AN ANALYSIS OF INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES IN THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH MINISTERS IN CHURCHES OF CHRIST

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Education

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by

Houston Derrick Jay Heflin

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APPROVAL SHEET

AN ANALYSIS OF INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES

IN THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH MINISTERS

IN CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Houston Derrick Jay Heflin

Read and Approved by:

Katheryn L. Webb

Katheryn L. Webb (Chairperson)

Brian C. Richardson

Brian C. Richardson

Date May 14, 2004

To Karen,

for your faithful love

that makes me a better man

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACU	Abilene Christian University
ATFE	Association of Theological Field Educators
ATS	Association of Theological Schools
AYME	Association of Youth Ministry Educators
CPE	Clinical Pastoral Education
FHU	Freed-Hardeman University
FU	Faulkner University
HU	Harding University
JYM	*Journal of Youth Ministry*
LCU	Lubbock Christian University
LU	Lipscomb University
NAPCE	North American Professors of Christian Education
OCU	Oklahoma Christian University
RQ	Research Question
SACS	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

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PREFACE

This work would not have been possible without the generous support of my beautiful wife, Karen. She challenged me and cheered for me throughout this process. She is a precious gift from God and the perfect mother for our daughter, Matalee.

My family has also been a source of encouragement. My parents, Ron and Jayleta Heflin, deserve accolade for the foundation of faith they laid in my life and for being my first teachers. My brother and sister, Heath and Heather, have been an inimitable juxtaposition of siblings and friends. Karen's parents, Colonel Dennis and Kathy Cherry, have showered me with love and support since I became one of their sons.

Special gratitude is extended to my advisor, Dr. Katheryn Webb, in addition to Dr. Brian Richardson and Dr. Mark Simpson for their wisdom and guidance. Their supervision has been very influential in this project. Similarly, I am grateful to my friend, Dr. Kyle Roberts, for providing assistance with statistics and the analysis of data.

Several individuals have left an indelible impression on my life because of their faithfulness to God and the church. It has been my blessing to learn from great teachers like Dr. David Wray, Dr. Charles Siburt, Dr. Douglas Foster, and Dr. John Willis; to have mentors in ministry like Chris Hatchett and Robert Oglesby; and to be encouraged academically by friends like Slade Sullivan and Dr. Glenn Pemberton.

Without the blessing of the elders at Richardson East Church of Christ this task would have been difficult to accomplish. These men are faithful shepherds of God's

flock and a joy to serve with. Likewise, the ministerial staff at Richardson East are great servants whose friendship has been a blessing throughout this journey.

My appreciation is also offered to those youth ministry professors who assisted in this project and the students who shared reflections on their ministry training.

Finally, my gratitude is extended to the One whose generosity has given me life and breath and everything else. May these words contribute to His praise.

Houston D. J. Heflin

Richardson, Texas

May 2004

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH CONCERN

While many ministers feel well equipped by their ministry education, a significant number find that their academic training did not prepare them for certain tasks of ministry (LaRue 1995, 56). Some students graduate from formal ministry training feeling "spiritually cold, theologically confused, biblically uncertain, and relationally calloused" (Dearborn 1995, 7) with a general sense of being professionally unprepared (Morgan 1994, 74). Although by no means the majority, a number of ministers enter ministry believing their educational experiences were inadequate as training for ministry.

Introduction to the Research Problem

The grievance that some ministry programs are educationally inadequate has resulted in the recent publication of articles such as "Ten Things I Didn't Learn in Seminary" (Esau 2003, 12), and "De-schooling the Theological Seminary" (Harkness 2001, 141). It has also led some to believe that, in spite of the contributions of religious academic institutions, renewal of ministerial education is imperative if schools hope to produce ministers capable of reaching a rapidly changing world (Shoemaker 1992, 100).

The issue of ministerial education is further complicated by the frequent disagreement about the essentials of ministry. This may reflect residual patterns from an era when the schools emphasized Bible, theology, and church history, while the churches focused on the practical disciplines and spiritual formation (Mahan 1996, 60). One study

confirmed this division by revealing a discrepancy between what church members, ministers, and seminary professors believed to be the most important skills for effective church ministry (Morgan 1994, 75). While some training institutions emphasize theological knowledge and theoretical comprehension, the work of ministry also demands a strong grasp of practical ability and interpersonal skills. Unfortunately, the practical and functional components of theological education have traditionally been weakest (Stiles 1962, 344).

Connecting Churches and Schools

Recognizing the disparities between churches and schools, there are those who claim the onus lies with theological institutions to network with churches through intentional cooperation in order to provide more relevant educational opportunities for students (Hubbard 1993, 46). This call is an echo of earlier observations that seminaries could not continue to function autonomously of churches in the education of ministers (Becker 1969, 586). Such training is educationally insufficient.

In spite of these admonitions for academic institutions to improve working relationships with churches, some believe a widening gap of isolation exists between the academy and the church (Banks 1999, 11; Myers 2002, 10). It has been noted that there is a "lack of connection between graduate pastoral education and Christian education in local congregations" (Zikmund 1993, 116). Banks suggests that the chasm exists because of the temptation for the church to focus on practical ministry and the academy to focus on academics without balance and intentional cooperation between the two. The product of education within these polarities also reflects two extremes. The church is often left to choose between graduates who are "mindless practitioners" or "irrelevant theorists" in

ministry (Livermore 2002, 90). Livermore defines mindless practitioners as those who are characterized by superficial thinking devoid of theological reflection or the discipline of questioning presuppositions. They have good practice without good theory. Such a person "does not claim the authority for the meaning of what he or she is doing" (O'Gorman 1996, 73). On the opposite extreme, irrelevant theorists are defined as those having learned solely in academic settings where the mind is engaged but the relational component so important to ministry is neglected (Livermore 2002, 92). These ministers excel in the comprehension of theory but are weak as practitioners.

The solution to improved ministerial education entails a fusion of theory and practice, or engagement and reflection (Everist 1984, 91), so that ministers are both practical thinkers and reflective practitioners (Banks 1999, 35). Such engagement involves active participation in ministry as a complement to academic training so that the dualism of theology and faith experience is removed (Richards 1972, 69). Field experiences facilitate this learning in ways that a classroom setting cannot (Harkness 2001, 151).

A Brief History of Theological Field Education

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is one of the earliest forms of organized theological field education. It began in the 1920s as a method of professional education for Protestant ministers (Jackson 1995, 6). The structure of this educational model involved submerging students in hospitals with other students and supervisors to develop in pastoral identity and to learn how to minister to the suffering and dying (Breyer 2000, 862). Although CPE has evolved through the years its emphasis continues to center

around the opportunity to serve as a hospital chaplain for the purpose of ministry preparation.

Other forms of fieldwork slowly gained acceptance in Protestant theological education from the 1920s through the 1940s (Stiles 1962, 342). The purpose of fieldwork was to meet the church's need for additional workers and the student's need for additional income (Mahan 1997, 60; Seals 1995, 125). Any educational benefits beyond the scope of these two factors were considered secondary.

As the concept of field education expanded in ministry training the balance between theory and practice emerged as a central issue. Finding qualified field supervisors who saw these experiences as field education instead of just fieldwork also lingered as an essential concern into the 1960s (Borchert 1996, 562). The challenge facing field educators was "to develop structures and processes which enabled students to experience pre-professional work roles as an educational introduction to professional ministry rather than simply as a job" (Chesnut 1975, 279). Finding the balance between work and education in theological field experience remains a challenge while the necessity of ministry supervision for ministerial education continues to gain support.

Field Education for Accreditation

The standards of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) did not include supervised field education until 1962 (Mahan 1996, 60). Since that time field education has grown in its structure and reputation so that currently, the standards of ATS for the Master of Divinity (M.Div.), and the Master of Arts (M.A.) in Christian Education or other specialized ministries requires ministry supervision as part of the curriculum (www.ats.edu 2003). Each degree program is required to "provide opportunities for

education through supervised experiences in ministry. These experiences should be of sufficient duration and intensity to provide opportunity to gain expertise in the tasks of ministerial leadership and to reflect on interrelated theological, cultural, and experiential learning" (Association of Theological Schools 2003, A.3.1.4.3).

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has also emphasized the necessity of connecting academic learning to practical ministry (www.sacscoc.org 2000, criteria.asp). In their "Criteria for Accreditation" they state for master's programs that an institution "must demonstrate that an effective relationship exists between curricular content and current practices in the field of specialization" (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools 2000, 36). One of the ways this is accomplished is through field experiences that ensure students are receiving exposure to current practice in ministry.

Field Education for Ordination

For many denominations ministry internships are a prerequisite to ordination (Shoemaker 1992, 114; Lundborg 2002, 15). In Churches of Christ there are no formal ordination requirements for serving as a youth minister. Therefore, ordination ceremonies are rarely conducted in the majority of churches. The qualifications for the position are generally an associate's or bachelor's degree in youth ministry or a related field such as biblical studies. When a church hires an individual, that person is considered a minister. Although churches do not mandate field experience as a prerequisite to employment, most of the universities associated with Churches of Christ encourage or require an internship as a part of the student's ministry education.

Improvements to Theological Field Education

The Association for Theological Field Education (ATFE) was organized as a vanguard for improving theological field education. They formally began in 1956 and represent more than 100 theological schools across the United States and Canada, most of whom are associated with ATS. ATFE "connects and bridges theory and practice, academy and church, local and global contexts, and the wisdom of the past and the dreams of the future" (www.atfe.org 2003).

Despite the accreditation requirements and the advances in ministry supervision through groups such as ATFE, some believe "theological field education continues to be compromised by the vestiges of the old field work system" (Mahan 1997, 60). That system focused on the ministerial benefits to churches and financial benefits to students without the commitment to the education of the student. In many internships students are either viewed as full staff with little to learn or they are viewed as hired hands who are working for a paycheck. Both views fail to attend to the issues of individual and ministerial growth. The ideal scenario places students in ministerial contexts that offer supervision and a tension between work and education in order to promote full learning (O'Gorman 1996, 72). To this end Mahan suggests a vision for improved supervision in ministry that includes a deeper understanding of the value of supervision on the part of churches, and a clearer expression of expectations for supervisors as well as better training for supervisors on the part of schools (Mahan 1997, 64). This need exists for all ministry positions, including the burgeoning area of youth ministry.

Youth Ministry Education

Youth ministry continues to grow as a viable option for young men and women seeking to serve God in the context of the church. Many undergraduate colleges and graduate school seminaries have added degrees in youth ministry to their catalogues with departments and faculty to prepare students for ministry. In addition to the classroom preparation these programs offer, many schools are requiring, and many churches are offering, opportunities to participate in supervised field experiences, or internships. While the benefits of interns to youth ministers as support staff and the benefits to the teens as mentors and friends have been accepted, the efficacy of internships in preparing these students for future full time ministry has yet to be examined.

The need to evaluate ministry education, field experiences, and youth ministry as a discipline of Christian Education has not escaped professors of youth ministry. Several actions have been taken by the community of youth workers and professors to improve youth ministry education and its hope for a future as an academic discipline. An important first step was the creation of the Association of Youth Ministry Educators (AYME).

AYME is North America's only professional organization for undergraduate and graduate professors of youth ministry and others involved with the education of future youth ministers in colleges and seminaries (Lambert 1999, 37). The pillars of their cause are effective instruction, pioneering research, and integrating theory and practice (www.youthspecialties.com 2003). Their birth may be traced to groups of youth ministry professors who met annually at the North American Professors of Christian

Education (NAPCE) conferences throughout the 1980's and early 1990's (Cannister 2003, 1). In 1994 these professors organized the AYME conference prior to the NAPCE conference as a forum for youth ministry educators.

A second important action to buttress the profession of youth ministry resulted from the members of AYME. As they grew and expanded their influence in youth ministry they created the Journal of Youth Ministry (JYM), a biannual publication intended to promote and strengthen the field. JYM is the first professional journal for youth ministry intended for professors and others sharing youth ministry research. Although an Internet version existed for several years prior to its publication, the periodical officially began in the fall of 2002 with the first print edition (Lambert and Cannister 2002, 5).

Finally, recognizing a dearth of empirical research that informs the profession, an increasing number of youth ministers and educators are conducting research on youth ministry. Some of these studies focus on character education among youth workers (Rennick 2000), the role of the adult youth minister (Boran 1996), the impact of mentoring on youth ministers (Shelly 1996), the occupational socialization of youth ministers (Widstrom 1998), and factors influencing career changes among youth ministers (Grenz 2002). In addition to this research, Dan Lambert conducted a seminal study investigating future research needs in North American Christian youth ministry. His conclusions were based on responses from 86 youth ministry professors and experts in the field (Lambert 1999, 38). While most respondents suggested the need for research in areas involving youth, their families, and characteristics of successful ministry programs, there was strong support for research on the characteristics of effective

ministers. Specifically, there was a desire to see improved youth ministry education and research that investigates how students are prepared for the profession of youth ministry.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of youth ministry internships as a component of education for full time youth ministry. By investigating the evaluations of youth ministry interns this study sought to capture an image of field education as ministry training that occurs in the context of the church.

Delimitations of the Study

Several delimitations were imposed on this study for manageability and focus. This study was intentionally delimited to youth ministry interns from a specific religious fellowship in a specific geographic location. This study concerns interns training for ministry at schools in North America that are associated with Churches of Christ. While the larger culture of all youth ministry interns would produce an even broader scope, focusing the study in this way permits the understanding of ministry training occurring within this religious group.

The study was also delimited to those interns who are majoring in youth ministry at the seven largest Christian universities associated with Churches of Christ offering a bachelor's degree in youth ministry, or a degree in Bible with an emphasis in youth ministry. This delimitation was made in an attempt to connect with the most number of interns preparing for youth ministry in Churches of Christ. While some schools offer a Bible degree in youth ministry, others offer a degree in Bible with youth ministry as an emphasis. Interns pursuing both types of degree were considered for this

study because they each reflect an intention on the part of the student to enter youth ministry as a profession.

Finally, the study was delimited to juniors and seniors in college. The purpose for this delimitation was to reach the largest number of youth ministry interns planning to enter ministry. Freshmen and sophomores were not included because of the increased opportunity for these students to change majors before graduation. Graduate students were not included because many youth ministers enter ministry immediately after graduating with a bachelor's degree. Furthermore, many graduate students are older, having already served in ministry. This former ministry experience may have significantly altered responses to the inventory instrument.

Research Questions

To guide the evaluation of youth ministry internships as a form of field education and preparation for ministry the following research questions were investigated:

1. To what extent do youth ministry internships assist interns in the acquisition of knowledge relevant to youth ministry?
2. To what extent do youth ministry internships assist interns in the acquisition of skills relevant to youth ministry?
3. To what extent do youth ministry internships contribute to the spiritual development of interns?
4. In what ways does the supervisor influence the report of a positive or negative internship experience?
5. To what extent do youth ministry internships influence the vocational decisions of interns to enter or avoid youth ministry as a profession?

Terminology

The following terms and their definitions are offered to assist with clarification in the current study.

Christian university. A Christian university is any four-year liberal arts institution with multiple colleges whose heritage is linked to a religious fellowship and whose current mission reflects a strong commitment to religious values.

Churches of Christ. Churches of Christ are nondenominational churches that began in the American Restoration Movement of the early nineteenth century by men such as Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, and Barton Stone (Mead and Hill 1990, 91). The church's genesis was defined by reverence for the Bible and the pursuit of Christian unity while attempting to restore the New Testament church in every way, including patterns of worship and church organization (Allen 1993, 39). They have no headquarters, no governing bodies, and no creeds but cooperate voluntarily because of similarities in doctrine and practice. They celebrate weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, baptism of adults by immersion, and have traditionally chosen a cappella singing in worship. They believe in the priesthood of all believers and each local church is autonomously governed by elders and deacons. Because of the unique nature of the fellowship, membership figures are an approximation. Most estimate there are 1.27 million members in more than 13,000 churches (Lynn 2003, 17).

Curriculum. Curriculum is educational experience. It is educational because it includes any tool or instrument used in the process of education to bring about learning in the student. It is experiential because the events of life often function as a resource for education. From this understanding curriculum has been called the educational journey

throughout life (LeBar 1995, 241). It has also been called the activity of the student in all of life (Ford 1991, 34).

Experiential learning theory. Experiential learning theory is an educational perspective that accounts for the diverse experiences of students in various contexts as they acquire the ability to understand and manipulate content. In contrast to content-centered education it is student-centered and places value on the experiences of individuals moving along a path of learning.

Intern. For the purposes of this study the term intern will denote junior and senior college students serving under a supervisor in a church for the purpose of service and education in ministry (Cunningham 1982, 54).

Supervisor. An internship supervisor is any minister, elder, or church leader with the responsibilities of oversight, accountability, and support for the ministry intern. This individual's function is very similar to that of a teacher. The supervisor assists with the ministerial education of the student as he or she learns in the context of church ministry.

Youth minister. A youth minister is any full-time adult church employee with specific and primary ministerial responsibilities involving youth. Synonyms for the role of youth minister abound. For example, female youth workers are more likely than males to have a variation of the title youth director, or director of youth (Grenz 2002, 81). Other titles include youth pastor, pastor of youth, minister of youth, student minister, and student pastor. In this study the term youth minister will be given preference because of its extensive acceptance and use to define the adult religious leader of youth in Churches of Christ.

Youth ministry. "Youth ministry is the purposive, determined, and persistent quest by both natural and supernatural means to . . . share with adolescents God's message of good news" (Lamport 1996, 62). This occurs through a process of discipleship led by Christian adults. The aim of this interaction is for teens to form relationships with God and develop Christ-like maturity as they serve in the context of the church. Because the mission of youth ministry is synonymous with the mission of the church it cannot be relegated to simply an "appendage of the body" (Clark 2001, 61). It is the church being the church to those who are younger (Shelly 1996, 51). In this sense youth ministry is directed toward youth. It is also ministry conducted by youth. "Youth ministry is not about finding an extra place for yet another ministry, but about finding a place for youths within every ministry and among the people that the ministries are designed to reach and serve" (Nel 2001, 7). Incorporating adolescents into the ministries of the church is one method of ministry to them. It promotes Christ-likeness. "Teenagers grow toward mature Christian adulthood as they are connected to the total body of Christ, not isolated from it" (DeVries 1994, 43). Such an inclusive approach recognizes the significant role of young people in the life of the church family and prepares them for future works of service when they are older. "Youth ministry . . . socializes them into the Christian community, and encourages them to become involved in the church's mission in society" (Boran 1996, 4).

Youth ministry internships. Internships are laboratories of learning where ministry students enter an agreement to serve within the context of the church community while learning under the direction of a supervisor. Internships may occur during the school year or during the summer months and last from several weeks to one or more

years. There are numerous synonyms for the concept of internships. These include field experience, fieldwork, contextual education, cooperative education, cooperative learning, service learning, practicum, and ministry supervision (Sweitzer and King 1999, 3).

Procedural Overview

This research consisted of five phases. First, the precedent literature was consulted related to biblical discipleship, experiential learning theory, internships in higher education, and internships in youth ministry. The relevant literature is discussed in chapter two along with theological presuppositions and educational assumptions.

Second, in order to collect information in response to the five research questions, an inventory instrument was created. The instrument was produced in consultation with a panel of experts in the fields of youth ministry and ministry supervision, and was field-tested for reliability. Chapter three presents the specific methodological design that describes the creation of the instrument and the process of data collection.

The third stage involved data collection. The seven largest Christian universities associated with the Churches of Christ who offer a bachelor's degree in youth ministry were selected as the context for the population sample. Information was collected from students at these schools and the surveys were returned to the researcher.

The fourth stage of the research involved the analysis of data according to the five research questions. These findings are presented in chapter four along with an evaluation of the research design.

Finally, conclusions and applications were made from the data analysis. These are presented in chapter five along with recommendations for future research.

Research Assumptions

Several assumptions guided this research. First, interns who had recently completed a youth ministry internship would be able to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses by reflecting on their experiences. In addition, these former interns would be able to highlight the significant aspects of their internships that made them positive or negative educational experiences. Although they represent only one half of the intern-supervisor relationship, interns' perceptions are valid, revealing insights into the educational benefit of internships.

A second research assumption was that those students who are youth ministry majors are more likely than students with other majors to enter full time youth ministry upon graduation. Because the objective of this study was to analyze the educational experiences of those who are most likely to enter the field of youth ministry, current students preparing for ministry were selected.

Third, youth ministry majors attending schools associated with the Churches of Christ who work as interns in Churches of Christ are more likely than other students to seek employment as youth ministers in these churches. Because this research evaluates internships as a form of ministry education in a specific religious fellowship, both that fellowship and its schools were integral to the study.

Finally, it was assumed that opportunities to learn ministry related knowledge and skills, develop character, build relationships with mentors, and test vocational commitments are legitimate components of ministry preparation. While there are many factors that contribute to ministerial success, these five possess the potential to influence the education and training of future ministers.

Value of the Research

This research has value for several groups who participate in the internship process. Valuable time, resources, and energy could be more effectively spent with an understanding of what schools, churches, and supervising ministers can do to create effective experiences, relationships, and training for students through internships.

First, this study informs youth ministry professors and Christian universities of the perceived education students receive from internships in churches. Those schools that require an internship as part of their curriculum are trusting the churches in general and ministers in particular with the responsibility of joining the academy in the education of future ministers. Likewise, the churches trust the academy to fulfill their obligation to train and prepare ministers. In one sense, this study has the potential to improve the communication and relationship between schools and the churches working with them as they both endeavor to prepare future ministers.

A secondary benefit to the universities is the information gleaned concerning current youth ministers and their ability to supervise interns. This research could help professors improve the cycle of education as they teach their students. The students who sit in ministry classes today may eventually become teachers of ministry as they supervisor interns in the future. There is an opportunity to teach them as students what it means to serve as a supervisor in ministry.

The research is also beneficial to churches and the ministers who serve them by revealing the conditions under which interns report positive and negative experiences. This study concerns what students are learning under the supervision of churches and their ministers. Such information could assist current ministers in the refinement of

supervision practices and mitigate those actions that contribute to a negative educational experience.

Finally, the research is beneficial to future interns. By describing the experiences of former interns, this study offers an image to help form expectations. This study serves as a guide that prepares students for the experiential learning of internships.

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENT LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter was to engage the theological precedents for the practice of discipleship and present the educational theories relevant to ministry internships. For this reason, specific elements of biblical discipleship, experiential learning theory, internships in higher education, and internships in youth ministry were addressed. The chapter concludes with a profile of the current study.

Biblical Discipleship

The history of discipleship extends back farther than Jesus' command to "go and make disciples" (Matt 29:19, 20), although his methods exemplify the core values of the process. The reproduction of leaders through discipleship finds precedent in the long history of God's people. Successors to great leaders in the Bible were often strong leaders themselves because of their experiences while learning from their teachers. Specifically, the relationships between five pairs of leaders will be discussed. Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus and Peter, Barnabas and Saul, and Paul and Timothy each illustrate the components of discipleship for the purpose of producing leaders and ministers of God's people. First, these leaders carefully chose disciples who possessed the Spirit of God. Second, the disciples were trained for specific roles of leadership. Third, teachers nurtured their disciples with encouragement and love. Finally, the disciples set out as leaders, imitating their teachers' behavior.

Character: Disciples Possessed the Spirit of God

The biblical disciples who became great leaders were chosen by their teachers under the direction of God (Deut 31:14; 1 Kgs 19:16; Matt 4:18; Acts 11:25, 26; 16:1-3). These men were intentionally elected as receptive vessels for God's Spirit, which they possessed either before their call to discipleship or upon their confirmation as they were commissioned for God's work. The presence of the Spirit in their lives signaled the conversion of identity that occurs in discipleship. "To be a disciple means . . . to undergo a transformation of character" (Bennett 1995, 14). A life of character for biblical disciples meant a life monopolized by the presence of God's Spirit (Gal 5:22, 23).

Moses and Joshua

The first mention of Joshua in the Bible places him in command of the army of Israel against the Amalekites (Exod 17:9). In spite of being young (Exod 33:11), Moses' aide was one of the twelve leaders chosen to explore the land of Canaan (Num 13:6). After returning from the exploration, Joshua stood with Caleb on the conviction to trust in God despite being outnumbered by those of the community who sought to stone them (Num 14:10). God then confirmed Joshua, along with Caleb, as the two who would enter the promised land (Num 14:30).

After years had passed, Moses began to prepare for and pray for another leader, asking God to ensure that the people would not be like sheep without a shepherd (Num 27:15). It was fitting that one who had established himself in battle (Exod 17:13), traveled with Moses up Mount Sinai (Exod 24:13), stood near Moses as he talked with God (Exod 33:11), and possessed the Spirit (Num 27:18), would be selected by God to succeed Moses. As God instructed, Moses commissioned Joshua by laying his hands on

him before Eleazar the priest and the entire Israelite assembly (Num 27:18-23), imbuing him with the same authority Moses possessed. When this occurred, Joshua was filled with the Spirit of wisdom to lead God's people (Deut 34:9).

Elijah and Elisha

Like Moses, Elijah's role in the selection of his successor was significantly directed by God's instruction. While on Mount Horeb, Elijah experienced God in a gentle whisper and was instructed to anoint Elisha as the prophet to follow him (1 Kgs 19:16). Elijah placed his cloak around this new disciple who set out to become his attendant (1 Kgs 19:21). The same Spirit that worked through Elijah flowed through his assistant. Before Elijah left his disciple on the banks of the Jordan, Elisha requested he be given a "double portion" of his teacher's Spirit (2 Kgs 2:9). The disciples' request was granted and confirmed by the prophets who witnessed Elijah's ascension in a fiery chariot. These witnessing prophets proclaimed, "The Spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha" (2 Kgs 2:15).

Jesus and Peter

Peter's invitation to discipleship, like Elisha's, was the beginning of his relationship with his teacher. Jesus first met Peter and Andrew while walking along the Sea of Galilee and offered, "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt 4:18; Mark 1:16, 17). They accepted the invitation and served with the Spirit of God as their counselor (Matt 10:20). Like Elisha, Peter and the other disciples also received more of the Spirit once their teacher had departed. He and the apostles were told to remain in Jerusalem until they were "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49;

Acts 1:4). This was accomplished before the thousands gathered at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on them as tongues of fire (Acts 2:3, 4).

Barnabas and Paul

Barnabas was a man of courage who welcomed Saul into the family of God when many doubted the authenticity of his conversion (Acts 9:27). Barnabas believed the testimony that Ananias had placed his hands on Saul to restore his sight and fill him with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17). Traveling from Antioch to Tarsus, Barnabas found Saul and recruited him to become his disciple (Acts 11:25). They spent a year in Antioch teaching together (Acts 11:26) until they were sent off by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel in Cyprus (Acts 13:2-4). It is important to note that Saul's name is not changed in Acts until chapter 13 when, filled with the Holy Spirit, he takes the lead in condemning Elymas the sorcerer for opposing his preaching (Acts 13:9).

Paul and Timothy

After his year of discipleship under Barnabas at Antioch and subsequent travels, Paul met a young man from Lystra named Timothy who was highly regarded among the Christians. "The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him" (Acts 16:2). Paul had already parted with Barnabas to travel with Silas but invited Timothy to join his team (Acts 16:1-3). Timothy learned under Paul until he, too, was sent off on a team to share the good news (Acts 19:22). Timothy's charge to do the work of ministry was led by Paul and a group of elders who all placed their hands on Timothy (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). As he set out to work in the church he was reminded through Paul's letters that God's powerful Spirit of love and self-discipline worked inside him (2 Tim 1:7).

In each of these cases the disciples possessed something divine that assisted in their education. These disciples were granted the Spirit of God as they learned from their teachers. Part of this education involved training for specific roles of service.

Knowledge: Disciples Trained for Specific Roles

After choosing individuals who had demonstrated a spiritual capacity for the specific position they would fill, biblical teachers offered opportunities for their disciples to acquire the knowledge the teachers possessed. Successful disciples garnered the teachings of their instructors because they possessed a hunger for knowledge that made them teachable (Coppedge 1989, 54). This desire to learn translated into knowledge of specific competencies necessary to continue in their various arenas of leadership.

