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ASSESSING EPISTEMOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG  
WOMEN IN EVANGELICAL SEMINARIES

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

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by  
Jennifer Jeannean Kintner

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**APPROVAL SHEET**

**ASSESSING EPISTEMOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG  
WOMEN IN EVANGELICAL SEMINARIES**

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To my mom,  
no matter the level of coursework,  
always my greatest cheerleader, tutor, proofreader, and teacher,  
who gave me a love for education that has led me here.

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## PREFACE

I have spent thirty of my thirty-four years in educational institutions in some capacity. I am the recipient of a rich heritage of Christian education. God, by far my greatest teacher, has kindly, patiently, faithfully, and effectively taught me. The world is His classroom; His intimate and specific knowledge of each student perfect; His assignments, discipline, illustrations, and lessons are always effective. He has used many people in my life in formal and informal ways as a part of that educational process.

My family's business seems to be education, and I am grateful for how each of them has contributed to mine from birth. They have put up with my lugging home dozens of books each holiday and often spending my time "with them" at the table while laboring over a book or a laptop. Thank you to you all and I love you. Jas, thanks for believing I could teach and inviting me, though an unlikely candidate as your little sister, to be your partner in the classroom.

As long as I can remember, I've been intrigued in the classroom, not just with the material, but by how teachers taught. The following teachers and professors were among those who displayed a love for their God, a love for their students, a love for their subject matter, and the ability to convey their passion for the material to their students in a way that the students shared in the passion for the subject. Thank you to Mr. Camburn, who through British literature taught me to write, to think, and to work. Thank you to Dr. Todd Bolen, who gave me a passion for the Word of God, the Land of the Bible, collegiate-level writing, for having academic excellence to the glory of God, and for being a teacher who knows and cares for students. Thank you to Betty Price, whose classes taught me to study the Word of God. She identified, nurtured, and continues to nurture my potential as a college professor. Thank you to Dr. Greg Behle, who has

challenged my thinking over the years, who encouraged my academic and teaching pursuits, who has mentored me through doctoral work, and who first introduced me to the writings of William Perry.

My time at SBTS has been the pinnacle of my education thus far. Thank you, Dr. Trentham, for talking me through the challenging times of doctoral work and thesis writing. Conversations with you about epistemological development among college students have pushed me to be a better educator and discipler. Dr. Wilder, your pastoral heart and scholarly excellence exemplify the kind of educator I want to be and have pushed me to be a better follower and leader. Dr. Jones, thank you for pushing me to not put up straw men, to tighten my argument, to think historically and theologically about educational issues, to interact with others as image bearers, and to revel in and live out of my wonderful union with Christ. Dr. Foster, your class came at a pivotal time of my career as I stepped into the college classroom as a professor. God knew I needed the content and empathy I received in your class. Dr. Parker, your class prepared me to step into my role as an Associate Dean by helping me know how to think about and respond to the challenges of higher education, how to lead in change, and how to have a heart that considers people in the process.

Cohort 2015, I can't imagine completing this process without you. Support and encouragement abounded in our group, as did camaraderie. Important information was shared and help given; snacks or meals in homes were provided; it was the opportunity to be in a room full of educators and pastors and to pick your brains, it was teaching the same course as Erin and Linda; it was long discussions about the meat sweats or educating one another on "mic drops." The list could go on and on, but you all were a large part of my education and development as a leader and follower of Christ.

I am also indebted to former students and current students in this process. One learns a great deal by teaching, and I have been blessed and honored to have you in class. Friends and coworkers have dedicated time and resources, have shouldered more

responsibilities, and have heard more of my studies than they probably cared to. Thank you to The Master's University Student Life Department, who employed me, gave me opportunities to lead and educate, and allowed for and encouraged me to complete this process.

I could not have completed this research without the faithful work of all the researchers who have come before in considering the epistemological development of pre-ministry students and without my faithful research pod. Through this process I have also experienced and benefited from a kind community of scholarship; people were eager and willing to converse and help. I would be remiss not to specifically mention Dr. William Moore's faithful part in this research. He not only added extensive experience and faithful, thorough research to this project, but his astute insights, willing dialogue, and extensive time given, educated and developed me as a researcher. I am also extremely grateful for my committee. Dr. John Trentham and Dr. Kevin Jones, thank you for not only seeing the need for this research, but for cheering on both Erin Shaw and me as we wrote and defended. That kind of support and encouragement is pivotal to women's development as scholars. This project and your feedback has had a great impact on me personally, probably greater than I even realize at this point. I am grateful to the women whom I interviewed for their time and their invaluable input in this research. Lastly, I am thankful to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, an institution that is complementarian in its convictions and that is training women for kingdom work to the glory of God. God has allowed me to be trained here, and I look forward to seeing the good works He has prepared for me in the future. "For from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen" (Rom 11:36).

Jenn Kintner

Santa Clarita, California

May 2018

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

“Why can’t a woman be more like a man?” This comical phrase was uttered by bachelor Henry Higgins in the classic film *My Fair Lady* in response to his confusion with Eliza Doolittle. Considering the complexities and differences between men and women is as old as creation. The differences between men and women should not be surprising, given that God designed and created two different sexes to be complementary. In the very first chapter of Scripture, this distinction is seen: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27). God’s purpose in creating Eve is seen in his assessment that it was not good for Adam to be alone (Gen 2:18). God purposed to create for Adam “a helper fit for him” (Gen 2:18). The creation account goes on to describe this complementary design as God “fashioning” Eve out of Adam’s rib. She was divinely designed as a complement, not a carbon copy. She was designed differently.

Could it be that women’s epistemological development differs or that their experience as learners varies from men’s? In “A New Look at Women’s Learning,” Elisabeth Hayes, author and educator renowned for her work in increasing female participation in the realm of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), recounts the history of this inquiry into the differences between men and women as learners:

Women’s potentially distinctive characteristics as learners have been a topic of interest to scholars, educators, and women themselves for centuries. Noted Western (male) philosophers, ranging from Plato to Rousseau, questioned whether women

could learn at all, or could at least engage in the kind of rational thought typically associated with “higher” learning.<sup>1</sup>

Hayes articulates the importance of inquiry into this subject:

It can be tempting to simply ignore gender, perhaps in the name of treating each person as a unique individual. Ignoring gender can make us blind to the significant impact that it can have on our learners, and to ways that we can improve learning experiences for all learners.<sup>2</sup>

Is it important to examine how individuals, in this case women, know and think? If knowing is ethical, it is. Much has been written on the importance of the Christian mind. Wood, in *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous*, calls for careful oversight of one’s intellectual life in order to think well. After all, “thinking well is an indispensable ingredient in living well.”<sup>3</sup> He goes on to write, “Christians have some special reasons to take seriously the questions and concerns raised by epistemologists. Exercising care over the formation of one’s mind is not a purely academic pursuit; it is also spiritual.”<sup>4</sup>

John Frame argues in *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* that all knowledge is closely related and tethered to the knowledge of God. Epistemology, therefore, is a moral pursuit. Because knowing is pivotal in the Christian life, epistemological development is an important field to consider, especially for those who desire to be trained for ministry. Because growth in one act of the human mind strengthens the others, it will be advantageous to understand how seminary influences epistemological development.

Though men and women are more similar than different when it comes to the epistemological realm,<sup>5</sup> and while they have the same ethical, moral, and spiritual

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<sup>1</sup>Elisabeth R. Hayes, “A New Look at Women’s Learning,” *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 89 (2001): 35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>3</sup>W. Jay Wood, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>5</sup>Both men and women are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27), both are fallen (Rom 3:10-



responsibility before God in the use of their minds, if God created women differently than men, it is appropriate to explore those differences through research and to consider how women develop epistemologically in specific contexts.<sup>6</sup> An exploration of those differences will aid in women being trained and equipped for robust ministry in appropriate, God-designed roles. Seminary is one arena where women can be trained in preparation for ministry.

Although the number of women in seminary over the last few decades has increased, enrollment of women still remains relatively low in Evangelical institutions. Daniel Aleshire, Executive Director of The Association of Theological Schools (ATS), in his article “The Future has Arrived,” states that the percentage of female students in ATS institutions has grown from 29 to 35 percent.<sup>7</sup> The annual ATS reports also reflect few women enrolled in ATS institutions. In 1995, in the Master of Divinity programs, there were 7,325 women enrolled, comprising 28 percent of the Master of Divinity population.<sup>8</sup> Women enrolled in Master of Divinity Programs in 2006, totaled 10,663 or 31 percent.<sup>9</sup>

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12, 23), and both are redeemed the same way believing the same gospel and the same truths (Rom 10:9; Acts 16:31; Col 1:13-14; Eph 1:7; 1 Tim 2:6; Heb 9:12; Rom 3:23-25). The vast majority of scriptural commands apply to both men and women, while there are a few distinctions regarding roles in the church and in the family (Gal 3; 1 Tim 2; Col 3; Eph 5; 1 Cor 14).

<sup>6</sup>This project was limited in scope and did not seek to assess the epistemological development of all women in all cultures for all time. It did not seek to essentialize what it means to be female or feminine or what it means to think and know as a female. This thesis does not try to say women are defined by anything outside of how God has defined them and does not try to place more or fewer limits than what God has placed in the realms of the church and the family, but does ask how women experience seminary specifically in the realm of epistemological development. For more on essentialism and gender, see Jo Suzuki, “He Made Them Male and Female: Image of God, Essentialism, and Evangelical Gender Debate,” in *What Really Happened in the Garden: Realities and Ramifications of the Creation and Fall of Man*, ed. Abner Chou (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015), 251-76.

<sup>7</sup>Daniel Aleshire, “The Future Has Arrived: Changing Theological Education in a Changed World,” *Theological Education* 46, no. 2 (2011): 73.

<sup>8</sup>Association of Theological Schools, “Annual Data Tables,” accessed February 2, 2016, <http://www.ats.edu/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables>.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

The report from ATS for the 2014/2015 school year showed a small decrease from the decade before; 8,706 women enrolled in Master of Divinity programs comprising 29 percent of the enrolled population.<sup>10</sup> In the most recent report for 2016/2017, the amount of women enrolled remained a steady 29 percent.<sup>11</sup> While some of Aleshire's reportings show progress in the inclusion of women in higher theological education,<sup>12</sup> Sharon Hodde Miller, in her Ph.D. dissertation covering the positive influences that lead women to enroll in seminary, argues that while numbers have increased, they are still low. She writes,

The United States is witnessing a significant shift in the halls of the American academy. An increasing number of women have entered higher education, and women now outnumber men at nearly every level of education. However, this trend is not universal. That same year, ATS reported that women account for only a third of seminary student bodies in the United States. At evangelical schools, that percentage is even lower. ATS reports that the average percentage of women enrolled in evangelical M.Div. programs is 21%.<sup>13</sup>

Women who desire to go to seminary wonder about their reasons for attending and some feel guilt over the impracticality of seminary as women.<sup>14</sup> What is the value of seminary for women who desire to minister but have no intention of being ordained as pastors?<sup>15</sup> How does it shape their thinking and knowing? How do different types of

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<sup>10</sup>Association of Theological Schools, "Annual Data Tables."

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Aleshire reports that in 2009, sixty-one ATS schools had more women than men enrolled in their M.Div. programs. Daniel O. Aleshire, "Deconstructing the Gender Issue in the 2010 Standards for Accreditation," *Theological Education* 46, no. 2 (2011): 4.

<sup>13</sup>Sharon Hodde Miller, "An Exploration of the Factors That Influence Women to Pursue a Master of Divinity at Evangelical Seminaries" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2014), iii.

<sup>14</sup>Miller addresses this issue: "What distinguishes the participants' self-scrutiny is the connection between guilt and impracticality. The women feared their degree was essentially a waste, a perception that is out of sync with Christian teaching." Ibid., 145.

<sup>15</sup>One article notes that while many women are "consistent students" who pursue masters or doctorates in a theological field, very few will find a faculty position and even fewer a church position to fill. Eleni Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi, "Orthodox Women and Theological Education," *The Ecumenical Review* 65, no. 4 (December 2013): 474. Susan Shaw and Tisa Lewis also speak to women's experience of studying and finding no prospect for employment after graduation. Susan M. Shaw and Tisa Lewis, "Once There Was a Camelot: Women Doctoral Graduates of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982-1992, Talk about the Seminary, the Fundamentalist Takeover, and Their Lives Since SBTS," *Review and*

seminaries impact the intellectual development of the female students enrolled in them? Research has yet to be done and literature has yet to be written in this regard.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

William Perry's study *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* has for decades been considered crucial to understanding the epistemological development of students in higher education.<sup>16</sup> As a professor at Harvard in the 1950s and 1960s, Perry conducted a qualitative, longitudinal study of the epistemological development among undergraduate students. Using open-ended questions, he developed an epistemological progression of nine stages. These stages have continued to be verified and used throughout the last fifty years to measure epistemological development, and his scheme has laid the framework and a foundation for further studies in the field. While his stages have been verified and proven, and while his research continues to provide tools for evaluating epistemological development, his research was based largely on male students at Harvard.<sup>17</sup> His research, however, has been used and verified by later studies involving women.

#### **Belenky et al.**

Almost thirty years after Perry's publication, Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule raised the issue that women's epistemological development was assessed according to male development patterns.<sup>18</sup> They sought to do a study of women, by women, to understand why women

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*Expositor* 95 (1998): 397-423. Although these articles are from an egalitarian perspective, they speak to the question women have regarding the practicality of seminary.

<sup>16</sup>William G. Perry, Jr., *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

<sup>17</sup>In Perry's research, out of a sample of over one hundred students, only two females were interviewed, and their data was excluded from the reported findings.

<sup>18</sup>Mary Field Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and*

feel they are lacking in their education. Their research emphasized collaboration and discovery in education as well as women gaining their voice. Although their study is important for setting a precedent of research focused on females in this field, their findings did not reveal a new structure of epistemological development that dramatically differed from Perry's study. In studying women, they found some patterns and perspectives that differed and they structured and interpreted things differently, such as determining their categories to not be sequential stages. Overall, however, they found more in common with Perry than different. In so doing, they continue to show the value of Perry's trusted scheme for epistemological development of adults.

Belenky et al.'s research includes valuable data, but like Perry, their interpretations lack the redemptive framework: creation, fall, redemption, and consummation.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, in order to understand the patterns and perspectives of epistemological development of pre-ministry women, it is necessary for the researcher not only to have a theological, redemptive framework by which the results may be interpreted, but also a sample that matches the intended population; namely, pre-ministry female seminarians.

### **Baxter Magolda**

Marcia B. Baxter Magolda saw the need for a study that closely compared both men and women, since the studies of Belenky et al. and Perry were decades apart and examined different populations.<sup>20</sup> While no momentous differences emerged in her study,

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*Mind* (New York: Basic, 1997).

<sup>19</sup>Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation is the *historia salutis* or the order of salvation laid out in Scripture. This biblical storyline or narrative arc is foundational for understanding man in light of his Creator and his need for restoration. It explains who man is, where he came from, what his problem is, what is necessary for his happiness and what his hope or the solution to his need is. This worldview is necessary to qualitative research in understanding the world as God created it and in its broken state. This helps the researcher understand their own bias as well as that everything they are observing in participants is not always what it should be. It is descriptive not prescriptive.

<sup>20</sup>Perry studied male Harvard students in the 1950s while Belenky et al. studied all women in

gender-related patterns in reasoning and thinking did emerge.<sup>21</sup> Baxter Magolda has edited a book entitled *Development and the Assessment of Self Authorship: Exploring the Concept across Cultures* in which she and other authors investigate how Perry's concept of epistemological development can be applied to a wide variety of people and ages.<sup>22</sup> *Development and the Assessment of Self-Authorship* deals with the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects in the formation of self-authorship. Self-authorship means no longer being consumed with what everyone else thinks as an external formula but rather relying on inner perspectives and strengths as an internal authority. This work shows the anthropotelic nature of these development schemes. These studies over the decade show the usefulness of these development schemes, which can be utilized for research in various settings. The anthropotelic nature of the works also demonstrates the need for the schemes to be examined and reinterpreted with a biblical framework.

### **Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Students**

John David Trentham, in his study of thirty undergraduate, pre-ministry students from three differing institutional contexts, examined intellectual and ethical development, both according to the Perry scheme and according to a taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies.<sup>23</sup> The taxonomy reflects presuppositions related to epistemology. The priorities and competencies include a recognition of God and His authoritative Word, the relationship between faith and rationality, metacognition and

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the 1980s, some of whom were a part of "the invisible college," institutions that help women in need.

<sup>21</sup>Marcia B. Baxter Magolda, "Gender Differences in Cognitive Development" (paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, April 22, 1987).

<sup>22</sup>Marcia B. Baxter Magolda, ed., *Development and the Assessment of Self Authorship: Exploring the Concept across Cultures* (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2010).

<sup>23</sup>See John David Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates: A Cross-Institutional Application of the Perry Scheme" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 175-78. Trentham studied students in secular colleges or universities, Bible colleges, and Christian liberal arts colleges or universities.

reflection including a preference for higher modes of thinking and wisdom thinking, a criterion for assessing beliefs, understanding social-environmental influences on one's learning, and taking personal responsibility for knowledge. The analysis of the data by the Center for the Study of Intellectual Development (CSID) according to the Perry scheme correlated with Trentham's analysis of the presence of epistemological priorities and competencies according to his developing taxonomy. While these results may be surprising given the possible conflicts between a constructivist structure and a biblical worldview, Trentham explains these findings with the principle of inverse consistency, which shows that while believers and non-believers are developing in similar patterns, the respective end or telos for either group is oriented according to opposite trajectories. The believer's development is Christotelic, while secular development theories are anthropotelic.

Perry's scheme has been used for decades as a valuable and reliable tool for measuring the intellectual development of students in higher education. It observes a real pattern that believers follow, as seen in Trentham's work. While Christian students and educators have a very different end in mind than that of Perry, Belenky et al., and Baxter Magolda, Perry's scheme is a valuable way to assess the epistemological development of higher education pre-ministry students.

### **Need for Study**

Several further studies<sup>24</sup> have been done using Perry's scheme to assess the epistemological development of pre-ministry students at various levels, but none have specifically focused on women.<sup>25</sup> Women's epistemological development has been limited

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<sup>24</sup>Building upon Trentham's work on epistemological development of pre-ministry undergraduates, Long used the Perry scheme to examine the development of students in various Bible colleges, Sanchez in students at secular universities, Cannon in students at Christian liberal arts colleges or universities, Leatherman in confessional and non-confessional contexts, Mullins in high school students in various contexts, and Stuckert in male seminary students in various contexts. Each of these studies is discussed individually in chap. 2, the literature review.

<sup>25</sup>Trentham's study included 4 females; Long's included 6; Sanchez's study included 8;

to studies from a constructivist, feminist viewpoint.<sup>26</sup> Literature regarding women in seminary is developing, but is limited.<sup>27</sup>

Although God created women and men distinctly different, little research has been done exploring these differences with regard to theological training. In his book *A Guide to Christian Spiritual Formation*, Evan B. Howard demonstrates the need to consider this difference: “Community size, gender, and personality type are among the many factors that influence the ways that transformation will be experienced in any given situation.”<sup>28</sup> No research has been done demonstrating the effect of seminary on the epistemological development of women.<sup>29</sup> This research sought to fill that void.

### **Benefits of the Study**

This research aids several different spheres and groups of people, including both current and future female seminary students and seminary faculty, staff, and administrators. The study also serves as a resource for local churches to further their ministry to women in their congregations.

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Cannon’s included 10 female students; and Stuckert’s study was delimited to male seminarians.

<sup>26</sup>See Belenky et al., *Women’s Ways of Knowing*.

<sup>27</sup>The following articles all argue from a feministic perspective: I. Anderson, “Two Decades Later: North Park Theological Seminary Female M.Div. Graduates (1977-1997),” *Covenant Quarterly* 56 (1998): 19. Anderson believes that the lack of traditional church leadership positions, like pastors, keeps women from developing their full giftedness. Barbara Wheeler, “Accountability to Women in Theological Seminaries,” *Religious Education* 76, no. 4 (July-August 1981): 390. Wheeler argues for the importance of a “feminist theology” as one of many critical perspectives to be considered. Shaw and Lewis, “Once There Was a Camelot,” 397-423. Shaw and Lewis’ work is egalitarian. It argues for the loss of the SBC through a “fundamentalist takeover,” as they take issue with one part of that change, the complementarian view.

<sup>28</sup>Evan B. Howard, *A Guide to Christian Spiritual Formation: How Scripture, Spirit, Community, and Mission Shape Our Souls* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 90.

<sup>29</sup>Bickley looks at beliefs of gender at the seminary level and the influence of the second wave of feminism on thinking, but does not look at the epistemological development. See Julia Elizabeth Bickley, “The Relationship between Second-Wave Feminist Philosophy and Interpretation of Biblical Gender Roles by Entering Seminary Students” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011). Miller explores the factors that are a part of women deciding to pursue a M.Div. In so doing, she examines their experience prior to seminary and not in seminary. See Miller, “An Exploration of the Factors.”

**Female seminarians.** This project sought to serve women who desire to go into ministry in assessing whether seminary is a viable option for training and what sort of institution to choose. This project also allows a prospective student to weigh the option of seminary with an informed view of what she can expect. It further helps women who are in seminary to better understand their context, the training they receive, and the benefits or challenges of seminary. This phenomenological study helps students currently in seminary to better understand their experience by having a study with which they can compare it. This project may help them further articulate their experience in order to better understand and communicate about their education.

**Seminary faculty, staff, and administration.** This study guides seminaries in training women, as women, for appropriate roles of ministry. This project aids many ATS institutions in carrying out their mission statements. As each of the institutions represented in this project enroll women, understanding the epistemological development of the women in their seminaries will assist them in fulfilling their mission in regard to education and in regard to the strengthening of the church.

A simple survey of several institutions' websites shows their expressed desire to further the ministry and mission of the church,<sup>30</sup> to build up the body of Christ worldwide,<sup>31</sup> to train Christian leaders,<sup>32</sup> to help their students develop holistically into

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<sup>30</sup>Part of the mission statement for The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary says, "To be a servant of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention by training, educating, and preparing ministers of the gospel for more faithful service." The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, "Mission," accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.sbts.edu/about/mission/>. Reformed Theological Seminary aims "to serve the Church by preparing its leaders, through a program of graduate theological education." Reformed Theological Seminary, "Purpose," accessed February 17, 2017, <https://www.rts.edu/site/about/purpose.aspx>.

<sup>31</sup>Dallas Theological Seminary exemplifies this expressed desire to further the ministry and mission of the church in their mission statement: "The mission of Dallas Theological Seminary as a professional, graduate-level school is to glorify God by equipping godly servant-leaders for the proclamation of His Word and the building up of the body of Christ worldwide." Dallas Theological Seminary, "DTS Mission Statement," accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.dts.edu/about/missionstatement/>.

<sup>32</sup>Westminster Seminary in California "offers instruction in biblical, theological, and ministerial disciplines to both men and women as the heart of a program to help students to develop intellectually and



Christlikeness,<sup>33</sup> and to develop disciples of Christ in thought, character, and lifestyles.<sup>34</sup> Understanding epistemological development and students' perspectives on knowing is profitable in fulfilling each of these goals. The theological basis for knowledge foundational to this study, as well as the findings from the research, directly relate to these mission statements, as this work emphasizes the development of the whole person biblically and the Christotelic nature of development for believers in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, as institutions seek to further the church and make disciples, excellence in training women for appropriate roles is a key part of that outcome.<sup>35</sup>

Understanding how this research aids institutions in fulfilling their mission statements leads to the benefit of this study with regard to accreditation. The continued development of Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies in this study may aid administrators in accreditation and assessment.<sup>36</sup> Demonstrating fulfillment of the institution's mission or purpose statement is an important part of

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spiritually as leaders." Westminster Seminary in California, "Mission," accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.wscal.edu/about-wsc/mission>. Both the mission statements from Reformed Theological Seminary and Dallas Theological Seminary specifically mention their intent to prepare and equip leaders. Reformed Theological Seminary, "Purpose," accessed February 17, 2017, <https://www.rts.edu/site/about/purpose.aspx>. Dallas Theological Seminary, "DTS Mission Statement."

<sup>33</sup>Gateway Seminary speaks to their mission of "encouraging and promoting personal, spiritual and professional growth," and shows the holistic nature of their mission by mentioning wisdom, courage, creativity, relational competency, obedience, and contextual ministry among their desired student outcomes. Gateway Seminary, "Essential Leadership Characteristics," accessed February 17, 2017, <https://www.gs.edu/about/our-mission/>.

<sup>34</sup>Talbot School of Theology expresses their commitment "to the development of disciples of Jesus Christ whose thought processes, character and lifestyles reflect those of our Lord, and who are dedicated to disciple-making throughout the world." Talbot School of Theology, "Mission," accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.talbot.edu/about/>.

<sup>35</sup>More is explained in this section on the benefits of this study for the church.

<sup>36</sup>King and Kitchener note the benefit of their model for administrators and faculty tasked with assessment since it shows a progression through the years. See Patricia M. King and Karen S. Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment: Understanding and Promoting Intellectual Growth and Critical Thinking in Adolescents and Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), xix.

accreditation.<sup>37</sup> Demonstrating integrity in the accreditation process entails demonstrating the alignment between programs and offerings and the purpose of the institution, which requires appropriate forms of assessment to demonstrate outcomes.<sup>38</sup>

Accreditation bodies examine educational effectiveness among various constituencies in schools. ATS has highlighted over the last several years their emphasis on schools serving their female constituency.<sup>39</sup> Recruitment, admission, services, and placement are important aspects of serving the institution's primary constituency—its students.<sup>40</sup> Institutions must also consider recruitment, admission, services, and placement in demonstrating the financial preparedness required by an accrediting agency.<sup>41</sup> Serving female constituents begins before enrollment with advertising and recruitment. Because a seminary education seems impractical to women who will be unlikely to find a job in ministry,<sup>42</sup> a marketing department or an admissions counselor will be greatly aided by this study.<sup>43</sup> They will be aided by being able to articulate the epistemic or other revealed

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<sup>37</sup>Association of Theological Schools, *Standards of Accreditation* (Pittsburgh: The Commission on Accrediting, 2015), 3.

<sup>38</sup>Association of Theological Schools, *Standards of Accreditation*, 2.

<sup>39</sup>The following statement is included in the Accreditation Standards published by ATS: “In their institutional and educational practices, theological schools shall promote the participation and leadership of women in theological education within the framework of each school’s stated purposes and theological commitments.” The standards also mention that schools must give evidence of efforts to encourage diversity in the admissions process and specifically include gender diversity as a part of the standard. *Ibid.*, 3,16.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>42</sup>Miller addresses this perceived impracticality of a seminary degree for women: “What distinguishes the participants’ self-scrutiny is the connection between guilt and impracticality. The women feared their degree was essentially a waste, a perception that is out of sync with Christian teaching.” Miller, “An Exploration of the Factors That Influence Women,” 145.

<sup>43</sup>David Worley, director of student services at Illiff School of Theology in Denver, who has been responsible for impressive enrollment gains at that institution, gives four strategies for improving enrollment. His first strategy demonstrates the usefulness of this work for those trying to recruit female students. His first strategy is “advocate for programs, delivery systems, and student programs that students need.” This work will help identify female students’ needs. Implementing his fourth strategy, “Articulate

benefits of a woman's experience in seminary and have a greater understanding of their female constituency. Furthermore, understanding and learning about this group of potential students serves to recruit a largely untapped population for seminaries.<sup>44</sup>

Enrollment is a significant consideration for institutions. Administrators and student success personnel will be helped with retention and student support through the themes, trends, and contextual realities revealed in this research. Institutions learning of challenges female students face can find solutions. For instance, an ATS report stated, "Single female students are among those most impacted by student debt in seminary. This has raised questions about the availability of financial resources for women students."<sup>45</sup> If

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clearly what distinguishes your school from other ATS member schools," will also be furthered by this research in understanding both the typical female seminary experience for Master of Divinity students in Evangelical seminaries as well as understanding the benefits of a specific institutional context for female seminarians, such as denominational or inter/multidenominational. Furthermore, seminaries who understand the weaknesses seen in varying institutional contexts can address those weaknesses in their context. Most importantly, understanding a student's experience in a specific context serves the applicant/student and furthers education, but it also allows for the seminary to explain how on a specific issue or in a specific arena it differs from its competitors. See David Worley, "Reaching for the Stars: Four Strategies for Boosting Enrollment," *Colloquy* 18, no. 1 (Fall 2009): 23-25.

<sup>44</sup>In 2015, the US Census Bureau reported the percentage of women exceeded that of men in undergraduate and graduate programs. They cited 55.4 percent of undergraduate and graduate education in the United States is comprised of females. United States Census Bureau, "Women's History Month: March 2017," Facts for Features, accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2017/cb17-ff03.html>. The Census Bureau also released the following numbers for male and female enrollment in graduate or professional schools in 2017. There are 2,352,893 female graduate students currently in attendance, but only 1,683,923 male graduate students. United States Census Bureau, "Sex by School Enrollment by Level of School by Type of School for the Population 3 Years and Over," American Fact Finder, accessed February, 17, 2017, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>. In 2012, *Forbes* reported the ratio of males to females in private college institutions to be 40 percent to 60 percent, with more females in attendance. In fact, they note, "Female domination of higher education prevails across all types of schools." Daniel Borzelleca, "The Male-Female Ratio in College," *Forbes*, accessed February 16, 2017, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ccap/2012/02/16/the-male-female-ratio-in-college/#1611ea0b1525>. Although in undergraduate education and in secular education females outnumber males, seminaries are still predominantly male. The most recent report from ATS reported seminary enrollment to be 67 percent male and 33 percent female. Association of Theological Schools, "Learning from One Another: 2016 Annual Report," Publications and Presentations, accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/documents/2016-annual-report.pdf>.

<sup>45</sup>Association of Theological Schools, "Sixty-Seven Theological Schools Share Strategies for Reducing Student Debt," accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/documents/67-theological-schools-share-strategies.pdf>.

a need like this is unknown, the problem will likely persist and enrollment will be negatively affected.

Student development personnel, including counselors, career services, internship coordinators, residence directors, financial aid staff, and others, can be better equipped through this research to counsel women and to help them grow outside the classroom as they make necessary choices and commitments related to finances, marriage, vocation, and other areas of life.<sup>46</sup> The co-curriculum can be purposefully designed to aid in epistemological development for the ultimate goal of being more conformed to the image of Christ. To this end, Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies, as well as findings with regard to the taxonomy in this work, are a resource for student development personnel.

The co-curricular use of Trentham's Taxonomy may aid institutions in bridging the traditional divide between faculty and student development personnel by providing a unified curricular structure. If both can acknowledge that development is holistic and is Christotelic, then both sides should see the benefit of each sphere and work in conjunction with each other. King and Kitchener demonstrate the benefit of this kind of teamwork: "We believe that students will be more likely to learn to think reflectively when this institutional goal is communicated in many institutional contexts, with multiple opportunities in both curricular and co-curricular settings to learn and practice thinking skills involved."<sup>47</sup>

Professors in evangelical seminaries who may be accustomed to predominantly male classrooms may be aided by this research through the revealed female patterns and

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<sup>46</sup>On different campuses this support staff can be referred to as student services, student affairs, or student life. King and Kitchener also mention this group as an audience for their research. King and Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment*, xix.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 240.

perspectives of the epistemological development of their students.<sup>48</sup> As a result of this study, further resources may be developed for seminarians to train women. Rather than being focused on training for the pastorate, these resources and textbooks can incorporate the patterns and perspectives seen in this study and take into account the female students in the seminary classroom.

**The church.** This thesis will also aid the church in considering how to support, equip, and utilize women in appropriate roles to further the ministry of the local church. This study will help pastors and leaders who guide and counsel women in pursuit of ministry training to give counsel without making assumptions based on the male seminary experience. This research will also help them support and encourage women currently enrolled in seminary as they understand their thoughts and experiences.

Through this research, women can be further equipped and utilized. This is an important effort as the church is comprised of two genders. It is important for the overall health of the church that both genders are equipped and trained for maturity and service. If a major portion of the body of believers is unused, the health and effectiveness of the church is compromised. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:7 that gifts were given to each member for the common good. He shows the importance of members with differing gifts in the body of Christ through analogies with the physical body. It would be foolish for the eye to say to the hand, "I have no need of you;" through this analogy Paul demonstrates it would be just as ridiculous for members of the congregation to not see the mutual need and benefit of the other members of the congregation (1 Cor 12:21). Similarly, Paul exhorts the church in Rome to use their differing gifts given by God's grace for the benefit of the church (Rom 12:6-8).

The church must be biblical in its understanding of womanhood and roles for

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<sup>48</sup>According to King, "Teachers who attempt to teach . . . without attending to students' underlying epistemic assumptions will probably be very frustrated, and their students will probably be dissatisfied as well." *Ibid.*, 169.

the home and the church given in Scripture, but in so doing it is important to not neglect the vital contributions women have made through the millennia and should continue to make in furthering the gospel and the mission of the church. Amy Byrd, author of *No Little Women: Equipping all Women in the Household of God*, writes,

Women play a major role in the body of Christ and in showing the face of Christianity to the watching world. So we need to be well-equipped with God's truth in our own lives. Of course, our gender does not affect the truth or who God is, but there are some nuances in the women's perspective and contribution that are different from those of the men. We also have some differences in our experiences and roles.<sup>49</sup>

To maximize these differences for Christ, women must be equipped, developed, and led by pastors and elders. Pastors and elders will be helped in this role if they recognize the commonality of all believers with regard to development, as well as the different patterns and perspectives present in males and females. As Byrd so aptly puts in her work, “Clearly God has designed [women] differently. And yet, as Dorothy Sayers has written, ‘the fundamental thing is that women are more like men than anything else in the world.’ Together we make up the image of God. We need both!”<sup>50</sup> Male pastors will be strengthened in their role of equipping the members of their church by growing in understanding of the female members’ differing patterns and perspectives (Eph 4:11-12). It is not enough for *some* of the congregation to be serving and maturing; *all* must be built up together.

### **Purpose Statement**

Using the theoretical lens of the Perry scheme along with Trentham’s taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies, this research explored epistemological development among female seminarians in evangelical institutions. Secondly, it considers the impact of varying institutional contexts on their epistemological development.

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<sup>49</sup>Aimee Byrd, *No Little Women: Equipping All Women in the Household of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2016), 61.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 260.

Attention is also given to the contextual realities and experiences of women who attend seminary. Practically, the purpose of this research is to provide a resource that lends wisdom and clarification regarding pre-ministry discipleship and vocational preparation for female students, parents, church leaders and advisors.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between female students' attendance at various evangelical seminaries and progression through the positions of intellectual and ethical maturity according to the Perry Scheme?
  - a. What is the relationship between attendance at a denominational seminary and progression through the positions of intellectual and ethical maturity according to the Perry Scheme?
  - b. What is the relationship between attendance at an inter/multidenominational seminary and progression through the positions of intellectual and ethical maturity according to the Perry Scheme?
2. What is the nature of epistemological development among women in evangelical seminaries when assessed according to Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies?
3. What contextual issues and themes emerge from female evangelical seminarians as they express their perspectives related to epistemological positions and values?

### **Delimitations**

1. This study was delimited to graduate students enrolled in evangelical seminaries.<sup>51</sup>
2. This study was delimited to ATS institutions.
3. This study was delimited to the two institutional contexts selected for the study.
4. This study was delimited to Master of Divinity students.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>For the purpose of this study, in conjunction with Jonathan Stuckert's work, *evangelical* is defined by the five distinguishing characteristics of evangelicals found in George Marsden's chapter in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*. These characteristics are "1) The Reformation doctrine of the final authority of Scripture; 2) The real, historical character of God's saving work recorded in Scripture; 3) Eternal salvation only through personal trust in Christ; 4) The importance of evangelism and missions; and 5) The importance of a spiritually transformed life." George Marsden, "Introduction: The Evangelical Denomination," in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, ed. George Marsden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), ix-x.

<sup>52</sup>This delimitation was made because a M.Div. degree is available at all seminaries (except Dallas Theological Seminary), which allowed comparison across institutional contexts to be equitable. Because Dallas Theological Seminary does not have a M.Div. degree, in order to encourage their students

5. This study was delimited to those who have completed a minimum of 75 percent of their studies.
6. This study was delimited to participants who have completed less than 25 percent of their coursework through distance learning.<sup>53</sup>
7. This study was delimited to the time of the study and did not trace the students' epistemological development longitudinally.

### **Research Population and Sample**

The population for this study consisted of female students toward the end of their Master of Divinity program enrolled in ATS evangelical seminaries or who have recently graduated within the last academic year.<sup>54</sup> Fifteen students were recruited from the denominational category and fifteen were included from the inter/multidenominational category.

### **Limitations of Generalization of Research Findings**

1. Findings are limited to the institutions included in the research and may not be generalized to different institutional contexts including non-evangelical institutions, institutions outside of the Association of Theological Schools, or institutions outside the scope of denominational or inter/multidenominational seminaries.
2. Findings may not generalize to non-theological programs or to theological programs outside of the Master of Divinity.
3. Findings may not translate to women who are not enrolled in a similar program.

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to pursue the four-year Th.M. degree, an accommodation was made to this delimitation to include their Th.M. students.

<sup>53</sup>This delimitation was made in Jonathan Stuckert's study as well because of "some of the anticipated influences on epistemological development (peers and friends, mentors and professors, seminary culture) may be absent or diminished in the distance setting." Jonathan Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 56-57. This delimitation also helps as students involved in distance learning are often involved in different vocational, ministerial, and relational contexts in their areas that could also alter and even advance their epistemological development. This delimitation allows for considering the effect of the seminary on their epistemological development by excluding other variables.

<sup>54</sup>The selection of M.Div. students for this study is also supported by the literature where M.Div. students were chosen for purpose of easy comparison. Anderson, "Two Decades Later," 20. The M.Div. is "the bread-and-butter degree of most seminaries, the core of the institution's programs," according to Wheeler, "Accountability to Women in Theological Seminaries," 382. The M.Div. also trains people for ministry providing the population sample necessary for the continued study of pre-ministry students. See Miller, "An Exploration of the Factors That Influence Women," 50.



4. Generalizations of findings are limited to females and may not reflect male epistemological patterns of growth.<sup>55</sup>

### **Methodological Design**

Following the methodology of Perry and Trentham, this research was done using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions “to elicit the views and opinions from the participants.”<sup>56</sup> The Perry Interview Protocol was adapted for use in this research project.<sup>57</sup>

ATS evangelical seminaries were contacted for permission to include in the study women from their Masters of Divinity programs. These candidates were then contacted about the project and asked to fill out a participation form that obtained participants’ permission and collected demographic information to be used in the selection of participants and in the research. It also ensured those included in the study were willing and able to freely communicate in the interviews.<sup>58</sup>

A pilot study was then completed with three female students using the adapted interview protocol.<sup>59</sup> This allowed me to grow more comfortable in my interviewing skills and allowed Moore from the CSID to give feedback and instruction on properly

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<sup>55</sup>While generalizations are made to females, this is not to say that the findings of this project reflect all females. This research seeks to avoid essentializing gender to aspects other than what Scripture specifically reveals. This research was done in a specific contexts and findings reflect that context and are not generalizable to all women for all time. For a further understanding of essentialism and gender, see Suzuki, “He Made Them Male and Female,” 251-76.

<sup>56</sup>John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014), 190.

<sup>57</sup>The CSID has a standard Perry protocol utilizing open-ended questions and associated probes that have been adapted to meet the needs of various studies. The Perry Network, “Interview Format,” Assessment and Research Support, last modified August 23, 2014, accessed October 3, 2015, [http://perrynetwork.org/?page\\_id=19](http://perrynetwork.org/?page_id=19).

<sup>58</sup>Creswell writes, “For one-on-one interviewing, the researcher needs individuals who are not hesitant to speak and share ideas . . . the less articulate, shy interviewee may present the researcher with a challenge and less than adequate data.” John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among the Five Approaches*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013), 164.

<sup>59</sup>See appendix 6 for the Kintner Interview Protocol.

interviewing participants to gain the data necessary to rate the students according to the Perry scheme.

Fifteen students from each of the institutional contexts were interviewed by telephone. Interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants. I transcribed all interviews. Transcripts were sent to the CSID to be rated according to the Perry scheme.

I conducted my own analysis of the interviews with respect to Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies. After identifying instances where the priorities or competencies were evidenced in the interviews, I sent statement allocations for each priority and competency to Trentham for his review. His review and the dialogue that ensued led to a greater clarification of what evidenced the priorities and competencies and rich discussion over the seminarians' thought patterns. Through the dialogue statement allocations were confirmed as representing the priority or competency or set aside. I also analyzed the interviews for themes, trends, and contextual realities for the participants. After a thorough content analysis, observations were made with regard to the research questions.

Research competencies necessary for this study included the following: selecting and enlisting participants who met the qualifications for inclusion in the study, training in the CSID interview protocol, effective recording and transcription of interviews, proper evaluation and scoring of the data by the CSID and by me, as well as knowledge of Scripture to properly interpret the data and discern through the findings and interpretations contained in the literature.

## CHAPTER 2

### PRECEDENT LITERATURE

A study of the epistemological development among women in seminary must begin with a theological basis of epistemology. This literature review will explore themes found in the work of theologians and Christian philosophers with regard to knowing. Having this epistemological foundation will provide a basis by which to understand the rest of the literature. As this study seeks to utilize the Perry scheme as a theoretical lens in examining the epistemological development of the women involved, Perry will be explored at length, before examining the different studies related to gender in the field. This research gives insight and understanding of the population being studied in this work. Several themes which emerged with regard to women's thinking will be discussed. Finally, as this study falls in a long line of research with pre-ministry students and will utilize Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies, his study and subsequent studies on pre-ministry students will be explored.

#### **Theological Foundation for Epistemology**

Biblically, knowledge is more than intellectual assent. Knowledge is affective and effective. It involves belief and conviction, care and affection, as well as action and obedience. James makes this truth clear in his epistle; he argues that faith without works is dead (Jas 2:14-26). He writes, "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!" (Jas 2:19). He sarcastically invites those who think biblical knowledge is simply cerebral to pat themselves on the back before stating even the demons who are opposed to God do that. While Western philosophy has often seen knowledge as information, fact, and reasoning, biblical knowing is more holistic.

## Knowledge Is Dependent

Biblical knowledge begins with its dependence upon the Lord. Scripture authoritatively begins with God as the starting point, not from foundational truths upon which the existence of God builds.<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:1 states, “In the beginning, God. . . .” He needs no introduction or explanation. Even His revealed name to His chosen people demonstrates this: He is Yahweh, “I am who I am” (Exod 3:14). Belief in God is basic, not groundless.<sup>2</sup> Romans 1:18 reveals the righteous wrath of God against humanity because they are without excuse. They should have acknowledged God because what can be known about Him is clearly on display (Rom 1:19). Creation displays God’s eternal power and divine nature (Rom 1:20). Objective knowledge is not possible. Everyone wonders what is true, good, and real and relies on foundational beliefs without realizing it.<sup>3</sup> God, in His person and in His Word, provides a framework for interpreting facts. Jesus Christ proclaimed Himself as the way, the truth, and the life; apart from Him no one comes to the Father (John 14:6). He also set forth His Word as truth (John 17:17). All truth is connected and finds its source in God. As John Frame states, “All knowledge is theologizing.”<sup>4</sup>

John Frame in his work on the knowledge of God gives three perspectives for knowledge and shows their unity and place for the Christian. They are the normative or law, which is held by the rationalist; situational or world that is held by the empiricist; and the existential or self, which is held by subjectivists.<sup>5</sup> Christian philosopher Esther

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<sup>1</sup>Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds., *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 19, 195.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 16-93.

<sup>3</sup>Esther Lightcap Meek, *Longing to Know: The Philosophy of Knowledge for Ordinary People* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003), 7-8.

<sup>4</sup>John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1987), 167.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 74.

Lightcap Meek, drawing heavily from Frame, calls the three “correlatives in human knowing” word, world, and self.<sup>6</sup> *Word* represents God’s lordship in His law; *world* represents his lordship through creating, sustaining, and controlling all things; and *self* demonstrates His lordship through his presence, which can be known by mankind.<sup>7</sup> According to Meek, “All knowing is knowing God’s word or law, knowing self, and knowing the world.”<sup>8</sup> Every epistemic act includes these three perspectives or correlatives, which are distinct but inseparable.<sup>9</sup> The world tries to make one perspective sovereign but contradicts itself because rationalists, empiricists, and subjectivists all must borrow from one another.<sup>10</sup> Each of these views by itself has a spiritual problem in seeking certainty outside of God’s Word, but all of them have their place in biblical knowing.<sup>11</sup> All of them are founded in God and must be seen with Him as the source. Daniel Estes writes, “Though knowledge may be acquired through various means, by personal observation, traditional instruction or divine revelation, there is a basic unity of truth which finds its ultimate source in the omniscient Yahweh.”<sup>12</sup> Linguistics, logic, history, reason, perception, experience, emotions, imagination, will, habits, skills,

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<sup>6</sup>Esther Lightcap Meek, *Loving to Know: Covenantal Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 162.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 158.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 162.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 159. Because this is true, John David Trentham has included all three categories in his Taxonomy of Epistemological Priorities and Competencies with corresponding columns or categories. The first category reflecting the normative perspective is Biblically-Founded Presuppositions for Knowledge and Development; the second reflecting the situational perspective is titled Metacognition, Critical Reflection, and Contextualistic Orientation; the last demonstrating the existential correlative is called Personal Responsibility for Knowledge Acquisition and Maintenance- Within Community. See table 4.

<sup>10</sup>Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 80-81.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>12</sup>Daniel J. Estes, *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1-9* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), x.

intuition, and science are all a part of knowing but must be subjected to and understood in light of God's Word.<sup>13</sup> Growth in one realm of knowledge will strengthen the others, but all these acts of the human mind must align with God.<sup>14</sup> He is sovereign, not man. There are only two moral foundations—either God is sovereign or the individual is.<sup>15</sup> Meek points out that even while man tries to make himself sovereign and deny his dependence upon God, man is connected to God. Saying God does not exist takes as much thinking and work as saying He does.<sup>16</sup>

### **Knowledge Involves Belief**

Because knowledge is founded in God<sup>17</sup> and because purely objective knowledge is not possible, biblical knowledge involves a personal responsibility. Biblically, knowledge does not just involve facts, but entails belief.<sup>18</sup> Israelite education began with faith commitments.<sup>19</sup> Because of who God is, He and His world can be known to some extent.<sup>20</sup> The wise seek out knowledge and understanding, but also embrace God by faith for the areas of life that are beyond comprehension.<sup>21</sup> For instance, Abraham walked by faith without every question answered or without complete certainty.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 80-81.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 329.

<sup>15</sup>Meek, *Longing to Know*, 16.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>17</sup>Estes, *Hear, My Son*, 68.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 99.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>22</sup>Frame, *Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 357.

Hebrews 11, the Bible's hall of faith, tells of Abraham leaving his home not even knowing where he was going, because he was called to by God (v. 8). The following is said of Abraham and of others in this chapter of faith: "These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth" (v. 13). Frame writes of this kind of biblical knowledge: "In the midst of questions and unresolved difficulties, we follow God."<sup>23</sup> The student must personally pursue and take responsibility for seeking wisdom, character, and knowing God.<sup>24</sup>

### **Knowledge Necessitates Obedience**

True knowledge not only entails belief, but is acted upon. In *Biblical Knowing: A Scriptural Epistemology of Error*, Dru Johnson connects knowledge with action by showing that knowing involves knowing who to listen to as an authority and from there acting upon the truth received.<sup>25</sup> Jesus insulted those who would not believe he healed a blind man, by insinuating they were the ones who were blind (John 9:39). When the Pharisees asked, "So are we blind?" Jesus denounced them for their refusal to submit to Him, saying, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains" (v. 41). The parable of The Good Shepherd follows right after and tells those refusing to acknowledge Christ, that they are not only blind, but deaf. In the parable, Jesus says with regard to His leadership as The Good Shepherd, "the sheep follow him, for they know his voice" (John 10:1-21). Because knowledge is subject to God's authority, it involves obedience.<sup>26</sup> Epistemology is a moral pursuit; knowing is

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<sup>23</sup>Frame, *Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 357.

<sup>24</sup>Estes, *Hear, My Son*, 68.

<sup>25</sup>Dru Johnson, *Biblical Knowing: A Scriptural Epistemology of Error* (Eugene OR: Cascade, 2013).

<sup>26</sup>Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 43.

closely intertwined with obedience.<sup>27</sup> After all, as Wood shares about epistemology, “Thinking well is an indispensable ingredient in living well.”<sup>28</sup> Estes builds upon this truth, as out of Proverbs 1-9 he draws a philosophy of education that speaks of more than mere intellectual assent but of living in light of the true, sovereign Creator God who revealed Himself to Israel.<sup>29</sup> Wood demonstrates this through advocating intellectual virtues. Epistemology is not disconnected from everyday choices and actions but is intimately connected. Virtues allow people to respond in correct ways to specific situations.<sup>30</sup> Not only does knowledge of God produce obedience, but obedience to God leads to knowledge as well.<sup>31</sup> Frame describes this “circular” relation of knowledge and obedience: “Neither is unilaterally prior to the other, either temporarily or causally. They are inseparable and simultaneous.”<sup>32</sup> Knowledge of God will be evidenced in an obedient life (John 14:15).<sup>33</sup>

### **Knowledge Is Unified**

Sometimes knowledge can be portrayed as solely comprised of intellect, but complete knowing not only involves obedience but also perceptions, experience, and the affections. This truth about knowing is seen when Jesus promises the Holy Spirit in John 14: 15-31. Jesus draws the connection between love and obedience, saying the one who loves Him will obey Him (vv. 15, 23), and the one who loves Christ “would have

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<sup>27</sup>Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 43-44.

<sup>28</sup>W. Jay Wood, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 16.

<sup>29</sup>Estes, *Hear, My Son*, 62.

<sup>30</sup>Wood, *Epistemology*.

<sup>31</sup>Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 43.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 44.



rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I” (v. 28). This passage shows the intersection of knowledge and understanding, affections and emotions, and actions and obedience.

Wood argues for the place of emotions in knowledge by explaining that intellect is not detached from the rest of humanity and from the personal responsibility inherent in intellectual virtues.<sup>34</sup> Emotions, which are viewing the world through one’s concerns, motivate intellectual pursuits and are a part of acting out moral virtues.<sup>35</sup> Justice, for example, involves feeling and not merely thinking.<sup>36</sup> Wood writes,

Intertwining moral and intellectual virtues in this way underscores the unity of our lives; these are not isolated compartments of ourselves. We cannot be fully intellectual . . . without also being morally virtuous. The converse is also true; we cannot succeed in the moral life without also displaying important intellectual virtues. When we succeed in harmonizing these aspects of our lives, we achieve what ancients and moderns alike call integrity.<sup>37</sup>

Meek also argues for this complete knowing and against the Western philosophy that sees knowledge as purely informational, in *Loving to Know*. Personal knowing does not exclude emotion, passion, longing, religion, art, values, justice, and other factors that are all a part of humanity.<sup>38</sup> To strip man of these things and to exalt reason above all else is to shrink the act of knowing and to rip it of meaning.<sup>39</sup> Caring and longing are a part of knowing.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Wood, *Epistemology*, 144.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>38</sup>Meek, *Loving to Know*, 32-33.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 412.

Likewise, Frame argues for an integrated or complete knowing, stating that “knowledge of God is a heart-knowledge,” and “the knowledge of God is gained by the whole person as an integral unity.”<sup>41</sup> He explains that reason, perception or experience, and emotion, do not “exist or act apart from the others.”<sup>42</sup> Later in his work, he writes,

Reasoning, perceiving, and feeling can be seen respectively as normative, situational, and existential perspectives on the human mind. We speak of reasoning when we want to focus on the mind’s use of various principles and laws. We speak of perceiving when we want to focus on its access to the objective world. And we speak of feeling when we want to focus on the integrity of our subjectivity in the cognitive process.<sup>43</sup>

Like the intellect, emotions have been severely impacted by the Fall and are in need of redemption.<sup>44</sup> As Frame explains, the Fall “was rebellion of the whole person—intellect as much as emotions, perception, and will—against God.”<sup>45</sup> One of these aspects of humanity is not more fallen or less sanctified than the other, as Greek philosophy implies with the view that emotions should be subordinated to reason—all need to be reconciled to who God is.<sup>46</sup> Feelings or experiences when rightly aligned with God can be correct ways of knowing. Speaking of experiencing this unity even in writing book reviews, Frame writes, “If I had no feelings about the book I was reviewing, I would simply set it aside. The feeling guides my reflection; my reflection refines my feelings. Those refined

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<sup>41</sup>Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 328.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 329.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 338.

<sup>44</sup>With regard to redemption of the emotions, Frame writes, “Redemption doesn’t make us more emotional (as some charismatics might suppose) or less so (as many Reformed would prefer), and more than it makes us more or less intellectual. What redemption does to the intellect is to consecrate that intellect to God, whether the I.Q. is high or low. Similarly, the important thing is not whether you are highly emotional or not; the important thing is that whatever emotional capacities you have should be placed in God’s hands to be used according to His purposes.” Ibid., 336.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

feelings provoke additional reflection, and so on.”<sup>47</sup> Feelings are a means of knowledge.<sup>48</sup>  
“Emotion is unavoidably present in all theological work.”<sup>49</sup>

Before the Fall, there would have been no distinction between thinking, feeling, and living because all these aspects of humanity would have been perfectly aligned to God. Although there is cognitive dissonance now as a result of the Fall, knowing and understanding still involve affections and viewpoints. “Cognitive rest,” as Frame phrases it, will not be found until “intellect and emotions are somehow reconciled.”<sup>50</sup>

### **Knowing Is Relational**

Knowledge not only involves relationship with God, but it also involves relationship with others.<sup>51</sup> This fact is seen in the two greatest commandments: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:36-40). The interconnection between the vertical and horizontal relationships are seen in this passage when Jesus says, “And a second is like it” (v. 39). God is relational and created man a relational being. Wood argues that humans as “moral and intellectual agents are developed in a community context. . . . Family, friends, and social institutions such as the church contribute mightily towards shaping the framework within which our development takes place.”<sup>52</sup> Meek and Johnson argue clearly for this relational aspect in their epistemological works. Meek argues for a covenantal epistemology that puts the

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<sup>47</sup>Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 337.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 338.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 339.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 337.

<sup>51</sup>For a history of Christian thought on the relational motif in Christian ethics, see Edward Leroy Long, Jr., *A Survey of Christian Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 117-64.

<sup>52</sup>Wood, *Epistemology*, 20.

knower and the known into a relationship where they interact and are changed.<sup>53</sup> Knowledge is transformational.<sup>54</sup> It is more than gathered facts but includes knowing God, creation, self, and others.<sup>55</sup> Johnson describes knowing as a process and a part of a relationship, not just a list of facts.<sup>56</sup>

Biblically, knowledge is dependent upon God, involves belief, includes obedience, is unified or complete, and is relational. While many empirical studies approach epistemological development or an understanding of how humans know what they know from a constructivist approach that ignores God and makes man supreme, much can be learned from these studies. The studies show how men and women think, not necessarily how they should think. These studies are affected by human fallenness. They demonstrate at times man's desire to be autonomous and independent knowers apart from God. They also demonstrate at times selfishness and broken relationships. At the same time, they teach about humanity and knowing; they observe truth. Many of these studies hint at similar themes or show glimpses of the truth found in the theological foundation of epistemology given. They have observed themes of connection, conviction, and community and have examined men and women as knowers in a world of uncertainty where not everything can be ascertained.

### **William Perry**

In *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years*, William Perry recognized that knowing was both ethical and intellectual. While he did not recognize God as the source of knowledge, he recognized the moral responsibility

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<sup>53</sup>Meek, *Loving to Know*, 32-33.

<sup>54</sup>Johnson, *Biblical Knowing*, 10.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, v.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, xviii.

and the innate longing of mankind to search for truth. He writes, “Ultimately, then, our scheme chronicles the course of an aesthetic yearning to apprehend a certain kind of truth: the truth of the limits of man’s certainty. Persistence in this yearning is, if you will, an act of love—and humor.”<sup>57</sup> Perry’s scheme has for decades been considered crucial to understanding the epistemological development of students in higher education. Although in his study he originally set out to simply understand why different students respond in contrary ways to the same teachers, his study resulted in a development scheme that is still utilized in higher education today.<sup>58</sup> Although he initially hypothesized personality types were the cause, through his study he found it was developmental.<sup>59</sup>

Perry’s study dealt with ways of thinking, not the content of thinking.<sup>60</sup> Perry used open-ended questions to allow students to communicate what was important to them, demonstrating their thoughts on thinking, knowledge, learning, and education. Perry developed a progression of nine positions through which the adult learner develops.<sup>61</sup> One can, freeze, retreat, or surge forward through positions, but it is a progression.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>William G. Perry, Jr., *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 56.

<sup>58</sup>William G. Perry, Jr., “Cognitive and Ethical Growth: The Making of Meaning,” in *The Modern American College: Responding to the New Realities of Diverse Students and a Changing Society*, ed. Arthur W. Chickering (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981), 77.

<sup>59</sup>Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development*, 7.

<sup>60</sup>Perry writes to this effect, “The developments traced in the scheme are of construal rather than of content, of contextual configuration rather than of linear increment, and involving what might be called the growth of conceptual hierarchies.” *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>61</sup>Perry’s stage-oriented development scheme is neo-Piagetian. Perry takes Piaget’s ideas of development in stages, but develops the ideas beyond adolescence. While Piaget saw growth as more uniform, Perry saw growth as more dynamic with the stages demonstrating “resting points” on the path of growth. See Perry, “Cognitive and Ethical Growth,” 78. For more information on Perry as a neo-Piagetian theorist, see John David Trentham and James Estep, “Early Adult Discipleship at the Intersection of Neurological and Phenomenological Research,” *The Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* 5, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 7-32.

<sup>62</sup>Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development*, 177-78.

## Progression of Stages

Perry's scheme shows a progression of nine positions grouped into four stages: Dualism, Multiplicity, Contextual Relativism, and Commitment within Relativism.<sup>63</sup>

**Dualism.** A student falling into the category of dualism holds an absolute idea of right and wrong, and authorities know what is right. Questions all have right answers; truth is believed to be black and white. Perry beautifully and conversationally describes this stage: "When we first come into this world, it is obvious that there are authorities and that they know what they are doing, or at least so it seems. They tell us what to do and what not to do, and so they know what they are doing."<sup>64</sup> Positions 1 and 2 reflect dualism.

Position 1 holds to polar terms of right and wrong. This is the simplest understanding of knowledge and values.<sup>65</sup> In its most basic form, authority is the absolute "truth."<sup>66</sup> This position was not actually observed as being held by any of the students in the study.<sup>67</sup> Some students did reference having at one time thought this way. For example, one student remarked, "When he came to college he didn't suppose there was such a thing as a question that had more than one answer."<sup>68</sup>

Position 2 brings more understanding of diversity of opinion, but it is unwelcomed.<sup>69</sup> As Perry explains, "Diversity and complexity are still perceived as alien

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<sup>63</sup>For a more thorough description of each of Perry's nine positions, see appendix 7.

<sup>64</sup>William G. Perry Jr., "Sharing in the Costs of Growth," in *Encouraging Development in College Students*, ed. Clyde Alvin Parker (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1978), 267.

<sup>65</sup>Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development*, 59.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Perry writes, "As we expected, no freshman in the study was found to express the structure of Position 1 at the time of his interview in June. A few did attempt to describe themselves as having arrived at college in just such a frame of mind, but none could have remained in it and survived the year." Ibid., 55.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 9.

but as elements introduced within the community by willful Authorities who are failing of their mediational role.”<sup>70</sup> Despite the difficulty, some tentativeness has been allowed.<sup>71</sup>

**Multiplicity.** Multiplicity includes positions 3 and 4. Multiplicity understands authorities disagree, which brings a cacophony of opinions as students realize some complex questions have more than one answer. This understanding of authorities disagreeing or room for more than one answer leads them to believe each person has a right to his own opinion.<sup>72</sup> In an article examining the intersection of neurological and phenomenological research, Trentham and Estep explain the following with regard to this stage: “What results is an epistemically irresponsible attitude that glorifies personal opinion.”<sup>73</sup> Because of this, Perry thought “personalism” was perhaps a better name for this stage.<sup>74</sup> In Multiplicity, there is no discernment between opinions; all opinions are equal. Perry aptly describes this stage:

[They discover] they do not know what they’re doing after all. And since they do not seem to know what they are doing and do not have all the answers, they think, “Hooray! As soon I can get out from under their tyranny, I’m free, and any opinion is as good as any other, mine included.”<sup>75</sup>

Position 3 brings more acceptance of different opinions, but it is still temporary. It is a modified dualism. The right answer exists but is yet to be found. This uncertainty,

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<sup>70</sup>Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development*, 73.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>72</sup>Barbara K. Hofer and Paul R. Pintrich, “The Development of Epistemological Theories: Beliefs about Knowledge and Knowing and Their Relation to Learning,” *Review of Educational Research* 67, no. 1 (1997): 91.

<sup>73</sup>Trentham and Estep, “Early Adult Discipleship,” 11.

<sup>74</sup>Perry, “Cognitive and Ethical Growth,” 77.

<sup>75</sup>Perry, “Sharing in the Costs of Growth,” 267-68.

however, “implies the legitimacy of a multiplicity of answers.”<sup>76</sup> More concession is made in one’s epistemology “for a legitimate human uncertainty.”<sup>77</sup>

As a student comes out of dualism and has some room for uncertainty, he sometimes wonders why teachers can continue to grade him as wrong in a world of multiplicity or relativism. Position 4 allows for two different responses to this dilemma. Some students conform more readily to professors’ wishes, and some resist. Multiplicity Correlate is put up against authority, as the student believes professors have no right to call something wrong. Relativism Subordinate is more compliant and sees Multiplicity as something the professors want students to work on.<sup>78</sup> Those who comply progress more quickly.<sup>79</sup> Either way, this new view includes some legitimate uncertainty.<sup>80</sup> Trentham and Estep point out, however, that this stage is still dualistic in nature: “Multiplicity is thus still a form of dualistic thinking, as the student considers knowledge and truth in terms of absolute propositions and values—substantiated completely according to one’s own arbitrary inclinations.”<sup>81</sup>

**Relativism in context.** Relativism brings drastic changes in justification of knowledge. An individual still acknowledges multiple answers, but sees them in different contexts.<sup>82</sup> Relativism includes positions 5 and 6. According to Hofer and Pintrich,

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<sup>76</sup>Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development*, 92.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>81</sup>Trentham and Estep, “Early Adult Discipleship,” 11.

<sup>82</sup>Perry’s *relativism* is very different from how the term is generally used today. Relativism today often is used to describe personalism, or what Perry calls *multiplicity*, that everything is relative, all opinions are equal, and everyone is entitled to their own opinion.



“Position 5 is the watershed of the scheme, as individuals make the shift from a dualistic view of the world to a view of contextual relativism that will continue, with modifications, through the upper stages.”<sup>83</sup> At this stage, the student uses various forms of analysis and comparison to assess knowledge, becoming actively involved in making meaning.<sup>84</sup> This stage ends with the individual foreseeing the need for commitment.<sup>85</sup>

Perry describes Relativism:

[Relativism is the discovery] that when I get out from under their tyranny I walk smack into a plate-glass wall and find that I’m still subject to a tyranny, not of they, but of fact. And in the tyranny of reality I discover that, although there are a lot of differences of opinion among reasonable people, not every opinion is as good as any other, including some which I have that are no good at all. And then I have to get to work and start thinking about all these things. I think about various ways in which very reasonable people disagree very reasonably in wide areas.<sup>86</sup>

In position 5, contextual and relativistic thinking is generalized to different areas of life and study.<sup>87</sup> This way of thinking becomes more habitual in the student’s life.<sup>88</sup> In this position, the student’s view of authority changes as he or she comes to realize authorities are in the same relativistic world as the student.<sup>89</sup>

A student who reaches position 6 realizes a need for some commitment in the face of relativism. Commitments involve choice and affirmation by the individual.<sup>90</sup>

Relativism has more reasons for responding differently in different contexts, which

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<sup>83</sup>Hofer and Pintrich, “The Development of Epistemological Theories,” 91.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Perry, “Sharing in the Costs of Growth,” 268.

