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Professional Identity Formation Throughout the Curriculum: Lessons from Clergy Education

by Dr. Larry A. Golemon*

Clergy education is undergoing radical transformation in the United States due to changes in the profession, the religious communities served, and the larger landscape of higher education. Many reformers of theological education question whether the education of pastors, priests, and rabbis should be considered “professional” education at all. Some call for less competence training and more formation of theological habits of interpretation and reflection; others advocate for more practical and contextual training of skills and role-formation; and others emphasize the formation of personal character and religious piety. Yet most of these reformers agree that the formation of pastoral and professional identity, values, and vocation is central to the educational enterprise, and should be addressed across the curriculum.¹

I approach this topic from the framework of the Carnegie Foundation’s studies of professional education, especially the study of the education of pastors, priests, and rabbis put forth in *Educating Clergy*,² which I had the privilege of participating in as a researcher and co-author. I continue

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1. There are many critiques of the professional model of clergy education. *See generally* EDWARD FARLEY, *THEOLOGIA: THE FRAGMENTATION AND UNITY OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION* (2001); DAVID KELSEY, *BETWEEN ATHENS AND BERLIN: THE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION DEBATE* (2011), <http://www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=437>; REBECCA S. CHOPP, *SAVING WORK: FEMINIST PRACTICES OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION* (1995). For a new emphasis on leadership formation, *see* CRAIG VAN GELDER, *THE MISSIONAL CHURCH AND LEADERSHIP FORMATION: HELPING CONGREGATIONS DEVELOP LEADERSHIP CAPACITY* (2009).

2. CHARLES FOSTER, LISA DAHILL, LAWRENCE GOLEMON & BARBARA TOLENTINO, *EDUCATING CLERGY: TEACHING PRACTICES AND PASTORAL IMAGINATION* (2006).

to support the view of graduate clergy education as “professional education” in the wider world of higher education because it has an historic association with law and medicine as professions that serve the common good, and because it addresses the “three apprenticeships” in the Carnegie studies of professional schools: those of forming the intellect, the skills, and the identity and norms of the profession.³ One of the main differences, however, between theological schools and other professional schools lies in the former carrying on liberal arts traditions of interdisciplinary teaching and the goal of the formation of character in continuity with the nineteenth century American colleges from which most of them developed.

Because most theological and rabbinical schools address professional issues in terms of “pastoral formation,” I will use these terms together when referring to clergy education. I will focus on the “pastoral/professional” degrees of the Master of Divinity (M. Div.) for Protestants and Catholics, and the Master of Arts (M.A.) in Rabbinical Studies (or Hebrew Literature) in rabbinical seminaries. For Protestants, the professional degree takes about three years, and for Catholics and Jews, it requires four to five years of study.⁴ I have found that a pastoral/professional model of clergy education is useful and adaptable to the nine seminaries and university schools of theology that I currently work with in the Washington, D.C. region, which include Catholic, mainline and evangelical Protestant, and historic Black Divinity schools.⁵ In this Article, I will focus on best practices and will not dwell on the problems and incongruities that many seminaries face, which are numerous.

I will begin with a quick overview of the Carnegie study of clergy education and its four signature pedagogies of interpretation, formation, contextualization, and performance (or practice). Then I will examine three ways in which pastoral/professional identity is formed in theological curricula:

3. See WILLIAM SULLIVAN, ANNE COLBY, JUDITH WELCH WEGNER, LLOYD BOND & LEE SHULMAN, *EDUCATING LAWYERS: PREPARATION FOR THE PROFESSION OF LAW* 25 *passim* (2007).

4. See *The Rabbinical School of JTS*, JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, <http://www.jtsa.edu/the-rabbinical-school-of-jts> (last visited Dec. 18, 2016); *FAQ's about Seminary*, HEED THE CALL, <http://.org/248/faqs-about-seminary> (last visited Dec. 18, 2016); *How to Become a Pastor*, HOW TO BECOME, <http://www.howtobecome.com/how-to-become-a-pastor> (last visited Dec. 18, 2016).