Joshua

Joshua trained as a disciple through opportunities such as leading an army in battle (Exod 17:9-16), and doing covert reconnaissance (Num 13:1-16). These experiences contributed to his preparation for service as a military leader. In addition to this role, and perhaps more importantly, Joshua was also trained to be a religious leader (Nogalski 1998, 430). As Moses depended on God for victory over Egypt (Exod 6:1-8), and sustenance in the desert (Exod 16:1-5), Joshua understood that his success in leadership was dependent on his obedience to God (Josh 1:6-9; 6:2-5; 7:10-12; 9:14). This dependency was undoubtedly learned from hours spent outside the Tent of Meeting long after Moses had departed from his conversations with God (Exod 33:11).

Elisha

As Joshua was trained to be a military and spiritual leader for the nation of

Israel, Elijah enlisted Elisha as a disciple that would become a prophet for Israel. Elisha's actions of burning his plow and slaughtering his yoke of oxen (1 Kgs 19:21) signaled the end of his former profession, as he became Elijah's attendant. He then was able to learn from his teacher about the ways of a prophet. He learned as Elijah received instructions from God (1 Kgs 21:17; 2 Kgs 1:3), spoke for God to the people (2 Kgs 1:6), condemned those who were sinful (1 Kgs 21:20, 21), and struck down those with evil intentions (2 Kgs 1:10, 12). When Elisha set out to lead on his own he faced similar circumstances for which he was well prepared (2 Kgs 7:1; 2 Kgs 7:2; 2 Kgs 2:23-25).

Peter

Peter was also equipped by his teacher to serve in a unique way. He was not only one of twelve apostles set apart as preachers and witnesses, Peter was one of three disciples in an intimate relationship with Jesus who were permitted to join Jesus at his transfiguration (Matt 17:1; Mark 9:2), at the resurrection of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:51), and the prayer of Jesus in the garden before his crucifixion (Matt 26:36-46). Peter heard Jesus' sermons, asked questions when he didn't understand (Matt 15:15; John 13:36; John 13:24), and sought insight into spiritual truths like forgiveness (Matt 18:21, 22), and the eternal reward (Matt 19:27). He is representative of all the disciples because his education for ministry reflects the victories and failures disciples experience while attempting to become like their teachers (Webster 2001, 83).

Paul

Barnabas worked closely with Paul to prepare an evangelistic disciple. This training began when Paul joined Barnabas in teaching for a year in Antioch (Acts 11:25,

26). During this time they also served together by carrying a gift from Antioch to the believers in Judea suffering from a famine (Acts 11:27-30). Their qualifications for this role may have been Barnabas' generosity to those in need (Acts 4:34-37) and Paul's compassion for the poor (Acts 24:17; Gal 2:10). Later, in Lystra, the citizens misidentified Barnabas and Paul as the Greek gods Zeus and Hermes (Acts 14:12). This undoubtedly equipped Paul with an appropriate response on the island of Malta where Paul once again was labeled a god (Acts 28:6). Through these formidable training events Paul gained experiences that contributed to his identity, education, and preparation for future ministry. Finally, Barnabas was training more than a recent convert, or a missionary, he was mentoring an apostle. Both Barnabas and Paul were considered apostles (Acts 14:14; 1 Cor 9:5, 6), which may imply Barnabas, like Paul, was personally commissioned by Jesus (Bauckham 1979, 62).

Timothy

Imitating the work of his predecessor, Paul worked with his disciple Timothy to fashion a ministry disciple. This was accomplished through their service together. After joining Paul and Silas on their mission team, Timothy witnessed Paul devote himself to preaching and testifying about Jesus (Acts 18:5). He knew well from the life of his teacher what was meant by Paul's instruction to "Preach the Word" (2 Tim 4:2; 1 Tim 4:13). Timothy's training also included serving as Paul's personal emissary (Sanders 1981, 356). In this role Timothy was a co-writer with Paul (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; Phil 1), he demonstrated Paul's living to others (1 Cor 4:17), and brought reports to Paul about the churches (1 Thess 3:1-6; Phil 2:19). In many respects, Timothy gained knowledge about ministry because of what he learned from his teacher.

Relationships: Disciples and Teachers Loved Each Other

Another biblical characteristic of discipleship is the loving commitment to, and encouragement of, disciples on the part of teachers who shared uniquely personal relationships with their disciples (Donnelly 1998, 11). Biblical teachers extended verbal affirmation to the disciples they loved, and encouraged them, seeking for their disciples a successful future when they would venture out to lead on their own.

Moses and Joshua

Joshua shared a special relationship with his teacher from the beginning days of his discipleship until Moses' death. Joshua stood beside Moses in war (Exod 17:9), revolt (Num 14:10), prayer (Exod 33:11), and even rebuke from his teacher (Num 11:28, 29). But Moses also strengthened his disciple. On two occasions God actually commanded Moses to encourage Joshua because of the daunting task before him (Deut 1:38; 3:28). These instructions were matched by encouragement from God himself, perpetually reminding Joshua to be "strong and courageous" (Deut 31:23; Josh 1:6,7,9).

Elijah and Elisha

Before his ascension into heaven, Elijah paused to encourage Elisha with a tender of assistance. He offered, "What can I do for you before I am taken from you?" (2 Kgs 2:9). This concern for the benefit of his disciple in his absence communicated the humble, servant spirit with which Elijah discipled his friend. By granting his request, Elijah further demonstrated his love. Elisha displayed it as well. While watching his teacher being snatched away Elisha exclaimed, "My father! My father!" (2 Kgs 2:12) in expression of the love he felt for his teacher.

Jesus and Peter

Jesus and Peter shared an intimate friendship that weathered many trials (Donnelly 1998, 20). Peter rebuked Jesus (Matt 16:22), resisted being washed by him (John 13:8), complained about Jesus' plans (John 13:27), doubted as he walked toward Jesus on the water (Matt 14:29-31), arrogantly boasted of his dedication to Jesus (Matt 26:33-35; Luke 22:33) and then denied knowing him (Luke 22:54-62). In spite of these things Jesus affirmed Peter for proclaiming that he was the Christ, the son of the living God (Matt 16:16). Jesus then gave him a special blessing because of the confession (Matt 16:17-19).

Peter's relationship with Jesus was not only strong enough to withstand Peter's impetuous actions (Lockyer 1958, 273), it was strong enough to endure the difficult teachings of Jesus. These teachings resulted in many disciples turning away (John 6:60-66). When this occurred Jesus asked the Twelve about their intentions to stay or leave him. Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" (John 6:68). His commitment to his teacher seemed unwavering until the night of Peter's three-fold denial. Even then the teacher loved his disciple (John 15:13). In an act of divine love and grace Jesus offered Peter the opportunity to confess his love in response (John 21:15-17). After each expression of Peter's love Jesus responded with the instruction to continue the work he was called to do. Jesus concluded this reaffirmation with the same encouraging invitation that began his relationship with this disciple in the words, "Follow me" (John 21:19).

Barnabas and Paul

Joseph was a generous Levite from Cyprus whose kind reputation spread among the early Christians (Acts 4:37). It was fitting that the one the apostles named

Barnabas, meaning "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36), would be among the first to strengthen the infamous persecutor of Christians in his new work (Acts 9:26, 27). This required a great amount of love for Barnabas to reach out in vulnerability to Saul, the one who had destroyed the lives of so many Christians (Coppedge 1989, 144).

Paul and Timothy

Paul's relationship with Timothy was characterized by parental love and encouragement. On several occasions the young disciple was affirmed as a dear son loved by his father (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2; Phil 2:22). In addition, Timothy was reminded to live a life of boldness beyond the meager number of years he had lived (1 Tim 4:12; 2 Tim 1:7) as Paul liberally showered his disciple with support. While imprisoned, Paul also urged Timothy to come visit him before winter (2 Tim 4:21). This may reflect Paul's desire to be comforted by his good friend (Jeffreys 1995, 27).

Without the loving foundation of these biblical relationships, disciples would have simply been students. Instead, these teachers became models of loving support and encouragement for their disciples and formed relationships that reached beyond what is traditionally called education. These teachers empowered their learners through their relationships so that the learners could venture out on their own to teach and lead.

Skills: Disciples Imitated Their Teachers' Actions

After being chosen, trained, and loved, biblical disciples set out to independently lead by imitating the examples of their teachers. The words of Jesus, the master teacher, reveal the intended product of true discipleship. Preparing his followers

to lead, Jesus washed their feet and directed, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15).

Joshua

Because Joshua, like Moses before him, was both a military and religious leader his dependence on God emerged in his leadership. After receiving confirmation that God was giving Israel the land of Canaan (Josh 1:1-5), Joshua went on to imitate Moses by sending out spies to explore the land before crossing the Jordan (Josh 2:1). Joshua also turned away God's wrath from the people (Josh 7:25-26), as Moses had done before him (Exod 32:11-14). He called on God to use nature as a weapon against his enemies (Josh 10:12, 13) as God had used Moses to send the plagues on Egypt (Exod 7-10). Finally, as Moses prepared for his death by declaring the need for the people to choose between blessings and curses (Deut 30:19-20), Joshua prepared for his death by demanding the people make a choice between the gods of their enemies and the Lord (Josh 24:14, 15).

Elisha

Because Elisha possessed a "double portion" of his teacher's spirit (2 Kgs 2:9), some believe he was able to perform twice as many miracles as Elijah (Levine 1999, 25; Lockyer 1958, 106). In many ways these miracles reflected the actions of Elisha's predecessor. Elijah caused a widow's flour and oil to not deplete (1 Kgs 17:14), while Elisha caused a widow's oil to multiply (2 Kgs 4:1-7). Elijah prophesied that it would not rain for several years (1 Kgs 17:1), while Elisha caused a valley to flood without water falling from the sky (2 Kgs 3:16-20). Other similarities are seen in the events

surrounding two boys' deaths. In response, each prophet called on God in prayer and stretched themselves out on top of the dead body to revive it (1 Kgs 17:21; 2 Kgs 4:34). Finally, it was Elijah who first struck the waters of the Jordan with his cloak in order to cross over on dry ground (2 Kgs 2:8). Elisha later took the cloak of his departed friend and struck the waters producing the same result (2 Kgs 2:14). In many ways the teacher's life was evident in the actions of the disciple who excelled at the imitation of his instructor.

Peter

Jesus and Peter shared a unique discipleship relationship full of disappointments and successes. During the course of the defeats and denials, Peter was learning to imitate his teacher. He walked on water (Matt 14:29), healed the sick (Acts 9:34), preached (Acts 2:14-40), and raised the dead (Acts 9:40) as Jesus had done before him. A striking similarity is found between Jesus' healing of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8) and Peter's healing of Tabitha (Acts 9). They were both urged to enter the home but sent people out of the room (Luke 8:41, 51; Acts 9:38, 40). They each took the deceased by the hand and instructed them to get up (Luke 8:54; Acts 9:40). Their actions diverge only as Peter knelt to pray, connecting with the source of power to heal before performing this miracle (Acts 9:40). Clearly, Peter imitated the example of healing learned from his teacher, Jesus.

Paul

Before Paul became active in mission work Barnabas was being sent as an envoy to encourage other churches (Acts 11:22). These two men were not only sent off

together (Acts 13:2), they each provided for themselves financially so that they were self-supported missionaries (1 Cor 9:6). Eventually they selected other coworkers and served independently (Acts 15:39,40). What Barnabas first began by bringing a great number of people to the Lord as a leader of the mission to the Gentiles (Acts 11:24), Paul imitated, and continued beyond the work of his predecessor as the "apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom 11:13; Gal 2:8).

Timothy

Timothy's life reflects Paul's in many ways. At one point Timothy was matched with Erastus as Paul had been matched with Barnabas and sent out to share the gospel (Acts 19:22). Furthermore, Timothy was commended to the church in Corinth as one who was imitating Paul in doing "the work of the Lord" (1 Cor 16:10). This young disciple later worked among the churches in close cooperation with elders as Paul had done in Ephesus (Acts 20:17-38). "Timothy, the quintessential disciple, the end result of modeling and mentoring . . . provides a brilliant example of how leadership is learned behavior" (Gangel 1992, 28). Whatever he learned from Paul he put into practice as Paul instructed the Philippians to do (Phil 4:9).

Biblical relationships provide many insights into the nature of teaching and learning in the context of discipleship. Disciples were chosen, trained, loved, and taught to imitate their teachers. Their character was defined by the presence of the Holy Spirit within them, they grew in knowledge of specific roles, they formed solid relationships with their teachers, and they learned skills of imitation as they put into practice what they witnessed in their educators.

The Contexts of Biblical Discipleship

Biblical discipleship involved several components: the existence and development of character through the Spirit, the loving relationship between teachers and disciples, specific knowledge pertinent to the roles disciples would fill, and the eventual departure of the teacher so the disciple could continue the work of the teacher through imitation. Biblical teachers developed their disciples in these ways while doing the work that their apprentices would one day assume. The disciples, therefore, were educated while traversing the various paths of life with their teachers. Jesus adeptly modeled this art of peripatetic teaching by offering training and instruction for his disciples in almost every environment of human interaction. He taught them in synagogues (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 12:9-14; 13:54), on mountainsides (Matt 5:1, 2; 15:29-39; 17:1-13; 24:3-51; 28:16-20), in homes (Matt 9:10-13; 9:23-26; 9:28-31; 13:36; 26:6-13; 26:20-30), in fields (Matt 12:1-8), outside tombs (Matt 28:8-10; John 11:17-27; 20:10-18), in cities (Matt 11:1; 17:24-27) beside roads (Matt 20:29-34; 21:18-22), on a lake (Matt 8:26; 13:1-9; 14:25-33), and at the temple (Matt 21:12-17; 21:23-27; 24:1-2). It was appropriate for the teacher who sent his disciples to be witnesses in "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) to train them for every setting they would encounter.

Discipleship exemplifies an effective context from which to assist others in learning. This learning context is characterized not only by a strong relationship between teachers and learners, but also by the relationship learners have with their environments. It was the realization that multiple settings influenced and often improved learning that gave rise to theories of experiential learning.

Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential learning theory is an educational perspective that accounts for the diverse experiences of students in various contexts as they acquire the ability to understand and manipulate content. In contrast to the content-centered education of many schools it is student-centered and places value on the experiences of individuals as they travel the path of learning.

Influential Proponents of Experiential Learning

Many educators have proposed the use of experiential learning. These individuals have articulated the rationale and the purpose for this form of learning in their work. Although the relationship between Christian education and experiential learning will be discussed later, the influence of Herbert Spencer, John Dewey, and David Kolb is discussed here.

Herbert Spencer

Herbert Spencer was an educational theorist of the mid-nineteenth century who was known for his ability to synthesize the ideas of others according to the guiding principles of evolutionary theory (Tomlinson 1996, 235). His devotion to evolutionary beliefs significantly influenced his educational theories. In the first chapter of his book, *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical*, he asked the question, "What knowledge is of most worth?" (Spencer 1909, 1). To Spencer, this was the core question of education. It has continued to surface as a central question of educational philosophy (Knight 1989, 202; Broudy 1981, 574). In his naturalistic, and humanistic form Spencer concluded that the most important types of knowledge can be listed in a hierarchy of value, which should

reflect the attention given to each in the educational curriculum. The most important knowledge concerns those actions that are related to self-preservation, then actions supporting self-preservation, followed by actions of child rearing, then actions pertaining to social and political relationships, and finally, those actions comprising the leisure part of life (Spencer 1909, 18). Education following these principles, he believed, would more accurately reflect and apply to the experiences of adults in society.

Spencer also believed that as knowledge should be useful for experience, the experiences of life assisted in new knowledge. Considering the ways humans developed, Spencer claimed children's early experiences formed the basis for their future learning (Spencer 1909, 78). This empirical knowledge was the foundation that permitted children to conceive things rationally.

> What was once thought mere purposeless action, or play, or mischief, as the case might be, is now recognized as the process of acquiring a knowledge on which all after-knowledge is based . . . . Without an accurate acquaintance with the visible and tangible properties of things, our conceptions must be erroneous, our inferences fallacious, and our operations unsuccessful. (Spencer 1909, 105)

Spencer believed the knowledge of understanding that emanates from simple concrete experiences precedes the knowledge that emerges from complex and abstract conceptions. Experience, he claimed, was for children the paramount precursor to other learning.

John Dewey

John Dewey was a major twentieth century proponent of experiential learning and a strong voice for renewal in education. His progressive education stood in contrast to the traditional approach of classroom learning. Progressive education was marked by an emphasis on individualized, hands-on learning that rejected any emphasis on

knowledge as an end of education (Dewey 1938, 23). In contrast, the traditional approach to classroom learning emphasized the verbal communication of information by teachers and its internalization by students along with textbooks and testing (Dewey 1938, 18). Promoting progressive education, Dewey proposed that transformation occurred on the inside of students through dynamic discovery instead of through the static imposition of outside knowledge guided by the knowledgeable. The traditional approach sought to gather masses of information from the past to learn for some future responsibility while the progressive approach sought to glean every ounce of meaning from the present. This radical departure from traditional education garnered many opponents. The most vocal opponents of experiential education were generally suspicious of learning environments outside the classroom, more individual student contact, the use of small group or collaborative learning, and the appearance that less content was covered (Hickcox 2002, 125).

The debate over philosophies of education continues today. Recently it has been suggested that there is room in education for the best parts of both the traditional and progressive approaches (Ackerman 2003, 6). To claim that one philosophy is greater than the other unfairly places them against each other when both offer valuable methodologies to education (Hirsch 1997, 42). Dewey was slightly more emphatic about his perspective. He believed that American education needed a transformation through increased emphasis on experiential learning, despite its limitations.

While Dewey proposed that experience should be a major component of education he did not believe it was a panacea for the symptoms of the traditional approach. In contrast, he believed that it was possible for some experiences to hinder

rather than aid learning. "The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated with each other. For some experiences are mis-educative" (Dewey 1938, 25). Only those experiences that promote reflective thought and future learning are valued. Reflective thought, or critical reflection, is the action of questioning personal assumptions and practices (Brookfield 1995, 8). It is the testing of assumptions and practices after experience that results in learning. Experience cannot be depended as a sole purveyor of truth because "many people learn nothing from experience. They simply plow ahead, committing the same mistakes again and again. Experience is only a good teacher when one reflects deeply upon her experience and projects her learning onto her future experiences" (Shawchuch and Heuser 1996, 19). Failure to reflect on experience is failure to seize an opportunity for growth. Without reflection, lasting change is not likely to occur.

David Kolb

David Kolb drew from this concept of experience and reflection in Dewey's work and suggested a four-step cycle of learning that accounted for experience (Kolb 1984, 42). It explains the ways individuals gather and process information to make meaning and learn from experiences (Atkinson and Murrell 1988, 375).

Kolb's process begins through some form of concrete experience, or doing, as individuals focus on their environment (Figure 1). Without any additional thought this action is simply experience and devoid of any educational value. It becomes meaningful when there is reflective observation on that experience. This stage is marked by a

consideration of assumptions and explanations that emerge from thoughts applied to the former action.

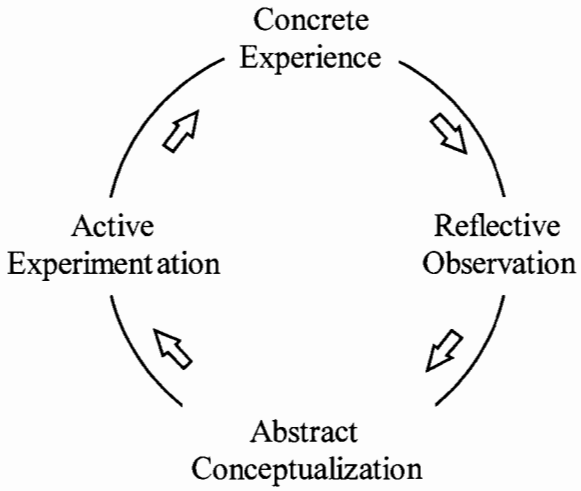

Figure 1. Kolb's learning cycle

From this reflection one may proceed to abstract conceptualization, or the imagination and construction of new possibilities or applications based on experience and reflection. In order for this to be accomplished there must be analysis of experience by deriving principles or creating generalizations from what has occurred (Washbourn 1996, 12). These broad observations are then examined in active experimentation. This final stage of experiential learning follows as the individual tests the structural stability of new theories and concepts. In this way, experiences are integrated into the learning process.

The four stages of experiential learning theory are also used to describe four learning style preferences (Heffler 2001, 307). Those learning best through concrete experience generally have a preference for feeling. Reflective observation represents those who have a preference for watching. The abstract conceptualization stage reflects

thinking as a primary tool of learning. Finally, active experimentation represents learning by doing. As with most learning style inventories, individuals may possess multiple preferences that are not descriptive of one single method of learning. Kolb's learning cycle and the associated experiential learning style preferences contribute to the theory of experiential learning by documenting the ways individuals make sense of their experiences. The learning cycle in particular illustrates the basic principles of experiential learning and its emphasis on the relationship between knowledge and the environment.

Conceptual Foundations of Experiential Learning

Experiential learning theory is based on the foundation of several principles that distinguish it from other approaches to education (Caffarella and Barnett 1994, 35). These concepts emphasize the role of the learner in the construction of knowledge and meaning from intentional reflection on experience. The principles are experiential knowledge, reflective practice, constructivist learning, and situated cognition.

Experiential Knowledge

Knowledge is not only that which is disseminated in classrooms by teachers to passive recipients aligned in rows. Such a definition of knowledge is theoretical and conceptual. It is complemented by another type of knowing called empirical knowledge. This knowledge grows out of both educational research and experiential truth that is understood by reflection on practice (Weimer 2001, 45). This experiential knowledge depends on learners to critically evaluate events in their lives so that what has occurred informs future actions. This is the foundation of reflective practice.

Reflective Practice

A second foundational principle of experiential learning theory is reflective practice. Learning that is disciplined in self-assessment and review of experience contributes to improved practice. Critical reflection, critical thinking, challenging assumptions, and evaluating presuppositions are all components of reflecting on actions. As "metacognition" is thinking about thinking, reflective practice is thinking about doing. The assumption behind this activity is that continual monitoring of one's actions leads to greater effectiveness (Davis, Sumara, and Luce-Kapler 2000, 24).

Constructivist Learning

As learners reflect on experiences they participate in the creation of knowledge and understanding. This construction of knowledge, also called constructivism, results from the application of prior knowledge as individuals attempt to form meaning from new information (Jackson and MacIsaac 1994, 22). Constructivism suggests humans are interactive in relation to their environment and that learning is the development of generalized insights that guide behavior. It is a purposeful and creative activity that is reflected in knowledge, skill, attitude, value or commitment change (Bigge and Shermis 1999, 88). Constructivists believe it is possible for a student to experience learning without changed behavior as it is possible for a change in behavior to occur without learning.

The developmental psychologist Jean Piaget recognized two adaptive cognitive actions that facilitate the progression of children through the developmental stages of cognitive ability (Piaget 1971, 6). These adaptive processes reflect the effect of the environment and experience on knowledge construction. First, assimilation occurs as

information is collected from the environment and made compatible with existing cognitive frameworks. Individuals continually interpret external conditions based on previously formed methods of thinking. The second adaptive action is accommodation. This occurs as individuals alter their cognitive understandings in order to make them congruent with the reality of the environment. Both assimilation and accommodation are attempts to make sense of experiences through the reconstruction of existing methods of cognition (Muuss 1996, 147). At the heart of constructivist learning is the attempt to negotiate meaning from life experiences, which assimilation and accommodation make possible.

It is important to note that to endorse a constructivist view of some knowledge forms does not by necessity imply a rejection of absolutes (Livermore 2002, 96). It is possible to embrace constructivism as one form of learning while maintaining belief in objective truth. The existence of truth is something entirely different from understanding that truth. Understandings may vary in assorted contexts and among disparate groups while truth is unchanged. In one sense constructivism describes the meanings and personal understandings attributed to, although not necessarily descriptive of, truth.

Situated Cognition

Because learning is an amalgam of the student, the subject, and the setting it is often beneficial to create learning experiences that are situated as closely as possible to the context in which learning will be applied. Education is augmented when aspects of the learning context, including the nature of tasks and the physical environment, parallel the anticipated circumstances of future performance (Caffarella and Barnett 1994, 36). Kolb has labeled these affectively complex learning environments

> in which the emphasis is on experiencing what it is actually like to be a professional in the field under study. Learners are engaged in activities that simulate or mirror what they would do as graduates, or they are encouraged to reflect upon an experience to generate these insights and feelings. (Kolb 1984, 198)

In this way the transfer of learning to similar settings is enhanced. Therefore, the context of experiential learning is not limited to the classroom. Instead, field-based experiences, internships, apprenticeships, practicum, and on-the-job training all provide an environment conducive to experiential learning.

Experiential Learning and Christian Education

Christian educators have also embraced the importance of the "mode of knowing that is relational, experiential, and active" (Groome 1980, 146). For example, Habermas and Issler have challenged the fallacy that a single instructional methodology is sufficient. "Too often we assume that the exclusive instructional purpose is to impart new information. Therefore, we're convinced the best method is lecturing" (Habermas and Issler 1992, 146). When education is reduced to the communication of information students are likely to gain understanding, but they may miss the components of education that influence morality and practical skills. If the purpose of education extends beyond comprehension to include the acquisition of convictions and competence in ministry, it is logical to conclude there may be other instructional methods that facilitate the achievement of these objectives. Learning from experience is one such method.

Recognizing the importance of experiential learning to Christian education, some educators have urged teachers to implement this approach. They believe it is the responsibility of the teacher to "control and shape all the variables which are known to exert a significant influence on the acquisition of learning outcomes – pedagogical

strategy, materials, curriculum, socio-emotional climate, institutional setting, and environmental variables that interact to cause learning" (Lee 1992, 323). Teachers can draw from copious contexts to promote student learning. The scope of potential learning environments includes the life of the individual, the classroom, family, congregation, neighborhood, nation, and the world (Everist 2002, 70). Interacting with anything in any location can be an educative experience. This recognition is not without the caveat that "experience is a hard teacher, for she gives the test first, the lesson afterward" (LeBar 1992, 378). Teachers can help students learn the lessons of experience when students need assistance, or have not become skilled at reflection.

Thomas Groome offers one approach for Christian teachers that follows the pattern of experiential teaching and learning Jesus employed with the disciples on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection (Groom 1980, 136). Jesus encountered the two men and entered into dialogue with them by inviting them to retell their recent experiences. Once their story was told Jesus focused their attention on the larger story that began prior to their experiences but included what they had seen (Luke 24:25-27). Part of this explanation was a vision that extended forward past their story. This vision helped connect the disciples' experiences to the larger story of God's activity, although they still did not realize it. Finally, through continued time together, at a meal, the disciples discovered what Jesus was revealing to them all along (Luke 24:30, 31). Jesus masterfully unfolded the complex mystery of his identity in a way that allowed his disciples to discover the truth rather than simply hear it. By teaching in this way Jesus honored the experiences of his students but helped them understand those experiences in

meaningful ways. He also helped them assimilate reflections on experiences and reflections on their prior learning. Together, these resulted in learning from experience.

Spiritual Implications of Experiential Learning

The implications of experiential learning for spiritual development and morality are staggering. The Hebrews writer reprimanded his readers who were "slow to learn" (Heb 5:11) because they did not put into practice what they already knew. This lack of practice resulted in an immature faith. The writer said, "Though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food . . . . But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" (Heb 5:12, 14). The continual application of knowledge in the experiences of life results in new learning that produces righteousness and the wisdom to discern between good and evil. In one sense, the Hebrews writer is reminding his readers that there is learning that comes from life's experiences. This is one component of spiritual formation and education toward maturity in Christ.

Experiential Learning and Curriculum

The nature of curriculum is significant to any discussion of education but of primary importance to education that occurs in the context of a relationship instead of a classroom. In a classroom, curriculum may be defined as books, lectures, projects or assignments that assist the teacher in covering a scope of educational content. A broader definition of curriculum may be applied to internships and other experiential learning activities. In one sense, curriculum is any tool or instrument used in the process of

education to bring about learning in the student. This expanded view of curriculum has led some to suggest that curriculum is the course traveled by anyone on an educational journey throughout life (LeBar 1995, 241). The course of life provides content in forms such as information, imagination, experiences, and relationships. In every aspect of living there is opportunity to learn. Therefore, curriculum has also been called the activity of the student in all of life's experiences (Ford 1991, 34).

