountain. Now Jeremiah names God himself as the fountain of living water, moving from just the waters of salvation to being named the fountain. Living water refers to moving water as opposed to stagnant, standing water. The dynamism of God’s Spirit powers the water of the fountain as it flows forth. Jeremiah showed another aspect of this quality of the Spirit: It cannot be contained or stored outside of direct contact with the fountain itself. Sustenance via the Spirit is only maintained when the receiver is connected to God, the fountainhead of the living waters.

Water was also a vital part of ritual, particularly for cleansing and purification. As
an intrinsic part of being spiritually alive, Christians reckon with their own failing, maintain that the sinful self is the problem, and find salvation and purification from the source of God’s grace and forgiveness. Christians need and receive regular cleansing through the power of Jesus Christ. This act of baptism and repentance distinguishes the spiritually alive Christian from another person who lives with vigor and liveliness but lives apart from Christ.

The Nature of the Spirit’s Overflowing into All Life

Beyond the Spirit’s sustenance of the life of the believer, the prophets prophesy about the eschatological Spirit bringing blessings to the land itself. In Isaiah 32 “the oracle begins and ends with the theme of ‘fertility’ (vv. 15-16, 19-20), and at the center is ‘justice’ and ‘peace’ (vv. 17-18)” (Ng 175). Joel (3:17-18) and Ezekiel (47:1-12) describe the abundant blessings coming from the river flowing out of the temple giving life to the land. “This life comes from the fountain symbolizing salvation and the temple, symbolizing the Lord” (Ng 177). Zechariah (14:8) prophesies that the living water will flow out of Jerusalem at the second coming of Christ, only this time to the ends of the earth.

Water and the Spirit in the New Testament

Drawing on images of God’s Spirit from the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament lifts up the dynamic nature of the Spirit as the Sustainer and Overflower, as the Holy Spirit spiritually forms believers as well. In addition to Jesus’ own references to living water in the Johannine writings, New Testament writers connect water with the Spirit as well.

In the synoptic Gospels and Acts, water is used primarily in the context of water
baptism. The obvious usage of water in baptism represents cleansing, new life, and the coming of the Spirit, even as the Spirit descends upon Jesus at his own baptism in the Jordan River. The Spirit is “poured out” (Acts 2:33; 1 Tim. 1:14; Tit. 3:6) and the disciples are “filled” (Acts 4:8; 13:9).

The writer of Hebrews refers to sacrifice and cleansing. Christians need cleansing and refilling regularly, received through the power of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, illustrated by John as “one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water” (John 19:34). Repeated cleansing, repentance, and refilling through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ distinguish the spiritually alive Christian.

In addition to many references throughout the Gospel of John to water, several times Jesus announces that he is the source of “living water” (4:10, 14; 7:37-38). Though scholars debate whether the living water itself refers to Christ or to the Holy Spirit, most seem to favor the theory that the living water refers to the Holy Spirit: “Scholarly consensus is that ‘water’ in this context is preeminently either the ‘Torah’ or the ‘Spirit’” (Ng 140). The fact remains that the “water of life” (Rev. 21) denotes genuine, everlasting life.

The New Testament is filled with examples of persons filled with the Holy Spirit; however, the nature of the Holy Spirit is not just to settle into a believer. In John 4:10-11 and 7:38, hydor zon is used for flowing, “living water.” Zon, the word for living, is related to the word used in the prologue of the Gospel of John: “All that came to be had life [zoe] in him and that life was the light of all people” (John 1:4). The inherent nature of God’s Spirit of sustenance and life is that it does not just flow from the fountainhead
God into the lives of believers, but from believers to others as well. Wai-yee Ng views the usage of living water as dual nature of the Spirit:

I suggest that Jesus’ use of ὕδωρ ζωή should be understood as a double symbolism. First, the earthly symbolizes the heavenly, or the physical symbolizes the metaphysical, for ζωή can simply mean “fresh” and “running,” whereas ζωή means “life.” By offering fresh water Jesus was actually talking about the quickening of life (4:10). This may be called the “vertical dimension” of the water symbol, which the woman failed to understand in the early part of the dialogue (4:7-15). Second, there is a horizontal dimension to the water symbol in which the traditional or cultic worship symbolizes the eschatological worship. (137)

The nature of the living water is also meant to flow out of the life of the believer who is connected to the divine Source into the lives of others, bringing new life available by the Spirit through the Son of God. “The water offered by Jesus … both challenged and transcended tradition, sated a deeper spiritual thirst, and ‘welled up’ within the recipient” (Jones 109). While scholars trace Jesus’ image of “living water” to many things, “O’Day echoes … in calling living water a spiritual gift that avails one to the life-giving power of God” (112). In the context of John 4, John begins to “unite all of the various images and meanings of water under the general heading of the pre-eminent gift of the Spirit” (113).

**The Example of Jesus’ Offering of Living Water**

John 4 reveals an understanding of the overflowing nature of the Spirit in the context of person-to-person sharing and receiving. Through Jesus’ dialogue with the Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar, John exposes something of the inward process going on in the individuals and the effects of the Spirit as living water. The dialogue is set in the context of the well of Jacob, at which Jesus meets the woman. While the discussion begins with the water from the well, Jesus moves it to the deeper and superior living water that he offers to all. This new meaning and function of water Jesus offers provides
“a new reality which is spiritual in nature and which generates further blessings” (Jones 110). Jesus’ use of living water gives a clear dual view of inward formation and outward expression:

Christian spiritual formation is the redemptive process of forming the inner human world so that it takes on the character of the inner being of Christ himself. In the degree to which it is successful, the outer life of the individual becomes a natural expression or outflow of the character and teachings of Jesus. This shapes the inner person in such a way that the words and deeds of Christ naturally flow from us. (Willard 1)

The outward expression of inward transformation manifests in the life of the believer by doing the things that Jesus did and said. John depicts Jesus offering this gift of living water to an individual in John 4:1-42. Several unique factors arise from this text.

Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well and offers her living water. This encounter was the first teaching of the Lord beyond the limit of the chosen people in John’s Gospel. The living water flows from one person into the lives of others. As John depicts in the dialogue, the living water of the Spirit that Jesus offers the Samaritan woman allowed him to break down barriers on many levels. In offering this new life to the woman, he turns the tides of racism: between Jesus, a Jew, and the woman, a Samaritan, sexism between a man and woman, classism between a rabbi and an ostracized poor woman who must draw water for herself, traditionalism or dogmatism as Jesus steers the conversation through the woman’s prejudiced views of religion such as inheritance via Jacob and false worship on foreign mountains, and sinful individualism as John reveals the woman had tried everything, including living in disobedience to the Law. Jesus offers the new reality of living water, which he makes available to all, even Samaritans.

“Jesus seems to be referring metaphorically to water that ‘gives life,’ and this is
not really water at all but rather some life-giving quality that flows from belief in Jesus himself” (Matson 31). The woman does not understand the gift Jesus is offering. She still thinks in terms of water as the natural element that quenches thirst, but Jesus promises her water that will sustain her in life:

The water he offers surpasses that of Jacob in two ways: it is “continuously self-replenishing” and “of a completely different kind.” Jesus can provide water that sates thirst forever and, even more, will become a source of water “welling up into eternal life” (4:14). By accepting his gift, the woman can receive both eternal life for herself and also the gift of eternal life which she can provide for others. In addition to offering the woman a gift she did not expect, Jesus also challenges her to accept a commission to bear that gift to others, a commission she will accept in the ensuing verses (4:28-29). (Jones 100)

The Samaritan woman speaks of a deep well using *phrear*: a human-made well or cistern. Jesus uses the word *pege*, which means a natural source of water that gushes up from the ground, like a spring, reflecting the same contrast noted by Jeremiah:

The movement of a fountain is brought out in the vigorous “springing up” (or “leaping”; the word in a compound form is used of the formerly lame man leaping up, Acts 3:8). The life that Jesus gives is no tame and stagnant thing. It is much more than merely the entrance into a new state, that of being saved instead of lost. It is the abundant life (John 10:10), and the living Spirit within men is evidence of this. It is more than possible that the words are also an indication that the life within the believers goes forth. Life has a way of begetting life. (Morris 263)

The backdrop of the entire dialogue is Jesus’ foray into Samaria, bringing the good news of the kingdom of God to which the Samaritans respond favorably (John 4:40-42). Ng notes, “There is a mission emphasis that binds the whole passage together” (115). Those others in turn experience directly the life and effects of faith in Jesus Christ, bringing about their own experience of overflowing life into the lives of others:

In this general sense, the “living water” means the gifts of God including Christ himself and all that he bestows, salvation, purification, joy, and eternal life. These gifts are fulfilled in the life of a believer through the
Holy Spirit, who is also symbolized by “living water,” and has the living life-giving quality symbolized by the constant quenching of thirst. (141)

The exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman bore fruit. Many came to believe in Jesus as Messiah independent of her witness, as another characteristic of the nature of the Holy Spirit as living water becomes evident. The life offered by Jesus comes from the Source of life and brings people back to him again. The focus was on Jesus, as people traced the evidence of the new life back upstream to him.

**Conclusion**

This dynamism of the Holy Spirit as living water intersects spiritual formation in theological education in several ways. Spiritually alive pastors seek to develop and be developed in their inner person so that the words and deeds of Christ flow through them naturally. Inward transformation takes place through the work of the living water of the Holy Spirit. Wesley summarizes the Spirit’s work in “Letter to a Roman Catholic” about the Holy Spirit:

> I believe the infinite and eternal Spirit of God, equal with the Father and the Son, to be not only perfectly holy in himself, but the immediate cause of holiness in us: enlightening our understandings, rectifying our wills and affections, renewing our natures, uniting our persons to Christ, assuring us of the adoption of sons, leading us in our actions, purifying and sanctifying our souls and bodies to a full and eternal enjoyment of God. (qtd. in Outler sec. 8: 495)

Wesley’s view of the Holy Spirit as God in us drawing believers to holiness stresses the dynamism of the Holy Spirit evidenced in the study of the nature of living water as portrayed in Scripture. For theological education to create contexts for spiritual formation to the end that graduates leave “spiritually alive,” they would have to create learning environments that reflect this enlightening, rectifying, renewing, uniting, assuring, leading, and purifying nature. The traditional nature of education, tracing its
roots to the university model and evolving from there, would need to be infused in a more holistic way to reflect the holistic nature of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit nurtures and sustains the believer, bringing holiness in life, as in the case of the Samaritan woman. As Christians have shown throughout the centuries, God has offered spiritual disciplines and means of grace by which God offers salvation and continually sustains and grows believers into the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. These disciplines are earthen vessels, containing the living water of salvation in Christ:

[Holiness is] that transformed life that is lived in dialogue with this word of Scripture, of those filled with the Holy Spirit, becoming contagious from person to person, meeting persecution and trouble and persevering suffering and finally covering the earth. (Oden 224)

The contagion of the Spirit from person to person has guided theological education and must continue to guide into the future. The power of the Spirit to convict, guide, comfort, sustain, and persevere infuses theological education even as the student studies divinity. The seminary atmosphere, while rigorous, is saturated in the love of God. Students are encouraged to reflect personally on their progress in allowing themselves to be filled, but most of the inner-being issues are evidenced by the outward flow of this living water, the salvific love of God. Dr. Steve Seamands reflects on God’s “overflowing, joyful, intimate love”:

Pseudo-Dionysius says it well: “Love does not permit the lover to rest in himself. It draws him out of himself, so that he may be entirely in the beloved” (Moltmann 58). God’s going out of himself, first in the creation and then in the redemption and renewal of the world, flows out of the plentitude of love which exists in the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Out of the dynamic fullness of love and the joyful intimacy which exists within [original emphasis] the circle of the trinitarian fellowship, flows God’s love for the world (Jn. 3:16) outside [original emphasis] the circle.”

