

Outcome or Ability? Recovering Excellence in Theological Education
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Introduction

The following essay emerges from an ongoing struggle to define clergy education in the Church of the Nazarene, particularly educational practice in the USA/Canada Region. While clergy education remains a priority in the denomination, alongside a historical commitment to education at large, efforts to both coordinate educational efforts among educational providers, district leadership, and local churches, proves a problem. While the denomination finds itself often touted for its coordination among International Board of Education schools, the level of collaboration, even understanding, around clergy education often leaves educators and practitioners perplexed. Simply put, following the changes to the standards for ministerial education in the 1997 *Manual, Church of the Nazarene*, and the adoption of the language of outcomes in the USA Regional Sourcebook, provider schools and districts found themselves wrestling with a paradigm that hampered both the design and assessment of clergy education. Understanding both the roots of that perplexity (from subjects to outcomes-based language) and situating a response by drawing upon Alisdair MacIntyre's emphasis on practice, provides a way forward by reframing ability statements with their academic disciplines, as a pursuit of excellence.¹ Educational providers, district leadership, and local congregations need to recognize that clergy education reflects something much more than subject headings or outcomes-based education. By seeing the various domains as representing ministry practices, or disciplines, educators can provide sufficient intensity of instruction to help students gain exposure to not only demonstrate basic competence, but also understand the vision that guides that discipline and the virtue, or excellence, possible over time.

The paper will first describe some of the conundrums associated with outcomes-based education and the original design of the USA/Canada Region (UCR) outcomes as well as its struggle to balance program instruction and partnerships. The writing moves to describe an alternative structure, beginning with a revision of the 2015 UCR Sourcebook, to adopt a broader language more associated with 'ability' to overcome some outcome difficulties. The writing then offers the underlying theory of that move, MacIntyre's vision of "practice" and its relation to academic disciplines. The writing then applies this theory to specific questions around the duration, intensity, and interdisciplinarity associated the concept of years of study within clergy education both considering formal education, candidacy, and the interdisciplinary programing between the disciplines themselves.

On a personal note, the rhetoric I employ in writing this paper resonates between a descriptive accounting and a personal (sometimes seemingly acerbic) interpretation. Naming this work as a personal investment reveals my close tie as the Regional Education Coordinator for USA/Canada

¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd Edition (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

since 2005. The style, however, represents several of my writings as an academic. I have often remarked that my research and writing primarily serves to “start balls rolling down a hill” and stir responses. Historically some of those conceptual offerings found energy and rolled on to fruitful efforts either in my own work, or for others who found kinetic energy to continue the study. At times those conceptual ideas lack “critical mass” to overcome inertia and stopped somewhere on the hillside. Sometimes the balls not only rolled quickly, but often crunched toes, or even landed on the head (metaphorically speaking), of a reader thereby provoking rebuke. Regardless, I often write to start a conversation, not finish it (a dreadful tendency with some scholars) so please consider this offering an invitation, even if your toes hurt in the telling.

Outcomes Based Education and Ensuing Problems

Without a doubt, outcomes-based education (OBE) often defines both traditional approaches to course instruction as well as more aggressive models of self-directed, or mentored, competency based education (CBE).² The shift from teaching toward subjects governed by the teacher’s intended goals (such as to cover a specific range of topical material) to focusing on the learner’s level of competency of a subject (either cognition, practice, or disposition) defines most educational endeavors around student outcomes. The shift began primarily as a specific, course-related, strategy. Prospective teachers found themselves challenged to rethink their approach through curriculum design courses, moving to OBE in articulating the purpose, or existence, of any course.³ Current faculty members wrestled to articulate the same challenge, often rethinking previous course goals into specific, behaviorally minded, outcomes while learning the taxonomy of action verbs that described how students demonstrated knowledge, capabilities, or value as the result of class instruction and examination. Eventually administrators supervising full programs, often still governed by degree goals, found themselves designing situational program outcomes to determine the efficacy of a degree as a whole. Outcomes defined not only micro curricular strategies, but also macro-curriculum outputs demonstrated through a comprehensive evaluation of students for the sake of quality assurance.

OBE influences almost every aspect of course design and assessment, and future OBE strategies may continue to grow as a strategy, as well as provide a mode of assessment, for theological education. The emergence of Competency Based Theological Education (CBTE) in the United States signals such an emphasis.⁴ In addition, almost all accrediting agencies, from regional

² Jessica Mason and Kelle Parsons, *State of the Field: Findings From the 2019 National Survey of Postsecondary Competency-Based Education* (American Institutes for Research, 2019); George Posner and Alan Rudnitsky, *Course Design: A Guide to Curriculum Development for Teachers*, 7th Edition (New York: Pearson, 2005).

³ Linda Alexander “Outcomes Based Education,” *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 2:1 (June 2002) Accessible online (5/18/2021) <https://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/volume-2-1/273-v2n1-alexander>; see also Clergy Development, “Grove City 2001 Educational Folder,” Compact Disk (2001).

⁴ The Association of Theological Schools, “Competency-Based Education Final Peer Group Report,” in *Explore, Assess, Affirm: Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education*

accreditation bodies to state agencies, require some level of outcome measurement to determine the efficacy of school instruction at the program level. However, do outcomes guarantee excellence? This question may lie at the heart of future efforts around clergy formation. Could schools, even instructors, miss a crucial interpretive guide in the race to diversify outcomes?

Design Guide or Program Assessment?

Over the past twenty years, the USA/Canada Regional Course of Study Committee, wrestled with that question through the denomination's change to a competency "minded" vision for clergy education. Anchored in changes to the 1997 *Manual, Church of the Nazarene* (424.3-424.6), the denomination shifted from subject related descriptions of coursework (anchored in the vision of a three-year Bible college model) to a 4-C emphasis centered around core domains, and representative subject areas, associated with clergy education: Content (core theological knowledge), Competency (arts and practices of ministry including leadership tasks), Context (local and cross-cultural awareness), and Character (personal, interpersonal, and intellectual virtues).⁵ Still the Manual description of the of the 4-C relied on what many might describe as either "subject areas," or what might be better known as "disciplines" later in this writing, in describing the each of the larger domains (See Appendix 1). In corresponding fashion, the USA Sourcebook included not only the 4-C domains but also a series of "academic subject areas under each domain."⁶ The list of Sourcebook domains can be found in Appendix 2.

The *USA Sourcebook* also listed a large array of "competencies" under each domain. While including an emphasis on a descriptive list of expectations (437.14) that ministers must know/be/do in preparing for ordination (45 statements), the Sourcebook also listed a large list of specific outcomes (stated as abilities) that detailed what a prospective minister must demonstrate before completing their ordination education based on the 4-C paradigm (437.15-17).⁷ These outcomes served as the standard for assessing the curricular design of the education provider's program efforts to instruct students toward the same outcomes. A review of the 2005 Sourcebook indicated that education providers might face a total of 89-100 mandatory outcomes depending on whether they addressed all ministry specializations (beyond just preaching), along with an additional 50 possible supplemental outcomes remaining to demonstrate "value added" in educating prospective clergy.

Peer Group Final Reports (Pittsburgh, PA: The Association of Theological Schools, 2016) available online (2/7/2021), 151-159, cf. 153.