God's instructions for learning the Law illustrate this concept well. He combined the content of the Law with the experiences of life in his instruction to impress the commandments on the hearts of the people by reading, touching, and discussing them throughout every part of daily living (Deut 6:4-9). Israel was told to experience the curriculum of relationship with God as a lifestyle rather than as a compartmentalized component of their education. Through this command God offered instruction on the definition of education. It is a process that occurs through a relationship among educational content, individuals, and their environments.

The invitation to discipleship that Jesus offered also echoes this principle. Jesus said to Simon and Andrew, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). This proposal to fishermen meant learning a new trade through an education that involved more than acquiring knowledge. The content to be acquired was communicated through relationships, both with people and with God, as the disciples followed Jesus. In a similar way, David extended the invitation to experience God by offering, "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8). This suggests that the curriculum for knowing God can be learned through experiences with God. Such

experiential learning combines information, learners, and the relationships that help them learn. These three components are central to a definition of education.

Components of Education

Robert Pazmiño defines education as content shared with persons in the context of their community and society (Pazmiño 1992, 10). The students, setting, and subject of learning form an educational trinity that contributes to a view of curriculum not just as content, but also as educational experience (Figure 2). Curriculum is in one sense educational because it entails the relationship between students and the subject in which individuals interact with content and knowledge. Curriculum is also experiential because of the relationship between students and the context of their learning, whether that occurs in a classroom or an internship. Because education may occur in multiple contexts, the structure of that learning is very diverse.

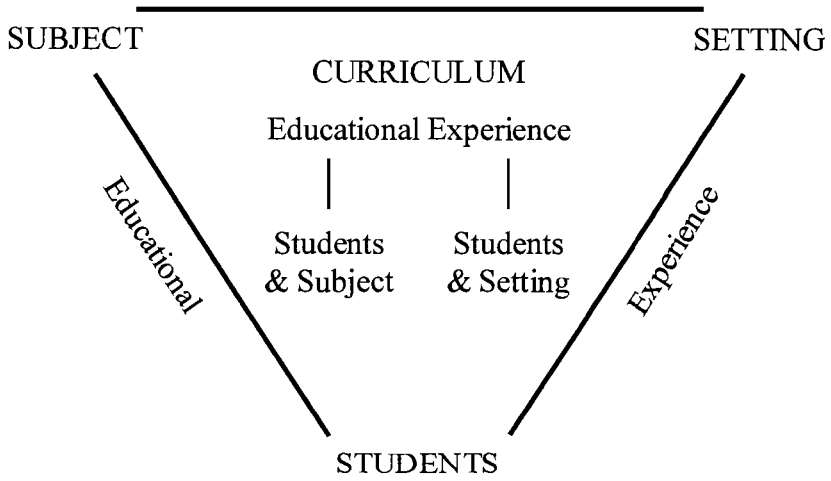

Figure 2. Curriculum as educational experience

Three types of education reflect the multiple contexts and teaching interactions in learning (Pazmiño 1992, 63). Formal education is centered on systemic methods of learning like that found in public schools. In this context it is possible for teachers to exercise power over students and dominate the learning experience by directing every aspect of learning. Nonformal education concerns organized activities for smaller groups outside the traditional educational context of classrooms. This is a form of shared experience under guidance. The role of the teacher, or facilitator, in this context is less controlling but offers guidance when necessary. Finally, informal education occurs as individuals glean meaning from various life experiences with or without a teacher. Each of these contributes to the education of the student, although formal education has typically received the greatest emphasis.

Internships are a form of work-based education that focus on nonformal and informal education. This education occurs through shared experiences under the guidance of a supervising mentor. The student intern and the occupational subject interact in the settings of the internship while the supervisor serves as the teacher who creates and responds to events that make up the curriculum of educational experiences.

Internships in Higher Education

Field-based experiences have existed in American higher education since the 1930s (Lewis and Williams 1994, 7). These opportunities began from the belief that students could glean an educational advantage by working with supervisors in the field of their majors. This belief continues today. In majors such as business, law, medicine, engineering, educational administration, financial planning and human services, specific objectives have been proposed that assist learners in their education. Most internships

reflect the attempt to pack as much experience as possible into the student's work program, as illustrated by the following description of the field experience component for criminal justice majors at the State University of New York:

> The public justice practicum course has many purposes. Its academic purpose is to provide an opportunity for students to add to their knowledge . . . and to relate theories they have learned in their courses to actual practice as they observe it in the field. In addition, the course serves the professional interests of the students by giving them the chance to try out an occupation of interest to them, learn the day-to-day requirements of the occupation in question, meet professionals in the field, and make contacts that may assist them in their subsequent job search. On a personal level, students acquire or refine job-readiness skills and seek an answer to the question: "Is this job really for me?" (Sgroi and Ryniker 2002, 191)

As this practicum description illustrates, there are several purposes for participating in field experiences. The literature on internships repeatedly highlights five aspects of field learning that serve to guide the experience. Internships contribute to the education of students by providing opportunities for assimilating school-related and work-related knowledge, improving skills, developing personal character, forming relationships with supervisors, and clarifying decisions about professional goals.

Among the biblical examples of discipleship, character emerged as the vital prerequisite to leadership and was therefore listed first. This was followed by knowledge competencies, the relationship with teachers, and finally, the skills required of the position. In contrast, the literature on internships in higher education places a greater emphasis on knowledge and skill acquisition. For this reason, the objectives of internships presented here reflect an order common to contemporary internships: knowledge, skills, personal character, the supervisor relationship, and finally, vocational discernment.

Knowledge

Most professions emphasize a strong knowledge component in their fieldwork programs. Internships are an opportunity to acquire insights from the profession in order to expand knowledge (Ryan and Cassidy 1996, 23; Rompelman and De Vries 2002, 174). This knowledge acquired from the experiences of fieldwork is a practitioner's knowledge gleaned from insights while on the job, or from interactions with supervisors.

Closely related to the objective of acquiring new knowledge is the emphasis internship programs place on helping students understand the relationship between their education at school and the activities of their profession (Luft and Vidoni 2002, 708; Markham and Lenz 2002, 76; Daugherty 2002, 109). One study of undergraduate criminal justice majors revealed that after their internship experiences they felt some dissonance between the theory of their classroom learning and the practice of the field (Ross and Elechi 2002, 308). These students' internships provided an opportunity for reflection on the relationship between theory and practice, a recurring theme among internship objectives (Sweitzer and King 1999, 4; Vocino and Wilson 2002, 35). By reflecting on their prior classroom learning in light of their current field experiences students were accomplishing more than critical thinking toward education, they were also facilitating the transition from student to employee. A transition of this type requires students to acquire a selection of job skills. This is a second objective of internships.

Skills

Practical professional skills are an important product of internships. Whether these are entry-level competencies (Gray 2001, 665) or advanced abilities (Ivey and Wampler 2000, 386), internships are expected to result in skill acquisition (Jones 2002,

127; Ross and Elechi 2002, 298; Rompelman and De Vries 2002, 174). To this end, an integral feature of internships is the evaluation by the supervisor to help the intern discern strengths and weaknesses. Unfortunately, this does not always occur. One study of undergraduate elementary and secondary education interns revealed a dearth of adequate feedback for students about their internship experiences (Williams and Alawiye 2001a, 232). Only 15% of interns said their feedback was better than average while 23% said it was average. When thoughtfully communicated, evaluative comments by supervisors could actually serve to promote the acquisition of skills by encouraging interns in those practices at which they excel. When there is supervisor affirmation for strengths some students may perceive that they possess certain requisite competencies. This in turn may contribute to greater skills. Research on motivation has demonstrated that a student's perceived competence in the educational subject is one of the strongest predictors of intrinsic motivation (Ferrer-Caja and Weiss 2002, 61; Sagor 2002, 34). This motivation can be developed in interns as supervisors provide constructive evaluation.

Personal Character

A third objective of internships focuses on the student as an individual. Some internship programs explicitly stress personal development (Ryan and Cassidy 1996, 23) or emphasize character formation as an objective of internships (Sweitzer and King 1999, 4). This is accomplished as goals are achieved such as learning to survive in a different culture (Rompelman and De Vries 2002, 174). The very nature of fieldwork involves depositing the intern in a context somewhat different from academic learning. While this has the potential to be threatening, it also has the potential to energize students as they learn about themselves and their role in relationship to others.

Supervisor Relationships

The relationships interns share with their supervisors also has emerged as an internship objective. This relationship serves two significant purposes in the occupational education of interns. First, supervisors are a source of education, support, and encouragement. The persistence required to attain competence in a profession is facilitated by the encouragement of the instructor (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 2001, 251). A high level of coaching must usually precede a student's acquisition of proficiency because a moment often comes when the initial enthusiasm for learning wanes and the seemingly insurmountable content looms larger. When students realize the discrepancy between actual competence and what remains to be learned, discouragement may ensue. Supervisors aware of this possibility can help interns through encouragement and continued training with new skills.

The second important function of supervisors involves their ability to assist interns in finding a job after graduation. Supervisors help students form contacts and increase references for employment after graduation (Ross and Elechi 2002, 298; Tovey 2001, 228). This networking role has resulted in many students gaining employment at the same company as their supervisors or at a company they were exposed to during their internship (Currie, Vierke, and Greer 2000, 13; Sullivan 2003, 32).

Vocational Discernment

A final objective of internships in the literature centered around the influence of the internship on the career development of the intern (Ivey and Wampler 2000, 386). Internships socialize students into the professional working environment (Sweitzer and King 1999, 4), and help interns decide if they truly enjoy the profession (Koehnecke

2001, 590). Sweitzer and King's work serves as an internship manual for those in the human services. They offer a stage theory of experiencing internships, suggesting that most interns will experience anticipation, disillusionment, confrontation, competence, and finally, culmination (Sweitzer and King 1999, 13). The second major premise of their work centers on the concept that an internship assists interns in understanding themselves. This self-understanding comes about as relationships are formed, values are tested, and experiences are shared. Self-understanding, as an objective for internships, serves primarily to help clarify career and educational goals. Experiences in the working world assist students in understanding themselves and making informed decisions about the profession they desire to pursue (Tovey 2001, 230).

Internships in Youth Ministry

Youth ministry internships are a form of theological field education intended to help prepare students for ministry. Ephesians 4:11-13 suggests the primary role of the minister is to prepare others for works of service and ministry. This is accomplished in one way as ministers prepare interns to serve in the church. In one sense, youth ministry internships are a form of Kingdom succession planning where ministers train the future ministers who will one day serve in their place.

The Contribution of Internships to Youth Ministry Education

Internships in religious education continue to be in a nascent stage (English 1998, 75). Youth ministry internships in particular remain a frontier area of ministry preparation. In one study of 247 current and former ministers associated with the National Network of Youth Ministries, less than half of all participants experienced an

internship during their ministry preparation (Grenz 2002, 77). The fact that more youth ministers have not experienced internships may be attributable to the fact that internships are only recently becoming widely accepted as a required form of ministry education.

In a study of 77 full time youth ministers and 14 part time ministers associated with the Evangelical Free Church, internship training was ranked fifth out of a list of six factors that influenced the development of full time youth ministers (Widstrom 1998, 24). Only the category of Books, Journals, and Periodicals was rated as less significant. The categories that preceded internships were first, Previous Ministry Experiences, second, Role Models, Mentors, and Colleagues, third, Continuing Education, Workshops, and Seminars, and fourth, Formal Training Programs. For the part time youth workers, the internship experience was ranked fourth out of six, followed by Books, Journals, and Periodicals, and the category of Continuing Education, Workshops, and Seminars. One possible explanation for the divergence in responses is that the full time youth ministers had been in ministry on average 6.9 years while the part time workers had been in ministry only 1.6 years (Widstrom 1998, 21). It is possible that for these latter ministers, internships served an important purpose in their training for the beginning years of ministry. It is also possible that as years of ministry experience are accumulated other factors become more influential on ministerial development.

Widstrom later conducted an ethnographic study of twenty-three youth ministers in the Evangelical Free Church. Four factors were highlighted as being responsible for the socialization of youth ministers into the profession of youth ministry (Widstrom 1998, 135). The factors were events of equipping, observation, experiential learning, and pivotal life events (Figure 3).

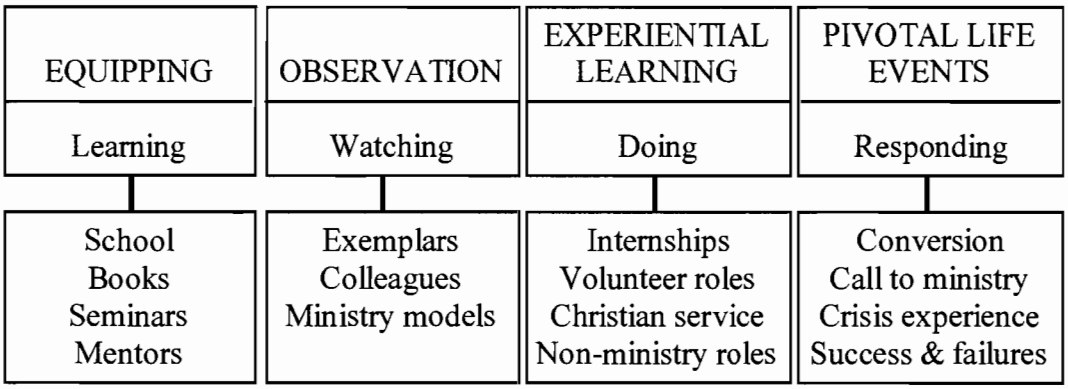

Figure 3. The professional socialization of youth ministers

First, equipping involved activities of learning both in formal settings through books and school, and the informal setting of mentors and colleagues. Next, observation involved watching the actions of exemplars in ministry. Third, experiential learning involved doing the actions of ministry, whether through organized internships or from the volunteer roles in ministry prior to formal training. Finally, pivotal life events reflect the minister's response to successes and failures, as well as crises that occur which form identity.

While each of these influences assist in the socialization of ministry it should be noted that each can occur within the context of a ministry internship that is guided with intentionality on the part of the supervisor. This is not to imply that internships should be the only form of education required for ministry training and socialization. Conversely, internships are one component that improves the overall education of ministers who need formal, informal, and non-formal educational experiences.

Foundational Objectives of Youth Ministry Internships

An explanation of the purposes for youth ministry internships is easier to

elucidate than an explanation of their structure. One standardized pattern for the composition of youth ministry internships does not exist. Each one is distinctive because of variables such as the requirements of the academic institution, the context and size of the church, the interests, gifts, and needs of the supervising minister, and the interests, gifts, and needs of the intern (Widstrom 1998, 253). Other variables include the specific ministry description for the position, the total number of hours required each week, the overall length of the internship, and the presence or absence of other interns. The one most homogeneous characteristic of internships is their ultimate objectives.

The objectives of theological field education are generally summarized in a triad consisting of cognitive knowledge, competence in ministerial skills, and personal character development (Harkness 2001, 142; Pearson 1995, 61). To these objectives some have included the importance of learning through relationships with supervisors (Jackson 1995, 13). These aspects were addressed, as well as the influence of internships on the vocational decisions of students to enter or avoid youth ministry as a profession.

Knowledge Assimilation

Internships are an opportunity to assist students in gaining new knowledge through opportunities to study, read, and think reflectively about experiences. This is a central component of an internship's purpose (Borchert 1996, 563). The most effective internships not only support ministerial competence, they encourage theological reflection. Since the minister's work is itself a form of continuing education the internship should help the student acquire the motivation to pursue lifelong learning (Chesnut 1975, 281). In short, the minister must learn to learn. Kolb's cycle of learning from experience through action, reflection, imagination, and experimentation echoes this

spirit of education from experience (Kolb 1984, 42). It is precisely this learning while doing that Livermore advocates to prevent the continual production of irrelevant theorists and mindless practitioners in youth ministry (Livermore 2002, 90).

From a discipleship perspective, ministry internships exist to disciple others in the art of reproduction so that still others learn what the initial teacher understood (Cunningham 1982, 55). This was precisely Paul's intention when he instructed Timothy, "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Tim 2:2). Timothy was to continue passing the baton of knowledge to another generation of learners who would then be competent to teach others what they had learned.

Internships are also an opportunity for assimilation as they help students access former learning so that information can be applied in a new context (Jackson 1995, 13). Fragmented data collected through years of classroom study may be connected in functional use through the practice that internships offer. In one sense there is an integrative component of field experience that connects with and enlightens prior education. This contributes to congruence between knowledge gleaned from the classroom and practical skills learned in the field.

Skill Acquisition

In addition to the cognitive component of field education, internships are successful when they help students glean the fundamental skills required to function at a beginning level in ministry (Hornecker 1995, 23). This skill development helps the intern emerge from training with a "competency in responsiveness" (Parr 1982, 18), or the ability to respond appropriately to the events of ministry.

The necessity of this skill acquisition for ministry is debated less than the discussion of what those skills should be. The relevant literature emphasizes the multiplicity of skills required for effective ministry and varies from an emphasis on the pastoral to the administrative. In a study of teaching ministers in the Christian Church the skills mentioned as foremost among those needed for their jobs were planning and administration (Rowell 1981, 69). Some of these administrative tasks included creating and functioning within a budget, planning, organization, implementing ministry programs, communicating effectively with adults and teens, and the enlisting, equipping, encouraging, and evaluating of adult volunteers. Others highlight pastoral care, teaching, leadership, administration, finances and organization as central to effective ministry (Chesnut 1975, 283). Finally, in a study of church members, pastors and seminary professors, relationship, management, and communication skills were among the most important competencies for ministry (Dearborn 1995, 7).

While administration in ministry finds support among many ministers, some have opposed the direct application of management principles such as organizational development to ministry (Hanson 1976, 206). This may be in part because those who perform more administrative tasks engage in fewer direct ministerial activities, and vice versa. One study exposed a reciprocal relationship between the amount of time ministers spend in administration and the time they commit to personal ministry (Perl 2002, 173). The amount of time a minister spends on management versus ministry is usually defined by the context of the ministry being accomplished. Another study revealed that Protestant pastors spend almost one quarter of their time on administrative functions (Kuhne and Donaldson 1995, 151). The only other activity to receive more time was

preparation for preaching. While the duties of a preaching minister may be quite different from other ministers the temptation to be drowned in administrative minutia is similar.

The realization that personal ministry and administration often compete in a reciprocal time relationship causes some to question the amount of time required to perform managerial duties that easily become distractions from the more significant matters. Speaking on behalf of ministers, William Willimon states, "Our greatest administrative challenge is to keep the important things we do from crowding out the essential. Pastors are not called to manage, but to lead. If we allow management to crowd out the more visionary and priestly functions of ministry, the church suffers" (Willimon 1995, 47). Others have contributed their caveats because they perceive principles of management to be the next gimmick in a long line of alleged remedies for the church that have led the people of God toward a corporate structure at the expense of community (Wagner 1999, 20). One weakness of this perspective is its failure to appreciate the advantage of administrative tasks for the facilitation of ministry.

Therefore, as an objective of internships, skill acquisition means helping a student learn to minister by providing balance in ministerial functions through opportunities to participate in both the pastoral and the administrative tasks of ministry. When a student realizes an area of weakness or an overemphasis of time in one area the supervisor can help him or her through personal direction to find the appropriate tools necessary for effective practice.

Character Formation

As the presence of the Spirit in biblical leaders signified their qualification for

leadership, the character of ministry interns is vital to their service in ministry. The nature of ministry demands that professional preparation not stop with skills and knowledge. In addition to these, education in character formation, or the opportunity to learn about oneself and about God, is vital to the curriculum. "The visible display of consistent Christian character is the first prerequisite to spiritual leadership" (Hegg 1998, 36). The authors in Pyle and Seal's work on ministry supervision express the same sentiment (Pyle and Seals 1995). Their objectives for ministry internships include not only growth in ministry skills and theological reflection, they also expect that internships will assist with the integration of educational and experiential components of the Christian faith so that there is a maturing spirituality in the life of the student. This occurs as students have the opportunity to be supervised by a person of character (Jackson 1995, 13).

Judy Tenelshof, at Talbot Seminary, is a proponent of this view. She believes that skills and knowledge are secondary to the responsibility schools have for the character formation of future ministers (Tenelshof 1999, 85). She has observed that many students enter ministry training with a host of character traits reflective of a relativistic culture rather than those of Christ. For this reason her school has begun a mentoring program in which every student is paired with a supervisor for the purpose of helping students with spiritual formation in both formal and informal settings.

Finally, in a study of Catholic youth ministers and role expectation, the most important factors to successful ministry as reported by youth ministers were the minister's interpersonal relationship skills, personal spirituality, and recognition that the position demands one be a role model and mentor (Boran 1996, 116). Others concur with

this emphasis on spiritual leadership and, tying it back to the education of ministers, have declared, "Youth ministry graduates must experience the spiritual transformation and discipleship they are expected to foster in the students they shepherd" (Livermore 2002, 93).

Mentor Relationships

A fourth foundational objective of youth ministry internships is the development of mentor relationships. The word mentor originated in the Greek mythology of Homer's *Odyssey*. As Odysseus experienced his epic voyage his son was guided by Athena under the guise of an Ithacan elder named Mentor. Athena, the goddess of war, wisdom, and craft, directed Telemechus' education and his journey from childhood to adulthood (Galbraith and Cohen 1995, 1). In a similar fashion, contemporary mentors encourage, challenge, and educate their protégés on the journey toward occupational competency. They accomplish this through their relational, professional, spiritual, and motivational influence.

Relational Influence of Mentors

Internships that prepare students for full time ministry help students build relationships. This is accomplished in youth ministry education as interns have the opportunity to form relationships with ministers, church leaders, fellow interns, adolescents, and other adults in the church. While many relationships are formed through internships, a vital component of the intern's learning experience is influenced by the quality of instruction provided by the supervisor (Raschick, Maypole, and Day 1998, 31). This relationship facilitates others so that the intern can equip the laity as the church

equips the intern (Cunningham 1982, 61). There is reciprocal blessing through the mentoring relationship of an internship because the minister is training the intern to be a servant of the church.

In one study of Catholic youth ministers, mentors were found to be effective in promoting faith development as well as encouraging the decision of students to enter full time youth ministry (Shelly 1996, 93). Supervisors assist this transformation from student to minister by keeping that goal in mind and training the intern to become a colleague instead of a perpetual subordinate.

Professional Influence of Mentors

While much of the supervisor's relationship with the intern develops informally in the setting of active ministry, an important part of the relationship forms during intentional meetings and supervisory conferences. These discussions are an opportunity to reflect on ministry experiences and evaluate the professional development of the intern. Such an environment is conducive to the discussion of journal entries, incident reports, and case studies as methods of reflection and learning (Stevens 1995, 96). To function in this role of occupational instructor the supervisor must not only understand and excel in ministry, he or she must be able to effectively communication the reasons for how ministry is done.

In addition to the role of guiding the intern's reflections, the supervisor assists the student in identity formation as the student grows in maturity. Ministers share cooperative responsibility with schools to "assist the student to move beyond his image of himself as a student and begin to see himself as a minister. This does not mean he ceases to see himself as a learner. Rather, he learns how to learn when he is not in

school" (Glasse 1972, 142). Such ministers are no longer defined by their role as students but as practitioners committed to lifelong learning (Stoltenberg 1995, 57). This includes the process of growing and learning spiritually.

Spiritual Influence of Mentors

There is a certain level of spiritual and psychological maturity that is important for spiritual directors and supervisors to possess (Ruffing 1997, 96). The presence and gifts of the Holy Spirit in the life of the supervisor are resources available to the intern through ministry supervision if the supervisor is honest and transparent about his relationship with God (Ryan, Woods, and Flanagan 1997, 94). This availability to students reflects a spirit of hospitality by creating space for relationships (Nouwen 1972, 51). Through their example of openness, supervisors can model the openness required of students as they become ministers who will care for others (O'Gorman 1996, 72).

As supervisors lead their students spiritually they have an opportunity to model the servant spirit of Jesus. In one sense supervisors are servants of students because they bear the responsibility of assisting interns in their education. "The primary purpose of supervision is to assist the one seeking supervision in coming to greater clarity about his or her own dynamics, motivations, beliefs, skills, and commitments in order to strengthen his or her ministry in similar instances and settings" (Liebert 1997, 21). As students and supervisors serve together there is an opportunity for sharpening to occur that is lauded in the Proverbs: "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Prov 27:17).

Motivational Influence of Mentors

While a student in isolation may possess the motivation to learn, motivation is

encouraged by a healthy relationship with an instructor (Deci and Ryan 2000, 71). This is particularly true of interactions between students and teachers outside the classroom setting (Jaasma and Koper 1999, 45), and those interactions that incorporate humor (Wanzer and Frymier 1999, 48). Jaasma and Koper discovered that the more out of class communication a student had with a teacher the more likely it was that the student would be motivated in the educational setting where the instructor teaches. This has relevance to the relationship between interns and supervisors who share life and occupational experiences that develop even closer bonds than those between a student and teacher. Interns have an opportunity to learn from mentors who share the meaningful and significant aspects of their lives with their protégés. This sharing includes the enthusiasm they possess for ministry.

The precedent of the facilitator's attitude toward the subject also has a significant influence on student motivation. The passion of the teacher expressed in enthusiasm for the content can be contagious, causing those who witness it to desire a richer educational experience (Patrick, Hisley, and Kempler 2000, 221). Patrick, Hisley, and Kempler discovered that following an enthusiastically taught class students were more energetic, curious, and excited about learning. In addition, following an energetic experience, students were more likely to privately read material on the content of the class. Those supervisors who disclose their passions may be igniting flames of motivation in their interns.

Vocational Discernment

A final function of theological field education is to confirm the match between students and the profession. Internships allow students to test gifts, learn about personal

interests, and validate their pursuit of ministry as a career before assuming full time ministerial responsibilities (Kesner 1995, 34). Through personal reflection, the insight of the supervisor, and the response of the church, students are assisted in discerning their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their commitment to the vocation. These various perspectives from church and supervisor, when shared with the intern, also serve to confirm or challenge the student's understanding of a call to ministry.

Profile of the Current Study

The precedent literature provided the basis for the five research questions and guided the design of this study. The literature highlights five prominent objectives of internships: knowledge, skills, character development, mentor relationships, and vocational discernment. The final objective, vocational discernment, is admittedly more subjective and individually determined than the others. Professional aspirations reflect dreams and a recognition of individual abilities. Furthermore, from a theological perspective, the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the intern to guide and counsel may influence vocational decisions. As a result, this research sought to reveal what interns perceived to be vocationally influential about internships.

Two aspects of the relevant literature were cause for reflection on the structure of this research. First, several studies challenge the integrity of research that investigates only interns' evaluations. It has been suggested that students' responses to surveys concerning the quality of supervision may be a reflection of their overall satisfaction with their field experience more than a discriminating observation of supervisors (Sinicrope and Cournoyer 1990, 266). Conversely others assert that current and former interns are competent evaluators whose reflections are invaluable to the improvement of the

educational experience (Ross and Elechi 2002, 306; Treadwell and Grobler 2001, 476; Eyler 1995, 186; Seals 1995, 128). This is especially true in light of fieldwork's tendency to alter students' views about their chosen profession (Mills and Satterthwait 2000, 33). In addition, it has been suggested that educational evaluation must include students' analysis of the services they have received through educational experiences such as internships (Williams and Alawiye 2001b, 113). The current study recognizes the limitations of interns' evaluations while seeking to understand their interpretations of the experience.

A second cause for reflection was the contention that retrospective ratings may reflect an attempt by interns to provide evaluators with information that they think the evaluators want (Reid and Bailey-Dempsey 1996, 46). This observation significantly influenced the research design. Initially, the researcher intended to physically distribute the survey instruments in youth ministry classes on university campuses. The purpose for this approach was to personally explain the objectives of the study and motivate respondents to answer truthfully. Based on the literature it is possible that the opposite may have resulted. A researcher's presence in the instrument distribution may affect results. By removing the researcher from the immediate distribution of the surveys it was hoped that bias directed toward pleasing the researcher would be mitigated.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of youth ministry internships as a component of education for full time youth ministry. This was accomplished by investigating the evaluations of students who served as interns in ministry. The result was an understanding of field education's contribution to ministry training as perceived by students.