Ng further suggests that out of this very nature of overflowing love eschatological
salvation occurs and the mission of the church is birthed:

This life-giving activity of the Spirit is none other than the eschatological salvation of Christ which brings along multiple life blessings, or God’s recreation of the world as if “bringing in a harvest.” Therefore, “living water” entails the “eschatological harvest.” The symbol gives expression to the work of the Spirit in a believer as “a spring of water welling up to eternal life,” meaning, the believer’s life in Christ is continuously quickened by the Spirit to live in a manner that complies with God’s way—that entails participation in God’s harvest of gathering people into his kingdom.” (153)

The Spirit is God who guides the church through the now and the not yet, through the time between Christ’s resurrection and his return. The living water, which began flowing personally from the life of Jesus into the life of believers upon their salvation in Christ will be consummated upon his return as described by John in Revelation 21:6:

“And He said to me, ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.’”

Jesus’ promise is complete with an invitation to the living waters in Revelation 22:17:

“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”

Through their training in seminary and church, through faculty, field education, and mentorship, spiritually alive pastors personally attend to the spring in their own lives, even as they are trained and educated to invite others to it, in accordance with the Holy Spirit. To attend personally to the Holy Spirit in one’s life without including the intrinsic invitation reaching out to others, or conversely, to invite others without personal attention to the Holy Spirit in the life of the pastor would not reflect the inherent nature of God, as revealed ultimately by Jesus Christ, the giver of the living water.

Personal attention and intrinsic invitation go hand in hand in seminary education
and ministry lived out in the living water of spiritual aliveness.
CHAPTER 3
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The problem addressed by this study was based on the perception that many local congregations believe that the seminaries are not producing spiritually alive pastors. Churches need and look for pastors who maintain and grow in their connection with Christ, allowing his Spirit to overflow into the lives of those around them in dynamic ways. Historically, the local church relies on the seminary to provide and equip capable leaders who will provide direction, dynamic leadership, and spiritual nourishment. Churches look to the seminaries to offer the best training possible to provide more capable, stable, and longer-tenured leadership. Outside of the spiritual formation taking place in the classroom, many seminaries appear to lack intentional processing of spiritual formation.

A biblical approach to spiritual aliveness addresses the whole person: inner connection with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit as well as outward, relational connections via the overflowing dynamism of the Holy Spirit. Focusing on one element (inner relationship or outward interactions, time in seminary or present sense of spiritual well-being) to the exclusion of other elements offers something less than the holistic response, which spiritual aliveness entails and the local church needs.

This study was an attempt to identify the seminary contexts of formative spiritual experiences and present well-being of United Methodist clergy in the North Central Jurisdiction who have been in ministry for approximately five years. The perceived gap among the seminary, the local church, and the spiritual preparedness of local church pastors formed the backdrop of this study. Upon receiving the recent graduates’
perceptions of the contexts of their formational experiences while at seminary as well as their responses to a spiritual well-being survey, examination was made of seminaries’ efforts to engage their students in spiritual formation through a review of the seminaries’ literature.

This study began with the assumption that the more intentional seminaries were in offering spiritual formation and spiritually formative contexts of learning to their students, the greater the subsequent spiritual growth and present sense of spiritual well-being and aliveness in clergy responses. Assuming that the possibility of increasing the number of spiritually alive pastors exists, the correlation between the specific measures taken by the seminary and the responses of the spiritually alive subjects would be examined, named, and taught.

While spiritual formation in theological education has come under scrutiny, this study has provided an opportunity to examine the responses of several seminaries to this debate, as well as trends in theological education. While the seminaries are called to train a theologically educated clergy, they are also called to produce a pragmatic curriculum that prepares local pastors for the many tasks and roles they will face. Coupled with the emphases of theological education and pragmatic curriculum may or may not be spiritual formation as a third area of need for pastoral preparation, leadership, and scholarship. Local churches and clergy burnout statistics seem to say this third area needs intentional development (C. Wood 550-62).

The survey responses and examination of the catalogues of representative seminaries clarified the investment and intentionality of the seminaries in spiritual formation. From the questionnaires, conclusions could be made of the implied
Research Questions

The purpose statement of this study reflects two stages of research: the questionnaire to recent seminary graduates serving the United Methodist Church and follow-up catalogue research with representative seminaries. To determine how seminaries form students spiritually, the instruments used provided data to answer three basic questions. The first research question identified the context of the respondents’ most formative experiences while attending seminary. The second research question focused on the awareness and intentionality of representative seminaries where the largest number of respondents attended. The third research question examined any correlation or patterns that emerged from the data.

Research Question #1

What do recent seminary graduates remember as their most formational experiences while at seminary?

The answer to this research question provides the opportunity to examine the perspective of the recent graduate’s contexts for spiritual formation at seminary, set against their current spiritual lives, their spiritual growth, and their spiritual discipline since seminary. The question of context assisted in two areas. First, the respondent reviewed the various contexts in which spiritual formation may have taken place. These contexts may or may not have been intentionally emphasized by the seminary itself. The experience or series of experiences that led to the formation of the students could have happened in any of the three historical emphases of theological scholarship, ministry skill training, or intentional spiritual formation design. Second, by examining the specific
context of the most significant spiritually formative experience, factors can be applied to quantify the experience. Close attention was given to whether such experiences happened inside the classroom or outside the classroom, during seminary-sponsored events or in the unstructured time between seminary sponsored events, in conversation with faculty or in community with fellow students (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Quantifiable Contexts for Spiritual Formation in Seminary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inside the Classroom</th>
<th>Outside the Classroom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor-led devotions</td>
<td>Chapel worship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor’s teaching</td>
<td>Small groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific course on spiritual formation</td>
<td>Conversation with teacher or mentor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class discussions</td>
<td>Seminary support during life crisis or transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic content (lectures/readings/projects)</td>
<td>Ethos of the seminary community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor’s model of a life of faith</td>
<td>Spiritual disciplines</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(scriptures/prayer/solitude/fasting/serving/witnessing)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field education experience</td>
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Research Question #2

What explicit claims do seminaries make with respect to the spiritually formative experiences their institutions make available to their students?

This research project was built on the premise that seminaries are cogently aware of what potentially produces the greatest spiritual growth in their students and that seminaries can correspondingly plan effective aspects of the theological education that produce spiritually alive pastors.

The highest number of graduates responding from particular theological schools or seminaries determined the sample population of seminaries examined further. The
explicit claims that the seminaries made revealed how well the administration knew their students’ responses, as well as the intentionality of those seminaries in addressing the issue of spiritual formation.

The information about specific claims of the seminaries came from a review of the individual seminary’s literature, which supplied some information regarding purpose and vision statements, curriculum, professors devoted to spiritual formation, organization of the weekly schedule, reflection groups, chapel times, or covenant small groups. In evaluating the seminary’s catalogue, close attention was paid to the correlation or lack of correlation between the information contained in the seminary catalogues, the contexts represented in the answers of the respondents, and their spiritual life today.

**Research Question #3**

What patterns emerge from the data with respect to ways in which seminarians are intentionally formed spiritually?

This study assumed a link between the intentional exercise and practice of personal and corporate spiritual disciplines and the spiritual aliveness of the pastor. The hypothesis of the study was that greater attention to spiritual formation while at seminary would yield persons who are more spiritually alive. The questionnaire was designed to examine whether local pastors had maintained an active and growing connection to Christ since seminary and whether they had an overflowing Spirit that offers dynamic new life and hope to those around them.

Another important hypothesis was that the more intentionally a seminary offers spiritual formation to its students, the higher the sense of spiritual well-being and spiritual aliveness. The contexts of the spiritually formational experiences were examined
carefully to see if the most common experiences could be produced or replicated by seminaries, once the data was collected and analyzed.

**Population and Sample**

Out of the population of all seminary graduates, the sample of United Methodist pastors serving under appointment in the North Central Jurisdiction was chosen. While another approach would have been to obtain alumni lists from preselected seminaries, the problem of privacy became an issue. Discussions with seminary administrative personnel raised the problem that seminaries were likely to be reluctant to release alumni listings. Thus, out of all seminary graduates, the sample was made up of recently ordained elders in the United Methodist Church who were serving as pastors in the North Central Jurisdiction, having graduated from seminary approximately five years earlier. Correspondingly the sample excludes pastors of other denominations as well as those not serving churches in the role of pastor.

In response to these issues, the subjects were obtained through the information contained in their respective annual conference journals. In the United Methodist Church, a pastor out of seminary is on probation for three years, and upon completing elder’s orders, the commissioned pastor becomes an ordained elder. Between seminary graduation and ordination, the minimum time is three years. The conference boards of ordained ministry could have requested the pastor to wait a year before being commissioned or ordained; however, the most common process takes three years. Dr. Reg Johnson cites studies of professional identity that in the first three to five years people are deciding to stay or drop their chosen profession. The period of three to five years is a crucial one. The dynamics of personal identity of the self in relation to ministry
and issues are settled sometime during these years. For purposes of this study, the discrepancy between persons out of seminary three years versus those out five years is not a factor.

The North Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church includes twelve annual conferences: Northern Illinois, Dakotas, Illinois Great Rivers, North Indiana, South Indiana, Iowa, Detroit, West Michigan, Minnesota, East Ohio, West Ohio, and Wisconsin. Out of a population of 188, the number of respondents was eighty-eight.

From the respondents’ answers, the two most represented seminaries were chosen. School catalogues were reviewed for evidence of intentionality toward the area of spiritual formation.

**Data Collection**

This project was an evaluative, correlational study utilizing questionnaires and subsequent examination of catalogues from representative seminaries. Names were obtained from the 2001 and 2002 General Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church (Babbitt and Haralson). Each recently ordained clergy was contacted via a letter mailed to their local churches, inviting written response and reply. In order to ensure the maximum participation possible, each subject was mailed a cover letter (see Appendix A) explaining the project, the guaranteed anonymity of the participants, a copy of the questionnaire (see Appendix B), and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Two sets of surveys were mailed: one in January 2004 that yielded forty responses and one in December 2004 that yielded forty-eight responses.

**Instrumentation**

The questionnaire was evaluative in the descriptive mode. It utilized four sections.
1. Background information was obtained, including the seminary the subject attended.

2. The current spiritual state of the subject was based on self-assessment, which folds into the instrument items from Andrews and Powell’s and Rambo’s studies. Andrews and Taylor note the relational connections of spiritual well-being:

   One’s spiritual well-being is clearly associated with his/her satisfaction on all ten factors, and at near zero probabilities on all three scales (religious, existential, and spiritual well-being). The strongest associations are between (1) career satisfaction and existential well-being (r=.53), (2) dating/marriage (r=.49), (3) peer relationships (r=.49), (4) friendships (r=.43), (5) family of origin (r=.42), and involvement in church (r=.40). While positive relationships exist between the religious sub-scale and the overall spiritual well-being scale along all ten factors, the correlations overall were not as strong as those for the existential well-being sub-scale.

3. Spiritual growth assessment, based on Babcock’s modifications of the Spiritual Life Inventory (84). Questions revolved around the growth since seminary in five areas of the pastor’s life: relationship with God, relationship with self, relationship with others, relationship with ministry, and present spiritual disciplines.

4. The subjects then noted seminary contexts and their spiritual growth as impacted by those areas. The contexts were initially divided into two categories: inside the classroom and outside the classroom, followed by an open-ended description of the subjects’ most spiritually formative experiences while at seminary. This essay question was used to clarify the seminary context responses.

While ideally the survey research could have been obtained in a longitudinal study, several factors prohibited this method. First, the length of time necessary to complete the acquisition of data was outside the parameters of this study. Second, one of the primary objectives of the study was to create a strong link between seminary and
church-based ministry. In addition, the emphasis on the correlational growth via specific experiences would not necessarily have been strengthened by longitudinal study.