⁵ Church of the Nazarene, *Manual 1997-2001* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2001), 179-182; Michael Vail, "Outcome-Based Ministerial Preparation —A Case Study," *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 2:1 (June 2002) Accessible online (5/18/2021) <https://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/volume-2-1/283-v2n1-vail>

⁶ See Appendix One for Manual Language

⁷ Course of Study Advisory Committee—USA Church of the Nazarene, *Sourcebook for Ministerial Education* (Clergy Development, 2005), 8-21; see also Handbook

One reason for the adoption of outcomes came from a discomfort of course titles governing the discernment process. One enduring concern revolved around ministry students taking coursework at non-Nazarene institutions as indicated in the 1993 *Manual Church of the Nazarene* (424.4-424.5).⁸ Often classes on the district level were addressed much like selections in a cafeteria where evaluators possessed no guidelines other than the course title in a transcript for determining selection (See Appendix Three).

The sheer weight of the range of outcomes often proved daunting since the *USA Sourcebook* offered the statements as a guide for assessing curriculum design, with an implication that the outcomes might be used to both guide both educational provider delivery and assessment of student performance through said course development.⁹ The regional course of study advisory committee found themselves tasked with the challenge of identifying the educational provider's ability to "deliver" such a curriculum primarily through the review of the syllabi designed to communicate the expectations within the course through "assignments" (readings, lectures, experiential events, etc.) and "assessments" (exams, reports, portfolios, etc.). This approach, really a guide for curriculum design rather than a substitute for program goals, applied to all degree programs (majors and minors) that claimed to meet ordination standards. The creators of the sourcebook also intended the same outcomes to serve district boards of ministry by giving them general guidelines to assess concrete expectations of candidate knowledge, skills, and values. However, this second goal has yet to be realized.

To complicate matters, the USA RCOSAC (following standards set forth in the *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordained Ministers*) included both a minimum 75% program weighting among the 4-Cs (30% Content, 25% Competency, 10% Character and 10% Context), with 25% of the program available for special emphasis "within" clergy education based on the unique strengths and interests of the educational provider.¹⁰ In addition, international reporting forms also suggested each course should include "some" aspect of all 4-C domains in each class in its worksheet though no specific designation occurred in the Sourcebook. This final expectation created confusion across international bodies in recognition that the domains/disciplines themselves (listed in the 1997 *Manual*) did not suggest such hybrid classes.

Over time, problems began to emerge with the RCOSAC strategy. First, outcomes language, particularly at the program level, threatened to swamp educational efforts with massive models of program assessment reflective of institutionally minded quality control strategies. Program evaluation, by design, centers on SPAM (Specific, Attainable, and Measurable) outcomes that

⁸ Church of the Nazarene, *Manual 1993-1997* (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1997), 60-61.

⁹ Mike Vail, "The Challenge of Evaluating Clergy Education in the Context of the Church of the Nazarene," *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 8:1 (June 2008) Accessible online (5/31/2021) <https://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/issues-topmenu-38/59-vol-8/34-vol-8-no-1-june-2008>

¹⁰ Church of the Nazarene, *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordained Ministers*, 1999, Revised 2005 (Clergy Development, 2005), 11-12.

demonstrate program efficacy often through survey and measurement of student performance outside typical classroom grading. Faced with providing up to 89 independent models of measurement just to prove program efficacy, often educational providers found themselves forced to avoid formally educating clergy in some states due to educational requirements. Other programs found themselves including supplemental program assessments for each RCOSAC outcome alongside the broader degree goals that largely governed the program degree to meet internal provider expectations. Ability statements, when seen as program outcomes, created multiple problems. The challenge reflected a similar conflation of standards and outcomes in the parlance of higher education as demonstrated in the Sourcebook itself. By naming outcomes as standards, the Sourcebook risked confusion around program assessment.¹¹

Lost in a Sea of Pastiche

In addition, the conflation of ability statements with specific course outcomes (that guide student learning in given classes) often either created massive amounts of additional assessment or reduced the larger goals of clergy education to a fraction of a single course plan. Recent efforts at a more rigorous model of outcome-based education, both in the general higher education and in theological education, reveals that the original 89 ability statements, while too large for program evaluation, proved much too small for true student outcomes assessment. Currently institutions adopting OBE as a comprehensive curricular strategy often adopt anywhere from 200-500 specific outcomes designed for assessment by a robust team of continuing mentor/evaluators, as a recent effort by the Asia Pacific Region COSAC reveals as well. When a COSAC ability statement began to appear as one of several course outcomes, the original intent was lost in a dwindling of the efficacy of that ability statement, among other agendas, in each course. This atomization of the ability statement in the “weeds” of individual student outcomes and specific assignments forced RCOSAC reviewers to ask whether one book review assignment, or a paper, comprehensively covered the ability statement. Often, that approach did not adequately prepare students for prospective ministry.

For many programs, the creation of the outcomes-model merely reflected a rethinking of traditional courses often geared to the subject areas in the Manual and reflective of traditional theological education as a whole (whether governed by what is understood as four-fold theological education of the academy, or the basic framework of bible college instruction). Unfortunately, the creation of more esoteric constellations of majors/minors offered by some educational providers introduced a well-meaning strategy, one entrepreneurially combined to attract students, while possibly addressing a specific track to educate clergy. Unfortunately, the strategy created a dizzying arrangement of outcomes in hybrid courses and degrees, often obscuring the subject areas originally associated with *Manual* language. Whole subjects might be subsumed into one class while other subjects might “float” across multiple classes without recognizable expectations of assignments or assessments that provide a substantive engagement.

¹¹ Elena Silva, Taylor White, and Thomas Toch, *The Carnegie Unit: A Century-Old Standard in a Change Education Landscape* (Stanford, CA: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2021), 15.

To be truthful, some subjects and attendant Ability Statements often required more than one class to address the efficacy of that subject, while other classes might attend their full weight to a given subject with adequate intensity to demonstrate a substantive assessment of the student's capability around two to three interrelated ability statements. In either case, such classes often translated well in program articulation with other schools. However, in this early, outcomes-guided version, several ability statements seemed more like micro-managed expectations of a sub specialization within the subject area. Rather than represent a broader vision of the domains and subject areas, abilities came to hover somewhere between implicit student learning outcomes (even replacing the course outcomes in some programs) and program goals. While offered in the spirit of integrative course development, some ability statements, and the subject areas they represented, reflected a kind of pastiche flavoring over preferred courses, rather than provide a comprehensive vision of the subject area in preparing for ministry. If asked for a clear location where a student might undergo substantive evaluation that demonstrated a basic capability from "within" that subject area, often several courses might be required that addressed other subject areas as well.

Still, at the heart of the decision for the original 89-150 outcomes developed for USA/Canada lies a clue to what the original committee sought to achieve (and we will return to later). Unfortunately, the strategy often failed in an outcome oriented educational environment often guided by administrators not always versed in the limits of that approach. Resembling program goals (rather than design guides) the ability statements seemed too threatening; used as course goals (particularly with the apparent need to use at least one ability statement from each of the 4-Cs per class) they appeared more as a nuisance to be hidden away alongside other student outcomes often preferred by professors. The actual role of the outcomes remained obscured by practice.