<sup>87</sup>Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development*, 110-11.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

allows for more structure and less chaos than was allowed for in Multiplicity.<sup>91</sup> Reason alone cannot decide, but one must affirm values and make decisions.<sup>92</sup> The need for commitment is “foreseen as the resolution of the problems of relativism,” although commitment has not yet been made.<sup>93</sup> Of relativism and the foreseen need for commitment, Trentham and Estep write, “Since Relativism is still an essentially cerebral (i.e., not affective) position, Perry calls it the ‘space of meaninglessness between received belief and creative faith.’”<sup>94</sup>

**Commitment in relativism.** In the final stage, the student develops and carries through commitments that involve affirmation or choice in the midst of relativism.<sup>95</sup> College students did not typically score in this stage. It was proposed that they had not had the opportunities and experiences necessary to exercise or experience the consequences of commitments. Choices in life such as career or marriage often occurred after college. Perry spoke of this last stage as “another obvious” discovery, writing,

Then I make one more discovery, another obvious one, that I am faced with the challenge of affirming myself and my life as a person. Given so many differences of opinion among reasonable people, differences which reason alone cannot resolve, I see that I can never be sure I am making the right decision in life. And yet I must decide. Oh, I have been told never to make a wrong decision lest I regret it all my life, but now I see I have no protection against regret. Unless I am going to weasel out of really living, I must choose what I believe in and own the consequences, and never know what lay down the road I did not take. I have discovered what Robert Frost meant and what it means to commit.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development*, 122.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 122, 136.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>94</sup>Trentham and Estep, “Early Adult Discipleship,” 12; Perry, “Cognitive and Ethical Growth,” 92.

<sup>95</sup>Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development*, 57; Perry, “Cognitive and Ethical Growth,” 80.

<sup>96</sup>Perry, “Sharing in the Costs of Growth,” 268.

Positions 7 through 9, which fall under commitment, are “more qualitative than structural.”<sup>97</sup> The final three positions are more constant with “no major restructuring of the background of life.”<sup>98</sup> Perry further explains, “The assumption is established that man’s knowing and valuing are relative in time and circumstance, and that in such a world the individual is faced with the responsibility for choice and affirmation in his life.”<sup>99</sup> Positions 7, 8, and 9, then, are greater “degrees of ripening in an art.”<sup>100</sup> Position 7 is characterized by making an initial commitment or taking responsibility to decide on one major area of life.<sup>101</sup> In position 8, a student demonstrates more experience with commitments bearing the implications and responsibilities of his or her initial commitment.<sup>102</sup> Those in position 9 understand that commitments are ongoing.<sup>103</sup> This final position, like the first in the scheme, was not really observed in the study, but was envisioned by some of the students’ comments. It was hypothesized that college does not provide many opportunities for this level of experience.

Perry’s scheme has continued to be verified and used throughout the last fifty years to measure epistemological development and has laid a framework and foundation for several more studies. While his research only involved men and has an anthropocentric end, his research provides a valuable tool for evaluating epistemological development for both sexes and for both believers in Christ and unbelievers. Trentham and Estep explain the value of Perry’s study and other developmental research like it to discipleship:

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<sup>97</sup>Hofer and Pintrich, “The Development of Epistemological Theories,” 91.

<sup>98</sup>Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development*, 153.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 10, 153.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 154.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

At this point, it is important that we briefly acknowledge the conspicuous reality that the worldview presuppositions of Perry, Fischer, and developmental theory in general do not accord with presuppositions inherent in a thoroughgoing biblical worldview. This is most acutely the case with regard to the desired purpose or ultimate trajectory of development, which is necessarily either anthropocentric or Christocentric. Still, on the basis of common grace, we maintain that that [sic] substantive interaction with these theoreticians and scientists is possible and valuable, and that this is particularly true with respect to better understanding the patterns and modes of growth and maturity consistent with human personhood as imbued with the divine image.<sup>104</sup>

The observed consistency with human personhood in modes of growth and maturity does not just apply to believers and non-believers, but has also been observed between males and females. Although his final analysis of his research included only male students' surveys, further studies using Perry's scheme have continued to show its reliability for both men and women, while those further studies have added nuance to Perry's understanding of epistemological development.<sup>105</sup>

### **Gender Studies**

Thirty years later, Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule raised the issue of women's epistemological development being assessed according to male development patterns. Their study, done by women on women, sought to understand women's perceptions that they are lacking in their education.<sup>106</sup> Marcia B. Baxter Magolda also contributed to the research on

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<sup>104</sup>Trentham and Estep, "Early Adult Discipleship," 13.

<sup>105</sup>In Bruce Cannon's study of confessional liberal arts colleges utilizing the Perry scheme, the sample was comprised of 33 percent women. Bruce Richard Cannon, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Confessional Christian Liberal Arts Colleges or Universities" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015). Warren Leatherman's study of confessional versus non-confessional liberal arts colleges included 21 females out of a sample of 31 students, 68 percent. In both of these studies there were no noticeable differences in epistemological development according to MID scores or Trentham's Taxonomy of Epistemological Priorities and Competencies. Warren Dale Leatherman, "Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Confessional versus Non-Confessional Liberal Arts Colleges or Universities" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017).

<sup>106</sup>Mary Field Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic, 1997).

epistemological gender differences with a study of one hundred students, both male and female, in a large university.<sup>107</sup> This study compared both men and women in one study, whereas Belenky et al. and Perry's studies were decades apart and studied different populations.<sup>108</sup>

Carol Gilligan also studied women's development in response to what she determined to be a predominantly male scheme developed by Lawrence Kohlberg in the realm of moral development.<sup>109</sup> In her view, Kohlberg's scale presents a notable problem for women since they do not tend to score in the upper stages. She believed these scores gave the impression that female moral development is stunted or arrested, leading her to do further research to consider why this occurred.

### **Epistemological Development of Women**

While Perry acknowledged the intersection of intellectual and ethical thought, gender specific studies seem to separate the two.<sup>110</sup> Some, such as Belenky et al. and Baxter Magolda, pursued intellectual development, while Gilligan focused on moral development.

*Women's Ways of Knowing.* Following Perry's foundational study in the field, Belenky and her fellow researchers looked specifically at the epistemological development

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<sup>107</sup>Marcia B. Baxter Magolda, "Gender Differences in Cognitive Development" (paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, April 22, 1987).

<sup>108</sup>Perry studied male Harvard students in the 1950s while Belenky et al. studied all women in the 1980s, some of whom were a part of "the invisible college," institutions that help women in need.

<sup>109</sup>Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

<sup>110</sup>Perry explains, "The students' endeavor to orient themselves in the world through an understanding of the acts of knowing and valuing is therefore more than intellectual and philosophical. It is a moral endeavor in the most personal sense. As their words will show, their realizations confronted them repeatedly with reworkings of the issues of competence, loneliness, community, and self-esteem." Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development*, 54.

of college women, including current students, recent graduates, and those in “the invisible college,” institutions that help women grow. While there were many similarities overall with Perry’s scheme, there were also distinctions which they attributed to gender.

Allowing the data collected to speak, Belenky et al. created their own categories of epistemological perspective based on their research. These categories are silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge, and constructed knowledge.

Silence is characterized as mindless and voiceless.<sup>111</sup> It relies on external authority.<sup>112</sup> This silence is not just interpersonal silence but is intrapersonal silence. Individuals are not even aware of their own thinking. When asked about when her conscience bothers her, one participant replied it was when someone picks on her. The researchers explained, “She did not comprehend words that suggest an interior voice that could give herself mental directions and exhortations” (25). These women can also not describe themselves but can only describe what they see “gazing outward from their own eyes” (32). They do not find meaning in their experience or learn from their peers but rely on authority for direction (26-28). This form of knowing was often the result of tragic circumstances or abusive relationships.<sup>113</sup>

The next category is Received Knowing. Received knowers see themselves as both able to receive and reproduce knowledge but keep their view of “all-knowing external authorities” (15). “They collect facts but do not develop opinions. Facts are true; opinions don’t count” (42). These knowers are not silent, but hold words and specifically

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<sup>111</sup>Belenky et al., *Women’s Ways of Knowing*, 15.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>The authors explain this trauma or tragedy: “We believe that individuals grow up to see themselves as ‘deaf and dumb’ when they are raised in profound isolation under the most demeaning circumstances not because of their genetic intellectual endowment. That anyone emerges from their childhood years with so little confidence in their meaning—making and their meaning-sharing abilities as did Ann and Cindy signals the failure of the community or receive all of those entrusted into its care.” Ibid., 34.

listening to others as vital to learning (36). Like the simplest dualism in Perry's scheme, these knowers are intolerant of ambiguity and therefore do not persist in trying to understand things that take time and "exercise reason" (42-45).

With Subjective Knowledge, truth and knowledge move from being external and clear to personal, private, subjective, and intuitive (15). In contrast to the received knower, the subjective knower avoids the opinions of others, thinking others' views silence one's own feelings and intuition (74). This knower focuses on her inner voice and believes her intuition or her "gut" to be the most reliable source of authority (53). Truth is "experienced not thought out, something felt rather than actively pursued or constructed" (69). In Subjective Knowing, truth is unique to each individual (69). One participant's response illustrates this way of knowing well: "I tend to weigh anything in light of how I feel about it. I am only searching for what is valid to me" (70).

In the next way of knowing, Procedural Knowledge, there is a shift from intuition, or trusting one's gut, to a personal investment in learning and communicating knowledge through objective means (15). This way of knowing is "much humbler, although ultimately more powerful than subjective knowing" (87). With this kind of knowledge one recognizes that they need to understand others, and they start to listen more closely (91). Even in reading there is an emphasis on "reading the text as independent of your own existence rather than using it for your own convenience or reinforcement" (99). It is more objective than Subjective Knowing. In this category, one also realizes that one's "gut reactions can be irresponsible and no one's gut feeling is infallible; that some truths are truer than others" (93). This form of knowing is procedural in the sense that it does not just look at content but examines the way knowledge is approached, how people think and feel (97).

Two different methods for Procedural Knowledge were observed—Separate Knowing or Connected Knowing. Separate knowing focuses on autonomy and independence, while connected knowing is "an orientation toward understanding and

truth that emphasizes . . . a joining of minds” (55). Belenky and her fellow authors write on Connected Knowing:

By understanding we mean something akin to the German word *Kennen*, the French word *connaitre*, the Spanish *conocer*, or the Greek *gnosis* (Lewis 1983), implying personal acquaintance with an object (usually but not always a person). Understanding involves intimacy and equality between self and object, while knowledge (*Wissen, savoir, saber*) implies separation from the object and master over it. (101)

Connected knowers rely on reason, but also recognize the problem of eliminating feelings in making judgments. Belenky et al. states, “What is needed is not reversion to sheer feeling but some sort of integration of feeling and thinking” (130).

Constructed Knowledge, the last way of knowing, goes beyond Connected Knowing, seeing knowing as more than objective, but as “a way of weaving their passions and intellectual life into some recognizable whole” (141). This way of knowing sees knowledge as contextual and knowers as creators of knowledge. Previously in Received and Procedural Knowledge one looked to outside truths; with Subjective Knowledge one only looked internally (134). As a part of this unified outlook, Constructed knowers are able to listen to others without the threat of silencing their own thoughts (145).

Constructed Knowledge “combines subjective and objective strategies of knowing” (15). Speaking of interviews that reflected this way of thinking, Belenky et al. writes, “They told of weaving together the strands of rational and emotive thought and of integrating objective and subjective knowing” (134). In Constructed Knowledge, “the knower is an intimate part of the known” (137). Like Perry’s concept of Commitments, there is a level of responsibility involved in Constructed Knowledge. The authors write,

Once knowers assume the general relativity of knowledge, that their frame of reference matters and that they can construct and reconstruct frames of reference, they feel responsible for examining, questioning, and developing the systems that they will use for constructing knowledge. (139)

While Belenky et al. filled a gap in the research of the epistemological development of women, their work was done decades later on a very different population including a group of women who were in need of help and assistance, while Perry’s was



done on Harvard male students. Despite this divide, the findings were rather similar to Perry's. William Moore of the CSID has written to this effect, saying of Belenky et al., Baxter Magolda, and of King and Kitchener,

What is important to note here is that while these authors have generally claimed that their work represents theories separate from Perry's Scheme, there is no compelling evidence that these frameworks in fact define distinct theories. All of these efforts represent important areas of scholarship with respect to intellectual development, but rather than being separate theoretical models they extend and expand descriptions of the same fundamental journey described by Perry's framework.<sup>114</sup>

Belenky et al., Baxter Magolda, and King and Kitchener provided a different pattern and perspective but not a new path of epistemological development.

**Gender-related patterns in students' intellectual development.** In her study of the reasoning of 101 women and men at Miami University in the 1980s from their first year to their first year after graduation, Marcia Baxter Magolda used the terminology of "gender-related patterns of knowing and reasoning" to speak of the differences she found between men and women.<sup>115</sup> Her work *Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender-Related Patterns in Students' Intellectual Development* utilized Perry's work as well as King and Kitchener's Reflective Judgment Model (RJM).<sup>116</sup> The greater awareness of different gender-related patterns, in her estimation, improves "understanding of how particular experiences affect individual students."<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>William S. Moore, "Understanding Learning in a Postmodern World: Re-thinking the Perry Scheme of Ethical and Intellectual Development," in *Personal Epistemology: The Psychology of Beliefs about Knowledge and Knowing*, ed. B. Hofer and P. Pintrich (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001), 23.

<sup>115</sup>Marcia Baxter Magolda, *Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender-Related Patterns in Students' Intellectual Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 23.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., xiii. Marianne T. Bock, "Baxter Magolda's Epistemological Reflection Model," *Understanding and Applying Cognitive Development Theory: New Directions for Student Services*, no. 88 (1999): 29.

<sup>117</sup>Baxter Magolda, *Knowing and Reasoning in College*, xiii.

Like Belenky et al., Baxter Magolda found the importance of voice and of relationships in education. She also emphasized constructing knowledge. She writes, “One of the most powerful messages in the students’ stories was that the ability to develop a distinctive voice stems from defining learning as constructing meaning jointly with others” (xiv). She found the following features characterized the most powerful learning experiences:

When students were free to relate them to aspects of their own lives, when learners were valued as capable of exploring knowledge and interpreting it, and when learners worked through their various ideas collaboratively to arrive at understandings or beliefs. (xiv)

Baxter Magolda’s study resulted in “four qualitatively different ways of knowing, each characterized by a core set of epistemic assumptions,” with corresponding gender-related patterns in the first three ways of knowing (29). While Baxter Magolda provides different “gender-related” patterns, she does not present a different development scheme altogether for men and women. Her scheme has the same stages with different patterns. Furthermore, women and men did not always fall into their gender-related pattern. In addition, it is important to note that while she presents her own scheme, many similarities can be noted between her findings, the findings of Belenky et al., and Perry’s scheme.

Baxter Magolda’s ways of knowing are titled Absolute Knowing, Transitional Knowing, Independent Knowing, and Contextual Knowing. These categories along with their gender-related patterns can be seen in table 1.

In Absolute Knowing, knowledge is received from the instructor whose job it is to communicate knowledge to the students. Knowledge is certain and absolute. Peers share what they have learned with one another and tests are simply for the purpose of demonstrating to the professor what a student has learned (30).

Table 1. Representation of male and female patterns in Baxter Magolda's model

	Male Pattern	Female Pattern
Absolute Knowing	Mastering: Public acquisition of knowledge, focus on achievement, includes interaction and sparring with teachers and peers.	Received: Private acquisition of knowledge, receive information from instructors, receive encouragement from peers.
Transitional Knowing	Impersonal: Thinks for oneself through debate with others.	Interpersonal: Collects the ideas of others, relationships central.
Independent Knowing	Individual: Focuses on one's own view while still making room for peers and instructors. Focus on separation.	Interindividual: Others' perspectives help to clarify one's own. Focus on connection.
Contextual Knowing	No gender-related patterns were able to be identified at this level due to the infrequency of participants reaching this level during their college years. Baxter Magolda did hypothesize that because of the integrated nature of understanding and knowledge as development progresses, that perhaps the gender patterns would converge at this level.	

Receiving and mastering knowledge are the two gender-related patterns in this category. Receiving is more often held by women and mastering by men. Receiving is more private in acquiring knowledge; mastery is more public (38). The mastery pattern focuses on achievement, and those who hold this pattern have more interchanges and sparring with teachers and peers because they are “confident enough to engage in these activities” (38; 100-101). In contrast, Baxter Magolda writes about receivers, “Thus, these students seem to be receivers – of information from instructors, of support from peers, and of judgments about their work from tests. One could argue that their ‘voice’ is silent in light of the descriptions offered here” (91).

Transitional Knowing, the second stage, does not simply focus on acquiring knowledge but on understanding. In this stage, knowledge is partially certain and partially uncertain. Rather than simply dispensing knowledge, a professor's role is to help students understand and apply knowledge. Peers help in this process as they “provide active exchanges” (30).

The two gender-related patterns in Transitional Knowing are interpersonal and impersonal. Impersonal, usually associated with the male mindset, thinks for oneself

through debate with others; Interpersonal, usually associated with the female, collects the ideas of others (48). Baxter Magolda explains this pattern:

Interpersonal-pattern students care about their classmates' perspectives, want to know their peers, and hope that instructors will care about them. Relationships are central to the learning process because knowing others promotes sharing perspectives and sharing perspectives increases knowledge. (134)

Students in both patterns developed more of a voice in Transitional Knowing than they had in Absolute Knowing (134).

Independent Knowing sees knowledge as uncertain, with each person having their own beliefs. No ideas, in their estimation, are better or worse (55). Independent knowers think on their own and are willing to share their views with others as a source of knowledge (30). "Students begin to see themselves as equals and hold their own opinions as valid" (55). A professor's role, then, is to promote thinking and exchange of opinions to fulfill the students' desire at this level for an exchange of ideas in class (30, 55).

The gender-related patterns for males in independent knowing is individual and for females interindividual (56). With an interindividual pattern, others' perspectives help one clarify his or her own perspective. "The interindividual pattern has as its defining theme a connection between the knower and others that maintains the integrity of both" (155). The individual pattern focuses more on one's own view while also seeing a place for peers and instructors (56). As a result, one holding an individual pattern "sometimes had to struggle to listen carefully to other voices" (156). Baxter Magolda speaks to the variation between the two patterns as well as their movement toward more similarities:

The variation between interindividual and individual knowing can also be cast in the language of communion and agency (Bakan, 1966). Communion involves connection and relationship with others, whereas agency involves separateness. Both patterns moved toward communion: interindividual-pattern knowers became very open to classmates' views; individual pattern students moved toward real consideration of the opinions of others. Students in both patterns also came closer to agency in generating knowledge, and individual pattern knowers approached agency in their separation from authority in the learning process . . . moving closer together than in previous ways of knowing. (166)

Contextual knowing, the final stage, compares perspectives, thinks through problems, integrates information, and applies knowledge in context. Learning at this

junction is enhanced as everyone contributes. The professor's job is to "promote application of knowledge in context." Evidence is necessary but must be seen in context (30). While there is still uncertainty in knowing in Contextual Knowing, the "everything goes perspective" is forsaken because students realize that some assertions are better than others (69). Because of this differentiation or judgment of ideas with some being better than others, there is a responsibility to "construct views carefully" (188).

This level of knowing is "rarely evident during college" (68). Because few participants in the college study reached this level of knowing, there was not enough data to establish gender patterns for contextual knowing (70). Baxter Magolda does speculate, however, at the possibility of gender patterns converging in Contextual Knowing:

Because contextual knowers integrated thinking for themselves with genuine consideration of others' views, it is possible that the gender-related patterns of earlier ways of knowing converged in contextual knowing. For example, receiving-, interpersonal-, and interindividual pattern knowers' focus on connection to others is a central feature of contextual knowing when integrating other valid views. Mastery-, impersonal-, and individual-pattern students' individual approach is also a basic feature of contextual knowing, because students are ultimately responsible for their own judgments and constructed perspectives. (189)<sup>118</sup>

Baxter Magolda describes one of her male students demonstrating more empathy over the years and one of her female students enjoying more debate over the years and explains, "Thus, though their preferences within ways of knowing illustrate gender-related patterns, they simultaneously reveal that students' thinking is not restricted to one pattern" (70).

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<sup>118</sup>Baxter Magolda is not the only one to speculate that at more advanced levels of knowing gender-related patterns start to converge. Both Gilligan and Belenky et al. hint at this as well. Gilligan writes, "Thus, starting from very different points, from the different ideologies of justice and care, the men and women in the study come, in the course of becoming adult, to a greater understanding of both points of view and thus to a greater convergence in judgment. Recognizing the dual contexts of justice and care, they realize that judgment depends on the way in which the problem is framed." Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 167. Belenky et al. write of their participants, "Some noticed their fathers listening with care. When that occurred it was highly valued. However, not n of these daughters particularly admired their fathers for speaking out. For fathers to have a voice was a given – not an achievement. For fathers to develop a listening ear and for mothers to 'gain a voice' were the feats that those who were integrating the voices of reason and feeling noted and appreciate." Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 177.

Absolute Knowing was predominant in freshmen. Transitional Knowing increased through the first three years of college. Transitional Knowing declined in subsequent years and beyond college (70). Independent Knowing increased during the senior year and saw a “substantial” increase after graduation (72). Contextual Knowing appeared minimally in juniors and seniors, and in the first year out of college (72).<sup>119</sup> Women and men both went through all of the stages with a similar pace (70).

Table 2. Comparison of stages between Perry, Belenky, and Baxter Magolda

Perry	Belenky et al.	Baxter Magolda
	Silence: Mindless, voiceless reliance on external authority.	
Dualism: Bifurcation of right and wrong with authorities holding the answers.	Received Knowledge: All-knowing external authority that teaches material they can learn and reproduce. No room for ambiguity.	Absolute Knowing: Knowledge is certain, absolute, and received from the instructor.
		Transitional Knowing: Goes beyond acquiring knowledge and focuses on understanding. Knowledge is seen as partially certain and uncertain.
Multiplicity: Plurality of answers with all opinions being equal.	Subjective Knowledge: Knowledge is personal, private, intuitive, and varied.	Independent Knowing: Knowledge uncertain with each person having their own beliefs. No criteria for ideas being better or worse. Everything equal.
Relativism: Multiple answers must be understood in context, using various forms of comparison and analysis.	Procedural Knowledge: Personal investment in learning knowledge through objective means.	
Commitment: A personal affirmation of values that involves choice in the midst of relativism.	Constructed Knowledge: Knowledge is contextual and created by knowers. Unified outlook that listens to others but doesn't silence oneself.	Contextual Knowing: Compares perspectives, thinks through the contextual realities of the problem and evidence, and applies knowledge and solutions in context.

<sup>119</sup>Because the current study concerns the epistemological development among women in seminary beyond the college years, it would be expected that women in the study would show more evidence of higher levels of knowing than Baxter Magolda's study showed.

Table 2 shows that Belenky et al. and Baxter Magolda are not presenting alternate structures of epistemological development but that they have observed some of the same patterns Perry has. They may represent some different patterns and perspectives and they may have categorized their findings slightly differently, but overall the same arc of development is seen, although Belenky et al. perpetuates that it is not a scheme one progresses upon but that all are legitimate and equal ways of knowing.<sup>120</sup>

### **Women's Moral Development**

Out of concern that women did not appear to advance in the same developmental stages of morality as men in Kohlberg's study, Carol Gilligan began her own research on the moral development of women. In her research interviews, she began to hear two different voices or ways of conceptualizing moral problems.<sup>121</sup> Her book *In a Different Voice* claims the exclusion of women from previous research in the field had completely erased a moral voice of care.<sup>122</sup> As a result, women have been labeled deficient when being examined against a developmental structure built around men.<sup>123</sup> This book combined her findings from three separate studies into one unified proclamation that the female voice must be included to complete the understanding of moral development.

The first study, conducted with Mary Belenky, was where she first heard the difference in voice and realized the participants constructed and viewed their dilemma

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<sup>120</sup>It is interesting to note that while Belenky et al. say it is not a scheme to progress through and that all are equal ways of knowing, they do not actually seem to believe the first levels are ideal ways to know and think. It is even evident that it might be developmental in the fact that the first category they present predominately represents individuals who have been abused or traumatized.

<sup>121</sup>Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 1.

<sup>122</sup>Carol Gilligan, "Moral Injury and the Ethic of Care: Reframing the Conversation about Differences," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 45, no. 1 (2014): 90. In this work, Gilligan defines the ethic of care: "The ethic of care in its concern with voice and relationships is the ethic of love and of democratic citizenship. It is also the ethic of resistance to moral injury."

<sup>123</sup>Gilligan, "In a Different Voice," 2.

differently than what she had previously taught.<sup>124</sup> This study examined the relationship between experience and thought, through interviewing twenty-nine women who were seeking abortions.<sup>125</sup> Gilligan's next study, that is included as a part of *In a Different Voice*, dealt with the identity and moral development of twenty-five college students who were chosen at random from a class on moral and political choice. Of the twenty students who dropped the course, sixteen were women, which Gilligan found of interest.<sup>126</sup> Her third study flowed from the previous two studies. Michael Murphy, Sharry Langdale, and Nona Lyons all participated in the research. Males and females, representing various ages, were matched for age, intelligence, education, occupation, and social class to examine self-conceptions, moral conflict, and to see their responses to moral hypotheticals.<sup>127</sup>

**Stages.** With her findings, Gilligan postulates a new development of morality. Like Belenky et al., rather than creating a new structure, Gilligan's model is a slight variation on Kohlberg showing new patterns and perspectives represented by women. Kohlberg's emphasizes justice; hers emphasizes care. Kohlberg's was predominantly found by research with males; hers is seen more clearly in her research with females. Her ethic of care emphasizes the idea of connection, while Kohlberg's emphasizes autonomy.

Her first stage is caring for oneself. From this stage there is a transition to seeing responsibility. Stage 2 is caring for others, often to the neglect of oneself. The transition from this stage to stage 3 is labeled "inequality to caring for self and others." Stage 3 then is an understanding of the connection between self and others. Table 3 demonstrates how similar her stages are to Kohlberg's. In fact, both Gilligan and Kohlberg used the same terms to label their stages: Pre-Conventional, Conventional, and Post Conventional.

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<sup>124</sup>Gilligan, "In a Different Voice," 1.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>127</sup>Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*, 3.



Table 3. Comparison of Gilligan and Kohlberg's categories of moral development

Levels/Stages	Gilligan	Kohlberg
Pre-Conventional	Emphasis on caring for self	External authority dictating morality. Stage 1: Punishment and Obedience (Punishment by authority) Stage 2: Instrumental Relativist (Reward by authority)
Conventional	Emphasis on caring for others	The external standard for morality is personally accepted and internalized. Stage 3: Interpersonal Concordance (Conformity to majority) Stage 4: Law and Order (Duty as a part of society)
Post Conventional	Understands the connection between self and others and seeks to do no harm to either	No longer is there an acceptance of an external standard, but there is a self-directed, chosen, and internalized moral structure. Stage 5: Social Contract (Personal values exist but subjected to democratic laws) Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principle (Ethical principles exist that are more important than the laws of the land)

**Ethic of care.** In Gilligan's initial findings, the two moral voices or perspectives were often referred to as male and female voices. As research findings continued to show men and women were not exclusively using the assigned voice or could utilize both voices at times, this terminology was set aside. It was replaced with terminology of the "moral voice of care" or the "moral voice of justice" that was still associated but not directly linked with gender.<sup>128</sup> Subsequent publications have moved to using the terminology of "moral orientation."

These orientations deal with issues of connectedness and detachment, of views of oneself and others, and with justice and care. With this shift to moral orientation, Gilligan claims it is about theme, not gender. While she states the ethic of care is "not because care is essentially associated with women or part of women's nature," she

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<sup>128</sup>Gilligan believes that while care is not limited to females and justice to males, leaving out females in research almost eradicates the moral voice of care and makes it non-observable.

believes “women for a combination of psychological and political reasons voiced relational realities that were otherwise unspoken or dismissed as inconsequential.”<sup>129</sup>

## Themes

Several themes begin to emerge as one examines these studies on epistemological development of women by women. These themes include voice, relationship, and connectedness. Gilligan draws all three concepts together in her work, understanding connectedness to be “a change in the conception of the human world” from a “patriarchal voice” to a “relational voice.”<sup>130</sup>

**Voice.** The terms *voice*, *silence*, and *listening* permeate these studies. Elisabeth Hayes summarizes, “Voice is a pervasive and powerful image in women’s stories about learning and in the academic literature on women’s learning.”<sup>131</sup> Belenky et al. lists the following terms from interviews, demonstrating its presence:

“Speaking up,” “speaking out,” “being silenced,” “not being heard,” “really listening,” “really talking,” “words as weapons,” “feeling deaf and dumb,” “having no words,” “saying what you mean,” “listening to be heard,” and so on in an endless variety of connotations all having to do with sense of mind, self-worth and feelings of isolation from or connection to others.<sup>132</sup>

Speaking does show a connection and a relationship as it represents dialogue and interaction.<sup>133</sup>

Voice can mean several things in the studies. Voice can mean talk, power or influence, or “can be used in a metaphorical sense, to represent the expression of

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<sup>129</sup>Carol Gilligan, “Hearing the Difference: Theorizing Connection,” *Hypatia* 10, no. 2 (1995): 123.

<sup>130</sup>*Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>131</sup>Elisabeth Hayes et al., *Women as Learners: The Significance of Gender in Adult Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 79.

<sup>132</sup>Belenky et al., *Women’s Ways of Knowing*, 18.

<sup>133</sup>*Ibid.*

women's identity."<sup>134</sup> When used for identity, the term "focuses on how women's identity is reflected in what they say, in the ideas they express, and in the confidence they express in their own thoughts and opinions."<sup>135</sup>

Voice in the studies showed an increased movement from "echo of authority to the development of one's own voice in the context of existing knowledge."<sup>136</sup> This silent voice is seen in "absolute knowers" who do not even hear their own voice and see the classroom as a place to gather information and instead see learning as a solo practice at home.<sup>137</sup> They also see the teacher as playing the dominant role.<sup>138</sup> In position 2, or Transitional Knowing in Baxter Magolda's study, women were more interested in listening to others' voices and "expressed a hesitancy to speak in class or criticize authority."<sup>139</sup> Baxter Magolda connects this hesitancy to Belenky et al.'s "receivers" and relates it to women's tendency toward relationship, saying,

Women's interest in getting to know others and supporting each other matches earlier research suggesting women see themselves as connected to others. The men expressed more interest in active involvement in looking for answers, argument and quizzing each other.<sup>140</sup>

While clear development of voice was seen in *Women's Ways of Knowing*, the authors write, "Even among women who feel they have found their voice, problems with voice abound. Some women told us, in anger and frustration, how frequently they felt unheard

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<sup>134</sup>Hayes, *Women as Learners*, 80.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid.

<sup>136</sup>Baxter Magolda, *Knowing and Reasoning in College*, 196.

<sup>137</sup>Bock, "Baxter Magolda's Epistemological Reflection Model," 32.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.

<sup>139</sup>Baxter Magolda, "Gender Differences in Cognitive Development," 19. Bock, "Baxter Magolda's Epistemological Reflection Model," 33.

<sup>140</sup>Baxter Magolda, "Gender Differences in Cognitive Development," 19.

and unheeded--both at home and at work.”<sup>141</sup> Women in the study “hoped to find understanding and communicative people--people who were invested in ‘really talking.’”<sup>142</sup>

Women would often rather be silent and care for their relationships than disagree or be in conflict.<sup>143</sup> Baxter Magolda writes, “Whereas males assert their right to their own opinion and present it, females keep opinions hidden to avoid alienating themselves from others. When opinions are expressed it is with qualification of the limits of the opinion to personal experience.”<sup>144</sup> Relationship is key in voice as “voice implies communication and connections with other people, an orientation to relatedness that has frequently been associated with women in dominant United States culture.”<sup>145</sup>

**Relationship.** Relationships are key in knowing. Goldberger writes, “Knowing is not insular. How one knows is multiply determined within the array of relationships that define the self.”<sup>146</sup> Judith Jordan writes,

It seems apparent that the human condition is to grow and live in groups. That is, human beings can develop only within relationships with other people, more specifically, other people who can engage in relationships in a way which fosters the development of the people in them.<sup>147</sup>

While Piaget believed morality to be focused on rules and not on relationship, for Gilligan, the significance of her findings in studying women is in an emphasis of

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<sup>141</sup>Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 146.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid.

<sup>143</sup>Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan, *Meeting at the Crossroads: Women's Psychology and Girls' Development* (New York: Ballentine, 1992), 3.

<sup>144</sup>Baxter Magolda, “Gender Differences in Cognitive Development,” 11.

<sup>145</sup>Hayes, *Women as Learners*, 80.

<sup>146</sup>Nancy Goldberger, introduction to *Knowledge, Difference and Power: Essays Inspired by Women's Ways of Knowing*, ed Nancy Goldberger et al. (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 14.

<sup>147</sup>Judith V. Jordan, *Women's Growth in Diversity* (New York: Guilford, 1997), 27.

connected relationships in making moral choices.<sup>148</sup> The differences in men and women was not as important to her as “the relational realities that were otherwise unspoken or dismissed as inconsequential” when women were left out of the research.<sup>149</sup> Gilligan’s recognition of relationships being a part of the human condition is noted by Blum when he writes,

For Gilligan each person is embedded within a web of ongoing relationships, and morality, importantly, if not exclusively, consists in attention to, understanding of, and emotional responsiveness toward the individuals with whom one stands in these relationships. (Gilligan means this web to encompass all human beings and not only one’s circle of acquaintances).<sup>150</sup>

To prove the centrality of relationships to human development, Gilligan cites studies of infants showing “compelling data . . . that the desire for relationship, pleasure in connection, and the ability to make and maintain relationship are present at onset of development.”<sup>151</sup>

Gilligan sees this connection or relationship as so crucial that she does not believe that a mature morality and a democratic society can exist apart from an understanding of connection. She writes,

To see self-sufficiency as the hallmark of maturity conveys a view of adult life that is at odds with the human condition, a view that cannot sustain the kinds of long-term commitments and involvements with other people that are necessary for raising and educating a child or for citizenship in a democratic society.<sup>152</sup>

Not only can a mature morality and democracy not exist apart from necessary connection and relationship, but Gilligan, in speaking of a paradigm shift in human development as a

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<sup>148</sup>Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (New York: Norton, 1965), 13.

<sup>149</sup>Gilligan, “Hearing the Difference,” 123.

<sup>150</sup>Lawrence A. Blum, “Gilligan and Kohlberg: Implications for Moral Theory,” *Ethics* 98, no. 3 (1988): 473.

<sup>151</sup>Gilligan, “Hearing the Difference,” 123.

<sup>152</sup>Carol Gilligan et al., eds., *Mapping the Moral Domain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), xii.

result of her emphasis on connection, says, “The separation of the self from relationships and the splitting of thought from emotion signal injury or responses to trauma.”<sup>153</sup>

The idea that relationships are pivotal to development is not unique to Gilligan. Baxter Magolda’s gender-related patterns show the importance of relationship in knowing as well. In Transitional Knowing, the interpersonal pattern more characteristic of women relies more heavily on peers than the impersonal pattern characteristic of men, which is individually focused.<sup>154</sup> In stage 3, or Independent Knowing, both males and females value their own and others’ opinions, but they differ in that women tend toward “the interindividual pattern of thinking, and men tend toward the individual,” showing their tendencies towards “connection or separation” from others.<sup>155</sup> One of the male participants in Baxter Magolda’s study even recognized this propensity in his female peers toward relationship. He stated,

You need that other gender’s input. I feel more comfortable talking with women sometimes because of that building-towards-community attitude they have because of the way they’ve been socialized. They’re very good to sit and talk to. You can tell they’re listening and care.<sup>156</sup>

From the studies, one relational aspect that stands out is the idea of collaboration. Hayes explains,

“Women’s ways of knowing” (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986), popularly characterized as collaborative and empathetic have been promoted as a more effective and appropriated ways of learning in the workplace and in formal education than the competitive, individualistic modes of knowing traditionally associated with men.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup>Gilligan, “Moral Injury and the Ethic of Care,” 89.

<sup>154</sup>Bock, “Baxter Magolda’s Epistemological Reflection Model,” 33.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., 35-36.

<sup>156</sup>Baxter Magolda, *Knowing and Reasoning in College*, 65.

<sup>157</sup>Elisabeth R. Hayes, “A New Look at Women’s Learning,” *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 2001, no. 89 (2001): 35.

Women's preference for collaborative learning environments is documented by a number of studies including Gilligan, Noddings, Melamed, Kazemek, Ravindran and Clason-Hook.<sup>158</sup> Baxter Magolda emphasizes the importance of a "communal atmosphere" for learning: "Supportive collaboration is necessary for discussing and disagreeing, for challenging each other to grow intellectually, and for developing student voice."<sup>159</sup>

Relationship and collaboration are not unique in characterizing women in epistemological developmental studies, but this is also evident in studies of female pre-ministry students. In her thesis on positive influential factors for women who attend seminary, Sharon Miller writes, "The most beautiful and inspiring lesson I have gleaned from this project is the immeasurable influence of social support. Relationships make the difference."<sup>160</sup> As Belenky et al. states so well, "For women, confirmation and community are prerequisites rather than consequences of development."<sup>161</sup>

**Connectedness.** Connected knowing, in contrast to separate knowing, puts the knower and the known in a relationship. There is an empathy and an affect involved in this kind of knowing.<sup>162</sup> The known is not necessarily a person, although it can be.<sup>163</sup> This idea of connected knowing emerges in many works on epistemology and is seen in both *Women's Ways of Knowing* by Belenky et al. and in Gilligan's works. Connected knowing

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<sup>158</sup>Hayes, *Women as Learners*, 125.

<sup>159</sup>Baxter Magolda, *Knowing and Reasoning in College*, 223.

<sup>160</sup>Sharon Miller, "An Exploration of the Factors That Influence Women to Pursue a Master of Divinity at Evangelical Seminaries" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2014), ix.

<sup>161</sup>Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 194.

<sup>162</sup>Hayes, *Women as Learners*, 117, 125.

<sup>163</sup>Blythe McVicker Clinchy, "Connected and Separate Knowing," in *Knowledge, Difference and Power*, 221.

does not just consider something from another disassociated or unconnected viewpoint, but through care connects the knower with what they seek to understand.<sup>164</sup>

Estep explains this difference of connectedness, showing the contrast between Kohlberg and Gilligan. He writes,

Unlike Kohlberg, with his principle-centered moral reasoning, Gilligan favored one that was more affective—a moral reasoning of the heart. “Men feel secure alone at the top of the hierarchy, securely separate from the challenge of others. Women feel secure in the middle of a web of relationship; to be at the top of a hierarchy is seen as disconnected.” . . . “For males, it is legitimate to fracture relationships if this means embracing a greater principle of justice. For females, such a fracture represents a failure not an increase in sophistication.”<sup>165</sup>

Gilligan’s idea of connectedness thus embodies a more relational, affective, particular or contextual consideration of morality than Kohlberg’s. Blum explains, “For Gilligan, morality necessarily involves an intertwining of emotion, cognition, and action, not readily separable.”<sup>166</sup>

Many see the idea of connection as beginning with Gilligan, as in her work she “found that women saw a world that was composed of relationships.”<sup>167</sup> Belenky et al. write, “Gilligan (1982) and her colleague Nona Lyons (1983) use the terms separate and connected to describe two different conceptions or experiences of the self, as essentially autonomous (separate from others) or as essentially in relationship (connected to others).”<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup>Belenky et al., *Women’s Ways of Knowing*, 124.

<sup>165</sup>James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, eds., *Christian Formation* (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 129.

<sup>166</sup>Blum, “Gilligan and Kohlberg,” 476.

<sup>167</sup>Hayes, *Women as Learners*, 113.

<sup>168</sup>Belenky et al., *Women’s Ways of Knowing*, 102.



Gilligan argues that morality is hindered when the self is separated from relationship or when thought is split from emotion.<sup>169</sup> Blum emphasizes Gilligan's call to connected knowing, saying, "If emotionally expressive action is an integral part of appropriate behavior within personal relationships, then a philosophy grounded in rational principle alone will be importantly deficient in this domain and cannot be seen as superior to one of care."<sup>170</sup>

Belenky et al. speaks at length to Connected Knowing, presenting Connected and Separate Knowing as different ways of seeing or approaching knowledge under Procedural Knowledge. Both Connected and Separate ways of Procedural Knowledge are shown to be objective by the authors: "Both separate and connected knowers are wary of projection, but they avoid it by different means."<sup>171</sup> Separate knowers suppress self as they view objectivity as excluding all emotions, thinking pragmatically, and speaking "dispassionately, to exclude [their] own concerns and to adopt a perspective that [their] adversaries may respect, as in [others'] own self-interest."<sup>172</sup> While personality is excluded from separate knowers, "connected knowers see the personality as adding to the perception, and so the personality of each member of the group enriches the group's understanding."<sup>173</sup> Connected knowers are objective by looking not just from their viewpoint but from others' perspectives.<sup>174</sup> Connected knowing is not subjectivism, as it is a procedure of thought; it does not just embrace what feels right.<sup>175</sup> Clinchy explains the difference

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<sup>169</sup>Gilligan, "Moral Injury and the Ethic of Care," 89.

<sup>170</sup>Blum, "Gilligan and Kohlberg," 490.

<sup>171</sup>Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 109.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid.

<sup>173</sup>Ibid., 119.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid., 113.

<sup>175</sup>Clinchy, "Connected and Separate Knowing," in *Knowledge, Difference, and Power*, 209.

between Subjectivism and Connection: “Although both subjectivists and connected knowers might say that ‘experience can’t be wrong,’ they mean different things when they say it. Subjectivists are unmitigated relativists.”<sup>176</sup>

Separate Knowing is adversarial and starts from a vantage point of doubt.<sup>177</sup> In seeking to view issues or ideas from others’ perspectives and reasoning and because of the high value they place on relationship, women are more reluctant to debate and play the “doubting game” involved in Separate Knowing.<sup>178</sup> They want to avoid others being hurt. Clinchy explains, “Connected knowers act not as adversaries, but as allies, even advocates of the position they are examining.”<sup>179</sup>

Blythe McVicker Clinchy, one of the researchers with Belenky in *Women’s Ways of Knowing*, has done further research on Connected Knowing and writes about her research as a chapter in *Knowledge, Difference, and Power*. She explains the difference between separate and connected knowers when she writes about their approach to reading her chapter: “If you approach this chapter as a separate knower, you examine its arguments with a critical eye, insisting that I justify every point.”<sup>180</sup> This way of thinking is to “play the doubting game” with principles that are “objective and impersonal.”<sup>181</sup> She expounds further, “If on the other hand, you take a connected approach to this chapter, you will read it with an empathic, receptive eye.”<sup>182</sup> She gives voice to this inner “believing game,” writing, “What do you see? . . . Give me the vision in your head. You

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<sup>176</sup>Ibid., 215.

<sup>177</sup>Belenky et al., *Women’s Ways of Knowing*, 106.

<sup>178</sup>Ibid., 104.

<sup>179</sup>Clinchy, “Connected and Separate Knowing,” in *Knowledge, Difference, and Power*, 208.

<sup>180</sup>Ibid., 206.

<sup>181</sup>Ibid.

<sup>182</sup>Ibid., 207.

are having an experience I don't have; help me to have it?"<sup>183</sup> The aim then for the connected knower is not to test but to understand the other person or material.<sup>184</sup>

These two modes of thinking are not mutually exclusive and are not limited specifically to either males or females. Belenky et al., writes, "Separate and connected knowing are not gender-specific. The two modes may be gender-related: it is possible that more women than men tip toward connected knowing and more men than women toward separate knowing."<sup>185</sup> Baxter Magolda, in her *Contextual Knowing* saw more of a convergence between the two sexes and ways of thinking. Gilligan also saw in moral development a need for the "integration of gender patterns" in "mature moral development."<sup>186</sup> Baxter Magolda transferred this to the realm of intellectual development, writing,

The same could be said of intellectual development. Most educators would agree that intellectual functioning that integrates the use of objective and subjective processes is more effective than reliance on only one of those processes. Contextual thinking as defined by the most complex epistemological perspectives in intellectual development theory requires the ability to integrate evidence with contextual circumstances.<sup>187</sup>

She believed connection was important because the ruling objectivist view of the day does not acknowledge this need for connection in advanced modes of thought, and because autonomy is too highly praised in the literature.<sup>188</sup>

Although these previous studies in the field focused on females are important in both setting a precedent and providing valuable information, descriptions, and themes, they do not offer a new framework or a new scheme. They simply provide some nuanced

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<sup>183</sup>Clinchy, "Connected and Separate Knowing," in *Knowledge, Difference, and Power*, 207.

<sup>184</sup>Ibid.

<sup>185</sup>Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 103.

<sup>186</sup>Baxter Magolda, "Gender Differences in Cognitive Development," 23.

<sup>187</sup>Ibid.

<sup>188</sup>Baxter Magolda, *Knowing and Reasoning in College*, 375.

changes to Perry's scheme, making Perry's scheme fundamental to epistemological research. Furthermore, their interpretations often lack a redemptive framework. Further research is needed to understand the epistemological development of pre-ministry female seminarians.

### **Reflective Judgment Model**

Another related model that must be examined when considering epistemological development is King and Kitchener's Reflective Judgment Model (RJM). King and Kitchener, like many of the other theorists, rely on Perry greatly, thus validating his centrality to the field but also providing nuance. Their RJM has also been used in a study of pre-ministry seminary students, making it a helpful resource for the study at hand.

King and Kitchener's study was largely built from examining developmental theories, especially Perry's, and by studying educational philosophers like John Dewey.<sup>189</sup> The term "reflective judgment" was acquired from Dewey. He believed reflective judgment was necessary for an individual to resolve a problem that did not have a correct solution (6).

While being very similar to Perry's study on intellectual and ethical development, the RJM is more narrowly focused on how people think through ill-structured problems (17). King and Kitchener state, "We found that people's assumptions about what and how something can be known provide a lens that shapes how individuals frame a problem and how they justify their beliefs about it in the face of uncertainty" (xvi). Their focus then is on the understanding of knowledge and justification as they relate to problems that are not black or white, right or wrong, or clear-cut. Reflective judgment begins with the acknowledgment of uncertainty in the world (xvi). This shows a great deal of similarity to Perry's progression to commitment in the face of relativism.

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<sup>189</sup>Patricia M. King and Karen S. Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment: Understanding and Promoting Intellectual Growth and Critical Thinking in Adolescents and Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), xvi.

The first study on reflective judgment done by King and Kitchener was a ten-year, longitudinal study conducted from 1977-1987. The participants ranging from high school to graduate school were matched based on test scores and gender to eliminate those variables in the test scores (128). Many subsequent studies have been done using the Reflective Judgment Interview and Model. Over 33 studies have been done and over 1,700 individuals interviewed (179). Among the 1,700 participants were 1,100 college students, 200 graduate students, and over 150 adults who were not students (126). Many of the studies have been longitudinal with participants being interviewed two or more times over a period of months or years depending on the study (153).

The studies were based on interviews presenting several ill-structured dilemmas which the participants had to answer. The interviewer used probes where necessary to gain information on the dilemmas for scoring. In the original longitudinal study, four standard problems were given during each interview. Several years later, a fifth was added. All the questions were selected because each had no clear-cut answer and each involved contradictory views (101). The original questions dealt with “how the Egyptian pyramids were built, the objectivity of news reporting, how human beings were created, and the safety of chemical additives in foods” (100). The fifth question added at a later time related to the disposal of nuclear waste.<sup>190</sup>

## **Stages**

The interviews resulted in a RJM comprised of seven epistemic assumptions and ways of justifying beliefs (xvi). The level of complex thinking and justification grows with each stage, making it developmental (13). These stages are organized into three categories: Pre-Reflective Thinking, Quasi-Reflective Thinking, and Reflective Thinking (14-15).

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<sup>190</sup>The fifth question was helpful in demonstrating that the higher scores in successive tests were not related to familiarity with the dilemmas as the scores for the fifth question were consistent. King and Kitchener, *Developing Reflective Judgment*, 101, 158.

**Pre-reflective thinking (stages 1-3).** In stage 1, knowledge is absolute and concrete, making justification obsolete. No justification is needed because truth and falsehood are very clear (49). Controversies in knowledge “do not exist” and are therefore “not problematic” (48). In stage 2, while knowledge is absolutely certain, it is not always readily accessible (51). Beliefs remain assumed and are unexamined and unjustified unless justified by an authority (54). While still believing knowledge is certain, stage 3 leaves room for temporary uncertainty. Knowledge at this stage is still believed to be held by the authorities. Where authorities do not know the answer, knowledge claims cannot be justified (55).

**Quasi-reflective thinking (stages 4-5).** Evidence is used in quasi-reflective thinking, but those who practice quasi-reflective thinking are unable to clearly connect their evidence to their conclusion (58). Stage 4 brings a recognition of uncertainty. It takes into account idiosyncrasies and situations leaving some ambiguity in knowledge (60). This category allows for justification based on the individual’s preconceived views (61). In stage 5, knowledge is contextual, subjective, and personal (64). Everything is based upon interpretations and justified in context. One participant made the following statement which was representative of the stage: “People think differently and so they attack the problem differently. Other theories could be as true as my own, but based on different evidence” (15)

**Reflective thinking (stages 6-7).** In reflective thinking, knowledge is not certain; relevant data must be given, but beliefs must be open to reevaluation (66). Knowledge in stage 6 is constructed. The individual collects information from different sources, considering various perspectives, and evaluating the evidence. Authorities are consulted but are not the sole source of justification.<sup>191</sup> Stage 6 requires action on the part

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<sup>191</sup>This view of authority is demonstrated in the following excerpt from King and Kitchener: “On occasion, people using Stage 6 reasoning will explicitly know that they evaluate the expertise, opinions,

of the knower (66). Stage 7 also contains a reasoning process to arrive at knowledge. Sources and evidence are consulted to find what is most reasonable. Evidence is “synthesized into epistemically justifiable conjectures about the nature of the problem under consideration” (70). Justification is further explained by the individual than it was in stage 6. Probability, different factors, consequences, evidence, and varying perspectives are all considered and a conclusion arrived at and defended based on the best available understanding of the issue (16). They understand that more information may later come to light, leading to better explanations or opinions (70).

In addition to the creation of the model, King and Kitchener have contributed several other aspects and findings to the field, including discussion of gender differences, the influence of education on reflective judgment, and the involvement of student affairs personnel in students’ development.

### **Gender Differences**

During many of the years of the study, gender differences were not found. In 1983, “a group by gender in interaction approach statistical significance . . . with men scoring higher than women” (147). This discrepancy led to several successive analyses to see if there were different patterns of development for men and women (147). The successive evaluations, however, proved nonsignificant. In the subsequent analyses, no differences were found “between the scores of the women and the men on four of the five problems (148). One possible difference relates to education level.

In 17 subsequent studies using the RJM and including male and female participants, 3 did not report with regard to gender. Seven of the studies found no differences by gender, and 7 reported differences. Six of the 7 found higher scores for the male participants. The last study did not find overall differences but found female “non-

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and conclusions of experts. One graduate student, for example, suggested that she based her opinion about chemical additives ‘on the credibility of the people I hear reports from.’” Ibid., 68.

traditional” aged freshman, “scored higher than their male counterparts” (176). While in their work, King and Kitchener acknowledge some research may point to differences “in growth spurts between males and females” (176), they emphasize throughout the book that reported differences “may be attributed to a variety of factors in addition to gender, such as academic aptitude, leadership opportunities, and different rates of maturation” (186; 177).

### **Influence of Education**

In examining the gender gap between male and female scores in 1987, researchers found that 47 percent of the men involved had received post baccalaureate degrees by 1987, while only 15 percent of the women had done so (148). Researchers believed “the differences in the educational achievement of the men and women in the sample may have contributed to the gender differences” in scores at the time of testing (148). While the further analyses based on the differing scores of males and females suggest a relationship between education and reflective judgment, in general the findings from the studies suggest a slow and consistent pattern of development (187).

Most of the participants in their first study were engaged in formal education, providing “an initial assessment of whether involvement in higher education leads to higher levels of reflective judgment” (127). In 1977, the three groups—high school, undergraduate, and graduate students—showed significantly higher scores at each level (132). The scores of the participants, with the exception of the doctoral students, continued to increase with each subsequent testing. The doctoral students’ scores between 1979, and 1987, remained stable (132).<sup>192</sup> Participants who were college juniors in 1977, showed the largest increase in the longitudinal study (132). In all longitudinal studies that extended over eight years or more, significant increases in scores were seen, but this was especially true among those enrolled in college programs. Further research is needed to understand

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<sup>192</sup>Doctoral students on the other hand on the raised from 6.2 to 6.4 over the tenure. *Ibid.*, 135.



the specific roles of age and of education in Reflective Judgment Interviews (RJI) scores (159).

### **Student Affairs**

Another contribution by King and Kitchener in their work is the benefit, the need, and the opportunity for education to occur in different spheres on campus. They acknowledge education beyond the classroom. Throughout the work they acknowledge and incorporate the student affairs staff on college campuses.<sup>193</sup> Their definition of education includes “many interactions a student may have that serve an educational purpose. . . . Development occurs in a variety of settings and that individuals in many roles may serve as teachers in fostering reflective thinking” (xvii). They acknowledge the benefit to students’ reflective judgment through that goal being “communicated in many institutional contexts, with multiple opportunities in both curricular and co-curricular settings to learn and practice thinking skills involved” (240). A few contexts they mention by name in the book that represent the curriculum and co-curriculum “stimulating, nurturing, and challenging” are the classroom, the theater, and the dormitories (188, 255). This cross-campus thinking is also represented in one of their suggestions for fostering reflective judgment:

Foster a climate that promotes thoughtful analysis of issues throughout the campus. . . . This suggestion recognizes that learning to think reflectively occurs within the context of the student’s intellectual community, from the immediate environment of his or her living group or specific class to the broader community of the college and its environs. (255)

### **Comparison with Perry’s Scheme**

While King and Kitchener’s RJM differs from Perry’s Scheme, several similarities can also be seen. Similar to Perry’s findings with regard to assumptions of knowledge when he sought to understand why students respond differently to the same

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<sup>193</sup>King and Kitchener sought student affairs contributions to the research recognizing student affairs position on campus to access “students’ informal observations about their classes, their learning, and their own development.” Ibid., xvii.

teachers, King and Kitchener found “the way people justify their beliefs is related to their assumptions about knowledge” (5). “Being asked about the safety of NutraSweet, one participant appealed to authority showing similarities to Perry’s Dualism (2). Some recognized uncertainty on the issue, but only saw it as temporary. This was similarly evidenced in Perry’s interviews. Some thought no one would ever know, so each individual was entitled to his or her own opinion; this resembles Perry’s multiplicity (3). Other participants thought one could make a reasonable claim with evidence, demonstrating that claim which resembles Relativism in Perry’s scheme (4). While Perry states Commitment in Relativism “refers to an act, or ongoing activity relating a person as agent and chooser to aspects of his life in which he invests his energies, his care, and his identity,” King and Kitchener state, “Reflective thinking requires the continual evaluation of beliefs, assumptions, and hypotheses against existing data and against other possible interpretations of the data” (7). Thus, King and Kitchener have findings that resemble each of Perry’s stages. This is not surprising since both models deal with the development of epistemic cognition. King and Kitchener write, “As individuals develop, they become better able to evaluate knowledge claims and to explain and defend their point of view and controversial issues. The ability to make reflective judgment is the ultimate outcome of this progression” (13). While reflective judgment ability is a specific part of epistemic growth, the progression laid out by King and Kitchener is largely what Perry laid out in his work decades earlier. King and Kitchener do acknowledge that, saying,

The reflective judgment model was not the first to suggest that people’s assumptions about knowledge change over the course of their lifetime; the works of Perry (1968) and Broughton (1975) were its major predecessors. These early models of episodic logical development greatly stimulated our thinking about the intellectual development in adulthood, especially during the college years. (36)

Another similarity the two models share is a recognition that epistemic cognition is tied to morality. Perry notes this in the very title of his book with the phrase “Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development.” King and Kitchener, while not as focused on the ethical aspect of the dilemmas they propose, acknowledge that both of

these realms are involved in “frequently identified desired outcomes of education” (221).

They add,

We have discussed intellect and character as two distinct attributes, but it is important to remember that they are not separate within the person, and it is unlikely that the intellect and identity developed independently. In fact, the same experience may contribute to growth in both domains. (221)

Both Perry and King and Kitchener note this aspect of development.

Even in ways they try to differentiate themselves from Perry, they are seen to be rather similar. They write,

Contrary to Perry’s (1970) most advanced positions, characterized as “Commitment and Relativism,” the idea of being committed to a point of view does not fit here, given the assumption that all conclusions are open to reevaluation based on new information or new interpretations. (71)

Perry’s Commitment within Relativism, however, also remains open to new information and interpretations. This level of epistemological development understands the responsibility to make a decision based off of supporting evidence in context and understands the process is ongoing.

King and Kitchener acknowledge the intersection between Perry’s study and their study in the early positions, but they believe Perry failed to articulate “the nature of judgment” in the final positions of his scheme (38). While they believe Perry’s emphasis on responsibility and identity are a divergence from their judgment model, Perry’s scheme continues to demonstrate the same development but with a wider scope with regard to development (38).

King and Kitchener’s RJM is different in its specific focus on understanding and justification of ill-structured problems. In another way, Perry is narrower in his protocol, as it can only be used in an educational context. King and Kitchener’s design presents several issues that non-students would be able to answer in order to be assigned a score (80). Given that the sample and population of the current study are students, that is not a problem. Seeing that the study seeks to understand epistemological development and not specifically reflective judgment, Perry’s scheme is a better theoretical lens for

this project; yet understanding reflective judgment, along with a study with seminary students using the RJM, is helpful.

### **RJM and Seminary Students**

Janet Dale, from Alliance Theological Seminary, studied the epistemological development of pre-ministry, evangelical seminary students using the RJM. She wondered how seminary students' understanding of revealed knowledge might impact their understanding of ill-structured problems.<sup>194</sup> RJI were used to assess this interaction. In her stratified study, she interviewed 19 students who were entering seminary and 19 students who were graduating. They were matched by student level and ethnicity. Their ages ranged from 23 to 49 years of age, with a mean age of 31.6 (57). In addition, following the interview, each was given a written question to rate their usage of Scripture, either verbally or mentally and silently, in answering the given dilemmas. They did so with a scale of 0-3 with 0 being no reference to one's faith to 3 being high consideration of one's faith (57).

She had three hypotheses going into the project. Her first hypothesis that student level would have no effect on the RJM scores was proven (60-61). There was no significant difference between the RJM scores of those entering and those graduating from seminary (58). Dale found,

The RJI mean score across dilemmas for the graduating students was 4.98, and the mean score of both groups of students for the news reporting dilemma was 5.29; both indicate level two, stage 5 assumptions. "Reality exists only subjectively. . . . Knowledge claims are limited to subjective interpretations from a particular perspective" (Kitchener & King, 1981, p. 97). (61)

It is interesting to note Dale's assessment of the similar scores with regard to the creation/evolution dilemma. She writes, "Because of three or more years of study in Bible and theology, students ready to graduate should score higher on this dilemma than

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<sup>194</sup>Janet L. Dale, "Reflective Judgment: Seminarians' Epistemology in a World of Relativism," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 33, no.1 (2005): 56.

entering seminarian.” (63). She is right; this should cause concern and lead seminaries to assess how their students are developing.<sup>195</sup>

The second hypothesis was also proven. It stated that the religious content of the ill-structured problem presented to participants would not affect their RJM scores (62). Students’ reflective judgment scores did not appear to fluctuate significantly depending upon the religious or secular nature of the question (58), which showed an integration of faith and reason in how they addressed ill-structured problems.

In her third hypothesis, Dale expected to find a negative relationship between RJM scores and a participant’s faith. Her third hypothesis was unsupported by the research (63). While Dale thought a belief of revealed knowledge might prove to be a problem for students in trying to “integrate Scripture” with real-world, ill-structured problems, this was not the case (56-57). Stated simply, “Graduate students’ RJI scores did not decrease significantly as their references to faith increased” (60). This finding, while surprising to Dale, is in line with Trentham’s principle of inverse consistency.

It is of interest that the RJI scores of the participants in Dale’s study were very similar to the RJI scores in other studies of graduate students in other programs. Graduate students in other studies using the RJI regularly scored the highest, typically falling between stages 4 and 5 as “early level” graduate students and between stages 5 and 6 for “advanced level graduate students” (62). The majority of graduate students in this study and in others fell into quasi-reflective assumptions.<sup>196</sup> In Dale’s study, the mean scores

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<sup>195</sup>Trentham’s taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies would be useful in this assessment process as it gives a category of “Biblically-founded presuppositions for knowledge and development.” The priorities and competencies in that category include both an understanding of God and His Word as metaphysically ultimate and a clear articulation of how faith and rationality are related. It also addresses Dale’s main concern in her study that Seminary students would grow in reflective judgment as it has sections for higher levels of thinking, wisdom, reflective criteria for assessing one’s beliefs, a recognition of context, a sense of personal responsibility for knowledge, and a convictional commitment to one’s world view. See table 4.

<sup>196</sup>Dale notes that this quasi-reflective level of assumptions reflects the relativism of Western culture (63).

for entering students was a 4.58 and for graduating students it was a 4.98. Dale believes that this finding “suggested Christian students’ epistemology of revealed knowledge might not affect their development of reflective judgment” (62).

Dale’s study also provided the opportunity to provide recommendations for helping seminary students grow in reflective judgment (56). She states, “Strategies where students are passive recipients of knowledge ignore students’ epistemic assumptions and their role in interpreting information and thus, are not as reflective as strategies where students are active in constructing their knowledge claims about the world” (62). More than lectures are called for, but professors should allow students to “wrestle with the ill-structured issues that are present in every discipline,” and then professors should explain how they reached their conclusions and thus “model higher levels of thinking” (62). This strategy for improving reflective judgment in seminary students does not need to ignore absolute truth where God has revealed it, but it allows the students to think, discern, and work in ways necessary to their future leadership and ministry beyond seminary.

Dale’s contribution to pre-ministry training is her concern for how seminary students are being trained to solve “ambiguous, controversial, [and] complex problems of life and ministry?”<sup>197</sup> Dale writes,

There was no significant difference between the two groups of students’ mean RJI scores across all three dilemmas: students entering the Master of Divinity program, 4.58, and students ready to graduate, 4.98. For these graduating students, the seminary experience did not significantly help them develop reflective judgment. This finding presents an important challenge to the seminary to help students develop reflective thinking. (61)

Dale is concerned the ten responses to dilemmas with a level 1 score may reveal “anti-intellectualism that has characterized evangelicals generally for many decades” (61). She also believes it may reveal what Mark Noll has described as “an ultra-simplistic view of

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<sup>197</sup>Dale gives examples of ill-structured problems that arise in ministry: “Leadership issues, contextualization of the biblical message, role of the church in society, interpretation of a scripture passage when biblical scholars differ, relationship of God’s providence to biotechnology, mode and age of baptism, and training of laity” (57).

the Bible and its interpretation” (61). She emphasizes the crisis of entering and graduating seminary students not being statistically different in their thinking:

For these students ready to graduate, seminary did not significantly help them develop reflective judgment. . . . The seminary should embrace the challenge to help students develop in reflective judgment while they are in the Master of Divinity program so that graduates better respond to ill-structured problems of life and ministry. (63)

While this concern is legitimate, her study reveals growth in reflective judgment is not the only desired outcome for seminary graduates. Her study shows that graduating seminarians were more likely to use their faith while analyzing the two secular dilemmas: “This positive finding indicated these students may be learning to integrate their faith into areas not explicitly discussed in the Scriptures, that is, into secular issues” (63). Both Dale’s concern over the lack of development of reflective judgment in seminary students and the evident growth in her participants’ understanding of faith and reason during their time in seminary will be addressed in this research as the students are assessed according to the Perry Scheme and according to Trentham’s taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies. A dual assessment in this way allows for examining the development among seminarians without narrowing the assessment to one field that does not consider other desired goals or outcomes from seminary.

### **Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Students**

The anthropotelic nature of self-authorship found in the preceding developmental theories is in sharp contrast to what one would expect to find in researching pre-ministry students. Self-authorship stands in contrast to several biblical principles and does not align with the storyline of Scripture: creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. Trentham, in his study of pre-ministry undergraduates from differing institutional contexts,<sup>198</sup> examined the students’ intellectual and ethical development,

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<sup>198</sup>Trentham researched students in secular colleges or universities, Bible colleges, and Christian liberal arts colleges or universities.

both according to the Perry scale and according to a taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies developed in his research and shown in table 4.<sup>199</sup>

Table 4. Epistemological priorities and competencies according to category

I. Biblically-founded presuppositions for knowledge and development	II. Metacognition, critical reflection, and contextualistic orientation	III. Personal responsibility for knowledge acquisition and maintenance—within community
A recognition of the God of the Bible as metaphysically ultimate, and of revelation as the source and most basic component for knowledge and development	A preference for higher-level forms of thinking according to Bloom’s taxonomy	A pursuit of personal development that results from mutual interdependence and reciprocity in one’s relationships with authority figures and peers
	A prioritization of wisdom oriented modes of learning and living	A sense of personal responsibility for gaining, maintaining, and progressing in knowledge
A clear articulation of the relationship between faith and rationality	A reflective criteria of assessing one’s own beliefs and values, as well as divergent beliefs and values	A preference for active involvement in the teaching and learning process
	A recognition of social-environmental influences on one’s learning and maturation	A convictional commitment to one’s own worldview—maintained with critical awareness of personal contexts, ways of thinking, and challenges brought to bear by alternative worldviews—through testing and discernment

The analysis of the data by the Center for the Study of Intellectual Development (CSID) according to the Perry scheme correlated with Trentham’s analysis of the presence of epistemological priorities and competencies based on biblical principles. While these results may be surprising as one looks at the contrast between a constructivist, existential

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<sup>199</sup>This taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies, as well as the chart according to category, were taken from John David Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates: A Cross-Institutional Application of the Perry Scheme” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 175-78.



structure and a biblical worldview, Trentham explains these findings with the principle of inverse consistency.

