THE TEACHING CHURCH:
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, MONTGOMERY, AL
AND HUNTINGDON COLLEGE
INTERN PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP

By

Nathan William Attwood
B.A., Oral Roberts University, 1997
M.Div., Emory University, 2002

Supervised by:
Dr. D. Cameron Murchison, Jr., first reader
Dr. Stephen A. Hayner, second reader

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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is dedicated to my wife, Shawna, who, with great personal sacrifice, has supported me through my academic journey. Without her determination, I surely would not have seen this project through to completion.

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ABSTRACT

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This project proposes that active partnerships of academic institutions and communities of faith provide the best environment for the preparation of local congregation vocational leadership by integrating conceptual frameworks and faithful practice. It relies heavily on the practices literature of Diana Butler Bass, Dorothy Bass, Craig Dykstra, and others.

Huntingdon College students served as interns at First United Methodist Church, Montgomery, AL. Interns, program staff, potential employing clergy, and Huntingdon College Religion faculty interviews described the characteristics and capacities of effective local church program staff and how college and congregation might work together to prepare such leaders.
Introduction

In the fall of 2008, First United Methodist Church (UMC), Montgomery, AL and Huntingdon College, a nearby United Methodist-related small liberal arts school, agreed to join in a partnership in which the church would serve as a “Teaching Church” for the college’s efforts to train and equip clergy, staff, and congregations for effective ministry. Senior Pastor Dr. R. Lawson Bryan and Huntingdon President J. Cameron West likened the relationship to that of a research hospital related to a university medical school. This project focuses on one aspect of the vision of this partnership, namely, the redevelopment of the intern program of First UMC as an integrative, situated, intentional learning opportunity to prepare church leaders for local congregations in partnership with majors in Religion, Christian Education, and Youth Ministry at Huntingdon College.

After a period of decline, the Trustees of Huntingdon College sought to reinvigorate the school partly through a reaffirmation of its heritage as a church-related institution. It named a United Methodist clergyperson, J. Cameron West, as president of the college in 2004, with the charge to aggressively pursue a distinctly United Methodist identity for the school. Among other changes, curriculum was restructured to require all students to take courses in Bible and religious studies, allowing additional faculty to be added in the Religion department, all with United Methodist clergy credentials or graduates of United Methodist schools.

First UMC is one of Montgomery’s more than a dozen United Methodist congregations. The increase in United Methodist students at Huntingdon College caused many of these congregations to begin to hire the students as interns, mostly to support
youth programs. These students quickly created an intern culture for these congregations, especially the program sized churches with large youth programs and multiple staffs.

Huntingdon College conducted a survey of the congregations of the Alabama West Florida Conference to learn how the college could best serve the churches. The survey revealed that the primary need of local congregations was for well prepared program staff, especially youth ministers.

Huntingdon responded to this need by using its growing Religion faculty to add courses in youth ministry and Christian education and to redirect its Religion major from a phenomenological approach to religion to a pre-seminary degree. The school was able to attract Ed Trimmer, a United Methodist clergyperson and a nationally known expert in youth ministry and Christian education, to head the Religion department. Dr. Trimmer led the addition of a major in Christian education in 2008 and a major in youth ministry in 2009 before leaving Huntingdon during the summer of 2010.

Huntingdon College’s new focus on the preparation of church leaders resounded with the culture of First UMC, which had long recruited and mentored promising young clergy as associate ministers and considered the development of these clergypersons part of its identity. Additionally, First UMC had long offered college students internships in programmatic ministry, though these were administrated by the program staff of each area without consistent oversight, responsibilities, pay scale, hours, or concern for vocational development.

This project’s vision holds the potential to make several contributions the preparation of those serving in vocational ministry. First, it locates preparation for ministry at the intersection of the academy and the community of faith. L. Gregory Jones compares the traditional way of preparing clergy to a “relay race,” in which a candidate is
nurtured in the Christian community, then handed off to a seminary, and finally handed back to the local congregation. He claims this method is flawed for many reasons, particularly because life and leadership in community must be experienced and lived. It cannot be taught didactically alone.¹

On the other extreme, Jackson Carroll reports that many churches are “raising up and training staff from within the congregation while bypassing traditional education institutions such as theological seminaries.”² Congregational leaders who are raised within the congregation and mentored by senior clergy may be efficient practitioners of organizational and programmatic tasks, but they will necessarily be less able to call the people to meaningful reflection on the Christian faith and life.

The seminary-based supervised ministry programs that provided a starting point for this project³ generally see the local setting as a place to make what they teach in the classroom come alive and become applicable, a sort of lab for the real theological education that professors provide. The seminary is often tempted to see the ministry setting as a mere teaching aid for the real curriculum of the classroom, or even a distraction from focus on classroom learning. An anonymous Candler faculty wrote concerning student pastors, “If I had my way, no student would serve a church beyond the seminary requirements.”⁴ Many clergy candidates see seminary training as a

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⁴. Theodore Brelsford and Alice Rogers, *Contextualizing Theological Education* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2008), 60.
requirement to be fulfilled rather than a necessary part of the nurture and formation needed for meaningful ministry. A true partnership between an academic institution and a local congregation may offer an example of how two kinds of learning can nurture thoughtful, effective ministers who bring the insights of the classroom to life in the congregation and bring the lived experience of the faith to bear on reflection in the classroom.

Recent changes in congregational life necessitate the development of well equipped lay staff. Mark Chavez’s exposition of the 1998 National Congregations Study demonstrated that “although most congregations are small, most people are associated with large congregations,” and that, “the largest 10 percent of congregations contain about half of all churchgoers.”

Those few large congregations that contain so many of the people who actually attend church will necessarily hire many staff to aid their few clergy in the tasks of ministry. A youth pastor in a large congregation will directly impact the faith development of many more people than the average pastor will. (The average Sunday attendance at the median-sized church in America is 75 people.)

Many of these program staff are church members hired by the congregation with no formal training or clergy whose training is not specialized for the task. Combining real-world experience in a programmatic area with theological and practical training for undergraduates may serve as an important tool for the preparation of such programmatic professionals.

Also, according to Jones, seminaries are finding that many of their incoming students do not arrive with the requisite faith development and experience in local church


leadership of seminarians of past years.\textsuperscript{7} Incoming students in seminaries would have a much less steep learning curve if they could attend strong undergraduate programs that train students theologically while discipling them in vital local congregational settings.

