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Theological Institutions and the Church: The Spiritual Formation of Emerging Leaders— Past, Present, Future

Jack C. Whytock[1]

The intention of this paper is to explore the relationship between the theological institution, the church, and spiritual formation – historically, presently, and in the future – for training emerging Christian leadership. Thus two institutions (the theological institution and the church) and their respective philosophical concepts in the training of leaders, namely, spiritual formation, will be examined. The best way to begin this paper is to briefly walk through the basic terms contained in our main title to ensure that we are all operating from a similar starting point on the subject at hand. It is a vast topic so good, clear definitions at the outset should aid us. Also, the underlying presuppositions of this paper will thus emerge.

Terminology/Operating Presuppositions

First, I have adopted the term "**theological institution**" as a generic or inclusive term for an institution of theological or Bible training. I have endeavoured to use this term as much as possible to avoid confusion. The term can mean a Bible school, a Bible or theological institute, a Bible college, a theological college, a school of theology, a faculty within a university offering theological education, or a seminary. The last word "seminary" has various meanings today. In historical usage it has often been associated with an institution for the training of Roman Catholic priests.[2] It has also been used historically to describe a place for the training of young women in Protestant

[1] A version of this paper was presented at the 2015 Bible Schools Consultation hosted by Mukhanyo Theological College held at the Joy Lodge, North Pretoria, South Africa in June 2015. Appreciation is expressed for the kind invitation to present this and also to those who offered comment at those meetings. I would particularly like to thank Dr. Richard Ball for his insightful comments and careful reading of a draft of this paper.

[2] *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles Deluxe 6th Edition* Volume 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2748.

communities chiefly in the 19th century.[3] Today for many it refers to a graduate-level, theological, degree-granting institution (master's degrees),[4] but it can also mean (for some Protestants now) a theological institution offering all levels whether undergraduate certificates, bachelor's level degrees and/or master's or graduate and post-graduate level degrees and certificates.[5] By using *theological institution* I think what follows can be received at any of these types of institutions, so it is best to be inclusive.

"**Church**" likewise can have a range of meanings. It can refer to the wider denominationally structured church, whether state church or a particular denomination or a synod or church association. It can also refer to a local congregation; that is, one congregation whether a mega-congregation or not. We will use the term church throughout this paper in both of these ways – denominationally and also congregationally. I should also add that our focus will be upon the five hundred years of evangelical Protestantism, so Protestant denominations and congregations will be our focus and in particular the evangelical Reformed grouping.

"**Spiritual Formation**" has a wide range of meanings. I will be using it as follows: the holistic spiritual life of a Christian believer (being transformed and growing up into maturity by God's grace) whereby the development of character as a growing believer is a priority and this is both for piety/godliness and the exercise of one's faith into all areas of life.[6] This last phrase thus established a premise: there is a direct relationship between spiritual formation and growth in pastoral skills and development whereby one applies their theology to all areas of life. This was an underlying premise in an article back in 1999 in the *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* where Richard Stuebing suggests a close connection between pastoral skills and spiritual formation.[7] The two are very difficult to separate and actually one

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[3] See, Kristen Welch and Abraham Ruelas, *The Role of Female Seminaries on the Road to Social Justice for Women* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), chapter 4 for a selected list, 46-58.

[4] Susie Stanley, "Foreword", in Welch and Ruelas, *The Role of the Female Seminaries*, ix.

[5] A cursory look at several institutions now shows this emerging definition. For example South Africa Theological Seminary goes from undergraduate higher certificates, right through to doctoral level. So with SATS it is being used here very inclusively whereas in other parts of the world, for example, in North America, it is usually limited to graduate level or post-graduate level, although even there it is changing.

[6] Jack C. Whytock, "Study Guide for Spiritual Formation DPT 112", Mukhanyo Theological College, KwaMhlanga, South Africa (2009), 34-37. Also, Glen G. Scorgie, "Overview of Christian Spirituality", in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, gen. ed., Glen G. Scorgie (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 27-33.

[7] Richard W. Stuebing, "Spiritual Formation in Theological Education: A Survey of the Literature", *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 18.1 (1999): 47 where Stuebing contends that when one suffers the other also suffers, i.e. spiritual formation or pastoral skills. A recent work which explores spiritual formation in relationship to distance education in theological education is: Joanne J. Jung, *Character*

should not attempt to separate or divorce them. Growth in Christian ministry skills goes together, we hope, with spiritual growth and piety and knowledge (theology).[8] Thus the perspective taken here is the *integration* of spiritual formation and growth in ministry skills and practice as a fundamental presupposition. Moreover, the theological institution and the church are *integratively* involved in this process of spiritual formation.

Furthermore, I will add one more caveat on spiritual formation: spiritual formation must take place in the context of the Christian community. The church teaches in a community context.[9] Thus by extension, the theological institution is in many ways also a teaching, communal environment. This is the great challenge with distance theological education; the theological institution must strive to overcome that loss of community. There is the solitary place of study, but there must also be the place for study within the Christian community. This is affirmed in this paper, is understood as vital to maturing spiritual formation, and operates as another fundamental presupposition.[10]

Integration/Integrative

At the heart of the argument in this paper is the notion of integration or being integrative. Therefore, as we proceed please keep the following in mind: as we discuss the *theological institution*, the *church*, and *spiritual formation* we will unavoidably also be considering *the development of pastoral skills and practice and the accumulation of theological knowledge within a communal context*, whereby integration is the goal. We should see as we proceed that the academic, the spiritual, the practical, and the communal really are integrated – that is the ideal. We will see as we reflect that this ideal has been reached to various degrees. Hopefully this paper will cause us to reflect and ask – "Are we aiming for a greater degree of balanced integration?"