### **Principle of Inverse Consistency**

For believers, the proper goal for epistemological development is conformity to Christ. A believer's *telos*, as David Powlison so aptly puts it, "is to grow into the head of the church, which is Christ. Our end is not a completed self, but resurrection."<sup>200</sup>

Secular models are consequently missing an essential piece of epistemological development.<sup>201</sup> In his chapter in *All Things Hold Together in Christ*, Brad Kallenberg writes with regard to the contrast of the two models:

Because the Enlightenment rejected the traditionally shared concept of what human life is for and started, as it were, from scratch by inventing the idea of humans as 'autonomous individuals,' the concept of *telos*, so very central to morality, was lost. Having rejected the received account of *telos*, the only remaining option upon which moral principles might be grounded was the *untutored* human nature—the very thing in need of guidance and, by nature, at odds with those guiding principles.<sup>202</sup>

The end of development for them is not Christotelic, but is anthropotelic.

Biblical knowledge is oriented toward Christ and is committed to the authority Scripture; worldly knowledge is oriented away from God. Table 5 displays the principle of Inverse Consistency applied to the Perry Scheme, showing the contrast between Perry's beliefs and epistemological priorities found in Scripture.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>200</sup>David Powlison, "The Cure of Souls and Modern Psychotherapies," CCEF, accessed December 13, 2011, <http://www.ccef.org/cure-souls-and-modern-psychotherapies>.

<sup>201</sup>Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 16.

<sup>202</sup>Brad Kallenberg, "The Master Argument of MacIntyre's After Virtue," in *All Things Hold Together in Christ: A Conversation on Faith, Science and Virtue*, ed. James K. A. Smith, and Michael L. Gulker (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 76.

<sup>203</sup>Table 5 was taken from Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 128-29, with a slight change made in wording based upon further refining done by Trentham since the publication of his dissertation. See Jonathan Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 48.

Table 5. Applying the principle of inverse consistency to the Perry scheme

<i>Regarding the limits of formal logic and reason . . .</i>	
Perry: Human beings cannot ascertain <i>Truth</i> (capital T), only <i>truth</i> —since absolute Truth is illusory.	Scripture: Human beings cannot ascertain Truth (capital T), only <i>truth</i> —since absolute Truth is solely and preliminarily determined by an almighty, infinite Creator.
There are limits to formal logic and reason, thus <i>faith commitments are required for knowledge</i> ; belief is basic to knowledge—knowledge is impossible apart from the adoption of an (ungrounded) starting point; faith (conviction) activates belief. [Ref. Polanyi ( <i>Personal Epistemology</i> ), Mavrodes ( <i>Belief in God</i> )”proved-premise principle” and “termination rule”]	
Perry: Faith commitment requires “arbitrary faith” and represents the “willing suspension of disbelief.”	Scripture: Faith commitment requires “revelatory faith” and represents “the <i>assurance</i> of things hoped for; the conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11:1).
<i>Regarding the objectivity of knowledge . . .</i>	
Perry: All knowledge is mediated by context and no truth claim is objectively justifiable; individuals must therefore “make meaning” for themselves.	Scripture (Reformed Epistemology): All knowledge is mediated by general and special revelation and no knowledge is objectively justifiable; individuals must therefore aim to “think God’s thoughts after him” (ref. Bavinck).
<i>Regarding contextual knowledge . . .</i>	
Perry: Knowledge is contingent on the unique contexts brought to bear in a naturalistic universe, devoid of ultimate purpose and without a foundational metanarrative—thus knowledge must be continually pursued and “created” by human beings according to <i>internally-based</i> processes of substantiation	Scripture: knowledge is contingent on the unique contexts brought to bear in a God-initiated, God-designed, God-ruled universe, infused with purpose and grounded by the overarching biblical metanarrative—thus knowledge must be continually pursued and “discerned” by human beings according to <i>revelation-based</i> processes of substantiation.
<i>Regarding positive maturation . . .</i>	
Perry: Given naturalistic reality, successful cognitive growth entails increasing, convictional commitment to one’s own values and assumptions—formed on the basis of a critical and reflective criteria of assessment—while remaining open to revision of one’s worldview through continual testing and discernment in light of alternate, potentially valid truth claims.	Scripture: Given theistic, Christocentric reality, successful cognitive growth entails increasing, convictional commitment to biblical values and assumptions—formed on the basis of a critical and reflective criteria of assessment—while remaining open to revision of one’s worldview through continual testing and discernment in light of alternate, potentially valid truth (not Truth) claims.
<i>Regarding commitment . . .</i>	
Perry: Commitment involves maintaining one’s worldview “with universal intent”—i.e., exercising steadfast, convictional faith, acknowledging that one’s commitment is the only means by which to genuinely fulfill one’s longing for purposeful identity, albeit through commitments that are arbitrary, groundless, and personally beneficial (ref. Polanyi).	Scripture: Commitment involves maintaining one’s worldview “with universal intent”—i.e., exercising steadfast, convictional faith, acknowledging that one’s commitment is the only means by which to genuinely fulfill one’s longing for purposeful identity, through commitments that enable one to “draw near” to God, seek his will, and serve the benefit of his Kingdom (Heb. 11:6).

Secular studies, because of the way God, as Creator, has ordered his world, can observe true human patterns, but because of sin they wrongly interpret them.<sup>204</sup> Trentham writes, “Thus, what is put forth as positive or ‘natural’ development according to secular research is often a description of a ‘pattern of fallenness.’”<sup>205</sup> Trentham consequently defines inverse consistency in the following way:

A principle which maintains that secular and biblical models of development observe and prescribe similar patterns, but are inversely oriented with regard to *telos* (self-identification versus Christlikeness). Secular models observe and prescribe ‘patterns of fallenness’ rather than patterns commensurate with biblical norms.<sup>206</sup>

### **An Ongoing Dialogue**

Researchers continue to study both women’s epistemological development and pre-ministry students’ development. Erin Shaw, for her doctoral thesis at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, identified foundational and prescriptive elements for a developmental model, for women, from an evangelical, complementarian perspective. Christian educators have often begun such studies with Gilligan, Belenky, and Baxter Magolda as the authorities on the topic and accepted parts of models that are founded upon constructivism, feminism, and egalitarianism. Shaw’s study will begin with a biblical worldview. After a biblical model is articulated, secular models will be critically examined.

Linda Marie Reed, who received her Doctor of Education degree in 2017, at the same seminary, completed a mixed study to review the programs and academic courses for women at ten Christian higher education institutions. This study entailed a review of the institution’s catalogs as well as an interview with one director or female faculty member from each institution. As higher Christian education for women from a

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<sup>204</sup>Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 34.

<sup>205</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>206</sup>Ibid., 19.

complementarian perspective continues to develop, this research will provide a valuable resource.

Several studies using Trentham’s method of utilizing the Perry scheme to research the epistemological development among pre-ministry students have been completed. Long, Sanchez, and Cannon’s studies are completed and focused on the development of pre-ministry undergraduates in various contexts. Long used the Perry scheme to examine the development of students in various Bible colleges<sup>207</sup>; Sanchez focused on students at secular universities;<sup>208</sup> and Cannon studied students at Christian liberal arts colleges or universities.<sup>209</sup> Warren Leatherman examined the epistemological development among undergraduates in confessional and non-confessional institutions; Justin Mullins later investigated the epistemological development of high school students in various contexts;<sup>210</sup> and Jonathan Stuckert completed a study of male, pre-ministry seminary students.<sup>211</sup>

### **Epistemological Development among Male Seminarians**

Stuckert studied the epistemological development among male students in denominational and inter/multidenominational contexts working on their Master of

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<sup>207</sup>Gregory Brock Long, “Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates at Bible Colleges according to the Perry Scheme” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014).

<sup>208</sup>Christopher Lynn Sanchez, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Secular Universities” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).

<sup>209</sup>Cannon, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates.”

<sup>210</sup>Justin Robert Mullins, “Exploring the Impact of Secondary Educational Contexts on College Student Formation and Development” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017).

<sup>211</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians.”

Divinity degrees. He sought to understand how participants' seminary studies impacted their progression through Perry's stages.<sup>212</sup>

**Hypothesis and MID findings.** Based upon Janet Dale's findings in her study using the RJM to assess seminary students, which showed similar scores between seminary students and other graduate students,<sup>213</sup> as well as because of similar scores between the other pre-ministry studies and other applications of the Perry scheme to undergraduate environments, Stuckert hypothesized the average MID score of seminary students "would be more developed than the undergraduate samples in the previous studies."<sup>214</sup> The MID scores from his study, however, were unexpected. While the preceding studies of undergraduate students ranged from 3.10 to 3.45, Stuckert's research participants scored an average of 3.25.<sup>215</sup>

**Suggested reasons for low scores.** Stuckert suggested several possibilities for the low score, including inverse consistency, developing epistemologically but not cognitively, emphasis on technique or personal devotion, and seminaries trying to transmit orthodoxy:

The fact that this sample did not show further development past what is typical for a college graduate with the same evangelical commitments should cause us to question the effectiveness of the evangelical seminary experience to 'nudge' students toward more mature thinking.<sup>216</sup>

Between denominational and inter/multidenominational, however, he found a notable difference. Seminarians that went to a denominational institution scored an average of

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<sup>212</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 8.

<sup>213</sup>Dale, "Reflective Judgment," 58.

<sup>214</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 52.

<sup>215</sup>Ibid., 74.

<sup>216</sup>Ibid., 77.

3.42, while those who attended inter/multidenominational scored a 3.07.<sup>217</sup> While the MID scores were surprising, Stuckert notes that Perry's scheme is still a useful grid to utilize in this research since they still fell within the range. Since there is growth that is not shown by Perry's scheme, Stuckert believes additional measuring tools are needed, such as Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies.<sup>218</sup>

The seminary students in Stuckert's study did, however, appear to differ in the presence of certain epistemological priorities and competencies. They were much higher in wisdom-oriented modes of thinking as well as in convictional commitment, but fewer preferred higher levels of thinking or active and engaged learning. The interviews often lacked a clear articulation of faith and reason and often demonstrated utilitarian ideas. Knowledge was always a means to an end and not enjoyed for knowledge's sake. Stuckert recommended that a future study be done with female seminary students for the entire sample. He said this would provide "very interesting comparisons in how students of different genders view seminary, ministry, and intellectual community and development."<sup>219</sup> With evidence that very few jobs are available in related fields for women who attend seminary, it will be interesting to note if the same themes of a utilitarian mindset with regard to knowledge appear. Stuckert also noted and probed for certain themes including mentors, marriage, faculty, local church, and calling. For the purpose of studying the epistemological development among women in seminary, it will be interesting to note general similarities as well as differences in patterns and perspectives.

Based upon the precedent literature and previous research, it would be expected that in a study of the epistemological development of women in seminary, similar MID scores to prior studies of pre-ministry students with slight variations. Women's scores

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<sup>217</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 77.

<sup>218</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>219</sup>Ibid., 123.

may vary based upon women's ages,<sup>220</sup> stages of life, leadership opportunities, being less likely to attend seminary and being in the minority at their institutions.<sup>221</sup> This study may also vary in themes and contextual realities. Based upon previous studies on women, one might expect to find more hesitancy in speaking or disagreeing, more cooperation, more relationship, and more feelings revealed in a study of the epistemological development of women in seminary. Whatever this study may reveal, it will contribute to the literature of epistemological development of pre-ministry students and will reveal the impact being a woman can have on a seminarian's experience and development.

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<sup>220</sup>According to John David Trentham, "a relationship likely exists between preministry undergraduates' ages and epistemological maturity." Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 209. Because of this relationship between age and epistemological maturity, Stuckert had an age delimitation from twenty-five to thirty years of age. He explains this decision based on the fact that it helps minimize "the effects of intervening vocational experience on the development of participants' epistemology," Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 56. In this study, because of the precedent literature showing that women pursue their degrees at different ages for a variety of reasons, including stage of life and care for others, that parameter was not used. Women's ages in this study varied from twenty-four to sixty-eight years of age.

<sup>221</sup>The unlikelihood of and hindrances to women entering seminary may mean that the women who do go differ from those who do not or may result in differences between the men who attend seminary and are expected to in preparation for ministry. See Miller, "An Exploration of the Factors That Influence Women."

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

Using the theoretical lens of the Perry scheme, replicating Trentham’s work, and complementing the research of Jonathan Stuckert, this research explored the epistemological development among women in evangelical seminaries along with the impact of varying higher educational institutional contexts on the epistemological development of female seminary students. Attention is also given to the contextual realities and experiences of women in seminary. This research aims to provide a resource that lends wisdom and clarification regarding pre-ministry training and vocational preparation to students, parents, church leaders and advisors.

#### **Synopsis of Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between female students’ attendance at various evangelical seminaries and progression through the positions of intellectual and ethical maturity according to the Perry Scheme?
2. What is the nature of epistemological development among women in evangelical seminaries when assessed according to Trentham’s taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies?
3. What contextual issues and themes emerge from female evangelical seminarians as they express their perspectives related to epistemological positions and values?

#### **Design Overview**

Following the methodology of Perry and Trentham, this qualitative<sup>1</sup> research study was done using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions “to elicit the

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<sup>1</sup>Creswell explains that qualitative research involves “emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.” John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014), 4.



views and opinions from the participants.”<sup>2</sup> The Perry, Trentham, and Stuckert Interview Protocols were adapted for use in this research project.<sup>3</sup> Probes were used as necessary to elicit further information from the participants.

ATS evangelical seminaries were contacted to gain access to possible participants enrolled or recently graduated from their Master of Divinity programs. Candidates were contacted about the project and asked to fill out a participation form. The participation form obtained participants’ permission, as well as allowed for demographic information to be collected for use in the selection of participants and in the research. It was also a way of ensuring that those included in the study would be willing to share their thoughts and opinions in the interviews.

A pilot study was completed with three female students using the Kintner Interview Protocol. The pilot study allowed me as the researcher to grow more comfortable in my interviewing skills and allowed for William Moore of the Center for the Study of Intellectual Development (CSID) to give feedback and instruction on properly interviewing participants to gain the necessary data by which to rate the students according to the Perry scheme.<sup>4</sup>

Interviews of no less than thirty students, fifteen students from each of the institutional contexts, were then conducted by phone. Interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants.<sup>5</sup> I transcribed the interviews, after which transcripts were sent to the CSID to be rated according to the Perry scheme.

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<sup>2</sup>Creswell, *Research Design*, 190.

<sup>3</sup>See Kintner Interview Protocol in appendix 6.

<sup>4</sup>William Moore’s curriculum vitae can be found in appendix 10.

<sup>5</sup>Students’ responses are not be identified or reported with names in the final analysis. Names were changed to protect the anonymity of participants while using the information to present findings from the interviews.

While the CSID rated the interview transcripts, I conducted my own analysis of the materials and identified instances in which participants' articulation aligned with the epistemological priorities and competencies in Trentham's taxonomy. Findings with regard to the taxonomy were reported. The transcripts were also examined for themes and contextual realities communicated by the participants with regard to the female seminary experience. Conclusions were made regarding the research questions and findings were reported.

### **Population**

The population for this study was female students enrolled in ATS, evangelical seminaries in Masters of Divinity degree programs, or in a Master of Theology program when no Masters of Divinity program was offered.

### **Samples**

To accomplish the research purpose, fifteen students were recruited from ATS schools in the following two institutional categories: denominational and inter/multidenominational.<sup>6</sup> Participating schools were selected utilizing the ATS website. The individuals utilized as a part of this study were female, full-time Masters of Divinity<sup>7</sup> students nearing completion of the program or having recently graduated within the last academic year. While the samples in Trentham's and successive pre-ministry studies were limited according to age, because it was noted in a review of the literature that

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<sup>6</sup>This purposeful selection is done to "best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question." Random sampling or large numbers of interviews are not required for this qualitative study. Creswell, *Research Design*, 189.

<sup>7</sup>Master of Theology students from Dallas Theological Seminary were included in the study as their institution does not have a Master of Divinity degree, but those who would take the Master of Divinity Degree are instead included in the Master of Theology program.

women attend schooling at various ages because of life stages and circumstances, the sample in this study was not limited by age.<sup>8</sup>

### **Delimitations**

1. This study was delimited to graduate students enrolled in evangelical seminaries.<sup>9</sup>
2. This study was delimited to ATS institutions.
3. This study was delimited to the two institutional contexts selected for the study.
4. This study was delimited to Masters of Divinity students.<sup>10</sup>
5. This study was delimited to those who have completed a minimum of 75 percent of their studies.
6. This study was delimited to exclude participants who have completed more than 25 percent of their coursework through distance learning.
7. This study was delimited to the time of the study and did not trace the students' epistemological development longitudinally.

### **Limitations of Generalization**

1. Findings were limited to the institutions included in the research and may not be generalized to different institutional contexts including non-evangelical institutions, institutions outside of the Association of Theological Schools, or institutions outside the scope of denominational or inter/multidenominational seminaries.
2. Findings may not generalize to non-theological programs or to theological programs outside of the Masters of Divinity.

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<sup>8</sup>John David Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates: A Cross-Institutional Application of the Perry Scheme" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 151.

<sup>9</sup>For the purpose of this study, in conjunction with Jonathan Stuckert's, *evangelical* is defined by the five distinguishing characteristics of evangelicals found in George Marsden's chapter in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*: "1) The Reformation doctrine of the final authority of Scripture; 2) The real, historical character of God's saving work recorded in Scripture; 3) Eternal salvation only through personal trust in Christ; 4) The importance of evangelism and missions; and 5) The importance of a spiritually transformed life." George Marsden, "Introduction: The Evangelical Denomination," in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, ed. George Marsden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), ix-x.

<sup>10</sup>Because Dallas Theological Seminary does not have a Master of Divinity degree in order to encourage their students to pursue the four-year Masters of Theology degree, an accommodation was made to this delimitation to include their Masters of Theology students.

3. Findings may not translate to women who are not enrolled in a similar program.
4. Generalizations of findings were limited to females and may not reflect male epistemological patterns of growth.<sup>11</sup>

## **Instrumentation**

### **Study Participation Form**

A participant survey and permission sheet was developed for possible participants. This allowed me to gain demographic information and permission, and enabled purposeful inclusion in the study. This form was similar to forms used for prior studies with pre-ministry students using the Perry scheme as a lens.<sup>12</sup> Changes were made based on the review of the literature for this study, including suggestions from Stuckert's study. Marital status was added to the form as Stuckert began to probe in this regard in his interviews and reported findings with regard to marriage. Furthermore, it is an important demographic in understanding how marital status impacts female seminarians and if its impact differs from the male experience. Women's seminary attendance may differ from men's in timing and longevity as they are often in caretaker roles. Stuckert asked for a graduation date from participants. A beginning date was added to determine the longevity of participant's seminary experience. A question was also asked with regard to one's self-identification as an egalitarian or complementarian. This question was added with Shaw and Reed's ongoing studies in mind.

As the literature surveyed spoke to the importance of holistic education and also touched on the purpose and benefits of a liberal arts education, more details were

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<sup>11</sup>While generalizations are made to females, this is not to say that the findings of this project reflect all females. This research sought to avoid essentializing gender to aspects other than what Scripture specifically reveals. This research was done in a specific context and findings reflect that context and are not generalizable to all women for all time. For a further understanding of essentialism and gender, see Jo Suzuki, "He Made Them Male and Female: Image of God, Essentialism, and Evangelical Gender Debate," in *What Really Happened in the Garden: Realities and Ramifications of the Creation and Fall of Man*, ed. Abner Chou (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015), 251-76.

<sup>12</sup>This sheet was developed by adapting the Participant Survey and Permission Sheet used in Jonathan Stuckert's research.

asked with regard to the participant's past education. Also, due to the role of Student Affairs Personnel in epistemological development seen in the literature, a question was added to ask about students' undergraduate involvement on campus.

As women are the minority on a seminary campus, two questions were asked to explore whether they might be a double or triple minority and how that might impact their experience. One question was asked with regard to ethnicity and another with regard to being raised in a single-parent home. These questions may also lead to further related studies.

Other changes were made for practical reasons. Participants were asked if they were referred by another student and if yes, by whom, for the purpose of distributing incentives as needed. For clarity, instructions were given with regard to each section of the form rather than all instructions being placed at the top of the form. Also for clarity and ease, the order of the questions were changed. A question dealing with church membership that appeared on Trentham's form but was omitted on Stuckert's was reinserted because church membership is important when considering the differing seminary contexts involved in this study. A student's denominational affiliation does not necessarily match their seminary institution's affiliation. Lastly, at Stuckert's suggestion, participants were asked to rank six provided influences on their seminary experience by importance. Stuckert had participants rate the influences on a scale of 1 to 5, but believed a ranking would have been more helpful to findings. Participants were asked to both rate and rank the factors. I still desired to include the rating to compare findings with the answers from Stuckert's male participants.

### **Interview Protocol**

In accordance with Perry, an Interview Protocol was developed using open-ended questions along with probes to allow for "standard procedures" in each interview.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Creswell, *Research Design*, 194.

The Kintner Interview Protocol was adapted from Perry's, Trentham's, and Stuckert's protocols. Because of suggestions in Stuckert's research, one modification was made to The Kintner Interview Protocol. He suggested probing with regard to peers in seminary. Stuckert wondered if a seminarian appreciated his peers, if it would show in the data collection.<sup>14</sup> He suggested adapting future protocols using related probes that could be found on Perry's alternate interview protocol. Several probing questions with regard to peers were added to the interview protocol used for this study. Stuckert's suggestion further led me to consult all of the interview protocols available to me to craft my protocol. Language from other protocols was adapted to fit the context and population of the current study.

Three questions to the protocol were added because of the specific nature of this study with regard to women. The following question was asked acknowledging that a woman's experience may differ from a man's but also eliciting from participants their understanding of that difference: "How might your experience as a female on the seminary campus have been different from that of a male student?" Two questions were added as a result of the gender studies included in the literature review. Women were asked, "During your time at the seminary, when were you most likely or least likely to speak up or contribute in classes or group discussions?" This question is drawn from the literature's emphasis on "voice." The second addition was, "How do you feel better equipped for life and ministry as a result of your studies in seminary? Where do you still feel you are lacking in your education?" This inquiry was based on Belenky et al.'s initial inquiry based on women's felt lack of education in *Women's Ways of Knowing*.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Jonathan Derek Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 125.

<sup>15</sup>Mary Field Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic, 1997).

The adapted interview protocol was reviewed by Moore of the CSID for his approval and suggestions. The Kintner Interview Protocol was also tested in a pilot study. Moore's approval confirmed rating the interviews using the new protocol was possible by the CSID.

### **Procedures**

Being that this study continues the dialogue related to the epistemological development among pre-ministry students, the procedures utilized in this research project were similar to prior related studies but differed slightly because of the population being studied.

#### **Recruit Participants**

Thirty participants were recruited for interviews, fifteen from denominational seminaries and fifteen from inter/multidenominational seminaries. Institutions falling into each of the categories identified through the ATS website and through their websites were contacted to receive information on possible participants. Possible participants were then contacted for involvement. Incentives in the form of a \$10 Amazon gift cards were provided for all who completed the interview. Results of the study were made available to all participants.

#### **Conduct Pilot Study**

Before interviews on participants began, a pilot study was conducted. The pilot study involved three one-hour long interviews with three female students at The Master's University pursuing their Masters of Biblical Arts degree. Before they participated, they filled out the Thesis Study Participation Form. Their interviews were recorded with permission, transcribed by myself, and then reviewed by both Trentham and Moore of the CSID. The pilot study provided the opportunity to review and revise, if necessary, the Thesis Study Participation Form and to test the adapted interview protocol with the CSID to ensure a rating was available using the Kintner Interview Protocol. The pilot study also

allowed the opportunity to receive feedback for improvement from Moore from the CSID and Trentham at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary with regard to interview skills and techniques.

### **Conduct Interviews**

Following the pilot study, interviews were conducted by phone with the thirty participants. Interviews were recorded with permission. They were conducted according to the Kintner Interview Protocol and were approximately one hour in length.

### **Interview Scoring and Independent Content Analysis**

I transcribed each interview and then sent them to William Moore for ratings. While William Moore assigned scores based on the Perry scheme, I evaluated the interview transcripts with the help of John David Trentham according to his taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies. This process entailed me finding statements from the interviews that reflected a priority or a competency from the taxonomy. These statement attributions then were proposed to Trentham for review and dialogue. After negotiation between John David Trentham and myself, positive attributions were confirmed. This process contributed to the ongoing development of the taxonomy as a paradigm for epistemological development consistent with biblical development.

### **Evaluate Findings and Draw Conclusions**

Three phases of analysis were essential aspects in reporting findings and conclusions of the study: MID ratings from the CSID, ratings by John David Trentham and myself according to the taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies, and my analysis of the interviews for themes and trends. The findings with regard to the research questions are stated in the following chapters.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>When presenting research findings, quotes from participants may be utilized, but their names are changed to keep their participation anonymous.



## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This phenomenological, qualitative study examined the epistemological development of women in both denominational and inter/multidenominational evangelical seminaries. The methodology used closely paralleled the prior studies done on the epistemological development of pre-ministry students in various contexts so that similarities and differences could be reported. The data collected and analyzed for this study was primarily from 30 semi-structured interviews of female seminarians. In addition, data was collected from the participants' Thesis Participation Forms, which were filled out prior to their inclusion in the study.

The interview data was examined in three ways. First, it was analyzed using the Perry scheme as a lens. All interviews were scored and assigned an MID rating by the Center for the Study of Intellectual Development (CSID). Second, John David Trentham and I analyzed the interview transcripts to find attributions that demonstrated the epistemological priorities and competencies from the taxonomy created by Trentham in his research. Last, the interview transcripts were analyzed for themes and trends. This analysis allowed for a greater understanding of a woman's experience in seminary. This chapter reports the findings of the study, giving attention also to the compilation protocol and an evaluation of the research design.

#### **Compilation Protocol**

This study involved several steps. Each was important for the methodology and purpose of the study. Compilation included a pilot study, recruitment, interviews, and data analysis. The process for each of those will be discussed in this section.

## **Pilot Interviews**

After I received permission from the Ethics Committee, three pilot interviews were conducted with women who were similar to the women in the study, but who were outside the population of the study.<sup>1</sup> The pilot interviews allowed an opportunity to refine the Thesis Study Participation Form,<sup>2</sup> the Kintner Interview Protocol,<sup>3</sup> and my interviewing techniques and skills without eliminating eligible participants from the study. The pilot interviews were transcribed and sent to the CSID and to Trentham for analysis and feedback. William Moore of the CSID annotated and rated each of the interviews.<sup>4</sup> Overall, Moore thought the pilot interviews went well. He gave three areas for improvement. First, he advised me not to be afraid to probe when the participant did not fully answer the question. Second, he instructed me to “redirect and refocus the respondents, as gently as possible, when they launch into long, detailed anecdotes that aren’t particularly germane to the question that was posed.” Last, he encouraged me not to “feel compelled to do a forced march through all of the Perry-related questions and probes” if they had addressed the most important questions or if the interview went long.

Trentham responded regarding my protocol: “This is a very effective series of questions, and I think you’re going to have no trouble whatsoever eliciting a large amount of significant data for analysis.” His feedback from the pilot interviews was to remind me to establish rapport with the participants before and throughout the interviews. He also gave me freedom to take time for participants to elaborate when they said something profound or insightful as “not many of us are used to talking through personal

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<sup>1</sup>All three of the women had received master’s degrees in biblical counseling from an institution that is not a part of the Association of Theological Schools. In addition to her master’s degree, one was pursuing a doctorate of educational ministry at an ATS institution.

<sup>2</sup>Instructions on the participation form that were unclear to those participating in the pilot study were edited for clarity. See appendix 1 for the final participation form used in the study.

<sup>3</sup>See appendix 6.

<sup>4</sup>The average MID score of the participants in the pilot study was 3.11.

epistemological issues in every day conversation.” Lastly, he cautioned me against not leading participants into answers. He cited as an example in an interview when the participant did not initially respond to my question, that I volunteered some categories. He encouraged me to prompt her again, saying “I know it is a broad question, but you can just tell me one or two things that come to mind and we will go from there.” He explained,

So, the idea is that you want to give a straightforward question, but one that is general enough that you’re going to elicit a genuinely personal response rather than a categorized response that primarily appeals to your question. If they go in a strange or irrelevant direction, then you can intervene with more direction, but you usually won’t have to do that.

This feedback before performing the study interviews was extremely valuable in growing my skills as an interviewer and helped to solicit better data from the participants. The feedback allowed me greater freedom in the following areas: making the interviews more conversational, exploring important areas, moving from a participant’s comment to a related question on the protocol while also ensuring I asked the critical questions necessary to receive a CSID rating. Many of the questions that were peripheral for the CSID rating were still necessary, however, for eliciting information to be assessed according to Trentham’s taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies. As most of the interviews extended to or beyond the hour mark, I did not feel obligated to ask every question or use every prompt.

## **Recruitment**

After the pilot study was completed, ATS institutions meeting the qualifications of the study were contacted for permission to contact their students for inclusion in the study.<sup>5</sup> Having located the appropriate institutions using the search function on the ATS website, each institution’s website was examined to identify the most fitting contact at the

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<sup>5</sup>See appendix 8 for the standard email sent to each contact. Each email was personalized or adapted for the institution and the individual contact’s role or research interests. For their convenience, an email to potential participants explaining the project and containing a link to the Thesis Study Participation Form was included. This email can be seen in appendix 9.

institution, including faculty members or advisors who specifically oversaw female M.Div. students, and also deans, vice presidents, or registrars. Since many institutions have different procedures for gaining approval, my initial contact sometimes referred me to someone else. Before granting approval, some institutions required further forms and authorization from their institution’s research approval board or a class specific to their institution. Another institution was unable to email students on my behalf, but allowed me to write a recruitment paragraph to submit to their school newsletter. Other networks were also contacted, including pastors and higher education professionals with connections to the academic or seminary arenas. Table 6 shows institutional support in this recruitment process.

Table 6. Requests and responses for institutional participation

	Contacted	Positive Responses	Negative/No Response	Participated
Seminaries	36	26	10	11
Other Networks	5	3	2	0
Students	Unknown	46	Unknown	30

What is not evident in table 6 is that several emails were often sent to several contacts at individual institutions. While only 36 institutions were contacted, a total of 60 separate contacts at institutions were corresponded with in order to receive a response. Some of the institutions that required the most work, though willing to participate, resulted in no participants or very few.

At two institutions, students or staff members posted on social media forums to inform the student body of the opportunity. This request from someone in their own context brought responses that the standard email sent to potential participants had not. In one case, two participants from other schools were informed of the opportunity through friends seeing those postings.

While 47 individuals filled out the participation form, many were excluded because they did not meet the parameters. The women who were unable to participate

often expressed their support and interest in the project and even referred classmates. Others who filled out the participation form and did qualify were excluded after multiple attempts to contact them went unanswered.

After four months of contacting institutions, contacting ATS, and utilizing personal networks, the quota of participants was still not met. At that point in reviewing the ATS website, it was noted that Dallas Theological Seminary had been excluded from my initial search for contacts because they did not have a Master of Divinity program. All of their would-be Master of Divinity Students are given their fourth year of schooling free of charge to instead receive Master of Theology degrees.<sup>6</sup> This discovery was discussed with my advisor and approval was granted to include their Master of Theology students in the research.

In the end, 15 students were included from denominational institutions and 15 students were included from inter/multidenominational contexts. Table 7 shows the participating institutions classified by context. The number in parentheses following each institution’s name shows the number of participants from that seminary.

Table 7. Participating institutions classified by context

<i>Denominational</i>	<i>Inter/ Multi-Denominational</i>
Covenant Theological Seminary (4)	Azusa Pacific Seminary (4)
Heritage Seminary (1)	Dallas Theological Seminary (3)
Logsdon Seminary (1)	Dallas Theological Seminary, Houston Campus (1)
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (6)	Denver Seminary (3)
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (3)	Talbot Theological Seminary (2)
	Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (2)

The difficulty in locating 30 women pursuing Master of Divinity degrees for inclusion in this research shows the need for further investigation and development

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<sup>6</sup>Dallas Theological Seminary, “Master of Divinity,” accessed January 3, 2017, <https://www.dts.edu/mdiv/>.

regarding women and theological education. The support for the research was evident in 26 institutions responding with a desire to help. Some contacts who in the end did not provide any participants recommended resources that might be helpful, dialogued about the importance of the topic or their related interests, gave advice, or went out of their way to help or sent well wishes. One contact said because of the timing of my email at the end of the semester he would reply with the requested information in two weeks. He then replied an hour later saying he hated to have me wait two weeks, so he skipped his lunch break to run the inquiry. Seven of the 15 institutions that responded positively, but in the end did not have students participate, replied after investigating their records that they had no women who met my qualifications. Two had no women at all in their program, though they do enroll women. Three of the institutions had one woman in each of their programs, but none of the women were far enough along in their studies to qualify. While seminaries were not asked for the number of students they had meeting the parameters, several offered the numbers. Institutions who emailed their students and reported the number of emails they sent varied between 1 to 21 students meeting the parameters.

Some institutions in their replies gave more history or insight and commented on the lack of women in their programs. One wrote,

Most women students are pursuing the MA degrees that are more practical and fit the opportunities available to women in [our denomination]. Many of our schools will not let women take certain courses such as preaching, so why not pursue degrees that are more accepting of women?

Another explained,

It was a surprise for me to realize that I had to go back six years to find the most recent female graduate of [our] M.Div. program. In the last ten years (back to May 2007), there have been a total of 6. . . We currently have 6 women in the M.Div. program, but all are still at the junior-year level.

Representatives at responding institutions, even if they could not provide any participants, were helpful to the study. Through their encouragement and responses, they continued to demonstrate the need for this study.

## **Interviews**

Students who had completed the Thesis Study Participation Form and who were qualified to participate were contacted for interview times. A phone interview was conducted with each participant in the study and digitally recorded. Although each interviewee had given permission to participate on the Thesis Study Participation Form, before each phone interview began the participant gave permission to be recorded for transcription purposes. Each participant was interviewed using The Kintner Interview Protocol. Following each interview, the participant was emailed a \$10 Amazon gift card, thanking them for their time and participation.<sup>7</sup>

## **Data Analysis**

As stated, each interview was later transcribed, and transcripts were sent to Moore at the CSID to be rated according to Perry's scheme. Simultaneously, independent analysis of the transcript was done according to Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies. Instances of the priorities and competencies observed in each of the transcripts were then sent to Trentham for his consideration. Through further deliberation and discussion between him and me, the analysis according to the taxonomy was completed. I performed further analysis for themes, similarities, and differences within the study and with other related studies. A software that supports qualitative research called Nvivo was utilized to analyze the data for themes and connections. Findings of this analysis will follow. Jonathan Stuckert in his study describes this three-fold analysis: "These overlapping perspectives inform each other and shed light on the fuller picture of the development of seminary students during their time of study."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>One participant declined the gift card saying it was her joy to be a part and that she did not wish to receive any remuneration. She was sent a thank you note instead.

<sup>8</sup>Jonathan Derek Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 109.

## **Participation Form Data**

All participants completed a Thesis Study Participation Form online. Receiving this information also allowed for a comparison between aspects of this study and preceding studies in the field. For instance, what differences might be observed between the participants in Stuckert's study of all males and this study of all females? What differences might be observed between the two research populations within the study, namely denominational and inter/multi-denominational? The data received served a further purpose of gaining understanding of the population being studied as a whole. In addition, it gave detailed information of the sample to be considered regarding epistemological development and the participants' experiences in seminary. Similarities and divergences were analyzed as well as themes.

### **Binary Data**

The majority of participants were single. Some of the married participants had gotten married while in seminary. Most of the students were full-time, on-campus students who had not taken any distance courses. The students recruited who had taken distance courses had not taken more than 25 percent of their courses online because of a delimitation of this study. Most students had come straight from college to seminary. Most of the participants had a mentor during seminary. Most also belonged to a denomination and an overwhelming majority grew up in the church. Only 4 out of 30 seminarians reported having not grown up in church. Half of the participants subscribed to a confession and half did not. All of the participants identified as evangelicals. This information can be seen in table 8.



Table 8. Binary data from interview participation study forms

	Yes	No
Married <sup>9</sup>	12	18
Grew up in Single Parent Home	4	26
Full-time student	28	2
On-campus student	18	12
Distance Courses	11	19
Mentor during seminary	17	13
Worked between college and seminary	10	20
Belong to denomination	19	11
Subscribe to confession	15	15
Evangelical	30	0
Grew up in the church	26	4

**Comparison of binary data according to institutional context.** When binary data was examined for similarities and differences between the two institutional contexts, several similarities and differences emerged. It was more common for those attending inter/multidenominational schools to commute to campus rather than be in residence on campus. This may be for a variety of reasons. Some campuses may not have housing options, or some of the women may have had life circumstances or opportunities that led them to commute. This difference was not explored further during the interviews, but does not necessarily reflect a difference in value or desire with regard to being on or off campus. Several participants in the interviews who did not have an on-campus experience expressed that they wish they would have. While the inter/multidenominational category had more students who commuted to campus, the denominational seminaries had more students who reported using distance education classes.

More students attending inter/multidenominational seminaries reported being mentored during seminary than students who attended denominational schools. Only 5 seminarians attending denominational seminaries reported having a mentor, while 12

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<sup>9</sup>While Stuckert in his study of males in seminary did not include marital status on his participation form, he found many of the men mentioned their spouses in the interview. He knew that 13 men in his study were married. Ibid., 105.

seminarians at inter/multidenominational seminaries had mentors. Where the participants found their mentors was not explored in the interviews. They could have been in the local church or at the seminary. A future study could explore this factor, as well as if the mentors were male or female. Several students in the interviews reported being impacted by the women on campus, while several other participants reported noticing that they had either no or few female professors or women to look up to in higher education.

It was more common for those who attended denominational schools to work for a year or more between undergraduate and graduate degrees. Seven participants out of 15 denominational participants did this, while this was only true of 3 students from the inter/multidenominational category. It was also more common for seminarians at denominational schools to identify with a denomination and subscribe to a confession of faith. It was not surprising to find that 14 out of 15 students at denominational seminaries identified with a denomination. Only 5 of the students at inter/multidenominational seminaries did so. Most of the schools in this study affiliated with a denomination were either Baptist or Presbyterian, and participants who attended denominational schools and identified with a denomination often aligned with their school with only two exceptions. Given the participating schools, Southern Baptist, Baptist, and Presbyterian affiliations were expected. Two participants identified as Baptists, 9 as Southern Baptists, and 3 as Presbyterian. In addition to those denominations, the following denominations were reported as an affiliation by 1 participant for each: Christian Missionary Alliance, Sovereign Grace, Church of God in Christ, Transformational Ministries, and Four Square.

Twelve of 15 students at denominational schools subscribed to a confession, while 12 of 15 students at inter/multidenominational schools did not subscribe to any confession. Confessions also often coincided with the denominational schools of attendance. All but 1 student who held a confession and attended Baptist schools listed they agreed with the Baptist Message and Faith. Three students attending Baptist schools did not claim to hold to any confession. All the women attending Presbyterian seminaries

aligned with the Westminster Confession, as did 1 participant who attended a Baptist school. Of the 3 students at inter/multidenominational seminaries that did hold to a confession, 2 held to the Westminster Confession and one to the Baptist Faith and Message.

The data comparing denominational and inter/multidenominational binary information is displayed in table 9.

Table 9. Binary data from thesis participation study forms by institutional context

	Denominational		Inter/ Multidenominational	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Married	6	9	6	9
Grew up in Single Parent Home	2	13	2	13
Full-time student	15	0	13	2
On-campus student	12	3	6	9
Distance Courses	7	8	4	11
Mentor during seminary	5	10	12	3
Worked between college and seminary	7	8	3	12
Belong to denomination	14	1	5	10
Subscribe to confession	12	3	3	12
Grew up in the church	12	3	14	1

**Male/female comparison of binary data.** Table 10 shows a comparison of the binary data between the male seminary population in Stuckert’s research and the female population in this study. Both male and female participants in the studies were similar with regard to binary data, although it was more common for the men in Stuckert’s study to belong to a denomination and subscribe to a confession than for the females in this study to do so. This may simply be because of the institutions that participated in Stuckert’s study and the institutions that were included in this study, rather than due to the participants being male or female.

Table 10. Binary data from studies on male and female seminary students<sup>10</sup>

	Female		Male	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Full-time student	28	2	28	2
On-campus student	18	12	18	12
Distance Courses	11	19	13	17
Mentor during seminary	17	13	18	12
Worked between college and seminary	10	20	10	20
Belong to denomination	19	11	26	4
Subscribe to confession	15	15	26	4
Grew up in the church	26	4	27	3

### Further Demographics

The Thesis Study Participation Form also solicited important demographics that were not binary. These questions covered a variety of topics, including the start date of their degree, expected graduation date, position on women in ministry, outside ministry opportunities, and questions related to their undergraduate studies.

**Seminary particulars.** Students were asked a variety of questions to better understand their experience in seminary, examine themes and trends, and examine whether factors such as age affected their measures of intellectual development or the presence of epistemological priorities and competencies as they answered the interview questions. Only 2 of the 30 students were part time; both attended inter/multidenominational seminaries. Both women who attended part-time were married, worked, and were involved in their churches. One had taken eight years to complete the program and the other expected to finish in seventeen and a half years.

Diversity in the categories of age and the length of a participant's study was expected because of the literature. Women typically attend and complete degrees at different ages and paces due to other life obligations. The average age for the women

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<sup>10</sup>Data for male participants was taken from a spreadsheet provided by Stuckert. The data provided in his thesis included everyone who filled out his participation form, rather than his final participants. Ibid., 67. Because the majority of those who filled out a participation form for this study were not used because they did not meet the parameters and many were not even M.Div. students, it was important to compare participants from one study to the other.

who participated in the research was thirty-one to thirty-two years of age. The range of ages was from twenty-five to sixty-four years of age. The mode or the most common age was twenty-five. While there was a greater age range than for the men in Stuckert's study, which had a delimitation to ages twenty-five to thirty, 22 of the 30 participants did fall into the same bracket as the male study. The male participants in Stuckert's study were not asked about the length of their program. The women in this study took an average of 4.75 years. The range for all participants was from two years to seventeen and a half years. The median was four years. The data was bimodal, showing that most participants attended for three or four years. When the women who fell outside of the precedent age parameters for Jonathan Stuckert's study were excluded<sup>11</sup> and anyone pursuing a Th.M. were excluded,<sup>12</sup> the average length of time for the program of study was just under four years. The range for that group was from two to seven years and had a mode of three years.

**Ministry opportunities.** The participation form explored areas of the students' life outside of the seminary. These were important and formative parts of the student's experience. Questions solicited information about parachurch ministry and church membership and involvement. Every participant reported being involved in a local church. Several listed multiple areas of involvement. The most common were working with children, youth, music, and in some type of teaching capacity. Fifteen participants listed that they worked with youth in their churches, 11 with children, 7 with a teaching opportunity, 5 with women, 5 with music, 4 with college ministry, and the rest listed other various opportunities for service and involvement.

When asked about involvement in parachurch ministries, 16 participants reported parachurch involvement during their seminary years. These opportunities ranged from helping women who had been trafficked, to children's ministries like Kid's Beach

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<sup>11</sup>Eight participants were older than the 25-30 parameter in Stuckert's study.

<sup>12</sup>Only one participant in the study between 25-30 years of age was pursuing a Th.M.

Club and Child Evangelism Fellowship, to campus ministries, to counseling ministries, to working with institutions that help those in need.

**Undergraduate education.** Not only did the participation form data collected explore their seminary experience and extracurricular activities, but it was also necessary for examination and comparison to gather data regarding the participants' educational background. Participants were asked to list prior academic degrees including majors and minors. Twenty-one of the 30 participants reported having two or more emphases, majors, or degrees prior to attending seminary. Several undergraduate emphases were represented including theology, Bible, social work, urban missions, leadership, communications, Christian education, mathematics, political science, music, Spanish, foreign languages, linguistics, English, cultural studies, psychology, TESL, history, Jewish studies, and education. Of the 27 who reported the subject of their undergraduate studies, 15 had studied Bible, theology, or religion; 7 sociology; 4 Spanish, and 4 education. Ten of the 12 who had no association with theology, Bible, or religion had attended secular schools. The participation form also included a question regarding their undergraduate institution. Seventeen of the 30 attended Christian colleges or universities before attending seminary.

Of the 30 participants, 28 reported extracurricular involvement in one or more ways during their undergraduate years. These ranged from being a teacher's assistant, to being involved in Blue Angels, to sororities and clubs, to outreach, and other opportunities for involvement. The most common occurrences were involvement in student/residence life, campus ministries, and short-term missions trips. Eighteen of the 30 participants were involved in student life, 13 in campus ministries, and 7 in overseas missions trips. While students from both seminary categories showed equal involvement in student/residence life and similar involvement in missions trips, it was much more common for those who attended denominational seminaries to be involved in a campus ministry during their undergraduate years. Nine of the students attending denominational schools

were involved during their undergraduate experience in campus ministries, versus 4 of those attending inter/multidenominational institutions.

**Minorities.** On the participation form, students were asked to select their ethnicity from a list. One participant selected African American, 2 selected Asian, 4 selected Hispanic, and 23 selected white. Two of the minority students, in addition to being minorities, were also international students attending seminaries in countries that were not their country of birth.

Natalie D., a Hispanic seminary student at an inter/multidenominational school, shared about her experience in seminary as a minority. She described an added necessity to work hard as a double minority on campus, saying, “As a female, I have to work at it and especially also because I’m a Latina so there’s an added layer. I not only think about my gender, I think about my race or ethnicity.” When asked about what stood out to her in seminary, she explained, “I think navigating through gender issues as well as ethnic issues was another reality that was in my face that I didn’t think was going to be such an identifier or marker.” Later in the interview, in response to a different question, she said, “In classes I felt it because typically we are only being told one side of things . . . so basically learning from white theologians.” In speaking of a beloved seminary professor, she stated, “Just getting to see someone who looks like me, though he is a male, but still just the things he would have to overcome, and then teaching that class, that was very impactful for me.”

Another participant, though not an ethnic minority, recognized the additional challenges of students from minority populations. Linda C. expressed the following in her interview about her experience with the Financial Aid Office in seminary:

They’d have these little seminars and they really discouraged you borrowing money, and I get that, trust me . . . but not realizing that women in seminary and theological training . . . don’t normally get the financial support from churches and family members. . . . I’m a very observant person and at the end of my seminary time I remember going to loan exit counseling and walking in that room and it hit me, the only people in that room were African Americans and women. . . . I mean I never got to dig in and research and understand it . . . but it just hit me, “Okay, this is an

issue of inequality when it comes to theological training for women,” and . . . I’m not African American, so I can’t really speak into whatever their battles are, but as a woman it was really difficult to pay for seminary.

Other students noted the benefit of being exposed to ethnic diversity on their campuses. Bethany said,

We have a lot of students from Korea and just learning how things would be done differently in the context of a Korean culture or with Ferguson and with all of the issues happening there with race . . . which I love to talk about racial reconciliation . . . and one year I got to live with two black women as my roommates and just learning they have a different culture and learning about the way that we sort of expect them to fit into our culture, but actually we need to dignify and give dignity to their culture, so I actually learned a lot about just paying attention to what perspective people are coming from, so that’s how diversity has been helpful to me.

Though there is great benefit to diversity in a Christian educational community, the number of women on campuses is low and the number of women in ethnic minorities even lower.<sup>13</sup> Given that much of the binary information in the men in Stuckert’s study and the women in the current study are similar, it would be good for future exploration into hindrances to women attending seminary as well as the impact of limited resources for women and ethnic minorities at seminary in order to see why so few attend.

While the number of participants who grew up in a single parent home was reported above with the binary data, one factor to be further explored is understanding how students might have added factors as minorities. All of the women participating by nature of being a woman in seminary are in the minority. Those attending who are not white are also in the minority. Those attending who are from single family homes are also considerably in the minority. Only 2 participants were found to have the triple minority of sex, ethnicity, and a single parent home.

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<sup>13</sup>According to the ATS 2016/2017 data tables, a total of 20,620 men and 8,427 women attended M.Div. programs last year. Of those 29,047 M.Div. students 44 percent were white, 8 percent were Asian, 16 percent were African American, 5 percent were Hispanic, 7 percent were on visas from other countries, less than 1 percent were Native Americans, and the rest did not report their ethnicity. See Association of Theological Schools, “Annual Data Tables,” accessed February 2, 2016, <http://www.ats.edu/resources/institutional-data/annual-data-tables>.



## **Beliefs and Values**

The final questions on the participation form went beyond demographics and solicited the participant's beliefs, values, and interpretations. These questions helped in understanding who the participants were, what they valued, how they interpreted their seminary experience, and what they believed. Participants were asked whether they self-identified as an egalitarian, a complementarian, or neither. They were asked to rate several factors for their impact on their seminary experience, which had been done as a part of Jonathan Stuckert's study. In addition, at the recommendation in Stuckert's thesis for future studies, the participants ranked the influential factors as well. The last question on the participation form was to solicit what questions they would like to be asked about their education.

**Views on women in ministry.** When asked if they self-identified as a complementarian, egalitarian, or neither, 7 did not self-identify as either. The remaining 23 were closely split between the two positions. Twelve identified themselves as complementarians and 11 as egalitarians. Only 3 of those attending denominational schools said they were egalitarian, while 7 from inter/multidenominational seminaries self-identified as egalitarian. Ten from denominational schools self-identified as complementarians, while only 2 from inter/multidenominational schools did so. Better data would have been solicited had the participants been asked to describe what they believe the terms mean or had they been given definitions of the terms according to which they could then select. It was clear from the interviews that there was a variety of understandings related to these terms. Linda, in her interview, expressed this lack of clear understanding of the definitions of these terms: "I don't know; I don't like to call myself egalitarian or complementarian, because I think the whole thing is a bloody mess, so I don't put myself on that spectrum." Claire in her interview expressed,

So I always qualify what I mean when I say that I am complementarian because I feel like it spans such a large category of belief. So I would say that I believe that there is an ordained office that is reserved for men, but that most anything anyone can do. So I believe that women can and should teach and maybe even preach on

occasion; I don't know what that would look like . . . but under the authority of the ordained elders.

Laura V., who like Claire identified as a complementarian, explained her position, saying,

Well . . . I don't see anything wrong with being egalitarian or complementarian. I think they are both equally valid. I think there's a good argument for both. As far as the context of my church, it's a complementarian church, so that's how I act in that situation. If we were at an egalitarian church I would have no problem going with or agreeing with the egalitarian way they do things. So I go with what is appropriate for the context I'm in.

Natalie D. expressed how her understanding of complementarianism was limited to bad interactions with some who held that position and how putting a face to the position was helpful:

I've had people who were complementarians but who were not very great in their approach or in how they treated me . . . so my mistake was that I would blanket all complementarians under that one complementarian, and so for a while I thought that all complementarians were people who hated women and were against me.

She then expressed that in actually getting to know a complementarian and having beneficial dialogue, some of her misconceptions about the whole group in general were clarified.

Though rarely solicited in the interviews, by nature of speaking with women in seminary who have considered at length what it means to be a woman in ministry, many of the women spoke of complementarian and egalitarian positions as a part of their experience in seminary. One denominational seminarian, Claire, expressed that it played into her decision of what seminary to attend because she was not sure what she believed. Because she leaned toward an egalitarian position but really wanted to be challenged to understand what the Scriptures said about the issue, she chose an institution with a complementarian position that would challenge her but also accept her if she "landed on the other side."

Participants spoke of positive and negative experiences in relation to this topic on their campuses. Noelle G., in speaking of when she was most or least likely to speak up on her campus, described the following experience:

Woah! I'm in a class of 80 and I'm the only female. You know? That's a little overwhelming and daunting having a professor from the front of the room say Jesus was a complementarian, and if you don't agree with that, you don't agree with Jesus . . . in terms of that discussion having . . . not only an authority difference of a

professor student to overcome, but you now have [laughter] you are going to battle with Jesus.

Riley C., who during her time in seminary shifted toward being complementarian, had a positive experience on her campus. She shared,

I think that it's really, really easy for me to speak up and state my opinion with my brothers in Christ, which I think shows that women are very well respected on campus, which I think is very important because I think in a complementarian setting it is very easy to take any truth and twist it and abuse it for your own purposes, but . . . I felt very free to speak up in front of my brothers, and that has been a pretty big deal for me, and they listen to me about, you know, theological things and other stuff like that.

In speaking about the treatment of the subject on her campus, Laura V. felt the issue was often avoided. She shared,

A lot of the questions [about] complementarian or egalitarian leadership, they're either side-skirted or just shut down, which is very frustrating and very subtle. Just ignorance of the fact that there is a female in the class and I think differently or that illustration isn't applicable to what I'm doing or even a thought of this is how we do ministry specifically. I'm like, "Well, women's ministry is a little different."

Through the interviews it also became clear that, whether they were discussing complementarianism or egalitarianism, women in ministry was a topic that the participants understandably hold dear. Across institution types, many participants expressed either a frustration or a hurt related to this topic, or they expressed how important it was to them.<sup>14</sup> Natalie D. stated, "In my opinion, it is a gospel issue when it comes to the woman thing because it is having to deal with my person. For me it is different, while for some other people they might think it is not and might think it is a secondary issue." Taylor H. shared,

I just would have preferred to be in a denomination and would have preferred to be in a seminary where it was assumed I would preach, but that is not the situation that I am in . . . because I am in this denomination and because of personal decisions I made by marrying the man that I married, I won't be preaching and so that's probably one of the biggest things for me. That's a huge loss and most of the time that conversation is manageable if people are thoughtful, but that conversation can be extremely painful with people who don't get it and don't really understand and try to explain away that for me . . . that loss.

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<sup>14</sup>Early on in the interview process, because it became evident that this was a topic that was very personal for the participants, at the end of the interview I would disclose my position as a complementarian and let them know their involvement in the study at any point was optional. It was especially important that I do this with those who self-identified as egalitarians or with those who spoke passionately of being hurt by complementarians.

**Rating influences on seminary experience.** Participants were asked to rate the influences of the following aspects on their seminary experience: friends and peers, professors, reading, seminary culture, local church involvement, and supervised field education. The following figures show how ratings differed between inter/multidenominational and denominational participants.

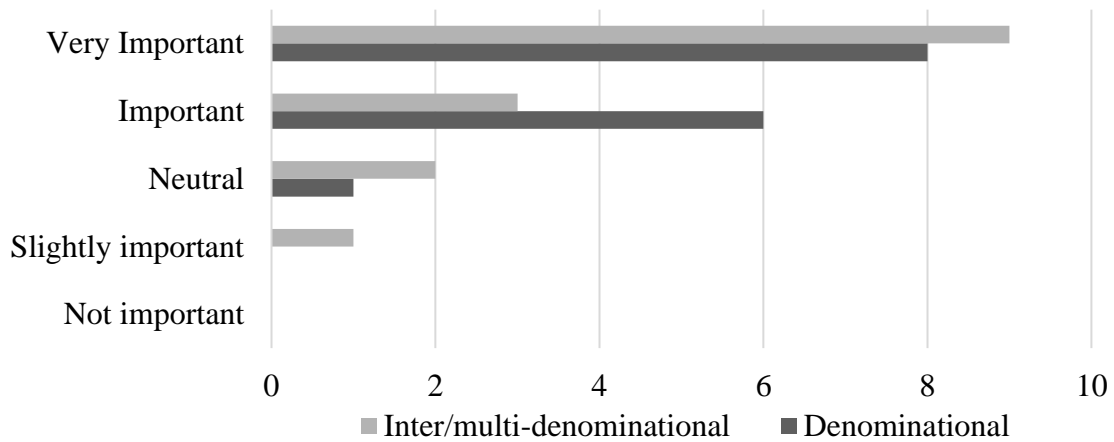


Figure 1. Rating of the importance of friends and peers to the seminary experience compared by institution type

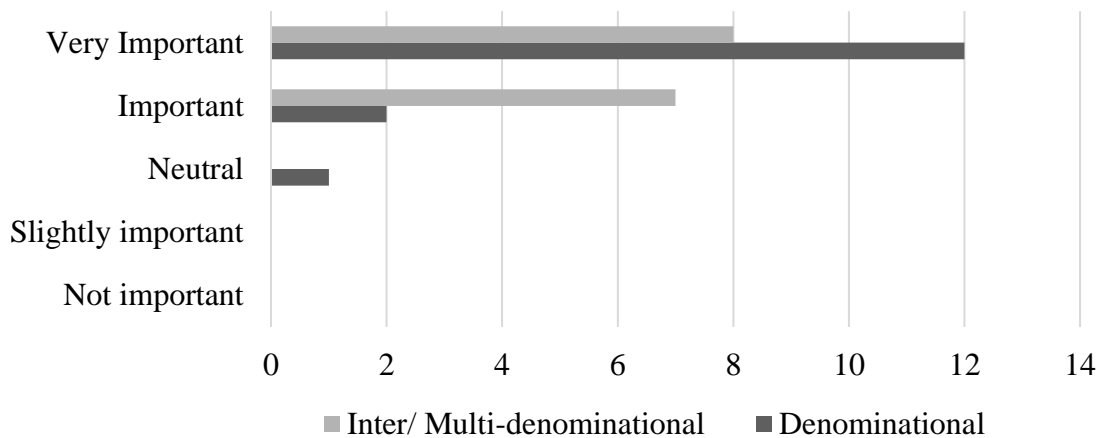


Figure 2. Rating of the importance of professors to the seminary experience compared by institution type

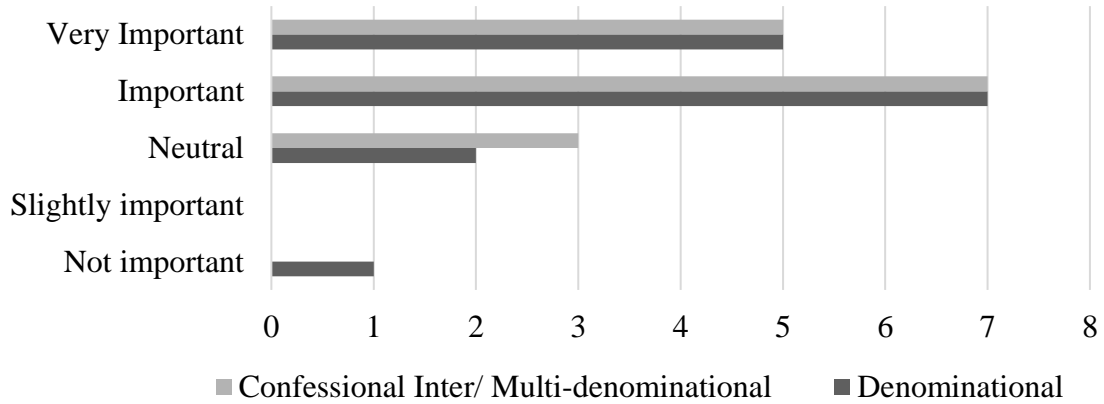


Figure 3. Rating of the importance of required reading to the seminary experience compared by institution type

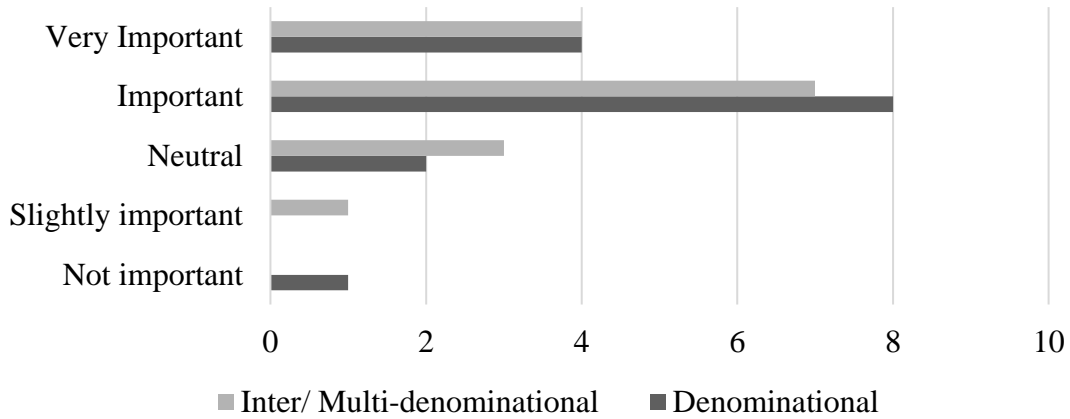


Figure 4. Rating of the importance of seminary culture to the seminary experience compared by institution type

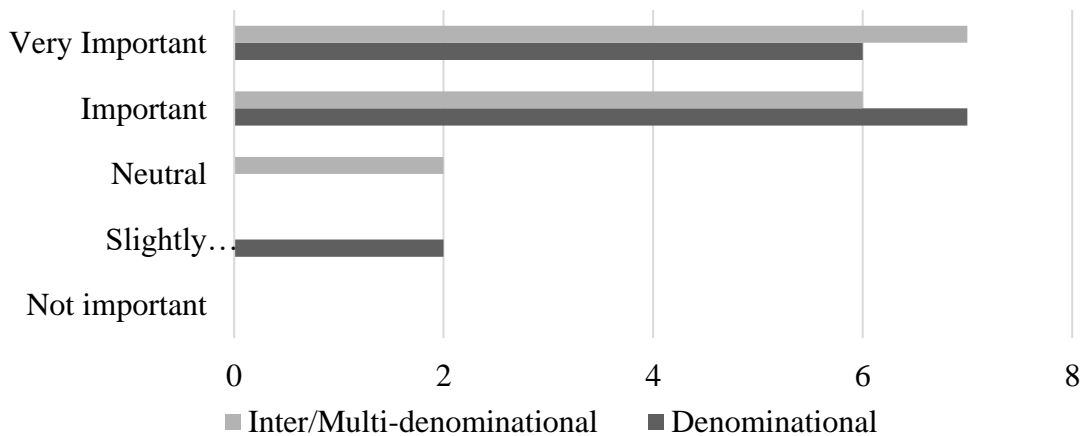


Figure 5. Rating of the importance of local church involvement to the seminary experience compared by institution type

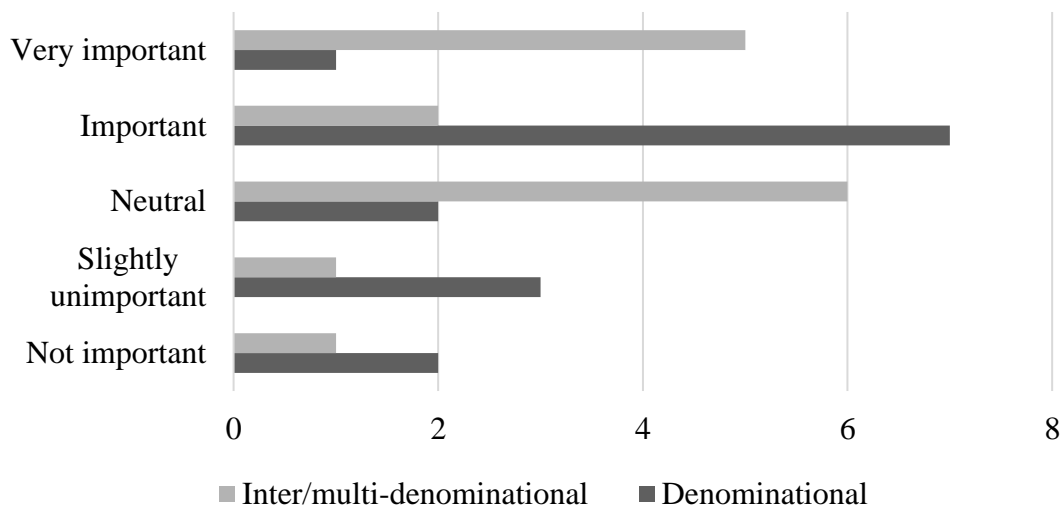


Figure 6. Rating of the importance of supervised field education to the seminary experience compared by institution type

Ratings for each factor fell for the most part in the categories of important or very important. This result was similar in Stuckert’s study, which is why he suggested rankings for the future. The most divergent rating that only had 15 categorize it as important or very important was supervised field education.

There was little difference between those at denominational institutions and at inter/multi-denominational institutions in ratings. While those who attended denominational seminaries found the seminary culture slightly more important than those who did not, those who attended inter/multidenominational seminaries found church involvement more important than those who attended denominational schools. Perhaps both of these can be explained by those who attended denominational schools being more at home in seminaries that aligned with their denomination. That was important to them, and perhaps because they had that alignment at seminary, they felt the influence of their involvement in their churches less.