A New Way Forward

In 2015 the RCOSAC began to reimage, and reduce, the 4-C outcomes to a more manageable amount of ability statements. The reduction to 44 ability statements (14 Content, 14 Competency, 8 Character, and 8 Context) afforded a more reasonable number to guide comprehensive clergy education. However, the number also respected the different domains, and academic subject areas, that still organized clergy practice. In addition, the decision included a shift to language around discipline and practice in discussing the curricular assessment. That shift indicated a move from behaviorally minded outcomes to an Aristotelian framework where abilities represented both practice and virtue language. While still named in light of student capability, the ability statements often combined several behaviorally minded outcomes (since they were already recognizable in previous COSAC reviews) into a constellation, reflecting a broader vision of the task, or practice, at hand. Unfortunately, articulation of this goal was limited due to personnel changes and the press of RCOSAC business. The plan to introduce this vision relied on schools regularly introducing curriculum every ten years, so adjustments could be guided over time.

The combination of the Ability Statements may have helped Educational Providers avoid large assessment projects, often driven by state as well as regional accreditation associations. It also forestalled any temptation by the RCOSAC to ask for similar program assessments in the future. However, the confusion between a more behaviorally driven outcome and a more comprehensive ability statement continued to haunt program review particularly when administrators introduced a new/revised program where courses were yet to be taught and honed by classroom experience. With recent changes in leadership at many of USA/Canada schools, additional explanation proved necessary to clarify the goal of the ability statements and their role in guiding clergy education. Hence, this writing.

Academic “Disciplines:” Understanding Subjects as Practices

To better understand Ability Statements today, one probably needs to begin with the work of Alisdair MacIntyre and the retrieval of concepts of practice (what we will call in our context an academic discipline) and the concept of excellence (what educators often seek in strategies of substantive assessment of a given subject).¹² Alongside the creation of the Ability Statements the retention of the Subject Areas (still prominent in Manual language) were to be reconceived as ministry “practices” or “disciplines.” Whether they were intellectual disciplines (a collection of specific, and valued, knowledge) or practice-based disciplines (contextual engagement and ministry practice) or moral disciplines (related to character) the goal was to reframe the work of clergy education away from strictly behavioral outcomes to Aristotelian practice.

MacIntyre defines a practice as

“any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence, which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.”¹³

Breaking down this concept, a practice (or discipline in clergy education context) includes the following criteria

- Coherent activity (materially connected actions)
- Complexity
- Social acknowledgement and cooperation (i.e. a social fabric or narrative around the practice) that helps practitioners know and actually extend excellence.
- Goods internal to the activity provide both impetus and means for judging excellence and success (i.e. some worth intrinsic within the practice itself) There are conceptual frameworks (i.e. a “grammar”) within the practice that provide the means to pursue and actually extend excellence

¹² Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd Edition.

¹³MacIntyre, 187.

With the change in 2015, the intent behind the USA/Canada change in Ability Statements included providing ability statements that, while broader in scope, articulated activities that would remain materially connected with such complexity as to help students both learn, and extend excellence, particularly within a social context of other pastors and educators who could recognize how the coursework actually could accomplish this goal. To be sure, the ability statements still resided within the domains previously established but provided a grammar that more closely defined those domains, or what will be referred to as disciplines below.

Admittedly the creation of the new Ability Statements (now 44 in number) borrowed heavily from the previous language among the 89 statements. The committee made the decision to keep language as recognizable as possible since many provider schools already possessed validated curricula based on the original 89 outcomes (or more if approving specialized tracks), yet the hope remained that the providers could also argue these abilities really did capture a different language so that accrediting bodies would not always seem them as opportunities for continued measurement. In a worst-case scenario of mandated assessment, a sub-section of the ability statement from within a subject area or discipline might be selected for assessment rather than adjudicate the quality of all previous statements.

In addition, the awkward attempt to balance every course with the 4-C distribution finally ended at the ICOSAC level in 2016, even contending that the program balance could be narrated rather than reduced to formulas.¹⁴ It might be said that all courses, all disciplines at least, do cross over all 4-C designations. A given class in Old Testament literature might indeed provide some competency in hermeneutics, formative influence upon the student's character, and contextual awareness of both an ancient culture and contemporary interpretation. A course on Christian education might include a historical and theological orientation to the history of discipleship alongside personal challenges to maintaining one's own personal formation through better Biblical study processes. What distinguished drawing from within the disciplines and moving specifically across disciplines in a truly inter-"disciplinary" engagement?

Curriculum specialist Elliot Eisner noted that curriculum often carry aesthetic, subsidiary, "gifts" known as expressive outcomes that deepen the quality of educational efforts. However, this "accent" or expression within the course need not be rigorously evaluated, nor necessarily anticipated, with the same rigor by teacher or student.¹⁵ Overall, every class might have some general spillover effect based on everyday practical wisdom. However, the 4-C formula did not necessarily mandate a rigorous balance of outcome statements from all four domains in each class (a claim some courses indicate, but the comprehensive rigor of true assignments and assessments easily question the intent when taken to their logical conclusion). Instead, the 4-C

¹⁴ ICOSAC Minutes

¹⁵ Elliot Eisner, *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs* (New York: Macmillan, 1979, 1985, 1994); *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice*, Reissued (New York: Teacher's College Press, 2017), 36-37.

distribution chart really seemed intended to ask how all courses, aesthetically taken as a whole, interrelate and collectively influence the final distribution.

Perhaps a more important contribution rested with the ability statements now describing the “goods internal” to the larger practice of a given academic “discipline,” whether in capturing the breadth of scriptural knowledge, theological reflection, historical imagination, or the scope of pastoral practice in all of its “arts and ministries,” or the depth of character development, or the perceptual reach of social/cultural awareness. Bryan Stone argued a similar point in the constitutive practice of evangelism (or witness) that emerges as a specific discipline with its own narrative, tradition, and virtue (the ability to both understand and appreciate moral excellence in evangelism) that allows practitioners to not only truly understand the practice but also generalize the power of witness in other efforts of the church.¹⁶ The larger Ability Statements, linked to academic and ministerial disciplines, provided enough descriptive power to at least guide curricular concerns both in course design and in broader assessments of student capability to embrace the disciplines as those worthy of a life of ministry.

I do remember being both at the planning debrief that shaped the 4-C approach at the end of the final Breckenridge general session and also at the planning table for the smaller comprehensive curricular session the year following Breckenridge that set up both *Manual* and Sourcebook language. I remember then both the frank discussions around the strengths and limits of outcomes. I also remember leaders, often deeply ingrained in their specific discipline, discussing what clergy “really” needed to know, be, and do based on expertise and social location. Yet, even as the winnowing first began, differentiating the 89 outcome statements (as they were known then) from the remaining 50 (or more) supplemental outcomes, most of the participants did not regard these statements merely as student learning outcomes that one might draw from a course. The original statements often represented a larger vision, one much closer to the “abilities” that would lead to a well-informed ministry life through the given discipline. Whether by accident of design, the *Manual* language retained not course titles but disciplinary areas, what I might call practices, seen as important to the ultimate vocation of a minister. Nevertheless, some members just could not let go of their love for a given discipline long enough to listen and summarize their discipline. Ultimately the final statements created a problem in sorting out the difference between comprehensive abilities from behaviorally addressed outcomes as the RCOSAC moved forward.

I had a frank conversation with Mike Vail, Education Consultant for Clergy Development, during the 2001 Grove City planning meeting to establish the course outlines for what would become the Modular Education Program. I cautioned about the caveats associated with outcome-based development.¹⁷ Mike agreed but acknowledged that outcomes proved far better than just course titles in describing the expectations of clergy development for both educational providers and district boards of ministry. To that degree, Mike was correct, though neither he nor I

¹⁶ Bryan Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007) 29-62.