\textbf{Theoretical Assumptions}

This project depends heavily upon the theological foundation laid by the current conversation on practical theology and practices of faith. These writers, thinkers, and practitioners challenge the assumption that faith development begins with correct understanding of doctrine and ethics, which is then expressed and applied in Christian living. They argue that this assumption is based more in Enlightenment epistemology than Christian tradition and scriptural witness, which describe faith as individual and community practices constituting a way of life from which doctrinal convictions arise. Craig Dykstra, Diana Butler Bass, and Dorothy Bass have written widely and collaboratively on practices of faith and practical theology, generally in compilations of essays by both academics and church leaders.

In \textit{Mapping the Field of Practical Theology}, Kathleen Cahalan and James R. Nieman describe “Practices of Faith,” “Practices of Ministry,” and “Practical Theology” as interrelated concepts that must be carefully delineated.\textsuperscript{8} “Practical Theology” is a model of theological inquiry that seeks to recognize God’s work in the world and the faith community’s participation in it, using the resources of faith tradition to foster a

\textsuperscript{7} Jones, “Beliefs,” 186.

dynamic conversation. “Practices of Faith” refers to the things that people do over time that give identity and constitute abundant life. “Practices of Ministry” replaces “Practical Ministry” in the theological curriculum, a term which assumes ministerial arts are the application of Bible, church history, and systematic theology. Preaching, teaching, pastoral care, administration, etc. are not professional duties with a loose theological foundation, but redemptive acts which are part of a long tradition of communal life in the community of faith, and have as much to offer theological inquiry as doctrinal theology has to offer them.

While these concepts are interrelated, the conversations they spawn provide guidance in numerous ways to an intern program that seeks to integrate classroom and congregational learning in order to equip leaders who shape congregations with an abundant collective life. Students should learn from the life of the congregation and its practices, they should learn to be practical theologians, and they should learn to integrate their academic learning while learning to be proficient in acts of ministry.

Dorothy Bass’s Practicing Our Faith describes faithful practice as the source of life-giving ways of life for the community of faith. Bass defines Christian practices as “things Christian people do together over time in response to and in the light of God’s active presence for the life of the world.” Her vision for practices does not include spiritual disciplines or practices of ministry such as preaching or pastoral care. Rather, they are the ways of life done faithfully by the people of God—hospitality, saying yes and saying no, keeping Sabbath, testimony, etc.

Robert Schnase’s Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations discusses practices

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that describe faithful life in the Christian community throughout the Church’s history.\textsuperscript{10} But he locates those practices most evident in growing (“fruitful”) congregations and describes them in ways that might shape the programmatic life of congregations in much more concrete terms. Those practices are radical hospitality, intentional faith development, risk taking mission and service, passionate worship, and extravagant generosity. Schnase’s book has been a helpful tool in engaging the language of practices with interns and giving them a common vocabulary of practices with the congregation. First UMC has used the book as a tool to reflect on its own collective life and practices.

Diana Butler Bass’s \textit{The Practicing Congregation} discusses practices of faith in light of the historical context of congregational paradigms throughout American religious life. Current congregational life is largely shaped by the paradigm that emerged immediately after WWII, which she describes as “participatory congregations,”\textsuperscript{11} characterized by a program-driven, marketed, full-service, consumerist approach most successful during the rise of evangelicalism and mainline decline.

Bass argues that a new paradigm is emerging, “intentional congregations,”\textsuperscript{12} which prefer “spiritual authenticity and communal coherence” over marketing, technique, and therapeutic orientation. Intentional congregations seek to “re-tradition”—to embrace and re-appropriate lost or neglected traditions as a means to find anchoring in a shifting, postmodern world. Bass distinguishes custom, which is merely doing things because of the habit of doing them, to tradition, which “claims an ancient source”\textsuperscript{13} and


\textsuperscript{11} Diana Butler Bass, \textit{The Practicing Congregation: Imagining A New Old Church} (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2004), 17.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 18.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 39.
reflects deeply held practices and beliefs passed down from generation to generation. Practices are important in postmodern times, because they provide grounding in core values and identity—core teaching is teaching about what Christians do. Bass compares a faith founded on doctrine rather than on practice to that of the “cheap grace” described by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *The Cost of Discipleship.*

Doing what Christ taught disciples to do and doing these things with others in community (*Life Together*) makes Christians pilgrims rather than nomads—they travel together in purposeful discipleship rather than wandering alone.

Bass’s work raises important questions for a congregation interested in being a community in which ministers are prepared for leadership. Is serving in vocational ministry not a way of life grounded in the earliest of Christian traditions, are not acts of ministry a part of a tradition of practice, and is the training of ministers itself not a practice with a long history?

Craig Dykstra begins to take up these questions in *Growing in the Life of Faith,* which focuses on practices and Christian education. The community of faith imparts knowledge, but the primary knowledge it imparts is a way of living and being as faithful disciples, to use a phrase borrowed from Martha Nussbaum, “love’s knowledge.” The risen Lord is known through practices that “collectively constitute a way of life.” Dykstra therefore argues that seminaries must take seriously their charge to be

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14. Ibid., 57.


17. Ibid., 144.
communities of faith and learning, and judge their effectiveness primarily on the way Christ is discovered in their community life rather than quality of curriculum, libraries, faculty, etc.

Along with Dorothy Bass, in *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, Dykstra directly confronts the relationship between the conversation about Christian practices and practical theology and its implications for congregational participation in the preparation of ministers. Bass and Dykstra identify the heart of Christianity as a “life giving way of life.” Jesus came to offer life abundant, and he both taught and modeled practices that constitute an abundant life, which is lived in community and for the sake of the world. The stated purpose of the book is to reflect on four questions (summarized here): First, what constitutes such a life-giving way of life? Secondly, how may congregations and ministers foster such a life giving way of life? Thirdly, how may leaders best be prepared to lead communities that foster a life abundant? Fourthly, how may practical theologians in seminaries prepare ministers who embody a life-giving way of life?

This project is, in many ways, a serious attempt to address the third question. “What kinds of learning, teaching, and collaboration, both within and beyond theological schools, are necessary and adequate to educate and form ministers who are able to lead and shape community for discipleship in and for the sake of the world?” Bass and Dykstra have taken seriously both the congregation’s role as a context of practical theological reflection and as a partner with seminaries for the preparation of ministers.