5. The Washington Theological Consortium consists of three university-based schools of theology and six free standing Catholic and Protestant seminaries, with partner institutions in Islamic and Jewish-Christian education. *Members*, WASHINGTON THEOLOGICAL CONSORTIUM, <http://wasstheocon.org/members/> (last visited Dec. 18, 2016).

(1) through various teaching practices that equip students to internalize professional norms and values;

(2) through the unique role that practical and clinical pedagogies have to integrate other pedagogies; and

(3) through the cultural symbols, narratives, and ethos of the theological school.

My argument can be stated simply: theological and rabbinical schools are most effective in forming pastoral/professional identity when they address it across the curriculum through a variety of pedagogies. The difficulty of executing this claim, however, lies in utilizing pedagogies with aims that are explicitly different, such as interpreting texts, forming spiritual practice, or practicing ministerial skills to also shape pastoral/professional identity. In terms of the Carnegie apprenticeships, my argument can be restated this way: the identity-norms apprenticeship is best fulfilled when it interacts with, or, at times, integrates aspects of the intellectual and skills-based apprenticeships.

I. OVERVIEW OF THE CARNEGIE STUDY OF CLERGY EDUCATION

The Carnegie study of Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, and Jewish seminaries identifies four signature pedagogies in the education of priests, pastors, and rabbis. The signature pedagogies are defined as teaching practices that are intentionally formative of student learning and identity by drawing them into patterns of social interaction that instill specific aims and values. In the tradition of social philosophers ranging from Carl McIntyre to Pierre Bourdieu, and in the thought of religious educators such as Dykstra and Dorothy Bass, pedagogy as a social practice engages ideology, epistemology, and learning in a matrix of intellectual, professional, and personal change.⁶

The four pedagogies in the Carnegie study of clergy education are:

(1) *Pedagogies of interpretation*, which focus on the hermeneutical methods of critical and normative readings of sacred texts, traditions, and exemplars of a faith community;

(2) *Pedagogies of formation*, which focus on the human and spiritual development of clergy toward an encounter with the divine, with the aim of internalizing authentic holiness and wisdom so that one can represent them to others;

(3) *Pedagogies of contextualization*, which focus on the analysis of social and cultural settings for ministry effectiveness and for the re-interpretation of religious traditions for a variety of peoples and settings; and

6. See generally FOSTER ET AL., *supra* note 2.

(4) *Pedagogies of performance*, which focus on building competencies in specific skills and roles required of religious leadership and the habits of the reflective practitioner that are required to adapt and develop them.⁷

These four signature pedagogies overlap with the three apprenticeships identified in the other Carnegie studies of professional education (intellectual apprenticeships, skills apprenticeships, and normative-ethical apprenticeships), but the added emphasis on contextualization distinguishes a dimension that runs through all three apprenticeships, especially in clergy education.⁸

What is the aim of clergy education according to this study? It is how these pedagogies interact to form a "pastoral, priestly or rabbinical imagination," which in the words of educator Craig Dykstra is "a way of seeing into and interpreting the world which shapes everything a pastor [priest, or rabbi] thinks and does."⁹ The pastoral imagination is not "imaginary" and thus a fanciful kind of knowing, as in the Platonic tradition; rather it is synthetic and constructive of experience, knowledge, and action, as in the tradition of Aristotle and later Kant.¹⁰ Pastoral imagination is at the root of perception, understanding, and action.

In light of the Carnegie study of clergy education and of my ongoing work with a variety of theological schools in the Washington, D.C. region, I will now discuss three approaches to the formation of professional/pastoral identity in clergy education: (1) through various teaching practices that equip students to internalize professional norms and values; (2) through the unique role that practical and clinical pedagogies have to integrate other pedagogies; and (3) through the cultural symbols, narratives, and ethos of the theological school as it shapes pastoral/professional imagination.