¹⁷ Grove City 2001 CD

anticipated the battle over accommodating the disciplines in some curricular programs due to the struggle offer a comprehensive program in the amount of time given to theological education.

Duration and Intensity in Theological Education.

The necessary turn to Ability statements remains linked to the need to recognize the academic disciplines as well as part of the USA/Canada RCOSAC. Each element serves the other. However, the competition for academic “space” often presses upon this vision. With the change to the 4-C curriculum, the denomination also established an International Course of Study Advisory Committee who, through the *International Sourcebook*, determined a minimum education requirement for a candidate should be three years of full-time ministerial preparation or its part-time equivalent (437.4).¹⁸ However, the International Sourcebook did not stipulate what three years might actually represent in light of the type of school, or the nature of the program, including liberal arts instruction and other models of distributed learning.

Ascertaining a Three-Year Standard

More traditional approaches to theological education found ample curriculum space within larger MDiv programs in seminaries, or comprehensive Bible College curriculum, both which resembled the older, and still active, Bachelor of Divinity degree offered as either an undergraduate, or postgraduate, degree program.¹⁹ The Association of Theological Schools/USA based Master of Divinity degrees upon a minimum standard of 72 hours. However most traditional programs often ran 90 or more hours (up to 120 hours in Catholic Seminaries) until the turn of the 21st century.

Undergraduate programs often combined professional majors and minors coterminous with business and education profession programs that could easily consume sixty or more hours of a 120-128-hour undergraduate baccalaureate degree, yet that level of “professional education” would actually reflect only two years of a traditional undergraduate degree program. What constituted three years? Often degree hours per semester represented a portion of the equation, but even then, application varied based on the number of weeks that constituted a semester or another duration of time, such as terms or quarters, in other schools.

Each academic hour remains based on the Carnegie Unit, a century-old standard, that guides most educational efforts whether on yearly engagement during a secondary level or high school year, a semester (the predominant standard in most undergraduate liberal arts and university), or on a quarterly basis in others academic settings.²⁰ What proves remarkable surfaces from a study of the history of the unit, originally designed to determine a faculty member’s eligibility for a

¹⁸ *International Sourcebook*, 2005, 11.

¹⁹ Walter D. Wagoner, *Bachelor of Divinity: Uncertain Servants in Seminary and Ministry*. (New York: Association Press, 1963)

²⁰ Silva et al. *The Carnegie Unit*, 8.

pension, based on the hours “taught” rather than student hours of learning.²¹ Regardless, the unit remains a primary governing force in higher education, primarily as a federal standard for financial aid, where faculty commit to two fifteen-week semesters and dedicate three hours of instruction per class.²² A common rule of thumb includes a minimum of two hours of independent study by the student for each class time, resulting in an average of 135 hours invested per student, on a given three-unit or three-hour class. Faculty teaching on a quarter system (three semesters occurring fall, winter, and spring) dedicate only ten weeks per student, reducing the total hours to 90 hours or approximately two-thirds (66%) course engagement per course. Schools using quarters offset the time difference by including another “quarter” or “term” on a yearly basis. Nevertheless, individual “term” courses did not meet the same level of intensity as individual semester classes over the year.

The Original Standard in the Church of the Nazarene

The variation between term and semester classes proves important when exploring the expected duration for clergy education in the Church of the Nazarene. Prior to 1997, the *Manual, Church of the Nazarene, 1993-1997* (434.1) includes a specific set of courses in: Biblical Literature, Theology, Homiletics/Practics/Religious Education, Church History, Evangelism & Missions, English/Literature/Speech, Philosophy & Psychology, History & Social Science, and Science (see Appendix 3). The Manual included two other key elements for interpretation. The first element revolved around a differentiation between “term” hours and “semester” hours. In addition, the Manual distinguished between Nazarene Bible Colleges and “U-Level Theological Institutions.” The distinction probably signals the difference between term (or what might be considered quarterly hours at Bible College level) and semester (or what might be considered semester hours). Collectively the Manual stipulated a total program of either 120 “term” hours or 80 semester hours. The oddity of the 120/80 differentiation reflected the 66% difference

In addition, the program stipulated at least 48 of the 120 term hours, or 32 of the 80 semester hours, forty percent, reflect liberal arts education in language arts, philosophy, social studies, and physical sciences. Those program hours reflected the Church of the Nazarene’s long-term commitment to liberal arts in general, and a more traditional distribution of liberal arts education in a Bible College or Bible Institute curriculum.²³ In short, the 72 term hours listed did not reflect semester hours but quarter hours, or approximately 48 Carnegie hours of theological education at a semester level. In Carnegie units, the resulting 48 hours would result in sixteen, 3-hour courses.

²¹ Casey Fabris, “The Credit Hour Is Here to Stay, at Least for Now,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2/6/2015), Vol. 61: Issue 21, 14.

²² Silva et al. *The Carnegie Unit*, 25

²³ James Riley Estep, Jr. “The Church and College in Culture: A Paradigm for Faith-Learning Integration in the Bible College Curriculum,” *Stone-Campbell Journal*, 2 no 2 (Fall 1999), p 191-208, c.f. 199; J. Matthew Price, “Liberal Arts and the Priorities of Nazarene Higher Education” *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 2:1 (June 2002) accessible online (5/31/2021) <http://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/issues-topmenu-38/24-vol-2/30-vol-2-no-1-june-2002>.

The shift to three years of theological education represents a model of clergy education far and above the original standard unless general education appears as a portion of the program reminiscent of the Bible college model that predates this format. Bear in mind the issue revolves around whether the program requires three years of semester hours or three years of term (or quarter) hours. A distribution that allows for 25 percent of the 4-C distribution as liberal arts really does not reflect the original 40 percent distribution, nor would it allow for additional emphasis in the other parts of the program distribution. Simply put, a 4-C curriculum based on current semester formulas effectively restricts all theological options if a liberal arts agenda remains any part of the program within that three-year period. Returning to the Bachelor of Divinity model, the 90-hour semester expectation for three years would still stipulate 36 hours of liberal arts education, leaving 54 Carnegie hours or 18 three-hour classes as the minimum expectation for theological education.

In the intervening years IBOE schools seem to have improved on the original vision of 1993. However, whether schools can now require seventy-five percent of a four-year semester program as theological education seems impossible considering a) a more balanced liberal arts program (one suggested by some of the Ability Statements) and b) the contextual challenges resident within USA/Canada education. With the rise of granting college credit at the secondary school level, and market pressures created by the high cost of education, all programs face constriction in the next few years. The constriction includes some reduction in liberal arts education in light of rising STEM education (Science, Technology, Education, and Mathematics) but it also signals the shift of professional programs to the graduate level. Health profession programs recognized this shift early but still struggle with changes even within their fields.²⁴

A recent report by the Carnegie Institute reveals alternative approaches that continue to challenge the traditional category of degree hours, based on Carnegie units. However, degree hours can prove helpful (providing a sense of standardization) alongside the need for flexibility, as long as the organization understands “what” the program intends to accomplish during a particular duration and with some level of intensity. Considering the outcomes-mindset mentioned earlier in the USA/Canada, one might wonder if standardization could serve an outcomes model. However, the Abilities, anchored in a virtues-minded approach might provide a better understanding when one returns to the disciplines raised under the Manual statement. The virtues model might also help educational providers understand the mutual role of districts and local congregations in preparing clergy.