By selecting persons out of seminary a minimum of four years, those areas in seminary that were most spiritually formational in regards to local church ministry would surface more often than lesser influences. The questionnaire guided the subject to reflect upon the most spiritually formational experiences while at seminary. Having some distance (four or more years) between the event and the subjects’ responses ensures the perspective than only time and experience in the local church can bring while at the same time not allowing so much distance between seminary events and the subjects’ responses that memories run together resulting in inaccurate recall.

The combination of the current spiritual state assessment and the spiritual growth assessment since seminary benefited the accuracy of the subjects’ self-assessments, because even if the subjects’ current spiritual state was being affected adversely by current temporary circumstances the day they took the test, the spiritual growth assessment would give additional data regarding the more general growth trend of the subjects. This data was analyzed through content analysis, correlations, mean comparisons, and t-tests.

Observation of the seminary catalogues and the references to spiritual formation contained therein noted the seminary’s proactivity and purposeful attention in offering spiritual formation opportunities to students. While the seminary’s role may have included scheduling for student organizations that may or may not have offered spiritually formational experiences, the specific role of the seminary as a whole was closely examined and explained. The unique approaches to spiritual formation were noted
Variables

Two major self-reported variables were studied among the subjects’ responses. First, the pastors surveyed named the seminary they attended. From the total of all the seminaries named, the two seminaries listed most were studied in order to examine the approach of the seminary toward spiritual formation: the espoused values, the spiritually formative programming, the choice of faculty members, and the implicit and explicit theories of theological education and spiritual formation. This variable facilitated research question #2, “What explicit claims do seminaries make with respect to spiritually formative experiences their institutions make available to their students?” Comparative research was done by reviewing the course catalogues of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (GETS) and United Theological Seminary (UTS). Sixteen GETS graduates and fourteen UTS graduates represented thirty out of eighty-eight seminary graduates responding to the survey.

Second, the subjects listed their spiritually formative experiences while attending seminary. This variable enabled research of the factors inside the classroom or outside the classroom that were significant to the subjects’ spiritual life today.

The most important correlational variable available for this study was the present self-perceived spiritual well-being. While this variable would be impacted by several extraneous variables, it would also allow subjects to be subdivided into various levels of spiritual aliveness for correlational examination.

Extraneous variables were kept in mind as the study proceeded, and consideration was given them upon interpreting the outcomes. These variables included the subjective
nature of spiritual formation, the ongoing life situations of each subject, the personal lives of the pastors, their experiences of the ordination process in the United Methodist Church, and their present contexts of ministry. Extraneous variables outside the parameters of this study that would have affected the subjects’ experiences while at seminary were the academic quality and discipline of the students entering seminary, the leadership potential of students entering seminary, the previous spiritually formative experiences of the respondents, their various ages, their previous church experience, their ability, and motivation levels. By examining the amount of time each subject attended seminary, the additional variable of whether the respondent was a resident or nonresident, full-time or part-time student was studied. As spiritual formation takes time, many students who had to balance family and job situations may have been unable to give the time necessary to focus on their spiritual formation while at seminary.

**Delimitations and Generalizability**

Seminary students who went on to become pastors of local churches pursuing ordination in the North Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church provided the data in the assessment tools. The data collected was limited to the self-reported evaluations of recent seminary graduates. Findings may be applicable to comparable mainline denominations, especially those in the Midwest/Great Lakes region. The seminary information was limited to Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and United Theological Seminary. Findings may be applicable to comparable mainline seminaries.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Local churches desire to be led by spiritually alive pastors, and a primary purpose of seminaries is to prepare pastors for local churches. Seminary experience is common to all ordained elders in the United Methodist Church, and seminaries are the place where intellectual study, practical training, and spiritual growth with the goal of spiritual aliveness can occur. The purpose of this research was to evaluate, correlate, and compare pastors’ spiritual lives today, spiritual growth since seminary, and present spiritual discipline with the contexts of their spiritually formative experiences while at seminary. The goal was to determine what seminaries are currently doing and how seminaries can increase the intentionality of those experiences that seem to correlate with pastors experiencing overflowing, alive, and active spiritual lives today.

Three research questions guided this study. First, what do recent seminary graduates remember as their most formational experiences while at seminary? Second, what explicit claims do seminaries make with respect to the spiritually formative experiences their institutions make available to their students? Third, what patterns emerge from the data with respect to ways in which seminarians are intentionally formed spiritually?

The questionnaire (see Appendix B) used for this research was an instrument that combined with and added to previous research to contain four major sections: background information, spiritual state today, spiritual growth since seminary (based on Babcock’s research incorporating the subjects’ relationship with God, others, self, and ministry), and reflections on the seminary experience, including an open-ended essay.
question about their most formative experience.

Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested on a sample of questions that asked the same question in different ways. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to measure internal reliability, that is, how well the set of responses to a number of questions relate to each other. In order to determine the internal consistency, the Cronbach Alpha was checked for the following question pairs. In social science research an alpha of about 0.8 is considered good. The test results above 0.70 are noted in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Cronbach Alpha Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Numbers</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13, 14</td>
<td>Recognition of the Bible addressing your own life. Recognition of the Bible addressing the lives of others.</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21, 29</td>
<td>Progress in the development of a disciplined prayer life that provides personal nourishment. The personal and spiritual discipline of prayer.</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18, 19</td>
<td>A sense of confidence and courage in taking stands for my convictions in religious communities. A sense of confidence and courage in taking stands for my convictions in secular communities.</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 7</td>
<td>My spiritual life today. My relationship with God today.</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35, 36</td>
<td>The personal and spiritual discipline of scripture study. The personal and spiritual discipline of spiritual reading.</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20, 37</td>
<td>Progress in the development of a disciplined worship life that provides personal nourishment. The personal and spiritual discipline of worship.</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profile of Subjects
The population of this study included seminary graduates who are United Methodist pastors serving under appointment in the North Central Jurisdiction (Northern Illinois, Dakotas, Illinois Great Rivers, North Indiana, South Indiana, Iowa, Detroit, West Michigan, Minnesota, East Ohio, West Ohio, and Wisconsin) who were ordained elders in 2001 or 2002, as recorded in the General Minutes. The Seminary to Ministry Life Questionnaire was mailed to the entire population of 188. Eighty-eight subjects returned the questionnaire for a response rate of 46.8 percent.

**Age and Gender**

Respondents ranged in age from 29 to 65 years old, with a mean age of 46.3 years and standard deviation of 9.7 years (see Figure 4.1).

![Figure 4.1. Subjects’ age range.](image-url)
Thirty-nine women (44 percent) and forty-eight men (55 percent) were represented. One respondent failed to indicate gender.

**Seminary and Years Attended**

The eighty-eight subjects came from a total of twenty-four different seminaries (see Table 4.2). The two seminaries most represented were Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and United Theological Seminary. They accounted for 34.1 percent of the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2 Seminary Attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seminary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Theological Seminary Dayton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist Theological School in Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asbury Theological School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Theological Seminary Indianapolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton Theological Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Theological Seminary of Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Dubuque Theological Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashland Theological Seminary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke Divinity School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson University School of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North American Baptist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul School of Theology Kansas City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson Theological School, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Bethel Theological Seminary, Candler Theological Seminary, Eden Webster Groves, MO., Fuller Theological Seminary, Iliff School of Theology, Payne Theological Seminary, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Southern Theological Seminary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The minimum number of years required for the Master of Divinity degree is three,
though many students do a fourth year and some attend part-time. The mean number of years subjects attended seminary was 3.8.

**Relationship to Family of Origin**

With a mean of 3.3 and a standard deviation of 0.71, the average respondent felt moderately warm and close to his or her family growing up (see Table 4.3). This data was obtained in order to explore the potential relationship between subjects’ ability to relate to God as Father or Parent based upon their familial experiences. Andrews found among adult missionary children, for instance, a “second factor in mediating the tensions between vocation and family is the warmth and closeness children feel with their parents. Feeling warm and close to one’s parents is strongly associated with different dimensions of well-being for the adult TCK” (5).

**Table 4.3. Family Relationship Growing Up in Percentages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe your relationship to your family as you were growing up.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Cold &amp; distant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Moderately cold &amp; distant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = Moderately warm &amp; close</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = Warm &amp; close</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spiritual State Today**

The self-perception of the subject’s spiritual life today (see Table 4.4) took into account several factors including the relationships immediately around the subject. Upon responding to the general question of spiritual life today, the mean of the group was 3.21, with a standard deviation of 0.60. This is associated with being “moderately full,
Pastors who responded that their spiritual life today was moderately sparse and maintaining (one step above dry and burned out in the questionnaire) represented nine percent of the subjects, and thirty-one percent of the pastors surveyed responded that their spiritual life was alive and overflowing. This question became the linchpin question for analyzing the subject’s self-perceived spiritual aliveness.

While 90 percent of the subjects viewed their spiritual life as moderately full or alive and overflowing, 97 percent of the subjects viewed their relationship with God as warm and close to moderately so, with a standard deviation of 0.53.

Table 4.4. Subjects’ Spiritual State Today in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual State</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe your spiritual life today.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Dry, burned out</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Moderately sparse, maintaining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = Moderately full, sustaining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = Alive, overflowing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your relationship with God today.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 = Cold &amp; distant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Moderately cold &amp; distant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = Moderately warm &amp; close</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = Warm &amp; close</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current level of satisfaction in ministry yielded 9 percent of subjects as dissatisfied, while 53 percent were satisfied and 38 percent highly satisfied (see Table 4.5). The mean response was 3.28, with a standard deviation of 0.66. Satisfaction with spouse and family yielded the highest means of 3.69 and 3.55, with standard deviations
of 0.58 and 0.55 respectively. These satisfaction levels with spouse and family were even higher than the mean of the subjects’ perceptions of their relationship with God, which was 3.51.

The connection between pastors and their friends and colleagues was the least satisfying area for the group. They are particularly dissatisfied with their ministry colleagues. The current satisfaction level of friendships averaged 3.09 with a standard deviation of 0.62, and the ministry colleagues averaged 2.89 with a standard deviation of 0.59, with twenty-three percent of the respondents dissatisfied with their colleagues in ministry.

Table 4.5. Current Level of Satisfaction in Ministry in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe your current level of satisfaction …</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In ministry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With your spouse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With your family</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With your friendships</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With your ministry colleagues</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Self-Perceived Growth since Seminary**

Based on Babcock’s questionnaire, four areas were examined: growth in relationship to God, self, others, and ministry. These statements do not indicate anything about the strength or weakness of these relationships but simply the self-reported growth or change that occurred in the years since seminary.
On the whole, the subjects reported “much” or “significant” growth in their relationship to God since leaving seminary (see Table 4.6), particularly in the area of confidence in God’s active presence in their lives and in the world. The mean values of growth in their relationships to God were higher than any of the other areas of growth since seminary.

**Table 4.6. Growth in Relationship to God in Percentages**

**Key:** 1 = No growth, 2 = Some growth, 3 = Much growth, 4 = Significant growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Relationship to God</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A personal awareness of being loved by God.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A deepening acceptance of God in my life.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A deepening love of God.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A growing confidence of God’s active presence in the world.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A growing confidence of God’s active presence in my life.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In their relationships with others, the subjects grew the least in their ability to receive love, with a mean of 2.88 and a standard deviation of 0.83 (see Table 4.7). Earlier in the questionnaire, the subjects were asked their current levels of satisfaction with spouse, family, and friends, which were 3.69, 3.55, and 3.09. Their experience of growth in relationship to others scored less than their satisfaction with spouse, family, and friends, though not significantly so.
Table 4.7. Growth in Relationship to Others in Percentages

Key: 1 = No growth, 2 = Some growth, 3 = Much growth, 4 = Significant growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Relationship to Others</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. A deepening acceptance of others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A deepening love of others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A capacity and propensity for compassion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. A freedom to receive love</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. A freedom to give love</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Concern for and ability to relate openly with other people, especially to my Christian faith and life</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the category of growing in relationship to oneself following seminary, the pastors’ reported the least amount of growth in two areas (see Table 4.8). Progress in “a disciplined worship life that provides personal nourishment and ministry with others” had a mean of 2.67, with a standard deviation of 0.85. Progress in “a disciplined prayer life that provides personal nourishment” had a mean of 2.49, with a standard deviation of 0.849.

