

An Essay Concerning Seamless Integration

by Luke Fetters

When my 16-year-old son heard that I had the opportunity to write a paper on faith integration for my tenure review process at Huntington University, he immediately asked, “Are you going to just write out that sermon that you’ve been preaching about Aquila and Priscilla?” (It appears that in addition to gaining driving experience traveling with me from church to church, Piers has also been paying attention to the *message de jour*.) In Priscilla and Aquila, I have encountered two people who seem to embody my ideal of faith and life integration. Their faith impacted every aspect of their lives: employment (they brought Paul on as a partner in their tent-making business), home (local churches met in their house and Paul lived with them for a period of time), location (they moved at least three times for ministry purposes), and learning (they were confident enough in their growing knowledge of the faith to mentor young churches and to confront Apollos with inadequacies in his teaching). In looking at their example, one does not see clearly defined boundaries between the major areas of their lives, but rather a seamlessly integrated lifestyle.

The most fulfilling episodes of my life have been times when the boundaries have been least defined. As a missionary in Asia for over eleven years, I thoroughly embraced the convergence of various realms of life: personal faith (sensing God’s call to obedience), practical ministry (teaching English and church planting), applicable learning (Cantonese study and graduate study in missiology and Chinese culture), and intentional family life (relocation and hospitality). In my role as a faculty member at Huntington University, I daily experience a similar blurring of life’s categories. I am teaching at an institution that is twice my alma mater. I am continuing to live out my ministry calling in a school affiliated with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, the denomination of my birth and the church in which I have been ordained since 1984. I represent the middle of three generations of the Fetters’ family currently involved at Huntington University. I live adjacent to campus within sight of the property where I lived during middle school and high school. Even my dissertation research was largely accomplished in denominational archives located at Huntington University’s RichLyn Library.

Perhaps the life integration described in these introductory paragraphs is not the same sort of integration that this essay is intended to address, but it is nonetheless the backdrop for my understanding of everything that I do. This understanding of life integration may also explain why it is difficult for me to look at the integration of faith and learning without considering the larger context of faithful living.

1. Definition of Faith Integration

For the purposes of this essay, faith integration is defined as the process whereby Christian scholars seek 1) to situate their embedded faith in an informed understanding of church history and evangelical theology, 2) to engage in two-way critical assessment of their faith and the truth claims of other academic disciplines, and 3) to express their faith in personal piety and responsible service to society and the Body of Christ.

When ministry scholars ignore part one of the above definition, the result is cultural respectability and active piety which have no moorings in historical evangelicalism. When ministry scholars ignore part two of the above definition, the results can include rigid orthodoxy and prescribed piety which fail to consider relevant knowledge in so-called secular disciplines. When ministry scholars ignore part three of the above definition, they risk having a culturally-respectable ivory tower theology that fails to influence their personal lives or the faith communities to which they belong.

2. Turning Points & Influences in My Understanding of Faith Integration

It is relatively easy to identify turning points in life when I came to understand the need for faith-learning integration or see the challenges associated with faith-learning integration more clearly. It is somewhat more difficult for me to identify specific authors or theories that have shaped my understanding of faith-learning integration.

My unconscious learning preference prioritizes concrete experience over abstract conceptualization. David Kolb's experiential learning cycle (see Figure 1) has been helpful in understanding my learning preferences, even as they relate to faith-learning integration. According to Kolb (1984), "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). Kolb's experiential learning cycle portrays learning in adulthood as continuous movement through four phases that he locates in a circle: concrete experience (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC), and active experimentation (AE) (see Figure 1).

According to Kolb, the adult learner is changed as experience (CE) is transformed into understanding (RO), expressed in words or models (AC), and experimentally tested, replicated and modified (AE). Learners may enter the learning cycle at any of the four points, but typically learners will display preferred patterns of discovery. My scores on Kolb's (1999) Learning Style Inventory indicate a strong preference for the upper left quadrant, indicating that key learning events will more likely be triggered by the experiences of living than by reading or reflection. Research (Mitchell & Nyland, 2005; Kosower & Berman, 1996) suggests that the majority of faculty may be located in the lower two quadrants of Kolb's model. My specific learning style may account for the difficulty I sense in tracing my development in the area of faith-learning integration to specific theories and models.

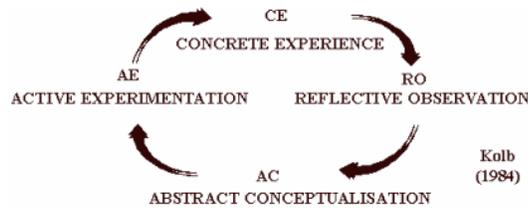


Figure 1. David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.
From *Facilitator's guide to learning*. Kolb, D. (2000).
Hay/McBer.

EXPERIENTIAL TURNING POINTS:

Writing a high school term paper. The first experiential turning point that I recall in my understanding of faith-learning integration occurred in 1978, during the second semester of my junior year at Huntington North High School. My English teacher, Joyce Timmons, assigned a formal research paper on a topic of our choice. Two personal factors influenced my choice of a topic for the paper: 1) I was beginning to sense a call to Christian ministry, and 2) Easter had just passed and I had recently read a small booklet regarding proofs of the resurrection of Christ that my parents had left lying in the bathroom (just one of their many seditious household discipleship strategies). After selecting several other sources at Huntington University's Loew Alumni Library, I wrote a five-page paper about the resurrection. I remember giving more effort and feeling more pride in this paper than anything else I had written during high school. I was hurt when I received the paper back with a grade of B, not for technical problems or content deficiencies (although I'm sure there were plenty of both), but rather with an accusation that I had been unduly influenced or assisted by my parents. In retrospect, I suppose the pride I had felt was a result of writing what I considered to be a high-quality paper and the sense that I had articulated my faith in a public way. I clearly remember how frustrating it was that a self-avowed agnostic teacher could not imagine the personal ownership I felt for something as crucial to my faith and emerging calling as the resurrection. This was the first experience I can remember writing about matters of personal faith in an academic context. It may seem like a small incident, but it stands out as a time when I learned that care needs to be taken in mixing faith and learning.