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19. Ibid., 2-3.

20. Ibid., 3.
They conclude that Christian living is embodied and placed, and so practical theology “does its work with an eye to the particularity of each location….Indeed, its capacity to guide practice and to craft proposals for action arises in large part from close attention to situatedness and specificity.” 21 This project allows a student, for example, to learn general theories of Christian education, while experiencing the specificity of Christians actually learning the Christian faith in classroom and community. Students in this program, for example, were reading and discussing N.T. Wright’s views on afterlife in *Surprised by Hope* 22 when they were called upon to help youth deal with the suicide of a fourteen-year-old classmate.

Bass and Dykstra conclude that growth in the Christian life is shared and collaborative, for it cannot be lived in isolation but is “received and realized through relationships….Practical theology cannot thrive apart from collaboration—especially collaboration that crosses boundaries between the academy, the church, and other settings.” 23 A program like this one offers a rare example of how a congregation and a school can truly collaborate in ministerial preparation.

Lastly, Bass and Dykstra conclude by affirming the “intelligence of practice”—“Texts and propositions alone cannot carry or communicate the knowledge of God’s grace in Christ that is at the heart of Christian existence. This life giving knowledge, which dwells in the bodies of believers and in the body they comprise, is gained through forms of active and receptive participation that engage a wide range of human capacities.” 24 This program allows candidates for vocational ministry to be both literally

21. Ibid., 357.


and figuratively embraced by the bodies of these believers and the collective body as they learn the kind of knowledge only the body can know by doing acts of ministry and service.

Though this project differs in several ways from the seminary model of clergy preparation, resources for seminary supervised ministry programs are a helpful place to begin in shaping the program. Pyle and Seals’s *Experiencing Ministry Supervision* provides a helpful historical overview of the development of both seminary-based supervised ministry programs and other contextual learning programs such as Clinical Pastoral Education. More importantly, it provides theoretical and practical foundations for these programs in ways that serve as helpful tools in the shaping of the First UMC-Huntingdon College partnership.

Pyle and Seals offer a concise summary of foundational core values, including “Field Education is Theological,” “Field Education Uses Symbolic Representation,” “Field Education Focuses on the Learner,” “Field Education is Personal and Experiential,” “Field Education is Contextual Learning,” “Field Education is Relational,” “Field Education is Ministry,” “Field Education Supervisors are Models,” and “Field Education is Integrative.”

Pyle and Seals enumerate several strategies for field education which were foundational for this project, including: Nurturing Personal Spirituality, Developing Relational Skills, Reflecting Theologically, Learning Through Relationships, and Learning Through Ministry Events. They provides practical material on the shaping of

24. Ibid., 358.
26. Ibid., 8-13
27. Ibid., 13-17.
supervised ministry placement, including emphasis on the learner connecting with a maximum number and diversity of people, providing opportunities to do ministry and reflect on experience, and providing opportunity to observe as many diverse functions of ministry as possible. The book also contains a wealth of resources on the development of learning covenants, use of lay committees, qualities of effective supervisors, and evaluative tools.28

Brelsford and Rogers’s *Contextualizing Theological Education* describes Candler School of Theology’s contextual education program and its experience working with student pastors through its Teaching Parish program. While faculty expressed concern that many student pastors do not engage the material deeply enough or have time to learn course work as well as they should, the seminary benefited from student pastors’ constant contextualization. Student pastors live at the intersection of academy and congregation. They offer the seminary connection to real Christian communities while offering the resources of disciplined study to the congregation.

While theological educators may yearn for students who are able to give their undivided attention to their studies within the academy, the pedagogical lessons of relevance, integration, pastoral awareness, and academy/parish connection provided by the presence of student pastors in the classroom are extraordinarily helpful in addressing the growing challenges of teaching an ever increasingly diverse student body whose fragmented lives cause them to be more engaged with responsibilities outside of the academy than within.29

Congregation and academy have much to offer each other, though they have few ways to maintain regular dialogue. Student-practitioners have the potential to be the bridge that carries the gifts of academic theological education to the congregation and the gifts of situated reflection to those who do theological reflection and teaching in


academic institutions.

An advantage of internships is that they teach a kind of knowledge that cannot be acquired in the classroom, a kind of knowledge that sometimes cannot be described by those who possess it, a skillfulness and artistry in performing acts of ministry. *The Reflective Practitioner* ³⁰ argues that while the professions were once trusted to solve society’s problems, the world changes too quickly for university education to prepare professionals to adapt.³¹ Schon refers to the “dominant epistemology of practice” as “Technical Rationality,” which holds that “professional activity consists in instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique.”³²

Schon argues that “a kind of knowing is inherent in intelligent action,” that “in much of the spontaneous behavior of skillful practice we reveal a kind of knowing which does not stem from a prior intellectual operation.”³³ The things professionals do are themselves a kind of intelligence ingrained in professional practice even if those professionals cannot explain why or how they perform those practices. Effective training and development of professionals requires mentors to reflect on the embedded intelligence of their practices and demonstrate how and why they do what they do to students/protégés. This reflection on practice enables practice to be critiqued and improved, creating a cycle of excellence. Naming knowledge-in-practice as a form of knowledge every bit as valuable as technical knowledge honors the gifts of program staff professionals who work with interns and helps those program staff professionals to grow.

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³¹ Ibid., 15.

³² Ibid., 21.

³³ Ibid. 67.
in their craft as they are called upon to reflect upon what they do in order to teach it to someone else.

The capacity of undergraduates to perform acts of ministry while reflecting theologically, analytically, and synthetically about classroom and ministry settings has been an early and persistent concern in this program. In *Stages of Faith*, James Fowler discusses major developmental shifts in faith development. “Synthetic conventional faith” the primary faith of adolescence, is characterized by conformity to the systems and beliefs of one’s home and congregation. Seminary students tend to be at the Individuative-Reflective stage. They experience angst and struggle and have taken personal responsibility for faith. This period of wrestling is fertile ground for theological reflection and faith formation. It should be no surprise if an internship proved a more fruitful experience for a seminarian than an undergraduate religion major.