Supervised Ministry, Candidacy, or Experiential Learning

When one returns to the goal of theological education, one finds a struggle to name the final purposes of clergy preparation. To be sure, both formation of the minister, and empowerment of gifts and graces through academic preparation seem crucial. Yet the question remains what level

²⁴ Stephanie M. Mazerolle, PhD, ATC; Thomas G. Bowman, PhD, ATC; William A. Pitney, EdD, ATC, FNATA, “Multistakeholder Perspectives on the Transition to a Graduate-Level Athletic Training Educational Model,” *Journal of Athletic Training* (2015) 50 (9): 964–976.

of preparation might a student retain upon graduating from a program designed and delivered by the educational provider? Historically a lack of clear direction to this question hampers both the expectations of students, congregations, and district leadership. For some, the goal of clergy education might entail graduating a student as a finished product, a kind of “finishing school” approach where the minister possesses the skills necessitated to lead a congregation. This approach might well fit certain ecclesial bodies who grant ordination with the completion of a theological degree, like the MDiv. However, the other approach might be to suggest that students possess “basic competencies” that provide them a good beginning while, at least as traditional students entering ministry upon completion of their coursework, they undergo basic supervision during their candidacy prior to ordination. This approach resembles other professional degree programs that require some level of “residency” in ministry and more accurately reflects the two-three candidacy process prior to ordination even if districts rarely offer the intensity of training of other residency programs in healthcare or clerkships and fellowships in legal settings.²⁵

During the final planning session following Breckenridge, one question lingered around the degree that supervised ministry would play in the final program. Everyone agreed some supervised ministry proved important (though the subsequent version in the Modular Education Program borrowed from an Australian Baptist College) though the depth remained an open question considering the multiple pathways to ordination in the denomination. One concession surfaced to actually treat the candidacy period as the logical location for supervision and place more responsibility on the district to provide that guideline. Following this decision, the framework for supervised ministry remained limited in scope. The language of the 2005 USA Sourcebook placed supervised ministry under 437.10 “Partnership with the Local Church” (included, but not listed as an ability statement in the Validated Program Worksheet). The language clearly indicated a supervised process of a limited educational endeavor.

Evidence of satisfactory work completed in this partnership and competency development will be submitted to the DMSB for evaluation; for example, learning objectives, ministry projects, and supervisory evaluations. The student should keep the syllabi of the instructors and/or supervisors or completed assignments, covenants, projects, and reflection papers for evaluation.²⁶

The fact that the District Ministerial Studies Board (DMSB) retained the final evaluation indicates the intent of the program to serve a longer candidacy process. The hope remained that, much like other professional programs, the academic preparation would lead to further

²⁵ American Bar Association, “Law Student Internships, Fellowships, and Clerkships,” webpage, available online (June 17, 2021) at <https://abaforlawstudents.com/start-your-legal-career/law-student-internships-fellowships-and-clerkships/>; Kramer M, Maguire P, Halfer D, Brewer B, Schmalenberg C. “Impact of Residency Programs on Professional Socialization of Newly Licensed Registered Nurses,” *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, (2013) 35:4, 459-496; doi:10.1177/0193945911415555.

²⁶ *Sourcebook on Ordination*, 2005, p. 6

integration of experience through intentional, strongly mentored, supervised oversight at the local and district church level as part of the ordination journey.

The tandem between formal education, followed by an extended supervisory experience prior to ordination, obviously overlooked the process of students starting the ordinand journey in the midst of their formal education. Whether the student began their ordination process earlier in their academic career (as undergraduates) or began more formal education, as adult students, while in ministry (a fact often underscored in graduate programs and distance programs today) the conflation of formal and non-formal, or experiential, education compressed the process of time and duration. The need to maintain both academic and experiential frameworks for ministry (where a full orientation to ministry education occurs prior to ordination) in one setting conflated one of the logical partnerships between schools and districts/congregations. Districts began to take on the role of educational provider, guiding academic coursework, sometimes rejecting one curriculum for another, as an attempt to broker the whole relationship often without the overall organizational structure to assure quality education over time (something educational institutions were built to deliver). Whether Districts provided a strong supervisory, mentoring, role over the actual experiential practice of ministry remains an open question. In some settings District leadership seemed to prefer academic teaching to its more natural role of mentored engagement during the pre-ordinand period, reducing the candidacy to short meetings with candidates in committee, rather than assigning sustained supervisory mentors as envisioned.

However, educational providers also slipped into the experiential arena as well. Extended mentorships, often begun as a requisite for specialized ministry scholarships, infiltrated the school curriculum. In honesty, the experiential learning probably proved helpful albeit not in the same manner as cooperative education programs in other professions.²⁷ However, as mentorships shifted from co-curricular emphases to required coursework, they also replaced core disciplinary classes, often distributing orientation to key disciplines at the level of practice without requisite introduction, or assessment, of the material. By mimicking the responsibility of the congregation or district within an academic environment (particularly residentially based educational programs) the schools often forfeited key opportunities for instruction, even based on experiential learning principles that require some engagement with the core literature within the active process.²⁸ Both educational providers and districts failed students as they conflated their

²⁷ Thomas Clark, “The Business Profession: A Mandatory, Noncredit, Cocurricular Career Preparation Program for Undergraduate Business Majors” *Business Communication Quarterly*, 68:3, (September 2005), 271-289.

²⁸ David Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* 2nd Edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984); Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). Kolb, in education, and Osmer, in practical theology, acknowledge a cycle to experiential learning that includes not only concrete engagement, but also abstract knowledge often derived from the engagement but also in dialog with the larger “funded experience” (Dewey) of the discipline itself. To engage in discipleship, worship, or evangelism in ministry without intentional reflection and dialog with core insights of

respectively stronger institutional capacities with areas that would be contextually challenged to maintain.

Obviously, a student engaged in full-time formal education lacked the requisite space for a serious supervisory process as envisioned in a minimum two years of fulltime ministry to meet candidacy. Students engaged in ministry often had to extend their education over several years just to accommodate the demands of ministry (one reason for acknowledging the minimum of two courses a year as sufficient in making academic progress). If one anticipated at least two full years of ministry experience to accompany academic preparation, how does one balance the time required in academic preparation, and to what end might that preparation serve the experiential phase? Once more, a virtues-based may provide an answer below.

Learning Excellence in the Disciplines

To be sure, the argument that the Carnegie hour serves as an accurate predictor for student learning remains an open question that even the Carnegie institute admits. Malcolm Gladwell's now questioned claim that it takes more than 10,000 hours to achieve excellence raises a clear question as to what any student might accomplish in three years of semester study, or term study as originally envisioned, over a wide array of domains.²⁹ If ordination requires, at the minimum, an additional two years of deepening through supervision (if Districts elect to follow this vision) where all skills should be honed and refined in practice, what does clergy education accomplish in the hours/days/years given to formal education? Can meeting basic competencies alone as the result of a class, or even in an open-ended CBTE program, assure the goal of the time and duration given to clergy education? How well can the same competencies be met if those outcomes seem so interspersed in some classes as to raise the question of intensity of instruction in the first place?

Returning to McIntyre, guided by additional insight from Bryan Stone, perhaps an answer might be given. Simply put, formal education should assure students recognize the internal coherence and complexity associated with any ministerial "practice" or discipline (including biblical and theological practice) and be exposed to the practice with sufficient context (taking the discipline on its own terms) so that the student can see the "virtue" or excellence of that practice when taken seriously as a part of clergy education.