That brings me to my other major underlying presupposition of this paper, which has already been assumed above, *namely that true education is also to be spiritual* and for *theological* education there must especially be a true integration and unity of this principle. My presupposition is that theological education, as education, cannot be divorced from spiritual formation. The

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Formation in Online Education. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015). We will not be formally addressing this aspect in this paper.

[8] I Timothy 4: 11-16 is one of the key texts which presents an integrative perspective for Christian leadership – they must have good character (piety), sound doctrine and knowledge (theology), and practice well ministerial calling doing the best as preachers etc. (skills practiced in ministry).

[9] See my review of Paul R. House, *Bonhoeffer's Seminary Vision* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015) elsewhere in this volume of the *Haddington House Journal*.

[10] The article by Gordon T. Smith, "Education and Spiritual Formation", in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, gen. ed., Glen G. Scorgie (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), is particularly helpful on this point of communal context for spiritual formation, 84-88.

goal of theological education must be to lead students to make informed and knowledgeable judgments, to develop critical assessment, and to grow in wisdom. Surely all such things are spiritual – together with the development of good communication skills and pastoral leadership – again for spiritual ends. Colleen Griffiths summed it up well, and was describing all education in general(!), "when education has a spiritual vision, it can usher in these rounder and fuller ways of knowing…devoid of such vision, education quickly becomes utilitarian, subject to a narrow pragmatism…"[11] Thus, just as I presume that spiritual formation includes skills development, and so does education with training, I make this assumption that the pursuit of theological education as education must also be seen as spiritual. To see otherwise is to thus turn it only into a cerebral pursuit which is imbalanced from its holistic mandate and lacks proper integration.[12]

What is the relationship between the theological institution and the church concerning governance or control?

The first way we can approach the relationship between the theological institution and the church is to summarise how the two have interacted through governance models in the Protestant period over these past five hundred years. For the sake of simplicity, I have created eleven models of governance which evangelical Protestants have employed over these past five hundred years.[13] These need to be noted because governance and control issues often have a large role to play for the advancement or hindrance of spiritual formation and skills development/practice. I have avoided giving specific names of theological institutions over this five hundred year summary because many have changed categories over their own histories. Also, it is a good exercise to start to personally engage with the models by asking, "Where does my institution fit and also where do others fit that I know about historically and presently?"

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[11] Colleen M. Griffth, "Education and Spirituality", in *The New SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality,* ed. Philip Sheldrake (London: SCM Press, 2005), 267.

[12] To simply see theological education as "scientific study" can lead to a deformation of theological education. Correctly balanced, theological education as science or scientific study, if one wants to use this terminology, must not exclude theological education as *also* spiritual. The danger which some see is to go to one extreme, namely fanciful piety, the opposite danger is fanciful head knowledge.

[13] The categories for summarising Western theological education over 2,000 years by Edward Farley have some connection here but I am purposely being more specific by concentrating upon the 500 years of Protestantism and also upon the questions of governance and relationship. Edward Farley, *Theologia* as referenced in Steven K. Sandvig, "Theological Education", in *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education*, ed. Michael Anthony, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 691. I have developed these categories over many years. I do not claim that they are perfect or that next year I may not need to amend them.

Models of Governance:

#1. The theological institution is denominationally owned and controlled. In this model one assumes that the theological institution and the church are integrated. The reality is "maybe". In many ways this integration depends upon the spiritual health and leadership of the church body as well as the governors of the institution as to whether or not they are in a position to exercise their respective roles. Smaller churches often struggle here basically because of finances and staffing issues or resources. The model does not of itself mean integration.

#2. Denominationally owned and controlled yet partnered with a secular or state entity (university). This may be a faculty of theology within a state university or it could be a college within a state university. There are often many underlying factors here at work, such as subsidies, or outside requirements and pressures binding the hands of the faculty or college. The questions often asked include: "Can the church direct?" "Who is setting the vision for spiritual formation – the partner institution or the church?" "Who is driving the vision and moulding the academics and spiritual life of the theological institution?" "Has the theological institution moved towards the academic research-driven model or is there a clear integration of academics, church, and spiritual formation and skills development?"

#3. Contained within the state university to serve the state church. This is very much a European model and can be found still in Germany, some Scandinavian countries, and Scotland. Often in this model piety has been driven "underground" into student-led movements whereby we see more spiritual formation in these student associations than in the actual state-university structure. Funding and appointments of faculty are often key issues in this relationship. It has led to various secessions out of the state church and the creation of non-state churches and also the creation of non-state oriented theological institutions. The history here is often more complex than first thought.

#4. Self-governing in ownership and control, yet with specific denominational links and affiliations. Here the theological institution has a self-governing board but in complicated ways relates to some local congregations or denominations. For example, the appointment of board members may be by quotas or a formula of some kind, or levels of informal accountability to obtain students placements may be worked out. The model can work and can lead to an integration of spiritual formation or it can also lead to issues of turning to the academic model and divorcing skills development by saying this is the church's role and not that of the theological institution. Again, it can be complex. Historically the model goes through a metamorphosis over time as relationships grow distant.

#5. Self-governing in ownership and control with complete independence from denominational or church linkage. Here the board does not answer to any denomination directly but "works" with many, yet with no direct

accountability or control or ownership. Here churches often "vote with their feet" when they are dissatisfied and look somewhere else to send their students. In this model the theological institution sets the agenda for spiritual formation and may or may not necessarily seek out churches.

#6. Part of a federation whereby each "college" has its own governance within a consortium of colleges. Federations can have various governance models even for each college so there can be models within the model! Some might have "links" to a local church or a denomination by ownership or governance but others may not. Some may also be more like "extension centres" within the consortium, and relate back to a "mother" college or administrative central hub, church controlled or not. Thus spiritual formation in this model can be varied and also integrated in a variety of ways, or not integrated.