When the ratings of the female participants in this study were compared with the ratings of the male participants in Jonathan Stuckert’s study, there were also few noticeable differences. The figures below display this data.

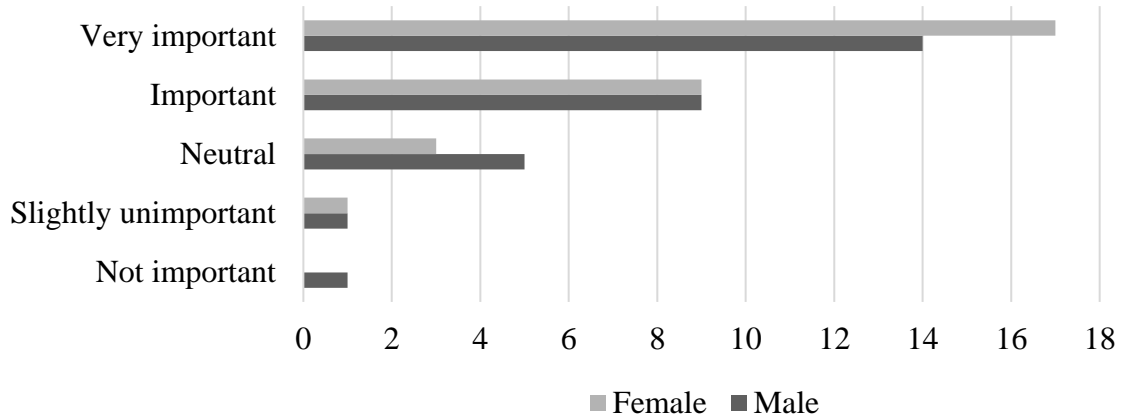


Figure 7. Rating of the overall importance of friends and peers to the seminary experience compared with study of male seminarians

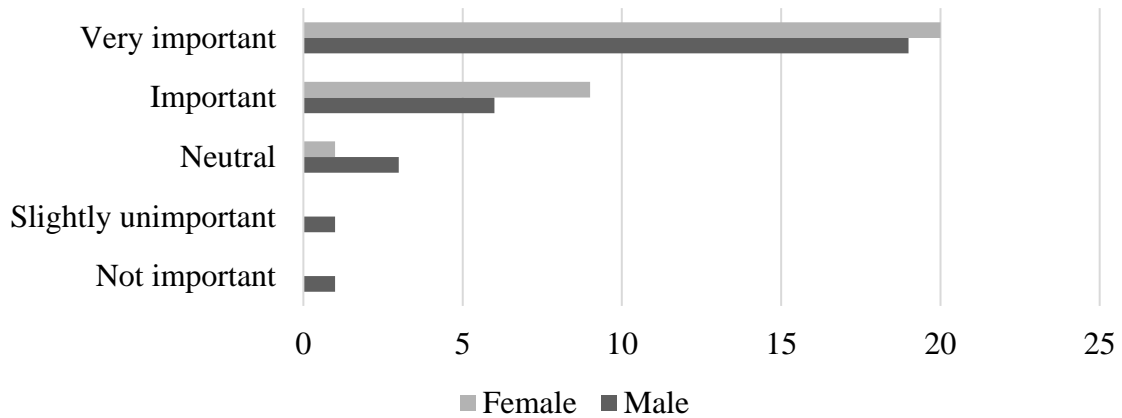


Figure 8. Rating of the importance of professors to the seminary experience compared with study of male seminarians

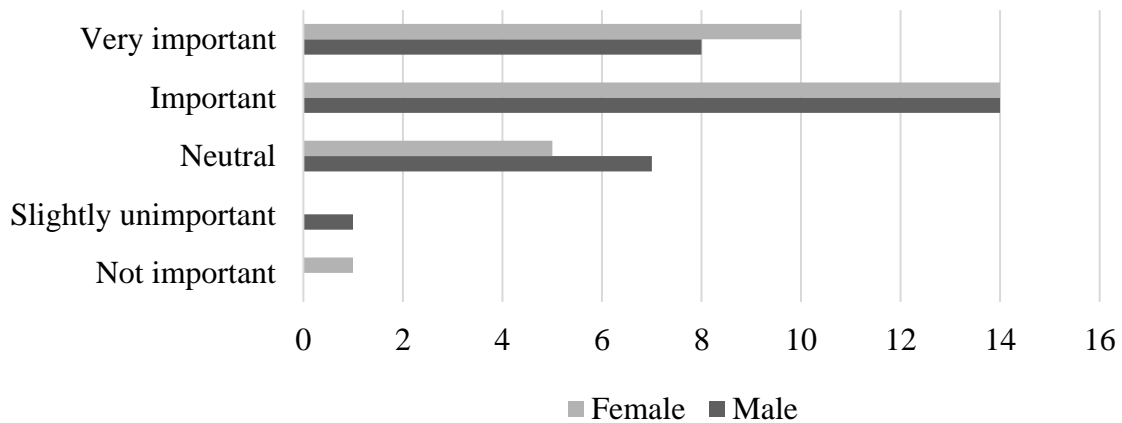


Figure 9. Rating of the importance of required reading to the seminary experience compared with study of male seminarians

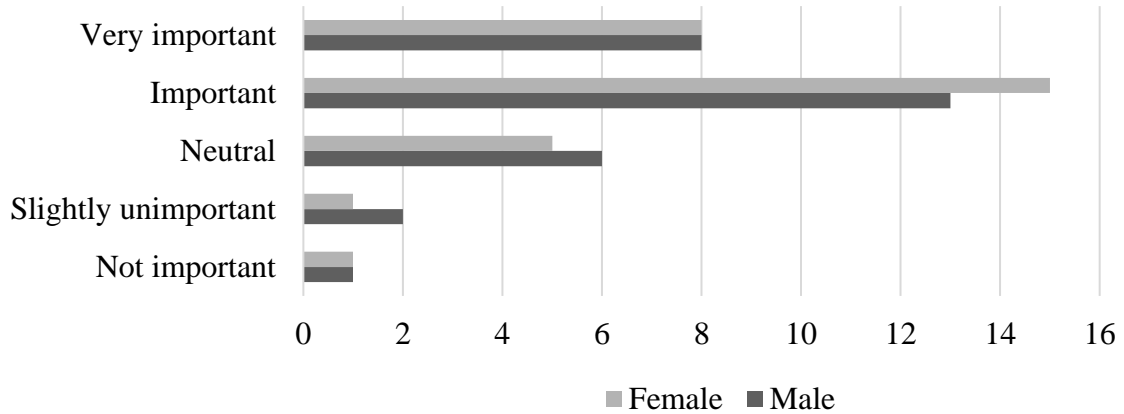


Figure 10. Rating of the importance of seminary culture to the seminary experience compared with study of male seminarians

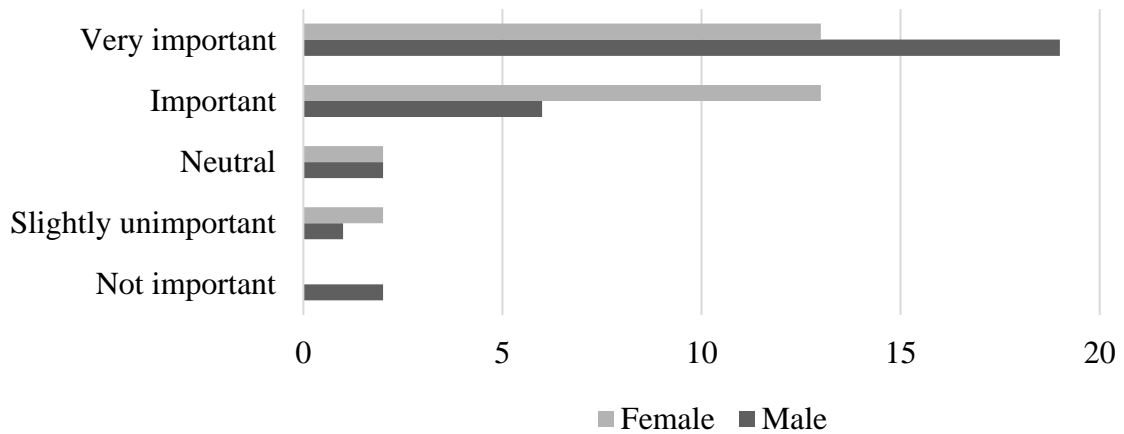


Figure 11. Rating of the importance of local church involvement to the seminary experience compared with study of male seminarians

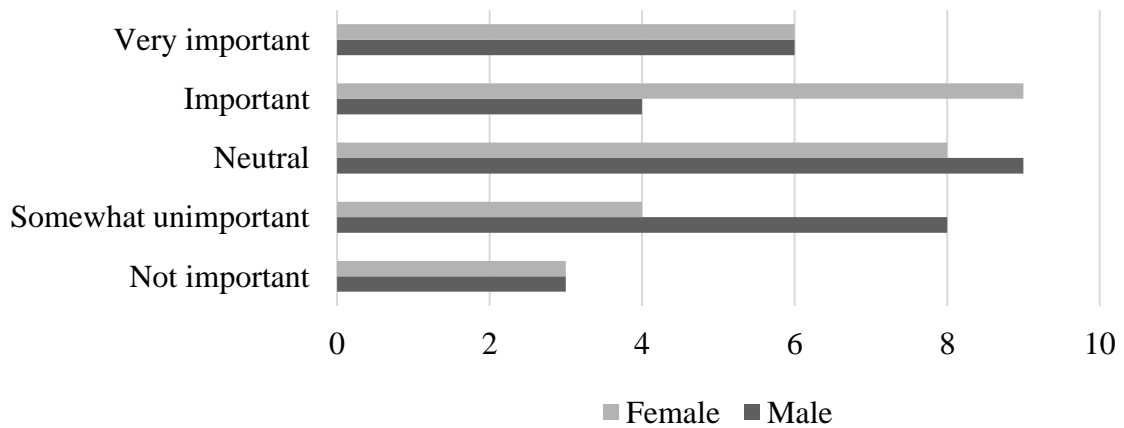


Figure 12. Rating of the importance of supervised field education to the seminary experience compared with study of male seminarians



The differences between males and females are minor. Women in every category had more participants in the very important or important categories. From the literature, this could perhaps be explained as women's likelihood to use connected knowing. They often align themselves with what they are considering rather than viewing it at a distance. This may result in their being more affirming of what they are considering. It is also not surprising that more women rated peers and professors in the important categories given the theme in the literature of relationship in women's epistemological development. The females in this study also rated the seminary culture as more influential than the men, but men had more participants who said local church involvement was most important. This may be because women often had less opportunities in their churches. For instance, one student at an inter/multidenominational setting said,

One thing they tell you in seminary is make sure you are active in the church and using your gifts in the church, and for whatever reason God continued to frustrate that for me and even though the church I was at knew I was at seminary . . . the door just never opened for me to do any internship or any ministry in the church, so I ended up doing my internship and ministry with women on campus there at [my seminary], so that was a big part of my seminary training; that I worked with women students.

Men, perhaps because of the opportunities for hands on ministry and internships in churches, saw church as more directly related to their education than the women in this study did.

The female participants in this study appeared to find field education of slightly greater importance than the males in the previous study. This difference in value could perhaps be that women had fewer opportunities in general than the men did, so supervised field education, which provided built-in opportunities, was seen as more important to them than to the men who had more vocational ministry opportunities and church opportunities available to them. Women also found reading to be more important than the men did in the previous study. This was interesting since reading came up several times in the interviews in answer to the question of what a student least valued about seminary. Six students, 3 from denominational schools and 3 from inter/multidenominational schools, included reading in their answers to this question. Some of those same interviewees, however, and

many of the other interviewees, also spoke to the importance of reading to inform convictions or to reach a position on theological issues. They also saw the benefit of reading from a number of perspectives. In addition, there were many comments related to reading Scripture, really reading Scripture, reading the Bible in context, and reading the Bible for the intended message.

**Ranking influences on seminary experience.** Ranking was added at Stuckert’s recommendation. The rankings of influential factors in seminary is reported in table 11.

Table 11. Overall rankings of influential factors

	1 (Most important)	2	3	4	5	6 (Least important)
Friends and Peers	6	8	7	1	2	6
Professors	12	6	4	3	3	2
Reading	1	5	5	11	7	1
Seminary Culture	3	3	8	5	9	2
Local Church	4	6	3	7	5	5
Field Experience	4	2	3	3	4	14

The impact of the professors was evident in their rankings. Professors’ crucial role corresponds with findings from past studies and from the qualitative data from these participants’ interviews as well. Friends and peers were also seen to be highly valued. Field education, while important to some, was most frequently ranked with the least importance.

When rankings are compared between denominational and inter/multidenominational contexts, participants from inter/multidenominational seminaries appear to value relationships with friends and peers more than their counterparts at denominational seminaries; while those at denominational seminaries tended to rank local church involvement higher than their counterparts. It is interesting to note that when asked to rate the local church, inter/multidenominational students rated the church as more important, but when asked to rank, it got a higher ranking among the denominational

students. Table 12 shows the data from the survey regarding ranking influential factors according to institution type.

Table 12. Rankings by institutional context

	1 (Most)	2	3	4	5	6 (Least)
Friends and Peers						
Denominational (D)	2	2	5	0	2	4
Inter/multi (I/M)	4	6	2	1	0	2
Professors						
D	8	1	1	1	3	1
I/M	4	5	3	2	0	1
Reading						
D	1	2	3	7	2	0
I/M	0	3	2	4	5	1
Seminary Culture						
D	1	3	3	3	4	1
I/M	2	0	5	2	5	1
Local Church						
D	1	5	1	3	4	1
I/M	3	1	2	4	1	4
Field Experience						
D	2	2	2	1	0	8
I/M	2	0	1	2	4	6

When examining what each participant rated as the most influential factor, relationships with professors and peers are seen to be of great influence. When examining according to institutional context, students at denominational seminaries had more participants choose professors as the primary influence, while students at inter/multidenominational institutions ranked peers and professors as equally important. Students' primary influences, according to institutional context, can be seen in figure 13.

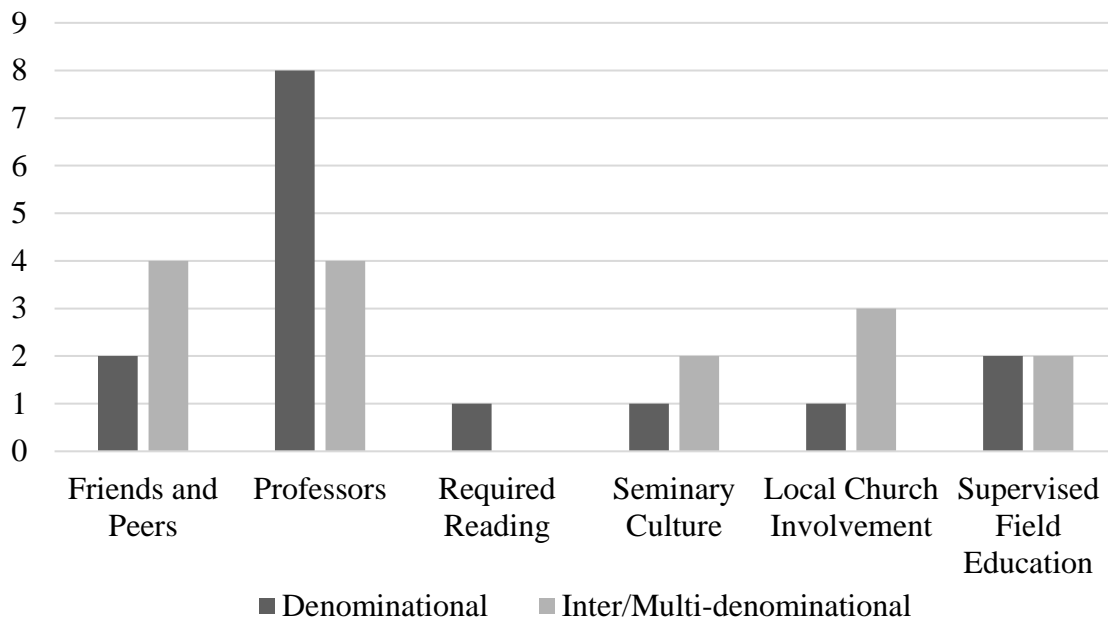


Figure 13. Rankings for most important influence by institution type

**Final question.** The final question on the survey was, “Is there a question you wish people would ask you about your education?” Thirteen participants responded with a question they would like to be asked. These questions were sometimes used in the interviews and at other times the participant had already answered the question without being prompted or asked.

Many of the questions related not only to the individual’s academic growth, but also to spiritual growth. Some related to applying what was learned in the program and others to a participant’s experience in her specific context. It was much more common to get a response on this question from someone coming from an inter/multidenominational context than from a denominational context. Of the thirteen participants who answered this question, only four were from a denominational seminary context. Table 13 shows the questions or comments they mentioned.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>All participants’ names have been changed to maintain anonymity.

Table 13. Questions participants wish they were asked about their education

Participant	Institutional Context	Question/Comment Listed on Participation Form
Sarah A.	Denominational	How has being in classes with mostly male students affected your ability as a female student to answer questions or contribute to discussions?
Anna E.	Inter/ Multidenominational	How has seminary shaped you?
Cheryl J.	Denominational	How did the M.Div. program impact and transform your life?
Lucy M.	Denominational	Have I been encouraged or discouraged to pursue a seminary education as a woman and/or as someone intending to pursue international mission work?
Patricia O.	Inter/ Multidenominational	What has seminary been like for you and what type of ministry are you pursuing?
Heather P.	Denominational	How does my education help influence beyond just being a pastor (the ability to pick up a job beyond the pulpit)?
Mabel T.	Inter/ Multidenominational	Any question really; I wish people would take seminary training seriously and not just view it as opinion/abstract.
Amber W.	Inter/ Multidenominational	How did you balance responsibilities while attending school?
Clara B.	Inter/ Multidenominational	“How did you feel empowered, included, or excluded as woman/minority in seminary?”
Linda C.	Inter/ Multidenominational	How did completing [seminary] impact your walk with the Lord?
Jennifer D.	Inter/ Multidenominational	How do you integrate your degrees?
Hazel F.	Inter/ Multidenominational	How has your time in seminary affected your mind and your soul?
Mary G.	Inter/ Multidenominational	How I was transformed?

### Research Question Synopsis

This research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between female students’ attendance at various evangelical seminaries and progression through the positions of intellectual and ethical maturity according to the Perry Scheme?
  - a. What is the relationship between attendance at a denominational seminary and progression through the positions of intellectual and ethical maturity according to the Perry Scheme?
  - b. What is the relationship between attendance at an inter/multidenominational seminary and progression through the positions of intellectual and ethical maturity according to the Perry Scheme?
2. What is the nature of epistemological development among women in evangelical seminaries when assessed according to Trentham’s taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies?

3. What contextual issues and themes emerge from female evangelical seminarians as they express their perspectives related to epistemological positions and values?

### **Analysis according to Perry's Scheme**

The CSID has developed an instrument for assigning a measure of intellectual development (MID).<sup>16</sup> Raters trained by the center in the Perry Scheme and the rating process are able to assign a position of 1 through 5, focusing in on the cognitive portion of Perry's scheme rather than the latter positions related to commitment. Each interview transcript in this study was rated by Moore of the CSID and assigned a three-digit MID rating.

The MID can explain the participants' dominant position as well as possible subdominant positions. The middle number shows the participant's dominant position, while the numbers to the left and right show if the participant is trailing in the last position or opening to the next position. For example, Sarah, a participant in the current study, received a 334, showing that she had a dominant position 3 with an opening to position 4. Ruby received a 344, showing she had a dominant position 4 with a trailing position 3. At other times a participant may receive a score of 444 (5) like Claire, which shows a stable position of 4 with a glimpse of 5. A score such as Amber's, of 444 early, shows a stable 4 position that is early in its development. These three numbers can be averaged to find the participant's numerical score. These scores can then be used statistically.

A judgment can also be made that the transcript is unratable, indicating that there is inadequate data to provide a rating. None of the transcripts in the current study were found to be unratable, but one was rated with a "ball park rating." Linda received a rating of BP 3/4. A ball park rating indicates that there is either insufficient data or the data provided is unclear to give a formal rating, but the data provided is enough to

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<sup>16</sup>For further information on the rating process, see appendix 11.

approximate a rating. While Linda is presumed to be within either a position 3 or position 4 rating, her scores were excluded from the numerical analysis.<sup>17</sup>

The process of assigning the ratings to each interview is lengthy in order to assign a proper rating. Moore explained his process of rating to me as the following:

- 1) Read through once highlighting comments/sections that seem interesting and/or relevant from a Perry scheme perspective;
- 2) Read through again, assigning specific ratings to relevant comments/sections using inserted comments;
- 3) Skim through again, concentrating on the annotations (occasionally making adjustments), then making an overall judgment about the interview rating as a whole;
- 4) Set aside for a day or two, then read through again to see if my interpretation of any of the material has changed and adjusting the final overall rating if necessary (rare, but it happens!)

### **MID Scores**

The mean score for the sample in this study was 3.31. They ranged from 2.67 (233) to 4.67 (455).<sup>18</sup> Although not surprising, these scores are concerning. The mean score and where it fell within the range of previous studies was not surprising, as it was similar to the previous study done on male seminary students. The male participants in Stuckert's study had a slightly lower mean MID of 3.25. Because the CSID reports regarding normative or comparative data that "there seems to be no consistent difference by gender," it was not surprising to see how close the scores were for the men and women. The precedent literature also showed more similarities than variances between male and female epistemological development. Patterns and perspectives between male and female participants might vary, but epistemological development was generally the same.

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<sup>17</sup>The CSID suggests that while a ball park rating can be used for informal research purposes, it is recommended to exclude it from analysis for formal research purposes. See appendix 11.

<sup>18</sup>Primary cues for each position cited by the CSID for the female seminary sample can be found in appendix 13. Representative statements for each cue can be found in appendix 14.

Given the slightly higher score in this study of women versus the score of men in the prior study, I examined the possibility that it was attributed to age. This examination was done because past studies showed age as a possible factor in epistemological development.<sup>19</sup> This inquiry was also because Stuckert's study was limited to males age twenty-five to thirty, and this current study had no age limit. Age, however, was not seen to be a factor on these results. When the 8 participants who were older than the range of the men in the comparable study are excluded, the mean score for the remaining 22 women between ages of 25-30 is raised to 3.33. The small difference between the male and female scores is slight, and given the many variables in adults' epistemological development, this difference could be attributed to several things. These factors may include different institutions included in the study, different opportunities afforded to the participants, or even the effect of being in the minority in seminary.

As in Stuckert's study, the scores are troublesome when compared with the scores of previous studies. A score of 3.31 places the participants somewhere between position 3 and 4, clearly in the stage of multiplicity. The past studies ranged from a rating of 2.777 to 3.45.<sup>20</sup> Studies done on undergraduates ranged from 3.1 to 3.45. Both Stuckert's study and the current study, which were done on graduate students toward the end of their Master of Divinity degree, fell within the range of the undergraduate ratings. Furthermore, the CSID reports, "In general, traditionally-aged students enter college in the position 2-position 3 transition and exit college four (or so) years later in the position 3-position 4 transition." While the CSID does not provide a typical range of scores for graduate students, the fact that seminary students are nearing the end of their degrees, or graduating with scores in the range of what they should be entering seminary with, is concerning.

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<sup>19</sup>John David Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates: A Cross-Institutional Application of the Perry Scheme" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 205.

<sup>20</sup>For all the scores from the previous studies, see appendix 16.



The scores for all the previous studies on epistemological development of pre-ministry students using the theoretical lens of Perry's scheme can be seen in figure 14.

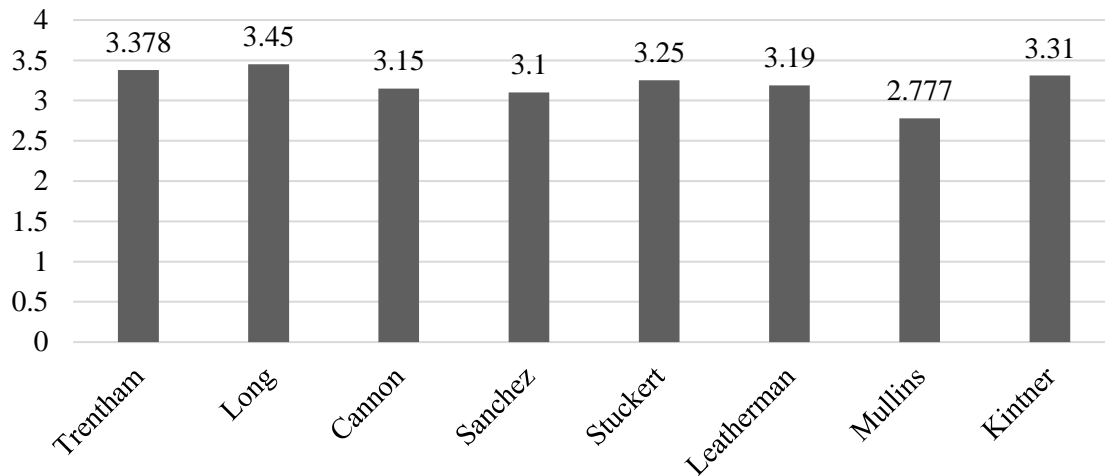


Figure 14. MID mean scores

### **Epistemological Development, Delay, or Departure in Seminary**

Stuckert found in his thesis that, according to the ratings by the CSID, the evangelical seminarians were in the same range of epistemological development as evangelical undergraduates. He then stated, “Why this is so then becomes the larger question.”<sup>21</sup> Stuckert, in his thesis, explored the possible explanation that seminary students were showing the principle of inverse consistency.<sup>22</sup> As students age and experience various things, they diverge more and more, according to Moore.<sup>23</sup> Stuckert speculated that perhaps students were still developing epistemologically, but “in an inverse manner than what is noted in psychometrics like the MID and the Perry Scheme.”<sup>24</sup> He also

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<sup>21</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development,” 75.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

suggested that perhaps they were growing epistemologically but not cognitively.<sup>25</sup> He explained further, “Since the seminary experience is so much about being formed as a Christian, the growth to the student’s view on knowledge and the justification of knowledge may be happening more outside of the arena of cognition.”<sup>26</sup> The development of seminary students may be more in the affective realm than in the cognitive realm. In his address, “The Scandal of the Seminarian Mind? A Speculative Overture,” to the 1892 Club at The Southern Baptist Evangelical Seminary, Trentham also suggested why the seminary scores fell in the range of the undergraduate study scores. Stuckert included Trentham’s presentation to the 1892 Club as an appendix in his thesis. In that presentation, Trentham asked the following speculative questions:

- Have evangelical seminaries become so insistent and careful to preserve and assure doctrinal fidelity among their students that they tend to excel in indoctrination to the detriment of personal epistemic maturation? I.e., do seminaries so effectively transmit orthodoxy that they simultaneously preclude deliberative questioning and creative reasoning on the part of students?
- Are evangelical seminary students so enamored with the confessional community ethos of “consensus,” “likemindedness,” “common identity,” and “the faith once for all”. . . with regard to non-negotiable and primary elements of protestant-evangelical doctrine that they assume a posture of epistemic rigidity, non-reasoned deference to leading voices, or a multiplicitous perspective with regard to secondary and tertiary elements of doctrine? Do (we) professors facilitate this phenomenon? Are (we) professors unwitting epistemic bullies?
- Is the de facto epistemological attitude among seminarians that topics or ideas or doctrines requiring personal commitment are “settled” and therefore should be regarded as “factoids” (ref. Meek) to be utilized in ministry rather than semper-transformative truths to be increasingly discovered and creatively/missionally applied?<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development,” 76.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>John David Trentham and Jonathan D. Stuckert, “The Scandal of the Seminarian Mind? Findings, Questions, and Overtures for Practitioners in Theological Higher Education” (paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society of Professors in Christian Education, Dallas, October 27, 2017).

These questions are important to ask. Many statements in the interviews of female seminarians do suggest a reliance on authority to tell them what is orthodox. Several of the interviews, however, showed an ability to consider various viewpoints, to disagree on non-essentials, to support their viewpoint, and to interact with a wide variety of views and people to sharpen their own beliefs. Recognizing this discrepancy in the interviews led me to examine the lowest and highest instances in the scored interviews. I looked at all instances containing a scoring of 2.<sup>28</sup> I also looked at the items scored with a 4+ or a 5.<sup>29</sup>

The comments did reveal indicators of dualism according to the Perry scheme, such as a focus on facts/content or what to learn, a focus on the teacher for providing structure/clarity for learning, and the use of absolutes and/or dichotomies in language.<sup>30</sup> While these comments and their ratings do raise questions, such as Trentham's with regard to seminary training and developing seminary students' minds, I wanted to ensure that the scores were not impacted by the Perry Scheme considering form and not content. There is a contrast between Perry's scheme scoring the form and structure of replies as opposed to the content of the replies, and a seminary where certain content is at the heart of a Master of Divinity education, so I wanted to ensure this was not causing the low scores.

As statements rated with a 2 were examined, several themes of note emerged. These themes were humility in knowing, the authority of God's Word, growth in knowledge of Scripture, and practically applying what was learned. Of the 171 statements rated with a 2 in the interviews, 77 of the statements fell into one of these categories.

**Humility in knowing.** Nine statements in the interviews scored with a 2 had to do with the infinite nature of God and His Word. Students described how seminary had

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<sup>28</sup>This included scores of 2, 2+, 2-3, and 2/4 split.

<sup>29</sup>4+ was included because of how few items were scored in this upper range.

<sup>30</sup>For the cues and sample statements, see appendices 12, 13, and 14.

helped them grow in humility, recognizing they knew less than they had realized and that they would be growing for the rest of their lives. Some of the statements in this category did show signs of a reliance on authority to receive knowledge or understand knowledge.

One participant, Laura, stated,

I'm at a place where I just want to sit and learn from others . . . and how am I going to use that in my ministry? So . . . there's been a tremendous amount of humility learned, sanctification process gone through, and just a better sense of maturity now than when I first started.

Claire, another participant, received a rating of 2-3 for the following statement:

I feel like I certainly know a lot more and I have way better knowledge of what I don't know. I think I had grown up in a very theological church and had done an internship in ministry before going to seminary, so I sort of thought that I knew everything. I didn't think I was going to learn that much . . . which sounds terrible! . . . and I learned SO MUCH, but it also made me realize how much more there is to study, and I love studying.

While this statement received a lower score for epistemological development, Scripture speaks to the infinite nature of God and the finite nature of man (Rom 11:34; 1 Cor 2:16; Job 21:22; Job 36:22). Understanding the limited nature of one's knowledge and the infinite nature of God is a recognition of knowledge being dependent upon God.<sup>31</sup>

**Scripture.** Another regular occurrence found in the 2 ratings was a reference to the authority and truth of Scripture. This type of occurrence is a dichotomy and as such would be identified with Perry's stage of dualism. Can a believer, however, developing epistemologically, not only be growing in discerning what is gray, but also what is black and white? Is a confidence in Scripture as the foundation of knowledge, wisdom, and truth something seminaries should be concerned about or rather is it something that they should be seeking to develop in their students? Of the 171 statements showing dualism, 43 related to the authority or foundational nature of Scripture. The following statements are representative of the comments in this category:

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<sup>31</sup>See the section "Knowledge is Dependent" in chap. 2 of this work.

Table 14. Participant statements regarding Scripture scored as dualism

Sarah A.	I have learned what it is to build knowledge and truth on the foundation of God's Word . . . I've really learned how to put away the things that aren't true and how to discern.
Riley C.	If there are hints of a certain belief in the Bible but it's not clearly there then I'm, you know, perfectly happy to admit that I may be wrong, but I think that the most important things in the Christian life, like God has made clear to us in the Bible, and that is an act of love because He wanted to give us everything we need for life and godliness.
Lucy M.	Scripture. I'm going to keep going back to that because Scripture and prayer are at the heart of how we know the truth and who God is and are able to faithfully serve Him in a way that is honoring to Him, so Scripture and prayer first and foremost.
Emma N.	Scripture is going to be truth. So if the knowledge you have received does not match up with Scripture, then it is not true knowledge; it is false information, but knowledge that does match up with Scripture is just going to affirm the truth of the knowledge and truth of Scripture.  Because I think there are some areas in Scripture that are not super clear-cut and you can hold within reason some varying differences without being a heretic or anything like that. . . So I try to make Scripture kind of the basis of it all, but I'm sure there are beliefs I hold that I'm just not really aware of or that I haven't been challenged in or you know that I would maybe change if I realized what I was doing. I'm definitely not perfect, but I do strive for Scripture—truth to be the standard.
Patricia O.	What [is] clear and absolute truth according to the inspired Word of God? . . . I think that is ultimate authority and then there is kind of a tiered system. Okay . . . there's that and God has given us general revelation as well. The sciences and sociology and anthropology. Those things help inform us as well.
Amber W.	I do believe in absolute truth . . . that there is a particular one truth, and I think that we can know a lot of things, but for me I believe that the Bible is truth and I think if you weigh everything we learn against that, you come up with a different kind of truth. You don't receive everything as truth, but you can know a lot of things about life. You can know about trees and learn whatever else.
Rose A.	It's not necessary wrong to have different views. Obviously there's right doctrine and wrong doctrine but within that to understand that sometimes God speaks to different people differently and to explore that brings so much color and vitality to Scripture. . . . The biggest thing is obviously Scripture is our . . . only true and reliable source.
Jennifer D.	I guess just the way Scripture was really privileged over everything and everything really came to rest there.

These statements in some ways are reflective of what one would expect seminary students to leave seminary articulating.<sup>32</sup> In these statements, the women reflect

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<sup>32</sup>The purpose and mission statements of various seminaries in this study all include things beyond form, but specific content that is important. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, for instance,

on the certainty of Scripture and use it as a standard by which they discern truth and error. More consideration of how the women viewed Scripture and the impact on epistemology is discussed in later analysis.<sup>33</sup> To determine if the women's view of Scripture impacted their MID's, it was helpful to compare their results with the male seminary students' results in Stuckert's study. The male seminary ratings did not appear to receive the same low scores for comments related to the certainty of Scripture, perhaps showing that the issue of Scripture as a standard for truth was not the issue as much as the form for how the women were articulating their understanding of knowledge. On the summary cue sheets provided for the studies by the CSID, there were three cues for position 2 checked for the current study and none checked for Stuckert's study.<sup>34</sup> One cue checked for this study is "a use of absolutes and/or dichotomies in language;" this was not checked for Stuckert's study, so though the male students also believed in the foundational nature and authority of the Word of God, they perhaps did not hold to it in a way that reflected Perry's dualism. His study also had fewer 2 ratings. Compared to the 177 ratings of 2 in the current study, he only had 101.<sup>35</sup> Based upon these findings, it does not appear that the content of the comments was related to the score.

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says they are "preparing ministers of the gospel," not just ministers. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, "Mission," accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.sbts.edu/about/mission/>. Reformed Theological Seminary aims "to serve the Church by preparing its leaders, through a program of graduate theological education." Reformed Theological Seminary, "Purpose," accessed February 17, 2017, <https://www.rts.edu/site/about/purpose.aspx>. Dallas Theological Seminary seeks to equip "godly servant-leaders for the proclamation of His Word." Dallas Theological Seminary, "DTS Mission Statement," accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.dts.edu/about/missionstatement/>. Talbot School of Theology is committed "to the development of disciples of Jesus Christ whose thought processes, character and lifestyles reflect those of our Lord, and who are dedicated to disciple-making throughout the world." Talbot School of Theology, "Mission," accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.talbot.edu/about/>.

<sup>33</sup>See discussion of priority 1A in chap. 4.

<sup>34</sup>A Sample Cues Summary sheet was provided by William Moore of the CSID for each of the studies showing which cues he noted with regard to each of the Perry positions for the participants in the study. See appendix 12 in the current study, and Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 150.

<sup>35</sup>This difference in the number of 2 ratings could also be related to the length of the interviews of females in this study and the length of the interviews with the males. While all interviews in both studies lasted approximately one hour, the word count between the interviews differed. The word count for the thirty male transcripts was 139,594; the word count for the female transcripts was 189,160. The additional

Another consideration in thinking through the students' articulation of the authority of Scripture and whether this is inverse to the Perry scheme is to look at the highest ratings on the interviews as well. There were 27 total ratings of a 4+ or a 5.

Table 15. Participants' statements receiving a 4+ or 5 rating by the CSID

Ruby F.	[My professor] really helped me shape my philosophy of ministry and really helped me understand my role as a children's minister and what that looks like and biblically how to shape my philosophy and how to understand my role and relating to parents and the children. Even now to this day she still helps guide me in what to value and what to prioritize and things like that.
Claire I.	I think an ideal seminary education would expose you to beliefs that you disagree with in positive way and require you to think through, very carefully, what you believe and whether or not it is true or just what has been in our mind all along so you haven't questioned it.  I think [secondary issues] are places where I take the core beliefs and just go where I think that those lead, and it does make me uncomfortable when I disagree with people on those things, but I also just feel really confident that I have put the biblical truths and core truths in practice the way that seems appropriate.
Natalie D.	I try to keep an open mind I guess; in some regards I like to be firm, but I also like to be open in learning.
Anna E.	I realize even Scripture is so much more complex and gray than I thought it was.  We were not getting deep enough. That they were surfacy or I could kind of pass by writing my reflection papers and not be forced to really wrestle with the deeper things. In those things, I felt like I was missing out more.  A challenge of learning what I need to keep and what I need to hold on to and what things I just feel like I have to hold on to because it is just what I have always known.  When I'm convicted that my belief is founded on non-negotiable truth, then I feel like it ought to apply. When it is in one of those cases where it feels more gray or ambiguous or it is a matter that is not a non-negotiable then I feel less validated on imposing that on other people because it does feel so dependent on one unknown factor, or my story, or my background, or life experience.
Clara B.	It's another thing when you encounter someone who has maybe had a life-changing experience that has caused me to question . . . maybe I do need to reevaluate or maybe I need to make room for the gray, because I'm very much black and white. This is this, and that is that, and there is no room for any other belief, but I think one thing that I did learn from seminary is the idea of both and, and not just either or, 'cause I've always been an either or person. Either it's this or that . . . but there are some things that are both this and this . . . so leaving room for the gray.
Hazel F.	I really appreciated one professor said, "Write a paper; I don't care what your conclusion is, I just want you to be able to demonstrate why you think it is true or why you think this is the best," that they wanted us to be able to defend our own conclusions rather than just parrot theirs.

comments and probing resulted in more material to score overall, which may have resulted in more 2 ratings. The women had more 2-rated comments, but they still had a slightly higher score overall than the men did.

These ratings regularly referenced or exhibited worldview, philosophy, personal conviction, differing opinions, and understanding gray areas and some can be seen in table 15.

These statements that were given ratings of late multiplicity or early relativism not only show a more advanced epistemology than the statements assigned a 2 position, but this kind of thinking and development should be desired by seminaries for their graduating students. While considering how an authoritative view of Scripture as the Word of God might impact ratings according to the Perry Scheme, it must be noted that some of the statements with early positional ratings dealing with the Word of God, or application, or humility reflected early positions in other ways besides just dealing with those topics. Also, it is important to note the more advanced ratings did not preclude an understanding of the authority of Scripture. The fact that students can have an authoritative or foundational view of Scripture and still receive ratings in the latter positions is seen in the following statement by Ruby:

I guess Scripture first and systems of theology second. I think it is good for people with differing opinions to all be in one place. I think we need that, but just for us to be able to put the authority of Scripture to dictate everything . . . versus it is all what one person says or all what one book says.

Claire also spoke to the place of Scripture in her discernment of truth:

If I were to be asked if I believed that the earth is round, I wouldn't be able to turn to Scripture and say, "Yes, because it says so right here." So I think that Scripture provides the background for almost all of the things that I can say whether they are true or not but it doesn't directly give the answer to everything.

The following portion by Natalie, which was rated 4+ by Moore, also reflects belief in the revelation of Scripture as primary:

When it comes to beliefs or convictions . . . I truly believe God has revealed himself through the Scriptures as well, and that it is authoritative for my life, so I do need to go there and I do need to figure that out. What's being said here? What is the truth here? Okay, and then from there looking at history and other points of view and things like that. I hope to always start where I think we should be starting, which is whether that's prayer or Scripture reading or whatever.

These instances, showing a more developed epistemology according to the Perry scheme, necessitate a consideration of the following question: are there ways to transmit an



orthodox view of Scripture while still developing seminary students according to the Perry scheme? One should not preclude the other. Ministry requires having the inspired Word of God with normative principles and commands. Ministry also necessitates navigating a complex, fallen, broken world while working with people in a variety of situations. Ministry further demands understanding one's own thinking and one's role in the midst of that. The situational and existential aspects of ministry do not mean that normative principles must be questioned and thrown out, but it means that ministers need to be prepared to think and live through a world of gray.<sup>36</sup> People who intend on ministering to others need to be developed as discerners who can approach various people and situations with wisdom, rather than just given a list to align to or a process to follow step-by-step.<sup>37</sup> The principles do matter. N. T. Wright writes on the importance of Christian character when describing a school administrator who did not care to write rule after rule: "Of course there were rules, and they mattered. But what mattered even more was developing the character of pupils so that they would behave with good sense and judgment in the thousands of areas which weren't covered by official rules."<sup>38</sup> The normative principles believers have, along with their confidence that everything does not rest on them as individuals, but on Christ, should make them the most willing to engage ideas and walk through a variety of trying situations with wisdom, trusting the Word of God and entrusting themselves to God in those situations.

**Practical application.** Another theme in examining the lowest and highest rated statements by the CSID was how many references the 2 ratings contained related to

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<sup>36</sup>For more information on educating in this way, see appendix 20, "Toward a Taxonomy for Virtuous Christian Learning."

<sup>37</sup>Evan B. Howard, *A Guide to Christian Spiritual Formation: How Scripture, Spirit, Community, and Mission Shape Our Souls* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 217.

<sup>38</sup>N. T. Wright, "Why Christian Character Matters," in *All Things Hold Together in Christ: A Conversation on Faith, Science and Virtue*, ed. James K. A. Smith, and Michael L. Gulker (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 171.

education being practical or knowledge being applied. These references are to be expected in seminary students' articulation of knowledge given that one of the theological foundations for epistemological development seen in chapter 2 of this work was "Knowledge Necessitates Obedience." It was seen that "thinking well is an indispensable ingredient in living well,"<sup>39</sup> and knowledge and obedience are intertwined and inseparable—each leads to the other. Many of these statements, however, were not about living well, but focused only on ministry skills. The comments were utilitarian.<sup>40</sup> The utilitarian statements and some of the low ratings could also flow from the typical understanding that seminary is where one goes to learn the Bible and to prepare for ministry. This understanding of seminary may also be why many of the students whose statements were rated in late dualism spoke of specific biblical knowledge they gained or facts about Scripture. Seminary is often viewed more as a trade school for ministry than as an intellectual pursuit. While not wanting to deter from application to ministry or obedience, perhaps seminaries need to train students to understand and value seminary beyond vocational training, but rather as an education that trains one to think.

It is interesting to note that in Trentham's study of undergraduates, students from liberal arts colleges received the highest averaged MID score among the different institutional contexts.<sup>41</sup> The average score for Bible college students was lower. Liberal arts students in Trentham's study expressed the primary purpose of college was to shape a person's identity and manner of thinking.<sup>42</sup> They expressed that education should help

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<sup>39</sup>W. Jay Wood, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 16.

<sup>40</sup>For further discussion of the utilitarian mindset of seminary students, see discussion of priority 1A in chap. 4.

<sup>41</sup>Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 158.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 186.

one form a coherent worldview.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps liberal arts students were helped by their training encompassed different subjects and fields to consider everything in light of Christ and how all things relate to one another. This may have led to higher scores. A liberal arts education does not just focus on “show me what to do,” but “help me develop as a thinker so I can assess whatever I come in contact with.” Seminary is more like Bible college than like a liberal arts college. While seminaries used to be a branch of the academy, they have now been separated and isolated.<sup>44</sup> Philosophers, historians, and experts on literature no longer dine in the cafeteria with the theologians. With knowledge being segmented and isolated into different schools, perhaps it is not a surprise that students were focused on learning a specific content, which led to Measures of Intellectual Development. The widespread understanding that seminary is where you go to prepare for ministry may have some impact on the ratings of these interviews; even if that is true of seminarians’ initial motivations, professors in educating the students should compel virtuous Christian knowing.<sup>45</sup>

While there were prevalent theological themes in the instances rated with a 2 according to the Perry scheme, the themes were not the cause of the low scores. The students received the scores because of the ways of thinking associated with their statements. Perry acknowledges looking at form and not content, so it was understood that these topics should not have caused the low scores. Faith and beliefs were also demonstrated to not be a factor impacting seminary students RJM scores when dealing with ill-structured problems. Dale found that whether the question was religious did not

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<sup>43</sup>Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 187.

<sup>44</sup>Harvard University was founded by the Puritans with the primary purpose of training clergy. The Puritans, however, according to Marsden, did not draw sharp lines between the sacred and the secular and “had no difficulty in maintaining the traditional dual purposes of Christendom’s university, serving the temporal as well as the civil order. So the school served a dual purpose, training men for other professions as well.” George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 41.

<sup>45</sup>See appendix 20 for a further explanation of how Trentham’s Taxonomy can be used for virtuous Christian learning.

impact the students' scores and also found that there was not a negative relationship between RJM scores and participants' faith. In other words, the content of the problem or the content of the students' statements did not impact the RJM score because the RJM score was based upon form not content. Like Dale's finding, as the theological themes found in the statements with the lowest and highest scores, the theological content was seen to not impact the scores as male and female seminary students did not have the same problems in this area and as the students with higher MID's also held to the same theological truths as those with lower MID's.<sup>46</sup>

### **Epistemological Development and Institution Type**

As research question 1 dealt with epistemological development according to differing institutional contexts, the scores by the CSID will now be discussed by institutional type and are listed in the following tables.

Table 16. Denominational participants' position ratings with descriptions

Participant	Position Rating	Position Description
Anna S.	233	Dominant Position 3, Trailing Position 2
Ava B.	233	Dominant Position 3, Trailing Position 2
Emma N.	233	Dominant Position 3, Trailing Position 2
Joelle Y.	233	Dominant Position 3, Trailing Position 2
Lucy M.	233	Dominant Position 3, Trailing Position 2
Marie K.	233	Dominant Position 3, Trailing Position 2
Heather P.	333 (4)	Stable Position 3, Glimpse of Position 4
Bethany U.	334	Dominant Position 3, Opening to Position 4
Cheryl J.	334	Dominant Position 3, Opening to Position 4
Noelle G.	334	Dominant Position 3, Opening to Position 4
Sarah A.	334	Dominant Position 3, Opening to Position 4
Taylor H.	334	Dominant Position 3, Opening to Position 4
Riley C.	344	Dominant Position 4, Trailing Position 3
Ruby F.	344	Dominant Position 4, Trailing Position 3
Claire I.	444 (5)	Stable Position 4, Glimpse of Position 5

<sup>46</sup>Janet L. Dale, "Reflective Judgment: Seminarians' Epistemology in a World of Relativism," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 33, no. 1 (2005): 56-63.

Table 17. Inter/multidenominational participants' position ratings with descriptions

Participant	Position Rating	Position Description
Jennifer D.	233	Dominant Position 3, Trailing Position 2
Rose A.	233	Dominant Position 3, Trailing Position 2
Mary G.	333 (4)	Stable Position 3, Glimpse of Position 4
Abbey Q.	334	Dominant Position 3, Opening to Position 4
Jodi R.	334	Dominant Position 3, Opening to Position 4
Mabel T.	334	Dominant Position 3, Opening to Position 4
Linda C.	BP 3/4	3/4 Ball Park
Carley L.	344	Dominant Position 4, Trailing Position 3
Clara B.	344	Dominant Position 4, Trailing Position 3
Hazel F.	344	Dominant Position 4, Trailing Position 3
Laura V.	344	Dominant Position 4, Trailing Position 3
Natalie D.	344	Dominant Position 4, Trailing Position 3
Patricia O.	344	Dominant Position 4, Trailing Position 3
Amber W.	444	Stable Position 4
Anna E.	455	Dominant Position 5, Trailing Position 4

The scores of these participants when averaged according to institutional type were 3.5 for the inter/multidenominational seminaries and 3.13 for the denominational seminaries. These can be seen in figure 15.

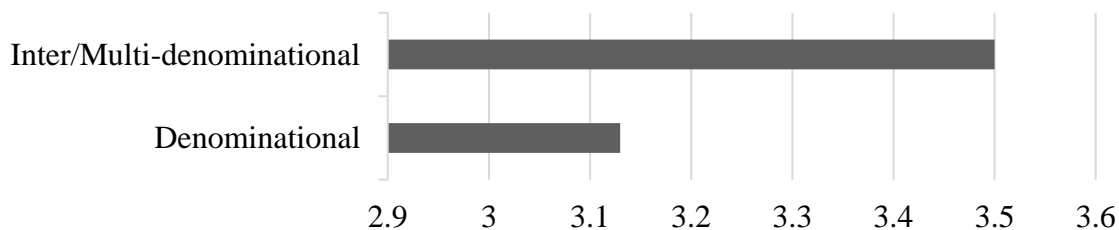


Figure 15. MID scores according to institutional type

These scores differ by over a third of a step in the rating system. This difference is notable and may suggest a connection between women's attendance at an inter/multidenominational seminary and more advanced epistemological development according to the Perry scheme.

While the difference in the gap between scores for the institution types was similar to Stuckert's study, as his institutions differed in positions by .35 and the same types of institutions in this study differed by .37, the results were inverted. In this study,

the average score of the inter/multidenominational seminaries was higher, while in Stuckert's study on male seminarians, the average score for denominational seminaries was higher. This comparison of average scores by institution and gender can be seen in figure 16.

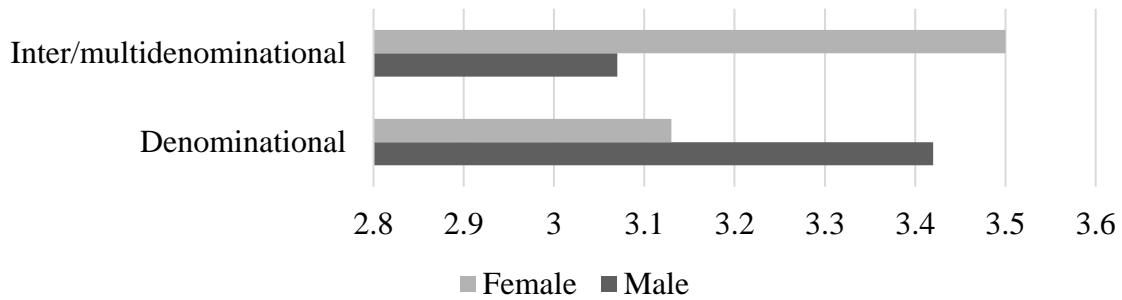


Figure 16. MID scores according to gender and institutional type

While acknowledging the difference between the two institutional types and suggesting a connection between institution type and progression, Stuckert did not hypothesize as to why denominational students in his study had higher MID scores. Given that most of the data in this study points to similarities between female seminary students at both institution types and given that much of the data collected on the Thesis Study Participation forms for this study and Stuckert's study suggest similarities between the male and female seminary populations, this difference is even more noticeable.

While Perry's model is a useful theoretical lens, it does not answer all the questions that arise in this study with regard to epistemological development among women in seminary. The MID scores actually raise more questions. These questions are of great value, but also show the necessity of having other means of analysis in assessing development. In correspondence between Stuckert and Moore with regard to the low MID scores in Stuckert's study on male seminary students, Moore said,

I wish I had a more straightforward answer for you, but as Bernice Neugarten noted some time ago, the general developmental reality is that as people get older their lived experiences diverge more and more so assessing developmental perspectives gets messier and more complex at the same time. It's a key reason why the Perry

ratings should only be one aspect of analyzing data like your interviews; the qualitative and thematic analyses of the respondents' perspectives on their experiences provides a richer and nuanced complementary understanding of their developmental "position" in the world!<sup>47</sup>

The current study, as Stuckert's, was strengthened by not only analyzing the data according to the Perry scheme with the help of the CSID, but by additional forms of independent content analysis.

### **Trentham's Taxonomy**

While the transcripts were being rated by Moore at the CSID, I examined the transcripts to find statements that demonstrated the priorities and competencies set forth in Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies developed in his research utilizing the Perry scheme on undergraduate students in various institutional contexts. The taxonomy contains ten priorities and competencies under three categories.<sup>48</sup> Each of the categories and priorities will be explained as the findings are reported.<sup>49</sup>

### **Biblically-Founded Presuppositions for Knowledge and Development**

The first category is "biblically-founded presuppositions for knowledge and development." This category, which relates to reasoning, is what Frame in his view on perspectivalism would label "normative."<sup>50</sup> Meek, in her discussion of knowing, labels this category "Word."<sup>51</sup> These are the principles or the standard of criteria of knowledge.

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<sup>47</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 75-76.

<sup>48</sup>See table 4 of this study. See also Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 137.

<sup>49</sup>For a comparison of each of the priorities in each of the studies done on pre-ministry students, see appendix 16.

<sup>50</sup>John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1987), 338.

<sup>51</sup>Esther Lightcap Meek, *Loving to Know: Covenantal Epistemology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 162.

**1A—God and revelation.** Under the category of “biblically-founded presuppositions for knowledge and development” falls the first priority of “a recognition of the God of the Bible as metaphysically ultimate, and of revelation as the source and most basic component for knowledge and development.” Mullins in his study found 10 incoming college freshmen who exhibited this priority, with an additional 2 exhibiting pre-competencies. In the studies of undergraduate students, this priority was seen in anywhere from 7 to 15 of the 30 participants in each study.<sup>52</sup> In Stuckert’s study of male seminarians, it was identified in 20 individuals.<sup>53</sup> In this study, the first priority was observed in 15 of the women. Articulation of this priority was split fairly evenly between the two institution types with eight participants from the denominational category exhibiting the priority and seven from inter/multidenominational seminaries.

Clara exhibited this priority, saying with regard to how she evaluates the truth of her beliefs and values,

I think I’m very much informed by Scripture . . . the whole truth and the life of Jesus Christ. He says He is the way the truth and the life, and so if . . . I’m trying to model a life that looks like Christ’s, I have to be willing to live that out even when that’s uncomfortable and when it’s not the norm, and I think there are times when I would like to make decisions or have conversations with people and recognize, “Oh man! I am not lining up with truth, and what God says, or how Christ would live and model His life, or what Scripture tells me, and what truth am I actually living?”

Laura also demonstrated this priority when she described the relationship between knowledge and truth. She stated,

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<sup>52</sup>Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 170. Gregory Brock Long, “Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates at Bible Colleges according to the Perry Scheme” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 94; Bruce Richard Cannon, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Confessional Christian Liberal Arts Colleges or Universities” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 85 Christopher Lynn Sanchez, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Secular Universities” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 77. Warren Dale Leatherman, “Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Confessional versus Non-Confessional Liberal Arts Colleges or Universities” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 86.

<sup>53</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 82.



I think knowledge can get you to truth. I think knowledge can also steer you away from truth depending on what knowledge you learn. If I define knowledge as just facts, it could either bring me closer to God or farther away from God like my undergrad. . . . Truth is God's knowledge and truth is knowing Him in relationship and learning from Him in relationship, so that would be the difference.

Stuckert and Trentham in their analysis of the male seminarians noted that participants in that study spoke in oblique terms about their commitments in this category.<sup>54</sup> They speculated this was true because this commitment is assumed in the seminary context and that because of this, different questions might be necessary with seminary students “in order to draw out more reflective epistemological statements about God and Scripture.”<sup>55</sup> This was also true with the female seminary students. In fact, a number of students in this study articulated the importance and primacy of Scripture in their interviews without recognizing God as metaphysically ultimate, God as the source of that revelation, or the presuppositional nature of truth found in the eternal God. Undergraduates did not seem to have the same challenge as seminarians, as undergraduates communicated a broader perspective of truth. Perhaps a follow-up question such as “Why do you believe the Bible is true?” would have helped participants to better articulate their views in this category that might have been assumed. This could perhaps be added as a prompt to the interview protocol. A question could also be added to the protocol regarding common grace could, such as “How does God reveal knowledge outside of Scripture,” or perhaps, “How are common grace and knowledge related?” Given that Stuckert suggested that seminarians may assume some of these basics and therefore not articulate them, perhaps the seminary students need a question such as this to elicit robust responses.

While many of the female seminarians had statements regarding the Bible that could imply the priority, they did not explicitly state it, so they were excluded. With the taxonomy being refined in this way, though 66 percent of the male seminary participants exhibited this priority related to God and revelation, only 50 percent of the female

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<sup>54</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 82-83.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 83.

seminary students did. When those who did not clearly exhibit the priority but reflected the importance of Scripture were included, the percentage was raised to 83 percent, with 25 women either exhibiting the priority clearly and/or focusing on Scripture.

Based upon the current study and Jonathan Stuckert's study, it also appears that this trend is more specific to seminary students than to pre-ministry undergraduates who were better able to articulate this first priority, although fewer participants in those studies possessed this priority. Seminarians' emphasis on Scripture, to the neglect of all other means of knowing that originate in God Himself, is important to note. The seminarians often rightly acknowledged Scripture as authoritative, but did not acknowledge God as the ultimate source and revealer of truth. Scripture is not the only way God reveals Himself or reveals truth, but in their comments the seminary students often focused on Scripture as the only source of truth, without even identifying it as given by God. Twenty of the participants in this study were seen to have statements focusing on Scripture as the only source of truth without reference to God.

Several of the female seminarians' statements evidenced a view that could be described as *Nuda Scriptura. Sola Scriptura* holds that "Scripture, and Scripture alone, completely equips people for knowing God and faithfully and obediently doing his will."<sup>56</sup> As scholar Gregg Allison asserts, this Reformation principle did not ignore wisdom from the church's past or disdain the "second book of revelation"—"creation, or the work of God."<sup>57</sup> *Sola Scriptura* held to the sufficiency of Scripture, meaning that Scripture alone contained "all the divine words necessary for any aspect of human life."<sup>58</sup> This did not

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<sup>56</sup>Gregg Allison, "Scriptural Sufficiency and Christian Education" (paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society of Professors in Christian Education, Dallas, October 27, 2017), 1.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, 1, 4.

<sup>58</sup>John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2008), 156.

mean that Scripture held all information, but that “it has all the divine words that the plumber needs, and all the divine words that the theologian needs.”<sup>59</sup>”

*Nuda Scriptura*, on the other hand, views nothing as relevant except what is explicitly stated in the Bible. No truth is found elsewhere; anything that is not explicitly stated in the Bible is irrelevant or unknown. Several students made statements that the Bible is truth, not the Bible is true. The Bible was equated with truth. For instance, Amber, who attends an inter/multidenominational school, stated, “I do believe in absolute truth . . . that there is a particular one truth, and I think we can know a lot of things, but for me I believe that the Bible is truth.” While Anna S., who attends a denominational school, similarly said, “Well, I would say from a Christian perspective in my mind truth is the Bible and knowledge is what we are trying to get from it.” When analyzing attributions for this priority, John David Trentham wrote,

It’s probably safe to assume that if you pressed them by asking is truth “only” found in the Bible, they would provide a more nuanced answer, but this statement is indicative of their general posture regarding (1) truth as “Scripture” [rather than truth as “the gospel of Christ” or “God’s existence and revelation”] and (2) the worthwhileness [or lack thereof] of considering the legitimacy or righteousness of anything not explicitly contained in the Bible.

The primacy of Scripture is important, but the concern with this general mindset regarding Scripture is that students in wanting to submit to the authority of Scripture may consider anything outside of Scripture as fallen or unimportant. This may cause them to not only neglect common grace, but it may stunt epistemic growth. Knowing is more than just normative principles found in the Word of God. God’s revelation reflects normative, situational, and existential perspectives.

In *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*, John Frame expresses this priority well in his discussion of Lordship and triperspectival knowing. The three perspectives are so interrelated, that one cannot understand the normative without understanding the situation

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<sup>59</sup>Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*, 157.

to which it is applied and the person who is applying it.<sup>60</sup> After all, “To apply Scripture to the specifics, we need to have knowledge of things outside the Bible” (223).

God’s revelation is “the source of our norms that will govern our decisions” (132). All that God reveals is normative because He is metaphysically ultimate. Frame acknowledges that when asked “What is God’s revelation?” evangelicals automatically answer Scripture (132). He goes on to instruct those with this kind of inclination, saying, “Scripture has a special place of prominence among other kinds of revelation. . . . But Scripture is not all there is of revelation” (132). He illustrates this with God’s Words that are not recorded in Scripture, which are just as normative as those that are included. Another example is Jesus Christ, the very living Word, who is the ultimate revelation.

Howard also speaks to Jesus Christ as the revelation of truth:

We must realize that the truth claimed by Christianity is not simply a principle or a proposition but, ultimately, a person. First John acknowledges that ‘the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life’ (1 John 5:20). Jesus himself declares, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life’ (John 14:6).<sup>61</sup>

Normative is not limited to Scripture but to God Himself, and God reveals Himself in a normative way through His authority, control, and presence (131). God reveals himself in “the word that comes through nature and history, the word that comes through persons, and the written word -- which correspond to the three perspectives: situational, existential, and normative, respectively” (135).

God’s Word that comes through nature is displayed in Romans 1.<sup>62</sup> It is also displayed in history as God has worked to reveal his redemptive plan (136). While the

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<sup>60</sup>John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2008), 132.

<sup>61</sup>Howard, *A Guide to Christian Spiritual Formation*, 179-80.

<sup>62</sup>Though many caution that this might be a naturalistic fallacy to consider truths displayed in creation, Frame explains that it is not because it is authoritative revelation that comes from God. He points out that the naturalistic fallacy occurs when those who have rejected God argue from the “facts of creation” without “any reference to God as the source of the data” (135-36).

world wrongly interprets natural revelation, Frame argues that for the believer, it is important (136). Natural revelation helps us better interpret Scripture, apply Scripture, and glorify God (136). He even goes as far as to say, “If the created world did not reveal God, Scripture itself would be useless” (136). He explains that to properly interpret Scripture one must understand the setting in which it was written and the setting in which it must be applied (136).

People are also another medium for God’s revelation; he calls this existential revelation (137). Frame explains that God’s revelation is very personal, not distant. Humans as image bearers “are revelation” (137). Redeemed individuals can also serve as revelation through their transformed lives as examples (1 Cor 11:1, 4:16; Phil 3:7; 1 Thess 1:6) (138).

Scripture, though completely true, is not equivalent to Truth or to God’s authoritative revelation, but it does have a vital role in God’s plan. Frame writes, “The point is not that the Bible is more authoritative than God’s word in nature or through persons. Everything God says has the same authority, namely supreme authority. But the Bible has a unique role within the organism of revelation . . .” (140-41). He continues his train of thought emphasizing that Scripture alone is the “document of the covenant,” and is the only means of access to the words of Jesus and the prophets; Scripture reveals the gospel, the only means by which we are able to understand natural revelation rightly (141).

Because these means of revelation are so interrelated, this fuller understanding of knowing represented in triperspectivalism, when rightly understood, does not diminish, but actually enhances the place of Scripture. Frame wrote the following to this effect:

I believe that the unique importance of Scripture can best be seen, not by denying the existence of other forms of revelation, but rather by showing the precise relationships between Scripture and those other forms. As we look at those other forms, we shall see that we cannot make adequate use of them apart from Scripture. So, by mentioning other forms, we do not detract from the uniqueness of Scripture; rather, we enhance it. (132)

Students should leave seminary with the conviction of the authority of Scripture settled. In fact, “Christian knowing assumes a biblical foundation.”<sup>63</sup> The primacy of Scripture in God’s revelation is important, but that truth can be settled while also recognizing the God of the Bible as metaphysically ultimate and revelation as the source and most basic component for knowledge and development. This was demonstrated by Noelle when she clearly articulated the relational knowledge of God being the reason she believes Scripture in the following statement:

I think it is about God and the Bible . . . having a working relational knowledge of God enables you to learn more about His Word, and His attributes, and how He is working in the world, and what our role is, and how to be obedient, and how he wants his church to function.

Patricia also exhibited this priority while still holding to Scripture as her ultimate authority. She stated,

I think my ultimate authority is Scripture. What does the Word say? What is clear and absolute truth according to the inspired Word of God . . . and I think that is ultimate authority and then there is kind of a tiered system. Okay . . . there’s that and God has given us general revelation as well. The sciences and sociology and anthropology. Those things help inform us as well. I say Scripture would be first and building [on that with the] other things. . . .

Because the three perspectives are so interrelated, seminaries should seek to instruct beyond the normative category. Ministry is more complex than having a Scripture passage to quote. Ministry involves various situations full of nuance in which a person in ministry must understand the normative principles found in God Himself, the situation, and the individuals involved, including the person who is ministering. This possible trend towards *Nuda Scriptura*, as well as the trend that will next be discussed, seminary pragmatism, need to be considered and understood to better instruct, shape, and prepare those who intend to minister.