Disappointing a mentor. A second experiential turning point in my understanding of faith-learning integration occurred in Macau sometime between 1987 and 1989. Sam Rowen, a friend and mentor, was a Presbyterian missions educator who served on the United Brethren Board of Missions, the organization under which we served in Macau. While a doctoral student at Michigan State University, Rowen had been a protégé of Ted Ward, who was already a renowned figure in the fields of Christian Education and Missiology. I remember an occasion, sitting in my living room talking with this fascinating conversationalist, when he made an offhand reference to Reformed theology. Having recently determined not to pretend to know things that I did not know, I naively asked him what Reformed theology was. His astonished disappointment caught me off guard. As a Presbyterian scholar he could not believe that I, with

an undergraduate degree in Bible and Religion and a graduate degree in practical theology from Huntington University, was functionally illiterate in historical theology. The fact is that I had raced through my undergraduate program in three years, applying myself as little as possible to learning. My practice-oriented graduate degree had been relevant to my work at the time as a church planter and I took it seriously, but the program required little interaction with the heritage of Protestant evangelicalism. In 1989, largely as a result of that single conversation with Rowen and a subsequent meeting with Ward, I enrolled in a Systematic Theology course through the extension program of Wheaton College Graduate School. As I applied myself to the course, I knew that my perspective on education had changed, and I recognized that my faith and ministry practice needed to be informed by a fuller understanding of church history and evangelical theology.

Choosing a doctoral program. A third experiential turning point in my understanding of faith-learning integration related to my struggle to choose a doctoral program. In 1997, upon my return from Asia, I began exploring doctoral programs. Sensing that I had adequate credentials within my denomination (two degrees from Huntington University) and within the evangelical community (an M.A. from Wheaton College), it seemed best to round out my curriculum vitae with a terminal degree from a state school. Ball State University (BSU) was within a reasonable driving distance, and a friend had recently completed his doctorate in adult and community education there. The program seemed relevant to my experience teaching English to adults in Macau. I enrolled in the Ed.D. program at BSU without much further thought. During the fall of 1998, my first semester at BSU, I was highly self-conscious of my identity as a pastor and missionary in an environment that I interpreted to be hostile to evangelical Christianity. My participation in class was characterized by misguided defensiveness, and I carefully avoided the topic of faith in written assignments. After one semester, I began to look for other graduate programs. I applied and was accepted to the D.Miss. program at Fuller Theological Seminary, where I knew my faith commitment and missions experience would be esteemed. Before enrolling in my first course at Fuller, however, I was challenged to rethink my decision through a conversation with one of my former Wheaton College professors, Muriel Elmer, while attending a theological education conference at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School on December 1, 1999. In essence, she encouraged me to pursue the Ed. D. from BSU, saying, “We need more educators as missiologists. So much of missions is, at its heart, educational.” Within a week, I had drafted a rationale to reengage my Ed.D. studies at BSU. In that rationale, I asked, “Did I give Ball State a chance? Was my negative reaction to postmodern ideology appropriate for a Christian seeking to engage in today’s world?” I ended the document with a personal commitment to “embrace exposure to humanism and postmodern thought as an integral part of the learning experience, seeking to have my ministry and evangelistic thinking continually informed by (not conformed to) these pervasive worldviews.” I determined to write papers no differently than I had in my previous graduate work at Christian institutions, quoting Scripture when relevant, reading and quoting both Christian and secular authors, and selecting research topics that directly related to my overtly evangelical interests in missions and ministry preparation. I found that my faith commitment was affirmed, my life experience was valued, my references to Christian authors brought richness to class discussion, and my research interests were no more idiosyncratic than those of other students. The degree to which I was able to consider issues of faith in this graduate program can be seen in the fact that all but one of the nine questions submitted for my comprehensive doctoral examination related to vocational Christian ministry in one way or another (see Appendix A for a list of comprehensive examination questions).

INFLUENTIAL AUTHORS & THEORIES:

The following authors and theories have been influential in my emerging understanding of faith-learning integration. Hasker, Niebuhr, and Stott have been especially helpful in relation to my understanding of faith-learning integration as I articulated it in part 1 of my definition above. Stone and Duke have been especially helpful in relation to parts 2 and 3 of the definition (see the previous section, “Definition of Faith Integration”).

Hasker’s dimensions of faith-learning integration. At Huntington University, where I teach, the new faculty orientation program includes reflection on William Hasker’s article, “Faith-Learning Integration: An Overview.” In this article, Hasker (1992) identifies a significant problem for many faculty members at Christian schools.