Research Question Synopsis

The following research questions (RQs) were investigated to guide the evaluation of youth ministry internships as a form of field education and preparation for ministry:

1. To what extent do youth ministry internships assist interns in the acquisition of knowledge relevant to youth ministry?
2. To what extent do youth ministry internships assist interns in the acquisition of skills relevant to youth ministry?
3. To what extent do youth ministry internships contribute to the spiritual development of interns?
4. In what ways does the supervisor influence the report of a positive or negative internship experience?
5. To what extent do youth ministry internships influence the vocational decisions of interns to enter or avoid youth ministry as a profession?

Design Overview

This study reflects descriptive quantitative research and was conducted in five phases. The first phase was an investigation of the precedent literature relevant to the current study. These areas were biblical discipleship, experiential learning theory, internships in higher education, and internships in youth ministry.

The second phase entailed the creation of an inventory instrument that was informed by the precedent literature and organized according to the five research questions. Prior to distribution, the instrument was field tested by a pilot group and reviewed by a panel of experts to test validity and reliability. Revisions were made to the instrument after receiving evaluations from these two groups.

The collection of data marked the third stage. The instrument was administered to a sample of the population so that inferential statistics could be applied to the information. The instrument was mailed to youth ministry faculty at seven schools who then administered the instrument to their students in one of two ways. Professors distributed them to youth ministry majors in their classes or mailed them to students through campus mail. The completed instruments were then collected by the faculty at each school and returned by mail to the researcher.

The fourth stage of the study involved data analysis. After the tabulation of responses the data was analyzed based on the five research questions. This information is presented in chapter four.

Finally, conclusions were drawn from the study in the form of implications and applications for youth ministry education. These are presented in chapter five.

Population

The population for this study consisted of all Christian youth ministry interns in Churches of Christ. These are individuals serving under a supervisor in a church for a period of time while assisting with youth ministry responsibilities. The purposes for these internships are service to the church and education in ministry. These students often travel to various states for employment. Other students serve at local churches during the school year.

Sample

The research sample consisted of current and former youth ministry interns in the 2003 fall semester who were juniors and seniors enrolled in the seven largest universities associated with the Churches of Christ offering a bachelor's degree in youth ministry. These students were often, but not exclusively, employed by churches during the summer months to complete an internship requirement of the program's curriculum. Youth ministry interns in these schools did not necessarily work with a church in the same city or state as the institution they attend. Furthermore, because an intern is specifically defined as someone who is under the tutelage of a supervisor, those students who served in churches without a supervisor were excluded from the sample.

Sampling Technique

The researcher used purposive sampling (Leedy and Ormrod 2001, 219). This is a form of non-probability sampling that was selected in order to reach the largest segment of the research population. By surveying youth ministry majors in the largest

schools the greatest number of interns were reached. In addition, the researcher had access to these universities and was familiar with their programs.

Several factors influenced the decision to work through the Christian universities instead of the churches in reaching the sample of interns. First, most youth ministry positions require a college degree. Therefore, the academic setting is an environment with a concentrated group of future ministers. In addition, because the research concerns education toward ministry, universities were chosen as the context for instrument distribution.

Second, because some churches do not hire interns, and because youth ministry interns are not always college students, acquiring a large sample size would have been difficult through the distribution of surveys to random churches who may not have employed interns. This also contributed to the third factor influencing the decision to work through the universities. It was believed that a higher return rate would be achieved because the surveys were distributed and collected by ministry professors instead of being mailed from an unknown researcher. In addition, it was believed that because ministry professors distributed and collected the surveys there would be increased motivation on the part of students to respond.

Delimitations of the Sample

Several delimitations were imposed on the sample to acquire an accurate picture of youth ministry internships as education for ministry.

The sample was delimited to students attending one of the seven largest universities associated with the Churches of Christ offering a bachelor's degree in youth ministry. These schools were selected because of their similarity of doctrine, the

presence of a youth ministry program, and their comparatively large number of youth ministry majors. These schools offer a Bachelor of Science or a Bachelor of Arts degree in youth ministry, or a Bible degree with youth ministry as an emphasis while other schools do not offer a youth ministry degree. Furthermore, each of these schools has an enrollment of over 1,000 students. Enrollment figures were acquired from a fellowship publication (Lynn 2003, 36) and verified by each school's web site. These schools are Abilene Christian University (ACU) in Abilene, Texas, Faulkner University (FU) in Montgomery, Alabama, Freed-Hardeman University (FHU) in Henderson, Tennessee, Harding University (HU) in Searcy, Arkansas, Lubbock Christian University (LCU) in Lubbock, Texas, Lipscomb University (LU) in Nashville, Tennessee, and Oklahoma Christian University (OCU) in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The sample was also delimited to students who declared youth ministry or youth and family ministry as their major. Because this study sought to discern the extent internships influence the ministry preparation of future youth ministers those students who were youth ministry majors were included while those with other majors were not considered. Those students who were pursuing a Bible degree with a youth ministry emphasis were considered youth ministry majors.

The sample was also delimited to those youth ministry interns or former interns who were enrolled as juniors and seniors in college. These students were selected recognizing that some students graduate and immediately begin working as youth ministers while others graduate and begin graduate school or seminary. The delimitation to juniors and seniors allowed the researcher to reach the largest number of interns who were potential youth ministers immediately before beginning full time ministry.

Limitations of Generalization

Because delimitations were imposed on the population sample the generalizations of research findings are also limited. First, the data does not necessarily generalize to interns attending other schools, seminaries, or Christian universities. Each academic institution establishes its own curriculum requirements for field education, making each one unique. The fundamental structure of internships from various schools may intentionally impose an emphasis that is not shared by the schools involved in this research.

The data does not necessarily generalize to other internship programs or professional preparation experiences in other fields. While there are many similarities in the field experiences of students preparing for a vocation, the context of youth ministry is unique as a burgeoning profession comprised of employees serving in churches. Furthermore, the additional aspect of character formation as an essential component of Christian ministry internships sets them apart from other internships focused primarily on skill acquisition, professional knowledge, or socialization into a profession.

The data does not necessarily generalize to students who are not juniors and seniors. The curricular requirements of every school are different and therefore require internships at various times. Those students who are younger as interns and closer to the ages of those to whom interns minister may view internships through the lens of a summer job more than as preparation for ministry. Some students serve as interns after their freshman year, being only one year older than the high school students they serve. Similarly, graduate students, many of whom have already been in ministry, may reflect differently on their field experiences.

The data does not necessarily generalize to students who are not youth ministry majors. Some students may participate in youth ministry internships while majoring in related fields such as communication or psychology. Since there is less certainty that these students will enter youth ministry as a vocation they may not participate in their internships with the same intentionality or direction that youth ministry majors may possess. Because this study describes the internship experience for those entering the field of youth ministry it does not of necessity apply to other students.

Finally, the data does not necessarily generalize to other religious groups or denominations. While many Protestant evangelical groups share similar objectives, each group has its own culture with language, symbols, and traditions that influence the unbridled generalization of this study's results to those contexts.

Instrumentation

To facilitate data collection the researcher created a forty-two-question inventory instrument (Appendix 1). A panel of experts was then selected in order to evaluate the instrument's validity. This panel consisted of two professors of youth ministry and three ministers with extensive experience supervising youth ministry interns (Appendix 2). A letter was sent to panel members explaining the nature of the research and requesting their participation. Their suggestions were noted and revisions were made to the instrument.

The instrument was also field tested by a pilot group for reliability. The pilot group consisted of five students who had served as youth ministry interns in Churches of Christ, but who had also completed a bachelor's degree in ministry from one of the participating schools. The graduation requirement ensured the students in the pilot group

were not included in the study. Their responses were noted, minor revisions were made, and the instrument was completed.

Demographic Items

The inventory instrument consists of three personal demographic questions, thirteen internship demographic questions, eight multiple choice questions, twelve Likert-type scale questions, five open-ended essay questions, and one ordering question. The personal demographic information consists of questions concerning gender, classification in school, and major. The internship demographic questions concern the ministry area of the internship, the state of the internship, the degree program requirements, the denomination of the internship, the size of church, the season and length of the internship, the number of fellow interns in youth ministry at the church, salary, the identity and gender of the supervisor, and the presence of a job description and code of ethics to guide the intern.

While not a foundational element of this research, the demographic data served three functions. First, it assisted in instrumentation inclusion. Respondents were required to legibly answer questions 2, 3, 4, 7, and 13 for the inventory to be included in data analysis. Answers to these questions revealed the student's major, classification in school, area of ministry service, the religious fellowship of the internship, and the identity of the supervisor.

Second, several demographic questions were relevant to the overall picture of internship experiences that helped answer the research questions and provided valuable information about the conditions in which interns served. This information may be useful to future studies as research in the field of youth ministry expands.

Finally, the demographic information will be of particular interest to the youth ministry faculty who consult with churches about the nature of youth ministry internships. The demographic data was an important component of the complete written analysis presented to the administering youth ministry professor at each school. In November 2003 a report summarizing the analysis of data was mailed to each professor as a gesture of professional courtesy for his assistance in instrumentation distribution and collection. These reports contained the collective information about students from all schools, as well as information pertaining to the particular school where the report was mailed. A comparative analysis among schools was neither the goal, nor the product of this research.

Multiple-Choice Items

Following the demographic questions were eight multiple-choice questions offering an opportunity for respondents to describe their internship as a form of ministry training. Students were asked to report about how frequently they met with their supervisor for intentional support and training in ministry, as well as how frequently their performance was evaluated. They were asked about their educational activities during internships, the spiritual disciplines they practiced individually and with a supervisor, the various ministry activities they experienced, the weeklong ministry events of their church and their plans immediately after graduation.

Likert-Type Items

The twelve subsequent Likert-type items were based on an equidistant, descriptive scale assessing the perceptions of interns to achieve a measure of variability.

For each item respondents were asked to express their level of agreement with statements about their internships by circling a number from 1 to 5 that represented the following responses: "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Neutral," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree." Cumulative responses provided a mean score that reflected the overall level of agreement with the statements. Each statement coincided with one of the research questions.

Essay Items

Each essay question provided an opportunity for interns to describe the influence of their internship as it related to their knowledge, skills, spirituality, the supervisor relationship, and their decision to enter or avoid ministry as a profession. These questions gave students the opportunity to express their perceptions of internships and the various components that made them beneficial.

Ranking Item

Finally, the ranking question asked respondents to rank ministry knowledge, skills in ministry, spiritual growth, the supervisor relationship, and discernment about career plans in order of the most significant item gleaned from their internships.

Criteria for Instrumentation Inclusion

In order for individual inventories to be considered in this study five specific inventory questions were required to be legibly completed. Questions 2, 3, 4, 7 and 13 could not be omitted. In addition, the responses to these questions were required to demonstrate that the respondent was a junior or senior in college, a youth ministry major, served as an intern in youth ministry, was employed by a Church of Christ, and worked under the direction of a supervisor. These specific criteria allowed for a survey that had

one or more of the multiple-choice, Likert-type, or essay questions unanswered to remain in the study.

Procedures

The seven largest Christian universities associated with the Churches of Christ that offer a bachelor's degree in youth ministry were selected as the context for the population sample. The chair of each youth ministry department was contacted by phone in the Spring of 2003 in order to assess each school's interest in the study. These professors were also contacted by email at the beginning of the summer to maintain communication concerning the study. On August 5, 2003, a letter was sent to each school for the purpose of inviting their students to participate and requesting institutional approval to conduct research. Responses were received by email and each school granted approval for the research.

Once each school approved the research, the professors were asked by email to report the number of surveys that should be sent to them based on the sample delimitations. Although enrollment figures for junior and senior youth ministry majors were requested by the researcher, the schools were unable to provide precise responses concerning the number of students who met these delimitations of the sample. Therefore, the number of surveys sent to each school reflects the number requested by the professor at that school.

The inventory instruments were mailed to the youth ministry professors in August 2003 along with a letter providing distribution instructions (Appendix 3). Instruments were mailed to FHU, FU, LCU, and LU on August 16, 2003, via United Parcel Service. The instruments were mailed to the youth ministry professors at ACU,

HU, and OCU on August 19, 2003, via the United States Postal Service. Mailing the instruments by these dates ensured they would arrive prior to the beginning of fall classes at each school. Once the instruments were received, each professor distributed the instrument to students during the first weeks of school. This was done in one of two ways: in ministry courses or through campus mail. If students received surveys through campus mail they were instructed to return them to their professors within one week of receiving them. Faculty members collected the surveys and mailed them back to the researcher. The surveys were returned to the researcher between the first week in September and the first week in November 2003.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to investigate the perceived influence of youth ministry internships as a form of education for full time youth ministry. Five areas of theological education were specifically investigated that coincide with each research question (RQ). The first concerned the acquisition of knowledge relevant to ministry. The second focused on ministerial skills. The third research area involved the spiritual formation of interns. The fourth addressed the mentoring relationship between interns and supervisors. The final area concerned the influence of internships on the vocational decisions of students.

Compilation Protocol

As complete inventories were received from each school they were coded with a university abbreviation to delineate the school from which they originated. Inventory instruments meeting the inclusion criteria were also coded by the number of responses from each school. The resultant labeling produced codes such as ACU5 and HU3, meaning the fifth inventory from Abilene Christian University and the third inventory from Harding University.

Once the instruments were coded, the data from each inventory was tabulated by hand and incorporated into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. Simple means and percentages were calculated for the responses to the inventory questions. The data was

then transferred into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 8.0 in order to perform further statistical analysis. Information concerning the demographic data was investigated first. This was followed by statistical analysis as it applied to each RQ and the corresponding inventory items.

Findings and Displays

Several statistical procedures were used in the analysis of data. First, mean scores were calculated for responses to the five point Likert-type items. This generated an average level of agreement to various statements concerning internships.

Second, a product-moment correlation coefficient, or Pearson r correlation (*r*), was conducted on various items to investigate the possibility of a statistically significant relationship (Gall, Borg, and Gall 1996, 427; Kranzler and Moursund 1999, 56). This procedure was used as a bivariate correlation between various sets of two variables. The Pearson r correlation data is displayed in tables.

A final procedure was the independent samples t test. The t test is helpful to investigate "the significance of the difference between two sample means" (Gall, Borg, and Gall 1996, 389). It was used to reveal patterns between responses of various groups.

Demographic Data

Students from seven schools participated in this study. The schools represented were Abilene Christian University (ACU), Faulkner University (FU), Freed-Hardeman University (FHU), Harding University (HU), Lubbock Christian University (LCU), Lipscomb University (LU), and Oklahoma Christian University (OCU). These

are the seven largest schools associated with Churches of Christ who offer a bachelor's degree in youth ministry or a Bible degree with an emphasis in youth ministry.

Return Rate

A total of 252 surveys were requested by professors and mailed to the seven schools. The specific responses of each school are listed in Table 1. There were 105 surveys returned to the researcher for a return rate of 41.67%. Of these, 57 were included in the study. The 57 surveys that were included reflect a 22.62% return rate. There were 48 surveys not included because they did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the study. For surveys to be included they were required to represent youth ministry internships in Churches of Christ by junior or senior youth ministry majors.

Table 1. Survey return rates by school

	Surveys Requested	*Surveys Returned*	*Met Criteria*	*Not Included in Study*
ACU	60	26	14	12
FHU	25	14	6	8
FU	7	4	1	3
HU	60	25	15	10
LCU	20	7	5	2
LU	50	14	9	5
OCU	30	15	7	8
TOTAL	252	105	57	48
RETURN RATE		41.67%	22.62%	

The surveys that were not included failed to meet the inclusion criteria for the following reasons: 17 were from students who were not youth ministry majors, 14 were

from sophomores, 9 represented internships in ministry areas other than youth ministry, 6 surveys were from internships conducted in churches other than Churches of Christ, and 2 were from graduate students.

Personal Demographic Data

There were 50 males and 7 females whose surveys were included in this study from the seven participating schools (Table 2). Of these students, 21 were juniors and 36 were seniors. Youth and family ministry majors accounted for forty of the completed inventories and represented 70.18% of respondents. Seventeen students were Bible majors with an emphasis in youth ministry representing 29.82% of respondents.

Table 2. Demographics of gender and classification in school

	Male		*Female*		*Total*	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Juniors	18	31.58	3	5.26	21	36.84
Seniors	32	56.14	4	7.02	36	63.16
Total	50	87.72	7	12.28	57	100.00

Internship Demographic Data

Over three quarters of interns participated in internships to complete a program requirement of their degree. Just over one fifth served in internships for other reasons. The internships occurred in fourteen different states and one foreign country (Figure 4). The states that had the most number of interns were Texas, Tennessee, Arkansas, Georgia, and Oklahoma. Texas and Tennessee each had two schools that participated in the study. These two states accounted for 52.63% of all internships.

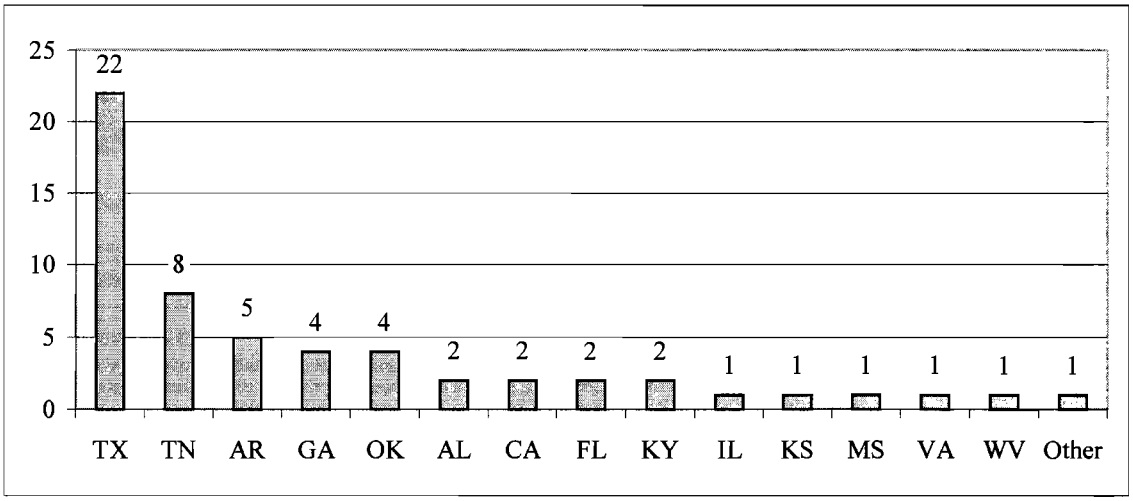

Figure 4. Number of interns by state

As interns served in various states, they also served in churches of various sizes (Figure 5). The 251 to 500 Sunday morning attendance bracket was represented more than any other, and 66.67% of the internships occurred in churches between 101 and 750 in Sunday assembly attendance.

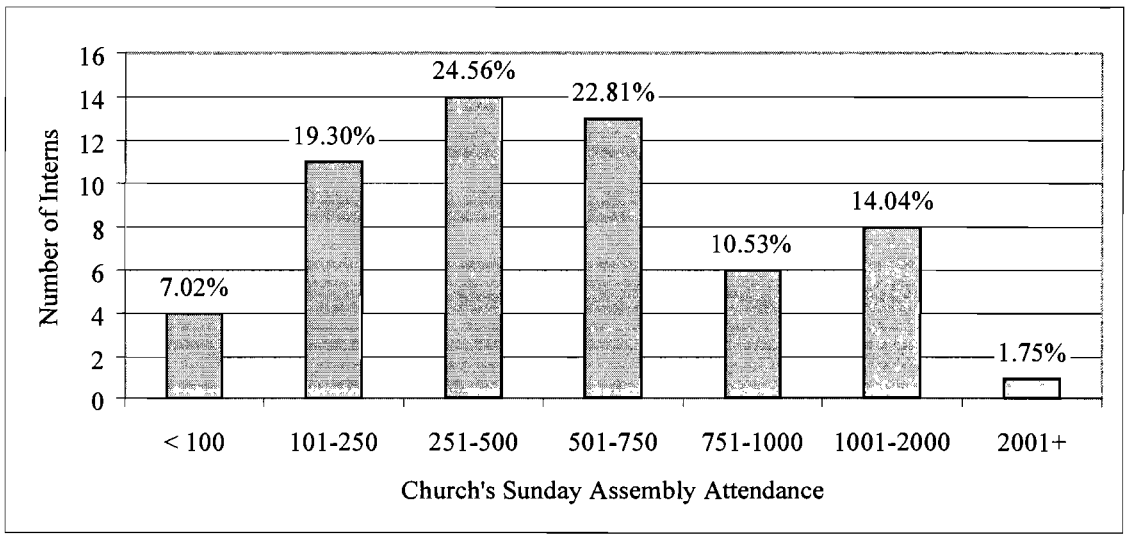

Figure 5. Internships by church size

A minority of interns served in churches with less than 100 in Sunday morning attendance. Only one student participated in the study who served in a church with an attendance greater than 2,000.

Almost 85% of the internships occurred during the summer months. Only 9 of the 57 internships occurred during the school year and the summer. Over half of the internships lasted between 11 and 14 weeks, and 82.46% lasted between 7 and 14 weeks (Figure 6). This coincides with the data suggesting interns usually serve in churches during the summer.

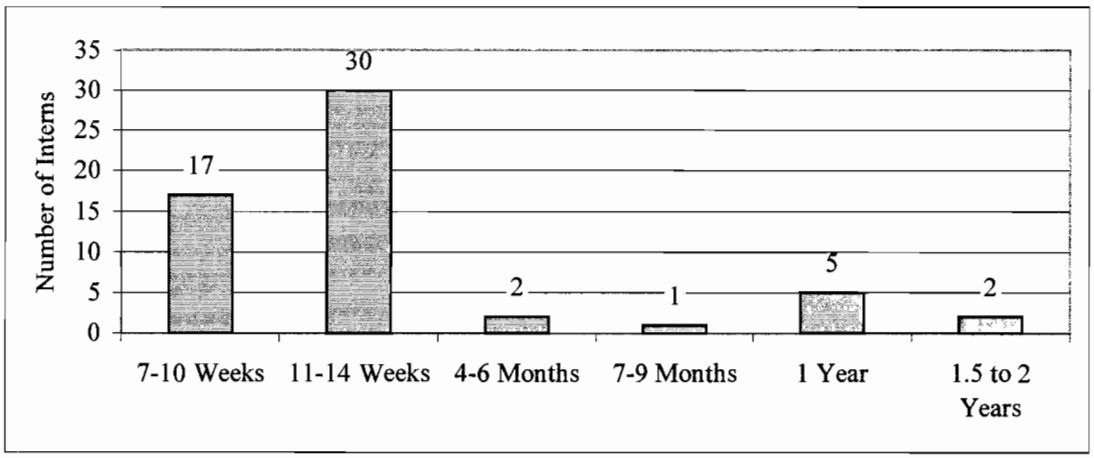

Figure 6. Internships by duration

Almost two thirds of the interns served in churches as the sole youth ministry intern, and almost one quarter served with one other person. Internships with three or more youth ministry interns were far more rare and accounted for only 12.28% of all internships.

There were no female interns who served as the sole youth ministry intern in a church (Table 3). This helps explain the strong correlation between the total number of interns at a church and the respondents being female ($r = .507, p < .01$).

Table 3. Total number of interns at churches by gender

	One		*Two*		*Three*		*Four*		*Seven*		*Total*	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Male	36	63.16	11	19.30	1	1.75	1	1.75	1	1.75	50	87.72
Female	0	0.00	3	5.26	1	1.75	2	3.50	1	1.75	7	12.28
Total	36	63.16	14	24.56	2	3.50	3	5.26	2	3.50	57	100.00

Interns were paid between $201 and $250 a week more frequently than any other salary (Figure 7). This range accounted for 38.60% of the responses.

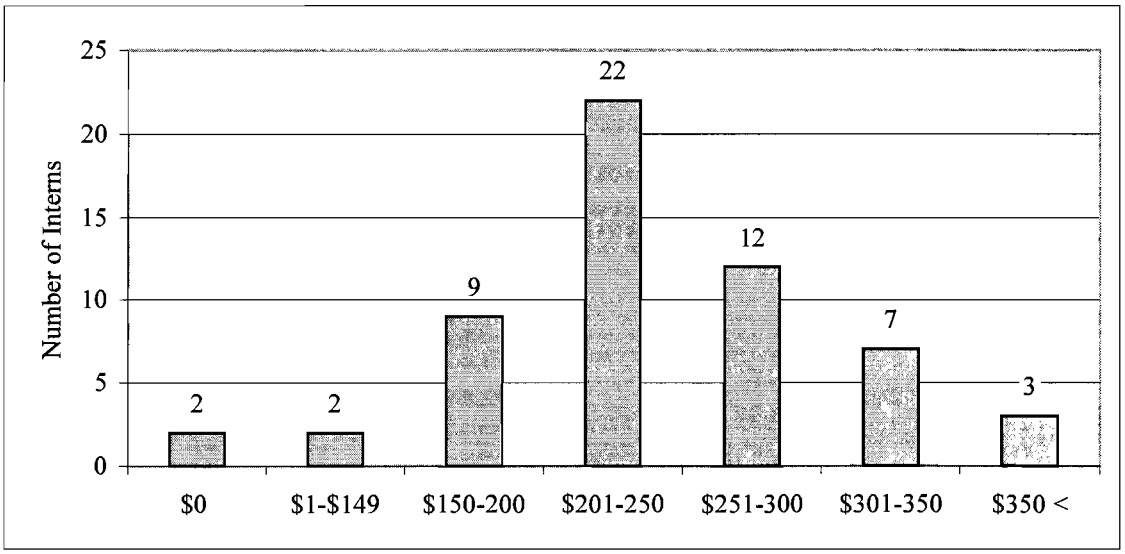

Figure 7. Weekly salary of interns

The interns receiving between $201 and $300 a week accounted for 59.65% of the responses. Two interns were not paid for their internships and three received more than $350 a week.

Research Question 1

The first research question (RQ) asked, "To what extent do youth ministry internships assist interns in the acquisition of knowledge relevant to youth ministry?" Inventory items 15, 19, 23, 31, 36, and 41 applied specifically to this RQ. A Pearson r correlation was conducted on item 19 and the demographic data, as well as the multiple-choice and Likert-type items. The purpose for this analysis was to reveal if a statistically significant relationship existed between internships as opportunities to learn new knowledge and other aspects of internships.

The Likert-type statements of items 19 through 30 provided a base from which to evaluate the components of internships. These statements are listed as an overview in Table 4 according to their level of agreement by interns. The statement receiving the greatest support concerned the importance of internships to the education of students as ministers. This was followed by the importance of internships as opportunities to learn new knowledge about ministry and the importance of internships to learn new ministry skills. The two statements receiving the least support concerned the skill of supervisors in the role of supervising interns and the role of ministry courses in school as preparation for internships.

The mean student score for the Likert-type response concerning knowledge gleaned from internships indicates students viewed their internships as experiences that taught them new knowledge and insights about ministry.

Table 4. Responses to Likert-type statements in order of agreement

Statement	*Mean*
29. This internship was important to my education as a minister.	4.72
23. This internship taught me new knowledge and insights about ministry.	4.61
24. This internship taught me new skills in ministry.	4.60
19. My supervisor was knowledgeable about ministry.	4.46
25. This internship helped me grow in Christian character.	4.46
21. My supervisor excelled as a model of Christian maturity and morality.	4.33
20. My supervisor was skillful in ministry.	4.30
28. This internship gave me opportunities to apply things I learned in the classroom.	4.25
26. My supervisor and I developed a close relationship.	4.18
30. This internship helped me to decide whether or not to enter ministry.	4.04
27. My ministry courses in school prepared me well for this internship.	3.96
22. My supervisor was an excellent intern supervisor.	3.82

Note: Students responded to these statements by indicating their level of agreement. One (1) was "Strongly Disagree," two (2) was "Disagree," three (3) was "Neutral," four (4) was "Agree," and five (5) was "Strongly agree"

When asked to rank in order the most significant aspect of internships, students listed new knowledge as third out of the five choices, after new skills in ministry and the influence internships have on the character and spirituality of the intern. Although interns generally agreed that new knowledge was an important component of internships based on the Likert-type items, their ranking of significant internship contributions communicated knowledge was not as important to them as new skills in ministry and the development of Christian character.

Knowledge and Demographics

There was no statistically significant relationship between students' reports of gaining new knowledge from their internships and the personal demographic information

of gender, school, or classification. In a similar fashion, the internship demographics concerning the season of the internship, the length of the internship, and the identity of the supervisor did not significantly correlate with learning new knowledge.