II. TEACHING PRACTICES THAT ARE FORMATIVE OF PROFESSIONAL/PASTORAL IDENTITY

I have chosen two examples of forming pastoral/professional identity through the pedagogies of formation and interpretation.

7. *Id.* at 88-98, 100, 120, 128, 157.

8. *See generally id.*

9. Craig Dykstra, *The Pastoral Imagination*, 9 INITIATIVES IN RELIGION, Spring 2001, at 2, 3.

10. Kant described the "productive imagination" as a synthetic power of reason and aesthetic judgment. *See* IMMANUEL KANT, CRITIQUE OF JUDGMENT 91-92 (Werner Pluhar trans., 1987).

A. Life-Story as a Pedagogical Strategy of Formation

To illustrate pedagogies of formation, I want to describe the use of the personal narratives of students as a strategy of negotiating cultural, gender, and racial differences into a shared discourse of spiritual and professional discovery. As every educator today knows, the negotiation of diversity and pluralism among students in the classroom is one of the ongoing and most exhausting tasks of the educator. In theological education, the intentional use of life-stories or community narratives is an important way of building a shared discourse that honors student diversity.

Prominent social psychologists and educators have influenced the rise of narrative pedagogies in clergy education. Jerome Bruner has argued for the importance of narrative learning in liberal arts and professional education.¹¹ Bruner describes how humans engage the world through narratives as a means of negotiating time and changing conditions.¹² Expert in life-story research Dan McAdams offers examples of how life-interviews and structured story-telling elevates self-integration and purposeful action, often in exemplary ways for society.¹³ These and other approaches to narrative inquiry and teaching have deeply influenced theological educators.

As a basic example of a narrative pedagogy of formation in the Washington Theological Consortium, we use a life-story exercise that helps new students find a place in the ecumenical community of learners they are joining. Every year, we hold a new student orientation where Protestant students visit Catholic Religious Study Houses for dinner and conversations. As Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, and Anglicans visit with Dominicans, Paulists, Benedictines, and Carmelites, the students are invited to share their personal, spiritual journeys that brought them to theological education. Some of these stories are intellectual quests for truth, others are spiritual quests for meaning, still others convey a struggle with social injustice that creates a new life purpose. The variety of stories is remarkable, but the practice of sharing narratives that shape one's life purpose creates a shared discourse for the ecumenical community of learning they are entering.

Theological educators increasingly use pastoral memoirs and spiritual autobiographies—from Theresa of Avila to Frederick Douglass—to model the diversity of spiritual paths in the Christian tradition.¹⁴ Lee Ramsey

11. JEROME BRUNER, *THE CULTURE OF EDUCATION* 16, 132 (1997).

12. *Id.*

13. DAN P. MCADAMS, *THE REDEMPTIVE SELF: STORIES AMERICANS LIVE BY* 77-81 (2006).

14. See generally THERESA OF AVILA, *THE LIFE OF ST. THERESA OF AVILA BY HERSELF* (1988); FREDERICK DOUGLASS, *NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS* (1994).

of Memphis Theological Seminary uses well-crafted pastoral memoirs to orient students' own reflection and story-telling toward religious leadership. This use of narrative in teaching also helps students shape a pastoral imagination regarding the trajectory their own ministry might take and the challenges they will face.¹⁵

Instruction in pastoral care and counseling also engages life-narratives. Professors introduce students to the skills of "active listening" and the personal demeanor that invites another's life-story to lay the rapport and framework needed for ongoing encounters of compassion, counseling, and healing.¹⁶ Inviting and guiding life-stories is a pastoral art that opens the pastor, priest, or rabbi to the diversity within their community of faith, and it empowers persons whose voices have been stifled or oppressed by a religious tradition of cultural context. African-American educator Ed Wimberly and feminist educator Christy Neuger, for example, utilize life-stories as strategies for challenging marginalized people to reframe their narratives with life-giving and liberating futures.¹⁷ Many of these strategies draw upon paradigms of "narrative therapy" utilized in the wider counseling field.¹⁸