As this research sought to define the spiritually alive pastor as the Christian leader of a congregation who takes in sustenance (food, air, water) from, gets energy from, and grows in his or her connection to Christ with a measure of vigor and liveliness, these responses of minimal growth to the concept of nourishment were particularly poignant. A full 40 percent of the subjects reported little or no growth in the development of a nourishing worship life, and 58 percent reported little or no growth in the development of a disciplined prayer life that provides personal nourishment.
Table 4.8. Growth in Relationship to Oneself in Percentages

Key: 1 = No growth, 2 = Some growth, 3 = Much growth, 4 = Significant growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Relationship to Oneself</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. A capacity to allow God the freedom to be God.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Recognition of how the Bible addresses my own life.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Recognition of how the Bible addresses the lives of other persons and groups.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. An ability to be in touch with my own feelings and to identify and express them appropriately.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. A creativity, imagination, humor, and freedom of spirit, as characteristics of my ministerial style.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. A sense of confidence and courage in taking stands for my convictions in religious communities.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. A sense of confidence and courage in taking stands for my convictions in secular communities.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. A sense of confidence and courage in taking stands for my convictions in the face of opposition.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Progress in the development of a disciplined worship life that provides personal nourishment and ministry with others.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Progress in the development of a disciplined prayer life that provides personal nourishment.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the section regarding growth in relationship to Christian ministry, three of the questions focused on the growth of the sense of the pastor’s identity and the growing conviction of his or her call (see Table 4.9). In the final open response question of the Seminary to Ministry Life Questionnaire, fifteen of the eighty-eight subjects named their most spiritually formative experience as having something to do with their coming to a self-acceptance of their identity as pastor or spiritual leader. For 17 percent of the subjects, the sense of call, introduction to ministry, or relationship to Christian ministry was their greatest epiphany moment in their spiritual formation. At the same time, 17 percent of those surveyed reported no growth or only some growth in the conviction that God had called them to Christian ministry, and 35 percent experienced no growth or only
some growth in the conviction of God’s call on their lives to a specific arena or form of ministry.

Since seminary, the majority of the subjects have grown in their convictions regarding the place that Christian ministry has in their lives, although the subjects’ reflections on their ability to “hold things loosely” show a mean of 2.64 with a standard deviation of 0.73, which was the subjects’ lowest area of growth in their relationship to ministry section, with 45 percent of the respondents reported no to minimal growth. A few respondents marked the question as confusing.

Table 4.9. Growth In Relationship to Christian Ministry in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Relationship to Christian Ministry</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. A sense of conviction regarding my call by God to Christian ministry.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. A sense of conviction of my call by God to a specific arena or form of ministry.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. An ability to hold “things” loosely.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. An ability to invest myself passionately in my ministry.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In their ability to invest themselves passionately in their ministry, 24 percent of the subjects reported no growth or minimal growth with a mean of 3.09 and standard deviation of 0.78. One of the definitions of a spiritually alive pastor is growing with a measure of vigor and liveliness.

**Personal and Spiritual Disciplines**

Subjects as a whole showed the most growth in the disciplines of worship and service seeing themselves as having grown much in these areas (see Table 4.10). The
least growth occurred among the subjects in the areas of fasting and spiritual journaling.

Table 4.10. Growth in Present Personal and Spiritual Disciplines in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confession</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fasting</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solitude</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual guidance</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual journaling</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual reading</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study of Scripture</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflections on the Seminary Experience

Subjects were invited to reflect on where they experienced the most significant spiritual growth inside the classroom and outside the classroom (see Table 4.11).

The average spiritual growth that happened within the context of the classroom was 2.58 compared to 2.64 average spiritual growth that happened outside the context of the classroom.

As a whole, subjects experienced the least amount of spiritual growth in professor-led devotions, with 81 percent reporting no growth to some growth. One respondent may have voiced others’ perceptions by writing in, “This was seminary. What
devotions?” With no devotions upon which to reflect, some respondents may have answered “no growth.”

The most growth overall occurred through the field education experience, with 73 percent reporting much growth to significant growth as a result of their field education experiences.

Table 4.11. Sources of Significant Spiritual Growth at Seminary in Percentages

Key: 1 = No growth, 2 = Some growth, 3 = Much growth, 4 = Significant growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inside the Classroom</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor-led devotions</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor’s teaching</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific course on spiritual formation</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class discussions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic content</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor’s model of a life of faith</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outside the Classroom</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapel worship</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small groups</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty mentor</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminary support during life crisis</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethos of the seminary community</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual disciplines</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field education experience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most Significant Spiritually Formative Seminary Experience

In order to ensure the instrument revealed the most spiritually formative experience while at seminary, subjects were asked to describe them in writing. Of the
eighty-eight respondents, seventy took the time to answer the final question (see Table 4.12).

Subjects were encouraged to share the setting, where, and when it happened, events or issues leading up to it, significant people present, and ways the subject was changed as a result. Many of the subjects recorded more than one significant experience. Seventy respondents listed ninety-eight different contexts of experiences.

For purposes of this research, all the responses were categorized and divided between in-class or out-of-class contexts. The in-class experience was presumed to be within the seminary’s intentional programming, but many of the out-of-class experiences were not possible to gauge, as the seminary may have encouraged a trip or experience although it does not appear in the seminary’s official programming. Thus the seminary’s intentionality in offering such out-of-class experiences was unable to be assessed, based on this question.

Some of the specific responses may have been field education, although the respondents listed the context in a different way, such as a cross-cultural experience, travel, pilgrimage, retreat, or Clinical Pastoral Education. For sake of categorization, these were listed separately in order to provide the most information into the specific contexts of the formational experience for each subject. A similar issue occurred with the categories of small group and/or friends. Some of the friends to which the subject referred to may have been within the context of a seminary-sponsored small group. The Introduction to Ministry Course may also have functioned more like a small group than an in-class experience. The subject’s identification as pastor is a third area in which some respondents name that epiphany, while others name the Introduction to Ministry course,
or Clinical Pastoral Education that may have provided the space in which the pastor came to a sense of identity.

Table 4.12. Contexts of the Subjects’ Most Spiritual Formative Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class on Prayer/Pastoral Care/Spiritual Formation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty (in-class)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Ministry Course</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out-of-Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Outside of Class</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Ed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethos/Community Support</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; Cross Cultural Experience</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity as Minister</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilgrimage &amp; Retreat Outside School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPE</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapy/Spiritual Director (off campus)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Trip &amp; Evangelism Opportunity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The greatest number of formational experiences were found in friends, small groups, class experiences based on the curriculum (and likely the professor), connection with a professor outside of class, and field education.

The seminary ethos and community support as an important context of spiritual formation may be the sum of the other contexts or the general sense of the importance of the Christian community as a whole in the formation of the subject.

**Spiritual Life Today**

In order to assess what patterns, if any, emerge from the data with respect to ways in which seminarians are intentionally formed spiritually, examination was made of the
correlation between measurements within the data. Pearson’s Correlation analysis was applied to each response (see Appendix C for complete results).

Of primary interest for this study was the examination of correlations with the Spiritual Life Today data. The statistically significant results (in which $p \geq 0.05$) are in Table 4.13, followed by those less significant correlations to spiritual life today.

While none of the formational experiences at seminary correlated with spiritual life today, four other growth categories did. The strongest correlation was the pastor’s relationship with God. Second was growth in the development of a disciplined prayer life that provides personal nourishment. Third was the personal discipline of prayer, and the last correlation that contains statistical significance is satisfaction in ministry. Growth in the personal discipline of mediation is also notable.

The seminary experiences that came the closest to a significant correlation with spiritual life today were Professor-led devotions ($r=0.22$), Professor’s teaching ($r=0.24$), Academic content ($r=0.23$), and Spiritual disciplines ($r=0.21$). One negative correlation was present in the area of Chapel worship ($r= -0.19$).
Table 4.13. Factors Contributing to Spiritual Life Today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with God.</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in progress in the development of a disciplined prayer life that provides personal nourishment.</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal discipline of prayer.</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction in ministry.</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal discipline of meditation.</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in progress the development of a disciplined worship life that provides personal nourishment and ministry with others.</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for and ability to relate openly with other people, especially to my Christian faith and life.</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal discipline of Scripture reading.</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal discipline of worship.</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An ability to invest myself passionately in my ministry.</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A personal awareness of being loved by God.</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal discipline of confession.</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A creativity, imagination, humor, and freedom of spirit, as characteristics of my ministerial style.</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relationship of Seminary Experiences to Other Areas**

Out of all the seminary experiences, only one statistically significant correlation existed. A class on spiritual formation correlated with the subjects’ personal discipline of journaling ($r=0.5$). The class on spiritual formation increased the likelihood that the pastors would experience more growth in their journaling.

While no other statistically significant correlations appeared, some variables were nearly significant in other areas (see Table 4.14). Due to the seminary-related focus of this research, they are listed where $r$ was 0.3 or higher.

The correlations in which $r$ was less than 0.3 did not mean that the seminaries were unsuccessful in preparing spiritually alive pastors. Conversely, they meant that indicators based on the seminary experience could not predict the spiritual aliveness or personal growth of that pastor.
Table 4.14. Relationship of Seminary Experiences to Growth since Seminary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminary Experience</th>
<th>Area of Resulting Growth Since Seminary</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual formation class</td>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual reading</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confession</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual guidance</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solitude</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor-led devotions</td>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual reading</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic content</td>
<td>A sense of conviction regarding my call by God to Christian ministry</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scripture reading</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual reading</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual disciplines</td>
<td>Confession</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spiritual reading</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scripture reading</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class discussion</td>
<td>Spiritual reading</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminary Support during crisis</td>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor’s model of faith</td>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor’s teaching</td>
<td>A sense of conviction regarding my call by God to Christian ministry</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trends in the Factors Influencing Spiritual Life Today**

Although less strong than Pearson’s Correlation analysis, certain noteworthy trends emerge in the means when the basic statement “Describe your spiritual life today,” was compared with the subjects’ responses throughout the rest of the questionnaire. The t-test was applied to the two samples of those whose spiritual life today was “moderately
sparse, maintaining” (scoring 2 on the Likert scale) versus those whose spiritual life today was “moderately full, sustaining” (scoring 3 on the Likert scale) or “alive, overflowing” (scoring 4 on the Likert scale) (see Appendix D).

The t-test ensures confidence that the means of each group represent a true difference. Based on the t-test results, the confidence percentage of the findings for twenty-seven key questions is over 95 percent, ensuring a true difference between responses of those who were “moderately sparse, maintaining” and those who were “alive, overflowing.”

Of the eighty-eight responses, eight subjects described their spiritual life today as “moderately sparse, maintaining;” Fifty-two subjects described their spiritual life as “moderately full, sustaining;” and twenty-seven subjects described their spiritual life as “alive, overflowing.” For the remainder of this chapter, these three groups are known as “Sparse (n=8), Full (n=52), and Overflowing (n=27)” (see Table 4.15).

Table 4.15. Comparative Spiritual State References

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual State Today</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = Dry, burned out</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = Moderately sparse, maintaining</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sparse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = Moderately full, sustaining</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = Alive, overflowing</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Overflowing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each subset of responses was compared with the major sections of the questionnaire in order to determine if any correlational determinant existed. A number of correlations were found.