**Research Method**

The research question for this project is as follows: How may First UMC’s intern program be redeveloped as a partnership with Huntingdon College as a service learning opportunity that best prepares program staff members for effective ministry in local congregations? The question is straightforward and directly addresses the design and shaping of the intern program itself. The answer to the question is a programmatic answer. At the same time, the question suggests answers that are nuanced and complex. For example, how should “effective ministry” be defined? While an intern program

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34. David Goolsby of Auburn Wesley Foundation addressed this concerned in an informal conversation.

design may give shape to a learning environment, the relationships, interactions, and experiences within the structural framework of the program will more profoundly affect its effectiveness. The research question also suggests the intern program has many stakeholders—the interns themselves, Huntingdon College, and especially the academic mentors of interns, First UMC’s clergy staff and program staff who mentor interns, as well as the congregations that will eventually hire the interns and enjoy their leadership.

This project is a qualitative study primarily employing semi-structured open-ended interviews. These interviews were augmented with weekly intern reflection reports, as well as various formal and informal conversations with stakeholders. Participants were asked an open-ended question specific to their relationship to the intern program, given in advance of the interview. At the outset of the interview, the purpose of the project was explained to each participant, and each signed an informed consent. Interviews began with the primary question, and follow-up clarifying questions were asked as necessary. Interviews lasted an hour each and were audiotaped and transcribed.

Interview participants were chosen from five categories. Current interns Chelsey Jones, Davis Ryan, Lauren Randall, and Sarah Francis were interviewed to seek their perspective on their current learning environment. First United Methodist Church program staff members Nell Brown, Glenda Argo, Renee Norman, Robbie Plunkett, Jack Horner, and Linda Gill were interviewed in order to learn about their experience and perspectives regarding intern supervision. Nick Mielke and Emily Kincaid, former interns serving full-time ministry placements elsewhere, were interviewed to learn how their intern experience had been helpful or not helpful in their professional development. Huntingdon religion faculty members were interviewed to learn how they would like to see their classroom instruction integrated with placement learning at the church.
Clergypersons Karl Stegall, Neil McDavid, Cory Smith, and Dric Williford were interviewed to learn the sorts of qualities and characteristics they seek when hiring a program staff professional.36

Interns began preparing reflection papers for weekly group supervision meetings in the fall of 2009. Interns responded to the following questions: “What has happened in your ministry this week?” (for narrative), “How is it with your soul?” (for spiritual nurture), “What struggles do you have?” (to provide a helping community), “What questions do you have?” (to illicit collaborative learning), and “What have you learned in both your classroom and ministry setting?” (for integration). Besides serving as a catalyst for evaluation, mentoring, feedback, community building, etc., these reports served as a valuable secondary data source for the project. Weekly reports from six interns were gathered through the 2009-2010 school year, and reports from four interns were gathered for fall semester 2010.

Regular interaction with the congregation, its staff, and Huntingdon College’s faculty and administration informed the project from the time the researcher began to supervise interns in 2008. Institutional memory from prior years continues to shape the program. Dr. Ed Trimmer consulted with the church and met with the program staff about internships, but had left Huntingdon College to take another position by the time interviews were conducted. Many clergy colleagues offered their thoughts and opinions on effective ministry and ministerial preparation in informal conversations. These many interactions and resources are data sources, as well.

The audiotapes of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher. The participants were edited only slightly for clarity and to eliminate repetition. In a few

36. See appendix for interview settings, interview questions, and descriptions of interviewees.
instances, interviewers asked for something to be kept confidential or shared information that might be inappropriate for publication, and these were withheld. Generally, though, transcripts are verbatim reports.

Data was analyzed using a constant comparison method. Themes emerging from conversations and daily interaction with interns, mentors, and faculty were compared with perspectives of interviews and intern reports, and kept in regular conversation with theological resources and scholarly materials from education and leadership literature.

Practical theology and qualitative research are both process oriented—they seek to understand a situation as it happens, and give power to those from whom information is received to enact change in the situation. Practical theology and qualitative research share, therefore, a dialectical and experimental quality.37

This project has certainly had this quality. The program was dramatically reshaped after the first round of conversations about the program in 2009, only a few of which were recorded interviews. These changes included the creation of separate intern tracks for programmatic areas, including new internships in Christian education (at Huntingdon College’s request, to go along with the new Christian education major), weekly group supervision meetings (“Integration Seminar”),38 and consistency in selection, pay, hours, etc. Experiments along the way have included interns leading Wednesday night college Bible study followed by peer critique during supervision, interns introducing devotional practices during prayer times in supervision, and interns attending professional conferences with their staff supervisors. Staff members have taken on a wide variety of mentoring roles, from the retired pastor of congregational care taking

37. John Swinton and Harriett Mowat, Practical Theology and Qualitative Research (London: SCM, 2006).

38. The term was borrowed from Kathleen Cahalan, “Introducing Ministry and Fostering Imagination: Teaching the Bookends of the Master of Divinity Program,” in Bass and Dykstra, 99.
interns with him to visit hospitals, to an intern helping administrative staff with paperwork for the ministry to children with disabilities. This experimentation is also a data source. The community’s reflection on these experiments is part of the rich description of this context and makes this moment of analysis only part of an ongoing conversation.39

Findings

Finding One: Spirituality

Each of the pastors immediately responded that the primary characteristic church staff professionals must have is a vibrant, thriving personal spirituality that manifests itself in the way they express passion in their love of Jesus Christ, the church, and its people. Rev. Williford said that the first thing he asks a prospective employee is an account of personal spiritual disciplines: “Do you have a quiet time?” Almost as importantly, he emphasized the necessity of church professionals needing to be able to offer testimony of the working of God’s grace in their lives, the ability to share with others how the Christian faith makes a difference for them.

Though Dr. Karl Stegall values education and training, he was clear and explicit in arguing that personal spirituality is far more important, quoting Lyle Schaller as saying, “When you hire someone, don’t go to Scarritt.40 Go find a cheerleader who loves Jesus Christ, the church, and the people. You’ll be much better off in the end.” Dr. Stegall gave many examples of how employees with enthusiasm growing from authentic

39. Mowat and Swinton, Practical Theology and Qualitative Research, 50.

40. Scarritt College for Christian Workers in Nashville, TN trained United Methodist ministers other than clergy, such as Christian educators and missionaries.
faith had been better hires than those who had good credentials. Passionate spirituality nourishes those qualities that make for productive staff members, because those who love Jesus Christ and the church will love people enough to demonstrate care and develop connections with people. They will also be more likely to show initiative, to work for more than a paycheck, and less likely to limit their hours and activities to their job descriptions.