Bryan Stone treatise on evangelism provides a reasonable case in point. In Stone's book, *Evangelism After Christendom*, the author introduces the concept of evangelism as both a broad area of Christian witness while also being a very specific practice, or discipline, "as a distinct,

the larger tradition that stands behind those fields, localizes the experience to the one ministry context alone.

²⁹ Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (San Francisco, CA: Little, Brown and Company, 2008); Donald J. Walter and Jennifer S. Walter, "Skill Development: How Brain Research Can Inform Music Teaching," *Music Educators Journal* 101:4 (June 2015), pp. 49-55.

identifiable, socially established, cooperative, and intentional practice along the lines of McIntyre.”³⁰ Ultimately the broader view of Christian witness affects the total life of the church:

engaging in the explicit practice of reaching the world, challenging sin, communicating the good news, offering Christ, sharing Christian worship, drawing persons into Christian friendship, inviting and welcoming persons to be a part of God’s reign, and summoning persons to a new and living way.³¹

For Stone, the explicit teaching of evangelism as practice has to be linked to the larger vision of witness (*martyria*) that incorporates worship and social ethics. This comprehensive social vision becomes linked to the specific of evangelistic strategies, so that evangelism cannot be reduced to an instrumental action that does not connect to the comprehensive vision of witness. However, witness, cannot be understood without a specific faithfulness to evangelistic practice. The interplay of vision and practice reflects a discipline that demands a narrative imagination of the possibility of what excellence might mean as a student learns to engage in evangelism yet refuses to reduce evangelistic practice to merely the production of converts as serving a means to some other end. Instead, people judge faithful evangelism, not based on external success but upon the virtue (excellence or faithfulness) of the performance.³²

To return to McIntyre raises the question whether educational providers, districts and congregations recognize the domains listed in the Manual to this date really reflect descriptive “areas” of study (as in a theological encyclopedia) or indicate core clergy practices as disciplines. The ability statements under each practice should describe not just a basic outcome leading to initial competency, but gesture toward a vision of what a “virtue,” or sense of excellence might be drawn from that discipline as the candidate not only grows through experiential learning to ordination but also continues to grow through lifelong learning. If educators adopt an embrace between vision and practice combine to provide the virtues, or standards of excellence, whether in biblical discernment, theological imagination, historical awareness, but also disciplined worship, discipleship, compassionate care, alongside contextual awareness and even personal character, the discussion around ability statements move from random outcomes to a complex, interconnected process worthy of both intense engagement and substantive assessment.

How Long Does One Take?

By now, acknowledging the shift from domains to disciplinary practices might reveal some indication of both the program balance and the requisite time for study to capture “both” an initial competence and at least some degree of a sense of excellence within the discipline. Currently (see Appendix 2) the USA/RCOSAC lists 22 Disciplines (26 with specializations)

³⁰ Bryan Stone, *Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007) 48.

³¹ Stone, 49

³² Stone, 48-49, cf 49.

under the 4-Cs. Obviously one might assert that each discipline should result in a class to themselves, reflecting a 66 to 78-unit program, or 2,970 to 3,510 hours if using the semester understanding of the Carnegie unit, or no more than 44-52 “semester” hours, 1,980 to 2,340 hours, based on a term/quarter system reflective of the original vision in the 1993 Manual.

Perhaps, using the language of 1993, a three-year program would reflect a larger vision of professional education within a more traditional USA undergraduate program, where professional majors might fall anywhere between 40-42 hours to as much as 70-76 hours in education programs which stipulate both education classes and a specialized area of study (science, language arts, physical education, even engineering education).³³ Some professional programs, like business degrees, also include a shift to a more integrative partnership with the professional field engagement, via non-degree internships or co-operative education programs. The partnership assures experiential education alongside theoretical preparation.³⁴ In these settings, the internships serve the student without needing to invest in degree hours, yet both academic and professional networks draw upon respective strengths without elongating program demands. The range in degree/unit requirements might also reflect the greater need for double majors during undergraduate work, reflective of a growing bi-vocational placement in the USA (now 47% of all pastors according to research statistics provided by Nazarene Research).

Additional contextual factors may govern the future of ministry education in the USA and Canada. As an aging denomination, fewer students enter Nazarene institutions as traditional undergraduates seeking clergy education, particularly in a denomination where only 1% of the clergy below the age of 30 serve as senior pastors. Admittedly many programs now include a reasonable number of younger students pursuing ministry, but not ministry in the church of the Nazarene alone. In the last two years the number of students attending UCR schools in all degrees and majors (excluding the two professional schools, Nazarene Bible College and Nazarene Theological Seminary) average between 20 and 25% students identifying with Nazarene identity. In 2018, the nine university and liberal arts college programs included 1372 ministry students enrolled (full and part time, undergraduate and graduate); however, only 693 students (approximately 50%) pursued ordination education. Of the total 1372 students, at least 501, or 36% of the students, did not identify with the Church of the Nazarene. University programs find themselves facing a very different student cohort of those not desiring certain core classes for ordination in a denomination that lacks access to leadership positions before the age of 30. Recognizing these constraints, university programs will quickly realize that elongated programs of clergy education will fail as a business model, resulting in shrinking programs and reduced faculty members. Ultimately the challenge may reside in providing a program with a

³³ Lisa Meloncon and Sally Henschel, “Current State of U.S. Undergraduate Degree Programs in Technical and Professional Communication,” *Technical Communication*, 60:1 (February 2013), 45-64; Len S Litowitz, “A Curricular Analysis of Undergraduate Technology & Engineering Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States,” *Journal of Technology Education*, 25:2 (SP 2014), 73-84.

³⁴ Clark, “The Business Profession,” 271–89.

tightly focused series of courses that really do address the disciplinary practices with some attention to both basic competency and a vision of instilled excellence.

Inter-disciplinary or Intra-disciplinary?

If clergy education in the USA/Canada faces a future challenge, it may reside in developing a clear set of disciplines (not class titles) that accurately defines the purpose, and sense of excellence in pastoral practice. Such a challenge raises questions around the holistic formation of pastors, often seen occurring through inter-disciplinary engagement where ability statements cross-pollinate classes in an integrated whole. This vision of interdisciplinary education often underscores earlier interpretations of the 4-C curriculum which moves to incorporate explicit outcomes from each of the four domains in every class.

As noted above, the original intent of the 4-C curriculum distribution need not stress a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, program. The 4-C distribution may merely serve as an acknowledgment that all disciplines carry expressive strengths that add to the overall quality of the program. To be sure, interdisciplinary work often proves extremely difficult to maintain administratively and assess academically. Even at the doctoral level, interdisciplinary research often fails due to at least five conditions: 1) disjointed communications, 2) absence of credibility frameworks, 3) difficulty in identifying focal themes and audiences, 4) a dearth of evaluation methods for “interdisciplinarity,” and 5) lack of continuity.³⁵ Often students must possess a strong degree of internal motivation and intellectual self-discipline to not only gain initial understanding of specific disciplines, much more relate the inherent linkages across disciplines. To be truthful, interdisciplinary work often requires some advance knowledge of a given discipline first, and then related in specialized seminars designed to demonstrate interdisciplinary understanding at strategic points in the curriculum.³⁶ A systematic review of interdisciplinary thinking noted that often programs fail to provide the requisite guidance for students to truly understand the difference.