The average age of respondents who believe their spiritual life today is sparse is
39.6 years with a standard deviation of 8.45, in which n=8. For those who believe their spiritual life today is full or overflowing, the average age of 47 years with a standard deviation of 9.3, in which n=31. Although the sample population of the spiritually sparse pastors is not large, the t-test confidence of this figure is 95.3 percent, insuring that this age difference is real. While the distributions overlap, on average those pastors experiencing a sparse spiritual life are younger.

In their relationship to their family as they were growing up, very little difference was observed between the subsets. The means of the subjects were 3.13 with a standard deviation of 0.83 for spiritually sparse pastors, 3.29 with a standard deviation of 0.69 for spiritually full pastors, and 3.39 with a standard deviation of 0.74 for spiritually overflowing pastors. The similarity of this data was helpful in pointing out that the spiritually sparse pastors were not simply more negative in their memories than the spiritually full or spiritually overflowing pastors.

**Spiritual State’s Effect on Spiritual Life Today**

Generally, in the other areas of their spiritual state today, Figure 4.2 shows those respondents whose spiritual life today rated a 2 scored lower than those whose spiritual life today rated a 3, who scored lower than those who rated a 4.

As each subset was compared to the rest of the responses for the spiritual state today, a distinct and noteworthy trend in the mean responses in their relationship with God and in their ministry satisfaction was found. Satisfaction with friends and ministry colleagues exhibited less of a trend. No real relationship existed between spiritual life today and spouse or family satisfaction, which also points out that the “sparse” respondents did not undervalue everything.
Figure 4.2. Comparison of mean responses of spiritual life today with spiritual state today.

Spiritual Growth Factors Affecting Spiritual Life Today

In the Spiritual Growth since Seminary section, the more significant differences were noted in Figure 4.3. In the subjects’ personal awareness of God’s love and their ability to relate the Christian faith openly, those whose spiritual life today was sparse lacked a perception of growth, as compared with those whose spiritual life was overflowing. Nevertheless, each subset has grown consistently, no matter how they labeled their spiritual life today.

In the subset of subjects’ responses to the question of growth of nourishing worship life and nourishing prayer life, those whose spiritual life today was sparse lacked a perception of growth, as compared with those whose spiritual life was full or
overflowing.

Figure 4.3. Comparison of mean responses of spiritual life today with spiritual growth since seminary.

In the correlation of spiritual disciplines, overall the 2s track below the 3s, who track below the 4s. The most significant discrepancies are in the 2’s disciplines of meditation and prayer. None of the subjects have grown significantly in the disciplines of journaling or prayer.

Comparing Seminary Factors with Spiritual Life Today

In ten out of thirteen contexts of the seminary, those whose spiritual life today was sparse scored lower than those whose spiritual life today was full, and those whose
spiritual life today was full scored lower than those whose spiritual life was overflowing (see Figure 4.4). This trend was consistent in every formational experience within the context of the classroom to varying degrees.

Those whose present spiritual life was sparse seemed to have a lesser opinion of their professor-led devotions than those who were experiencing an overflowing present spiritual life. The difference also occurred in their course or courses on spiritual formation; however, the standard deviations bridge the gaps, leaving a less predictable outcome.

A positive relationship also exists between the respondents’ rating of their spiritual growth in the context of their professors’ teaching and their view of their spiritual life today. Respondents who valued their spiritual growth as “significant” in professors’ teachings were almost three times more likely to indicate having an overflowing spiritual life today.

Another correlation may be established between the subjects’ rating of their seminary academic content and their spiritual life today. Those who valued their spiritual growth in the context of their academic content as “much” or “significant” were about two times as likely to have a full or overflowing spiritual life today.

Field education affected all the subjects equally well. It was also the most valued of the seminary context, having had a relatively positive growth impact on all the subjects.
Figure 4.4. Comparing seminary factors with spiritual life today.
In seminary chapel worship experience the trend is inverted. The mean of the spiritual growth experience decreases from the 2s to the 4s in seminary chapel worship. In this category, 87.5 percent of those whose spiritual life was sparse experienced “much” to “significant” growth at chapel. Respondents who experienced “much” to “significant” growth in the chapels were almost 1½ times more likely to have a spiritual life today that was sparse or maintaining. Nevertheless, no single area stands out as a predictor of a pastor’s present spiritual aliveness.

**Comparisons with Gender as the Variable**

When compared along the lines of gender, the responses indicated that no substantial differences were observed by gender affecting the responses or levels of spiritual aliveness in any of the categories. Statistically, men and women responded in a very similar manner in all categories and sections of the questionnaire (see Appendix E).

**Comparison of Means with the Seminary as the Variable**

The two seminaries most represented in the responses were Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (GETS n=16) and United Theological Seminary (UTS n=14). These two subsets were correlated with the subjects’ responses throughout the rest of the questionnaire.

The t-test was applied to the two seminary subsets. The t-test ensures confidence that the means of each group represent a true difference. Based on the t-test results, the confidence percentage of the findings for many key questions was over 95 percent (see Appendix F).

On the whole, the subjects from the two seminaries responded similarly to the questions regarding their spiritual life today (see Figure 4.4). UTS respondents’ spiritual
life today had a mean 3.00 with a standard deviation of 0.55. GETS respondents had a mean of 3.20 with a standard deviation of 0.68.

In the areas of growth since seminary and personal spiritual disciplines, no statistical difference between the means of the local pastors from GETS and those from UTS existed.

In the areas of growth since seminary and personal spiritual disciplines, no difference was found between the local pastors from GETS and those from UTS.

Figure 4.5. Comparison of seminary with spiritual state today.

Graduates of these two seminaries did differ within the reflections on the seminary experience (see Figure 4.6). Within the context of the classroom, the students
from GETS reported more growth in the areas of professor-led devotions, a specific course on spiritual formation, and the professor’s model of a life of faith.

In the area of spiritual growth outside the classroom, the respondents of GETS also reported more growth in the areas of faculty mentor, seminary support, seminary ethos, and spiritual discipline. In those same areas the majority of UTS alumni reported no growth or some growth.

Figure 4.6. Comparison of the seminary experience between UTS and GETS.

An Examination of the Seminary Catalogues

In order to examine what explicit claims the seminaries make with respect to the spiritually formative experiences their institutions make available to their students, the
seminary catalogues for Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and United
Theological Seminary were studied.

First, the purpose or mission statement for each seminary was examined.

**GETS’ Core Purpose.** “To know God in Christ and, through preparing spiritual
leaders, to help others know God in Christ” (Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
4). GETS’ purpose incorporates the phrases “To know Christ,” implying the basic
purpose of spiritual formation, which includes not only the way one thinks but the kind of
person one is. The dynamic process of receiving the living Christ into one’s life is
spiritual formation. “to help others know God in Christ” is the second purpose of GETS,
which implies some of this project’s observation of the overflowing nature of the Holy
Spirit in the implication of the spiritually alive pastor. Being one who experiences growth
in his or her connection to Christ, with a measure of vigor and liveliness to the point of
overflowing into the lives of others implies helping “others know God in Christ.” This
biblical aspect of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Sustainer is evident by the
symbolism of living water. The method purposed by GETS to achieve these results is
“through preparing spiritual leaders.” Use of the word “preparing” implies training for
some future context or area of growth in which its students will be influencers,
implicating the relationship with the local church.

**UTS’ Mission Statement.** UTS is “a Christ-centered graduate school of The
United Methodist Church that equips leaders for the church in a pluralistic world through
the nurture of piety, the love of learning, and the pursuit of justice” (United Theological
Seminary Catalogue 1). UTS’ mission begins with the phrase, “Christ-centered,”
followed by its identity as a “graduate school of The United Methodist Church.” While
the focus is on Christ, the words “graduate school” shifts some emphasis of the mission statement toward the academic side of preparation. The purpose is then to equip “leaders for the church in a pluralistic world,” giving a heightened emphasis to the church in the midst of diversity and dialogue. The seminary then names the means it seeks to use in order to accomplish “the nurture of piety, the love of learning, and the pursuit of justice.” Piety refers to the practice of holiness, including spiritual disciplines. The love of learning implies growth in academic arenas, though likely includes issues of faith and spiritual formation as well. The pursuit of justice implies acts of service and mission, as well as the intellectual discourse related to tearing down preconceived notions of righteousness or prejudice. Integrally associated with pursuing justice is a sense in which persons are reeducated or convicted about present realities.

At the beginning of its section on Theological Education and Seminary Life, GETS offers this introduction:

Christian ministerial formation for missional leadership requires time and spiritual companionship as one grows in knowledge of God and the practices of the faith. Study, personal prayer, and worship, as well as participation in covenantal communities of prayer and mission are required. While mentoring by faculty advisors is a key element of spiritual formation, it is further grounded in a robust community worship life, including Eucharist, praise, and gospel services; small groups within courses exploring the practices of Christian faith, numerous covenant discipleship and prayer groups meeting for sharing, support, and accountability; seminary spiritual retreats; and spiritual directors. (Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary 20)

In the areas of program, UTS highlights its contextual education, its version of field education. Among its goal is to “heighten your capacity for theological reflection … [and to] expand awareness of your personal relationship with God and the ways in which you life and ministry mutually influence each other” (United Theological Seminary
Formation in connection with the field education experience involves professional identity formation, which includes Christian identity formation and spiritual formation. In the areas of community life, the calendar lists two special events with connections to students’ spiritual formation.

Under the purpose section of the UTS M.Div. degree program, the first two items listed in the design of the M.Div. degree are to “[d]eepen one’s commitment to God as disclosed in Jesus Christ [and to] [s]upport one’s personal spiritual life and practice” (United Theological Seminary Catalogue 7). United highlights this quote by a student in its catalogue: “United is in the business of preparing pastors and emphasizes practical ministry experiences as well as academic study” (7).

GETS, on the other hand, under its M.Div. degree requirements, lists Letter E—Spiritual Formation:

Spiritual formation is intrinsic to the degree. While it is a part of coursework, students are also expected to devote time outside of class to significant formative experiences, such as corporate worship, community meals, service, and spiritual direction. Students are introduced to designated spiritual practices (the historic “rule of life”) within the Vocation in Ministry course. Church leadership and field education continues the covenantal community. The student’s “rule of life” is reviewed regularly with faculty advisors (Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary 2004-2006 Academic Bulletin 20)

Within its course offerings, UTS lists courses in spiritual formation as Christian Education: Teaching and Forming Disciples; Ministry Formation and Integration: Formation I, II, Integration V, and VI (United Theological Seminary Catalogue 72, 79, 80). GETS lists these specific courses under the heading of Integrative Courses: Vocation in Ministry; Congregational Leadership: Practicum/Supervision in Spiritual Formation/Companionship, Spiritual Disciplines for Personal and Parish Renewal, The
Art of Membership Development, Spiritual Direction/Companionship, and Prayer in Christian Ministry (Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary 51-52).

In the faculty department, UTS has one faculty member with a named interest and emphasis in spiritual formation, though this professor’s title is Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling. GETS employs an Associate Professor of Spiritual Formation, who is also the Director of the D.Min. Program.

The claims made in each seminary’s purpose or mission statement seem to be met successfully, as the data suggests in Table 4.4 (p. 66). GETS implies a dual emphasis on the classroom and out-of-class experience, and contexts of growth in the students supports that claim. UTS places an emphasis on the challenges of Christian witness in the modern context of cross-cultural and pluralistic society. In each case, the subsets of respondents’ spiritual life today are on average “full, sustaining.”

**Comparing Evangelical and Mainline Seminary Results**

When the seminaries were divided between those seminaries that were considered mainline (n=74) and those generally considered nondenominational, non-mainline, and recognized as historically evangelical (n=14), several differences appeared (see Table 4.16).

For this study, the seminaries categorized as evangelical consisted of Asbury Theological Seminary, Ashland Theological Seminary, Anderson University School of Theology, Bethel Theological Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, and Southern Theological Seminary (while Southern Baptist is considered mainline, it is also considered evangelical). Those seminaries considered mainline included Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, United Theological Seminary, Methodist Theological
Seminary, Christian Theological Seminary Indianapolis, Princeton Theological Seminary, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Duke Divinity School, North American Baptist, St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Anderson Theological School, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Candler Theological Seminary, Eden Webster Groves, Missouri, Iliff School of Theology, Payne Theological Seminary, Perkins School of Theology, and Southern Methodist University.