It hardly needs pointing out that the leadership of the academic disciplines is not in the hands of those who share the vision that “all truth is God’s truth.” While many Christian colleges provide a good undergraduate education and offer some limited graduate study, leadership in the various academic fields is vested in “prestige” graduate programs in leading secular universities. Christian faculty members, having been trained in such institutions, have typically received little or no guidance in relating their graduate training to their Christian faith. As they begin their professional careers, then, they are *in fact* confronted with two “separate and disjoint bodies of knowledge and belief,” simply because the graduate program has not assisted, and may have actively discouraged, the establishment of connections between them. (p. 237)

While I recognize the importance of Hasker’s observation for many faculty, his description does not match my experience. My undergraduate degree and two of my graduate degrees are from Christian institutions which sought to foster connections between academic learning, personal faith, and ministry practice. (To assume that these learning experiences are necessarily inferior to secular education would seem to call into question the very validity of Christ-centered education.) Additionally, my preparation to teach in a practice-oriented ministry field included two decades of ministry experience, during which I continuously formed connections between learning, faith, and practice. (To deny this possibility, once again, seems to call into question the ability of Christ-centered education to achieve the very outcome claimed as its most distinctive contribution.) Further, as noted above, my doctoral program at a state university did nothing to discourage connections among the various bodies of knowledge associated with my faith and ministry practice.

The faith integration question for me, and perhaps for most professors in practice-oriented ministry disciplines, may be better described as the need to develop in myself and in my students abilities to recognize ways in which ministry models have incorporated knowledge from other disciplines and to determine if those models 1) use secular knowledge responsibly, 2) contain foundational assumptions that are contrary to the gospel of Christ, and 3) produce results that promote Christlikeness. This never-ending analytical task is complex and requires humility, collegiality, and a commitment to lifelong learning. Effective ministry education assumes functional competence in many fields: biblical studies, history, theology, philosophy, literature, language, psychology, sociology, educational theory, management, communication theory, cultural studies, etc. Ministry professors will not become discipline-specific experts in all of these fields, and they would be naïve to think of themselves as such. It would be equally naïve, however, to think that they will do their jobs well without some knowledge in a wide variety of disciplines and a network of resources in those disciplines through which they may test ideas or concepts which they find intriguing or troublesome.

Hasker (1992) distinguishes between theoretical disciplines and applied disciplines as he describes dimensions of faith-learning integration. He does recognize that some disciplines do not “fit neatly into one category or another” (p. 247). He states, “A discipline which could be classified as ‘theoretical’ may have practical applications which require the Christian scholar to give consideration to one or more of the integrative dimensions associated with the applied disciplines, or vice versa” (p. 247). Ministry is one such discipline. While ministry is technically classified as an applied discipline, I regularly explore both theoretical and applied dimensions of integration in my ministry courses (see Appendix B for examples of questions in ministry scholarship which could be associated with each of Hasker’s dimensions).

Niebuhr’s models of Christ and culture. Hasker (1992) describes three strategies for faith-learning integration: compatibilist, transformationist, and reconstructionist. These strategies “. . . differ in their assessment of the existing relationships between the disciplines and the Christian faith, and therefore also in their understanding of what must be done in order for a Christian scholar to pursue the disciplines with integrity” (p. 239). In brief, compatibilists assume no fundamental conflict between faith and their discipline. Transformationists seek to add missing Christian perspectives to the valid knowledge available within their discipline. Reconstructionists, finding their discipline to be permeated with fundamental assumptions which are contradictory to faith, are left with no alternative but to recreate their discipline based on Christian principles. In a footnote to his article, Hasker (1992) credits these terms to Ronald R.

Nelson. I have not read Nelson’s article to see what influences he cites, but Hasker’s description of these concepts is very similar to my understanding of H. Richard Niebuhr’s (1951) models of Christ and culture.

Niebuhr’s models were prominently considered in a graduate course on the contextualization of theology that I took at Wheaton College. Niebuhr describes five possible understandings of the relationship between the gospel and culture. These understandings can be conceptualized as a continuum (see Figure 2), moving from a higher recognition of conflict on the left to a higher assessment of compatibility on the right. The textbook for the course, Charles Kraft’s (1979) *Christianity in Culture*, expands on Niebuhr’s categories, describing eight different ways that Christians have interacted with culture throughout history. As I have interacted with these concepts from a missiological perspective, taking into account the complexities of intercultural understanding, I have concluded that one does not have to choose a single model for interpreting every situation. John Stackhouse (2002), writing for *Christianity Today* on the fiftieth anniversary of Niebuhr’s book, observes, “Evangelicals have inhabited all of Niebuhr’s types. And, given the varied circumstances in which evangelicals have sought to serve Christ, each type can be seen to offer its own integrity . . .” (¶ 3).

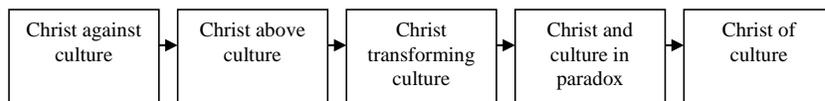


Figure 2. Niebuhr’s Christ & Culture Models.

Orthodox Christianity has long taught that all human understanding is tainted by sinful human nature. It does not, however, necessarily follow that all cultural expressions are equally contrary to God’s truth. To assume that all discipline-specific discoveries of knowledge are compatible with truth, as God understands it, denies the seriousness of the fall. On the other hand, to assume that all discipline-specific discoveries of knowledge are contradictory to God’s truth denies the mortified remnant of the image of God in which humans are created. Charles Manson and Mother Teresa were both depraved and in need of God’s redemptive grace, but their behaviors were not equally contrary to the image of God within them. In the same way, scholarship in any discipline may operate from presuppositions (or come to conclusions) that closely reflect God’s truth or substantially pervert it. Consequently, compatibilist, transformationist, and reconstructionist strategies will all be appropriate at different times.