#7. Owned and controlled by a local congregation. Mega-churches can do this but it is often much more taxing for a small local congregation. With smaller congregations they may be controlled by the local congregation but often financially they are looking well beyond for funding and staffing. One would assume in this model that the theological institution and the church would blend well together. This is not necessarily true. There can be factors here of staffing and of the spiritual health of the local assembly; sometimes certain spiritual eccentricities are highlighted and a balanced spirituality is not always practised. One will often find that such institutions run by a small congregation will seek out partnerships to accomplish their goals so there will often develop "affiliations" which can beg the question often of who really is in control.

#8. Owned and operated by a mission society. With this model the theological institution and the church connection for governance and ownership does not exist because the mission society remains in control. However, spiritual formation and skills development could still occur whereby the local church community is involved in some way. With this model we also see a historical trajectory whereby change in governance may occur in the second or third generation.

A sub-group here could be in the more modern ecumenical period of the Protestant context whereby a parachurch sponsored ecumenical college is owned and operated by the ecumenical group which may or may not be linked to local churches or denominations. These are "quasi-parachurch ecumenical training institutions".

#**9. A faculty of theology within a state university with no direct church affiliation or control or ownership.** The state university and the church may have been linked in some instances in the past but this is now an historical footnote. Now the education is very much research driven and typically does not have a strong emphasis upon spiritual formation and skills development nor does it have a strong partnership with the church. More students are usually to be found in graduate or post-graduate level degree work rather than in training for the ministry within local congregations.

#10. Engaged in a three way partnership between church, state, and the theological institution. Each part has its duties and governance responsibilities, and ownership and control in each sphere are worked out and defined. The church may assess spiritual skills and development, the theological institution may access the academic, and the state may fund the operation of the theological institution and have final powers over the theological institution. This is close to model number three above but may contain a more carefully defined role for the church.

#11. Multi-campus, non-denominationally controlled campuses of theological institutions with a central administration yet each campus having a degree of semi-autonomous authority. This is a rather recent development within protestant theological education. Usually there is a common name in such structures of governance and common control and ownership. Such arrangements usually seek partnerships with local churches to assist in spiritual formation and skills development through placements and internships or mentoring programmes.

Each of these models and mutations of governance and ownership can be found throughout our five hundred years of evangelical Protestant history. Each model can be studied to see how spiritual formation has been viewed and developed within its structured operations. These models, as outlined above, apply to traditional in-class theological institutions or also to distance educational theological institutions and now to the combination of both by the same institution.

Studying the evangelical Protestant heritage of theological education and training I believe can be a worthy enterprise. For example, we may be surprised that in the evangelical Reformed tradition there have been various models employed. There has not been a slavish uniformity on the models employed. We will now study two historical case studies. We will study them in context, select the good from them, try to learn from them, endeavour to build upon them, and no doubt modify them as needed. I also believe we will be challenged to see just how contemporary these historical models are.

I have limited this study to two for three reasons. First, because one can work through the eleven models above and see our five hundred year heritage summarised here. Second, two will be sufficient considering the constraints of this paper. Third, the two that I have selected have features which warrant our consideration of them today and the reasons will become obvious as we proceed.

The Past

Historical Case Study Number One: The Genevan Academy

We begin with one of the earliest and most significant purposely estab-

lished evangelical theological training institutions in the Reformed tradition, the Genevan Academy.[14] It cannot claim to be the first but rather is amongst the first. It was formally established on 5 June, 1559 just shortly before Calvin's final edition of the *Institutes* which appeared in September of 1559. Thus it has been described as really "the crown of Calvin's Genevan work"[15] as it came near the end of his ministry. The vision, organisation, and curriculum must be attributed largely to John Calvin, and it must also be acknowledged that The Genevan Academy has had great influence on other institutions.

Five faculty were appointed on that opening day in June, 1559. Three were what we would term today "full-time", and two would likely be termed "part-time" as these continued as pastors of congregations (maybe adjunct by some). The artist's rendering captures this first faculty.

Technically the academy did exist in a less formal sense before 1559. Pastors and former priests were being trained prior to June 1559 in Geneva. Calvin had been giving what were termed "theological lectures" which were on the Old and New Testaments. Thus Calvin was both a pastor and a doctor before and after 1559; in the years prior to 1559, it was really a church theological institute under the Company of the Pastors for about twenty years. Calvin believed this could be improved upon, hence the formal move to open the Genevan Academy when the timing was right with more faculty.

The Genevan Academy was a rather complex entity. It had two divisions. The college or *gymnasium* had seven grades and was the larger division. The upper division or *schola publica* (latterly, the university) was smaller and its focus was to train citizens for government leadership and vocation and also future ministers for the church. Of course many students who attended the latter were to be trained for France and also for local Genevan needs.

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[14] Much of this section is a condensation from my book, *"An Educated Clergy": Scottish Theological Education and Training in the Kirk and Secession, 1560-1850* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 3-19. I have not included all the references to source material from the relevant chapter as it is there in the footnotes. See also, Charles E. Raynal, III, "The Place of the Academy", in *John Calvin and The Church: A Prism of Reform*. Ed.Timothy George. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1990),120-134; Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors*: *Pastoral care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Karen Maag, "Calvin's Academic and Educational Legacy," in *The Legacy of John Calvin*, ed. David Foxgrove (Grand Rapids: Calvin Studies Society, 1999),11-30; James Edward McGoldrick, "John Calvin-Erudite Educator," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* , 21 (2010), 121-132; Robert Vosloo, "Calvin, the Academy of Geneva and 150 years of theology at Stellenbosch: historical-theological contributions to the conversation on theological education," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae (Supplement)*, 35 (2009), 17-33; Scott Manetsch, "Pastoral Collegiality and Accountability in Calvin's Geneva," http://www.reformation21.org accessed on 25 September, 2015.