There was a positive correlation between salary and the report of learning new knowledge from internships ($r = .351, p < .01$), although salary was not correlated with any other variable. One possible explanation for this is that those supervisors who placed a higher value on the internship experience, and subsequently paid more for interns, were more intentional about teaching new knowledge to interns. Another possibility may be that those interns who were paid more also made an increased effort to glean knowledge from their internships.

Job Descriptions and Codes of Ethics

Almost four out of five interns totaling 78.95% received a job description during their internships. Youth ministers were slightly more likely than other supervisors to give their interns a job description ($r = .289, p < .05$). Despite their presence, there was not a significant correlation between receiving a job description and the report of gaining new knowledge. Although they were more rare, there was a correlation between receiving a code of ethics and interns' reports that they gained new knowledge ($r = .306$, $p < .05$). Only 46% of interns said their supervisors gave them a code of ethics to follow during their internships.

Knowledge and Supervisors

The supervisor's competence in ministry, character as a minister, and leadership of interns influenced interns' reports about their experiences (Table 5).

Table 5. Knowledge and supervisors

Correlations between new knowledge and supervisors	*r*	*p*
Supervisor skill in ministry	.560	$p < .01$
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.523	$p < .01$
Frequency of meetings for training and support	.435	$p < .01$
Supervisor adeptness at supervision	.434	$p < .01$
Supervisor Christian maturity	.428	$p < .01$
Close supervisor relationship	.371	$p < .01$
Frequency of performance evaluations	.293	$p < .05$

First, supervisors' perceived skill and knowledge in ministry produced the strongest correlations with interns' reports of learning new knowledge. These relationships were followed by correlations concerning the frequency of meetings for training and support, supervisors' skill in supervision, supervisors' Christian maturity, and the existence of a close relationship between interns and supervisors. The correlation between learning new knowledge and the frequency of performance evaluations was weaker but significant on the .05 level.

Knowledge and Other Learning

Learning new knowledge from internships was not a solitary event segregated from other learning. There was a strong positive correlation between the report of learning new skills in ministry and gaining new knowledge from internships ($r = .741$, $p < .01$). Similarly, there was a correlation between the report that internships helped students grow in Christian character and the acquisition of new knowledge ($r = .506$, $p < .01$). Both the acquisition of new skills and the influence of internships on personal character were related to learning new knowledge. There was also a correlation between students' responses to the statement "This internship was important to my education as a

minister" and the report of learning new knowledge ($r = .427, p < .01$). These strong relationships suggest that learning new skills, growing in character, and valuing internship experiences are more likely to occur as students report gaining new knowledge from internships.

Assimilation: Knowledge from Internships and Classrooms

Inventory items 27 and 28 focused on the reciprocal relationship between classroom education and the learning of internships. While only 7% of interns expressed disagreement or strong disagreement with the statement, "The ministry courses I took in school prepared me well for this internship," another 24.56% were neutral. This totaled 31.58% of respondents who did not agree that their classroom learning was beneficial as preparation for internships.

Despite the fact that almost one in three did not feel prepared by their classroom learning, there was a strong correlation between the statements, "The ministry courses I took in school prepared me well for this internship" and "This internship gave me opportunities to apply classroom learning" ($r = .621, p < .01$). Those students who felt equipped by former educational experiences were more likely to report applying that learning during internships. These students were more positive about the relationship between their classroom and internship education. Furthermore, when students reported that they were given the opportunity to apply classroom learning they were more likely to say their internships were important to their overall education as ministers ($r = .308$, $p < .05$).

One difference between juniors and seniors in this area was insightful. Although there was no significant difference between juniors and seniors' agreement with the statement "The ministry courses I took in school prepared me well for this internship," or the statement, "This internship was important to my education as a minister," seniors were more likely than juniors to agree with the statement, "This internship gave me opportunities to apply classroom learning" ($r = .296, p < .05$). One reason for this difference may be the increased opportunities of seniors to experience classroom education that could affect their application of that learning.

Knowledge and Educational Activities

When asked to report on their personal educational activities during internships 71.93% of interns said they read a book about ministry and 68.42% said they practiced journaling. These activities are listed in Figure 8.

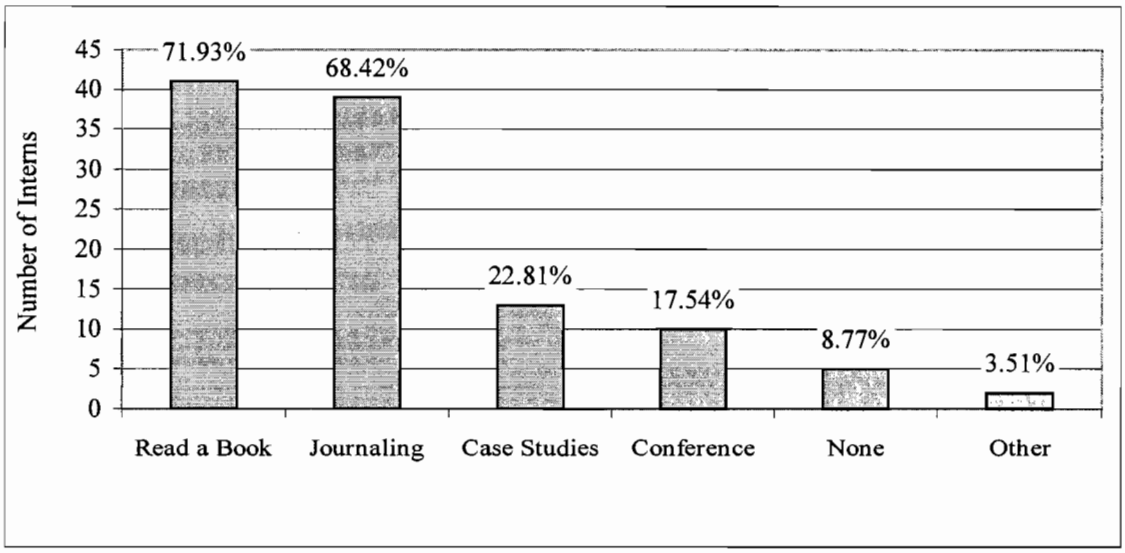

Figure 8. Educational activities of interns

Less than one quarter discussed case studies. The fact that only 17.54% attended a conference during their internships is not surprising given that 84.21% of internships occurred during the summer months and over half lasted between 11 and 14 weeks. Five students reported that they did not participate in any of these activities during their internships.

There was no statistically significant correlation between engaging in any of the educational activities listed on the survey instrument and the report that new knowledge was acquired from the internship. In addition, the total number of educational activities interns experienced did not significantly correlate with learning new knowledge. Specifically, no combination of reading a ministry related book, keeping a journal, attending a conference, and discussing case studies influenced the report of learning new knowledge. Other factors were more strongly related. Among these factors were the practice of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor.

An independent sample t test was applied to all five variables of item 31 using item 23 as the dependent variable. The purpose for this procedure was to investigate the difference of the means between those who did participate in the educational activities and those who did not as it related to the statement, "This internship taught me new knowledge and insight about ministry." Results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference in the means of these two groups. Both groups were as likely to report gaining new knowledge from internships.

Similar statistical procedures were conducted between the means of responses related to the various ministry activities of interns and the report of new knowledge, as

well as the weeklong events of interns and learning new knowledge. Results failed to demonstrate a significant difference in the mean responses of the various groups.

Finally, gender and classification were investigated as they related to various activities of internships. Neither gender nor classification in school was significantly correlated to the total number of educational activities, the total number of ministry activities, or the total number of weeklong events experienced during internships.

Knowledge and Spiritual Disciplines

There was no statistically significant relationship between engaging in any of the personal spiritual disciplines and learning new knowledge from internships. Furthermore, there was no statistically significant relationship between participating in numerous personal disciplines and learning new knowledge. Only the spiritual discipline of theological reflection, when shared weekly with a supervisor, was found to correlate with learning new knowledge ($r = .344, p < .01$). When interns engaged in theological reflection at least once a week with a supervisor they were more likely to report learning new knowledge from their internships.

While theological reflection with a supervisor was the only discipline to be correlated with new knowledge, there was an inverse relationship between reporting "none of the above" to the spiritual disciplines with a supervisor and gaining new knowledge ($r = -.432, p < .01$). When students did not participate in any of the spiritual disciplines with their supervisors on a weekly basis they were less likely to acquire new knowledge from their internships. Similarly, there was a correlation between the total number of spiritual disciplines engaged in with supervisors and the report that new knowledge was gained from the internship ($r = .303, p < .05$).

Gender was not shown to significantly influence correlations concerning the total number of personal spiritual disciplines or the number of spiritual disciplines shared with a supervisor. Males and females were each as likely to practice multiple personal spiritual disciplines and they were each as likely to participate in multiple spiritual disciplines with a supervisor.

Summary

The strongest predictors of learning new knowledge in ministry were learning new skills from internships and the supervisor's skill in ministry (Table 6).

Table 6. Correlations with learning new knowledge

Correlations with learning new knowledge	*r*	*p*
Learning new skills	.741	$p < .01$
Supervisor skill in ministry	.560	$p < .01$
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.523	$p < .01$
Growth in Christian character	.506	$p < .01$
Frequency of meetings for training and support	.435	$p < .01$
Supervisor adeptness at supervision	.434	$p < .01$
No weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	-.432	$p < .01$
Supervisor Christian maturity	.428	$p < .01$
Close supervisor relationship	.371	$p < .01$
Salary	.351	$p < .01$
Theological reflection with a supervisor	.344	$p < .01$
Receiving a code of ethics	.306	$p < .05$
Total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	.303	$p < .05$
Internship was important to ministry education	.296	$p < .05$
Frequency of performance evaluations	.293	$p < .05$

These were followed by correlations with the supervisor's knowledge, growing spiritually from internships, the frequency of training meetings, the supervisor's ability to supervise, the failure to engage in spiritual disciplines with a supervisor, the supervisor's

Christian maturity, a close supervisor relationship, salary, and theological reflection with a supervisor. Other correlations, albeit weaker, were evident between learning new knowledge and receiving a code of ethics, the total number of weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor, reports that internships were important for ministry education, and the frequency of performance evaluations with a supervisor. Eight of eleven correlations on the .01 level pertained directly to the supervisor's ability, character, or leadership.

Essay Responses

The open-ended essay question 36 asked "What new knowledge or insights about ministry did you gain from your internship?" The responses were evaluated and organized into various categories. The knowledge interns reported receiving from internships focused on relationships with teens, relationships with adults, the importance of a minister's personal relationship with God, the importance of organization, and insights into the difficult nature of ministry.

Relationships with Teens

Many students reported gaining knowledge about the relationships they formed with youth and how to intentionally develop relationships with a spiritual focus. One intern reported "I learned how to build relationships with teens where I am a spiritual leader, and how to talk about spiritual issues freely with teens" (HU13). Another student added, "I realize more and more that kids need role models and will attach to people who love them" (HU3). These students discovered truths about developing intentional relationships that aided their ability to minister.

Several interns elaborated on the successful ways that they connected with students. One noted that being an example actually helped facilitate interactions with teens (ACU2). Others shared this perspective and felt the secret to forming relationships with teens was to "be authentic with students" because "they can see when one is not being real" (HU2). Interns also said they realized from their experiences that each student needed to be approached in different ways. Despite this consideration for personalities, interns discovered that "studying the Bible with teens brings a closer relationship with them" (FHU3).

Finally, one intern noted the tenuous issue of romantic interest between youth group members and interns. He said, "I learned how to handle girls who are interested in me who are still in the youth group" (OCU7). Addressing these and related issues as interns will undoubtedly prepare students for the possibility of similar situations when they enter full time ministry.

Relationships with Parents, Elders, and Staff

While many interns discussed their relationships with teens, others commented on their interaction with older members noting, "You deal and interact differently with a teen than an adult" (FHU1). This was a second theme from the open-ended responses. Students said they gained wisdom about relationships with adults in the church. One student reported, "I got insight on how to deal with parents, elderships, other members of the staff, and other members of the church" (ACU9). Another student highlighted this as primary in his learning and declared, "I think the most important thing I learned was how to deal with parents and work with elders" (OCU3). There were still others who

commented about the importance of adult relationships and stated, "I gained a greater knowledge about the importance of having a good relationship with the elders" (FHU5). One student said he received a holistic education from his youth ministry internship and learned "how to handle every age bracket in the congregation" (FHU1). From students' comments it can be concluded that their field experiences were not solely limited to interactions with those who were younger. There was an important educational aspect of internships that placed students in relationships with adults.

A Minister's Devotional Life

Interns also stressed the significance of their own personal devotional life in light of the calling to ministry. One intern expressed his dependence on this and said, "I grew to understand the need for personal quiet time with God to be refueled and reenergized for each new day" (ACU7). Others emphasized the priority of fellowship with God as a prerequisite to ministry and said they learned "the importance of being filled with your personal relationship with God before you can share it" (LCU3) because "if you are not filled up by God, you can not minister" (HU5). The collective sentiment of interns is summarized by one student who observed, "you can only minister from the overflow" (HU5).

Organization

A fourth category of responses by interns concerned the importance of organization. This was specifically true as it applied to "how to plan and lead an event" (LCU1) which students noted was difficult to do (FU1, HU11). They said it was surprising "how much work and planning it takes from several people to run a youth

group's programs" (ACU10). To do so requires organizational skills in areas such as budgeting, communicating announcements (HU12), and other forms of paperwork (ACU12). As these students transitioned from participating in youth ministries to leading youth ministries they discovered that a key to success was to "be as organized as possible" (LCU2).

The Difficult Nature of Ministry

Finally, the knowledge that interns gained about ministry from their internships was not always positive in nature. One student wrote, "I learned that ministry is a hard thing. There are great things about it, but also some dark sides to it" (LU4). This student did not expound on what was meant but he was not alone in his observations. Another student said of ministry, "It's not easy because people talk – especially when you aren't doing a good job" (HU7).

Interns also emphasized the arduous nature of ministry as a learning outcome. These students said that ministry was difficult (DLU4), specifically because it was exhausting to continually serve others (HU8). Other students were equally transparent about their experiences. One student in particular reported about his learning by saying, "I don't feel like I have any new knowledge or skills specifically. This internship has taught me things that I don't want to do" (LCU4). Although still educative, some interns learned from the crucible of negative experiences and reported that they learned what not to do in ministry (FHU6).

Research Question 2

The second RQ asked, "To what extent do youth ministry internships assist

interns in the acquisition of skills relevant to youth ministry?" Inventory items 15, 20, 24, 28, 33, 35, 37, and 41 applied specifically to this RQ. Various Pearson r correlations were investigated to determine the existence of relationships related to new skills, and independent sample t tests were applied to various items to investigate the means of different groups. Essay question 37 was evaluated for patterns that supported or challenged the findings of statistical analysis concerning ministry skills.

Skills and Demographics

There was no significant correlation between church size, length of internship, or season of internship, and the acquisition of skills. In addition, there was no correlation between the identity of the supervisor and the report of new skills in ministry. The strongest relationship existed between the report of learning new skills in ministry and the report that new knowledge was gained ($r = .741, p < .01$).

The Most Significant Aspect of Internships

Item 41 asked respondents to rank five aspects of internships in order based on their significance as the most important thing gleaned from internships (Table 7).

Table 7. Aspects of internships in order of significance

	Aspects of internships	*Total*	*Mean*
1.	Skills in ministry	125	2.19
2.	Character / Spirituality	137	2.40
3.	Knowledge about ministry	155	2.72
4.	Supervisor relationship	199	3.49
5.	Vocational discernment	239	4.19

Note: Students were asked to rank in order of significance the most important thing they received from internships, using 1 as the most important and 5 as the least important

Interns reported that new skills in ministry were first. This was followed by the influence of internships on the character and spirituality of the intern. Knowledge about ministry was ranked third, and interns' relationships with their supervisors was ranked fourth. The least important contribution of internships was their influence on whether or not to enter ministry.

Skills and Supervisors

The factors that most influenced the report of learning new skills from internships were those related to the supervisor (Table 8). Significant relationships existed between the interns' reports of learning new skills and supervisors' knowledge about ministry, supervisors' skill in ministry, supervisors as models of Christian maturity, and supervisors as excellent intern supervisors.

Table 8. Skills and supervisors

Correlations between new skills and supervisors	*r*	*p*
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.524	$p < .01$
Supervisor skill in ministry	.471	$p < .01$
Frequency of meetings for training and support	.437	$p < .01$
Supervisor Christian maturity	.366	$p < .01$
Close supervisor relationship	.338	$p < .05$
Supervisor adeptness at supervision	.323	$p < .05$

Specifically, the relationships that developed between interns and supervisors bore influence on the report of learning new skills. There was a positive correlation between the frequency of meetings with supervisors for training and support in ministry and the report of new skills gleaned from internships. The more frequently a supervisor met with an intern the more likely that intern was to report learning new ministry skills

from the internship. Finally, there was also a correlation between new skills and the report that supervisors and interns developed close relationships.

Skills and Educational Activities

Although the educational activities of interns did not significantly influence the report that new knowledge was gained, there was a correlation between reports that interns participated in journaling and their reports that new skills were gained from internships ($r = .351, p < .01$). While a correlation existed between journaling and learning new ministry skills, there was no statistically significant relationship between journaling and learning new knowledge or growing in Christian character. The other educational activities of reading a book about ministry, attending a conference, and discussing case studies were not shown to significantly correlate with the acquisition of new ministry skills.

A Pearson r correlation was conducted against item 24 by summing the total number of educational activities engaged in during internships. There was no statistically significant relationship between participating in more educational activities and the report of learning new skills in ministry. Similarly, there was no correlation between reporting new ministry skills and participating in more weeklong events, more ministry activities, or more individual spiritual disciplines.

Skills and Ministry Activities

Interns engaged in copious tasks during their internships. These are presented in Figure 9. The activities that interns most frequently participated in included teaching a class, planning and leading events, and counseling youth. There were no interns who

conducted a wedding or a funeral during their internships. Other activities interns were less likely to engage in included performing a baptism and preaching in the assembly.

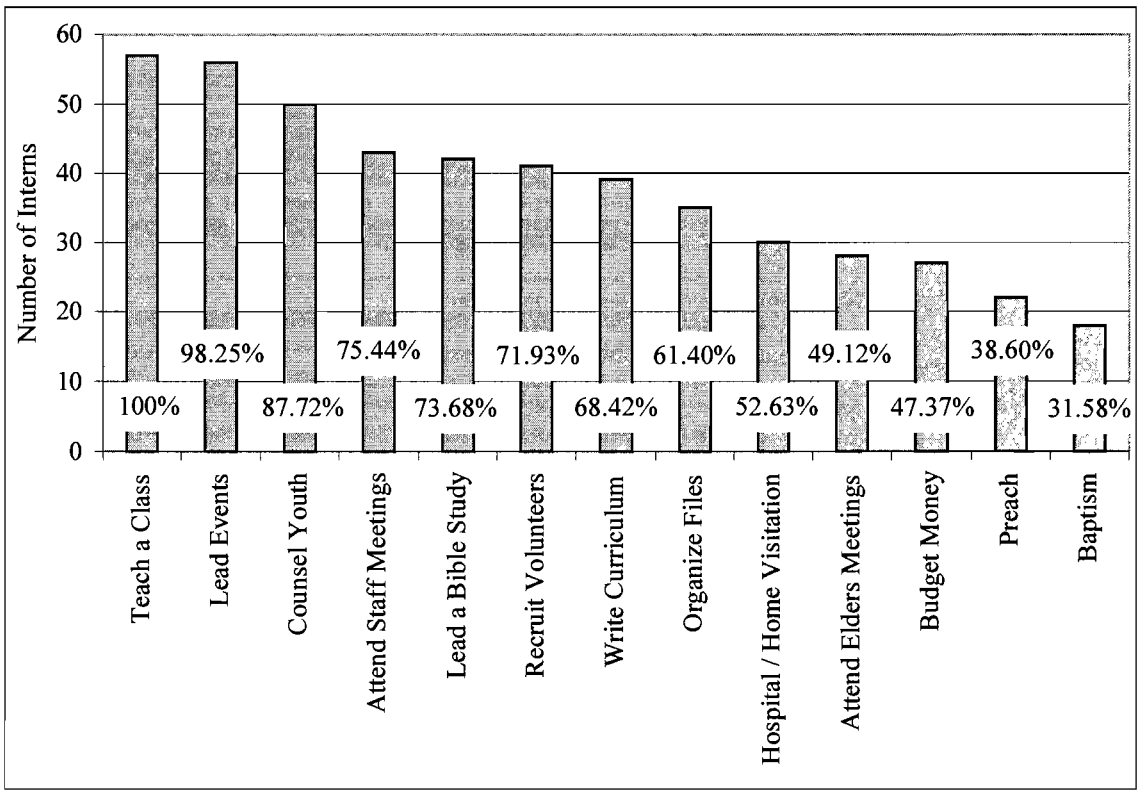

Figure 9. Ministry tasks of interns

There was no significant relationship between performing any of the ministry activities listed in the inventory instrument and the report that ministry skills were acquired from internships. Furthermore, there was no significant correlation between the total number of ministry activities and the report that new skills were learned from internships. Neither gender nor classification in school was significantly related to the total number of ministry activities experienced during internships.

Differences did exist in the opportunity to practice specific tasks. Seniors were more likely than juniors to report that they participated in budgeting money ($r = .433$, $p < .01$) and were more likely than juniors to report that they attended staff meetings during their internships ($r = .325$, $p < .05$). Despite this fact, juniors were more likely than seniors to report that ministry skills were an important contribution of internships ($r = .304$, $p < .05$). Seniors were more likely to rank ministry skills as less important.

Skills and Spiritual Disciplines

There was no significant relationship between interns engaging in any of the spiritual disciplines individually and the report that new skills were learned. Conversely, participating in the spiritual disciplines with a supervisor on a weekly basis did influence skill acquisition. There was a correlation between participating in Bible study with a supervisor and the report that new skills were learned ($r = .302$, $p < .05$). Also, when students did not participate in any of the spiritual disciplines with their supervisors they were less likely to report learning new skills in ministry from internships ($r = -.401$, $p < .01$). This is not surprising given the correlation that existed between learning new skills and the total number of spiritual disciplines between interns and supervisors ($r = .320$, $p < .05$). The more spiritual disciplines interns reported participating in with their supervisors on a weekly basis the more likely they were to say they learned new ministry skills from their internships.

Skills and Ministry Events

Interns participated in six different types of weeklong events during their internships. These are presented in Figure 10. Most interns participated in High School

camp, Junior High camp, Service Projects, and Mission Trips. A minority participated in Wilderness Trek or equivalent camping experiences, and Vacation Bible School.

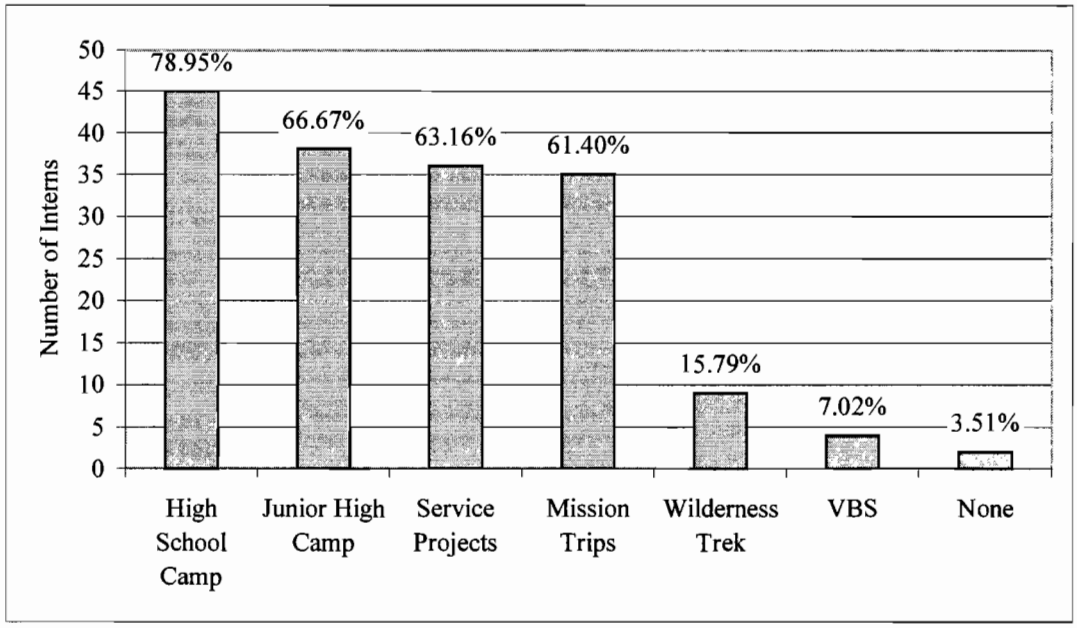

Figure 10. Weeklong ministry events of interns

The individual weeklong ministry events during internships were not found to significantly influence the report that interns learned new skills. Neither was there a correlation between the total number of weeklong events and the report of learning new skills in ministry. Neither gender nor classification in school was significantly related to the total number of weeklong events of interns.

Summary

The various components of internships that had the strongest positive correlation with gaining new skills are presented in Table 9. These included learning new knowledge, the supervisor's knowledge about ministry, the supervisor's skill in

ministry, the frequency of training meetings, failure to engage in weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor, the supervisor's Christian maturity, and the action of journaling.

Table 9. Correlations with learning new skills

Correlations with learning new skills	*r*	*p*
Learning new knowledge	.741	$p < .01$
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.542	$p < .01$
Supervisor skill in ministry	.471	$p < .01$
Frequency of meetings for training and support	.437	$p < .01$
No weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	-.401	$p < .01$
Supervisor's Christian maturity	.366	$p < .01$
Journaling	.351	$p < .01$
Close supervisor relationship	.338	$p < .05$
Total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	.320	$p < .05$
Bible study with a supervisor	.302	$p < .05$

Although less significantly correlated, there were relationships between learning new skills and developing a close supervisor relationship, the total number of spiritual disciplines shared weekly with a supervisor, and the practice of Bible study on a weekly basis with a supervisor. Five of the seven correlations at the .01 level pertained directly to the supervisor's ability, character, or leadership. All three of the correlations at the .05 level were associated with the supervisor.

Essay Responses

Item 37 served as an open-ended essay question that asked, "What ministry skills did you learn from your internship?" The responses were evaluated and organized

by various categories. These included teaching, time management and organization, counseling skills with youth, and working with others in ministry.

Teaching

The most frequently mentioned skill acquired from internships involved the act of teaching. Almost 50% of all respondents said they acquired skills in teaching or improved their teaching proficiencies. This is not surprising given that 100% of interns participated in some form of teaching during their internships. This exposure to the teaching task resulted in new skills that included writing curriculum, preparing for lessons, and using various forms of audio and video media.

Although most students simply listed "teaching" as a new skill, some reported on the ways their teaching improved. One student said, "I feel more comfortable speaking in front of groups" (LU3). Another added, "I have a greater confidence in my teaching ability" (ACU7). Through the education of experience, internships offered students opportunities that resulted in greater poise during teaching and assurance of their abilities while speaking in front of groups.

Time Management and Organization

Students also mentioned time management as a skill acquired from their internships. For some, this was a lesson learned out of necessity. One student reported, "I learned how to better manage my time because there were so many demands on my time" (HU13). This student was afforded the opportunity to experience the demands of full time ministry on personal schedules. Other interns also emphasized the specific

contexts of their learning, which included the management of office time (ACU9), and skills of organization (LU9) in order to be productive in ministry.

Counseling Relationships With Youth

Interns' responses also centered on the counseling relationships they formed with youth. More than one in five interns said they acquired skills related to some aspect of counseling. These skills were primarily related to the ways interns formed relationships with teens. One proponent of experiential learning noted, "Nothing teaches one how to do something better than experience, so this internship was amazing in teaching me to lead a Bible study, teach kids one on one, and to use the small, everyday moments in life to lead someone to Jesus" (HU3). Another student found forming friendships to be enjoyable and commented, "It was fun just learning to relate to young people in a way that makes them love you and respect you" (HU5).