Finally, professors of homiletics utilize narrative methods in the teaching of preaching. Telling the story of exemplary saints or exemplars of a religious community is encouraged to clarify a religious way of life and to inspire others to embrace it. Increasingly, professors of preaching encourage the careful use of personal life-stories of contemporaries as ways to embody a scriptural narrative or as a model for the life of faith.¹⁹ Some homiletics professors encourage students to capitalize on distinct story-forms of their own culture, like the *Han* or personal lament from Korea.²⁰ Because good preaching is highly synthetic of sacred texts, exemplary figures, contemporary experiences, and more, it requires integrative acts

15. G. Lee Ramsey Jr., *The Continuous Thread of Revelation: Pastoral Memoirs and the Narrative Imagination*, LIVING OUR STORY 43-62 (Larry Golemon ed., 2009).

16. SUZANNE M. COYLE, UNCOVERING SPIRITUAL NARRATIVES: USING STORY IN PASTORAL CARE AND MINISTRY (2014).

17. EDWARD P. WIMBERLY, AFRICAN AMERICAN PASTORAL CARE: REVISED EDITION (2008); CHRISTIE COZAD NEUGER, COUNSELING WOMEN: A NARRATIVE, PASTORAL APPROACH 134, 222 (2001).

18. MICHAEL WHITE & DAVID EPSTON, NARRATIVE MEANS TO THERAPEUTIC ENDS 183-86 (1991).

19. See generally EUGENE L. LOWRY, THE HOMILETICAL PLOT: THE SERMON AS NARRATIVE ART FORM (2001); AUSTIN B. TUCKER, THE PREACHER AS STORYTELLER: THE POWER OF NARRATIVE IN THE PULPIT (2008); MIKE GRAVES, THE STORY OF NARRATIVE PREACHING: EXPERIENCE AND EXPOSITION (2015).

20. See generally SANGYIL PARK, KOREAN PREACHING, HAN, AND NARRATIVE (2008).

of pastoral imagination that include the reconstruction of how sacred texts and traditions relate to new ministry contexts.

Many homiletics professors caution against using one's life-stories in exemplary ways, as this can create conditions for clergy abuse of power. Instead, many follow the advice of pastors such as Reverend Graham Standish of Pittsburgh, whose rule is to use personal stories only when humorous or self-deprecating, in a Lake Wobegon way.

B. Argument with Texts and Others as a Holy Act

As an illustration of a pedagogy of interpretation, I want to share how educators in rabbinical schools draw students into studied argument about the meaning of sacred texts. This is an inherently dialogical pedagogy, as students learn how to argue with various rabbinical voices in the Talmud, and how to argue with other students and the professor about what the text says and what it means for today. Learning to master the interpretive methods of sound argument becomes integral to a rabbi's identity, especially in his or her relationships to the Hebrew Bible and Talmud, and to one's relationships with peers.

Many professors of the Talmud introduce rabbinical students to various levels of interpretive practice, including the decoding of linguistic terms and idioms, identifying the various rabbinical voices and arguments in a text, following the logic of how these voices are intertwined in the final version of the text, and offering an interpretation of what the arguments around the biblical text in question actually mean for a community today.²¹ Different traditions of Judaism will stress different dimensions of the "logic" employed in weaving the distinct rabbinical voices together, the more modern Reform and Conservative traditions emphasizing social, historical, and cultural dimensions that were taken into account, while the Orthodox stress the intra-textual, literary relationships of the voices.²²

It helps newcomers to the Talmud, like myself, to understand that it is composed of rabbinical opinions and textual commentaries that range from first century CE to medieval Judaism. The bulk of the Talmud is a commentary on the *Mishnah*, composed of the earliest oral teachings related to the Hebrew Bible and the rise of Jewish law. At the center of a page of the Talmud is the text of the *Mishnah*, representing classic rabbinical scholars like Hillel and Shammai, and around the *Mishnah* are commentaries by the great school of Rashi and glosses by many other