[15]Williston Walker. *John Calvin the Organiser of Reformed Protestantism, 1509-1564*. 1909. Reprint. (London: Forgotten Books, 2013), 418.

At this point the question is often asked, "Was the Genevan Academy strictly speaking a theological seminary or was it a Christian university?" In reality it was both. By 1567 both law and medicine were added to the curriculum. The actual curriculum which ministers and future government leaders received from the beginning is not exactly what would be taught today in theological seminaries. The five faculty (doctors) were responsible as follows: one for humanities (arts), one for Greek, one for Hebrew, two for theology. Recall that by theology here we mean Old and New Testament. Also, Greek was not confined to NT Greek classes. The humanities also built upon the lower division's work in rhetoric, grammar and literature. This curriculum was to benefit both future ministers and future government leaders as it was intended to lay a foundation in piety.

In terms of governance, The Academy followed model number ten (as outlined above). Nominations to teach were made by the pastors of Geneva but formally these teachers had to be approved and appointed by the City Council magistrates. The goal was the advancement of the church and good governance in society. The magistrates (the state) had a role to perform, and the pastors (the church) had a role to perform. The nature of the pastors' role needs further elaboration as the academy did not do everything for the education and training of future ministers.

The Company of Pastors acted basically like a presbytery, but do not think of this as the same as a modern presbytery. There were about 25-30

local churches both within Geneva and the surrounding villages. The Company supervised all of these parishes. The Academy may have given formal lectures but training and spiritual development also came through the informal role of the Company of Pastors. Preachers were needed in the rural parishes and thus the Company drew upon the students in the Academy. Other tasks included stenographers, chaplains, catechism teaching, family tutors, and secretaries for leading pastors. All of this provided good experience and mentoring in ministry.

There were weekly meetings (each Friday), the *Colloquy*, which continued just as it had for the previous eighteen years before 1559. Here ministers and students gathered to hear public expositions in theology, criticisms/discussions and the assignment of topics. It was the role of the Company to determine where students labored, not the role of the Academy, thus making for a three-way partnership. The Company conducted oral examinations of students (monthly on Saturdays) on doctrine, exposition, and in the enquiry into "whether he is of good morals and has always conducted himself without reproach". There was a marriage between the Academy and the Company of Pastors within the context of a city state. At its high point this Company may have had twenty-four pastors. Over time this was to become a very unique educational training centre and must be seen in context.

Consider this correspondence from France as to why students were sent from France to the Academy:

> He is in Geneva to study and profit not only from the language and doctrine of the Word of God, but also from the practices of doctrine and good order which can bolster ecclesiastical discipline… Please have him practise in some village, so that he will be less of a novice when he comes to lead the flock in this area…
> …We would ask that he could have entry to your consistories, to learn that good order which was first born among you and then spread to the churches of France. We also ask you to use him sometime, as you do others of the same status, to preach in the villages of your area, so that by speaking in public, he may be able to train his voice and grow in confidence.[16]

It must be recalled that the Genevan Academy, unlike most of our modern theological institutions, did not issue certificates, diplomas or degrees to students. However, the Company of Pastors did issue letters which were really endorsements, evaluations and sources of advisement. For example, for the student Jean Valeton, 1584 the letter read:

> As regards his doctrine, having heard him expound various passages of Scripture several times, and after having had him practise for a time by preaching in one of our parishes in the area, we have al-

[16] As quoted in Whytock, *An Educated Clergy*, 15.

> ways found him to hold a pure and complete doctrine. He possesses a certain ability for teaching and for making himself heard. With God's will, he will develop these skills. And as for his morals, he has always lived here in a Christian and peaceful manner, so that we can but hope that he will bear good fruit.[17]

Some of the letters attested orthodoxy in students but recommended that since they were "too timid" or "the voice not loud enough" then they should become schoolmasters. Clearly these letters commented upon knowledge, piety (spiritual life), and ability. In many regards they were amazing transcripts and differ quite remarkably from today's theological certificate and degree parchments.

I now offer a summary analysis of the Genevan Academy in light of the theme of this paper:

1. The Genevan Modal was a mixture or an integration of the formal (Academy) and the informal (The Company of Pastors).

2. It was not one local congregation/church that ran this programme. The number of congregations and leaders involved was actually very large.

3. Not all the "faculty" were full-time but some were really what today we would call adjunct combining their teaching with parish work.

4. The final evaluation was more personal than perhaps today's transcripts and diplomas and degrees. In essence there was an attempt at a holistic evaluation and assessment. (*testimonia*)

5. The Academy was not a research-driven entity. It was a gospel, ministry focused institution where the primary goal was the training of ministers, yet not exclusively. So it can be said that the Academy was not too restrictive yet maintained its primary objective. This can speak to us today of the dangers of research-driven entities and of how we need to beware of the balance being shifted.

6. The Genevan Academy curriculum was both broader and narrower than many today.

7. There was an overarching theological unity in this institution. One does wonder if this statement could be accurately said of many institutions today.

8. There was certainly a missional and cross-bearing focus with this institutional atmosphere. It may not have been in a full-orbed missional sending perspective but contextually it was clearly missional and cross-bearing in orientation.

9. Institutionally there was no room for any woman here.[18] Personally, I question this restriction. Do we need separate training institutions for women or can there be a sharing in various training and educational endeavours?

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[17] As quoted in Whytock, *An Educated Clergy*, 16.

[18] See Ken Stewart's review of Douglas Shantz's *An Introduction to German Pietism* elsewhere in this volume of the *Haddington House Journal*.

Was this a formal constraint, or was it more the natural result of cultural/theological assumptions operating at the time?[19]

I now propose a second historical case study that is also in the evangelical and Reformed tradition but a very different model.