Interns acquired a second tier of skills as they related to the act of counseling. Student's testimonies suggest that internships provide opportunities to dialogue about meaningful subjects and to offer guidance to teens when necessary. But this should follow active listening. As one student said, "I learned the importance of compassion and listening, not offering advice all the time, but really listening to what a kid or adult has on their heart" (FHU4). Others agreed that the skills of compassion (HU6) and listening (ACU13) were an important part of their education through internships.

Working With Others

Finally, internships exposed interns to multiple relationships and various personalities. Almost 20% of interns said they grew in their "people skills" (ACU5), and

in their ability to work with other adults in ministry (ACU6, DLU8, OCU3). Interns specifically reported about their experiences learning the skills required to serve in ministry with difficult people. Interns said they learned to work with "others who may not click with your personality" (HU2), "people you don't like or get along with" (FHU6), and "a boss who makes things uncomfortable" (ACU11).

Research Question 3

The third RQ asked, "To what extent do youth ministry internships contribute to the spiritual development of interns?" Inventory items 16, 21, 25, 32, 34, 38, and 41 applied specifically to this RQ. A Pearson r correlation was computed on item 25 and various other items to discern the significance between intern spirituality as a result of internships and other factors including the supervisor, the spiritual disciplines of interns, and the supervisor and intern relationship. Essay question 38 was evaluated for patterns that supported or challenged the findings of statistical analysis on spirituality.

Character Overview

Students were generally positive about the influence of internships on their character and spirituality. When asked to express their level of agreement with the statement, "This internship helped me grow in Christian character," students responded with a mean of 4.46 out of 5.00. A strong correlation existed between students' agreement with the former statement and their ranking of character and spirituality as the most significant aspect of internships ($r = .393, p < .01$). Collectively, interns ranked character and spirituality as the second most important acquisition from their internship experiences, behind only learning new skills in ministry.

Spiritual Development and Demographic Information

Growing in Christian character and spirituality was not significantly correlated with any of the individual demographic data. Specifically, there was no statistically significant relationship between growing in Christian character and variables such as the identity of the supervisor, the season and length of the internship, weekly salary or number of fellow interns. Although inventory item 16 investigated the relationship between receiving a code of ethics to follow during internships and growing in Christian character, there was not a significant relationship between the two.

Spiritual Development and Supervision

Several significant correlations existed between supervision and the report of growing in Christian character (Table 10).

Table 10. Spiritual development and supervision

Correlations between spiritual development and supervisors	*r*	*p*
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.483	$p < .01$
Supervisor skill in ministry	.459	$p < .01$
Frequency of meetings for training and support	.448	$p < .01$
Frequency of performance evaluations	.447	$p < .01$
Supervisor Christian maturity	.367	$p < .01$
Supervisor adept at supervision	.319	$p < .05$

Those interns who reported that their supervisors were knowledgeable and skillful in ministry were the most likely to say that they grew in Christian character from their internship experiences. These two correlations were followed by the frequency of meetings for training and support in ministry, and meetings for performance evaluations.

When interns met frequently with their supervisors they were more likely to grow in Christian character. Finally, those interns who reported growing in Christian character were likely to have supervisors who were models of Christian maturity and morality, and skillful in the tasks of supervision.

When asked to express their level of agreement with the statement, "My supervisor was a model of Christian maturity and morality," females were less likely than males to agree. An independent sample t test was calculated for males and females as they responded to their supervisor's Christian maturity. Female interns' mean rating of their supervisor's maturity and morality was significantly lower (Table 11). Despite this variance in gender perception of supervisor morality, there was no significant difference in the responses of males and females to the statement, "This internship helped me grow in Christian character."

Table 11. Reports of supervisor morality by gender

	Gender	*n*	*Mean*	*sd*
My supervisor was a model of Christian maturity and morality.	Male	50	4.44	0.81
	Female	7	3.57	1.27

Spiritual Development And Other Learning

The character growth of interns was closely associated with other learning. A correlation existed between interns' reports of growing in Christian character and learning new knowledge about ministry from their experiences ($r = .506, p < .01$).

Similarly, interns who reported that they grew in character from internships were more likely to report that they learned new ministry skills ($r = .589$, $p < .01$).

Spiritual Development and the Spiritual Disciplines

When asked to report on the practice of personal spiritual disciplines, most interns said they engaged in prayer, Bible study, and worship on a weekly basis. These are presented in Figure 11. Only 66.67% gave financially, 63.16% engaged in theological reflection or meditation, and 29.82% participated in confession and accountability. There were no interns who fasted on a weekly basis.

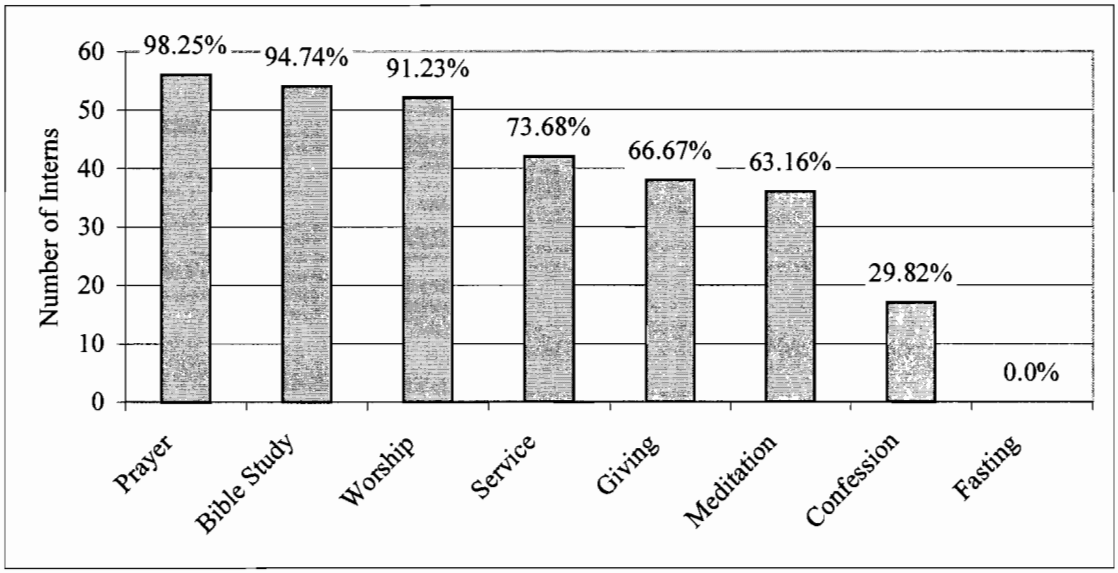

Figure 11. Weekly individual spiritual disciplines of interns

The overall influence of the spiritual disciplines on the spirituality of the intern was minimal. The only individual spiritual discipline to have a significant correlation with the report of growing in Christian character and spirituality was meditation and

reflection ($r = .312, p < .05$). Those students who participated in the other disciplines were as likely to report that they did not grow in character from the internship. The only spiritual discipline to be correlated with gender was service. Females were slightly less likely than males to report that they participated in service on a weekly basis.

Participating in numerous spiritual disciplines did not alter this pattern. The total number of personal spiritual disciplines was not significantly related to reports that internships helped develop Christian character. Practicing the disciplines with a supervisor proved more closely related to developing Christian character and spirituality.

Interns reported that they engaged in various spiritual disciplines with their supervisors on a weekly basis. These are presented in Figure 12. Over half the interns participated in weekly worship and prayer with their supervisors and almost half engaged in theological reflection. Almost one fifth said they did not participate in any of these with their supervisor.

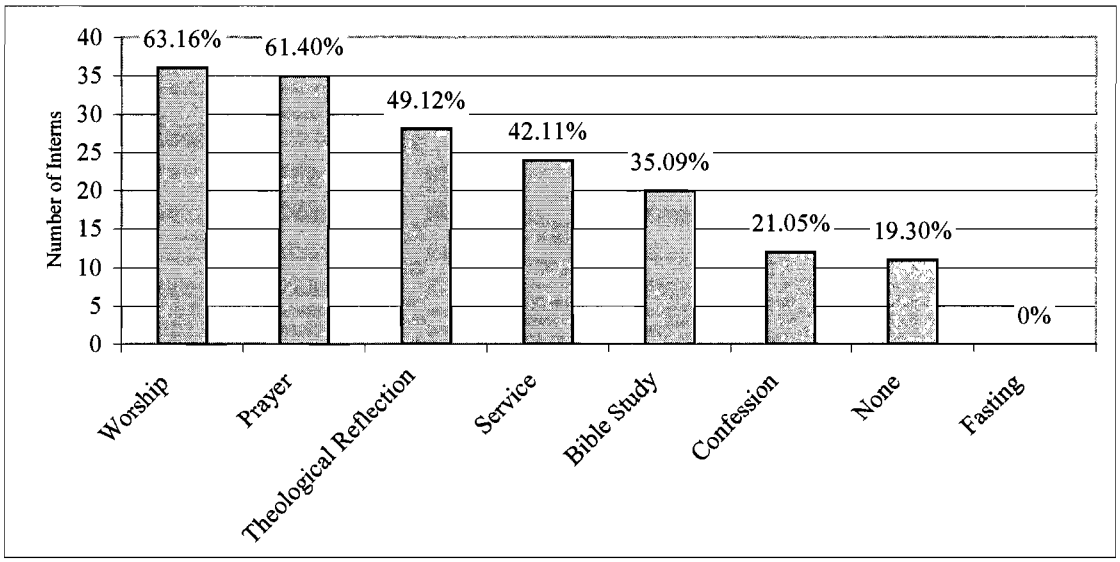

Figure 12. Weekly spiritual disciplines of interns with supervisors

The spiritual disciplines that interns participated in with supervisors were significantly correlated with reports of spiritual development (Table 12). Of all the disciplines, theological reflection with supervisors had the strongest correlation with interns' reports that they grew in Christian character. Other disciplines such as service, prayer, and Bible study also had a significant relationship with growing in Christian character.

Table 12. Spiritual development and spiritual disciplines with a supervisor

Correlations between spiritual development and spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	*r*	*p*
Total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	.440	$p < .01$
No weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	-.411	$p < .01$
Theological Reflection	.336	$p < .05$
Service	.330	$p < .05$
Prayer	.279	$p < .05$
Bible Study	.275	$p < .05$

The absence of sharing in the spiritual disciplines with a supervisor was also related to interns' character. When students did not engage in any of the spiritual disciplines with a supervisor there was a negative relationship with growing in Christian character. Conversely, the total number of weekly spiritual disciplines with supervisors was significantly related to reports of growing in Christian character. The more spiritual disciplines interns and supervisors shared on a weekly basis, the more likely the intern was to say she grew in Christian character from the experience. This was true irrespective of gender or classification. Neither the total number of personal spiritual disciplines nor the total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor were significantly related to gender or classification in school.

Spiritual Development and Ministry Activities

The various activities of interns during internships were not as influential to the report of new character as other factors. The only ministry task to influence growing in character was leading a small group Bible study ($r = .296, p < .05$). The total number of ministry activities, educational activities, and weeklong events of interns were not significantly related to growth in Christian character.

Summary

There were numerous variable associated with growing in Christian character. These are presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Growing in Christian character

Correlations with growing in Christian character	*r*	*p*
Learning new skills	.589	$p < .01$
Learning new knowledge	.506	$p < .01$
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.483	$p < .01$
Supervisor skill in ministry	.459	$p < .01$
Frequency of meetings for training and support	.448	$p < .01$
Frequency of performance evaluations	.447	$p < .01$
Total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	.440	$p < .01$
No weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	-.411	$p < .01$
Supervisor Christian maturity	.367	$p < .01$
Theological reflection with a supervisor	.336	$p < .05$
Service with a supervisor	.330	$p < .05$
Supervisor adept at supervision	.319	$p < .05$
Personal meditation and reflection	.312	$p < .05$
Leading a Bible study	.296	$p < .05$
Prayer with a supervisor	.279	$p < .05$
Bible study with a supervisor	.275	$p < .05$

The components of internships that had the strongest positive correlation with growth in character were learning new skills, learning new knowledge, the supervisor's knowledge about ministry, the supervisor's skill in ministry, the frequency of training meetings, the frequency of performance evaluations, the total number of spiritual disciplines shared with a supervisor, and the supervisor's Christian maturity. Other variables were correlated at a significance level of .05. These included theological reflection with a supervisor, service with a supervisor, a supervisor who was skillful at supervision, personal meditation and reflection, leading a Bible study, prayer with a supervisor, and Bible study with a supervisor. Seven of the nine correlations at the .01 level pertain directly to the supervisor's ability, character, or leadership.

Essay Responses

The responses to item 38 comply with the report that internships encouraged students in their relationships with God. More than 65% of interns said their relationships with God were strengthened through their internships. Specifically, several themes emerged from the responses that indicate interns were convicted of the need to continue growing spiritually, they learned dependence on God, and they realized the significance of their example and its influence on personal spirituality.

Convicted of the Need to Grow

As students participated in internships they were confronted with a realistic evaluation of their spirituality. One student reported, "I realized I need to be more spiritually minded" (ACU5). As if commenting on the same experience, another intern testified that the internship "deepened and strengthened my relationship with God but it

also made me see where my shortcomings are" (ACU12). Students were able to see themselves more clearly in the light of ministry contexts. This perspective resulted in motivation toward growth.

Interns also reported that their experiences, while beneficial, often deceived them. One intern said, "I was drained and did not realize until the end of the summer how much I needed to make time for just me and God" (HU2). It was not uncommon to be exhausted by the work of internships. As a student noted, "I grew closer to God through my daily study, but I did have to be careful about not nourishing myself" (DLU9).

Learned Dependence on God

Another theme among the essay responses concerning intern character and spirituality was the realization that interns needed to learn total dependence on God (HU6; HU7). One student said of the internship, "It forced me into situations where the only thing that could save me was my relationship with God" (ACU10). Others joined this resignation of helplessness and submission to God by stating "the internship forced me to realize I can't do it without God" (ACU1). Part of that realization of dependence displayed itself in dependence on communication with God through prayer. For one student, the internship supplied the necessary impetus to form positive habits of communion with God. He said, "I've come to rely on God more. My prayer life is as strong as I can remember" (OCU3). Others agreed about the influence of internships on personal spirituality and said, "This internship helped me to rely on God and other Christians more because I needed a lot of support. It also helped me to be more prayerful, as my supervisor was prayerful" (HU13).

As interns were challenged by the experiences of internships they were reminded of their relationships with God and the great power that he has in the world. As one intern said, "I'm only one man. I can't do everything. God can make anything happen" (LCU2). Such an insight resulted from immersion in ministry contexts. In one sense internships simulate the experiences of fulltime ministers who daily draw strength from the One who empowers them for their tasks.

Example Was Motivation For Growth

Finally, student responses highlighted a common experience among interns: the powerful motivation that being watched provides for growth. Internships helped students understand the type of person they need to be when they serve as ministers. One student said, "When I am leading and directing others, I am pushed to be a better woman of God. It challenges me to know what I'm talking about and to make sure I'm living the way I'm telling others they should live – according to God's Word" (HU3). Another female wrote, "Preparing classes and devos, and just praying with young girls strongly influenced me and brought me deeper" (HU5). The actions of spiritual leadership were influential not only in the lives of those they ministered to. Interns also benefited spiritually from their efforts. This was particularly true as interns understood their influence.

When interns comprehend the significance of their influence it caused them to realize they are "called to a higher standard" (HU9). Having an audience of impressionable teens led one intern to write, "the internship definitely made me stronger because I was able to grow more as a leader, and I knew that the kids were constantly

watching me" (FHU4). One intern grasped the influence of personal spirituality in ministry and stated, "I also learned that my character is my job" (OCU3).

Research Question 4

The fourth RQ asked, "In what ways does the supervisor influence the report of a positive or negative internship experience?" Inventory items 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 34, 39, and 41 applied specifically to this RQ. Various other combinations of questions were investigated with the Pearson r correlation where item 22 was the dependent variable. An independent sample t test was used with the items of item 34 with item 22 as the dependent variable. Essay question 39 was evaluated for patterns that supported or challenged the findings of statistical analysis concerning the supervisor's role in internships.

Supervisor Identity

Interns were supervised by four groups of people (Figure 13). Three quarters of youth ministry interns were supervised by youth ministers. Just under 18% of interns were supervised by preaching ministers, and a small minority were supervised by elders and deacons. Although male youth ministers supervised all of the interns there were three interns who reported that a female youth minister served beside a male youth minister as a co-supervisor.

The supervisor's identity was significantly related to several aspects of internships. First, a positive correlation existed between reports that a youth minister supervised the intern and reports that the supervisor was knowledgeable about ministry

($r = .368, p < .01$). Similarly, a positive correlation existed between a youth minister as the supervisor and reports that he was a good intern supervisor ($r = .310, p < .05$). In addition, a correlation existed between youth ministers as supervisors and intern's reports that they developed a close relationship with their supervisor ($r = .304, p < .05$). Interns were more likely to report that youth ministers were adept at supervision and youth minister supervisors were more likely to develop a close relationship with their interns.

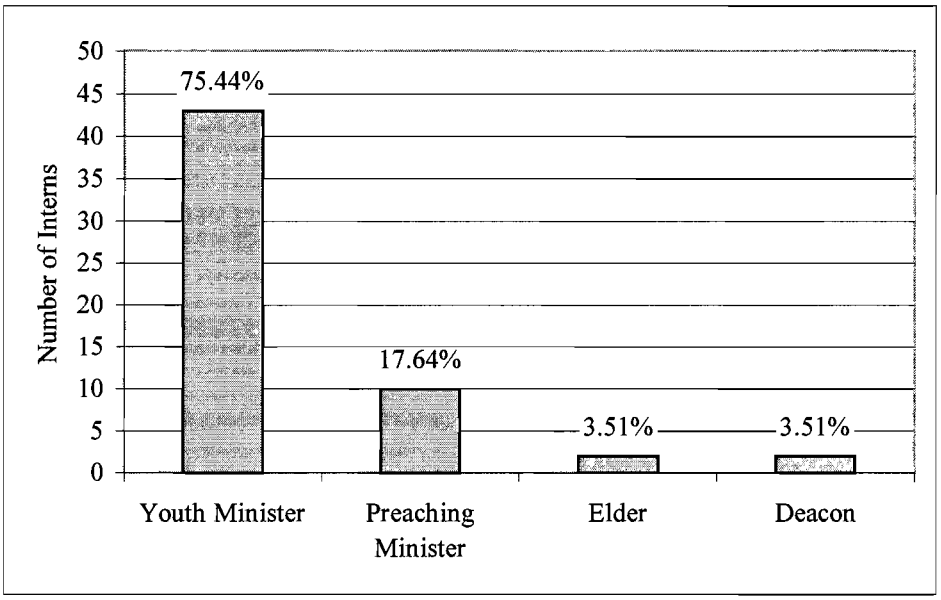

Figure 13. Identity of intern supervisors

Excellent Supervision

The statement, "My supervisor was an excellent intern supervisor" garnered the least support of any other Likert-type statement on the inventory. Almost 20% of interns expressed disagreement or strong disagreement with the statement. Another 17.54% were neutral. Together, there were more than one in three interns who did not agree that their supervisor was good at supervision.

Several correlations offer insight into the low rating of supervisors' skill and the components interns equate with quality supervision. When interns did report that their supervisors were skilled in the tasks of supervision certain trends followed (Table 14). First, excellent supervisors were reported to be models of Christian maturity and morality, skillful in ministry, they developed close relationships with their interns, and they were knowledgeable about ministry. There was also a strong correlation between interns' reports that their supervisors were excellent at supervision and the total number of spiritual disciplines the two shared together on a weekly basis.

Table 14. Supervisor adeptness at supervision

Correlations related to excellent supervision	*r*	*p*
Supervisor Christian maturity	.715	$p < .01$
Supervisor skill in ministry	.689	$p < .01$
Close supervisor relationship	.688	$p < .01$
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.559	$p < .01$
Frequency of meeting for training and support	.545	$p < .01$
Total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	.503	$p < .01$
Learning new knowledge	.434	$p < .01$
Learning new skills	.323	$p < .05$
Growth in Christian character	.319	$p < .05$
Frequency of performance evaluations	.294	$p < .05$
Internship was important to ministry education	.279	$p < .05$
Receiving a code of ethics	.274	$p < .05$

Job Description and Code of Ethics

Despite the fact that receiving a job description was not strongly correlated with the supervisor's skill in supervision, there was a correlation between receiving a job description and the act of discussing case studies during internships ($r = .281$, $p < .05$). Interns reported that job descriptions had little to do with their supervisor's quality of

supervision. Conversely, interns who received a code of ethics were more likely to say their supervisors were excellent at supervision ($r = .274, p < .05$). Youth ministers were much more likely to give their interns a code of ethics than other supervisors ($r = .401$, $p < .01$). In addition, supervisors who gave their interns a code of ethics to follow met with their interns more frequently for performance evaluations ($r = .278, p < .05$) and these interns were more likely to report that their supervisors were excellent supervisors ($r = .274, p < .05$).

Supervisor and Intern Meetings

Next, supervisors who were reported to be skillful at supervision were more likely to meet on a frequent basis for interns' professional development ($r = .545$, $p < .01$). Most interns met with their supervisors on a daily or weekly basis (Figure 14). Over one fifth met less frequently and 5.26% did not meet with their supervisors at all during their internships.

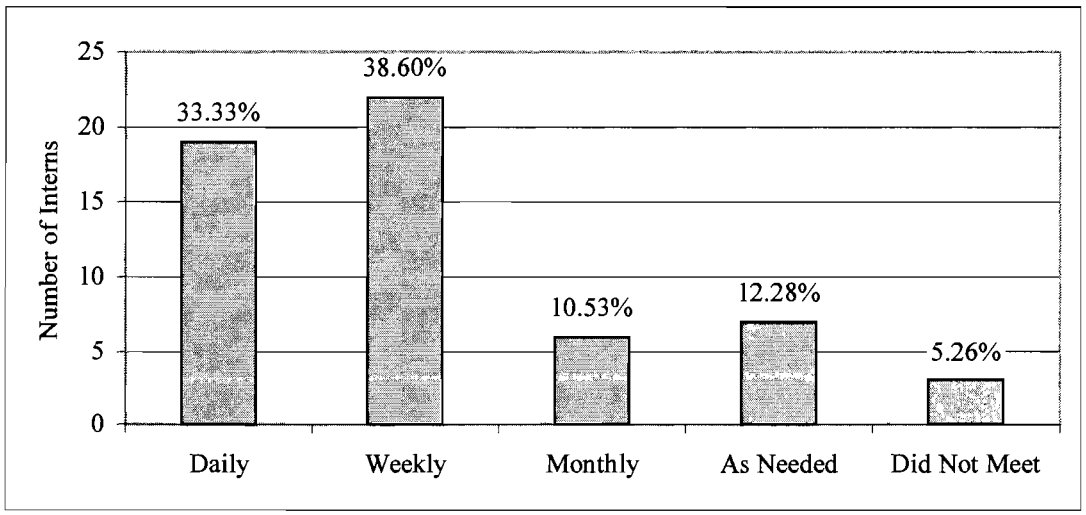

Figure 14. Frequency of supervisor meetings for support and training in ministry

Supervisors who were skillful in supervision also met more frequently with their interns for assessment (Figure 15). These supervisors, noted as skillful, were more likely to instigate frequent meetings for performance evaluations ($r = .294, p < .05$). While frequency of meetings for training and support in ministry was related to excellent supervision, discussing case studies with a supervisor was not shown to have a significant relationship on the report that the supervisor excelled as a supervisor.

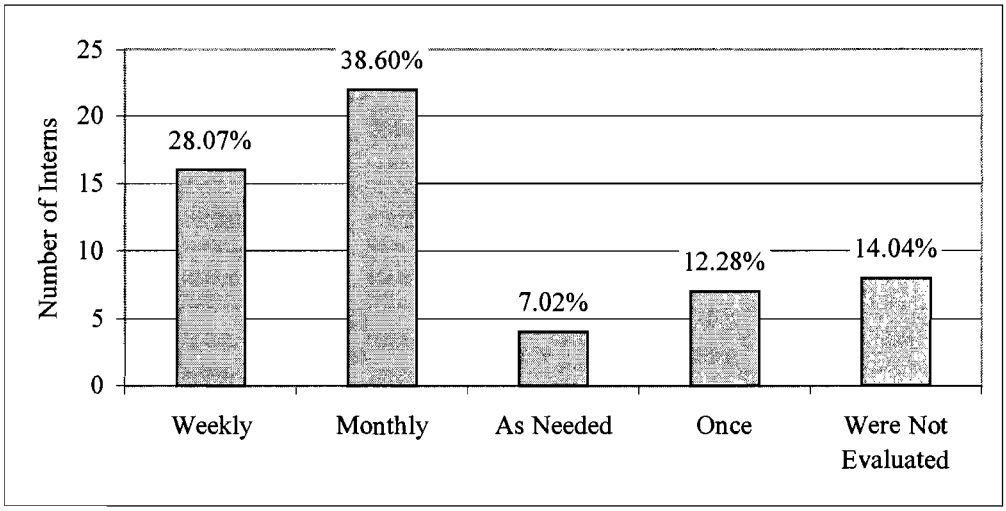

Figure 15. Frequency of performance evaluations

Supervisors Skillful in Ministry

When interns reported that their supervisors were skillful in ministry they were more likely to report that they learned new knowledge from internships ($r = .434, p < .01$), they learned new skills ($r = .323, p < .05$), and they grew in Christian character ($r = .319, p < .05$). These interns were also more likely to say that the internship was important to their education as ministers ($r = .279, p < .05$).

Total Number of Spiritual Disciplines Between Supervisors and Interns

The total number of spiritual disciplines interns and supervisors engaged in together was investigated. These are displayed in Table 15.

Table 15. Total number of weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor

Correlations related to the total number of weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	*r*	*p*
Frequency of meetings for training and support	.687	$p < .01$
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.527	$p < .01$
Supervisor Christian maturity	.507	$p < .01$
Supervisor adeptness at supervision	.503	$p < .01$
Supervisor skill in ministry	.456	$p < .01$
Growth in Christian character	.440	$p < .01$
Close supervisor relationship	.428	$p < .01$
Total number of weekly individual spiritual disciplines	.424	$p < .01$
Frequency of performance evaluations	.380	$p < .01$
Total number of ministry activities	.338	$p < .05$
Learning new skills	.320	$p < .05$
Learning new knowledge	.303	$p < .05$
Total number of weeklong events	.264	$p < .05$

The total number of spiritual disciplines interns and supervisors participated in was significantly correlated with several other aspects of internships. Foremost among these was the correlation between engaging in the spiritual disciplines with a supervisor and the frequency of meetings for support and training in ministry. It is possible that these meetings were the context for several of the spiritual disciplines. Correlations also existed between the total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor and reports that supervisors were knowledgeable in ministry, models of Christian maturity and morality,

excellent supervisors, and skillful in ministry. When interns and supervisors joined in the spiritual disciplines together the interns were also more likely to report that the internship helped them grow in Christian character.

Supervision and the Spiritual Disciplines

The practice of the spiritual disciplines was related to reports that supervisors excelled in supervision. These correlations are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Supervisor adeptness and weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor

Correlation between supervisor adeptness and weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	*r*	*p*
Theological Reflection	.482	$p < .01$
Prayer	.444	$p < .01$
No weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	-.400	$p < .01$
Bible Study	.344	$p < .01$
Service	.295	$p < .05$

When interns reported that their supervisors were adept at their roles they were more likely to say that they engaged in theological reflection, prayer, Bible study, and service with their supervisors. Conversely, there was a negative relationship between reports that supervisors excelled in their roles and not participating in the spiritual disciplines with a supervisor. More precisely, when interns did not engage in any of the spiritual disciplines with their supervisors on a weekly basis they were more likely to report that their supervisors were poor supervisors.

Supervisor Relationship with Intern

The relationships that interns shared with their supervisors were correlated

with several aspects of internships (Table 17). Interns who formed close relationships with their supervisors were more likely to say that their supervisor was a model of maturity and morality, an excellent intern supervisor, skillful in ministry, and knowledgeable about ministry.