Several areas of difference emerged from the data. In the area of spiritual life today, those pastors who attended evangelical seminaries were more likely to be alive or overflowing. Other seminary context differences were in professor-led devotions, spiritual formation class, chapel worship, and seminary support. The growth since seminary in journaling, meditation, and fasting was greater among evangelical seminary graduates than among mainline seminary graduates.

Table 4.16. Comparison of Evangelical and Mainline Seminaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Statistical Difference</th>
<th>Evangelical Mean</th>
<th>Mainline Mean</th>
<th>T-test P-value</th>
<th>Confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spirit Life Today</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>98.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof-led Devotions</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>93.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit Form Class</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>92.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel Worship</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>93.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>95.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>97.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fasting</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>99.19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extraneous Variables

Findings were examined to determine if the intervening variables of gender, length of time spent at seminary, and age were a factor toward the subjects’ spiritual life today.

Neither family life nor gender produced significant differences; however, length of time attending seminary (full or part-time students) produced some significant differences (see Figure 4.7).

Based on the years attending seminary, the subjects were divided into two groups: those who completed seminary in four or less years and those who finished in over four years. The minimum time for the M.Div. degree is three years, and many students do a year-long internship for a fourth year. Anything over four years most likely involves some part-time schooling.

When the respondents were subdivided by the number of years attending, significant differences arose in the means for those who attended seminary part-time with a mean of 3.2 and standard deviation of 0.66 from those who attended full-time with a mean of 2.56 and standard deviation of 0.6.

The subjects who were part-time students perceived more growth since seminary in thirty-one of the thirty-seven categories, though the difference was not statistically significant. Their mean growth in class discussions and small groups were larger than the full-time students.

The extraneous variable of age was noted in the comparison of the means between spiritually sparse and spiritually overflowing pastors but was not statistically significant.
Summary of Significant Findings

1. Statistically, the strongest correlation to the spiritual life of the pastor was his or her relationship with God, followed by growth in the development of a disciplined prayer life that provides personal nourishment, the personal discipline of prayer, satisfaction in ministry, and growth in the personal discipline of meditation.

2. Those pastors experiencing a sparse spiritual life were younger than those whose spiritual lives were full or overflowing.

3. Authentic differences were observed between those whose spiritual life today was sparse and those whose spiritual life today was overflowing. The seminary contexts...
in which spiritually alive pastors grew the most as compared to their colleagues whose spiritual lives today were sparse were in the classroom: professors’ devotions, professors’ teaching, a course on spiritual formation, and academic content (see Figure 4.4 p. 84).

4. Outside the seminary classroom, the biggest differences between spiritually alive and spiritually sparse pastors occurred in their growth with a faculty mentor and with spiritual disciplines.

5. Seminarians remembered their most spiritually significant seminary experiences in the context of friendships, a small group, conversations with professors in and out of class, and field education.

6. The seminaries claim to offer spiritual formation as a part of their learning experience. Although the methods and emphases are different, the results appear the same, although evidence of their emphases shows up in the comparative data.

7. Since seminary, those whose spiritual life today was alive and overflowing grew in the areas of nourishing worship life and nourishing prayer life much more than those whose spiritual life today was sparse (see Figure 4.3 p. 82).
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The origin of this research project stems from concerns expressed in the axiom by
the former President of Asbury Theological Seminary, Maxie Dunnam: “As goes the
seminary, so goes the local pastor. As goes the local pastor, so goes the local church. As
goes the local church, so goes the denomination” (Conversation). The local church is
desperately in need of “spiritually alive pastors,” a term people intuitively have a sense of
but do not know how to define. Common attitudes of church men and women toward the
quality of pastors in the United Methodist Church and the ability of the seminaries to
produce them were heard in comments that boiled down to, “Who are they going to send
us this time?” and “I hope seminary doesn’t destroy their faith.”

This project does not deal with the perceptions of the laity but rather looks at what
seminaries are doing in order to produce spiritually alive pastors. Through the Seminary
to Life Ministry Questionnaire, 188 surveys were sent and responses were gathered from
eighty—eight recently ordained local pastors in the United Methodist Church.

As seen in Chapter 2, the seminaries give emphasis to three areas: indoctrination
in historic Christian beliefs and Scripture, study of practical theology including church
leadership and management, and scholarly expertise in theological sciences. Within this
threefold arena, the seminary also introduces and encourages the student into the spiritual
life that Jesus offers, which cannot be self-contained because of the very overflowing
nature of the Holy Spirit, as seen throughout Scripture in the image of living water.

By definition and the revelation of Scripture, this overflowing spiritual life is
missional. John’s Gospel gives evidence of this missional nature in his account of Jesus
and the woman at the well. The response of the people to her, and then ultimately to Jesus himself, expresses how the Holy Spirit works in the continuation of spiritual aliveness as the Spirit draws people to Jesus Christ: “And they were saying to the woman, ‘it is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world’” (John 4:42). Spiritually alive pastors deal with the very nature of God. God overflows in abundant life to the point that that nature and life spill over into the lives of others, calling them to go forward to others and relate back to God. As the seminaries are able to identify the contexts that most significantly impact the spiritual aliveness of the pastor, intentional progress can be made to increase the ability and likelihood that the pastor is equipped and open to the living water of the Holy Spirit. The goal would not just be to maintain or sustain individuals in their personal relationship to Christ but to move in the pastors’ lives in order to overflow into the life and ministry of the church. This assertion formed the core of this research project.

**Major Findings and Reflections**

The results of this study demonstrate that the strongest indicator of the spiritual life of pastors today is from growth in their relationship with God, followed by growth in the development of a disciplined prayer life that provides personal nourishment, satisfaction in ministry, and growth in the personal discipline of meditation. The major finding is that recent growth significantly influences spiritual well-being.

The relationship with God and deepening love for God is where being equipped in spiritual formation could have its greatest impact. The primacy of this relationship and love for God harkens back to the early writings in spiritual formation as recorded in
Augustine’s passionate dependence on the grace of God (Augustine: Major Writings 21). It substantiates Bernard of Clairvaux’s emphasis on the love relationship with God as necessary for all other forms of godly love (Collins 47). The love relationship emphasis exists throughout the writings of Christian scholars and mystics. The pastor who appears to find security in the warmth and closeness of his or her relationship with God is the one whose spiritual life is most overflowing. According to the data, this relationship with God correlated strongly with spiritual life today, a nourishing prayer life, a deepening love for God, the ability to relate the faith openly with others, spiritual guidance, and nourishing personal worship.

**The Importance of Nourishing Prayer and Worship after Seminary**

In the lives of the pastors since seminary, growth in a nourishing prayer life (or lack thereof) was moderately related to the spiritual aliveness of the pastor today. Predictably, a notable difference between the spiritually alive and spiritually sparse pastors existed in their progress in the development of a disciplined prayer life that provides personal nourishment. The impact of personal prayer reinforces the spiritually formative writings throughout Christian history: from Origen and Benedict of Nursia, to John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, to Henry Nouwen’s twentieth-century experience of the simplicity of prayer. The significance of nourishing prayer also affirmed the eighteenth century pietist response to the shifts within theological education that included a strong call back to prayer and discipline as well as preparation for specific tasks of ministry the setting of theological study (Farley, Theologia 41).

Meditation and a personal, disciplined, nourishing worship life moderately correlated with spiritual aliveness today, reinforcing the writings of many such as the
mystics such as John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, as well as Augustine.

When the means between sparse and overflowing pastors were compared, those whose spiritual life today was alive and overflowing grew in the areas of nourishing worship life and nourishing prayer life much more than those whose spiritual life today was sparse (Figure 4.3 p. 82).

For the 40 percent of the subjects who reported little or no growth in the area of nourishing worship life and the 58 percent of those who reported little or no growth in the area of disciplined prayer life, further study, preparedness, and accountability in those practices would seem vital to maintain or reclaim a level of growth beyond their current level of growth. Pastors trained by the seminary in the discipline of self-care through the setting up of a system of nourishing study, worship, and accountability would be more equipped for spiritual growth. Intentionality on the part of the seminary may contribute to the likelihood of growth occurring.

The two worship questions in the questionnaire produced different responses. Growth in the progress of development of a disciplined worship life that provides personal nourishment and ministry with others was one of the largest discrepancies between spiritually alive pastors and moderately sparse pastors today. The personal discipline of worship was perceived to be much higher than nourishing worship with others. Perhaps the discrepancy comes from the inability of the pastor to receive much nourishment out of the Sunday worship service. Being in charge takes the spiritual nourishment out of Sunday worship for many pastors. It becomes more worrisome and less nourishing.
Ministry Satisfaction and the Myth of Friendship in Church

One of the statistically significant indicators of spiritual aliveness is ministry satisfaction. Ministry satisfaction involves a feeling of well-being, meaningful relationships, and success in ministry. (In John 4, the effects of the living water bore fruit.) In the local church setting, the ministry satisfaction would naturally come from the work being done and the pastor’s relationship with people.

When ministry satisfaction is coupled with the contexts of the most formative spiritual experiences at seminary (in the areas of friends and small groups, Figure 4.4 p. 84), a natural question for pastors becomes whether or not they are engaging in any current satisfying friendships and small groups in the local church. Ministry satisfaction in the church includes friends and supportive small groups.

The impact of transformative small groups supports the historical success of the monastic movement, Hunter’s view of the success of the Celtic way of training and growth using soul friends and small groups, and the boom of early Methodism through the class meeting structure. Bonnhoeffer (qtd. in Amirtham and Pryor 193) and Collins call for emphasis in theological education to take place in a communal life as well.

The perpetual myth about whether or not the local pastor should form deep friendships within the church continues to be discussed. Sometimes the pastor chooses not to be in relationship with those persons in their immediate surrounding. Other times he or she is prohibited from being in relationship with those persons due to local culture or expectations. In these cases, supportive relationships and spiritually formational experiences are limited. When isolation occurs, the sense of being able to work together as friends with those in the local church is gone, and ministry satisfaction may be
affected. While Cetuk’s view of seminary de-emphasizes the local church relationship issue, many scholars (e.g., Farley; Collins; Calian; McNeal) call for seminary to refocus and reclaim the vision of training for the work of local church ministry.

Virtually every spiritual-wellness indicator includes multiple references to relationships in life. Without in-house church relationships (those most easily accessible), spiritual wellness would decrease. When spiritual wellness is lessened, satisfaction level in the pastor’s ministry is lower, leading to a decreased level of spiritual aliveness. This increased level of dissatisfaction means the pastor must use energy in order to meet his or her own needs, leaving the ability of the Spirit hindered in that person’s life to overflow into the lives of others.

The Role of the Seminary Experience

While seminary experiences were not statistically significant indicators of spiritual aliveness today, weak correlations were evident. The trends of this study based on the comparison of spiritually sparse pastors versus spiritually overflowing pastors indicate authentic differences. Those pastors who are sparse today experienced less growth in their seminary experiences, particularly in the classroom: professors’ devotions, professors’ teaching, a course on spiritual formation, and academic content (see Figure 4.4 p. 84).

The only context in which this trend was reversed was in the context of the seminary chapel. The sparse pastor experienced slightly more growth from the chapel experience than the full or overflowing pastor. A dramatic implication results: much spiritual growth in chapel worship actually has an inversely related effect on the spiritual aliveness of pastors in the local church. Different levels of growth in the chapel
experience may be due to the difference in persons who receive spiritually formative experiences from external rather than internal focus.