Historical Case Study Number Two: The Selkirk Divinity Hall, Scotland, under George Lawson, 1787-1820

Clearly Geneva has played a significant role in Reformed theological education (though not always as we think) but so has Scotland. I will now turn to a Scottish case study which numerically in terms of students also represents a very significant contribution. Unfortunately, this case has been given very little attention by church historians or historians of education; this is a thirty-three year case study of the Selkirk Divinity Hall, 1787-1820.[20]

1. Context Overview

For about 150-200 years in Scotland, there existed Secessionist "divinity halls" that operated outside of the Scottish Universities and the faculties of theology. Statistics are not easy to clearly establish here but it could be that between 40-45% of Presbyterian clergy were being trained in these halls at their zenith.[21] Even though statistics vary greatly depending on the focus of the time frame, it is undeniable that a very large number of Presbyterian clergy which served in Scotland, Ireland, England, and in overseas ministries were educated and trained in these hall systems.

These halls can be traced back to secession Presbyterian movements outside of the mainstream Church of Scotland. There are many complexities within these branches of Presbyterianism. I have selected only one of these divinity halls, one which operated in the south of Scotland for thirty-three years in Selkirk. Often the professor was a solo professor and served really as a *regent*[22] for all the subjects in the curriculum. This was before the universal

[19] My thanks to Dr. Richard Ball for a helpful discussion on this point.

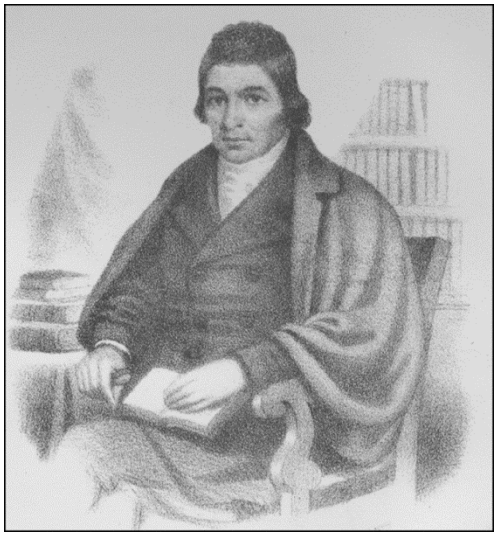
[20] Whytock, *An Educated Clergy*, 257-271. Again I have not included here all the source references as they can be found in the footnotes in this referenced chapter. See also, Andrew M. Muirhead, "Associate Synod (Burgher) Divinity Hall (1747-1820)," Dissenting Academies Online Encyclopaedia (2011), Dr. William's Centre for Dissenting Studies, http://dissacad.english.qmul.ac.uk accessed on 25 September, 2015.

[21] There were halls which were Covenanter (Reformed Presbyterian), Secessionist (various branches), and in a technical sense the Free Church Halls of post-1843 must also be considered as they were outside of the Scottish Universities. Not all three were identical. Statistics vary greatly by period. I am not focusing upon all of these in this paper nor post-1900 at all.

[22] A regent is one who oversees a student through their whole course of studies. The term was very common in Scottish education. A principal was also viewed as a "*principal regent*".

appeal to specialisation that we are familiar with today. It certainly was a heavy and demanding workload. Generally such halls did not have their own buildings yet did have a separate library. Traditionally the hall moved when a new professor was appointed, i.e. the hall moved to the locale of that professor.

2. George Lawson—An Inspiring Educator of Theology



George Lawson (1747-1820) was nicknamed "the Christian Socrates". Reports speak of the incredible amount of the original texts of the scriptures which he knew from memory. He was no doubt a most intimidating person for a student, yet from all accounts there was no pompous decorum in his conduct towards anyone. He was given the title "Professor" by his Synod, but this title must be understood as a professor in the regenting tradition of educational instruction. He served in this solo regenting capacity for all thirty-three years during which time he also authored numerous expositional works. One or two of these remain in print today. In particular, his lectures on Joseph have been kept in print by Banner of Truth.[23]

3. An Overview of how the Selkirk Divinity Hall Functioned

The actual instruction classes were conducted in the church building in Selkirk where Lawson served as the minister for the local Secession (Associate) Presbyterian congregation. The term each year lasted for one period of nine weeks. This pattern was repeated for four or five years of mandatory attendance. During the remainder of the year, the students would often run private Christian schools or be live-in tutors to wealthy families. Responsibilities would include catechism work with the school children and on occasion serving as session clerks.

During the nine-week term the lectures would be held Monday through Friday in two blocks daily of one and a half hours each. In addition to these formal lecture periods, there would be student preaching and evaluation sessions on select evenings at which times the public was invited and encouraged to attend. During some lecture periods students would also make formal

[23] George Lawson, *The Life of Joseph*, original 1807. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1972).

presentations. There was also a student-led missionary meeting where presentations on mission activity were presented. The work of the London Missionary Society was a favourite for reporting upon and having prayer meetings. All lectures opened and closed with a rota of students leading in prayer. There were about fifty students often in attendance for a nine-week term (session). Students boarded during the nine weeks around the church and would eat together where the "juggling of tea cups each evening" could be heard. These annual terms created for a close-knit student Christian community that included close bonds with the local residents. No elements of Greek or Hebrew were taught. Generally these had all been completed in the arts course at one of the Scottish universities prior to coming to the Selkirk Divinity Hall. The focus of the hall was to ensure that students were prepared to rightly handle the scripture and to properly engage in communication of the scriptures.