Rev. Neil McDavid emphasized spiritual vitality, but doubted that an intern program could foster an enthusiastic faith if it was not already there, as passions for ministry and ensuing behaviors are intrinsic and demonstrated from childhood. If he is correct, can anything be done to nourish the spirituality of interns? Certainly, selection is important, and hiring interns should include consultation between clergy, program staff, and Huntingdon College faculty, with careful reference checking from home congregations and past positions. Interns of all levels of spiritual maturity and enthusiasm have sought spiritual nurture from the congregation, however. They regularly write detailed reflections in their weekly reports regarding the second question: “How is it with your soul.” College is a difficult time for spiritual development, and the students often feel times of dryness and confusion while struggling to maintain spiritual disciplines, due to time management struggles and the loss of the accountability structures home and home churches provided.

Finding 2: Goal Setting and Evaluation

All four clergy, both former interns, and two of the three Huntingdon faculty specifically asked about the program’s evaluation system. Evaluation was a major topic
of conversation in the group interview with program staff, as well.

Evaluation begins with goal setting, because, without clear expectations, evaluators have no basis for evaluation. When asked how an intern program should be shaped, Emily Kincaid’s first suggestion was, “There need to be clear expectations from the beginning.”

In his interview, Nick Mielke focused on the importance of personal professionalism, particularly for youth pastors, who have a stereotype of irresponsibility. The pastors identified many areas of personal professionalism, as well, and expressed frustration for the time they had wasted dealing with the results of unprofessional staff behavior. Each of the faculty members talked either specifically of personal professionalism or the need for students to learn skills and capabilities related to personal professionalism, such as time management, being prepared, following through, showing up, being on time, demonstrating work ethic, productivity, and attention to detail.

Interns will not know what congregations will expect of them unless someone teaches them. But even if they are told expectations, they will not truly learn them until they are held accountable to habituate those practices. This means that they will have to be instructed to do things, shown how to do them, held accountable if they fail to do them, and affirmed when they succeed.

Evaluation is not only a matter of letting people know when they do well and when they do poorly. Evaluation is a process of reflection on action and of regular interaction concerning the work of ministry. Nick Mielke said that he wished his mentor had taken the time to meet with him more often to make learning explicit.

Interns seek this interaction. In the group interview with the current interns, Davis Ryan said, “I think if we had more meetings it would be helpful.” Despite the
church’s tremendous investment in intern Wes Anderson, he wrote in a reflection paper that he felt like, “I pour into this internship and it never pours back into me.” Interns require regular contact, feedback, and give-and-take with their mentors.

Interviewees were universally glad to hear that First UMC had a system of feedback and evaluation through weekly reports and group discussion, though interns complained about them in the reports: “Why do we have to write these papers?” Emily Kincaid, Karl Stegall, and Jimmy Jeffcoat each mentioned that interns would dislike evaluation, but would appreciate it later.

When interns fail to meet expectations, as they inevitably will from time to time, evaluation may be unpleasant. On this point, Karl Stegall advised dealing with problems “honestly and directly with as much Christian love as possible.” Jimmy Jeffcoat emphasized how such evaluation is crucial during an internship, because evaluation would never be as specific or constructive later in full-time parish work.

Finding 3: Meaningful Ministry

The interests of all groups interviewed converged in the affirmation that internships must be a place in which students do real ministry that truly adds to the life and work of the congregation. Many interviewees rejected common forms of church internships in which students only perform menial tasks or else watch ministry being done by others while they talk about and reflect on it. Huntingdon faculty, especially Dr. Jeffcoat, argued that the material they teach in the classroom cannot be learned adequately in an intern program that fails to give interns true responsibility. Program staff tended to seek interns who take on real responsibility because these staff members
need interns’ help running growing programs. Interns complained regularly when they felt as if their work was not meaningful or failed to make a real contribution. Clergy argued that if they were hiring a graduate from Huntingdon College, they would want to know that an intern had actually done real ministry and would ask specifically about tasks and responsibilities the intern had performed. Former interns reported that doing real ministry during an internship was a primary way that internships had been helpful in their preparation.

Why, then, would any church fail to give real responsibility to an intern? For one, a church that holds to a standard of excellence takes a risk that important tasks will be done poorly when it allows an intern to do meaningful work. Dr. Jeffcoat wondered aloud how a church could give an intern the opportunity to learn how to preach, for example, because a large congregation cannot allow a beginner to offer a sermon. Giving interns real responsibility requires mentors to be skilled at delegating and supervising important tasks, and some program staff are better at sharing the load than others.

This necessity comes into sharp contrast, however, whenever an intern graduates and interviews for a job. When First UMC of Panama City hired music intern Jenna Parish as music minister, the church made the decision largely because she had full responsibility over several choirs and had served in meaningful capacities in every area of the music program.

Some of the fundamental skills participants discussed were related to specific areas of ministry, such as the ability for youth and children’s ministers to plan trips and develop curriculum. Some were professional capacities such as writing skills and public speaking. Mid-sized church pastors said that program staff often serve the functions of an associate pastor and need to be able to visit hospitals and nursing homes.
Nick Mielke and Dr. Jeffcoat each described the pressure church staff professionals feel to produce, and described good internships as a place to feel some of that pressure without the full weight of responsibility. Mr. Mielke said that the responsibility he felt once he became a youth director was something for which he could not be prepared, but one he was able to anticipate. Dr. Jeffcoat called this kind of learning “the preliminary stage to experiential knowledge.” He was very concerned that internship not only provide opportunities for leading small groups or building relationships, but that these tasks be performed over time.

Finding 4: A Community of Mentors

Interns responded positively to the community of mentors with which they interacted at First UMC. Youth interns have learned from youth minister Robbie Plunkett’s tremendous gifts for relational ministry, while learning from the associate youth director Elizabeth Crockett’s gifts in organization and leadership. When the Christian education internship was created, program staff in youth, children, older adult ministry, and administrative staff who worked with volunteer coordination each had tasks to teach the intern. Likewise, the pastoral intern worked on sermons with the senior minister, visited hospitals and nursing homes with the retired minister of congregational care, and worked on administrative tasks with the executive minister. Students responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to learn from these professionals, and the process created a teaching environment for all.