In the comparative study of the two seminaries, the mission statement of each seminary was reflected in the specific results of each seminary’s respondents, although the spiritual life today was statistically similar. Thus, when the seminary named its mission, it was able to follow through, as the results of the comparison suggest.

**The Role of the Seminary Faculty**

As the trends among the comparisons were examined closely, a common denominator in each of these trends became clear. The influence of the professors’ input into the life and spiritual growth of the student while at seminary compares favorably to the spiritual aliveness of the pastor, whether in the professors’ devotions, teaching, academic content, or mentorship. In the comparative trends between spiritually alive and moderately sparse pastors, the combined influence of the faculty factor showed a greater total difference in spiritual life today than any other factor. The original hypothesis of growth through whole-person engagement was overshadowed by the results of the faculty’s impact.

The trend emphasized the role of the faculty that supported Farley’s research on the early seminary’s mentoring pastor/teacher model. Increasing the faculty’s role supports the views of Farley, Collins, Calian, and McNeal, who claim that much of the seminary’s original vision and agenda has been sidelined, from nourishment to training. The personal impact of the faculty answers Marshall’s call for a new pedagogic approach, as well as Hunter’s Celtic observations.

The reasons for the professors’ teaching leading to an increased spiritual aliveness
today can only be speculated. They may include the professors’ subject matter, their
manner of teaching, or the actual ability of students to understand the material due to the
teaching of the professors.

The closest factor of significance to impacting the future life of the seminarian
was the class or classes on spiritual formation. The correlation was notable between the
spiritual formation class and the personal discipline of journaling, although journaling
itself had minimal correlation with the pastor’s spiritual state today.

The impact of the “community” approach of the seminary is greatest when the
core community is the faculty of the institution. Their interactions, devotions, teaching,
and life of faith demonstrated in class, their relationships outside of class, and their
advisory roles would increase the likelihood of the students’ spiritual aliveness,
answering Marshall’s call for relational contextual learning in seminary.

For seminaries to create contexts of spiritual formation that produce spiritually
alive pastors, they must create a culture of emphasis on the person-to-person learning and
leading as Thomas C. Oden suggests (224). Similar to John 4, the overflowing of the
Holy Spirit from person-to-person is perhaps the most holistic approach to spiritual
formation in theological education. The passing on or overflowing of the knowledge,
experience, and training the pastor receives becomes a part of the message and method of
the gospel, whether in the context of a class or a mentor-type relationship. The pastors
then become conduits, sharing and carrying on the new life of holiness, healing, and
missional nature of the gospel message (Isa. 32:17-18; Jer. 2:13; Ezek. 47:1-12; Joel
3:17-18). As Larry Paul Jones (100) and Mark A. Matson (31) note, this person to person
approach of the living water overflowing into people’s lives breaks down barriers and
creates the phenomenon of life begetting life (Isa. 32:15-16, 19-20).

**Two Issues for the United Methodist Church: Colleagues and Passion**

Two issues bear reflection within the unique context of United Methodism: colleagues and passion. Both areas contained a lower level of satisfaction than any other relationship.

**Colleagues in ministry.** The connection between local pastors and their colleagues was their least satisfying area of relationship. A full 23 percent of the respondents were dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied with their colleagues in ministry. With caucuses, theological and methodological diversity, the person-to-person approach of the seminary could have an impact on the United Methodist Church denomination.

The United Methodist Church would seem to be in a position to impact the subjects’ satisfaction with ministry colleagues more than any other influence. The United Methodist Church attempts to connect colleagues through annual conference, programs, district connections, and cluster groups, which many annual conferences offer pastors. No other organization seeks to unite United Methodist colleagues; however, the church’s attempts appear to be making the least amount of impact on the satisfaction level of the pastor.

**Passionate investment.** No growth or some growth occurred in 24 percent of the pastors in their ability to invest themselves passionately in their ministry. Their ability to be spiritually alive for their local congregations may be inhibited.

Because of the way the United Methodist system works, pastors five years into their appointments are more likely to have smaller churches, have multiple-point charges, or be in the role of associate pastor. The nature of the appointment system tends to
promote the mind-set of growth occurring in a new assignment rather than in a long-term relationship in the present situation. The 24 percent who responded with no growth or some growth in their ability to invest themselves passionately may be facing a situation in which an unhealthy church on the lower end of the appointment system is guaranteed a pastor due to the United Methodist system, rather than that congregation facing issues of church health in a way that would attract or sustain a spiritually alive pastor, which is all the more reason for the seminaries to be intentional in their approach as they prepare spiritually alive pastors for the local church.

The Age Issue and Part-Time Students

Two extraneous variables arose in the trends of the study that require reflection. Those pastors experiencing a sparse spiritual life tended to be younger (averaging 39 years) than those whose spiritual lives were full or overflowing (averaging 47 years). This statistical difference may reflect several realities.

30s versus 40s. Average people in their late 30s tend to have younger children at home. They may have yet to settle into the identity of the role of career pastor. This busyness or unsettledness may not encourage a sense of spiritual aliveness. The typical person in their mid to late 40s may have older children and a more established career or self-identity.

The variety of second-career identities. In the study, both age groups were in ministry and seminary for the same length of time (approximately five years of ministry plus three to four years of seminary). The likelihood of both groups being second career is fairly certain, which means that both groups had a first career. The older set may have been more established in a first career, indicating a measure of maturity, staying power,
or success in that career. The average 39-year-old in ministry for approximately five years and seminary for approximately three years may not have been as established or successful in their first career. If recent growth significantly influences spiritual well-being, the lack of growth in the first career may still have the effect of lessening the experience of spiritual aliveness in the younger set of respondents.

**Part-time versus full-time.** While there is no difference in age between the full-time and part-time students, the part-time students scored significantly higher in their spiritual life today than the full-time students did, which may reflect a difference in the level of commitment between the groups. The part-time students most likely had a job or family for which to care. They would have had to balance more areas of life than those who attended school full-time. Outside of class, small groups stood out as more important for the part-time students than the full-time students. The small group may have been the primary contact with the seminary outside of class for part-timers, since many may have been working or living away from campus. The difference in spiritual life today may reflect a higher level of commitment in the part-time students as they made it through the demands of seminary while maintaining a life outside of their education.

**Weaknesses of the Study**

This study could have been strengthened by a greater number of respondents representing a greater number of seminaries. In particular, increasing the data obtained from the population of those pastors whose spiritual life today was “moderately sparse, maintaining” could provide further insight into the observable seminary factors, growth factors, and spiritual state today factors that are a part of their experience.

While progress was made in examining closely what makes up a “spiritually alive
pastor,” quantifying the term proved difficult. No minimum threshold could be generated beyond the subjects’ self-assessment of their spiritual life today.

In addition, the relatively large number of seminaries represented by a small number of subjects impeded observation of any correlating seminary influence in more than the two seminaries examined by the study.

**Research Possibilities**

The greatest contribution this study makes to research methodology is in spiritual well-being design. The results of this study indicate that recent growth significantly influences spiritual well-being. Spiritual well-being indicators should include observation of recent events rather than looking only at the present satisfaction levels in a person’s life. The important recent growth experiences reveal more clearly the source or sources of present satisfaction levels, which in turn affect spiritual well-being. The theory of the place and power of memory in the building of a soul would support this (Ashbrook).

This project also sought to research the connection between the seminary and the local church. One contribution to research is toward exploring the importance of the context of spiritual formation, whether relational, physical, or social. The increased level of importance of the seminary faculty in the spiritual formation of the seminary student opens wide the field of study of seminary faculty themselves.

The final contribution of this research methodology is to suggest that the spiritual formation of pastors is a cooperative issue and concern for the local church and seminary to explore and solve together. This cooperative research effort may succeed in breaking down the walls among the seminary, the local church, and the general church. Resources, solutions, and observations may be increasingly shared rather than compartmentalized,
adding to the body of knowledge available to all areas of Christian ministry for the
couragement of spiritual aliveness among clergy.

Implications of Findings and Practical Application

The data set implies variables at work that determine the spiritual aliveness of the
local pastor, most significantly in the area of recent growth in the pastors’ lives,
relationships to God, and prayer. Seminary education in its present form lacks the ability
to impact the spiritual aliveness of the pastors in a statistically significant way.
Nevertheless, the trends suggest that the faculty play a most important role in
encouraging spiritual aliveness. The interpersonal experience of students with the faculty,
the small group, and meaningful field education experience work together with the gifts
and abilities of the student to shape the growth potential and spiritual aliveness of
students for years to come.

The positive results of this research help to remove the general suspicion of the
seminary’s approach to spiritual formation of the pastor. This study demonstrates that
seminaries can be intentional in their offerings with the corresponding result of
succeeding in their mission.

The implications of the data lend an increased level of importance in the selection
of the seminary faculty. They would suggest that seminary trustees and administration
pay proper attention and give priority to how much of the faculty’s time is given over to
the classroom experience and the interactions with the students rather than less related
issues or concerns such as outside organizations, caucuses, and administrative meetings.

A prototype of the person-to-person approach to theological education could be
developed with a special emphasis on the faculty’s role as vessels of the living water of
the Holy Spirit and knowledge of the gospel. The overflowing nature of the person-to-
person model of theological education would go from faculty member to student and, by
its very nature, continue into the future as the spiritual aliveness of the pastor flows into
other lives. This person-to-person overflowing emphasis would occur even as the
students are steeped in learning Scripture, theology, spiritual formation, and the practical
trades of ministry.

Once the pastor is serving in ministry, specific discussions of his or her
relationship with God would prove to be a very relevant indicator of the pastor’s spiritual
aliveness. Conferences could intentionally provide person-to-person encouragement and
training in spiritual growth and disciplines, focusing on growing in loving personal
relationship with God, nourishing prayer life, and ministry training in order to encourage
success and satisfaction. Nourishing worship, meditation, and disciplined Scripture
reading would prove fruitful in helping the pastor avoid burnout and embrace an
overflowing spiritual life.

Researchers within a given seminary itself could administer a version of the
Seminary to Ministry Life Questionnaire to its alumni and be able to measure specific
classes. The study of the professor’s spiritual aliveness as well as their success in the
person-to-person impact upon students could be studied in the areas of class devotions,
teaching, academic content, faith modeling, and mentorship.

Surveys could be conducted of entry-level appointments in the United Methodist
system in the areas of church health or clergy support, in order to determine additional
barriers that beginning pastors have to overcome or even combat as they seek to remain
or grow in their spiritual aliveness.
Surveys could be conducted of seminary professors in their spiritual well-being in order to assess the impact of that well-being on the responses or spiritual growth of seminary students.

Surveys could be conducted of recent graduates in greater detail to find the contexts of spiritual formation beyond the seminary or before the years of seminary, such as local church involvement, campus ministries, para-church experiences, personal encounters, and relationships.

Further exploration of the perpetuation of the myth that dissuades pastors from being in close relationship with persons in their local church could lead to information about ministry satisfaction levels among clergy.

Since some inter-seminary differences in this small data set occurred, target four or five seminaries with different approaches to teaching in order to get sampling and representation from each one that would allow correlation analysis to be done. Then a comparison could provide data regarding specific seminary methods.

Given the difference in part-time and full-time test scores, further exploration might reveal why the part-time students seemed to score higher in spiritual aliveness.

**Postscript**

My own seminary experience matches many of the experiences of those respondents who indicated a spiritually alive and overflowing spiritual life today. My classroom experiences were largely determined by the seminary faculty, which did lead to significant spiritual growth. In addition to interaction with certain professors in the classroom, field education was my most significant context for spiritually formative experiences.
Other experiences outside the classroom were rich; however, as I reflect, I realize I had taken a leadership role in helping to provide the experiences for the seminary. While I did learn a lot through the seminary chapel experience, they were less spiritually formative than other seminary contexts.

Experiencing the living water of God through the eyes and guidance of professors and other leaders was evident as I reflect upon those professors who took the extra time to invest in me and encourage me in my pursuit of ministry.