Stott’s marks of true dialogue. The single most formative work in my academic development is John R. W. Stott’s *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, which I first read in 1990 for my graduate work in intercultural studies at Wheaton College Graduate School. After defining “mission” and “evangelism,” Stott focuses a chapter on defining “dialogue.” Stott (1975) describes the importance of dialogue with other systems of knowledge (I see this as parallel to, if not synonymous with, faith in dialogue with academic disciplines), recognizing

. . . the constant activity of God in the non-Christian world. God has not left himself without witness. He reveals himself in nature. He is not far from any man [*sic.*]. He gives light to every man [*sic.*]. . . We do not therefore deny that there are elements of truth in non-Christian systems, vestiges of the general revelation of God in nature. (p. 69)

If God is active in all realms and regions of life, then there is something of God to be known through interaction with those who are most knowledgeable of those realities. This calls for active dialogue with those outside the community of Christ. Stott (1975) lists four marks of true dialogue:

- Authenticity – recognizing our shared common humanity, both its dignity and fallenness.
- Humility – listening to another person, respecting the person as a human being made in God’s image with something to teach me.
- Integrity – listening to another person’s real beliefs and problems, abandoning false preconceptions about that person and their views.

- Sensitivity – rejecting the temptation to “. . . force the conversation along predetermined lines in order to reach a predetermined destination” (p. 73).

Stone & Duke’s tests of adequacy. When I was first assigned to teach MI373 Theological & Ethical Issues in Ministry for the Ministry and Missions Department at Huntington University in the spring of 2000, I adopted a course text which was used by Karen Jones who previously taught the course. The textbook, *How to Think Theologically* by Howard W. Stone and James O. Duke, has helped me further articulate a particular model for assessing a new thought or practice. They recognize the need for ministry practitioners to develop an informed yet intuitive ability to bring all forms of knowledge to bear on ministry practice. Stone and Duke (1996) assert, “Christian [ministers] must develop a way to internalize their theological reflection. It must be so simple that it can be acted upon at the spur of the moment, almost automatically; yet it must be so sophisticated that it can adapt to the complexities of the modern world” (p. 118). Toward this end, they identify four tests of adequacy: Christian appropriateness, intelligibility, moral integrity, and validity. I have developed a table of questions (see Appendix C) to help myself and my students operationalize these tests of adequacy.

3. Faith-Learning Integration in Ministry & Missions

Faith-learning integration should be addressed in the disciplines of ministry and missions in regard to each of the three parts of the definition offered above.

Ministry scholars should situate their embedded faith in an informed understanding of church history and evangelical theology. Many ministry authors, pastors, and church members lack knowledge of church history and basic orthodoxy. Ralph Winter, founder of the U.S. Center for World Mission, describes BOBO Christianity, an arrogant or simply naïve assumption that relevant church history “Blinked Off” after the New Testament and “Blinked On” again sometime in the 20th Century. Winter (1999) observes that “many Evangelicals are not much interested in what happened prior to the Protestant Reformation” (p. 199).

In his classic address entitled *The Two Tasks*, which was offered at the dedication of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College on September 13, 1980, Charles Malik (2000), Lebanese ambassador to the United Nations, expressed a similar concern.

There are some who would affect to think that nothing really worth knowing happened in the Christian world between Saint Paul and Billy Graham. I know Billy Graham is a landmark, but not a landmark to the extent that everything between him and Saint Paul has been a total blank. Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world, will not be revealed as such, and His wonderful light will not shine in the awful darkness of the world, until the American Evangelicals, on whom so much depends today, integrate into themselves, and get themselves integrated into, the unity and continuity of the cumulative Christian tradition. He has shown on many a soul and many a culture in the past, and not only on the Evangelicals of today. (p. 33)

Making the same observation in an edited collection of essays entitled *The University through the Eyes of Faith*, Earl Palmer (1998) wrote, “Christian colleges must not assume that the students from churches have any sense of our great Christian heritage. We must seek to share that heritage, to acquaint them with the great history of our faith and to remember God’s faithfulness throughout the generations” (p. 55).

These authors recognize a general ignorance among evangelical Christians regarding the historical foundations of their faith. In an era that deemphasizes denominational affiliations and theological distinctives, it should not be surprising that today’s evangelicals cannot connect the dots from their contemporary faith expression back through history to the Apostolic church. In an era that has replaced Sunday School with age-graded, peer-targeted worship and substituted youth group for catechism, one should expect evangelical students to enter the university as functional illiterates regarding church history and basic theology. As a professor in the Ministry and Missions Department, teaching a number of practical ministry courses and a course in the core curriculum entitled *Understanding the Christian Faith*, I have been confronted with classrooms full of students who do not even know the basics of orthodox

Christianity, let alone possess the ability to articulate the most basic tenets of Protestantism or evangelicalism.

In an extensive study of American teenagers conducted between 2001 and 2005, Christian Smith observed that the religion of American teenagers can be described as “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.” Smith has presented his findings in *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (2005) and in an interview with Michael Cromartie for *Books and Culture* (2005). In that interview, Smith summarized his findings on teen morality, “God exists. God created the world. God set up some kind of moral structure. God wants me to be nice. He wants me to be pleasant, wants me to get along with people. That’s teen morality. The purpose of life is to be happy and feel good, and good people go to heaven. And nearly everyone’s good” (§ 17). Smith (2005) found “the vast majority of [American teenagers] to be *incredibly inarticulate* about their faith We found very few teens from any religious background who are able to articulate well their religious beliefs and explain how those beliefs connect to the rest of their lives” (p. 131). While noting some exceptions among conservative Protestant (and Mormon) teens, Smith (2005) wrote, “It’s unbelievable the proportion of conservative Protestant teens who do not seem to grasp elementary concepts of the gospel concerning grace and justification. Their view is: be a good person” (§ 23).