21. FOSTER ET AL., *supra* note 2, at 77.

22. *Focus Study on Judaism as a Religious Tradition*, ISRAEL & JUDAISM STUDIES, <http://ijs.org.au/Judaism-as-a-Religious-Tradition/default.aspx> (last visited Dec. 18, 2016).

rabbis up to the medieval period. Learning to decode and read a page of the Talmud can take hours, and it requires students to enter into the arguments of the rabbis, ask pointed questions of the *Mishnah* text, and analyze the various arguments of rabbinical commentary. In the end, the student makes an educated judgment about what the central text means.²³

The old joke about asking two rabbis a question and there will be at least three opinions is actually normative for Talmudic interpretation, as a skilled student knows how to follow and recite the various interpretations offered on one page of this sacred text. Joining one's own voice to the company of rabbis requires the fostering of a rabbinic imagination that is analytical, dialogical, and confident.

This dialogical interpretation is reinforced in the study process between peers in the *beit midrash*, or house of study. There, one finds students in pairs called *havruta* (from Hebrew for "friend"), arguing over the interpretation of a page from the Talmud, reciting various rabbinical opinions, and rendering their own judgments, often against one another. This argumentative form of study embodies the dialogical and communal nature of Jewish interpretation of sacred texts, and it shapes the habits of reading and analysis that mark an educated rabbi.²⁴

This teaching practice of sound argument is intensely intellectual, but it is also a holy act. Now before any rabbinical student (or legal student for that matter) believes that sound argument makes one like God, the Jewish value of *Torah Lishmah* (the study of the Bible and the Talmud for its own sake) honors and delights God by drawing one into the teachings and arguments of the great rabbis. The aim of sound argument with the text is twofold: to immerse the student in sacred texts and to keep the holy way of life shaped by this study alive. This unique form of argument and dialogue is done for the sake of a people and for sustaining a way of life. As this practice deepens, the rabbi becomes a *klei kodesh*, or "holy vessel," that represents a way of life for the sake of the community.²⁵

I hope this description of a formative and an interpretive pedagogy in clergy education supports the overall argument that forming pastoral/professional identity can take place throughout the seminary curriculum by means of various pedagogies. To further this argument, I will

23. See the sample page of the Talmud at the University of Calgary page at *A Page from the Babylonian Talmud*, ELIEZER SEGAL, <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/Talmud-Page.html> (last visited Dec. 18, 2016).

24. FOSTER ET AL., *supra* note 2, at 78.

25. NORMAN LAMM, *TORAH LISHMAH: TORAH FOR TORAH'S SAKE IN THE WORKS OF RABBI HAYYIM OF VOLOZHIN AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES* 190-91 (1989).

now turn to another of the pedagogies: the performance of clergy roles and skills with reflection on practice.

III. PERFORMANCE AS AN INTEGRATIVE PEDAGOGY FOR SHAPING PASTORAL/PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Now I turn to the performative pedagogies that take place in classroom practica and field education. These are integrative of other pedagogies, as they draw students into utilizing learned subject matter and critical thinking in relation to ministry practice and reflection.

A. Classroom Practica in Preaching and Worship

The *locus classicus* of integrating the four pedagogies in clergy education is in the area of preaching and worship leadership. In early American seminaries, preaching was central to the final integrative year of study, much as rhetoric and oratory crowned the liberal arts curriculum of nineteenth century colleges. Today, preaching performance involves students' delivery in the classroom, critical feedback from peers and their professor, and the review of videotapes of their delivery with their professor. The entire exercise of writing and delivering a sermon requires interpretive work with a given sacred text, a critical awareness of the context and issues of the congregation addressed, and a set of skills around effective use of language, rhetorical devices, and the use of voice.²⁶

Worship practica include similar classroom pedagogies of presiding over a service, feedback from peers, and critical review from the professor. As students progress, they are involved in the planning and leading of worship for the seminary community or a local church. Worship leadership also requires knowledge of the history and theological composition of the rite in question, an adaptive and creative ability to recompose certain rites and prayers for a new context, and the exercise of a leadership style and presence that is fitting for the given community, such as robed and formal for some, in jeans and with a microphone in hand for others.