Interdisciplinary thinking does not occur spontaneously, it can take a considerable amount of time for students to achieve an adequate level of expertise in its practice. In addition, students need help in order to be able to synthesize two or more disciplines. All too often a curriculum is called *interdisciplinary* when it is actually *multidisciplinary*. Multiple perspectives are presented without any support for the integration of disciplinary knowledge throughout the curriculum. As a consequence, in curricula on food studies, for instance, students lack the ability to integrate the required disciplinary knowledge of food

³⁵ R. E. Holt et al, “Avoiding Pitfalls in Interdisciplinary Education,” *Climate Research* 74:2 (December 27 2017), pp. 121-129, cf. 122.

³⁶ William H. Newell, “Academic Disciplines and Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Education: Lessons from the School of Interdisciplinary Studies at Miami University, Ohio,” *European Journal of Education*, 27:3 (1992), pp. 211-221, cf. 212.

processing and food microbiology to keep bacterial growth within food safety criteria. Specific support and learning tasks intended to develop interdisciplinary thinking.³⁷

Sprinkling outcomes across curriculum do not assure the type of integrative, disciplined, thought required in an interdisciplinary approach where not only must the student know the discipline but also the disciplinary “paradigm” before integrating the work.³⁸ As noted above, often holistic approaches often mask weaknesses in a curriculum where key disciplines may well be fragmented into disconnected outcomes. Holistic integration takes more effort, often additional, strategic, coursework, to serve students well.

Perhaps a better approach may well be to ask if there might be intra-disciplinary strengths that work well in reinforcing the discipline itself while also engaging another discipline in a strategic manner. Intuitively educators often recognize the interplay between certain ability statements. Obviously, hermeneutics serves the understanding of the biblical story, but it also influences a student’s approach to history, or theology, when one understands how contextual perspectives and theological or historical “texts” interact with each other. The recent embrace of a theological engagement with scripture (as opposed to the abstraction of biblical statements into a systematized biblical theology) reflects how the intra-disciplinary goal of theology and scripture serves one another.³⁹ Similarly, core disciplinary competencies from sociology and anthropology also assist students in discerning the best ministry practices for a given congregation or ministry context. In these circumstances a careful arrangement of curricular overlay might assist the student in recognizing how the “goods internal” of one discipline also influence another.

However, not all inter-disciplinary engagement serves intra-disciplinary goals. For instance, spiritual formation, often taught in a manner to serve the character of the minister, can fail to communicate the same need among congregants. In this case, personal spiritual formation practices serve only to guide the minister without the recognition of a deeper calling to also guide the congregation. In similar fashion, educators often place biblical studies in tandem with preaching, which can prove helpful but also obscure the role of scripture in other disciplines such as teaching or leadership. Finally, some programs conflate pastoral care with discipleship, providing a therapeutic model of personal self-awareness in the place of a missionally minded vocational calling. Even an intra-disciplinary placement must respect the internal practice and vision of each discipline otherwise the interplay across the disciplines dilutes the long-term goals (or standards) for clergy education. Regardless, holistic formation into ministry requires greater

³⁷ Elisabeth J. H. Spelt, Harm J. A. Biemans, Hilde Tobi, Pieter A. Luningand Martin Mulder, “Teaching and Learning in Interdisciplinary Higher Education: A Systematic Review,” *Educational Psychology Review*, 21: 4 (December 2009), 365-378, cf. 366.

³⁸ Spelt et al. *Teaching and Learning in Interdisciplinary Higher Education*, 373.

³⁹ Daniel J. Treier, “Biblical Theology and/or Theological Interpretation of Scripture? Defining the Relationship,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61:1 (2008), 16-31.

attention within the demands of each discipline before it can adequately function across the disciplines.

Perhaps what better serves this interdisciplinary approach may well be a larger, more holistic narrative, that governs the life of the minister in the employ of the various disciplines. Such an approach would allow both respect for each discipline, and its horizon, alongside the rich diversity of ministry settings. Perhaps interdisciplinarity requires an orientation, a vision, that not only articulates the interplay of the disciplines, but communicates that clergy education reflects a lifetime engagement, not a finishing school mindset. If students left the academic side of their education with a vision of how much richer their ministry lives will be over the course of their lifetime, as they give themselves to the practice of excellence, the virtue, of all the disciplines, lifelong learning would seem a logical conclusion.

The Salvation Army candidate school may reflect this framework in their educational model. After two years of focused instruction in a ministry school, the SA require five years of “continuing education” to set a trajectory for the future of learning. Perhaps a similar approach, if only in narrative if not in practice, would inspire graduates, and ordinands, of the importance of lifelong learning in a sifting ministry context where disciplines also adapt as time unfolds.

Conclusion

To some degree, clergy education in the USA/Canada moved too quickly into an outcomes-based model of education without recognizing the limitations of that approach both at the program and at the curricular level. The initial design focused on the program level assess curricular construction of syllabi with hopes to ascertain an educational provider’s ability to construct a curriculum that addressed the educational needs of the denomination’s clergy, the language of outcomes quickly substituted for course expectations. In some circumstances, whole disciplines were atomized, reduced to subsets in courses, relegated to experiential learning exercises, and lost among the myriad outcomes, assignments, and assessments populated in one course or across several disparate classes. Often four or five courses addressed an ability statement, albeit in tangential form, leaving both regional assessors and district leadership, confused on where students might be confronted with the fullness of a given discipline, asked to provide a strong enough substantive assessment to assure both basic competence and a sense of what excellence might look like in the discipline. At times students needing one or two courses to complete a validated curriculum were forced to abandon some educational providers based on the sheer range or course used to address, or hide, an ability. Sometimes the strategy merely reflected the specific strengths of a given faculty (and compensation for their weaknesses) but other times the mistake indicated a clear misunderstanding of the 2015 shift to ability statements.

I recognize the failure rests in part with my own leadership as Regional Education Coordinator. At the time of the revision of the 2015 Sourcebook, I realized the committee was embarking on a different vision that I hoped would prove to be both a relief to the educational providers (less “outcomes” to manage) and a resource to district partners (a more focused set of expectations or abilities to use during the candidacy period in guiding ministers). However, the RCOSAC found

itself moving to a new era of dialog around Estes Park consultations, while struggling to review and approve several incomplete program submissions. In the interim, several schools underwent leadership changes so that those most familiar with the process no longer guided the program submissions. Of the three goals that began in 2015:

- 1) Re-envisioning the Ability Statements
- 2) Streamlining program submissions
- 3) Communicating a virtues/practice/disciplines vision

The third approach was delayed due to several unforeseen circumstances. An error I have often regretted.

Perhaps the future of clergy education in the Church of the Nazarene needs to move beyond the language of outcomes and restore the vision of disciplines. To be clear, this would not reduce the curriculum to a set of course titles, returning to a cafeteria approach to clergy education. Instead, the Ability statements might warrant additional review only to undergird a vision of excellence in each discipline. In doing so, discussions around the time and duration for ministry preparation may ultimately need to jettison both outcomes and Carnegie units for a season to ask how any curriculum would provide not only a basic orientation to a discipline but also the virtue, or vision of excellence, associated with that discipline to inspire and guide the pursuit of lifelong learning.

In the interim, Carnegie units do help offer a level of standardization to assure some sense of equal access to education (where students should be guaranteed opportunity to gain competence and acquire vision) much like the standard served to duly compensate the efforts of educators and students. However, naming the appropriate duration for students, the appropriate partnerships during the candidacy periods, must be done in negotiation with the initial vision of clergy preparation pre-1997 and the contextual factors facing schools today. Finding mid-space between demanding access for all students, and avoiding the overburdening of educational providers, may well be governed by a vision of the pursuit of excellence among the disciplines that remain part of Manual nomenclature.