Another trend with both the male and female seminary students that was evidenced in reviewing the interviews for this priority was a utilitarian mindset.

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<sup>63</sup>See appendix 20.

Application is not a bad thing. Biblical knowing is not complete until it is applied. It involves the head, the heart, and the hands, but if hands-on practice is the extent of one's knowing, epistemological growth will be stunted. While seminary students should be able to read the Bible for themselves and translate that in a practical way to ministry, that should not be the extent of their education. Application is vital, but must be matched by the presuppositional and reflective domains as seen in Frame's triperspectivalism and in Trentham's taxonomy.<sup>64</sup> Howard speaks to the necessity of the reflective domain for spiritual development: "Certainly, then, the task of spiritual formation requires that we discover appropriate means of nurturing 'holy affections': patterns of emotion that are of increasing conformity with those of Christ and the gospel. This is the formation of the heart."<sup>65</sup> The need for both the presuppositional and reflective domains is also demonstrated in the following quote by Trentham and Estep, who speak of holistic formation as involving head, heart, hands:

From a biblical worldview, this trajectory may be understood as moving from propositional truth affirmation (head) to convictional understanding (heart), resulting in an outpouring of Christian love, fellowship, and missional consciousness (hands).<sup>66</sup>

Seminary is often seen as a trade school rather than a place where one goes to grow in virtue and knowledge. Both male and female seminary students tended to speak of seminary and Scripture in utilitarian terms. The purpose of seminary was seen to be mastering the Bible and to pick up the skills necessary for later ministerial practice. One student expressed this utilitarian mindset in answering what she most valued about seminary. She said, "I would have to say just to be able to get into the depth of level of

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<sup>64</sup>To better understand how the normative, situational, and existential domains work together in theological education, see appendix 20 for an article by John David Trentham entitled "Toward a Taxonomy for Virtuous Christian Learning."

<sup>65</sup>Howard, *A Guide to Christian Spiritual Formation*, 181.

<sup>66</sup>John David Trentham and James Estep, "Early Adult Discipleship at the Intersection of Neurological and Phenomenological Research," *The Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* 5, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 24.

training on God’s Word . . . get into the languages, sit under theologians to just immerse myself in a theological world.” Ruby was asked how a seminary student should change as a result of seminary and this was her reply:

I think they definitely need to be equipped to handle the Word and understand what it means to teach Scripture and how to understand Scripture and how to communicate it, but I also think someone on the same hand should be able to understand what it means to relate to people. . . .

Her statement presents a pragmatic view of seminary. Many of the seminary students also articulated that the purpose of seminary in their mind was primarily to gather tools for ministry. Seminarians tended to think in utilitarian terms rather than metaphysical terms.

**1B—Faith and rationality.** Another priority in the first category of the taxonomy is “a clear articulation of the knowledge relationship between faith and rationality.” Stuckert found this priority the most challenging to identify and said it “occasioned the most discussion.”<sup>67</sup> This challenge was not seen in the interviews with the female students, perhaps because of the continued development of the taxonomy or perhaps because of the participants in the study and their articulation of this priority.

Many students had statements which spoke in vague terms about both faith and rationality, but they could not define the knowledge relationship between the two. This is seen in the quote below from an interview with Carley L:

Ideally you would grow in both kinds of knowledge; you learn information about theology, about biblical studies, and about ministering to different populations and how to do that well. . . . It’s one thing to be able to know what justification means and define it correctly and point to passages of Scripture that support or demonstrate that doctrine and to be able to talk about the implications of that doctrine of justification, and it is another thing to know you are justified on a personal experiential level.

One participant even created a dichotomy between the two, saying,

Okay. Rely on proof and faith? I think both are important for some things like in the spiritual realm . . . they cannot always be proved, so for things spiritual and experiential, we have to trust in God and put our faith in Him. For some other things we can rely on proof, other than spiritual things.

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<sup>67</sup>Trentham and Estep, “Early Adult Discipleship,” 84.



In general, this priority is demonstrated by a mindset of “faith seeks reason.” Priority 1B regarding faith and rationality was identified in a greater number of female seminarians in this study than in any of the populations researched in previous studies. In the study on recent high school graduates, this priority was not articulated by any of the participants; there was one precompetency exhibited, however.<sup>68</sup> The studies of undergraduate students identified this priority in participants between 3 and 7 times.<sup>69</sup> This priority was found in 9 male seminarians and in 16 female seminarians.<sup>70</sup> The male seminary students often described this priority in practical or lived-out ways.<sup>71</sup>

Riley demonstrated the understanding of the relationship between faith and rationality that exemplifies this priority:

I would say that God has gifted us with the ability to think and reason. Christianity is real. It’s historical. We have a historical Jesus. There is evidence for the resurrection, you know. . . . kind of an instrument that helps us defend Christianity and encourages us in our faith, but I think the Bible places a very heavy emphasis on faith. . . . It talks about in Ephesians how we are saved by grace through faith, not by our own works. At the end of the day I would say personal knowledge and belief trump that, and I know there are different views of apologetics. I could be wrong, but that is what I infer from the heavy emphasis the Bible places on belief and faith.

Lucy showed her understanding of the ethical nature of knowing when she said of the relationship between faith and proof,

They don’t have to be in conflict, and they also don’t have to be synonymous. I think that Christians walk an interesting kind of blurred line, where we do walk by faith, but we also do walk by sight. . . . Scripture doesn’t call us to be blind. We can probe for these answers, and we can ask the hard questions, and we can look for them, and

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<sup>68</sup>Justin Robert Mullins, “Exploring the Impact of Secondary Educational Contexts on College Student Formation and Development” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 92.

<sup>69</sup>Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 171; Long, “Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 94; Cannon, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 87; Sanchez, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 78. Leatherman, “Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 88.

<sup>70</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 84.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 85.

I think it is important that we do because in the process we better understand God, we pursue Him, and we help other believers in the process.

Noelle showed her understanding that faith shapes all we learn in the following quote: “It is about God and the Bible. Having a working relational knowledge of God enables you to learn more about His Word, His attributes, how He is working in the world, what our role is, how to be obedient, and how He wants His church to function.” Natalie demonstrated her understanding of faith and rationality, saying,

I think I like to keep the main thing the main thing, but I do think core issues deal with Jesus. Who is Jesus, who is God, who are we in relation to that. . . . All of that for me . . . is a non-negotiable. What you think about Jesus, what you think about God what you think about sin, what do you think about our human condition -- that’s going to determine everything else, in my opinion, so those things are core and need to be sought out and processed well, and secondary issues . . . I think there’s things that are not necessary to having a relationship with God. . . . You don’t need to know those things to follow Jesus, but I do think that as you grow and learn, you will encounter them and have to work through them.

### **Metacognition, Critical Reflection, and Contextualistic Orientation**

Category 2 of the taxonomy is “metacognition, critical reflection, and contextualistic orientation.” This category encompasses what Frame would call “situational” and Meek would call “world.” This section relates to the object that is being perceived by an individual and deals with understanding something in its context.<sup>72</sup>

**2A—Forms of thinking.** The first priority related to metacognition, critical reflection, or contextualistic orientation, is “a preference for higher-level forms of thinking according to Bloom’s taxonomy.” This means a preference for analyzing, evaluating, and creating as opposed to the lower levels of Bloom’s taxonomy, which are remembering, understanding, and applying. Analyzing involves breaking down information and thinking critically about a claim or generalization. Evaluating takes thinking a step further to make

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<sup>72</sup>Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 338.

a judgment about what one believes and to defend it based on a set of criteria. Creating takes data or material and manufactures something new out of it.

Mullin's study showed 3 people who demonstrated this competency and 2 individuals with precompetencies.<sup>73</sup> The studies on undergraduates identified this priority in anywhere from 5 to 21 participants.<sup>74</sup> Of the 30 male seminarians in Stuckert's study, only 17 individuals demonstrated this priority.<sup>75</sup> That was fewer occurrences than in three of the undergraduate studies. Stuckert suggested that perhaps "those who had these preferences in their undergraduate setting then kept them into the graduate context, while those that did not already have these priorities in college did not develop them later when in the seminary context."<sup>76</sup>

In the current study, this preference for higher forms of thinking was identified in 19 individuals. One undergraduate population had a larger number of participants who possessed this priority and one undergraduate population matched the number found in this study. Sanchez identified this priority in 21 of the 30 undergraduates in secular universities included in his study.

Most of the statements exhibiting this priority in the current study reflected Bloom's idea of analyzing and not the higher levels of evaluating or creating. A few instances were found demonstrating a preference for evaluating or creating, however. Riley C., for instance, demonstrated her preference for evaluation when she stated the following with regard to why she appreciates that her professors present opposing views:

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<sup>73</sup>Mullins, "Exploring the Impact," 92.

<sup>74</sup>Long, "Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 95; Cannon, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 90; Sanchez, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 79. Leatherman, "Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 89.

<sup>75</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 87.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

It is something I value tremendously, because what they are doing is teaching us to wrestle through various ideas, and I feel by . . . presenting . . . the various beliefs they are teaching us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. At a school like that, where we have great teachers, it would be very easy to just teach you know what the Bible says and create little robots who can't think for themselves, but I think they just really want us to be able to work out what we believe and be good thinkers.

Noelle, demonstrating this priority of a preference for higher levels of thinking when she answered a question regarding what standard she uses for evaluating the truth of her beliefs, said,

I use the Bible and especially the Bible within the Bible—contextual support. If it is consistently throughout the Bible, it is easy. If there are passages in the Bible that seem to differ, then delving into those and seeing how they speak, and where the discrepancy might be. . . . Things that aren't necessarily spoken of in the Bible, but are spiritual truths, trying to read historically what have people in times before come up with, and interacting with tradition and historical theology, and looking at the principles set forth in the Bible to help us . . . [like] social issues—immigration, or gay marriage, or things that it doesn't necessarily speak that directly to in the Bible . . . but using the principles from the Bible to infer where we need to stand on those things.

**2B—Wisdom-oriented modes of thinking.** The second priority under metacognition, critical reflection, and contextualistic orientation is “a prioritization of wisdom-oriented modes of learning.” This area was described by Jonathan Stuckert as “living successfully in the world as God has ordered it.”<sup>77</sup> In correspondence over attributions for this priority, Trentham, described wisdom-oriented modes of thinking as two-fold: “(1) recognizing God’s way versus others, and (2) living in light of God’s revealed truth.”

In Mullin’s study, 1 recent high school graduate exhibited this trait and 4 demonstrated pre-competencies.<sup>78</sup> Trentham in his study found this priority in 4 participants.<sup>79</sup> Cannon found 4 instances,<sup>80</sup> Long and Sanchez both found 7 instances, and

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<sup>77</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 88.

<sup>78</sup>Mullins, “Exploring the Impact,” 92.

<sup>79</sup>Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates, 174.

<sup>80</sup>Cannon, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 93

Leatherman only found a single instance.<sup>81</sup> There was a noticeable increase in occurrences with Stuckert's graduate population; he found 20 participants who exhibited this priority.<sup>82</sup> Stuckert noted that many of these instances were in reference to the participants' life outside of the seminary context. He suggested that opportunities to apply what they were learning in the classroom in another context, such as local churches or ministries, perhaps developed a deeper appreciation for wisdom modes of thinking.<sup>83</sup> Just as Perry suggested that undergraduates in general had not lived enough life or had not had enough opportunities to make decisions to reach the commitment level of his scheme, perhaps undergraduates have not had the life opportunities to appreciate wisdom modes of thinking. Findings for this priority in female seminarians suggests Stuckert was correct in his assertion, as seventeen of the female seminary students exhibited this priority.

The concern for seminarians regarding this priority, as noted in other areas of this thesis, is a focus on utility. Eight participants who did not reflect this priority and were not included in the seventeen had statements that focused on application, but not on wisdom. They were interested in gaining skills to utilize in ministry, but not in growing personally. Ava demonstrated this emphasis on application for accomplishing ministry rather than a prioritization of living in light of God's revealed truth. She stated,

I think I would probably try to make it a little more on the application side than here is a bunch of knowledge that you know . . . cause a lot of what I have heard students having problems with is not being able to reach people when they go back, because they have all this knowledge and they want to kind of dump it on people, but they don't know how to apply it to real life situations or the real importance of what they are learning.

This statement shows Ava's desire to be a skilled professional, which is not a bad thing, but it does not demonstrate the priority of desiring to live wisely.

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<sup>81</sup>Long, "Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 98; Sanchez, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 81; Leatherman, "Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 92.

<sup>82</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 89.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

Those demonstrating wisdom-modes of thinking often spoke in terms of life, church, and ministry, not just learning knowledge to minister to others. Trentham wrote in response to a positive attribution, “Wisdom is both reflective and personal—identifying ways of living and flourishing in light of God’s truth.” Emma N. exhibited this priority when she said,

I think I value how it’s made me more like Christ. I think the goal is to be more like Christ, to bring him glory. In my education, as I learned more about Him, I was able to become more like Him and have that opportunity to use what He was teaching me and what I was learning to reach out to others and help them in that journey as well. Just growing in confidence in evangelism was a big one for me because I’ve been shy and timid in that area, so that was exciting to see how He grew me, shaped me, and made me want to be more like Him.

Natalie D. articulated this priority beautifully when she stated the following regarding teacher and student roles in seminary education:

I don’t think you just go and give content and that’s it. I do think you equip them, because they are to be equipped, and you do so by making sure they are not just taking this and keeping it at a head knowledge, but I also think the students’ responsibility is to learn, to be there, to do the work that is being required of them, but to also be thinking about what they are learning, how they are going to appropriate this into their life and ministry, and also perhaps not necessarily always thinking about how will this help others, but what we are learning how is this going to affect our lives and what are we going to do with this first before we tell people they need to do it. . . .

**2C—Criteria for assessing beliefs and values.** The third competency in the second category is “reflective criteria for assessing one’s own beliefs and values, as well as divergent beliefs and values.” This priority is two-fold, requiring a reflective criteria for evaluating and a reckoning with differing viewpoints. Two entering college freshmen in Mullin’s study evidenced this priority.<sup>84</sup> It is of note that while only 4 of Trentham’s participants exhibited this priority, all of those who did were in the top ratings within their institutional groups.<sup>85</sup> Trentham said in his study that “a clear relationship may be

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<sup>84</sup>Mullins, “Exploring the Impact,” 92.

<sup>85</sup>Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 175.

suggested between inclusion in this sub-category and overall epistemological maturation.”<sup>86</sup> The subsequent studies on undergraduate students had between two and four occurrences of this subcategory, and Stuckert’s study had 14 participants exhibiting this priority.<sup>87</sup> The occurrences among the male seminary students, however, were often very preliminary or were assumed, so Trentham and Stuckert in the analysis found this category challenging.<sup>88</sup>

While analysis for the females was not challenging, the presence of this priority was not as common. Only seven participants in this study exhibited this priority, with three additional participants exhibiting proto-examples.<sup>89</sup> These proto-examples demonstrated a need for reflective criteria but did not articulate a criteria. Noelle G., for instance, demonstrates how examining others’ views fairly leads her to examine her own, but she does not clearly lay out a criteria by which she does this. She said,

I find it fascinating to learn how other people view certain topics and we covered it a lot in historical theology classes, so seeing where did it come from . . . “Oh that makes total sense! They were fighting this heresy and needed to guard against it, but the pendulum swung just a little too much, but their intention was right.” So understanding the history behind that is helpful. Examining how did I get to what I believe? Have I pendulum swung or taken a wrong turn in a reaction to something in my life or something that was going on in the world at that time or the region of the world where I was growing up or whatever? It’s so fascinating and I find it really interesting to learn, and it helps me reexamine my own stance and see if there needs to be an adjustment. . . . “No, I actually really do even more strongly believe this

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<sup>86</sup>Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 175.

<sup>87</sup>Stuckert “Assessing the Epistemological Development,” 90; Long, “Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 99; Cannon, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 95; Sanchez, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 82; Leatherman, “Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 92.

<sup>88</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 90.

<sup>89</sup>The concept of proto-examples of the priorities and competencies was developed by John David Trentham and Jonathan Stuckert in Stuckert’s study on male seminary students. Latent or emerging competencies in students were identified as the taxonomy continued to be clarified and refined. Stuckert “Assessing the Epistemological Development,” 90. Justin Mullins in his study with recent high school graduates in different contexts also used this terminology. Mullins, *Exploring the Impact of Secondary Educational Contexts on College Student Formation and Development*, 89.

now.” So it doesn’t always have the same outcome, but I really, really appreciate it, and it helps me to interact more kindly and compassionately with other people.

One possible contributing factor to participants frequently being unable to articulate criteria may be the common practice in this group as seen under priority IA to equate Scripture with truth. For instance, one participant in her interview could articulate that there was true knowledge and false knowledge, but had no criteria apart from Scripture by which to determine fact from fiction. Emma, when asked what standards she used for evaluating the truth of her beliefs or values, answered,

Scripture. I really try to take all of it back to Scripture and see if it matches up and aligns with what Scripture teaches, and if not, I need to make some changes . . . so I try to make Scripture the basis of it all. . . . I’m definitely not perfect but I do strive for Scripture, truth, to be the standard.

While Natalie D. did not explicitly express a criteria, she did imply one. She also articulated that her beliefs need to be assessed and she also reckoned with others’ views. Because she met these qualifications, she exemplified this priority well. She stated,

It’s funny you think any belief you have isn’t wrong. I really do try to figure out where they are coming from. What Scripture are they using? Okay . . . study those. Who are they listening to, who have they been reading about this certain thing and really try to understand the argument better or the belief better because I think it is a disservice to try to tell someone I don’t agree with you, but then you really don’t understand why I’m not agreeing. I try to evaluate is this a gospel issue or is this a secondary issue.

**2D—Social-environmental influences.** The last competency in the second category is “a recognition of social-environmental influences on one’s learning and maturation.” Trentham and Estep displayed the importance of this priority, saying,

Findings in neuroscience, as well as sociological descriptions and models, as well as the biblical view of life and personhood, agree that social-environmental influences are pervasive and consequential in the lives of all people. Human development thus occurs according to one’s experience in his or her or cultural context(s). According to the Christian worldview, this is a reality established in the relational aspect of God’s creation of man in his own image.<sup>90</sup>

This priority goes beyond one being able to appreciate the benefit or realize the reality of one’s context to being able to recognize specifically in what ways the environment shapes

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<sup>90</sup>Trentham and Estep, “Early Adult Discipleship,” 25.



one's learning or maturation. While women in this study were often able to communicate the environment they were in as minorities on a campus, they often did not articulate how that context had shaped them. Though many of the women in this study could articulate the value of community, they did not evidence this priority. This priority goes further than recognizing the benefit of specific relationships to understanding the shaping influence of the context as a whole. The women in this study often spoke of specific relationships that were examples to them, pushed them, encouraged them, or gave support, in ways that did not meet the priority.

In Mullin's study, 5 of the entering college freshmen were assessed to have this competency along with 2 signaling precompetencies.<sup>91</sup> Only 3 occurrences of this subcategory were seen in Trentham's study on undergraduates.<sup>92</sup> The other studies on undergraduates contained between 3 and 13 instances.<sup>93</sup> Twenty-one male seminary students in their interviews were able to articulate how their environment contributed to their intellectual and ethical growth.<sup>94</sup> One woman in the current study had a proto-example of this priority because she did not articulate a focus on learning and maturation, but did recognize social-environmental influences. Two others showed a glimpse of this priority, while not exhibiting enough to categorize them as possessing the priority. Twelve women were able to articulate the social-environmental influence on their learning. Anna E. was one of those twelve. In her statement she both recognized her context as well as how it had shaped her learning and growth. She stated,

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<sup>91</sup>Mullins, "Exploring the Impact," 92.

<sup>92</sup>Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 176.

<sup>93</sup>Long, "Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 100; Cannon, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 97; Sanchez, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 83. Leatherman, "Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 94.

<sup>94</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 92.

I think my whole seminary experience was full of rethinking especially because my background was from a place of so much sureness. . . . I think that it spurred a lot of growth. I even . . . in my childhood and youth, I didn't experience a lot of diversity in a number of ways. Not a lot of diversity theologically. I come from a rural farm town, so there's not a lot of racial or socioeconomic diversity. I very much had one experience, so I think especially in seminary when I was faced with so many different stories but also . . . had my eyes opened to so many more interpretations or reflections on Scripture or who God is, it was, I think, it was refreshing. A challenge of . . . and still is a challenge of learning what I need to keep, and what I need to hold onto, and what things I just feel like I have to hold onto, because it is just what I have always known. So I guess it spurred me to growth in that area in that it caused me to rethink a lot of things and to actually ask myself the question: "Okay, am I just holding onto this one particular view because it is what I always thought or do I need to be willing to let other perspectives and other stories into this conversation more than I have in the past?"

### **Personal Responsibility for Knowledge Acquisition and Maintenance within Community**

The final category in Trentham's taxonomy is "personal responsibility for knowledge acquisition and maintenance within community." Stuckert says the competencies in this category "center upon the student having made responsible choices for learning in community and as an individual in having commitments with awareness of the difference in his community."<sup>95</sup> This category is what might be termed by Frame as "existential" and by Meek as "self." Whereas the first category dealt more with thinking and the second with perceiving, this category deals more with feeling.<sup>96</sup>

**3A—Interdependence and reciprocity.** The first priority in this category is "a pursuit of personal development that results from mutual interdependence and reciprocity in one's relationships with authority figures and peers." During analysis, Trentham pointed out that this priority entails two subpriorities. First is "mutual interdependence," which is "the recognition that members of the learning community should rely and depend on each other for sharpening and growth." Second, it entails "reciprocity," which is "understanding that one is personally responsible to contribute the lives and learning of authority figures

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<sup>95</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 92.

<sup>96</sup>Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 338.

and peers.”

Four incoming college students demonstrated this quality with an additional 3 demonstrating precompetencies.<sup>97</sup> Representation of this priority in the undergraduate studies ranged from 4 to 8 instances, with only 9 male seminary students in Stuckert’s study demonstrating this subcategory.<sup>98</sup>

Given that one of the themes found in the literature on women’s epistemological development was relationship, it was expected that more instances of this subcategory would be found in the current study. That hypothesis, however, was not confirmed, as six participants exhibited proto-examples of this priority and only four participants were found to possess this priority. Those who had proto-examples often demonstrated an interdependence, but not reciprocity. They understood community was a crucial piece to learning, but that was the extent of their stated understanding. They also sometimes spoke in transactional rather than reciprocal terms. They were learning to get a product out of it. Other participants had statements referring to the benefits they received from authority and peers, but did not communicate a contribution on their part necessary for reciprocity.

Claire was among the four participants who exemplified this priority. This priority can be seen in her following statement:

There are about twelve M.Div. women at a time on [my seminary’s] campus and so we form a really incredibly tight community and that was wonderful. And then I mentioned a lot of my friends being counseling students and my friends who I lived with being counseling students and so that was really fun too. To share a similar experience of being at [my seminary], but to get such different degrees and have different skills and knowledge to share with each other was really fun. And then for the most part I really enjoyed my relationships with my male M.Div. friends. I feel like a few of them in particular were so open about how much they needed to learn from me and wanted to learn from me about what it is like to be a woman in the

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<sup>97</sup>Mullins, “Exploring the Impact of Secondary Educational Contexts,” 92.

<sup>98</sup>Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 177. Long, “Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 100; Cannon, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 100; Sanchez, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 84; Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 93. Leatherman, “Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 95.

church or even just my perspective on things not just as a woman but as an individual. I felt really respected by them and like they really wanted to help me succeed and that made me really want to help them succeed.

The four participants who exhibited this priority were all from denominational schools. This was interesting to note since in every other priority, instances were generally split between the two institutional categories, with one institution type having one to two more instances in one priority and the other institution type having one to two more in another priority. This brings the question of why would an understanding of interdependence and reciprocity be more common among those attending denominational schools. Perhaps it is because those who attend denominational schools are often a part of the denomination and as such have seen their necessary contribution to the denomination, even in their scholastic setting.

**3B—Personal responsibility.** The second priority in this third category of the taxonomy is “a sense of personal responsibility for gaining, maintaining, and progressing in knowledge.” This priority is the understanding that maturation in learning results not from merely receiving information, but through personal investment. This priority goes beyond hard work to a personal investment in knowing. Evidence for this priority was found in 3 of the recent high school graduates entering college along with 5 exhibiting a precompetency.<sup>99</sup> Five to 14 participants in each of the undergraduate studies also possessed this priority.<sup>100</sup> Thirteen of Stuckert’s seminarians reflected this priority in their interviews.<sup>101</sup> Stuckert noted that many of the instances regarding gaining and

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<sup>99</sup>Mullins, “Exploring the Impact,” 92.

<sup>100</sup>Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 178. Long, “Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 101; Cannon, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 102; Sanchez, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 84. Leatherman, “Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 96.

<sup>101</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 95.

maintaining knowledge “reflected a utilitarian bent.”<sup>102</sup>

Many statements in the current study came close to exhibiting the priority, but fell short since they exhibited a utilitarian mindset, a propensity for just going after answers, or a pursuit of opportunities to learn without the sense of personal investment in knowing as an ethic. Four women exhibited precompetencies. One exhibited the personal responsibility for growing in holiness, not knowledge. A pursuit of growing in holiness is related to growing in knowledge but does not equate to the priority. Others implied responsibility but did not explicitly state it.

Nine women in the study had statements fully exhibiting the priority. Among them were the following statements by Ava and Natalie respectively:

Well, in seminary or any advanced degrees, the higher you go up the more responsible you are for your own education, so a lot of it is professors talking and trying to teach us, but the student really taking a lot of responsibility in their own learning, so then expecting you to learn for yourself.

So I literally came into seminary thinking, “I just have to do this because someone told me I should come,” but this was just more of the next thing of what I need to do to get where I want to be . . . and just who I am now, I think, “Wow! That was not the purpose of seminary and people who go there for that, I don’t think they should be there.” I would tell my younger self, “Don’t go!” because seminary, sure you are there to learn, to get trained, and to grow, but I mean if you are just doing that to get to the next step, and not during that time being intentional about how you are growing as a person spiritually, relationally . . . thinking about what type of leader, what type of pastor. Wherever you are going, if you aren’t thinking about those things while in there and really challenging, and thinking, and processing, then you shouldn’t be there. . . . I am so glad throughout that process God was able to reveal things.

**3C—Active and engaged learning.** “A preference for active involvement in the teaching and learning process” is the third epistemological priority in this category.

This priority was articulated in the following statement by Clara:

I got glimpses of classes that were more Socratic seminaresque type and I really appreciated that. It didn’t seem like we were just coming and just soaking up information that was being thrown at us, but we were able to engage, and share, and listen. It was a different type of learning. It allowed room for questioning, and I had some classes that did that, but I also had some classes where just a professor lecturing

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

constantly from a PowerPoint and I'm like, "This is so much information, and is there room for us to kind of explore and learn from one another and not just the professor?"

This priority was found in only 2 entering college freshmen in Mullin's study, with 4 more demonstrating a precompetency.<sup>103</sup> Most of the undergraduate studies found the presence of this subcategory in at least half the participants. Trentham found it in 19, Long in 22, Sanchez in 15, Cannon in 11, and Leatherman in 12.<sup>104</sup> Trentham suggested that the large presence of this priority in his sample "suggested that a preference for active learning is a common epistemological priority possessed by undergraduates."<sup>105</sup>

Stuckert in his research on male seminary students was surprised to find fewer instances of this priority in male seminary students than in all of the prior studies on undergraduate students.<sup>106</sup> He had 9 students who evidenced this priority. This was not true of the female seminarians, 14 of whom exhibited this priority. There were an additional 9 participants who articulated proto-examples. These proto-examples usually were either anecdotal demonstrations of active learning or they showed a preference for active and engaged learning but not in the teaching/learning environment. They may have had an anecdote about active/engaged learning in one class or with one assignment, but not demonstrated the priority in general. This was of interest because the participants throughout the interviews tended to speak of specific instances instead of more general philosophies or values. They spoke of specifics instead of overarching views. I often noted this and tried to redirect the interview when they were on too specific of a theme, because I knew it would be unrateable for the Perry scheme or for Trentham's taxonomy.

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<sup>103</sup>Mullins, "Exploring the Impact," 92.

<sup>104</sup>Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 179. Long "Evaluating the Epistemological Development," 101; Cannon, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 102; Sanchez, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 84. Leatherman, "Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 97.

<sup>105</sup>Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 179.

<sup>106</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 96.

What I neglected to consider at the time, however, was that this could be a common way for women to communicate. Perhaps this use of anecdotes is a result of the tendency

Baxter Magolda wrote about in the following quote:

Whereas males assert their right to their own opinion and present it, females keep opinions hidden to avoid alienating themselves from others. When opinions are expressed it is with qualification of the limits of the opinion to personal experience.<sup>107</sup>

Referring to specific experiences, may be a result of women's relational way of knowing, a way of qualifying the limits of what they are saying.

During analysis, something that was also noted was the participants' statements demonstrating a very introspective and individualized perspective. Several statements were made regarding "I wrestled" or "I had to think through," rather than "I wanted to engage more in class." Many of the statements expressed a desire for room to think deeply and for one's self. This desire was true of those who exhibited the priority and those who did not. Note the personal nature of Lucy's inquiry when she said, "I don't think I valued it at the time, but looking back I would say that I did particularly when it was something that did challenge me because it challenged me to do my own research and look into specific topics more than I previously would have." Note how she appreciated a challenge that pushed her to personally pursue knowing. Claire demonstrated a preference for active learning, but again it was in a very personal, internal sense. She stated, ". . . I think it probably made me willing to take more risks in terms of what I was researching or writing about, because I felt encouraged to do that by the professors." Taylor exhibited the same tendency in the following quote:

I think the experience of trying to figure something out and making an educated guess is better educationally speaking in the mental exercise. Better to try to come to a conclusion even if . . . you find out you are wrong. You just change your mind; it's not a big loss. I mean I'm not going to write a book if I'm not sure or even post a Facebook status, you know what I mean, but I think it is good to go with your gut, and I think it is good to have tentative beliefs because you just don't know everything, so if you are able to come to tentative beliefs, then you are able to really work with

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<sup>107</sup>Baxter Magolda, "Gender Differences in Cognitive Development," 11.

what you got and learn. . . . You might actually learn a lot more and grow . . . and you also might be right, and so if you don't let yourself come to tentative beliefs, then I think you lose a lot of opportunities to potentially learn, but you don't really gain a lot [by avoiding tentative beliefs] except saving face, maybe, or thinking something wrong for an extended period of time; I mean that would be a loss.

In dialogue with Trentham regarding whether or not this was unique to the female seminary population, we speculated a number of possibilities, including the following: are women seldom given the opportunity to engage as active learners in the classroom; does this somehow relate to women in the study having a harder time finding their voice in a mostly male classroom; or is this a result of a woman's tendency to value community and to want to find agreement rather than sparring? This led back to the literature. Baxter Magolda's gender-related pattern for Absolute Knowing indicates that the female pattern tends to be a preference for private acquisition of knowledge, while receiving information from instructors, and receiving encouragement from peers.<sup>108</sup> This definition of Absolute Knowing describes a number of the statements made by female seminarians preferring time and space to think deeply. As previously noted, Baxter Magolda writes, "Whereas males assert their right to their own opinion and present it, females keep opinions hidden to avoid alienating themselves from others."<sup>109</sup> This perhaps speaks to the female seminary students' propensity to want to pursue wrestling privately rather than publically with issues. The idea of connected knowing in Belenky et al. and in Gilligan's works also speaks to this preference in female seminarians. Connected knowing does not consider something from a distance, but through care connects the knower to what is known. Connected knowing contains affect as well as reason. Perhaps this pattern or perspective of knowing that is more common in women leads the female seminarians to desire more time and space to personally work out what they believe.

**3D—Convictional commitment.** The final priority in the third category is "a

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<sup>108</sup>Marcia Baxter Magolda, *Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender-Related Patterns in Students' Intellectual Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 38.

<sup>109</sup>Baxter Magolda, "Gender Differences in Cognitive Development," 11.



convictional commitment to one's own worldview maintained with critical awareness of personal contexts, ways of thinking, and challenges brought to bear by alternative worldviews through testing and discernment." Statements evidencing Multiplicity or being aware of other's positions are both not enough to demonstrate this priority. Trentham noted in analysis that it is often easier for those who enter an educational setting that is different from one's background or context to exemplify this priority. This priority entails both a personal commitment and willing self-examination; it entails a recognition of alternate views and a reconsideration of one's own views in light of alternate views. When asked if conflicting beliefs arising was something she valued, Clara B. replied without any hesitation,

Oh yes! Absolutely because then those conflicting beliefs I think again push me to kind of search and grow. "Well, why do you believe what you believe? Do you even know why? Do you even know why you are standing so firmly on this issue or why you have supported this for so long? Like is it a faith of your pastors or parents or your schooling before or is it something that you actually live out?" . . . This is one thing that one of my professors stands by, and it is this idea of theory and practice. Do our theories and what we say we believe actually match up with practices and how we live out our faith and how we do practical theology, so recognizing that, you know, confrontation may happen but confrontation is not necessarily a bad thing and conflict isn't a bad thing. I think it just opens up our eyes to other perspectives and other angles of a situation or a problem at hand, and so I definitely value those moments even though they were hard, or I didn't understand in the beginning, but I learned a lot about myself, and I learned a lot about God in those moments, and I don't regret them.

Linda C. also valued the self-examination caused by interacting with those she disagreed with. She stated,

Well, I think the differences come from so many variables that create the differences . . . whether it be upbringing, training, views of the Word of God. . . . There are so many things at least when it comes to God, the belief in God, all the things that form and shape me, and form and shape other people, but I know . . . I used to be afraid of people who thought differently than me, and so I realized that people that think differently than me actually strengthen me, you know? It's asking good questions of people. Why do you think that? . . . I like to think through are there fallacies and what they are fearing, and truthfully, when I've found fallacies in their arguments, guess what? They've highlighted my fallacies.

Two recent high school graduates were found to possess this priority.<sup>110</sup> This

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<sup>110</sup>Mullins, "Exploring the Impact," 92.

priority was evident in 5 of Trentham’s participants, 7 of Long’s, 7 of Cannon’s, 2 of Sanchez’s, and only 1 of Leatherman’s participants.<sup>111</sup> Half of the male seminary students exhibited this trait.<sup>112</sup> In Stuckert’s and Trentham’s analysis of the male seminary students’ priorities and competencies, Trentham suggested the seminary students in this area appeared to “hit their epistemological stride.”<sup>113</sup>

Eleven participants in the current study demonstrated this priority. Eight who did not possess the priority demonstrated proto-examples. These proto examples often demonstrated a willingness to consider opposing views on the other side’s terms, but were not self-reflective. Other participants in statements were willing to understand opposing world views for the sake of evangelism, but also did not demonstrate a self-reflection. Still others showed an epistemic humility that was willing to consider one’s own view and be sharpened or change if necessary, but this consideration of one’s own view was not prompted by alternate positions.

In analysis for this sample, Trentham noted a preference for “theological triage” in the participants. This was also noted in Stuckert’s sample of male seminary students. Several statements differentiated between primary, secondary, and tertiary issues. Trentham noted, “This is a generational theme, exemplified in Reformed circles by a preference and celebration of core orthodox Protestantism as an identifier that is more important and prior-to denominational distinctives.” This preference and celebration is exemplified in Together for the Gospel and The Gospel Coalition.

Examining the interview transcripts for the presence of each of these priorities and competencies provided rich data for examination. Utilizing Trentham’s taxonomy for

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<sup>111</sup>Long, “Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 103; Cannon, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 106; Sanchez, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 86. Leatherman, “Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 98.

<sup>112</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 98.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

epistemological priorities and competencies also contributed to its further development. The taxonomy continues to be a valuable addition to the Perry scheme in assessing the epistemological development of pre-ministry students.

### **Comparison of MID and Observed Priorities and Competencies**

Stuckert, in his study, compared the MID scores for participants with the number of priorities and competencies observed. This relationship was examined using the Pearson correlation coefficient. In his study, the correlation coefficient was .311607, indicating a weak correlation. He suggested that might be indicative of the epistemological growth of seminary students occurring largely outside of the areas indicated by the MID.

In the current study when MID scores were compared with the numbers of priorities and competencies for each participant, the Pearson correlation coefficient was found to be very similar to the previous study with it being .3261.<sup>114</sup> As in Stuckert's study, this technically is a positive correlation, but it is still weak.

When the Pearson correlation coefficient for all previous studies was calculated using the MID scores and numbers of priorities and competencies observed, many of the previous studies demonstrated a stronger correlation between the variables than the studies on the seminary students, though two exhibited weak correlations. Leatherman's study on undergraduate students in confessional and non-confessional contexts had the weakest correlation, with a coefficient of .1954. Long's study on Undergraduate students at Bible colleges, though exhibiting a stronger correlation than in the studies on seminary students still demonstrated a weak correlation with the value of R being .4541. The coefficients in the other studies ranged from .7651 to .8161, all exhibiting a strong positive correlation.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>For a comparison of the MID scores and number of priorities and competencies observed for participants, see appendix 15.

<sup>115</sup>For a comparison of Pearson correlation coefficients between the various studies, see appendix 18.

These findings could indicate that in each of the studies with a weak correlation, that growth was happening outside of what is described in the Perry scheme, but given this weak correlation is found in both seminary populations and two undergraduate populations it could signal something else. Aside from Leatherman's study, the findings may suggest that Bible colleges and seminaries are perhaps transmitting orthodoxy but not developing students epistemologically according to the Perry scheme. These variances in correlation are to be expected, however, as this is qualitative research, as the taxonomy scoring continues to be refined, and as the developing taxonomy did not allow for the researchers to be formally trained in the interview process to prompt participants to articulate certain components. All of these factors allow for attributions to fluctuate in different contexts with different researchers conducting the interviews. Further inquiry into this area would allow for the continued development of the taxonomy and a better understanding of how pre-ministry students are being formed in various undergraduate and seminary settings.

### **Repeated Themes**

In his study of undergraduate students in different contexts, Trentham observed and reported on themes from the interviews. Replication studies on pre-ministry students have done the same. Themes that emerged in this study will also be reported. Trentham observed in his study the primacy of relationships, mentor relationships with teachers, the student's understandings of the purpose of college, the impact of college, the perspective regarding seminary, and "the bubble" at Christian universities and colleges. Long in his study of pre-ministry undergraduates attending Bible colleges and Sanchez in his study of pre-ministry undergraduates at secular universities reported on the same themes.<sup>116</sup> Cannon, in addition to exploring similar themes as Trentham, explored relationships

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<sup>116</sup>Sanchez, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 89-98; Long, "Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 104-15.

within dormitories and the need for ministry practically.<sup>117</sup> Leatherman’s themes varied by examining appreciation for the college experience, the impact of Campus Crusade for Christ, challenge required and desired, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, in addition to the primacy of relationships.<sup>118</sup> Stuckert in his study assessing the epistemological development among men attending evangelical seminaries reported on the following themes: faculty, mentors, the local church and ministry, marriage, and calling.<sup>119</sup> In the current study, the following themes were noted and will be discussed: being a woman in seminary, personal growth, coursework, and community.<sup>120</sup>

### **Being a Woman in Seminary**

It was not a surprise given the purpose of this study that a wealth of data was gathered regarding the experience of being a woman in seminary. Overall, the participants described being a woman in seminary with warm sentiments and in very positive terms even as they acknowledged being in the minority. One participant, in speaking of how her experience was different from her male peers, spoke of feeling proud when she graduated as one of the few women in a class of sixty or seventy students. She said, “I counted seven women in that, so I felt proud to be one of them, and I don’t think I would have felt that, like that specific feeling of, ‘I made it!’” Taylor, who attended a denominational institution and was a part of that denomination which took a different stance on women in ministry than she did, said,

I had an extremely positive experience with an almost all, exclusively male staff at my seminary, and that was really really beautiful. . . . I just had a really positive experience and was really affirmed and encouraged in my gifts. . . . I felt particularly honored and maybe someone would just want to be treated like the

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<sup>117</sup>Cannon, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 110-19

<sup>118</sup>Leatherman, “Comparing Epistemological Development among Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 100-110.

<sup>119</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 100.

<sup>120</sup>For a discussion of auto-coded themes and sentiments, see appendix 18.

boys, but I really liked it . . . like they would say, “Hey, we actually really want you here and we are really glad you are here.”

**Minority.** At least 19 out of 30 participants mentioned being in the minority as a woman in classes, in their programs, or on campus. One participant from a denominational seminary described the experience of being “outnumbered,” saying that women “tend to get overlooked if we are the only one and it is a larger class.” Another recalled the feeling of realizing, “Woah! I’m in a class of 80, and I’m the only female.” Participants also spoke to feeling a pressure as a result. Natalie, who attended an inter/multidenominational seminary, described having to prove herself as a woman in seminary. Many described a pressure to be a representative for their gender. Natalie D., for instance, said,

[My school] is more of an academic driven school. I think part of the culture sets the stage for it, but I do think being a woman you have to prove yourself, and maybe that is just something I have put on myself, which probably it is, but at the same time if you know you are not necessarily fully welcome, there’s just this pressure to prove you are just as smart.

For some, this pressure made it intimidating to speak, and others felt a responsibility to speak as the only voice from that perspective. Carley, a participant from an inter/multidenominational seminary, spoke of this pressure:

I think part of it is that I had this consistent feeling like I didn’t have room to fail. I think part of that was my own perception. . . . Feeling like everything I said in class had to be well thought through and theologically irrefutable and eloquent and profound because if I made a mistake in something that I said or quoted a verse wrong, something that came off as unintelligent or uninformed, I was pretty sure, if not sure in every case, that something I’d said that was wrong would be confirmation to people who didn’t think I should necessarily be there.

Bethany, from a denominational seminary, said,

I think one way my experience was different was that sometimes I was the only woman in the classroom, and I had to sort of, I don’t know that I had to, but I was sort of aware of that if I answered a question that had to deal with women, I felt like I was the representative of women, and I don’t know that men would often have that experience of feeling like they are representing their gender when they answer, but when you are one of a few women or the only woman in the class there is that added, “I feel like I’m representing women when I speak.”

Claire, who attended the same denominational seminary, was more likely to speak up because of the need to represent women. She stated,

The classes at first where I was more likely to speak up were the ones where I was the only woman, because I felt like if I didn't say anything, no one was going to. So that is part of what got me started . . . feeling like it was all in my hands a little bit and being encouraged in that by the professors. But then as time went on, I can count several times some of my male classmates coming up to me after class and thanking me for saying what I had said or ask follow up questions. That was really meaningful to me, and it gave me more courage to keep doing that, I think.

**Male professors and peers.** Claire was not the only participant to speak to the support of male professors and peers in the seminary experience. Most of the participants spoke positively throughout the interviews about their male professors. Female seminarians were more likely to have mixed responses from and to their male peers. Many, however, spoke to the impact of supportive male students. Several, like Claire, expressed that their peers affirmed, welcomed, honored, and expressed their need for their female classmates to speak up and share their viewpoints. Rose, who attended an inter/multidenominational seminary expressed,

I actually felt more comfortable in classes with a lot of guys than in classes with a lot of women. I took some counseling classes and I felt so awkwardly out of place. Yeah, it's just a different environment, I think, than the M.Div. classes where it was mostly male, and so I think I had more of a voice in the M.Div. classes sometimes because usually people were like, "What's your perspective because it might be different than ours?"

Riley expressed her experience of this at her denominational seminary: "I think that it's really really easy for me to speak up and state my opinion with my brothers in Christ, which I think shows that women are very well respected on campus."

**Female faculty and staff.** Another relationship addressed in the interviews was a relationship with female faculty and staff. This relationship was spoken of in half of the interviews.<sup>121</sup> Sometimes the female seminarians raised the issue of the lack of female faculty and staff. Amber stated to this effect, "Well, one thing I noticed here is that I haven't had a female professor at all since I've been here. . . . I kind of questioned, 'Why are there no female professors?'"

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<sup>121</sup>Eleven students from the inter/multidenominational context spoke of female faculty and staff and four of those from a denominational context.

Female professors and staff were often referenced specifically as being individuals who had been impactful to the women involved in the study. Students felt encouraged, guided, and understood by women on staff. They spoke of meeting with female faculty and staff on their campuses to discuss philosophy of ministry, the future, or to talk through challenges they faced in seminary. Linda, a student at an inter/multidenominational seminary, expressed both her gratefulness for a female faculty member at her institution and that faculty member's influence in her life, as well as the lack of mentorship available to women in theological graduate work:

[That professor], you know, she really was the one sole person that just spoke into the battle for women in theological training and seminary . . . that we do have a place there, and if it wasn't for her I think I probably would have taken the counsel to lessen my degree. No doubt about it. I'm sure you are hearing this, there's not the level of mentorship at the higher levels of education with women to help us fight that battle.

Other students also agreed more female faculty and staff members would be both beneficial and desired. One student expressed her desire for a dean of women who could care for the female students. Other participants expressed the value of relationships with people in seminary with whom they could relate. Clara, a student who attended an inter/multidenominational seminary and was in the ethnic minority, stated,

I would have loved to have encountered more women, number one, and two, more people of the minority . . . the people who I did develop relationships with, women professors and people of color, I so appreciated them, and I wish I would have encountered more of that as well in seminary.

**Challenges.** The women also described several challenges that arose from being a woman in seminary. These challenges included male camaraderie to the exclusion of females, limited opportunities as a woman, different learning opportunities or needs, assumptions made about them, and hurtful experiences they endured. One third of the students referenced a male camaraderie on campus in some shape or form, from which they felt excluded. The participants reported in their experiences on several campuses a separation between the two sexes. This divide was much more common to find in the transcripts from women at denominational schools than at inter/multidenominational



schools. Of the 10 women who spoke of this, 7 attended denominational schools. This divide between male and female students was often described as being present but not purposeful. Lucy, who attended a secular undergraduate school before attending a denominational seminary, found this separation puzzling. In answering a question related to contrasts in her undergraduate and graduate institutions, she said,

The biggest one to me, which gave me a little bit of grief internally of how to reconcile it spiritually, was the approach from men toward women and vice versa. There was a very big separation between the two, and it wasn't to say that the entirety of the seminary was against women being there or that women completely cut off all friendships with men, but there was a noticeable difference in their interactions and the interactions between both genders than anything I had ever seen before.

She went on to give an example of standing with three men on campus when a male peer approached and addressed everyone in the group individually, noticeably skipping her. Regarding this incident, she expressed, "It's not because he's not a nice person; it's because I'm a woman."<sup>122</sup>

Anna S. expressed that as much as she can as a woman, she tries to benefit from relationships with the professors, but that there are things male peers can do with the professors that she could not. She recalled sometimes thinking, "Man, I wish I could do x, y, and z; I probably can't, so what *can* I do with a professor?" Linda articulated this desire as well, saying,

There's just a handful of female professors and advisors, and so just over all [I] had a very positive experience and able to get what I needed from them, but through my observation and watching, what I grieved that I couldn't have was that just natural relationship with each of my professors. I watched how male professors would mentor and guide and shepherd their male students . . . like you could see the camaraderie in their offices, and you know, it was just like why do I only get that with my female professors, and again I'm going to be honest and say that that was partly me trying to figure out the tension in this newness, because I did watch some of my female peers not have as much struggle as me.

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<sup>122</sup>In a qualitative study involving interviews with ethnic minorities on seminary campuses, Benjamin Espinoza had a participant tell an almost identical story. A group of students that had one person who in the ethnic minority were talking together and the seminary president walked up and addressed every student except the one student in the ethnic minority. Benjamin Espinoza, "Toward the Many Colored Kingdom: Race and the Doctoral Experience at Evangelical Seminaries" (paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society of Professors in Christian Education, Dallas, October 27, 2017).

Besides limited opportunities with peers and professors, women in this study expressed other limited opportunities as female seminarians. These sentiments were equally represented across institutional types, with 6 women at denominational seminaries expressing this and 6 women at inter/multidenominational seminaries referencing limited opportunities. The women represented 8 of the 11 different institutions in this study. Some of the limitations mentioned were within the seminary, but many related to opportunities as women beyond seminary. Two women expressed realizing their degrees were liabilities, not assets, because they were women. Ruby, who desires to work with children in the church, told of a conversation with a professor where her female professor told her that her M.Div. is intimidating to pastors who are hiring, especially if they do not have a comparable degree. Mary spoke of experiencing a similar challenge in the ministry at the church she works at now that she has graduated; others feel threatened by her degree.

Several, even those who did not desire to be pastors, expressed the challenge of finding a position to serve in after seminary. Heather, whose plans changed through seminary, stated, “I’m kind of uncertain about what I will be doing and what’s the importance of having a Master of Divinity? The only good thing it is for, is to become a minister or a pastor of a church, when I felt like clearly that is not my calling at all.” Mary stated, “I think I know what [God] wants me to do, and then I try to do it, and I feel like I’ve run into some walls.” She elaborated later in the interview, saying, “My theory is that women can teach women, and women can teach children, and yet seminaries are not warm and fuzzy toward women, and church staffs are not warm and fuzzy towards women.”

Many who desire to teach in some capacity qualified their desires for their future when sharing. For example, one said, “Does that position exist? I have no idea, probably not,” and another, “If teaching on a seminary level is possible, and I realize we also live in a culture and time where women can’t do that or can’t do that as openly and freely as some might like, but I think potentially I would really like to do that.”

In addition to speaking to limited opportunities in the future, several expressed the challenges of educational differences in the seminary. Participants felt that the courses and discussions were often tailored more toward men. Claire expressed that while she loved her time in seminary as a woman, it required her to work harder as a woman to translate and apply what she learned. Ava, who attended a different denominational seminary than Claire, said,

Most of the classes are more geared to the guys. I had a class that wasn't even a preaching class, it was just a general class . . . assignments and lectures were all geared around "When you are a preacher, you will do this," or "What would you do if you were in this case?" but that's never going to happen.

Another participant described being in a class where there was a lengthy discussion of biblical manhood, but when it got to biblical womanhood, the list was rather short and predominantly revolved around modest dress. Others also expressed certain topics being dealt with at length and other topics being glossed over that were more relevant for women.

Several participants expressed the different needs women have as learners, recognizing that perspectives and application differ from one sex to the other. Laura, in her preaching class, considered the examples she shared to ensure they were relatable to her male peers, but she felt that males did not seem to think about the same thing for the females. She continued this thought, saying, "So a lot of their applications may be very male-centric, and it's just not a thought." She felt there seemed to be "ignorance of the fact that there is a female in the class and I think differently, or that illustration isn't applicable to what I'm doing, or even a thought of this is how we do ministry specifically." Mary expressed the freedom she felt, realizing some of these differences in how men and women lead and communicate:

I took a Preaching 3 class and was the only woman in there, and the men would make comments about things I had said or the way I had phrased things, and sometimes I would make comments to them, and I began to realize that men and women hear different, teach different, we think different, and . . . what hits the heart of a man is slightly different than what hits the heart of a woman, and so I began to take some of their comments with a grain of salt, because I think when you teach to women, they want to hear different things. I think we connect in a different way than men do, and I think it's so important. . . . I'm not a big proponent of women taking over

pulpits, but I am a big proponent of women sitting under the teaching of other women, because I think they get different things out of it.

Another difference in the realm of learning that some expressed was different expectations placed on them as women. Some of these comments were innocuous and were simply statements of different program requirements because of an institution's stance on women in ministry. Others were expressed with more sentiment or concern. For example, one student spoke of working for nine months to have an equal opportunity to pick a professor to study preaching under. The men had several professors to select from; women only had one, which she felt greatly limited her opportunity to learn and grow.

While several institutions were represented by participants discussing these differences in educational expectations, one institution in the inter/multidenominational category had 3 women express there were different standards in relation to coursework or academic advising. Jennifer spoke of the women at her seminary wanting to switch to a lesser degree and not receiving the pushback that the males did for the same choice:

I remember there were friends of mine, who were guys, who were kind of in the same boat of, "These languages are super hard; I'm going to go get out of it," and they really pushed those guys to stay. You had to basically have a super serious reason to get out of the program as a man, and as a woman they give you much less pushback.

She expressed that while the majority of professors have the same standards for men and women, a few had the idea that, as she put it, "Oh you're a woman; I'm not going to require as much out of you."

Hurtful experiences were another challenge seen for these women as women in seminary. The hurtful experiences participants had to endure included assumptions and comments that were made about them or to them. Experiences of hurtful situations were more often experienced by those attending inter/multidenominational schools.<sup>123</sup> Over one third of the women in this study expressed they had hurtful experiences in seminary and nearly half shared about assumptions that had been made about them as women.

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<sup>123</sup>Espinoza, "Toward the Many Colored Kingdom."

One woman spoke of bracing herself for certain conversations in classes. Stories were shared in the interviews of having things said about women in relation to the church fathers or Proverbs 31 that made women seem like temptresses or that women are the root of all evil. Another mentioned comments like, “Women are more hysterical,” or that if there were crisis situations “we just need to have a male leader to keep calm.” One had experienced male peers at an inter/multidenominational seminary leaving class because she prayed; another had male peers drop a homiletics class because she registered.

Several women were bothered by assumptions people would make about them. Among the expressed assumptions about women that bothered the women interviewed were that they were there to be a pastor, they were there to work with women and children, or they were there simply in the role of wife. Taylor H. said in her interview,

Everyone assumes I will be a women’s minister. The idea that my aim would be to be on a staff where I am ministering to people in general is crazy to people, whereas the men, it is assumed that they will be ministering to everyone. No one sees a man in seminary and says, “Oh! You’re going to be a men’s minister.” No one, you know, that would be so weird, so that probably is painful.

Lucy stated,

There’s always a lingering question of what I will do with what I am learning about. So with men it is always understood that they have the opportunity to become a pastor or to teach, and for women it’s always the assumption you are here to help raise the children or you are here to help specifically with a women’s ministry, and no, I want to do something that can still help everyone, and I still want to respect the biblical roles, but there was always that underlying assumption that was very troubling at times.

Bethany shared of conversations she had with peers,

“You are getting the M.Div.? What are you going to do with that?” Just this sort of unspoken assumption that some people, not everyone and mainly students, not professors, would have of what are you doing here as a woman getting an M.Div.? I guess I wish that many of these men and really people in the church too wouldn’t ask, “What are you going to do with that? You can’t be a pastor in [our denomination]!” I just wish it was more accepted in the church and in the seminary that it’s okay for women to learn about the Bible.

## **Personal Growth**

Over 80 percent of the participants in this study spoke of personal, spiritual growth in seminary. For some of them it was reflective: they recounted how much they

had changed during their experience. For others it was prescriptive: they expressed the necessity of personal growth being a part of seminary. This was often the result of being asked how they changed in seminary or being asked what an ideal seminary education should entail. These general statements of personal growth often related to discernment, wisdom, holiness, sanctification, spiritual disciplines, trust in the Lord, love for God, and love for others. Bethany had not expected or sought this growth when deciding to attend seminary, but she did experience it during her time in seminary. She shared,

I really wanted to sort of come here and gain some head knowledge. I want to learn the languages. I want to learn how to translate and I have loved learning those things, but . . . I didn't really understand how it was going to affect my heart and my life and relationships too.

Marie conveyed her personal growth during seminary in the following way:

I think the person I was when I started seminary is very different than the person I am when I graduated seminary. I think I've grown a lot. The Lord used this experience to carve out a lot of things I was idolizing. . . . I learned a lot academically but spiritually this time was really good to show me really what needed to change in my life in order to be devoted to Christ and not just trying to pretend devotion.

Similar statements were made by several other women in both institutional contexts regarding spiritual growth. In addition to the general statements regarding personal growth, several subthemes were observed, coded, and analyzed. These themes were humility, knowing oneself, confidence, and growth through challenges.

**Humility.** Over half of the female seminarians in this study either spoke of humility or of realizing how little they knew. This was split fairly evenly across institution type. They also valued seeing the trait in their professors. Several referenced professors being willing to say they did not know, or the professors respecting the students as fellow learners even though professors knew so much more. While the term humility was not referenced in past studies as a theme, the idea of being confronted with what one did not know was brought up by the undergraduates in Trentham's study.<sup>124</sup> The result of

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<sup>124</sup>Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 190.

learning in seminary often resulted in the realization that a student knew less than she had originally thought and that there was so much more that she did not know. Rose expressed this in the following quote taken from her interview:

I think something that really stuck with me at seminary about knowledge in general . . . the gentleman that founded [my seminary] . . . he's quoted around the seminary as saying all the time, "As the island of your knowledge grows, the shore line of what you don't know grows as well," and I love that line because the more you know the more you realize there's so much I don't know. It just kind of built a hunger to always be learning and always be humble when it comes to Scripture and theology and having those discussions.

Linda expressed that coming to seminary with a Bible college background she thought she could not learn much more. She then laughed and said,

Right. You know nothing sweetheart! and I graduated, and I laugh at my degree, and I'm sitting right in front of it right now. Master's of Theology . . . no, theology has mastered me. I mean . . . it humbles me because you learn how infinite our God is. I'm just going after it and I'm still going after it. I worked as a researcher for a year after graduating for biblical research, and I still don't have the answers, and now I'm teaching middle schoolers theology and literature, and I still don't have all the tools I need and so for me it humbled me. The view I had going into seminary was that I'm going to finally arrive. I'm going to know the Bible and now I am like, "No, no. You've learned enough . . . you've gained the tools in seminary to continue to learn for the rest of your life . . . that you have not arrived" [laughter] . . . and He keeps showing me that.

**Self-knowledge.** Participants further spoke of growth in understanding themselves. This emphasis on understanding oneself was closely split by institution as well with 6 participants from denominational schools making statements to this regard and 8 from inter/multidenominational schools. Terms were often used such as "one's story," or "understanding yourself." This often related to knowledge of God, knowledge of how God made them as individuals, their own strengths and weaknesses, and how they had been shaped, formed, and influenced by past experiences. For example, Patricia stated in her interview,

I think that's the purpose of seminary to grow in knowledge, and that's not just academic or theological knowledge, but understanding of yourself better. I think that's kind of the purpose of school in general. In your knowledge . . . understanding of Christ and who you are in Him.

Noelle spoke of “an intentional mucking up of your life that you have to interact with your story and how God has worked in your life,” and Taylor spoke of the encouragement at her seminary for students to go to counseling “to really understand yourself as a way to know God and understand yourself as a way to know how to love others.”

**Confidence.** Sixteen female seminarians spoke of growth in confidence. The areas of growth in confidence varied from teaching, interpreting Scripture, discernment, biblical knowledge, evangelism, researching, reading, or voicing perspectives. One student expressed her hope for how a seminary student would grow in seminary and later said that that was the same way she felt shaped in seminary: “My hope for any student in seminary is that they would leave feeling more confident in their own knowledge and convictions.” Jennifer expressed the following about what she appreciated most in seminary: “It’s really the ability to read the Scriptures for myself and really know confidently that’s what it says and that’s what it means.”

**Growth through difficulty.** Several participants also related instances of challenging circumstances that they valued because they saw the growth that resulted from those experiences. Anna S. spoke of having watched her dad go to seminary and as a result understanding it would be hard. She knew that “Satan would try to attack in seminary.” She did not realize, however, the great challenges she would face in seminary. In speaking specifically of the financial hardship and the spiritual battles that went along with it, she concluded that discussion with, “I’m different now because of that than when I came in.” Linda expressed that what she least enjoyed in seminary was the tension of being a woman in a theological setting, but she would not give that answer when first asked what she least valued because she said, “You know, the tension and the struggle had immense value.” Rose when asked if she would change anything about her seminary experience, said, “I don’t think so because even the experiences that were maybe hard or



that I didn't really understand at the time, but looking back, they are all things that have made me better or have made me more who I am now."

### **Coursework**

The women had much to say about personal growth in seminary, but they also had a lot to share with regard to the coursework. They brought up several courses or areas of study regularly in the interviews. These courses were evangelism, church history, preaching, biblical languages, and counseling.

**Evangelism.** Seven students mentioned evangelism. All but one instance were at denominational institutions. Sometimes it was in regard to a specific assignment, at other times to a specific course, still others as an emphasis at the seminary, and lastly as simply one's overall growth in confidence when evangelizing as a result of seminary in general. While evangelism was often described as out of their comfort zone, their exposure to it in seminary was often described as positive, even if it was to say that before they had misunderstood it, which is why it had been so challenging. Seminary often provided opportunities that shaped their philosophy and practice of evangelism. Ruby shared,

Here's an evangelism professor who really stands out in my mind . . . who really helped me see that my philosophy of evangelism and practice of evangelism were conflicting and that really, really shaped me, and I took this class as a winterim class for two days in my first winter, and that really shaped the way the rest of my time in seminary looked in terms of proactively engaging in evangelism, and I don't know how that would have happened if I never went through that.

**Church history.** Eleven participants mentioned church history in the interviews closely split between both institution types. These references were sometimes about a professor or class, but often was woven into conversation. Church fathers' beliefs or historic creeds were mentioned. Most of the time it was a reference supporting their knowledge or their faith, but sometimes it was a negative response to what church fathers had believed or taught regarding women. While some students referenced church fathers in classroom discussions they did not appreciate, a participant named Jodi was the only

student to specifically disparage the field of church history. She expressed being wary of church history, that she did not “know if there is another way to better beat someone over the head with patriarchy,” and that it was “oppressive to women.” The following statement by Jennifer, who, like Jodi, attended an inter/multidenominational seminary, was more representative of the statements in the study made by the women with regard to church history:

So there’s a class called the history of doctrine, and basically you just study through all of the creeds of the church, and you study all of the heresies and kind of see how our doctrine came to be, and I think what was so helpful about that class was that it really taught me what are hills to die on and what are sort of a flash in the pan and not that important, so that class was really important.

**Preaching.** Preaching or homiletics courses were mentioned 16 times by 13 participants. Participants who spoke on this topic were split rather evenly between the two institutional types, with 6 denominational seminary students referring to a preaching class and 7 inter/multidenominational students mentioning it. Women in the interviews sometimes spoke in irritation of preaching being the emphasis in classes that were not about preaching. They also spoke of the growth they experienced in preaching classes and the affirmation they received. They also spoke of the isolation they experienced as a woman in these classes or by being relegated to a different related class with different requirements. It was clear that preaching class was one of the areas in seminary where the women felt more of the tension of being a woman in a theological arena. Riley, who attends a denominational seminary said of differentiation in this area, “We have three preaching classes women aren’t allowed to take, and I’m all for that because I’m a complementarian, but I would like to see some maybe women’s ministry classes designed in place of those.” Taylor, who attends a different denominational seminary, said, “I would have loved to just be in a preaching class, and I was in the girl version of a preaching class,” Noelle, said of the same issue,

For women, it might be called communicating or giving a devotional, but it’s the exact same amount of work that has gone into it. It’s the same thing different label, and then we would go into two different labs in the course of our program . . . for

women M.Div.s, there was only one choice of professor for our homiletics lab . . . and so the instructor was not as qualified, had less probably teaching experience than I have had, was not as good academically to really help you learn and grow. Male M.Div. ordination track students had 15 or 20 maybe professors to select from. They could have “ stylistically this guy preaches like I do; he’s going to really help me continue in that path,” or “This professor doesn’t preach anything like me, and I’m going to learn so much because of the different style,” or different time that works for your schedule. . . . I respect the seminary’s opinion, but I think there is some space there that can still be respectful, and so that was hard.

**Biblical languages.** Seventeen of the 30 participants mentioned biblical languages as a part of their seminary experience. Some mentioned them multiple times throughout their interviews. Of the 17, 8 were denominational and 9 attended inter/multidenominational seminaries. Ten had very positive responses to the language courses or professors in those courses and desired more of the languages. Six participants had neutral mentions of the languages and only 1 participant had a negative stance on the languages.<sup>125</sup> Even the student who did not wish to study languages further saw a benefit from the study she had done:

I’m not going to be someone who studies the original Greek every day for my quiet time with the Lord. Instead I have been very encouraged in my study of the languages to trust the translation. A basic level of study of languages for translation has been one of the least favorite things, I guess, but what I’ve taken away from it as far as studying the translations has been very encouraging.

Several who were very positive about the languages also mentioned the immense challenge or difficulty of Hebrew and Greek. They had wondered if they could do them. A few of the participants mentioned their age being a challenge with the languages.

**Counseling.** Counseling had more mentions than any of the other courses or fields. Eighteen separate participants spoke of counseling. The references included the push at the seminary for students to receive counseling or a counseling class as a part of the seminary requirements or interacting with the counseling students, or having a

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<sup>125</sup>It was interesting to note that students with a positive response to the languages tended to have higher MID scores than those who made negative statements about the languages. Five students who had negative or neutral statements had a score of 233, while the two remaining had scores of 334 and 344. The scores of those who spoke positively about the languages were as follows: one instance of 333(4), one instance of BP 3/4, five instances of 334, and three instances of 344.

counseling emphasis as a part of their M.Div. These mentions overall were positive. The seminary students saw counseling as very practical for ministry and impactful for one's own life. For instance, Noelle stated,

Through some of the counseling requirements we have, and we had several counseling classes . . . there was a counseling practicum where we actually practiced in the safety of being supervised . . . especially for those who will be doing pastoral counseling in the future but for everyone, we are going to come across hurting and wounded people . . . how to navigate that, and in order to do that you kind of have to grapple with your own story, and be willing to be vulnerable, and move toward Jesus' grace and love.