While I did experience significant growth experiences in seminary, I do not remember specific equipping for life after seminary through any plan offered by the seminary. In reflection, some of my attention to my relationship with God was in spite of the intellectual approach of my seminary pursuit. The seminary challenged my idea of a personal God. While the challenge opened my eyes to a more pluralistic worldview, I believe only by God’s grace was I able to settle into a nourishing relationship with God. Prayer life and worship life was also in spite of the seminary’s guidelines for inclusive language and experimentation of imagery and God language.

As I seek to be an overflowing, spiritually alive pastor, this research reassures my trust in the classic spiritual disciplines as those means by which humanity can practice the presence of the living God manifested in Jesus Christ. Even as the seminaries continue to refine the process of training for ministry, I am convicted to continue to provide leadership in person-to-person approaches to enable others to grow in their relationships with Christ, overflowing into the lives of others.
January 3, 2004

Dear Colleague in Ministry,

Greetings in the name of Christ! I hope you have a blessed New Year. My name is Matt Hook and I am a United Methodist Pastor working on a dissertation project for a Doctor of Ministry degree. I am studying how seminaries are intentionally offering spiritual formation to students in seminary, for good of the local church. I am conducting a survey of all recently ordained clergy in the twelve annual conferences that make up the North Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist church. I got your name and address from the list of ordinands as recorded in The General Minutes of the United Methodist Church for 2001.

Here is how you can help:
- Complete the questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.
- Please complete and return the questionnaire by Friday, January 23rd, 2004.

Here is my pledge to you:
- No attempt will be made to match questionnaires to individuals.
- Absolutely nothing will be done with your information outside of this research project.
- Every response will be gratefully received and included in the study results.

Thanks so much for your participation!

Sincerely,

Rev. Matt Hook
Dexter United Methodist Church
7643 Huron River Dr.
Dexter, MI 48130
Matt@dexterumc.org
APPENDIX B
THE SEMINARY TO MINISTRY LIFE QUESTIONNAIRE

PART 1: BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

1. What age are you? _____________________________________________
2. What seminary did you attend? __________________________________
3. How many years did you attend seminary? __________________________
4. What gender are you? Male / Female
5. Describe your relationship to your family as you were growing up, for the most part: (please circle your response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warm &amp; Close</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Cold &amp; distant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm &amp; close</td>
<td>Warm &amp; close</td>
<td>Moderately cold &amp; distant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART 2: YOUR SPIRITUAL STATE TODAY

6. Describe your spiritual life today:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alive, overflowing</th>
<th>Moderately full, sustaining</th>
<th>Moderately sparse, maintaining</th>
<th>Dry, burned out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
7. Describe your relationship with God today:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warm &amp; Close</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Cold &amp; distant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm &amp; close</td>
<td>Warm &amp; close</td>
<td>Moderately cold &amp; distant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Describe your current level of satisfaction in ministry:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Highly dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9. Describe your current level of satisfaction with your spouse (if applicable):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Highly dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10. Describe your current level of satisfaction with your family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Highly dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. Describe your current level of satisfaction with your friendships:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Highly dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

12. Describe your current level of satisfaction with your ministry colleagues:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Highly dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
PART 3: YOUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH SINCE SEMINARY

As you consider each of these personal attributes or spiritual characteristics please indicate your personal assessment of the growth you have experienced in each over the years since leaving seminary. Please circle your response.

IN RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

1. A personal awareness of being loved by God.
   
   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |


   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

3. A deepening love of God.

   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

4. A growing confidence of God’s active presence in the world.

   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

5. A growing confidence of God’s active presence in my life.

   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

IN RELATIONSHIP TO OTHERS

6. A deepening acceptance of others.

   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

7. A deepening love of others.

   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

8. A capacity and propensity for compassion.

   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

9. A freedom to receive love.

   | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

10. A freedom to give love.

    | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

11. Concern for, and ability to relate openly with other people, especially to my Christian faith and life.

    | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

IN RELATIONSHIP TO ONESELF

12. A capacity to allow God the freedom to be God.

    | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
With regard to this spiritual attribute or characteristic, I have experienced:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Growth</th>
<th>Much Growth</th>
<th>Some Growth</th>
<th>No Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Recognition of how the Bible addresses my own life.

14. Recognition of how the Bible addresses the lives of other persons and groups.

15. An ability to be in touch with my own feelings and to identify and express them appropriately.

16. A creativity, imagination, humor and freedom of spirit, as characteristics of my ministerial style.

17. A sense of confidence and courage in taking stands for my convictions in religious communities.

18. A sense of confidence and courage in taking stands for my convictions in secular communities.

19. A sense of confidence and courage in taking stands for my convictions in the face of opposition.

20. Progress in the development of a disciplined worship life that provides personal nourishment and ministry with others.

21. Progress in the development of a disciplined prayer life that provides personal nourishment.

IN RELATIONSHIP TO CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

22. A sense of conviction regarding my call by God to Christian ministry.

23. A sense of conviction of my call by God to a specific arena or form of ministry.


25. An ability to invest myself passionately in my ministry.
With regard to this spiritual attribute or characteristic, I have experienced:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Growth</th>
<th>Much Growth</th>
<th>Some Growth</th>
<th>No Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRESENT PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

As you consider each of these classic spiritual disciplines, please indicate your personal assessment of where you are in your growth in each of these disciplines at this point in time. Growth should be measured by your increased practice of, appreciation for, or sense of value for a particular discipline.

26. Celebration

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

27. Confession

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

28. Fasting

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

29. Meditation

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

30. Prayer

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

31. Service

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

32. Solitude

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

33. Spiritual Guidance

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

34. Spiritual Journaling

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

35. Spiritual Reading

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

36. Study of Scripture

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

37. Worship

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
With regard to this spiritual attribute or characteristic, I have experienced:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Growth</th>
<th>Much Growth</th>
<th>Some Growth</th>
<th>No Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART 4: REFLECTIONS ON THE SEMINARY EXPERIENCE

Think back to your seminary experience. As you reflect, think of where you experienced your most significant spiritual growth. As you think through each area below, circle the number that corresponds.

Inside the classroom:

38. Professor-led devotions

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

39. Professors’ teaching

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

40. Specific course on spiritual formation

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

41. Class discussions

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

42. Academic content (lectures/readings/projects)

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

43. Professors’ model of a life of faith

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Outside the classroom:

44. Chapel worship

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

45. Small Groups

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

46. Faculty mentor

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

47. Seminary support during life crisis

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

48. Ethos of the seminary community

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

49. Spiritual disciplines (Scripture/prayer/solitude/fasting/serving/witnessing)

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

50. Field education experience

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
Thinking back to your time at seminary, can you describe your most significant spiritually formational experience during your time in seminary? This experience could happen in the span of a moment or over the course of time, such as the experience of being in covenant with a small group for some set time. Share the setting of the experience, where and when it happened, events or issues leading up to it, significant people present, and ways you believe you were changed as a result.

Thank you for your participation. Please put this Questionnaire in the return envelope and mail it.
APPENDIX C

PEARSON CORRELATIONS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE TODAY
## APPENDIX D

### COMPARING RESPONSES OF 2s AND 4s USING THE $T$-TEST

**WITH CONFIDENCE LEVELS OF 95 AND ABOVE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Confidence %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Describe your relationship with God today.</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Describe your current level of satisfaction in ministry.</td>
<td>99.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Spiritual Growth Since Seminary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Confidence %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A personal awareness of being loved by God.</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Concern for and ability to relate openly with other people, especially to my Christian faith and life.</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>A capacity to allow God the freedom to be God.</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>A creativity, imagination, humor, and freedom of spirit, as characteristics of my ministerial style.</td>
<td>97.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Progress in the development of a disciplined worship life that provides personal nourishment and ministry with others.</td>
<td>99.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Progress in the development of a disciplined prayer life that provides personal nourishment.</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>A sense of conviction regarding my call by God to Christian ministry.</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>An ability to invest myself passionately in my ministry.</td>
<td>97.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Present Personal and Spiritual Disciplines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Confidence %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>99.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Confession</td>
<td>97.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Fasting</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Solitude</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Spiritual guidance</td>
<td>97.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Spiritual journaling</td>
<td>97.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Spiritual reading</td>
<td>99.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Study of scripture</td>
<td>99.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>99.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reflections on the Seminary Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Confidence %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Professor-led devotions</td>
<td>99.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Professors’ teaching</td>
<td>98.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Specific course on spiritual formation</td>
<td>99.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Class discussions</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>Spiritual disciplines</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

GENDER COMPARISON OF MEAN RESPONSES WITH STANDARD DEVIATIONS

**Spiritual Life Today**

**Spiritual Growth Since Seminary**

(In relationship to God, In relationship to others)
Spiritual Growth Since Seminary
(In relationship to oneself, In relationship to Christian Ministry)

![Graph showing spiritual growth since seminary for both females and males, with categories like God, Bible, others, life, church, convictions, prayer, service, and worship.]

Spiritual Disciplines

![Graph showing spiritual disciplines for both females and males, with categories like celebration, confession, fasting, meditation, prayer, service, solitude, spiritual guidance, journaling, scripture, spreading, worship, and others.]
Seminary Experience

[Bar chart showing mean scores for various aspects of seminary experience for Female and Male, with error bars indicating variability.]
## APPENDIX F

### COMPARING RESPONSES OF GARRETT-EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY WITH UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**USING THE T-TEST WITH CONFIDENCE LEVELS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Confidence %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Spiritual Growth Since Seminary</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>A deepening love of God</td>
<td>85.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>A freedom to receive love</td>
<td>85.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Recognition of how the Bible addresses the lives of other persons and groups.</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>An ability to be in touch with my own feelings and to identify and express them appropriately.</td>
<td>93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>An ability to invest myself passionately in my ministry.</td>
<td>86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Present Personal and Spiritual Disciplines</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Fasting</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Spiritual Guidance</td>
<td>89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reflections on the Seminary Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Professor-led devotions</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Specific course on spiritual formation</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Professor’s model of a life of faith</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Faculty mentor</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Seminary support during life crisis</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Ethos of the seminary community</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G

DEFINITIONS OF STATISTICAL TERMINOLOGY

**Alpha** “It is the measure of internal reliability of the items in an index. This [Cronbach’s] alpha ranges from 0 to 1.0 and indicates how much the items in an index are measuring the same thing” (Vogt 4).

**Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)** “A test of statistical significance of the differences among the mean scores of two or more groups on one or more variables or factors. It is an extension of the t test, which can only handle two groups, to a larger number of groups. More specifically, it is used for assessing the statistical significance of the relationship between categorical independent variables and a continuous dependent variable” (Vogt 7).

**Correlation** “The extent to which two or more things are related (‘co-related’) to one another. This is usually expressed as a correlation efficient” (Vogt 48).

**Internal Consistency** “The extent to which items in a scale are correlated with one another, which is to say the extent to which they measure the same thing” (Vogt 114).

**Mean** “The average. To get the mean, you add up the values for each case and divide the total by the number of cases” (Vogt 137).

**n** “Number. Number of subjects” (Vogt 149).

**P** “Probability value, or p value. Usually found in an expression such as p<.05. This expression means: ‘The probability (p) that is the result could have been produced by chance (or random error) is less than (<) five percent (.05).’… The p value is the actual probability associated with an obtained statistical result; this is then compared with the alpha level to see whether that value is (statistically) significant” (Vogt 163).

**r** “Symbol for a Pearson’s correlation, which is a bivariate correlation (between two variables)” (Vogt 186).

**Reliability** “The Consistency or stability of a measure or test from one use to the next. When repeated measurements of the same thing give identical or very similar results, the measurement instrument is said to be reliable” (Vogt 195).

**Standard Deviation** “A statistic that shows the spread or dispersion or scores in a distribution of scores; in other words, a measure of dispersion. The more widely the scores are spread out, the larger the standard deviation” (Vogt 221).
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