In a recent issue of *Christian Scholar’s Review*, Perry Glanzer and Todd Ream (2005) argue that Christian colleges and universities must design their curriculum so that students learn to “order their identities by valuing some version of the Christian identity story over all other identity stories” (p. 19). They contend that Christian universities “should teach students to understand themselves first and foremost as Christians. As a result, students need to know the stories of the Christian Church first and foremost – even more than the story of their particular nation . . . the particular story of an ethnic group . . . or even the general story of humanity” (p. 19). They recognize that each institution will value the stories of a particular tradition within the Christian faith. Glanzer and Ream (2005) observe that “the identity stories and conversations that a particular college or university requires or offers indicates how the institution seeks to form its students” (p. 20). They argue for an emphasis on “Christianity’s communal narrative” (p. 20) – stories of the faith – instead of a Christian worldview approach, believing that the latter produces students deficient in historical consciousness. Glanzer and Ream (2005) contend, “Developing a Christian identity means identifying with the Christian Church throughout history and the contemporary world. One then approaches questions of education, public policy, foreign policy or economics not by first asking what these things will mean for America, but how the Christian Church should address such matters” (p. 20).

Ministry scholars must value the historical and theological distinctives of their particular faith expression so that they and those whom they influence are equipped to assist in the Christian identity formation of the church at large.

Ministry scholars should engage in two-way critical assessment of their faith and the truth claims of other academic disciplines. Evangelical authors frequently use secular wisdom to inform the agenda of the church, and much ministry literature approaches secular knowledge from a compatibilist perspective. There is an abundance of Christian literature drawn directly from current theories in such fields as marketing, leadership, communication, and education. This literature often demonstrates the sanctified creativity of the author, who shows how Jesus, Paul, or an Old Testament patriarch practiced ministry in ways that anticipated recent discoveries in other fields. Little thought seems to be given to whether the foundational assumptions of the discipline or theory are consistent with Christian theology or biblical revelation. As a result, secular concepts (i.e. self-actualization, target audience, continuous process improvement, outcomes-based assessment) have worked their way into the essential vocabulary of evangelicalism.

In his 1999 commencement address at Wheaton College Graduate School entitled, “Will the Evangelical Market Overwhelm the Church?”, Nathan Hatch, provost at the University of Notre Dame, raised a warning about various ways that the evangelical church is taking its lead from the surrounding culture. Addressing the ubiquitous concept of leadership in evangelical literature, Hatch observed that the evangelical church has anointed as its leaders those who have proven themselves to be the most successful marketers and entrepreneurs. The problem, as he points out,

. . . is that these leaders are not necessarily wise churchmen. They are more likely to be those that assume prominent political roles or who build mass special-purpose ministries. To the extent that this is the case, we allow the market to set the terms of church leadership.

The long-term question for evangelicals is what kind of shepherds we will follow, whether we will follow leaders whose interest is the well-being of the church itself, men and women who are theologically savvy, historically informed, and committed to seeing the church prosper in all its dimensions and for all its people. (p. 11)

Ministry scholarship and education should produce the sort of servants that Hatch describes. Not all definitions of ministry success or personal wholeness reflect biblical truth, and scholars in the area of ministry must be prepared to critically assess the assumptions of models borrowed from secular disciplines.

Ministry scholars should express their faith in personal piety and responsible service to society and the Body of Christ. As a practice-oriented field, ministry by its very nature is expressed in activity. Ministry is doing – whether prayer, teaching, preaching, counseling, or interpreting scripture. However, as Bobby Clinton (1988) and countless other authors have reminded us, “Effective spiritual ministry flows out of being, and God is concerned with our being” (p. 13). Spiritual formation, resulting from and leading back to personal piety, is essential for ministry preparation. Personal study, worship, scripture memorization, and service will all be emphasized in an effective model of ministry preparation. Simply stated, ministry preparation that stops short of personal spiritual formation is not adequately integrated.

It is essential to understand that the Christian leader (and a ministry scholar certainly ought to be one) is “a man or woman with God-given capacity [to influence] a specific group of God’s people toward His purposes for the group” (Clinton, 1988, p. 14). Such influence assumes specific actions to help guide God’s people. It is not enough for ministry scholars to simply come to interesting conclusions through intellectual exercise. Stone and Duke (1996) make this point at the conclusion of their chapter on critical theology.

It is tempting to do research and sort through data (observe and analyze) until kingdom come. But there is a reason why judgment, by whatever name, is a part of every critical method in every discipline. Critical thinking that stagnates at observation and analysis is self-indulgent.

We have to decide. Fear of being wrong is no excuse; it is a risk every theologian takes. With a critical method and the resources of Scripture and the church’s tradition, experience, and reason to guide us, we reach a point where all of our deliberations bring us to a certain understanding or a sense that certain acts are more fitting than others. We form views, take a stand, commit ourselves, choose a course of action. (pp. 111-12)

The biblical leaders commended for their faith in Hebrews 11 were all characterized by active obedience in response to God’s calling in their lives. Effective ministry scholarship will equip scholars and students to act on informed faith commitments.