Appendix 1
Manual Language (based on *2017 Manual, Church of the Nazarene*)

529.3. General Curriculum Areas for Ministerial Preparation. Though curriculum is often thought of only as academic programs and course content the concept is much larger. The character of the instructor, the relationship of the students and instructor, the environment, and students' past experiences join with the course content to create the full curriculum. Nevertheless, a curriculum for ministerial preparation will include a minimal set of courses that provide educational foundations for ministry. Cultural differences and a variety of resources will require differing details in curriculum structures. However, all programs for providing educational foundations for the ordained ministry that seek approval by Global Clergy Development should give careful attention to content, competency, character, and context. The purpose of a validated course of study is to contain courses that include all four elements in varying degrees and that will help ministers fulfill the mission statement of the Church of the Nazarene as agreed upon by the Board of General Superintendents as follows: "The mission of the Church of the Nazarene is to make Christlike disciples in the nations." "The primary objective of the Church of the Nazarene is to advance God's Kingdom by the preservation and propagation of Christian holiness as set forth in the Scriptures." "The critical objectives of the Church of the Nazarene are 'holy Christian fellowship, the conversion of sinners, the entire sanctification of believers, their upbuilding in holiness, and the simplicity and spiritual power manifest in the primitive New Testament Church, together with the preaching of the gospel to every creature'" (19). A validated course of study is described in the following categories:

- Content—Knowledge of the content of the Old and New Testaments, the theology of the Christian faith, and the history and mission of the Church is essential for ministry. Knowledge of how to interpret Scripture, the doctrine of holiness and our Wesleyan distinctives, and the history and polity of the Church of the Nazarene must be included in these courses.
- Competency—Skills in oral and written communication; management and leadership; finance; and analytical thinking are also essential for ministry. In addition to general education in these areas/courses providing skills in preaching, pastoral care and counseling, biblical exegesis, worship, effective evangelism, biblical stewardship of life resources, Christian education and Church administration must be included. Graduation from a validated course of study requires the partnering of the educational provider and a local church to direct students in ministerial practices and competency development.
- Character—Personal growth in character, ethics, spirituality, and personal and family relationship is vital for the ministry. Courses addressing the areas of Christian ethics, spiritual formation, human development, the person of the minister, and marriage and family dynamics must be included.
- Context—The minister must understand both the historical and contemporary context and interpret the worldview and social environment of the culture where the Church witnesses.

Courses that address the concerns of anthropology and sociology, cross-cultural communication, missions, and social studies must be included

Appendix 2:
Outcome totals including Domains/Disciplines USA Sourcebook 2005

Content Domain: 30 mandatory content related ability statements around the disciplines of

- Old Testament,
- New Testament,
- Interpretation of Scripture,
- Theology (in general),
- Doctrine of Holiness,
- Church History
- History and Polity of the Church of the Nazarene.

14 additional “supplemental outcomes” that would indicate excellence in program delivery

Competency Domain: 24 mandatory competency related ability statements around the disciplines of

- Oral & Written Communication
- Management, Leadership, Finance, and Church Administration
- Analytical Thinking
- Congregational Care and Counseling
- Effective Evangelism
- Christian Education
- Worship
- Preaching/Chaplaincy

21 additional “supplemental outcomes” that would indicate excellence in program delivery

In addition, the Competency detailed several ministry specializations (disciplines) that could be taken by students pursuing ordination as a Deacon (that did not require a specific call to the discipline of preaching). 12 competencies (three per specialization) addressed the following disciplines

- Christian Education/Children’s/Youth Ministry
- Compassionate Ministry
- Music Ministry
- Administration

In addition, 7 “supplemental outcomes” that would indicate excellence in program delivery under Christian Education/Children’s/Youth Ministry

Character Domain: 14 mandatory competency related ability statements around the disciplines of

- Christian Ethics
- Spiritual Formation
- The Person of the Minister

Only one additional supplemental outcome occurs under Spiritual Formation

Context Domain: 11 mandatory competency related ability statements around the disciplines of

- Contemporary Context and Social Environment
- Anthropology and Cross-Cultural Communication
- Historical Context
- Missions

7 “supplemental outcomes” that would indicate excellence in program delivery

Appendix 3 Manual, Church of the Nazarene, 1993-1997

434. The ministerial course of study is designed to assist in the training of God-called ministers whose service is vital to the expansion and extension of the holiness message into new areas of evangelistic opportunity. We recognize the importance of a clear understanding of our mission based on Christ's commission to His Church in Matthew 28:19-20, to "go and make disciples" (NIV). Much of the training is primarily theological and biblical in character, leading toward ordination in the ministry of the Church of the Nazarene. Students enrolled, advanced, and graduated from the course of study by the District Ministerial Studies Board must complete the study course within eight years [403.4]. The District Ministerial Studies Board shall direct and grade all examinations and determine the placement of each student in the course through his examination.

434.1. College or College-Seminary Program. When a candidate elects to pursue preparation for the ministry in one of the liberal arts colleges of the church, or any other college approved by the International Board of Education, and/or Nazarene Theological Seminary, the candidate shall be graduated from the course of study when transcripts from either college or seminary or both show minimum supervised field education experience and credit in the following subject areas:

	Term/Semester Hours/Hours
Biblical Literature	18/12
Theology (including one semester of Doctrine of Holiness)	18/12
Homiletics, Practics, and Religious Education (including some credit in each of these fields)	18/12
Church History (including one course in the History and Polity of the Church of the Nazarene with special concentration in the Manual)	12/8
Evangelism and Missions	6/4
English, Literature, and Speech	18/12
Philosophy and Psychology (including some credit in each)	12/8
History and Social Science	12/8
(This would include all History courses other than Church History; Social Science would include Sociology, Economics, and Political Science.)	
Science	6/4
(This would include any Physical or Natural Science, such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, etc.)	
 Total	 120/80

434.2. Nazarene Bible Colleges and U-Level Theological Institutions. Licensed ministers shall be graduated from the course of study when they have satisfactorily completed the three- or four-year program at any U-level institution or Nazarene Bible College [U.S.A.]. The Bible college and U-level programs may be based on either the Directed Studies or the College/College-Seminary model. Bible and U-level colleges must submit their ministerial education courses of study to Pastoral Ministries for approval.

424.3. Directed Studies. A four-level program of Directed Studies is available, which shall be directed and supervised by the District Ministerial Studies Board. Pastoral Ministries will provide a handbook on the courses of study as the official guide for the District Ministerial Studies Board. Some

cultural/linguistic adjustments may be made with the approval of Pastoral Ministries in light of regional concerns and available materials.

424.4. Preparation for the ministry pursued in non-Nazarene schools or under non-Nazarene auspices shall be evaluated in conformity with the curricular requirements stated in the *Handbook on Ministerial Studies* provided by Pastoral Ministries.

424.5. All courses, academic requirements, and official administrative regulations shall be provided by Pastoral Ministries in a *Handbook on Ministerial Studies*. This *Handbook* and such revisions as become necessary shall be approved by a Course of Study Advisory Committee, the General Board, and the Board of General Superintendents. The Course of Study Advisory Committee shall be appointed by the Board of General Superintendents.