4. The Role of the Church

The Hall was controlled by the church (Synod) which appointed the professor. In reality much of the life of the Hall received almost no Synod support or assistance. Often Dr. Lawson would ask Synod for assistance in conducting the Hall but to no avail. However, the role of the church can be found outside of the term time of the Hall. The church's role was very much in the practical training and spiritual formation of the students. At the conclusion of each term at the Hall students were sent home with assignments to complete and their local presbytery would then assign dates for the hearing and evaluation of those assignments. Note that the emphasis was on oral delivery of the assignments. When either four or five terms in the Hall had been finished, the student was given his probationary roster. This roster often took up to two years to fulfill. Since the students were single, there was a greater ease in mobility. Often a pony was provided for the probationer. Their roster directed them where they would go each week. Many were sent to Ireland on missionary work. They went to vacant charges, preached, catechised, and conducted visitation. Because there was not always a resident minister, the probationer often worked more closely with a local elder. Therefore, in some regards the ruling elders had a significant role to play in this probationary/apprenticeship training period. Again, this fact is something that is not always appreciated or acknowledged in Scottish education and training of ministers.

You will notice that I have introduced here the idea that this probationary period had many similarities to what some today refer to as "apprenticing". The congregation became very well acquainted with these students and from this calls would emerge. On occasion, there were no calls forthcoming and the probationer was counseled to go and teach in a Christian school instead. So by age 24, on average, a student would be ready for ordination, having completed academic work, oral exercises with the presbytery, and probationary or apprenticing training. If one analyses this system, one finds the Hall

was playing its role, the church was playing its role, and congregations were playing their role. The role of the church at the Hall was in reality delegated and not direct.

In terms of spiritual formation, one finds it in the classroom, in the mission gatherings, in the intimate community which developed and also through again the practical training exposure which again is difficult to separate from a specific spiritual formation discipline. When one reviews the ethos of the Hall it emerges as a place of sound Christian doctrine, piety and practical Christianity. It was very integrative. In terms of facilities they were not impressive—borrowed in reality through sharing arrangements. The Hall was definitely not a research based institution but was rather a ministry focused endeavour. Though writing was required, the real stress, whether in Hall or Presbytery, was on preparation for oral communication. The system also allowed for students to work during the school periods to make money and also to gain experience.

Analysis of the Selkirk Divinity Hall

1. The Hall flourished when there was an inspiring educator. In order for the system to work well it needed church endorsement and encouragement. The reality of this approach to education did not always measure up to the ideal. However, we can say that there was a relationship between the Hall, the Presbytery, and the local congregations in the whole process of educating and training students. We can also say that spiritual formation was evident in the process.

2. This Hall and the whole process functioned within a theological unity. There were not radically competing theologies.

3. It appears impossible to separate spiritual formation and practical theology here. They were married together. There was a concerted effort to be mindful of spiritual life in the classroom. (Some of the anecdotal evidence of the professor breaking down in tears while lecturing by being moved by the subject and the tears by many at the close of the term, leads to the conclusion that a special spiritual community existed). Again, this would depend on the particular educator.

4. There is evidence of a missional dimension being cultivated in the Hall and also through the apprenticeship work.

5. The missional dimension in terms of engagement was restricted denominationally. There appears to be an inward focus because of the denominational connection. Students almost never came from other denominations to study here.

6. Once again, like at Geneva, there were no female students. Room for such training was not a consideration. Can this be justified?[24]

[24] See also footnotes 18 and 19.

7. The focus of the Selkirk Hall was narrower than that of the Genevan Academy. Training leaders for wider societal leadership was not the purpose. This can be looked at from different perspectives. Perhaps resources dictated this or maybe it was not even a consideration. Whatever the reason or reasons, the hall was only engaged in training minsters for local churches.

8. One can see here a model for "block" teaching combined with school teaching for support. It would appear students were not "graduating" with massive debt.

9. This is a strong model for inclusion of practical apprenticing.

10. Again no diplomas or degrees were ever issued but again personal letters or completion statements were issued. This is very different from current practices.

11. Other institutions were used to help to provide prerequisite training and education. The curriculum at the Hall was "stripped down". This raises the questions: "What level and type of education should be a prerequisite for theological education today?" "Should the curriculum include some of these prerequisites?" "What about more general courses; for example, English, research, or computer skills?"

12. The focus was good--the training of pastors, but should we be this narrow? Are there other Christian leadership training needs that should be included?

13. Can and does the church sometimes expect too much from those who are appointed? Did they really take seriously the workload that was imposed upon this solo professor, and why did they not help to bring more relief and carry the burden with him?

14. It is interesting to note that when this professor of theology published, he published materials intended to help fellow pastors and laity, not esoteric, academic treatises. How does this relate to today's emphasis on publishing and professors of theology and the chant "publish or perish"?

The Present

What are we doing today – in the present – to foster healthy relationships between theological institutions and the church concerning the spiritual formation of leaders? The answer which I will now give to this question I have arrived at from a variety of sources, many non-published. They come from visits and contact with many theological institutions over the last several years in many countries. Some of these answers have come from informal interviews. Some have come from reading promotional or informational literature of theological institutions or from their websites. The observations for the present are not exhaustive. I offer twelve observations of this relationship

between the theological institution and the church, and the effort to encourage student spiritual formation.[25]

1. Most theological institutions have a regular chapel time which is intended to contribute to the students' and faculties' spiritual formation. At times the local church may be involved through guest speakers. This is not limited to speakers but may also include local church singing groups, mission groups etc. being invited to the chapel. The theological institution uses ways through chapel to reach into the local community of Christians yet also reminds the students of why they are at the theological institution studying. There is again that stress on holistic spiritual life. Faculty, staff, students (and often local church leaders) come together for worship. Consider the demise of chapel in the state universities teaching theology. Theological instructors are not involved, or rarely involved, in devotional spiritual exercises in chapel and surely this makes an impact on what the theological institution exists to do.