The most effective pedagogies related to preaching and worship include reflections on the pastoral presence and style of the individual students. One's person becomes an instrument of worship, and it should draw people into the rite or prayers being used. Practice pedagogies, then, are not all about skills, as they necessarily include authentic em-

26. See generally THOMAS G. LONG & LEONORA TUBBS TISDALE, *TEACHING PREACHING AS A CHRISTIAN PRACTICE: A NEW APPROACH TO HOMILETICAL PEDAGOGY* (2008); EDWARD FOLEY & TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE OP, *A HANDBOOK FOR CATHOLIC PREACHING* (2016).

bodiment and personal presence. Many a gaffe in a sermon or ritual enactment can be forgiven if the future priest, pastor, or rabbi maintains a proper demeanor or personal authenticity.

Far from being conformist, however, many preaching classes emphasize the development of personal style, embodied presence, and voice. For example, every year we hold a “sermon slam” in the Consortium, where an exemplary preacher from each of our schools comes to deliver a sermon before a houseful of peers from the schools. The diversity of styles—from carefully written homilies, to slam style poetry reflections, to Black preaching with call and response, to somber or humorous personal narratives—demonstrates the importance of embodying one’s tradition in a personal voice. Classroom practice exercises involve elements that are probably similar to moot court in legal education, except they are always part of the regular curriculum and offered for credit in seminaries.

Because clergy constantly put themselves before the community in preaching, worship, and leadership, many clergy educators are intentional about helping students learn how to embody pastoral/professional identity with integrity and intention. This requires cultivating a pastoral imagination that calibrates how to use their own person, demeanor, and bodily presence as a social sign or symbol for the good of the community they serve.

B. Field Education

Now I turn to the central role that field or contextual education plays in shaping pastoral/professional identity. In seminaries with highly developed programs, field education is the culminating, integrative point of the professional degree. For example, San Francisco Theological Seminary asserts:

The internship experience is designed to integrate divinity studies and form M. Div. students in the arts and skills of ministry. This is an interactive learning process . . . [that weaves] together the person that God has created and called in Christ through the practice of ministry, theological reflection, spiritual formation, constructive feedback, critique, and evaluation.²⁷

One of the clearest set of guidelines for seminary education, *The Program for Priestly Formation* of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, affirms that

27. SAN FRANCISCO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, SFTS HANDBOOK FOR FIELD EDUCATION 12 (2015), <http://sfts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/field-ed-hanbook.pdf>.

pastoral formation, which includes ministry placements, “is the culmination of the entire formation process.”²⁸

Almost all theological and rabbinical schools have some form of field education for their students, but they vary in intensity and duration. Protestant seminaries usually require two years during the regular course of study; Catholic seminaries require three years plus an internship; and most Rabbinical Schools require some part-time semesters plus an internship.²⁹ An excellent article by Daisy Hurst Floyd and her colleagues at Mercer University School of Law captures well the emphasis these programs place on personal and professional formation, the centrality of reflection on practice, and their relevance for legal education.³⁰

The most effective field education programs for seminarians include the following elements:

(1) introduction to a *wide range of pastoral roles* and the various skills required to build competency in them, ranging from pastoral care, preaching, and worship leadership, to organizational leadership, teaching opportunities, and community service or outreach;

(2) a *clear context* and time frame for field education: usually a parish, synagogue or congregation, but sometimes a community clinic, hospital, nursing home, or social service organization;

(3) consistent *supervision* from an experienced, if not gifted practitioner, who also has training in supervision;

(4) a *community advisory group* made of constituents served in the congregation, health care facility, or agency who offer focused feedback on the student’s work;

(5) regular *written requirements* of reflection papers on specific cases of encounter, thematic papers on theological reflection on their ministry, and journals of learnings and reflections throughout the experience;

(6) *teaching sessions* with supervisors and other staff members, some community or religious experts, and at times regular faculty who provide richer resources for reflecting on the work being done;

(7) *peer-reflection groups*, especially for extended internships, which share pastoral incidents, offer support and prayers, and offer constructive criticism and raise questions of specific incidents.