4. How Faith is Integrated in the Classes I Teach

At several points in this paper, I have alluded to topics that I address in assigned courses within the Ministry and Missions Department (see Appendix D for a list of specific courses in which I discuss the very authors, models and concepts used in this paper). It may be valuable, however, to describe a curriculum model that I have found helpful in developing and assessing courses and to show how that model can be correlated with my definition of faith-learning integration. Then I will identify at least one faith-learning integration topic or exercise from each of course that I have taught at Huntington University.

Holland’s two-track model. As a faculty member at Michigan State University in the 1970s, Ted Ward popularized the split-rail fence analogy (Holland, 1978). One rail of the fence represents cognitive input (i.e., reading, lectures). The other rail represents practical experience (i.e., observation, activity

assignments, case studies, role plays). The posts of the fence represent classroom interaction (i.e., class discussion, thought questions).

Fred Holland (1978) adapted Ward's split-rail fence model for use in evaluating curriculum for international Theological Education by Extension (TEE) programs. Holland conceptually laid the fence on its side as the rails and ties of a railroad track. This analogy allowed Holland to add the concept of a railroad bed (spiritual formation) to the curriculum model. Holland felt that a model for ministry education should include spiritual formation as a discreet facet of curricular development. For Holland's purposes in TEE curriculum assessment, he defined cognitive input (the first rail) as the TEE text and course packet. The typical TEE learner was a pastor or church worker in a remote area gaining practical ministry experience (the second rail) daily. The periodic TEE seminar fulfilled the classroom interaction component (railroad ties) of his model. Spiritual formation (the railroad bed) was nurtured through assigned spiritual disciplines and Bible memorization.

Bobby Clinton (1984) adapted Holland's two-track model (see Figure 3) in order to "use it in evaluating any kind of training" (p. 41). Commenting on Clinton's adaptations to the model, Doug McConnell (1990) observed,

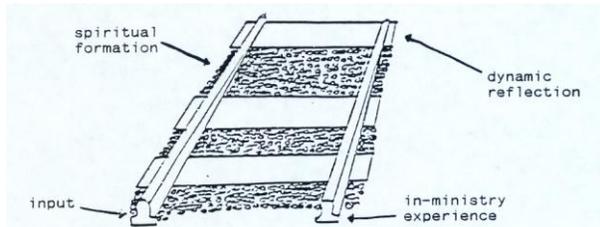


Figure 3. Fred Holland's Two-Track Model. From *Holland's two-track model explained*. McConnell, D. (1990). Wheaton College Graduate School. Non-published class handout.

The major change is the elimination of the TEE seminar replacing it with the idea of dynamic reflection. A second adaptation was the broadening of the definition of cognitive input to include a more integrated view of learning input . . . The purpose of the model is to find the balance between input, in-ministry experience, spiritual formation, and dynamic reflection in the training program analyzed. (p. 2)

Holland's adapted two-track model serves as a framework for the evaluator or curriculum designer to identify the balance between knowing, doing, and being. The evaluator focuses on each training component and observes the balance and interaction between them. McConnell notes that "[t]his in turn becomes valuable information for implementing needed changes to achieve a greater degree of [curricular] balance" (McConnell, 1990, p. 3). In regard to knowing, Clinton expanded Holland's emphasis on cognitive input to include affective and psychomotor development. McConnell (1990) observed, "Input refers to the information and learning activities which enable the learner to acquire knowledge for ministry, to develop values which will become norms for life, and to function in ministry. . . . Typically, input is in the cognitive domain. . . . A balanced approach will also consider attitudes and skills" (p. 4).

In regard to doing, learners possess different levels of in-ministry experience. Clinton calls on educators to give careful attention to the level of experience possessed by learners and adapt the curriculum accordingly. McConnell (1990) observed, "In some cases, the trainee is a mid-career person who needs primarily spiritual and mental input. The focus would then be less on the in-ministry experience and more on the other three components. In the case of pre-service people or those moving into ministry, the focus must include a heavy component of in-ministry experience" (p. 6).

In regard to being, Holland was concerned that there was a gap between the spiritual character of learners and their knowledge and experience of ministry. For some students, ministry experience and knowledge outpaces their personal spiritual development, leaving them vulnerable to temptations of power, greed and pride. According to Holland (1978), spiritual formation is ". . . considered to be the process by which the student candidate for the ministry is influenced and directed in spiritual growth and development" (p. 8).

Clinton (1984) presents dynamic reflection as an integrating factor within the curriculum. He describes dynamic reflection as “a two-fold thinking process which teaches how to correlate input ideas relevantly to experience and spiritual formation and how to draw out from experience ideas which influence input and spiritual formation” (p. 48). Clinton clearly sees a three-way interactive relationship between knowing, doing and being. Dynamic reflection can take place most effectively in periodic facilitated group dialogue and perhaps less effectively through thought questions completed as homework.

Holland’s two-track model is useful in assessing course development according to my three-part definition of faith-learning integration. Figure 4 may help readers see correlations between Holland’s model and my definition.