2. Some theological institutions have a spiritually themed week or spiritual emphasis week. This is not something new but was very common in the 19th century mission institutes and colleges. This week may or may not be integrated into the local church community or wider church community. The choice of speakers and themes determines a great deal. The point here is that this spiritual emphasis week is not seen as an academic graded subject. Rather, it is seen as a very important component in the life of that theological institution in fostering a Christian ethos for staff and students and even often the local community. It is a clear reminder that the Lord is the One whom we are to exalt and for whom we are to live. The theological institution places planning and thought into this week and has goals for what they hope to accomplish from such activities. It is very interesting that in the past such weeks have often been identified as turning points for students in their own spiritual lives.

3. Some theological institutions encourage, foster, and promote special seasons of prayer and fasting. Some of this may be staff initiated, some may very well be student initiated. Usually these are independent of local churches but not necessarily so. These special seasons of prayer and /or fasting again are clear reminders that we exist far more than simply for mark sheets. Quite frankly, such things may be shocking to some very traditional theological institutions yet are common and quite accepted in many others.

4. Some theological institutions have student-led ministry projects with faculty mentoring. This may take on a whole variety of appearances, from HIV initiated projects, to horticultural projects, to rural preaching initiatives, to foreign student outreaches, etc. The point is that the faculty are men-

[25] I have not footnoted these points on purpose here because I did not want to single out institutions and set up examples for assessment within this paper. I offer these as ideas of showing attempts at integrative models only.

toring ministry projects with the college's students. For example, faculty members may take a group of students into a rural area where Christian ministry in in serious decline (or not even taking place). Faculty and students together conduct services and visit with the people. There is a sharing of tasks: one preaches, one translates, one leads singing, one teaches the children, one shares a testimony of Bible college life and challenges young people to consider their callings. The strategy here is faculty involvement with students – a mentoring role. Here the church, the theological institution and practical ministry and spiritual formation are all integrated. The training can be brought back into the classroom through using what has been observed or learnt as illustrations in lecturing. In order for such integration to be effective, staff and faculty must be selected very carefully.

5. Some theological institutions require students to be involved in apprenticeship programmes or ministry training programmes often for integrated credit. Some may spend four days in the local church context with a mentor and then come for three days to the college for formal lectures. Some of these apprenticeship or ministry training programmes allow a student to explore and refine calling. However, these programmes are meant to provide students with basic ministry qualifications. Church, theological institution and practice in ministry will hopefully be integrated but again much is dependent upon the mentors, the faculty and also the student. This can be said for many of these twelve points.

6. Some theological institutions insist upon faculty-led fellowship groups. The names here may vary. For example, some may just refer to them as small groups, others as accountability groups, and still others as support groups for Christian fellowship. Regardless of the name, these groups are seen as aids to spiritual formation. They are not a substitute for the local church. Though they exist for fellowship, accountability, and study, they are likewise mentoring what a small group ministry should be. This in itself provides mentoring in the development of ministry skills in a very informal way. Again, this raises the question of the hiring and appointment of faculty. In a sense, the faculty leader here becomes a chaplain or pastor figure to the students in the group.

7. Some use faculty-led ministry teams of students from the theological institution. This may actually mean the faculty-led team is going to another country or another cultural setting. It could mean partnering up with a local church group in another country or setting. Maybe a faculty person leads students from the theological institution in South Africa to Zambia to undertake a project with a local church or group of churches in Zambia. This takes the classroom (through the faculty member) into ministry. The extent to which spiritual formation will take place depends largely on the faculty member. However, in theory, such ministry team experiences should lead to a complete integration of theological institution, church and spirituality.

8. Some theological institutions insist upon one-to-one mentoring between an assigned church pastoral mentor and the theological student at

the theological institution. Here each student is covenantally bound to a local church and pastor and each is directed to seek their council. Students are also directed to be accountable to their mentors. This takes planning and much initiative. In small denominational theological institutions this may be easier than in larger institutions, although the former is no guarantee of a successful mentoring programme.

9. Some endeavour as faculty to approach the development of their teaching with an integration of spirituality in the classroom. They openly lead in prayer or call upon students to pray. They have a Bible with them and are prepared to use it when necessary. They offer counsel from their lecture material and they integrate case studies from church life etc. into their classes. There is a demonstrated openness for spiritual life in the classroom and the faculty leader sets the tone and leads the way in this. There are those master teachers who present such integration into their classrooms of spirituality with solid content and a sense that the church is not foreign to them. Again, selection of faculty is absolutely critical here.

10. Some churches insist upon church examination and reports to be conducted. Here the church may send a representative to the theological institution and speak with faculty about their students and ask spiritual questions and seek transparency concerning their student. The church representative is checking to determine the well-being spiritually not just academically of their student. Some institutions will even insist upon this for the sponsoring church to conduct such an annual audit and this report goes into the student's file. Other churches will annually meet with all of their students at a theological institution and conduct a joint group meeting to determine if they are pleased with how things are going academically, spiritually and for development of ministry skills.

11. Some theological institutions also include in their programme credit integration in practical theology courses whereby so many hours must be spent being involved or working in a local church assignment. If these things do not occur then there is no graduation certificate issued. Often these are "complete only" without assigned marks. Again, here is the theme of integration between the theological institution and the church and endeavoring to instill and cultivate a real spiritual reality in ministerial training.

12. Finally, many institutions insist upon assignment integration. By this I mean that knowledge of sound theological content is not sufficient but must also include an applied relationship to one's spiritual life and church life. Hence, the manner in which assignments are conducted is carefully considered. This philosophy applies not only to the practical theology subjects but must be integrated throughout the curriculum as much as possible. For example, there has been a tremendous shift away from oral examinations to written and typed presentations in theological education and training. Yet most students will be heavily engaged in oral communication (preaching and teaching) after they leave the theological institution. Thankfully, some insti-

tutions are beginning to show more diversity on this point.