Table 17. Close supervisor-intern relationships

Correlations related to a close supervisor relationship	*r*	*p*
Supervisor Christian maturity	.722	$p < .01$
Supervisor adeptness at supervision	.688	$p < .01$
Supervisor skill in ministry	.685	$p < .01$
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.575	$p < .01$
Learning new knowledge	.371	$p < .01$
Learning new skills	.338	$p < .01$
Frequency of meetings for training and support	.316	$p < .05$

Interns who reported a close relationship with their supervisors were also more likely to say they learned new knowledge, and new skills, from their internships. They were also more likely to have supervisors who instigated frequent meetings for training and support in ministry.

Although there was no significant correlation between the statements, "My supervisor and I developed a close relationship" and "This internship helped me grow in Christian character," results show that a significant correlation existed between a close supervisor relationship and the practice of individual Bible study ($r = .274, p < .05$). Moreover, a close supervisor relationship was correlated with the practice of the spiritual disciplines with supervisors. These relationships are presented in Table 18. When interns reported that they formed close relationships with their supervisors they were more likely to say that they engaged in Bible study, prayer, service, and theological

reflection. When interns said that they did not form a close relationship with their supervisors they were more likely to say they did not participate in any of the spiritual disciplines with their supervisors on a weekly basis. This is consistent with the fact that a close supervisor relationship was correlated with the total number of spiritual disciplines interns shared with supervisors.

Table 18. Close relationships and weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor

Correlations related to close supervisor-intern relationships and spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	*r*	*p*
Total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	.428	$p < .01$
No weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	-.393	$p < .01$
Bible Study	.345	$p < .01$
Prayer	.316	$p < .05$
Service	.309	$p < .05$
Theological Reflection	.281	$p < .05$

Summary

The three strongest predictors of interns' reports that supervisors were adept at supervision involved the supervisor's Christian maturity, the supervisor's skill in ministry, and the development of a close relationship between supervisors and interns (Table 19). These correlations were followed by several more at the .01 level. Other relationships existed between reports of quality supervision and the supervisor's knowledge about ministry, the frequency of training meetings, the total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor, theological reflection with a supervisor, prayer with a supervisor, learning new knowledge, failure to participate in any weekly spiritual

disciplines with a supervisor, and Bible study with a supervisor. Other variables were correlated with quality supervision at the .05 level.

Table 19. Supervisor adeptness at supervision and all correlations

Correlations with supervisors adept at supervision	*r*	*p*
Supervisor Christian maturity	.715	$p < .01$
Supervisor skill in ministry	.689	$p < .01$
Close supervisor relationship	.688	$p < .01$
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.559	$p < .01$
Frequency of meetings for training and support	.545	$p < .01$
Total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	.503	$p < .01$
Theological reflection with a supervisor	.482	$p < .01$
Prayer with a supervisor	.444	$p < .01$
Learning new knowledge	.434	$p < .01$
No weekly spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	-.400	$p < .01$
Bible study with a supervisor	.344	$p < .01$
Learning new skills	.323	$p < .05$
Growing in Christian character	.319	$p < .05$
Service with a supervisor	.295	$p < .05$
Frequency of performance evaluations	.294	$p < .05$
Internship was important to ministry education	.279	$p < .05$
Receiving a code of ethics	.274	$p < .05$

The three strongest predictors of interns' reports that supervisors and interns formed close relationships were the supervisor's Christian maturity, the supervisor's skill in supervision, and the supervisor's skill in ministry (Table 20). These were followed by several other correlations at the .01 level, including the supervisor's knowledge about ministry, the total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor, learning new knowledge from the internship, and Bible study with a supervisor. Other variables were correlated with close relationships between supervisors and interns at the .05 level.

Table 20. Close supervisor relationships and all correlations

Correlations with a close supervisor relationship	*r*	*p*
Supervisor Christian maturity	.722	$p < .01$
Supervisor adeptness at supervision	.688	$p < .01$
Supervisor skill in ministry	.685	$p < .01$
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.575	$p < .01$
Total number of spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	.428	$p < .01$
No spiritual disciplines with a supervisor	-.393	$p < .01$
Learning new knowledge	.371	$p < .01$
Bible study with a supervisor	.345	$p < .01$
Learning new skills	.338	$p < .05$
Frequency of meetings for training and support in ministry	.316	$p < .05$
Prayer with a supervisor	.316	$p < .05$
Service with a supervisor	.309	$p < .05$
Theological reflection with a supervisor	.281	$p < .05$

Essay Responses

The open-ended question of item 39 asked, "What did your supervisor do to make this a positive or negative experience?" Student responses congealed around three themes when supervisors were a positive influence: supervisors offered support and encouragement, they corrected with gentleness when correction was necessary, and finally, they offered respect and trust to their interns. Students who reported that their supervisors offered inadequate supervision most often said their supervisors were detached from the process of supervision and offered little guidance during the experience.

Support and Encouragement

A recurring theme among intern responses was the concept of supervisors supporting their interns through encouragement and affirmation. Interns valued supervisors who gave them responsibilities so that they could learn from experiences but

were always present to help in a time of need. One student testified by saying, "my supervisor helped me when I needed guidance, but also let me have many responsibilities in order to learn and grow" (OCU5). This intern perceived the permissive, yet supportive approach of the supervisor as facilitating growth. Another student working with fellow interns made a similar observation and said her supervisor gave them "room to work for ourselves and to grow, but stayed close and supportive" (ACU6). Still others echoed the desire to have a spatial context to do ministry without the constricting restraint of an overly concerned supervisor. A student who experienced this freedom noted the supervisor "gave me room to do some things differently and even make minor mistakes for my experiential benefit. And he constantly encouraged me as a minister and personally" (LCU3). These students placed value on the opportunity to be ensconced in ministry, receiving support while they learned through the events of their internship. As one student said, "My supervisor made this a very positive experience for me by letting me learn through experiences and the correction of mistakes" (ACU9).

Gentle Correction

A second theme in the student responses was that supervisors who corrected interns out of gentleness and love were appreciated. As one student said, "my supervisor gave me nothing but encouragement. Even when correcting something I could have done better, he did it in a positive manner" (FHU2). Another student offered, "He was nothing but supportive. He affirmed virtually everything I did. I was not belittled if I messed up, he just advised me on a better way or a suggestion to smooth things over and told me to keep going" (HU3). Refusing to berate students for mistakes, some supervisors stood

beside their interns and helped when mistakes were made. As compassionate correctors, these supervisors served to encourage learning from experience.

Respect and Trust

A third characteristic of supervisors who were lauded for their positive influence on internships was their respectful trust of their interns. This respect was evident in the ways supervisors treated their interns. As one student said, "He helped me and supported me, but he gave me room. He trusted me and viewed me as an equal member of the youth team" (HU11). Interns who wanted to receive a complete experience of being in ministry valued this opportunity to experience ministerial equality. In order to grow from experiences these students felt it was important to have supervisors that permitted them to make decisions as a minister. This required supervisors who were willing to trust their interns' judgment and leadership (HU6).

Respectful trust was also communicated in the zeal supervisors had for their relationships with interns. One student remarked that the enthusiasm his supervisor displayed about the relationship was very influential. This student said, "he made himself not only available but ready and excited about guiding me. He made me feel like family" (ACU10). Extending beyond the scope of professional relationships, this supervisor chose to love his intern as a family member, which significantly influenced the intern's learning. Another intern directly associated his supervisor's hopeful trust to development in ministry. He said of his supervisor, "he answered any ministry questions that I had, and prayed with me on a regular basis. He gave me guidance but let me know that he fully trusted me and that God would work through me. This expectation meant a

lot and helped me to be a better minister" (HU13). By offering the blessing of a hopeful future, this minister was able to inspire his intern toward growth in ministry.

Detached Ministers Criticized

While some ministers reportedly excelled at the tasks of supervision, others were detached, distracted, or apathetic about their roles. This in turn had a negative influence on interns' experiences. Interns did not appreciate approaches to supervision that left them to act without guidance. They expected some sense of structure from their supervisors. One student reported about a distracted supervisor by saying "my supervisor and I spent very little time together. He was not focused on the ministry at all. He has a lot of family issues that really distracted him" (HU7). Others said the issue was not just about distractions, but supervisors who had unrealistic expectations of their interns' ability. One student carped, "he expected me to know what to do as if I had done this for some time; I hadn't" (ACU12). Another shared a similar disappointment with his supervisor's lack of involvement in the experience and said, "honestly, I thought he would be a better guide to the process, but he basically just let me do whatever, without much guidance, which was disappointing" (HU1). These perspectives stand in stark contrast to the students who were given support and encouragement during their ministry training. Interns craved that type of working relationship. As one intern reported who did not have sufficient contact with his supervisor, "we did not interact very much . . . he just 'let me loose'. I wish he would have supervised and met with me more" (HU2). These students' experiences reveal that they are well aware when they are slighted by their supervisors, and notice when there is "not enough structure, guidance, feedback, or evaluation" (LU6).

Research Question 5

The fifth RQ asked, "To what extent do youth ministry internships influence the vocational decisions of interns to enter or avoid youth ministry as a profession?" Inventory items 29, 30, 40, and 41 applied specifically to this RQ. The mean was calculated for item 30 to determine the degree to which internships were reported to influence career decisions. Combinations of items were investigated with the Pearson r correlation where item 30 was the dependent variable to establish any relationships among the data. Essay question 40 was then evaluated for patterns that supported or challenged the findings of statistical analysis.

Summer Internships

There was an inverse relationship between the season of internships and reports that they helped interns decide whether or not to enter ministry (r = -.280, $p < .05$). When students served as interns only during the summer months they were slightly more likely to report that internships helped them decide whether or not to enter ministry. Those students who served as interns during both the school year and summer may have been more confident about their plans to enter ministry and therefore sought longer internships.

Supervisor Influence on Vocation

Supervisors were an important influence on the decision of interns to enter or avoid ministry. Although the supervisors' identity, receiving a job description, receiving a code of ethics, the frequency of meetings for support, and the frequency of performance evaluations did not significantly influence interns' decisions to enter ministry, other

aspects of the supervisor relationship were significant. There was a positive relationship between interns' perceptions of their supervisor's skill in ministry and the influence of the internship on decisions about entering ministry ($r = .340, p < .01$). There was also a positive relationship between interns' perceptions of their supervisors' knowledge about ministry and the influence of internships on decisions to enter ministry ($r = .332, p < .05$). The nature of the Likert-type item that stated, "This internship helped me decide whether or not to enter ministry" does not permit an accurate conclusion about the specific vocational decision of the student. For this reason it may only be said that vocational decisions are correlated to the abilities of the supervisor. Having established that caveat, it is possible that knowledgeable and skillful supervisors communicated a persuasive message about the profession of ministry that lured interns to the profession. Conversely, it is possible that the less knowledgeable and less skilled supervisors conveyed a message dissuading interns from the profession.

Intern Skill and Learning

There was a positive relationship between interns' reports that they learned new ministry skills and the influence of the internship on the decision about career plans ($r = .358, p < .01$). Similarly, there was a positive relationship between the statements "This internship was important to my education as a minister" and "This internship helped me decide whether or not to enter ministry" ($r = .310, p < .05$). Those students who considered the internship an important component of their education were more likely to say that it helped them decide whether or not to enter ministry.

Journaling

Engaging in the personal spiritual disciplines was not shown to significantly relate to career decisions. Similarly, engaging in the spiritual disciplines with a supervisor was not shown to significantly correlate with the decision to enter or avoid ministry. Only the individual practice of journaling was significantly correlated with interns' decisions to enter or avoid ministry ($r = .380, p < .01$).

Ministry Activities and Events

The various activities of ministry were not shown to significantly influence the career decisions of interns. Similarly, the weeklong ministry events during internships were not found to significantly influence the report that the internship helped the intern decide whether or not to enter ministry.

Vocational Discernment Compared With Other Aspects of Internships

The collective responses of students revealed that internships are valued primarily for reasons other than their influence on vocational decisions. When asked to offer their level of agreement to the statement, "This internship helped me decide whether or not to enter ministry" the Likert-type responses yielded a mean of 4.04 out of 5.00. While this reflects a sense of agreement, interns offered greater agreement to receiving new knowledge about ministry, new skills in ministry, growth in Christian character, and the supervisor relationship. This coincides with intern responses to item 41 where students were asked to rank in order the most significant aspect of internships. The aspect receiving the least support was "Discernment about career plans," or the influence of internships on the decision to enter or avoid ministry as a profession.

Future Plans of Interns

Intern responses to the question, "What are your plans immediately after graduation?" revealed five separate paths that are listed in Table 21.

Table 21. Plans after graduation by classification in school

	Become a Youth Minister	*Undecided*	*Attend Graduate School*	*Missions*	*Other*	*Total*
Juniors	14	6	0	0	1	21
Seniors	20	7	5	3	1	36
Total	34	13	5	3	2	57

Almost three-fifths of interns plan to become youth ministers after they finish their bachelor's degree. More than one in five are still undecided about their future plans. A minority of students plans to attend graduate school, begin mission work, or pursue another form of employment.

Over half of the females expressed that they were still undecided about their plans after graduation (Table 22).

Table 22. Plans after graduation by gender

	Become a Youth Minister	*Undecided*	*Attend Graduate School*	*Missions*	*Other*	*Total*
Males	32	9	5	3	1	50
Females	2	4	0	0	1	7
Total	34	13	5	3	2	57

While there were no females who expressed interest in attending graduate school after the completion of their degrees, five senior males declared their intention to begin graduate work after graduation.

Summary

The various components of internships that had the strongest positive correlation with influencing vocational discernment were journaling, learning new ministry skills, and the supervisor's skill in ministry (Table 23). Each of these were correlated at the .01 level. The supervisor's perceived knowledge about ministry, internships that were valued as important to ministry education, and internships that occurred solely during the summer months were positively correlated with influencing vocational discernment at the .05 level.

Table 23. Vocational discernment

Correlations with vocational discernment	*r*	*p*
Journaling	.380	$p < .01$
Learning new skills	.358	$p < .01$
Supervisor skill in ministry	.340	$p < .01$
Supervisor knowledge about ministry	.332	$p < .05$
Internship was important to ministry education	.310	$p < .05$
Internship during the summer only	.280	$p < .05$

Essay Responses

Inventory item 40 gave students the opportunity to respond to the question, "How did your internship help you decide to enter or avoid youth ministry as a profession?" Students responded that their internships offered confirmation of their

calling in ministry, internships encouraged them to continue pursuing ministry, and internships offered them the ability to see ministry more clearly.

Confirmation of Calling

Many students reported that their internships had a persuasive influence on their decision to enter ministry by validating their call. One student reported, "the internship excited me and confirmed my calling" (LU4). Others were equally enthusiastic about the influence of their internships and made comments such as, "it confirmed my calling all the more" (ACU7). Something about the opportunity to engage in active ministry caused many students to sense a tugging from God toward ministry. One student compared the additional persuasion of internships to "a scream" (LCU3) rather than a gentle whisper.

As some students received renewed confirmation others sensed their call to ministry more deeply. These students said they were made more aware of God's invitation to serve because of their experiences through internships. One remarked, "the internship convinced me that God truly had been working on me all my life to enter this field" (ACU12). Continuing the emphasis on God's call, another student said, "the internship helped solidify why I do ministry and why God has called me to it" (HU6). By participating in the work of God these students realized they were doing exactly what they were made to do.

Encouragement and Confidence

Students also reported that their internships gave them encouragement that they had the aptitude and the gifts to do ministry. One student said, "It helped to show

me that I have the ability to do it. I was very weary of whether or not I was going to be able to be a minister, but now I know" (ACU9). Others also recognized their own gifts for ministry and were assured by their experiences. One such student said, "This truly gave me the confidence I needed to see a future in the ministry" (ACU11). For this student the internship was a necessary prerequisite to making a vocational commitment.

Others saw their internships through the analogous lens of a testing ground before ministry. One such student said, "I feel like God used me and that has given me the passion and confidence that he can and will use me more in this ministry in years to come" (HU3). This confidence of being used by God gave them the impetus to continue. As students were encouraged through a realization of their gifts and the confidence that comes through successful service, they realized that ministry was a legitimate possibility for their future. As one student asserted, "it showed me that I really can do youth ministry" (LCU1).

Viewing Ministry Clearly

Several student responses revealed that they were able to see ministry more fully because of their internships. One student, commenting on the tangible benefit of internships said, "It really put 'faces' with the general idea of youth ministry. No longer is the word 'teens' general and abstract. I have real people to think about and real experience with them. This gave me a passion for working with teens, more than any class could" (HU13). Students who reported viewing ministry more clearly recognized an educational benefit to internships that reached beyond classroom learning. One student said, "It helped me to see what the work is really like, instead of just reading it from a book" (FHU1). Discovering what the work is really like was not an isolated

event. Another student reported, "I saw the ups and downs of youth ministry but I love it – even in the rough times this summer" (HU7). Another added, "I went into this summer not knowing much about youth ministry and pretty sure I didn't want to do it. Now that I have done it I know it is where I've been called to serve" (ACU10).

As some students viewed ministry clearly and were drawn to it, others saw the true nature of ministry and became hesitant. One student was slow to draw conclusions about his experience because of what it revealed. He said, "I am still in prayer about the subject of vocational discernment but this summer's internship allowed me to see the ugly side of ministry with politics, unhappy parents, etc." (HU2). This student was not fully persuaded by his internship. Instead, he continued to reflect on his experiences with prayer in order to evaluate the implications of committing to ministry.

Decision Was Already Made

For some interns, the internship experience was more about learning than making a vocational decision. These students had already committed to ministry as a profession but wanted to grow in maturity. As one student said, "I have already decided to enter ministry and just view the internship as a learning experience rather than a deciding factor" (LCU4). Another student, when asked how the internship influenced vocational decisions replied, "It didn't. I was already committed wholeheartedly!" (HU4). These students were not looking for assistance with vocational decisions. They served as interns to refine skills and begin their lives of ministry through internship experiences.

Evaluation of the Research Design

Once the research was completed, an evaluation of the research design was conducted. Suggestions for improvements on this research are divided into two components: the distribution and collection of the instrument, and a discussion of specific inventory items. Suggestions concerning inventory items include an evaluation of questions that may have been unclear and items that, if added, would improve the efficacy of the instrument.

Inventory Distribution and Collection

A reflective analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology used suggests there may be a more efficacious alternative to a paper-based instrument. Because the sample for this study consisted of junior and senior college students, offering an internet-based instrument would be another logical approach. The paper-based instrument depended heavily on professors to not only distribute, but also to collect instruments once students completed them. Although the instrument was mailed to the schools in August, one school did not return the surveys until the first week of November. It is possible this element of the study would be removed using the internet. In addition, it is possible that permitting students to complete the instrument online would have produced more responses because of the medium of communication.

Inventory Instrument

Evaluation of the questions on the instrument revealed that a ministry task common to youth ministry interns was omitted. Item 33 asked, "Which of the following ministry activities did you participate in at least once during your internship?" Absent

from the list of fourteen tasks provided was the role of leading worship. Although an option of "Other" was given, there were no students who listed leading worship as a task performed during internships. This task may not have come to the mind of interns taking the inventory because of the long list that preceded the opportunity to mention it. Including the action "leading worship" may have resulted in more students mentioning it as a task of their internships.

The Likert-type response items 19 through 30 provided insightful information into interns' perceptions of their supervisors and the internship experience. Students were asked to circle a number between 1 and 5 that reflected their response to statements such as, "This internship helped me grow in Christian character." The possible responses were "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Neutral," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree." The third option, "Neutral," may have unintentionally provided a passive and ambiguous, albeit safe, response to the statements. That was not the intention of the word. Another option would be to substitute the word, "Uncertain" for "Neutral." It is possible that the word "Uncertain" could be perceived as more active. It could imply to respondents that the statement's veracity has been considered but no conclusion has been reached. This would more accurately reflect the intention of the third option on the Likert-type scale.

Items 15 and 16 of the internship demographic section asked, "Were you given a job description or ministry profile describing your position?" and "Were you given a code of conduct or code of ethics to follow?" It would be more accurate to ask if interns were given a "written job description" and "written code of conduct." Although it is implied that a job description is written this clarification would be helpful.

Other relevant information that was not acquired by the instrument concerned the number of former youth ministry internships that students had experienced and the number of hours interns worked during the week. This data would permit the comparison between groups who had and had not completed additional internships. It would also permit the comparison between various internship programs with similar hourly requirements.

Finally, item 35 asked, "Which of the following weeklong ministry events did you participate in this summer?" Among the logical weeklong choices such as High School and Junior High camps or a mission trip was an option "Service Project(s)." This question is ambiguous because service projects are not always a week in length. They can be a single day, multiple day, or weeklong event.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study provide valuable insights for those who participate in internships as a form of ministry education. These results also offer an opportunity to discuss the restructuring of field experiences with the intentionality required for effective ministry training. The conclusions presented here include, first, the implications of the study in response to each research question. This is followed by a discussion of proposed applications for the process of youth ministry internships as they apply to schools, supervisors, and students. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of youth ministry internships as a component of education for full time youth ministry.

Research Questions

To guide the evaluation of youth ministry internships as a form of field education and preparation for ministry the following research questions were investigated:

1. To what extent do youth ministry internships assist interns in the acquisition of knowledge relevant to youth ministry?
2. To what extent do youth ministry internships assist interns in the acquisition of skills relevant to youth ministry?

3. To what extent do youth ministry internships contribute to the spiritual development of interns?

4. In what ways does the supervisor influence the report of a positive or negative internship experience?

5. To what extent do youth ministry internships influence the vocational decisions of interns to enter or avoid youth ministry as a profession?

Research Implications

The implications of the research are addressed here. These implications address beliefs, theories, and practices generated by the research findings. They are presented as they relate to each research question.

Knowledge and Internships

Interns' responses suggest that field experiences facilitate learning new knowledge relevant to ministry. Their mean scores from the Likert-type questions and the rank ordering item placed knowledge in a primary position among the various internship benefits. The factors most related to learning new knowledge from internships were centered on two basic areas: the cumulative learning of the student in areas such as new skills and character development, and second, the influence of the supervisor.

As interns acquired new knowledge from internships they were more likely to also report that they gained new skills, they grew in Christian character, and they considered the internship very important to their education as ministers. Because a causal relationship cannot be deduced from the data it is difficult to know whether new knowledge was a catalyst for other learning or whether an outside factor influenced the acquisition of knowledge. In either case, students who gained new knowledge were

likely to say they also benefited from other areas of learning during internships such as skill acquisition and character formation.

The other factor most correlated with learning new knowledge centered on the supervisor's adeptness at ministry and supervision. Specifically, when supervisors were intentional about the practice of supervision, providing structure, evaluation, and opportunities to reflect theologically, interns were more likely to report learning new knowledge relevant to ministry.

The Importance of Field Experience
In Addition to Classroom Learning

The youth ministry internships represented by this study were successful in providing opportunities to acquire insights into ministry. As a result, they helped students acquire new knowledge and accomplished one of the primary objectives of internships in higher education (Ryan and Cassidy 1996, 23; Rompelman and De Vries 2002, 174). A secondary objective of internships is helping students understand the relationship between their education at school and the activities of the profession (Luft and Vidoni 2002, 708; Markham and Lenz 2002, 76; Daugherty 2002, 109). The internships of this study were not as successful at this task.

First, the strong correlation between reports of school adequately preparing students for internships and internships providing opportunities to apply former learning must be acknowledged. To some degree assimilation of learning took place for some students, although this was not the case for all students.

When interns were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, "My ministry courses in school prepared me well for this internship," the

resultant mean was 3.96 out of 5.00. This statement received the second lowest level of agreement of the twelve Likert-type statements. It is possible that the students of this study recognized a discrepancy between the academic learning of classrooms and the practical abilities required of a ministry position. The statement receiving the greatest level of agreement supports this possibility. Students generally agreed with the statement, "This internship was important to my education as a minister." This also was further supported by the open-ended questions where students testified about the importance of their internships to their education. These students said there were certain aspects of ministry education that an internship provided which their classroom learning neither supplied, nor prepared them for. Similar observations have been made by others who are supportive of field experience in theological education (Harkness 2001, 151).

Despite the desire for field experiences to be integrative (Jackson 1995, 13; Sweitzer and King 1999, 4; Vocino and Wilson 2002, 35), the results of this study imply the chasm between academic classroom learning and practical ministry experience still exists to some degree (Banks 1999, 11). Knowledge and skills were learned during internships but these were not always the result of assimilation with classroom learning. They were often the result of new insights gleaned from experience. For this reason, continued attention must be given to the process of theological field experience so that schools prepare their students for internships and, more importantly, full time ministry positions.

Skills and Internships

Results from this study indicate that students perceived new ministry skills as the most significant aspect of their internship experiences. This is in agreement with

others who believe field experiences are an important opportunity to learn the foundational skills of a profession (Sweitzer and King 1999, 4). Surprisingly, these skills did not come about primarily through actions of ministry. Many were acquired from watching a skillful supervisor and reflecting on experience.

The chief influence on whether or not interns learned new skills during internships was almost entirely dependent on the actions and character of the supervisor. The two other factors associated with learning new skills were the correlations with learning new knowledge and growing in Christian character. Both of these factors were robustly correlated with the supervisor as well. When supervisors were skillful in ministry and supervision, and when they spent quality time with their interns engaging in the spiritual disciplines, interns said they gained new ministry skills, new knowledge, and grew in Christian character.

It is not surprising that supervisors who were skillful in ministry and skillful at supervision would produce interns who reported learning new skills. As Jesus commissioned his disciples after washing their feet by saying, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15), the competent supervisors set an example for their students who learned to imitate what they saw.

Intern responses to the essay questions revealed the skills they acquired from internships focused on teaching, organization, counseling youth, and working with others in ministry. Teaching (Chesnut 1975, 283), organization (Rowell 1981, 69; Chesnut 1975, 283), and relationship skills such as communication (Dearborn 1995, 7) have been noted as foremost among competencies required for ministry.

Spiritual Development and Internships

The students of this study ranked advances in their spiritual development as the second most important contribution of internships. Spiritual development was surpassed by new skills, but spiritual development exceeded the new knowledge interns gained. Some might argue this is an unfortunate reality. Judy Tenelshof claims that skills and knowledge are secondary to the responsibilities educators have for the character formation of future ministers (Tenelshof 1999, 85). Others believe that individual spirituality is one of the most important factors to a successful ministry (Boran 1996, 116; Hegg 1998, 36). It follows, then, to ask why interns did not more consistently report that spiritual formation was the most important contribution of internships. The answer may lie in the relationships interns had with their supervisors.

The most significant correlation from internship experiences to the spiritual development of interns was the opportunity to engage in spiritual disciplines with a supervisor in ministry. The influence of personal spiritual disciplines on the spirituality of interns paled in comparison to the influence of sharing in the spiritual disciplines on a weekly basis with a supervisor.

The fact that interns and supervisors who shared in the spiritual disciples were more likely to correlate with intern growth supports the need for ministry education to include intentional Christian discipleship where teachers train those who are younger. This ideal of discipleship does not always occur in internships. Only 61% joined in prayer on a weekly basis, 49% engaged in theological reflection, and just over one third of the intern-supervisor dyads studied the Bible together. Interns need ministry supervisors who are willing to invest in their education and their lives by growing in

relationship with God together. Practicing the disciplines of peace and communion with God during internships accomplishes more than helping interns grow during their educational service, the disciplines give them a vision for how to sustain a growing relationship with God while working in ministry. One important way this occurs is by teaching ministry students to find balance between the important, though polar, aspects of being and doing in ministry.

There is a tension in ministry between performing acts of service to the church and being still to connect with the source of power that enables one to act. Luke emphasized this dichotomy of doing and being by retelling the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) followed by the story of Jesus at Martha's house (Luke 10:38-42). The parable teaches disciples to engage in active service while the second story reminds them it is important to sit at Jesus' feet, being still. These two stories inform the practice of ministry because the pressure to perform in ministry still exists today. Internships are an opportunity for students to join ministers and learn not only the actions of ministry, but also the art of peace; a component of ministry that centers on being rather than doing. This can be learned through the practice of the spiritual disciplines and shared experiences of formation between supervisors and interns. Supervisors have an opportunity to do this by refusing to use their limited time with interns only for task related activities. Engaging in the disciplines of the spirit-filled life together is one of many teaching forms that directly benefits the supervisor's relationship with God as well.