Components of Holland’s Model	Components of Feters’ Definition of Faith-Learning Integration
Left Rail (Input)	Direct student interaction with lectures, texts, concepts, and models. <i>Will include part one of the definition (church history and theology) and part two of the definition (interdisciplinary content).</i>
Right Rail (Experience)	Guided or incidental life encounters (past or current) which shed light on course content. <i>Will include part three of the definition (responsible service). Will likely include part two of the definition (interdisciplinary insight).</i>
Railroad Ties (Dynamic Reflection)	Facilitated group interaction which draws meaning from the interplay of input and experience. <i>Will include all three parts of the definition (church history and theology, interdisciplinary insight, and responsible service).</i>
Railroad Bed (Spiritual Formation)	Personal or corporate disciplines and encounters (whether assigned, intentional, or providential) which promote spiritual growth and ministry readiness. <i>Will include part three of the definition (personal piety). Will likely include part one of the definition (biblical content and church history). May include part two of the definition (interdisciplinary insight).</i>

Figure 4. Correlation of Holland’s Two-Track Model with Feters’ Definition of Faith-Learning Integration.

5. Specific Faith-Learning Integration Activities in Assigned Courses

The following list includes a faith-learning integration topic or activity from each of the courses I have been assigned to teach within the Ministry and Missions Department at Huntington University. Most of these examples relate to part two (interdisciplinary insight) of my definition of faith-learning integration.

- MI231 *Evangelism* – Students encounter positive deconstruction, a communication process which uses questions to bring worldview inconsistencies into sharp contrast and create cognitive discomfort leading to change.
- MI251 *Relationships in Ministry* – Students consider the implications of George Wood’s multiple communities theory and Edward T. Hall’s concept of proxemics on the practice of small groups in the local church.
- MI285 *Understanding the Christian Faith* – Students write a reflection paper analyzing Judge Roy Moore’s decision to install a granite monument of the Ten Commandments in his Alabama courthouse in light of Niebuhr’s Christ and Culture models as adapted by Phillips and Okholm.
- MI301 *Urban Ministry* – Students discover the self-perpetuating segregation within evangelical Christianity resulting from widespread acceptance of the Homogenous Unit Principle, first developed by Donald McGavran as a way to conceptualize evangelism in India and then popularized in the 1980s as a church growth strategy in the United States by Peter Wagner and other early authors in the Church Growth Movement.

- MI311 *Church Planting* – Students become familiar with Supreme Court decisions relating to the use of public schools for church planting and then to weigh the practical and spiritual implications of such a decision.
- MI321 *Intercultural Communication* – After reading Stewart & Bennett’s *American Cultural Patterns*, students write a short paper describing ways in which the practices of the American church either resemble or contradict the values identified in the text and then reflect on the implications of their observations.
- MI331 *Leadership & Structures for Educational Ministry* – After reading a particular chapter in Reggie McNeal’s *The Present Future*, students discuss the following question, “McNeal borrowed significant concepts from corporate training models in this chapter (Buckingham & Clifton’s *StrengthsFinder*© and Peter Senge’s *The Fifth Discipline*). How does knowing this inform your interpretation of his assertions?”
- MI365 *History & Theology of Missions* – Students consider the common missions practice of teaching English as pre-evangelistic tool in light of a code of ethics for educators.
- MI373 *Theological & Ethical Issues in Ministry* – Students use Stone & Duke’s tests of adequacy to assess the appropriateness of paintball as a church youth group activity.
- MI381 *Family & Children’s Ministry* – After considering the Dobson-influenced emphasis on the family in evangelical Christianity, students read an article by Rodney Clapp entitled “Is the ‘Traditional’ Family Biblical?” and write a reflection paper about the family implications of Jesus’ call to discipleship.

6. Faith-Learning Integration Challenges in the Discipline of Ministry

Several faith-learning integration challenges have been addressed in this paper. In conclusion and by way of summary, however, let me reiterate a few of the challenges I have identified. Since nearly every aspect of ministry scholarship is interdisciplinary, broad functional knowledge in a variety of fields is expected of ministers and ministry educators. Humility, then, is required in all areas of knowledge for the ministry educator. Such humility will lead ministry educators to admit their limited knowledge in any field. Effective ministry educators rely on a network of resources in related disciplines to shed light on difficult problems or intriguing new ideas. For this reason, a Christian liberal arts university is an ideal setting for ministry preparation. Effective ministry educators prioritize lifelong learning in the fields of scripture, theology, and church history. This foundational knowledge provides “ballast and a long-term orientation” (Hatch, 1999, p. 10) for the never-ending evaluation of cultural and ministry trends.

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APPENDIX A

Luke S. Fetters Comprehensive Doctoral Exam Topics, Ball State University, Summer 2003

Themes & Topics for the Comprehensive Doctoral Exam in Adult, Higher, and Community Education

1. **Teaching & Learning** – Articulate the epistemological assumptions of a subject-centered model of adult education. Describe the role of the teacher/facilitator vis-à-vis the learner in a subject-centered learning context. Describe David Kolb's experiential learning cycle. Describe a subject-centered model for curricular development in adult religious education which incorporates praxis, dynamic reflection, and spiritual formation.
2. **Research** – Describe important differences between quantitative and qualitative research. Explain how Q-methodology may be used as a middle-ground approach, bridging qualitative and quantitative methods. Describe two preliminary studies and their implications for a study of Chinese values
3. **Trends & Issues** – Describe key characteristics of George Wood's multiple communities theory. Explain how social networks influence individual and group behaviors and values. Show how an understanding of multiple communities and social networks complements contemporary models of evangelism.
4. **Leadership** – Describe the role of a not-for-profit board according to John Carver's Policy Governance model. Describe the change process as a major faith-based not-for-profit organization (Wycliffe Bible Translators) transitioned to the Carver model.
5. **Evaluation** – Describe Deming's critique of personnel evaluation. In light of Deming's critique, articulate appropriate outcomes for pastoral evaluation. Apply the outcomes to the evaluation of associate pastors in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ.
6. **Ethics & Social Responsibility** – Adult educators face a variety of ethical issues. Describe how Ralph Brockett's process model for ethical consideration and Thomas Sork's ethical issues for program planning inform choices for adult educators. Apply these models to a faith-based adult education program in a restricted access country.