The community of mentors for these students includes both program staff and Huntingdon faculty. Many, though not all, are aware of each other and the work each
does. Relationships across the divide between school and setting have allowed several opportunities for collaboration, and, more fruitfully, consultation and intervention for the benefit of a specific student. For example, one intern struggled to complete tasks on time in both her school work and church work, and consultation between faculty, clergy, and program staff helped the intern to overcome the issue.41

Program staff interaction with faculty might help, for example, in integrating theological education with the lived experience of the community of faith. Clergy and faculty alike stressed the necessity of theologically informed local church leaders. Rev. Cory Smith and Dr. Kyle Fedler each emphasized the need for both school and internship setting to teach students to be professionally proficient and theologically aware. As Rev. Smith said, “When they go on a trip…they can have a conversation on what a pilgrimage is.” Rev. Smith and Rev. Williford specifically addressed the need for staff able to communicate Methodist faith and practice.

Dr. Fedler described how it might be easy for an undergraduate program to focus on the nuts and bolts of ministry or to rather focus on the theological underpinnings of why and how ministry is done. On the other hand, an academic institution might focus on theological training while partnering with a church like First UMC so that the church teaches nuts and bolts. He argued that in order for student interns to come to understand the embedded theology of church practice, school and the church each needed to teach both the nuts and bolts as well as theological reflection.

Dr. Jeffcoat agreed, describing the relationship between the school’s work and work of the congregational setting as that of the general and the specific. While the school teaches the necessity of relational ministry or how to run a small group, the church

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41. For a description of the benefits of protégés developing a network of mentors from business leadership literature, see Ellen Ensher and Susan Murphy, *Power Mentoring: How Successful Mentors and Protégés Get the Most Out of Their Relationships* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers, 2005).
provides an opportunity to build real relationships and actually run small groups.

Finding 5: Long Term Internships

Many of the interview participants initiated conversations about the length of internships. Their thoughts on the length of intern tenure, as well as on related issues indirectly affecting intern tenure, suggest that a shift to longer tenure would more effectively serve the program’s goals to prepare effective program staff.

After the first series of interviews in summer 2009, in consultation with Huntingdon College’s then religion department chair Ed Trimmer, internships were defined as concurrent placements for Huntingdon College students through one academic year. Students working for the church were called “summer staff” rather than interns, and all interns reapplied each year, with preference given to students with vocational interests and academic majors in programmatic areas for which they applied.

This basic structure—preference for alignment of major/vocational interest/programmatic area with school-year long covenants renewed annually—was explained to participants who inquired about the length of internships. Many of the interviewees expressed concern that preference for students with vocational interest in ministry eliminated students who might discern a call to ministry while serving an internship. Among many examples program staff cited, the first intern to graduate since the program was restructured joined the staff as a music major intending to be a music teacher, and is now serving effectively as music minister at First UMC, Panama City, FL. Ms. Parish worked at the church in several capacities throughout her college career.

Children’s minister Glenda Argo expressed concern in the program staff interview
that shorter term internships might eliminate an intern like her current children’s ministry intern. Sarah Francis, an elementary education major intending to work as a school teacher, has become a valued employee and a necessary part of her team through her long tenure, and Ms. Argo was unwilling to give her up in order to mentor someone else.

Dr. Jimmy Jeffcoat expressed a strong preference for multi-year internships. He offered the example of several interns who had served St. James UMC throughout their entire college experience and experienced cumulative learning in a single placement.

Dr. Jeffcoat also argued for long-term internships on the grounds that ministry is primarily about people skills and relationships, and relationships take time to develop. Although few of the other participants made this connection between internship duration and relational ministry, nearly all of them emphasized the need to teach interns the importance of relational ministry. Emily Kincaid said that her internship did not prepare her to realize how much time, patience, and sensitivity programmatic changes require. Several participants talked about taking the time to develop the trust of the people. Dric Williford talked about the need to learn to respect people of different demographics and backgrounds and to communicate with people raised differently.

Discussion

Immediate Implications

Many practical changes might arise from an emphasis on intern spiritual vitality. First, Integration Seminars, which already have components related to spiritual development, should take more of the character of a discipleship small group than a seminary reflection seminar. Secondly, clergy and program staff mentors see themselves
as spiritual guides and caretakers who, to paraphrase a Wesleyan phrase, watch over students in love, rather than supervisors who make students productive or teachers who impart knowledge and skills. The research suggests that fostering spiritual growth is the most efficient way to accomplish the other goals, as well. Thirdly, many of the students struggle to find First UMC’s worship meaningful because they come from congregations or youth ministries with contemporary worship. Interns have been lax in worship attendance with little consequence as long as work in the programmatic area was done well. Interns must attend worship and be discipled and prepared to find meaning and inspiration in it, so that they will find worship nourishing throughout their careers no matter the worship quality or style of the churches they serve.

The second finding regarding evaluation affirms the current system of group weekly reflection using a written report. Some program staff mentors have regular individual supervision meetings with interns, but this should be required for all. Additionally, it suggests that a more structured system of expectation and goal setting should be implemented at the beginning of internships rather than the basic delineation of hours and duties currently in place. The program currently has no system to evaluate interns at the end of a semester or school year, either. Huntingdon College’s internships for academic credit begin with goal setting and end with evaluation, and might serve as a good tool for setting up such a system.

As Emily Kincaid said in her interview, “Everyone needs an evaluation.” The intern program itself should be regularly evaluated, as well. Conversations with program staff, current interns, former interns in the field, and Huntingdon faculty should be conducted at least annually.

The third finding regarding the need for interns doing meaningful ministry
necessitates some acceptance of risk on the part of the church and the mentors, a risk the interns must also take. But in order for interns to take the risks the church asks them to make in order to grow and change, the church needs to assume some risk and be willing to change, as well. Dr. Jason Borders described how he raises bees and learned over time how he could work with bees with no suit and without being stung. He had to stop trying to manipulate bees, because, “with bees, you have to change yourself to be on a level they appreciate and respond to.” When asked if that meant that mentors had to show courage and capacity for change, he responded, “I don’t see any other way you can do it.”

This insight may express the potential for the most meaningful ministry interns can offer both their mentors and the congregation as a whole. A congregation that offers the grace to allow interns to be themselves and fulfill their ministry in their midst may be positively transformed as a result. The congregation, particularly program staff, must consistently offer responsibilities to interns just beyond either the interns’ or the congregation’s comfort.