Several women in this study were counseling others in different ministries outside of seminary, so the counseling classes were of great benefit and practical help. One student stated she took as many counseling classes as she could, while another said if had she taken the required counseling course sooner in her program, she would have taken more counseling classes in seminary. It was evident at these institutions that there were more women in counseling courses or programs than men and that some of the women felt more comfortable to speak in the counseling classes than in other classes. The counseling professors were seen as kind, understanding, and helpful. Many of the students were helped in their own lives through these courses. Riley described Introduction to Counseling as "probably the single most impactful class to me," and she told of a project she did in that class that gave her greater insight to her sin and described it as a "turning point in her life."

Many participants who were not in the counseling program also spoke to rooming with or being friends with counseling majors. Jennifer spoke of her friendships with those in the counseling program:

I felt like in the counseling program there was just a lot more . . . group work, but there was also just more camaraderie, which also makes sense just with the personality of the kind of person that would choose to do a counseling degree. So when I look back on my friendships I had some friends in [my program], but most of my friends were really from the counseling program.

## **Practical Nature of Studies**

Twenty-six of the 30 participants in some way referenced the practical nature, application, or working out of their studies. This was also a theme in past studies.<sup>126</sup>

Often the statements were in reference to application in the local church, helping others, lacking applied ministry skills, or wishing for either practical classes or a requirement for applied ministry. Sarah, a student at a denominational seminary, spoke to the lack of applied ministry skills in her program and her desire for them:

This could have to do with where I'm at in my program right now but as far as learning applied ministry skills . . . things like, you know, how do you relate to your lead pastor when you are on staff at a church or how do you really plan a discipleship program . . . especially for women or girls, so things that are kind of the more everyday tasks of ministry, I still feel lacking in that, but it could come my last year in taking applied ministry courses.

Natalie, who attends an inter/multidenominational seminary, spoke of her desire for training in “hands-on things” she would face in ministry:

What do you do when you have to write bylaws. I don't know any of that . . . weaving more of those courses into the program, I think, would have been more helpful to me instead of giving heavy Bible theology. Those are very important, but I think you can't have all Bible and no practice. I feel like a better integration of orthodoxy and orthopraxy, I would have liked more.

Patricia, who attends the same seminary as Natalie, shared her value for practical application of her studies:

But how are we living this out? How are we applying it? Do we practically love and care for the people God is entrusting to us? So I felt like at times it was just disconnected where I'm reading about this incredible argument on Greek. It's important, and I get it, and it informs my own understanding of Scripture and how I preach it or teach it or whatever, but at the same time there was just that missing aspect of the purpose of this is for you to better love and care for people . . . love and guide them into Christ's truth.

Anna S. spoke of her church being “a really helpful and practical outlet” where she could witness the doctrines from the classroom applied to everyday life. Some participants referred to knowledge and practice as two parts of education. Others referred

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<sup>126</sup>Cannon addressed this as a theme and Stuckert had noticed this in several parts of his analysis. Cannon, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates,” 116; Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 89.

to the two parts as textbook knowledge and wisdom or as people and theology. Mary said in this regard,

I think you need more hands-on experience. I know my undergrad degree is in education, and I remember thinking 3 ½ years of college did not do as much as one semester of student teaching, and I think that seminaries are remiss . . . to not require people to be working in churches as they go through seminary.

While many desired and praised the practical, Anna E., who received the highest MID in the current study, spoke of the practical classes, in her experience, falling short:

I think there were some classes I took in their attempt to be very practically driven, which has its merits in many ways, often left out the richness and depth I experienced in more meaty Bible and theology classes. I think in those situations, they were few and far between. . . . I still love and respect all the professors. In those experiences I found myself wishing for more . . . maybe more depth and . . . deep conversation and maybe more wrestling. I'm not sure exactly what it was, but I often found myself feeling like . . . we were not getting deep enough . . . that they were surfacy or I could kind of pass by writing my reflection papers and not be forced to really wrestle with the deeper things. In those things, I felt like I was missing out more.

The desire for knowledge to be applied is not the problem; Scripture clearly ties knowledge and obedience together. Even Perry recognizes an ethical nature to epistemology. Perhaps the challenge is that students jump to the practical application too soon or that they wish to just be told what to do instead of learning how to think and wrestling with deeper things, as Anna desired. If students can wrestle to think and understand deeper things, the practical application by believers will come because of the nature of knowledge and because God created thinking, feeling, and actions to be unified. Though each of these areas are bent and broken in a fallen world, they are being restored. Because thinking, feeling, and acting are meant to be unified, being told what to do and what not to do should not be the only goal or the end goal of education. Students need to be taught more than what to do, but to think and to desire more out of their education.

## **Community**

Given the emphasis on relationships when overviewing the epistemological development of women in the literature review and given that past studies have also seen

a theme of the priority of relationships, it was not surprising that the importance of relationships was woven throughout the interviews of these women in evangelical seminaries. They too, like other pre-ministry students in past studies, had a great deal to say about their professors' roles in their lives and spoke often of the pastoral nature of their professors. They spoke of influential relationships inside and outside of the seminary. They often spoke of others encouraging or initiating educational pursuits. Discussion within community was also seen to be valued by them in their education and in the forming of views.

**Discussion.** Discussion in community and learning from others was often how the women in the study evaluated conflicting beliefs, made decisions about what they believed, or evaluated the truth of their beliefs. Instances related to discussion were found in 25 of the 30 interview transcripts in this study. This was not surprising given the emphasis in the literature on relationship in women's pursuit of knowledge.<sup>127</sup> Mabel exemplified this idea of discussion, saying, "I think community is so important in the learning process . . . where it challenges me, and it usually ends up in a lot of different discussions on an issue and also just in general for your well-being."

Emma spoke to being surprised at first that someone's beliefs differed from her own, but she went on to express how that helped her evaluate her own beliefs. She said her first response to those she disagreed with would be "Whaaaaat?!!!!!" She then continued, "Then you go back and think, 'My goodness! They are right and I just completely missed it.' Changing my own beliefs if I realize that what they believe is more biblical than what

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<sup>127</sup>The female patterns for knowing in Baxter Magolda's work display this emphasis on relationship. In *Transitional Knowing* this is displayed through the centrality of relationships and through the collecting of ideas of others. In *Independent Knowing* this is displayed through focusing on connection and needing other's perspectives to help clarify one's own. Marcia Baxter Magolda, *Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender-Related Patterns in Students' Intellectual Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 30, 55.

I had held to.” She also spoke of that process and coming to a different conclusion than those she discussed it with. In this vein, she said,

I really value the input of other believers . . . especially those I know are really seeking the Lord and whom I trust. I hate to say whom I trust, but there really are people who you respect and trust their interpretation of Scripture more than others, and so if they are saying something I’m probably going to put a little more weight on that than what I come up with on my own . . . there have been people that who I really admire and respect and they said something I don’t agree with, and I don’t see in Scripture, so all of it you really have to take back to Scripture.

Participants also spoke of hearing what others had to say related to complicated issues. Some spoke to hearing different views, others of hearing from those they respected, and others of hearing from people who were related to whatever the topic was being discussed. One participant spoke of her position on illegal immigration shifting after having more interactions with immigrants. Hazel, in the following quote, exemplified this emphasis of listening to others or discussing with others:

What I thought had been cut and dry like “Of course that’s not the right perspective,” well now I’m meeting thoughtful intelligent people who aren’t so sure, and it really changed. Maybe I do still have the same position as before, but there’s a whole lot more substance to the other side.

Participants also spoke of being challenged by those who disagreed, and it helping them rethink an issue. Claire stated that she chose a seminary for the purpose of it challenging her in a specific area she was wrestling through:

One thing that played into my decision making was [my seminary] was complementarian in their beliefs and the other was egalitarian, and at the time I really wanted to be egalitarian but wasn’t sure and so I wanted a place that would challenge me in that and let me think it through really well, and I felt like [my seminary] would do that. That they would accept me if I landed on the other side, but that they would challenge that in me and provide that environment of giving me the best of the other viewpoint as I wrestled with this. . . . So that was really important to me, because I felt I had these gifts and a passion for teaching and pastoral gifts, and so it was really important to me to figure out what Scripture was saying about that.

**On campus.** Also related to community was the emphasis of being “on campus.” Half of the participants spoke to the benefits of being on campus or the opportunities that came with living with fellow students, eating in the dining hall, or just being together outside of class. Some students referenced that they wished there were



residential opportunities in the program in which they enrolled. Because the sample was limited to those who had taken very few units online, it was not surprising that some students referenced their dislike of online classes and expressed having chosen an on-campus experience because of the community of professors and peers that came with it. Laura said of her ideal seminary education, “I would have less online, because I think a lot of the spiritual development happens in class, meeting people face to face, and that’s lost online.” Some chose their seminary based on where they could physically attend, and several moved to attend a seminary on campus.

Emma, who attended a denominational seminary, spoke to the benefit she received from an on-campus experience. She said she felt better equipped for life and ministry because of being physically on campus and a part of that community. She spoke to “being able to see men and women live out their faith and having that live example.” Being on campus with others, according to participants, brought camaraderie, support, study, discussion, opportunities to ask questions and think things through, and fun. When asked how her peers had impacted her experience, Anna, who attended a denominational seminary, said,

I would say super positively. It was kind of like I always had someone at some point that I could ask a question or we could think through something we heard in class or just practically we could go get dinner and hang out and not talk about seminary stuff . . . there were times where we were just being regular young 20s . . . going out and getting popsicles . . . but there would also be times when we would sit down and talk about God’s sovereignty for hours, so it just kind of was an all-inclusive . . . sharpened my beliefs and helped me socially just to be a good friend.

In a response to a later question, she also said,

I would say one thing that came to my mind is community. I would always hold community in high regard, but I guess when you are living life with people, even including housing, almost like a college experience, basically together all the time . . . it just shapes you and shows where you are not so great and things you need to work on. It shows all those things. I think I’ll take that away from this when I am done with seminary and say though it could be a bubble and there are times where it feels like that, there are some really good things to learn about living life in community.

One student referenced her experience having been both on and off campus during her time in seminary: “I noticed the difference when I moved off campus . . . not

as much time for meeting people and getting together.” She had been glad to get off campus, but also said the following, showing the value she placed on what she gained from living on campus: “[On campus housing] is very small and very outdated, so a lot of people try to get off as soon as possible, which is probably not super helpful for relationships.” Mabel, who attended a non-denominational seminary with no housing opportunities, expressed her desire for on-campus community:

I know some people that went to Princeton, and most of them that went there actually lived on campus, so it was more of a communal experience, which I so wish was more a part of it. I’m thankful for my scholarship group where we have mandatory events to get together, but at the end of the day some of us live . . . an hour away, so that can be kind of rough . . . so communally I think it would be really cool if there was decent-priced, on-campus housing.

**Peers.** Peers were generally seen as a positive part of the seminary experience. Patricia, when listing the most impactful relationships, even put peers above her professors. Her peers came second in influence only to her mentor. Lucy also spoke in her interview to the impact of her friendships in seminary:

I would say the greatest impact that I’ve had has been the friendships that I made. It’s been really encouraging to hear and get to know on a very personal level all of these people in very different walks of life being together at seminary and seeing how it is that God is using them.

Abbey had similar sentiments:

I would say actually something that most stands out to me are just friendships that were built during that time with professors and fellow students. I think that those friendships were a big part of my seminary experience and why I found it such a rich time, and so I think that those friendships play a huge part.

Participants in seminary felt they were “doing it together” with their peers. Friends provided support and encouragement. Female peers often met up regularly to support one another. Heather, described this, saying,

I was kind of nervous because I didn’t know if getting my M.Div. was going to be the thing for me or if I was going to be good at it or anything like that. I was also a little under-confident about being able to make relationships due to how demanding the masters is. . . . Once we stepped into that luncheon, a group of us girls got together and said, “Can we sit together?” and we all were just like, “Yeah, let’s do this!” and we’ve been friends throughout the entire seminary experience, and it’s been fantastic with them, because they are my core group that help me get through

everything . . . through the ups and the downs, and it's just been wonderful to have that support.

Jodi said of her experience with peers in seminary,

I had safe people to process with. I had people who understood what I was going through. It's a little bit of a unique experience . . . a subculture where women are in the minority and are still unequal in the population . . . and we are interested in the same subject matter.

Anna E. similarly spoke of processing with people. She saw this as being connected to her formation in seminary:

Maybe one other thing . . . another formative aspect of my education. I went through seminary with a few really close friends. One girl I actually grew up with, we moved down here together. . . . Her name is Julie and having her as a roommate throughout the whole process of seminary was super formative, because all hours of the day we could be learning and processing and talking through our classes and our conversations, and I also started dating my now husband in seminary, and we were in a lot of classes together, and those two relationships throughout the seminary experience, in addition to other peers and professors, were super, super formative, and I think gave me even more space to really, really wrestle even outside the classroom, but it was very safe and very connected to the classroom.

While in general peers were a positive component to a seminary education, 4 participants, from 4 different institutions, mentioned the competition or comparison present among peers in seminary. This was seen as a negative part of their experience. It was mentioned as an issue with fellow students, and it was often expressed that it was absent in what they observed in their professors.

**Professors.** It was not surprising to find that professors and relationships with professors were an important part of seminary for the participants. Many female seminarians saw relationships with their professors as the most impactful relationships during their seminary career. They spoke of getting to know professors and watching their professors' lives. They appreciated the access they had to professors and noted the continued support and help they could access after graduation because of their relationships with their professors. Anna S. referenced the continued opportunities with professors after graduation, saying,

I have so many professors from now until the day they die or I die . . . with questions . . . I have massive resources. Just for questions and things I might encounter, and then I would just say obviously their teaching was formative for me, whether that

meant sharpening things for me or like I said providing a different perspective . . . they are the ones that taught me the material, so yeah I read a ton, wrote a bunch of papers, there were things I did on my own, and or were influenced by outside writers and thinkers, but they are the ones who were synthesizing and that I'm spending hours with every week, so I recognize how much of an impact they had in the classroom and basically how much of an impact on the rest of my life, because I'm never going to lose on my mind and heart to some extent what they taught me.

Many spoke of the care and mentorship they received in their relationships with professors. Twenty-one of the women interviewed reference their professors being pastoral. They spoke of the professor's counsel, advice, prayer, personal ministry, genuine care, making time, walking with the students through hard circumstances, or helping them wrestle through difficult theological issues. There was a consensus that the professors had the students' interests at heart and cared about their spiritual lives, not just their intellectual growth. This was present in past studies as well.<sup>128</sup> This was seen in Abbey's and Riley's understanding of a professor's role. The following are their respective quotes:

[A professor is] someone who is serving in the role of a pastor at the same time . . . so not only facilitating and helping guide and form people to think and read Scripture carefully and understand who God is, but also to be with students as they are wrestling through those questions and kind of pastor them along the way.

The best seminary professors, I would say . . . the best are ones who not only care about the scholarly growth of students but the personal growth of students. That's going to come from a man who has not only spent years as a scholar, but as someone who loves the local church.

Riley and Jennifer, respectively shared of their personal experiences with pastoral professors:

I have sat in his office countless times talking about Calvinism and the sovereignty of God and trying to work all that out and . . . really if I had to pick one professor who is responsible for why I think the way I do about God, it would be him. He's the best, and he really cares about students . . . yeah he just really wants the students to be like Christ. He dedicates time to his students.

There were several that really helped me personally through some hard things that happened . . . I felt like they were very invested not only in my academic life but also in my spiritual formation. . . . I think honestly when I talk to people about [my seminary] I say the professors are the best thing they have going for sure.

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<sup>128</sup>Trentham, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 185; Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 114; Long, "Evaluating the Epistemological Development of Pre-Ministry Undergraduates," 105-6.

The following quote shows one student's assessment that she learned more about ministry from relationships with professors than she did in the classroom: "To be true and honest, I do think there was a lack of ministerial type of courses that actually prepare you more for it, and I think a lot of my pastoral side of things were learned through the relationships with the professors more than it was the content in a class."

Many professors and administrators were specifically named for their impact in a student's life. The women spoke of impactful conversations at a graduation barbeque, or a prayer of commissioning on the last day of class, or of a professor sharing with a student about how he had watched the student come out of her shell at seminary, or a professor helping a student think of herself as a theologian and getting her involved at The Evangelical Theological Society. Jennifer referenced the following conversation with a professor twice in her interview because of how it had challenged and impacted her:

When I asked that professor about how to integrate my Th.M. with my M.A. in counseling, he just looked at me and said, "Listen, the Bible is the only objective truth that we have, and so no matter what is going on, you are always going to come back here." And he kind of likened it to when you are wallpapering a room. . . . He said, "You have one place that you measure in the middle of the room, and if you don't go back and check with each piece you put up, it will be totally wonky and won't look right," and he said that's what we do with Scripture whether it is a ministry position or trying to help a counselee or whatever. This is still the truth no matter what is going on.

While a couple students expressed being intimidated at first by professors, they shared stories of their professors being encouraging, welcoming, and disarming. Claire was one such student. She shared the reason why one of her professors was the most impactful:

He was one of those people who really pursued a relationship with me, and he is very intimidating. I mean he is incredibly intelligent and just the kind of person that I certainly started out being very nervous around, but he just didn't let me stay that way, and he saw the gifts that I had and just kind of picked those out and told me them, and I was not used to being seen in that way, so he was hugely impactful and just had me come to office hours when I would never have signed up for that on my own and kind of opened the door to me being in relationships with more professors but also just with him.

**Local church.** As in previous studies with pre-ministry students, the local church was often spoken of by participants. Twenty-three of the participants mentioned

the church. The church was seen as a context for applying what was learned; it was considered a “massive outlet for service.” It was also a place where participants could grow. A participant named Joelle said of her growth during seminary, “I’m not sure so much that it was the actual seminary that contributed to my personal growth as much as being a part of the church during that time.”

The church was seen as a place for relationships and support. Ruby, who attended a denominational seminary said the following when asked about the impact of her involvement in her local church during seminary:

I couldn’t have imagined not having been a part of a church while in seminary . . . for a place to utilize what I’ve been learning but another environment that is a Christian environment that I can be with other believers that’s not seminary, that’s not just a bunch of people that are brainiacs. They are good people, but I don’t know. . . . I joke with people that seminary people aren’t real people sometimes, just because I feel like they are a special cut of people, and I guess I am one of them. Just to be around believers that aren’t having the same conversations over and over again that people in seminary tend to have, and they are good conversations, but it is just refreshing to be in a church, and I was in a church that didn’t have a lot of seminary students, so just to rub shoulders with believers who are living like every-day, normal life.

Local church pastors or lay leaders sometimes served as mentors to the participants. The church also helped people adjust to a new area and to seminary. It was also a reason some participants stayed in the area after seminary.

The local church was also seen as a place that was impactful on one’s beliefs. Several mentioned forming their beliefs within the community of a church. For example, where they attended church shaped certain secondary issues, like women’s roles. While church shaped beliefs, seminary also shaped beliefs about the church. Seminary was seen as a time where participants’ ecclesiology grew. Marie, in her interview, stated that her seminary education emphasized in her mind that “ministry is church-based,” and that she hoped to “learn how to better serve the local church” after seminary. Emma spoke of the impact in her life of studying Scripture and seeing “God’s heart for the local church.”

Mabel shared the following when asked what most stood out to her:

I would have to say probably my growth in my perspective on the church . . . thinking back to before I had started seminary. I had been leading a college group for a while

. . . and all of my ideas were very much based on my own experience, and seminary has really forced me to challenge so many of my views, so I would say it has really challenged me to grow in my understanding of ecclesiology.

While the local church was predominantly seen in a positive light, 2 students expressed difficult church situations they had wrestled through, and 1 spoke to the challenge of learning the material she was learning and knowing what the church should be versus what she was seeing in her local church. Others expressed involvement in a local church but a lack of opportunities for internship or ministry opportunities there.

Linda spoke to this issue:

One thing they tell you in seminary is make sure you are active in the church and using your gifts in the church, and for whatever reason God continued to frustrate that for me and even though the church I was at knew I was at seminary, a lot of . . . professors actually attended that church . . . the door just never opened for me to do any internship or any ministry in the church.

**Marriage.** The role and impact of a spouse for those in seminary was something Stuckert had not planned to ask about, but that he began to probe for after many of the male seminary students spoke of discussions with their wives. While a question on the interview protocol for this study was about being single or married in seminary, because of time limits, many of the students in this study were not asked that question. Still much can be seen from those who were asked or from the content on marriage and singleness that came up in the interviews. In those comments, marriage was seen to be valued, but singleness was seen to provide a flexibility and freedom for women in seminary that married students did not have. One participant spoke of there not being too many married women taking classes because they postpone their education at times because often the husband's classes take priority. Claire said the following: "I am really glad I went through seminary single. I think it gave me a lot more free time to put a lot more effort into my schoolwork instead of having to worry about other people in my family . . . so I think that is really helpful." Singles were seen to have less to balance during their time in seminary.

Married women spoke of the challenges of working, running their homes, and being in seminary. Some spoke of homeschooling while in seminary or having a business.

One spoke of having babies during seminary and the challenge to balance the work load while not getting much sleep and having others to care for. Married women often lived off campus, which made it harder to meet classmates or work on things with their peers. Married women also did not have the flexibility their single peers did to move to another state for an available internship.

Still, the married women had support from their families. Married women in the study spoke of regularly having conversations with their husbands and even with their older children to assess if they should continue in seminary. When answering a question about the most impactful relationships during seminary, Linda said about her husband's support in seminary,

Okay, I can say first of all without a shadow of a doubt I would not have made it through four years . . . without my husband being my number one cheerleader. . . . Yes, he was there to catch my tears. He was there as God was changing me from the inside out. . . . He was there saying, "You are there. God has told me you were supposed to be there." . . . He wouldn't let me throw in the towel and quit. He helped me to see that. He helped me to see my gifts and even though he was paying a heavy price for that, and so were our children, we were homeschooling our children at the same time, by the way. . . . This is a sacrifice God has asked us to make, and we had this little test that I told him that we would do at the end of each semester. I would ask him and I would ask the kids, "Am I supposed to keep going? Is this too much?" . . . and at any point if the sacrifice was too great they could say so . . . so first my husband and then my kids.

Being married or being single was seen to have an effect on community in seminary. A married women expressed feeling isolated on campus in a "culture of singles" and feeling like the odd ball out; and a single participant expressed the difficulty of being single in the married culture at her seminary. One single participant felt that the single population was overlooked. Married and single participants reflecting on the difference of being married or single in seminary expressed there were challenges in one's own status and challenges for those with the other marital status. Many agreed that married and single students should interact more than they did on the seminary campuses. Claire, when asked how her experience as a single seminary student differed from her married peers, said,

I think it is very different in terms of community. I made some really good friends who were married, but a huge percentage of my friends were single, and I feel like most of the married people only had married friends, which I think is a shame, but I



also think that it is comfortable in terms of what you can find as far as community goes. A huge percentage of the students at [my seminary] are married, so there was a smaller group to choose from in terms of friendships with single people but also more free time for them.

**Encouragement and support.** Seminary was a wonderful but challenging time in participants' lives. Many of them referenced the support and encouragement that helped them get to seminary and then carried them through seminary. This area was seen already in discussing their peers, professors, local church, and husbands, but it was evident in other ways or more specifically than previously addressed. Many said they would not have pursued an M.Div. or would not be pursuing Ph.D. programs in the future, had someone not recommended it or encouraged them in scholarly pursuits. The following quotes are examples of this frequent refrain:

I'm sure you have learned with your own school experiences of higher education, especially Christian higher education for a purpose . . . is definitely a time of sanctification. There were a lot of things I went through in the last three years, both personally and family things that happened and vocationally, and having that encouragement and support, people praying for me, people who were willing to help me think through things that were happening and just give perspective on it. Just having the community in seminary was important for me persevering.<sup>129</sup>

Some of the professors at seminary have been incredibly encouraging in so many ways, be that with missions or Ph.D. studies or anything . . . and one of them . . . has become a really great proponent in me furthering my education. . . . They've encouraged me by reading what it is I've written, just outside of what has been required in the classroom, or meeting up with me to have coffee and discuss what is going on.<sup>130</sup>

One particular professor who had her Ph.D. saw things in me and she saw some of the counsel or heard some of the counsel I was getting to go the route that most women went, and they weren't intentionally trying to discourage me, but they knew the battles when I didn't know the battles, so they were like, "You just need to do your master's in education and go on and do your doctorate of ministry," because my heart was to minister to women, and I was like "Okay, maybe that's what I need to do," but yet I knew I needed the languages, and I knew that I was a teacher, and I don't feel like if I switch out of a Th.M. that I'm going to have the tools to be accountable . . . so one of the Th.M. professors . . . pushed me to keep pushing against all of the tension in saying, "You are in the right program. You need the languages." She got me involved with the Evangelical Theological Society . . . going to the annual

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<sup>129</sup>Participant Carley L., interview with author, June 28, 2017.

<sup>130</sup>Participant Lucy M., interview with author, July 14, 2017.

meeting . . . being involved as a theologian . . . calling myself a theologian. Allowing myself to say, “You see things that God wants you to share with the world,” and then just pushing me on to do Ph.D. studies.<sup>131</sup>

### **Evaluation of the Research Design**

Given that no research had previously been done to assess the epistemological development of women in seminary, the qualitative, phenomenological research design for this project was most conducive to exploring and evaluating their intellectual and ethical development. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to elicit the views of the participants freely, resulting in gathering the data necessary to be rated by the CSID to receive MIDs, the data necessary to assess the presence of priorities and competencies according to Trentham’s Taxonomy, and allowed for extensive data to explore themes. All of this allowed for the research questions to be answered with regard to the participants’ epistemological development in general and to explore the impact of institution type.

The data, analysis, and findings in this study will benefit current and future female seminary students, as it lends insight into the training received in seminary and gives students something to which they can compare their own experience. Seminary faculty, staff, and administrators will be encouraged in seeing the care, impact, and growth reflected in women’s statements in the interviews. The interviews also elicited a great deal of data by which to understand the thinking and experiences of this minority population on seminary campuses. This research can be used to lend further support and resources to growing and educating this population. This resource will also aid the church in considering how to support, equip, and utilize women as women and how to advise female congregants with regard to seminary.

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<sup>131</sup>Participant Linda C., interview with author, September 21, 2017.

## **Strengths**

There were many strengths to the research design in this project. One was the participant recruitment. Though fewer institutions were able to provide participants than I would have hoped, contacting many institutions allowed me to get valuable data even from schools that had no women who met my criteria enrolled. Also, contacting multiple institutions meant the sample was more diverse than in some of the previous studies. The sample in this study represented 11 different institutions, including 2 international students and 1 student studying outside of America. This broader sample allowed for greater comparison of similarities and differences and better reflects the nature of seminary education for women.

Once recruited, the research design was also helpful in eliciting participants' responses. This skill was improved and refined through the pilot study and with the input of William Moore of the CSID and John David Trentham, my supervisor. This allowed me to build better rapport with participants, to assess when the participant did not answer the question, and to know better when to probe or when not to probe if they had already answered different areas of the protocol. This skill, along with the phone interview format, and because I was a woman interviewing women, allowed me to gather data on a wide variety of aspects of participants' lives. The phone interviews also allowed for data collection beyond the protocol. Aspects of female seminarians' worlds, responsibilities, challenges, and passions were observed as a phone interview was interrupted unexpectedly by a crying baby who was supposed to be napping, or as a participant had to warn me she was on call for her job and we might have to be interrupted, or as participants had to reschedule for various reasons. Participants also dialogued about their passion for women's theological education and the current study after the interview. Two also prayed for me in my pursuit.

As a replication study, the research design was not only helpful in the continued assessment of pre-ministry students, but it allowed for a comparison between male and female seminarians. Past exploration into the intellectual and ethical development of

women was often compared with drastically different populations of men. While the interview protocol was adapted for this study with the literature in mind, and while slight adjustments were made in light of the literature, such as eliminating an age requirement, the study closely paralleled Stuckert's research assessing the epistemological development among male seminary students. With the view that God created men and women similarly as humans, but different as males and females, this research was a worthy pursuit to further understand the patterns, perspectives, and experiences of this population of female seminary students.

In utilizing Trentham's Taxonomy for Epistemological Priorities and Competencies, this research continued to develop the taxonomy as a tool for further usefulness in assessing theological education. This research design also allowed for further inquiry into the realm of epistemological development among pre-ministry students. Stuckert's study continued to develop the field by looking at a graduate population as opposed to the under-graduate populations in the prior studies. While his was a single gender sampling of males, this study was a single gender sample of females. The following was written by Stuckert with regard to his study, but is also true of this study:

In another respect, this population is a continuation of previous studies. The previous studies were composed of students who were pre-ministry and likely to attend seminary. This current study can be conceived of as a cross-sectional study or even a quasi-longitudinal study in that it examines a slightly older population that is representative of what the samples before were heading towards, i.e. the successful completion of a seminary education.<sup>132</sup>

## **Weaknesses**

While there were many benefits to the research design, in hindsight, several adjustments would have improved the study. The Thesis Study Participation Form would have been better utilized with some slight changes. In asking participants if they self-identified as egalitarian, complementarian, or neither, definitions for the terms should have

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<sup>132</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 62.

been provided or the participants should have been asked to define the term they identified with. The interviews revealed a wide spectrum of positions for the terms. It would have also been useful on the participation form to gain permission to record the interviews. This permission was received verbally on each phone call, but one institution in granting permission to include their students was looking for this on my participation form. They allowed me to proceed since I was already gaining verbal permission, but this addition to the participation form would have provided greater clarity and simplicity. Instead of asking for a year of birth or a start date and an expected end date for participant's seminary careers, it would have been clearer to ask for age and for the time it took them to complete their degree. It would have been useful on the form to also ask about on-campus jobs during their seminary education, given three students mentioned the impact of working at the seminary in understanding the culture or impacting their relationship with the faculty or administration, as well as several others mentioning being TAs for their favorite professors.

Another area of the participation form that was a weakness was the rating and ranking portion. While it was necessary to include both, because of the improvement the ranking provided, and the data for comparison with Stuckert's study that the ratings provided, for future studies I would recommend simply using the ranking. Having both sometimes was confusing to the participants and also provided more data than was necessary. Another weakness in this regard was not matching more closely to Stuckert's study when it came to the ratings. His likert scale was comprised of the following: least important, somewhat unimportant, neutral, somewhat important, most important, while mine were labeled: not important, slightly unimportant, neutral, important, very important. While I changed the wording to be more user-friendly, the choices provided may have elicited different answers from the participants in this study than if the same labels Stuckert used in his study had been used. This change in wording affected the data comparison. Because the differences were slight, the ratings between Stuckert's study and this study were still compared.

With regard to the Kintner Interview Protocol, this study would have been aided by adding additional questions or prompts regarding common grace or what made Scripture authoritative or unique. The participants had a challenging time articulating God's nature as being metaphysically ultimate and revelation being the most basic component for knowledge and development. They often made statements about Scripture being ultimate, but did not demonstrate that Scripture was revelation and did not articulate the importance of other forms of revelation. Undergraduates did not struggle to articulate priority 1A, nor did they have the same theme present of *Nuda Scriptura*. Stuckert presumed it was assumed by seminarians and therefore not articulated. Perhaps this is the case necessitating these additional questions.

My research would have been further aided by better utilizing and keeping track of emails. Each email sent to an institution, participant, or to a fellow researcher, such as Jonathan Stuckert, John David Trentham, or William Moore, was valuable data to be considered for the project. As I did not understand the value at the time, it took more work to go back through inboxes and sent folders to examine and utilize those emails. For future research, I would recommend saving all emails related to the project in a folder. Email could have also been further utilized to gather more data. Participants gave permission for follow-up questions to be sent by email, but with time limitations and the rich data provided in the interviews, this was not utilized.

Another weakness identified in the research is the homogenous sample. While several institutions were contacted, the limited nature of the population did not allow for being selective, but necessitated utilizing the institutions and participants that responded to my invitation. In the end, 11 of the 15 participants from denominational seminaries were affiliated with a Baptist denomination. Nine of the 15 were specifically from Southern Baptist schools. The remaining 4 participants in the denominational category were all from one seminary. After recruiting 1 student at a seminary in Canada who had immigrated there from Asia and 1 student who was from Canada who was studying in the United

States, I pursued unsuccessfully to incorporate more international students or students studying abroad for an additional comparison in my study. ATS seminaries in Puerto Rico and in Canada were contacted but did not respond. As both participants studying outside their country of origin spoke of the impact of moving to a new country or the opportunity available to them that would not have been available in their own country, and as both students received MID scores that were slightly above the mean for the sample, further participants in this category would have allowed for comparison and analysis.

Another weakness in this study was additional categories that would impact epistemological development that could not be considered or controlled. This study dealt with institutional context and addressed the impact of being a female in seminary. Countless additional factors, such as the impact of studying in another country, the conservative or progressive leanings of the institution, or a student's alignment with their seminary could not be explored in this study. Some of those might have been more influential on development than sex or institution type.

This research was also likely affected by my limitations as a researcher. In evaluating the transcripts later, I found many aspects that I wished I had probed or clarified during the interview. Also, while it was a strength of this research to have a woman interviewing women and to have one researcher coding all of the interviews for consistency, the research could have been improved by having a male and a female code the interviews together or at least multiple people. While the interviews by someone of the same gender might elicit freer responses by participants, comparison of the studies could be improved by having a male and a female researcher code all of the interviews done on male and female seminary students. Stuckert in assessing his research design suggested the importance of critical distance, because in being so close to the population he too easily "filled in the blanks" and did not probe.<sup>133</sup> Perhaps there are also ways where

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<sup>133</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 109.

being a woman both in interviewing women and analyzing their responses or for Stuckert being a man interviewing men and analyzing their responses did not provide the critical distance that having both a man and a woman analyze the responses of the men and the women would have provided.

Further studies could also be improved with a more detailed analysis or scoring according to Trentham's Taxonomy. The MID allows for assessing individual statements in an interview and assigning a score for the participant. Currently, the taxonomy is being utilized by just noting if that particular priority or competency exists anywhere in the transcript. As a student might represent a position 2 according to the Perry Scheme in one response or a position 5 in another response, so with the priorities a student might make a strong statement of a priority in one instance and a weak representation in another or even contradict the same priority later. The current system also does not allow for determining the strength of the presence of a priority in a student's understanding. Sarah A. and Lucy M., for instance, were both assessed to have the priority of wisdom-modes of thinking. Sarah A. had four strong statements exhibiting this priority, including the following:

I think that knowledge is kind of . . . so if we are thinking about the foundation of the house . . . so we would have the truth of God's word and the ability to know Him and seek Him, but knowledge is the stuff that is built on top of the foundation. . . . I'm going to receive a lot of knowledge at seminary, but also I'm going to learn how to apply that knowledge in my life and church and ministry. . . . I think that truth is again that foundation that knowledge is built upon, but then there is also falsehood that knowledge can be built on. Knowledge and wisdom kind of are synonyms, and yet they are different terms because knowledge is maybe just knowing facts and which is necessary, but wisdom is the ability to discern between is my foundation truth or is my foundation.

Lucy, on the other hand, only exhibited one vague statement evidencing this priority, yet received the same credit for possessing the priority. She said,

While I now have textbook knowledge in different areas, it doesn't necessarily mean I have street smarts, and I think that seminary sometimes impresses upon its students that if you have one you don't need the other, but no, you need both. It's both . . . so while I think I have a good base of textbook information, it's now living my life and putting that to use and seeing how the Holy Spirit works through it.

These different responses with the same assessment show the need for a more nuanced way of assessment using the taxonomy.



While there were both weaknesses and strengths to this research, valuable insights came out of this study. The current chapter has spoken about the multi-faceted data analysis and the findings that resulted. Conclusions for this study are presented in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

In assessing the epistemological development among women in seminary, the previous chapters of this thesis have presented the place of this topic, the precedent literature, the methodological design of the study, and the analysis of the findings. This chapter will summarize the research purpose, the research questions, the implications, and the application of the project, while also addressing the research limitations and further research to be completed on the subject.

#### **Research Purpose**

This study explored epistemological development among female seminary students in evangelical institutions. This assessment was done utilizing William Perry's scheme of intellectual and ethical development as a theoretical lens along with Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies. The impact of varying institutional contexts on the participant's epistemological development was considered, namely denominational and inter/multidenominational institutions. The study also gave attention to the contextual realities and experiences of women who attend seminary.

#### **Research Questions**

The research purpose was pursued by asking the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between female students' attendance at various evangelical seminaries and progression through the positions of intellectual and ethical maturity according to the Perry Scheme?
  - a. What is the relationship between attendance at a denominational seminary and progression through the positions of intellectual and ethical maturity according to the Perry Scheme?

- b. What is the relationship between attendance at an inter/multidenominational seminary and progression through the positions of intellectual and ethical maturity according to the Perry Scheme?
2. What is the nature of epistemological development among women in evangelical seminaries when assessed according to Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies?
3. What contextual issues and themes emerge from female evangelical seminarians as they express their perspectives related to epistemological positions and values?

### **Research Implications**

Guided by the research questions, this section will discuss the research implications of this study. A summary list will be given of research implications, followed by sections dealing with implications from the data forms and implications for each of the research questions.

### **Summary of Implications**

1. Participants reported the importance of the influence of professors to their seminary experience at the highest rate.
2. Participants reported the importance of supervised field education to their seminary experience at the lowest rate.
3. Demographically, female seminary students were strikingly similar to male seminary students.
4. The element that most differentiated female students who attended denominational seminaries from those who attended inter/multidenominational seminaries was whether or not they subscribed to a confession.
5. Epistemological positioning and maturation of female seminarians according to the Perry scheme falls within the range of the positioning and maturation of pre-ministry undergraduate students in previous studies and with college undergraduates in general.
6. Epistemological positioning and maturation, according to the Perry scheme, for female seminary students in this study is generally consistent with that of the male seminary students in a prior study.
7. Students attending denominational seminaries reflect an earlier epistemological position according to the Perry scheme than those who attend inter/multidenominational seminaries.
8. The most common epistemological priority possessed by female seminary students was a preference for higher-level forms of thinking according to Bloom's taxonomy.
9. The priority or competency that was least present in female seminary students was a

pursuit of personal development that results from mutual interdependence and reciprocity in one's relationships with authority and peers.

10. The priority where female seminary students seemed to most excel in comparison to past studies was in a clear articulation of the relationship between faith and rationality.
11. The category of the taxonomy that was represented the most consistently among female seminary students was Category I, "biblically-founded presuppositions for knowledge and development."
12. The category that was seen to be the most infrequently observed in female seminarians was Category 3, "personal responsibility for knowledge acquisition and maintenance within community."
13. One of the most distinguishing elements differentiating students who attended denominational seminaries from those who attended inter/multidenominational seminaries was a pursuit of personal development that results from mutual interdependence and reciprocity in one's relationships with authority and peers.
14. In this study, a weak correlation was observed between the variable of participants' MID scores and the variable of the number of epistemological priorities and competencies.
15. Among females in evangelical seminaries, preferences for active involvement in the teaching and learning process may be indicative of higher positions of epistemological development according to the Perry scheme.
16. Female seminary students, like male students, described their development in terms of biblical knowledge, practical application to ministry, and spiritual growth.
17. Relationships during seminary were seen to be essential to the process.
18. Uniquely among the female seminary students, a common voice was narrative or story.
19. For female seminary students, discussion was seen to be an important part of education since it helps a person refine her own positions or decisions.
20. Students who self-identified as complementarian generally reflected an earlier stage of epistemological development according to the Perry Scheme than those who self-identified as egalitarians.
21. Students who reported holding to a confession reflected an earlier stage of epistemological development according to the Perry Scheme than those who did not hold to a confession.

### **Thesis Study Participation Form Implications**

**Participants reported the importance of the influence of professors to their seminary experience at the highest rate.** According to participation form data,

female students at Evangelical Seminaries in both their ratings and rankings of influential factors assessed professors to be most influential. Twenty of the thirty participants rated their professors as “very important,” while other influences received anywhere from six to seventeen ratings of “very important.” Professors were often ranked as most influential above the other factors of peers, reading, seminary culture, local church, and field education. Twelve participants ranked professors first, with the closest in comparison being peers, with only six participants ranking it as most important. The influence of the professors was also seen to be true throughout the interviews as women named specific professors and their specific influences or as they spoke in general terms about the importance of professors. Professor’s importance to male seminary students was also was also seen in Stuckert’s study.<sup>1</sup>

**Participants reported the importance of supervised field education to their seminary experience at the lowest rate.** Supervised field education was also reported at the lowest importance by the male seminary students in the prior study.<sup>2</sup> More females, however, rated supervised field education in the very important or important categories than male students did. Although supervised field education received more instances of the highest ranking than reading or seminary culture did, it also received more votes for the lowest ranking than any other influential factor. Slightly higher interest in supervised field education for the female seminarians than for the males in the previous study may reflect the lack of opportunities women have in ministry and in the church. Stuckert suggested that male seminary students did not see supervised field education as important because of the opportunities they had for service and experience in the church.<sup>3</sup> Male

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<sup>1</sup>Jonathan Derek Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 114.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 115.

seminary students rated local church involvement as second to their professors for influential factors. For females, however, church did not have as high of ratings. In their interviews they also spoke of a need for more hands-on experience and expressed frustration at times over the lack of opportunities for them in churches.

**Demographically, female seminary students were strikingly similar to male seminary students.** With regard to data received on participation forms, there were several similarities between the female students in the current study and the male students in Jonathan Stuckert's study. In fact the male and female samples were seen to be more consistent in demographics than the women in the study were consistent between institutional categories. Table 9 shows that women noticeably varied in the following categories when compared by institution type: residential status, use of distance courses, mentorship, working between college and seminary, belonging to a denomination and subscribing to a confession. The male and female samples, on the other hand, are identical in full-time status, residential status, and work between college and seminary. They were similar in their use of distance courses, mentorship, and growing up in the church, while they noticeably differed only in two categories: denominational affiliation and confessional stance. These similarities can be seen in Table 10. While male and female participants in the studies were largely the same in demographics, the size of the populations on seminary campuses differs greatly. Although according to Census Bureau findings, men and women received advanced degrees in equal percentages, women pursuing advanced theological degrees are clearly in the minority.<sup>4</sup> While this discrepancy is somewhat understood since seminary is often seen as pastoral preparation, this finding that male and female participants are similar in demographics may lead

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<sup>4</sup>Camille L. Ryan and Kurt Bauman, "Educational Attainment in the United States: 2015," United States Census, March 2016, accessed February 1, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p20-578.pdf>.

seminaries to further investigate what obstacles keep women from pursuing advanced theological degrees.

**The element that most differentiated students who attended denominational seminaries from those who attended inter/multidenominational seminaries was whether or not they subscribed to a confession.** Denominational and inter/multidenominational responses with regard to confessions were inverted. Given that students from the inter/multidenominational and denominational categories were similar in most ways, this difference is noticeable. Twelve of the fifteen denominational students subscribed to a confession, while twelve inter/multidenominational students reported not subscribing to any confession. While this variance differentiated the women at the two institution types, the difference between institution types for Stuckert’s study was not as drastic. In his, all fifteen men at denominational schools subscribed to a confession and eleven at inter/multidenominational schools subscribed to a confession. Beyond institutional type, subscribing to a confession also differentiates the male seminarians from the female seminarians. While 50 percent of the overall female participants subscribed to a confession, 87 percent of the overall male participants subscribed to a confession.

### **RQ1 Implications**

**Epistemological positioning and maturation of female seminarians according to the Perry scheme falls within the range of the position and maturation of pre-ministry undergraduate students in previous studies and with college undergraduates in general.** When the MIDs for participants in this study were averaged, they received a 3.31 placing them in the stage of Multiplicity. The prior studies on pre-ministry undergraduates ranged from 3.1 to 3.45, placing them in the same stage. The CSID reports “traditionally-aged students enter college in the position 2-position 3

transition and exit college 4 (or so) years later in the position 3-position 4 transition.”<sup>5</sup> Male seminary students pursuing masters of divinity degrees had similar scores in the stage of Multiplicity. Stuckert in his study hypothesized “epistemological positioning of evangelical seminarians according to the Perry Scheme would be found to be generally consistent with that of other graduate level students and at some level more developed than the undergraduate samples in the previous studies,” but this hypothesis was disproved in his study.<sup>6</sup> The question remains whether these low scores are because of diverging experiences and growth in ways not reflected by the Perry scheme, if it is because of the emphasis on transmitting orthodoxy to the neglect of epistemological growth, or if the low scores are reflective of some other cause. While the question remains, it is evident that something must be done to promote the intellectual and ethical growth reflected by Perry’s scheme in seminary students. Natalie D. reflected on her early epistemological stance in seminary and the change she saw in her last semester of seminary. Her reflection speaks to the need of seminary students to be developed as thinkers who have convictions, not parrot convictions. She stated,

So honestly probably my last semester at school I think all my systems exploded. In a way, it is hard because now I feel like I’m back to the basics which is good, but it was one of those, “Wow! I thought I believed this, but I was really just taking things someone else told me and wasn’t really thinking, and processing, and really analyzing, or whatever, if that was something I really believed. . . .” and two weeks ago I read a book . . . for young theologians, and there was one line in the book that literally just cut me to my core, and he is talking to students who are starting their first year of Bible college or seminary. He says, “Every idea that you are persuaded by or think that is profound should come into questions.” Reading that was totally like “Wow! I totally get that.” I just took what was great, whereas now I’m really still wrestling through what are my convictions? Of course I believe Jesus, the Bible, and all of that, but all these other . . . like what is the Christian life supposed to look like? All that stuff, I’m still in a lot of ways trying to figure that out.

Ministry necessitates the type of contextual understanding seen in Perry’s idea of relativism and requires the commitment reflected in Perry’s last stage, so growth

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<sup>5</sup>See appendix 11.

<sup>6</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 126.



according to Perry's scheme should be desired and pursued.

**Epistemological positioning and maturation, according to the Perry scheme, for female seminary students is generally consistent with that of male seminary students.** The male seminarians in the previous study received an average MID of 3.25; the females in this study scored 3.31. Both groups' scores place them firmly in the stage of Multiplicity. This similarity was not surprising as the CSID says there is no consistent difference by gender.<sup>7</sup> Past studies on pre-ministry students also found no differences on epistemological positioning based on gender. This similar but slightly higher score, as well as different themes in this study, demonstrate continuity between male and female epistemological development, while also validating the pursuit of researching the different epistemological patterns and perspectives between males and females.<sup>8</sup>

**Students attending denominational seminaries reflect an earlier epistemological position according to the Perry scheme than those who attend inter/multidenominational seminaries.** The average MID for women attending denominational seminaries was 3.13. For those attending inter/multidenominational schools it was 3.5. These scores differ by a third of a position in the rating system. This difference is noteworthy and may suggest a connection between women's attendance at an inter/multidenominational seminary and more advanced epistemological development according to the Perry scheme. The male seminarians in the previous study also had a notable difference of the same size between the two institutional contexts. What is puzzling, however, is that in the study of male seminary students, those attending denominational schools scored beyond their peers at inter/multidenominational seminaries.

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<sup>7</sup>See appendix 11.

<sup>8</sup>For a lengthier discussion of the epistemological continuity between males and females seen in empirical research, as well as the demonstrated different patterns and perspectives, see appendix 17.

Those at inter/multidenominational seminaries received an average MID of 3.07, while their counterparts at denominational seminaries received 3.42. These inverted results call for further investigation into why this is.

## **RQ2 Implications**

**The most common epistemological priority possessed by female seminary students was a preference for higher-level forms of thinking according to Bloom's taxonomy.** Most of the statements exhibiting this priority reflected Bloom's idea of analyzing, although seven statements did point to evaluating and one to creating. While it is good that many students were found to prefer higher-level forms of thinking according to Bloom's taxonomy, it is clear more needs to be done to better develop thinking in seminary students.

**The priority or competency that was least present in female seminary students was a pursuit of personal development that results from mutual interdependence and reciprocity in one's relationships with authority and peers.** While many of the women in the study displayed a value of community and an understanding even of interdependence, only four exhibited a reciprocity, showing their own need to contribute to the learning environment. This lack of perceived contribution is perhaps not surprising as Moore in analyzing the interviews to assign MIDs cited the following common cues among the sample which would coincide with lower levels of learning according to Bloom's taxonomy: focus on facts/content—what to learn, focus on teacher providing structure/clarity for learning, and use of absolutes and/or dichotomies in language. This demonstrates a propensity to view themselves more as receivers of knowledge rather than contributors to the learning process. This lack of exhibited reciprocity could also relate to the female propensity seen in the literature to struggle to gain their voice; it could be related to the female seminarian being in the minority and being hesitant to speak as a representative for all women; it could be the way seminary is

often viewed as a trade school where one goes to gain skills for ministry rather than be developed; or it could be an area that female seminarians and evangelical seminaries need to further pursue for epistemological growth.

**The priority where female seminary students seemed to most excel in comparison to past studies was in a clear articulation of the relationship between faith and rationality.** None of the recent high school graduates in Mullin’s study were able to articulate this priority in their interviews. The presence in studies done on undergraduates ranged from observations of this priority in three to seven of the participants. Only nine male seminary students exhibited this priority, while sixteen female seminary students were able to articulate that their faith caused them to seek understanding. The clear articulation of the relationship of faith and rationality appears to be the area where the female seminarians hit their epistemic stride.

**The category of the taxonomy that was represented the most consistently among female seminary students was Category I, “biblically-founded presuppositions for knowledge and development.”** Half of the students in the study were able to articulate God as metaphysically ultimate and the necessity of revelation for knowledge and development. Just over half of the female seminary students were able to also articulate the clear relationship between faith and reason. Female seminarians appear to be consistent in this category while other categories varied widely from one priority to the next. This category also had the highest average between the priorities for students who exhibited the priorities of all three of the categories. This likely shows that seminary students are developing during seminary in this category. Seminaries are likely excelling in this category more than in the latter two.

**The category that was seen to be the most infrequently observed in female seminarians was Category 3, “personal responsibility for knowledge acquisition and maintenance within community.”** When averaging the number of students exhibiting

each of the four priorities in this category, the average number for this category was 9.5. For the first category the average was 15.5, and for the second category it was 13.75. These averages demonstrate that this category is the least common among female seminarians. Seminaries may want to consider what they are doing to contribute to this and what can be done to foster more personal responsibility for knowledge. Several of the participants spoke of their classes and learning in seminary in reference to lectures. One student even commented on her peers' attempt for more involvement, seeing it as inappropriate for their level of education. She said,

There always seemed to be one to two students in every class that seemed like their goal [was] to talk in class. . . . Most of seminary were all lecture classes. There were times for questions, but it wasn't a conversation . . . it wasn't a doctoral colloquium . . . it was a lecture. You listened and took notes. There were students who wanted to turn it into a doctoral class . . . I was like, "You will thrive four years from now; for right now just take your notes."

Primarily relying on lectures may reinforce a receiving mentality rather than spurring a personal responsibility. Several other comments were made regarding being in seminary to humbly learn from the professors. Humbly learning from professors is not a bad thing, just as lectures are not a bad thing, but how and when these methods or views are utilized or validated can spur or hinder growth of seminary students in this category. This usage and effect should be considered.

**One of the most distinguishing elements differentiating students who attended denominational seminaries from those who attended inter/multidenominational seminaries was a pursuit of personal development that results from mutual interdependence and reciprocity in one's relationships with authority and peers.** Of the four women who displayed this priority, all were from denominational seminaries. All other categories were generally split between the two institution types. The women exhibiting this priority represented two different institutions. All four varied in a number of ways on their participation forms, but all four articulated the value of relationships and community throughout their interviews. All four had also

previously been involved in student life and campus ministries during their undergraduate years. This commonality could suggest that the collaboration with peers and leaders in the cocurricular helped them to develop this priority in the students which affected how they viewed curricular. Another possibility as mentioned in chapter 4 is that students belonging to a denomination and attending a denominational school by virtue of belonging to the denomination sense a responsibility to contribute rather than just receive. Many of the students who did not exhibit the priority had more of a transactional mindset of what they could gain, but not of what they could give. These four participants, however, were not just there to grow, but saw a responsibility to their peers and professors.

**In this study, a weak correlation was observed between the variable of participants' MID scores and the variable of the number of epistemological priorities and competencies.** This relationship was examined using the Pearson correlation coefficient. When calculated, the coefficient was found to be .3261, exhibiting some correlation as a positive and not a negative number, but showing that correlation to be weak. As Stuckert suggested in his study, this may suggest that epistemological development may be happening in seminary outside of what is measured by the Perry scheme. Given that three of the studies prior to this one had a strong correlation and three exhibited a weak correlation, more research is warranted to understand what this weak correlation suggests.

**Among females in evangelical seminaries, preferences for active involvement in the teaching and learning process may be indicative of higher positions of epistemological development according to the Perry scheme.** The three participants with the highest MID scores of either 4 or 4.67 had only two priorities that they all possessed. The first priority they all possessed was a recognition of social-environmental influences on one's learning and maturation, and the second was a preference for active involvement in the teaching and learning process. When examining

the students who had scored a 3.67, the next tier of MID scores, the preference for active involvement in the teaching and learning process was also prevalent in those students. The understanding of social-environmental influences, however, was not. While several priorities that were common in general were common in this upper tiers, this priority for involvement was not as common in general but had a large representation among those with the highest MIDs. Of the eleven students with the top MID scores, 64 percent demonstrated this priority, while only 37 percent of participants who scored below a 3.67 demonstrated this priority.

### **RQ3 Implications**

**Female seminary students, like male students, described their development in terms of biblical knowledge, practical application to ministry, and spiritual growth.**

Stuckert in his study assessed, “Regardless of the reported scores, seminarians describe their seminary experience as a time of growth and change.”<sup>9</sup> The following statement by Sarah A. is indicative of a self-described development of biblical knowledge: “I have learned what it is to build knowledge and truth on the foundation of God’s Word. . . . I’ve really learned how to put away the things that aren’t true and how to discern.” Jennifer spoke to the development of her biblical knowledge and practical ministry skills, saying,

It’s really the ability to read the Scriptures for myself and really know confidently that’s what it says and that’s what it means, and to be able to translate that in a practical way to people who are in need. I don’t think I thought it would be this practical on the other side of it, but it really has been.

Cheryl spoke of her spiritual growth when she shared that seminary had “helped [her] grow in humility and . . . godliness.” Marie expressed how she had grown in this way:

I think the person I was when I started seminary is very different than the person I am when I graduated seminary. I think I’ve grown a lot. The Lord used this experience to carve out a lot of things I was idolizing. . . . I learned a lot academically, but spiritually this time was really good to show me what needed to change in my life in order to be devoted to Christ and not just trying to pretend devotion.

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<sup>9</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 117.

When asked what she most appreciated about the education she received in seminary, Ruby said, “Probably that it was both academically rigorous and spiritually rigorous. That it required both . . . and that my professors weren’t just concerned I was getting good grades, but they were concerned that I was being a faithful follower of Christ.”

Stuckert said in his study of the students’ articulation of their growth, “The implication is that development is taking place in the seminary environment, it may just be in terms that must be interpreted through the lens of the philosophical and theological commitments of the students and the seminary.”<sup>10</sup> Although the MID scores for both male and female seminary students are cause for concern, both the assessment according to Trentham’s Taxonomy and the students’ expressions of their own perceived development show that the students are being stretched and grown, just perhaps not in areas reflected in Perry’s scheme.

**Relationships during seminary were seen to be essential to the process.** In both ratings and rankings on the participation form, peers and professors were the two most influential categories. Eighty-seven percent of participants believed peers were very important or important to their seminary experience. Ninety-seven percent rated their professors as very important or important. Peers and professors had eighteen votes between the two for the highest ranking. This primacy of relationships with both professors and peers is seen in the rankings reported in Figure 13.

Additionally, when asked what most stood out about their time in seminary, relationships was the overwhelming response. Eighteen of the thirty responses specifically mentioned relationships, fifteen answers referenced professors, and eight specifically mentioned peers. While the primacy of relationships is evident, some distinctions were shown in institutional context. Denominational students ranked professors as more influential than inter/multidenominational students.

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<sup>10</sup>Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 117.

Inter/multidenominational students had an equal amount of votes between peers and professors for the first ranking, but had more votes for peers than their denominational counterparts.

The importance of relationships was seen in previous studies as well. Trentham said of this finding in his study, “The most prominent common theme that voluntarily emerged among participants in this study was the primacy of relationships as the most consequential element of their overall college experiences.”<sup>11</sup> While the male seminary students when rating influential factors also rated faculty as most important to the seminary experience, the female students for peers and professors had higher ratings than the males did.<sup>12</sup>

**Uniquely among the female seminary students, a common voice was narrative or story.** This was seen both in participants’ emphasis on considering one’s own story and also in listening to another’s story as an important part of knowing.<sup>13</sup> Emma N. and Taylor H. spoke to each of their personal stories and the impact on their education in two different ways. Taylor spoke about her story as a part of what originally deterred her from pursuing a seminary education. Emma spoke of her story as a part of the value of the local church, theological education, and how the Lord had personally grown her. Noelle spoke of growing in knowledge on secondary issues by knowing people and knowing their stories. She said,

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<sup>11</sup>John David Trentham, “Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates: A Cross-Institutional Application of the Perry Scheme” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 214.

<sup>12</sup>Figure 7 and figure 8 display this data. See also, Stuckert, “Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians,” 114.

<sup>13</sup>This theme of narrative or story as a way of knowing also relates to participants valuing discussion in knowing and in their desire to grow in understanding oneself. See finding on page 218-20 with regard to the importance of discussion in the process of knowing for female seminary students. See page 177 for a discussion of the theme of self-knowledge in participants.



If you are wanting to come up with a stance on immigration, you actually need to know people who are immigrants. I teach piano lessons to a blind boy whose parents are illegal immigrants from Mexico, and that's not the only way I come up with my view on immigration, but it certainly impacts, because I actually know them and see their struggle and know their family's story, so I think knowing people that are in those gray. . . . I don't know how could you could come up with a stance on gay marriage if you don't know anyone who is gay? Not that it would be the only thing . . . that would be dangerous . . . but I think it is important to have a lived-in theology or incarnate theology. . . . Entwining that personal aspect/story probably comes into play much more on secondary and tertiary issues than it does on core beliefs.

Several others spoke in these terms as well. Anna E.'s process of evaluating the position of someone with a different view than her own included the following:

Think through their story or what I know of it, ask questions about their experience or what has shaped that conviction that they have. In classes, I didn't always get to ask those questions or didn't always have the time and space to really grapple with all of those pieces, but I think in an attempt to understand you have to make space for those questions too.

Claire spoke to understanding her own story and others' stories as she evaluates conflicting beliefs in the following statement:

I think one thing that I have found helpful is to look at people's backgrounds and how they have grown up or how their emotional attachment to their viewpoint might affect them and to think about the same things with myself. I think it is really helpful to recognize that . . . things that have happened to us or the way that we are raised, or anything like that can affect the way we preserve things . . . but still the question still remains how can we perceive truth, but it does make me confident or allow me to remain confident that there is a truth to be had even though we can disagree on things.

Although this voice was only identified in nine of the thirty participants, it was worth noting for several reasons. First, it has to do with the epistemology of these female seminarians, which this thesis has set out to assess. Secondly, although only found in about a third of the participants, six different institutions, both denominational and inter/multidenominational seminaries, were represented by those nine participants. Lastly, some of the nine women had this theme woven through their entire interview, showing it to be a predominant theme in their ways of knowing.

**For female seminary students, discussion was seen to be an important part of education as it helps a person refine their own positions or decisions.** Eighty percent

of participants spoke of discussion as a part of their education. Each participant, on average, mentioned it at least two times during the interview. Professors were often seen to instigate or facilitate the discussions, even though the discussions often continued beyond the classroom. Participants spoke of conversations in class as well as in the cafeteria or dorms. They spoke of discussions with peers, professors, roommates and those who differed from them. They believed these discussions helped them to question, refine, or better understand various positions. The topics of discussion varied from life to theology to politics. In her interview, Rose recalled her experience in seminary of exploring ideas through discussion. As she described the experience, she said,

Wow! I've been stuck in one box my whole life and now I'm learning to look at other people's perspectives and not necessarily fight them as "I'm right and they are wrong," but let's talk about where I'm wrong and you are right and where you are wrong and maybe I'm right and actually have a discussion.

Jodi, in four words she used to answer her view of an ideal seminary education, included "discussion-based." She further explained the idea of "discussion-based:"

You have to engage what you believe instead of parroting back. I feel like there's a lot of seminary students exceptional at school and given enough time they can memorize what the professor's notes are and when I say discussion-based they have to form their own opinion.

Sarah in her interview said the following with regard to the place of discussion in making decisions or forming beliefs:

I really think that discussing those decisions with others after I've discussed them with the Lord . . . is probably the most beneficial because then I understand . . . the role of my community in how I'm forming my beliefs. Not that it has more weight than the Scriptures or more weight than what God's Word says, but it does help most of the time.

Mabel in her interview also discussed the importance of discussion and community to her education, saying,

I think community is so important in the learning process. . . . It challenges me and it usually ends up in a lot of different discussions on an issue and also just in general for your well-being. If you have a very good sense of community, that's just going to be better for yourself overall . . . so I think whether it is to help us have built-in places for us to discuss what we are going through or even for our overall well-being, it would be great to have that.

This emphasis on discussion in the learning process is not surprising as the literature which dealt with women's development points to collaboration, relationship, and voice as important aspects to women's development.

**Students who self-identified as complementarian generally reflected an earlier stage of epistemological development according to the Perry Scheme than those who self-identified as egalitarian or who did not identify as either.** Participants in the study who self-identified as complementarians received an average MID of 3.14; those who identified as neither received a 3.29; those who identified as egalitarians received a 3.53. Of the eight women who received the lowest MID score of 233, none self-identified as egalitarian. The one woman who received the highest score of 4.67 identified as an egalitarian. Representation of both positions were scattered throughout the middle scores. These results may have varied had women been given definitions of the positions, but with this data to examine, the question may be asked: why the difference in scores? The concern was raised in past research: do seminaries in transmitting orthodoxy neglect epistemological development of students; perhaps a question here might be this: does a commitment to complementarianism hinder female seminarians' epistemic maturity? Like orthodoxy, complementarianism is a good thing, but are there ways this position is misunderstood or misrepresented to hinder women's intellectual and ethical growth? This finding suggests the need for further inquiry and development in the field of theological education for complementarian women. Linda Reed in her doctoral thesis notes that in surveying the *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* nothing has been written with regard to "theological and practical ministry education for complementarian women."<sup>14</sup> As she addressed the issue of

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<sup>14</sup>Linda Marie Reed, "Theological and Practical Ministry Training" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 3-4.

complementarian higher education in her thesis, she noted the need for further development in the area of complementarian higher education, saying,

Complementarian higher education educates tomorrow's leaders in biblical scholarship. In this debate, the female voice is not distinctly heard. . . . Many complementarian women are tentative; few complementarian female scholars write or teach, as noted in the literature review. Few speakers at complementarian conferences have masters or doctoral level theological teaching or homiletics training.<sup>15</sup>

Reed's study is an important first step in developing complementarian higher education. Her study and this study call for still more to be done. As she said, "Complementarian Christian schools must move forward to encourage women to develop as thinkers, writers, and speakers as they lead appropriate ministries and pursue global options."<sup>16</sup>

**Students who reported holding to a confession reflected an earlier stage of epistemological development according to the Perry Scheme.** Those who reported holding to a confession scored an average of 3.11, while those who did not hold to a confession scored an average of 3.53. It is hard to draw a comparison in this category with Stuckert's study, since 87 percent of his sample was confessional, but the four participants who did not hold to a confession had an average MID of 3, while those who did had an average MID of 3.36. Dale Leatherman in his thesis research examined epistemological development among pre-ministry undergraduates in confessional and non-confessional environments. In doing so, he found that the scores of those who attended confessional institutions on average were higher than those who did not. Their scores were respectively 3.27 and 3.11. It is possible that the finding in this study with regard to those who hold or do not hold to confessions and their MID scores reflects other factors more than it reflects the general epistemological position influenced by this factor.

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<sup>15</sup>Reed, "Theological and Practical Ministry Training." 60.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 61.

There was definite overlap in those who did not hold to a confession and those who self-identified as an egalitarian. Also, those who went to denominational schools were more likely to hold to a confession than those who did not, so it is hard to assess which factor most contributed to a student's epistemological growth represented by their MID.

### **Research Applications**

This study explored the epistemological development of women attending evangelical seminaries. It also examined the relationship between a student's epistemological development and the type of seminary they attended. These areas were addressed through the CSID assigning epistemological positions according to the Perry scheme, through analyzing participant's articulation of the epistemological priorities and competencies according to Trentham's Taxonomy, and through analyzing the interviews for reoccurring themes. Several research applications are evident given the list of implications given in the section above.