The Future

Here I address questions that those of us involved in leadership of theological institutions need to ask. I am purposely focusing on theological institutions but I sincerely hope that others in leadership in the church will be open to dialogue about these matters. As we move from the past and the present and consider the future let me begin by saying it is very difficult to don "the prophet's hat" and foretell what the future will look like in theological education and training globally. There are some trends which we could speak about and an examination of these trends could lead us to predict what theological institutions and the church (and their relationship to each other) may look like for the future.[26] However, I would rather lay aside the "prophetic" and ask something much more practical: **"What can we do now, as we plan for the future, to strengthen the relationship between the theological institution and the church concerning the spiritual formation of emerging leaders?"** The best way to approach this question is to be willing as a theological institution to do an analysis of your theological institution's model. Consider doing your own self-assessment and analysis. Here are some particulars which you may want to consider as you conduct such an analytical self-assessment.

1. What is your primary agenda or purpose as a theological institution? – And here be brutally honest. Is it "ministry" driven or is it "research" driven? This will very quickly answer the question. Do not state what you want to become but begin with what you are.

2. How do you hire faculty and staff? What do you look for in hiring a new person? What are the real qualifications? Do you look for an integrated commitment to church, theological institution and spiritual formation in the candidate? Do you sense the wrong kind of ambitions coming through the process? Do you ask if the candidate will invest time with students outside of the lecture? Do you insist upon this?

3. Has your theological institution embraced a holistic philosophy of education that promotes an integration of skills, spiritual formation, and sound theological knowledge with good learning principles, or is there another visionary curricula focus or perspective at work? Do the board and faculty know or have they considered properly the perspective from

[26] There are many articles discussing trends and making predictions, such as, "Seminary of the Future", (the Eight Discussion Points), http://future.fuller.edu accessed 27 September, 2015. Also, Michael Spradlin, "The Future of Theological Education", http://www.mabts.edu accessed 27 September, 2015. Many such articles are very helpful but are not exactly dealing with the three-fold perspective which we are trying to grasp namely, the theological institution, and the church, and spiritual formation.

which they are working? Many inherit traditions in education and do not question them.

4. What is the academic dean looking for in examining all faculty course syllabi? Is the dean looking for an integration of skills, spiritual formation, and sound theological knowledge with good learning principles? Sound theological knowledge here should be what the church desires in all her ministerial candidates and leaders. Does the dean understand this philosophical perspective or is there another visionary curricula focus or perspective at work?

5. List as many different ways as possible that your theological institution is pursuing the spiritual development of your students.

6. Describe how you as a theological institution communicate with the church/churches concerning the spiritual development of your students. Are you satisfied with this presently? Are you truly serving the Kingdom for the future or not in this regard?

7. Assign various faculty and board members the task of researching how other institutions are relating to the church concerning the spiritual development of students. Then have a follow-up meeting or retreat to discuss these findings with all faculty and board members. Next, what concrete action needs to be taken? What further investigation and prayer needs to continue specifically?

8. When evaluating the financial reports at year end, do NOT stop there. Review the year and ask "How has the atmosphere of the institution changed spiritually?" Are we encouraged with the piety which we see? Marks cannot be given for piety but holiness and spiritual maturity are to be growing in emerging Christian leaders. These are biblical mandates much more than a degree. Maybe we have got something out of order in our educational paradigm.

9. Pretend that someone has asked you this question: "How are the faculty members of your institution expected to emphasize spiritual formation?"

10. Since spiritual formation takes places in the context of Christian community, how do we overcome the loss of community in the case of distance theological education? Or, can a sense of community be retained? If so, how?

I am sure that there is much more that can be discussed as you conduct your own analysis and self-assessment. The critical point here is that *an analysis needs to be conducted* so that we address tomorrow with the best possible approach today and do not merely repeat yesterday's ways.

We need to seek to learn from our Protestant past, both the bad examples and the good examples. We also need to learn from other models in the present, again the good and the bad. We must openly and honestly take time as a faculty and board to evaluate the deliberate and specific steps being taken to

foster spiritual development in our student body. Finally we must openly and honestly take time as a faculty and board to evaluate our relationship to the church and consider how we can strengthen this relationship and thereby strengthen the spiritual formation of our students.

Conclusion

Let me close by making a parallel illustration. If you as a parent elect to send your child to a school, you are still the parent. You grant or delegate to that school the task of helping to educate your child. Now the question is, "Can the school do everything necessary to raise and to educate your child?" Obviously not. You as the parent must continue to exercise your responsibility. We call this arrangement in *locus parentis*; that is, the school stands there "in place of the parent" but it is never meant to displace the role and duty of the parent. Now think of the theological institution. The church may send a student to a theological institution to be educated and trained, but always recall *in locus ecclesia*, in place of the church but never to displace the role and duty of the church. There should be a relationship which seeks integration and partnership, not a divorce between the two. There has been much abuse on both sides at given points in history. Likewise, if the theological institution is truly Christian, then by definition it must cultivate and strengthen spiritual formation. This is not optional, it is a given.

In this paper we have explored two historical case studies. Let us seek to learn from the past and also to learn from the variety of models also operative in the present.

I will conclude by offering five summary points for this relationship, five key points concerning theological institutions and the church and spiritual formation:

1. The theological institution and the church should both commit themselves to the vision of seeking a dynamic partnership and fostering it.
2. The theological institution should always keep before it a model that is sound in the faith, ministry driven, contextually relevant, and mission focused.
3. The theological institution should keep the vision to be holistically integrative at as many levels as possible when hiring, setting credits, and undertaking curricula development.
4. The theological institution should not become arrogant but should listen respectfully to the church and be willing to be humble.
5. The church should not perfunctorily, that is half-heartedly, carry out her visits or reports as this is a travesty but be willing to really engage for constructive ends.