28. U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, PROGRAM OF PRIESTLY FORMATION ¶ 236 (5th ed. 2006), <http://www.usccb.org/upload/program-priestly-formation-fifth-edition.pdf>.

29. FOSTER ET AL., *supra* note 2, at 296-325. For one example of a rabbinical internship program at Jewish Theological Seminary, see *Iyun*, JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, <http://www.jtsa.edu/iyun> (last visited Dec. 18, 2016).

30. Daisy Hurst Floyd, Timothy W. Floyd & Sarah Gerwig-Moore, *Learning From Clergy Education: Externships Through the Lens of Formation*, 19 CLINICAL L. REV. 83 (2012).

Programs differ in their emphasis, depending on the tradition and school in question. Most mainline Protestant and evangelical schools emphasize theological and pastoral reflection on ministry experience as a core practice that takes place in supervision, peer reflection, and written assignments. As one school states: “[T]he intern should be given regular opportunities to pause in the practice of ministry to reflect upon the personal and theological issues.”³¹ Likewise, Catholic seminaries emphasize the integration of skills and role congruence in field education. But they also help students experience and incorporate the embodied and symbolic dimension of becoming a priest, who “communicates the mysteries of faith through his human personality as a bridge.”³²

Recently, many seminaries, such as the McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University and Virginia Theological Seminary, are turning to “Teaching Churches” as primary sites for student learning in the last year or two of study. There, students are exposed to various dimensions of practice, including worship, teaching, administration, conflict management, pastoral care, board governance, finance, and more. These programs are sophisticated and carefully integrated, and they elevate the local congregation as a teaching partner with the seminary.³³

Performative pedagogies in classroom and field education help students integrate acquired knowledge and critical thinking with ministerial practice and reflection. Throughout these programs, there is an emphasis on the integrity of the practitioner in role-congruence, personal character, and social demeanor or presence as a key element in serving the local religious community and the various publics they engage.

IV. THE POWER OF THE SCHOOL’S CULTURAL SYMBOLS, NARRATIVES, AND ETHOS

In my final section, I want to illustrate how collective pedagogies of the school environment, traditions, and symbolic rituals contribute to forming pastoral/professional identity. Seminaries, like historic colleges and universities, are keenly aware of the symbolic culture, narratives, and ethos of the school’s traditions as a resource for shaping students’ identities. I share this learning resource to emphasize again that professional formation is best viewed as a holistic process, one that is akin to cultural formation of personal identities and ways of life.

31. *SFTS Handbook for Field Education*, *supra* note 27, at 4.

32. PROGRAM OF PRIESTLY FORMATION, *supra* note 28, ¶ 237.

33. For a description of McAfee’s program, see *Curriculum*, MERCER UNIV., <http://ctc.mercer.edu/curriculum/> (last visited Oct. 1, 2016).

Here, I draw once more on Jerome Bruner's narrative understanding of culture and its ongoing construction in the educational environment. While at New York University Law School, Bruner described his strong interest in "the various institutional forms by which culture is passed on—most particularly in school practices and in legal codes and legal praxis. In both examples, my concern is with how canonical forms create dialectic with the 'possible worlds' of imaginative art forms."³⁴ He draws on an "anthropological-interpretive" approach to culture, indebted to Clifford Geertz, with the added emphasis of a "narrative mode of construing reality," following Paul Ricoeur.³⁵ Schools, like traditional societies, construct a "web of meaning," within which meaning and identity of the profession are formed through symbols, rites, traditions, and ongoing social practices.