### **Perspective or Current Female Seminarians**

The first research application is to both current and future female students pursuing graduate theological education. The perspectives and statements of female seminarians included in this study will provide a personable way for prospective female seminarians to assess if seminary is what they desire. This research additionally provides encouragement for women to go to seminary. As women in the study often spoke of needing encouragement or a suggestion from someone else to propel them to seminary, those who read this thesis may be led to further consider attending seminary. They will be able to better understand the benefits, joys, and challenges women may face in seminary. They may also be aided through the research to consider what type of institution might serve them in their pursuit of theological education.

Those who are attending seminary will be provided with a helpful comparison and a sense of camaraderie. They might find their experience has been better or different

from the experience of the women in this study, or they may identify with the experience of these female seminarians. C.S. Lewis in his book *The Four Loves*, speaks of friendships forming when two people have the moment of “You, too? I thought I was the only one.”<sup>17</sup> He goes on to describe that as that friendship is born, “instantly they stand together in immense solitude.”<sup>18</sup> As women are in minority in seminary, this research may provide an opportunity for women to express “You, too?” and experience a solidarity that helps them in their pursuit of graduate theological education. Additionally, prospective or current female seminarians might be challenged to rethink their ideas with regard to education or to consider in what areas they desire to grow or need to develop epistemologically.

### **Seminaries**

This research applies to seminaries in a number of ways. It aids administration, staff, and faculty in their various roles of the institution by helping them assess the education and care of their female populations.

**Administration.** With the administration lies the tasks of accomplishing the purpose of the institution, vision or development within the institution, assessment, and accreditation. This information can aid institutions in determining if their practices and procedures match their purpose. As stated at the beginning of this thesis, several seminaries state their expressed desire to further the ministry and mission of the church, to build up the body of Christ worldwide, to train Christian leaders, to help their students develop holistically into Christlikeness, and to develop disciples of Christ in thought, character, and lifestyles. If a seminary’s purpose is purely to train pastors, then practices and procedures should reflect that, but if the aims are wider, then procedures, practices,

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<sup>17</sup>C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1988), 65.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

classes, and course material should match those aims and should consider the two sexes enrolled in the seminary.<sup>19</sup> This research may even help administrators at institutions assess their beliefs and practices to better know why they do what they do.

Given their responsibility for vision and direction, this study further applies to administration by providing them with rich qualitative data and findings to consider the specific population of women on their campuses. Administrators may consider the hardest aspects of seminary for women that differ from those men experience in order to implement appropriate changes. There may be ways to lessen the impact of the difficulty. For instance, changes might be made with regard to the preaching classes. Perhaps the financial need and support of women could be considered. The impact of difficulties experienced by women might be lessened by considering how to better communicate or serve both sexes on their campuses in ways such as facilitating better relationships and respect between male and female students or not limiting the focus of classes to pastoral ministry. It may further be applied to help administrators create and further programs and resources to train women.<sup>20</sup>

The continued development of Trentham's taxonomy in this work has application for administrators as they pursue assessment for accreditation. Seminaries should be concerned with epistemological development of their students. This study and Jonathan Stuckert's study in their findings should encourage seminaries to seek further development of their students in this area. Perry's scheme is valuable, but it alone is not adequate to assess the diverging development of graduate students, and even more

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<sup>19</sup>Research has recently been completed or is currently underway to help develop curriculum for women at complementarian institutions. See Reed, "Theological and Practical Ministry Training"; and Erin Megan Shaw, "Applying a Comprehensive Model for the Evaluation of Social Science Research to Epistemological Development Theories Pertaining to Female Undergraduates" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018).

<sup>20</sup>Reed's research will also serve this purpose as it surveys the complementarian theological education currently underway and interviews women responsible at various institutions for its past and future development. See Reed, "Theological and Practical Ministry Training."

specifically, the seminary context.<sup>21</sup> This research both challenges and aids seminaries. It challenges them to consider if the way they are pursuing seminary education needs to be advanced to also develop students intellectually. It aids seminaries in giving them a taxonomy that aligns with the seminary's priorities such as "Biblically-founded presuppositions for knowledge and development." This taxonomy will help assess whether growth is happening in seminary beyond the Perry Scheme.

**Staff.** This research also has application to those who are in marketing, admissions, or student affairs at the seminary. Understanding the experiences and growth of women on seminary campuses will help those in marketing and admissions know how to better recruit and encourage women to attend seminary. It will also have application for those who help and care for women once they enroll. This study will not only serve the students but will also aid the institution in the retention of students. Those in supportive roles like student affairs, residence life, or student finance can understand how to better counsel women during their seminary experience, encourage women as they are in the minority, and challenge the female students to grow in their epistemology.

**Professors.** Application of this research at the seminary level will also aid professors. It will be of encouragement to professors who are already supporting and challenging women in their classes to pursue education and scholarship. It will also aid both professors and administrators to consider seminary students' progression in

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<sup>21</sup>William Moore in his chapter on Perry's scheme in *The Handbook of College Teaching* demonstrates both the need to examine specific institutional contexts while also showing the immense value of Perry's scheme to those varying contexts. He writes, "It should be noted that while the Perry schema has proved to be a useful conceptual framework for thinking about good practice in higher education, discussions about students' approaches to learning and appropriate classroom design need to be grounded in the individual experience and expertise of faculty in their specific institutional contexts. Teaching is a contextual act, and, thus, the model cannot be 'applied' in some mechanistic fashion. Given that caution, however, the Perry schema does have some powerful implications for college faculty." See William Moore, "Student and Faculty Epistemology in the College Classroom: The Perry Schema of Intellectual and Ethical Development," in *Handbook of College Teaching: Theory and Applications*, ed. Keith W. Prichard and R. MacLaran Sawyer (Westwood, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 51.



epistemological development according to the Perry scheme and to assess if something needs to be changed. Additionally, they will be able to assess what priorities and competencies seminaries are excelling in and which areas need to be further developed.

### **The Church**

The research explains patterns and perspectives of women in churches who desire to serve and minister. This research also has application in the church as the church seeks to support, equip, and utilize women in appropriate roles to further the ministry of the local church. It will help churches counsel and advise women in their congregations regarding seminary. It may also serve to bring understanding to church leadership on the needs and gifting of women in their church. It may more generally help male leadership in churches better understand differing patterns and perspectives in female congregants.

### **Future Researchers**

This research benefits future research in the fields of epistemological development, women's epistemological development, women's theological education generally, and more narrowly to complementarian education. This thesis provides research to build upon as it raises more questions in all these fields. No previous study had specifically researched the epistemological development of women in seminary. Because it closely paralleled a previous study done on male seminary students by Jonathan Stuckert, useful comparison between male and female epistemological development were drawn. This close comparison between male and female studies was uncommon in the literature, as many studies that are foundational in the field compared very different male and female populations.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>For further elaboration on this subject, please see the section entitled "Gender Studies" in the Literature Review in chap. 2.

## **Research Limitations**

While findings and conclusions in this study are valuable, they must be considered in light of the limitations of this study. In addition to the limitations given in chapter 3 of this thesis, four limitations should be considered.

While this study has produced rich qualitative data and helpful findings with regard to the epistemological development of women in evangelical seminaries, it does not represent the epistemological development of all women in all evangelical seminaries. It reflects the represented institutions and the represented degree, Masters of Divinity. It may not reflect the epistemological development or experiences of women receiving a variety of other degrees at evangelical seminaries.

While this study enlisted participants from multiple evangelical institutions within the denominational and inter/multidenominational categories, the findings do not represent every evangelical, ATS seminary within that category. In the end, the denominational sample was Presbyterian and Baptist, with the latter being more heavily represented.<sup>23</sup>

Another limitation is that this study did not differentiate between progressive or conservative institutions or between complementarian or egalitarian institutions. Two institutions that agree on these topics, one being a denominational and one being an inter/multidenominational institution may have more in common than two who bear the same denominational or inter/multidenominational institutional category.

While thorough content analysis was done by William Moore, John David Trentham and myself, possible subjectivity, bias, or errors made by any of these individuals in the process would influence the conclusions.

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<sup>23</sup>Four participants were from a Presbyterian Seminary and 11 were Baptist, with of those specifically being Southern Baptists.

## Further Research

This study is a part of a long line of research in epistemological development and an even more specific line of research in epistemological development among pre-ministry students using the Perry scheme as a theoretical lens and Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies for assessment. This study not only benefited from comparison with the preceding studies, but several of the studies even had recommendations for further research that shaped the current study. Sanchez in his study of pre-ministry students at secular universities suggested further research specifically with women.<sup>24</sup> Cannon in studying Christian liberal arts students said the following as a part of his recommendations for further research: "Special efforts need to be made to locate and research the epistemological development of female ministry workers."<sup>25</sup> Stuckert in concluding his study stated, "Studies that have female seminarians as a portion or the entire sample could provide very interesting comparisons in how students of different genders view seminary, ministry, and intellectual community and development."<sup>26</sup>

Though this study was a replication study, it was the first of its kind exploring epistemological development among women in evangelical seminaries. As such, there is still much study to be done in the field. The research findings in this study, as in all studies, are helpful but lead to further questions to be explored through research. The following list suggests further research in the area of Christians' epistemological development:

1. A study may be undertaken to explore the epistemological development among women in evangelical churches who have not attended seminary. This inquiry would provide a sample for comparison to assess the similarities and divergences with women in this study who have attended seminary. It would be interesting to

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<sup>24</sup>Christopher Lynn Sanchez, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Secular Universities" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 117.

<sup>25</sup>Bruce Richard Cannon, "Epistemological Development in Pre-Ministry Undergraduates Attending Confessional Christian Liberal Arts Colleges or Universities" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015),129.

<sup>26</sup>Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians," 123.

note in what ways the women in seminary were similar to women who had not attended or in what ways they diverged. It would also be interesting to note where female seminarians were less or more aligned to their male counterparts in seminary than the average women in a church pew.

2. Using a similar design and method as this study, two studies may be done on women within each of the institutional contexts in this study to specifically assess the epistemological development among women in denominational seminaries or the epistemological development among women in inter/multidenominational seminaries. This research would be beneficial in understanding why there was a discrepancy between the MID scores in this study for the two institution types.
3. Using a similar design and methodology as in this study, a study could be designed closely pairing men and women from each institution type for age, emphasis, school, and completion of the program. This research would help in investigating why the MID results by institution type were inverted for men in Stuckert's study and for women in the current study and would also provide an even closer comparison for different patterns and perspectives between men and women.
4. A study similar to the current study could be designed to assess the epistemological development among women at conservative or progressive seminaries rather than at denominational or nondenominational. Criteria for institution type would need to be defined. It would be interesting in these interviews to explore which seminary students felt more supported at their institutions.<sup>27</sup>
5. A study may be designed to better understand the impact of a specific institution, not just an institution type, by doing a study on males and females in seminary but with a sample of ten to thirty students per institution, utilizing the Learning Environment Preferences (LEP).<sup>28</sup> Trends at institutions could be reported.
6. A study could be done utilizing both the LEP on seminary students at a variety of institutions and also performing interviews with professors at each of those seminaries to assess what priorities and competencies they would desire for students and to assess alignment between the professors' goals for their students on the students' epistemological development.
7. A study for similar purposes as above could be designed using interview transcripts rated by the CSID. Statements which received a rating can be placed into a survey sent to professors at various seminaries for their assessment to see if professors at seminaries value students who are further developed epistemologically according to the Perry Scheme. Schein in his research on leadership and culture of an organization

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<sup>27</sup>Benjamin Espinoza, in a study examining race as a factor in the doctoral experience at seminaries, found that ethnic minorities on conservative seminaries actually felt more supported than on progressive seminaries. He suggested that this was in part due to expectations and marketing and also due to progressive seminaries recognizing institutionalized racism, but not personal racism. Benjamin Espinoza, "Toward the Many Colored Kingdom: Race and the Doctoral Experience at Evangelical Seminaries" (paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society of Professors in Christian Education, Dallas, October 27, 2017).

<sup>28</sup>The Perry Network, "Recognition/Checklist Format," Assessment and Research Support accessed January 21, 2018, [http://perrynetwork.org/?page\\_id=15](http://perrynetwork.org/?page_id=15).

claimed rewards or attention from a leader was a primary embedding mechanism in a culture.<sup>29</sup> What professors praise, pay attention to, or promote will likely impact the students who study at an institution, so this sort of study would be a valuable assessment.

8. A longitudinal study could be developed interviewing women in seminary utilizing the same protocol as in the current study and assessing according to the Perry scheme and Trentham's Taxonomy. Interviews could be done before each participant starts seminary, each year they are in seminary, and one year following seminary in order to assess the impact of seminary on each woman's epistemological development.
9. A study could be undertaken to develop an instrument for assessing epistemological priorities and competencies according to Trentham's taxonomy. As Moore, in his dissertation at the University of Maryland, explored "the feasibility of an objective-style measure for Perry's scheme" resulting in the LEP, future studies into the epistemological development of Christian students would be benefitted by a study to create and test a similar instrument to assess or score students according to the taxonomy.<sup>30</sup>
10. To further research and develop Trentham's taxonomy, a study utilizing both King and Kitchener's work and the developing taxonomy could be done.
11. A study could be designed to assess the impact of a truncated M.Div. degree on student's epistemological development. Many institutions are pursuing five-year plans for students to receive both their bachelors degree and their Masters of Divinity degree.<sup>31</sup> Given that age can be a factor with MIDs and given that some of the seminary students' variances from their undergraduate counterparts according to the taxonomy were speculated to be because of further experiences, it would be interesting to compare the epistemological development of Masters of Divinity students in these programs to those in traditional programs.
12. As community and relationships came up throughout the interviews in relation to participants' growth in seminary, and as many seminaries offer Masters of Divinity degrees that are either partially or completely online, a study with a similar methodology and design could be developed to assess the epistemological development among students pursuing their seminary degrees online.
13. Further research could be done to assess the epistemological development of pre-ministry students by undertaking a study with a similar methodology and design as the current study but with the participants being doctoral students in seminary. As the current study and Stuckert's study build upon and extend the research with

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<sup>29</sup>Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2010), 225.

<sup>30</sup>William Moore, *The Learning Environment Preferences: An Instrument Manual* (Olympia, WA: Center for the Study of Intellectual Development, 2000), 3.

<sup>31</sup>The Master's University and Cedarville University are two of the schools pursuing a truncated M.Div. degree. Tom Halstead, e-mail message to author, May 10, 2017. "Biblical Studies (Accelerated B.A./M.Div.)," School of Biblical and Theological Studies, accessed January 21, 2018, <https://www.cedarville.edu/Academic-Schools-and-Departments/Biblical-and-Theological-Studies/Undergraduate/Biblical-Studies-Accelerated-BA-MDiv.aspx>.

undergraduates, a study of doctoral students would provide useful assessments and data for comparison.

14. Given the emphasis on utility and practice in both the male and female seminary interviews and given the MID scores for these sample populations that were in the same range as undergraduate students, a study examining the epistemological development of doctoral students pursuing Doctorate of Ministry degrees and Doctorate of Philosophy degrees utilizing the Perry Scheme could be developed. The Doctorate of Ministry has a practical focus, while a Doctorate of Philosophy has a scholarly focus, providing an interesting comparison with regard to epistemological development.
15. A study similar to the current study could be done with Master of Arts students at Evangelical seminaries. This study would be beneficial as women are more likely to pursue a Master of Arts degree rather than the Master of Divinity degree. This research would allow for a helpful comparison with the current study to identify what factors might be unique to female Masters of Divinity students as a population, as they are not only a minority at seminary, but even a minority among women who attend seminary.
16. A study similar to the current study could be designed to assess the epistemological development of students in other fields for comparison with those in seminary. Little research has been done utilizing the Perry Scheme beyond the college years. This research would extend the field of research and provide a comparison for the seminary studies to see if other academic programs are further developing students according to the Perry Scheme beyond the college years.
17. A study could be designed to assess the impact of gender-specific speech patterns on epistemological development or assessment. In the course of this study, several things were noted related to the participant's speech patterns in their interviews. Besides lengthier dialogues, the women often used hesitant or relational speech, phrases like, "You know," and also often quoted others and their own past thoughts and comments. Given the purpose of the study, the wealth of literature on the impact of gender on speech was not explored. How gender-specific communication affects participants' articulation of epistemological development or their scores was also not explored.
18. Given the findings in this study regarding the MID scores of those who self-identified as egalitarian and those who self-identified as complementarian, a study could be designed to further explore complementarian and egalitarian perspectives.
19. A study could be designed to specifically explore the presence and impact of female faculty and staff at seminaries on epistemological development of both male and female students in seminary.
20. As this study was a foray into a specific, minority population at seminaries, a study could be designed to examine the motivations, patterns, and experiences of learning among majority versus minority seminary populations.
21. As the CSID has reported that students leaving college typically score somewhere between position three and four, but as Perry's participants from Harvard in the 1950s had higher scores, a replication of Perry's study done with Harvard males would be useful. This research would assess if scores are lower elsewhere because

of the caliber of student at prestigious Harvard or if they have declined in general over the years with cultural shifts.<sup>32</sup>

22. As metacognition is a part of epistemological development, a study could be designed to assess if teaching on epistemology and ways of thinking helps students in their development. A study could be done on students enrolled in a course containing a lecture on Perry's scheme. An assessment using the LEP could be given at the beginning and end of the semester with a test group that is taken out for a different lecture the day Perry is covered in class.

## **Conclusion**

It is evident that there is still more work to be done in the field of epistemological development and within that field more research to be done with regard to pre-ministry students and with regard to theological training of women. God created two sexes by design for His glory. Though they are more alike than different in their epistemological development, investigations into their different patterns and perspectives is appropriate to further the discipleship and training of women in the church and in the academy. This thesis has researched a specific aspect of women's development by assessing epistemological development among women in denominational and inter/multidenominational contexts. While rich qualitative data and findings emerged in this study, the task is still unfinished. Jonathan Leeman, in a recent article sparked by a debate surrounding women's place in seminaries, argued for the need and benefit of investigating differences between the sexes in a culture that promotes androgyny. In that article, he so aptly stated, "God created two kinds of humans—a male kind and a female kind (Gen. 1:27). Let those who extol diversity extol the diversity of genders. Both are

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<sup>32</sup>Later studies were done on Harvard and Radcliffe students by Perry and his colleagues in the 1970s. Although there were some different trends, overall the students' development appeared consistent with the first study showing that Perry's scheme was not just for the particular time it was conducted. As it has been nearly forty years since, it would be helpful to do a study like this to observe continuity in the scheme but also to see the different trends or patterns revealed in the current day and age. See William G. Perry, Jr., "Cognitive and Ethical Growth: The Making of Meaning," in *The Modern American College: Responding to the New Realities of Diverse Students and a Changing Society*, ed. Arthur W. Chickering (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981), 98. Toni-Lee Capossela, "Using William Perry's Scheme to Encourage Critical Writing," in *The Critical Writing Workshop*, ed. Toni-Lee Capossela (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1993), 53.

needed to image God.”<sup>33</sup> As Mark Thompson, the Principal of Moore Theological College in Sydney, Australia, has said regarding seminary training of women at his institution,

Moore College trains all whom the Lord brings to us to be faithful stewards of the Word of God and sacrificial servants of his people. Our graduates leave us to exercise ministry in a range of different contexts: churches, schools, university campuses, chaplaincies of various kinds, and on the mission field. In each of these contexts women are able to exercise an effective ministry alongside men in a way which respects the God-given differences between the sexes and the responsibilities God graciously apportions to each.<sup>34</sup>

It is important to recognize the need of both sexes to reflect the image of God and act as faithful stewards of His Word and servants of His people. This understanding calls for further investigation into and promotion of women’s epistemological development and theological training for the good of the church and the glory of Christ. After all,

More than half the world are women. In our churches the percentage is often much higher. There is a pressing need for well-trained women who are capable of discipling other women, walking with them in life, sharing the word of God with them, guiding them in decision making and equipping them to pass on the gospel to others.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Jonathan Leeman, “A Word of Empathy, Warning and Counsel for ‘Narrow’ Complementarians,” *9Marks*, February 8, 2018, accessed February 9, 2018, <https://www.9marks.org/article/a-word-of-empathy-warning-and-counsel-for-narrow-complementarians/>.

<sup>34</sup>Mark Thompson, “Is There a Place for Women on a Theological College Faculty?” July 2, 2017, accessed February 9, 2018, <https://au.thegospelcoalition.org/article/place-women-theological-faculties/>.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*



## APPENDIX 1

### THESIS STUDY PARTICIPATION FORM

[Section 1]<sup>1</sup>

**Instructions: Please read the following statement and note your agreement to participate.**

The research in which you are about to participate is a study to assess the epistemological development among women in seminary in various institutional contexts. This research is being conducted by Jennifer Kintner for purposes of thesis research. In this research you will complete the form below and participate in a personal interview by telephone lasting about an hour. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses.

*Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this form and the subsequent personal interview, and by checking the appropriate box below and entering the requested information, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

- I agree to participate.
- I do not agree to participate.

Name:

Date:

[Section 2]

**Instructions: Please answer each question below, even if it is to put not applicable.**

Preferred name:

Preferred phone number:

Preferred email address:

Were you referred by another student?

- Yes  No

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<sup>1</sup>This form was adapted from Jonathan Stuckert's Thesis Participation Form. An electronic version of this form was completed by all participants.

If yes, by whom?

Year of birth:

Gender:

Married Status:  Single  Married  Divorced  Widowed

Ethnicity:  Hispanic  African American  Asian  White  Pacific Islander  Indian  Middle Eastern  Two or More Ethnicities

Did you grow up in a single-parent home?  Yes  No

What seminary do you attend?

Degree program(s):  Master of Divinity  Master of Arts

Expected month/year of graduation:

What month and year did you begin your M.Div.:

Which better describes your seminary experience?  full-time student  part-time student

Which better describes your seminary experience?  on campus  commuter

Did you take any distance courses during seminary?  Yes  No

If yes, approximately how much of your degree was done by distance? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you have a mentor during seminary?  Yes  No

Prior academic degrees awarded (including majors and minors):

From which college or university did you graduate? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you attend any other colleges or universities?  Yes  No

What were some areas you were involved in on campus during your undergraduate and graduate work (e.g., Residence Life, Women's Ministry, Campus Ministries, Campus Activities, Missions Trips, etc.)?

Did you work for more than a year between college and seminary?  Yes  No

Do you self-identify as either an egalitarian or complementarians?  No  Egalitarian  Complementarian

Do you belong to a denomination?  Yes  No

If yes, which one? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you subscribe to a confession of faith? E.g. Baptist Faith and Message, Westminster

Confession of Faith.  Yes  No

If yes, which one? \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you been a Christian?\_\_\_\_\_

George Marsden gives this description, “Evangelicals . . . are Christians who typically emphasize 1) the Reformation doctrine of the final authority of Scripture; 2) the real, historical character of God’s saving work recorded in Scripture; 3) eternal salvation only through personal trust in Christ; 4) the importance of evangelism and missions; and 5) the importance of a spiritually transformed life.” According to this description, do you consider yourself to be an evangelical?  Yes  No

Did you grow up in the church?  Yes  No

At what church do you maintain active membership or involvement (name and location)?

What are some particular areas of ministry or service in which you were personally involved at your home church during seminary (e.g., youth ministry, adult Bible study, music, etc.)?

What other church, para-church or humanitarian ministries (if any) were you involved in during seminary (e.g., Campus Crusade, Crisis Pregnancy Center, Habitat for Humanity, etc.)?

Please rate these importance of the following six influences on your seminary experience by assigning it a score of 1-5. 1 is very important and 5 is not important.

- Friends and peers
- Professors
- Required reading
- Seminary culture
- Local church involvement
- Supervised field education

Please rank the importance of the following influences on your seminary experience by placing numbers 1-6 next to them utilizing each number only once.

- Friends and peers
- Professors
- Required reading
- Seminary culture
- Local church involvement
- Supervised field education

## APPENDIX 2

### STANDARDIZED PERRY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What is your view of an ideal college education? How, if at all, should a student change as a result of that educational experience?
2. Have you encountered any significant differences in beliefs and values in your peers in college or other people you've met in your experiences here? What is your reaction to this diversity; how do you account for these differences? How do you go about evaluating the conflicting views or beliefs you encounter? How, if at all, do you interact with people who have views different from your own?

[Note: The focus here is on the process of evaluating and/or interacting, not on specific beliefs or reactions per se]

3. Facing an uncertain situation in which you don't have as much information as you'd like and/or the information is not clear cut, how do you go about making a decision about what you believe? Is your decision in that situation the right decision? Why or why not? If so, how do you know?

[Note: Try to get the student to describe the process of coming to a judgment in that kind of situation, which in many cases will involve generating a concrete example of some personal relevance but not too emotionally-charged—preferably an academic-related context, related if possible to their major field.]

4. How would you define “knowledge”? How is knowledge related to what we discussed earlier in terms of a college education? What is the relationship between knowledge and your idea of truth? What are the standards you use for evaluating the truth of your beliefs or values? Do your personal beliefs/values apply to other people—in other words, are you willing to apply your standards to their behavior? Why or why not?

Possible follow-up probes in each area:

1. How have you arrived at this particular view of these issues? Can you remember a time when you didn't think this way and recall how your view changed over time?
2. To what extent do you think the view you have expressed is a logical and coherent perspective you've defined for yourself? What, if any, alternative perspectives have you considered?
3. How likely is it that your view will change in the future? If you think it's likely to change, what kind of experiences or situations might produce such change?

## APPENDIX 3

### ALTERNATE PERRY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

(This protocol is particularly useful for probing for post-position 5 reasoning.)

#### **1. Looking Backward (College Learning Experience)**

We're interested in learning how you view your overall educational experience in college. Later I'll ask you some specific questions, but for now, I'd just like you to tell me what seems important to you as you think about it--what stands out to you as you think about your experience here?

Alternatives: What about your college experience has influenced you the most—what stands out in your mind that has really made an impression on you and influenced you? Or what overall sense do you make of your educational experience in college?

Probes (request examples, tie together threads of narrative, relate to earlier experiences):  
Who has been important to you in your learning? (peers, faculty/administrators, family, others) How have you changed in the way you approach learning since you've been in college? How would you describe yourself—in general, and specifically as a learner? Are there any ways in which you are different than before as a result of your experience in college? [Possible follow up: If you could have your way, what kinds of changes in yourself would you have hoped to see as a result of your educational experience in college?]

#### **2. Clarifying Convictions**

Does it seem to you that usually there is only one opinion, idea or answer that is really right or true, or do you think there can usually be more than one? Explain.

Follow-up Probes (variable, depending on what seems appropriate with student):  
What makes an opinion right? Are all opinions right? Can you say some opinions are better than others? How do you know? In terms of what makes an opinion “right,” what role do you think experts and authorities need to play? Is it important to obtain support for your opinions? What kind of support? Do you think your outlook on this diversity of opinions has changed in recent years? What/who led to this change?

It seems that with all the various ways of looking at things and all of the different opinions that exist, there's a very confusing variety of choices to make. Do you have any strong convictions to help guide you in these choices? Could you describe an example? [If necessary, define “conviction” as a point of view that one develops about an issue or subject over time, not an unexamined belief one has grown up with or inherited from one's parents or upbringing]

Follow-up Probes:

How did you come to hold this point of view? Can you describe how your

thinking developed? What alternatives did you consider in this process, and why did you discard them? Do you feel or have you ever felt that you would like to convince others of your ideas? What do you think when others have strong convictions and try to convince you? If someone attacks your belief [about opinions], how do you defend yourself?

Optional questions:

React to each of these statements, describing how and to what extent they apply to you:

“I never take anything someone says for granted. I just tend to see the contrary. I like to play the devil's advocate, arguing the opposite of what someone is saying, thinking of exceptions, or thinking of a different train of logic.” “When I have an idea about something, and it differs from the way another person is thinking about it, I'll usually try to look at it from that person's point of view, see how they could say that, why they think that they are right, why it makes sense to them.”

### **3. Looking Forward (Goals for future and career)**

What are your educational or career goals at this point? How have your educational or career goals changed since you started--for instance, do you have any goals now that you didn't have before, or do some you started with seem less worthwhile or realistic?

In what ways has the college specifically contributed to the achievement of your goals up to this point?

How do you think your experiences or accomplishments in college will connect or relate to what you do after college?

\*In each question set, explore for:

Synthesis/integration--pulling threads of narrative together

Connection-making--between ideas, between discipline and personal experience, etc.

Self-reflection--e.g., understanding of self-as-learner, as person considering career choices, etc.

Meta-thinking--analysis of own thinking over time (i.e., how it's changed/evolved)

## APPENDIX 4

### TRENTHAM INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### **Questions regarding overall development through the college experience (RQs 1, 2)**

Thinking back through your college experience overall (to this point), what would you say most stands out to you?

How would you compare yourself as a college freshman with yourself now?

(Probes: ...with regard to knowledge? learning? convictions? personal maturity? personal faith? relationships?, etc. Also: Do you feel like you've "grown up" as a result of being in college? How so?)

In what ways, if any, has your college experience prepared you for life after college?

(Probes: How has your specific major prepared you for the future?)

Have you had someone who has been a personal mentor to you during college (e.g., a teacher, advisor, older adult, or minister)? (If yes...) What was the impact or benefit of that relationship for you?

(Probe: Do you think those types of relationships are important for college students?)

#### **Questions regarding perspectives on knowledge and learning (RQ2)**

What is your view of an ideal college education? How, if at all, should a student change through the college experience?

What is your idea of a great college course?

(Probes: What do you gain from it? What is the role of the teacher? What is the role of the students? What type of assignments are most beneficial?)

• Related (if necessary): What do you most value about the education you received in college? (Probes: What do you *least* value? What would you change if you could?)

• Related (if necessary): Did you get to know many of your professors through college?

How would you describe your relationship with the teacher(s) you got to know best?

(Probe: What would you say are the top attributes of the best college teachers? What sort of relationship would you most like to have with your professors in seminary?) Why do you feel it's necessary for you to go to seminary? (Probes: How did/will you choose the school? What's your purpose in obtaining a seminary degree? What do you hope to gain?)

#### **Questions regarding the impact of encounters with diversity (RQ3)**

Through college (in your classes, especially), did you encounter ideas which challenged your (Christian) beliefs and values? How did you (and how *do* you now) react to that sort of challenge? Is this something you value, looking back? Why?

(Probes: Do you feel these types of challenging encounters are important? How so? How

do you go about evaluating diverse and conflicting views when you encounter them?)

Through college, did you commonly interact with people who held different faiths or worldviews than your own? Did this sort of interaction occur in your classes? What impact did these types of interactions have on you, personally?

In your coursework, were you exposed to multiple disciplines of study (sciences, social sciences, humanities, etc.)? Do you feel this was a benefit to you, personally, and also in preparation for the future? How so?

### **Questions regarding personal commitment (RQs 1, 2)**

When you face a situation where you have to make a decision about an uncertain or difficult issue, and you don't have as much information as you'd like or the information is not clear-cut, how do you go about making a decision about what to believe or choose?

- Related (if necessary): How do you go about arriving at your own positions on core issues and secondary issues, especially when it's hard or impossible to find definitive answers?  
(Probe: How do you decide on important-but-debatable issues when there are multiple opinions that seem equally valid (e.g., in matters of theology, practices in the church, etc.?)
- Probe here about the relation of "proof" to personal knowledge/beliefs/faith.

Thinking about your Christian faith...were there times through college that you felt like you needed to "examine what you believe"?

(Probes: Even core beliefs? What prompted that? Was this ultimately a positive or negative experience for you?)

Tell me about your "calling to ministry."

(Probes: How did you make the decision to commit to vocational ministry? Did you ever consider a different career path? Were there times through college when you questioned or doubted your decision or your ministerial calling in general? How did you deal with that? Do you think about your commitment to ministry differently now than you did at first?)

### **Final question**

To wrap this up, I've asked you questions about several different experiences and issues...but is there anything I haven't asked you about that you would say has been really significant or life changing through your time as a college student?



## APPENDIX 5

### STUCKERT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### **Questions regarding overall development through the seminary experience (RQs 1, 3)**

Thinking back through your seminary experience overall (to this point), what would you say most stands out to you?

How would you compare yourself as a first time seminary student with yourself now?

(Probes: . . . with regard to knowledge? learning? convictions? personal maturity? Personal faith? relationships?, etc. Also: Do you feel like you've "matured" as a result of being in seminary? How so?)

In what ways, if any, has your seminary experience prepared you for real life ministry?

(Probes: Which courses prepared you best?)

Have you had someone who has been a personal mentor to you during seminary (e.g., a teacher, advisor, older adult, or minister)? (If yes . . . ) What was the impact or benefit of that relationship for you? (Probe: Do you think those types of relationships are important for seminary students?)

#### **Questions regarding perspectives on knowledge and learning (RQs 1, 3)**

What is your view of an ideal seminary education? How, if at all, should a student change through the seminary experience?

What is your idea of a great seminary course? (Probes: What do you gain from it? What is the role of the teacher? What is the role of the students? What type of assignments are most beneficial? What is the culture of your seminary and how did it affect you? What was your involvement in the local church and how did it affect you? What did you do for supervised field education and how did it affect you? If you took distance courses, how did they contribute to your seminary experience? What were the key influences on your seminary experience?)

- Related (if necessary): What do you most value about the education you received in seminary? (Probes: What do you least value? What would you change if you could?)
- Related (if necessary): Did you get to know many of your professors through seminary? How would you describe your relationship with the professor(s) you got to know best? (Probe: What would you say are the top attributes of the best professors in seminary?)
- Related (if necessary): Did you take any distance courses during seminary? How would you describe the differences between residential and distance courses? How would you describe your development related to residential and distance courses?

Why did you feel it was necessary for you to go to seminary? (Probes: How did you

choose the school? What was your purpose in obtaining a seminary degree? What did you hope to gain?)

**Questions regarding the impact of encounters with diversity (RQ 2)**

Through seminary (in your classes, especially), did you encounter ideas which challenged your beliefs and values? How did you (and how do you now) react to that sort of challenge? Is this something you value, looking back? Why? (Probes: Do you feel these types of challenging encounters are important? How so? How do you go about evaluating diverse and conflicting views when you encounter them?)

Through seminary, did you commonly interact with people who held different Christian traditions or commitments than your own? Did this sort of interaction occur in your classes? What impact did these types of interactions have on you, personally?

In your coursework, were you exposed to multiple perspectives on issues like the interpretation of the Bible, or the doctrine of baptism? Do you feel this was a benefit to you, personally, and also in preparation for the future? How so?

**Questions regarding personal commitment (RQs 1, 3)**

When you face a situation where you have to make a decision about an uncertain or difficult issue, and you don't have as much information as you'd like or the information is not clear-cut, how do you go about making a decision about what to believe or choose?

- Related (if necessary): How do you go about arriving at your own positions on core issues and secondary issues, especially when it's hard or impossible to find definitive answers? (Probe: How do you decide on important-but-debatable issues when there are multiple opinions that seem equally valid (e.g., in matters of theology, practices in the church, etc.?)
- Probe here about the relation of "proof" to personal knowledge/beliefs/faith.

Thinking about your Christian faith . . . were there times through seminary that you felt like you needed to "examine what you believe"? (Probes: Even core beliefs? What prompted that? Was this ultimately a positive or negative experience for you?)

Tell me about your "calling to ministry." (Probes: How did you make the decision to commit to vocational ministry? Did you ever consider a different career path? Were there times through seminary when you questioned or doubted your decision or your ministerial calling in general? How did you deal with that? Do you think about your commitment to ministry differently now than you did at first?)

**Final question**

To wrap this up, I've asked you questions about several different experiences and issues . . . but is there anything I haven't asked you about that you would say has been really significant or life changing through your time as a seminary student?

## APPENDIX 6

### KINTNER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### **Questions regarding overall development through the seminary experience.**

1. Thinking back through your seminary experience to this point, what would you say most stands out to you?
  - Related (if necessary): What do you most value about the education you received in seminary? What do you least value? What would you change?
  - Related (if necessary): What have been the most impactful relationships for you during your time in seminary? How did those relationships impact you? (Probes: How do you think a student who doesn't have those kind of relationships would fare in seminary?
    - a. Related (if necessary): Did you get to know many of your professors through seminary? How would you describe your relationship with the professor(s) you got to know best? (Probe: What would you say are the top attributes of the best seminary professors? What sort of relationship would you most like to have with your professors in seminary?)
    - b. Related: What was your involvement in the local church? How did it affect you?
    - c. Related (if necessary): What were your interactions like with your peers? How did they impact your experience?
    - d. Related (if applicable): How do you believe your experience as a married seminary differ from women who were single?
2. How would you compare yourself as a first time seminary student with yourself now? (Probes: . . . with regard to knowledge? learning? convictions? personal maturity? faith? relationships? How have you matured in seminary? How has it impacted the way you live?) What courses or professors were most impactful and why?
3. What proved to be the hardest moments or challenges in seminary for you?
4. How might your experience as a female on the seminary campus have been different from that of a male student?
5. During your time at the seminary, when were you most likely or least likely to speak up or contribute in classes or group discussions?
6. How do you feel better equipped for life and ministry as a result of your studies in seminary? Where do you still feel you are lacking in your education?

#### **Questions regarding perspectives on knowledge and learning**

1. What is your view of an ideal seminary education? How, if at all, should a seminary student change as a result of going to seminary?
2. How would you define "knowledge"? How is knowledge related to a seminary education? What is the relationship between knowledge and truth? What are the standards you use for evaluating the truth of your beliefs or values? Do your personal beliefs/values apply to other people—in other words, are you willing to apply your standards to their behavior? Why or why not?

### **Questions regarding the impact of encounters with diversity**

1. During seminary, have you encountered any significant differences in beliefs and values with peers or other people you've met in your experiences in seminary? What is your reaction to this diversity; how do you account for these differences? How do you go about evaluating the conflicting beliefs you encounter? How, if at all, do you interact with people who have views different from your own?
  - Related, (if necessary): Through seminary, did you interact with people who held different Christian traditions or commitments than your own? What impact did these types of interactions have on you, personally?

[Note: The focus here is on the process of evaluating, not on specific beliefs per se]

2. What ideas that challenged your beliefs came up in your courses? How did that impact you? Is that something you value, looking back? Why or why not?
  - Related, (if necessary): In your coursework, were you exposed to multiple perspectives on issues like the interpretation of the Bible, or the doctrine of baptism? Do you feel this was a benefit to you? How so?

### **Questions regarding personal commitment**

1. Facing an uncertain situation in which you don't have as much information as you'd like and/or the information is not clear-cut, how do you go about making a decision about what you believe? Is your decision in that situation the right decision? Why or why not? If so, how do you know?
  - Related (if necessary): How do you go about arriving at your own positions on core issues and secondary issues? (Probe: How do you decide on important-but-debatable issues when there are multiple opinions that seem equally valid (e.g., in matters of theology, practices in the church, etc.?)
  - Probe: What part does proof play in your positions and what part does personal knowledge, belief, and faith play?
  - What factors might contribute in your changing your views over time.
2. Thinking about your Christian faith . . . were there times through seminary that you felt you needed to "examine what you believe"? (Probes: What prompted that? Was this ultimately a positive or negative experience for you?)
3. Why did you feel it was necessary to attend seminary? (Probes: Did you ever consider a different path? How did you choose which seminary to attend?)
4. What do you hope to do after seminary? (Probes: Has that plan changed during your time in seminary? How might you think of ministry differently than you did before seminary? Were there times through seminary when you questioned or doubted your calling? How did you deal with that? In what ways has seminary specifically contributed to the achievement of your goals up to this point?)

### **Final question**

To wrap this up, I've asked you several questions about experiences and issues, but is there anything I haven't asked you about that you would say has been really significant through your time as a seminary student?

APPENDIX 7  
PERRY'S 9 POSITIONS

**Position 1: Basic duality.** Position 1 holds to polar terms of right and wrong. This is the simplest understanding of knowledge and values.<sup>1</sup> From this position knowledge is absolute and held by authority. In its simplest form, authority is the absolute “truth” (59). This position was not actually observed as being held by any of the students in the study.<sup>2</sup> Some students did reference having at one time thought this way. For example, one student remarked that “when he came to college he didn’t suppose there was such a thing as a question that had more than one answer” (9).

**Position 2: Multiplicity pre-legitimate.** Position 2 brings more understanding of diversity of opinion, but this diversity is seen as stemming from “unwarranted confusion or to result from ‘poorly qualified authorities’ or ‘exercises set by Authority . . . to find The Answer’” (9). As Perry explains, “Diversity and complexity are still perceived as alien but as elements introduced within the community by willful Authorities who are failing of their mediational role” (73). Difference of opinion is only allowed for a time “as a good exercise,” but it is still seen as resolvable (78). Despite the difficulty of allowing for some “complexity,” some tentativeness has been allowed (87).

**Position 3: Multiplicity subordinate.** Position 3 brings more acceptance of different opinions, but it is still temporary. There is still believed to be a right answer that

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<sup>1</sup>William G. Perry, Jr., *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 59.

<sup>2</sup>Perry writes, “As we expected, no freshman in the study was found to express the structure of Position 1 at the time of his interview in June. A few did attempt to describe themselves as having arrived at college in just such a frame of mind, but none could have remained in it and survived the year.” *Ibid.*, 55.

has not yet been found. This uncertainty, however, “implies the legitimacy of a multiplicity of answers” (92). More concession is made in one’s epistemology “for a legitimate human uncertainty” (89).

**Position 4: Multiplicity correlate or relativism subordinate.** As a student comes out of dualism, and has some room for uncertainty, he sometimes wonders why teachers can continue to grade him as wrong in a world of multiplicity or relativism. Position 4 allows for two different responses to this dilemma. Some students conform more readily to professors’ wishes, and some resist. Multiplicity Correlate is put up against authority. In this view because of legitimate uncertainty, the student believes professors have no right to call something wrong. Relativism Subordinate is more compliant and sees multiplicity as something the professors want students to work on (100). In this, students start to bear responsibility, but it is “practiced within Authority’s care” (104). Those who comply, believing faculty want them to think more relativistically, progress faster (96). Through either channel, in this position students start to see “the new world of comparative thought” and “the distinction between an opinion (however well ‘expressed’) and a supported opinion” (100). This new view which includes some legitimate uncertainty can also bring a new relationship with one’s peers as they share ideas (108).

**Position 5: Relativism correlate, competing, or diffuse.** In position 5, relativistic thinking is generalized to different areas of life and study (111). This way of thinking becomes more habitual in the students’ lives (111). All knowledge is seen to be contextual and relative (110). This new way of thinking changes the structure of community as the student comes to realize authorities are in the same relativistic world (122). Relativism Correlate and Competing are still transitioning in this process (113). Diffuse is more complete with issues resolved; yet even Diffuse is still vague and lacks focus like the positions that follow (135).

**Position 6: Commitment foreseen.** In this position a student realizes a need for some commitment in the face of relativism. A commitment “refers to an act, or ongoing activity relating a person as agent and chooser to aspects of his life in which he invests his energies, his care, and his identity” (135). Commitments involve choice and affirmation and are creative acts by the individual. With Commitment Foreseen there is more structure than the chaos of multiplicity that preceded it (135). Relativism has more reasons for why to respond differently in different contexts. Reason alone cannot decide, but reason if thrown out leads to multiplicity, where everyone with competing opinions is right (135). Position 6 realizes one must “transcend” reason. Reason will not fully justify, but one must affirm values in making a decision (136). The need for commitment is “foreseen as the resolution of the problems of relativism,” although commitment has not yet been made (137). There is personal responsibility anticipated in this idea of commitment. It is no longer a matter of obedience or disobedience to “what they want,” but an investment channeled toward studies, impending vocation, moral values or religion (139).

**Position 7: Initial commitment.** The final three positions are more constant with “no major restructuring of the background of life” (153). Perry further explains, “The assumption is established that man’s knowing and valuing are relative in time and circumstance, and that in such a world the individual is faced with the responsibility for choice and affirmation in his life” (153). Positions seven, eight, and nine, then, are greater “degrees of ripening in an art” (153). Position seven is characterized by making an initial commitment or taking responsibility to decide on one major area of life (10, 153). This leads to “relief in settled purpose,” while at the same time there is a strong sense of being “defined by the external forms typifying the role [one] has chosen” (154).

**Position 8: Orientation in implications of commitment.** In position 8, a student demonstrates more experience with commitments. After having made an initial

commitment in position seven, in position eight the student bears the implications and responsibilities of the decision that was made. In this position it becomes less about “external forms,” and there is a greater emphasis on “stylistic issues” (154).

**Position 9: Developing commitments.** In Position 9, commitments are seen to be ongoing. There is a demonstrated maturity in commitments in both content and living (154). This final position, like the first in the scheme, was not really observed in the study. It was envisioned by some of the students’ comments but not observed. It was hypothesized that college does not provide many opportunities for this level of experience. This final foreseen position rounded out the scheme.



## APPENDIX 8

### LETTER TO INSTITUTIONS

Subject for Email: Educational Research

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:<sup>1</sup>

I am writing to request your assistance in recruiting some of your students for my research. I am currently enrolled in the Ed.D. Program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, and am in the process of writing my Doctoral Thesis, entitled “Assessing Epistemological Development among Women in Evangelical Seminaries.” I am recruiting students from a variety of seminaries.

I was wondering if you would be willing to either send me a list of email addresses of female students who are either recently graduated or currently enrolled in the final year of your Master of Divinity Program, or if you would be willing to send the attached letter to your female M.Div. students. Their involvement would entail filling out the questionnaire on the link provided and then participating in an hour-long interview. Their identity will remain completely anonymous in my thesis.

Your approval and assistance in contacting your students for participation would be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call next week and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time. You may contact me at my email address: [jkintner097@students.sbts.edu](mailto:jkintner097@students.sbts.edu).

Sincerely,  
Jenn Kintner

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<sup>1</sup> This standard email requesting institutional support in recruiting students for participation was adapted for each email with considerations for each recipient and institution.

## APPENDIX 9

### LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED WHEN CONTACTING INSTITUTIONS

To Whom It May Concern,

I am currently enrolled in the Ed.D. Program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and wanted to write and ask you to consider helping me with my research entitled “Assessing Epistemological Development among Women in Evangelical Seminaries.” I’m excited to contribute to the research in this field, since I am passionate about discipleship and theological education for women. I hope my thesis will be a resource that will benefit female seminarians, churches, and theological institutions.

I am writing to request your help and participation in my research. My research involves an hour-long interview with 30 women in the last year of their program or who have recently graduated from a Master of Divinity program at various evangelical seminaries.<sup>1</sup> If you fit that category and would like to participate, there will be two steps. The first would be filling out a participation form [here](#).

From there, if you meet the criteria, you will be invited to participate in the second and final step, an hour-long interview by phone. Your interview transcript would be used in my research, but the identity of all participants will be kept confidential. In rare circumstances, a follow-up question may be necessary, but most likely the interview would conclude your participation. As a thank you for completing the interview, you would receive a \$10 Amazon gift card.

Please consider being involved in this research which will benefit you and future students who attend seminary. If you have any questions with regard to the process or your involvement, please feel free to contact me at [jkintner097@students.sbts.edu](mailto:jkintner097@students.sbts.edu)

Thank you,  
Jennifer Kintner

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<sup>1</sup>This standard text inviting participants to participate was edited specifically for Dallas Theological Seminary Participants before it was sent to contacts at that institution as their student participants were pursuing their Master of Theology Degrees instead of a Master of Divinity.

## APPENDIX 10

### WILLIAM MOORE AND THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

#### **WILLIAM S. MOORE**

1505 Farwell Ct. NW

Olympia, Washington 98502

360-704-4346 (work) 360-528-1809 (cell)

bmoore@sbctc.ctc.edu (work) wsmoore51@comcast.net (home)

#### **CORE AREAS OF EXPERTISE**

- ◆ Learning, teaching and assessment
- ◆ Student learning outcomes
- ◆ College and career readiness
- ◆ K-12/higher education articulation
- ◆ Education reform and policy issues
- ◆ Professional development
- ◆ Institutional effectiveness
- ◆ Organizational culture and change

#### **EDUCATION**

Ph.D.

December, 1987

College Student Personnel  
Administration (Emphasis:  
student development)

University of Maryland, College  
Park

Major Advisor: Dr. L. Lee  
Knefelkamp

Topic: “The **Learning  
Environment Preferences:**  
Establishing Preliminary

M.A.

August, 1976

Counseling Psychology

University of Texas at  
Austin

Master's Report Topic:  
“Effects of Career  
Counseling on Locus of  
Control and Vocational  
Maturity”

B.A., Special Honors  
May, 1973

University of Texas at  
Austin

Plan II Honors program  
(concentrations in  
English and  
psychology)

Reliability and Validity for an Objective Measure of the Perry Scheme”

## **WORK HISTORY**

*Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges  
Olympia, Washington*

*Director, K-12 Partnerships and Core to College Alignment August, 2013--present*

- Leading system work focused largely on college readiness in mathematics and English as well as high school/college articulation issues, including supporting a shift to a multiple measures approach to placement (e.g., transcript-based, directed self-placement, across-college placement reciprocity agreement)
- Facilitating and helping lead Washington’s involvement in the Dana Center’s *Math Pathways to Completion* initiative
- Developed and now leading the *Bridge to College Project*, a collaborative partnership with the Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction, offering senior year “transition courses” in math and English in over 150 high schools across the state
- Organized and led Washington’s participation in the *Core to College* project, a multi-state effort focused on helping the state higher education system play a constructive and supportive role in the implementation of Common Core and Smarter Balanced assessment system
- As part of the *Core to College* effort led the work in developing a system-wide placement policy agreement on the use of the high school Smarter Balanced assessment

*Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges  
Olympia, Washington*

*Coordinator, Student Outcomes Assessment January, 1990—July, 2013*

- Developed and led the *Re-Thinking Pre-College Math* project from 2009-2013, focused on transforming precollege math programs and curricula and providing professional learning opportunities for faculty teaching in those programs
- Developed and led the Transition Math Project from 2004-2009, a statewide K-16 initiative to create, assess, and implement local high school/higher education partnerships around faculty/teacher-driven and clearly-defined college readiness standards in mathematics
- Provided leadership for assessment, teaching and learning efforts across the community and technical college system, including coordinating and supporting a wide range of systemic professional learning opportunities for faculty
- Organized and led a Washington annual assessment, teaching and learning conference for higher education faculty

*University of Georgia, Counseling and Human Development Services*

*Athens, Georgia*

*September 1988-June 1989*

*Visiting Professor*

- Taught master's level courses in developmental theories, educational outcomes assessment issues, theory-to-practice, and developmental interventions
- Supervised and coordinated field work experience for master's students

*Longwood College*

*Farmville, Virginia*

*July 1983-September 1988*

*Student Development Educator*

- Coordinated a comprehensive, developmentally-based student involvement program; designed interventions, created assessment instruments, created developmental transcript, conducted small group discussions with students, promoted project internally and externally
- Conducted student life research--retention/attrition, quality of life(residential, academic), student attitudes and time usage, etc.; report data to campus community
- Taught courses for Longwood Seminar program and psychology department
- Collaborated with academic affairs on programs geared to undeclared students and academic "problem" students (career planning concerns, study skills, scheduling/advising, etc.)

*Career Development Center, University of Maryland*

*College Park, Maryland*

*August 1981-June 1983*

*Coordinator, Career Planning Course*

- Trained and supervised instructors for a developmentally-designed career planning course; taught same course
- Designed and revised course workbook materials and exercises
- Helped redesign self-help materials for Career Library and re-organize major sections of the Library itself
- Consulted with students, both individually and in groups, about career plans and career-related issues (e.g., 1981 Maryland Leadership Retreat)

*University of Maryland*

*College Park, Maryland*

*August 1980- July 1981*

*Coordinator, National Clearinghouse for Commuter Programs*

- Wrote and edited articles for a quarterly national journal/newsletter, The Commuter
- Conducted research(collected and analyzed data, wrote summary report) on commuter institutions around the country

- Compiled and edited comprehensive bibliography on commuter-related issues
- Consulted with student affairs professionals on commuter-related programs and research

*Office of Residence Life, Southern Methodist University  
Dallas, Texas*

*August 1978-July 1980*

*Area Coordinator*

- Supervised a staff of 5 hall directors and 15 resident assistants
- Co-designed and coordinated the resident assistant selection process
- Coordinated the design of an overall staff development program for
- Implemented a variety of special housing options(e.g., room personalization, roommate matching with the MBTI, etc.) to enhance satisfaction in residence hall living
- Edited a comprehensive Office of Residence Life self-study report done for accreditation purposes
- Helped initiate a campus-wide Leadership Development program; conducted or co- led workshops on leadership issues and skills

*California Lutheran College  
Thousand Oaks, CA*

*July 1976-July 1978*

*Director, Career Planning and Placement*

- Created, organized, and maintained a Career Library structured around John Holland's typology model
- Initiated and taught a career planning course
- Counseled students individually and in groups on educational and vocational concerns
- Designed and conducted a number of structured group experiences, including a short-course in group dynamics

## **RESEARCH/PUBLICATIONS**

(2013). (co-authors Emily Lardner, Gillies Malnarich, & Michael Davis). Re-Thinking Precollege Math: Pedagogy, Professional Responsibility, and Student Success. RPM Project final report, SBCTC.

(2002). Accountability is More than 'Accounting': Promoting and Sustaining Institutional Assessment-as-Learning. Journal of Applied Research in Community Colleges special issue, *Outcomes Assessment in Washington State*, Winter 2002.

(2001). Understanding learning in a postmodern world: Re-thinking the Perry scheme of ethical and intellectual development. In B. Hofer & P. Pintrich (eds.), Personal epistemology: the psychology of beliefs about knowledge and knowing. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- (1996). (co-author: Michael J. Pavelich) Measuring the effect of experiential education using the Perry model. Journal of Engineering Education, 85(4), October, 1996. p. 287-292.
- (1995). 'My mind exploded': intellectual development and the assessment of collaborative learning environments. In J. MacGregor (Ed.), Handbook for Assessment in and of Collaborative Learning Environments. Olympia, WA: Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education.
- (1994). Student and faculty epistemology in the college classroom: the Perry scheme of intellectual and ethical development. In K. Pritchard & R. M. Sawyer (Eds.), Handbook of College Teaching: Theory and Applications. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- (1994). Beyond 'mildly interesting facts': student self-evaluations and outcomes assessment. (co-author: Steve Hunter) In J. MacGregor (Ed.), Fostering Reflective Learning through Student Self-evaluations. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- (1993). (co-author: Michael J. Pavelich) Measuring maturing rates of engineering students using the Perry model. IEEE Frontiers in Education conference proceedings, p. 451-455, 1993.
- (1992). Standards and outcomes assessment: strategies and tools. (co-author: R.B. Winston, Jr.) In B. Bryan (Ed.), Using Professional Standards in Student Affairs, *New Directions for Student Services*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- (1991). Issues facing student affairs professionals in the 1990's. In T.K. Miller & R.B. Winston, Jr. (Eds.), Administration and Leadership in Student Affairs: Actualizing Student Development in Higher Education (2nd edition) Muncie, IN: Accelerated Development.
- (1989). The Learning Environment Preferences: establishing construct validity for an objective measure of the Perry scheme of intellectual development. Journal of College Student Development, v. 30, November, 1989, p. 504-514.
- (1988). The Measure of Intellectual Development: an instrument manual. Olympia, WA: Center for the Study of Intellectual Development (CSID).
- (1988). Instrument manual for the Learning Environment Preferences: an objective measure of the Perry scheme. Olympia, WA: CSID.
- (1988). Current issues in the assessment of cognitive development. The Georgia Journal of College Student Affairs, 3 (2), 11-14.
- (1988). Assessing student development: the Longwood experience. VASPA Interchange, 16 (2), 1-4.
- (1987). Longwood College Involvement Project. Report ED 283 498, Washington, DC: Educational Resources Information Center.
- (1986). Perry scheme assessment issues. Perry Scheme Network Newsletter, v. 8, #1, p. 1-4.
- (1985). Student development: an institution-wide commitment." ACU-I Bulletin, 53 (3), 21-25. (co-authors: Barb Gorski, Meredith Strohm, Kathe Taylor)
- (1985). The Maryland career course: type/learning style issues. Report ED 253 791, Washington, DC: Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).
- (1985). The Maryland career course: Stage/style Interactions--the Perry scheme and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Report ED 253 792, Washington, DC: ERIC.
- (1982). Experiential learning and student development. Unpublished paper, Farmville, VA: Center for Applications of Developmental Instruction (CADI).

- (1982). William Perry's Cognitive-Developmental Theory: A Review of the Model and Related Research. Farmville, VA: CADI. (for Fernald & Fernald, Introductory Psychology, 5th edition).
- (1981). Adult development vs. student development? The Commuter (National Clearinghouse for Commuter Programs quarterly), Summer issue.
- (1981). Trends in off-campus housing. The Commuter, Winter issue.
- (1980). Philosophical foundations of programming. The Commuter, Fall issue (co-author: Dennis C. Roberts).

## **SELECTED PRESENTATIONS/WORKSHOPS**

### *CONFERENCE SESSIONS AND WORKSHOPS*

- “Guided to What? The Promise and Perils of ‘Guided Pathways’,” ATL Conference, May 2016
- “Clarifying the Smarter Balanced Placement Agreement and Washington Bridge to College Courses,” ATL Conference, May 2015
- “‘When Hope and Fear Collide’: Using the Smarter Balanced Assessment in Course Placement,” presentation to Hawaii K-20 gathering, November 2014
- “Understanding Student Motivation and the Role of Self-Reflection in Learning,” 2014 National Summer Institute on Learning Communities, with Sonja Wiedenhaupt, The Evergreen State College
- “Fostering K-20 Collaboration and Inquiry: Developing a College Readiness Course,” NISOD, May 2014, with Jennifer Whetham, SBCTC
- “Lessons Learned from the Re-Thinking Precollege Math Project,” Washington (WAMATYC) Two-Year Colleges’ Math Conference, May 2013
- “Unpacking the ‘A’ in Outcomes Assessment: Assessment as Learning,” 2013 Washington New Faculty Institute, with Jennifer Whetham, SBCTC
- “Re-Thinking Precollege Math: Taking a Collective Approach to Challenging the Status Quo,” Instruction Commission presentation, November 2012
- “What’s Missing from this Picture? Using Qualitative Methods to Assess Student Learning,” ATL conference, May 2012 (with Robin Jeffers, Bellevue College)
- “Focusing on the Core of Educational Practice in Precollege Math,” Everett Community College K-16 summit plenary presentation, June 2011
- “Getting Real about Community: Addressing the ‘Group-Worthy’ Work of Teaching and Learning,” ATL plenary session, May 2011
- “Standards: A Critical Need for K-16 Collaboration through Professional Learning in Real (not Pseudo) Communities,” Spokane Area Math Symposium, November 2011 (with Greta Bornemann, OSPI)
- “Key Elements in System-wide Innovation Efforts”, Trustees’ conference presentation, January 2010
- “Tying Authentic Assessment to Learning Community Program Outcomes,” 2011 National Summer Institute on Learning Communities, with Marilyn Martinez-Flores, Riverside Community College
- “Re-Thinking Precollege Math: From ‘Professional Development’ to ‘Professional Learning’,” RPM 2011 Summer Institute



- “Assessment on the Front End: Re-examining ‘Placement Testing’ From a Student Learning Outcomes Perspective, WA Assessment, Teaching and Learning preconference workshop, May, 2011
- “What’s in a Name? What Does/Should ‘Intermediate Algebra’ Mean?,” Washington Math Conference, May 2011 (with Mike Nevins, Everett Community College)
- “Re-Thinking Developmental Education: A Collective Approach to Changing Core Educational Practices,” NISOD, May 2010, with Emily Lardner, Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education
- “If ‘Developmental Education’ Didn’t Exist Would We Have to Invent it?” Washington Math conference, May 2010
- “Standards, Standards Everywhere...: Do Standards=Standardized Instruction?” *Multiplying the Options* conference, Everett Community College, June 2010.
- “General Education Assessment: The Promise and Perils of a Statewide Community of Practice,” AAC&U, February 2010 (with Robin Jeffers, Bellevue College)
- “Assessing Learning Community Initiatives: Gathering Evidence that Works around Questions that Matter,” National Learning Communities Summer Institute, June 2006
- “Complex Questions and ‘Kitchen Stories’: Pursuing Authentic Institutional Assessment in an Age of Accountability,” keynote presentation, National Student Affairs Assessment & Retention conference, June 2005
- “Assignments and assessments as the key to deep learning online: Outcomes, engagement, and interaction.” American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum, June, 2000, Charlotte, NC. [with Elayne Rousso, Bellevue Community College]
- “Beyond the ‘standards wars’: Addressing more fundamental questions about teaching, learning and assessment.” Keynote presentation at the Washington Assessment Group annual conference, May, 2000, Vancouver, WA.
- “Faith, proof, and judgment: The importance of keeping authentic assessment alive in an age of accountability.” Keynote presentation at the California State University-Fullerton Assessment Conference, March, 2000, Fullerton, CA.
- “Assessment in and of learning communities as a way to improve authentic institutional assessment.” American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum, June, 1999, Denver, CO.
- “‘Exploding minds’ and other hazards of ‘really learning’: Assessment in and of learning communities.” Washington Center national conference on learning communities, May, 1999, Seattle, WA.
- “Assessment’s role in institutional effectiveness.” Association fall conference, October 29, 1997, Wenatchee, WA
- “Outcomes assessment and distance learning.” Community College System new faculty seminar, September 11, 1997, Seattle, WA
- “Assessing performance of student learning.” Aviation Accreditors outcomes assessment workshop, July 16, 1997, Seattle, WA
- “Performance assessments for college outcomes.” Abilities Institute, June 25-27, 1997, North Bend, WA
- “Using the Perry scheme of intellectual development to re-think teaching and learning.” *Teaching Science at the Tertiary Level* (an international conference for engineering educators, sponsored by Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden, June 14-17, 1997

- “Using student self-evaluations to understand intellectual development and learning outcomes.” Washington Assessment Group annual conference, May 7-9, 1997
- “Outcomes assessment, changing paradigms, and the diffusion of innovation.” Washington Assessment Group annual conference, May 7-9, 1997, Spokane, WA
- Quantitative Reasoning Transfer Outcomes Retreat, April 10-11, 1997, Seabeck, WA
- Developmental Education College-Readiness Outcomes Retreat, February 27-28, 1997
- “Focusing on learning principles in distance learning.” Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education Annual Conference, February 14-15, 1997, Seattle, WA
- “Changing paradigms through outcomes assessment.” Learning Paradigm conference, January 11-14, 1997, San Diego, CA
- “Assessing 'things that matter' through purpose, performance, and judgment.” American Association of Colleges & Universities annual conferences, January 1996, 1995, 1994.
- “Balancing assessment and accountability toward educational reform: can two masters be served at the same time?” Pacific Northwest Association of Institutional Researchers & Planners annual meeting, October, 1995, Seattle, WA.
- “Assessing the ineffable: reaffirming a community of judgment in higher education.” Washington Assessment Group annual conference, May 4-5, 1995, Spokane, WA.
- “Understanding the ineffable: the 'Student Voices' project.” Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education annual conference, February 11-12, 1994, Bellevue, WA.
- “Outcomes assessment: reaffirming a collaborative community of judgment in higher education.” Community College Humanities Association, October 27, 1994, Portland, OR.
- “Learning as transformation: Re-thinking outcomes assessment in higher education.” The Minnesota-Wisconsin Workshop on General Education, sponsored by the Association of American Colleges, Minnesota Community Colleges, & the University of Wisconsin Centers, November 20, 1993, St. Paul, MN.
- “Assessment, government, and public policy: responding to Kenneth Adelman.” Pacific Northwest Association of Institutional Researchers and Planners, October, 1993, Vancouver, B.C.
- “Assessment as cultural revolution.” Workshop for the Association of American Colleges annual conference, January, 1993, Seattle, WA. [with Steve Hunter, The Evergreen State College]
- “Ethical issues in assessment: student-centered assessment.” Presentation at the American Evaluation Association annual meeting, November, 1992, Seattle, WA.
- “Assessment as cultural revolution: re-framing outcomes assessment at community colleges in Washington state.” Presentation to the American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum, June, 1992, Miami, FL.
- “The Perry scheme of intellectual and ethical development: issues and implications for the assessment movement.” Workshop for the American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum, June, 1991, San Francisco, CA.
- “Using student self-evaluations to assess intellectual development.” Presentation to the American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum, June, 1991, San

Francisco, CA. [with Kirk Thompson and Steve Hunter, The Evergreen State College]

- “Assessment of the Perry scheme of intellectual development: a critical review of research and issues.” Part of a symposium on “Measuring Thinking Processes” presented to the American Association for Educational Research national conference, April, 1991, Chicago, IL.
- “Tuning in to student voices: assessment and the Perry scheme of intellectual and ethical development.” Workshop for the American Association for Higher Education national conference, March, 1991, Washington, D.C.
- “Tuning in to student voices: assessment and the Perry scheme of intellectual and ethical development.” Workshop for the Fifth American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum, June, 1990, Washington, D.C.
- “Beyond content: re-framing questions of student learning.” Workshop for the Student Outcomes Research Institute, June, 1990, Olympia, Washington.
- “Developing an Objective Measure of the Perry Scheme: Pitfalls & Progress, American College Personnel Association (ACPA), March, 1988, Miami, FL
- “The Impact of Liberal Arts on Student Development Outcomes,” Southern Association of College Student Affairs (SACSA), November, 1987 {with Pat Murrell}
- “A Program of Student Involvement in Learning,” Southern Association of College Student Affairs (SACSA), November, 1986 {with Sue Saunders and Phyllis Mable}
- Rater Training Workshop for the Perry Scheme, October, 1986 [for Evergreen State College and the Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education]
- “The Confluence of Cognitive Stage and Style: The Perry Scheme and the MBTI,” Association of Psychological Type-Southeast convention, October, 1986 {with Gina Graham from the Memphis State Center for the Study of Higher Education}
- “A Developmental Approach to Student Activities and Involvement,” American College Unions-International regional workshop, Charlottesville, VA, October, 1986
- “Fostering an Institutional Commitment to Student Development: Can Territories Be Transcended?” {with Longwood College Project team}
- “Doing I.T.: Involvement & Learning Through Student 'Activities',” (sponsored by Commission IV) {with MaryKaye Benton, Pat King, & Kathe Taylor}
- “Measuring Cognitive Development: Current Issues”
- “Understanding the Perry Scheme through Rater Training” (all-day pre-conference workshop) {with Kathe Taylor}
- [ four previous entries: American College Personnel Association annual convention, April, 1986]
- “Involving Students in Their Education: One Path to Excellence,” Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA) convention, Nashville, November, 1985
- “Are Students Really Committed to Competence?” Presentation to the Competence & Commitment: Educating for Abilities that Last conference, Memphis, TN, July, 1985
- “Differences in Counseling and Advising Men and Women,” at the CAEL Counseling and Advising Adult Learners conference, Richmond, VA, April, 1985 {with Meredith Strohm}

- “Fostering Student Involvement: A Developmental Approach,” NASPA drive-in workshop, Charlottesville, VA, April, 1985 {with Longwood Involvement Project team}
- “Discussing Developmental Outcomes with Freshmen,” Freshman Year Experience conference, February, 1985 {with Longwood Project team}
- “Assessing Student Development,” at the Implementing Student Development conference, Longwood College, June, 1984
- “The **Measure of Intellectual Development**: A Review and Update” {with Peggy Fitch, Lee Knefelkamp, and Kathe Taylor} &
- “Integrating the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator into a Career Course”{with Wendy Whittemore}, ACPA convention, March, 1984
- “Bridging Academic and Student Affairs,” Virginia College Personnel Association conference, February, 1984 {with Kathe Taylor}
- “Using Developmental Theory in Faculty Consultation” {with Peggy Fitch, Lee Knefelkamp, and Kathe Taylor}
- “Encouraging Students to Plan Ahead in the Area of Careers” {with Anna Beth Payne and Wendy Settle} [two previous entries: American College Personnel Association, March, 1982]
- “Using Developmental Theory in the Classroom”, all-day workshop at the American Association for Higher Education convention, April, 1982 {with Peggy Fitch, Lee Knefelkamp, and Kathe Taylor}
- “A Faculty Consultation Model,” The Perry Conference, St. Paul, MN, July, 1981 {with Peggy Fitch, Lee Knefelkamp, and Kathe Taylor}
- “More Than a Place to Park”(sponsored by Commission XVII), American College Personnel Association convention, April, 1981
- “Residence Hall Staff Development Efforts”(sponsored by Commission III, American College Personnel Association convention, April, 1980 (Co-editor/author of staff development publication for Com. III)

#### *FACULTY WORKSHOPS ON INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE PERRY SCHEME*

- University of South Florida, January 2001 and December, 2000, Tampa, FL.
- College of Engineering, Penn State University, October, 1996, University Park, PA.
- American Association of Colleges & Universities Asheville Institute on General Education, June, 1996 and June, 1995, Asheville, NC.
- Eastern Washington University, May 1995, Cheney, WA.
- University of Colorado, September, 1994, Boulder, CO.
- Oakton Community College, January, 1994, Chicago, IL.
- Central Washington University, May, 1993 & October, 1993, Ellensburg, WA.
- Lafayette University, March, 1993, Easton, PA.
- Memphis State University, January, 1993, Memphis, TN. [with Kathe Taylor, CSID]
- Mt. St. Mary's College, September, 1992, Los Angeles, CA. [with Kathe Taylor]
- Seattle University, March, 1992, Seattle, WA.
- Eastern Washington University, February, 1992, Cheney, WA.