Implications from the fourth finding calling forth a community of mentors arise from the realization that no single mentor can offer all the skills, abilities, and characteristics protégés need in order to develop into effective local church leaders. Some can impart rich, dynamic spirituality; others can introduce a wide and deep skill set; others can help interns see the work of local church ministry through a theological lens. While the program needs a single overseer for administrative purposes, church, school, and interns have the most to gain from a wider community of mentors investing in the lives of interns.

Program staff and faculty all suggested forms of communication and connection with each other. At the very least, the faculty at Huntingdon College need to know which
of their students are serving at First UMC, in which programmatic areas they work, and who their staff supervisors are. Program staff at First UMC need to know Huntingdon religion faculty (as well as appropriate faculty for music or elementary education, perhaps), and faculty academic foci.

Dr. Fedler suggested that all Huntingdon religion faculty get together with First UMC program staff, perhaps in a seminar setting in which the faculty could present basics of those concepts they most want to instill in interns. Dr. Jeffcoat suggested occasional gatherings for Huntingdon faculty and representatives from all the local churches offering internships to Huntingdon students. Dr. Jeffcoat also suggested these gatherings might include the interns themselves, so that everyone would be aware of what everyone else was doing, who was serving in internships and where. He recalled that some of the best learning in seminary occurred in conversations between classes when students would reflect on classroom material, and that interns might learn best by engaging such conversation with each other if they knew more about each other’s experience.

Program staff will be unable to integrate placement learning with academic learning if they are unaware of what interns are taught in the classroom. Several Huntingdon College faculty suggested syllabi sharing with program staff, and Dr. Fedler agreed to provide First UMC with syllabi to all religion courses. Making program staff aware of their interns’ academic work would not only allow them to teach in an integrated way, but it would also help the program staff to stay fresh in their fields.

With a denominational leaders’ view, Nick Mielke and Neil McDavid suggested ways that the learning community might be expanded further beyond Montgomery’s walls. Mr. Mielke suggested that interns could help plan and implement age-level events
that included many churches, an idea which has been implemented particularly in summer youth gatherings among Montgomery area churches. Neil McDavid proposed a certification process administered through the judicatory in partnership with Huntingdon and Montgomery churches. The ministry of the church is for the sake of the world, and the judicatory might serve as one catalyst for this program’s scope and impact to expand.

Regarding the fifth finding, longer internships would also help address another persistent concern raised by participants, whether underclassmen are developmentally prepared to serve in local church ministry while understanding theological curriculum and integrating it to experience. Certainly, the underclassmen who served during this project struggled mightily to balance the demands and opportunities of college life with their work. They experienced tremendous swings in commitment and professionalism and were often given to negativity. Longer internships could allow students who begin their intern experience with limited capacities to grow into their role and to be aided by more mature interns.

A possible programmatic solution to the question of intern tenure would be to actively recruit underclassmen to serve in ministerial capacities other than full internships, such as the Wednesday night children’s ministry helpers and choir scholarship students. These students could be given preference for internship openings. These positions, as well as summer staff positions, could also serve as space for discernment for students not studying for church-related vocations.

Public Presentation

The public presentation was held Friday, January 21, 2011, at First UMC. The
church staff, Huntingdon College faculty, interns, everyone who had been interviewed for the project, and a number of laity were invited. Because the presentation was held during the day, only church staff and congregation members were able to attend, a total of roughly 25 people.

The program staff members who attended affirmed in various ways their sense that they had been heard during their interview. Several shared their affirmation of findings that attended to their concerns about issues such as longevity, nurture, evaluation, and selection. The laity present expressed their sense that their role in nurturing interns had been affirmed. Some even shared stories of ways in which laity had offered specific acts of hospitality and welcome for interns. Many present shared their surprise that the intern program was organized as purposefully as it is, and with the programmatic complexity it has. The time closed with a hopeful conversation about the future prospects of the program as partnerships and relationships grow between college and congregation, and between congregations with interns.

Next Steps

A congregation and academic religion department working together as a true community of learners and mentors may offer a fresh model for theological education and ministerial development. As Kyle Fedler reflected during his interview, “That kind of cooperation is something I’ve never seen between any church and any school.” The “old model,” as he described it, has been for academic institutions to send students to a setting and reflect on experience when they return, or for the congregation to send

42. Swinton and Mowat, Practical Theology and Qualitative Research, 122-123, argue that participants in qualitative research not only make a subject understood, but that they have the power to shape the situation being studied.
students away to school for these students to apply knowledge when they return. It remains to be seen whether graduates will serve as effectively as hoped when they begin serving in full-time placements. But if the goals of the partnership begin to be realized, the partnership may offer attractive approaches to ministry training and supervision to both congregations and schools of higher education.43

This study focused on the relationship between one congregation, First UMC, with Huntingdon College’s efforts to train local church program staff professionals through its religion department. The study only began to suggest ways opportunities for cooperation between congregations in the development of student interns might be explored. Certainly, a city like Montgomery, with its many churches of various sizes and types within one denomination, denominational offices, and agencies such as the United Methodist Children’s Home and campus ministry at Alabama State University, has unlimited opportunities for students to learn and grow in a community of widely varied mentors and learning settings.

Perhaps the study’s greatest weakness was its focus on professionals and its complete failure to include laity in the research process. The congregation teaches interns how to be effective in ministry, and the body knows the difference between effective and ineffective ministry as well as any professional does. Most importantly, it is the congregation that creates the nurturing, hospitable environment that allows interns to thrive.

Conclusion

43. Edward Farley, Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001) calls for new models of ministerial training to integrate fragmented theological disciplines as well as disconnection from practices of ministry.
The effectiveness of the Intern Program Partnership between Huntingdon College and First UMC will only be determined when its graduates have demonstrated effective service in congregational placements over time. Still, consensus emerged among participants in the study on many aspects of the nature of effective ministry and how effective student ministers should be cultivated by congregations.

Nearly all of the participants either hinted at the dark side of ministry or explicitly described the loneliness and isolation, conflict, and difficulty of congregational life. Many of them shared the importance of internships providing a safe space to be nurtured by a congregation even while interns were introduced to church life’s messiness.