For example, Howard University School of Divinity resided for many years in a former school of the Franciscans.³⁶ The building combines modern art deco forms with traditional statuary of Christian saints.³⁷ Howard transformed this setting with the cultural narratives and icons of the Black Church and African traditions. In the place of niches designed for Catholic statuary, Howard placed symbols of African religions and language. Moreover, pictures and library articles of the exemplary alumni of the school, including Benjamin Mays and Howard Thurman, adorned the hallways that students followed regularly to class. These cultural symbols reminded students and faculty that traditions of African-American religious communities are living resources for shaping contemporary ministry and Black Church life.³⁸

Now the School of Divinity shares a campus with the Howard University School of Law. The theological school has modern hallways, classrooms, and a beautiful floor of the library, but the setting has been void of the symbols and figures of the Black Church or African culture until just recently, when they were unpacked from boxes and crates for display. The auditory aspects of Black Church cultural performance have

34. NYU DEP'T OF PSYCHOLOGY, <http://www.psych.nyu.edu/bruner/> (last visited Mar. 3, 2017).

35. BRUNER, *supra* note 11, at 134.

36. JEFFREY ANDERSON, *The Catholic Church is Selling Northeast DC to Developers*, WASHINGTONIAN (Feb. 2, 2016), <https://www.washingtonian.com/2016/02/02/catholic-church-catholic-university-selling-brookland-northeast-dc-to-developers/>.

37. *Id.*

38. HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY, FACILITY BROCHURE 10, http://divinity.howard.edu/pdf_forms/facility/HUSD%20Facility%20Brochure%20Packet.pdf.

been present through preaching, worship, and professorial voices. But the tangible and visible representations have been lacking.³⁹

Contrast this to the ethos and symbols of the law school environment next door. Notable graduates are celebrated in the large bronze bust of Thurgood Marshall and photos or testaments of notable civil rights attorneys, such as Wiley Austin Branton and Robert Carter, and accomplished politicians, such as Douglas Wilder and Vicki Miles Lagrange.⁴⁰ The moot courtroom creates a primary setting for legal practice, and helps students place themselves in ethos and role of courtroom practice.⁴¹ Which of these schools has the more visible cultural symbols and iconic figures of the profession? At present, it is the law school.

Historic theological and rabbinical schools are rich in the teaching resources of architecture, symbols, art, rituals, and iconic figures, and there is no reason that law schools cannot do the same. The more these symbolic and cultural elements are used intentionally by professors and students in the social practices and community pedagogies of the school, the more explicitly faculty and students draw on these resources for teaching and learning, and the more they can equip students to internalize profession values and norms into their overall identity.

In short, the formation of pastoral imagination in clergy education must include aesthetic and symbolic elements that help shape a student's imaginative capacity. Kant was right, I think, when he analyzed the imagination as a dimension of reasoning and aesthetic judgment. Pastoral or professional imagination is best cultivated by a combination of reflective pedagogies and symbolic and cultural pedagogies. If professional imagination is a synthetic and constructive mode of reasoning, perception, and action that is central to professional education more broadly, I hope that schools of clergy education and legal education will capitalize on their symbolic and cultural traditions in the formation process.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that schools of clergy education utilize a variety of pedagogies and learning contexts to shape the pastoral/professional identity of students. The approach in many schools is holistic, as professors and program staff try to address this area of formation throughout the curriculum. The age-old divides between ana-

39. *See id.* at 6-11.

40. *History*, HOWARD UNIV., <http://www.law.howard.edu/19> (last visited Apr. 18, 2017).

41. *Giving*, HOWARD UNIV., <https://giving.howard.edu/school-law> (last visited Jan. 30, 2017).

lytical scholarship and professional practice continue, but most theological and rabbinical schools are seeking to bridge the gap. As more theological educators understand the formation of pastoral/professional identity as a process that they share with other professional schools, the more they will have to share and learn from their colleagues in law schools and elsewhere.