- Centralia College, January, 1992, Centralia, WA.
- Wheaton College faculty, February, 1991, Wheaton, IL.
- Sears Roebuck Teaching Fellows, Duquesne University, October, 1990, Pittsburgh, PA.
- University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, May, 1988, Oshkosh, WI.
- Suomi College, April, 1988, Suomi, MI.
- The University of Texas at Austin, July, 1986, Austin, TX.

*INSTITUTIONAL WORKSHOPS ON OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT*

- Santa Clara University, August, 1999 and April, 2000, San Jose, CA.
- University of Washington graduate seminar on community colleges, October, 1997, Seattle, WA.
- Seattle University, Student Development assessment, June, 1997, Seattle, WA.
- Douglas College, June, 1997, New Westminster, British Columbia.
- North Seattle Community College Assessment Retreat, March, 1997, Seattle, WA.
- American Association of Colleges & Universities Asheville Institute on General Education, June, 1996 and June, 1995, Asheville, NC.
- Illinois College, August, 1996, Jacksonville, IL.
- Willamette University, May, 1995, Salem, OR.
- Lane Community College, September, 1994, Eugene, OR.
- Antioch University (annual multi-campus conference), April, 1994, Seattle, WA.
- Oakton Community College & Wm. R. Harper College, October, 1993, Chicago, IL.
- Seattle Central Community College Professional/Technical faculty, October, 1993.
- Douglas College, April, 1993, New Westminster, British Columbia.
- Bellarmine College, October, 1992, Louisville, KY.
- Northern Nevada Community College, August, 1992, Elko, NV.
- Skagit Valley College, April, 1992, Mt. Vernon, WA.

## APPENDIX 11

### CSID INTERVIEW SCORING

#### **Interpreting MID Ratings**

The **MID** is scored by raters who have trained extensively in the general Perry scheme and the specific rating process developed over the years by Knefelkamp (1978) and CSID (Knefelkamp et al, 1982). Because the instrument is designed to assess the part of the Perry scheme that we believe to be primarily cognitive/intellectual in focus, **MID** ratings range along a theoretical continuum from position one through position five. In practice, position one perspectives are not found (it was a hypothetical and conceptual extension of the model even in the original study), and thus the actual **MID** ratings will range from positions two through five.

Ratings derived from the standard Perry scheme interview protocols follow the same conventions as described here for the **MID**, but depending on the questions/prompts used ratings may extend to positions 6 and 7 (through initial Commitment) in the Perry model.

#### The Rating System

Individual ratings on the **MID** are represented by a 3-digit number which reflects the dominant and (if necessary) the subdominant position/s rated in the essay. This system extends the intellectual/cognitive portion of the Perry scheme continuum from 4 steps--that is, positions 2, 3, 4, and 5--to 10 steps: 222, 223, 233, 333, 334, 344, 444, 445, 455, & 555. Solid ratings (like 333) reflect a "stable position" perspective; the two steps between each stable position indicate transitional essays. As examples, 223 represents "dominant position 2 opening to position 3," while 233 indicates "dominant position 3 with trailing position 2." The ratings thus reflect an assessment of the cognitive complexity displayed by the essay with respect to classroom learning along a linear, simple stage model continuum (see Rest, 1979, Judging Moral Issues, for a thorough discussion of simple vs. complex cognitive stage model assumptions).

**MID** rating summary sheets will normally include three ratings--the two individual raters' ratings and the final, or reconciled, rating. In some instances, there will be a third individual rating, which means that the two original raters could not agree on a reconciled rating, in which case a third rater is consulted. We recommend that two figures be computed for interrater reliability: **absolute agreement** and **within 1/3 position agreement**. The former indicates the percentage of the sample on which the two raters produced identical initial ratings, the latter the percentage on which the raters' individual ratings were 1/3 position different (or less, meaning this figure includes cases in which there was absolute agreement). Our rater training standard for certification is 90% for the

within 1/3 position agreement figure. For a further discussion of the current inter-rater reliability data available on the **MID**, see the complete instrument manual (Moore, 1987) available from CSID.

### Data Reporting

For reporting purposes, the MID ratings can be treated in either (or both) of two ways, as categorical data or as continuous data. Some statistical purists insist that a measurement scale like the MID can only be treated as categorical data. Other experts, however, including respected psychometricians like Jum Nunnally (Psychometric Theory, McGraw-Hill, 1967), argue that such a strict interpretation is too rigid and not meaningful in practical terms for psychological scales. (For a more in-depth discussion of this topic, see the MID instrument manual.) Depending on the purpose and the audience of the research, the scores can be effectively used either way, and often are reported both ways for comparison purposes.

#### 1) Grouping categories:

222 & 222(3) = Position 2	444 & 444(5) = Position 4
223 & 233 = Transition 2/3	445 & 455 = Transition 4/5
333 & 333(4) = Position 3	555 = Position 5
334 & 344 = Transition 3/4	

Report the frequencies and percentages of students in each of the categories. These figures can then be converted to a histogram if desired, and in a longitudinal project, “profile shifts” to the right on this kind of chart indicates upward movement. For a good example of this kind of analysis, see Kirk Thompson's 1990 paper, available from the Perry Network, on Evergreen State College data.

#### 2) Continuous data:

Convert the rating scores to numbers as follows:

222 & 222(3) = 2.0	344 = 3.67
223 = 2.33	444 & 444(5) = 4.0
233 = 2.67	445 = 4.33
333 & 333(4) = 3.0	455 = 4.67
334 = 3.33	555 = 5.0

Once the ratings are converted to these numerical scores, they can then be manipulated statistically however you choose (mean, standard deviation, etc.)

“Glimpse” ratings (e.g., 333(4); see the rating notes on the following page for more details) can be treated numerically as a separate sub-stage. In the case of 333(4), for instance, it could be scored as a “3.17” (half of 1/3 a position, in effect). Conceptually, I would argue that these essays are different from 333 essays and the latter approach is preferable; practically, unless your sample has a lot of these ratings, it probably doesn't make much difference.

### Note Regarding Normative/Comparative Data

Formal normative data for the *MID* instrument have not been developed; I have not had the staff or resources to conduct such studies, and I also believe that the effort to “match”

samples and colleges is problematic given the range and diversity of variables involved. In my judgment, there are two major recommended strategies:

- 1) **the best “norms” are internal to the institution or program—determine a baseline and then monitor one’s progress in terms of that baseline;**
- 2) **develop criterion-based rather norm-based standards—how does the profile of student data compare to faculty expectations regarding intellectual development for the course, program or college as a whole?**

In any case, whether comparisons are normative or criterion-based, the significant issue is not the relative judgment involved—“we’re .3 of a position ahead (or behind) of the average of our peers”—but rather what, if anything is to be done to help improve or sustain the kind of intellectual development seen in the data.

Having said that, because the interest in comparisons is so persistent, I have included two tables drawn from the *Measure of Intellectual Development* manual providing general comparison data for classification (year in school), age, and gender. In general, traditionally-aged students enter college in the position 2-position 3 transition and exit college 4 (or so) years later in the position 3-position 4 transition. There is a modest but statistically significant effect by classification and by age, with the former seeming to be a stronger factor (with a great deal depending on the nature of the curricular interventions and learning experiences occurring in those intervening years). There seems to be no consistent difference by gender. Demographic data on ethnicity has been collected inconsistently over the years, and has become increasingly problematic in terms of data quality and interpretation, so at the present no comparative data are provided for that dimension.

If you have any further questions, or if anything on the summary is unclear, feel free to give me a call—360-528-1809—or email me at [wsmoore51@comcast.net](mailto:wsmoore51@comcast.net).

### References

- Knefelkamp, L.L. (1978). Training manual for Perry raters and rater training cue sheets. Unpublished manuscript, University of Maryland, College Park.
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- Nunnally, J. (1967). Psychometric theory. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Rest, J. (1979). Development in judging moral issues. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Thompson, K. (1990). Assessing cognitive development with self-evaluations and the Perry model. Unpublished paper. The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA.

### Rating Summary Sheet Notes

*Below is a general overview of the kinds of “rater shorthand” notes and comments you might see on the summary sheet of your data.*

\* **BP:** “Ball Park” rating; there is insufficient data, or insufficiently clear data, for us to provide a full research rating with confidence--but enough for us to approximate, or “ballpark,” a rating. People use such ratings in different ways; with formal research (and



an adequate sample!), you might want to exclude them from the analysis. For most informal research purposes, however, it is reasonable to include BP ratings. In converting these ratings to continuous data, treat them as a half-stage; a “BP 2/3,” for example, would convert to a “2.5” score.

\* **Glimpse:** rater's notation that accompanies ratings like 333(4). Such a rating indicates that while the essay is seen as reflecting stable position 3, there is a hint, or “glimpse,” of the next position (in this example, position 4) that is noted but not given sufficient weight to warrant a +1/3 position increment. I would argue these essays are distinct from 334 or 333 essays, but you may prefer to simply consider them as 333 essays. You may also see 222(3) or 444(5), but these are less common.

\* **Unr:** Unrateable; the judgment is that the data sample is inadequate to provide any kind of rating. The reasons vary; sometimes students don't write the essay, sometimes they are simply too brief, and sometimes they either don't take the task seriously or they tangent in ways which make rating impossible. The percentage of Unrateables in samples is usually only 1-5% at most.

\* **Flooded:** there seems to be a strong emotional tone taken in the essay--usually in glowing positive terms (a professor, most often, who obviously had a powerful personal influence on the person), but sometimes harsh and negative as well. Such emotional “flooding” tends to obscure the cognitive rating, so its occurrence is noted as a possible caution in reviewing the rating. Flooding does not make the data automatically unrateable, but it can make the essay rate as less complex than it might otherwise be.

\* **Early:** essentially the same notion as “Glimpse,” but on the “other side” of the position; that is, a 333 (Early) means that the essay is seen as borderline between a 233 rating and a full 333 rating. As with the “glimpse” notation, this reference is mainly useful for rating and criteria research, and likely a distinct set of essays—but it's probably preferable to include them as 333 essays rather than a separate category.

\* **2/4 or 3/5:** indicates that one or both of the raters noted this essay is an example of a rating split problem--a problematic essay that can be interpreted, for example, in the case of a “2/4” split, as being on either the position 2 or position 4 side of position 3. Conceptually, these splits result from the fact that there are close parallels between positions 2 and 4 and between positions 3 and 5 in the Perry scheme; practically, it's a rating challenge and a function of insufficient information from the respondent. These essays are noted to allow us to go back to do closer analyses on these essays to help refine our rating criteria and decisions.

\* **Q:** simply means that the essay in question is quotable, unusual, or for some other reason worth noting. You can use these signs to pull out the best essays for writing a section on the richness of the essay data or for presenting quotes to faculty; I use them primarily for rater training efforts and our ongoing rating criteria refinements.

\* **+ or - :** found beside individual ratings (as opposed to the final reconciled ratings), these signs are simply an indication that there's an argument for more than one rating: the one noted and the next 1/3 position step above (+) or below (-) it. These notes help facilitate

the rating reconciliation process, but should be ignored when computing inter-rater agreement percentages.

## APPENDIX 12

### SAMPLE CUES SUMMARY

#### SAMPLE SUMMARY PRIMARY CUES CITED

*SOURCE:* Jennifer Kintner

*DATE COLLECTED:* 2017

*Form:* Interviews

*SAMPLE OVERVIEW:* seminary students

<p><b>CUES FOR POSITION 2</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> focus on facts/content—What to learn</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> learning as information exchange</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> "Teacher (Authority) is all" (T-centered)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> emphasis on 1-to-1 relationship with teacher</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> peers noted primarily as "friends in class," "fun" rule structures</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> focus on teacher providing structure/clarity for learning</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> simple comfort in classroom/physical environment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> emphasis on clearcut/straightforward grading ("no tricks")</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> use of absolutes and/or dichotomies in language</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> simplistic; focus on "fun," little on learning</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other cues and/or Quotes:</p>	<p><b>CUES FOR POSITION 3</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> concern w/ process/methods—How to learn</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> opening to multiplicity (multiple perspectives)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> focus on practicality/relevance</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> learning a function of teacher/student relationships</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> student responsibility = working hard and/or learning skills</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> discussion endorsed (peers provide diversity of opinions)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> "safe" and/or relaxed atmosphere</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> quantity/qualifiers; lots of details</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> focus on challenge/ hard work = good grades</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> emphasis on evaluation issues (especially fairness)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> listing (simple, unelaborated); multiples w/ little connection</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other cues and/or Quotes:</p>
<p><b>CUES FOR POSITION 4</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> focus on ways of thinking—How to think</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> concern w/ independent thinking, freedom of expression</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> "anything goes" perspective ("Do Your Own Thing")</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "New Truth" rules (absolutes within multiplicity)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> teacher a facilitator/guide (source of way/s to think)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> peers noted as sources of learning (but unelaborated)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> student more active, taking more responsibility for learning</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> increased self-processing, ownership of ideas</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> endorses loosely-structured format</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rejects grading and/or memorizing ("regurgitation")</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> comfort w/ multiplicity, connections across disciplines</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other cues and/or Quotes:</p>	<p><b>CUES FOR POSITION 5</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> focus on qualitative evidence—How to judge in context</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> reflection on own thinking ("meta-thought")</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> understanding of different frames of reference</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> greater tentativeness, openness in language</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> teacher as learning partner, source of expertise</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> peers seen as full partners in learning process</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> strong sense of self-as-agent in own learning</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> emphasis on synthesis of ideas and themes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> endorses seminar, argument, discussion of ideas</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> acknowledges role of critique/evaluation in learning</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> appreciation for other perspectives (empathy)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other cues and/or Quotes:</p>
<p><b>GENERAL COMMENTS:</b></p> <p>"3-4" indicates a passage that reflect transition, with elements of both positions 3 and position 4</p> <p>"3 (4)" indicates mostly a position 3 focus with a possible "glimpse" of position 4</p> <p>"2/4 split" indicates a passage that could be interpreted as being on the 2 or 4 side of position 3, depending on the overall context</p> <p>"Early" indicates stable position but borderline</p> <p>Most interviews contain lots of rich and interesting material related to faith perspectives and general perspectives on seminary education but less material directly relevant to epistemological perspectives, making ratings challenging; several respondents often provided lengthy responses without directly addressing the specific question asked</p>	

APPENDIX 13

PRIMARY CUES FOR POSITIONS

Table A1. Primary cues cited among participants

Primary Cues for Position 2	Focus on facts/content- What to learn
	Focus on teacher providing structure/ clarity for learning
	Use of absolutes and/or dichotomies in language
Primary Cues for Position 3	Concern with process/method – How to learn
	Opening to multiplicity (multiple perspectives)
	Focus on practicality/ relevance
	Learning a function of teacher/student relationships
	Student responsibility=working hard and/or learning skills
	Discussion endorsed (peers provide diversity of opinions)
	Quantity/qualifiers; lots of details
Primary Cues for Position 4	Focus on way of thinking – How to think
	“New Truth” rules (absolutes within multiplicity)
	Teacher a facilitator/guide (source of way/s to think)
	Rejects grading and/or memorizing (“regurgitation”)
Primary Cues for Position 5	Reflection on own thinking (“meta-thought”)
	Greater tentativeness, openness in language

APPENDIX 14

REPRESENTATIVE STATEMENTS AND  
CUES FOR EACH POSITION

Table A2. Position 2 statements and cues

<i>Sample Statement</i>	<i>Primary Cue</i>
Riley C: I would define knowledge by saying that ... it is information you obtain for the purpose of conformity to Christ and service to the local church.	Focus on facts/content- What to learn
Ava B. - You are always going to pick up things in the class that you didn't necessarily know before. It's hard to know looking back, because you pick up things naturally by being in classes...	Focus on teacher providing structure/ clarity for learning
Rose A.: Yeah well I think ... the biggest thing is obviously Scripture is ... the only true and reliable source, so I think going to Scripture any time even when you hear something ...	Use of absolutes and/or dichotomies in language

Table A3. Position 3 statements and cues

<i>Sample Statement</i>	<i>Primary Cue</i>
Cheryl J.: Because English is not my mother tongue so it is harder for me than my fellow students. Say for example they would spend one hour doing the assignment, I would spend double time or even more. The workload is really, really heavy for me. Very tough for me.	Concern with process/method – How to learn
Patricia O.: ... it's okay to have different views. Diversity is okay.	Opening to multiplicity (multiple perspectives)
Natalie D: ... what I would try to do though is try to weave in ministerial experience or just help in those classes. I would have liked more classes like how do you plan a funeral or how do you do a church budget or like what do you do in this crisis situation, and of course you can't figure out all crisis situations but just like more of those types of courses -- hands on things you are going to face ...	Focus on practicality/ relevance
Noelle G: I learned so much, not just from the professor lecturing from the front of the room and trying to catch the information that came across, but I was really intentional about doing office hours not just with the professors but also with the president and other people in the administration and hearing their stories or working through something difficult in class or coming from a different perspective than they believe and interacting on those rough topics. That was a really helpful and a beautiful time of growth...	Learning a function of teacher/student relationships
Marie K.: I think it is the student's role to engage in that scholarship. Engage in it and engage in it faithfully... I think that would be the important thing to engage in the knowledge being presented to you to understand it well and understand it as holistically as possible at least in survey classes.	Student responsibility=working hard and/or learning skills
Carley L.: Also having the opportunity of learning what it is to have solid conversations with people you don't necessarily agree with on a topic and being able to recognize, "Hey, we disagree on this, but there's also the most important things we agree on theologically that we can come back to and we are brothers and sisters in Christ," and respect each other well and respect each other's opinions and continue to grow that relationship while still having disagreements.	Discussion endorsed (peers provide diversity of opinions)
Abbey Q.: ... I really appreciated some Old Testament Bible classes because of well for varying reasons, but one I grew in a richer understanding of the Old Testament and so that was huge, and then also in walking through that the questions that come up of like God's dealings with His people and what does that mean? I don't know ... I guess the Old Testament classes and the theology classes were the most impactful.	Quantity/qualifiers; lots of details

Table A4. Position 4 statements and cues

<i>Sample Statement</i>	<i>Primary Cue</i>
Taylor H.: I just benefited greatly from the biblical knowledge that I was given and just from categories of how to think about the Bible, how to think about Christianity, how to think about church and the Christian life...	Focus on way of thinking – How to think
Claire I.: I think an ideal seminary education would expose you to beliefs that you disagree with in positive way and require you to think through very carefully what you believe and whether or not it is true or just what has been in our mind all along so you haven't questioned it.	"New Truth" rules (absolutes within multiplicity)
Ruby F: She really helped me shape my philosophy of ministry and really helped me understand my role as a children's minister and what that looks like and biblically how to shape my philosophy and how to understand my role and relating to parents and the children...	Teacher a facilitator/guide (source of way/s to think)
Ruby F: ... I don't know if that is a true test of what I have been learning in the class to just be spilling it ... cramming it all in my head and spill it all out without much reflection. ... I feel that it is more beneficial when I really have to critically think about what I've been learning and what they have been teaching me versus just regurgitating information ...	Rejects grading and/or memorizing ("regurgitation")

Table A5. Position 5 statements and cues

<i>Sample Statement</i>	<i>Primary Cue</i>
Anna E.: I do a lot of internal processing and reading. I think even coming to my own conclusions is all tied up in conversations with others. I really like to process things and get feedback with other people as well. I guess maybe part of it is my own reflection, but I also really value solidifying my own convictions within the context of community.	Reflection on own thinking ("meta-thought")
Anna E.: ...so I think when especially in seminary when I was faced with so many different stories but also ... had my eyes opened to so many more interpretations or reflections on Scripture or who God is, ... it was refreshing. A challenge of and still is a challenge of learning what I need to keep and what I need to hold onto and what things I just feel like I have to hold onto because it is just what I have always known.	Greater tentativeness, openness in language

APPENDIX 15

CATEGORIES OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL PRIORITIES  
AND COMPETENCIES

Table A6. Epistemological priorities and competencies by institution type

	MID	1A	1B	2A	2B	2C	2D	3A	3B	3C	3D	Total
<b>Denominational</b>												
Sarah A.	3.33		x		x							2
Ava B.	2.67		x						x			2
Riley C.	3.67	x	x	x		x		x			x	6
Ruby F.	3.67	x		x	x					x	x	5
Noelle G.	3.33	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	9
Taylor H.	3.33		x						x	x		3
Claire I.	4		x	x		x	x	x		x	x	7
Cheryl J.	3.33	x			x							2
Marie K.	2.67									x		1
Lucy M.	2.67	x	x	x	x							4
Emma N.	2.67	x	x	x	x	x					x	6
Heather P.	3						x			x		2
Anna S.	2.67			x	x	x	x	x				5
Bethany U.	3.33	x		x	x		x				x	5
Joelle Y.	2.67	x	x	x					x			4
Subtotal:		8	9	9	8	4	5	4	4	6	6	
<b>Inter/Multidenom inational</b>												
Natalie D.	3.67	x	x	x	x	x			x	x		7
Anna E.	4.67	x		x			x		x	x	x	6
Carley L.	3.67		x	x	x					x		4
Patricia O.	3.67	x	x	x								3
Abbey Q.	3.33			x	x		x			x		4
Jodi R.	3.33									x		1
Mabel T.	3.33						x			x	x	3
Laura V.	3.67	x	x	x	x				x			5
Amber W.	4		x		x		x			x		4
Rose A.	2.67	x	x	x		x	x		x		x	7
Clara B.	3.67	x		x	x		x			x	x	6
Linda C.	BP 3/4	x			x	x			x		x	5
Jennifer D.	2.67			x								1
Hazel F.	3.67		x	x	x							3
Mary G.	3				x		x					2
Subtotal:		7	7	10	9	3	7	0	5	8	5	
<b>Total</b>		15	16	19	17	7	12	4	9	14	11	



APPENDIX 16

COMPARISON BETWEEN STUDIES BETWEEN  
PRIORITIES AND COMPETENCIES AND MIDS

Table A7. Epistemological priorities and competencies and MID scores by study

	1A	1B	2A	2B	2C	2D	3A	3B	3C	3D	MID
Mullins: Recent high school graduates from 3 Secondary Contexts <sup>1</sup>	10	0	3	1	2	5	4	3	2	2	2.78
Trentham: Undergraduates in differing institutional contexts	9	6	14	4	4	3	5	14	19	5	3.38
Long: Undergraduates in Bible College	11	3	19	7	6	11	8	7	22	7	3.45
Sanchez: Undergraduates in Secular Universities	15	3	21	7	2	13	7	8	15	2	3.1
Cannon: Undergraduates in Christian Liberal Arts Institutions	7	6	18	4	2	5	8	13	11	7	3.15
Leatherman: Undergraduates from Confessional and Non- Confessional Contexts	11	7	5	1	3	3	4	5	12	1	3.19
Stuckert: Male Seminary Students	20	9	17	20	14	21	9	13	9	15	3.25
Kintner: Female Seminary Students	15	16	19	17	7	12	4	9	14	11	3.31

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<sup>1</sup>Because of the focus of the study on recent high school graduates, precompetencies were identified in addition to the priorities and competencies included on this chart. 1A had 2 participants that exhibited precompetencies; 1B had 1; 2A had 2; 2B had 4; 2D had 2; 3A had 3; 3B had 5; and 3C had 4. See Justin Robert Mullins, “Exploring the Impact of Secondary Educational Contexts on College Student Formation and Development” (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 92.

## APPENDIX 17

### PRESENTATION AT THE SOCIETY OF PROFESSORS IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

#### **Patterns and Perspectives in the Epistemological Development of Women—Jenn Kintner**

Foundational studies in epistemological development have typically either ignored gender or have presupposed men and women are completely different in their intellectual and ethical development. Despite this great divide in approaches to research, empirical research actually demonstrates the continuity between male and female epistemological development while also acknowledging the different patterns and perspectives between males and females.

#### Biblical Foundation

- There are not two separate views of knowledge— one for men and one for women.
- Both men and women are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27).
- Both are fallen (Rom 3:10-12, 23).
- Both are redeemed the same way, believing the same gospel and the same truths (Rom 10:9; Acts 16:31; Col 1:13-14; Eph 1:7; 1 Tim 2:6; Heb 9:12; Rom 3:23-25).
- Men and women are addressed separately in a few places with a few distinctions (Gal 3; 1 Tim 2; Col 3; Eph 5; 1 Cor 14).
- The vast majority of scriptural commands, however, apply to both men and women.

#### History of the Debate

Elisabeth Hayes, an author and educator known for her work in increasing female participation in the realm of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics has said,

Women’s potentially distinctive characteristics as learners have been a topic of interest to scholars, educators, and women themselves for centuries. Noted Western (male) philosophers, ranging from Plato to Rousseau, questioned whether women could learn at all, or could at least engage in the kind of rational thought typically associated with “higher” learning.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Elisabeth R. Hayes, “A New Look at Women’s Learning,” *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 2001, no. 89 (2001): 35.

### Need for the Discussion

- Everyone does not agree.
- These patterns are important in understanding both female and male learners and their growth and experiences as such.
- Hayes speaks to this, saying,  
It can be tempting to simply ignore gender, perhaps in the name of treating each person as a unique individual. Ignoring gender can make us blind to the significant impact that it can have on our learners, and to ways that we can improve learning experiences for all learners.<sup>2</sup>
- It value all humans.
- Knowing is ethical, so it is a necessary discussion.
- It is a study of God’s creative work. Though men and women have the same ethical, moral, and spiritual responsibility before God in the use of their minds, if God created women differently than men, it is appropriate to explore those differences.

### A Word of Warning against Essentialism

In considering epistemological development we do not want to essentialize what it means to be female or feminine or what it means to think and know as a female. We do not want to define women by anything outside of how God has defined them and place more or less limits than what God has placed.<sup>3</sup>

### Epistemological Survey:

#### I. Perry

- *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years*
  - 1950s to 1960s
  - Qualitative, longitudinal study
  - Harvard undergraduates
  - Developed into an epistemological progression of nine stages
  - Largely on males, but over the decades has been used and verified with women as well.
- Overview of the scheme:
  - Dualism
    1. Authorities know what is right
    2. Absolute idea of right and wrong
    3. Questions all have right answers

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<sup>2</sup>Hayes, “A New Look at Women’s Learning,” 40.

<sup>3</sup>See Suzuki, Jo. “He Made Them Male and Female: Image of God, Essentialism, and Evangelical Gender Debate,” in *What Really Happened in the Garden: Realities and Ramifications of the Creation and Fall of Man*, ed. Abner Chou (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015), 251-76.

“One student remarked that “when he came to college he didn’t suppose there was such a thing as a question that had more than one answer. . . .”<sup>4</sup>

- Multiplicity
  1. Understands authorities disagree.
  2. Cacophony of options; every person has a right to their own opinion.
  3. No discernment. All opinions equal.
- Relativism
  1. Drastic changes in justification of knowledge
  2. More structure and less chaos than Multiplicity
  3. Multiple answers still acknowledged, but seen in contexts
  4. Recognize some positions are more supported than others
- Commitment within Relativism
  1. Reason alone cannot decide. One must affirm values and make decisions.
  2. College students did not typically score in this range. It was conjectured that they did not have the opportunities or lacked the experiences that would develop a person in this way, such as career, marriage, etc.

## II. Belenky, et al.

- 1970’s
- Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberg, and Jill Mattuck Tarule
- Study by women, with women
- College women, current students, recent graduates, and “those in the invisible college,” institutions that help women grow.
- *Women’s Ways of Knowing*
- Did not reveal a new structure of epistemological development that drastically differed from Perry’s study.
- Different patterns and perspectives perhaps
- These distinctions they attributed to gender.
- Categories:
  - Silence
    1. Mindless, voiceless, relying on external authority
    2. Intrapersonal silence- not aware of one’s own thinking.
    3. One participant when asked when her conscience bothers her replied when someone picks on her.
    4. This form of knowing was often the result of tragic circumstances or abusive relationships.
  - Received knowledge
    1. Receive and reproduce knowledge
    2. Collect facts, but don’t develop opinions.

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<sup>4</sup>William G. Perry, Jr., *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 62.

3. All-knowing external authorities remain
4. Intolerant of ambiguity
- Subjective Knowledge
  1. Truth and knowledge no longer external and clear, but now personal, private, subjective, and intuitive.
  2. The gut is the source of authority.
  3. Avoids opinions of others.
  4. Truth felt, not pursued or constructed.
  5. Truth unique to each individual
- Procedural knowledge
  1. “Much more humble and more powerful than subjective knowing”
  2. Recognize the need to understand others and listen more closely
  3. Personal investment in learning through objective means.
  4. Realizes gut fallible
  5. Realizes some truths truer than others
- Constructed Knowledge
  1. Knowledge contextual
  2. Weaving passions and intellect into a whole – subjective and objective, rational and emotive
  3. Like Perry’s concept of commitments, there is a level of responsibility.

### III. Baxter Magolda

- 1980s
- Study to closely compare men and women
- 101 women and men at Miami University in Ohio State, from their first year to their first year after graduation
- *Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender-Related Patterns in Students’ Intellectual Development*
- Resulted in 4 different ways of knowing with corresponding gender-related patterns
- Different patterns but not an alternate scheme for men and women
  - Absolute Knowing
    1. Knowledge certain and absolute
    2. Knowledge received from instructor
  - Transitional Knowing
    1. Not just acquiring knowledge, but understanding
    2. Knowledge is partially certain and partially uncertain
  - Independent Knowing
    1. Knowledge is uncertain, each person has own beliefs
    2. No ideas better or worse
    3. Like Multiplicity or Subjective Knowledge
      - Contextual Knowing
        1. Compares perspectives, integrates information, and applies knowledge in context.
        2. The previously held “everything goes” is forsaken some assertions are better than others.
        3. Evidence required, but must be seen in context

4. This level of knowledge is rarely evident during college

- Gender related patterns:

1. Men and women did not always fall into their gender-related patterns. In fact a student is not restricted to one pattern.
2. Chart:

	<i>Male Pattern</i>	<i>Female Pattern</i>
Absolute Knowing	Mastering: Public acquisition of knowledge, focus on achievement, includes interaction and sparring with teachers and peers.	Received: Private acquisition of knowledge, receive information from instructors, receive encouragement from peers.
Transitional Knowing	Impersonal: Thinks for oneself through debate with others.	Interpersonal: Collects the ideas of others, relationships central.
Independent Knowing	Individual: Focuses on one's own view while still making room for peers and instructors. Focus on separation.	Interindividual: Others' perspectives help to clarify one's own. Focus on connection.
Contextual Knowing	No gender-related patterns were able to be identified at this level due to the infrequency of participants reaching this level during their college years. Baxter Magolda did hypothesize that because of the integrated nature of understanding and knowledge as development progresses, that perhaps the gender patterns would converge at this level.	

3. She describes male student showing more empathy over the years and a female student enjoying more debate.

#### IV. Differences and Similarities:

<i>Perry</i>	<i>Belenky et al.</i>	<i>Baxter Magolda</i>
	Silence: Mindless, voiceless reliance on external authority.	
Dualism: Bifurcation of right and wrong with authorities holding the answers.	Received Knowledge: All-knowing external authority that teaches material they can learn and reproduce. No room for ambiguity.	Absolute Knowing: Knowledge is certain, absolute, and received from the instructor.
		Transitional Knowing: Goes beyond acquiring knowledge and focuses on understanding. Knowledge is seen as partially certain and uncertain.
Multiplicity: Plurality of answers with all opinions being equal.	Subjective Knowledge: Knowledge is personal, private, intuitive, and varied.	Independent Knowing: Knowledge uncertain with each person having their own beliefs. No criteria for ideas being better or worse. Everything equal.

Relativism: Multiple answers must be understood in context, using various forms of comparison and analysis.	Procedural Knowledge: Personal investment in learning knowledge through objective means.	
Commitment: A personal affirmation of values that involves choice in the midst of relativism.	Constructed Knowledge: Knowledge is contextual and created by knowers. Unified outlook that listens to others but doesn't silence oneself.	Contextual Knowing: Compares perspectives, thinks through the contextual realities of the problem and evidence, and applies knowledge and solutions in context.

- Belenky et al. and Baxter Magolda are not presenting alternate structures
- Categorized their findings slightly differently
- Overall the same arc of development
- William Moore of the CSID has written to this effect, saying of Belenky et al., Baxter Magolda, etc.,

What is important to note here is that while these authors have generally claimed that their work represents theories separate from Perry's Scheme, there is no compelling evidence that these frameworks in fact define distinct theories. All of these efforts represent important areas of scholarship with respect to intellectual development, but rather than being separate theoretical models they extend and expand descriptions of the same fundamental journey described by Perry's framework.<sup>5</sup>

- Toni-Lee Capossela in her chapter on Perry in a book on critical writing points out that given the significant differences in Belenky's study from Perry's study of male students at Harvard, with 45 participants in Belenky's study being in organizations that help women in need and 90 in formal education, only 12 of whom were in liberal arts institutions, one would expect more variation in the schemes. She writes this,
 

Given the social and economic diversity represented by this population, it is remarkable that the resulting developmental sequence so closely resembles Perry's scheme in its general contours.<sup>6</sup>
- They provided a different pattern and perspective but not a new path of epistemological development.

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<sup>5</sup>William S. Moore, "Understanding Learning in a Postmodern World: Re-thinking the Perry Scheme of Ethical and Intellectual Development," in *Personal Epistemology: The Psychology of Beliefs about Knowledge and Knowing*, ed. B. Hofer and P. Pintrich (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001), 23.

<sup>6</sup>Toni-Lee Capossela, "Using William Perry's Scheme to Encourage Critical Writing," in *The Critical Writing Workshop*, ed. Toni-Lee Capossela (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1993), 54.

## Ethical/Moral Development Survey:

### I. Kohlberg

- Educator at Harvard
- Graduated with Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1958
- Study included boys in Chicago from the ages of 10-16, followed up every 3 years for 20 years
- Research participants given the Heinz dilemma of a man with dying wife who could not afford the medication
- Three levels of development
  - Pre-Conventional Morality
    - 1. Obedience
    - 2. Punishment/Reward
  - Conventional Morality
    - 1. Good Interpersonal Relationships
    - 2. Maintaining the Social Order
  - Post-Conventional Morality
    - 1. Social Contract and Individual Rights
    - 2. Universal Principles

### II. Gilligan

- Gilligan saw Kohlberg's research as problematic since women do not score in the upper stages.
- In research began to hear two different voices or ways of considering moral problems. Believed women being excluded from previous studies meant that the moral voice of care had been eliminated. Women then labeled deficient and examined by structure built around men.
- *In a Different Voice* –combined three separate studies.
  - 29 women seeking abortions
  - Identity and moral development of 25 college students chosen at random from a class on moral and political choice.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> study – males and females representing various ages were matched for age, intelligence, education, occupation, and social class to examine self-conceptions and moral conflicts.
- Kohlberg emphasized justice; Gilligan emphasized care. She emphasizes connection, Kohlberg emphasizes autonomy.
- Stages:
  - Caring for oneself
  - Caring for others, often to the neglect of oneself
  - Understanding the connection between self and others



### III. Comparison of Gilligan and Kohlberg’s categories of moral development

<i>Levels/Stages</i>	<i>Gilligan</i>	<i>Kohlberg</i>
Pre- Conventional	Emphasis on caring for self	External authority dictating morality. Punishment by authority and Reward by authority
Conventional	Emphasis on caring for others	The external standard for morality is personally accepted and internalized.  Conformity to majority Duty as a part of society
Post Conventional	Understands the connection between self and others and seeks to do no harm to either	No longer is there an acceptance of an external standard, but there is a self-directed, chosen, and internalized moral structure.  Personal values exist but subjected to democratic laws Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principle (Ethical principles exist that are more important than the laws of the land)

- Dr. Estep in *Christian Formation*,

While their results are similar – with males and females equally capable of all levels of moral reasoning, the developmental process itself is different, resulting in an ethic of justice in men and one of care in women. However, realizing the common element between justice and care, both place the needs of another individual first – before self-interest, showing a common moral center with two equally valid expressions.<sup>7</sup>

- Interesting to note development by Gilligan – male and female moral voices to “moral voice” or “moral orientation” of care or of justice that was still associated but not directly linked with gender because each voice was not exclusively used by each gender and individuals could actually switch back and forth.
- In a meta-analysis reviewing 108 studies of sex differences in moral development, Lawrence Walker found sex differences in moral reasoning to be rare and insignificant.

#### Female Patterns and Perspectives:

##### I. Voice

- Voice can mean talk, power or influence, or identity.
- Voice in the studies showed an increased movement from “echo of authority to the development of one’s own voice in the context of existing knowledge.”<sup>8</sup>

##### II. Relationship – collaboration

- One of the male participants in Baxter Magolda’s study even recognized this propensity in his female peers toward relationship: “You need that other gender’s input. I feel more comfortable talking with women sometimes because of that

<sup>7</sup>James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, eds., *Christian Formation* (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 31.

<sup>8</sup>Marcia Baxter Magolda, *Knowing and Reasoning in College: Gender-Related Patterns in Students’ Intellectual Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 196.

building-towards-community attitude they have ... They're very good to sit and talk to. You can tell they're listening and care."<sup>9</sup>

- Belenky et al – “For women, confirmation and community are prerequisites rather than consequences of development.”<sup>10</sup>
- Women’s emphasis on collaboration and empathy also seen in other research as well - Noddings, Melamed, Kazemek, Ravindran and Clason-Hook

### III. Connectedness.

- Knower and known in relationship. Empathy involved in knowing. Does not consider something in a disassociated manner.
- Separate knowers - suppress self by objectively excluding all emotions, thinking pragmatically, and speaking “dispassionately”; starts from vantage point of doubt as an adversary
- Connected knowers – see personality as adding to perception; look not just from their viewpoint but from others’ perspectives; more reluctant to debate or play the doubting game; allies even of positions they are examining

#### Pre-ministry Students Studies: John David Trentham and colleagues

- 30 undergraduate, pre-ministry students from different contexts
- Perry scale and a taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies.
- 3 studies specific to each context, one study comparing confessional and non-confessional, one study comparing high school students, study on males in seminary, forthcoming study on females in seminary
- 13% women – 65% women in the past studies
- Studies not to see the differences in gender, but all examined it briefly
- Women fell in the same Perry positions as the men, some studies slightly higher and some slightly lower but no difference of consequence showing that men and women are more similar than different.

#### Pre-ministry Studies: Gender Specific

##### I. Male Seminary Students

- Jonathan Stuckert - male, pre-ministry seminary students in denominational and inter/multidenominational contexts.
- Examined according to Perry scheme along with Trentham’s taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies
- Explore epistemological development, look at specific institutional contexts, themes, contextual realities and experiences

##### II. My ongoing study

- RQs
- Expecting scores to match the male seminarians’ scores with some slight variations. Expect might vary off of age, women attend seminary in different stages of life than men, and women being less likely to attend seminary.
- Research ongoing, but the scores for a third of the participants that I have received so far seem higher (Males: 3.25; First 10 Female Scores: 3.57)
- Emphases already observed:

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>10</sup>Mary Field Belenky, et al., *Women’s Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic, 1997), 194.

- Voice
- Minority
- Biblical languages
- Humility
- Encouragement – someone telling them they can do it or telling them that what they want to pursue is worthwhile
- Tentativeness or Hesitancy
- Relationship demonstrated in speech patterns - You know? Does that make sense? Right?

Conclusions:

- Foundational studies in epistemological development have often either overlooked or highly emphasized gender, setting up an alternate scheme for development.
- In the end, these studies reveal the similarities between men and women's epistemological development.
- Yes, different patterns and perspectives are important to explore, there are different elements that emerge when women are included, but overall epistemological development is not bifurcated, but it is unified.
- The findings actually support what I would think to be common thought from Scripture with regard to men and women being more similar but also different, but many debate this issue.
- This should lead us to all the more explore created differences and similarities to better understand intellectual and ethical maturity, to better understand learners, and to better understand humans made in the image of God without essentializing.

## APPENDIX 18

### AUTOCODED THEMES AND SENTIMENTS

In addition to using the Nvivo software to code according to a list of themes I identified, which were previously reported, I also used the autocoding features of the software to identify both reoccurring themes and sentiments. Themes and sentiments in the interviews were identified separately between the two groups in the study, denominational and inter/multidenominational, and also separately between the female transcripts in this study and the male transcripts from Jonathan Stuckert's study.

#### **Themes**

When Nvivo auto-codes for themes, it analyzes important noun phrases that reoccur throughout the material.<sup>1</sup> The program has a filtering system, so only the most important themes are reported. This feature was used to analyze the transcripts for all the inter/multidenominational participants together and for all of the denominational students together. Themes common among both groups included classes, professors, theology, women, church, counseling and ministry.

#### **Differences between Institution Types**

While these themes were held in common, there were subtle differences, between how the themes were represented by the two groups. For instance, while classes were referenced 31 times in auto-coding by the inter/multidenominational students, it was only utilized 13 times by the denominational students. While those attending inter/multidenominational schools referenced a number of courses, preaching classes had

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<sup>1</sup>“How Auto Coding Themes Work,” accessed January 15, 2017, [http://help-nv11.qsrinternational.com/desktop/concepts/how\\_auto\\_coding\\_themes\\_works.htm](http://help-nv11.qsrinternational.com/desktop/concepts/how_auto_coding_themes_works.htm).

the highest number of instances at nine. Of the 13 total references to classes for the denominational students, only 1 referenced homiletics; the rest referred to missions, ethics, or counseling.

“Professor,” like “classes,” had more occurrences among inter/multidenominational students than among denominational students with 30 and 8 references respectively. The preaching professor was the highest occurrence among the inter/multidenominational students with 7 instances, but they also referred to mature professors, female professors, women professors, and favorite professors. The denominational seminary students had the following references to professors: ministry professors, evangelism professors, full professors and talking with professors.

Inter/multidenominational women had “women” auto-coded 16 times. These instances included women pastors 9 times with the greatest frequency as well as women professors, number of women, and hated women. Denominational instances were for “woman” rather than “women” and referred to a woman as single, married, and modest. Church was mentioned 14 times by those at inter/multidenominational seminaries and 11 times by those at denominational seminaries. Half of the church references that showed up in the automated themes by Nvivo for the inter/multidenominational seminary females referred to egalitarian churches. Additional references included church ministry, local church, church fathers, church government, church’s culture, and church budget. Denominational representations had no mention of egalitarian, but referred to the local church most frequently but also spoke to churches with regard to different, change, culture, and the average church member.

Themes also came up for each group that did not appear for the other group. Additionally, inter/multidenominational students had the following themes: preaching with 24 mentions, experience with 10 mentions, gospel with 6 mentions, and belief with 5 mentions. Themes from the denominational female seminary students included missions, mentioned 19 times, different/multiple perspectives or beliefs mentioned 19 times,

knowledge mentioned 9, liberal mentioned 8, right mentioned 7, and pressure mentioned 5 times.

While the inter/multidenominational representatives' themes and subthemes focused more on women's roles, preaching, and the pastorate, denominational representatives in the themes and subthemes focused more on what was right or true and had a greater emphasis on the local church, missions, or evangelism.

Inter/multidenominational women referred to "preaching class," "preaching professors," "preaching lab," "women pastors," "female professors," "women professors," "egalitarian church," and "pastoral ministry." The subthemes for the denominational seminary regarding right or true included "theological rightness," "biblical theology," "true knowledge," "biblical knowledge," "right decisions," "right priority." With this focus on what is right and true, as might be expected, the female denominational seminary students had a lower average score according to the Perry scheme.

### **Differences between Genders**

All of the women's transcripts were automatically coded for themes together and then the same was done with all of the male transcripts from Jonathan Stuckert's study. The female's auto-coded themes were as follows with the number of each coding listed after it in parenthesis: experience (18), theology (16), missions (15), church (15), perspectives (12), right (11), knowledge (11), ministry (9), decisions (9), core (9), woman (7), and beliefs (7). The male seminary students' auto-coded themes were as follows: theology (48), seminary (31), ministry (29) experience (25), sermon (23), life (22), reformed (21), group (18), friends (17), church (17), view (10), and position (8). It is interesting to note that although the male participants had shorter transcripts,<sup>2</sup> their reoccurring themes had a greater quantity of instances, perhaps showing that the male participants more commonly

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<sup>2</sup>The word count for the compiled male interviews was 139,488, while the word count for the compiled female interviews was 189, 218.

referred to the same categories, where women varied on the things they spoke about. Male and female participants both spoke of theology, experience, ministry, and church. Theology was the theme that had the most occurrences for the male participants. The men spoke of theology in terms of being reformed, practical, covenant, convictions, systematic, discourse, biblical, training, division, perspective, education, differences, and academics.<sup>3</sup> Theology fell second among the themes for the female participants, but with fewer occurrences. Women spoke of theology in terms of basic, right, true, knowledge, training, deep, biblical, and issues.

While both males and females had the auto-coded theme of experience, it was the first on the list of themes for female students, while it was fourth on the list for male students. It was not surprising to find this theme ranked so highly in both groups given that in the analysis process for both studies the researchers noted the trend towards a pragmatic or utilitarian view of seminary.

While women spoke of experience in terms of seminars, positive, intimacy-building, destructive, life, field, past, and on-campus, male students used it to simply refer to seminary and real-life. Male and female seminary students both referred to ministry in a variety of ways, but the male seminary students referenced pastoral ministry more, while female participants referenced ministry needs.

The theme of church had 17 codings among the male participants which referenced church plants, the local church, and church worship services. Church was auto-coded 15 times among the female transcripts and was used in reference to local church missions, church culture, different churches, church changes, church government, church budget, and average church members.

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<sup>3</sup>The difference in how the men and women referred to theology may be in who was included in the samples. Stuckert in his thesis mentioned the homogenous nature of his sample regarding being reformed in theology. Jonathan Stuckert, "Assessing Epistemological Development among Evangelical Seminarians" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 110.

Additional themes auto-coded for the male seminary students were seminary, sermon, life, reformed, group, friends, church, view, and position. Additional themes auto-coded for the female seminarians, but not represented in the male transcripts, were missions, counseling, perspectives, right, knowledge, decisions, core, woman, and beliefs. While it seems from the auto-codings that the men had much more of an emphasis on ministry and sermons, the women had an emphasis on missions that was not present in the autocoding for the males. The auto-coding for the men also seemed to have more of an emphasis on relationships, while the church was higher on the list of auto-coded themes for the women than for the men. The autocoded themes for the women had more of an emphasis on knowledge or perspective. While it is helpful to examine these auto-coded themes, it is important to realize that some of these themes may have been the result of specific questions on the respective protocols or from specific probing by the interviewers or may have been the result of the specific sample populations and may not generally represent the priorities of male and female students at evangelical seminaries.

### **Sentiments**

In addition to autocoding for theme, Nvivo has designed auto-coding for sentiment. While it classifies information according to positive and negative sentiment, it does not consider the context of the statement and is not able to recognize things such as sarcasm, double negatives, idioms and so forth.<sup>4</sup> Because of this, something a student is thankful for might still be coded as negative because they are speaking of the difficult challenge that in the end helped them grow. While the sentiment coding is a useful tool to see what is valued by the students or what is challenging, the list of positive and negative themes of sentiments needs to be considered with an understanding of how the sentiment coding works. Still it provides an interesting mode of comparison for the different groups

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<sup>4</sup>“How Autocoding Sentiments Works,” accessed January 15, 2018, [http://help-nv11.qsrinternational.com/desktop/concepts/How\\_auto\\_coding\\_sentiment\\_works.htm](http://help-nv11.qsrinternational.com/desktop/concepts/How_auto_coding_sentiment_works.htm).



in this study. After the sentiments were coded, I reviewed the negative and positive sentiments for the denominational and inter/multidenominational groups for common themes. While many things were discussed with a positive sentiment and many were identified with a negative sentiment, only those that reoccurred will be reported for these groups.

### **Differences by Institution Type**

The denominational interviews had the following reoccurring themes identified with positive sentiments: personal/spiritual growth, the Word of God/Scripture, professors, application, more knowledgeable, truth, gaining discernment, and counseling. The themes among the positive sentiments for the females in inter/multidenominational seminaries were professors, relationships with peers, practical application, spiritual transformation, knowing God, learning, truth, knowledge, discerning among differing opinions, conversation/discussion, broader perspective, questions and tensions, one's calling, being equipped, counseling, understanding oneself, mentoring, loving God and others, certain courses, biblical languages, the church, support, and women's roles. Certain things communicated with positive sentiment were held in common among the two groups, such as professors, counseling, spiritual growth, practice or application, and discernment. The inter/multidenominational participants who scored almost half a position beyond their denominational peers according to the Perry scheme, had positive sentiments associated more with peers, differing opinions, knowledge, and self-contemplation. An openness to and understanding of the impact of these things in one's education and growth would understandably impact one's epistemological development and rating according to the Perry scheme.

Denominational seminary students in the current study reported the following concepts with negative sentiment: opposing views, women in ministry, misconceptions or assumptions about women, challenges and hardship, relationships between male and female students, classes focusing on preaching, their own sin, and people pleasing/being

intimidated by others. It is important to remember that the participants did not necessarily dislike all of these things, but that there might have been a difficulty attached to the concepts, even if in the end they saw some as profitable. Like the denominational students, inter/multidenominational women in seminary similarly reported the following themes with negative sentiment: conflicting opinions, inappropriate comments by male peers, assumptions about women, questions about what one intended to do with one's degree, others thinking you should not be there, differing views of women in ministry, no room to fail as a woman, peers, and personal sin. They additionally reported with negative sentiment being in the minority both with regard to gender and race, wrestling with calling, the problem of just going to get trained and not to grow personally, trials, speaking up, overworking oneself/not resting, Christian liberty discussions, belief, wrestling with past, wrestling with convictions, heavy responsibility/ the exhausting nature of preaching all the time, intellectual laziness, finances, reading, busywork, homosexuality/LGBT, change, making decisions by faith, lack of opportunities, competition, harsh speech in disagreements, personal bias, social life or lack of relationships and discomfort. It is interesting that some of the things denominational students reported with negative sentiment, inter/multidenominational students reported with positive and negative sentiment, such as opposing views and women in ministry.

### **Differences by Gender**

The male interviews from Stuckert's study on male seminary students were also autocoded for sentiment using Nvivo. Similar to the female participants in this study as a whole, they spoke positively about professors, mentors, specific courses, Scripture, growing spiritually, counseling, understanding oneself, confirming calling, questions, discussion, differing opinions, intellectual growth, preparation, practical ministry opportunities, ministering to others, the church, women's roles, and relationships with peers including cohorts, shepherding groups, or soul-care groups offered. In addition, the following themes appeared in the positive sentiments for the male seminary students: wife

and kids, challenged in new directions, growing emotionally, being in the classroom as opposed to online, open feedback, electives, research, papers, reading, lectures, worldview, confident, humbled, preaching, gifts affirmed, critical thinking, realistic expectations for ministry, biblical languages, theological convictions, reformed theology, slowing down the pace of seminary, wisdom, balance between academics and pastoring, youth ministry, missions and evangelism, the Lord's care, financially affordable, job placement, and listening.

There were also similarities and differences between the male and female transcripts when looking at the instances coded for negative sentiment. Many of the negative sentiments for the females were associated with the challenges of being women in seminary, while for the men the negative sentiments were more focused on community and ministry. The following themes which Nvivo analyzed as negative sentiments were held in common by both male and female seminarians: sin, opposing views, balancing different areas of life, ethnic minority, not having a strong call to ministry, the complementarian/egalitarian issue, changing positions, settling convictions, busy work, finances, difficulty of maintaining a community, belief, and wrestling with one's past. In addition, male seminary students spoke of the following with negative sentiment: marriage in seminary, kids born during seminary, the need for critical thinking, blind spots, being overly critical of other views, difficult coursework, the need for practical application or ministry during seminary, the inferiority of online courses, difficulties in ministering to others, commuting, need for emotional intelligence, family illness or circumstances, doubt, humility, church difficulties, the seminary not replacing the church, Calvinism vs. Arminianism, people moving away, being cognizant of how much one does not know, gray areas, job searches, comfort zones, spiritual warfare, stress, growth in self-awareness, and the seminary grind.

APPENDIX 19

PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS COMPARING  
MIDS AND NUMBER OF PRIORITIES AND  
COMPETENCIES OBSERVED

Table A8. Pearson correlation coefficients from studies on pre-ministry students

	R	Correlation
Mullins: Recent high school graduates from 3 Secondary Contexts	.7799	Strong
Trentham: Undergraduates in differing institutional contexts	.8161	Strong
Long: Undergraduates in Bible College	.4541	Weak
Sanchez: Undergraduates in Secular Universities	.7651	Strong
Cannon: Undergraduates in Christian Liberal Arts Institutions	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA
Leatherman: Undergraduates from Confessional and Non-Confessional Contexts	.1954	Weak
Stuckert: Male Seminary Students	.3116	Weak
Kintner: Female Seminary Students	.3261	Weak

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<sup>1</sup>Cannon did not have the data included in his thesis to calculate the Pearson correlation coefficient.

## APPENDIX 20

### TOWARD A TAXONOMY FOR VIRTUOUS CHRISTIAN LEARNING

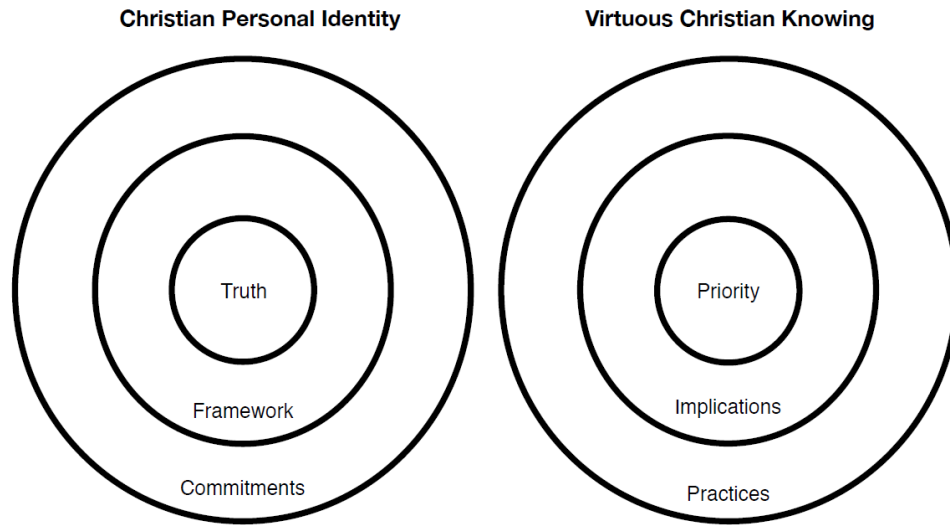
**By John David Trentham, Ph.D.**

**A.** Progressive thesis on *Virtuous Christian Knowing*:

1. Learning requires “knowing” in the fullest sense.
2. Ultimate “reality” (I.e., God) is fixed. “Knowing” is dynamic and progressive.
3. Knowing that is “virtuous” is (1) honest, (2) humble, and (3) lived.
4. All knowing requires a worshipful personal commitment (or faith assumption) to Truth (capital T).
5. Secular knowing assumes a temporal foundation for Truth; religious knowing assumes a supernatural foundation; Christian knowing assumes a biblical foundation.
6. Knowing is not mere *comprehension* and awareness, but requires it.
7. Knowing is not mere *reflection* and analysis, but requires it.
8. Knowing is not mere *experience* and application, but requires it.
9. *Virtuous Christian Knowing* thus entails a personal commitment to Truth in which one (a) recognizes biblical priorities; (b) seeks biblical implications; and (c) engages in biblical commitments and practices.

*\*Educational implication: Effective Christian education prompts Virtuous Christian Knowing. The role of the teacher is thus to facilitate virtuous knowing through virtuous teaching. The role of the learner is thus to pursue virtuous knowing through virtuous learning.*

- B.** The categories for virtuous Christian knowing correspond to the categories for Christian personal identity—as comprised by gospel, worldview, and discipleship, in which (a) *gospel* is one’s life-defining Truth, (b) worldview is one’s life-informing framework, and (c) discipleship [formation] is one’s live-living commitments.



C. Virtuous Christian Knowing is thus, “tri-perspectival” [\*Ref. John Frame]

Priority	Implication	Practices
Head	Heart	Hands
Knowledge	Understanding	Wisdom
Comprehension	Reflection	Experience
Pressuposition	Critical Judgment	Responsibility
Normative*	Situational*	Existential*
Metaphysics	Epistemology	Axiology
Claim	Apologetic	Demonstration

D. Applied to Christian teaching and learning contexts, Virtuous Christian Knowing may be recognized by a series of corresponding categories, each with identifiable priorities and competencies.

- Virtuous Christian *Learning* is an educational manifestation of Virtuous Christian Knowing.
- Virtuous Christian *Teaching* is an educational manifestation of Virtuous Christian Learning.

Taxonomy for Virtuous Christian Learning		
Category A: Biblically-founded presuppositions for knowledge and development	Category B: Metacognition, critical reflection, and contextualistic orientation	Category C: Personal responsibility for knowledge acquisition and maintenance—within community
<i>Learning entails...</i>	<i>Learning entails...</i>	<i>Learning entails...</i>
A recognition of the God of the Bible as metaphysically ultimate, and of revelation as the source and most basic component for knowledge and development	A preference for higher-level forms of critical reflection	A pursuit of personal development that results from mutual interdependence and reciprocity in one's relationships with authority figures and peers
	A prioritization of wisdom-oriented modes of learning and living	
A clear articulation of the relationship between faith and rationality	A reflective criteria of assessing one's own beliefs and values, as well as divergent beliefs and values	A sense of personal responsibility for gaining, maintaining, and progressing in knowledge
	A recognition of social-environmental influences on one's learning and maturation	A preference for active involvement in the teaching and learning process
		A convictional commitment to one's own worldview—maintained with critical awareness of personal contexts, ways of thinking, and challenges brought to bear by alternative worldviews—through testing and discernment

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## ABSTRACT

### ASSESSING EPISTEMOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG WOMEN IN EVANGELICAL SEMINARIES

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Building on the foundation laid by Trentham and his colleagues in researching the epistemological development among pre-ministry students, this phenomenological study used the Perry scheme as a lens to examine development among women in evangelical seminaries. Understanding female seminarians' patterns and perspectives on knowing, along with the contextual realities they experience in seminary, aids women who desire to go to seminary, women in seminary, seminary administration, professors, and student development personnel, as well as churches in their ministry to women.

The literature review in this work covers the theological foundation for epistemology. Theologically, knowledge is seen to be dependent, unified, relational, requiring belief, and necessitating obedience. From this foundation, Perry's research and nine-stage scheme is explored. As this study focuses on the epistemological development of women, the following studies related to gender are also explored: *Women's Ways of Knowing* by Belenky et al., *Knowing and Reasoning in College* by Baxter Magolda, and *In a Different Voice* by Carol Gilligan. Themes between these works were identified as voice, relationship, and connectedness. The Reflective Judgment Model by King and Kitchener is also examined and compared with Perry's scheme. The use of the Reflective Judgment Model to study the development of seminary students is also reported. The ongoing dialogue of research on pre-ministry students is then surveyed including a

discussion of inverse consistency and Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies.

Thirty women were interviewed using semi-structured protocols to explore their epistemological development in their institutional contexts. This study included denominational and inter/multidenominational contexts. Participants were enlisted by completing a Thesis Study Participation Form. Using a custom-designed interview protocol for this population, an interview was conducted with each participant. The interviews were then transcribed and submitted to the CSID for scoring. The transcripts were also examined for statements demonstrating each of the epistemological priorities or competencies in Trentham's Taxonomy. Statement attributions were determined in conjunction with Trentham. An independent content analysis was also completed to examine themes and trends. The data was then analyzed and findings reported.

**KEYWORDS:** anthropotelic, Baxter Magolda, Belenky et al., biblical epistemology, Carol Gilligan, Center for the Study of Intellectual Development (CSID), Christian formation, Christotelic, complementarian, critical thinking, denominational, dualism, ethical development, epistemological development, epistemological telos, female patterns and perspectives, faith and reason, higher education, institutional context, institutional type, intellectual development, interdenominational, inverse consistency, multidenominational, multiplicity, Perry Scheme, pre-ministry, Reflective Judgment Model, seminary, seminary student development, student affairs, student development, student life, telos, theological foundation for epistemology, Trentham's taxonomy of epistemological priorities and competencies, vocational ministry, William Moore, William Perry, women in ministry, women in seminary, Women's Ways of Knowing (WWK)

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