Supervisors and Internships

Although interns reported that the relationships they formed with supervisors

were fourth in a list of five important aspects of internships, the supervisor relationship permeated the quality of every other internship component. Skills, knowledge, spiritual formation, and vocational decisions were each significantly influenced by the supervisor. Although many relationships are formed through internships, the intern's learning is substantially impacted by the quality of supervision provided by the supervisor (Raschick, Maypole, and Day 1998, 31).

Similarly, the supervisor significantly influenced whether an intern reported a positive or negative experience. Those interns whose supervisors were adept at ministry and supervision, met frequently with their interns, and built strong relationships were more likely to offer positive evaluations about their internships. Conversely, when supervisors were aloof, negligent, incompetent, or unorganized, interns were more critical of their internships. The overall perception of interns was directly tied to the quality of the supervisor and the quality of supervision.

In addition to the primary function of assisting interns in their mastery of a profession, the literature highlights the important role supervisors fill in helping former interns find employment after graduation (Ross and Elechi 2002, 298; Tovey 2001, 228). It is not surprising that this was not a common theme among the responses, given the fact that those who completed the inventory instrument were still students. It is possible that as these individuals graduate they will learn a new dependence on their former supervisors for references and networking.

Vocational Discernment and Internships

The influence of internships on the vocational decisions of interns to enter or avoid ministry were limited. Although interns generally agreed that their internships

helped them decide whether or not to enter ministry, the influence of internships on vocational decisions was ranked fifth by students in a list of significant contributions of internships. There are several possible reasons for this. First, it may be that, as juniors and seniors in college, these students had already committed to a vocational field. It is possible that sophomores would rate vocational discernment a much more prominent aspect of their internship experiences. Second, it may be that there are other, more persuasive, factors that lead a student to choose or avoid ministry as a career. Perhaps those students who want to enter ministry are persuaded and dissuaded by something other than internships. Some of these factors may be prior interaction with church work and ministers, their educational courses in the field of ministry, and opportunities to pursue another profession.

Despite the limited influence of internships on vocational decisions, the findings of this study support a study of Catholic youth ministers where mentor relationships were found to encourage the decision of students to enter ministry (Shelly 1996, 93). There was a correlation in this study between the perceived knowledge and skills of supervisors and interns' reports that internships helped them make a decision about their vocation.

While the influence of internships on the decision to enter or avoid ministry was minimal, students reported that their internships did assist with discernment, or clarifying support, concerning their chosen occupational path. These internships helped interns make more informed decision about the profession (Tovey 2001, 230), and they assisted by contributing to the socialization of students into the working environment

(Sweitzer and King 1999, 4). For most students, internships served to validate their pursuit of ministry (Kesner 1995, 34).

Research Applications

The applications of the research are more subjective as a result of the findings and are presented as they relate to professors, supervisors, and students. Because the sample for this study was delimited to internships in Churches of Christ certain limitations of generalization apply that prohibit direct application to other religious groups. Therefore, applications are made as they apply to the specific religious fellowship of Churches of Christ and their institutions. Furthermore, there are programs in place by churches and academic institutions of other denominations that currently employ many of the conclusions discussed in this chapter (National Center for Youth Ministry, 2003; Perkins School of Theology, 2003).

The applications begin with a discussion of the responsibilities of academic institutions and their professors in the preparation of interns. This is followed by the church's responsibility in general, and the supervisors' responsibility in particular, as they participate in the education of future ministers. Finally, specific applications are made for students as they participate in the experiences of internships.

Responsibilities of Professors

The following research applications focus on the work of ministry professors who possess the ability to prepare students for internships. Prior to student participation in internships, professors of ministry can lay the educational foundations of

comprehension that influence expectations and subsequently influence the performance and learning of interns during their field experiences.

Discuss Internships in Class

First, education for internships could include a series of classroom discussions on what to expect from internships. For example, students would benefit from knowing what to do if conflict arises with a supervisor, how to build relationships with and recruit adults, and how to guard against the temptation to neglect personal care as care is offered to others. These and other conversations concerning field education would assist in the creation of realistic expectations before serving in churches. The need for this preparation before internships is supported by one student in this study who reported that he learned what not to do in ministry while serving as an intern. Although this student represented the perspective of the minority, there were those students whose primary learning came from unfortunate internship experiences. Certain conclusions emerge when this reality is considered with the fact that many students said their classroom learning did not adequately prepare them for internships. By addressing the objectives and potential outcomes of internships, professors could equip students with resources that assist in the assimilation of learning. In addition, as informed expectations are created, the students will be more prepared for the range of possible experiences during internships and full time ministry.

Serve in Churches Doing Active Ministry

One way for professors to improve their education of students for ministry is to be actively involved in ministry, whether as elders, volunteer leaders, or paid staff. These

experiences equip professors with a church context from which to teach. Such exposure to ministry while teaching also lends credibility to the teaching of the professor in the minds of students.

As an extension of this point, there is also a need for professors of ministry to travel extensively, visiting churches outside the town of their academic institutions. This exposure would equip them with the perspective necessary to educate students who will be working in churches of various sizes and character. To facilitate this process academic institutions could provide incentives for professors who consult with churches because in so doing, these professors are gaining additional education about the state of churches and the nature of ministry in those contexts. Their teaching will be richer as a result of these trips and the academic institutions will benefit from having faculty representing the university in church contexts. One final benefit will be improved contact with the churches where students will serve as interns.

Improve Communication with Churches

Improving the state of youth ministry internships will also require awareness generated from an increase in intentional communication with churches. The instigation of networking with churches has been proposed as an integral component of the solution to improved theological education (Hubbard 1993, 46). One reason for this is that ministers need to be aware of the nature of internships and the areas where they can be improved. Such information is somewhat tenuous, as improvements are largely dependent on the willingness of ministers to become more intentional in their supervision. One method for the transfer of this information could be through training in supervision provided for youth ministers.

Provide Training for Supervisors

The interns who participated in this study continually reported the benefits of having supervisors who were skillful at the tasks of supervision and yet the ability of supervisors at supervision was an area of weakness. The Likert-type statement receiving the least support was "My supervisor was an excellent intern supervisor" ($m = 3.82$). The essay item concerning supervision confirmed this pattern. Interns were hesitant to agree that their supervision was completely adequate. One possibility to address this deficiency is for schools to provide the service of training for ministers. Such training in supervision has the potential to improve the overall quality of supervision and the perceptions of interns concerning their supervisors. This training could occur by written publication, online discussion groups, traditional face-to-face educational settings, or by video presentation. The opportunities are limitless for the communication necessary to train supervisors. The largest obstacle would be the variable of supervisor willingness to pursue this learning to improve the educational experience of interns.

Create Standards for Internships

The final recommendation for professors based on the results of this study concerns the need to establish and communicate standards for various aspects of the internship experience. In addition to creating uniformity among field experiences, standards for internships would help supervisors know the expectations of the schools where their interns attend. Such information could be provided in a brief document, power point presentation, or even a video explaining the educational responsibility of the supervisor. The content of this communication could include instructions on the assimilation of learning, providing a job description and code of ethics, the necessity of

participating in the spiritual disciplines with interns, and instructions on the required frequency of supervisor meetings for training and evaluations. These suggestions are further explained in the responsibilities of supervisors that follow.

Responsibilities of Supervisors

The influence of supervisors on the overall quality of internship experiences for students was staggering. Whether they desire this influence or not, supervisors have a responsibility to lead the internship process in ways that contribute to the education of students. This need for renewed commitment on the part of supervisors is really a call for shared responsibility in Kingdom succession planning. As ministers teach interns they are sharing the responsibility for discipleship and training students to be ministers. Such a mindset is radically different from the ubiquitous assumption that interns are foremost helpers to ministers. This view neglects to attend to students' education and spiritual growth in ways that intentionally prepare them for ministry. Conversely, when ministers invest their time by offering attention to their disciples, those disciples are more likely to grow and mature in spiritual development.

Help Assimilate Learning

An important function of supervisors concerns their ability to integrate the prior experiences of interns with the present realities of ministry. Supervisors are in a unique position to help students identify the ways they are applying classroom learning. Supervisors can discuss classroom learning with their interns throughout the internship and continually challenge interns to reflect on what they are learning. In order to facilitate this process it may be beneficial for supervisors to acquire the syllabi of former

youth ministry courses so there can be intentional repetition of key concepts during the internship. In this way there will more likely be transfer of learning and application of education in the context of ministry.

Provide a Job Description

Receiving a job description was not found to significantly correlate with new knowledge, skills, character, the supervisor relationship, or vocational decisions. Despite these results, receiving a job description simulates the conditions of full time employment and communicates that the supervisor is intentional about the learning experience. Another benefit of a job description is its ability to clarify the supervisor's expectations before the internship begins. This in turn influences the expectations of the student.

Provide a Code of Ethics

Although they were more rare, receiving a code of ethics was significantly correlated with gaining new knowledge from internships. Exactly how or why this occurs is not known. The perplexing correlation between salary and learning new knowledge may shed light on this issue. Two possible explanations are, first, supervisors who were more intentional about training students for ministry, and subsequently provided a code of ethics, were more intent on teaching new knowledge to interns. A second possibility is that those interns who were given a code of ethics may have exercised more effort to glean knowledge from their internships.

It is unfortunate that, while the profession of ministry requires high moral integrity, 54% of supervisors did not provide their students with at least a basic guideline of ethical behavior during their service in the church. It is remiss of ministers, who

themselves are held to a strict moral code, not to teach their students to abide by the morality that permits one to remain in ministry. High moral standards were likely modeled by those supervisors whose interns agreed with the statement, "My supervisor was a model of Christian maturity and morality." This modeling of Christian conduct is beneficial to students, but words give additional power. The example of supervisors could be buttressed by a written code of ethics to guide those learning to be ministers. As the Hippocratic oath provides an ethical foundation for those of the medical profession, a written code of ethics for ministers and students of ministry would state explicitly what is implied by the position: the highest of moral standards is required.

Practice Spiritual Disciplines with Interns

It was neither the tasks of ministerial activities, the investment in educational activities, nor the weeklong ministry events that most significantly correlated with interns' spiritual development. The two strongest relationships with spiritual development were between the practice of spiritual disciplines, both personally and with a supervisor, and the relationships supervisors shared with interns. In other words, interns' spirituality and growth in Christian character was largely associated with the supervisor's spiritual leadership. This is not surprising, given the template of spiritual leadership by the biblical examples of teacher-student relationships. Biblical disciples excelled at spending time with their teachers. The same should be true of Christian education for ministry today.

There must be copious opportunities throughout various contexts for interns to be in the presence of their teachers. Recognizing the significance of the supervisor-intern relationship, it may be that supervising ministers create a consistent time and place for

meeting with interns to practice spiritual disciplines together. This interaction is so important that if supervisors do not instigate it, interns would do well to request it. Supervisors could also establish goals and objectives for these times as a teacher organizes the educational scope of classroom curriculum and the specific purpose for individual lessons. This requires vision, intentionality, and preparation on the part of supervisors.

Although there is a temptation to rely on interns for assistance with ministry tasks to the exclusion of their education, supervisors serve students best by creating a quantity of quality interactions with their interns. Supervisors must view the opportunity to lead interns in the spiritual disciplines as one of the primary responsibilities of their supervision.

Provide Training and Evaluations

Student responses to the essay question concerning the supervisor's role during internships revealed overwhelming support for supervisors to provide structure, guidance, and encouragement during internships. Rather than resenting the direction of supervisors, interns sought their counsel and guidance, provided it was matched by support and trust. Understanding this desire, supervisors should meet with their interns on a frequent basis for intentional training and support in ministry.

Supervisors aware of their influence would also do well to conduct periodic performance evaluations for interns. These should be not only verbal, but also written. Creating an evaluation template to complete that focuses on the various components of intern service is one way to facilitate this process. The benefits to interns is that evaluations clarify expectations of supervisors, focus the attention of interns on what is

primary, and they educate students for future ministry. This preparatory function of evaluations serves to prepare interns for future evaluation experiences when they are full time ministers.

Responsibilities of Students

Although professors and supervisors exercise significant influence over the internship process, there are several things students can do to improve the possibility of a positive educational experience. Three suggestions for students are provided that concern the selection of the supervisor, the assimilation of learning, and finally, the practice of journaling and theological reflection during internships.

Choose Supervisors Wisely

Students who want to enter full time youth ministry would benefit from serving as interns in churches where there are full time youth ministers. Other supervisors, usually with other jobs and commitments, do not focus on the education of the intern with the intentionality of youth minister supervisors. Interns with other supervisors appear to be more likely to become either hired hands or expected to function as a full employee. In one sense, internships are still being compromised by "the vestiges of the old field work system" (Mahan 1997, 60) that focuses on the ministerial benefits to churches to the exclusion of the intern's education. Youth ministers are in a better position than any other supervisors to find balance in the tension between internships as work in a church and education that promotes student learning.

Focus on Assimilation of Learning

An important responsibility of students serving as interns is to continually

focus on the assimilation of learning that occurs when there is intentional reflection on experience. Although interns were most critical of their supervisor's ability to supervise and their classroom learning in preparing them for internships, the burden of responsibility ultimately falls with the student to instigate the learning required for growth, regardless of other variables. One way to actively pursue this education is through the practice of journaling and theological reflection.

Practice Journaling and Theological Reflection

The disciplines of journaling and theological reflection are central components of education for ministry. The fusion between theory and practice is facilitated by engagement in ministry followed by reflection (Everist 1984, 91). As Dewey expressed, only those experiences that are reflected on are educative (Dewey 1938, 25). In the same way, education for ministry is enabled by the reflection that practices such as journaling provide. Other activities such as meditation on experience and discussing ministry with a supervisor can also aid this education.

The influence of journaling was prominent to interns participating in this study. Journaling significantly correlated with learning new ministry skills, and along with spiritual disciplines with supervisors, was one of the few factors associated with the vocational decision of interns to enter or avoid ministry as a profession. It is possible that journaling has a clarifying influence on decisions related to profession. Conversely, it is possible that those who are more decisive about future vocational pursuits choose to journal more faithfully. In either case, the practice of journaling is a significant component of learning through internships that should be incorporated by all students.

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the results of this study there are several possibilities for future research. First, replication of the current study would further test the validity of these findings. Second, a study within a different population would provide interesting data for comparison. For example, studying youth ministry internship programs in other denominations would yield valuable insights contributing to a more holistic view of Christian ministry education. Also, because this study dealt solely with juniors and seniors, future research could investigate the perceptions of sophomores and graduate students engaged in internships.

Another area of research involves yearlong internships. The internships of this study were primarily summer internships and shorter in nature. A need exists to investigate the influences of longer field experiences on the education of potential ministers. Specifically, such a study would provide information concerning any potential benefits to longer internships.

Fourth, a longitudinal study of interns before, during, and after their internships would contribute an understanding of various perspectives interns have throughout their fieldwork education. Furthermore, once these interns become ministers and have served in ministry several years, research would contribute another perspective on the influence of internships as ministry training. Reflecting on their internship experiences these ministers may have a different view of the ways their internships prepared them for ministry.

Another potential research area involves the unique experiences of females as they prepare for ministry. As gender justice continues to become a reality in some

churches, the role of females in youth ministry will likely expand. Because the current female youth ministers are the first generation of females in this role, many have had to rely on males as their mentors and internship supervisors. Future research could investigate the nature of mentoring relationships for ministry that reach across genders as well as the unique nature of female ministers supervising other females entering ministry.

Finally, a related research area involves the relationship ministry internships have on the location and longevity of youth ministers in the profession. Specifically, research could be conducted that investigates the influence of internships on the size and type of churches where ministers work. It would also be of value to know what influence, if any, internships have on the length of time a minister stays in ministry.

Conclusion

Youth ministry internships serve academic institutions, churches, and interns in unique ways that make them an essential element of theological education. With intentional participation on the part of professors, supervisors, and students, field experiences in ministry will continue to develop as significant contexts for learning. Because of their potential to meld the education of academic settings and the experiences of ministry, internships may be the integral component of youth ministry education that prevents the future production of "irrelevant theorists" and "mindless practitioners" in ministry (Livermore 2002, 90).

APPENDIX 1

YOUTH MINISTRY INTERNSHIP INVENTORY

The Youth Ministry Internship Inventory was mailed to the head of the youth ministry department at the seven participating schools on August 16 and August 19, 2003. The instrument was administered to youth ministry majors in one of two ways: in class, or through campus mail. Instruments were then collected by professors and mailed back to the researcher between September and November 2003.

YOUTH MINISTRY INTERNSHIP INVENTORY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to evaluate youth ministry internships. This study is being conducted for a dissertation by Houston Heflin on ministry training and the educational contributions of field experience.

In this survey you will be asked to reflect on your most recent ministry internship and respond to questions about your experiences. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be requested, reported, or identified with your responses. Furthermore, it will be impossible to connect your identity with the church where you served. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this Youth Ministry Internship Inventory, and by placing an "X" in the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

[ ] I agree to participate.

[ ] I do not agree to participate.

YOUTH MINISTRY INTERNSHIP INVENTORY

Please respond to the following questions
as they apply to your most recent or current internship
and return this survey within one week to the professor who administered it.

Place an "X" in the appropriate bracket. Example: [X]

1. What is your gender? [ ] Male [ ] Female

2. What is your classification in school?
   [ ] Freshman
   [ ] Sophomore
   [ ] Junior
   [ ] Senior
   [ ] Graduate student

3. What is your major?
   [ ] Youth & Family Ministry
   [ ] Bible (Youth Ministry emphasis)
   [ ] Religion (Youth Ministry emphasis)
   [ ] Biblical Studies / Religion
   [ ] Other (specify) _____

4. In what ministry area did you most recently serve (or are you currently serving) as an intern?
   [ ] Youth & Family Ministry
   [ ] Preaching
   [ ] Children's Ministry
   [ ] Missions
   [ ] Other (specify) _____

5. In what state did you serve as an intern?
   [ ] Alabama
   [ ] Arkansas
   [ ] Oklahoma
   [ ] Tennessee
   [ ] Texas
   [ ] Other (specify) _____

6. Was this internship required by your degree program? [ ] Yes [ ] No

7. Did you serve in a Church of Christ? [ ] Yes [ ] No

8. What was the average Sunday morning attendance at the church where you served as an intern?
   - [ ] < 100
   - [ ] 101-250
   - [ ] 251-500
   - [ ] 501-750
   - [ ] 751-1000
   - [ ] 1001-2000
   - [ ] 2001 +

9. When did your internship occur?
   - [ ] Summer months
   - [ ] School year
   - [ ] School year and summer
   - [ ] Other (specify) _____

10. How long was your internship?
    - [ ] 7-10 weeks
    - [ ] 11-14 weeks
    - [ ] 4-6 months
    - [ ] 7-9 months
    - [ ] Other (specify) _____

11. How many interns worked in youth ministry at the church while you were there? (Include yourself)
    - [ ] 1
    - [ ] 2
    - [ ] 3
    - [ ] 4
    - [ ] Other (specify) _____

12. What was your weekly salary?
    - [ ] $150-$200
    - [ ] $201-$250
    - [ ] $251-$300
    - [ ] $301-$350
    - [ ] Other (specify) _____

13. Who was your primary supervisor at the location of your internship?
    - [ ] Youth Minister
    - [ ] Senior / Preaching Minister
    - [ ] Elder
    - [ ] Deacon
    - [ ] Other (specify) _____

14. What was the gender of your supervisor? [ ] Male [ ] Female

15. Were you given a job desciption or ministry profile describing your position? [ ] Yes [ ] No

16. Were you given a code of conduct or code of ethics to follow? [ ] Yes [ ] No

17. How often did you meet with your supervisor for intentional support and training in ministry?
    - [ ] Once a day
    - [ ] Once a week
    - [ ] Once a month
    - [ ] Other (specify) _____

18. How often was your performance evaluated by your supervisor?
    - [ ] Once a week
    - [ ] Once a month
    - [ ] I wasn't evaluated
    - [ ] Other (specify) _____

For the following questions circle the number that best matches your level of agreement. (1) is Strongly Disagree, (2) is Disagree, (3) is Neutral, (4) is Agree, and (5) is Strongly Agree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
19. My supervisor was knowledgeable about ministry.	1	2	3	4	5
20. My supervisor was skillful in ministry.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. My supervisor excelled as a model of Christian maturity and morality.	1	2	3	4	5
22. My supervisor was an excellent intern supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
23. This internship taught me new knowledge and insights about ministry.	1	2	3	4	5
24. This internship taught me new skills in ministry.	1	2	3	4	5
25. This internship helped me grow in Christian character.	1	2	3	4	5
26. My supervisor and I developed a close relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
27. The ministry courses I took in school prepared me well for this internship.	1	2	3	4	5
28. This internship gave me opportunities to apply things I learned in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
29. This internship was important to my education as a minister.	1	2	3	4	5
30. This internship helped me decide whether or not to enter ministry.	1	2	3	4	5

Items 31-35 will say "Mark all that apply" and may require more than one response.

31. Which of the following educational activities did you participate in during your internship? (Mark all that apply)

[ ] Read a book about ministry
[ ] Attended a conference
[ ] Discussed case studies
[ ] Kept a journal
[ ] None of the above
[ ] Other (specify) _____

32. Which of the following spiritual disciplines did you regularly (at least once a week) participate in during your internship? (Mark all that apply)

[ ] Bible Study
[ ] Prayer
[ ] Worship
[ ] Meditation / Reflection
[ ] Fasting
[ ] Service
[ ] Confession / Accountability
[ ] Financial giving / Tithing
[ ] None of the above
[ ] Other (specify) _____

33. Which of the following ministry activities did you participate in at least once during your internship? (Mark all that apply)

[ ] Teach a class
[ ] Write curriculum for a class
[ ] Lead a small group Bible study
[ ] Preach in the assembly
[ ] Conduct a wedding or funeral
[ ] Hospital or home visitation
[ ] Perform a baptism
[ ] Counsel youth
[ ] Recruit volunteers
[ ] Plan and lead events
[ ] Budget money
[ ] Organize files and paperwork
[ ] Attend staff meetings
[ ] Attend elders' meetings
[ ] Other (specify) _____

34. Which of the following spiritual disciplines did you regularly (at least once a week) participate in with your supervisor? (Mark all that apply)

[ ] Bible Study
[ ] Prayer
[ ] Worship
[ ] Theological reflection
[ ] Fasting
[ ] Service
[ ] Confession / Accountability
[ ] None of the above
[ ] Other (specify) _____

35. Which of the following week-long ministry events did you participate in this summer?

[ ] Junior High Camp
[ ] High School Camp
[ ] Mission Trip(s)
[ ] Service Project(s)
[ ] Wilderness Trek (or equivalent)
[ ] None of the above
[ ] Other (specify) _____

36. What new knowledge or insights about ministry did you gain from your internship?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

37. What ministry skills did you learn from your internship?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

38. How did your internship influence your spirituality, character, or relationship with God?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

39. What did your supervisor do to make this a positive or negative experience?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

40. How did your internship help you decide to enter or avoid youth ministry as a profession?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

41. Rank the following in order of their significance to you as the most important thing you received from your internship. (Use 1 as the most important and 5 as the least important).

___ Knowledge about ministry
___ Skills in ministry
___ Character / Spirituality
___ Relationship with my supervisor
___ Discernment about career plans

42. What are your plans immediately after graduation?

[ ] Become a Youth Minister
[ ] Attend graduate school
[ ] Undecided
[ ] Other (specify) _____

Please return this completed survey to the professor who distributed it to you.

APPENDIX 2

EXPERT PANEL CREDENTIALS

Dudley Chancey, Ph.D., has served in youth ministry for over 25 years. He is currently an associate professor of youth ministry at Oklahoma Christian University, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Vann Conwell is the Senior Youth Minister at the Northlake Church of Christ in Tucker, Georgia. He has served in ministry for 27 years. He received a B.A. from Samford University and has conducted graduate work at Abilene Christian University and the University of Alabama-Birmingham.

Chris Hatchett is the Senior Youth Minister at the Richland Hills Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas. He has supervised numerous interns and has served in ministry for 12 years. He received a B.S. from Abilene Christian University and is conducting graduate work at Lubbock Christian University.

Robert Oglesby has served in youth ministry for 20 years. He is an instructor and the Director of the Center for Youth and Family Ministry at Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas.

Mitch Wilburn has supervised dozens of interns and has served in ministry for 12 years. He spent several years as the Youth Minister of the Park Plaza Church of Christ in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He currently serves as an Associate Minister at the same church.

APPENDIX 3

PARTICIPATION INSTRUCTIONS

The inventory instrument was mailed to professors at the seven universities in this study on August 16 and August 19, 2003. The following letter was also included as an explanation of the procedures for instrumentation distribution.

Saturday 16 August 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

Please find enclosed copies of the Youth Ministry Internship Inventory for distribution to junior and senior youth ministry majors at your school.

In order to achieve the highest return rate, and to ensure consistency among the seven schools whose students are participating in this research, please follow these guidelines:

1. Distribute the surveys to juniors and seniors during the first week of classes when students' perceptions of their internship experiences are still fresh in their minds.

2. Distribute the surveys by hand in class or through campus mail. If you distribute them in class you may choose to give students time to complete the survey and return it immediately. If you mail them please indicate how and where they should be returned. The surveys say to return them within one week to the professor who distributed them.

It is my belief that any encouragement you offer to students to complete the surveys will significantly increase the probability that they will be returned. Additional reminders during the one-week period are completely appropriate and may increase the return rate. Once surveys have been returned to you at the end of the one-week period please mail them along with any unused surveys back to me at Richardson East Church of Christ. Having the unused surveys sent back will help me determine the response rate. If you request reimbursement for postage I will gladly send you a check.

In return for your support and participation in this research I will analyze the data from the surveys that are returned and present to you a report before the end of the semester. This report will include information from the cumulative responses as well as information concerning students at your school. I believe this report will be valuable and interesting, both for you and your students.

If you have any questions please contact me at any time. May God bless you in your ministry for the Kingdom.

Houston Heflin

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES
IN THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH MINISTERS
IN CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Houston Derrick Jay Heflin, Ed.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004
Supervisor: Dr. Katheryn L. Webb

This dissertation examines the influence of youth ministry internships as a component of education for full time youth ministry. The need for evaluation of ministry internships is elucidated within a discussion of the current state of theological field education. The precedent literature relevant to theological field education is then discussed. This includes biblical discipleship, experiential learning theory, internships in higher education, and internships in youth ministry. The literature points to five basic objectives of internships that are used to guide the evaluation of learning from field experience. These are the expansion and assimilation of knowledge, the acquisition of skills, the formation of character, the development of mentor relationships, and the opportunity to test vocational interests in order to make a vocational decision.

Purposive sampling was employed in this descriptive, quantitative research to reach the largest segment of the research population. The population consisted of junior and senior youth ministry majors in the seven largest universities associated with Churches of Christ who offer a bachelor's degree in youth ministry. Information was collected from these students concerning their internships through a survey instrument.

Results indicated students perceive internships to be a vital component of their education for ministry. Interns ranked learning new skills in ministry, followed by growing in Christian character, and learning new knowledge about ministry as the most important contributions of their internships. Although interns ranked the influence of the supervisor relationship as fourth among significant contributions of internships, the supervisor relationship permeated every other aspect of internships. When supervisors were intentional about offering training and support in ministry, and when they practiced the spiritual disciplines with interns, their interns were more likely to say they experienced both educational and spiritual growth. The practice of journaling and theological reflection also emerged as influential disciplines of interns. The influence of internships on the vocational decisions of students to enter or avoid ministry was minimal.

Applications for ministry education are proposed as they apply to professors, supervisors, and interns. These are followed by suggestions for future research in the area of theological field experience.

Key words: internship, youth ministry, experiential learning, theological education, ministry supervision, Church of Christ

VITA

Houston Derrick Jay Heflin

PERSONAL

Born: May 15, 1973, Azle, Texas
Parents: Ron and Jayleta Heflin
Married: Karen Lynn Cherry, May 31, 1997
Child: Matalee Grace, September 26, 2002

EDUCATIONAL

Diploma, Azle High School, Azle, Texas, 1991
B.S., Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas, 1995
M.S., Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas, 1997

MINISTERIAL

Youth Minister, Lakewood Church of Christ, Lakewood, Colorado
1997-2001
Youth Minister, Richardson East Church of Christ, Richardson, Texas
2001-

ACADEMIC

Adjunct professor, Graduate School of Theology, Abilene Christian University
2004-

ORGANIZATIONAL

Association of Youth Ministry Educators