Themes & Topics for the Comprehensive Cognate Exam in Executive Development for Public Service

1. **Clergy Continuing Professional Education** – You have been asked to consult with a Christian denomination regarding the design of a continuing professional education program for their clergy. Describe the role of reflection-in-action and the role of professional identity formation in continuing professional education for clergy. Make a case for mandatory continuing professional education for clergy and suggest next steps toward the creation of a workable design.
2. **Clergy Mid-Career** – You are approached by a mid-career ministry professional for advice regarding career planning. Describe a model of ministry career planning which integrates Pamela Perun & Denise Bielby's Timing Model, Donald Kuratko's corridor principle, Bobby Clinton's convergence principle, and James Fowler's trajectory of the whole.
3. **Staff Development: A Constructivist Approach** – Describe key elements of a constructivist philosophy of education. Discuss constructivist implications for staff development. Show how such a philosophy was employed to develop a highly functioning TESL team of adult educators in Macau.

APPENDIX B

Examples of Questions in Ministry Scholarship for Each of Hasker's Dimensions of Faith-Learning Integration

Hasker's Dimensions of Integration for <u>Theoretical</u> Disciplines	Examples of Questions in Ministry Scholarship Related to Hasker's Dimensions of Integration for <u>Theoretical</u> Disciplines
World-view Foundations	How does a multi-dimensional understanding of the impact of the fall influence ministry assumptions? How does an understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in inspiration and illumination impact understanding of ministry authority?
Disciplinary Foundations	Are the practices of the early church as recorded in the New Testament to be considered as orthopraxy for contemporary ministry?
Disciplinary Practice	What voices are underrepresented within the discipline of ministry? What ethnocentric value assumptions are being perpetuated in ministry literature?
World-view Contribution	How does the understanding of our ultimate contribution change if all of life is interpreted as a vocational response to God's calling?
Hasker's Dimensions of Integration for <u>Applied</u> Disciplines	Examples of Questions in Ministry Scholarship Related to Hasker's Dimensions of Integration for <u>Applied</u> Disciplines
Theory Applied to Practice	How do the assumptions of outcomes-based ministry assessment mesh with the biblical emphasis on being over doing? Are marketing principles consistent with the biblical practice of evangelism or planning worship?
Ethics and Values	Is it ethical to meet a felt need (educational, social, or physical) for the purpose of gaining an opportunity to evangelize?
Attitudes	How does a missionary convey a posture of humility while maintaining that Christ is the unique provision for salvation?
Contribution to the Kingdom of God	What impression of God's ultimate purposes can be inferred from Abram's calling to bless the nations, Jesus' Great Commission, and John's vision of heaven?

APPENDIX C

Operationalizing Stone & Duke's Four Tests of Adequacy for Ministry Practice
 Questions and Foci developed by Luke Fetters

Test of Adequacy	Questions & Foci for Operationalization
Christian Appropriateness	Is it faithful to the Christian message? What is particularly Christian about it? Is it worthy of calling others to Christian commitment around this idea? Is it biblical and within the bounds of orthodoxy? The primary focus is on the Word of God and Christian tradition.
Intelligibility/ Plausible Coherence	Is it logically consistent? Does it make sense to me? . . . to other Christians that I respect? Is there anything obviously contradictory in it (realizing that there are paradoxes and antinomies) related to my other theological ideas? The primary focus is on perceptions of consistency and logic as I seek to communicate it to critical, yet sympathetic, listeners.
Moral Integrity	How is it guided by moral values? How does it reveal my ethical sensitivities? Is it consistent with my understanding of the moral nature of God? The primary focus is on my internal moral sensitivity to God and the world around me.
Validity	Does it ring true to life? Where will correlation be necessary with the philosophies and beliefs of society? Does it correspond to what is generally accepted to be true? The primary focus is on anticipating external conflicts, blind spots, and societal reaction.

APPENDIX D

Authors, Theories & Models (identified in this paper as influential to me) Incorporated in Specific Courses I Teach

Model	Course
Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle	MI321 <i>Intercultural Communication</i> OM203 EXCEL <i>Career Development & Life Assessment</i>
Niebuhr's Christ & Culture Models (adapted by Phillips & Okholm)	MI285 <i>Understanding the Christian Faith</i> MI373 <i>Theological & Ethical Issues in Ministry</i>
Stott's Marks of True Dialogue	MI365 <i>History & Theology of Missions</i> MI231 <i>Evangelism</i>
Stone & Duke's Tests of Adequacy	MI373 <i>Theological & Ethical Issues in Ministry</i>
Winter's BOBO Christianity	MI285 <i>Understanding the Christian Faith</i> <i>Perspectives on the World Christian Movement</i>
Hatch's Criticism of Evangelical Market	MI373 <i>Theological & Ethical Issues in Ministry</i>
Clinton's Definition of Christian Leadership	MI251 <i>Relationships in Ministry</i> MI331 <i>Leadership & Structures for Educational Ministry</i>
Stone & Duke's Critical Theology Model	MI373 <i>Theological & Ethical Issues in Ministry</i>
Holland's Two-Track Model	MI331 <i>Leadership & Structures for Educational Ministry</i>