Dr. Karl Stegall shared his view that a minister who had a bad experience early would likely be forever hindered by it. At the same time, he felt that a person who had a nurturing, joyful, experience in early appointments would take the fruit of these positive experiences into every congregation he or she served. Dr. Stegall worked carefully behind the scenes to teach lay people how to nurture and encourage associates, even to the point of finding a donor to provide financial assistance when a protégé was in need. Dr. Stegall demonstrated that a nurturing, supportive congregation is the most important factor in establishing cycles of success in ministry. No one who served as his associate ever dropped out of the ministry. At the same time, while a congregation may have the potential to be a nurturing, life-giving environment, it does not happen by accident. It must be cultivated and coached.

Such an environment is created by small acts of kindness and attention. Lauren Randall, who graduated in December 2009 after serving a nearly three year internship at First UMC, said that she returned after her first visit because senior minister Dr. R. Lawson Bryan took her phone number and remembered to call her back. The investment
of lay persons who take an intern to lunch or to their homes cannot be overestimated.

In many ways, all of the findings of this project depend on a congregation that provides safe, nurturing space for learning. Interns can only grow spiritually through the invigoration a spiritually vital congregation imparts. Evaluation will feel like criticism if students do not know that they are authentically loved and accepted, that evaluation serves only as an investment in the interns’ development. Only a gracious congregation will take the risks necessary to offer interns opportunity to do meaningful ministry. The development of a community of mentors to guide students is a model of ministerial development built around the uniqueness of each student rather than acquisition of skills or completion of tasks. Longer tenures develop long term relationships; they demonstrate commitment to the intern and provide a setting in which interns can learn without the anxiety of being replaced.

Diana Butler Bass referred to congregations that practiced the Christian faith purposefully as “Intentional Congregations,” who, rather than walking alone through life without direction, walk together on a journey of discipleship, “From Nomads to Pilgrims.” Dorothy Bass and Craig Dykstra described communities of faith as people who do the things that constitute the abundant life Jesus Christ offers. This project is offered with great hope and expectation that many student interns will be invited to join in the abundant collective life and the life-giving practices of both the staff and laity of First UMC and the religion faculty of Huntingdon College. The world desperately needs

44. For an education theorist’s argument that taking on the practices and identity of the communities in which people live is the primary way people learn, see Etienne Wenger, Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).


46. Diana Butler Bass and Joseph Stewart Sicking, From Nomads to Pilgrims: Stories From Practicing Congregations (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006).
the grace of Jesus Christ that will be extended by communities of faith shaped and served by its graduates.

APPENDIX

Interview Settings, Questions, and Participants

The interview with current interns was a group interview and took place in July 2009. Participants were asked: “Please describe your intern experience at First UMC. How has the church and your work in ministry here been helpful or not helpful in your development as a minister? How has it related to your training at Huntingdon College?” Participants included Chelsey Jones, a sophomore Christian education major working as a summer youth intern; Davis Ryan, a sophomore business major working as a summer youth intern; Lauren Randall, a junior youth ministry/Christian education major completing her first full year as a youth intern; and Sarah Francis, a junior elementary education major competing her third year as a children’s ministry intern. The interview was held in the Pines Sunday School room at First UMC.

The church program staff members were interviewed as a group in July 2009. These included Adult Education Director Nell Brown, Children’s Ministries Director Glenda Argo, Assistant Children’s Ministries Director Renee Norman, Youth Ministries Director Robbie Plunkett, Music Director Jack Horner, and Assistant Music Director Linda Gill. Participants were reminded of the church’s commitment to serve as a Teaching Church in partnership with Huntingdon College and asked: “Please share what you have learned about mentoring through your experience with interns, as well as your thoughts on how our program might be shaped to best prepare interns to be effective local church professionals.” The interview was held in the Friendship Room, a
reception/meeting room at First UMC.

The third category of interviews was former First UMC interns currently serving in full-time vocational ministry. Two former interns were interviewed individually and asked: “Please describe your experience as an intern at First UMC. What did you learn there that has been helpful in your ministry since, and what have you experienced in your ministry since your internship for which you internship did not prepare you? How can you conceive of an internship best preparing Huntingdon College students for local church ministry?” The first of these interviews was conducted with Nick Mielke in July of 2009 at his office. Mr. Mielke is currently the youth minister at Prattville First UMC, but was then serving as Director of Youth Ministries for the area denominational judicatory. He had served as a full-time youth intern at First UMC for several years.

Emily Kincaid was interviewed in December 2010 in the interviewer’s office at First UMC. Rev. Kincaid is the associate pastor of First UMC, Wetumpka, AL. She served a year-long internship in children’s ministry and as a leader in the Alpha Course, a 14-week basic course on the Christian faith designed for seekers.

The fourth category of interview participants were Huntingdon religion professors, who were asked: “How can First UMC shape its intern program to partner with what you teach about theology and ministry in the classroom, and to be consistent with Huntingdon College’s internships for academic credit?” Each of these interviews was conducted in the professor’s offices at Huntingdon College in December, 2010. Participants included Dr. Kyle Fedler, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Professor of Ethics; Dr. Jason Borders, Professor of New Testament; and Dr. James Jeffcoat, Professor of Church History, Director of the Duffey Institute for Church Leadership, and ministry internships for academic credit. Dr. Fedler and Dr. Borders are members of
First UMC, and Dr. Borders and Dr. Jeffcoat are ordained United Methodist clergy.

The last category of participants was clergy with experience recruiting and supervising program staff. Four clergy participated in individual interviews conducted in December, 2010, in which they were asked: “If you were hiring a program staff member at your church and were interviewing one of our graduating interns, what qualities, characteristics, capabilities, and experiences would you be looking for in order to feel comfortable hiring the person? How would you suggest we shape our intern program to prepare such a minister?”

Dr. Karl Stegall, pastor emeritus of First UMC, recruited and supervised program staff and associate ministers over a more than forty year career in which he gained a reputation for mentoring outstanding clergy. Rev. Neil McDavid, Director of Connectional Ministries for area denominational judicatory, also recruited and supervised program staff and associate ministers over a long pulpit career, and now regularly consults with congregations seeking program staff. Rev. Dric Williford is pastor of Cain’s Chapel UMC, a mid-sized rural congregation typical of those likely to hire a student from Huntingdon College. Rev. Cory Smith is pastor of Woodland UMC, a mid-sized suburban congregation also likely to hire program staff directly graduating from college. Rev. McDavid was interviewed at his office. All the other clergy interviews were conducted at the interviewer’s office.
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